likelihood of the Front's infrastructure shredding at the middle and the top?

First of all, the essence of the problem was that there had been no concerted effort to target the Viet Cong's hierarchy for surrender. The Program had, of course, been open to all comers—with nine-tenths of the ralliers being private soldiers or civilian laborers. The administrative apparatus, the organizational nervous system of the Front, had not been identified until very recently as a special target audience for Chieu Hoi. While the cadres who came out expressed an optimism about potential defection in the upper levels, they felt, however, that these men were unsure as to what the GVN's policy was and this was crucial in their decision to wait. One cadre expressed it this way:
My comrades who are still in the Viet Cong do not understand our Chieu Hoi policy exactly. They don't understand what would be their fate in the future if they rallied and they don't know if the Government will treat them in accordance with their ability and their work. If we could tell them clearly and precisely how we would treat them if they joined us, they would certainly consider rallying.\textsuperscript{13}

Lt Colonel Chu Yen also had some definite ideas on the subject:

VC leaders do know that the Chieu Hoi Program has promised to give work and food to every rallier, but they also know that the Vietnamese Government does not employ the ralliers in accordance with their training and talents. There are many VC cadre, both of superior grade and of ordinary grade who might be tempted to rally, but who do not know clearly what the Government will do with them and how their talents will be employed.\textsuperscript{14}

It was significant that several months after Chu Yen's return he held a press conference in which these remarks were made. Premier Ky then journeyed to Manila to meet with President Johnson and announced the

\textsuperscript{13} C.H. 72, p. 18
\textsuperscript{14} C.H. 29, p. 24
beginning of a bold new program of offering comparable positions to Viet Cong who surrender. Chu Yen now holds the directorship of the National Chieu Hoi Center in Saigon.

Chu Yen's final statement, while really a critique of his own relationship with the GVN, was indicative of fresh winds blowing throughout the Republic that spelled a new, healthy look to what has been a suspicious atmosphere in the past.

Q. What use would you make of the ralliers if you were in a position to do so?

A. The thing that is most necessary is to have a clearly defined policy of using these cadre's talents and abilities, not simply to give them enough to eat or a job to do. The cadres should be employed on the basis of their training and experience to do what they can to help a country. A very important thing is that there be confidence between the Government and the ralliers on both sides. It is necessary that the ralliers and the Government both forget about the past. Neither side must retain fixed opinions from the past. 15

15 C.H. 29, p. 24
If more men of Chu Yen's calibre could be brought over, the brainpower of the National Liberation Front could be selectively weakened. No effort can have a more devastating potential effect on the Viet Cong. It deserves highest priority.

B. Motives: Why Do Viet Cong Defect?

The increasing numbers of hoi chanh in Viet Nam generally reflected the mounting military pressure by the allies in the countryside. This pressure could be selective, such as the 173rd Airborne Brigade's marked tendency to control water holes or the 101st Airborne Division's chaperoning of the rice harvests in Phu Yen. Or it could be more general like the large sweep and seal operations such as Operation Irving in the Binh Dinh area on the coast in the fall of 1966, after which nearly 1,000 ralliers crammed the surrounding coastal Chieu Hoi camps.

The hardship in the ranks of the Viet Cong could be very rough. This defector described the nightmare that was his main force unit's lot.
Q. For what reasons do you think they were not willing to carry on?

A. Many of the men had to change clothes three or four times a day. Some of them wept several times a day. When aircraft came to strafe, the men jumped into trenches and got wet. They had to change clothes after the air attacks, and clean their weapons constantly. If they did not clean their weapons thoroughly, they were named in criticism sessions. Those who did not want to take cover in the trenches were also criticized for contempt (of danger). Sometimes bombs dropped nearby and many were scared and cried. Some also vomited blood because of the blasts. As for the men of the intelligence section, they had to reconnect the telephone wires when these were broken in the blasts and they got killed easily. We had to go into hiding when aircraft came around. We could not sleep; we could not eat. Some fainted during the hikes. Many stumbled in the dark or fell from the bridges. In my company, three or four men were killed falling from bridges while carrying heavy weapons.\textsuperscript{16}

Another rallier expressed the loneliness and fatigue that plagued many of the guerrillas.

\textsuperscript{16} C.H. 71, p. 16-17
When winter came (he was with a main force unit in Quang Ngai Province), I had only a pair of short pants. I didn't have any other clothes, nothing. It got cold up there in those mountains. There were battles; we were really run down. Then one day after I came back from a fight, I looked down on a village by a river and saw how peaceful and lovely this was. I was thinking it would be nice to live a life like in childhood, where there would be light, many neighbors, friends and peace.

The temporarily fatherless family continued to draw back the Viet Cong. We had no idea of the number of VC who deserted without formally identifying with the Government in the process. Seasonal absenteeism on both sides was undoubtedly quite high and it was directed toward lonely relatives.

Q. How did you feel about being separated from your family?

A. The separation was much of my reason for deciding to leave the (Viet Cong) military and going back to my family. I was a semi-deserter in going back to my hamlet. I missed my wife and children.

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17 C.H. 35, p. 10
18 C.H. 52, p. 14
The real defectors came in for the most part to get out of the storm. As was seen, they feared the increasing hardship (whether it was bombing, starvation or sickness) and had families that wanted them home. The hamlet still owned the Viet Cong's emotions. This priority was reflected in the inducement leaflets as well as in the hoi chamh's conversations.

The motives for defection were well documented on a representative sample basis by the RAND Corporation for the last three years. Although still classified, their results correspond closely to this analysis. Returning to the Government then was essentially an act of survival and homesickness rather than a positive desire to help the "just cause." This should be contrasted to the Philippine Huks. The Huks, once they learned of Magsaysay's offer of lands and jobs in Mindanao on the EOWA farms, came out with a sense of positive expectation. The horizons of the hoi chamh in Viet Nam seemed far less anticipatory. In a sense the Viet Cong were behaving more like the Chinese Terrorists in Johore. As the combined Malay and
British forces were able to cut off the Terrorists' food supply by moving the Chinese squatters back from the jungle's edge, the Terrorists began to starve. They came in famished. The Viet Cong, while not suffering from a food shortage (except in the I Corps area where infiltrators suffered from both nutrition and bulk deficiencies), were coming over because it was too hard or dangerous on the other side.

The professional elite in the Viet Cong; the careerists, administrators, officers and Party members who defect came out the most disillusioned. They had banked everything on the organization - their career, their lives, their family - everything on a losing cause. We found three categories of elites turning up in the Chieu Hoi files: the first type, such as Lt Colonel Chu Yen, was the disillusioned Communist man of action. (His testimony is exhibited in Appendix B.) He had obviously seen enough of Communism in action to realize that the relatively fair cause lay with the Government. He found the lack of democracy and inability to make a free choice stifling. As he
tried to express himself, he found that, regardless of their astuteness, his opinions carried less weight than those of other men of lower class origins and longer Party membership.

Secondly we found the xenophobic nationalist. He was above all a Vietnamese patriot. He may have quit for a myriad of reasons: sickness, middle class origins stymying an otherwise promising career, ideological disillusionment with the Front. The defection of these men indicated a trend that was just beginning to show itself in Viet Nam in early 1967 - the surrender of the experienced cadre with Viet Minh origins. As a Viet Minh he was swept up in the tide of the national uprising against the French. The thrill of the mobilization effort culminating in independence brought a real satisfaction to his work. When the Viet Cong began their offensive against Diem he came back into the organization, utilizing his skills in familiar areas. He got out of the Viet Cong, but he held strong reservations about the nationalist regimes that followed Diem. A case history of this type of cadre appears in Appendix C.
The third type of elite hoi chanh seemed to be the administrative careerist. Capable, intelligent, but without the original dedication of the previous two types, he went into the Viet Cong because he was fed up with life on the Government side. This cadre, who became a member of the National Liberation Front’s Tay Ninh provincial committee at the age of 24, was charged with the supervision of all primary school indoctrination in the Province. The Viet Cong promised and gave him responsibilities and duties he probably never would have acquired in cliquish ministries or schools on the Government side. He remembered what life under Diem was like:

Q. You were a schoolteacher under Diem; what was it like?

A. No justice. It was like you were selling your lungs to feed yourself. A case of having to make friends to stay in office. The more friends you made the more power you could gain and you could actually buy a job. This was what really counted. I got fed up on November 11, 1960. (Note: This was the paratroop coup that partially succeeded for a day, but Diem was able to charm the paratroop officers out of his palace and
out of political power.) I was convinced by a friend who was also a teacher to take part in the demonstrations. I was in the People's Coordinating Committee for this revolution. It was defeated. I tried to go to Cambodia to get out but I couldn't get through. I was approached by the VC; they knew they had me. 19

The recruitment of this man seemed very typical of the talent search about which Douglas Pike wrote when the Front fleshed out its administrative apparatus in the early 1960's: "The hunt was for organizational talent, and the only credentials demanded were hostility toward the Diem government and personal dependability."

These elites are considerably valuable people. They exhibit skills that prove useful on the Nationalist side. As the Government designs its appeals to them, it must be remembered that they carry a sense of pride and professional confidence in their abilities.

19 C.H. 33, p. 17
*Pike, p. 78-79
C. Extraction and Expectation

When a Viet Cong decides to break with his old way of life and ask the GVN for amnesty, he must consider the safest way to get out. Many problems immediately arise. The act of surrender could be a very dangerous process. If the Communist cadres realized that a man was wavering toward surrender, they usually took immediate action. This often involved "reeducation," imprisonment or worse.

Many hoi chanh were encountered who waited months before slipping away because of the lack of opportunity or the fear of discovery. Even when they did escape, it could be very difficult when they arrived into Government hands. The following story seemed typical of the kind of difficulties that could arise.

One defector explained:

It is never easy to rally. I walked up to a Popular Force soldier and I told him, "I am a Viet Cong and I want to surrender." He was quite frightened. I did not know how to say hoi chanh, so he pulled out a pistol and pointed it at me. I told him to search me, that I wanted to surrender. He wasn't
entirely ready to believe me. He went and got a platoon of Popular Force soldiers and they found my buried documents and gun and then they believed me. 20

Another rallier who worked as a communications agent in Phu Yen province was typically pessimistic about the ease of escaping.

There's no generally safe way. Since many Viet Cong have rallied, the VC maintain a much tighter control. Even if you want to go fifty meters away from your unit, you have to inform the squad leader. A Viet Cong can only escape when he goes on a mission to some village. 21

One regrouped officer, who is now Commander of an Armed Propaganda Team in Hue, even found the necessity of a safe conduct pass as a guarantee of security to be dangerous.

While it is very doubtful that the Safe Conduct Pass hindered defection more than it aided it, that officer's experience was duplicated time and again in the extraction process. A number of defectors indicated they had to hide SCP's in shirt cuffs or collars,

20 C.H. 7, p. 32
21 C.H. 44, p. 25
especially where control cadres just witnessed leaflet drops.

Some hoi chanh never got out. In the summer of 1966, forty-one Phu Loi soldiers were killed in action with safe conduct passes hidden on their bodies.

The decision to defect often became a time of agonizing delay. The insurgent was not sure; he was barraged with feelings of uncertainty and doubt.

I waited for five months before rallying because I was very suspicious. I told no one - not even my children. I was afraid they would talk about it. Finally, I told my wife I could not stay with the Viet Cong any longer. She came with me.22

This regroupee hesitated while he agonized over the decision.

Q. Was it hard for you to rally once you decided to do so?

A. It was two months between the time I decided and the time I actually did. The difficulties were the battle in my own mind; for example, I had doubts as to whether the Government would treat me well or not, and I also had trouble because I was so well indoctrinated and had been in the Party so long. I had been in Communist ranks for twenty years and eight months.23

22 C.H. 17, p. 7
23 C.H. 66, p. 49
A hoi chánh usually came out alone or with some other token help from a relative or friend. This rallier, a Viet Cong village chief, had a plan:

I sent a letter to the Chief of Police in Long An by way of an ex-policeman whom I knew very well, and we specified a place. I went to that place and the Chief sent a policeman to greet me there. 24

The problem of easing the possibilities of escape does not seem to be remediable by the Government. They had tried to instruct the potential rallier in every possible method of extracting himself safely. The act finally devolved upon the rallier and his ingenuity. The hoi chánh had to work out their own means of escape; the Government could only guarantee immediate protection.

The hoi chánh's sense of expectation and optimism was very low. They were often surrounded by feelings of bewilderment, shock and shame. It was hard to imagine people more tired or malleable than these ralliers. They usually entered the camps clutching a safe conduct pass which they considered their most valuable possession. They brought a feeling of reserved

24 C.H. 64, p. 25
judgment about the Program. They left the jungle because they felt that to linger there would eventually mean death. Anything became better than staying behind.

A. Before I rallied I thought that the Vietnamese Government would surely torture me or put me in jail. But I decided that I would try anyway.25

This statement reflected the counter Chieu Hoi propaganda the guerrilla forces were constantly undergoing within the ranks, especially where their units were losing considerable numbers to the program or military action. It also indicated why these men were so apathetic about the Program. They often surrendered simply to save their lives. And, as with any act of survival, very little else mattered.

However, this did not prevent, as we have seen, fright, bewilderment, and expectancy of rough treatment ensuing during the escape. This rallier remarked:

A. I expected I would be subjected to torture. I visualized a whole array of torture instruments. But the treatment given me by the district authorities reassured me.26

25 C.H. 7, p. 32
26 C.H. 85, p. 19
One North Vietnamese Army infiltrator, now a member of Da Nang's Armed Propaganda Team, gave an insight to what must be on the mind of many a coerced traveler coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

A. Look, I'm a Northerner and an infiltrator. What's going to happen to me when I rally? I'm an arch enemy. I've seen local guerrillas rally and the Government treats them well, but what happens to an NVA soldier? I was very scared about it. I didn't know if the Government would treat us the same way as they did the guerrillas. Northern troops are aware that guerrillas defect and that they get good treatment. They are however quite worried about themselves. But the only way they can find out is with people whom they know. But people don't want to talk, they are afraid.  

It is this lack of confidence in the Government's offer, coupled with Viet Cong control techniques, that the author believes are the major hindrances to a greatly expanded defection rate. The Government can do little to enhance the ease of escape.

As the Viet Cong's control mechanisms shred under the mounting pressure of combat, the waverers will find it

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27 C.H. 36, p. 20
simpler to slip away. Where the Government must take action is in the improvement of its offer and the corresponding advertisement.

D. Summary

The errors involved in the appeal to and inducement of the Viet Cong to surrender were initially those of not integrating enough experienced candid Vietnamese into the inducement efforts and, secondly, not following up the efforts with more immediate operational research. Where the human element was more directly employed (as in the Armed Propaganda Teams) or if research was more painstakingly undertaken (as with the Phu Loi Battalion effort), the opportunity for the recultivation of the insurgent recruitment base and the neutralization of its Communist military offspring were enhanced. Undoubtedly errors of rapport and behavior existed in APT's performances. We have much less data on that than on the leaflet efforts. But what was discernible in the leaflet mistakes (and the author believes, indicative of much of the other psychological war approaches utilized in the
Republic) was that the understanding of the enemy's psychological environment was directly inhibited by allied hiring, staffing and budgeting procedures. Also, the integration of hoi chanh into the inducement and intelligence streams had yet to be successfully accomplished; the errors previously documented reflected this.

The process of defection with its insurgent parameters of hesitancy, reservation and lack of optimism reflected in these interviews showed that large scale components of the Viet Cong had yet to be convinced of the desirability of their seeking amnesty. They came out to save their lives or get home - a very personal and individual decision. There was a persuasive problem for the GVN here that may never be completely overcome due to the Communists' control over their forces. That problem will undoubtedly prevail to a certain degree to the bitter end. It is reasonable to assume, however, that as the military pressure in the countryside increases the Viet Cong desertion rate will rise. The necessity of coordinating and
finally equating VC desertion with Chieu Hoi reception is, in the long run, essentially a function of the GVN's ability to offer a real alternative to all strata of ex-Communist talent and background. This involves a truly sincere and honest implementation of the Program. But in a much larger sense, any meaningful enticement toward extraction of and integration into the Nationalist side of Viet Cong remnants is a question of national development and maturity. The road to nation-building, even without the added exacerbation of a twenty year civil war, is a tense affair, strewn with the debris of programs and people who for one reason or another have not provided the integrative skills and colative amalgam necessary to effect changes. This is the real essence of the Program's existence whether the initiators or implementors agree. Without the substantive back-up of meaningful employment and sympathetic integration the most skillful inducement successes, honed into every cleavage and weakness in the Front, can only have a sterile quality.
CHAPTER II - THE CHIEU HOI CAMPS
II. THE CHIEU HOI CAMPS

A. Reception and Interrogation

We now look at life in the Chieu Hoi camps. The environment of the camps, the facilities and accommodations, coupled with the indoctrination given, offers important insights into Government dealings with political dissidents. More importantly, the comparisons between the content, methods and techniques of indoctrination utilized by the Viet Cong and the Government shall be explored. The different advantages and disadvantages will be analyzed as well as the contrasting priorities and behavior models the two structures produce and value. This will illuminate the motivational skills of the two antagonists. Whereas with inducement schemes, the GVN was often having to appeal blindly to its opponent, the camp situation offers first-hand experience with the Front, and its weakest links.

1. Initial Reactions

The biggest surprise to the hoi chanh seemed to have been the fair treatment given most of them. One of the most delicate interviews ever held by our team
was with a military squad leader from Tay Ninh who had
rallied the day before we spoke to him. He had never
seen Caucasians before, and when he found he could trust
us and the Chieu Hoi cadres, he opened up considerably.

"Everything is new; just to be in this
room talking to you is very unusual for me.
But the fact that the Government is treating
me like a normal person is the biggest sur-
prise to me. I still can't help but worry
and feel hesitant; I am so new to this."1

Another rallier, an infiltrator from the North, was
gratified by his treatment:

"I thought that if I rallied with some-
one else from my unit they would believe me
more. I was a little apprehensive. By
coming alone, I thought they would think I
was a spy. But when I was in the Pleiku
camp, I was very well treated by both the
Vietnamese Chieu Hoi chief and the Americans."2

There was an element of uncertainty here. As we
have seen, their expectation was that they would receive
rough treatment. The Front cadres had told them day
after day to expect beatings or death if they ever

1C.H. 18, p 12
2C.H. 18, p 12
rallied. They were under an incessant barrage of counter Chieu Hoi propaganda—especially among units that had been badly hit. This was done in as closed an environment as possible. The good treatment they did receive came as an unexpected bonus. They came out with few illusions and a low sense of expectation. The hoi chanh were quite ready to indicate whether or not they were fairly handled. Their willingness to allude to this point indicated that it was of paramount importance in their mind.

One of the most interesting suggestions encountered for calming the fears of potential defectors was to drop leaflets containing photographs of ARVN commanders' orders to their troops not to mistreat hoi chanh. Whether such an order had ever been issued or will appear in a psychological war could not be answered by the Chieu Hoi advisors in late 1966.

2. Reception

Upon reception at the camps the hoi chanh were met by the camp officials, photographed, fingerprinted
and offered medical treatment, if necessary. This procedure not only identified them for future reference, but it also compromised them immediately, insuring the Government against known agents roaming the camps undiscovered. The availability of medical aid, recently introduced on a countryside basis and skillfully advertised (see leaflet), had proved a major factor in influencing a Hoi Chanh's initial reactions once he had surrendered. First aid treatment and limited pharmaceutical capabilities (most often antimalarial injections and vitamins) were introduced into the Chieu Hoi centers in late August 1966, as a result of the Simulmatics Corporation's interim report. The drawing power of this medical aid, while not documentable here, was obvious to any visitor to a Chieu Hoi camp. As an inducement factor, it was being advertised for captured enemy personnel as well as defectors. Probably the
"jungle grapevine" exploits its effectiveness as well as any leaflet campaign.*

One of the most effective and sympathetic means of offering medical aid to the hoi chanh was seen at the Tay Ninh camp. A Philippine medical team regularly makes the rounds of hospitals, POW, and Chieu Hoi camps at Tay Ninh. The following excerpt from a report on that center's medical visit gives insights as to the effectiveness of sensitive third country nationals hand-picked for the job. The entire text is exhibited in Appendix D.

"These Filipinos, of course, speak English and fairly good Vietnamese. They carry dictionaries with them, and their rapport with the Vietnamese is very good. They organized the sick call by having all the hoi chanh in need of attention line up and catalog through one of the local clerks. Then, using interpreters for technicalities, the clerk would explain to the doctor exactly what the man complained of. The doctor then diagnosed the problem and gave appropriate treatment."3

*One problem with an expanded medical aid program in the camps was, as might be expected, the selling of these drugs privately or their disappearance. One camp (Rach Gia) had lost so much medicine by the Fall of 1966 that the U.S. helicopters had ceased stocking the camp on a regular basis and supplied drugs only on demand for severe cases. Most camps kept the medicine under strong lock and key.

3Visit to Tay Ninh City, 8 October 1966.
These Filipinos had a very cathartic effect on the hoi chanh. The ralliers looked forward to the visits, not only for the attention but the natural curiosity and wonder at these Filipinos helping them.

The physical campsites varied greatly. They could be well-equipped, spacious buildings or open-air sheds. The ability of the officials to operate sympathetic programs did not seem to coordinate with the cost of quarters. One of the most modern looking Chieu Hoi centers in the country, Rach Gia, had produced some of the most dubious results. This "model camp" was built in 1966. It was perfectly maintained, and contained English-speaking officials, several fish ponds and a well-thatched Chieu Hoi village for families of defectors. Yet every American advisor or field representative with whom we talked believed that, at a minimum, thirty percent of the hoi chanh were being bribed into the camp by the Chief.4 A corrupt chief could offer, secretly, to split the reimbursement and daily compensation fees with the hoi chanh (usually draft dodgers

4Visit to Rach Gia, 18-23 September 1966.
or marginal lads who were not with the Front. If the average total compensation per hoi chanh over a forty-five day stay in the Chieu Hoi center was approximately 2,000 piasters or $17.00 (U.S.), half the take on this multiplied by one hundred defectors per year comes to a substantial sum. Compare this situation to Da Nang where, in the shabbiest of camps, defectors were busy at carpentry or blacksmithing and were taking their meals in the Chieu Hoi chief's home under the most sympathetic and honest conditions. Following Ky's removal of I Corps warlord General Thi, the Chieu Hoi program was left in a shambles. In reality, it had hardly existed. Thi took all defectors and put them into the uniform of self defense units, never bothering to train or indoctrinate them. No Chieu Hoi facilities, medical aid or housing existed in I Corps prior to the removal of Thi. Under sympathetic reconstruction by the American and Vietnamese Da Nang Chieu Hoi managers this program matured quickly into one of the best in the country. There was still some doubt about whether the program was successfully underway in Quang Nam or Quang Tri.
provinces and the recent intensification of the fighting there will, undoubtedly, put a strain on facilities and manpower.

3. **Interrogation**

Interrogation of *hoi chanh* varied in quality. Where camps were located in an area falling under the tactical responsibility of the large allied outfits operating in the Republic there was, generally, good coordination between the two concerns for intelligence purposes. The Marines at Da Nang stationed intelligence officers in Chieu Hoi camps in I Corps. The 1st Infantry Division at Di An in III Corps did the same thing. However, tactical information could still be lost either through lack of knowledge of the area's peculiarities or through unsophisticated approaches with the *hoi chanh*. Language was the most critical problem.

Mistreatment of surrendered or defecting personnel remained the crucial variable. The existence of brutality during the interrogation of *hoi chanh* had greatly decreased in the last two years. Our sample
uncovered only five percent who had experienced maltreatment either during reception or interrogation.5 Yet the expectation of maltreatment, the avoidance of certain ARVN units due to previous experience, and the seeking out of police or civilian authorities to surrender to indicated that the perception of "Open Arms" held by the wavering insurgent (often under the influence of NLF propaganda) was a different picture than that prevailing in the camps or in the minds of the GVN officials.

What gave credence to this lingering misconception and doubt? Two considerations invite attention and both were largely at the aegis of the "jungle grapevine"—that word of mouth communicative device by means of which an isolated peasantry learns and judges.

This respect for communication by word of mouth was evinced by this hoi chanh who was concerned over treatment of defectors in the provinces.

5This should be contrasted to the often popular but generally unsubstantiated charges in much of the American press about GVN and ARVN brutality.
Q. What is the best way to get the Chieu Hoi message back to people in VC zones?

A. It's very simple. They simply have to have good treatment in the Chieu Hoi Centers. The word will get back. This is what we call "Radio Catinat," or the "jungle grapevine." They'll speak to each other. If you give instructions to everybody in the civilian and especially in the military ranks to treat these people well, to take it easy with them, you will succeed. If you beat them, you'll lose them. The behavior of the local authorities is very important.

First, there was the question of how to handle a hoi chanh who came in with valuable operational plans in his head. For fear of tipping off his old unit or committee to GVN intentions he was "sat on," meaning his whereabouts and condition were not disclosed. Sometimes, if his relatives were aware of the fact that he was camped in an ARVN intelligence officer's tent, they would be notified and requested (hardly necessary) not to announce this to their neighbors. Such delicacies with kinship, however, were not usually considered because they were unessential to an interrogation center's main concern: extraction of information. One

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6 C.H. 71, p 7
American psychological war advisor, a dedicated and energetic individual who helped the Vietnamese Information Service with the Chieu Hoi leaflet campaigns had some thoughts on the problem. The entire text is exhibited in Appendix E.

"During the past two months I have searched for reasons to explain a downward trend in our numbers of hoi chanh. One possible explanation is the damage to the Chieu Hoi program caused by current interrogation procedures. I have always considered the jungle grapevine of the Viet Cong an important part of our exploitation, and in the local districts and Provincial Center "humane treatment" is given all returnees."7

The American advisor continued:

"Too often, however, a hoi chanh appeals to those collecting intelligence at the division or Corps level. In some cases, movement of the rallier to Corps or National Centers is certainly justified. In this respect, I have suggested a program of encouraging these individuals to send to the Provincial Center first receiving them a "having a swell time, wish you were here" type message. This would help erase fears among others in local Centers. The problem with intelligence interrogation for long periods and then return to the Center is more damaging."*

7Letter released to author for anonymous utilization September 22, 1966.

*Letter continued.
The second facet of continuing Viet Cong skepticism about the wisdom of surrendering had been the actual use of brutality on hoi chanh. This Viet Cong medical officer, trained at the University of Hanoi, had a rough experience upon rallying.

"When the ARVN soldiers surrounded my house I presented them with my safe-conduct pass. They did not believe me when I showed them the leaflet and said that I was taking advantage of the safe-conduct pass to rally and then get away. They tied me up and hit me with their hands and kicked me a few times. I told them I intended to rally and after a while, they looked into my pack and saw my medical instruments. They confiscated my ring and my wrist watch and my medical instruments. They brought me immediately to the district, where I met a second lieutenant from G-2 and a captain who was the District Chief. The District Chief apologized."\(^8\)

Another case in point was the military interrogation center at Sa Dec in the Mekong Delta. The officers at this intelligence center had not shown the same regard for the feelings of the hoi chanh as did other more directly connected agencies and personnel. However, Sa Dec's mission was different; they were constantly interrogating suspected agents, infiltrators, 

\(^8\)CH. 72, p 50
fakes, POW's and "loaded" hoi chanh. The use of violent measures either to extract information or to test a claimant's veracity continued to be employed at Sa Dec, and, at times, had proven their efficiency. Nevertheless, unfortunate incidents such as the above and described in Appendix D could ruin months of sympathetic efforts by Chieu Hoi cadres.

Both GVN and U. S. personnel had, at times, exhibited lack of care concerning treatment of defectors. Fortunately, this was an exception to both allies implementation of the Program.

There did not appear to be much argument about the priority of intelligence personnel's access to any peasant with information about the Viet Cong. What had yet to mature was a thorough appreciation on the part of the ARVN to the sensitivities involved in the implementation of the Chieu Hoi Program. This probably reflected the low priority that the Junta had put on the Program compared to other civil or military aspects of the war. Most often rough treatment or threats seemed to be a means of testing a hoi chanh's claims. This respondent, a village guerrilla from Long An Province, purposely
avoided surrendering to the Rural Forces and sought out the Saigon police instead.

A. They asked me how I could have been a VC; how I could have been so stupid.

Q. Did they threaten you?

A. Yes, but only a threat. They handled me roughly at times but they did not beat me. The purpose was to see if I was an underground VC agent.

This initial skepticism, while necessary for the GVN's safety and realized as part of the "game" by most hoï chanh, would produce some unsettling experiences for many ralliers. Another respondent, a twenty year organization cadre for the Front, recalled his experience.

A. I think is not good to specify the names of the unit that interrogated me. In my case, it was a civilian unit. By that time, I was really angry, and I almost fought them. I was like a fish jumping into a frying pan. I was ready to go to prison.

Another Southern regroupee, a Lieutenant who had spent time in Laos and China before infiltrating south, gave a very objective account of the rationale behind intelligence's behavior:

\[^{9}\text{C.H. 1, p 14}\]
\[^{10}\text{C.H. 5, p 67}\]
Q. Why were you threatened?
A. Because they thought by threatening me they could get more truth from me. Later, they explained that they knew I was telling the truth but that it was only their profession. They had to act like they didn't believe so in case I had something to say I would say it. They actually apologized.

There probably was no answer to this problem except an insistence of more sensitivity to the concept by the ARVN. The problem had shown considerable improvement over the last two years.

4. Housing

The camp sites were usually brick and mortar buildings with facilities for an office, mess hall, sleeping quarters and exercise yard. Life in the camps was generally lackadaisical. Time dragged in the provinces. Sometimes, however, especially in the larger centers like Saigon, turbulence prevailed. Witness the description of the fifteenth class to go through the National Center.

11C.H. 76, p 21
12C.H. 66, p 50-51
"There were perhaps a hundred people in my group, in total. Of these, three were NVA infiltrators, four or five regroupes and sixty were in the category of being thieves, short-time VC, Saigon "cowboys" and general no-goods. The man who was the leader of the last group, the fifteenth, was a regroupee and he stole a radio from the VC when he left, which he later sold. When he came in here he said he was a first lieutenant, but actually he was a second lieutenant, and his behavior was so bad as chief of the group that the ralliers under him beat him up and tore his clothing and wounded him with a knife."

Usually there was a Chieu Hoi village associated with the camp. The office buildings were being constructed with a view towards converting them into school buildings once the war was over. The poorest looking Chieu Hoi buildings were in I Corps, an area which had no Chieu Hoi Program until the summer of 1966, when General Thi (whom Marshall Ky ousted) left. The best physical facilities were in the Mekong Delta's IV Corps area. It was in relation to this construction and expansion facet of the Program that the largest incentive to corruption became most prevalent. In 1966 the decision was made between Washington and Saigon to
allocate a potential quadruple financial input on the part of AID--JUSPAO to Chieu Hoi if the situation warranted. The contingency planned for here was the possibility of huge numbers of guerrillas unexpectedly laying down their arms—say 100,000 suddenly quitting. Could the Government be ready for such a possibility? How would the Program cope with such an influx? The idea that evolved late in 1966 was to begin significant physical expansion of both camps and Chieu Hoi villages. Any camp or office enlargement was to be constructed in such a manner as to allow conversion to schools if the bottom dropped out of the NLF and a mass demobilization of the facilities was suddenly called for after the huge crossover. A Chieu Hoi village would be allocated to each provincial camp. Armed Propaganda Teams would be doubled immediately. The potential incentives for corruption in both an absolute and a relative sense began to multiply. When a Chieu Hoi chief bought cement blocks from a distributor to build a newly authorized office wing to an existing center, the only way to know if he had offered to split the rake-off on a jacked up manufacturer's price was to be able to listen to the
conversations involved. Thus, the problem of monitoring a Vietnamese conversation cropped up again. Interpreters in the hire of the chief simply could not be trusted. The major innovation to our monitoring capabilities along these lines was the recent introduction of the forty Filipino Chieu Hoi advisors. Most of these third country nationals have had experience with the Huk rebellion. They had army, civic action and development backgrounds and they brought with them a coterie of administrative skills, plenty of common sense and lingual abilities. They sat in the same office as the Chieu Hoi chiefs. About one third of them were thoroughly capable in a Vietnamese conversation; the rest were acquiring the fluency.*

*The IV Corps Chieu Hoi advisor at Can Tho was responsible in November of 1966 for fingering a corrupt Chieu Hoi chief there. True to the fashion of Vietnamese politics the chief was transferred to another post—Go Cong—rather than being removed. The Filipino at Go Cong, Mr. Romeo who spoke Vietnamese, intended to "sit" in the newly arrived chief's "hip pocket" for the rest of his stay at Go Cong.13

13 Conversations with Mr. Romeo, Go Cong City, December 1966.
It was this tightened monitoring based on a lingual and possibly a racial affinity that assured a more astute surveillance of the expanded input to the Program. The author does not intend to give an impression that all or very many of the Chieu Hoi ministry's field personnel were of low or questionable character. That was far from true. But there had been some pretty notorious cases in isolated spots which had existed because of favoritism and politics, and they detracted from months of otherwise sympathetic and sustained efforts by Vietnamese and allied administrators. The I Corps Regional Chieu Hoi director was an example of such a problem early in 1967.

The Filipinos were full of suggestions on other facets of the program; revampment of accounting and administrative procedure was one feature they were concentrating on. One of their senior members who was assigned to Da Nang was making a concomitant study of Viet Cong infiltration in the city. They were all wise to the methods of pocketing money and over-reporting.
B. Indoctrination

The quality of the indoctrination in the Chieu Hoi camps, when contrasted with Viet Cong methods and techniques, threw light upon the means and skills that had given the NLF such an advantage in its appeals to and manipulation of the Vietnamese peasant. The essence of the Viet Cong's superiority resided in one crucial factor: the sympathetic, selfless cadre. Washing out peasants' rice bowls, helping them at harvest time, sharing clothes, food and what little money they have with the families that adopted them, Viet Cong propagandists and organization men moved across the villages of Viet Nam by night in the late 1950's and early 1960's cajoling, convincing, and recruiting, hanging every peasant grievance on the "Diem-U.S. clique." This edge was to change as villagers were barraged with counter appeals by the GVN and loyalties swayed back and forth.

Always at hand were the instruments of coercion and violence. Where villages had resisted or doublecrossed the NLF, retribution was quick and ghastly. The statistics of terror mounted hand in hand with the growing demands on the peasantry to supply manpower and taxes to the organization.
But the basic quality of empathy between the peasant and communist propagandist was never lost even as the strain on the infrastructure mounted following the American buildup after the fall of Diem.

In many of our interviews we had indications of the value placed upon behavior and persuasion by the Front as it trained young cadres. Often neophytes would accompany veteran proselytizers as they went in to organize new villages. This respondent, a VC district information officer, tells how he did it:

*Douglas Pike, Viet Cong, MIT 1966, p 102*
"First, I would canvass the village for its size, crops, population, and public opinion as well, the people's likes and what they obviously disliked. Secondly, I would make a house-to-house check finding out which farmers were educated, which ones weren't, which appeals applied to different ones. I would begin proselytizing and propagandizing in favor of the Communist movement. Then comes the training program, either military or political. This involves self defense--teach them how to use a weapon including some practice with the weapons and drill. Then I would write a report explaining how the training was going. You had to be patient with them. I am sure that if a man is reactionary, he can be convinced in the long run either one way or the other." 14

Another rallier, a youth organizer who was involved in recruitment and mobilization efforts in Quang Ngai Province for five years prior to his rally in 1966, told of the methods used to gain young people's allegiance:

"At first we had to live with and get close to the poor people and learn how to guess what their needs were so that we would be able to satisfy their wants. We also had to be exemplary in our behavior. For example, before giving suggestions to the people we must do it ourselves, whatever we wanted them to do. Before they entered the village, the Viet Cong always knew the (local) problems which existed...in my village, especially, there was a problem of class differences....They were very popular, and the cadres talked to the villagers in an open and friendly manner." 15

14 C.H. 12, p 14
15 C.H. 80/95, p 9, 14
A second rallier, a young private who went into a Viet Cong local force unit in Chau Doc province after a feud with his parents, remembers the initial political indoctrination he received as a recruit.

"They put the emphasis on the villages. They showed us how to go into the villages and help the farmers, how to use our own hands to work with them in the rice fields, how to respect the property of the population--not to steal--things like this. I was taught this six hours a day for two weeks."16

A large majority of the hoi chamh interviewed said that Viet Cong teaching was conducted on a seminar basis. No new topics were presented by the Front cadres until previous material was thoroughly understood. Furthermore, in place of presenting material in a lecture format, Viet Cong cadres would outline the day's topic paragraph by paragraph, digest it, and scrutinize it until nothing remained unanswered or misunderstood. When a new topic was introduced, Viet Cong instructors apparently did not start off cold, but began by prefacing their remarks with allusions to current events and local considerations, thereby "warming up" their audience.

16 C.H. 60, p 11
1. **Chieu Hoi Indoctrination**

   A comparison of indoctrination experiences in both the Viet Cong and the Chieu Hoi Centers gave these typical remarks:

   Q. How do the Chieu Hoi teachers at the National Center compare with Viet Cong teachers?

   A. NOTE: Respondent is squinting his eyes and shaking his head.

   There is a great deal of difference between these (Chieu Hoi) teachers and the VC. There, (in Front classrooms) it is very much a democracy, whereas here, this is different. When the hour is over they go (Chieu Hoi instructors). But I don't want to insult anybody out here. I should be careful with what I say. What you should do is study the Program and the reactions of these people (the hoi chanh) much more carefully.17

   Another hoi chanh experienced this reaction:

   "We were not happy about the Chieu Hoi instructors because they were not friendly and did not have much rapport with us. They looked down on us and they had vespas and good clothes."18

   Often young inductees in the NLF are on a first name basis with the cadres.19 Pitching the content

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17 C.H. 33, p 22

18 C.H. 12, p 19

19 This regroupee, cited before, contrasted his experiences with hierarchy on both sides. His statements, possibly a bit overdrawn, ring true. See Appendix F.
to the audience came under severe criticism by the more intelligent hoi chanh also.

"I really don't think it was a re-education course as such. The instructors really don't consider the educational level of them; they just talk, talk and talk. They don't really think of whether these fellows are comprehending it or not." 20

These lectures were often simply read monotonously from a prepared script without audience participation. The indoctrination of hoi chanh usually involved a two-week course of lectures. The content was largely a mixture of anticommunism and nationalism with final emphasis put upon the following memorized "rules of behavior."

a. To terminate the old life with an entirely open heart.

b. To study in order to know the victorious position of the just cause thoroughly.

c. To break with lazy and leisurely ideas, including evading responsibilities and working for form's sake.

20 C.H. 33, p 21
d. To volunteer toward making achievements in order to certify your positive patriotism and define the reason which inspired you to rally.

e. To positively prevent any subversive plot of the Viet Cong for self defense and self preservation—to keep the hoi chanh branch pure.

f. To develop the light of the Chieu Hoi Program everywhere in every suitable circumstance.

A number of hoi chanh interviewed pointed with pride to their recollection of these rules. The priority put upon memorizing these rules of behavior and the hoi chanhs' willingness to recite them suggests some of them viewed our interview as something of an examination.

The course content was made up in Saigon, sent to the Provinces and largely read without break to a lethargic audience with little discussion afterwards. Up to six hours a day would be spent on subject matter of this nature. The ratio of lecture to discussion was four or five to one as a rule, provided any discussion was entertained. This appeared to be in direct contrast to Viet Cong indoctrination classes. The clarity of
the indoctrination also came under criticism by this North Vietnamese Second Lieutenant who went through the Saigon center.

"The Viet Cong employed a better method. They would ask questions. They would write questions out on paper and everyone would sit around and discuss them after the class was over. At each major point of the lecture, they would make a resume which was very clear and easy to understand. Here in the Chieu Hoi Center, they explain things in a vague way. The manner of explanation is unclear; it is much better to have a clear and fixed idea about these things." 21

Possibly the most critical problem in the indoctrination format was this absence of thoughtful discussion after or during the lectures. The length of the lectures themselves could be far too long. Often taught in musty surroundings with a generally forlorn aura to the process, an experience like this young village guerrilla could ruin any enthusiasm he might have brought to the Programs.

A. I sat in a classroom seven hours a day; in the morning from 0800 to 1200 hours and in the afternoon from 1400 to 1700 hours.

Q. How often did the hoi chanh ask questions?

21 C.H. 66, p 13
A. The ralliers had no questions.22

The content and material of the Chieu Hoi indoctrination course were also weak. A misgauging of the audience to the material was prevalent. This is understandable considering that the content of the material was handed down from the Ministry headquarters. The same hoi chanh, contrasting the Viet Cong and GVN indoctrination tactics, made this statement:

"Methods of teaching in the VC are superior to the Chieu Hoi Center. First of all, the Front uses a level of teaching suitable to the education and sophistication of their audience. In the VC they rely on specific examples to a great extent; they show the people exactly what happens. In the National Center they talk in platitudes and general terminology. In the National Center they are talking about Cuba, or international Communism, or Sino-Soviet problems. This is very high pitched and people really don't know what they're talking about. They don't understand world-wide considerations."23

This NVA infiltrator, a First Lieutenant who rallied at Pleiku in May 1966, and who had a long history of experience with both Viet Minh and Viet Cong indoctrination techniques, gave the following critique

22 C.H. 89, p 22
23 C.H. 12, p 19
of the best indoctrination the Chieu Hoi Program had to offer:

"We underwent very intensive, very rigorous and very convincing indoctrination training in the VC every day for several years. I must say that not too many of the ralliers have changed their minds. In the Chieu Hoi Center there are cadres who lead the morning classes, but who leave the men alone in the afternoon classes. These men left alone, fumble around in their discussions. There is no one to guide them or to correct their errors or to point out faults. I think the cadres should informally meet with us in the afternoon in our own sessions, too. I should also add that the classes are not taught with any energy or enthusiasm. They don't seem to pay much attention to the students. Second, the classes are all jumbled up. We were told that there would be classes, especially for squad leaders and ranks above, but when I got here, there are children and women and men of all different levels, and there is no differentiation of talent or education. There is no organization; the classes are poor; the teachers are poor and it seems almost a futile effort."24

This cadre's experience had been duplicated by thousands of ralliers. The less intelligent or poorly motivated hoi chanh simply stood the boredom with typical peasant passivity. The cadres, however, often came away from the weeks of lectures completely disappointed with their stay. They were full of ideas on how to improve the program. Exhibited in Appendix G are the suggestions

24 C.H. 48, p 26