The VN element did not have a translation team but the US element had the capability to translate Vietnamese, English, French, Chinese, Cambodian and Japanese. Documents were always considered to be a very valuable source of information. However, prior to the establishment of CDEC the evacuation of documents from the capturing unit to the Document Exploitation Section sometimes took up to six months. During this time documents were exploited at numerous levels prior to reaching the national level. This caused delays, inability to verify circumstances of acquisition, losses or mix-ups, and inconsistencies. Also analysts along the way tampered with the originals. After exploitation, the results were late in reaching the affected areas or the capturing units because they were forwarded through military postal channels and the recipient units might have been on tactical operations in remote areas. In this case the mail ended up at their rear base camps.

RVNAF document evacuation channel is shown as follows: 5 (Chart 18)

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To overcome this problem, intelligence advisers to RVNAF units and J-2, JGS met the TOE needs of corps and divisions by providing each with a document copier, but after a while difficulties occurred because the machines broke down and there were no qualified personnel to repair them, or the units had no funds to purchase the fluid and paper necessary for the copying process. Coordination with US agencies to whom lavish means were available helped solve the problem. When there were important documents to examine, go-teams were dispatched to do the job right on the spot or photograph the documents for the units while the
originals would be taken back to CDEC for exploitation. At the center, information was exploited within 12 to 24 hours and the units received feedback within 48 hours thanks to daily or special flights. Routine documents were forwarded to CDEC in the same, timely manner. Expeditious and professional exploitation boosted the unit commanders' confidence and made them more willing to urge their subordinates to send the documents in instead of keeping them for a long time as they had previously done.

Storage of documents became easier through the use of 35 microfilm and/or the ADP systems of CICV. Research was made easier through retrieval by filing systems which projected the documents on an 8 x 10 in. screen and reproduced them within five seconds per page for hard copies. Copying document exploitation reports was made easy and quick thanks to Xerox machines which reproduced, photographed, and made enlargements or reductions.

In 1968, captured documents numbered 900,000 pages. Exploitation results showed that only an estimated 10% had intelligence value. This center was restricted to exploiting documents captured in the field and thus did not have access to reference or Communist publications commercially available in such countries as France or Hong Kong. This latter type of material was processed by the US Document Exploitation Center in Japan. This arrangement was detrimental in terms of timeliness and essential elements of information (EEI). Also, in exploitation and interpretation of documents the US and VN elements worked independently of each other. However, results were later communicated to the counterpart element.

On many occasions exploitation results differed because most of the documents were handwritten and hard to read, and abbreviations were frequently found. The US side was handicapped in that it was difficult for US specialists to resolve such conflicts when they were totally dependent on their Vietnamese employees to process the materials. On the VN side, however, when there were important documents or documents which generated differing interpretations, they were immediately retyped into many copies for distribution to the most experienced intelligence
officers of J-2, JGS who would each prepare his own interpretation and comments. This method proved very effective.

Most available documents had been captured by US Forces, primarily because in the first years of their involvement they were responsible for tactical operations while RVNAF units worked in pacification. Moreover, the US military were trained to focus maximum attention on documents. The documents were all in the Vietnamese language and since US personnel could not tell the value of each, they turned in all captured documents.

The routing of Communist documents captured by US and allied forces is shown as follows: (Chart 19)

Chart 19 — Routing of Communist Documents Captured by FWMAF

Symbols:

\[\text{\rightarrow} \quad \text{Routing of documents through intelligence channels or directly to CDEC}\]

\[\text{\leftarrow} \quad \text{Information exchange channels.}\]

RVNAF units paid minimum attention to capturing documents and immediately discarded those they came upon which they considered to be
propaganda. In 1971, a unit of the 7th Infantry Division, RVNAF, staged an ambush in My Tho. The reported results were that two enemy junks had been sunk, five enemy troops killed in action (KIA) and seven K54 pistols captured. When the guns arrived at division headquarters, the division G-2 observed they were of the latest model and that the holsters bore a gold star, all indicative of the high ranks of the users. However, no documents were found. Preliminary investigations showed that the ambushing unit did capture a number of documents but did not give them any consideration because they were too busy searching for additional weapons in the river. Finally, the 7th Division's G-2 had the unit return to the site and a few remaining documents were found. These indicated the Communist team ambushed was made up of battalion and provincial unit cadre.

In this particular case the psychology of the troops was such that they believed capturing documents was not as important as other combat achievements and would cause the operation to be prolonged, pending the exploitation of the documents. Therefore they were not too eager to turn in documents. Still, the Vietnam war did demonstrate that knowledge of Communist strategic courses of action was gained through captured documents. Through lavish means of communication, transportation and operation, and through expeditious and professional exploitation, CDEC made documents an abundant and accurate source of information, and the most trusted in the area of combat intelligence.

**Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC)**

From 1959 to 1965 Interrogation was an organic section of the MI Center/ J-2, JGS. In 1961 the US appointed an officer and an NCO to be advisers to this section. By 1964 the number of US advisers had increased to 50 men. On 31 January 1967 CMIC was officially activated to perform the mission of interrogating important PW and "Hoi Chanh", who were selected for their strategic knowledgeability. These "selected" and "strategic knowledgeability" factors were set forth because, in addition to CMIC in Saigon, there were CMIC of the corps, interrogation sections of the corps and division Military Intelligence Detachments, and inter-
rogators of the sectors. The central CMIC was designed to accommodate up to 63 sources and had 28 interrogation rooms. The Interrogation Center compound was divided into three areas: VN area, US area and joint areas (organizational outlays shown in Chart 20).

The US element had two divisions: support and operations, while the VN element had three: operations, exploitation and editing. The VN exploitation division had two sections: requirements and interrogation. Requirements levied EEI on each PW or "hoi chánh". These EEI were based on general requirements of G-2, JGS or friendly units. The Interrogation Section had several teams, some in charge of geographical areas such as MRs' 1, 2, 3, and 4; others specializing in political, military or economic affairs, or infiltration, etc. Reports prepared by the interrogation teams were forwarded to the Editing Division which synthesized them for clarity, prepared sketch maps of bases from the information obtained, etc. Technical information was submitted to specialists from the engineer, signal, artillery, ordnance, etc. corps for review. This activity on the US side was the responsibility of its Reporting Section. This section also translated Vietnamese interrogation reports into English.

The US element of CMIC had a TOE strength of 98 men plus 40 Vietnamese civilian employees and 12 Vietnamese Military translators (two men and ten women). It was organized as follows: (Chart 21)

Chart 21 — US Element, Combined Interrogation Center

 Diagram showing the organizational structure of the US Element with the following divisions:

- Director
- Operations Division
  - Interrogation
  - Reporting
- Support Division
  - Operations & Document Storage
  - Administration
  - Logistics

98
The VN element had 97 men excluding a Regional Force (RF) company detached from Gia Dinh Sector to assume guard and defense duties at the compound. The VN element of CMIC was organized as follows: (Chart 22)

Chart 22 — ARVN Element Combined Interrogation Center

The interrogation process normally proceeded as indicated in Table 1. When sources arrived at CMIC they were divided into two groups. One group was interrogated by the VN element, the other by the US element. If there were only one source, the VN element usually interrogated him on the first day, and the US element had access to him on the second day. This procedure was changed in April 1971 after it had been determined that a day was not sufficient for any one side to complete its assignment. Subsequently, the Vietnamese were given three days and the Americans two. If the source was deemed to have information which responded to the special needs of the VN or the US element, that element was given priority for interrogation. Interrogation results were exchanged for corroboration and complementing.

Originally, US personnel selected for interrogation assignments were those who could speak Vietnamese, of whom there were very few. Those
Table 1 — Interrogation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogation Section</th>
<th>Requirements Section</th>
<th>Editing/Operations Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source arrives CMIC</td>
<td>Preliminary report prepared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary contact</td>
<td>EEI prepared</td>
<td>Contact coordinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogation requested</td>
<td></td>
<td>Source received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogator notified</td>
<td>Additional contact made with interrogator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual interrogation</td>
<td>Results reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional questions, guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogation report prepared</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reports reviewed &amp; corrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrogation report reviewed</td>
<td>Reports printed &amp; published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who spoke fluently enough to debate with the sources were even fewer. Gradually, US element interrogation had to be conducted through Vietnamese male or female interpreters, all noncommissioned officers, and could not be as effective as the VN element interrogation. The VN element had interrogation specialists who were all officers with long-experience in interrogation, with facility in the Communists language, and with knowledge of Communist organization and OB. Thus these VN interrogators were able to immediately detect any attempts to make false statements. Many of the sources did lie because the common psychology of PW and "hoi chanh" was a mixture of suspicion, fear, and a desire to receive better treatment. It prompted some to lie about their positions or ranks or to exaggerate in their reporting. All sources who came to CMIC were subjected to fingerprinting, photographing and haircutting, and received a towel, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, mat, and a blue uniform. Each source received a daily food ration worth VN$36.50, later increased to VN$49.00, which was equivalent to the daily ration of an RVNAF enlisted man. There were daily sick calls, a physician to care for them, and a dispensary with medics on duty 24 hours a day. The more seriously ill were hospitalized. The International Red Cross occasionally requested to visit or contact the PW, and the requests were granted. Reports made upon completion of these visits were very positive.

Prior to their selection for evacuation to CMIC the PW were subjected to tactical interrogation at the units. Evacuation of PW captured by the RVNAF operational units proceeded as shown in Chart 23.

PW captured by US Forces were moved as indicated in Chart 24.

In addition to the central CMIC in Saigon there were MR/Corps CMICs in Da Nang, Pleiku, Bien Hoa and Can Tho respectively. Interrogation coordination was effected at division level but the procedures were not as clearly defined as at corps level. At this latter level, an

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6 J-2, JGS Directive No 170-1- issued in 1969
Chart 23 — RVNAF, POW Evacuation Channel

Symbols:

- Evacuation channels
- Coordination channels

Chart 24 — US Forces, POW Evacuation Channel

Symbols:

- Evacuation channels
- Channels for exchanging information
agreement signed in April 1969 established the following coordination principles: commanders involved had equal rights to the PW; the operation of the center was Vietnamese responsibility; PW were not to be kept past six months unless specifically authorized by J-2, JGS and J-2, USMACV; logistics were a Vietnamese responsibility. In cases of shortage or lack of logistical supplies, the US side would help, upon joint agreement.

PW were kept at CMIC up to two months, then might be transferred to other national agencies such as National Interrogation Center/Central Intelligence Office (NIC/CIO), MSS or the National Police (NP), or be turned over to the PW camps of the military regions.

When speaking of interrogation matters, it was often believed, and more so by the PW, that they involved torture and inhumane punishment. These conditions existed only in the remote past. The Vietnam war was determined to be a war for the hearts and minds, a war of ideologies, and this concept extended to interrogation activities. The interrogator was trained to believe in the hearts-and-minds approach, and this belief was reinforced with each day on the job. Interrogation by psychological methods produced more and better results and brought the interrogator decent satisfaction and a sense of self-confidence. Communist troops and their cadre were extensively indoctrinated on RVN, society, the RVNAF, abuses, classes, savage torture, etc.

A Communist political cadre at provincial party committee level, captured on his way back from attending a regional-level discussion on the 1968 general attack, stated that he was firmly determined not to disclose any information and was prepared to cope with torture. This torture did not take place. The interrogator maintained an extremely decent attitude, and the subject was detained in a room with a window which allowed him to observe all the activities of the interrogation unit. Another surprise came to him when he noted the democratic
activities of the officers, noncommissioned officers and enlisted men of
the RVNAF, and the very close and non-discriminatory rapport between
them, particularly after work. The Communist attack right inside the
capital failed to cause these servicemen to panic and they continued
to perform their duties in a dedicated and cheerful manner, prompting
the cadre to ponder and to wonder if, after all, SVN did not have a
righteous cause. Even the presence of US advisers in the unit did not
provide him with an indication that there was something abnormal in
the relations between US and VN personnel or in their daily activities.
All these observations finally led him to decide to cooperate with the
interrogator.

Decent treatment came as a surprise to all PW and "hoi chanh". One
"hoi chanh" recalled he had turned himself in at a military base, bringing
along a K54 pistol. He expected to be harassed with questions for infor-
mation of military value. He was surprised to find that the officer in
command treated him in a very friendly manner, asking about his family,
and about life in Communist ranks, as if they were two friends reunited
after a long separation and eager to learn about each other's families.
No mention was made of military information. The pistol he had brought
with him lay on the table, by his side, when it should have been put
away as a precaution.

Facing realities which totally contradicted prejudices gained
through indoctrination was the principal motivating force that prompted
interrogated personnel to cooperate. This cooperation became even more
sincere as the treatment of the source improved. On one occasion, a
high-ranking defector who had returned from regroupment to NVN indicated,
in the course of a conversation, that he missed his family very much.
With the lavish means available to the US side, the family was brought
in to be reunited with the source who never thought this could ever be
done.

Information provided by PW and "hoi chanh" was often of high value.
It would have been a real mistake to determine validity of information
solely on the basis of rank and position. This only applied to the US
and RVNAF people since they were subjected to need-to-know restrictions.
On the Communist side, the policy of group study and discussion of assignments enabled the individual private to gain some insight on strategic intentions and requirements behind the campaign to come.

Interrogation at the various levels and interrogation by the VN and US elements all produced results that were exchanged and consolidated. This allowed those involved to discard false information and make significant HUMINT contributions.

In interrogation, combined and coordinated activities showed that US efforts between 1965 and 1971 were directed at equally sharing the quest for information from PW and "hoi chanh". Beginning in mid-1971, as US Forces gradually withdrew from Vietnam, the number of US personnel assigned to the combined interrogation centers was reduced until there were only one or two left and the activities became more of a liaison than an operational nature.

Combined Materiel Exploitation Center (CMEC)

Of the four combined centers, CMEC was the last established. Prior to that, the VN element was a materiel exploitation section of the MI Center/J-2, JGS whose productivity in terms of in-depth exploitation of war trophies was negligible. Its primary concern with captured materiel was to use them as a basis for protests with the International Control Commission or for displays.

The Vietnam theater frequently saw the introduction of sophisticated arms and equipment from the Communist bloc. New weapons in particular, were used in every general attack to reinforce enemy troop confidence as well as to surprise the RVNAF with unexpected enemy firepower. In intelligence collection, the appearance of new types of arms and equipment at the frontline was always a telltale sign of a Communist general attack in the making. The Communists were cunning in that, despite being supplied with sophisticated materiel from abroad, they pursued their efforts to make some locally for propaganda and motivation purposes.

CMEC was organized as follows: (Chart 25)
CMEC mission was to: 1. Test, evaluate, and categorize captured enemy materiel; 2. Disseminate technical intelligence information obtained and technical publications; 3. Motivate field units to turn in captured materiel and follow up on such activities; 4. Set up and maintain facilities to display captured enemy materiel; 5. Participate in interrogations of PW and ralliers and exploit of technical intelligence documents; 6. Dispatch field teams to visit combat units and provide them with technical guidance when requested.
US personnel assigned to CMEC numbered 93 while Vietnamese personnel numbered only 44. The Vietnamese element was basically organized like the US element except that its administrative and support division was strictly administrative in nature and its functions much simpler than those of the US element. Vietnamese specialists were detached from the various service branches: a medical doctor from the Medical Corps dealt with medical equipment; two Signal Corps officers worked with radio and electronic gear; two Ordnance Corps officers processed weapons; and a Quartermaster Corps officer handled quartermaster items. These representatives took the equipment to their respective organizations for testing purposes as CMEC did not have laboratories. The same procedure applied to the US side, and the usual rule was that only sophisticated arms were sent to the USA for examination and testing.

CMEC's most useful role was the publication of handbooks on Communist war materiel used or likely to be used in Vietnam. These handbooks helped tactical units identify and report captured materiel and equipment. In Vietnam however, the units often proved untruthful in their reporting of new Communist armament, particularly individual weapons identified by the handbooks as sophisticated. Many unit commander kept those trophies as souvenirs or gave them away as gifts to personalities in the administration. The best technical intelligence personnel could do was to photograph these items. Later, as the units were given authority to set up unit displays, many commanders found ways to retain numerous types of crew-served weapons that were captured for the first time.

Communist forces sometimes received arms from the Communist bloc that were not even featured in the handbooks. In 1972, when they used SA-7 heat-seeking missiles for the first time, these weapons were unknown to CMEC. Characteristics of the US Red-Eye missile had to be invoked when attempting to describe the SA-7. The first SA-7 missile to be captured, in Quang Tri Province, was turned over to the US, and so were subsequent catches in order for examination and testing to be thorough. Later, in faithful implementation of a section of the bipartite agreement which dealt with war trophies, a plastic replica of the SA-7 was made for display in lieu of the real thing.
Another weapon that the Communists used for the first time in Kontum in 1972, and caused serious psychological impact on RVNAF armored and infantry troops, was the SAGGER AT-3 missile, designed for use against tanks, boats or bunkers. At Tan Canh, Kontum, in MR-2, RVNAF armored units described the zigzagging flights of the projectiles in pursuit of armored vehicles and the subsequent destruction of the latter as in uncanny, deific battles of ancient mythology. Later the capabilities of the weapon were determined to be significant. This missile was rigged with wiring and the gunner had to steer it. Because of its jumbled wires it was first nicknamed "bach tuoc" (octopus). Firing from an exposed position while the battle was raging frequently made the gunner lose control and miss the targets. This prompted Communist troops to play with words and call the missile "bach truot" (ever-missing), a parody of "bach tuoc" (octopus).

The psychological effect that sophisticated arms and equipment of the Communist bloc initially made cannot be refuted. In this regard, enemy tanks and armored vehicles are not to be ignored. The RVNAF soldiers were used to fighting with tanks and armored vehicles supporting them from the rear. For a period of time they were rudely shocked when facing enemy tanks and armored vehicles for the first time. Later, as they received more advanced antitank weapons, gained more experience, and learned from CMEC of the vulnerabilities of each type of vehicle, the tactical units competed to destroy enemy tanks for rewards. Foremost of the tank-killer units were those defending An Loc.

Originally, CMEC was given authority to have the war trophies either sent to it or kept at the capturing units. Later this authority was passed on to the Central Logistical Command and CMEC was allowed to keep only one sample of each type. This limited CMEC performance and delayed the evacuation of new Communist equipment which came in increasingly greater numbers and types.

In summary, the Vietnamese military intelligence units had to rely on the US for detailed exploitation of technical intelligence. The lack of trained specialists and testing laboratories was an obstacle that was never overcome.
While intelligence cooperation and coordination between US and RVN agencies at the four combined centers and at Collection Unit 101 were based on bilateral coordination, the cooperation at corps, divisions, sectors and sub-sectors was typically an adviser-advisee relationship. This was because US intelligence advisers to field units were part of the MACV advisory system. In reality, this relationship was more cooperative than advisory in nature.

At corps level, the senior intelligence adviser was a colonel or lieutenant-colonel, assisted by a deputy and other officers who performed the same duties as their Vietnamese counterparts in the corps G-2. In terms of coordination, the advisers to the corps G-2 supplied US-acquired intelligence data, particularly information produced by SPAR (Significant Problem Area Report), SLAR, Red Haze, aerial reconnaissance photos and agents. United States advisers also provided office supplies that the Vietnamese did not have funds for or could not find on the local market, arranged for aircraft or helicopters to fly their counterparts on various assignments, supplied equipment not provided for in the Vietnamese TOE, and helped obtain slots in overseas training course.

The corps G-2 supplied the intelligence advisers with information acquired by the VN side, PW or ralliers interrogation reports, refugee interviews, preliminary document exploitation reports and information reported by agents of the Vietnamese nets. This method of cooperation indicated that there was no direct coordination between the Vietnamese corps G-2 and the G-2 of the US Field Force. In most cases, communication was made through the US intelligence advisers. Intelligence cooperation and coordination at division level were confined to the same framework as at corps level.

At sector level, intelligence cooperation and coordination received special consideration because the heavy responsibility for coping with the VCI and local force units was far out of proportion to the meager collection resources available, especially since the one and only
security/intelligence platoon was always engaged in assignments not relevant to intelligence. The sector S-2 staff of ten could not cope with all the requirements. Since sector personnel allocations came from the Regional Forces (RF) there was no way to reinforce sector and subsector intelligence staffs with Regular Army MI personnel. Sector S-2s were also occupied in miscellaneous duties assigned by the sector commanders and could not keep up with new intelligence organizations or directives from the JGS. Generally speaking, sector S-2 advisers had received only crash intelligence training prior to assignment and possessed no practical experiences in the field. As a result, in 1966 there was a requirement for both sector MI officers and their advisers to attend a special four-day training class. Each class had 20 students from ten sectors of the various MRs. The instructors were intelligence officers from J-2, USMACV and J-2, JGS as well as from the combined intelligence centers.

Intelligence at sector level was very complex because the concept of effectively coping with the enemy infrastructure by providing for a firmer friendly infrastructure had led to the establishment of too many organizations and committees at sector level. Sector intelligence committees included the Provincial Intelligence Coordination Committee, the Provincial Phung Hoang (Phoenix) Committee, and the Provincial Security Committee. In addition to advising and cooperating with the sector S-2, the sector intelligence adviser had to coordinate US intelligence activities in the various sub-sectors, receive reports and disseminate information to all places concerned, and provide intelligence support to US/FWMAF units operating in the sector's territory. Sector intelligence advisory teams started out with three men and later were increased to seven.

At sub-sector level there were only two intelligence advisers, both noncommissioned officers with the grades of E-7 and E-5 respectively. Sector and sub-sector intelligence advisers provided office supplies and equipment to the related S-2s, and funds to operate the volunteer agent program, to support the conduct of special operations.
Military Intelligence Detachments (MID)

Though Vietnamese liaison officers were assigned to US tactical units to help in public relations involving both the GVN administration and civilian population, intelligence needs warranted immediate assistance in exploiting combat intelligence information derived from documents, PW, and ralliers because US personnel were not familiar with the Vietnamese language. Originally, a joint concept was formulated that provided for an exchange of MIDs, i.e. Vietnamese MIDs were to be attached to US/FWMAF units and vice-versa. Later it was determined to be unrealistic to detach US/FWMAF MIDs to RVNAF units and only Vietnamese MIDs were detached to US/FWMAF corps (Field Forces), divisions, and separate brigades. Each was structured like an Airborne or VNMC (Vietnam Marine Corps) MID, with 30 men: 8 officers, 18 noncommissioned officers and 4 enlisted men. The detachment had a headquarters, an interrogation team, a document exploitation team, an order of battle team and an imagery interpretation team. The mission of the MID was to exploit on the spot intelligence information obtained by the US units for immediate tactical response. The MID later acted as intermediary for the US unit in contact with local authorities, Regular and Popular Forces (RF/PF) units, the National Police, the "Chieu Hoi" (Open Arms) services, etc.

Because of pressing needs, the MIDs could not have their full complement of men and their TOE was revised to include only 20 men organized into two essential teams: interrogation and document exploitation. An allocation of 360 men was approved for the activation of 18 MIDs. Priorities for assignments were determined by J-2, USMACV. Three of these detachments were assigned to FWMAF (two to Republic of Korea Forces and one to the Australian Task Force).

These MIDs were placed under operational control of the G-2s of the allied units they were assigned to and coordinated with these units' own MIDs. The concept of cooperation was justified because it responded to intelligence requirements, although not every G-2 was entirely satisfied with the MID accomplishments. The reason for this was that in the Vietnamese MIDs, except for the detachment commanders, all other personnel,
officers and noncommissioned officers alike, were fresh out of military schools and basic intelligence training. They did not respond to the needs and were not familiar with the enemy situation. On the other hand, though selected for their English language skills, these very skills proved to be limited. Living in most cases in the same barracks and making the first contacts with a foreign unit proved to be difficult for both sides because of differences in customs, habits and language.

On the US side, counterintelligence (CI) was part of intelligence. This was not so on the VN side. Consequently, some US units insisted that the Vietnamese MID perform CI functions such as checking identification of Vietnamese civilians working in US military installations, investigating illegal activities, etc. To the Vietnamese this went beyond the scope of the MID's mission. These MIDs were subordinate to the MI Center of J-2, JGS but control was ineffective because inspections were conducted only once every six months. Later, the MIDs were placed under operational control of the corps G-2 and the MI Center was restricted to administrative and logistical support. The MID program was gradually terminated as US and FWMAF phased out of Vietnam.

Cooperation and Coordination in Human Intelligence

RVNAF Human Intelligence (HUMINT) units included: Unit 101 of J-2, JGS, the collection sections of corps and division G-2s, and the collection sub-sections of sector and sub-sector S-2s. The Vietnam Navy (VNN) had Unit 701 and the Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) had its own, undesignated, collection detachment. Human sources were the oldest and most basic form of intelligence collection but to the Vietnamese Armed Forces, it was not until 1962 that this concept began to materialize and develop. At this time the 300th Special Detachment was activated with a strength of 388 men. Its mission was to collect strategic intelligence on the Communists, but its operations were limited to SVN territory. From the very beginning it conducted bilateral operations with US elements.

A basic agreement was signed between MACV and the JGS, which defined this coordination in terms of the following basic points: 1. The Vietnamese Communists (VC) were the target of the collection effort;
2. No coordination would be effected with third countries nor would operations be conducted in third country territory; 3. The US would provide financial and material support; 4. Information collected was to be equally shared.

At that time the US intelligence unit coordinating with the Special Detachment was SMIAT (Special Military Intelligence Activities). The 300th had a headquarters in Saigon, a detachment in each MR and numerous teams operating in the provinces. Because of security requirements and the unit's personnel limitations, not every province had a team. The US side was organized similarly and coordination was as much advisory as operational. This fact was very important, because from 1962 to 1975 the activities of this Vietnamese collection agency reflected entirely the organizational concept, operational procedures and techniques of the US collection agency. This peculiarity was beneficial for coordination because both sides shared the same techniques and methods. However, it did not help develop collection concepts and methods consistent with the Vietnam theater.

Though effecting very close coordination in their collection efforts on common targets, each side gradually developed unilateral operations in response to its own needs. On the VN side for instance, the internal political situation in 1963 grew tense with the Buddhist movement opposing the government and thus generated new, unilateral collection needs. This was precisely why the 300th Special Detachment became too well known after the 1 November 1963 revolution. Therefore its designation was changed to the 924th Support Group and it was placed under operational control of the Chief of Staff, JGS, although technical supervision was provided by J-2, JGS.

In 1965, when US combat forces were committed in the Vietnam war, more intelligence information was needed for tactical operations and this collection unit was subsequently expanded. On the US side, Detachment 1 of the 500th MI Group was transferred to the 525th MI group and intelligence coordination was effected through the 149th Battalion of the 525th. After the Communist general offensive of 1968, the Vietnamization plan was put into effect and 924th Support Group was again changed to
Unit 101 under direct control of J-2, JGS. It gradually expanded on the basis of a TOE strength of 918 men. By early 1975, however, because of difficulties in training and personnel, the unit had only 799 men of whom 44% were officers, 34% noncommissioned officers and 22% enlisted men. Unit 101 was organized into a headquarters and six collection detachments. (Chart 26)

Chart 26 — Organization, Unit 101

Detachments 65, 66, 67 and 68 were in charge of MR-1, MR-2, MR-3 and MR-4, and based in Da Nang, Dalat, Bien Hoa, and Can Tho, respectively. Detachment 69 was in charge of operations in the Capital Military District (CMD), border areas and third countries, while Detachment 60 was especially targeted against COSVN only.

The 525th MI Group, its counterpart, was composed of four detachments: the 571st MID in MR-1, the 572d MID in MR-2, the 573d MID in MR-3, and the 574th MID in MR-4.
No longer constrained to its original mission as the 924th Support Group, Unit 101 now reached into Cambodia to support RVNAF cross-border operations conducted in 1970. Unit 101 teams dispatched officers, under the cover of representatives of J-2, JGS and corps G-2s, to the Cambodian military region G-2s and to some important provinces of Cambodia to exchange information on the enemy situation and monitor the tactical situation.

In South Vietnam, because collection operations were conducted covertly, facilities and personnel were placed under civilian cover. Agent handlers were given civilian occupations compatible with their own skills and consistent with the environment in their respective target areas. These occupations included teaching in private schools, operating small businesses, selling hogs, driving cargo trucks, etc. Resources had to be provided to build the cover. The US provided operational funds which helped purchase civilian vehicles and motorcycles, rent safehouses, pay agents, and provide for other expenditures related to collection operations. Vietnamese funds, allocated by the Defense Ministry, paid for only 10% of the necessary expenditures. As a result, the US picked up the tab for the remaining 90%. The US also provided portable SSB radio transceivers for the internal communications system which linked the headquarters to the detachments and teams. In their professional field, US coordinators and case officers advised Vietnamese personnel in all phases of Field Operations Intelligence (FOI). In addition, US Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) organized FOI classes for collection personnel at the Vietnamese MI School, beginning in 1961. In later years the training took place at the US Army Intelligence School in Okinawa.

Though supported devotedly by the 525th MI Group in funds, resources, and technical advice the Vietnamese collection effort met with two major difficulties which seriously hampered its operations. The first one was not unique to Unit 101. As a matter of fact all other HUMINT collection organizations experienced the same problem. It involved cooperation from the sources and the civilian population.
In Vietnam a long standing question was: why was our side unable to set up a "people's intelligence" system i.e. use the populace in an intelligence capacity as the Communists did. The answer to this question was very simple except for an unwillingness to face the truth. One had to motivate the Vietnamese civilian to perform intelligence duties or to cooperate with intelligence agencies. The motivation on the Communist side was that failure to comply meant harsh punishment. However, on the RVN side incentives were hard to find, and there even was a motivating force which produced adverse effects. The people in SVN who lived under the nationalist regime were still very much influenced by Confucian ethics which asserts that reporting on someone else's activity is not chivalrous if the report brings harm to that person. Non-interference with another person's action might also have derived from the Confucian philosophy of "not doing unto others what one shall not have others do unto oneself." This led the Vietnamese civilian to adopt the oft-condemned attitude of "not lifting a finger while the neighbor's house is burning." These views, added to prejudices against the activities of the old French "Deuxieme Bureau" in Vietnam, caused people to look down on those connected with security and intelligence, or those providing information to these agencies.

Prejudices against security and intelligence were gradually washed away with time, but collaboration continued to be ignored by the populace, and most agents cooperated for subsistence rather than for ideals. Even in this case the earned income hardly justified the risks encountered, particularly when going deep into enemy-controlled zones. The Communists were merciless against those they considered spies, to whom they meted out harsh punishment. Many people were assassinated and notes were found on their bodies accusing them of acting as agents for the SVN government, which in many cases was not true. This was why the bona fide agents program designed to induce popular collaboration in return for rewards also failed. The only agents available were mostly professionals who worked simultaneously for several agencies or doctored known information for their own reporting.
An agent once provided Unit 101 with information on enemy forces in an entire MR, complete with extremely accurate details on their cover designators, cover numbers, letter box numbers, organization charts, etc. The accuracy caused such bewilderment among intelligence officers that J-2, JGS had to check with Unit 101 to reascertain the reliability and capability of the source. Later, the source slipped up and was found to be in possession of a MR-prepared document on Communist OB which he had used to write reports on real units but imaginary activities. This is not to say there were no outstanding agents or those with extremely promising potential. However, where such sources were found, active competition developed among the collection agencies and the winner was always the one with the most means and power. Unit 101 frequently saw extremely good prospective sources unexpectedly terminate their services just as they were about to be officially recruited.

The second difficulty encountered in HUMINT was the state of general mobilization which caused all male citizens from 18 to 37 years of age to be conscripted. Personnel of the various intelligence nets of Unit 101 operating under cover were required to have papers certifying the legality of their draft status, draft exemption, or military discharge. As far as agents were concerned, failure to obtain draft deferment for them negated all the efforts to develop them as sources.

The agency which had authority to issue such documentation was the Mobilization Directorate. It refused to do so because it considered such action to be illegal, though the JGS and the Defense Ministry had both approved it for intelligence purposes. Finally, the Directorate approved draft deferment for no more than 30 agents a year and no more than three times each. To fulfill the need for legal documents for the agent handlers, Unit 101 had to resort to forging discharge papers. This, however, was legal forgery in that J-2, JGS and the Mobilization Directorate were given rosters identifying those to whom such papers had been issued.

In addition to the two major obstacles described earlier, there were other difficulties, for example, communications between the agent and his agent handler, and between the agent handler and the team. The good sources who operated in enemy/friendly boundary areas or had access to
contested areas were frequently impeded by tactical operations. Uncom­pleted contacts had to be carried over according to plan, thus causing loss of time. There were no available technical means of communication.

Other difficulties originated from unit commanders, particularly those in command of sectors. They frequently had two conflicting attitudes. Either they suspected Unit 101 personnel of spying on them for J-2, JGS and reporting to the JGS on internal affairs of the sectors or they used them to meet their own needs for tactical intelligence. As strategic intelligence was difficult to acquire, the agent handlers were always willing to oblige by responding to tactical needs, disregarding strategic needs.

The two main difficulties encountered by Unit 101 were the same as those confronting the collection sections of corps and division MIDs, and to a certain extent were the common difficulties encountered by the various agencies in Vietnam in collecting intelligence through agent sources, though the extent to which they were hampered depended on the power of each agency. Generally speaking, though bilateral collection efforts helped resolve the problem of collection means and techniques, they failed to upgrade the quality of information acquired and collection through agent sources enjoyed but a modest position with regard to other collection techniques, even when the 525th MI Group was always there to support these activities during the period from 1965 to 1973. In 1972, this support was gradually reduced until after the Paris Agreement went into effect on 28 January 1973, when there was but a single representative of the 500th MI Group which was beginning to replace the 525th.

Cooperation And Coordination in Aerial Photo Reconnaissance

During World War II, it was estimated that 80% of intelligence information acquired came from aerial photo reconnaissance. This percentage remained the same during the Korean conflict. In the Vietnam war, although no official statistics are available to this date, aerial photo reconnaissance probably accounted for 65 to 70% of the intelligence information acquired.
Unlike the cooperation and coordination in other fields such as combat intelligence or special collection, in aerial photo reconnaissance, the VN side's contribution was rather modest. This was because the US, with its air superiority and abundant assets, bore the brunt of the photo missions throughout the Vietnam war.

By 1960, VNAF had only two C-45 aircraft for air photo missions, both with extremely limited capabilities. In 1965, VNAF was able to organize a reconnaissance squadron and in 1967 this was increased to two squadrons. However, the total number of aircraft was only 13, of which there were three RC-47, one EC-47 and nine U-6A. Aircraft such as the T-28 were modified to become RT-28 for photo missions over areas defended by enemy antiaircraft guns. Later this program was terminated because the equipment was too old and photos taken could not be used for mapping purposes. Not until after the Vietnamization plan had been implemented did the VNAF get to activate a squadron of twelve RC-47 (716th Squadron) and another squadron of six RF-5 (522d Squadron).

Meanwhile, during the same year, 1967, the US had the following reconnaissance aircraft operating in VN: 8

US Army Aviation: 282 Bird Dog 01, 69 Mohawk OV-1, 20 Beaver U-6A.
US Marine Corps: 9 RF-4, 8 EF-10B.
7th Fleet: 27 AEW.

The above force continued to be increased. By 1968, for instance, there were 327 01 Bird Dog observation aircraft and 115 Mohawks. The Mohawks were first introduced into VN in September 1962 after the Vietnamese government had realized that Vietnamese RC-45 and RC-47 could only operate in the lowlands and coastal areas. Six Mohawk OV-1s were

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8 Ibid., p.p. 23, 24, 36, 37, 46.
brought to Nha Trang and Qui Nhon airfields to support the air photo needs of II Corps. A Vietnamese observer participated in each mission. Reconnaissance targets were proposed by II Corps and submitted to the corps advisor for approval and determination of priority before they were forwarded to the 23d Special Warfare Aviation Detachment for execution.

In the first years of its use in VN, the Mohawk proved very effective because the enemy was not familiar with it or with its characteristics. With its high speed, this type of aircraft was able to approach a target undetected. The Mohawk OV-1A was equipped with a KA-30 camera installed under its fuselage for vertical photography and a KA-60 near the nosetip for panoramic photography with a field of view of 180°. The KA-30 camera, with its 6 in. lens, produced photos scaled to between 1:3000 and 1:5000, which were very useful for ascertaining enemy targets and activities. Later, the Mohawk OV-1A was tasked to perform another mission, tactical support, because it was armed with rockets and cal. .50 machineguns. II Corps requested this unconventional support in many emergency cases.

Once the photo flight was completed, US processing of the materials was very expeditious and results were immediately relayed to the requestors for appropriate action. Meanwhile, on the VN side, facilities were scarce. There was a lack of darkrooms, printers, processing paper, and chemicals. Gradually, the Vietnamese units became used to submitting their requests for air photo reconnaissance through US channels and practically ignored VNAF. From 1965 to 1969, the RVNAF were responsible only for supporting pacification and rural development; thus there was not much need for air photo reconnaissance. Besides, photos taken by the US side on its own were sufficient to meet the needs on the VN side. The Mohawk’s coverage was limited but the United States Air Force had aircraft whose coverage was extensive. Combined US Army/US Air Force action ensured better results in aerial photography.

Later, to minimize personnel losses in the face of increasing enemy air defense capabilities, unmanned aircraft were used and their photos proved satisfactory to the users.
Besides aerial photos, of which VNAF was able to contribute but a few, two other air photo reconnaissance techniques were totally new to the Vietnamese: SLAR and Red Haze. Mohawk OV-1B aircraft were fitted with Motorola side looking airborne radars which recorded moving target indications generated by enemy troops as they moved on the rivers or along jungle trails. Later, SLAR was applied for the detection of truck convoys moving along LOCs. Mohawk OV1Cs applied infrared or Red Haze techniques in low-altitude flights to pick up heat energy generated by enemy activities, camps, troop concentrations or staging areas. Many films generated up to 400 or 500 returns. SLAR activity was coordinated with Shadow aircraft (Air Force gunship No 3) which could fly at speeds comparable to the Mohawk’s for timely intervention, or with the artillery warning control center or helicopter gunships for tactical response. Results obtained from picking up energy emissions were not well received because it was difficult to identify the sources of energy: person or animal, or activities, etc. Rain and humidity also restricted collection activities. The RVNAF participated more in air reconnaissance than in air photography. The participation began in 1964 with the assignment of permanent observers to the US Army. These personnel conducted observation and made contact with RVNAF infantry units operating in the target areas. At that time the US had three platoons of O-1 Bird Dog observation aircraft, totalling 53 aircrafts. One platoon was based in Pleiku, one in Nha Trang and one in Can Tho. The participation became more active after 1969, when VNAF activated five L-19 observation squadrons, each with 25 aircraft. These squadrons were located as follows: the 110th in Da Nang; the 112th in Bien Hoa; the 114th in Nha Trang; the 116th in Can Tho; and the 118th in Pleiku.

Aircrafts were assigned on the basis of one per sector and two per division for observation, operational support, directing air and artillery strikes, supporting military convoys and maintaining liaison. Because of the varied duties involved, observation was usually given low priority. By cease-fire day, VNAF received an additional number of O-1 and O-2 aircraft which gave it three more squadrons: the 120th in Da Nang; the 122d in Can Tho; and the 124th in Bien Hoa.
In addition to conducting visual reconnaissance, the observers were trained to operate hand-held cameras, usually Japanese-made with 200-mm lenses for target pinpointing. The US side was also equipped with 4 x 5 Polaroid cameras and sometimes used Kodak Ektachrome infrared aerofilms, as at Ba Den mountain in Tay Ninh Province, to expose camouflaged items. This worked on the principle that metal absorbs infrared radiation, while living plants reflect it quite strongly due to the presence of chlorophyll. Genuine foliage may appear for instance as pale blue, but a bunker or other camouflaged objects will reveal itself by being shockingly pink. The shortcomings of this type of film were its cost and the complexity of processing techniques.

Another technique in air reconnaissance used unilaterally by the US was the airborne personnel detector (sniffer) also known as manpack personnel detector (MPD) which determined the presence of personnel concentrations by the detection of compounds excreted by the human body. To accomplish this, helicopters which carried the devices had to fly not more than 200 feet above the ground at speeds of 80 to 100 knots. The difficulties were a failure to identify man versus animal, exposure to hostile fire because of the low altitude, and the effect of weather conditions, rain, fog, dust on the results. This technique was usually applied to verify enemy troop concentrations reported by agents or aerial reconnaissance and was suitable for areas ascertained to be unpopulated.

Information from air photo reconnaissance was very reliable and the various units competed in asking for more, making it important to ascertain priorities and legitimacy of the requests. On the VN side requests for air photos were directed to the corps where priorities were determined. They were then forwarded to US advisers and J-2, JGS was notified. A Target Research and Analysis Center (TRAC) was set up at Tan Son Nhut and staffed with US and VN Army and Air Force personnel to oversee and satisfy air photo needs. Requests that VNAF was deemed able to fulfill were turned over to the VN side. This was particularly true for the areas in the Mekong Delta. Requests that matched photos available from previous US flights were satisfied immediately if the information derived from these photos was still considered to be valid.
Those photo requests that required new flights would be responded to upon completion of the flights and subsequent processing of the films, at which time the photos would be forwarded to the requestors through regular channels and information copies would be furnished to related agencies.

By cease-fire day the air photo program had fulfilled all the needs of the requesting units, with the US providing 97% of the coverage and VNAF credited with the remainder. The Vietnam Air Force's participation in visual reconnaissance was greater but this program was restricted by the weather, nocturnal conditions, terrain concealment, particularly in mountainous areas, and enemy antiaircraft firepower. The Vietnam Air Force's ability to fill the gaps caused by the withdrawal of effective US support following the Paris Agreement was minimal, particularly in the face of continued requests by the units which had become overly dependent on aerial photographs.

Cooperation and Coordination in Signal Intelligence

In the RVNAF, J-7, JGS was responsible for the acquisition of signal intelligence (SIGINT). On the US side, the Army, Air Force, Airborne, and Marine Corps all had this capability. A basic principle was established which provided for the Army Security Agency (ASA) to be the principal US representative in coordinating and cooperating with J-7 from 1965 to 1970. The National Security Agency (NSA) took over from 1970 to April 1975.

Prior to 1961, Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) was unknown in the RVNAF. However, the Ist Republic did give consideration to applying this technique in intelligence activities. The nucleus of a center for radio intercept was established in Saigon in 1955 under the RVNAF Telecommunications Command with a staff of approximately 80 military and civilian personnel who had had basic radio intercept experience with the French Army. This center had a branch in Da Nang. At that time, the mission was to monitor broadcast from Communist radio stations in Peking, Moscow and Hanoi, as well as free-world stations such as the BBC and the VOA. 9

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9 Information obtained from the BBC and VOA were used to crosscheck domestic news.
In 1961 SIGINT materialized and the US Embassy in Saigon received a request to provide equipment and training support. The unit which first came into being was designated 1st Signal Research and Exploitation Company and placed under technical supervision of the commander, ARVN Telecommunications Command. Another agency was established which took the name of "Special Technical Exploitation Agency" and became subordinate to the Chief of Staff, JGS. This agency effected liaison and coordinated with the US Embassy's Special Liaison Committee which oversaw equipment and training support. This committee was later redesignated the Policy Advisory Committee and consisted of the Special Assistant to the Ambassador (OSA), and the Commander, US Forces, Vietnam (Chief, USMAAG, and later COMUSMACV). Vietnamese specialists were trained by US technical units and gained practical experiences in the fields. American methods proved somewhat advanced as compared with French methods. Some information was thus acquired which was quite accurate but SIGINT was still too new for the RVNAF.

After repeated political upheavals such as revolution and successive coups, the agency in charge of radio intercept at the CIO which in turn reported directly to the Chief of State and Commander-In-Chief, was transferred to the JGS and J-7 thus came into being. The 1st Signal Research and Exploitation Company was deactivated and its components reorganized to become Unit 15.

In addition to the Policy Advisory Committee, the US also had a Technical Advisory Committee which included the commander of the Special Liaison Unit (SLU/US Embassy) and the commander of the 3d Radio Research Unit, 509th Radio Research (RR) Group.

Coordination was effected in the form of bi-weekly meetings to discuss operations, intelligence collection requirements, priorities, and assignments. J-7, JGS supported US units by providing teams to transcribe from Vietnamese into English. With the increasing need, detachments were activated to provide direct support to Vietnamese infantry divisions. In late September 1967 the first three detachments were organized to support the 2d, 22d and 5th divisions respectively. Other detachments were subsequently formed for the remaining divisions.
and they became operational in 1968. Radio Direction Finding (RDF) stations were also established: in Da Nang to support MR-1; in Pleiku to support MR-2; in Song Mao (Phan Thiet) to support MR-2; in Vung Tau to support MR-3; in Can Tho to support MR-4; and in Con Son to support MR-4.

J-7, JGS personnel were trained in airborne radio direction finding (ARDF) from U-6A aircraft in early 1968. In 1970, as the Vietnamization program began, J-7 personnel were trained by the 694th Air Force Security Force in ARDF from EC-47 aircraft. Unit 17 was activated to meet the needs of airborne RDF from U-6A and EC-47 aircraft. EC-47 aircraft were rigged for both intercept and RDF and there were two intercept sections to one RDF section: improvements were made in RDF capability of the Vietnamese to prepare them to replace US units which were phasing out. This system was reinforced by replacing outdated equipment at the MR stations with more advanced equipment. RDF was also directed at urban targets but in this case equipment had to be borrowed from the US. J-7, JGS used 390 and 392-type radios for RDF and AN/PRD-15s for radio intercept. For ground intercept it received 80 radios against a TOE of 120. For short-range RDF it had AN/PRD-3s which were usable in the lowlands but not in hilly or mountainous areas.

Between 1965 and 1968 the US was the sole provider of ARDF information. Between 1968 and 1970 the US provided 95% and the Vietnamese 5%. As regards MRDF information, the US acquired 50% and the Vietnamese 50%. GRDF information was credited on the basis of 65% to the US and 35% to the Vietnamese up to cease-fire day. The 718th Squadron, 33d Wing, 5th Air Division, VNAF, had 33 EC-47 for airborne RDF. Twenty three of these were based in Tan Son Nhat for missions in MRs 1 and 2. J-7, JGS gradually gained credit for up to 90% of ARDF and MRDF information acquired in country. Until cease-fire day the principal US Army unit was the 509th RR Group which consisted of the 146th Aviation Company (RR) in Can Tho, 138th Aviation Company (RR) and 224th Aviation Company (RR) in Da Nang, 175th RRFS in Saigon and 8th RRFS in Da Nang. A team of ten specialists from J-7, JGS was dispatched to coordinate with the US unit in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, which was targeted against enemy activities along the Ho Chi Minh trail.
Signal intelligence proved to be a valuable source of information and was very well appreciated by tactical unit commanders since it provided early warning of enemy troop movements and allowed time to devise countermeasures. This confidence was reflected in the designation of ARDF information as A2 information and everyone but the intelligence specialists swore by A2 information but had no idea what ARDF was.\textsuperscript{10}

Through coordinating operations and communicating results to each other, US SIGINT units disseminated information to US units and advisers faster than to J-7, JGS thanks to secure and rapid communication systems. The lead time was 24 to 36 hours. Vietnamese units received the information from their advisers while J-7 information was used only as a supplement.

Progress in RVNAF Signal Intelligence depended on US support in terms of aircraft, equipment and training. Personnel of this branch were trained in country and later learned further on the job. While cooperation and coordination with the US prevailed, i.e. until the Paris Agreement of 28 January 1973, there was no attempt to identify which information came from which side, probably because coordination was very close and it was deemed that the users had no need to know. Not until after cease-fire day were unresolvable difficulties acknowledged and credit given to the efforts of the signal intelligence branch. This credit aimed at maintaining the confidence signal intelligence had previously enjoyed. However, efforts in this area were gradually reduced in the face of insurmountable obstacles.

\textsuperscript{10}The RVN military intelligence evaluation system was the same used by the US Army. Letters A, B, C, D, E, F are used to indicate the relative reliability of the source while numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 are used to indicate the evaluation of the accuracy of the information itself.
Intelligence Training

The need to train intelligence and security personnel was not recognized until late in 1955. It began with the establishment of a school in Cholon to train officers and noncommissioned officers from the intelligence, security, and psychological warfare branches of the RVNAF. The school was named Cay Mai. Special classes were held for Civil Guard personnel. In 1957 an annex was established in Vung Tau to train the security/intelligence platoons and squads of the sectors and sub-sectors.

The Cay Mai school could accommodate 200 resident students and ten courses. There were 22 different training programs in security and intelligence. Intelligence courses consisted of: 1. Basic Territorial Intelligence Officer Course; 2. Intermediate Intelligence Officer Course; 3. Imagery Interpretation Officer Course; 4. Interrogation Officer Course; 5. OB Officer Course, and the FOI (Collection) Officer Course.

There were three security courses: 1. Basic Security Officer Course; 2. Intermediate Security Officer Course; 3. DAME/DASE Course.

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were trained according to Central Training Command (CTC) instructions and upon completing their training were awarded certificates or diplomas. These were: 1. Certificate of Qualification in MI, first degree; 2. Certificate of Qualification in MI, second degree; 3. Diploma of MI Specialist, first degree; 4. Diploma of MI Specialist, second degree. The same certificate and diplomas were available for Security or Counter-Intelligence specialists.

Courses attended by NCO specialists included: Imagery Interpretation; Interrogation; Order of Battle; and Agent Handler.

From its very inception the Cay Mai School designed its own programs of instruction and prepared its own training materials based on available reference documents which covered both US and French intelligence techniques. United States documents were made available to the Training

\[\text{Defense against Methods of Entry and Defense against Sound Equipment.}\]
Relation and Instruction Mission (TRIM) but they were not complete. In 1956 a US adviser was assigned to the school but his role was very general. He made recommendations on maintenance of barracks and arms, but in training his role was limited to discussing training aids and monitoring instruction and students' morale.

In September 1959 the first US-conducted intelligence course for VN officers was opened in Okinawa to last ten weeks. The second and other succeeding classes placed additional emphasis on training instructors. The Okinawa school then began to provide adequate security and intelligence training materials to Cay Mai. In the succeeding years Okinawa opened special courses such as DAME/DASE for MSS and FOI (Collection) for the 300th Special Detachment. Beginning in September 1960 mobile training teams (MTT) were sent to Cay Mai to instruct personnel of the 300th. Instruction in Okinawa and by the MTTs was conducted through Vietnamese interpreters. Later, however, Okinawa conducted Allied courses which VN officers could attend if they passed the English test. In 1965 intelligence training was stepped up as the US became directly involved in the VN war, and Vietnamese officers were sent to the Intelligence School at Fort Holabird, Md.

In 1968 it was determined that staff coordination between G-2s, G-3s, chiefs of staff, and commanders was not close enough because of a lack of knowledge of the mission and capabilities of intelligence officers. Special orientation courses were conducted for G-3s, chiefs of staff, and unit commanders. These courses were effective in changing the attitudes of the students, making them more inclined to cooperate and coordinate with intelligence personnel.

Intelligence training both at home and abroad had a shortcoming in that it was not consistent with realities of a wartime situation. Staff regulations and procedures were seldom required by the commanders or were followed with great reluctance because they were considered burdensome, dogmatic. To remedy this, intelligence students were sent on field-exercise assignments to the divisions and sectors but results left a lot to be desired because of time limitations. In lieu of classroom instruction, intelligence officers working at central agencies or at corps level
were sent out to deliver briefings on current events and on their own
duties and to visit various intelligence facilities to describe the
capabilities of their own agencies. This was aimed at acquainting stu-
dents with the specialized support available to them on their jobs.
Students were also asked to write intelligence lessons as a means to
make individual experiences known to other students.

United States advisers contributed to training by providing documents
from Fort Holabird or Okinawa, or by participating in courses conducted
by MTT instructors. The most noteworthy example of training coordination,
however, remained in the training of US and Vietnamese intelligence of-
cfers at sector level by intelligence officers from J-2, USMACV and
J-2, JGS.

Documents provided by the US were revised to include typical
situations and field exercises based on factual incidents recorded in
the Vietnam theater. Still, training documents failed to meet the need
to train intelligence officers for an unconventional war.
Military Intelligence Cooperation And Coordination in Vietnam Following United States Military Disengagement

Defense Attache Office, Intelligence Branch

The Paris Agreement of 27 January 1973 called for withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam except 50 servicemen assigned to the Defense Attache Office (DAO). This also applied to US intelligence organizations. They left, taking home their sophisticated equipment, lavish means, and numerous technicians. The US intelligence apparatus which remained in Vietnam after cease-fire day consisted of OSA and the DAO Intelligence Branch.

The DAO Intelligence Branch was an entirely new organization with extremely limited personnel allocations—by previous standards—of 10 military and 97 civilian personnel. Later, the number of military personnel was further reduced to three. The mission of the DAO Intelligence Branch was to collect, evaluate and disseminate information on North Vietnam and the Viet Cong in response to intelligence information requirements levied by the US Army Support Activities Group in Thailand, Commander in Chief Pacific in Hawaii, DIA, and other national intelligence agencies. The organization of the DAO Intelligence Branch is shown in the following chart. (Chart 27)

Chart 27 — Organization, DAO Intelligence Branch
The Liaison, Coordination and Collection Section was the main element of the Intelligence Branch. Its principal effort was in liaison. To that effect it had four teams: Team 1 conducted liaison with Republic of Vietnam (RVN) intelligence agencies in Saigon and at the military regions; Team 2 conducted liaison with N-2, Vietnam Navy (N-2, VNN) and was reinforced with representatives of the 500th Military Intelligence Group from Thailand; Team 3 conducted liaison with A-2, Vietnam Air Force (A-2, VNAF) and was reinforced with representatives of the 7602 Air Force Intelligence Group; Team 4 conducted liaison with Unit 101 and was reinforced with representatives from the 500th MI Group. In its coordination capacity, this section coordinated with aerial reconnaissance units of the United States Air Force (USAF) in Thailand in relation to Photographic Intelligence (PHOTINT) needs, and with J-7, JGS in the area of Signal Intelligence (SIGINT). The Current Intelligence Section monitored the daily tactical and enemy situations and prepared daily intelligence reports. The Security Section was responsible for classified correspondence and documents forwarded to the RVN. The Special Security Section ensured the coordination of counterintelligence activities and requirements, personnel security clearances, and liaison with the US Embassy on counterintelligence and security matters. It also coordinated the activities of US military criminal interrogation teams in Vietnam.

Personnel of the DAO Intelligence Branch were newly assigned. Few had worked for J-2, USMACV. The basis for cooperation and coordination between the DAO Intelligence Branch and J-2, JGS was jointly agreed to be as follows: exchange, on a broad and timely basis, of intelligence requirements and data related to the threat against both parties (US and Vietnam) and therefore of common concern to both parties.

Intelligence data supplied by J-2, JGS to the DAO Intelligence Branch were intelligence data acquired within the scope of its responsibilities and pertaining to South Vietnamese territory. Intelligence data furnished by the DAO Intelligence Branch to J-2, JGS were information pertaining to the areas outside South Vietnam, information on North Vietnam and information related to infiltration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam.
Difficulties Encountered

Under the new situation, after US forces had left and the Paris Agreement went into effect, intelligence data could be classified in two categories: 1) Totally lost, or 2) Limited and reduced. Those data in the first category included: information obtained through SLAR (Side-Looking Airborne Radar), Red Haze and People Sniffer techniques, information derived from sensors; weather indicators from satellites. Data of the second category included: Aerial photographs of North Vietnam and Laos; information from in-country air photo reconnaissance, information from combat intelligence sources; information from agent sources; and special intelligence studies.

The substantial reduction of communications, liaison, transportation and support means made it more difficult to conduct intelligence operations. Intelligence training in Okinawa was discontinued. To fill this gap, in-country courses were planned for personnel of Unit 101 and VNN Unit 701, with the participation of US mobile training teams from Thailand, but only two courses were actually held. The liaison system of the DAO Intelligence Branch was unable to replace the intelligence system of J-2, USMACV in the function of crosschecking intelligence information, tactical information, etc., with the Vietnamese side. It was precisely at this time when intelligence was confronted with numerous obstacles and challenges that the need for intelligence information became more pressing and important, more imperative even, than during the war. The Paris Agreement brought no peace of mind to the leaders of South Vietnam. There was a continuing strategic intelligence requirement to determine the changes in North Vietnam's conduct of the war in the wake of the agreement, the state of rehabilitation of military and economic potentials in North Vietnam and Communist-controlled portions of South Vietnam, and the level of infiltration of personnel and logistics from the North to the South. Other less important but much needed information pertained to negotiating strategies at the four-and two-party commissions, the composition and activities of the Communist delegations, etc.

The standstill cease-fire had brought the Communists an advantage in
that they now had buffer, leopard-spot zones. These were considered by the Communists to be access points to the zones effectively controlled by each side. The Communist objective was to prevent infiltration by RVN intelligence into their zones through these points while using the same points as bridgeheads for their own infiltration into nationalist zones to gather intelligence.

The Paris Agreement gave birth to a new political element, the Third Force, which encompassed the left-oriented political forces opposing the government. Civilian intelligence agencies and the Military Security Department (better known as MSS) virtually diverted their entire efforts to cope with this threat.

None of the armed forces intelligence agencies, J-2 or J-7, JGS, received any additional means to cope with their new difficulties. STRATDAT (Strategic Technical Directorate), too, was deprived of all the means that had given it mobility and it was reduced to reassigning its teams to the military regions to assist them in a tactical capacity.

The combined intelligence centers of the past were ordered merged into a single center designated Unit 306 of J-2, JGS. This reorganization created additional difficulties for J-2, JGS because the TOE was subsequently revised to reflect a reduction by one rank for all job titles while the missions required more effort than in the past. The organization of Unit 306 is shown in the following chart. (Chart 28)

Chart 28—Organization, Unit 306 - J-2, JGS

The Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), was reorganized to become the Intelligence Division or Division I; the Combined Documents Exploitation Center (CDEC) became the Documents Division or Division II; the Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC) became the Interrogation
Division or Division III; the Combined Materiel Exploitation Center (CMEC) became the Materiel Division or Division IV; and the Military Intelligence Center became the Support and Personnel Division or Division V.

Equipment formerly available at the combined intelligence centers was owned by the US side. Because this was costly, sophisticated equipment, it was not covered by MAP-funded TOE allocations. Moreover, the Vietnamese side did not anticipate that the day would come when the Vietnamese element would no longer have access to such equipment. When the US side prepared to pull out, J-2, JGS requested that some essential equipment be left behind. J-2, USMACV agreed in principle but ultimately the equipment could not be transferred to the Vietnamese side because there had been no advance planning for the authorization of such items. Some non-essential items such as filing cabinets, desks, and chairs were transferred to the Vietnamese by their respective US counterparts though they were not TOE-listed. However, this prompted the Logistical Command to order that all such items be turned in to storage depots. In order to keep them for Unit 306 personnel to use, US liaison officers had to resort to signing for them on a loan basis.

Liaison between JGS, military region/corps, division G-2s and sector S-2s ran into difficulties because intelligence liaison flights were no longer available. Documents and correspondence were forwarded through the military postal system. Except where special provisions were made, an average of three months elapsed between the day an enemy document was captured in the field and the day it was received at the Documents Division, whereas document evacuation used to be completed within a week. When the exploitation was completed, it was another two weeks before the results were disseminated to the unit. If the unit were a Regular Army force engaged in an operation in another area, the document exploitation report only reached the rear base, and there was no set time as to when it would reach the MI officer.

Prisoners of war and "hoi chanh" (defectors) were retained at local stations and the Interrogation Division sent teams out to interrogate them whereas they should have been evacuated to the central Interrogation Division as in the past.
Captured material was sent in only if it presented new characteristics, but how could any characteristic be identified as new when not all levels of intelligence were able to recognize the difference? Combat intelligence data acquired were substantially reduced. In 1973 for instance, the enemy targeted his attacks against isolated outposts near infiltration routes, and by concentrating large forces, was always assured of victory. Such battles yielded no PW or documents to help identify the enemy units involved. "Hoi Chanh" now came in smaller numbers and there were no high-ranking ones. The psychology was such that defections came when the fighting was fierce, when the enemy's tactical position was weak, and the RVN had the upper hand. In the seesaw situation of semi-war and semi-peace only the most determined defected and there was a high rate of false defections.

Fewer documents were captured, not only because there were fewer contacts with the enemy but also because the enemy had applied stricter secrecy control measures, forbidding his troops to carry documents during an operational mission. This prohibition occurred after the RVN had repeatedly used captured documents to substantiate its protests of Communist crimes and deliberate violations of the cease-fire.

Intelligence previously acquired through communications means was substantially reduced because the Communists had identified the communications intelligence reliance on overflights. To contain friendly air activities, an additional 20 Communist air defense regiments infiltrated after the cease-fire with sophisticated armament never before observed in the Vietnam theater. Among this new arsenal were SA-2 missiles; modified SA-7 heat-seeking missiles; radar-guided 100-mm, 57-mm, and 37-mm antiaircraft guns; and self-propelled, multiple-barreled anti-aircraft artillery. The air defense perimeter expanded daily and proportionately reduced aircraft operational ranges. Typically in MR-3 enemy 37-mm antiaircraft guns were positioned in Ben Cat, Binh Duong, 15 miles northwest of Saigon. The antiaircraft missile which caused the strongest psychological impact was the modified SA-7 missile. Its effective altitude and speed had been increased, the altitude being increased from 9,000 ft. to 15,000 ft., forcing VNAF pilots to fly above 15,000 ft.
However, RC-47 and EC-47 aircraft could not fly above 10,000 ft. Moreover, photos taken by RF-5s flying above 4,500 or 5,000 ft. were not usable because of the type of cameras mounted on the aircraft. The cameras were the 70-mm KS-92. Photos from these cameras were to cover an area between 400 and 500 square meters and the photography was unusable for mosaics. Furthermore, no VNAF aircraft were equipped with radar lock-on-warning (LOW) equipment. Areas denied to aerial photo reconnaissance were MR-1, the tri-border area and the highlands of MR-2, and the northern part of MR-3. Missions over these areas were very difficult because VNAF had no long range rescue teams. On 22 September 1973, when the Communists launched their first armor-supported attack after the cease-fire against the Le Minh outpost 38 km west of Pleiku, photo aircraft were directed to record the number of enemy armored vehicles and their progress. This was to serve as a basis for a RVNAF tactical response and as evidence of blatant violations of the Paris Agreement. However, it was not until five days later that the flights were conducted. By that time there were no traces left of enemy armored or infantry units. In Quang Duc, MR-2, the same problem occurred when in early November 1973 the Communists attacked the border outposts of Bu Prang and Bu Dop. The requirement then was to determine the locations of enemy armored, anti-aircraft, and artillery positions so that the corps might make counter-attack plans. Wrong coordinates and inclement weather were blamed for a delay that caused the air photo mission to be completed after the counterattacks had been launched.

Beginning on 1 September 1974, reductions in military aid caused fuel allocations and replacement parts to VNAF to drop to 65% of the year 1973. This, in turn, led to a drop of air photo reconnaissance performance to 52% of the previous year. Total flight time for RC-47s was reduced to 150 hours a month, for RF-5s to 45 hours a month. To meet an essential air photo reconnaissance need, J-2, JGS interceded with J-3, JGS to either borrow flight time from the following month or to reduce other flights, but this was virtually impossible. These situations occurred when the Communists launched large-scale attacks as in Ban Me Thuot. In other cases, air photo reconnaissance needs conflicted with the needs to fly tactical air or logistical support.
The Vietnam Air Force could not conduct night reconnaissance as it did not have sophisticated aircraft such as the RF-101 C Voodoo, RB-57F Canberra, RF-4C Phantom or OV-1 Mohawk. After Communist forces had overrun Ban Me Thuot the requirement was to detect enemy armored and vehicular movements from Ban Me Thuot toward MR-3 or the coastal areas of MR-2. Monitoring the lines of communication (LOC) was possible for a maximum of only eight hours a day, which meant enemy forces had 16 hours a day to move undetected.

United States-ARVN Intelligence Cooperation and Coordination
In The Face of New Difficulties

In air photo reconnaissance VNAF could meet only 7 to 10% of the in-country requirements, which meant that 90% of these requirements were still dependent on USAF air photo reconnaissance capabilities called upon through the DAO Intelligence Branch.

Most US aircraft took off from Thailand. Reconnaissance flights were conducted over North Vietnam, Laos and South Vietnam by SR-71 and U-2s. RF-4s provided coverage of Cambodia and a 25 nautical mile-wide corridor along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. Unmanned aircraft, or Buffalo Hunters, were also used in South Vietnam.

In order to ensure secrecy and avoid North Vietnamese protests, information obtained from SR-71 and U-2 missions was not passed to the RVN. Exceptions were made in only very special cases and with DIA approval. Photographs and information obtained by RF-4s were passed to the Vietnamese upon special request and with adequate justification of the need. Unmanned aircraft, or Buffalo Hunters, were the only source of information that the Vietnamese were totally entitled to. These aircraft were launched from DC-130s at an altitude of 20,000 ft, but this was not allowed over Laos territory after June 1974. Thirty to forty flights were performed per month, especially over areas inaccessible to VNAF. Photos thus taken were very sharp and clear. The overflights were programmed four days in advance and occasionally mechanical problems did develop. In some areas Buffalo Hunters were used in a
tactical reconnaissance capacity to provide information in support of battlefield requirements. This occurred, for instance, in July 1974 during the battles of Thuong Duc and Duc Duc in MR 1.

In mid-1974, Buffalo Hunter and RF-4 flight were stopped in Laos. When the situation in the RVN began to pick up in intensity, the US reinforced drone overflights with RF-4 missions in South Vietnam but such flights were conducted at very high altitudes to avoid complications which might develop should any be shot down.

Photos from Buffalo Hunter missions were originally delivered by aircraft to the Vietnamese in three days. Later this was reduced to a day. Prior to receiving the photographs the Vietnamese were given readouts by messages. The photos consisted of three duplicate positives, mission traces, select prints, and vu-graph slides. Of the three duplicate positives, one went to VNAF Imagery Interpretation Center, one to Division 1/Unit 306, and one to the military region concerned.

The two Vietnamese Army and Air Force Imagery Interpretation Centers usually re-interpreted and reprinted the duplicate positives for distribution to the areas concerned. Re-interpretation served a purpose. A photo, for instance, was interpreted by Nakhon Phanom (NKP) as showing NVA T60 medium tanks on RVN territory. Verification of this information was of utmost significance as North Vietnam had not been known to have such tanks. Re-interpretation indicated these were only T-54 or T-59 tanks. Finally, another overflight was conducted over the target area and DIA interpreters identified the tanks as T-54s and T-59s. Additional prints made by the VNAF Imagery Interpretation Center were sent to the air divisions, but they did not reach them until three days later. The Imagery Interpretation Section of Division 1/306, for its part, used hotlines to relay readouts to the corps and divisions concerned. They also sent selected prints but these did not reach the recipients until a week later.

In urgent cases, a method commonly used for delivery was to carefully package the prints and take them to a civilian terminal. There they were entrusted to passengers on Air Vietnam's domestic flights who were deemed reliable such as high-ranking military officers on TDY or leave, or
members of the clergy. Identification of these passengers, the flight number, flight time, etc., were then transmitted to the local agency which sent personnel out to meet the plane. This became the prime method used by RVN military intelligence to ensure expeditious delivery of documents.

The US and RVN held many discussions as to how to improve the photography process. In June 1974 they came up with an immediate solution and a long-range solution. The immediate solution called for replacing the obsolete KS-92 cameras with KS-121s for the four RF-5 aircraft. Testing showed that the KS-121 had twice the resolution and three times the accuracy, in addition to many other advantages. This program was to fulfill its objective within six to nine months of the signing of the camera purchase contract. The second solution provided for F-5Es to be used in aerial reconnaissance. These aircraft could be outfitted with KS-121s for photographing from low-to-medium altitudes, or with KA-95s for medium to high altitudes. Purchasing the KA-95s alone would have cost $7.5 million. The KA-95s and the KS-121s would have cost $13.5 million. If approved the program was not expected to fulfill its objective before mid-1977. However, till the very last day it remained in the stage of a project.

In late 1974 another effort was undertaken in the form of a project to equip C-130s with F 638-120 cameras to be borrowed from the Air Force Logistics Command. This did not materialize either because the cameras were not available.

As a substitute source of air photos, hand-held cameras received special consideration. However, VNAF hand-held cameras had only 200-mm lenses and the high altitudes of the flights were not conducive to sharp photos. A 600-mm lens would have been the minimum but even so, VNAF was not able to borrow more than one. The ideal lens would have been the F:11 1000-mm Yashica which did get proposed but for which no funds could be obtained.

The difficulties encountered by VNAF impacted seriously on the SIGINT program of J-7, JGS.
Though J-7, JGS had 33 EC-47 aircraft, one was destroyed by an attack by fire while at Tan Son Nhut airbase in late 1973 and two others were downed by SA-7s over northern Tay Ninh in May 1974. Of the remaining 30, a theoretical operational status of 50% or 15 aircraft a day was prescribed but in reality only 33 to 35% of the aircraft were operational on any one day because of lack of maintenance or personnel, or because the targets were located too deep in enemy territory. For example, of the ten EC-47s based in Da Nang, four should have been available for daily overflights. On many occasions, however, only two were serviceable. An effort was made to improve the EC-47 program by adding 7 more to raise the total force to 40 aircraft and the number of daily flights to 20 but this project never materialized. Actually, with the enemy's new air defense capabilities in the South, only RU/JU-21s could operate over enemy-controlled areas thanks to their altitude of up to 26,000 ft. and their speed of 180 knots versus an EC-47 altitude of 10,000 ft. and speed of 120 knots. Communist countermeasures were another obstacle to ARDF. Once an EC-47 entered a target zone, it took five to ten minutes to pick up radio signal and three lines of bearing (LOB) had to be obtained for a target fix. In the wake of the cease-fire the Communists frequently used 2- to 5-watt radios with very short ranges which, added to the rugged features of mountain and forest terrain, made intercept very difficult. In addition, they used FM voice communications which the EC-47 could not pick up as it was not equipped for DF/FM voice intercept. The Communists also used landlines whenever they could. A comparison in 1974 based strictly on the number of aircraft dedicated to ARDF would show that the capability for this type of mission had dropped to about 1/3 of the 1972 capability. Moreover, each flight was reduced from eight hours to five. Furthermore, a situation which received very little attention prevailed during the period from late 1973 onward. In the face of increasing costs of living, military pay remained stationary and therefore military personnel had to reduce their consumption of nutrients. As a result, their productivity dropped markedly after three flight hours.

Five ground stations at Phu Bai, Pleiku, Song Mao, Vung Tau and Can Tho constituted the backup for the ARDF program. The HFDFs, with
their high frequency direction finders (HFDF), did not produce effective results; however they were useful in locating target areas for ARDF coverage. These centers were equipped with AN/TRD-15s which were not as advanced as the AN/TRD-23s. There were only 80 such direction finders against 120 authorized, and by late 1974 only 50 were operational. To replace them would have required funding and a delay of a year from the date of order to date of delivery.

While PHOTINT and SIGINT encountered numerous obstacles resulting from US troop withdrawals, the obstacles were minimal in the area of HUMINT. Before leaving, the 525th Military Intelligence Group had transferred to Unit 101 and MSS all transferrable equipment, including 17 radioteletypes. It had also trained 50 NCOs for five weeks to replace personnel of the 504th Signal Detachment in operating these radio sets. To improve Unit 101 intelligence reporting, an automatic data processing (ADP) program was set up which provided for the encoding of intelligence information reports (IIR). The 525th also trained a key puncher for two weeks and experimented with encoding Detachment 69's IIRs. However, the CICV computer had been removed and Unit 101 had to use the ADP facilities of JGS. Shortage of qualified personnel to run this program caused it to make no further progress. After the cease-fire the US representative was a member of the 500th MI Group's Special Activities in Thailand. This group continued to fund Unit 101's operations. Bilateral operations of the past were now conducted solely by Unit 101 personnel. However, from a technical point of view, these personnel had by then become extremely proficient and the results showed no negative effects of a change to unilateral operation. On the contrary, unilateral operation gave them opportunities to test new methods. Furthermore, the 525th MI Group left barracks and quarters which provided more housing for Unit 101 families, thereby boosting its personnel morale.

Generally speaking, the cease-fire entailed a substantial reduction of intelligence sources and collection means, particularly PHOTINT and SIGINT means. Those difficulties of a financial nature could not be resolved because funds were just not available. This was why efforts to overcome PHOTINT limitations could not succeed though many projects had

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