4. DOCTRINE AND TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Viet Cong have five reasons for employing terror:

1. Morale building within the Viet Cong ranks. A successful terrorist act does much to create an aura of invulnerability within a guerrilla band and helps bolster spirits throughout the insurgent organization. The Zone D document cited earlier declared, for example, that terrorist acts in Saigon had "aroused enthusiasm among the people." Radio Liberation, after a terrorist act in Saigon, was quick to take credit for it in the name of the NLF, usually in boastful terms. Obviously the broadcasts were aimed as much at the faithful as at the enemy.

2. Advertising the Viet Cong movement. Kropotkin called terror, "the propaganda of the deed." Undoubtedly there is no cheaper nor easier way for an insurgent band or dissident group to single itself out from other opposition than by use of terror. In the early period Viet Cong terror acts quite obviously had advertising the movement as one of its objectives. For example a civilian might be shot down in a market place after which his killer would remain on the scene long enough to pin a note to his shirt even though it increased his chances of apprehension. The

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leadership wanted no ambiguity, no unexplained killings. In some cases it would go so far as to issue leaflets denying the killing of individuals, asserting that they were killed by bandits. But of course this sort of activity cuts both ways -- it advertises but it also horrifies, especially abroad. Thus on January 12, 1966, Yugoslavia, the United Arab Republic and Algeria jointly urged North Vietnam and the NLF to cease their terror activities, quite obviously because terror was hurting the North Vietnamese and NLF image in their countries. Apparently there was never any reply to this appeal.

3. Disorientation and psychological isolation of the individual. This is done by destroying the structure of authority which previously was a source of security. The particular target is the Vietnamese villager. The response which the Viet Cong seek by using terror is fright, anxiety and despair. Terror removes the underpinnings of the orderly system in which the villager lives out his life. It disorients the villager by demonstrating to him that his government cannot give him the safety and order he normally expects from it.

On a much deeper level, the Viet Cong seek to isolate the villager from his social context. Terror isolates. A villager can no longer draw strength from customary social supports. He can rely only on himself. He may be physically undisturbed but he is terribly
alone in his anguish. Villagers then become impotent and of no threat to the Viet Cong.

4. **Elimination of opposing forces.** This of course is the chief utility of Viet Cong terror. By means of terror the Viet Cong have sought to eliminate the entire leader class of Vietnamese villagers. Terror is also used to immobilize the GVN officials remaining between the Viet Cong and their domination of the rural area. For this reason there has been relatively little terrorism in Saigon and virtually none directed at top level governmental officials.

5. **Provocation of the GVN.** In the early years Viet Cong terror acts were committed with the express purpose of provoking reprisals, but the practice was not as widespread as in other insurgencies. Any government faced with terrorism must attempt to suppress the terrorists. Ideally, that suppression is by an orthodox use of law enforcement. But if the terrorist is effective and if the government sees itself in a crisis, it will almost inevitably use extra-ordinary repressive measures.

The Viet Cong has before it the Viet Minh experience. It saw the provoking of suppressive or enforcement terror as a holding action pending the buildup of Viet Minh strength among rural Vietnamese. As the Viet Minh's strength increased its use of
This form of terror diminished. Its use of disruptive terror, as pointed out by Brian Crozier in his book, *The Rebels*, was to make repression by the French so costly that the French government would prefer to withdraw rather than to continue the struggle.

In general, the experiences of the Viet Minh did not particularly recommend wide use of disruptive terror.

The Viet Cong leadership has experienced at least one major failure in the use of terror. This came in the Highlands in the summer of 1962 and involved the Montagnards. After years of patiently cultivating the Montagnards, the Viet Cong leadership apparently came to the conclusion that the policy had not paid off and that a harder line was in order. It was true that despite concentrated efforts, the Montagnards remained hostile to the Viet Cong. The GVN's resources control program in the Highlands (where it is possible to starve to death) and the organizational work among the Montagnards, chiefly by the American Special Forces teams, combined to create an inhospitable climate in the Highlands for Viet Cong Cadres. When food became short, these Cadres under the new policy did not hesitate to take the food of the Montagnard and allow him to go hungry. This Viet Cong program was designed to coerce them into supporting, feeding, and generally assisting the
guerrilla bands operating in the mountains. The Montagnards' response to this was traditional: The people of a whole village would vanish in a single night and go as refugees to a GVN military or civilian center. Total Montagnard exodus may have reached as high as 300,000 persons, more than a third of the total Montagnard population in South Vietnam. Eventually most of these people were relocated and a number of them were recruited into anti-guerrilla Civilian Irregular Defense Groups.

Beginning in February 1964, the NLF began a terror campaign against Americans in Vietnam. It probably did build morale among the terrorists; the bombing of the American Embassy on March 30, 1965, most certainly was for morale building purposes. The killing of American civilians obviously advertised the Viet Cong in the United States. The terror also served to disorient Americans in Vietnam and create within them a sense of psychological isolation. Terror, however, was not used to the extent it might have been in eliminating American opposition. The American death rate, for example, could have been much higher in the 1960-1965 period than it was. The initial burst of intensified violence in February and March of 1964 stopped almost as suddenly as it began. Within a ten day period there were about two dozen major and minor terror attacks on Americans but the campaign suddenly ceased for reasons that were never clear.
By studying captured Viet Cong documents and questioning Viet Cong prisoners it is possible to assemble a fairly complete statement of the Viet Cong doctrinal approach to terror. Viet Cong Cadres consider the proper use of terror as terror applied judiciously, selectively, and sparingly. They have found that terror, turned on and off, paradoxically produces both pro- and anti-guerrilla feelings among villagers. On the one hand, of course, it engenders fear and hatred, with the first usually predominating over the second. But when relaxed after an area-wide terror campaign, an exaggerated sense of relief spreads through the villagers and villagers tend to regard the guerrillas as being not nearly as inhumane as they are capable of being.

Terror, the Viet Cong hold, is virtually useless against a dedicated opponent. In general, Viet Cong theoreticians consider terror to be the weapon and hold that as guerrilla control increases is should be used less. They hold that from terror a guerrilla band gets rapid but quickly diminishing returns. And to judge from their terror acts, they believe that terror works better on friends than on enemies. They believe that terror is most effective when the general population is sympathetic to the cause and least effective when it is against it.
A Top Secret Viet Cong document, captured on February 6, 1967, reveals again the stress placed on the need for meticulous care in planning for terror. Excerpts from the translation follow:

"After a few years of operation, the Urban Sapper Movement has demonstrated a number of deficiencies in the following main areas:

Direction of activity.

Organization and preparations for combat (i.e. terror, ed.)

Technique, tactics, and equipment...

There exist significant targets which have not yet been attacked, namely: Division Tactical Area and Corps Tactical Zone Headquarters, high-level military schools, middle and high-level administrative schools.

We still have not been able to blow up a single major bridge that equals in size the bridges of Bon Luc, Da Nang, Phu Lang Thuong (which we destroyed) in the course of the nine years anti-French resistance.

There has been a lack of emphasis on continuing guerrilla-type attacks on minor and/or isolated targets and local tyrants, Chieu Hoi and Rural Pacification Teams. These targets can be engaged by village, district and local guerrillas. These small unit actions, added up together every month, will constitute a major factor
in boosting the local (revolutionary) movement and main force operations.

We have not embodied the spirit of "positively and courageously" conducting deep thrusts (into enemy lines).

To date, hundreds of enemy bases and rear area installations remain unattacked. A number of cities, such as Hue, Dalat, etc., scores of province capitals, district seats, strategic hamlets, and arteries of communication remain safe or relatively safe to the enemy.

In some places, on account of the concept of "long term agents", our agents, inserted among the population for civilian proselyting, dared not engage actively in the armed struggle for fear that, in so doing, the enemy might take countermeasures which would eventually hamper the movement.

Absence of guiding plans made it impossible to concentrate on the most important targets which had a bearing on the concept of operations.

For instance, when reconnoitering in the cities, we should place emphasis on selecting the enemy's shortcomings which can be exploited, the avenues of approach, and emplacements (for laying demolitions, directional mines, etc...).
Minor points which are closely connected with the attack procedures cannot be overlooked. For instance, during the bombing attack on the Brink BOQ, Comrade No. 1 lost his composure and became confused from the very start when he could not locate the receptionist (this was due to inaccurate reports).

During the attack on the US Embassy, we failed to assess the situation and the enemy who was posted along our avenue of withdrawal. After the demolition charges had been set off, all attention was focused on the direction of the explosion, and we were conspicuously noticed. This was the reason why Comrade Le Van H was chased, shot in the abdomen and captured.

Little attention was paid to the enemy after the attack had been conducted.

Generally speaking, when conducting attacks in urban areas, we hold the view that after the explosion has been set off our mission is accomplished and we withdraw.

Selection of enemy and puppet targets located in urban areas and rear areas (is considered important).
Little emphasis has been placed on eliminating enemy high-ranking officials, rural pacification tyrants, defectors and traitors who sycophantically and actively offer their services to their American masters.

For a long time in Saigon, we concentrated on attacking Americans while overlooking the (GVN) police and security agents (the latter are tracking down our agents) and the reactionary ringleaders (reactionary parties, disguised religious groups, spies, etc... ) who carry on their activities unpunished. If we destroy the Americans, they are capable of bringing in replacements; but if we succeed in destroying the (GVN) supressive government machinery, pacification apparatus, local tyrants, and reactionary ringleaders, we will have accomplished splendid achievements in favor of the revolution.

The US imperialists will have a difficult time finding replacements for the experienced "old foxes" who have serviced the Americans for years and who are familiar with the local situation.

Since we do not attack the security and police agents, many families have greased the palms of the authorities so their children could be recruited into security and police activities in order to dodge military service...
In the attack on the USS CARD, we did not anticipate its earlier-than-scheduled arrival. As a result, we were confused and could not sink it prior to the unloading of the cargo.

In the attack on the US Embassy, we failed to take into consideration the possibility of additional security and police reinforcement after the day Comrade Tran Van Dang, riding a Vespa scooter carrying 30 kilograms of TNT, was arrested on his way to the Embassy.

Upon entering the area of operation during the My Canh battle (25 June 1965), seeing that the enemy had increased his defense and dispatched tanks to Block 4, a number of cell members became confused and wanted to withdraw.

The lack of elaborate coordination, failure to memorize the passwords caused the enemy to uncover comrade Dien Ngoc's plan to motivate the local inhabitants to destroy strategic hamlets. As a result Comrade A was caught in the encirclement. After this action, only three of the 10-man unit survived...

The first attack on the My Canh Restaurant, supposed to be conducted on 25 May 1967, was delayed because the timing device of the mine was damaged in a rehearsal.

The mine in the Australian Embassy failed to go off at 2130 hours on 24 August 1964 at the moment when it had a full muster of personnel. According to the report of MR4 the timing device (watch) stopped after
a few minutes. The sapper concerned might have forgotten to wind it...

Recapitulation of activities, dissemination of information and learning from past experience are not done in time. As a result, the enemy is given sufficient time to take countermeasures and cause us losses.

Our cadre fail to fully understand combat tactics and techniques.

The main mission of sappers is to attack different types of targets in urban and rural areas, on land and in water both day and night. The targets on land and in water are numerous and quite different. No cadre knows all types of targets. Usually they know one or two types only. Without a good knowledge of targets, the cadre cannot successfully train sappers. Usually they know one or two types only. Without a good knowledge of targets, the cadre cannot successfully train sappers.

Sometimes we need an explosion to create commotion to facilitate our withdrawal. If the weapons fail to function properly and our comrades are detected by the enemy, escape from the spot is very difficult.

In the attack on the Brink, the bomb exploded 10 minutes before the set time (shortly after the explosion, the cars of Bob
Hope's entertainment group arrived. If the bomb exploded at the scheduled time, it might have killed an additional number of guests who came to see the entertainment.

The bomb planted at the Pershing Field exploded five minutes late.

We must ensure that the bombs explode right at the scheduled time, since many types of targets require accurate timing.

We have lacked appropriate equipment for operating in the enemy's rear in the capital, such as, smoke grenades, poisons, and weapons equipped with silencers for assassinations.

To facilitate a daylight withdrawal in the capital, it is desirable to use shaped-charge grenades as fragmentation grenades which sometimes kill friendly civilians. Capital action cells need in addition, smoke grenades, and tear-gas grenades...

The use of incendary grenades and something like a flame thrower against certain types of targets may prove practical and successful. But efforts have not been made to study the use of these weapons. In the capital, there are sufficient materials to manufacture flame throwers (gasoline, rubber, chemical products)....
6. WE BOMB THE KINH-DO THEATER

The following is a translation of a captured Viet Cong report on the bombing of the Kinh Do Theater in Saigon, February 16, 1964. It was apparently written for training and indoctrination use. It provides a graphic and accurate picture of the world of the Viet Cong terrorist.

**Purpose and Significance.** After studying the Party Central Committee Resolution of November 11, (1963) the (Interzone) Party Committee decided to deal a heavy blow to the enemy in the capital city. We sought to begin the year with a spectacular achievement that would have an intense political impact. . . . We also sought to widen the rift in the enemy ranks, which is already marked by mutual suspicion and distrust as a result of repeated coups and counter coups. And we sought to strengthen and enhance the combat spirit of our forces and improve their tactical and technical knowledge.

After careful consideration of three proposed targets we selected the Kinh Do Theater. Reasons: at this theater gather large numbers of important persons such as general and field grade officers. In attacking this target we will destroy a great amount of the enemy potential. This target is in the center of the city, near the Presidential Palace. Attacking it will
create a strong impression at home and abroad and will greatly affect the morale of the Americans, both in Vietnam and in the United States.

**Preliminary Preparations.** Le Van Duyet Street runs past the Theater. On the left is Bui Thi Xuan Street and on the right, Ngo Tung Chau Street. Bui Thi Xuan and Ngo Tung Chau Streets intersect behind the Theater. Traffic is heavy on these streets, especially on Le Van Duyet Street. Traffic will be heavier on the day of the attack, which will fall on the third day of the Tet holidays (Lunar New Year).

Across Le Van Duyet Street, directly opposite the Theater, is the Headquarters of the General Labor Union and behind it, the Botanical Gardens and a riding club. In front of the General Labor Union is a parking lot for about 40 vehicles, reserved for US moviegoers.

Approximately 100 meters in front of the Theater is the US Dispensary, the US Special Forces Headquarters and the house of a US general, all located on Nguyen Du Street. Next door to the Kinh Do Theater to the left is the office of the Farmers' Association and to the right is the house of an American. Behind the Theater are a network of alleys and houses of GVN civil servants and the city bourgeois. The people in this area are indifferent to politics and during Tet they gather in groups in the alleys to gamble.
About one kilometer in rear of the objective to the southwest is the Headquarters of the National Police. The 2nd Police Precinct is located southeast of and approximately two kilometers from the objective. The 3rd Police Precinct is located 1200 meters from the objective and down Le Van Duyet Street.

The objective, the Kinh Do Theater, is known to the Americans as the Capitol American Theater. This Theater is reserved strictly for the American community. Estimated dimensions: length, 40 meters; width, 25 meters; thickness of wall, 20 centimeters. Capacity: 600 seats. However, our investigation revealed that there usually are only 300 people in the Theater. Sometimes there are VIPs and high-ranking officers.

A one-meter high wooden fence is erected on the sidewalk 0.40 meters from the street curb. No pedestrian is allowed to loiter on the sidewalk and vehicles are forbidden to park in the area right in front of the Theater. One meter inside this fence is another fence which looks exactly like the first one. Entrances to these fences are wide open before the show. Inside the interference fence is a yard, of about five to seven square meters.

The Theater has a large facade with the following sign on it: "Rap Chieu Bong Kinh Do" (The Kinh Do Movie Theater). Below the sign is an accordion gate, with an opening about two meters wide when half closed. Inside the gate, is an open space of about
four meters in width and five meters in length, with two booking offices. Two steel sheets are used to guard the staircases. Between the staircases is a velvet curtain about two meters wide. Inside the Theater running along side the wall are two narrow aisles leading to the latrines separated from the auditorium. Behind the screen is a small room for storing movie equipment. The Americans sit both on the ground floor and the balcony.

Early defenses: there are two policemen standing guard in front of the Theater and, at one time, no US MPs. One policeman stood guard at the corner of Bui Thi Xuan Street and another in front of the US dispensary. One white Chevrolet usually is parked in front of the Theater. On this section of Le Van Duyet Street there always is one cell of plain clothes police patrolling. At each intersection leading to the Kinh Do Theater there is a traffic policeman.

The Theater was first attacked on September 19, 1963 by a Special Activities Cell from the Interzone Headquarters. At that time the attack was directed at the rear of the theater. (A low-grade bomb was exploded in back of the theater inflicting no serious injuries and doing little damage). These experiences were gained from this attack:
- Five minutes after the attack, policemen and security agents flocked down every alley.

- Le Van Duyet Street and all alleys leading to it were blocked so no one could leave or enter...

After the attack the enemy improved his security measures. Two policemen were stationed in front of the Kinh Do Theater. The white Chevrolet remained at the same place. A jeep, bearing the license number NBD 448, was parked at the filling station near Nga Sau intersection. Two or three security agents were ordered to circulate in the alleys back of the Theater. Two US MPs and one security agent were stationed in front of the Theater. Two guards were stationed inside.

The movie schedules: shows begin at 2000 hours and end at 2230 hours. On Sundays there are two or three shows. Before the show the moviegoers gather in groups in front of the Theater. At show time they all go inside. As the last man goes into the auditorium the doors are closed. When the show is finished they come out in groups of 30 under the supervision of the two US MPs.

Taking the Decision. ... Investigation and study indicated that the target would be easy to attack. The Theater was well protected in front but neglected in the rear. Although the routes of approach were long and closely watched by security agents, it was determined
that this could be overcome by secretly infiltrating necessary
supplies and conducting the raid lightning-fast. Though police
and security forces were deployed in the area no reaction by
them was anticipated during the first three minutes after the
explosion. This slow reaction is attributable to their lack of
aggressiveness and courage. Possible reinforcements from
adjacent enemy installations had to be anticipated.

-National Police Headquarters: 10 minutes
-3rd Police Precinct: 10 minutes
-2nd Police Precinct: 15 minutes
-Police stationed at Nga Sau intersection: 5 minutes

From the previous attack we know that five minutes after
the attack, police and security agents appeared at all alleys,
and that within ten minutes, the enemy was capable of blocking
off Le Van Duyet, Ngo Tung Chau and Bui Thi Xuan Streets. We
knew accordingly that the attack, including the time for
entering and accomplishing the mission, should be completed in
one minute and attackers should withdraw from the area within
three minutes.

Based on this assumption and on the situation stated above,
this decision was taken initially:
1) Use one cell (three men) to attack the main objective.

2) Use one Bazoomine, ten kilograms with a time fuse set at 15 seconds (apparently an explosive device involving use of a mortar, rocket launcher or bazooka round).

3) Penetrate the objective area via the alley located behind the Theater, place the bomb on a stool, three meters high, located near the left hand wall to slant toward the right hand wall.

The attack was scheduled for the night of February 15, 1964, just after the movie had started.

Plan of the attack. At 2000 hours the vehicle would leave the assembly area, follow Ngo Tung Chau Street and stop in the alley behind the Theater. Number One would pick up the stool, place it in the predesignated position and take up a position from which he could protect Number Two. Number Two would then swiftly run to the stool with the bomb, place it on the stool and pull the safety pin. Then both men would run back to join Number Three and all would withdraw along predesignated routes.

Of the three men selected for the mission, Number One, was the cadre and cell leader. He had received basic political indoctrination and had been thoroughly briefed on the attack. He was qualified as a pistol marksman, knew judo, had combat
experience and was a good leader. Number Two had no combat experience, but was ideologically sound. He had received political indoctrination and had received training in pistol marksmanship. He was enthusiastic and accepted the mission without fear. Number Three had received political indoctrination, but was not as good as pistol shot as Number Two or Number Three. He had no combat experience. The key personnel were Number One and Number Two. They were repeatedly briefed on the mission, and were indoctrinated thoroughly on the purposes and importance of the mission. The training continued before the attack, strengthened ideology and improved their skill with mines, pistols and grenades. They were given the benefit of experience from previous operations and were taught ways to use initiative in such attacks. Training and indoctrination continued after the attack as well.

Equipment and materials issued: one Bazoomine of ten kilograms; two fuses; two safety firing pins; a 15-second detonation cord; one 12-mm Colt pistol; five fragmentation grenades; one smoke grenade; two knives; one basket; one three meter stool (apparently this was a ladder type arrangement nearly ten feet tall with a basket for the explosive on top); two suits of clothing and two pair of shoes to be used as disguises in case of an emergency.
Number One was equipped with the Colt pistol, one smoke
grenade and a knife. He was the leader and responsible for
the entire operation. His specific mission, in addition to
leadership, was to protect Number Two during his part of the
mission.

Number Two was equipped with a ten kilograms Bazoomine:
two grenades and a knife. His specific mission was to explode
the bomb.

Number Three was equipped with two grenades and the vehicle.
His specific mission was to provide overall cover, stand by the
vehicle, and pick up Number One and Number Two after they
had completed their mission.

The Attack - Saturday, February 15. Number Three informed
of the date, lied to his wife and told her he was going to the
country. This gave him more freedom of action and improved
security. Information about the target was not given to Number
Three but nevertheless he remained enthusiastic about the task.

Number One and Number Three were to meet at 1200 hours, with
weapons and equipment, at a predesignated location. However it was
not specified whether the meeting time was to be Saigon time or
Hanoi time (Hanoi is one hour behind Saigon). Number Three went
to the meeting place at 1200 hours Saigon time, failed to meet Number One and so went to a pre-designated rendezvous. Before leaving he passed word to a liaison man on the scene (who did not know anything of the operation). Number One arrived at 1200 hours Hanoi time. Failing to meet Number Three, he continued to study the scene of the operation.

Number Two meantime studied the area of the operation from 1500 until dark. In accordance with the plan Number Two, at dusk, carried the three meter stool to a house under construction in the alley. Failing to contact Number One on the scene he returned to where he had started and there met Number One. Number One informed him of the error over time and of not being able to meet Number Three. He suggested that Number Two return to Headquarters the following morning and report that the plan had to be aborted but that the cell was determined to carry out the mission when the opportunity arose.

Number Three meanwhile had contacted the liaison man and learned that Number One had arrived late. He went searching for him and found him at 2400 hours.

The attack had not materialized that day. It was decided to make the attack the following day.
The Attack - Sunday, February 16. At 1300 hours Number Two met Number One at a predesignated rendezvous with the specific message from Interzone: "Destroy the Theater at all costs." Number Two said Interzone authorized the cell to use its initiative in deciding the best means of attack. Number One informed Number Two that he had contacted Number Three and that everything was ready. He asked Number Two to remain calm and to continue his surveillance work, which he did. At 1440 hours Number One and Number Three went to the rendezvous point. Number Three parked the vehicle in a secure area. Number One went to meet Number Two. After exchanging information, Number One decided the attack would be launched at the evening show.

At 1830 hours Number One and Number Two went to the alley back of the Theater by way of Ngo Tung Chau Street. There they noticed the presence of three or four strangers who acted suspiciously. At the alley entrance there were three parked automobiles. Many gamblers were playing dice.

Faced by this unexpected development, Number One and Number Two returned to the rendezvous area to discuss the situation with Number Three. The discussion brought out these difficulties:
it was possible the attackers could be trapped in the alley. There
were a large number of people in the alley and an explosion would
kill them all. (It was at this point that Number Three realized
that the objective was the Kinh Do Theater).

At 1920 hours Number One and Number Two once more approached
the objective, along Ngo Tung Chau Street. They found the
situation there unchanged. They then drove along Bui Thi Xuan Street
and past the front of the 'Theater on Le Van Duyet Street. Observation
revealed the following: the police were at their usual posts; a
plain clothes agent was standing at the entrance of the outer fence
talking to a US MP who was standing at the entrance of the inner
fence. The other US MP was standing at the left side of
the entrance of the inner fence. American aggressors, buying
theater tickets, were in a short line.

The cell held a quick meeting and the new situation was discussed.
A new plan was then developed and adopted. The consensus was
this: although the enemy had many men in front of the Theater
they were nevertheless negligent and tired as a result of
too much celebrating during the Tet holidays. Moreover,
based on experiences in the past, it was believed the police
and plain clothesmen were cowardly, unaggressive and, on
hearing the first shots, surely would run away. It was essential
that the two US MPs be killed at the outset. We decided we had the superiority of weapons and of morale. The route of approach to be used was short and direct, providing best chances for quick penetration and withdrawal.

The three or four men in the alley and the two or three cars parked in the alley were believed to be part of the enemy's security apparatus. An attack in the rear of the Theater could easily be detected; even approaching it would be difficult; distances were relatively long. If the enemy detected us in time they could block off the alley and corner us. An attack in the rear would produce less results since the capability of our weapons could not be exploited to the utmost.

An attack at the front of the Theater would be more difficult but it had a number of advantages: a good avenue of approach permitting quick penetration and withdrawal. The enemy had many guards but they were not vigilant. We had the capability of (momentarily) overwhelming the enemy. We could effectively use our weapons.

Based on these considerations, a frontal attack was decided upon. H-hour would be immediately before showtime, after all the Americans had gone into the Theater and before the accordion gates were closed. We also decided that all three cell members must be calm and courageous and act with precision.
The new plan was this: the vehicle will stop in front of the Theater. Number One quickly will jump out and kill the two MPs with his pistol. At the same time he will call to the security agents to run away. If they resist he will kill them all. It is vital that he get rid of the policemen and security agent. After the two MPs have been killed Number Two will run into the Theater with the bomb. The farther he runs into the Theater the better. Number Three will be outside the vehicle with two grenades in his hands ready to throw them at the police on guard in front of the Farmers' Association or in the parking lot. After Number Two has penetrated the Theater and the policemen and the security agents have been killed or run away, Number Three will return to the vehicle, pick up Number One and then Number Two and they will drive away.

The Bombing. At 1955 hours Number Two went to study the objective for the final time before the attack. He noted that the velvet curtain had been drawn and that the accordion gate was open just enough to let in one person at a time. The show was about to start. Noting that there was no change in the enemy set up, except that a few late comers loitered in front of the Theater, Number Two went back to report the situation to the other two men.
All three got into the vehicle and crossed the line of departure. Number Three, armed with two grenades, drove the vehicle. Number One armed with a pistol and a smoke grenade sat in the back seat of the vehicle on the left. Number Two sat in back on the right, armed with two bazoomines and two grenades. Everyone was tense.

The vehicle drove up to the Theater. It stopped quickly. Number One jumped out. He shot and killed the MP with two shots. At the same time he shouted: "We attack the Americans. Run away brother policemen and agents." One policeman ran away. But the security agent remained. Two American moviegoers outside the Theater, panic sticken pushed their way into the Theater.

Seeing that the enemy in his path has been killed, Number Two took the bomb and dashed into the Theater just behind the two American moviegoers. Fearing that the two Americans would block the door, Number One shot at them. But his pistol misfired.

Then one security agent seized Number One and swung his fist at his face. Number One dodged and the blow landed on his right shoulder. Number One hit the security agent with his pistol and his fist sending the man sprawling. But he got up and rushed at Number One and they traded many blows in the street.
Number Three rushed back to the vehicle, got in and tried to run over the security agent but instead almost ran over Number One. Then he drove to the rendezvous point in the alley.

Number One broke loose from the security agent, recovered his pistol, pointed it at the security agent and once more pulled the trigger. This time it worked and the shot killed the security agent.

Meantime Number Two, in the Theater lobby, approached the staircase leading to the balcony and was only one meter away from the velvet curtain. An American came down the staircase. The American moved to seize Number Two. Unwilling to wrestle with the American, Number Two put down the bomb and pulled the cord to detonate the bomb.

There was a snapping sound. The American aggressors fell back panic stricken. One ran into the Theater shouting something.

Number Two ran out of the Theater calling to Number One, "Withdraw immediately." Number One hurled his smoke grenade. He turned to run. There was a terrific explosion. Number One was thrown to the ground. Stunned by the explosion he got to his feet and leaned against an electric light post for a moment before he staggered to the alley where Number Two was waiting. They walked to the vehicle. Number One led the way, followed by Number

78
Two with a grenade in each hand. People came up the alley and asked what happened. "We attacked the Americans" Number One said as they got into the car and drove away.

According to the enemy radio two Americans and one security agent were killed among the five hundred people in the Theater at the time. But our reconnaissance agents reported that only about ten Americans came out of the Theater alive, while all others were killed. The bodies were taken to Tan Son Nhut in ten ambulances and trucks. Ten-wheeled cranes were used to lift the collapsed stairs and two walls. Most of the seats in the Theater were smashed; the wall behind the screen and the roof collapsed.

(Note: Actually killed in the attack were: the US MP, Corporal Peter M. Feiersbend; Marine Corps Captain Donald E. Koepler, whom Number Two met in the lobby and who had run into the Theater with the warning was buried alive under the debris when part of the balcony collapsed; and SP/5 William Reed sitting in the last row of the auditorium. Injured and requiring treatment were: 23 American servicemen, six American male civilians, three American women, two American children and one British civilian. All recovered. The security policeman shot by Number One was not killed and later recovered).
As they withdrew, Number One drove and watched the front; Number Two protected the left flank; Number Three protected the right flank. When they reached a certain point all three went their separate ways, agreeing to meet again in three days time. They crossed Hong Thap Tu Street just three minutes before it was blocked by security police.

**Enemy Reaction.** Five minutes later enemy security agents and policemen in the area began to react. Ten to fifteen minutes later fire engines arrived, along with policemen from the 2nd Precinct who blocked off the area. The enemy arrested a taxi driver, four policemen who had been on duty, and ten civilians. Twenty minutes later Vietnamese Marines and Military Police arrived and surrounded the area, from Hong Thap Tu to Ngo Tung Chau to Nga Sau to Nguyen Du Streets.

**The Effect.** All of the inhabitants in Saigon were very enthusiastic. They came that night and the next day to look at the scene of the attack. The people said: "Once they have succeeded in attacking this objective, they will easily succeed elsewhere." Another effect was that US and Vietnamese Army troop morale was badly shaken. After that the Vietnamese Marines and the US troops set up barbed wire fences and mounted guards everywhere. They always went armed. Over 20 Americans
demanded to return to the US. (Press reports so stated; however, of the 1800 American dependents living in Saigon at the time, only three families accepted the US Mission offer the following day of immediate return to the US for dependents).

Observations and Lessons Learned. The strong points were these: there was a thorough understanding of the meaning, purpose and importance of the attack. There was high resolution by the cell. Their calmness, courage, ability to overcome all difficulties ensured the successful accomplishment of the attack. Success was due to: secrecy, suddenness, quick penetration. Maintaining the initiative and keeping flexible increased the injury to the enemy and helped achieve greater success. Most importantly, precisely evaluating the enemy's situation and adopting an alternate attack plan enabled our agents to find the enemy's weak points and seize opportunities. The attack also involved coordination of troop proselyting with combat (i.e. calling on the police to flee).

The weak points were these: failure to understand clearly the time for meeting on the night of February 15. It was dangerous to carry the explosives around in the vehicle. There were too many trips past the Theater by our agents for observation purposes; they could have been noticed. There was the failure to make a false license plate for the car to prevent it being traced.
There was failure to anticipate all possible developments in the situation.

During the attack on the Kinh Do Theater, even after encountering many difficulties, our agents always kept in mind the importance of the attack, and they were determined to carry it out. Within a short time after the first abortive mission, the three agents made an accurate assessment of the enemy's situation, and devised and discussed an alternate plan. This stresses the importance of flexibility to cope immediately with any situation. In any attack it is necessary to devise a primary plan and one or two contingent plans. In the Kinh Do attack our agents were confused when their first plan was upset, although they successfully accomplished our mission by applying another plan.

However, we must recognize the active enemy defense. Because of money and pressure from the wicked leaders, there are stubborn security agents and policemen such as the policeman who fought with Number One during the attack on Kinh Do Theater and two security agents and policeman who ran after and fired at Number One during the attack on the US Embassy.

For the first time our agents did enemy troop proselyting during combat. In the city, the security agents and policemen are apparently escapist and negative but they still have a spirit of nationalism
(this means that they do not like the Americans). We have to take advantage of their spirit during our attack to isolate the Americans. This limits enemy resistance, reduces our difficulties and creates a situation favorable to successfully accomplishing the combat mission. Prior to appealing to them, we must punish them to make our appeal effective. Our experience in the Kinh Do Theater attack was that our appeal was only effective after we had killed two US MPs...
### 7- STATISTICS OF VIET CONG TERROR AGAINST CIVILIANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assassinations</th>
<th>Kidnapped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
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<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1,618</td>
<td>3,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 (through 25 March)</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

|          | 11,798 | 41,177 |

Total includes 1,000 assassinated and 1,500 kidnapped civil officials.

***Prior to 1 August 1966, figures are not entirely accurate since in many cases no count was kept by local authorities. It is believed, however, that any error is on the low side.***

84