

intelligence analysis. I established a Branch training schedule which provided for ten hours of classroom instruction per week. This, coupled with on-the-job training, enabled most officers to become fully effective in about four months. From a lessons-learned standpoint, what I am saying is that training in strategic intelligence production methods should have been accomplished in the US Army Intelligence School.<sup>33</sup>

In the OB area basically the same situation prevailed. There were a large number of young officers who had never been exposed to intelligence, but within a few weeks they became effective under good management and training. The fact that OB was not taught at the USAINTS was mentioned by several sources in comments on intelligence training. The former Chief, Order of Battle Branch, Intelligence Division, J2, MACV stated: "There is no Order of Battle Course taught at USAINTS and this is a mistake."<sup>34</sup> Dissatisfaction with the low level of order of battle training for both officers and enlisted men was not restricted to the J2 staff or the Combined Centers at the national level. The former G2 of II FFV remarked:

We have a long way to go in training, particularly in our junior officers, to equip them to walk into a G2 Section and do the job they are expected to do. You have to train OB people to be analysts. They can't just keep OB cards and files--they have a lot more to do. They have to expand the spectrum of their responsibilities and this takes lots of training. You have to get these people trained to be able to take an enemy situation or enemy operation and develop an assessment that's going to mean something to the tactical commander without cranking in a lot of garbage but being very

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<sup>33</sup>William Gilliland, LTC, Office of the Assistant Army Liaison Office, Hong Kong, message to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army CONFIDENTIAL 15 October 1970.

<sup>34</sup>Hawkins interview.

specific and evaluating intelligence, analyzing it properly and presenting it in an acceptable format. This is one of the most critical areas in the development of an MI officer.<sup>35</sup>

~~(C)~~ An even broader view of the lack of proper order of battle training was made by the former J2, who stated:

Another deficiency was in the trained order of battle personnel, enlisted and officers, at all level of US units from brigade right up through MACV.<sup>36</sup>

From these comments it is evident that the basic fundamentals are being presented to students at the USAINTS in that the ability to establish OB files and work up a data base is being accomplished. But in too many cases the mere establishment of the cards and files are viewed as the end in themselves. It is the exception to find an officer or enlisted man who can take the data and make an in-depth analysis. The location and selection of competent G2 Operation officers at division and field level proved to be a difficult problem faced by many G2s. A former G2 of II FFV remarked:

The replacements I have received were very fine officers, but in most cases had very little intelligence operational experience. It takes someone who knows what is needed by the tactical commander and someone with management experience plus the ability to create an operations section which will produce the intelligence needed. It was very difficult to find real talent and it's something we need to concentrate on in the development of our MI officers.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Interview with John D. Foulk, COL, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army CONFIDENTIAL Washington, 16 September 1970.

<sup>36</sup>McChristian interview.

<sup>37</sup>Foulk interview.

(U) G2 AIR ACTIVITIES

Within a few months after the buildup, the weaknesses in G2 Air activities surfaced. Although the G2 Air space called for a branch materiel (MI) officer, in most cases, the space was filled by untrained G2 Air operation officers of the combat arms. Officer shortages in MI branch influenced this situation for some time. ~~As a result the totality of the G2 Air effort was less than effective, causing overwhelming demands for unnecessary photographic coverage, and contributing to antagonism between US Army personnel and Air Force reconnaissance and surveillance elements.~~

The failure of unqualified G2 Air operations officers to understand the concept contributed to excessive coverage requiring the activation of the 45th MI Company (Imagery Interpretation) for priority deployment to Vietnam to establish a central photo repository and to sort out the thousands of feet of photography that had been needlessly taken in response to Army requests.

The Army-Air Force differences in approach to reconnaissance and surveillance can be narrowed and eliminated to a great extent by providing a qualified, MI officer for duty as the G2 Air operation. The USAINTS does an excellent job in training 9309 (II Officers) and Warrant Officers who provide the technical knowledge to a G2 Air, but the G2 Air must be equally qualified to perform his tasks. The G2 Air, at any level, is the aerial reconnaissance and surveillance systems manager for the Army, the manager of a most expensive collection of apparatus. For this reason alone, greater emphasis

should be placed on the managerial aspect G2 Air in the aerial surveillance course for MOS 9309. Further, it is imperative that greater attention be devoted to the training of the G2 Air. One officer has described the G2 Air as something of an artist. He must have a plan and to execute it, he mixes sensors, film types, area coverage, angle and scale desired to obtain the best possible results; an amateur cannot do an effective job. Additionally, either the Air Force element is overtaxed by excessive requests for coverage or organic OV-1, direct support aircraft, are used to effect piecemeal coverage of large areas without request for Air Force support.

The level of training and skill of the divisional MI units deployed to Vietnam was below the desired standards for several reasons. Many were neither MOS qualified nor area oriented and many arrived in-country with their units with less than a full tour remaining. Other shortcomings included lack of training in unit equipment and first echelon maintenance in a tropical environment.

~~(S)~~ COUNTERINTELLIGENCE (U)

~~(S)~~ A major problem area facing CI personnel was the lack of training in tactical counterintelligence. The 1966 Chief of the J2, MACV Counterintelligence Division commented:

The Army Counterintelligence Personnel knew very little, if anything, of the tactics or

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techniques of CI in combat. The US Marines were outstanding.<sup>38</sup>

It should be noted that US Marine CI personnel habitually train and operate with their parent division. US Army CI personnel are more likely to be assigned to personnel security or counterintelligence operations with the US Army Intelligence Command while assigned in CONUS as opposed to CI detachments supporting combat divisions. Those assigned to divisional CI detachments are frequently ill-trained or misutilized by the division intelligence staff; good tactical CI training was the exception rather than the rule. Even the CI training at USAINTS was deficient in tactical CI until mid-1968.

(U) In sum, officer personnel sent to Vietnam frequently lacked experience or could have received more detailed preparation for their assignment. It must be pointed out, however, that experienced MI officers were in short supply and to meet Vietnam requirements it was necessary to drawdown on European and other worldwide commitments. Junior officers were most frequently graduates of ROTC or OCS with only basic combat arms training and a short four week course at USAINTS in general intelligence. There is no doubt they were not MOS qualified and required additional training to become proficient. It was not feasible in many cases to provide additional training to these officers because of the need to get personnel in-country and the fact it was not possible to determine

<sup>38</sup>Downie letter.

their exact assignment within Vietnam prior to their arrival. One fact does emerge, however, and that is the fallacy of assuming general college education can be substituted for branch and MOS training.

~~(C)~~ INTELLIGENCE CONTINGENCY FUNDS (U)

Many aspects of the intelligence effort in Vietnam developed in unusual ways and resulted in major problems which required extraordinary efforts to resolve. The use of Intelligence Contingency Funds (ICF) was no exception. Prior to 1 January 1966, ICF support for J2, MACV was provided by the US Navy and was only available for use in the advisory role. US Army Intelligence units were provided their ICF support by USARPAC. ~~These units were the 135th Military Intelligence Group funded by G2.~~ USARPAC, the SMIAT which was funded by its parent organization, the 500th Military Intelligence Group. Operational control of both units was exercised by the J2, MACV. Control and administration of these funds left much to be desired, both from the administrative and operational point of view. Fund support was not responsive to the rapidly changing operational situation in Vietnam due to the long lines of communication to the support bases. In addition, centralized control over intelligence operations was difficult in that fund support was funded from an outside command. Each operational intelligence unit funded its own operations and this, in many instances, contributed to the lack of coordination of overall intelligence operations. On 1 January 1966, J2, MACV established an ICF Class B agent account and issued a SOP which provided centralized control. On 1 February 1966, an

Inventory Control Point, collocated with the Class B agent, was 56

established with the mission to control the procurement and distribution of all intelligence equipment in South Vietnam. This allowed a much more rapid response to tactical requirements by having intelligence funds and equipment directly responsive to the J2.<sup>39</sup>

(U) In summary, full credit must be given to BG McChristian in establishing an effective intelligence organization under the most adverse conditions. Arriving at the time the mission was changing from one of advise to active ground and air combat, he was faced with building an organization and providing intelligence at the same time. Adequate planning had not been accomplished nor were there sufficient intelligence assets available in the active army and many expedients were required. Only by superior management, effective priorities, and centralized control was he able to accomplish his mission.

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<sup>39</sup>Autmer Ackley, Jr., LTC, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army CONFIDENTIAL Washington, 26 October 1970.

CHAPTER IV ~~(S)~~ (U)

THE US INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY EFFORT (U)

The PHOENIX program is perhaps the best vehicle to use in evaluating the intelligence advisory effort, in an attempt to isolate problem areas that should not be forgotten in future US military intelligence planning.<sup>1</sup>

A review of the personnel and organizational problems of the advisory effort reflect the almost total absence of US intelligence personnel at the Province and District level. This lack of intelligence personnel contributed to a less than effective intelligence collection effort--countrywide.

(U) BACKGROUND

The nature of the widespread Vietnamese insurgency and the internal political situation in South Vietnam influenced many Vietnamese of both military and political walks of life to engage in intelligence activities, often to effect a personal coup or to weaken an opponent for personal gain. With no widespread or effective US intelligence effort, United States representatives in Saigon, prior to the buildup of 1965, were usually ill-informed on the true situation.

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<sup>1</sup>US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, MACV Directive 381-43: Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation (U) CONFIDENTIAL (9 July 1967).



The arrival of Brigadier General McChristian as the J2 in the summer of 1965 saw a decided change in the US attitude towards intelligence. BG McChristian initiated planning for an expanded intelligence effort and is credited with initiating steps in the combined intelligence field that led to an accelerated Sector intelligence program as subsequently developed by the CIA, utilizing primarily military personnel, and to the development of the PHOENIX program.

At the beginning of 1965, approximately 100 two-man District advisory teams had been established. The District teams reported that some personnel devoted up to 80% of their time to nonmilitary matters, with a 50-50 split between military and civic actions common. No mention was made of intelligence activities. The District advisory teams did not include intelligence personnel prior to the 1965 buildup.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, District teams were assigned an enlisted man (E6) as Operations/Intelligence NCO. Even with this intelligence duty requirement, the enlisted personnel were not intelligence oriented or even trained in the basics of Order of Battle (OB). It was not until the start of the Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation program (ICEX), developed in 1967, that the necessity for assigning a full-time intelligence officer at the District became apparent.<sup>3</sup> To facilitate the building

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<sup>2</sup>US Department of the Army, US Army Intelligence School, Unnumbered Pamphlet: "Information About Vietnam," (undated).

<sup>3</sup>ICEX was the initial title for the PHOENIX program. MACV Dir. 381-43.

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of an overall intelligence collection and coordination program, the vehicle selected was the attack against the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI).

(U) EVOLUTION OF THE ADVISORY EFFORT

Therefore in late 1967, two years after the US buildup began, the intelligence program evolved what could contribute the most in the way of producing enemy OB and information on the political cadre. Figure 1 depicts the guerrilla conceptual approach to organizational and geographical arrangements. Figure 2 and 3 depict the US intelligence advisory effort during the period between 1961-1965. Of course, after the buildup started in 1965, the presence of US units with their attached military intelligence detachments improved the collection of enemy OB information but not necessarily in regard to the VCI.

Figures 2 and 3 reflect the dearth of US Military Intelligence presence at the Province and District level where the guerrilla and VCI were operating, were exposed and in many instances were well known to the local police and the inhabitants of the villages and hamlets. As the nature of the US advisory effort changed from merely an advisory role to US participation in ground operations, the importance of an effective US intelligence program became apparent.

(U) ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY PERSONNEL (U)

(U) Doctrinally, a major US military element serving overseas should contain a dual purpose intelligence contingent to secure the

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NOTES

Figure 1 Viet Cong Organization of Political Cadre.

DISTRICT ADVISORY TEAMS PRIOR

TO 1965

District Advisor  
Assistant District Advisor

1965-1967

District Advisor  
Assistant District Advisor  
\*Operations/Intelligence Advisor (NCO-E6)  
Radio Operator EJ

1968-1969

District Advisor	MAJ/CPT
Assistant District Advisor	CPT/LT
*Phoenix Coordinator	CPT/LT
Operations Advisor	E6
Medical Advisor	E6
Radio Operator	E5

\* NOTE: The foregoing examples depict the evolution of the District Advisory teams requirements for intelligence personnel. The three examples cover the period 1965 to 1969.

Figure 2

PROVINCE/SECTOR ADVISORY TEAM

1965-1966

Sector Advisor COL/LTC  
USAID Representative  
JUSPAO Representative  
Public Safety Representative

1967-1969

Sector Advisor  
Deputy Sector Advisor  
S-3 Advisor  
\*S-2 Advisor (2 LTs - 1 EM)  
\*Phoenix Coordinator MAJ/CPT - control DOICS in ca  
District - POIC at Sector  
JUSPAO Representative  
USAID Representative  
Public Safety Representative

NOTE: Advisory teams vary in composition depending upon the operational situation at each local. The foregoing examples of Sector advisory teams depict the development of requirements for intelligence personnel.

Figure 3

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US activity by keeping abreast of the situation as well as performing its overtly assigned mission. Figures 2 and 3 reflect a lack of appreciation for intelligence collection purposes on the part of the MAAG-VN planner in the early stages of US involvement.

(S) As far as intelligence advisors are concerned, in the 1962-1964 time frame, the first and second generation of advisors were combat arms captains who were given an accelerated course in Combat Intelligence at Fort Holabird, Maryland before their direct assignment to S2 Advisory positions with ARVN units. Although the officers were career minded and dedicated to doing a good job, their lack of experience and linguistic ability did little to facilitate success in intelligence advisory duties.<sup>4</sup> Where were the experienced OB officers, the intelligence collection planners and analysts who could advise a Vietnamese counterpart, while observing and reporting their own observations to the MAAG-VN? The personnel selection function must be carefully reviewed to locate and project assignments of such experienced personnel on a priority basis. The point on priorities raises the question of whether, in regard to the assignment of experienced intelligence operatives, a "hot war" such as Vietnam should have priority over other intelligence assignments such as USAREUR, Korea or a STRAF unit in CONUS. The answer should be obvious, but the Department of Army Staff did not innovate changes to develop a priority personnel selection process to locate such personnel prior to the 1965 buildup.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Peter J. Uiberall, LTC, Department of Area Studies, US Army Intelligence School, Fort Holabird, Maryland, January 1966.

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(U) MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ASSETS IN-COUNTRY 1965 (U)

At this time, the main US military intelligence advisory effort was contained in two elements. One element, ~~the Special Military Intelligence Activities Team (SMIAT)~~, a small advisory and training element worked at the Saigon level and advised the ARVN ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ The restrictive nature of being Saigon-based inhibited the capability of this element to become intimately familiar with the personalities or the situation outside Saigon. The second element, the 704th MID, also Saigon-based, although very effective in its liaison duties with the Vietnamese MSS, was limited by its resources, location, and tight control on its range of activities in Saigon. The US officials were hesitant about engaging in aggressive US intelligence activities that might come to the attention of the Saigon Government.

(U) EXPANSION OF MACV INTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS

As previously indicated, the J2 MACV initiated steps toward collection and exploitation of data on the VCI, subsequently called Operation PHOENIX. In July 1965, the ACofS, J2, JGS, RVNAF published a Political Order of Battle book on the VCI. The impact of this document in the field was less than effective in that the police files throughout Vietnam contained this data all along, but due to a lack of interest and the apparent failure of the few US advisors to recognize the importance of these targets, the attack against the infrastructure existed in name only. In the Fall of 1965, at

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the direction of the J2 MACV, a combined intelligence system was established and a full-scale, all-sources effort was initiated against the VCI. A Political Order of Battle section at the CICV was charged with collation and production of data on the VCI with resulting intelligence being disseminated throughout Vietnam to aid in the neutralization of the vital elements of the Viet Cong, the political cadre.

The foregoing information reveals that, at the national level, accelerated efforts were being made to provide the field elements with adequate data to locate, identify, and facilitate the legal apprehension of the VCI. During the period leading up to the Summer of 1967, a great deal of data had been accumulated within the intelligence system of the ARVN and the National Police, but due to a lack of follow-up in the field, no appreciable results were obtained. ~~At the same time the H2 buildup was taking place, the primary effort in the intelligence arena was devoted to combat intelligence and exploitation in fighting the main force VC units and NVA, primarily in I, II, and III CTZs.~~ Project CORRAL, a collection program initiated by the J2 MACV that was directed specifically at the VCI, may actually have been the initial vehicle that pointed out the failure of the field elements to exploit data that had been in the files of the National Police and ARVN for years.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>CORRAL was an intelligence reporting requirement established by J2 MACV.



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DICHOTOMY OF EFFORT (U)

(u) In addition to the problem areas within the personnel field, a dichotomy of effort was detected, with the Province Intelligence Staff Officer concerned with OB, primarily Combat Intelligence while the PHOENIX coordinator was directed to pursue his program of attacking the VCI. This split in the overall concept of intelligence collection often applied where the Corps PHOENIX coordinator was unable to coordinate effectively the PHOENIX effort with the combat intelligence effort specifically at Province level. In analyzing this point, it becomes rather obvious that the two facets of collection should have been reflected in the initial planning of the PHOENIX program. After the MACV directive was published on PHOENIX, some Province Senior Advisors recognized that it was a CIA program and would not accept a role in its implementation.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, some CIA Province officers interpreted the directives as a private preserve of CIA and forbade the PHOENIX coordinators to engage in any collection or exploitation of Combat Intelligence. In the IV CTZ, the directive was broadly interpreted and PHOENIX personnel located at Province and District level were specifically instructed to be part of the overall intelligence team and to engage in any intelligence activity that contributed to the security of their element and/or the exploitation of enemy targets. In this manner the intelligence community of IV CTZ organized within

<sup>6</sup>MACV Dir. 381-43.

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the spirit of the overall effort in working for the destruction of the enemy in whatever form.<sup>7</sup> This attitude did much to set a psychological theme which benefitted the US effort by unifying it and at the same time ensured that the enemy, should he become aware of it, would realize the unity and sense of purpose shared by both US and Vietnamese intelligence personnel.

(u) ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ OPERATION PHOENIX (U)

While the Combat Intelligence activity prospered in supporting actions against the VC and NVA main force units, the CIA representatives operating with the National Police, Special Branch (political crimes) established the PHOENIX program.<sup>8</sup> The concept for PHOENIX called for the assignment of intelligence coordinators at the 44 Province/Sector and 244 Districts throughout SVN. These intelligence coordinators worked on a day-to-day intelligence evaluation and operations planning. In each center, the PHOENIX officers advised and aided the National Police, ARVN and operations officers and representatives of other agencies, i.e., RD cadre, State<sup>ic</sup> Census Grievance, Chieu Hoi, etc., to obtain, process, and act on intelligence information--or pass it on to others who could act. PHOENIX was designed not as an organization, but as a program to systematize the modus operandi for already existing organizations, that involved

<sup>7</sup>Per instructions of MG George Eckhardt, then Senior Advisor, IV CTZ.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan O. Seaman, LTC, Commanding General, First US Army, letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, CONFIDENTIAL 3 December 1970.

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the direction of effort for 80,000 National Police and the one million plus Vietnamese under arms.<sup>9</sup> This program started in July 1967, at the insistence of the CIA, to mount an attack against the VCI since up to that time no visible results had been obtained through lack of direction, advice, and emphasis on the part of the US intelligence community. ICEX, or PHOENIX as it later became known, was designed to provide a coordinating vehicle for the already existing intelligence, police, and civilian agencies. The program was a systematic approach toward building a cohesive, coordinated attack directed at the field level against the political cadre of the Viet Cong. Up to this time within the Advisory effort, US intelligence advisors engaged primarily in Combat Intelligence activities and were located with the ARVN Divisions, Corps, and served on the Province Senior Advisor's staff. The division and corps advisors were concerned with the main force units and overt guerrilla activity.

(U) THE INTELLIGENCE STAFF ADVISOR

The one intelligence staff officer at Province was a collector of data for MACV reports and was used to perform other unrelated tasks such as Province mess and pay officer. It is therefore obvious that the intelligence advisory effort at the field level was neither geared nor oriented to respond to an effective

<sup>9</sup>MACV Dir. 381-43.

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action-oriented collection and exploitation program. In the Summer of 1967, the CIA representatives activated the PHOENIX program and began expanding the placement of PHOENIX coordinators at all levels of authority throughout SVN.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, data continued to accumulate on targets and leads on the VCI. In this one program the most comprehensive and widespread effort was initiated that could do the most to enhance the overall intelligence collection effort.<sup>11</sup> More importantly, it provided US intelligence advisory personnel all the way down to District level to ensure exploitation of the data collected.

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At this point, it should be pointed out that the personnel assigned to the Province and District advisory teams were assigned to the MACV Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development System (CORDS). The PHOENIX personnel although assigned to CORDS advisory teams were under the operational control of the CIA.<sup>12</sup> For further examination of the problem areas, it is necessary to examine the structure of the Province Intelligence Program.

(U) PROVINCE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM VERSUS PHOENIX

Where the Province Intelligence Program had two intelligence staff officers (Lieutenants) and one enlisted man (administrative),

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Support, PHUNG HOANG (PHOENIX) Program 1969 End of Year Report (U) CONFIDENTIAL (December 1969) (hereafter referred to as "PHOENIX 1969").

<sup>12</sup>MACV Dir. 381-43.

there was no intelligence representation at the District level. The PHOENIX program placed two field grade officers (LTC and MAJ) at the Corps Tactical Zone Headquarters, one company grade officer at Province (CPT/Lt) with one EM (administrative assistant) and one officer (Lt) at District.<sup>13</sup> Their duties were confined to coordinating with every agency operating within their area to ensure that information collected on the VCI was collated, disseminated, and if at all possible exploited. The PHOENIX personnel were of an unusual mix. MACV provided counterintelligence officer personnel who were normally found operating at the Corps and District level, while some Province and District personnel were from CIA or were Foreign Service Officers on detail to CIA. CIA channels were used for information reports, logistic support, and transportation while operations to exploit information were usually conducted through the Province-District operations channels for troop support, helicopters, or combat support.

(U) A FULL-TIME EFFORT

The main thrust of the PHOENIX effort was the almost simultaneous placement of personnel at all levels of the advisory effort who were intelligence-oriented and were full-time coordinators and exploiters of targets of opportunity. Additionally, PHOENIX coordinators made known through official channels the lack of follow-up by either the National Police or ARVN so that US/GVN officials at

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

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higher levels could bring necessary pressure to influence target exploitation.<sup>14</sup> See figure 4 for PHOENIX organization.

(U) [REDACTED] PROBLEM ANALYSES (U)

The main lessons derived from an analysis of the PHOENIX program and from comparing it to the Sector Intelligence Program seem to fall into four broad areas:

1. Organization versus Execution.

Although the MACV J2 had developed an excellent Political Order of Battle program at the national level to collate and disseminate data on the VCI, the program was not sufficiently broad-based countrywide with US intelligence advisors to facilitate its exploitation. The analogy to be drawn is that of a well-conceived operations plan of attack with no friendly forces to execute it. Therefore, it follows that the staff officer, in preparing his plan or program must consider or make provision for the availability of resources or expeditors to ensure execution of the particular program. As this program finally evolved we see CIA entering the area of operational interest and executing another agency's program. In this instance CIA actually intruded into a MACV intelligence collection program due to the failure of exploitation of VCI targets at the Province/District level by GVN or US activities.

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<sup>14</sup>Nguyen Van Thieu, President of the Republic of Vietnam, Presidential Decree: Operation Phung Hoang, Saigon, 1 July 1968.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF  
PHUNG HUONG (PHOENIX) COMMITTEES (PROGRAM)

Decree Number 280-a/TT/SL, dated July 1, 1968  
of the President of the Republic of Vietnam  
establishing the PHUNG HUONG Program.

Permanent Office      Central PHUNG HUONG Committee      (Saigon based and  
staffed by National  
level representatives)

Permanent Office      TACTICAL ZONE PHUNG HUONG Committee      (Located in each  
CTZ)

Permanent Center      Capital, Province, and City  
PHUNG HUONG Committee      (Located in each  
major city and  
each Province  
Capital)

DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE AND OPERATIONS  
COORDINATING CENTER

(Located in each  
District through-  
out RVN)

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Figure 4. Organizational Chart of Operation PHUNG HUONG (PHOENIX)

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2. Operational Conflicts.

The recognized dichotomy of the intelligence effort resulted because of the presence of multiple intelligence elements of the GVN and the US. Under the delineation of responsibility for intelligence activities in wartime as prescribed in the Director of Central Intelligence Directives, it would have been normal procedure for the COMUSMACV to assume the overall direction of intelligence activity in Vietnam as exercised through his J2. Had this action been taken, it would have simplified the matter and reduced the number of US agencies engaging in such activity. However, such action was not taken and as a result, CIA, MACV, USARV units, USAF, and the US Navy representatives were engaged in various forms of intelligence activity, often crossing lines with each other. In this specific case, the Province Intelligence program and the PHOENIX program, both MACV Advisory elements, 525th MIG elements, and the CIA often clashed over the conduct of operations. At least the PHOENIX program, sponsored by the CIA, did not conduct operations, but it found on many occasions, in attempting to coordinate an exploitation of a VCI target, that it was necessary to cross operational lines with all or some of the aforementioned efforts with resultant hard feelings on the part of the MACV elements. The subject of HUMINT activities is covered in more detail in Chapter V.

3. Success or Antagonism.

There was redundancy or overlap of effort in both the Sector Intelligence Program and the PHOENIX program. As mentioned above, the presence of the PHOENIX personnel within the MACV

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organizational structure caused problems of both a command and operational nature.

The PHOENIX staff at the National level, dealing with plans and policy and coordinating with the GVN, JGS, and the National Police, were both necessary and particularly effective in coordinating the national program and facilitating interagency coordination.<sup>15</sup> At the CTZs level, the small PHOENIX staff was extremely effective in the overall coordination and exchange of information as well as in providing the needed extra presence of qualified field grade officers to ensure that a link existed between the National Police and ARVN at all levels within the CTZ. Since the PHOENIX coordinator's scope of activity was well defined, there did not appear to be any crossing of lines with the Corps Senior Intelligence Advisor. At the Province and District level the presence of PHOENIX personnel under the control of the CIA presented problems. The PHOENIX coordinator at Province was senior in grade to the Province Intelligence staff officers. This tended to cause conflict between the two activities particularly in collecting data and reporting it through MACV as well as CIA channels. The fact that the PHOENIX coordinator had access to and often operated as an operations officer within the CIA Province house enabled him to be better informed and better organized to perform his job with CIA financial, logistical, and administrative support and with no additional duties as was the case with the Province Intelligence

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<sup>15</sup>PHOENIX 1969.

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officer. The PHOENIX coordinators at District reported to the Province coordinator and would often facilitate the exploitation of anti-VCI operations<sup>x</sup> utilizing data that had been available to the Province but had not been acted upon. These small successes caused further antagonisms within the Province. The Province Intelligence Staff Officer found himself concerned with producing data for the time-consuming operational administrative reports for MACV, watch duty in the TOC, and also performing other unrelated duties. His counterpart in the PHOENIX program usually found himself completely free to pursue his operational mission.

4. Organizational and Command Conflicts.

The final lesson in this analysis pertains to the organizational and command structure of the Sector Intelligence Program and the PHOENIX program. Initially, the Province Intelligence Staff was part of the Corps Senior Intelligence Advisors Detachment.<sup>16</sup> In this capacity, and within the US Army Intelligence cellular structure, the Corps Senior Intelligence Advisor (SIA, CTZ) had direct command and control over the Province intelligence personnel. Additionally, he had the capability of shifting personnel to augment or reduce the size of the Province Intelligence Team. With such authority, the SIA could influence the intelligence effort within any province of his CTZ. Of course, with such responsibility, the SIA was responsible for the administrative and logistical

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Theodore H. Greimann, LTC, Senior Intelligence Advisor, IV CTZ, Can Tho, Vietnam, August 1968.

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officers assigned to the advisory teams, but occupying MI officer vacant billets. While the SIA, CTZ controlled the Intelligence Advisory Team at Province, he could ensure that the foregoing actions did not take place.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the SIA, CTZ was also interested in his personnel as well as the performance of their duties. After the change, the SIA, CTZ no longer thought in the same terms and generally looked to the intelligence personnel with the ARVN Division Advisory Teams as the main source of information, particularly in view of the fact that the appearance of the CORDS organization influenced a change in orientation to report through and look to the CORDS Corps staffs for guidance.<sup>19</sup> The overall effect of this change reduced the effectiveness of the intelligence advisory effort at Province and District level, except for the already mentioned presence of PHOENIX personnel at Province and District.

Considering the aforementioned developments, by early Summer 1968, excluding the ARVN Division Advisory Teams, the US Intelligence Advisory effort within the CORDS organization was fragmented to such an extent that it is remarkable that any effective intelligence activity existed.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

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CHAPTER V (~~SECRET~~)

THE HUMINT EFFORT<sup>1</sup> (U)

(~~SECRET~~) HUMINT activities constitute only one means available to satisfy the intelligence requirements of the military commander. They include the [REDACTED] activities "to accomplish intelligence, counterintelligence and other similar objectives, planned and executed under the sponsorship of a governmental department or agency in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment, and to permit plausible denial by the sponsor in the event the activity is compromised,"<sup>2</sup> and counterintelligence special operations, or operations "directed toward the detection, penetration and neutralization of hostile espionage, subversive, and sabotage activities . . . to include the conduct of offensive security operations in a tactical environment."<sup>3</sup> Since World War II, it has been accepted in intelligence circles that almost 90 percent of all intelligence requirements could be satisfied by overt means. The high costs in terms of manpower, money, materiel and time have dictated that HUMINT operations be employed to satisfy only the remaining 10 percent of.

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<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] HUMINT, or human intelligence, is the acronym for all systems and programs [REDACTED] through which intelligence is collected by human sources.

<sup>2</sup>US Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Acquisition Manual (U) ~~SECRET NOFORN~~ (1 July 1965), p. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup>US Army Combat Developments Command, Intelligence-75 (U), Vol. I, Final Draft, ~~SECRET NOFORN~~ (30 August 1968), p. E-18 (hereafter referred to as "CDC Intel-75").

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the commander's intelligence requirements that cannot be fulfilled by other means. Despite the acceptance of this doctrinal concept during peacetime, events in the RVN added new twists, surfaced new trends and dictated employment of new concepts for wartime HUMINT operations.

(u) ~~(S)~~ GENERAL (U)

(u) ~~(S)~~ US HUMINT efforts had their genesis with World War II OSS operations and in 1947 were codified by the National Security Act of that year. This act, with National Security Council and Director of Central Intelligence implementing directives, vested control of all clandestine intelligence activities with the CIA, but did authorize the military departments to conduct these operations.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, the efforts of the military services in this field were limited and operations conducted were focused on the collection of information of strategic military value. In 1958, the Army did recognize the need for tactical HUMINT support functions when it published the previously mentioned MIO concept. However, from 1958 to 1965, little emphasis was placed on determining the feasibility of this concept under combat conditions and too little was done to prepare personnel and organizations in either of the military services for conducting tactical level HUMINT

<sup>4</sup>US Army Combat Developments Command, Intelligence Doctrine and Techniques for Internal Defense and Development (U), Vol. 2, Draft Study, SECRET NOFORN (1 October 1966), p. D-19 to D-22 (hereafter referred to as "CDC Task 20").

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operations in a counterinsurgency situation. A fair criticism of US military HUMINT efforts just prior to our major commitment in the RVN was that "at one time the classical spy was concerned primarily, if not solely, with ferreting out military secrets. In our era of continuous ideological, psychological and economic warfare, the purely military secret has taken a back seat in the high councils."<sup>5</sup>

(u) ~~(c)~~ In retrospect, it appears that well before the arrival of US tactical forces in the RVN, Mao Tse-tung was the one who actually defined the scope and set the pace of HUMINT operations there when he wrote that ~~intelligence~~.

is the decisive factor in planning guerrilla operations . . . Guerrilla intelligence nets are tightly organized and pervasive. In a guerrilla area, every person without exception must be considered an agent--old men and women, boys driving ox carts, girls tending goats, farm laborers, storekeepers, school teachers, priests, boatmen, scavengers. The local cadre "put the heat" on everyone, without regard to age or sex, to produce all conceivable information.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the 1965-1969 period, the HUMINT effort seemed to be guided by these words of Mao, for on both sides the extent of employment of human sources for the collection of ~~military information~~ proved, ~~almost unparalleled in the history of warfare~~, ~~the~~ proliferation of all types of ~~agents employed by friendly and enemy~~ forces was such that at the apex of the US involvement, circa 1968,

<sup>5</sup>Joachim Joesten, They Call It Intelligence (1963), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Mao Tse-tung, On Guerrilla Warfare (1961), trans. by Samuel B. Griffith, p. 22.

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had all Vietnamese civilians employed by one intelligence service or another been required to wear a special uniform, very few South Vietnamese citizens would have been found garbed in mufti.

~~SECRET~~ ORGANIZATION (U)

~~SECRET~~ As the US force buildup began, in-country assets for conducting HUMINT operations were meager. As depicted in Figure 5, the SMLAT had been advising and conducting operations with the ARVN 924th Support Group ~~REDACTED~~ since 1959 and since early February 1962, the 704th MID had been operating with the Vietnamese MSS, the RVNAF's principal

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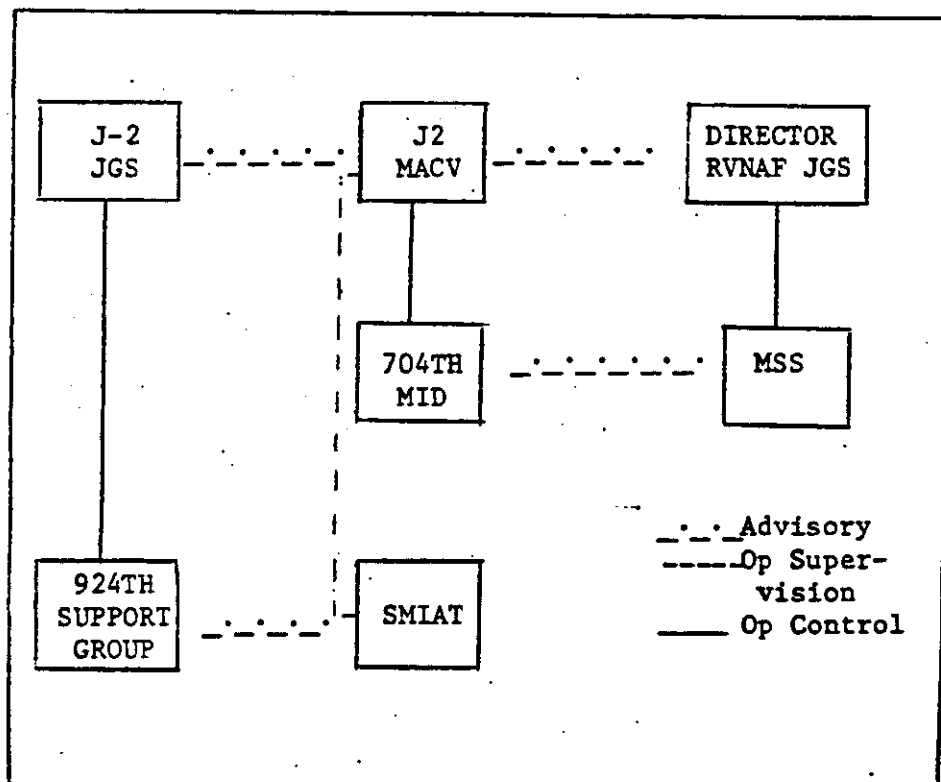


Figure 5

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counterintelligence and security organization.<sup>7</sup> When MACV placed demands on the CONUS base to provide necessary tactical HUMINT support, the only assets available were those existing in MIO type units. Neither the Air Force nor the Navy were in a position to provide organizations to support tactical requirements. It was left to the Army, therefore, to provide the organizational framework, personnel assets and other required resources to conduct the theater level HUMINT effort.

~~(S/NF)~~ US tactical divisions and separate brigades were deployed to the RVN with their attached MIO units which possessed only limited counterintelligence HUMINT capabilities. The only remaining units available in CONUS were the 519th MIB, a field army support unit, and the 525th MIG, a unit designed for theater army support. On their arrival in the RVN, these organizations, although assigned to USARV, were placed under the operational control of the J2, MACV and proved to be more valuable as vehicles for MACV to obtain trained intelligence personnel than as units for immediate tactical employment. Despite the diversion of major personnel and equipment assets of these units for other intelligence purposes, they did assume responsibility for the principal MACV in-country HUMINT operations to include bilateral operations, or those "carried out in a foreign country on a combined basis and

<sup>7</sup>US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Assistant Chief of Staff, J-2, Counterintelligence and Security Services of South Vietnam (U) SECRET NOFORN (March 1969).



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for the support of both US and host country forces" as well as unilateral operations, or those "operations in a foreign country carried out solely under the control and for the support of US elements, but not necessarily without the knowledge of the host country."<sup>8</sup> During 1966, the 525th MIG was augmented with numerous small team and detachment sized replacement "packets" which assisted that unit to expand its HUMINT role. It was not until September 1966, however, that the CONUS base was capable of providing two theater level HUMINT support units--the 135th Military Intelligence Group (Counterintelligence) and the 149th Military Intelligence Group (Collection). These units were assigned to the 525th MIG as they arrived in the RVN and both immediately deployed for tactical employment by assuming the operational assets of the 519th MIB. Figure 6 depicts the 525th MIG span of control at the beginning of 1967.

(C) Throughout the remainder of 1966 and all of 1967, ~~the 135th~~ and 149th Groups, under the direction of the 525th MIG, consolidated and refined MACV controlled HUMINT operations in the RVN. Their task was made somewhat easier by a continuing flow of small teams and detachments from the CONUS base. In December 1967, a Major General McChristian directed major reorganization of all intelligence assets in-country resulted in the inactivation of ~~the 135th~~ and 149th Groups and their subordinate elements. Using the assets

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<sup>8</sup>CDC Intel-75, Vol. III, p. A-19 and A-22.

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525TH MI GROUP ORGANIZATION, FEBRUARY 1967

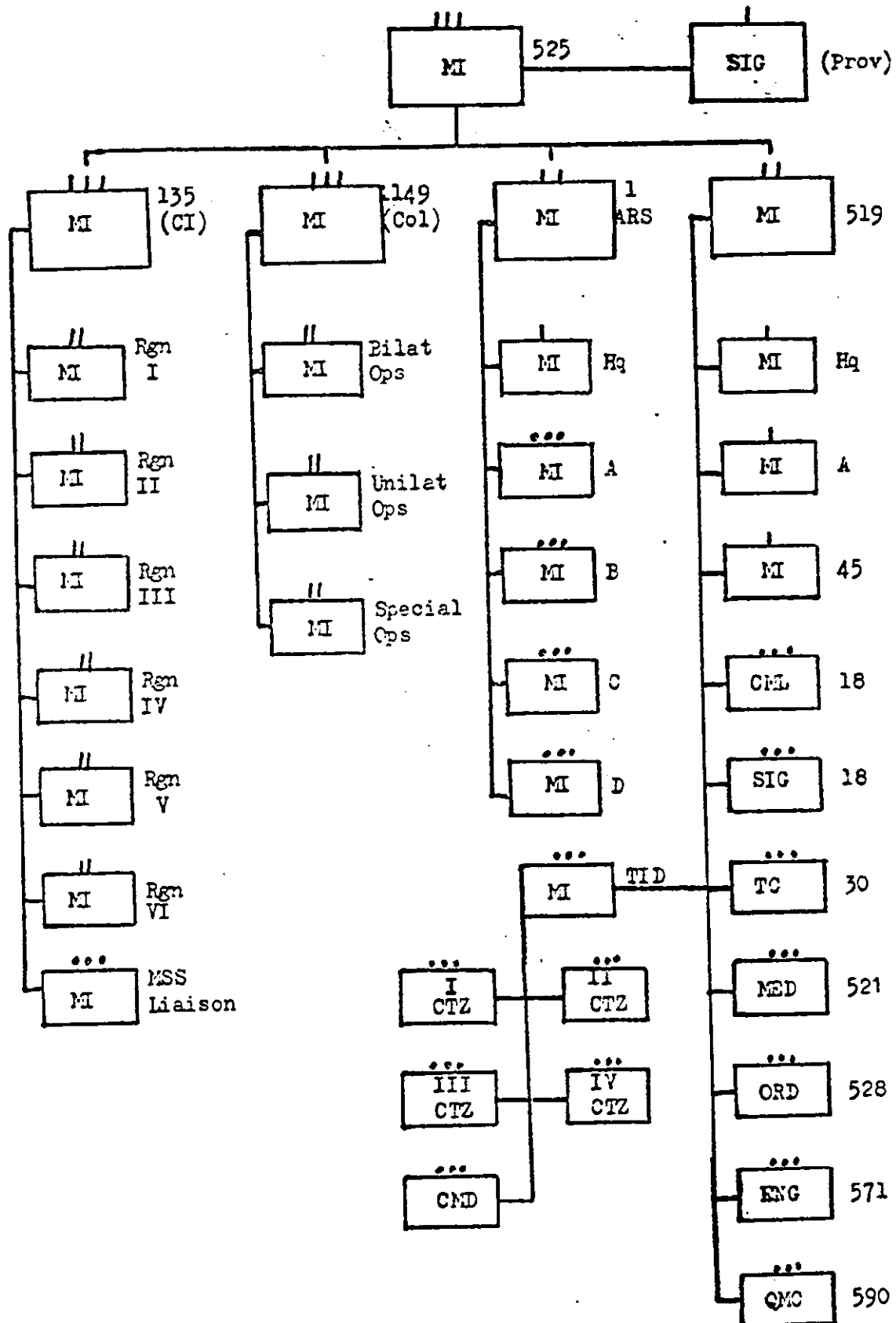


FIGURE 6

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of these units, the 525th MIG, in accordance with accepted Army policy, was reorganized into a Group headquarters and six provisional battalions.<sup>9</sup> Five of these battalions were placed in direct support of tactical elements in the CTZs and the Capital Military District [REDACTED]

See Figure 7.

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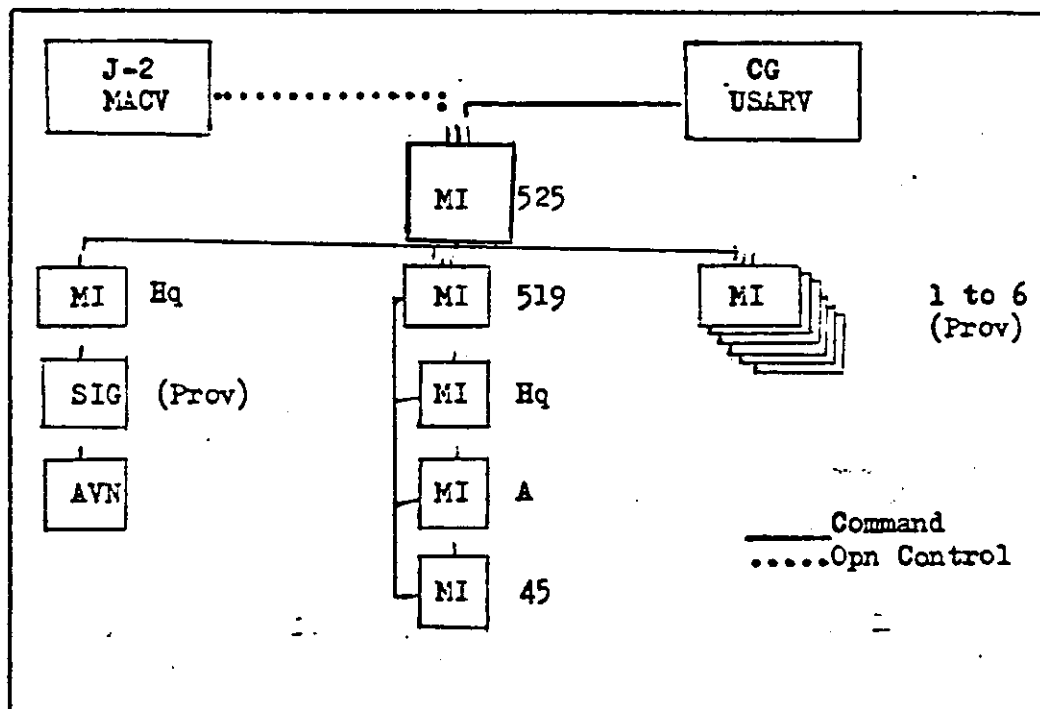


Figure 7

<sup>9</sup> US Department of the Army, Army Regulations 220-5: Designation, Classification, and Change of Status of Units (30 June 1967), para. 8.

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(U) Despite the fact that over two years passed before a consolidated, theater level military HUMINT organization responsive to MACV requirements evolved, there was certainly never any lack of in-country activity concerning the conduct of agent operations. In addition to the military units previously discussed, the CIA had been deeply involved in HUMINT activities for many years. The continuity provided by the CIA was the saving grace in the conduct of HUMINT activities during the period of buildup and transition. Agent operations had also been conducted by the large US military advisory organization which reached from national level through Corps, Provinces, Districts and down to battalion level RVNAF tactical units. As US tactical units arrived and US tactical commands were formed, their attached MI support units also launched pall mall into low level HUMINT operations. The MACV Studies and Observations Group (MACVSOG), Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support organization and the 5th Special Forces Group were also involved [REDACTED]

(U) [REDACTED] On the Vietnamese side, their long experience in combatting insurgency had resulted in their deep immersion into HUMINT activities at all levels. Principal efforts included those by the National Police, and especially the Police Special Branch dispersed throughout the RVN, the already discussed 924th ARVN Support Group and MSS, the various Province and District politico-military organizations, RVNAF tactical unit intelligence units and the Regional Force and Popular Force elements located throughout the country.

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In addition to this maze of organizations, as the Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) arrived in-country, they too became engaged in their own HUMINT activities. This was especially true of the Republic of Korea forces which had experience in conducting HUMINT operations with US Military Intelligence elements in Korea.

(u) ~~SECRET~~  
(S) COORDINATION (U)

(u) ~~SECRET~~  
"In Vietnam, it wasn't one war, but a group of little wars--and everybody wanted to fight his own war."<sup>10</sup> This statement, made by a former MI unit commander in Vietnam, has an obviously wide implication; however, it was particularly applicable to the conduct of HUMINT operations. Although the US, RVN and FWMAF intelligence communities neither lacked sufficient human resources nor were hampered by a lack of organizations to conduct HUMINT operations, the coordination of the overall HUMINT effort received only that degree of emphasis required to permit the fighting of individual "little wars."

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To grasp the meaning of this indictment, there must first be a clear understanding that the coordination aspects of HUMINT operations involve two separate and distinct precepts. In the first sense, coordination is the process whereby a US military HUMINT organization obtains the approval of the CIA to conduct a

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Michael Tymchak, COL, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, US Army, Washington, 16 October 1970.

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specific clandestine operation or project. This type coordination is dictated by Director of Central Intelligence directives and is applicable worldwide.<sup>11</sup> Coordination between foreign HUMINT agencies and the CIA in this sense obviously cannot be required. In more common parlance, coordination involves those steps taken to relate a given action to similar actions being taken by others to insure for economy of effort and to avoid duplication. In this sense, there should be at least some intercourse between friendly foreign and US HUMINT organizations working toward the same general goal. (u)

(u) During the early stages of the US force buildup, US military and CIA HUMINT supervisors recognized that tactical collection operations were unsophisticated, generally of short duration and produced information of a highly perishable nature. Tactical operations could not be termed clandestine because they were encouraged by the host country and were, therefore, not necessarily illegal. Furthermore, there was little need for concern with the plausible denial aspects of compromised operations because the enemy was well aware of the fact that allied forces were conducting HUMINT operations on an increasingly large scale. On the basis of these factors, plus others, all unilateral and bilateral in-country HUMINT operations, to include those which temporarily overlapped into the third country areas of North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, were declared to be sensitive operations, i.e., "those collection

<sup>11</sup>CDC Task 20, pp. D-20, 21.

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activities which fall within the 'gray' area between overt and clandestine operations . . . the extent of coordination of sensitive operations with the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) will vary according to the nature of such sensitive operations."<sup>12</sup> Tactical collection operations were, therefore, exempted from approval by, or coordination with, CIA representatives in the RVN. Only the highly sophisticated, truly clandestine or long-range HUMINT operations conducted unilaterally by US military organizations against targets outside the RVN required CIA coordination. In this context, "there were no problems in achieving coordination as long as we stayed in the military realm. We had no difficulty in coordinating the operations directed outside the country . . . our cooperation in this particular area was good."<sup>13</sup>

(U) ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Fortunately, a similar testimonial cannot be given to the exercise of coordination in its broader sense; especially coordination for the sake of economy, operational security or to avoid dangerous duplication of effort. As the first US tactical units arrived and were positioned at strategic points throughout the RVN, time and distance factors between units dictated their engagement in isolated "little wars." The immediate needs of tactical commands, coupled with a general lack of communications between the intelligence units supporting these commands, resulted in a go-it-alone atmosphere that prevailed throughout the conflict.

<sup>12</sup>CDC Intel-75, Vol. III, p. A-21.  
<sup>13</sup>Muggelberg interview.

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As one principal HUMINT staff officer at J2, MACV level observed,

coordination and utilization of intelligence collection efforts was a considerable problem since sources were legion-

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In addition to these factors, the necessity for secrecy and compartmentation also adversely affected coordination. Added to this was the aspect of friendly competition which from time to time escalated into undisguised interorganizational rivalry. In insurgency and limited war situations "there is no room for interagency rivalry

between for example, State, CIA or the military," yet this factor plagued US as well as RVN HUMINT operations from the outset.<sup>15</sup>

Each of the elements engaged in HUMINT operations seemed to foster a real fear of losing good sources to other agencies, so they did everything possible to conceal the identity of a source, or even his mere existence, so as to keep him. The CIA, either working unilaterally or in a bilateral capacity with such organizations as the National Police, Province Chiefs or the PHOENIX and other special purpose programs, rarely coordinated their efforts with the military. US advisors and tactical command intelligence units only coordinated their activities when it was convenient and appeared

<sup>14</sup>Rantz letter.

<sup>15</sup>John R. Rantz, LTC, Intelligence and Stability Operations, Thesis (Carlisle Barracks, 19 January 1968), p. 7.

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in the best interest of the local situation. Theater level HUMINT organizations did attempt to coordinate some of their efforts, but they also concealed some of their more meaningful and special purpose operations from the view of others. Coordination between lower level RVNAF and US tactical units seemed to be an exception, but when it came to national level efforts, there was an extreme reluctance to tell the other ally the whole story; something was always held back for one reason or another.

(e) ~~(S)~~ Despite the fact that this situation was identified relatively early in the conflict, little was ever accomplished to improve interagency or interorganizational coordination. A meaningful criticism of US intelligence collection methods published in an unclassified version highlighted this problem by saying that

present arrangements for the collection of information seem to suffer from two shortcomings: the collection of information is haphazard and it is cumbersome . . . each unit gathers its intelligence individually and supplements it by contacting other agencies and units in the area to which it also supplies information on demand . . . if a unit leaves the area without being immediately replaced, it cannot pass on its information to a successor, and it is irretrievably lost. Also lost are the contacts with private citizens. A subsequent successor unit has to start over again.<sup>16</sup>

It would almost appear that it was not a lack of knowledge, but either a lack of interest or a complete concern only for short-range results in a specific area of responsibility that led to

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<sup>16</sup>Otto Heilbrunn, "Tactical Intelligence in Vietnam," Military Review, (October 1968), p. 85.

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the coordination lag. "Oddly enough, some of the US type collection agencies were not appraised . . . of other US type collection agencies within the Province in which they were working."<sup>17</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately, the lack of coordination did not greatly impede tactical operations in any given area. This failing did, however, adversely affect the economy and efficiency of the overall HUMINT effort in the RVN.

~~(S/NF)~~ CONTROL (U)

(U) ~~(S/NF)~~ Like the term coordination, the term control, as applied to HUMINT operations, has a dual meaning. Control exercised for the purpose of command or supervision of a specific HUMINT activity or project to insure for its efficiency was, for the most part, properly exercised by all agencies and organizations in accordance with their individual standing operating procedures and ground rules. However, the exercise of control in the sense of source control, or source administration, was not properly exercised.

~~(S/NF)~~ Source control procedures encompass [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Stone W. Quillian, COL, USMC, Headquarters, US Marine Corps, Washington, 14 September 1970.

<sup>18</sup> John C. Urias, LTC, 470th MI Group, USARSO, letter to the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, US Army [REDACTED] October 1970.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The maintenance of an efficient, centralized interagency source registry permits HUMINT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Source control procedures also assist in determining [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These control procedures provide the only workable vehicle to "keep track of your informants and evaluate their performance and eliminate those who are giving false information and who can't contribute anything to the intelligence picture."<sup>19</sup>

[REDACTED]

<sup>19</sup>Foulk interview.  
<sup>20</sup>CDC Task 20, p. D-21.

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[REDACTED] From 1966 through 1969, the J2, MACV periodically developed command directives, procedures and systems which emphasized the requirement to establish and maintain a centralized US military source control registry. These procedures, which included MACV level computerized systems, failed to be effective in bringing the overall US military HUMINT community together. The fluidity of the tactical situation, a wide and unwieldy span of control at MACV level and a continuing concentration on higher priorities interfered with repetitive MACV attempts to establish a registry. At lower command echelons, overriding concerns for local autonomy and a lack of interest in areas beyond the local scene, i.e., the "little war syndrome," seemed to doom efforts to centralize even before they began.

(S/NF) There were, however, some other good reasons for general ambivalence in this area. Because of the extremely low level, highly perishable nature of both the information reported and the source reporting it at the tactical level, there were few human sources of lasting value. This remained true despite the wide proliferation of HUMINT assets throughout the RVN. Coupled with this was the CIA's lack of capability to supervise or even concern itself with tactical

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HUMINT operations. The CIA-military agreement on sensitive operations which obviated the need to coordinate operations within the RVN with CIA resulted in an acquiescence of a void of source knowledge at CIA level. In addition, the administrative burden of applying even abbreviated source control procedures to the vast numbers of assorted agents, informants, contacts, etc. was enormous and totally beyond the personnel and resource capabilities of US tactical and advisory elements. Lastly, the RVN and other allied HUMINT organizations were simply not interested in revealing the identities of all their sources to a combined, centralized source control registry.

(U) Regardless of the reasoning, or excuses, for the lack of both coordination and control, the fact remains that the criticism made recently to the effect that there "was no attempt to set up a joint US-South Vietnamese war council to coordinate military, police and intelligence operations at the highest level" was entirely valid and most appropriate to this appraisal of the US HUMINT effort in the RVN.<sup>21</sup>

(u)

(S/NF) METHODS OF OPERATION (U)

The recruitment of new informants into the underground network is the most hazardous and difficult task of all intelligence activities.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>"Why We Didn't Win in Vietnam," US News and World Report 9 February 1970, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Orlov, Handbook of Intelligence and Guerrilla Warfare (1963), p. 93.

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Despite the dangers and obstacles involved, it has long been recognized by the US military that intelligence "coverage in the domestic target category [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] during the incipient stages of an insurgency.<sup>23</sup> Otherwise, as the insurgency progresses to open conflict, the chances [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] become extremely remote. Experience prior to 1965 revealed that US and RVN HUMINT efforts had either failed to grasp the importance [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] or the task had proven to be too hazardous, too difficult or both.

(u) [REDACTED] By late 1965, as the arrival of additional personnel and units permitted expansion of the effort, there was little to provide the groundwork for the conduct of sophisticated HUMINT operations. By this time, the enemy was mounting large scale attacks, possessed strong logistical and support bases and was in control of large strategic areas throughout the country. It was almost impossible at this late date to insert penetrants into the enemy organization at any level above District, or in some cases, Province. The effectiveness of future HUMINT operations was, therefore, based primarily on the manner and extent of its exercise in previous years.

(u) [REDACTED] As previously mentioned, the number of CIA personnel in the RVN prior to the military buildup was limited. This factor,

<sup>23</sup>F. H. Dillon, Jr., Intelligence Operations Before the Insurgent War. Student Essay (Carlisle Barracks, 18 January 1968), p. 14.

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plus the priorities assigned, dictated the CIA's principal efforts be devoted to political and strategic intelligence collection. Although the CIA did engage in in-country operations, their efforts did not prepare them to support rapidly increasing military requirements. US Air Force HUMINT activities were also primarily concerned with strategic collection of value only to the Air Force and the US Navy's capability was, for all practical purposes, nonexistent. Until force level increases began in mid-1965, the US Army's HUMINT capability was also minimal. The SMIAT element, controlled by the Hawaii based 500th Military Intelligence Group, had been advising, training and conducting bilateral operations with the ARVN 924th Support Group, but the size and capabilities of SMIAT precluded its venture into large scale activities.<sup>24</sup> The Army's 704th MID, in addition to providing CI and security support to Headquarters, MACV, had been tasked to conduct bilateral counterintelligence special operations with the MSS, but its activities were also very limited. US military advisors and US tactical units had also been engaged in low level agent operations in conjunction with RVNAF intelligence personnel with varying degrees of success. In the main, however, the Army's HUMINT effort "had degenerated into a purely bilateral effort. In fact, it wasn't really bilateral in the sense that we were not aiding or directing the control of

<sup>24</sup>In mid-1968, because of a suspected security compromise, the 924th Support Group was redesignated ARVN Unit 101, a designation used hereafter.

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of US military HUMINT operations was directed toward the combat support role, i.e. the collection of low level tactical order of battle information through the conduct of both unilateral and bilateral operations.

(u) [REDACTED] Throughout the 1965-1969 period, two general categories of US military unilateral HUMINT operations existed--those truly unilateral clandestine operations, fully coordinated with the CIA, wherein host country and allied officials were unaware of their existence; and those operations termed unilateral which were conducted by US military personnel using interpreters and translators who were not overtly employed by RVN intelligence organizations. The extreme sensitivity and level of security classification applied for the protection of US unilateral clandestine operations preclude any elaboration herein of their scope or analysis of their contribution to the overall war effort. These operations, conducted against targets throughout Southeast Asia, were held to a minimum because of the political and diplomatic ramifications and because they placed a heavy drain on the limited pool of well-experienced specialists. They were closely controlled by MACV and the CIA and were only conducted by specifically designated theater level intelligence organizations.

(u) [REDACTED] Unilateral operations conducted by US military HUMINT personnel with the assistance of Vietnamese interpreters and translators were, on the other hand, far less sensitive in nature and were commonly engaged in by all US military organizations. Almost all US advisors, intelligence personnel assigned to tactical elements,

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theater level organizations and the 5th Special Forces Group conducted operations of this type with varying degrees of success. The US personnel developed targets [REDACTED] [REDACTED] throughout the RVN and along contiguous border areas. The interpreters and translators were ostensibly only support personnel required to assist in the conduct of meetings between US operatives and their agents. It is most doubtful, however, that any of these operations went undetected by the South Vietnamese. The Vietnamese counterintelligence agencies, especially the National Police and the MSS, were quite efficient in keeping tabs on all those Vietnamese citizens working with US elements. It was also simply impossible to conceal the fact from interested observers that these interpreters and translators were working with US organizations. It must be assumed, therefore, that all South Vietnamese personnel working with US MI units constantly reported the complete details of operations conducted to interested RVNAF CI or security agencies. A candid evaluation of this type of unilateral effort, provided by a former S-2, of the 5th Special Forces Group, which applies across the board was that "there was no such thing as a unilateral operation in Special Forces even though the publicized operations of Detachment B-57 was billed as such."<sup>28</sup> In sum, these operations were unilateral only in the sense that they were neither conducted in concert nor coordinated officially with RVNAF intelligence and CI organizations.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Ralph Groover, COL, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, Washington, 20 October 1970.

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(u) [REDACTED] Although continuing efforts were made to refine and expand unilateral operations, the major emphasis in the HUMINT field was placed on the conduct of bilateral operations with various RVNAF agencies and organizations. The value, indeed the necessity, of working with the South Vietnamese was recognized at the beginning of the US force buildup. Legally, US personnel were invited guests in the RVN and, as such, were expected to cooperate with the local authorities. More important, however, it was obvious from the outset that the conduct of bilateral operations permitted the US to capitalize on the long combat experience of the RVNAF and their vastly superior area, operational and language knowledge. The infusion of US technical skills, organizational ability, intelligence experience and, most of all, money and materiel provided the essential ingredients not available within the RVNAF structure.<sup>29</sup> In effect, bilateral operations seemed to offer the best of two worlds.

(u) [REDACTED] As a result of the anticipated operational benefits to be derived and because US HUMINT operatives, for the most part, possessed neither a linguistic capability nor an adequate knowledge of the area, almost all US HUMINT organizations and agencies strived to develop close working relationships with the various RVN agencies and organizations. The CIA, for example, worked closely with the RVN Central Intelligence Organization, the National Police and a host of other activities developed to satisfy specific requirements.

<sup>29</sup>McChristian interview.