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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF US ARMY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS AND CONCEPTS IN VIETNAM, 1965 - 1969

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GROUP STUDY PROJECT

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US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
8 March 1971

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This research project analyzes the role of intelligence in the Republic of Vietnam during the 1965 to 1969 period to determine principal measures needed to improve the intelligence support required by US military tactical commanders. The scope includes a review of intelligence concepts and doctrine, the use of selected technical methods for intelligence collection, the advisory contribution and the HUMINT effort. Specific problems of critical importance in the development of future intelligence concepts and doctrine are identified and discussed as a basis for the recommended actions presented in the final chapter. The theme of this project is that the US military services were ill-equipped for intelligence operations in the Vietnam conflict, ~~and current doctrine and operational concepts are deficient~~, and that considerable attention must be given to the development of intelligence support for tactical commanders in the future.

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CHAPTER I (U)

INTRODUCTION

The reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is foreknowledge.¹

Despite the fact that foreknowledge--or intelligence--has been accepted as a cardinal principal in the conduct of warfare throughout recorded history, at the time of the major force build-up in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), United States civilian and military intelligence capabilities were far less than optimum.

As is well-documented elsewhere, the US commitment in the RVN began after World War II with our efforts to assist the French. Until the 1954 Geneva Accords were reached, the French had an effective "hold" on intelligence throughout Southeast Asia (SEA) which they shared with the US. After 1962, French participation ebbed and the US was left entirely to its own devices to satisfy the intelligence requirements of the times. From 1962 to 1965, the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV) made some efforts to establish intelligence collection and counterintelligence capabilities in the RVN, but never achieved adequate analytical or production capabilities to provide timely intelligence to "consumers." Instead, almost total commitment was directed toward establishing intelligence advisory support to the Republic of Vietnam Armed

¹Sun Tzu, The Art of War, trans. by Samuel B. Griffith (1963), p. 144.

Forces (RVNAF), to include unconventional warfare training by US Special Forces elements. Until 1965, the J-2, MACV concentrated on his advisory role and, consequently, placed little emphasis on the planning aspects for the eventual commitment of considerable US forces in the RVN.

From 1965 to 1966, as major US combat units arrived in-country, the entire MACV staff was required to reorient itself from the advisory role to one of active combat operations. Because of the lack of planning for the buildup, US military intelligence support proved to be inadequate for a period in excess of two years. Fortunately, personnel and resources were able to become effective just shortly before the North Vietnamese Tet offensive of January, 1968. As intelligence concepts, doctrine and techniques continued to be refined, tested and revised after Tet, the support provided tactical commands improved continually in both quantity and quality.

This paper reflects an effort to review only selected intelligence activities in the RVN during the 1965 to 1969 period and to highlight and isolate selected major problems and strong points of the Military Intelligence contribution to the Vietnam conflict. Certain areas are recommended for further study to preclude similar mistakes in the future. Two specific areas are given detailed treatment in this regard. What did the US military learn in terms of joint and combined intelligence doctrine, to include concepts and organizations during the buildup and operational phases of the conflict; and, what must be changed, reviewed or further studied

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in the fields of intelligence organization, technology, covert collection and advisory efforts?

It is recognized that no analysis of intelligence operations in the RVN would be complete without consideration of SIGINT, ELINT, CODEWORD and other special categories of intelligence operations. However, coverage of these aspects of the overall intelligence role is not possible because the personnel involved in this research project are not currently authorized access to materials of this type. Further, inclusion of especially sensitive information herein would severely restrict the authorized dissemination of this completed project thereby negating one of the primary reasons for its completion.

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A second major area which is not examined is that of surveillance and target acquisition to include requirements for new organizations, equipment and manning levels. Studies and field tests, such as TARS-75, TASCIV II and Project MASSTER all recognize the need for new doctrine, techniques, equipment and personnel to provide adequate combat intelligence support for the tactical commander.

In September 1970, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Headquarters, Department of the Army directed the preparation of a monograph on the history of intelligence in the RVN. Over 150 questionnaires were sent to officers who were involved in the establishment and operation of intelligence in Vietnam. Most of those questionnaires were made available to the authors of this research paper along with selected documents, regulations, studies and reports. That material formed the basis for this paper,

C but was supplemented by additional interviews, documents, records and reports on file at the US Army War College, the US Army Intelligence School, the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, and the Military Intelligence Branch, Headquarters, Department of the Army.

CHAPTER II (C)

BACKGROUND (U)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the background and events leading up to the major involvement of the United States in ground combat in South Vietnam. Sufficient history, environment, geography and enemy situation will be provided to properly set the stage for a detailed analysis and review of the US Intelligence buildup in South Vietnam beginning in mid 1965 which will be covered in the following chapters.

(U) ENVIRONMENT

South Vietnam, located on the eastern side of the Indochina peninsula, contains about 67,000 square miles. It has 1500 miles of seacoast on the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. Its western border with Laos and Cambodia is ill-defined. It shares a boundary with its prime antagonist, North Vietnam, at the 17th parallel along a 45-mile demilitarized zone (DMZ). Both its land borders and sea coast present major problems in effective control. Of even greater significance was the presence of complex ethnic religions and languages scattered throughout South Vietnam. These ethnic factions, such as the South Vietnamese, North Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmers, Montagnars and other groups, often retarded the intelligence effort due to their cultural conflicts.

(U) CLIMATE AND WEATHER

The climate is subtropical in the north and tropical in the south where the mean temperature is about 80° F. 100° temperatures in the south are not uncommon. The major climatic factor is the monsoon of which there are two distinct seasons. The southwest and northeast monsoons occur in summer and winter and dominate the country. Rainfall is heaviest in the north along the coast and averages about 120 inches.

There are two seasonal alterations which influence the weather through the year. The summer, or southwest monsoon, begins in May and lasts through September. The winter monsoon normally begins in September and lasts through January. The dividing line between the influence of the two monsoons is the Annamite Mountain Range. In the area influenced by the southwest monsoon rainfall is heaviest in the north and becomes progressively lighter in the south. The rainfalls of the northeast monsoon are also heaviest in the northern area of its influence and lighter in the south.

(U) MILITARY GEOGRAPHY

South Vietnam is militarily divided into four major military zones, numbering north to south from one to four, and the Capital Military District. The terrain varies greatly from Corps area to Corps area and has special implications for air operations, ground combat and intelligence operations.

I Corps Tactical Zone. I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) covers some 11,000 square miles or about 17 percent of the total land area of South Vietnam. There are five governmental provinces with a population in the order of two million people, or about 15 percent of the total population. The bulk of the two million people live in the coastal lowlands, which constitute a narrow flat plain that extends from the sea to the foothills of the mountains. The bulk of the terrain in I CTZ is the highland region consisting of a chain of rugged mountains extending the length of the area from north to south. The mountains are characterized by steep, rocky slopes, sharp crests, and deep narrow valleys. The valleys are of lush tropical evergreen forests.

II Corps Tactical Zone. II CTZ covers 30,000 square miles or approximately 45 percent of the total land area of South Vietnam. The CTZ is divided into 12 provincial units and has about 2.5 million people. Again the majority of the population is located along the coastal regions. There are three distinct areas in II CTZ, the first being the coastal lowlands consisting of a series of flat river plains bisected by spurs of the Annamite Mountains. Sandy and silty beaches, wide flat-floored river valleys, marshes and rice fields make up the area. The next area is the highlands that are formed by the mountains and rugged hills which extend to the border of Laos and Cambodia. The area is characterized by steep, boulder-covered slopes, sharp crests, and deep narrow valleys with tropical evergreen forests. Further south in II CTZ, the mountains give way to a plateau region which forms between the mountains and

the Cambodian border. It is a typical rolling hills area with mountainous area in the extreme northern and southern sections. Vegetation consists of cultivated fields, grassy areas, bamboo and secondary forests.

III Corps Tactical Zone. III CTZ covers 11,000 square miles or about 17 percent of the total land area in South Vietnam. The area has 11 provinces and its population numbers about four million or just over 35 percent of the total population. The major populated area is Saigon. Most of the land in this area is rolling hills, plains, and dense jungle. There is a small section of the highland on the north consisting of rugged, forest-covered hills. The eastern part of the CTZ is on the coastal plain with its sandy beaches, wide flat-floored valleys and rice fields. A small section of the Mekong Delta is located within the southern boundary of III CTZ. The Capital Military District consists of the City of Saigon and Gia Dinh Province.

IV Corps Tactical Zone. IV CTZ has 14,000 square miles and about 21 percent of the Vietnamese land area. There are 15 provinces containing about five million people, or in the order of 40 percent of Vietnam's population. The area is completely within the Mekong River Delta. It is characterized by an extensive flat, poorly drained plain which is sharply cut by a network of large and small rivers, streams and canals. Rice paddies are the predominant type of ground surface along with interspersed marshes and swamps. Mangrove swamps are found along streams and the coast. Flooding caused

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either by the monsoon or by controlled flooding dominates the area for the better part of the year.

(U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ THE VIET CONG THREAT (U)

(U) The Vietnamese War had its roots in the temporary settlement of the Indochina question in July 1954 when the Geneva Accords ended almost 125 years of French dominion. The North Vietnamese Communists' first order of business was to consolidate their victory in the north and they undoubtedly believed that they would achieve their objective of complete control of all of Vietnam by either the reunification elections stipulated in the Accords in July 1956 or possibly by default, if the weak government in South Vietnam (SVN) collapsed as many observers predicted. North Vietnam's reunification dreams received a serious blow on 16 July 1955, when Ngo Dinh Diem, the surprisingly successful head of the Saigon Government, made it quite clear in an official statement that his government did not feel "bound in any way by these (Geneva) agreements signed against the will of the Vietnamese people."¹ In response to this move, North Vietnam (NVN) formed the Vietnam Fatherland Front designed to rally all Vietnamese to the cause of reunification.² From 1955 to 1959, the Communists worked to secure their position in the North and began their preparations for armed struggle

¹Ngo Dinh Diem, "On Elections in Vietnam," Embassy of Vietnam Press Service, (22 July 1955).

²Hoang Quoc Viet, et al., Vietnam Fatherland Front and the Struggle for Nation Unity, (1965), pp. 15-55.

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in the South. In May 1959, the Communists called for a violent revolution in the South and publicly called for their compatriots in SVN to launch a new phase of action.³ Also in 1959, NVN took steps to resolve its pressing border problem with Laos and actively intervened in support of the local Communists in a short operation which effectively strengthened its border and gained control of certain areas along the Laotian Panhandle in anticipation of future requirements for support of the struggle in SVN.⁴ There was a marked increase of Viet Cong (VC) initiated incidents in 1959-1960 in the South and it rapidly became apparent that the Communists had launched a military campaign to bring down the Diem Government. Hanoi announced to the world that it was going to promote and support "revolutionary struggle" in the south. By late 1960, Hanoi recognized that greater support by the masses in the South was necessary if the revolution were to succeed, and several steps were taken to create mass support. These included the founding of a Liberation Army, a National Front organization and the reestablishment of Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). By 1962, the VC forces had progressed to the point at which secure base areas had been established, an infiltration route had been completed from NVN almost to Saigon, and some 20,000 hard-core troops supported by some 60,000 irregulars and part-time guerrillas were

³ US Central Intelligence Agency, The Attitudes of NVN Leaders Towards Fighting and Negotiating, (25 March 1968), p. 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

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bringing increasing pressure on the Diem Government.⁵ [Enemy pressure increased and from the battle of Ap Bac in January 1963, to the widespread terrorism following the overthrow of the Diem Government in November 1963, it became increasingly evident that the VC were winning the insurgent war. Hanoi, sensing the weakness of the South Vietnamese military and political capabilities, believed their goal was within reach and the time was at hand to begin mobile warfare.⁶] In pursuit of this objective, regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units were introduced into SVN to accelerate the transition to a more conventional war. Probably embittered by the survival of the GVN in the face of extensive political and civil turmoil and disappointed by the inability of the VC to consolidate their gains, the North Vietnamese sought to swing the balance of power more decisively towards the insurgents.⁷ Apparently the Communists misread US intentions in Southeast Asia, believing that the US would not intervene with ground forces and the RVNAF was too impotent to defeat the combined NVA and VC forces.

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(C) By 31 March 1965, J2 RVNAF estimated Communist troop strength to consist of at least 53,000 troops organized into ten regiments and seventy-two battalions located as follows:

⁵US Department of The Army, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Special Study on Tet 1968 (U) SECRET NOFORN (September 1969), p. 4.

⁶US Department of State, Aggression from the North: The Record of Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Vietnam (February 1965), p. 7.

⁷US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Assistant Chief of Staff, J-2, Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam, Strategy Since 1954, (June 1967) p. 30.

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I CTZ 8,000 troops organized into 1 regiment and 13 battalions
II CTZ 12,000 troops organized into 3 regiments and 17 battalions
III CTZ 15,000 troops organized into 3 regiments and 21 battalions⁸
IV CTZ 17,500 troops organized into 3 regiments and 21 battalions

(U) (C) Later intelligence and events would prove that the 31 March 1965 estimate of enemy strength was considerably below actual Viet Cong strength. In addition, the battles of Plei Me and Ia Drang Valley would confirm the presence of two additional NVA regiments, one having been in-country since December 1964. NVA infiltration of both units and replacements was rapidly increasing in response to the US ground force buildup. Enemy combat troop buildup would continue and reach its high point in January 1968, just prior to the Tet Offensive.⁹

(U) THE NATURE OF US INTELLIGENCE INVOLVEMENT 1954-1965

US military intelligence interests over the years from 1954 and the end of the Indochina War had been served by the attache system, other national intelligence agencies, and, to a lesser degree, by the MAAG and MACV. All provided intelligence reports, assessments, estimates and general reporting on events of interest in their respective areas.

⁸US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Assistant Chief of Staff, J-2, MACV J-2 Order of Battle (U) CONFIDENTIAL (31 March 1965). (At this time, MACV published Order of Battle in bilingual format (English-Vietnamese), but for all practical purposes it was a Vietnamese document. J2 MACV did not have the capability to do more than spot check the RVNAF product.)

⁹US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Assistant Chief of Staff, J-2, MACV J-2 Order of Battle (U) CONFIDENTIAL (31 January 1968).

In 1964, the offices of the Armed Services Attaches were abolished to reduce the number of reporting channels to Washington and J2 MACV assumed the responsibility normally performed by the Service Attaches.

(U) ADVISORY EFFORT

Prior to the start of the buildup in 1965, the US military commitment consisted of a large advisory element with teams deployed to tactical units at battalion/squadron level. The Sectors (Provinces), numbering 43 at that time, had an advisory team assigned, and 103 Subsector (Districts) also had advisory teams. The Army advisory element, Marine Advisory Unit, the Air Force Advisory Group, the Naval Advisory Group, and the MACV staff and staff advisory elements were included in a single Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) dated 1 September 1964. The US Army personnel totaled nearly 15,000. About one-third were acting in advisory roles or as staff support for the advisory effort. The other two-thirds were providing combat support and combat service support to RVNAF and US advisors.

~~Until July 1965, MACV with only an advisory role in intelligence, did not have the intelligence units, specialists, communications, equipment, and facilities to properly acquire and process timely information which was received from Vietnamese counterparts.~~

Chapter IV covers more detail on the advisory effort; however, the almost total absence of military intelligence advisors at Sector and Subsector, the reluctance of the Diem regime to cooperate on

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matters of intelligence and the absence of a clear concept of joint and combined intelligence operations between the US, the Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF), in-country and the Vietnamese prevented the development of a truly effective, country-wide intelligence effort. As the military effort in Vietnam began to grow in 1965, and the transition from the advisory role to a combat role took place, the military intelligence effort had to grow to meet the needs of the combat situation. The new J2 MACV also recognized that the past efforts of the intelligence advisors had been unheeded by their Vietnamese counterparts and had often caused some resentment because the advice offered had been considered a form of criticism by some counterparts.

~~(S)~~ ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ COLLECTION (U)

As early as 1959, the G2 of USARPAC recognized the need for ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ collection effort in South Vietnam. By late 1960, bilateral agreements were signed between the RVNAF and the US Army's 500th Military Intelligence Group with headquarters in Hawaii. The agreements allowed for bilateral and unilateral collection operations. A Special Military Intelligence Activities Team (SMIAT) was established in-country to work with and advise the RVNAF in collection operations.¹⁰

¹⁰Interview with Glenn E. Muggelberg, COL, US Army Advisor Group, California National Guard, CONFIDENTIAL Fort Meade, Maryland, 16 October 1970.

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COUNTERINTELLIGENCE (U)

During the negotiations in 1960, certain assistance was provided in the counterintelligence (CI) field as well. In addition to providing training advice on CI operations, a special microfilm team was provided to microfilm the RVNAF CI archives which contained names of Communists and other insurgents dating back to the end of World War II.¹¹ With the establishment of MACV on 8 February 1962, a US Army 704th Military Intelligence Detachment (Counterintelligence) (704th MID) was assigned to support MACV headquarters. The 704th MID was also colocated with the Vietnamese Military Intelligence Service (MSS) and tasked to advise the MSS. The MSS has always had a mission which is nearly a carbon copy of a normal CI mission assigned to a US Army CI unit, but for years it had been used as a political tool by the Vietnamese government leaders. As a result it had not performed the classical role of military counterintelligence, but rather political intelligence. It supported the government in power and did not focus on the Communists' insurgency developing within the country as it should have done.¹² A more detailed discussion of the development of clandestine and CI operations will be covered in Chapter V.

¹¹During the period following US involvement in 1965, efforts were made by both J-2 and other US intelligence personnel to locate the microfilmed records with no success.

¹²John W. Downie, COL, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army CONFIDENTIAL Washington, 18 September 1970.

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INTELLIGENCE CONTINGENCY PLANNING 1963-1965 (U)

(U) There is little evidence of serious contingency planning for intelligence support in the event of increased involvement in the Vietnamese War. The only headquarters where forward intelligence planning was accomplished was USARPAC, when in the fall of 1964, the ACoS G2 requested and received a Military Intelligence production battalion. The 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, was scheduled for deactivation and consisted of the battalion headquarters, interrogation company, and a linguist company. USARPAC requested that from these assets a production battalion be formed consisting of an order of battle section and an area analysis section, along with the necessary support and headquarters personnel. The battalion was reorganized and deployed to Hawaii in April and May 1965. Upon arrival it began an extensive area orientation training and on-the-job training concurrently with its assigned production missions from Intelligence Division, G2 USARPAC.¹³

~~(S)~~ Concurrent with improving USARPAC intelligence capability, the G2 had his staff prepare an intelligence force structure and organization for both Vietnam and Thailand. The G2 took these plans to Vietnam and Thailand in May 1965, and briefed the recommended organizations to the J2 staff and COMUSMACV, who indicated the recommendations were sound and directed his staff to study

¹³ Interview with Daniel O. Graham, BG, Director of Estimates, Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, 14 February 1971.

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them and take the necessary actions to implement them. From Vietnam, G2 USARPAC went to Thailand where he presented the Commanding General of the MAAG a similar plan for Thailand. In both cases the plans submitted included the necessary staff work necessary for the local command to go through channels to request the authority and forces to establish the recommended intelligence organizations.¹⁴

(U) CONUS INTELLIGENCE BASE 1965

In July 1965, at the time the decision was made to begin the buildup in Vietnam, the CONUS Military Intelligence base consisted primarily of those TO&E Military Intelligence (MI) units stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The units were oriented, equipped and trained for deployment in support of CINC-STRICOM's area of responsibility in MEAFSA. The units were understrength, and, in most cases, the required linguistic talents were nonexistent. Additionally, the airborne elements were subject to commitment at any time as part of either the 101st or 82d Airborne Divisions.

The units that comprised this CONUS base were as follows:

- 525th Military Intelligence Group (525th MIG)
- 1st Military Intelligence Battalion (Air Rcn & Spt) (1st MIBARS)
- 519th Military Intelligence Battalion (Field Army) (519th MIB)
- Attached Technical Intelligence detachments
- Armed Forces Censorship Detachment

¹⁴Interview with Joseph A. McChristian, MG, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army CONFIDENTIAL Fort Meade, Maryland, 22 September 1970.

All of the foregoing units, except the Armed Forces Censorship Detachment were deployed to Vietnam in 1965. Upon their departure, the capability to support contingency requirements of CINC-STRICOM or any other command did not exist.

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CHAPTER III

US MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BUILDUP 1965-1967 (U)

At the time the decisions were made to employ US ground forces in an offensive combat role, COMUSMACV's primary means of influencing the conduct and outcome of the war was through the Military Assistance Program and the Advisory effort. Because of the limited US participation in combat operations, the scope of the J2's activities was also limited. In essence, the J2 mission at that time was to support and improve the Vietnamese intelligence effort and to keep COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the national agencies informed of the intelligence situation. The bulk of the intelligence acquired was from the Advisory system, bilateral operations with the Vietnamese, US Army's 5th Special Forces Group, and input from other US agencies operating in South Vietnam. ~~Unilateral US collection resources were limited to Signal Intelligence activities, photo, visual, infrared, and radar surveillance reconnaissance.~~ These resources were provided upon a very austere basis. CI capabilities were limited to those provided by a small Army detachment with even smaller Air Force and Navy units. The primary mission of these CI detachments was to provide installation security and personnel security for MACV Headquarters.¹

¹Muggelberg interview.

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J2, MACV, with essentially an advisory role in intelligence in July 1965, did not have intelligence units assigned, specialists in the various areas of intelligence, intelligence-dedicated communications, specialized intelligence equipment, nor the office space or facilities to collate and process information in a timely manner. Therefore, intelligence concerning the enemy and the war was being provided by the RVNAF to the J2 and his staff who were unable to evaluate or assess it because of the lack of manpower and facilities.² The intelligence capability that existed in MACV was directed towards strategic and political intelligence to satisfy national level requirements with little or no effort in the combat intelligence field to support ground operations. US ground units operated on what they could obtain from local Vietnamese military and civilian sources or produce themselves.

An exception to this was the production of B-52 targets by a targeting element of J2. ~~With the first use of B-52s on 18 June 1965,~~ it was necessary to rapidly develop a targeting capability to support the continued use of this weapons system. Utilizing all available intelligence to include all types of technical and visual data in conjunction with information and data gleaned from captured enemy documents, prisoners of war, and RVNAF order of battle, three or four targets were produced daily. The

² Ibid.

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preparation cycle included each target being briefed to the J2, J3, and COMUSMACV before being presented to the US Ambassador. After this approval, the target was presented to selected members of the Vietnamese High Command for coordination prior to being passed to SAC for execution.³

(S) At this point in time, J2's linguistic resources were extremely limited and there was only the barest document translation and prisoner interrogation capability. For all practical purposes, the command was totally dependent upon information provided by the RVNAF. The Chief of Intelligence Operations Division, J2, MACV, commented:

It became apparent upon arrival incountry that we were about six months behind where we should have been. We had to change our entire direction or thrust of our intelligence effort to support our ground combat troops, and our intelligence buildup should have been initiated much sooner. It should have been built up at least concurrent with the introduction of ground combat troops into Vietnam, but preferably preceded them.⁴

Another early observer of the J2's capability states:

Upon my arrival in February 1965, the intelligence capability of MACV rested upon the advisory system and in turn on their contacts with RVNAF. The reliability of information was always in doubt since it came basically from Vietnamese sources. Moreover, I would say US intelligence was "coup oriented" during the initial period as compared to the gathering and dissemination of combat intelligence.⁵

³John R. Rantz, COL, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, SECRET undated (1970).

⁴Muggelberg interview.

⁵Rantz letter.

~~SECRET~~

(U) At a critical time when the Vietnamese war was rapidly moving into a crisis situation for the United States, the intelligence effort of MACV was suffering from wide and varied problems and was ill prepared to support ground operations with combat intelligence. Moreover, it raised the question if COMUSMACV was receiving the necessary intelligence support for him to properly assess the military situation in South Vietnam at a most critical period where major recommendations were being made to CINCPAC and Washington.

~~TOP SECRET~~ MISSION ADJUSTMENT (U)

Brigadier General J. A. McChristian, USA, ~~reported to MACV~~
~~on 11 June 1965 to be the ACoS, J2.~~ Faced with a rapidly changing situation in both the mission of US forces in Vietnam and in the enemy threat, the J2 not only had to quickly change the direction of his staff from one of advisory, but to build an operational intelligence organization to support US air and ground operations. As the mission changed for J2, it readily became apparent that the J2 staff was not only going to perform the normal J2 functions in a joint staff, but was also going to be forced to perform certain theater level, and, in some cases, field army level functions as well. This factor, more than anything else, determined the internal structure of the J2 staff. Consequently, an unorthodox situation

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developed where command elements of intelligence units and groups were reporting directly to elements of the J2 staff.⁶

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES (U)

Recognizing the need for rapid reorganization to meet the changing situation, the J2 inquired about the status of the reorganization of the J2 Staff he had presented to COMUSMACV during his previous visit as G2, USARPAC in the spring of 1965. The plan had been staffed and sent to CINCPAC, but upon review, it was found to have been radically changed and reduced in scope and numbers to the point he considered it to be an ineffective organization. It was deemed necessary to reconstitute the original USARPAC plan. To further complicate the problem, the backup material for the original plan which had been left with the J2 staff in May 1965 could not be located. It was necessary, therefore, to reconstruct the organization and force structure without TOEs and other useful documents.⁷

A further example of the lack of intelligence force planning and knowledge of intelligence requirements was illustrated by the visit of the J2 to the J3 Force Development officer. When the J2 asked this officer about the intelligence force structure planned for MACV, he was told that the only intelligence forces planned were those of the MI detachments for infantry divisions.⁸

⁶Muggelberg interview.

⁷McChristian interview.

⁸Ibid.

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Therefore, the J2 and his staff were required to devote a great deal of time and energy on a crash basis to identify and justify intelligence resources to support combat operations in Vietnam.

(U) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE VISIT TO VIETNAM-JULY 1965

Acceleration of the buildup phase was provided by the visit to Saigon by the Secretary of Defense on 8 July 1965. The J2 presented his concept of the required intelligence structure which would support and serve the needs of the US military both in Washington and in Vietnam. In essence it would involve joint and combined intelligence organizations specializing in selected areas of intelligence, highly centralized and operating at the MACV level. Missions would be received from both higher and lower echelons and priorities assigned by the J2 staff.

~~SECRET~~ COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTERS (U)

~~SECRET~~ Major stress was placed upon the establishment of combined intelligence from the beginning of the intelligence buildup. The J2's philosophy was:

The best way of doing things was to initially start our intelligence to be a combined effort wherever possible. We were in Vietnam temporarily. The Vietnamese retained sovereignty and control of all sources of intelligence . . . so legally we couldn't get access to documents, prisoners, equipment, or to any sources that required an infringement upon this sovereignty without their concurrence.⁹

⁹Ibid.

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The Vietnamese also had the responsibility under law for detaining ~~prisoners of war~~ ~~for them~~ under the Geneva Convention.

(U) In the establishment of the Combined Intelligence Centers it was decided to build on Vietnamese facilities wherever they existed. The Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC) was an example of taking a Vietnamese facility and putting US interrogators to work together with ARVN. Because of the shortage of qualified US military interrogators it was necessary to use combined teams and interrogate under less than desirable conditions. However, the system worked quite well. A new interrogation facility was constructed and occupied by early 1967.

(U) The Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam (CICV) was the largest of the combined centers and reached a peak strength in 1968. It provided the J2 with his analytical and production capability. The J2 RVNAF agreed in principle to CICV but did not have the qualified manpower immediately available to staff it. A hanger was converted into office space in Ton San Nhut by mid November 1965. By late-1966 a new building was completed, J2 RVNAF provided his personnel and a true joint/combined intelligence production effort became operational. (See plate I.)

~~(C)~~ PERSONNEL PROBLEMS (U)

~~(C)~~ There were wide and varied requirements for intelligence personnel. At the joint level, the J2 staff had the highest priority, followed by the requirements of the Combined Intelligence Centers and other MI units in direct support of the J2 staff. The requirement

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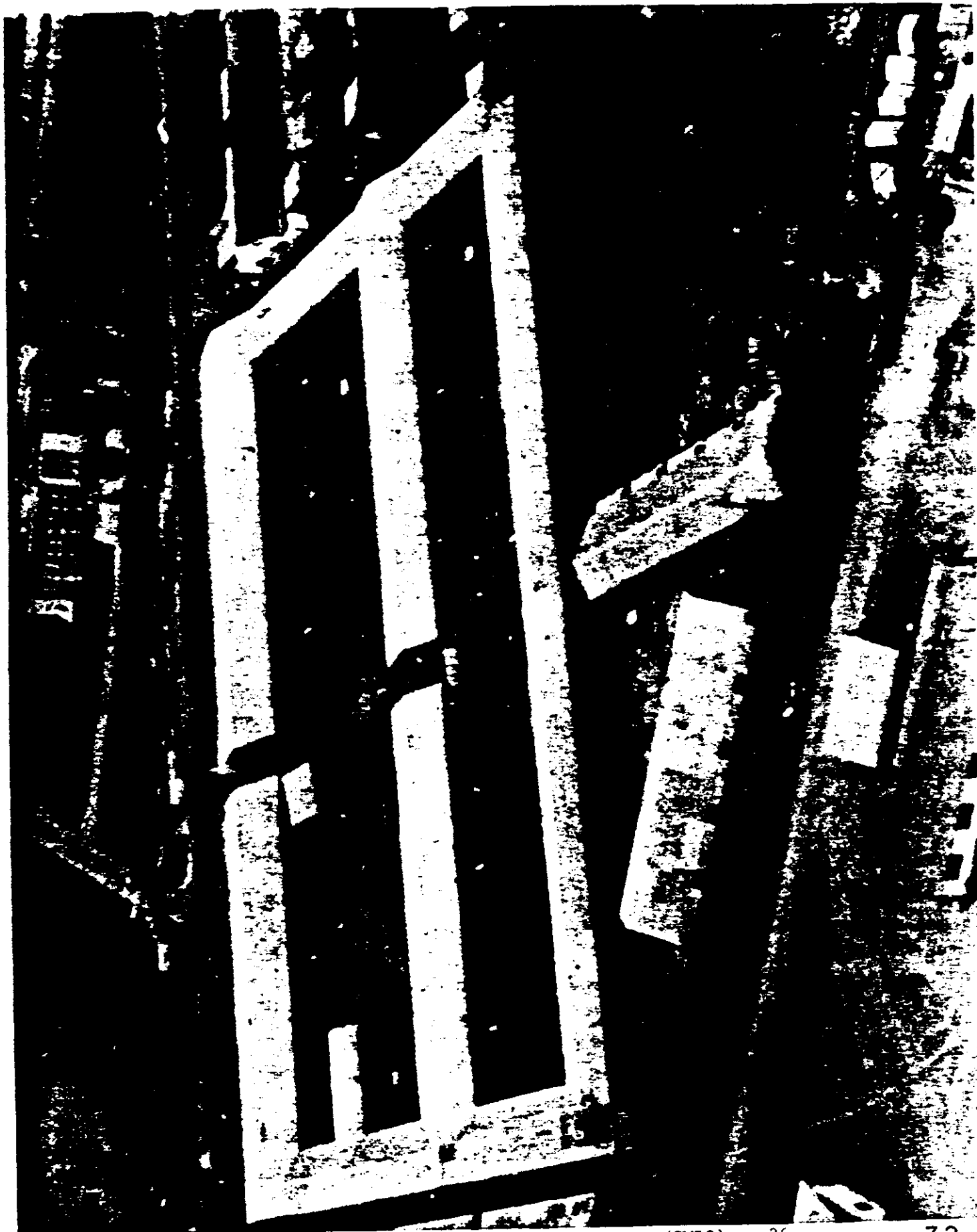


PLATE 1 COMBINED MILITARY INTERROGATION CENTER (CMIC) D.26

for personnel in the intelligence advisory system remained at a high level and as each major Army unit deployed in-country, it had a pressing requirement for qualified intelligence personnel. Meeting these diverse personnel requirements proved to be a major problem and nearly an impossible task. J2 stated:

One of the major shortcomings from the beginning was when the requirements for intelligence personnel resources were set forth in the force structure, the units and people were not available in the force structure of the US Army because our contingency plans call for intelligence to be mobilized from reserves.¹⁰

~~Although major combat units could be immediately deployed to Vietnam, it was necessary to activate and train Military Intelligence units for Vietnam.~~ As a result of this, the deployment of required intelligence units was delayed and when new units did arrive in-country they consisted of newly trained personnel without depth of experience. J2 operated in Vietnam with a very thin experience factor.¹¹

(U) Realizing that it would be impractical to wait for units to be activated, trained and deployed, the J2 requested the existing CONUS-based MI command headquarters be deployed to Vietnam and that cellular MI teams under the Military Intelligence Organization (MIO) concept be activated and deployed to Vietnam.¹²

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

MIO organization and doctrine was outlined in FM 30 series and TOE 30 series published in 1958 and 1959. Most of these publications were up dated in the 1967-1968 time-frame, but the existing doctrine, for the most part, was not changed.

Upon arrival in-country, these teams were attached to the control headquarters. In effect, teams and detachments were brought into country to get the personnel and skills needed.

(U) INTELLIGENCE TRAINING

In continuation of the analysis of US Army intelligence weakness, another facet of criticism applies in the field of training military intelligence personnel for advisory duties in the RVN prior to and extending into 1968. ~~The US Army Intelligence School (USAINTS) still had not developed an adequate course of instruction to sufficiently prepare the young, inexperienced MI officer and enlisted students, for Joint and Combined intelligence duties.~~ While the J2, MACV struggled with conceptualizing an effective joint and combined intelligence staff organization for VN, the arriving MI reinforcements were not prepared to effectively satisfy intelligence requirements.

Formal instruction at the USAINTS continued to teach the standard course of instruction in the fields of MOS 9666/9309/9316/9668 for officers and MOS 96B/96C/97B/97C for enlisted men in addition to an accelerated Combat Intelligence Staff Officers course--as required--and the Military Intelligence Officers Advanced course. Although some area orientation on Vietnam was taught in connection with the aforementioned courses, the POI was primarily oriented toward providing training in support of the CONUS counterintelligence missions. None of these courses emphasized combat intelligence subjects, particularly in a context of Joint and Combined operations. The

following figures reflect the thrust of the POI for the years 1965 to 1968:

Officer	Title	Students by MOS and Year			
		65	66	67	68
MOS 9301	CMBT Intel Staff O	0	0	0	139
9309	Imagery Interp	106	125	196	180
9316	Interrogator/Translator	72	19	19	29
9666	Area Research O	224	226	448	546
9668	Area Specialist O	94	66	151	221
96B	Int Analyst	408	1260		878
96C	Interrogation/Translator	143	0		

SPECIAL ABBREVIATED COURSES

1. Sr. NCO S2 Course FY 65 20 FY 66 59
2. Sp Cmbt Int Staff O FY 66 (*discontinued) 129 35*
3. MID Course (4 wks) 565 561
4. *SEA Course started 18 February 68 339¹³

The data reflects the USAINTS orientation to CONUS as well as USAREUR personnel requirements in the counterintelligence and collection field versus the absence of a full-fledged, 9301 combat intelligence staff officers course geared to satisfy SEA requirements. It is recognized that the USINTS could readjust only to officially condoned or directed requirements. However, the fact remains that "Yankee ingenuity" was lacking; otherwise, coordination

¹³Interview with Richard Lally, GS-13, Training Advisor, US Army Intelligence School, Fort Holabird, Maryland, 18 November 1970.

or a shortening of lines of communication between USAINTS, ACSI, CONARC, and MACV would have improved the situation. ~~The steady stream of official visitors to Vietnam and their trip reports, without command concurrences, were filed away, while the urgent preparatory training requirements went unattended.~~

(U) CONUS INTELLIGENCE BASE BUILDUP

At this point a background brief is necessary to understand the situation in the summer of 1965. Once the decision had been made to start the SEA buildup, the main CONUS MI elements were deployed to Vietnam from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 525th MIG, accompanied by the 1st MIBARS and the 519th MIB departed, but left in place at Fort Bragg a small cadre of approximately 20 officers and 120 EM. These personnel initially comprised the Continental Army Command Intelligence Center (CONTIC), commanded by a colonel, Military Intelligence, who was given the task of activating the additional Military Intelligence units required for deployment to Vietnam.

His primary task was to provide intelligence production support to CINC-LANTCOM and CINC-STRICOM and exercise operational control over the newly activated 48th MI Group, and the 14th and 15th MI Battalions. In spite of the personnel shortages, the CONTIC cadre organized into a cohesive effort along functional lines and performed the tasks very effectively.

(U) RELATIONSHIP WITH J2 MACV

Upon receipt at CONTIC of the projected activation lists and completion of a review of the TOEs, a check was made to determine both personnel and equipment shortfalls that would influence a delay in deployment of units. Once a delay was anticipated in deployment dates, CONTIC immediately informed the J2, MACV through technical channels. At the same time, the CONTIC staff posed operational questions and made suggestions to the J2, MACV that would enhance the intelligence effort and also assist the J2. For example, the J2 was advised to immediately submit an official request for CONTIC recommended changes or modifications, through channels. In this fashion, CONTIC was able to expedite deployments, change TOEs to facilitate the operational effort and keep the J2 informed on the status of his projected MI organizations.

In regard to training, as the graduates of the USAINTS arrived at Fort Bragg to fill the deploying units, a determination was made that their knowledge of Vietnam and its operational conditions was extremely limited. Therefore, CONTIC Instructional Teams taught classes on military intelligence operations in Vietnam and conducted field problems. Additionally, the deploying unit personnel were used in field exercises with Special Forces and elements of XVIII Airborne Corps to prepare them for Military Intelligence duties in Vietnam and exposure to rigorous living conditions in the field, not previously experienced except in limited form during basic training. Feedback reports from these personnel subsequently

revealed that they considered the training and field exercises conducted at CONTIC did the most to prepare them for duty in Vietnam.¹⁴ A parallel here in attacking recognizable problems in training is worthy of comment. Whereas the CONTIC Commander took positive steps to prepare personnel for duty in Vietnam, including innovative actions to aid and assist the J2, MACV in accomplishing his mission, the apparent lack of such innovative actions or efforts in the personnel and training fields at the ACSI and/or USAINTS contributed to the recognized shortfalls in providing qualified personnel in sufficient numbers to the J2, MACV throughout the period 1965 to 1969.

The fact that the Commander, CONTIC, was tasked by the Commanding General, CONARC, to host the military intelligence units deploying to Vietnam from CONUS, influenced a focusing of effort in one command. The expertise of the CONTIC commander and staff was exploited to the advantage of the J2, MACV in actually preparing staff actions in the mobilization field at Fort Bragg, and aiding the J2 in obtaining command and staff concurrences and to effect needed changes in TOE structures, personnel requirements, and logistics peculiar to the intelligence field. As previously mentioned, the temporary duty visitor to Vietnam and his trip report did not seem to be responsive to needed changes. Because the visitor could not speak with authority for the Commands between the J2, MACV, the

¹⁴Interview with Howard E. Hobson, Jr., LTC, Executive Officer, CONTIC, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, November 1970.

recommended changes went unheeded. A listing of those TOE Military Intelligence units that were activated and deployed from Fort Bragg, North Carolina is at Appendix 1. All of the listed units were sponsored by CONTIC.

(U) PERSONNEL PRIORITIES

From the very beginning of the buildup, ~~the J2 staff received the highest priority in intelligence personnel.~~ In addition to having first selection from the normal MI pipeline input and directing the stationing of MI units deployed from CONUS, the J2 received augmentation from USARPAC in the form of TDY personnel from the G2, USARPAC staff and the 319th MIB. The early establishment of even a limited production capability depended on the early arrival of the 319th (319th MID).¹⁵ Without the 319th MID, which arrived on 1 October 1965, CICV would not have become operational until the arrival of the ~~319th MIB on 23 December 1966.~~ J2, MACV organized CICV because COMUSMACV was required by the enemy threat to deploy his limited resources. He needed intelligence to be able to deploy his reserves rapidly and J2 had to be in a position to respond. So, as personnel arrived in-country, they were assigned to CICV where intelligence was being produced.¹⁶

¹⁵The 319th MIB in response to J2's request, sent seven Order of Battle teams, one Area Analysis Team and a Control Team totalling 55 officers and men which comprised the 319th MID.

¹⁶McChristian interview.

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Intelligence from RVNAF and the advisory system continued and as new US combat units arrived in-country they had their organic MIDs, and, thus, possessed a limited intelligence capability. The J2 plan was one of taking the limited MI personnel resources and placing them in key positions and retaining them under centralized control. Once the units and positions were filled, they would be decentralized; but, until they were in place in adequate numbers, they could not be decentralized and still remain responsive to COMUSMACV's requirements.¹⁷

~~(C)~~ STATUS OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES MID-1965 (U)

~~There was no tactical air control system because of the lack of agreement between the Air Force and the Army at that time.~~¹⁸

A discussion of the impact of this problem will be found in Chapter VI. A major problem concerning visual reconnaissance was that in the J2's initial force requirements to be deployed to Vietnam were at least two companies of O-1 (Birdog) aircraft. It was anticipated that these aircraft would provide constant airborne visual reconnaissance of the area. When these companies were finally deployed to Vietnam, they were not assigned to operational control of the J2, but were given to the J3 for command and control purposes. The J3 had not included O-1 justification in the force structure. A limited number were made available for intelligence use and eventually

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Muggleberg interview.

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the J2 received O-1 support from the Air Force to provide subordinate units a visual aerial reconnaissance capability.¹⁹

Ground reconnaissance proved to be a special problem for the intelligence staff because it also was under the staff supervision of the J3, making it difficult to obtain adequate response for J2 requests. Moreover, the existing reconnaissance units were trained and equipped to locate enemy forces or supplies and destroy them by air or artillery strikes. Very little effort was made to locate the enemy, avoid contact and to continue to report intelligence information of value to the commander.²⁰ By September 1966, the 5th Special Forces organized a Recondo School to train selected US and FWMAF personnel in specialized skills and techniques of long-range patrolling. With the graduates of the MACV Recondo School providing the nucleus, all major units organized Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols which rectified this problem to a large extent.²¹

The original organization of the J2, MACV CI Division was patterned after a conventional counterintelligence staff and was oriented toward providing the MACV headquarters with CI support. By late 1965, it had been granted an increase in authorized strength, but had yet to receive the personnel. The main function of the staff revolved around the personnel security of the headquarters and reading and forwarding the agent reports prepared by the 704th MID.²²

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¹⁹McChristian interview.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹General W. C. Westmoreland, "Report on Operations in South Vietnam, January 1964-June 1968," Report on the Vietnam War (As of June 1968), (1969), p. 121.

²²Downie letter.

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One of the major CI problems facing the J2 was the lack of mechanism for coordinating the operations of the various component CI units and the regulation of the jurisdiction of the existing and planned US Army CI units. Doctrine and policy held then, and still does, that CI is the responsibility of the components. CINCPAC guidance gave MACV "joint coordinating authority" which in essence required the referral of disagreements in coordination between MACV and a component to the next higher headquarters. Because of the centralized, vertical structure of the Air Force and Navy CI organizations, their next higher headquarters was at the departmental level while CINCPAC was MACV's. Therefore, a disagreement with either Air Force or the Navy could have resulted in quick initiative representation of their point of view at the national level, while MACV's argument would still be under study at CINCPAC. Complicating the matter further was the absence of an operational Army component headquarters in Vietnam. In effect, this meant that MACV was required to function operationally with US Army CI units, but maintain joint relationships with the Air Force and Navy CI units. These problems were resolved by an Agreement of Operational Principles and a deliniation of Jurisdiction in early 1966.²³

²³Ibid.

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~~(C)~~ SOUTH VIETNAMESE INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES (U)

Vietnamese military and civilian intelligence capabilities suffered from many deficiencies despite the years of US advice and assistance. A major problem was that the various Vietnamese agencies, and in many cases offices within a single agency, would not exchange information. There was little or no collation of interagency information at any echelon, let alone analysis. A second major defect was the fact that since Viet Cong political boundaries did not always coincide with those of the GVN, counter-infrastructure objectives could not be achieved by either GVN lateral units on the boundary.²⁴

There was a great deal of general information available on the VC and, in particular, the infrastructure, but there was little or no specific information on organizations, missions, identities, locations, or modus operandi of hostile intelligence or security forces. Intelligence targeting was nearly impossible. The former Chief of the CI Division, J2 MACV stated that:

No specific information was available in Washington in any national agency in December 1965. Assurances were given it would be found in Vietnam. Incountry US Military and Civilian CI personnel could provide no substantive information.²⁵

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

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ORDER OF BATTLE (U)

~~(C) MACV, in mid-1965, had no real capability to produce~~
~~Order of Battle (OB).~~ The OB Branch of Intelligence Division was
~~maned by six officers and enlisted men who relied completely upon~~
information from OB Branch, J2, RVNAF. Liaison with J2, RVNAF was
maintained by an officer and two enlisted men who occupied office
space in the Vietnamese High Command area. With the exception of
Special Intelligence, the bulk of the finished intelligence was
Vietnamese with only a superficial review by US Military Intelli-
gence personnel.²⁶ The need to provide close watch on the Vietnamese
political scene further reduced the J2's ability to produce combat
intelligence. The limited analytical capability of the Intelligence
Division meant that COMUSMACV was required to make operational
decisions based to a large extent on intelligence data provided
by the Vietnamese and not analyzed or checked in depth by US intel-
ligence personnel. To correct this, the J2 requested temporary OB
support from G2, USARPAC in late August 1965, but, because of the
cost involved, was required to obtain funds from MACV to pay for
them. It took over a month to secure a fund citation and order the
TDY personnel from USARPAC to Vietnam. The first increment of the
55-man detachment arrived in-country on 30 September 1965. At the
same time additional intelligence staff officers were requested from
USARPAC for augmentation of other divisions of J2.

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²⁶ As early as 1962, MACV had a small SI capability which was
a US unilateral operation.

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(U) With the arrival of the 319th MID, a true US OB capability was established and by late October 1965, both an in-country and out-country production effort was underway. These sections formed the nucleus of the OB Branch of CICV. Initial problems facing the OB effort were many and varied, the most pressing being working space. A hanger in Tan Son Nhut was converted by late November into a two-floored office with the CTZ teams on the second floor and the various branch offices on the ground floor.

~~During~~ During the initial organization period, a decision was made which would have an adverse impact on later OB efforts. ~~The~~ OB effort was organized on friendly organizational boundaries, rather than on the enemy organizational concept. Several good reasons can be given for this, but the net results were that the data base did not reflect enemy organization, which in turn impacted upon the production of sound intelligence.²⁷ Other problem areas included enemy terminology and necessity to maintain a separation of enemy units in several categories. There is little doubt that the maintenance of separate accounts for local and main forces and VC and NVA were necessary, but it certainly did much to complicate an already complex situation. Moreover, it opened the intelligence community to considerable criticism, much of which was not justified. Enemy terminology varied from CTZ area to area as well as within

²⁷ Shortage of personnel, lack of knowledge of enemy organization, reporting channels from the field, the fact that J2, RVNAF organized and produced OB using ARVN Corps all contributed to continuing to use the same organizational boundaries.

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their own organizations and the J2 was forced to exercise close centralized control to prevent unacceptable confusion in MACV OB and other intelligence products. The criteria used to accept enemy units and to estimate the strength of enemy units was quite complex and was frequently misunderstood by members of the intelligence community as well as those outside of the J2 staff. There were good and necessary reasons for both centralized control and a complex accounting and acceptance system. The very nature of the enemy buildup and the covert introduction of regular forces, coupled with the nature of the insurgent war, created situations never faced before by a US military operation. In effect, the US Army entered into operations against an enemy with little real knowledge of their organization, units, and unit histories, and doctrine. J2, RVNAF was of little help in this matter as their OB and intelligence had been and remained suspect for a considerable period of time. US experience in the 1950s and early 1960s revealed many wide and unacceptable variances in RVNAF intelligence reporting. Some can be explained by poorly trained personnel, inadequate techniques, poor organization and reporting procedures, and, in some cases, inflated reporting for a variety of reasons. As a result, RVNAF intelligence reports and finished intelligence was always subject to close scrutiny. Therefore, centralized control and a conscious effort to make sure that inflated reporting was not leaving Vietnam was in order, particularly in the beginning when J2's OB capability was being developed. In the initial stages of the J2 buildup, OB intelligence was behind actual events because

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of an incomplete data base, poorly trained personnel, new organization, and poor communications.²⁸

(C) The out-country OB section of the 319th MID became the out-country section of OB Branch, CICV and consisted of the North Vietnam [REDACTED] desks. The 319th MID brought with them from the G2, USARPAC files some 6,000 order of battle cards and reports to form the data base for CICV. The out-country OB effort suffered from a split between MACV headquarters and CICV location which was forced on it because of the ~~SIGINT~~ and ~~NOFORN~~ problem. This fragmentation resulted in a less than satisfactory operation in the out-country production effort. A former OIC of the section stated:

None of the US personnel working in the CICV, Out-country OB Section were cleared for SI. There was a shortage of qualified OB analysis and this shortage was further complicated by the requirement for two shifts. There were not sufficient experienced personnel in order of battle techniques nor in area knowledge of Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia to adequately manage or direct the activities of the section if all personnel were working at the same time, but fragmenting the section into two shifts resulted in even less effective operations.²⁹

~~(C)~~ PROBLEM OF CLASSIFICATION (U)

One problem which plagued intelligence production effort was that of releasability of information to the FWMAF and Vietnamese

²⁸ Interview with Gains B. Hawkins, COL, Special Research Detachment, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, US Army, Fort Meade, Maryland, 10 October 1970.

²⁹ Interview with Robert H. Markey, LTC, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, letter to Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, undated (1970).

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forces. In the production of intelligence on the VC and NVA forces operating in the RVN, releasability was not a problem since the bulk of the information and data was obtained through overt sources. However, the production and release of intelligence from the out-country section working on North Vietnam [REDACTED] posed special problems as it normally involved information gained [REDACTED] which required a NOFORN caveat. As indicated in the previous paragraph, the only solution was a split effort between CICV and the OB Branch of Intelligence Division at MACV Headquarters. The small in-house capability in MACV received and analyzed the NOFORN and sensitive information while the out-country section in CICV worked only with releasable information. There is little doubt that this resulted in an inferior product. J2, MACV's position on this problem was that there could not be:

. . . anything at CICV that brings out the fact that we don't trust the people we are working with. It had to be an operation where we turn out everything at the lowest possible classification and must be releasable to Free World Forces.³⁰

It should be noted that this is a problem which appears in all our dealings with allies in all areas of operations and has not been resolved in current doctrine.

³⁰McChristian interview.

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MI PERSONNEL IN VIETNAM (U)

(U) MI Branch at the time of the Vietnam War was only three years old, having been activated on 8 August 1964, and was initially known as Army Intelligence and Security Branch. Being a new branch, it still had imbalances in its grade structure and difficulties in meeting its worldwide commitments. Vietnam required it to draw down from Europe and send personnel directly to Vietnam. As might be expected adverse comments have been made concerning the experience level and quality of MI officers assigned to MACV during the Vietnam buildup.

The ACoFS, J2 during 1965 to 1967 expressed a favorable:

. . . opinion of the competence of the officers assigned to J2 MACV and the Combined Intelligence Centers. An effort was made by Department of Army to send the best available. . . they got just as good training as was available at the time and place of the Vietnamese War. The problem was there just wasn't experience. That's where the shortage was.³¹

(U) The quality of personnel on the J2 staff was high and the only criticism mentioned was the fact that many had had no previous intelligence experience or training in the field of intelligence operations or production. This was particularly true for Air Force, Navy, and Marine personnel. This created some problems because of the quantity of raw information flowing daily into the staff section. The few analysts with experience and background found themselves doing the bulk of the work. This was particularly true in

³¹Ibid.

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the field of special studies and estimates early in the buildup phase, prior to the time CICV became effective. For all practical purposes, the estimators were required to maintain their own data base which distracted from their time and efforts in the production of required estimates and studies.³²

(U) It has already been noted that the J2 staff selected the experienced intelligence personnel for the staff and the combined centers. Moreover, other operational intelligence requirements on a worldwide basis precluded sending all the trained intelligence personnel to Vietnam. This shortage was created, in part, by the lack of stress placed on the training and development of strategic and combat intelligence officers in the post Korea period by both the Department of Army and by MI Branch.

~~Other~~ Other observers agreed that high quality personnel were sent to Vietnam, but belabored their lack of training and experience. For example, the former Chief of Research and Analysis Branch, CICV commented:

By February 1966, the R&A Branch of CICV had 27 Lieutenants and seven NCOs. The Lieutenants didn't know how to do intelligence research and nearly all their projects had to be redone. This was despite their high education level. They had an average of seven and one half years of college. Only three did not have graduate degrees. Thirteen were members of Phi Beta Kappa and three more had been Magna Cum Laude. But the Army had not trained them how to establish a data base, collate information and prepare and present an

³²Coleman Noahson, COL, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, Washington, 10 September 1970.

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