AMNESTY IN SOUTH VIET NAM

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHIEU HOI (OPEN ARMS)

PROGRAM IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

by

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PREFACE

This study is the result of seven months' field research in late 1966 in the Republic of Viet Nam on the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) amnesty program. The author was given the opportunity of conducting indepth interviews with Viet Cong defectors (hoi chanh) by the Simulmatics Corporation. The work was part of Project Agile funded by the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Department of Defense.

Simulmatics' task was twofold. Initially we were charged with determining how hoi chanh are reabsorbed into Vietnamese society upon their release from the indoctrination camps. Concomitantly we probed for motives and factors which led up to the decision to surrender. In addition to these tasks we consulted with the American and Filipino Chieu Hoi advisors on all aspects of the Program: psychological appeals, training and indoctrination in the camps, and resettlement problems and other facets of the Program's implementation. The findings and interpretations in this study are entirely my own.
and in no sense necessarily represent the views of any other person connected with the Simulmatics Corporation or the Department of Defense.

I have relied entirely upon quotations from the eighty-five indepth interviews we obtained, conversations with the American or Filipino Chieu Ho advisors, and previous knowledge of the amnesty programs offered in the Malayan Emergency and the Huk Rebellion. I speak neither Vietnamese nor French, but I did have the good fortune of obtaining interpreters of integrity and sensitivity. Both Mr. Ton Di Sanh and Captain Huynh Van Loc (who parachuted into Dien Bien Phu, survived a Viet Minh POW camp and is now chief of Hoa Lac District, Go Cong Province) took great pains to translate both questions and answers intelligently and with an ear for nuances and inflections which can uncover a respondent's real feelings. Often Captain Loc would stop my transcription into the tape recorder with, "I don't think you understood me quite right," or "he (the respondent) is embarrassed about that topic - let's move on," etc. I owe a real debt of gratitude to these two men. Out of those days of strain and fascination with our work grew a friendship
and a respect that transcends continents and, I pray, outlasts the war.

I also want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. Ithiel de Sola Pool, Chairman of Political Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for the opportunity to participate in the Simulmatics project. Professors Robert Rupen and Raymond Dawson of the University of North Carolina's Department of Political Science advised me through the writing of the thesis. Professor Dawson has been a constant inspiration throughout my academic career at North Carolina and I am indebted to him and the Department for much patience and help.
INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF POLITICAL AMNESTY

The offering of political amnesty to Communist insurgents is an old and continuing practice in Asian conflicts. In both the Philippines under Ramon Magsaysay and Malaya under Sir John Templer's direction the national forces offered Communist insurgents an honorable choice in lieu of death in the ranks. The Programs were successful in those earlier contests and became the vehicles for a national healing process of vast importance. Magsaysay's popular phrase, "all out force or all out friendship," became the rallying cry for the sympathetic integration of the Huks into the national political life of the Philippines. (Even Mao Tse Tung's forces received over 800,000 defecting Kuomintang troops in the last two years of the Chinese Civil War.) Internal warfare is by nature civil war to one degree or another. One crucial factor in the countering of insurgencies has proved to be the attractiveness of the winning side's offer of amnesty - the jobs, status and promises of active national political life which the antagonists can expect from the government. The essence of amnesty, then, is
an honorable pardon. But without a corresponding utilization of the returning insurgent's talents - talents that were undoubtedly fully exploited by the Communists - a political pardon by the Nationalists is not enough. There must be a productive utilization of their skills and meaningful employment. The Huks were given land and provided tools on the EOWA farms in Mindanao. This productive stake in the Philippines' future became Magsaysay's major answer to the Huk Rebellion. In Malaysia's Johore region the surrendered Chinese terrorists were integrated back into the squatter communities which in turn were brought into the political life of the Republic.

The Chieu Hoi Program. In May 1963, President Ngo Dinh Diem of the Republic of South Viet Nam inaugurated his Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) amnesty program. Like its predecessors in Malaya and the Philippines it was an offer of political pardon to the Viet Cong insurgents operating in the countryside. The concept was urged upon President Diem by allied advisors, some of whom had contributed toward the technique's previous success in the Huk Rebellion and the Malayan Emergency. The Chieu
Hoi program had a very meager beginning and an uneven
development in Viet Nam. The skill of its implementa-
tion and the ensuing patterns of surrender were and
continue to be highly correlated to the vicissitudes
of Saigon politics and the feelings of the Vietnamese
Army. Colonel Bohannon of Philippine-fame was the
first American advisor to Diem on the concept of amnesty.
Since the initiation of the program, and after a number
of organizational changes and enlargements, the United
States has convinced the Vietnamese generals to continue
the fostering and, indeed, the expansion of the device.
The Vietnamese government staffs the program either
through appointments of army officers or selection from
the civil service ranks. The United States Agency for
International Development pays for the physical con-
struction of the camps as well as the costs of housing,
feeding and training (if offered) the defectors. The
United States Information Agency helps design and funds
most of the psychological warfare effort—leaflets,
loudspeaker broadcasts, movies, etc. The United States
Military Assistance Command in Viet Nam handles much of
the intelligence interrogation and tactical exploitation
of defecting guerrillas. The United States Embassy in Saigon has overall coordinative responsibility for the American advice to the Government of Viet Nam's Ministry of Information and Open Arms which administers Chieu Hoi.

In operation in South Viet Nam today the Chieu Hoi program has seven components: inducement or psychological appeals to the Viet Cong; reception and interrogation involving the processing of the hoi chanh and the extraction of tactical information and intelligence; tactical utilization which involves military work; indoctrination and training which involves the "counter brainwashing" and teaching of job skills; resettlement or the reabsorption of the hoi chanh into the economy; follow up or surveillance of the released ralliers; and, finally, administrative problems. There have been approximately 75,000 defectors who have rallied under the Program since its initiation. Viet Cong surrenders are now running at their highest rate - approximately 2,500 per month. The Program is reaching its maturation and is currently well-advised and well-funded. The recent introduction of forty Filipino advisors, one
of whom is assigned to each Chieu Hoi chief, is the most important innovation sponsored by the allies. It is anticipated that nearly 40,000 Viet Cong will surrender in 1967.

Research Design. An analysis of amnesty in a civil war eventually leads one to an examination of fundamental problems indigenous to that society and environment. The design of this research has been to investigate the three phases of Viet Cong defections: extraction, rehabilitation and resettlement. These phases will be analyzed largely through the defector's actual experiences as reflected in our conversations with him.

Initially we will look at the process of defection from both sides. This will entail descriptive analysis of Saigon's inducement efforts. Associated with this discussion will be an analysis of how the Viet Cong are reacting to these inducement appeals. We will also examine their difficulties with surrender and their expectations about what they anticipate at the hands of the Government.
Secondly, we will evaluate the Program's operation in the camps. How does the Government receive, care for and indoctrinate the hoi chanh? The essence of our concern here will be a comparative analysis of Government versus Viet Cong techniques and abilities to motivate and indoctrinate the same "target" - the peasant who has been on both sides. Such comparisons answer questions on organizational skills as well as psychological prowess resident in the two structures.

Finally we will analyze the reabsorption process. What difficulties does the hoi chanh encounter when he prepares for and then enters into competitive life in the national economy and social structure? What kind of stigma is attached to his past?

In essence, we are tracing the hoi chanh's livelihood from the ranks of the National Liberation Front, through the Chieu Hoi camps and out into the national social structure where the reabsorption process begins.

The Sample. The Simulmatics' Chieu Hoi sample consisted of eighty-five indepth interviews with hoi chanh in all stages of the amnesty process. One respondent had rallied the day before we interviewed him.
Another had been out of the camp and in the competitive economy for over two years. The ralliers in a Cambodian bandit group we interviewed had never been in a Chieu Hoi camp; they had simply been rearmed with American weapons and given custody of a valley on the Cambodian border. We had thirty-three civilians and fifty-two military respondents who came from all four Corps areas of Viet Nam, with the heaviest concentration in III Corps near Saigon. Our sample was chosen to give us as full a range of talent and experience with the National Liberation Front as obtainable in seven months. The respondents ranged from a sixteen-year-old messenger to a Main Force North Vietnamese Lieutenant Colonel. We interviewed a Provincial Committeeman who had been in Communist-dominated revolutionary movements in Viet Nam for twenty years. We talked to propagandists, organization men, guerrillas, sentries, intelligence officers, district chiefs, party secretaries, youth cadres, school teachers and corvee laborers. The sample had a great deal of breadth to it and was nonrepresentative. Our sample had relatively more civilians (only one-third of
the entire hoi chanh population held civilian positions in the Viet Cong) and men of responsibility. We had sixteen civilians who held administrative positions, five propagandists and twelve laborers. Our military sample had six North Vietnamese, five medics and forty-one soldiers of all levels.

We made a concerted effort to hunt out defectors who had seen the Chieu Hoi Program's effect on the NLF and knew the Viet Cong's structure and problems. We sought out the most informed dissidents, as well as the bewildered and the dragooned. As has been mentioned, our primary mission was to gauge the reassimilation process once the hoi chanh were released from the camps. Thus, we eventually became involved with identification card problems, job difficulties, threats from both the Viet Cong and some GVN officials, discrimination in housing and friction with refugees.

We found it was very easy to locate hoi chanh with favorable but biased things to tell us about the Government (they were working in the Chieu Hoi camps as clerks, guards, or members of the Armed Propaganda Teams). It was a much more difficult process to obtain case histories
of the more typical men who had left the camps and had to eke out an existence in isolated rural surroundings, often under insecure circumstances. We finally realized it was a mistake to ask the Chieu Hoi chiefs to locate hoi chanh for us - these hand-picked functionaries were often falling all over themselves to placate the interviewers. We finally came down to relying on our interpreters to locate hoi chanh with little or no association with the Program after they had left the camp. We utilized the records at the local Chieu Hoi offices and then sought out the hoi chanh as privately and as quietly as possible. Often this meant bringing a worried hoi chanh in from the farm (he usually thought we were disguised police), putting him up at a Vietnamese hotel in a provincial capital, reimbursing him for his expenses and time lost in the fields if he were employed, and slowly gaining his confidence.

The interview could last four hours or four days, depending on the respondent's information and willingness to talk about himself. Most of the hoi chanh refused to put their own voices on the tape recorder even after
They assured them that it was only a clerical short-cut for us. Many felt they would be compromised this way. Several even guaranteed they could be more candid if they did not have to speak into the recorder.

We finally developed two successful patterns of interviewing. Where a Vietnamese interpreter could work alone with the subject, he would conduct the entire interview in Vietnamese. It would then be translated into English in Saigon where it was later transcribed by American typists. The other method was to have an American ask the questions to his Vietnamese interpreter and then repeat the questions and answers in English into a tape recorder. This was the method used most often, and it gave a useful training ground to the interpreters who eventually were to conduct the interviews themselves. Possibly the most difficult phase of the process was gauging the respondent's sincerity and candor. The interpreters quickly became sensitized to this measurement problem and gave evaluations throughout and at the end of all the interviews. Where we were positive our respondent was either lying or hiding major information we dropped the interview completely. Different
respondents found different areas of the interview to which they were sensitive. Eventually almost all of the hoi chanh interviewed demonstrated a sense of embarrassment, shame or moral guilt over some aspect of their defection. Sometimes it evoked discussions of the self-criticism sessions that are mandatory in the Viet Cong. Others were embarrassed by their inability to stay celibate while in the Front. More often the sense of guilt was patterned around the "mistake" of ever having fallen in with the Communists in the first place. They felt they had been duped.

The men of this sample, then, were not "typical" of the hoi chanh population at large. Although the Chieu Hoi ministry's statistics on all the returnees were not very sophisticated (they broke it down by home province, civil or military function and class, i.e., rank), the average hoi chanh was a village guerrilla, probably a draftee, with a very limited knowledge of the organization around him. If he was not drafted he might have gone into the Front for adventure or through boredom. He stayed in about a year and a half. He quit because he
was afraid; the life had lost its romantic quality. He undoubtedly needed a rest and had a family who wanted him home. Thus, we cannot in any sense say that this thesis is a total or representative picture of the process of defection from the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam. We do not even know how many desert as opposed to those who defect.

Approximately 70,000 Viet Cong have surrendered since May 1963. It is a fair guess that between two and four times as many Viet Cong have deserted the Front or left it temporarily to get back home without formally identifying with the Government in the process. What we do have before us is an analysis of the attempt to offer the Viet Cong an honorable alternative to death in the ranks and a corresponding picture of how some of the more sensitive target guerrillas view the offer, their experiences in the camps, and their later position in Vietnamese society.

Hopefully, this study will bring more understanding to the difficulties of integration and social development endemic to the Vietnamese civil war in
particular and to the turbulence of Asian growth in general. South Viet Nam is a very sick country with one of the most frazzled and case-hardened peasantries in the world. Possibly the Chieu Hoi Program could become the healing vehicle by which something approximating national vibrancy can be realized. It may be the most that tormented land can hope for.
GLOSSARY

AID
Agency for International Development (US)

APT
Armed Propaganda Team

ARVN
Army of (South) Viet Nam

Chieu Hoi
The Government of South Viet Nam's surrender or amnesty program; literally, open arms

CIDG
Civilian Irregular Defense Group

DRV
Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, i.e., North Viet Nam

GVN
Government of (South) Viet Nam

Chanh
One who rallies under Chieu Hoi program; literally, rally (to just cause) - previously called Quy Chanh or returnee

JUSPAO
Joint United States Public Information Office

LLBD
South Vietnamese Special Forces

MACV
Military Assistance Command Viet Nam (US)

NVA
North Vietnamese armed forces (originally PAVN - People's Army of Viet Nam)

Regroupee
Viet Cong of Southern origins; trained in the North and returned South
RVNAF  Republic of Viet Nam Armed Forces
(South Vietnamese armed forces)

Viet Cong  Commonly employed term to describe the insurgent force in Viet Nam
(from Viet Nam Cong San - Vietnamese communist)
CHIEU HOI

"Chieu Hoi centers are really just rest camps for the Cong."

- commonly heard expression by US military personnel.

"At least there is such a program. What did we have in our Civil War--Andersonville and Libby Prison."

-Ogden Williams, top American Chieu Hoi Coordinator to author.

"The high ranking Viet Cong cadres are having quite a lot of difficulties with the Chieu Hoi Program."

-interview with LtCol Xuan Chu Yen, ex-commander of 66th Regiment, 5th Viet Cong Division.
CHAPTER I - INDUCEMET AND EXTRACTION
I. INDUCEMENT AND EXTRACTION

A. Inducements of Defection

The Government of Viet Nam's perception of the Viet Cong has been displayed most vividly in the psychological inducements with which it approaches the Front. There has come to be a gigantic concoction of surrender appeals being broadcast to the many components of the National Liberation Front. Oftentimes these have been experimented with to find the cleavage most exploitable. In many instances the Government and the US have been operating in the dark. The necessity for feedback, rather than increasing trial and error experimentation, has become absolutely crucial.

The design and purveyance of psychological appeals to the Viet Cong comes from a number of avenues, some fruitful, some sterile. Probably the most authentic knowledge of the Front was to be found in its own statements, publications, and broadcasts. The problem was, of course, one of separating noise from signals. The beatings in the basements of military interrogation centers also produced information in South Viet Nam as
in any war. A third avenue of data was from the hoi chanh. Their reactions to the GVN-Allied psychological war efforts, coupled with their knowledge of the Front, will be our concern here. The essence of the inducement designers' problem here has been well-catalogued in other environments; perceptions of reality were so often a function of the operational environment of the decision-maker rather than reality. This problem turned up in the design of appeals to the Viet Cong.

First, it was necessary to communicate with the insurgents the existence of the Open Arms program. The tactics being employed were grouped into three main efforts: leaflets, broadcasts (radio and airplane), and face-to-face contact with the target guerrillas or their families by means of Chieu Hoi Armed Propaganda Teams. Secondly, the insurgent, once he learned of the offer, had to be convinced of its honesty.

1. Leaflets

The leaflets were largely the functional responsibility of Joint United States Public Affairs Office and Viet Nam Information Service. Some of the
mass saturation leaflets are exhibited in the Appendix. These were for use throughout Viet Nam except where special instances would preclude their utility. These general leaflets were mass produced in Manila or Tokyo, whereas the specific tactical messages with special appeals were often written at the provincial headquarters. The JUSPAO representative at Rach Gia in the Mekong Delta had produced one million of these tactical leaflets in a single day when he found exploitable conditions prevailing.

The most extensive leaflet effort appeared in the annual Tet (Lunar New Year) campaigns. Most of the Viet Cong defectors whom we interviewed had seen a Tet "teu Hoi" leaflet. The Tet campaigns involve immense coordinated efforts by joint Allied civil and military agencies and were directed toward inducing the homeward-bound guerrilla to identify with the Government as well as his family. These campaigns have met with success.*

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*On January 19-20, 1966, 132 million leaflets were dropped signaling the beginning of the "coming home" campaign. In the following three weeks 2336 hoi chanh came in.
The numbers of Pol Chanh defecting in the wake of the Tet campaigns were usually two to three times the normal rate. The Viet Cong had begun to show apprehension toward this special joint effort. This concern resulted in a bombing attack on a psychological warfare office in Saigon in late 1966.* This office contained the plans for the Tet campaign of 1967. (The campaign went ahead anyway with substantial results.)

Substantial problems arose in both planning and evaluation of these joint mass saturation leaflet drops. There was a tendency to have these leaflets designed entirely by Americans. Joint creativity in the Saigon offices was less than perfect. The American agencies hired courteous, obsequious Vietnamese who would eventually accede to the expectations and wishes of their employers. Because those jobs paid well, the English-speaking Saigonese with a wife and family to support would not jeopardize his position by radically criticizing his employer's ideas. The product of such

*Old Kinh Do theatre destroyed 4 Dec 1966
a situation was leaflet #10 exhibited in the Appendix. The designer of this leaflet (the most extensive safe conduct pass used in South Viet Nam) undoubtedly was not a rural Vietnamese. When a North Vietnamese analyzed this leaflet, his reactions, typical of many northerners and southerners in our interviews, were as follows:

A. I think that this is kind of a nasty caricature of a VC. It is the same as we used to make when we were in the VC of the Americans and the Government people. Sometimes we would portray the Government people with a tail and the Americans with a great big stomach and hair all over their legs. I think it would be better to have a more realistic picture of someone rather than something distorted.¹

A regrouped (returned South) medical Lieutenant who had spent 16 years in Communist ranks and attended the faculty of medicine at Hanoi University agreed with the previous respondent:

¹C.H. 39, p. 26
First, you must not use caricatures like the one on the safe-conduct pass. It is much better to use photos, real pictures. Above all, the Government has a way of portraying the Viet Cong in an ugly way, like apes. That is not a very good idea because it insults their self-esteem.2

Another rallier, who had fought with a Southern main force unit in Quang Ngai province, also had definite opinions about portrayal.

Q. Does that look like a Viet Cong on the back of the safe conduct pass?

A. Of course not. They never wear a hat with a star like that. The hat, they'll wear sometimes. The Viet Cong man there is very ugly. He is too skinny and he looks like an ape. He's really ugly. The Viet Cong might look like that if he was sick with disease or fed up.3

Leaflet #12 again showed the questionable star and made an even bigger error of showing a Vietnamese sitting on the ground. Rural Vietnamese squat; very seldom do they sit. That was a traditional posture.

Problems with caricature were a result of preconceptions that simply do not hold true. Also, the patronizing posture of the ARVN soldier on the pass had been mentioned by the hoi chanh.

2S ... 72, p. 32
3S ... 55, p. 14
Another error was the vilification of the Viet Cong as an inducement appeal. We had numerous examples of hoi chanh indicating this was an erroneous approach.

Q. On leaflet number one how do men who have not rallied, but want to, react to the statement that we are lackeys of the Chinese Communist?

A. It is my feeling that saying the VC are lackeys of the Chinese Communist is counter-productive. An appeal towards the family or the home is more effective than this sort of an insult.4

Another respondent mentioned his unit's reaction to a leaflet (not shown here):

There was one leaflet that...talked about conditions in the Viet Cong. It showed them in poor health and with swollen bellies, and that was the worst. They hated this leaflet because they thought it slandered the VC.5

Leaflet #11, prepared in Pleiku, illustrated how a vilification theme could be portrayed pictorially. The negative reactions to these leaflets indicate that there was in the Viet Cong a delicate quality of self

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4. C.H. 14, p. 11
5. C.H. 66, p. 42
esteem that the GVN should have kept in mind. Seldom did the men in the ranks of the Front view themselves as monstrously as much of the GVN's propaganda would have us believe. The decision to surrender carried with it an onus of guilt. That feeling should have been carefully assuaged or it could become a major impediment to rallying if reinforced by GVN propaganda.

Another aspect of the leaflet incongruencies was the imputing of nationalist or urban characteristics into appeals directed at Communist peasant audiences.

Q. Looking at leaflet #4, is that a typical VC family?

A. No, obviously not. It's too well off. I think you've got an altar there, a gorgeous altar. Get rid of that thing. This is a well-to-do family, really. Possibly Government controlled.6

Again and again the hoi chanh thought the scene was "very beautiful" but not a family they could have known.

6 C.H. 35, p. 14
Leaflet 5, playing up the fear of death in Viet Cong ranks, came under mixed criticism. This rallier, who spent 16 months with a guerrilla unit in the Delta, indicated how indoctrination can overshadow risks:

I think that death is not important to the Viet Cong. What they fear is hardship in the VC life. The leaflets should emphasize this point and another - the miserable conditions of the families left behind by the wandering VC. Away from home for so long a time, the men would feel very painful when reminded of that. Also, the difficulties of a VC's life, the constant movement, lack of care and medicine when falling ill are also very depressing when they are mentioned. 7

It was undoubtedly a theme worth exploiting. Again we were faced with the delicate balance between inducing them out and antagonizing them.

Many hoi chanh agreed that the most personal and authentic messages were those written by the hoi chanh themselves to selected wavering members of units from which they rallied. These letters can illuminate many feelings about both sides, as indicated in the

7 C.H. 67, p. 12
one in appendix A2 from a civilian cadre who worked against Diem and his followers for nearly six years. Pictures of ralliers, like leaflet #13, with its personal message on the back, were judged the most appealing by our sample. Most camps had the ralliers write letters to friends back in the ranks and often photographs accompanied them.

Thus the problem of leaflet evaluation was a crucial one. It became more acute as the drop effort produced either extreme positive or negative results. The following are two examples of the same problem. In Binh Long province the US 25th Division fought a main force Viet Cong unit in the early summer of 1966. Over eight hundred insurgents were killed in a running battle that lasted for weeks. Nine million surrender leaflets were dropped. Three hundred hours of "loudmouth" aircraft time were flown to induce the remnants of the shattered battalions to surrender with honor. The result was two defectors.* This should be contrasted with the

results of equally concentrated psychological and military efforts in Binh Dinh Province on the coastline. The Chieu Hoi camps of the Binh Dinh and Phu Yen areas were swarming with hundreds of hoi chanh. Why the difference between them and the Binh Long case? Did the Cambodian border offer the rest and nourishing sanctuary to those Binh Long Viet Cong that was not found in the coastal enclaves? Were the Cambodian based Viet Cong units extremely well-disciplined as opposed to less cohesive units operating in the Tuy Hoa area? Were they starving in Phu Yen where the US 101st ABN was controlling the rice harvest? The answer to these questions and the corresponding asymmetry of the comparative defection rates could be learned if follow-up research was undertaken.

As we can see from our previous discussion, the effort lacked a reliable cross-coordination with indigenous expertise (as was done so effectively in Korea, for instance). The errors of portrayal, appeal and vilification were a function of two problems. Initially the previous hiring of inexperienced Vietnamese contributed
to unrealistic leaflets. The lack of Vietnamese designers with rural and front experience was partially responsible for the lack of credible propaganda.

Secondly, the leaflet myopias, where they occurred, were a function of the general overload of staff to field personnel. The existence of four JUSPAO employees in Saigon for every one in the field made it difficult for any province-oriented program to be generated through the layers and layers of staff and paper work. This ratio seemed typical for the American agencies in the Republic. If it took 100 men in Saigon to support 30 in the field, we had a built-in impediment toward effectively coordinating field needs with staff back-up capabilities. This author saw numerous examples of American civilian field personnel who had to ignore directions from US offices in Saigon simply because those directions were naive or based on preconceived information that was outdated. These are difficulties which can be corrected easily.

2. Movies

The tendency to sanction questionable psychological war material for the sake of agreement was well
illustrated the time a group of Vietnamese with rural background and experience but working for an American research agency in Viet Nam were invited to view two JUSPAO films on the Chieu Hoi program. The first film was a training movie for ARVN and allied troops concerning the handling of defectors. The film, shot at Chieu Hoi camps, showed how fair treatment and a brotherly open arms spirit toward hoi chanh could pay off in terms of information extraction. All the viewers of the film agreed it was well done and should be introduced into the Allied training programs. The second film, produced from much of the same material as the first, was targeted toward contested villages. Its appeal was toward the emotions of temporarily fatherless (VC) households, hoping to persuade the families to call the wayward father or son home from the Viet Cong.

The reel began with a combat shot of American helicopters on a gun run cutting down "hard hat"
guerrillas. As the bleeding body of a guerrilla was dragged into the jungle, one of the assisting Viet Cong troopers thought he must quit or be killed. This brutal scene was followed by shots of immaculate actors, well-shod, groomed, and nylon-shirted, playing the role of Communist Party members. One incongruity followed another until the Vietnamese watching the show broke out into polite laughter. When the American editor was queried about such incongruities, he remarked, "It's too late to change it, and anyway so and so (US Administrator) says it's okay." The agency had taken the precaution of inviting several hoi chánh from the National Center over to review the unfinished version of the film. You can imagine the reaction of these farm boys when, after being escorted into their first air-conditioned movie studio in the most spacious and comfortable American office building in Saigon, they were shown a psychological war film and asked for comments! They all agreed it was a handsome piece of work.
This author personally met two American JUSPAO field representatives who stated they would quit before allowing this film to be shown in their provinces, because of the brutality shown and the playing up of American firepower.

The critique of these films and leaflets was not meant to criticize any American agency or the personnel involved. These men were often working eighteen hours a day, six and seven days a week. But what was brought to the forefront here was the problem of coordinating and designing these inducement schemes to actual field conditions and needs. Suggestions for improvement of the psychological war effort appear in the last chapter on Policy Recommendation.

3. "Loudmouth" Aircraft

Many hours were spent on "loudmouth" aircraft surrender broadcasts in South Viet Nam. This involved mounting speakers in the sides of aircraft and playing tape recorded messages over contested areas. Sometimes a hoi chanh was actually placed in the aircraft for a direct appeal to members of his old unit. Immediate
tactical utilization such as this was most often used with the large American units. The military psychological war officer at Tuy Hoa was witnessed taking a hoi chanh into an aircraft ninety minutes after his surrender to try and "talk out" his unit from the air.*

Many of the hoi chanh interviewed mentioned encounters with loudmouth aircraft. Several of them were instructed to fire at these aircraft which explains the prevalence of patches on the wings of these small planes. This, of course, could be dangerous because it can draw fire from nearby aircraft or artillery. More often these kinds of measures were taken on the ground:

Q. Did you hear Chieu Hoi broadcasts from aircraft?

A. Yes, but I could not make out what the broadcast said. The cadres beat drums, tocsins and tin cans to prevent people from hearing the broadcasts. 8

This type of psychological appeal was necessary. Aside from continuing to exploit allied air superiority

*Visit to Tuy Hoa airport, Aug 20, 1966.

8 C.H. 71, p. 21
it forced the cadres on the ground to take control measures - often ones that ran counter to the peasants' curiosity. That may have had the effect of whetting their appetites even more.

4. Armed Propaganda Teams

Face-to-face contact with villagers and fighters in Viet Cong-controlled territory provided a continuing and personal means of explaining the program. This was done by hoi chanh who for special reasons had volunteered to undertake direct contact psychological warfare work. They were either trained locally or at Vung Tau and armed by whatever means was available. In many instances this was through the "scrounge" technique.

Even though the teams were small (thirty-six men per camp) some camps had two platoons. For its cost this seemed to be the most effective method of inducement due to the human factor involved and the obvious personal contact available to the Hoi Chanh as they probed the Viet Cong infrastructure and family groups. It allowed the hoi chanh to "prove" that they had not been mistreated or killed. Lack of this proof remained one of the largest
psychological impediments to rallying, as we shall see. The Vietnamese peasant, casehardened to most sympathetic appeals of the GVN, continued to harbor suspicions about Government goodwill. He had behind him a history of Diem's arbitrary methods coupled with the "jungle grapevine" by means of which Viet Cong rumors of maltreatment were easily spread. It had become evident that the dispelling of this history of brutality was a major block to rallying. Ralliers often mentioned this.

It was a fact that brutal treatment of surrendered personnel did exist until two years ago. When this changed, attempts to sensitize the population to the new policy met with suspicion and distrust. The old propaganda lingered on and Viet Cong agit prop cadres continued to play upon the historic grievances.

This rallier, an NVA squad leader, had some interesting views on his experiences as an armed propagandist.
In armed propaganda I tell my own story. I don't throw in a lot of propaganda; I simply tell my story. And it's been a good one in terms of treatment and rallying. But when villagers don't know what Chieu Hoi means, I have to start from scratch, literally explain everything about the program. (INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: In I Corps, the psy-war effort has been rather small because General Tri did not want ralliers.)

Another hoi chanh propagandist, at one time associated with the Viet Cong "Phu Loi" Battalion, remarked:

Often it is the case of a wife whose husband is away. We told them, "We were VC before; we have rallied. Life in the Viet Cong is rough, no clothing, food, or money. But look at us, we are doing all right here. It's better for you to tell that chap to come in. The Government will help him find a job." The motives for joining the Armed Propaganda Teams were, of course, mixed. We might first note that those hoi chanh are draft exempt as long as they remain on a team. Consider this statement by the same squad leader who defected after being infiltrated south:

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10 C.H. 42, p. 17
I (initially) applied to be an electric welder. But I was thinking that if I went to work as a welder and a year passes I'll be drafted into the ARVN. So after carefully thinking it out, I decided I would volunteer for the Armed Propaganda Team. I realized that if I got in any sort of private position I'd be drafted right away.\textsuperscript{11}

As also might be expected, the Chieu Hoi chief could pick the people he wanted for these teams and a certain amount of favoritism undoubtedly entered into the selection process. The hoi chanh who volunteered for this more extreme means of identifying with the GVN were going to associate with villages with which they are familiar. This gives them a chance to stay near home.

Armed Propaganda Teams varied in their performance from dismal to exceedingly valuable. When teams were not armed, they had to make very careful and often fleeting efforts with the families of Viet Cong. Where armed teams had been ordered or had decided to do some real "rooting" in counter-guerrilla style action, the propagandizing could be associated with a hail of lead. The

\textsuperscript{11}C.H. 36, p. 23
most active teams saw considerable combat and had been responsible for bringing back weapons, rice caches and ammunition as well as Viet Cong in various degrees of surrender. Their behavior could be very impressive as evidenced in Da Nang where Mr. Be, a hoi chanh with proven ability on the other side, was personally responsible for the return or capture of fifty Viet Cong as an Armed Propagandist. In Tay Ninh, however, where few missions were made and the team was not trusted with arms, fewer defectors were induced to come over. Armed Propaganda recontact like this also provided a means of maintaining surveillance of returned hoi chanh. In Go Cong Province, the Chieu Hoi chief, Mr. Kim Anh, worked very closely with ARVN 7th Division Military Intelligence. His teams were continually on the move throughout the districts, keeping a quiet but continuous monitorship on all elements of the Chieu Hoi Program there.

About one-third of the APT's had been trained at Vung Tau in the same camp as the Revolutionary Development Cadres. The rest were formed at the local provincial
capital and trained there. There had been little blending and cross-coordination in the training of APT's and Revolutionary Development Cadres. Since the Revolutionary Development program remained an American intelligence endeavor, it was difficult to convince the American officials at Vung Tau that ex-Viet Cong should be taken into their midst or given integrated training with the development cadres.

The Vietnamese at Vung Tau had shown a similar reluctance to embrace the hoi chanh. There were a number of ex-Viet Minh officers sprinkled throughout the training program at Vung Tau, but there were no known Viet Cong ralliers. The blending of the hoi chanh into the development efforts does not seem probable in the immediate future, but there is a possible blending foreseen in the area of tactical utilization. In less formal ways the hoi chanh were slowly but surely turning up as scouts, counterintelligence agents and interrogators. Here was another opportunity for them to prove their change of heart and dispel the mistrust that prevails at
Vung Tau, best epitomized by the statement, "Once a Communist, always a Communist."*

5. Bounties

There was another element of the inducement program that was getting under way recently. A reward system for weapons had been in use for several years (see leaflet #3), but the idea of bounties for people as part of an amnesty program had not begun to receive program attention in the Republic until late 1966.

The utility of such devices in Malaya and the Philippines did not guarantee their applicability in the Republic. An experimental bounty program was begun on September 22, 1966, in Kien Giang Province in the Mekong Delta. Viet Cong regimental commanders were offered 100,000 piasters, battalion CO's 75,000 piasters, to surrender. The advisors working in conjunction with the Chieu Hoi Ministry decided to experiment judiciously with this regard system rather than mass advertise it across the country. The considerations here were obviously sensitive ones. One of these was jealousy and the animosity

*Made to author by head of Vung Tau training camp during visit to site on Aug 28, 1966.
it can create in a hemorrhaging economy like South Viet Nam's where the needs of refugees and other welfare targets were so great that offers of huge sums to insurgents could only have exacerbated relations between them and the refugees or soldiers.

The bounty system had produced no officers of regimental or battalion rank in Kien Giang by early 1967 even though Communist units of these sizes had been known to be operating in that area. Whether the problem was that the rewards had not been successfully advertised or that Kien Giang was a poor place to choose for the bounty program, has yet to be determined. Probably the idea was poor. Money as an inducement had only a very qualified appeal with the Viet Cong. Our sample showed less than 5% of the hoi-chanh considered this a means of persuading officers or men to quit. By advertising the program in a very limited area care was taken not to create a "give away" imagine of the GVN. This could have drawn a picture in direct contradiction to that of the Viet Cong who promote the human appeal. The civil war in
Viet Nam was so much larger and more deeply rooted than in Malaya that the public offering of $100,000 for the surrender of a Central Committee Member of the National Liberation Front (as was done in Malaya) seemed hardly feasible or wise.

6. Unit Appeals

The idea of appeals to entire VC military units was also beginning to receive widespread consideration in Viet Nam in late 1966. Where continuing contact with hardcore Viet Cong units could be depended upon, the idiosyncrasies of the recruitment base and the subtleties of the behavior of the insurgent forces became something that could be analyzed and exploited for cleavages and weaknesses. Such an opportunity existed in Binh Duong Province where the US 1st Division had the responsibility, among others, of the neutralization of the "Phu Loi" Battalion. This Communist unit was a spirited main force battalion that carried as its rallying cry and title the name of a Diem concentration camp located in the area from which it claims it was recruited by the National Liberation Front. When Diem fell in October 1963,
apparently the doors to this camp were thrown open and practically all the inmates joined an indigenous Viet Cong main force unit operating in the province.

The Phu Loi, a small rock-hard unit, made a specialty of harassing allied troop convoys up and down Route 13 from Saigon to Tay Ninh. The esprit de corps of the Phu Loi battalion was surpassed only by its internal control mechanisms. Three-man cell systems and vertical segregation of officers from men was so great that one Phu Loi defector (a three-man cell leader) had this to say:

A. If I had appeared negligent during an afternoon operation, then in the evening, I will purge myself, talk about this, to show my wrongs and faults so that I can become better.

Q. And if you didn't want to criticize yourself, would the other fellows criticize you?

A. In fact, if I had done something wrong, and he didn't criticize me, I had the right to criticize him for not criticizing me. We are organized that tightly.12

12 C.H. 42, p. 9
The Phu Loi had devised a series of interlocking base camps in Binh Duong Province that had been described as "ingenious killing zones."* Elements of 1st Division patrols have been heavily decimated when caught stumbling into these forested areas. The battalion's men were supported from both War Zone C and D and had relatives in many of the hamlets along Route 13. The American and ARVN authorities were interested in bringing this unit over, either as individuals or as a whole. These authorities were designing appropriate appeals and receptive apparatus for such a possibility should it occur. 1st Division Intelligence stated that a year's intensive research preparation for the Phu Loi Battalion was a minimum estimate for such a feat to be accomplished on Route 13.** (Previous data on Viet Nam indicates that only one NVA company has come over as a group.)

*Interview with 1st Division - Intelligence Section, 4 Nov 1966.

**The crack in the Phu Loi ice may have come last summer when, after a battle, forty-one dead Phu Lois were found with safe conduct passes hidden on their bodies - a chilling testimony to the control in the organization. They could not surrender soon enough.
These unit efforts involved intense research and data collection. The effort became tantamount to getting inside the minds of the opposing cadres. This was a much more sophisticated and difficult task than spraying leaflets across the countryside. And when the first large Communist outfit comes across, it should lead to multiple unit defections once the reasons are understood and can be exploited.

7. Elite Inducement

Finally, why had so few high ranking Viet Cong surrendered? Aside from Lieutenant Colonel Chu Yen (66th Regiment, 5th Viet Cong Division), there were no other regimental officers and only a handful of provincial level civilian cadres came in. The inter-provincial, zone, central committee levels and the top combat commands remained uncompromised, at least as far as we knew. Was this because these men saw no honorable way to employ their services on the national side? Were they still so well indoctrinated that the national propaganda had yet to make itself felt? Had the Northern takeover decreased the