A STUDY

VIET CONG

USE OF TERROR

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UNITED STATES MISSION IN VIETNAM
SAIGON-VIETNAM
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1. INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1959, the Communist leaders in North Vietnam were growing increasingly impatient. They had won the Viet Minh war five years before and felt they had been cheated out of what they believed was rightfully theirs: control of all Vietnam. That the government in the South was not party to any agreement delivering Vietnam to the communists, or that the people in the South did not want and would not accept such an arrangement, was beside the point. The Viet Minh leaders had won the war and they meant to have the fruits of victory. For five years they had waited for unification, placing their faith in the Soviet and Chinese communist diplomatic process. For five years their fellow communists -- using the argument that the South was so divided and its government so weak that soon the whole structure would collapse of its own weight -- had dissuaded them from taking direct action to bring all of Vietnam under the red banner.

But finally the waiting game could no longer be endured. Worse, the South steadily was gathering strength and daily its government was becoming more stable. Time was running against the men in Hanoi. And so on March 13, 1959, the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, meeting in Hanoi, declared that the time had come to begin the task of "liberating the South ... to struggle heroically and perseveringly to smash the Southern regime."
To smash the Southern regime -- that was the stated objective. The method was to eliminate by force the Southern governmental apparatus, the country's official and natural leaders and establish in each village an apparat tied to Hanoi. The assault began in the villages and was to work its way up through the district and then provincial governmental levels until at last there would be a direct attack on the central government itself. Along the way, the enemy's instruments of power -- his police and his armed forces -- would be won over by proselyting or nullified by force.

A two-pronged attack was ordered -- a political attack and an armed attack. Underlying both attacks was the rational use of terror. Terror was made an integral part of the planned campaign to achieve the single political objective: unification of Vietnam under the communist banner.

This is a study of the specific uses which the Viet Cong have made of terror during the past eight years. The Viet Cong terror program has become sophisticated and highly developed, shaped by a number of forces: rural Vietnamese climate of opinion, the availability of resources and personnel, the inherent dangers involved in its use, governmental counter-measures, historical lessons, and Viet Cong grand strategy.

The public rationale for use of force was that the enemy had given the Viet Cong no alternative. Said an early indoctrination
"During the first years following the reestablishment of peace (Post-1954) the people of South Vietnam engaged in a peaceful political struggle. But the warlike and terrorist policies of the enemy forced them to take up rifles and begin an armed struggle ... The U.S. - Diem clique uses collaborators, villains, spies, Self Defense Corps members, and secret police agents to carry out fascist policies and to terrorize and suppress the people's political struggle. Thus it is necessary to counter-attack the enemy's military units, to destroy collaborators, villains, secret police agents and spies ... (violence) is required:

(1) because the enemy's political weaknesses have forced him to resort to force of arms to impose his will and this must be countered ... (2) because it will enhance the political struggle ... (3) and because it prevents the enemy from mingling freely among the village masses ... helps isolate him and thins out his ranks ..."

Justifying the use of terror was never an easy matter for the NLF. The natural abhorrence of rural Vietnamese for systematic slaughter formed a major and continuous problem which the leadership constantly sought to overcome. Among NLF cadres, especially those recruited locally, the use of force seemed both
repugnant and unnecessary. Even among more sophisticated cadres there was the widespread belief that the NLF could win by the political struggle alone and need not use terror. The response by the leadership to these reactions was thoroughly to mix the violence program and the political struggle and insist that the blend was essentially political. It also administered massive doses of indoctrination to cadres to convince them that victory could be achieved only by measured use of force and violence.

"We have learned," said an indoctrination booklet, "that the only correct way to organize revolutionary forces and make preparations in all areas to smash the enemy's machinery of violence is to use the appropriate form of armed struggle ... Therefore from the masses' struggle movement there has emerged a new struggle form, the armed struggle. Emergence of this new struggle form not only meets an urgent demand, but is an inevitable result of the revolutionary movement. It does not contradict the political struggle, but supplements it and paves the way for the political struggle to develop."

At any rate there is no doubt that the historical development of the NLF from 1960 to 1967 (as well as the 1957-60 period) was characterized by the growing use of violence and terror and by
increased efforts to make its use more palatable in and out of the Viet Cong ranks. And whereas the early effort had been essentially the political struggle, the attack against the post-Diem governments was basically the armed struggle.

The primary objective of the violence program was to make the political struggle movement possible. The terror program was central to the violence program -- it was the hardener in the formula, the steel in the superstructure.

Early acts of terrorism, in the 1957 to 1962 period were mainly local and sporadic and consisted largely of assassinations and kidnappings designed to eliminate or nullify local leadership opposition. A more concerted program of terror and violence began in December 1962 when the NLF Central Committee issued orders for increased use of terrorism:

"We should organize attacks against the enemy in his rear areas, to upset him. In the past this activity has been neglected. There has been no adequate preparation or organization. Weapons and facilities were lacking. Now, we should set up specialized units and clandestine forces to attack communication centers, warehouses, airports, and U.S. offices particularly. Public utilities such as electric plants, machines, etc., are not to be sabotaged yet. In carrying out sabotage activities in urban areas, always protect our organization. Clandestine organizations for sabotage in urban
areas should be set up separately and have no connection with political organizations. When using such organizations, in Saigon, in particular, consider carefully all immediate and all future advantages and drawbacks before performing an act."
2. THE TERRORISTS

The basic unit of all Viet Cong elements, as is common in a communist organization, is the three-man cell. In GVN controlled areas where of course it is covert, it is known as the Secret Guerrilla Cell. All Viet Cong within government controlled areas belong to such a cell. In addition, in the GVN controlled areas, there are other types of cells, two of which, under the bland names of Special Activities Cell and Sapper Cells, have been organized to carry out acts of terror.

Highly motivated, willing to take great risks, operating in either urban or rural areas they know well, members of these cells are able to strike virtually anywhere, at any time. From the rosters of these cells are drawn the assassination teams, the volunteer grenade hurlers and the death or suicide squads. Most of the spectacular acts of terror, sabotage, assassinations throughout Vietnam are the work of these cells. Although highly motivated and possessing good knowledge of local terrain these Cell members usually lack technical skills, such as the ability to manufacture and detonate explosive devices. Those technical skills, and sometimes leadership, is supplied by the Provincial or Zone Headquarters of the National Liberation Front. The frogman who blew a hole in the USS CARD, May 2, 1964, in Saigon harbor, undoubtedly was such a specialist sent in
for the job. The bombing of a major building in Saigon, which requires careful planning, timing, coordination and must be rehearsed until letter perfect, also is supervised by a specialist from Zone Headquarters.

A typical Viet Cong terrorist was Nguyen Anh Tuan, 37, who was captured January 7, 1966 while enroute to the Alabama Hotel, U.S. enlisted men's billet in downtown Saigon. Tuan, and the two other members of his Special Activities Cell were arrested by alert police a few blocks from the hotel and a 264 pound bomb was discovered hidden under the false floor of their three-wheeled cart.

Tuan appeared before the press on January 13, still defiant, and declared he would try again if he ever escaped. A Vietnamese school was adjacent to the Alabama Hotel, and police had estimated that perhaps 100 Vietnamese school children would have been killed or injured had the terrorist act been successful. When an incredulous Vietnamese reporter asked whether he would have felt even slightly remorseful about killing or maiming Vietnamese children, Tuan replied: "No, I wouldn't feel any remorse at all. This we cannot help."

Terrorists quite obviously must be strongly dedicated and highly militant. Most of them are young. Tuan's chief assistant for example was 19. Except for major terror acts, such as the
attempt to destroy the Alabama, daring and risky terror enterprises are assigned to youths in their teens. They are more easily influenced in their thinking, are more willing to take risks, physically are more capable of the tasks assigned them, are less prone to question orders and less likely to be or to become double agents. The optimum age for Viet Cong terrorists appears to be around 18. Some of the city saboteurs, such as grenade throwing boys are 13 or 14, and seldom past 25. The exceptions of course are the specialists.

Thousands of South Vietnamese living in rural areas have shown a high degree of courage and determination in resisting Viet Cong terrorism.

Nguyen Thich, was a poor farmer with a few worldly possessions, but as his neighbors report, he had "moral courage" -- the courage to speak out for what he believed to be right.

He had the courage to stand up at political meetings held by the Viet Cong in his hamlet in Duy Xuyen District of Quang Nam Province -- and to criticize the terror and sabotage committed by the communist guerrillas.

Mr. Thich asked how the Viet Cong could say they were fighting
a war of liberation when they were terrorizing the countryside and destroying the property of the very people they said they were trying to liberate. Moreover, according to his neighbors, Mr. Thich did this not once, but twice.

Shortly afterward Mr. Thich was kidnapped from his home by the Viet Cong and literally beaten to death. The 58-year-old farmer's body was then thrown callously to the ground in the village marketplace.

Stories such as this one are not news in South Vietnam, for, in 1965 alone, a daily average of more than 35 civilians, including women and children, were murdered or kidnapped by communist terrorists. And, more than 100 other acts of terror were carried out daily against the civilian population. The Viet Cong atrocity total for the year: over 12,000 civilians kidnapped or killed and more than 36,000 other acts of terrorism inflicted on the Vietnamese people.

Equally brutal attacks against government officials and their families have been frequent. In 1964, the average number of local officials murdered or kidnapped each month was 95. By 1965, the monthly average had climbed above 135 a month.

All Viet Cong atrocities are coldly organized for political purposes.
For instance, in February, 1966, Viet Cong mines blew up two buses carrying Vietnamese civilians who were in the midst of the unwarlike task of harvesting rice. The toll: 39 dead and seven wounded. Such acts are never really indiscriminate - there is always a purpose. A warning not to cooperate with or give information to the government - or an effort to spread the prestige of terror to demonstrate power - the victim himself may not be important. He doesn't even have to be guilty of the alleged crime - if his death will get the point across.

When the Viet Cong enter a village, they often try to win the local inhabitants to their cause through persuasion. When they are faced with opposition, however, terror is quickly used to force compliance.

Terrorism also has the important objective of disrupting the normal process of government and causing the villagers to lose faith in the ability of the central government to protect them. Thus, if the village chief, the symbol of the South Vietnamese Government, does not cooperate with the Viet Cong, he is likely to be shot or kidnapped.

Nguyen Van Tram was a village chief in Kien Phong Province. The Viet Cong kidnapped him and made him pay a ransom of 42,000
piasters. Afterward they chopped off one of his fingers to remind him that they, the Viet Cong, were to be feared and obeyed.

Mr. Tram was comparatively fortunate. One evening the Viet Cong entered the house of Huynh Huu Be, Chief of Phong Dinh Village. They dragged him into the courtyard of his home with the obvious intention of murdering him. His wife, who had been bathing their six-year-old daughter, ran out of the house and threw herself in front of her husband. The Viet Cong shot her. Then they shot her husband.

Meanwhile, their terrified daughter ran out of the back door to hide in the garden. A Viet Cong guerrilla spotted the child and riddled her naked body with bullets from a submachine gun. The murder had been coldly planned two weeks earlier and was carried out calmly - without emotion.

Many observers attribute the rise in atrocities to the military set-backs the Viet Cong have suffered and to the rising opposition to them by the people of South Vietnam. Recently captured Viet Cong have admitted that villagers flee into the jungle or government-held areas when the guerrillas enter a village to collect "taxes" in the form of money or rice and other foodstuffs.

There have been other indications that the continuing Viet Cong
terrorist campaigns have begun to meet with increased resistance. In a small village just outside the city of Hue, the Viet Cong were faced with vocal opposition from a number of courageous inhabitants when communist guerrillas arrived to collect "taxes." The Viet Cong selected two of the older members of the community, one 85 years old and the other 65, and shot them.

But instead of yielding to the Viet Cong terrorist pressure, more than 1,000 farmers and their families courageously staged an open demonstration in support of the South Vietnamese Government -- even though it was known that members of the Viet Cong band were still in the area.
3. THE TERROR

In order to provide the reader with a sense of the type of Viet Cong terror activity during the past eight years typical examples have been selected from government files, newspaper morgues and International Control Commission reports. This list is in no way complete, but it does provide a representative picture of the kind of terrorist activity which the Viet Cong have engaged in during the 1960s:

**February 2, 1960** -- The Viet Cong sack and burn the Buddhist temple in Phuoc Trach Village, Go Dau Ha District, Tay Ninh Province. They stab to death 17-year-old Phan Van Ngoc who tries to stop them.

**April 22, 1960** -- Some 30 armed Viet Cong raid Thoi Long Hamlet, Thoi Binh Village, Thoi Binh District, An Xuyen Province. They attempt to take away villager Cao Van Hanh, 45. Villagers protest en masse, farmer Pham Van Bai, 56, is particularly vehement. The Viet Cong, angered, seize him. This arouses the villagers who swarm toward the Viet Cong and their prisoner. The Viet Cong fire into the crowd. A 16-year-old boy is shot dead.

**August 23, 1960** -- Two school teachers, Nguyen Khoa Ngon and Miss Nguyen Thi Thiet, are preparing lessons at home when Viet Cong arrive and force them at gun point to go to their school, Rau Ran, in Phong Dinh Province. There they find two men tied to the
school veranda. The Viet Cong read the death sentence of the
two men, named Canh and Van. They are murdered. The Viet
Cong stage the murder presumably to intimidate the school
teachers.

September 24, 1960 -- A band of armed Viet Cong burn a
school in An Lac Village, Tri Tan District, An Giang Province.
All that remains are four walls.

September 28, 1960 -- Father Hoang Ngoc Minh, much loved
priest of Kontum Parish is riding from Tan Canh to Kondela. A
Viet Cong road block halts his car. A bullet smashes into him.
The guerrillas drive bamboo spears into Father Minh's body.
A Viet Cong fires his sub-machine gun point-blank, killing him.
The driver Huynh Huu, his nephew, is seriously wounded.

September 30, 1960 -- A band of ten armed Viet Cong kidnap
farmer Truong Van Dang, 67, from Long An Hamlet, Long Tri
Village, Binh Phuoc District, Long An Province. They take him
before what they call a "people's tribunal." He is condemned
to death for purchasing two hectares of rice land and ignoring Viet
Cong orders to turn the land over to another farmer. After the
"trial" he is shot dead in his rice field.

December 6, 1960 -- The Viet Cong dynamite the kitchen at the
Saigon Golf Club, killing a Vietnamese kitchen helper and injuring
two Vietnamese cooks.

December 1960 -- The GVN reports to the ICC that during the year the Viet Cong had destroyed or damaged 284 bridges, burned 60 medical aid stations and, by destroying schools, deprived some 25,000 children of schooling.

March 22, 1961 -- A truck carrying 20 girls is dynamited on the Saigon-Vung Tau road. The girls are returning from Saigon where they have taken part in a Trung Sisters Day celebration. After the explosion the Viet Cong open fire on the passengers. Two of the girls are killed and ten wounded. The girls are unarmed and traveling without escort.

May 15, 1961 -- Twelve Catholic nuns from La Providence Order, are traveling on Highway One toward Saigon. Their bus is stopped by Viet Cong who ransack their luggage. Sister Theophile protests and is shot dead on the spot. The vehicle is sprayed with bullets seriously wounding Sister Phan Thi No. The ambush takes place at Tram Van Hamlet, Thanh Phuoc Village, Go Dau Ha District, Tay Ninh Province.

July 26, 1961 -- Two Vietnamese National Assemblymen, Rmah Pok and Yut Nic Bounrit, both Montagnards, are shot and killed by Viet Cong near Dalat. A school teacher traveling with them on their visit to a Montagnard resettlement village, is also killed.
September 20, 1961 -- One thousand main force Viet Cong soldiers storm the capital of Phuoc Thanh Province, sack and burn the government buildings, behead virtually the entire administrative staff. They hold the capital for 24 hours before withdrawing.

October 1961 -- A U. S. State Department study estimates that the Viet Cong are killing Vietnamese at the rate of 1500 per month.

December 13, 1961 -- Father Bonnet, a French parish priest from Konkala, Kontum, is killed by Viet Cong while he was visiting parishioners at Ngok Rongei.

December 20, 1961 -- S. Fukai, a Japanese engineer working on the Da Nhim dam, a Japanese government war reparations project to supply electric power to Vietnam, is kidnaped after being stopped at a Viet Cong road block. His fate is never learned.

January 1, 1962 -- A Vietnamese labor leader, Le Van Thieu, 63, is hacked to death by Viet Cong wielding machetes near Bien Hoa, in the rubber plantation on which he works.

January 2, 1962 -- Two Vietnamese technicians working in the government's anti-malaria program, Pham Van Hai and Nguyen Van Thach, are killed by Viet Cong with machetes, twelve miles south of Saigon.

February 20, 1962 -- Viet Cong throw four hand grenades into
a crowded village theater near Can Tho, killing 24 women and children. A total of 108 persons are killed or injured.

April 8, 1962 -- The Viet Cong murder two wounded American prisoners of war near the village of An Chau in Central Vietnam. Each, with hands tied, is shot in the face. They could not keep up with their retreating Viet Cong captors.

April 25, 1962 -- Two French civilians are shot and killed by Viet Cong while boating on the Saigon River just outside the city.

May 19, 1962 -- A Viet Cong grenade is hurled into the Aterbea restaurant in Saigon wounding a Berlin circus manager and the Cultural Attache from the German Embassy.

May 20, 1962 -- A bomb explodes in front of the Hung Dao Hotel, Saigon, a billet for American servicemen, injuring eight Vietnamese and three Americans who are in the street at the time.

June 12, 1962 -- The Viet Cong ambush a civilian passenger bus near Le Tri Hamlet in An Giang Province, killing all the passengers, the driver and the driver's helper, a total of five men and women.

October 20, 1962 -- A teen-age Viet Cong hurls a grenade into a holiday crowd in downtown Saigon killing six persons, including two children, and injuring 38 persons.

November 4, 1962 -- A Viet Cong hurls a grenade into an alley
in Can Tho killing one American serviceman and two Vietnamese children. A third Vietnamese child is seriously injured.

**January 25, 1963** -- Viet Cong dynamite a passenger-freight train near Qui Nhon killing eight passengers and injuring 15 others. The train is carrying only rice as freight.

**March 4, 1963** -- Two Protestant missionaries -- Elwood Forreston, an American, and Gaspart Makil, a Filipino, are shot at a road block between Saigon and Dalat. The Makil twin babies are shot and wounded.

**March 16, 1963** -- Viet Cong terrorists hurl a grenade into a home where an American family is having dinner, killing a French businessman and wounding four other persons, one of them a woman.

**April 3, 1963** -- Viet Cong terrorists throw two grenades into a private school near Long Xuyen, An Giang Province, killing a teacher and two other adults. Students are performing their annual variety show at the time.

**April 4, 1963** -- Viet Cong terrorists throw grenades into an audience attending an outdoor motion picture showing in Cao Lanh Village in the Mekong Delta, killing four persons and wounding 11.

**May 23, 1963** -- Viet Cong mine the main northern rail line killing five civilian passengers. Twelve other passengers and crew
are injured.

May 31, 1963 -- Two powerful explosions set off by terrorists on bicycles kill two Vietnamese and wound ten others in Saigon. Police believe the explosive detonated prematurely.

September 12, 1963 -- Miss Vo Thi Lo, 26, a school teacher in An Phuoc Village, Kien Hoa Province is found near the village with her throat cut. She had been kidnapped by the Viet Cong three days earlier.

October 16, 1963 -- Viet Cong terrorists explode mines under two civilian buses in Kien Hoa and Quang Tin Provinces, killing 18 Vietnamese and wounding 23.

October 26, 1963 -- The French Embassy in Saigon reports that four French planters were kidnapped and two others wounded in machine gun attacks on French rubber plantations east of Saigon.

November 9, 1963 -- Three grenades are thrown in Saigon, injuring a total of 16 persons including four children; the first is thrown in a main street; the second along the waterfront and the third in the Chinese residential area.

February 9, 1964 -- A bomb explodes in the Playboy Bar in Saigon killing four Vietnamese and injuring 35 Vietnamese and four Americans.

February 9, 1964 -- Two Americans are killed and 41 wounded
including four women, five children when a Viet Cong bomb is set off in a sports stadium during a softball game. A second portion of the bomb fails to explode. Officials estimate that had it detonated fifty persons would have died.

February 16, 1964 -- Three Americans are killed and 32 injured, most of them U.S. dependents, when the Viet Cong bomb the Kinh Do movie theater in Saigon.

February 21, 1964 -- The Saigon - DaNang train is derailed, with 11 persons killed and 18 seriously injured.

July 14, 1964 -- Pham Thao, chairman of the Catholic Action Committee in Quang Ngai is executed by Viet Cong when he returns to his native village of Pho Loi in Quang Ngai.

October 1964 -- U.S. officials in Saigon report that from January to October of 1964 the Viet Cong killed 429 local Vietnamese officials and kidnaped 482 others.

December 24, 1964 -- A Christmas Eve Viet Cong bomb explosion at the Brink officer billet kills two Americans and injures 50 Americans and 13 Vietnamese.

February 6, 1965 -- Radio Liberation announces that the Viet Cong have shot two American prisoners of war as reprisals against the Vietnamese government which had sentenced two Viet Cong terrorists to death.
February 10, 1965 -- Viet Cong terrorists blow up an enlisted men's barracks in Qui Nhon killing 23 Americans.

March 30, 1965 -- A Viet Cong bomb explodes outside the American Embassy in Saigon killing two Americans, 18 Vietnamese and injuring 100 Vietnamese and 45 Americans.

June 24, 1965 -- Radio Liberation announces the murder of an American prisoner as a reprisal.

June 25, 1965 -- Terrorists dynamite the My Canh restaurant in Saigon killing 27 Vietnamese, 12 Americans, two Filipinos, one Frenchman, one German; more than 80 persons are injured.

June 1965 -- Vietnamese officials report that Viet Cong assassinations and kidnappings of rural officials doubled in June over May and April. A total of 224 officials were either killed or kidnapped.

August 18, 1965 -- A Viet Cong bomb at the Saigon Police Directorate in Saigon kills six and wounds 15 Vietnamese.

October 4, 1965 -- One of two Viet Cong planted bombs explodes at the Cong Hoa National Sports Stadium killing eleven Vietnamese, including four children and wounding 42 other persons.

October 5, 1965 -- A Viet Cong bomb goes off, apparently prematurely, in a taxi on a main street in downtown Saigon killing two Vietnamese and wounding ten others, most of them Vietnamese.
December 4, 1965 -- A Viet Cong terrorist bomb kills eight persons when it explodes in front of a Saigon hotel converted to quarters for U.S. enlisted men, 157 are injured, including 72 Americans, three New Zealanders and 62 Vietnamese.

December 12, 1965 -- Two Viet Cong terrorist platoons kill 23 unarmed Vietnamese canal construction workers asleep in a Buddhist Pagoda in Tan Huong Village, Dinh Tuong Province, and wound seven others.

January 7, 1966 -- A Claymore mine explodes at Tan Son Nhut gate killing two persons and injuring 12.

January 17, 1966 -- Viet Cong in Kien Tuong detonate a mine under a highway bus, killing 26 Vietnamese civilians, seven of them children. Eight other persons are injured and three listed as missing.

January 18, 1966 -- Viet Cong mine a bus in Kien Tuong Province killing 26 civilians.

January 29, 1966 -- Viet Cong terrorists kill a Roman Catholic priest, Father Phan Khac Dau, 74, at Thanh Tri, Kien Tuong Province. Five other civilians, including a church officer, are also killed. The marauders desecrate the church and destroy its statuary and religious artifacts.

February 2, 1966 -- A Viet Cong squad ambush a jeep load
of Vietnamese Information Service personnel, killing six
and wounding one in Hau Nghia Province.

February 14, 1966 -- Two Viet Cong mines explode under
a bus and a three-wheeled taxi on a road near Tuy Hoa killing
48 farm laborers and injuring seven others.

February 14, 1966 -- Fifty-four Vietnamese civilians, including
four children, are killed and 18 wounded by three Viet Cong mines
buried in a road in Phu Yen Province.

Mining of the road was in retaliation for an Allied operation
guarding the harvesting of the rice crop. The area had had to
import 600 tons of rice monthly because the Viet Cong control
the major portion of the crop.

The first explosion, which left a three-meter crater in the
road and threw the large bus into a canal, killed 27 farmers
on their way to work near Tuy Hoa. Eleven others are injured.

A three-wheel bus, loaded with men, women, and children,
touches off the second mine which kills 20 and wounds seven.
Another three-wheel bus sets off the third mine, which kills
seven.

March 18, 1966 -- Fifteen Vietnamese civilians are killed
and four injured in the explosion of a homemade Viet Cong mine
on a country road eight kilometers west of Tuy Hoa, capital of
Phu Yen Province (380 kilometers or 240 miles northeast of Saigon).

Most of the victims were riding in a Lambretta tricycle which struck the mine. Others were on bicycles. The blast ripped the Lambretta apart, and twisted the bicycle frames.

Authorities said the mine was a pressure-detonated type made of bamboo and contained about 20 pounds of TNT. They added that the mine was probably used to terrorize villagers returning to their homes from refugee camps in the area.

April 7, 1966 -- Twenty-five prisoners of the Viet Cong -- mostly civilians and including three women -- all of them chained and padlocked -- are gunned by their communist captors just minutes before Vietnamese Government troops, accompanied by American advisors, arrive on the scene.

The victims had been prisoners of the Viet Cong for varying lengths of time -- some of them since September, 1965. The survivors told of being shuttled back and forth between two Viet Cong prisons and of months of ill treatment.

The Viet Cong were forcing the prisoners, all chained together, to march to a new site when they were spotted from the air. When friendly troops were closing in the Viet Cong apparently felt their escape was being hampered by their chained captives and according to the survivors they were told they could walk
away. After they had started to do so, the Viet Cong shot them from behind.

May 22, 1966 -- Viet Cong terrorists slaughter 18 men, a woman and four children late at night in attacking a compound of canal workers in the Mekong Delta Province of An Giang.

The defenseless families were shot in their beds.

The Viet Cong boasted that the cold-blooded action was deliberate murder for revenge. Survivors quoted them as saying they were retaliating because the 60 canal workers and other residents of An Giang Province had been supporting the Government of Vietnam by giving information about the Viet Cong.

"We are doing this now to teach you a lesson," one Viet Cong cadre was reported as saying, just before he pulled the trigger.

Most of the 23 victims were shot in the head. At least 12 others in the compound were wounded. The slayings occurred in Vinh Han Village, 160 kilometers west-southwest of Saigon.

October 11, 1966 -- Acting upon information from a 14-year-old boy, a unit of the U.S. First Air Cavalry uncovers a Viet Cong prison complex with bodies of 12 Vietnamese who were machine-gunned and grenaded by their fleeing guards.

The Vietnamese youth, one of five to escape the slaughter,
said he had been held prisoner by the Viet Cong with 16 other Vietnamese and two North Vietnamese soldiers in a prison complex hidden under woven jungle vines 33 miles north-northwest of Qui Nhon, capital of Binh Dinh Province.

The boy told how the Viet Cong guards threw grenades and shot into the prisoners after they had been herded into a rock crevice. Luckily the boy escaped death when he happened to fall under the bodies of the slain prisoners. Two prisoners were not found.

A 24-year-old former Viet Cong medic, who had also survived the slaughter, led the American Cavalry unit to the camp, where they found the 12 dead Vietnamese prisoners.

October 24, 1966 -- The Hue-Quang Tri bus runs over a Viet Cong mine in Phong Dien District, Thua Thien Province; 15 passengers are injured.

October 22, 1966 -- A village Youth Commissioner in Binh Chanh District of Gia Dinh Province is shot and killed by a Viet Cong sapper team while asleep in his home.

October 27, 1966 -- A grenade is thrown into a home in Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province, killing a 63-year-old male civilian and a nine-month-old male child; seven other persons, including six females, are wounded.
October 28, 1966 -- An alert policeman arrests a female Viet Cong agent who is about to place a time-bomb under the reviewing stand at a Cambodian festival in Soc Trang, Ba Xuyen Province.

November 1, 1966 -- The Viet Cong kill the son of a Hamlet Chief in Hoa Vang District of Quang Nam Province.

November 2, 1966 -- A grenade is thrown by a terrorist at the front gate of the Phu Tho racetrack in Saigon, located in the 5th Precinct.

Approximately 3,000 Revolutionary Development Cadres were billeted in the racetrack at this time. Two ARVN soldiers were killed in the explosion and eight other persons were wounded. Among the wounded were two children and a Saigon policeman. The terrorist escaped.

November 2, 1966 -- A squad of armed Viet Cong guerrillas ambush a Hamlet in Chau Thanh District; Phong Dinh Province.

The Viet Cong fired machine guns and then withdrew, after having placed a 10 kilogram mine which detonated, destroying one-third of a steel bridge at the Dau Sau Canal and wounding one old woman and two children.

November 4, 1966 -- The Viet Cong launch a mortar attack against Binh Long Hamlet and Trang Lon Airport in Phuoc Ninh District of Tay Ninh Province; 16 civilians are wounded and two are killed.
November 4, 1966 -- The Viet Cong attack a settlement in Darlac Province, wounding two civilians and burning 22 houses.

November 4, 1966 -- The Viet Cong mortar Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province, killing one civilian and wounding eight others.

November 4, 1966 -- The Viet Cong attack Suoi Cao Regional Force (RF) outpost in Khiem Hanh District of Tay Ninh Province; two Revolutionary Development Cadres are wounded and six civilians are killed.

November 5, 1966 -- A Hamlet Chief is shot and killed, one Deputy Hamlet Chief is wounded and two other GVN employees are kidnapped by terrorists at a New Life Hamlet in Phuoc Ninh District of Tay Ninh Province.

November 7, 1966 -- One Viet Cong squad on Provincial Road 8 in Kien Duc District, Quang Duc Province, abducts a Hamlet Chief and Deputy Chief for having transported an official letter to the Kien Duc District Police Headquarters.

November 8, 1966 -- A Viet Cong terrorist tosses a grenade into a house occupied by a Hamlet Chief in Go Cap District; the occupant is seriously wounded in the explosion.

November 8, 1966 -- In Chau Doc Province, a 53-year-old woman is tortured and shot to death by the Viet Cong in Tinh Bien District.

A note pinned to her body declared that she was a traitor working
for the GVN.

November 9, 1966 -- Three Viet Cong terrorists ambush a Village Administrative Committeeman in Binh Chanh District of Gia Dinh Province.

November 11, 1966 -- The Viet Cong fire 25 rounds of 81 mm mortar at a community in Kien Giang Province, three civilians are killed and 40 are wounded.

November 15, 1966 -- A Viet Cong platoon infiltrate Phu Hai Hamlet in Hoa Da District, they smash and burn furniture in the Hamlet office, burn down a guardpost, disseminate propaganda leaflets and then depart, taking with them an alleged civilian sympathizer.

November 16, 1966 -- A terrorist parks a plastic-laden bicycle on Nguyen Van Thoai Street in Saigon; the device explodes and two ARVN soldiers and a Vietnamese civilian are wounded.

November 16, 1966 -- The Hamlet Chief of Hai Xuan, Binh Phuoc District, Long An Province, is assassinated by Viet Cong with carbine fire while he is returning to the Hamlet on foot.

November 19, 1966 -- The Viet Cong drop eight mortar rounds on Can Giuoc, Long An Province. Two children are killed and 12 civilians are wounded during this attack. At approximately the same time, 20 mortar rounds are dopped on Can Duoc, one
policeman, four civilians were wounded.

**November 20, 1966** -- Two policemen are wounded when they attempted to move several Viet Cong banners which are booby trapped.

**November 25, 1966** -- Three Viet Cong dressed in ARVN uniforms shoot and kill a policeman guarding a bridge in Soc Trang, Ba Xuyen Province. While escaping the terrorists threw two grenades, wound seven civilians and two soldiers.

**November 26, 1966** -- A Claymore-type mine is set off by the Viet Cong in the playground of the Trinh Hoai Duc Boys' School in An Thanh Village, Binh Duong Province. Korean troops are using the area as a judo training site. Three Koreans are killed and one Vietnamese student wounded.

**November 27, 1966** -- A squad of Viet Cong enter a Hamlet in Thanh An District, Pleiku Province, and abduct the Hamlet Chief and two Montagnards.

**November 30, 1966** -- The Viet Cong shell the Tan Uyen market area in Bien Hoa Province, killing three civilians and wounding seven others.

**December 4, 1966** -- A Village Chief in Gia Dinh Province is abducted from his home in Phu Lam by four unidentified men and killed with seven shots in the chest.
December 5, 1966 -- In Nam Hoa District, Thua Thien Province, the mother of a Hamlet Chief is shot by the Viet Cong.

December 5, 1966 -- A woman civilian is wounded by a Viet Cong mine in Kien Phong Province; another civilian is seriously hurt when the Viet Cong throw a hand grenade into a restaurant in Kien Hoa Province.

December 6, 1966 -- In Tuy Phuoc District, Binh Dinh Province, a former Village Chief and his wife are killed by the Viet Cong.

December 7, 1966 -- In the heart of Saigon, Deputy Tran Van Van of the National Constituent Assembly, Government of South Vietnam, is assassinated by the Viet Cong.

Van was going from his home to the Assembly building in his automobile when, at the intersection of Phan Dinh Phung and Phan Ke Binh Streets, the car is suddenly blocked by two men riding a Honda motor-bike. One dismounts and, at point blank range, mortally wounds Deputy Van who died on the way to the hospital.

December 10, 1966 -- A terrorist throws a grenade into the Chieu Hoi district playground in Binh Duong City.

Three young civilians were seriously hurt.

December 10, 1966 -- A tri-Lambretta taxi traveling along
National Highway #29 in Phong Dinh Province, is mined by the Viet Cong. Five of the passengers, all women, are killed and the driver is badly wounded.


December 13, 1966: While more than 100 Revolutionary Development Cadre are attending a course at the Ca Mau School, An Xuyen Province, a mine explodes in the classroom, killing three and wounding nine.

December 14, 1966 -- The Viet Cong mine and destroy 95% of the My Long School.

In the ensuing confusion, they kidnap three civilians.

December 18, 1966 -- In Binh Dinh Province, four Viet Cong infiltrate a Hamlet in Phu My District, and assassinate three women accused of being informants for the Government of Vietnam.

December 20, 1966 -- A Viet Cong platoon infiltrates a Hamlet in Quang Tin Province, kidnap a hoi chanh (a returnee under the Chieu Hoi Program), carry him to another Hamlet of the village and summarily shoot him as an example.

December 27, 1966 -- An assassination attempt is made on another National Constituent Assemblyman, Dr. Phan Quang Dan.

Dr. Dan narrowly escaped death when his car exploded near Gia
Dinh Province Headquarters. The explosion was attributed to a Viet Cong plastic mine which had been planted beneath the vehicle and detonated as Dr. Dan opened the front door of the car. Although he suffered only minor leg wounds, a female passerby was killed and five other civilians wounded.

December 30, 1966 -- In Lac Duong District an undetermined number of Viet Cong infiltrate Thas Phien Hamlet and shoot to death a former Hamlet Chief.

January 4, 1967 -- In the village of An Hoa, Bien Hoa Province, the Viet Cong shoot to death a Hamlet Chief.

January 6, 1967 -- A National Police Constable assigned to Vinh Binh Provincial Police Headquarters is visiting his family in Tan Chu Hamlet, Cao Lanh District, Dien Phong Province, when a squad of Viet Cong enter the Hamlet, forcibly remove the Constable from his house and then shoot him while members of his family are forced to look on.

January 7, 1967 -- A Viet Cong detonated mine destroys a school and health station in Hong Ngu District, Kien Phong Province.

January 8, 1967 -- In An Xuyen Province the Viet Cong throw a grenade into the house of a Hamlet Chief in Tai Van District, kill one of his children and injured three other civilians.
January 9, 1967 -- The house of the Tan Thanh Village Chief, Kien Phong Province, is destroyed by a Viet Cong mine. In the explosion, one of the village civilians is badly wounded.

January 10, 1967 -- A Viet Cong platoon forces its way into the Ly Tra Refugee Camp in Quang Tin Province and shoot to death two of the refugees.

January 12, 1967 -- Three civilians are killed and three ARVN soldiers are wounded when the Viet Cong ambush a civilian truck traveling on National Highway 14, two kilometers south of Tan Canh Village, Kontum Province.

January 15, 1967 -- In Thanh Tho Hamlet, Tam Ky District, the Viet Cong summarily shoot a merchant because he refuses to give them two of his oxen.

January 17, 1967 -- In the Hamlet of An Chanh, Binh Khe District, Binh Dinh Province, the Viet Cong shoot to death the Hamlet Chief and afterwards burn his house.

January 21, 1967 -- An estimated platoon of Viet Cong forces its way into a Hamlet in Buon Ho, Darlac Province, gathers the people together for a propaganda lecture and then kidnaps six of the young men.

January 22, 1967 -- A group of Viet Cong enters a Hamlet of
Hoai An District, Binh Dinh Province, and assassinates the Chief.

**February 1, 1967** -- One squad of Viet Cong fire sub-machine guns and automatic rifles at the 7th Precinct Headquarters in Saigon; the Viet Cong also fired 10 mortar rounds at the installation but these did not reach the target. Seven civilians are wounded, including three children.

**February 6, 1967** -- The Viet Cong came into Lieu Tri Hamlet, Binh Nguyen Village, Thang Binh District of Quang Tin Province and abduct a school teacher and an Inter-Family Chief. The school teacher is killed.

**February 6, 1967** -- A grenade is thrown onto the porch of the building where the Kontum Deputy Province Chief is giving a party for about 30 Vietnamese officials. The Chief of Education is killed instantly; the Chief of Montagnard Affairs and the Chief of the Political Detention Camp die of wounds the next day.

Eight others are seriously wounded.
Harassing villages has probably been the most common form of terror used by the Viet Cong. The most common form of harassment has been small arms fire. It seldom receives much attention in the press or in official reporting because of its apparent inconsequential results. Pro-GVN hamlets serve as primary targets. Periodically guerrillas will approach a village and fire into it a half a dozen random rifle shots. This alerts the defenders who can never be sure that a full scale attack is not underway. Word is radioed to the nearby military headquarters whose commander is then obliged to decide whether the action is harassing fire or an attack, and if an attack, whether an ambush is its real purpose or whether it is a feint designed to draw his unit away from the scene of an actual attack elsewhere. Any guess he makes is apt to be the wrong one. The correct military decision, usually, is for the moment to do nothing and await developments. This causes villagers to doubt that the unit will aid the village if it actually is attacked. This increases the anxiety in the village, precisely as the Viet Cong hoped it would, and adds to the sense of insecurity which villagers naturally feel when a rifle bullet whizzes by them.
The harassing fire often continues sporadically for weeks, generally accompanied by nocturnal megaphone taunts, threats, and appeals; sometimes after a few weeks of softening up, a full scale attack is launched. Harassing fire is cheap and can be done by even inexperienced guerrillas. It creates a great sense of anxiety within the village, keeps villagers awake at night, impairing their farming and normal daytime activities. And it builds confidence within guerrillas ranks.

Psychological objectives dominate Viet Cong sabotage and subversion efforts. In the early years the guerrillas were under strict orders not to destroy or interfere with permanent fixed economic installations such as power stations or port facilities. But beginning in 1965 these became targets of sabotage efforts.

In the cities there has been no end to the ingenuity employed in terroristic sabotage. The grenade is the most common instrument, often rolled into a cafe by a young boy who escapes on a bicycle. Sometimes the bicycle itself is the instrument of death. Its hollow tubular frame is packed with plastic explosive and a timing device is located under the saddle. Terrorists ride the bicycle into the area, lean it against the building to be destroyed, set the fuse, and walk off. Two such explosive devices were employed in
Saigon in May 1963, using a motor bicycle and a motorcycle to blow huge holes in the side of a U.S. military warehouse. The Brink officer's billet in Saigon was dynamited by an explosive-packed vehicle which had been driven into the parking lot on Christmas Eve, 1964. The Pershing Sports Field explosion in Saigon was caused by explosives packed into a length of soil pipe under the grandstand with a calendar watch detonator. The Kinh Do Theater explosion in Saigon was the work of Viet Cong terrorists who shot their way into the lobby carrying a pail of explosive, set it down, and dashed out.

Grenades lobbed into vehicles stopped for traffic lights; poison injected into bottles of wine with hypodermic needles; poisoned darts; doors, drawers, or automobile engines booby-trapped—all are used. Often merely the threat of violence is enough. In November 1964, a young Vietnamese girl typist in a U.S. aid program office in Saigon was caught with program plans in her purse. She told security officials a man came to her apartment and told her that unless she stole the documents, her family, living in rural Quang Tri Province, would be harmed.

Sometimes Viet Cong actions are inexplicable. Visitors to An Lac Village in An Giang Province in late 1960 were shown an example of sabotage that had taken place the night before: Viet
Cong had entered the village school, piled all the benches and tables together and set fire to them. Only the four bare walls remained. The villagers, and the teacher, maintained they had no idea why it was done.

A sense of the Viet Cong approach to sabotage can be gained from this criticism report by the Chau Phu District NLF Committee to the Chau Doc Province NLF Central Committee, dated October 25, 1965 on sabotage efforts from September 15 to October 15, 1965:

"The sabotage of the enemy's communication axis was not regular nor well coordinated. Sabotage activities in enemy hamlets this month was very weak. Only seven or eight out of 73 hamlets in the province were destroyed, all in Chau Thanh, Can Long and Can Ngang areas and these were not destroyed totally. After destructions we usually withdrew without enlisting personnel or motivating the people to destroy their own hamlets...

"During the month continuous sabotage activities were conducted.... The result was that 85 road cuts were made and a total of 396 meters of macadam road removed...183 mounds were built on macadam roads...341 meters of cuts made on dirt roads, 150 obstacles erected on dirt roads, 28 mounds built on dirt roads, a concrete bridge severely damaged and ten wooden bridges destroyed..."
"In the hamlets...we destroyed ten kilometers of bamboo fence, 1250 meters of barbed wire, 220 meters of ramparts, three gates...burned two administration buildings, two information halls, and seized 73 meters of telephone wire..."

It is violence against the individual villager, in his own village -- an assassination, execution or kidnaping -- that strikes home hardest. Turgid accounts of the "struggle movement" led by the Viet Cong or endless claims of military victories by agitprop teams mean little to the peasant. But when death strikes in his village, against someone he knows, a scar of fear is formed on his mind.

The individual targets of Viet Cong terrorism are Vietnamese government officials, social or natural leaders in the villages and Americans, in that order.

A US survey of terror against GVN officials in the January to October 1964 period indicated that in almost every case the 429 village and hamlet officials assassinated and the 1482 officials kidnaped were people native to the village in which they served and were not Saigon appointees coming in from the outside. Civil servants, village officials, civilians holding some form of authority -- these are the chief targets of the Viet Cong. The assassination pattern appears to be directed toward the very best and the very worst officials, against
the highly popular and effective government civil servant and against the most corrupt and oppressive local official. Such a policy obviously stimulates mediocrity among civil servants.

A document captured in Zone D in January 1966, apparently written about a month earlier, explained in some detail the secondary purposes of this kind of terror:

"During the month... (we) attacked policemen who were searching people in the streets (of Saigon) and also attacked police station. The... National Police Headquarters was attacked by our Liberation Army. These attacks caused confusion in the enemy ranks and aroused enthusiasm among the people...

"Enemy officials dare not oppose us. Policemen dare not stay in slums at night. Those guarding remote areas (of the city) are withdrawn... Policemen enter the slums now only in groups...

"Targets: In addition to attacks launched against personnel in the enemy's lowest echelons we must deal heavy blows against high ranking enemy personnel. Only blows like the attack on the... National Police Headquarters and on Americans can have the proper repercussions, hurt enemy prestige and exert sufficient pressure on the low echelon personnel. Therefore our attacks must be essentially aimed at wicked enemy ringleaders..."
The second major target is the natural village leaders, those individuals who do not hold office but who, because of age, sagacity or strength of character, are the ones to whom people turn for advice and look to for leadership. They may be religious figures, school teachers or simply people of integrity and honor. Because they are superior individuals these people are more likely to have the courage to stand up to the Viet Cong when they come to their villages and thus most likely to be the first victims of Viet Cong terror. Potential opposition leadership is the Viet Cong's most deadly enemy. Steadily, quietly and with a systematic ruthlessness, the Viet Cong in six years have wiped out virtually a whole class of Vietnamese villagers. Many villages today are virtually depopulated of their natural leaders. Natural leaders are perhaps the single most important element in any society. They represent a human resource of incalculable value. This loss to Vietnam is inestimable and it will take a generation or more to replace. By any definition, this is genocide.

Captured Viet Cong documents outline this process in clear and coldblooded terms. The Zone D document cited above declared:

"The plan for eliminating tyrants must be very carefully worked out. Investigation of those to be eliminated must be meticulously
conducted. Leaflets must be disseminated to make the people clearly understand the crimes of the tyrants to be executed and our motives in executing them and to warn other tyrants. The plan for eliminating tyrants must be very detailed so that our personnel can withdraw safely after accomplishing their mission...

"Then take advantage of the deaths of tyrants to terrorize the enemy generally and cause the lowest echelons of his organization to disintegrate..."

The Viet Cong attempt to place an aura of legalism around their assassinations. A kangaroo court meets and the villager, not present, is condemned to death. His death warrant is sent him through the mails or left at his front gate. It declares that he has been "tried" and has been "found guilty" and is to be "punished," which always means execution "in accordance with the instructions of the people's court." Then the villager is assassinated.

Such activity is freely recounted in Viet Cong mass media, where it takes on a moralistic tone. A typical assassination, told in typical communist terms, was described by Australian communist Wilfred Burchett, quoting a broadcast by Radio Hanoi (July 2, 1964):

"In Mo Duc District, Quang Ngai Province, was one Chau, a main
Diemist agent responsible for the deaths of hundreds of former resistance members. We sent a group of guerrillas disguised as Diemist officers to his house on the night of May 18, 1960. Our men persuaded him that the next day was President Hồ Chí Minh's birthday and that the Viet Cong would certainly make trouble, so action must be taken that very night... Eventually he agreed and we set out with some of his agents. About one kilometer from his house he was executed and his agents arrested..."

The guerrilla interviewed by Burchett added: "In each village... we compiled a detailed dossier of the various local despots. If someone merited the death penalty we sent a group to deal with him. Afterwards we used loudhailers to explain the crimes committed... we posted names of other tyrants who would be dealt with if they did not cease their activities... the executions... and the warnings... played a major role in breaking the grip of the enemy throughout the country... and created conditions under which we could move back into the villages, either permanently or on organizational visits..."

A typical example of Viet Cong terror against an individual involves Dang Van Gung, Editor-in-Chief, and Tu Chung, Editor of Chinh Luan (Political Discussions), one of the most respected Saigon newspapers. They are the Vietnamese natural leaders whom the Viet Cong seek to silence.

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Chinh Luan is an anti-communist newspaper. But it does not hesitate to criticize the Government of Vietnam or the United States, and has done so when it disagreed with GVN or US policies. Dr. Sung has said of his newspaper: "Our main object is to inform. The second is to provide enlightened opinion. I want to give my readers a digest of everything about Vietnam both here and abroad with no false news. I want to help my people bury the past, to give an impact for new political organizations, to stand on the people's side vis a vis the government -- to tell the people what the government is thinking and tell the government what the people are thinking."

In this task he succeeded. He and Tu Chung also succeeded in being placed on the Viet Cong assassination list. In June of 1965 a warning letter arrived at the Chinh Luan offices accusing Dr. Sung, Tu Chung and the paper of "serving American bosses" and threatening the pair with assassination. It was signed by Vo Cong Minh, "Commander of Detachment 628, Liberation Armed Forces of Saigon-Gia Dinh area." The letter was turned over to the police.

The in mid-December the Viet Cong sent their "last warning" to Dr. Sung and Tu Chung. It said that the Viet Cong planned to dispose of the two "scabby sheep."
Dr. Sung and Tu Chung published the Viet Cong letter and also replied to it, declaring that the paper sought to serve only one master, truth, and that proof it had done so could be found in the fact that it had been criticized by all. But only the communists, declared the editorial, go beyond criticism to threaten terror and death. It declared that, while the paper could fight the communists ideologically or politically, it of course had no defense against terror. It concluded: "We love the life that God has breathed into our bodies, as all men love life. But we will look straight into the gun barrel held by the murderer who comes against us and will say: You can kill us but our spirit will live on."

On December 30, Viet Cong terrorists fired four bullets into Editor Tu Chung as he stepped from his car in front of his home, killing him instantly. The two terrorists escaped on a motorbike.