

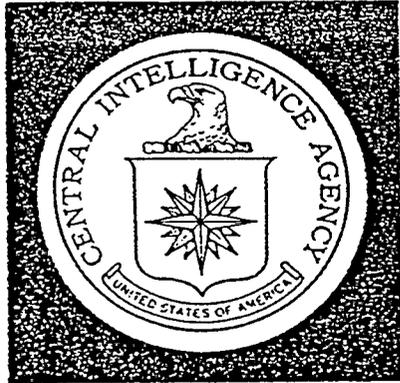
LC

~~Secret~~



1.3(a)(4)
C

LBJ LIBRARY
Mandatory Review
Case # NLJ 89-211
Document # 1



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Pacification in the Wake of the Tet Offensive
in South Vietnam*

~~Secret~~

5

19 March 1968

No.

1.3(a)(4)
C

Approved for Release
Date 30 MAY 1980

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CCENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
19 March 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Pacification in the Wake of the Tet Offensive
in South Vietnam

Although the evidence is still incomplete, the evidence that is now available indicates that the pacification program has received a severe setback in the majority of South Vietnam's 44 provinces as a result of enemy activities since the initiation of the Tet offensive on 30 January. In some areas, many of the gains made by the allies since 1965 were apparently negated.

Areas where only a slight to moderate setback occurred appear to be those of least significance from the standpoint of population density and strategic location. It is probable, moreover, that as the gaps in information are filled, the extent of personnel and material losses will grow.

In the long run, the most damaging aspect of the offensive may well prove to be its adverse impact on popular attitudes toward pacification. Evidence already indicates that the enemy action has greatly increased the apathy and passivity of many rural residents toward government programs and personnel.

1.3(a)(4)
C~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

SOUTH VIETNAM: Revolutionary Development Cadre

1 January 1968

Revolutionary Development Teams
 Total Personnel: 29,120
 Total Teams: 555

Truong Son Teams (Montagnard)
 Total Personnel: 6,768
 Total Teams: 108

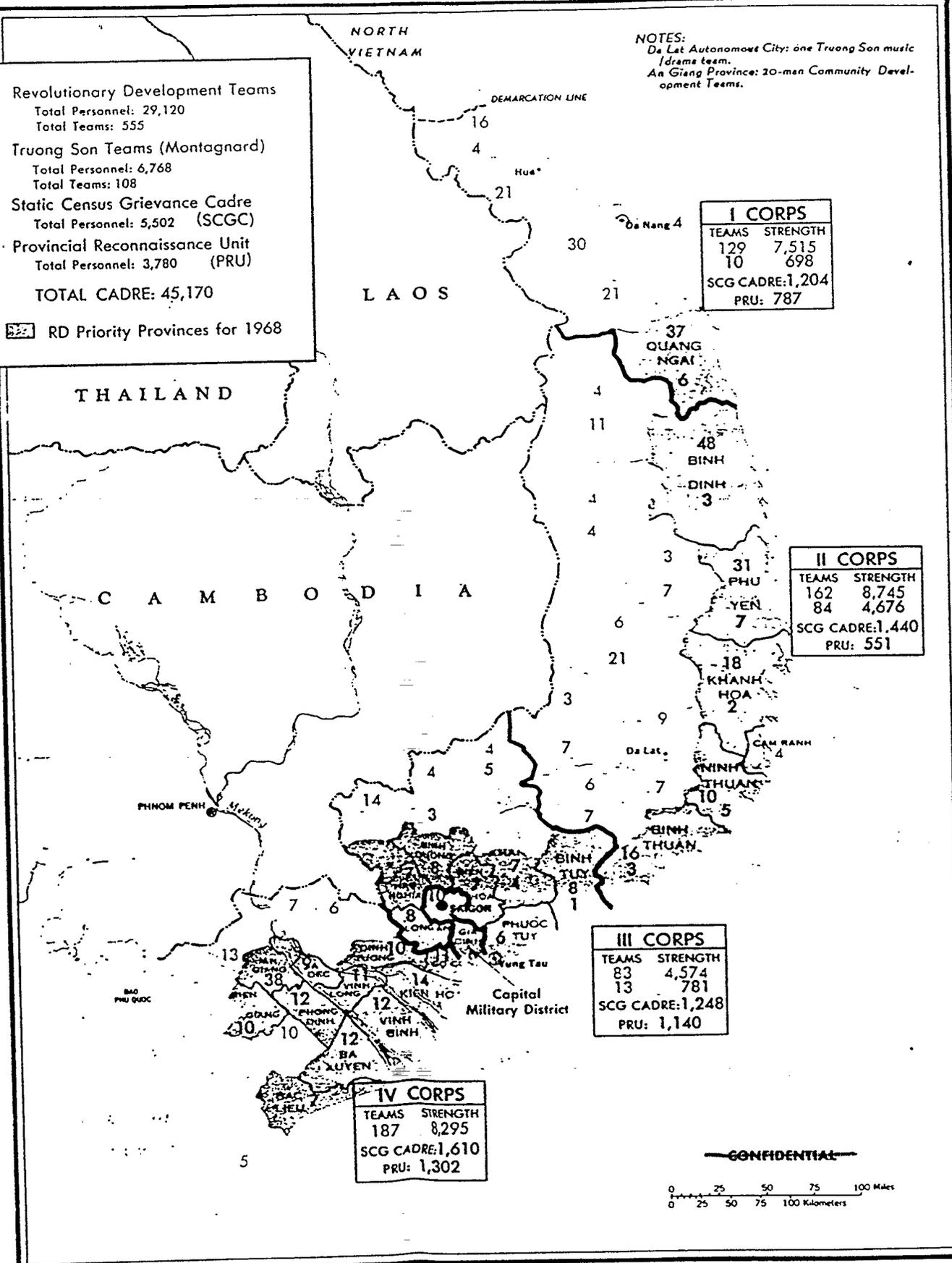
Static Census Grievance Cadre
 Total Personnel: 5,502 (SCGC)

Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
 Total Personnel: 3,780 (PRU)

TOTAL CADRE: 45,170

 RD Priority Provinces for 1968

NOTES:
 Da Lat Autonomous City: one Truong Son music drama team.
 An Giang Province: 20-man Community Development Teams.



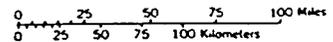
I CORPS	
TEAMS	STRENGTH
129	7,515
10	698
SCG CADRE: 1,204	
PRU: 787	

II CORPS	
TEAMS	STRENGTH
162	8,745
84	4,676
SCG CADRE: 1,440	
PRU: 551	

III CORPS	
TEAMS	STRENGTH
83	4,574
13	781
SCG CADRE: 1,248	
PRU: 1,140	

IV CORPS	
TEAMS	STRENGTH
187	8,295
SCG CADRE: 1,610	
PRU: 1,302	

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CThe Pre-Tet Situation

1. The blow to pacification caused by the Tet offensive did not come on the heels of steady, all around progress in the program. Rather, it was an additional, heavier setback in a rural security situation that had been gradually deteriorating in many areas since at least August 1967. The decline began to accelerate as the Communists' winter-spring campaign moved into high gear in October. Thus, for several months prior to Tet, the enemy had maintained continuous pressure on many rural areas, reducing the effectiveness of the GVN presence and improving his own political and military posture.

2. In the initial phases of the Tet assaults, pacification areas and personnel assets generally were not Communist targets. As a result of Viet Cong military action in the months before the offensive and the absence of government personnel for the Tet holiday, the forces involved in pacification in most places were easily bypassed or presented no effective opposition to the enemy's military forces. Since the offensive, however, as the enemy has attempted to consolidate his grasp on the countryside, those military units and Revolutionary Development (RD) teams that either remained in their assigned areas or are again operating in them have in most cases been subjected to a considerable increase in enemy pressure.

Present Status of Personnel

3. The status of the personnel assets of the related pacification programs--the bulk of whom, some 45,000 persons, are Revolutionary Development and other cadres--is still only partially known. Those provinces reporting casualties usually have only partial statistics available. There have, moreover, been few reports of cadre missing or deserting, although it is apparent that this has occurred to some degree. On 1 January, 555 Vietnamese RD teams with a field strength of about 29,120 had reportedly been formed. The Truong Son, or montagnard, RD teams numbered 108 with a field strength of approximately 6,770. The Static Census Grievance (SCG) cadres

-2-

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

stood at around 5,500 and the members of the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU) totaled some 3,780. During January, an additional 2,500 Vietnamese RD cadres finished training. Considering probable attrition in January, the RD cadres probably went into the Tet period numbering around 29,200.

4. As of 12 March, US officials in Vietnam reported that 321 Vietnamese RD teams--totaling approximately 13,800 cadres--were working in assigned RD hamlets. In addition, 93 Truong Son teams with about 5,900 men were in field positions. Of these, US officials have stated that about half were in planned 1968 locations. Although these teams are accounted for in the sense that they have been reported at a given locale, there is very little information available on their activities. Their personnel strength, moreover, appears to be an approximation at best.

5. Considering the extent of Viet Cong influence reported in the countryside and the drift of the fragmentary reports on current RD activities, it seems likely that the teams which have returned to the field are still largely involved in defensive activities. It is also doubtful that in the near future most of the teams can perform an effective mission among the people.

6. The condition of the Static Census Grievance program in the wake of the Tet offensive varies widely from province to province. In some cases, the SCG cadres performed effectively during the attack period and have been a major source of information on enemy activities in the countryside. In others, the personnel assets and effectiveness of the SCG have been seriously degraded or no cadre reporting has been received from the rural areas.

7. With few exceptions, however, the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU) are reported to have performed admirably, both during the attacks at Tet and subsequently. In a few cases, the PRU provided the only effective government military defense in urban areas and the units appear to have moved rapidly to the offensive as enemy troops withdrew.

-3-

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

The effectiveness of the PRU is almost certainly the result of their disciplined military character and the fact that they are directly under US rather than South Vietnamese Government direction. The units, however, took heavy casualties in some instances and it remains questionable whether they could sustain their punch under renewed assaults such as occurred at Tet.

Military Support for Pacification

8. As of 16 March, MACV reported that 20 of the 51 RD support battalions were not in their assigned areas. These battalions, for the most part, are still drawn off for security duty in and around urban centers. Most of the battalions now in place on pacification duty still appear to be deployed in defensive positions or are operating in RD areas only during daylight hours.

9. The status of the military forces most relied upon for pacification support--the Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF)--remains unclear. Based upon initial reports, the 150,000 PF soldiers appear to have suffered heavily, particularly in the wake of the urban offensive, as the Communists focused their attention on the rural areas. At least 360 militia outposts, primarily manned by the PF, have been overrun or abandoned in the delta alone. A number of the RF and PF units throughout the country were, like the ARVN, withdrawn in early February from the rural areas and brought to the provincial and district towns to augment defensive forces. Many of these forces have apparently not returned to the countryside.

The 1968 Plan

10. Generally speaking, the government's overall 1968 pacification plan is being held in abeyance until security improves and the situation in the rural areas is fully determined. Although efforts are under way by the Vietnamese Government to assess the present status of pacification and to get the program moving again, officials seem to be working

-4-

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

at cross-purposes to some extent. The government has formulated several new concepts and has issued several seemingly conflicting directives without agreeing on a single plan. New pacification guidelines thus far formulated by US authorities have not been coordinated with the South Vietnamese Government. Some of the Vietnamese officials apparently believe that the US plans go beyond the government's present capabilities.

11. It will be several weeks, at least, before the US Mission and the GVN have an agreed concept, and it may be the middle of May before the revised provincial pacification plans are approved, re-funded, and acted upon by a majority of the provinces. This assumes that the GVN will be capable of resuming an offensive stance in the countryside.

Prospects

12. It does not yet appear that most provincial governments are capable, on the one hand, of providing continuing security and handling the plethora of greatly compounded socioeconomic problems and, on the other, of restoring and maintaining the momentum of pacification activities. Government movement back to the countryside from the cities and towns has so far been very slow. This has been due in part to continued harassment of the urban areas by the Viet Cong and to the need for extensive diversion of personnel resources to reconstruction tasks in the cities.

13. It also appears, however, that the delay in the government's return to the countryside is due in part to the pervasive fear of enemy reprisal and to uncertainty about the political future of the government among provincial and district civil and military officials. The psychological impact of the recent fighting on this echelon of the government leadership and on many of the individuals directly involved in executing the specific pacification programs is bound to be significant and may be far-reaching. The loss of life among district and provincial officials, as well as the destruction of pacification facilities and records, was severe in a number of provinces.

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

14. Since pacification stands or falls on the confidence and enthusiasm of these individuals--and on the receptiveness of the rural populace--the extent of future support and participation in pacification by local Vietnamese remains in question. The past commitment of many of these officials to pacification has often been less than adequate, and in the aftermath of recent events, considerable foot-dragging can be anticipated. In the final analysis, however, the most significant effect of the enemy offensive may have been its revelation of the over-all vulnerability and relative shallowness of the pacification gains made during past years, despite the heavy cost and effort applied to achieve them.

15. Summaries of the situation by Corps are contained in the attached annex, along with detailed assessments of each province.

-6-

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

ANNEX

I Corps

1. The VC in I Corps do not appear to have concentrated on the RD areas, at least initially, except in the province of Quang Tri. The situation in Thua Thien Province remains unclear, however, and the program there has probably been completely disrupted. Although the VC are active in the countryside in Quang Tin, Quang Nam, and Quang Ngai provinces, lack of RDC activity there appears to be related more to the defensive attitudes of the GVN officials than to VC operations. Only in Quang Tri is an aggressive effort being made by the GVN to recover its RD area.

2. Cadre losses in I Corps are probably much higher than reported to date because of the lack of information on Thua Thien and the still incomplete accounting of the number of cadres on Tet leave. The RD cadre teams in I Corps were ordered back to their hamlets on 23 February, but the full degree of compliance with this order is not yet known. The 15 RD support battalions in I Corps were reported not to be operating in their assigned RD area as of 1 March, but four battalions were on pacification support duty as of 13 March.

Quang Tri

3. The three ARVN battalions assigned in direct support of the RD areas were withdrawn to Quang Tri city during the enemy attack, and by 3 February the Communists held two thirds of the RD campaign area, principally in Trieu Phong District. At least three New Life Hamlets in this district were destroyed. Although the damage from enemy attack on Quang Tri city was light, several hamlets on the northern outskirts of the city were destroyed. The refugee situation has become particularly acute around the city as a result of the widespread fighting.

A-1

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

4. In Quang Tri, as in other provinces, the Viet Cong appear to have concentrated for the most part on the 1967 RD projects and to have initially left the RD teams, which had already moved to 1968 locations, virtually untouched. By mid-February, however, only four RD teams remained in the field, all in hamlets located close to Trieu Phong District Headquarters; only one of these teams was in its 1968 hamlet. The province's other 12 teams were manning Quang Tri city's defense. Although morale and fighting capability of the teams has remained high, the RD control group has shown itself inept in trying to reorganize teams, exploit opportunities, and conduct required administration.

5. Prior to the Tet offensive, the four Truong Son (montagnard) RD teams had suffered from North Vietnamese Army activity in the Khe Sanh area. The teams were forced to withdraw in late January to US Marine areas, where they were assisting with refugees.

6. The South Vietnamese Army began by late February to try to move back into the RD areas. On the night of 24-25 February, the ARVN RD battalions moved into the RD area north of Quang Tri city for the first time since Tet. Although they continued operations against the enemy, the three RD support battalions were reported in early March still to be out of their assigned areas.

7. No assessment of the Static Census Grievance program in the rural areas had been possible as of mid-February because of a lack of communications and the absence of SCG leaders, who had gone to Hue for Tet and were still missing. The Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU), on the other hand, were reported to have performed well during the emergency, participating in the defense of Quang Tri city, assisting US troops in operations outside the city, and conducting patrols in the countryside.

8. In the Cua valley of Quang Tri, the Communists have been propagandizing the 8,000 members of the Bru tribe who live there, demanding that all village and hamlet officials renounce the GVN and join the Liberation Front. If the local leaders do

A-2

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

not join, according to reports, the enemy has stated he will kill all the local paramilitary defenders, who have been the target of heavy proselytizing from the Communists.

9. In the Trieu Phong District RD areas, the Viet Cong have formed the youth of four hamlets into ad hoc civil militia units to free regular troops from occupation duty. Success in this is reportedly small since most such units dissolve when the enemy forces leave. Additionally, according to informants, the enemy has attempted to incite villagers in at least four villages of Trieu Phong District to prepare for an "uprising," and the Viet Cong district and town committees reportedly have orders to destroy the RD program.

10. Most instances of the recent use of youths by the enemy in Quang Tri have apparently been on-the-spot improvisations to take maximum advantage of the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the allies. In Gio Linh District, however, many youths have reportedly been impressed into military service.

Thua Thien

11. The Viet Cong's Tet offensive is believed to have almost completely disrupted the pacification program in Thua Thien; the ex-chief of Thua Thien Province claimed that the enemy had "cut off the head of the program" by bringing about the destruction of Hue. The RD control group headquarters in Hue, apparently a primary target, was attacked and heavily damaged. The RD cadre chief was killed, and several members of the control staff are believed to have been captured.

12. Although there has only been intermittent contact with the districts, it appears that most RD teams are apparently in district headquarters rather than in their assigned hamlets. There are as yet, however, no estimates on personnel strengths. Accordingly, there is little information available on the status of the countryside, but US officials have reported that the situation in Quang Bien District remains bleak and Phu Loc District was overrun. These were primary pacification areas.

A-3

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)
C

13. The SCG Program, recently revised, has been similarly disrupted, and its chief was also reported killed. In early February a 51-man PRU element successfully defended its compound against five attacks until a shortage of ammunition forced it to withdraw. Survivors of the unit have since been operating with US Marine forces. The remaining PRU units were not operating in their assigned areas as of 1 March, and their status is not known. Damage to RDC, SCG, and PRU installations and equipment has been heavy and will require considerable reconstruction.

14. A new RD cadre chief was appointed on 22 February, and on 10 March, province officials and advisers began anew to formulate plans for the utilization of the RD teams. According to the revised plan, six teams which had been working north of Hue in Huong Tra District will continue there, and most of the remaining 16 teams will be posted in the primary pacification area in Phu Vang District east of Hue, hopefully during March. At least one team will work with the refugees in Hue city.

Da Nang

15. As of 1 March, there was no indication that the four RD teams in the Da Nang area, which were pulled into the city when the Viet Cong's Tet offensive began, had been redeployed to their assigned hamlets. There is also no information on the status on the SCG cadres in the Da Nang area. Security in the previously GVN-controlled areas near Da Nang has remained poor.

Quang Nam

16. The 30 RD teams in the province--concentrated in Hieu Nhon and Dien Ban Districts--were all pulled into the province capital or to the district towns in early February. One RD team returned on 12 February to Cam Nam Island, which lies near Hoi An city and where six teams had turned the area into the most promising pro-GVN sector in I Corps. The RD area was practically obliterated by allied bombing during the Tet attack and few people were still there. None of the remaining 29 teams is known to be in its assigned hamlet. Four teams were in Hoi An, the province capital, as of mid-February, and three were in, or adjacent to, Dien Ban District Headquarters. For the most part, the teams do not seem to have been

A-4

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

specific VC targets, but 17 teams had some casualties from contact with the enemy. Through February, the pacification program remained unsettled and without adequate GVN direction. The province chief was devoting practically all his attention to city defenses and rehabilitation, and he seemed unlikely to get around to the RD problem for several weeks at least.

17. The Static Census Grievance program was reportedly not disrupted in the rural areas, but with many cadres still absent on Tet leave and roads still interdicted, there was little reporting. The small Provincial Reconnaissance Unit in Quang Nam was used to guard the RD advisers' billet.

18. As of 1 March, the five battalions assigned to the direct support of pacification had not returned to their RD areas, partly because of concern that the Viet Cong would launch further attacks on the capital city of Hoi An and the various district headquarters.

19. The enemy, meanwhile, has been hyperactive in the rural areas of Quang Nam recruiting, propagandizing, and maintaining military pressure against the district towns and scattered outposts. The Viet Cong are alleged to be recruiting youths from 14 to 16 years of age for military service, and each Viet Cong district has been instructed to form a new battalion-- Hieu Nhan and Dai Loc have reportedly already done so.

Quang Tin

20. In Quang Tin Province, effective RD operations have been hindered more by the defensive attitude of province officials than by aggressive enemy action. Provincial officials were obsessed with the fear of future attacks at district and provincial headquarters and, by mid-February, indecisiveness and arbitrary shifts on their part in complete disregard of directives from above, had created confusion as to the location and operations of the RD teams. The province chief had, for example, suspended the 1968 pacification plan for Tam Ky District "for the duration of the emergency."

A-5

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

21. As of late February, few teams were located in planned 1968 hamlets. Three teams were in the provincial capital of Tam Ky and five teams were in Ly Tin District headquarters. The Thang Binh District teams were believed to be generally in their assigned 1967 hamlets along Highway 1. The shifting of the teams was, according to US officials, largely unnecessary because there was no real Viet Cong occupation of the RD areas and the teams apparently were not an enemy target. Nevertheless, at least 11 teams have reported hostile contact with the Viet Cong.

22. Although there had been little real change in the situation as of 1 March, the RD committee had assumed the responsibility of organizing and training the population into self-defense militia units. In the Tam Ky area, some 1,658 people from 15 to 40 years of age had been organized by the committee in cooperation with village officials; in Thang Binh District, 817 people had been armed; and in Ly Tin District, 200 had been trained and armed.

23. There is no indication that the SCG program in the province was disrupted as a result of the emergency situation. The SCG program in Tien Phuoc District, however, continues to suffer from VNQDD (National Party) infighting which has resulted in a number of SCG resignations. The PRU continued operations during the offensive. Its camp at Tam Ky was attacked on the night of 31 January, but the PRU repulsed the enemy. The two ARVN battalions assigned in direct support of RD areas were still being used for defensive purposes outside of RD areas as of 1 March.

24. The Viet Cong have not been idle, however, and have been reported conducting meetings in some hamlets of Thang Binh, Tam Ky, and Tien Phuoc districts. The enemy has reportedly established "liberation" committees in GVN-controlled areas that could function if the Viet Cong could seize power. In Tam Ky District, the people were being forced to join political demonstrations against the GVN and to build "combat hamlets." Reports have been received that the VC plan to draft males aged 15 and above and females between ages 17 to 25 to fill guerrilla units; civilian workers were to be drafted up to age 60 for males and 45 for females.

A-6

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CQuang Ngai

25. The rural areas of Quang Ngai Province had been largely under Communist control for years. Nevertheless, the GVN pacification program had challenged the enemy and, up until mid-1967, showed some signs of success. Since then, the enemy has regained much of his losses and at present GVN control is largely restricted to the provincial capital, district towns, and stretches along Route 1.

26. As of 15 February, GVN officials had pulled in 15 of the 39 RD teams from their assigned areas--in Tu Nghia and Binh Son districts, and along Highway 1--to provide protection for the provincial and district headquarters and to do work normally within the purview of the army. Few of the remaining 24 RD teams were staying in their hamlets overnight and, in at least one district, Binh Son, the teams were not working at all.

27. As February progressed, there were increased reports of clashes between the teams and the Viet Cong, and RD cadre casualties were growing. The RD cadre headquarters in Quang Ngai city, containing the control group offices and warehouses, has been a repeated Viet Cong target since Tet, suffering three ground attacks by early March which resulted in the destruction of the warehouse and its contents, and damage to the other buildings. There were several casualties among the control group personnel, whose morale appeared somewhat shaken.

28. There is little information on the status and activities of the six Truong Son RD Teams in Quang Ngai, but they are known to have sustained some casualties, including the death of two group leaders. The Viet Cong offensive had reportedly had little effect on the Static Census Grievance program, which was the primary source of tactical intelligence during the crucial early period of the offensive. As of 15 February, the SCG was functioning, but at a reduced pace. The Provincial Reconnaissance Unit continued to perform its mission without disruption.

29. The two ARVN battalions assigned in direct support of RD reportedly had not returned to their RD areas as of 1 March.

A-7

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CII Corps

1. During January and February, the security situation in the three major highland provinces of Darlac, Pleiku, and Kontum was worse than at anytime since 1965. This has seriously affected RD activity in the area. The bulk of the populace, however, resides in the coastal provinces which suffered varying degrees of RD damage. The effects have been particularly adverse in Binh Dinh Province, once a showplace for pacification. The sparsely populated provinces of Phu Bon, Quang Duc, and Lam Dong were not significantly affected by the VC Tet offensive.

2. By the end of February, the ARVN battalions assigned to support RD areas were reported back in their areas, and many of the RD and Truong Son teams had also returned. Throughout II Corps, however, there have been many reports that the VC were taking advantage of reduced security in the countryside to conduct propaganda, recruit, and establish their political organization.

Kontum

3. Communist operations in the province since Tet have made all roads insecure, and have significantly reduced communications within the province, and have generally confined the allies to the provincial and district towns. Since Tet, the enemy forces have been attacking villages and outposts and entering hamlets to seize foodstuffs or deliver propaganda lectures. It has reportedly become a standard nightly occurrence for enemy forces to enter the hamlets around Kontum City on recruitment, food, and propaganda missions.

4. As of mid-February, one Vietnamese RD team was reported to be in its assigned hamlet while the other three were in Kontum City as a security force. The eleven Truong Son teams have been accounted for and are either in hamlets or on security detail in one of the towns. Initial reports suggest that casualties among the Truong Son teams in Kontum have been the heaviest cadre losses in II Corps.

A-8

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

5. The PRU was effective in helping repel the enemy assault on Kontum city, but since then has remained relatively inactive.

Binh Dinh

6. A serious setback in pacification has occurred in Binh Dinh Province, previously one of the showplaces for the program. US officials believe it will take at least 18 months to reach the same stage of hamlet development that existed six months ago when provincial security began to decline. Vietnamese police reports indicate that the Viet Cong are becoming increasingly active in the countryside, particularly in the priority districts of Tuy Phuoc, An Nhon, Phu Cat, and Binh Khe. Enemy units, apparently unopposed, are entering hamlets on propaganda and food collection missions, and Vietnamese intelligence services have reported that the enemy is conducting an intensive manpower drive, impressing or recruiting both males and females from 15 years of age and up into military service.

7. During the initial days of the Tet fighting at least half of Binh Dinh's 50 RD teams were moved from their assigned hamlets to provide security for the capital city of Qui Nhon and the various district headquarters, or to help secure other hamlets. This move was at least in part necessitated by the withdrawal of local security forces to the district and provincial headquarters.

8. The Viet Cong apparently made a point of attacking RD hamlets in two of the three districts where the program was concentrated--Tuy Phuoc and An Nhon. As of 12 February, they had hit seven hamlets worked in these districts in 1966, nine worked in 1967, and nine included in the 1968 plan. Vinh Quang hamlet in Tuy Phuoc District, a show place hamlet in which an RD Team had been working for 18 months (mid-1966 to December 1967), was destroyed as a result of both enemy and allied actions. Many of the new refugees generated by the Tet offensive came from overrun RD hamlets.

9. In mid-February, because of the large number of RD cadres missing, the RD control group

A-9

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

chief was considering earmarking seven of nine new teams scheduled for 1968 as fillers for existing teams. The 1968 pacification plan was also expected to be rewritten. As of 10 March, however, a number of teams were in their assigned villages although primarily in defensive positions with the RD support battalions.

10. The SCG program was inoperative during the enemy offensive. The PRU, however, continued to function during the action.

Pleiku

11. The GVN has been operating a relatively small pacification program in Pleiku with limited success. Most of this rugged province is populated by montagnards and the countryside has been, and remains, generally under enemy control. The Tet offensive in Pleiku Province caused considerable dislocation of RD and Truong Son teams but no team was reportedly disbanded or even attacked. Security requirements caused two RD teams to be moved to Le Thanh District headquarters and another team was moved into Pleiku city. Although the remaining teams reportedly remained in their assigned hamlets, about half the total RD and Truong Son personnel were assigned to security duties. By 2 March, all RD teams were in place, but it was not possible to judge their effectiveness because security conditions prevented on-the-spot inspections.

12. There have been reports, however, that the Viet Cong have increased tax and rice collections and have stepped up assassinations of hamlet and village chiefs. In addition, Vietnamese intelligence reports indicate the enemy is attempting to conduct a large-scale recruitment drive in those villages and hamlets which have come under his control as the result of the withdrawal of friendly military units.

A-10

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

13. The SCG program reportedly continued to function throughout the Tet period. The PRU acted as a defensive force for the RD compound and the Pleiku Montagnard Training Center, repulsing two attacks against the latter.

14. Vietnamese officials in Pleiku were recommending in February that the RD and Truong Son teams be reassigned from their 1968 hamlets to work in Pleiku city and other towns with refugee problems. Although there is no word on the fate of this proposal, the RD chief believes that it will be necessary at least to revise the 1968 pacification plan for Le Trung District--where almost all the eight teams are located--because of the lack of security.

Phu Bon

15. The small pacification program in this underpopulated province was expected to remain on schedule, although the RD program was delayed in February for at least a week because of a province-wide alert. Truong Son cadres have shown some reluctance to return to their hamlets, but US advisers do not expect this to hinder the program significantly.

16. Viet Cong activity in Thuan Man District, where over 150 persons reportedly were abducted, caused more than 700 people to seek safety at the Bon Bleck Special Forces camp. It was planned to send Truong Son cadres to assist in the refugee resettlement which will be an addition to the 1968 pacification plan.

17. Although enemy military activity has been sparse in Phu Bon, allied forces in March have reported an increased enemy movement toward the coast along infiltration trails in Thuan Man District. The montagnards kidnapped by the enemy will probably be used as porters.

Phu Yen

18. By the end of February, GVN forces had been moved out of Tuy Hoa city and into the adjacent

A-11

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

rural areas, but they were deployed in what one American adviser termed a "defensive posture." Two battalions of the 47th ARVN Regiment were serving as a reaction force for Tuy Hoa. This requires that they concentrate their forces at night and thus limits their security value to the rural population. The third battalion of the 47th Regiment, whose mission was to provide security for the RD teams in Tuy Hoa District, reportedly was reluctant to patrol at night or set ambushes, and instead moved in company strength from one strongpoint to another. Even in the daytime, many of ARVN's "operations" in Tuy Hoa District were being conducted around 1967 New Life Hamlets rather than in the more insecure areas beyond.

19. As a result of the defensive concentration of friendly forces, Viet Cong units reportedly were relatively free to operate, even through RD areas, in platoon strength. GVN sources reported that the Viet Cong were taxing villagers, confiscating rice, and, in addition to these economic gains, were recruiting replacements for losses sustained during the Tet offensive. Unless the situation changes radically, the serious setback to pacification will continue in Phu Yen, previously a showcase province in which good progress had been made.

20. The 29 Vietnamese and seven montagnard RD teams have, for the most part, been back in their hamlets since mid-February, but because of limited military protection, many were forced to withdraw at night to more secure areas. About five RD teams were forced from their hamlets in early February and may still be employed as a security force in the province capital. The Truong Son teams have reportedly remained in their 1967 hamlets, in which they have been scheduled to continue work under the 1968 pacification plan. The wounding of the SCG chief in early February has caused a decline in SCG performance. The PRU have been restricted to providing security for the provincial and district headquarters.

A-12

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

Darlac

21. Prolonged fighting and heavy destruction in Ban Me Thuot have rendered most of the provincial government inoperative. Enemy forces, apparently unopposed, now have control of most of the province with the exception of the provincial capital and district towns. Fear prevades the attitudes of the people in Ban Me Thuot; a US observer has reported that local residents who voiced pro-GVN sentiments before Tet have now adopted a neutral attitude. In many villages, the enemy had, by early March, established an infrastructure to control and exploit the inhabitants.

22. In the face of the present military situation, pacification has unquestionably suffered heavily. The 1968 pacification plan will probably be abandoned. GVN military units in support of pacification were withdrawn in February. Although an ARVN battalion supporting pacification has reportedly returned to its RD area--possibly the Quang Nhiem Land Development center--it is not known if any RD teams are with it. At least three of the province's 26 teams were overrun in early February and the exact status of the remaining teams is as yet unknown. At least 12 appear to be in the Ban Me Thuot area and 11 may still be in their assigned hamlets. Cadre morale is reported to be low as a result of personnel and equipment losses, including the weapons of some 200 cadres. In early March, enemy units were reportedly attacking villages where the teams were operating.

23. The SCG program was inoperative until 6 February, but since then it has been one of the few valid information sources for the province. Approximately half of the 28-man PRU resigned between 30 January and 3 February, but 23 new recruits were hired by 10 February and since then the unit has reportedly been operative.

A-13

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

1.3(a)(4)
CKhanh Hoa

24. Despite GVN claims that all RD groups stayed in their areas during the Tet offensive, a mid-February visit by a US official to seven of the province's 20 teams showed that two teams had been moved out of their assigned hamlets to provide security for a district town. Many RD cadres were visiting Nha Trang during Tet and, while stranded by the attack, were assembled and assigned a security mission within the city. As of mid-February, about 50 cadres remained in that assignment. RD activities in the province generally are still focused on security rather than development.

25. The SCG program has continued to operate, and even the SCG chief was reportedly out collecting information. PRU operations were disrupted, primarily by the Tet holidays, but since 8 February have been about normal. SCG and other Vietnamese intelligence services have reported that the Communists appear to be making an effort to build up their political organizations in the villages and hamlets in what appears to be an attempt to organize a support base for future large-scale attacks on the provincial capital.

Cam Ranh City

26. Cam Ranh was not attacked until struck by mortar fire in early March; however, the pacification program was apparently disrupted in the area. Although the four 34-man RD teams in this special zone have remained in their assigned 1968 hamlets, their activities have been almost entirely of a military nature in the face of threatening attacks. The SCG program is apparently unaffected, but there is no information available on its status. The morale of the cadres and the populace is reported to be high, although the cost of living has soared, there are no indications of panic.

Quang Duc

27. Quang Duc, the least populated province in the country, has remained relatively quiet since Tet, although there have been reports of increased Viet Cong activity in the countryside and incidents of hamlet entry. The enemy offensive

A-14

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

elsewhere caused province officials in Quang Duc to strengthen defensive positions, resulting in only one RD team's moving to its 1968 hamlet, two teams' remaining in their 1967 hamlets, and a fourth team's moving to a district headquarters. The seven Truong Son teams have apparently remained in their 1968 hamlets.

Tuyen Duc

28. Pacification has apparently suffered a major setback in this province. No attacks against the rural areas of the province were reported until after the Viet Cong had withdrawn from the city of Da Lat. Since then, enemy forces have been focusing on the rural areas while friendly forces have concentrated on securing Da Lat city and on handling the socio-economic problems which have arisen in the wake of the fighting. Since at least 6 March, enemy forces have been launching small-scale attacks throughout the province and against the RD hamlets located astride Route 11.

29. In early February, the province chief--since removed--had pulled six of the seven Vietnamese RD teams and four of the seven Truong Son teams into the provincial and district headquarters to act as an additional security force. These teams had apparently not returned to their hamlets by the first of March, and the RD cadre chief, as of that time, was still forbidden by the province chief to leave Da Lat to visit the teams.

30. Reports of early March indicate that the enemy has been attempting to recruit replacements for his military forces, especially in montagnard settlements. About 300 new recruits were reportedly being trained as replacements for two battalions which had participated in the attack on Da Lat. There is also some evidence that the Viet Cong have been creating a form of local government in the southern area of Don Duong District.

A-15

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)

C

Lam Dong

31. There has been only limited Viet Cong military activity reported in this province since Tet. Five of the six RD teams were in their 1968 hamlets prior to Tet and have remained in place. The sixth team was working, under the direction of the province chief, in a 1967 hamlet near Bao Loc and was providing a 20-man security force for the province capital. The seven Truong Son teams have remained in their 1968 hamlets, and the SCG and PRU have continued to function normally.

32. As of 7 March, however, Vietnamese intelligence reports indicated an increase in Viet Cong activity in the countryside, including a number of hamlet entries. US observers have indicated that among the populace there is an increasing erosion of confidence in the ability of the GVN to protect them.

Ninh Thuan

33. In this province, one of four in II Corps that did not experience widespread attacks during the Tet offensive, incidents of hamlet entry by Viet Cong propaganda squads rose considerably during February. Virtually all of the hamlets--about 12--that had either been worked by RD teams during 1967 or were scheduled for development during 1968 were entered for purposes of propaganda and food collection. In addition, the VC devoted considerable effort to disrupting the major lines of communication (LOC) in the province during the month. US officials in Ninh Thuan have for some time noted a Viet Cong propensity to wait until teams move out of a hamlet before trying to reassert control.

34. As of mid-February, seven of the eleven RD teams were being used as security forces in Phan Rang city and were thus unable to move to their 1968 hamlets. Two of the five Truong Son teams had to be removed from their 1968 hamlets for security reasons.

35. The SCG program, on the other hand, has provided excellent information since Tet, despite interdiction of the LOCs. Unfortunately, the PRU

A-16

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

1.3(a)(4)

C

has been held in a static defensive position by province officials. As of the end of February, the ARVN battalion in support of RD was apparently in its assigned area around Phan Rang.

Binh Thuan

36. It appears that the Viet Cong have effectively checked the pacification program in the populous southern half of Binh Thuan Province and have dealt it a serious setback, but there appears to have been no major disruption in the northern half of the province. The Viet Cong mounted their attacks on the provincial capital of Phan Thiet from hamlets adjacent to the city and by mid-February were reported to be conducting nightly meetings and indoctrination courses in villages around the city. Census grievance reports indicate the enemy has been extremely active in these villages and hamlets, forcibly recruiting both males and females from 15 years of age and up, and attempting to re-establish a village and hamlet infrastructure through impressment of village elders into their organizations. One estimate places the number of new Viet Cong recruits at approximately 2,000 in southern Binh Thuan. There have also been reports that, as enemy units withdrew from the city, they broke up into small elements and that families in the hamlets were assigned the responsibility of housing and feeding individual soldiers.

37. The eight RD teams assigned to hamlets in the northern section of the province were not affected by the VC attacks on the province capital of Phan Thiet. The RD teams around Phan Thiet, however, apparently withdrew to the city when the attacks occurred, and approximately three fourths of the personnel of these teams were still there as of mid-February. The two "Quarter Zone" teams--supplements to the RD team effort--proved ineffective in the face of the Viet Cong incursions; eight members of one team reported to the enemy when the attacks came, and the hamlet in which the other team operated was completely destroyed.

38. Because of the lack of communications, the status of the three Truong Son teams is not known. The SCG program remained completely inoperative.

A-17

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

until mid-February, but appears to be starting up again. In early February, the PRU were operating in Thien Giao District but were mistakenly hit by friendly air strikes. Their present status is generally unknown.

39. The two ARVN battalions in support of RD were reportedly back in their assigned areas in southern Binh Thuan by 1 March.

A-18

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CIII Corps

1. The pacification program unquestionably suffered a very severe, and perhaps a disastrous setback in some of the most important areas of III Corps. The provinces around Saigon, for example, which have been the scene of vigorous pacification efforts--off and on--for some years, appear to have virtually no real pacification effort under way at present. Although the teams remain in their field posts in some sectors in these provinces, they appear to be mainly engaged in defensive tasks and little or no serious proselyting work in favor of the government is under way.

2. The provinces to the east of the capital--Binh Tuy, Long Khanh, and Phuoc Tuy for example--appear to have suffered the least, and it seems that the RD effort there was bypassed to a large extent by the enemy. This is doubtless in part because pacification in some of these provinces is minor in scope and not a serious threat to the enemy. Even in this area, however, the Communists are said to be very active in the countryside in the wake of the Tet offensive, and the remaining RD assets in field positions are in many cases pulled up tight in defensive positions.

3. Along the Cambodian border, the enemy has been very active for a number of months and, in the wake of the Tet offensive, has by and large pushed the government back into the district towns and provincial capitals. Although some of these provinces are not overly important in terms of the pacification effort, in Binh Long and Phuoc Long, for the present at least, it has all but ceased.

Phuoc Long

4. The Viet Cong are reported to be in control of the countryside in this relatively under-populated (46,000) province, which is inhabited primarily by montagnards and has not been heavily contested by the government. The government's somewhat limited pacification program, which was largely an activity in and around the provincial capital, was reported in both February and March to have been seriously affected, if not at a standstill. The status of the province's 630 or so cadres involved in the various programs is generally unknown. About half the provincial capital has been destroyed and most US personnel were evacuated from the province by mid-February. On 19 February only about 244 of 520 national policemen in the province were available for duty, and the ARVN ranger battalion in Song Be was down to 75 percent of its strength.

A-19

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
CLong Khanh

5. There are conflicting reports from Long Khanh Province on the status of the rural areas. Although the enemy is reportedly more active in the countryside, all the RD teams reportedly remained in their hamlets during and since the Tet offensive. However, by mid-February, a number of 1967 RD hamlets had been hit and/or infiltrated, and the team members were concerned with the increased Viet Cong harassment which had forced them into a defensive role. The teams have requested heavier weapons, such as the M-79 grenade launcher, in order to compete with the enemy's B-40 rockets. There are indications the people of these hamlets are confused and that Viet Cong elements in them were forming or reinforcing underground cells.

6. The SCG did not function until 6 February because of Tet leaves and disrupted communications, but partial operations did resume after 6 February when the SCG chief returned from leave. When the public transportation, upon which the SCG cadre are dependent, returns to normal, the SCG will be fully operational. Presumably, all hamlet cadres are still in place.

7. Following an in-province training course, the PRU were given leave during Tet and were thus scattered throughout the province and unarmed. This, in addition to the temporary capture of the PRU leader by the Viet Cong, delayed PRU participation in resisting the enemy's attacks. After regrouping, the PRUs were primarily involved in reconnaissance of the hamlets in the vicinity of Xuan Loc. The people of the Xuan Loc area are now reported to have a strong dislike for the Viet Cong, but the general populace is more frightened and is more apprehensive than ever of the government's ability to protect them.

Binh Tuy

8. Very little information is as yet available on the status of the pacification program in Binh Tuy Province. It does not appear, however, that much disruption has occurred in any program. There has been a slowdown of the RD cadre, SCG, and PRU programs, but this may have primarily resulted from the Tet holiday rather than the Viet Cong offensive.

A-20

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
CBinh Long

9. According to reports, the enemy controls all of Binh Long Province except for the provincial capital and district towns. A feeling of apathy has settled over GVN officials. The Viet Cong are erasing government influence in the villages and hamlets by appointing or "electing" their own administrations and mobilizing the population into a "people's militia." In many hamlets, however, this organizing was not necessary as the Viet Cong infrastructure was already firmly in place and required no facade.

10. Only 50 percent of the approximately 340 RD cadres were in place on 1 February, and the status of the programs' personnel is generally unknown. The SCG program was not very effective because a number of SCG personnel were still stranded in mid-February in the rural areas. Moreover, as in other provinces there was a prevailing sense of general apathy on the part of the populace. The PRUs, on the other hand, were providing one of the most effective forces in the province, operating as a reaction force and in sweep and ambush operations.

Tay Ninh

11. Tay Ninh was not initially involved in the first phase of the enemy attacks, but pacification ground to a halt on 1 February when the province chief ordered almost all the cadre teams to return to their respective district towns. By 12 February the teams had all been pulled into the provincial capital to augment defensive forces. It was expected at that time that the teams would be able to return to their hamlets by the end of February. However, on 5 March a number of installations in Tay Ninh city were attacked by mortar fire and it is not known in the subsequent crisis if the teams actually did return to their hamlets.

12. As a result of the curfew, there were few reports from SCG cadres. All PRU were ordered into the capital city area on 1 February and were used by the province chief for night ambushes throughout the capital city and neighboring Phu Khuong District headquarters area.

A-21

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

Binh Duong

13. Fighting in Binh Duong, including the southern portion where the pacification program was concentrated has been rather heavy in past weeks, and a number of government outposts have been overrun and abandoned. As a result, the pacification program in Binh Duong has been severely disrupted. As of mid-February only two of the eight RD teams were working in their assigned hamlets. Five of the teams were assigned to Phu Cuong, the provincial capital, for refugee relief activities, and one group was assisting the National Police in the distribution of rice ration tickets to the populace in that city. The RD leadership losses in this province were extraordinarily heavy and one team leader and four assistant leaders are still missing.

14. The SCG program continued to function fairly effectively, but was hampered by the insecurity of the lines of communication. The PRU, placed in the districts, performed in a creditable manner. The Ben Cat District PRU operated effectively throughout the offensive and was instrumental in preventing the district town from being overrun. The Chau Thanh and Lai Thieu district PRU joined with local forces on operations, while those in Phu Hoa and Tri Tam districts remained in the district towns as defensive forces because of the security situation.

Bien Hoa

15. During February there was a high level of Viet Cong activity and movement throughout Bien Hoa Province. The enemy was reported in late February to have been recruiting or kidnapping youths in Di An District and threatening the lives of local officials, SCG and RD cadres, and other government workers. Actual conditions in the countryside remain difficult to determine, but since 1 February, Communist forces have been carrying on a province-wide campaign of intimidation and terrorism against government officials. This campaign has included assassinations, letters containing either threats or appeals to join the Viet Cong, harassment of the families of government supporters, and an extensive propaganda campaign urging the people to be passive for their own protection.

16. Local Communist forces in Bien Hoa have reportedly rendered most of the secondary roads in

A-22

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

1.3(a)(4)
C

the province impassable, have torn down power and telephone lines, and also have interdicted the railroad. Probes continue to be made against several district towns; one district town, Cong Thanh, was apparently overrun in early February.

17. The adverse security situation and the withdrawal of ARVN units assigned to support of RD areas has precluded the movement of the RD teams to their 1968 hamlets. There is, however, no indication that the teams were withdrawn from their hamlets to provide security to district towns. During February, however, one report indicated that RD cadres had collaborated with elements of the Vietnam Information Service (VIS) and assisted social welfare officials in refugee work. This suggests some were located in the cities or towns.

18. The PRU have joined with other friendly forces on offensive military missions and have also served in a defensive role. By the latter part of February, the PRU were beginning to return to their primary mission.

Phuoc Tuy

19. In a nine hour battle for the provincial town on 2 February, the Viet Cong were repelled but Phuoc Le suffered heavily. Since then the Viet Cong have contacted some residents and made small payments for property damage. Elsewhere in the province, the Communists have been raiding hamlets in Long Dien District and "abducting" men and women 15 years of age and older. Long Dien District town was attacked on 7-8 February, and the Viet Cong reportedly had plenty of popular support.

20. The security situation apparently remains poor outside the provincial capital, and communication with the rural areas is intermittent. The RD cadre program was clearly disrupted throughout the province, although the personnel assets are generally reported intact. As of late February, three teams were in Phuoc Le working with the refugees. One team was in a district town because of the lack of security in its hamlet area, and two teams remained in their assigned hamlets apparently unaffected by recent events.

A-23

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

21. The SCG program, although it apparently suffered no losses, has been totally ineffective, since most of the hamlet cadres went into hiding or into GVN outposts. Most of the PRU were present for duty and had conducted themselves very well in heavy sustained combat. As the initial enemy offensive waned, however, the PRU reverted to a defensive role, guarding allied provincial and district compounds.

Gia Dinh

22. The years of effort to try to pacify Gia Dinh Province, within which the city of Saigon is located, have not met with much success. The government's provincial officials have never committed themselves very fully to the programs. In the days prior to Tet, the Viet Cong moved large numbers of men and quantities of supplies through the province apparently without any government personnel becoming aware of it. As in other areas, this suggests either greater popular apathy or more support for the Viet Cong than had been generally assumed.

23. Field work by the RD teams apparently ceased in Gia Dinh with the onset of the Tet offensive. At that time, the teams were awaiting the inspection of the hamlets in which they had been working prior to moving into 1968 hamlets. At least half of the over 700 cadres were on leave when the Tet offensive began and most of them are apparently still unaccounted for. In one instance, an RD team was reported to have deserted its hamlet and dispersed. Little information is available on most of the 250 cadres who composed the SCG and PRU.

Hau Nghia

24. For all practical purposes, it would appear that the pacification effort in Hau Nghia has ceased. Military support units assigned the task of RD security were withdrawn from their assigned hamlets and were involved in securing the provincial capital and district towns. A significant number of outposts throughout the province have been overrun or abandoned. The district town of Duc Hue was overrun and controlled by the enemy for a week.

25. Cu Chi, the center of the pacification effort, was the hardest hit district, and continued to

A-24

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
c

be harassed through the end of February. The RD effort was seriously disrupted in Cu Chi and cadres were unable to return to their assigned hamlets because of the presence of large Viet Cong units. A number of RD cadres were in the district town distributing commodities to refugees and providing security for the district compound.

26. In Duc Hoa District, the RD effort was also completely disrupted. Due to lack of security, only two teams remained in their 1967 hamlets; one of the teams was not working, and the other combined with cadres from two other teams to work during daylight hours only. In Trang Bang District, the one team assigned was in the province capital where it was expected to remain until the heavy enemy activity in the area ceased.

27. The SCG program was disrupted primarily because of lack of communications and the reluctance of the populace to associate with SCG cadre while Viet Cong were in the area. The conduct of the PRU was exceptional. These cadres were involved in a number of conventional missions during the Viet Cong offensive, and, in some cases, served as the focal point of resistance to the enemy.

Long An

28. Long An Province has long been a key province in allied pacification plans, but progress here has always been less than satisfactory. The Viet Cong seem to be able to adapt to changing allied strategies and survive, and possibly have a more significant degree of support or acquiescence than is generally realized. At the beginning of the Communists' Tet offensive, the Viet Cong entered a number of RD hamlets, but did little or no damage to them. Since most of the cadres were on Tet leave, those who stayed in the hamlets moved to the province capital when it became apparent the Viet Cong were around.

29. Since then, the cadres have been reluctant to return to the countryside. Only after the provincial authorities refused to pay their wages did seven of the eight Long An RD teams move to their 1968 hamlets. In several cases, this action was ephemeral--as soon as they were paid and the province chief was out of sight, the cadres changed to civilian clothes and returned to Can Giuoc district towns. Those cadres who had earlier moved to the provincial capital were remaining there and assisting in refugee relief.

A-25

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

The cadre teams had been working in northern Rach Kien and Can Giuoc districts adjacent to Gia Dinh Province.

30. The PRUs in Tan An city were very active during the Tet offensive and continue to function as a cohesive unit, conducting a number of strike operations into Viet Cong controlled areas around the town. The PRU have also used their familiarity with the local enemy elements to spot or identify important Viet Cong prisoners.

A-26

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

IV Corps

1. Damage to the pacification program throughout the delta was as serious as that inflicted anywhere in the country. The Viet Cong appear to have largely reversed the gains made by the government during the last two years in the northern tier of delta provinces. In most of the southern delta provinces, only a very limited government presence had ever been exerted outside the district towns and provincial capitals. In most of these areas, the VC appear to have again penetrated and are conducting anti-government activity.

2. In many areas, it will be necessary to start at least with the 1967 hamlets in attempting to regain support from the populace. So far, probably no more than half of the RD teams are back in the field, and most of these are engaged in mainly defensive tasks and have little time for winning hearts and minds. Some eight of the 15 ARVN battalions assigned to pacification are said to be in their assigned areas. The rest are apparently on static security assignment in the cities. The recent efforts to get the ARVN moving will probably help relieve the enemy pressure on some RD areas in the near future, but it seems doubtful if any viable pacification programs will get under way in any significant area of the delta for as long as the Viet Cong are able to keep up any reasonable semblance of the pressure they have maintained for the past six weeks.

An Giang

3. This province--the seat of the Hoa Hao sect--has been and probably remains the most secure province in South Vietnam. Since the Tet offensive was launched, An Giang has remained virtually unscathed. Although the Viet Cong appear weak in this province, there have been past allegations of Hoa Hao-Viet Cong collusion.

4. By mid-February all 38 pacification teams had returned to their respective villages after having been brought to the provincial capital during

A-27

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

the initial period of the offensive. The PRU assets were still being used as a defensive force in Long Xuyen. There is no SCG program in An Giang as the Hoa Hao information net provides the Hoa Hao provincial leaders with the information they desire.

An Xuyen

5. This province has been a Viet Cong stronghold for 20 years and, with the exception of the provincial capital--which the VC tried several times to overrun--and the district towns, the Communists by and large control the province. Here it is not a matter of the GVN taking the offensive but of holding on to what it has.

6. The limited pacification program was at a standstill as of the latter part of February. Most of the 250 RD cadres were being used in the defense of Ca Mau city or were under the control of Vietnamese Army units. The province chief has reported that the remainder--possibly very few--were in their assigned hamlets around the provincial capital. Although communications with the teams is still poor, attacks have been reported specifically against the RD areas.

7. The SCG center in Ca Mau city was in full operation and had provided some good intelligence on enemy forces and personalities. The PRU operated extremely well during the enemy offensive both as a reaction and reconnaissance force in the countryside, and in the city itself as an intelligence mechanism.

Ba Xuyen

8. Ba Xuyen, another GVN priority area, appears to be in relatively poor shape as a result of the recent fighting. In mid-February many outposts in the province were overrun or abandoned as the GVN pulled into defensive positions. The reaction of the people in the countryside to the enemy offensive cannot yet be determined, although US officials feel they probably have been impressed by the Viet Cong's actions. The enemy meanwhile has stepped up recruiting throughout the province.

A-28

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

9. As of late February, all 12 RD teams had been accounted for. Three teams were in district towns as an additional security force and were also working on refugee relief. Six teams were still in 1967 Phase II hamlets, and three had been moved from their assigned hamlets to more secure areas. Most of the teams were apparently still well below strength, partly because cadre have still not returned from Tet leaves. The RD cadre control group in Soc Trang was, however, gathering the stragglers together in the city. Most of the pacification program had been concentrated in Long Phu District; the amount of disruption here is still unknown. The SCG program was operating at a reduced pace because communication was only available with two of the province's six districts. The PRUs had been operating efficiently since mid-February. They appear to be in such a position that planned 1968 programs could be launched.

Bac Lieu

10. Although the RD teams were reported in the field undisturbed on 8 February, by mid-February the teams had been engaged several times, and as a result most were moved to more secure areas. Only two of the eight teams were remaining in place; however, they were not working on pacification. Two teams have been withdrawn into the district towns and three are, at last report, in Vinh Loi city as defensive forces and attempting to bolster the morale of the people.

11. The SCG headquarters was closed down for a week after the early February attacks and has since remained ineffective. Moreover, there had been no contact with outlying CG cadres. Since the attacks the PRU have functioned primarily in a conventional military role, largely involving defense of the perimeters of the PRU compound which is located in an isolated area near the provincial capital.

Chau Doc

12. The RD program which is dominated by Hoa Hao elements in this province has never been notably aggressive in pursuing the objective of pacifying

A-29

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

the predominantly Khmer-populated districts of Tri Ton and Tinh Bien, in which is located the Seven Mountains base of the VC 510th and 512th battalions. The pacification program is also concentrated in those districts. In the aftermath of the Communists' Tet offensive, four of the provinces' 13 teams are being used in refugee relief work in the hard hit province capital. The remaining teams had been pulled into the district towns for defense. This, combined with the defensive posture of allied forces, indicates that the pacification program has come to a halt, at least for the present. District towns continue to be harassed and there are signs that Viet Cong are otherwise active in the countryside.

13. The PRU, which was primarily responsible for driving off the 31 January attack on the province capital have remained in Chau Phu. The SCG cadre in and around Chau Phu have been accounted for, but those cadres outside the defense perimeter of the city have not been heard from.

14. VC activity had intensified particularly against the district towns of Chau Phu since August 1967 with a gradual but measured escalation which culminated in the Tet offensive.

Chuong Thien

15. Chuong Thien was not involved to any great extent in the initial Tet fighting, and thus the RD teams are still largely in place and intact. By mid-February the 10 RD teams had about 16 engagements with the Viet Cong, but suffered only light losses. The Viet Cong in this province were also applying less violent pressure on the cadres by sending them letters extolling Communist victories elsewhere and urging the cadres to desert the GVN and join them. Because of the situation, the teams have assumed a defensive role in their hamlets.

16. The SCG program has contributed effective intelligence since the offensive began. The PRU, however, are being used defensively and in ambush. Aside from one operation on 7 February which resulted in ten Viet Cong killed and one captured,

A-30

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3

the PRU have reported virtually no contact with the enemy.

17. According to a US official, the populace of Chuong Thien is scared and probably feels neglected and abandoned, especially in the countryside. The Viet Cong have been active there, and a Vietnamese intelligence officer believes the enemy has recruited two new battalions in the province during the past few months.

18. Roads and canals to the districts from the provincial capital are for the most part insecure and closed. Viet Cong tax collectors are trying to enter RD and other government controlled areas to tax the March rice harvest.

19. This province has been and remains largely an enemy domain, and there is believed to be a strong, pro - Viet Cong feeling among most of the rural people.

Dinh Tuong

20. Although little firm information is available on the situation in the rural areas of this important and populous province (population at least 600,000), US officials have reported that the Viet Cong have isolated the provincial capital of My Tho, the district towns, and except for stretches of Route 4, control the province by default. Here, as elsewhere, the enemy is reportedly conducting a heavy recruitment campaign in the countryside, has overrun some outposts, and is interdicting lines of communication.

21. In mid-February, Viet Cong propaganda cells were still active in My Tho, and the populace was reluctant to cooperate with the police. Allied operations are now, however, being conducted in and around the city, with some degree of success in reducing pressure directly on the city.

22. Pacification operations in Dinh Tuong Province in general and around My Tho city in particular remain completely disrupted. As of late February only two thirds of the 600 RD cadres were

A-31

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

accounted for, and their activities in the rural areas were halted. During the Viet Cong attack on My Tho in early February, the RD warehouse was damaged and all equipment and arms were lost. The administrative files of the RD program were also either destroyed or captured, thus requiring that the SCG and RD cadre record base be completely rebuilt. The personal assets of the three cadre programs remain dispersed and have presumably suffered severe losses.

Go Cong

23. The GVN control the provincial capital and district towns and, to some extent, Route 24 to My Tho and Route 5 to Saigon, but the Viet Cong move relatively freely elsewhere. Government outposts have been frequently attacked and have suffered severe casualties; as of 27 February, few outposts had been lost. The province chief believes he does not have enough forces available to carry out any offensive operations, but police forces are initiating cordon and search missions.

24. According to local Vietnamese estimates, the enemy has not yet committed his main assets, and the security situation in and around Go Cong city is expected to remain tenuous for some time. In addition, the enemy reportedly was taking over villages which were formerly declared pacified. For example, two hamlets less than a mile from the Go Cong airfield, which had been declared pacified in 1967, were considered Viet Cong controlled as of mid-February.

25. Nine of 11 RD teams were in Go Cong city as of mid-February, and were providing the outer perimeter defense on two sides of the province capital. Two teams were still being employed to defend their hamlets.

26. The SCG program had also come to a complete halt by mid-February. The province chief called in 20 hamlet cadres, armed them, and was using them to patrol the Go Cong city streets. One SCG intelligence report resulted in the assassination of the alleged Viet Cong province chief and the chief of the military

A-32

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

affairs section. The PRU were, in mid-February, not working against the Communist infrastructure, but instead were being used for tactical reconnaissance and urban security.

27. In response to a widespread program of Viet Cong recruitment in Go Cong, the provincial officials were encouraging military age males to voluntarily come into district towns for protection. Two thousand were on hand by 24 February and were being supported by government and US assistance. Most of the men spend the day at home and sleep in the district towns at night. This sudden surge of men into the towns of a small province like Go Cong (population 167,000) indicates the bottom of the manpower pool in the delta has not yet been reached.

Kien Giang

28. Information on what is occurring in the countryside of Kien Giang is still relatively sparse. Enemy forces attacked the provincial capital, Rach Gia, on several occasions between 31 January and 25 February and this seems to have precluded effective communications with the districts and countryside. The Viet Cong are known to have attacked and destroyed an ethnic Cambodian hamlet containing an ARVN RD battalion headquarters; this was the principal RD campaign area in the province. The nine RD teams in Kien Giang had been under increasing Viet Cong harassment since early last December. The Tet offensive exacerbated this situation and has resulted in a further decline in cadre morale. At last report, the majority (310) of RD cadres were in Rach Gia or the district towns as security forces or working with the refugees. The rest of the cadres (218) were widely dispersed, either in areas that were inaccessible, or in the four RD areas considered occupied by the VC.

29. The SCG program is reported intact but is only able to provide intelligence on the capital city and areas immediately adjacent to it. There is virtually no communication between the SCG center and the rural areas, but some hamlet cadres are reporting to the district towns.

A-33

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

30. The PRU are being used primarily in the defense of Rach Gia city. On 25 February, the PRU camp came under heavy attack. Although they held, the PRU suffered several casualties.

Kien Hoa

31. The Viet Cong in Kien Hoa Province (population at least 570,000) retain the initiative and the government continues in a largely defensive stance. The enemy continues day and night harassment of the provincial capital and district towns. The populace is generally apprehensive, and the government's problems are compounded by the extensive destruction of the provincial capital, Ben Tre. The enemy has apparently laid "seige" to the town, and 27 GVN outposts around it have either been overrun or abandoned by their defenders.

32. This province, long a Viet Cong stronghold, had lately been contested by the government. As of mid-March, however, it appears that with certain exceptions, the enemy again dominates the rural areas. Little explicit information is available on enemy activities in the countryside, but the Communists must be presumed to be filling the void and tightening their hold. The government's 1968 pacification plan is being held in abeyance.

33. As of late February, the majority of the province's 700 RD cadres were still unaccounted for. It is not clear whether this was the result of enemy action, or of failure by the cadres to return from Tet leave, perhaps in fear of Viet Cong reprisals. Reports from seven of the eight RD teams in the priority pacification area in Ba Tri District, for example, indicate that only a handful of cadres were present in mid-February. The number on duty was growing, however, and the area was still relatively secure, primarily because the two ARVN battalions providing security for the RD program in Ba Tri remained in place. There were approximately 150 cadres in Ben Tre city being used as security forces.

34. The SCG headquarters in Ben Tre was damaged by mortar rounds in early February, but

A-34

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)

C

remained in operation. Some PRU cadres were organized and instructed by the province chief to operate in the area immediately adjacent to Ben Tre, but the local ARVN regimental commander refused to allow the PRU outside of the city defensive perimeter.

Kien Phong

35. Government control within this province is, for the most part, limited to the provincial capital of Cao Lanh and to the district towns. Government forces are restricted to defensive operations and, as a result, only three of the 14 hamlets recorded as pacified during 1967 remain under government control. As of 25 February, only six of the 34 outposts around Cao Lanh remained in GVN hands as the enemy appears to be laying siege to the city. In anticipation of these attacks, an estimated 50 to 80 percent of the people have left the city.

36. The transportation and commercial routes in the province, except for the Mekong River, have been cut, and the economic life of the province has suffered. Most of the March rice harvest may fall into Viet Cong hands since they control the majority of the rice mills and warehouses.

37. All seven RD teams were withdrawn to the provincial or district towns in February, and apparently remain there as security or work forces. Only about a half of all RD, SCG, and PRU cadres were accounted for on 6 February. The 1968 pacification plan has been suspended by the province chief because of the lack of security in the countryside.

38. The SCG cadres, within narrow limits, have provided timely and exploitable information, and the eight-man PRU has been principally used to defend the RD cadre headquarters.

Kien Tuong

39. This province has never been heavily contested by the government. Two New Life Hamlets

A-35

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

1.3(a)(4)

C

completed in 1967 were overrun in February by the Viet Cong, but additional information on the status of the sparsely populated countryside is not available. None of the RD teams remain in the field. Four of the six teams were in Moc Hoa, the province capital, for a ceremony at the time of the Viet Cong attack on 1-2 February, and they have subsequently been used as security forces in the city. The other two teams are defending the district towns of Tuyen Nhon and Kien Binh.

40. Here, as elsewhere, the PRU were reported to be the most effective troops in the defense of the provincial capital and contributed heavily to cleaning up enemy strongpoints. The SCG program is functioning, but contributing little.

Phong Dinh

41. Since the initial Tet attacks on Can Tho city, government officials, according to a US observer, have been "staggered by the whole show." As of mid-March sporadic enemy harassment of Can Tho and its airfields continued. In addition, the enemy has been conducting forays against almost all the districts, and government sources report extensive enemy movement in the countryside. On 13 March a six battalion GVN operation was launched in Phong Dinh Province, but there has been only light enemy contact.

42. The Viet Cong have reportedly been conducting vigorous propaganda and recruitment programs in the rural areas. A report of late February indicated the VC were attempting to create one or two additional main force battalions in the province, one to two additional companies per district, and one or two additional platoons for each village. They are also reportedly attempting to upgrade guerrilla units into main force units while recruiting males from ages 14 to 45 to strengthen local force units.

43. In addition, the Viet Cong have been attempting to interdict the lines of communication in the province and have heavily taxed traffic on the waterways, particularly the Bassac River.

A-36

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

44. A number of RD cadres left their teams prior to Tet in an attempt to reach their homes for the holiday. The Viet Cong attacks in and around Can Tho city, where almost all the province's 14 teams were working, and disruption of the lines of communication throughout the province, have apparently prevented large numbers of cadres from returning to their teams. As of late February, elements of 12 teams were working in the city of Can Tho and two teams were working in a nearby hamlet. Forty five cadres, who were on the Tet leave in or around Phuong Hiep district town, were working under the direction of the Phuong Hiep district chief.

45. It is planned that the RD teams will continue to work in Can Tho city until major enemy units have been dispersed. Thereafter, the teams will have to move back into the Phase II 1967 hamlets in order to re-establish the confidence of the people, reopen schools, assess damage, and conduct a census. The security situation, the extensive property damage, and loss of GVN influence have all affected the 1968 pacification plan. It may be necessary to consolidate hamlets in three villages around Can Tho that were badly damaged during the fighting.

46. The performance of the SCG has been affected by poor morale, and severed lines of communication. Little information was being received from the hamlet cadres as of late February.

47. Although initially the PRU was used in a defensive role to ward off the attacking Viet Cong, it has since done an outstanding job of reconnaissance in and around Can Tho and some of the district towns.

Sa Dec

48. The pacification program was severely disrupted by the Tet offensive, and the enemy appears to have undisputed control of the countryside. In mid-February, the six RD teams evacuated the rural areas and regrouped in Sa Dec city following the apparently unopposed enemy occupation of outposts in the RD areas.

A-37

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

49. Duc Ton District, which lies astride the principal land route between Vinh Long city and the 9th Division Headquarters at Sa Dec, was reported as of 15 February to be entirely controlled by the Viet Cong, except for the district town. Two New Life Hamlets in the district were hit hard by allied air strikes when the Viet Cong moved into them.

50. The province chief's continued efforts to use the RD cadres to defend the province capital were reportedly overruled at corps level, and the cadres directed to return to the rural areas, but it is doubtful they are able to do so. The SCG performance since Tet has been unimpressive, while those PRU cadres who have been present for duty have been used in defense roles.

Vinh Binh

51. By mid-February the VC controlled most of the province except for the provincial capital, seven district towns, and a coastal base. The status of the primary pacification area in Cang Long District is unknown. Almost 115 GVN outposts in the province had been overrun or abandoned, 51 of them in Chau Thanh District alone.

52. The VC were reported to be recruiting heavily among the villages. A 22 February report stated that the Viet Cong had recruited the equivalent of two companies of young and old men in two villages immediately east of Tra Vinh city--areas that had previously been considered secure.

53. During the VC attack on Tra Vinh the capital of Vinh Binh Province, RD teams remained in their assigned hamlets, but in some cases they were severely understrength because of the Tet holidays. Since then, however, the status of the teams has been largely unknown. Fifty-seven cadres were in Tra Vinh at the time of the attack and were detailed to work with GVN services in cleaning up the city. Moreover, the SCG program was inoperative as of mid-February because communications with outlying areas had been severed.

A-38

~~SECRET~~1.3(a)(4)
C

1.3(a)(4)
C

54. The PRU was the only effective Vietnamese fighting unit continuously deployed from the beginning of the offensive. As of mid-February the PRU was conducting reconnaissance operations outside of the city following the movements of the enemy main force units.

Vinh Long

55. Populous Vinh Long Province, areas of which were previously believed relatively secure, has apparently slipped under Viet Cong control again. The government holds only the district towns, the provincial capital--by and large a shambles from the recent fighting--and some scattered installations. Since the heavy attacks on Vinh Long city, the Viet Cong have concentrated on attacking outposts and lines of communications. The outposts reportedly are faring badly and some are being destroyed or abandoned by the government or overrun by the enemy. At least 43 out of 50 GVN outposts are no longer manned in Cho Lach District alone.

56. Communist propaganda units are conducting a vigorous propaganda and recruitment campaign throughout the province. Reports of youths being impressed into service are widespread; three ralliers between 10 and 13 years of age claimed they were being used by the enemy as porters. Many of these reports concerning enemy impressment and recruitment come from southern Chou Thanh District, which previously was the center of the pacification effort in the province. In addition, the enemy now controls the Mang Thet - Nicoloi Canal which was secured last year.

57. Enemy propaganda is also being directed at the popular forces; two outposts were destroyed by the allies when it was learned the Viet Cong were conducting indoctrination sessions in them.

58. ARVN forces are also reported to have looted extensively, and continue to assume a defensive posture. Friendly forces in the district towns, however, began on 12 March to move out and are making sporadic contact with the enemy.

A-39

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)
C

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C

59. Nine of the 11 RD teams in the province were used to help defend the district towns or the province capital and apparently remain in these locations. About 100 cadres are in Vinh Long city helping in the refugee centers.

60. Most SCG cadres in Vinh Long city had returned to work by 15 February, but the only field cadres reporting were in the district around the provincial capital. The PRU assisted ARVN during the fighting in Vinh Long city, suffering most of their casualties when their compound was accidentally hit by friendly fire. The PRU compound was destroyed and many of the PRU dependents killed. Although the province chief initially used the PRU to guard a section of town and forbade it to conduct operations, the PRU are reported to be again operating in the countryside.

A-40

~~SECRET~~

1.3(a)(4)

C