MEMORANDUM
RM-5013-1-ISA/ARPA
JUNE 1966

A PROFILE OF THE PAVN SOLDIER IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Konrad Kellen

PREPARED FOR:
THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE/INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
AND THE
ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

Rand
SANTA MONICA, CA. 90406

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This research is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) under Contract SD-300 and by the Advanced Research Projects Agency under Contract SD-79. Views or conclusions contained in the Memorandum should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of either of these agencies.

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SANTA MONICA, CA. 90406

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Published by The Rand Corporation

FOREWORD

This report is one of a series of Rand studies that examine the organization, operations, motivation, and morale of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces that fought in South Vietnam.

Between August 1964 and December 1968 The Rand Corporation conducted approximately 2400 interviews with Vietnamese who were familiar with the activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army. Reports of those interviews, totaling some 62,000 pages, were reviewed and released to the public in June 1972. They can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service of the Department of Commerce.

The release of the interviews has made possible the declassification and release of some of the classified Rand reports derived from them. To remain consistent with the policy followed in reviewing the interviews, information that could lead to the identification of individual interviewees was deleted, along with a few specific references to sources that remain classified. In most cases, it was necessary to drop or to change only a word or two, and in some cases, a footnote. The meaning of a sentence or the intent of the author was not altered.

The reports contain information and interpretations relating to issues that are still being debated. It should be pointed out that there was substantive disagreement among the Rand researchers involved in Vietnam research at the time, and contrary points of view with totally different implications for U.S. operations can be found in the reports. This internal debate mirrored the debate that was then current throughout the nation.

A complete list of the Rand reports that have been released to the public is contained in the bibliography that follows.

(CRC, BJ: May 1975)

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PREFACE

Since July 1964, The RAND Corporation has been inquiring into the motivation, behavior, and morale of Viet Cong soldiers and of North Vietnamese serving in South Vietnam, in a series of memoranda based mainly on interrogations of prisoners and defectors. These studies are designed to reveal both strengths and weaknesses on the communist side and thus to provide bases for recommendations on policy and operations that might increase the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese and American war effort. The project is sponsored jointly by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

The present Memorandum draws on forty extensive interviews that RAND's field team has conducted with Northern prisoners and defectors, for a composite portrait of the typical North Vietnamese fighter in the South which points up the PAVN's soldier's potential vulnerability to particular propaganda appeals. The author is a RAND consultant with many years' experience in psychological warfare. An intelligence officer in World War II, he became Chief of Radio Free Europe's Information Department after the war, and, during the 1950s, served as a consultant to the U.S. Army on psywar matters.

Other reports in this series include RM-4911-ISA/ARPA, Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June-December 1965, by L. Goure, A. J. Russo, and D. Scott, February 1966. It provides an overview of the results of interviews conducted during 1965, a preliminary analysis of which had been reported earlier in RM-4699-ISA/ARPA, Some Impressions of Viet Cong Vulnerabilities: An Interim Report, by L. Goure and C.A.H. Thomson, August 1965. Special aspects of the problem are dealt with in the recent RM-4830-ISA/ARPA, Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, by J. M. Carrier and C.A.H. Thomson, April 1966, and RM-5983-ISA/ARPA, A Profile of the Viet Cong Cadres, by W. P. Davison and J. J. Zasloff, May 1966.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Stephen T. Hosmer, Alexander L. George, and Charles A. H. Thomson for their generous assistance.

SUMMARY

This Memorandum is based on extensive interviews that a RAND team conducted with forty defectors and prisoners of war from North Vietnamese units fighting in South Vietnam. The purpose of the analysis is to portray the typical North Vietnamese soldier before he finds himself in Southern hands.

The portrait that emerges is of a man whom his government has sent to the South to fight, either as a quasi-volunteer or as a soldier following orders and told of his destination only after he was well on his way. By and large he is a man who has lived in considerable harmony with the Communist society from which he came. He seems thoroughly convinced that South Vietnam has been invaded by the Americans and needs his help to attain the fruits of victory for which the country struggled in the 1945-1954 war against the French. There is usually little doubt in his mind that the bombing of his homeland in the North is unjustified and evil.

The PAVN soldier, after the considerable ordeal of infiltrating the South via the Ho Chi Minh trail, encounters there some harsh realities. Though told by his cadres that the South is already overwhelmingly controlled by the VC, he is likely to find on arriving that he is not welcomed by the local people and must camp out in the jungle. Often he is taken aback to discover that he must fight his fellow Vietnamese. Or if this is not a surprise, that he must fight them in numbers greater than he has been led to expect. In addition to these unexpected setbacks, he learns that his training is not entirely suited to the type of war he must wage. As a result, his certainty of an early victory -- though not necessarily his faith in the rightness of his cause -- is sometimes shaken. In this process of disillusionment, he has been influenced only to a minor extent by propaganda emanating from the South. It is perhaps rather the prospect of a protracted war without victory that dispirits him most.

Despite manifold hardships and his wavering confidence in the outcome of the struggle, the North Vietnamese soldier, except in the still relatively rare instance when he defects, continues to fight tenaciously

against the combined South Vietnamese-United States forces, partly because his faith in what he calls his mission remains unimpaired, and partly because his leaders employ physical and psychological devices to control his every thought and action. Among these devices are the three-man cell and the sessions of self-criticism. Both tend to keep him in line, though the latter often exasperate and even push him to, if not sometimes over, the brink of desertion.

The soldier depicted in the interviews appears to be an articulate young man of innate intelligence. Being skeptical, he is not easily won over to a sectarian point of view. For this reason, too, he is not ordinarily a doctrinaire Communist; he tends to accept some but not all of the Communist gospel. He is a man of resiliance and endurance, able to bear hardships and other hazards to his morale, among which is notably his great distress at being separated from his family.

The study suggests that the PAVN soldier might be intensely vulnerable to a range of psywar appeals if these were well-designed, well-implemented, and well-orchestrated. Among the most profitable are likely to be those appeals that make it clear to him (1) that the war is unnecessary because what he believes to be the intention of the United States is simply a fiction created by his leaders; and (2) that his confidence in his ability to defeat the Americans as he did the French a decade earlier is grossly unrealistic.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to sketch a portrait of the rank-and-file North Vietnamese soldier in action in South Vietnam as an aid to strategic planning for psychological warfare. The study is based on the results of a series of interviews, conducted by RAND in 1965, with Northern soldiers who, prior to their capture or defection, were assigned to combat either with the regular People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) or with the National Liberation Front's Main Force, i.e., the Viet Cong (VC).

Of the 40 men interviewed for this study, 32 were captives and 8 were ralliers (defectors); 26 were privates, 12 were non-coms and 2 were officers:*

CATEGORY	PRIVATES	NON-COMS	OFFICERS
CAPTIVES	21	10	1
RALLIERS	5	2	1
TOTAL	26	12	2

Seventeen men were definitely identified as members of PAVN units, 22 as members of the Main Force, and one as a member of the Local Force.

However, with regard to the political and psychological overview attempted here, there are no meaningful differences between Northerners fighting in actual regular PAVN units and those incorporated into the Main Force. The North Vietnamese's profile, as based on what he tells his interviewers in far-ranging conversations of between 3 and 10 hours' duration (that result in reports of up to 100 pages), is not altered in any essential respect by whether he served in one force or the other. Whatever possible differences there are in combat morale or psywar vulnerabilities between the various forces and units, this study attempts

*For more information on the group, see Appendix B.

only to analyze the Northerner as such, regardless of where he was ultimately assigned. Such a focus as this corresponds to the broad purpose of the study: to furnish guidance for strategic rather than tactical psywar planning.

The profile drawn here is of the predominant type of North Vietnamese soldier encountered in the South. It is a composite of those psychological and political traits of these soldiers that will have to be taken into account if we are to affect his actions. Research of this kind should be extended, as additional PAVN soldiers become available for interviewing, to identify those who may differ in important respects from the soldiers depicted here. In addition, of course, the results should be periodically updated to note whether important changes in the politico-psychological character of the enemy are taking place as a result of his prolonged stay in the South and his experiences in various types of combat against either U.S. or ARVN forces.

METHOD

The method used in producing the profile or Gestalt of the PAVN soldier was to isolate those traits, experiences, and attitudes that are widely shared by the soldiers interviewed. The portrait is not to be regarded, however, as an abstraction. The type of PAVN soldier depicted here is not an artifact of analysis. He exists. Much of the analysis underlying the portrait is basically quantitative, the traits or experiences most commonly found in the majority of the interviewees providing the broad brush strokes. If, for example, a majority of the 40 soldiers in the group were ordered to go South, and if most of them said that they did not even know they were going South until they were well on the way, the study will say: "He (our PAVN soldier) is not a volunteer; he was ordered to go South. In fact, he did not even know he was going until he was well on his way. However, a few of his comrades did go of their own volition."

The qualitative element in the study, aside from the analyst's inferences, comes primarily from what the composite PAVN soldier is actually quoted as saying. Here again, if what the respondent expresses is essentially similar to what most (i.e., more than half) of

the others have to say, our composite soldier will be quoted directly, to wit: "The PAVN reported: 'I was disappointed when I found that not as much of the South had been liberated as the cadre said.'" Minority opinions are directly quoted: "Some of his comrades said that...."

Because there were no significant differences between the responses of privates and those of non-coms, both groups were incorporated into the same composite profile. However, one of the two commissioned officers in the group was so markedly different, in so many ways, that his own story, in his own words, appears separately in Appendix A.

Every direct quote attributed to the composite PAVN was actually spoken by some PAVN soldier. The reader can find more on the background of each speaker in Appendix B.

DATA

The data on which this study is based are interrogations by a RAND team, composed of American and Vietnamese civilian personnel, on the basis of an extensive questionnaire devised by the RAND project leader in Vietnam, Leon Goure. Although all respondents were probed with regard to the same areas of information, the questionnaire was used primarily as a general guide for one or a series of intense conversations on important topics. In all, the resulting data bore the undefinable yet unmistakable air of genuineness and veracity, as any seasoned reader of POW and defector interviews would confirm. The interviewees all spoke freely and extensively, partly, perhaps, because the National Liberation Front, unlike other armed establishments, seems to place little restriction on what its men may say if captured. As one soldier put it: "The Front only told us that, if captured, we should remain loyal to the Revolution." (6) In the interviews, the soldiers really poured out their thoughts and feelings, and, as a result, the PAVN soldier does emerge from the interviews--to use a seeming paradox--quite clearly in all his ambiguity. The analyst feels confident that the results depict the PAVN soldier as he really is--despite the smallness of the group studied. Confidence in the final results of the study is enhanced by the fact that the respondents frequently said that they had no knowledge

or opinions about several of the points under discussion. Apparently, the PAVN soldier tends to speak mainly when he thinks he has something to say, a consideration that adds weight and reliability to the statements he does make.

From the data, the PAVN soldiers emerge, almost without exception, as remarkably intelligent and articulate. On the whole, the PAVN respondents, regardless of rank, express themselves spontaneously and sensibly on a wide range of subjects, often in simple and straightforward fashion. It can hardly be overemphasized that this is of great significance in connection with psywar and related operations. The PAVN is apparently a not entirely unsophisticated and quite demanding audience, and therefore susceptible to well-reasoned, meaningful communication and purposeful, sensible action. While this makes considerable demands on psywar on the one hand, it provides great opportunities on the other in that it permits the use of reasonably complicated and diversified appeals without fear of talking over the audience's head--a great advantage in the Vietnam situation, which resists reduction to a few simple formulae.

II. BACKGROUND IN THE NORTH

The PAVN soldier now fighting in the South, unless he is a new recruit, has in most instances served his mandatory three years in the People's Army, and is between 21 and 28 years of age. After completing his military service, he has either re-enlisted or has simply been retained in the army--a difference of no major significance in times of war. He is likely to have been recruited in 1962 or 1963, and thus to have been separated from his native village, his parents, and his civilian pursuits for a considerable period of time. During his military service he has had few if any contacts with his family back home. Postal connections with his people are virtually non-existent once he has been sent South. Uniformly, he is profoundly distressed by this separation.

Whether private or non-com, the PAVN soldier comes from an agricultural cooperative in 19 cases out of 20. Though he holds and expresses a wide range of views on domestic and foreign affairs, often in harmony with prevailing Communist tenets, he is no hard-core, across-the-board Communist. But he has learned to live with the Communist system prevailing in his native land, and conveys the impression that his parents and neighbors are not unhappy with it either. He is even a believer, up to a point. By and large there appears to be a considerable degree of harmony between the people and their government.

One statement he is most likely to make: "At least there was enough to eat--nobody was short of rice." (25) Or he might sum it up this way: "Compared to life before we joined the cooperative, my life was rather good. If I worked hard, I got more to eat; if I worked less, I got less to eat. My life was all right. I was neither terribly happy nor terribly miserable. Generally speaking, my life was greatly improved after I joined the cooperative." (37) Even if his parents had been "rich" farmers, now deprived of part of their land, there is a striking absence of resentment: "My family had owned five 'mau' of rice fields...the authorities took two mau...my wife and I both worked and each crop brought in 600 kilos of paddy. We only had two children; and as we needed only 200 kilos of paddy for our food during every half-year

period, we always had 200 kilos of paddy for our various expenses. We were well off." (12)

Some of the soldier's friends may not have liked everything about the new system, but they considered at least part of it a necessity: "I think collectivization was a good thing because irrigation is difficult without collective labor." (9) Others, though always in temperate language, may voice their irritations arising out of regulations laid down by the agricultural bureaucracy: "When we wanted to eat a pound of pork, we always had to prove that we had delivered a pig to the state...." (10) Only few of the soldiers object to the system itself: "If I were not forced to join a cooperative, I would like to have my own house and land, to be a farmer, trader, or learn a profession. I would very much want to choose my own life. But that was impossible." (4) Yet, the few who wanted to see a basic change apparently accepted their fate with little resentment: "I did not like the Vietnamese policy of establishing co-ops very much." Asked how he had opposed the policy, the same man said, "I did not oppose it...I simply did not like life in the co-ops.... But we could not choose another way of life." (10)

In all, the type of PAVN soldier we are describing is not likely to have witnessed in others even moderate political opposition, at least not very frequently. He is even less likely to have expressed it himself; if he is at all frustrated in his daily life, his thoughts are more likely to be wistfully focused on a motorcycle (4) than on a different economic or political system, and still less on those non-material advantages a non-Communist system might entail. Anti-Communist revolution at home in the North was apparently the last thing on his or his neighbor's mind.

On the whole, his demands are the kind that Ho Chi Minh not only can promise to satisfy but is already in the process of satisfying. In that respect, at least, no Western or ARVN propaganda can make a liar out of Ho. One thing is certain. Our PAVN soldier when at home in the North did not live in an atmosphere of political despair or revolutionary tensions, nor in one of resignation and apathy. The Mandate of Heaven is clearly with the incumbent leadership.* Unlike many of his

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*Particularly since "rectification" of the original Land Reform.

East European contemporaries living in the Communist orbit, neither he nor his parents are waiting to be liberated by revolution or invasion. On the contrary, he is likely to be--perhaps not proud of (few PAVN respondents express that rather aggressive sentiment)--but satisfied with and respectful of his social and political order. He is also likely to belong to a family that actively and voluntarily furthers Ho's efforts at "building socialism," even while he himself has gone to war. Therefore, he is ready to fight if his government calls him.

The PAVN soldier seems to have no doubt about his country's independence. There were few Russians to be seen in North Vietnam, he says, and "frankly, while in North Vietnam I did not see any Chinese troops at all, except for a few Chinese technicians and specialists."(10)* Consequently, he or his family is likely to be baffled rather than swayed at the sight of a recent ARVN leaflet describing the Ho regime as Chinese "stooges." If any power has trespassed against Vietnam at all, it is the United States.

With regard to the American presence in the South, he and his family ordinarily speak of it as an "invasion." (5) Communist propaganda has been both active and successful on that score: "What did you learn about the aims of the Americans in the South?" "I learned that the Americans were invading South Vietnam." "Did you believe what the North Vietnamese government told you?" "Yes, I believed them." (137) Or: "I learned that the Americans' aim was to oppress the Vietnamese and to control all plantations in order to take all the resources out of this country." (30) Or: "The Americans took South Vietnam to use it as a springboard, to take over North Vietnam and other countries." (5)

About the bombing of the North, he and his family are both perplexed and enraged. He is likely to say that after the bombing the people cursed the Americans, and that in his opinion they had good reason to: "At first, the people of North Vietnam were very frightened because of the air attacks. They hated the Americans a great deal for it. They cursed the Americans when they learned of the bombings. My

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*He also claims not to fear a resumption of historic Chinese inroads, for the aims of Communist China, he says, are different from those of old feudal China.

area was bombed once. Fifty houses were destroyed, and the people got very mad and cursed the Americans a great deal." "Did you share this feeling about the Americans?" "Yes, I did." (6) He may also elaborate: "Transportation became difficult for the people....Because of the destruction, the people lacked medicine, salt, and fish sauce." (35) And again: "All the construction works the people had completed in ten years by tightening their belts were destroyed by the Americans. So, they hated the Americans a lot." More frequent still are complaints about country people being killed by bombs. (40) Finally, the PAVN soldier speaks of his people's fear of still greater devastation: "The people were afraid that the GVN and the Americans would destroy the dams in the North, because the dams are very important to the farmers in the North. If they were destroyed, production would decrease a good deal." (35) In any event, "the people hated the Americans because to them the Americans were the cruel enemy who had bombed the civilian population....In attacks on Vinh, they completely destroyed what had been a beautiful and prosperous town." (40)

It should be noted in this connection that these quiet, even-tempered people evince such violent responses as "cursing" or "hating" only in connection with American bombings; nothing else seems to arouse them to such an emotional pitch. Anger was apparently compounded by confusion: "Did the people in the North know why the Americans bombed the North?" "They did not know why the Americans started the attacks." (24) To this, the PAVN might add: "The people in the North didn't know what was going on in the South. They wondered what the aims of the Americans were in attacking the North: to take it over or what? They only knew that the Americans were sabotaging the North." (24) Only a few of the respondents will admit to a causal link between the bombings and the war in the South: "I think the Americans bombed North Vietnam because of the latter's interference in the South." (10)* Yet, even then, the PAVN soldier sees no justification for the American action: "People said that North and South Vietnam form one country; therefore, if the North helped

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*The data do not reveal whether the respondent reached this conclusion before or after his capture.

the Front, it was not invading the South." (37) The U.S. is thus facing a soldier who by and large believes that the Americans are wantonly bombing his homeland for reasons of aggression or other, more obscure purposes--a belief that is shared by his family, whose judgment he traditionally respects.

As for his religious observances, the PAVN soldier, before coming South, was apparently little hampered by the authorities. If he were a Catholic, there were some restrictions: "My family and I often attended church in the past, but more recently we only attended big Mass. We were authorized to attend church, but not very often." (26) Once in the Army, he was also likely to encounter a certain amount of intolerance: "If you were a Catholic, things would be difficult for you because the cadres kept close watch over the Catholics." (23) But, most likely, our PAVN soldier practiced ancestor worship, though not necessarily with great fervor. And Communist doctrines are likely to have influenced his thinking: "No, I do not believe in a God because materialist doctrine says there is no God, and science hasn't been able to demonstrate that there is a God." (1) Or, he may express his religious skepticism in speaking of his captivity: "I don't think religion helps; if I pray now I will still remain in captivity." (6) In sum, the authorities in his native country did not interfere much, if at all, with ordinary religious activity of the non-Catholic kind. In any event, the PAVN soldier and his family, who are inclined more to what we would call piety (respect for graves, respect for parents) than religion, seem to have suffered little from that gross interference in their spiritual life that Communist authorities have visited upon other people under their domination.

III. THE ASSIGNMENT TO GO SOUTH: SELECTION AND RESPONSE

How was the PAVN soldier selected for infiltration into the South? How was he prepared for his missions? One of the two commissioned officers in the group under review insisted that he and all others who went South were volunteers. But that is a matter of his word against that of almost all the others. Most men go simply because they are went, although the illusion of a voluntary choice is sometimes created. For example, in the wake of a political session in a training camp up North, at which the men were told about American actions and the suffering of their brothers in the South, a "whole group of 200 men volunteered to go South" (4)--clearly under the emotional pressure of the skillfully conducted meeting. Thus the curious method of forcing men to "volunteer"--not exactly unknown in other armies--seems to be often used in the People's Army of North Vietnam when it comes to making soldiers go South. In many other cases, however, the soldier was simply informed that he was being sent South, and no attempt was made to give him even the illusion of volunteering for it.

Some soldiers put the matter ambiguously: "I was chosen by my superiors, but you could say that I volunteered because if I stayed in the North I would be replaced after serving two years in one area, but if I went South I would not be replaced and sent back North." (3) The statement leaves some doubt as to whether going South is a way for a soldier to stay in the Army (if that is what he wants) or a way to get discharged upon his return North. In any event, that going South is hardly a voluntary matter is attested by the fact that more often than not the soldier does not know he has been selected until he is on his way: "I was chosen (as far back as 1963) to attend a military training course in Nghe An. The authorities did not inform us that we were going to be sent South. My comrades and I were very happy to attend an officers training school. Upon completion of the training, however, the director of the training center told us that we would be going South shortly to help liberate the Southerners. It was only then that we knew we were going South." (3) In more recent instances, too, selectees for service in the South generally learned about it only when en route.

For what stated purpose were the men sent South? "The director of the training center said that the people in South Vietnam were very miserable and unhappy, and that we had to liberate them. He told us that the task of liberating South Vietnam was a common one for both North and South Vietnam, and that we in the North must not abandon the poor Southerners to their fate." (3) That was the "line" in 1963 and it has remained so ever since, even though different and simpler "lines" have lately (1965) been used on occasions: "The cadres only said we were going South to protect the North." (35) Though various cadres tell their men various things, the principal theme remains that the men have to go South to "liberate the South from the American imperialists."*

But the PAVN soldier, though not likely to be a genuine volunteer (even if he is a non-com and thus part of the military cadre), is by no means completely reluctant to go. He may be responsive to the accompanying increase in rations and pay, for example. When he hears, either en route or often just when he has completed his three years of obligatory military service, that he must go South to "fight the Americans," he is likely to take it in stride. Three reactions seem to predominate: sadness because of the impending long separation from his family, fear of never returning home, yet a ready acceptance of what he considers to be an obligation to his country. On the latter score, even his parents may have confirmed him. And not all is pain and sorrow anyway. As one sergeant put it: "They're all young, and the young love to travel." Or a private: "I was curious and wanted to see beautiful South Vietnam." Only one PAVN (1) reported that he specifically re-enlisted for the purpose of being sent South in order to defect there (which he did). The reason he gave was that he and his family had been badly treated in the North.** As one might expect, the unattached men were more likely to welcome the adventure of going South. Of course, once down there and faced with a situation that threatened to stretch into years, they, too,

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*More on pre-infiltration indoctrination in the following section.

**To this analyst, these words do not ring particularly true, but the thought suggested here--volunteering for duty in the South for the express purpose of rallying and so getting out from behind the Bamboo Curtain--might be considered as a possible appeal for psywar operations directed against the North.

developed anxieties about family matters, one being that they might miss the opportunity to get married and found a family of their own.

By and large, the PAVN soldier underwent some conflicting emotions when the news of his selection was broken to him: "How did you feel when you learned that you had to go South?" "I felt that it was my duty to go. I had to comply with national policy." (10) But in reply to the more searching question: "Did you want to go South?" he dropped his pretensions: "No. I was leading a peaceful life in the North where there was no war. Therefore I did not want to go South where I was likely to get killed." Or: "To tell the truth, I was very worried about our trip South. But I had no choice since it was my duty to go." Or, significantly: "I didn't want to go because of my difficult family situation....However, if the other men could go, why couldn't I who was in no way different from them? Besides, I was a youth who had been enjoying ten years of peace, so I could not sit still watching the South Vietnamese people, who had been suffering for ten years, go on enduring their sufferings." (14)

He may add: "Some have been in the Army since 1963 just as I have. Some joined the Army in 1964, and some joined in 1965. I think the Government may have selected them on the basis of their family situation. For example, fighter A came from a large family and was chosen to go South to fight, while fighter B, who was an only son in his family, was not chosen." "Did the NVN Government promise to help your family?" "I didn't have any worries concerning my family, but some other fighters said to the cadres: 'If I went South to fight, nobody would support my parents, wife, and children.' So the cadres said: 'Don't worry. Try to carry out your mission. As for your family, if your wife and children don't have enough to eat, the Government will help them.'"* (34) Despite such reassurance, there was an eagerness to be discharged: "My highest hope when I joined the Army was that I might return to my family after three years. I didn't suspect then that I might be sent South to fight. Originally, military service was for two years only, but at the

*The soldiers were told that their families would receive a gift of 200 piasters from the government.

time I joined the Army (1964) it was increased to three years. When I was about to complete my service I received the order to go South and fight; I was very disappointed." (And once he had been sent down? "I hoped I would be back in the North after one or two years in the Front.")

Old recruit or new, the PAVN is not likely to enjoy going South: "I think that only 20 per cent were enthusiastic about going South. The remaining 80 per cent did not want to go." (37) Some of these openly balked: "About 10 per cent of the men boldly returned their personal effects and weapons and asked to go home." What happened to them? "They were indoctrinated and educated. After some time they agreed to go South." (37) How was this conversion brought about? "They were criticized in front of their squads and platoons." Still, "about five or six from my company deserted in order to return to their native villages." (37)

Once selected for duty in the South, the PAVN is usually told not to inform his family of his destination. He is rarely given the opportunity. If he goes home on leave, it is ordinarily before he has been told his mission. Even though it is hard to believe that his parents, despite the inadequate postal facilities between North and South,* do not know where he is or what he is doing, the possibility that they really do not should not be rejected out of hand. Indeed, this absence of communication, and the resulting ignorance in the North of PAVN operations in the South, may be a clue to the surprisingly large number of Northerners who, the PAVN says, do not understand at all why their homeland is being bombed. Still, occasionally, a PAVN soldier may succeed in telling his family about his mission: "In my letter, I explained to my brothers the necessity of my mission. My brothers replied to take care of myself and await national re-unification, to return home." (37)

If the PAVN soldier is inordinately dismayed about having to go South, he may be effectively re-oriented by the cadre, like this man:

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*The infrequency of communication between the PAVN and his people in the North may also be planned by his leaders, out of fear that such letters tend to disrupt his morale by exacerbating his homesickness.

"I was very sad because I did not want to leave my family. But the cadre mobilized my spirit and told me that I could not stay behind because all my comrades were going. He said I was strong and healthy, so I should go South. My comrades were all very sad at first, but the cadres mobilized their spirits and then they began to feel all right about it. They were all enthusiastic, and willing to go South in the end." (3)

In any event, the PAVN is likely to learn from one or another of his comrades what is in store for him should he try to evade his assignment: "When we were informed about our trip South, five or six of us defected. I returned home, but the army sent a truck to my village and took me away forcibly. The women and the boys in my village made fun of me and said it was ridiculous for a youth like myself who had the good fortune to be chosen to go South to refuse to leave the North and to escape home. So I had to go." (9) Aside from giving us an insight into PAVN control methods, this account also affords us a glimpse--representative or not--into Northern popular support of the infiltration.

IV. THE JOURNEY SOUTH: PREPARATION AND ARRIVAL

PREPARATIONS

Once the PAVN soldier has been selected to serve in the South, either with the PAVN or with a Main Force unit, he is sent to a staging area for special military and political training. Such training seems to last about two to three months for privates, and about four for non-coms. It seems to be primarily of a routine conventional kind and not altogether suited to the combat situations he will meet in the South. A notable omission, it seems, is absence of good jungle survival training.

Indoctrination, though brief, is apparently quite intense. What does the PAVN soldier learn? "I studied about the situation in the South. I was told that the South Vietnamese were suffering an American invasion, and that they were living in misery." (5) Or: "The 'political training' course is mainly concerned with the soldier's duties. The long and short of it is this: The soldier's supreme duty is to fight on the side of the Revolution. The Revolution has given independence to one half of the country, but there still remains the other half. The Revolution is going on in the South. North Vietnamese fighters must go there to fight on the people's side to free them from the yoke of American imperialism. Vietnam is indivisible. We can't live in the North in independence and let our fellow countrymen in the South live in slavery." (8)*

However, the PAVN is told that the situation down South is very good, that two-thirds of the country is already in VC hands. He is apparently not told that the Southerners have a respectable army in the field ready to meet him. VC losses are never mentioned. His cadres tell him only that he is about to fight the Americans, who have invaded the country. As to the Americans' fighting ability, "The cadres told

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*Materials on just what the soldiers are being told in their political training courses are so voluminous that a separate paper could easily be written on them. However, this soldier sums up "the long and short of it" rather well.

us that the Americans were much braver than the French had been, and that they were much better armed than the French." (35) But indoctrination on this point--as on some others--is not uniform. According to one soldier, "the cadres said the American infantry was weak. They told us Americans were strong only with regard to air power, heavy equipment, and artillery." As for the ARVN soldier, if he is mentioned in the course of the indoctrination at all, the PAVN infiltrator is told that his opponent fights primarily for money and is therefore not a valiant foe: "The cadre said that generally speaking the morale of the ARVN was bad. They told us that whenever the GVN forces clashed with the Front forces, the ARVN either ran away or, if they surrendered, they would surrender even in entire companies." (37)

The PAVN soldiers are also told a good deal about the world at large and given the rudiments of a political philosophy on the Chinese Communist pattern. They are also told about the Sino-Soviet split, with the blame for it placed squarely on the Soviet Union. (13) How much do soldiers believe of what they have been told? "I believed some things and doubted others," said one soldier (5), thus providing one of many indications that on the whole the PAVN has a rather skeptical and discrimating mind. "But," the same soldier added, "I always pretended I believed what was said." Aside from such dissembling of his doubts, he may exhibit some rather human foibles: "When the political cadre gave his lecture, we did not listen to him carefully. He was standing up there talking, and we were down here pinching one another, smoking cigarettes, and fooling around." (13) It is perhaps remarkable, then, that the same soldier was also able to repeat, coherently and in great detail, Communist doctrine as taught by his cadre. This, like so many other replies in the data, attests to the high level of intelligence of at least some of the PAVN soldiers. And considerable diversity in the interpretation of what they have learned gives evidence of an inclination toward individual thinking.

What is the PAVN told about the USSR's and Red China's role in the Vietnamese war and the Northern effort to win it? Is he being told that the North, or the Front, has been promised or is now receiving assistance from either country? "No. We were told that Russia and Communist China,

being in the same camp as the Front, supported the Front...but that the Front was heroically fighting the American imperialists on its own. By so doing, the Front was carrying on the heroic tradition of the Vietnamese people, who, in the past, have risen many time to drive out the foreign invader on their own. The cadres said that the Front did not as yet need food, weapons, or ammunition from friendly countries, and that, when the Front needed them and requested them, these countries would give them to the Liberation movement." (37) It follows that, for the time being at least, no propaganda can profitably be made along the lines such as: "You have been let down," or "China will fight to the last Vietnamese." The PAVN is told and apparently believes that so far the war is a national affair and that it is up to him to help win it. And he accepts this even if he is pessimistic about his own personal fortunes: "I knew I would have to stay in the South with no hope of returning North and to my family. But my superiors had entrusted this mission to me and I had to carry it out." (31)

It is not entirely clear from the data how the political training of the military cadres differs from that of the men. It seems the cadres are given more detailed information on the world situation. On the whole, their military training and political indoctrination last longer and are more intense.

THE JOURNEY

Eventually the day arrives for the PAVN soldier to go South. Despite his political training and the morale-priming by the cadres, he may set out with great foreboding: "No, I thought I would never return North. I went to the South to liberate the Southerners and had no hope of returning. Either I would die there, or, if I were still alive, I would have to wait for national reunification to return North, or perhaps some unusual event." (2) But he may also have felt like thy man who smoked and fooled around during political sessions and still knew his lessons on Communism and its intricacies so well: "How did I feel? I was curious. I wanted to see the South even though I knew I would have to fight once I arrived there. This knowledge dampened my spirits somewhat, but did not scare me very much."

When the PAVN soldier leaves, he is given one or two green uniforms, "the color of which blends beautifully with the tree leaves" (8), a pair of black pajamas, two pairs of underwear, a sheet of nylon 2.40 meters in width, a cotton tent, one side of which is covered with asphalt, a cord designed to transform the tent into a hammock for sleeping, a small entrenching tool, a pair of rubber shoes, a pair of shoe laces, a canteen, and a few other items of clothing to put in his knapsack. He carries his personal weapon; heavy weapons are issued to him in the South. He is also given medical supplies, and food for the first seven days or so of the journey.

On the march down, the PAVN soldier suffers little from air attacks. He reports that, while en route, he occasionally sees planes overhead and observes craters on the ground, but air attacks do not seriously impede his progress or lessen his morale.* However, he has a very good chance of becoming sick. Almost all PAVN soldiers report that on the way down many of the soldiers fall ill, usually with malaria (despite anti-malaria pills). In the last quarter of 1965, incidence of beriberi has also been reported. In case of such illness the soldier may be permitted to stay behind at interim resting points--not an unmixed blessing, as he may by then have established some ties with his group and must now adjust to new companions.

He might even get it into his head at that point to use his sickness to be returned home. But his chances of succeeding are negligible. Once en route or actually arrived at his destination, the soldier seems to be there for "the duration" and might as well be on the moon as far as his homeland and family are concerned. There is almost no mail connection with the people back home and he does not know the roads over which he came and over which he would have to return home if he tried. He cannot even learn his route by asking the local villagers, as they do not know it themselves or are too scared of the VC to tell him. "Did anybody in your unit defect when you reached the Front?" "No. Nobody in my unit knew his way around. Had a man from my unit defected, he would have been captured by the guerrillas; had he gotten lost he

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*This was true at least during the period under review, before air attacks were intensified.

would have been captured by the ARVN." (18) The PAVN soldier therefore must make the best of it, and is not unlikely to do just that: "I had had some good years in the North and decided it was my turn to do something for my people." (14) Still, he might falter again and make yet one more attempt to be returned home: "At least one-third of my company asked for permission to return home on the pretense of sickness. I myself contracted malaria. I too asked permission to return North to convalesce for a while, but the cadres rejected it." (25)

ARRIVAL

Whatever hopes he has before he sets out and whatever troubles he manages to escape on his trip South, the PAVN soldier is a disappointed man soon after his arrival. In the first place, after being told that two-thirds of Vietnam is already "liberated," he finds that he must camp in the jungle and face harassment and death by day and night: "Since my arrival in the South, we have only been passing through territory controlled by the ARVN." (4) In the second place he finds that the war in the South is being fought "between Vietnamese and Vietnamese," while he had expected to see combat only with Americans. Apparently this comes as a real shock to him. (Of course, the situation has changed at least partially since most of the data underlying this study were collected. Today he goes into battle against Americans, and the more recent data reflect this change.)

The sight of Vietnamese fighting Vietnamese distresses the PAVN soldier often to such a point that he thinks the war should be terminated: "I saw that all who get killed and wounded in this war are Vietnamese. When I thought about that I felt we should not drag on this war." (23) And apparently the cadre felt the same: "Outwardly, they all said we should fight; but deep in their hearts they all wanted negotiations to end this war....They did not like to see this war, because it is mainly fought between Vietnamese." (23) Still, a few of the PAVN soldier's comrades react differently: "In battle you either get killed or you survive. If you don't shoot at the ARVN, they will shoot at you. It's nothing extraordinary...that's the way civil war is."

A third disappointment, for both privates and non-coms, is that their training does not equip them properly for the battles they face. They are trained primarily in conventional warfare, including the use of mortars, rifles, and assault techniques, but are not adequately trained in real jungle warfare.

A fourth disappointment (on which this study will have more to say later) is the reception the PAVN soldier receives from the local population: "The cadre said that when we reached the South we would be welcomed by the people. But when we did reach the South we didn't see anybody coming out to welcome us. We spent all our time...completely cut off from the people." Or: "I thought the North had sent us to liberate the South, and yet people in the South expelled us from their houses." (20)

Finally, a source of apprehension is that if he is wounded, he may have to be left behind, his wounds untreated. If he is killed, he may not be given a clearly-marked grave for his relatives to visit, if the time should ever come for that.* The interviews reveal that it was a shock to the PAVN soldiers when the dead and wounded had to be abandoned on the battlefield after Plei Me.

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*With regard to an earlier Viet Cong policy of collecting the dead or wounded at all cost, an actual change was apparently forced by increased U.S.-ARVN air activity: "Now the cadres said we don't have enough time to take the killed and wounded from the battlefield because our unit's movements would be delayed and aircraft would come and bomb its position....This discouraged and demoralized the fighters a lot." (31)

V. EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE FRONT

Having arrived in the South, the PAVN soldier, individually or as a member of a PAVN unit, apparently encounters no particular friction with the Front: "Everybody was very nice to each other. We had unity. We shared the same mission." (3)* He may report that Northern customs of daily life vary somewhat from those in the South, but he quickly adds that such differences cause no friction. Some of his comrades may feel inclined to patronize their Southern comrades: "Because the South Vietnamese recruits joined the Front at a later date (presumably this PAVN soldier is speaking here from a particular, atypical vantage point), their level of understanding of military and political matters was inferior to ours. Because we had received military and political training in the North before going South, our level of understanding was better than theirs. However, their morale was as good as ours; they were just as enthusiastic. They did not retreat in the face of difficulties." (23) Yet, if he feels superior, he apparently tries not to antagonize his Southern comrades by showing such feelings. "Materials other than those underlying this study reveal that occasionally his Southern comrades do detect and resent the Northerner's show of superiority.)

Toward the Front itself, the PAVN's attitudes vary a great deal. As stated before, there is much disappointment upon arrival in the South, which is further intensified in the course of the PAVN soldier's tour of duty there. He may complain: "I think the Front is losing more often than winning. We never occupied any areas; we were always withdrawing....We did not have any cannon or aircraft, and had to hide in the jungle all the time." (3) Or: "We didn't have enough to eat. I was discouraged. But I had no other choice except to serve the Front. I wanted to return to North Vietnam or go anywhere else, but that was impossible." (6) Yet: "I didn't dare to talk openly about my dissatisfaction."** Or he might paint this grim picture: "We did

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*However, the data are very meager on this important point.

**Such reticence, expressed by the PAVN soldier also in other connections, can be well used by skillful psywar to show A that B feels the same way he does, even though he seems not to. This can make fragmented disaffection coalesce.

not have enough to eat, and most of us were sick and could not fight.... Many fighters thought the Front would lose the war because its soldiers have to lead such a hard life that nobody is joining us to fight the GVN...." (3) But in this area, as in most others, there is no unanimity. Some of those who make only the most minimal demands on life may find the Front precisely as they expected: "Were you disappointed with life in the Front?" "No. Before I left I was told I would have enough to eat....when I arrived I wasn't disappointed at all; we had three cans of rice per day and a little salt." (14)

To the unexpected hardships he must endure--which include frequent moves, the cold and wet climate of the Highlands, sickness, exhaustion from carrying heavy loads, and lack of sleep due to GVN/US air and ground activity--the PAVN soldier responds either with the (always frustrated) desire to return to the North, or with resignation. Rarely, it seems, does he exhibit any overt rebellion. Instead he continues to hope for victory as the solution for his plight: "I kept hoping for the liberation of the South so that both regions could live in peace." (6)

Concerning the Front's declared independence, the PAVN soldier is on the whole skeptical: "Hanoi is the main element in the struggle. If it ordered that the Front cease fighting, the Front would comply." (3) He tends to hold the same view with regard to men and materiel. Without Hanoi's aid, Front operations would be crippled. This statement is echoed by half the respondents.

BATTLE EXPERIENCE

Much of the PAVN's battle experience in the South is markedly undramatic or at least sounds that way in the interrogation report: "I was transferred upon my arrival in the South to a mortar and support unit in the 95th regiment. I took part in two engagements along National Route 19 in Gia Rai province. During these two engagements my unit gave support to other Front units. During all the time I was in the Front, the mission of my company was to support the other battalions in the division. That's all." (31) Or, just as undramatically: "The cadre told us...try to catch up with our battalion to participate in (an) attack....On the way I felt sick and told the man in charge

to walk ahead....I got lost, and wandered for two days. I got scared and called the name of the man in charge of my group....I heard a burst of gunfire. I lay down on the ground and after some time two American soldiers came and captured me." (34) Or: "In October 1965 I...received the order to attack Plei Me....I fell seriously ill...the medical personnel took me to a dispensary....At about 8 or 9 AM helicopters landed American troops and we were all captured." (35) Or, very similarly: "Finally (after 24 days in a bivouac area) my company received orders to go on an undisclosed operation....After three days of marching I became so weak that I received orders to stay behind in the jungle with other sick men....Finally the Americans landed in big helicopters near our hideout and captured all three of us." (36) Or, once again: "I was on a rice supply mission for my company, which was fighting at Plei Mei. When my team reached a clearing, we saw helicopters fly overhead, but we kept on walking. We were detected and strafed....We ran in all directions. I don't know where the other fighters ran.... I stayed in the area. In the morning of the third day I was captured by the Americans." (37)

The PAVN soldier might also be captured in a manner almost indistinguishable from surrender: "Our unit moved to set up an ambush for GVN parachutists...we were to attack them if they arrived...the Company Leader cautioned us to be very careful or we would be attacked by artillery from Plei Mei, which was about 10 to 12 miles from the ambush area. We stayed for three or four days waiting for the GVN soldiers. When they didn't appear, the men in my unit began to pack up and return to their former camp. A few of us (including myself) had been sick and were told to stay behind and rejoin our unit whenever we could. I heard a broadcast from a helicopter...urging the Front fighters to put down their arms and surrender to the Nationalist Government. I thought to myself that if I stayed where I was I would surely die for lack of medicine....If I surrendered to the Nationalists I might be able to stay alive...I left my hiding place and went to where the Americans were. They captured me." (38)

If our PAVN soldier is a non-commissioned officer, his account of his battle experience and capture might sound a little more martial:

"After arriving in the South I participated in only one engagement.... On December 24 I went on an operation with my unit....It was composed of 110 men. The soldiers were Northerners and the cadres were Northerners and regroupees*....The troops were enthusiastic and full or ardor.... They had participated only in a few engagements and never talked about fighting....The operation took place on January 7, 1965....We were not told about it at all beforehand....At 3:00 AM the fighting started.... When I was ordered to fight I just fought without asking questions.... At 3:00 PM a GVN squad clashed with one squad of guerrillas....Fifteen minutes later M-113s, coming from Hue, attacked us...we were ordered to withdraw...about 15 minutes later aircraft came to bomb our position.... I ran to the mountains and, upon returning to the village, was captured." (14)

With regard to what he fears most, the PAVN's replies are contradictory. One type of airplane may inspire more fright in one PAVN than in another. The same is true for various kinds of ground attacks. No clear picture emerges as to what type of military action is considered most hazardous by the PAVN. But he does readily admit to being afraid of some weapons. He may also--atypically--claim not to be frightened at all: "When the fighting begins I'm so excited that I don't think of anything and therefore I'm afraid of nothing." (12) Or perhaps of everything? It is hard to tell. The interviewers, trying to extract information on just exactly how the soldiers responded in actual operations, often drew inconclusive replies. The PAVN who will on occasion say that he was scared, and then again that he was not, discloses little about himself: whether he fights hard or competently, whether he panics when green, whether he responds well to his officers in combat, and so on. He is, of course, depressed by defeats and the sight of his dead comrades, just as he rejoices in his victories. But what soldier doesn't? Just how he feels in his "moment of truth" does not emerge clearly from the data. In any event, some PAVN are apparently rather tough and resourceful fighters, particularly some on the non-commissioned officers who were promoted while serving in the South (28).

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*South Vietnamese members of the Viet Minh movement who went to North Vietnam in 1954 and were subsequently reinfiltrated into the South.

Others will rally. Those who rally invariably do so (or at least claim to do so) mainly for one reason: the hardships have become too great for them. In other words, they give no evidence of being ideologically disaffected. Some indicate that the tribulation occasioned by the sessions devoted to critical self-examination played a decisive part in the decision to rally. But the pressures of war itself and the often freely acknowledged fear of combat probably account for most ralliers: "We suffered extremely heavy casualties at Plei Me. My regiment suffered about 500 casualties--300 dead and 200 wounded. The fighters became discouraged and their morale fell very low. The cadres also lost their enthusiasm and their confidence in their leadership in combat." (38) The last sentence does not make it clear whether the cadres lost confidence in their leaders or in their own ability to lead. In any event, they gave evidence of being demoralized.

EXPECTATIONS AS TO THE OUTCOME OF THE WAR

An essential part of any soldier's morale is what he expects will happen. In fact, expectations are crucial, which is why both sides in any war wage the battle of expectations before the gallery of their soldierly (and civilian) publics, so to speak. What are the PAVN's expectations? His cadres have told him that the Front will win because it has the "people" on its side. And he seems partly to believe this, even though heavy armaments in the hands of his enemies and some defeats in the field have lessened his expectations of victory. Some of his comrades no longer believe it at all. In that connection, the Front is slowly but surely accruing a psychological liability. This liability may be slightly offset by the fact that the Front never promised an early victory.* On the contrary--the PAVN soldier came South expecting to stay for a long time and perhaps never to return. As a result, the question, "Would you continue to fight if you knew that the war would go on for another three, five, ten years?" is likely to draw the answer: "If I hadn't been captured, I would have gone on fighting no matter how long the war would last." (14)

*Only in the summer of 1965 did the Front come close to promising victory during that year.

On the subject of whose side will win, our profile of the PAVN becomes very blurred. Some believe the Front will win, some believe that it will lose, and an even greater number than either plead uncertainty or ignorance about the outcome. Some have a pat answer: "The side that has the people's support will win. The side that loses the people's support will lose, that's all I can say." (1) He may also express extreme gloom: "I'm in no position to know how long the war will last. I only think that perhaps all the people will die. The war destroys many families." (26) But how does he think the war is going? "In my opinion, the situation will not change until World War III plays the decisive role, because both sides want to go all out and fight to the last man. However, I do not think either Russia or the United States will dare to use atomic bombs; they are aware of the disastrous consequences of atomic war." (9) But, again, who will win? "The GVN will win and the VC will be defeated." Why? "Because the GVN has all the means, and in comparison the other side has nothing. I really believe that, because that is reality. We have nothing on our side. Any battle we ever engaged in, we lost. That was my true, personal experience." (7) He may also reserve judgment: "As I see it, the Front now has as many men as the GVN forces. While the GVN soldiers are armed with modern weapons, the Front soldiers are more disposed to fight, more courageous, and have higher morale. The Front and GVN forces are therefore equally strong. I believe the war will go on for a long time. And I can't say who will ultimately win." (25) But there are those who are more certain: "I think the Front will win this war. It started from scratch and yet its armed forces have grown stronger and stronger...this shows that the Front has the population on its side. In this war, if the population backs you, victory is yours." (8) Or he may merely say: "The side which is for the right cause will win. The Front will fight until there is no American left here." (14) And, additionally, on the subject of the Americans: "Our cadre said: 'The more American troops are sent to Vietnam, the more of them will die.!" (28) But despite this assurance from his cadre, the same soldier thought that "the Front will not be able to achieve victory because the GVN occupies most of the territory and possesses

modern and large weapons." One man, in this instance a regroupee, exclaimed: "Who can say how a revolution will end? But if you are a revolutionary you have to believe that it will end in victory. As for explaining the reasons behind that belief, I don't think anybody can do that."

Very tentatively, one may say that most of those who believe in a GVN victory base their belief upon what they have actually observed, such as GVN weapon superiority, U.S. planes, and so on, while those who favor the Front are less specific in their reasons. (It does not emerge from the data whether or not those believing in a GVN victory arrived at this conclusion only after their being captured or having defected, i.e., after having been exposed to a clearer view of the GVN.) It also seems that expectation of a Front victory declined during 1965. In any event, of fifteen respondents who gave an opinion, three expected the VC to win in the end, three opted for a GVN victory, and nine were uncertain. The reader, however, is warned against extrapolating from these figures. They may be entirely unrepresentative. But it does seem safe to assume that many PAVN soldiers do not expect an early and smashing victory, and that increasing losses and defeats may have further lowered their expectations. While this situation should normally affect their morale adversely, it may be partially offset by the fact that they had expected a long, hard war to begin with. Naturally, if large numbers of them could be convinced that they simply couldn't win this war, their morale would be decisively and negatively affected, but there is as yet no evidence that they have been thus convinced.

It is appropriate to mention here the one isolated reference in the data on how people in the North feel about Front prospects. One PAVN soldier, who infiltrated comparatively recently (September 1965) and was captured in November 1965, reported that "(People in the North) were all praises for the Front. The people in the North believed that the Front would win in the end and the people in the South would be free." (38)

VI. EXPOSURE TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE-U.S. PROPAGANDA

A disappointing feature of the interviews with respondents who were captured or who rallied before September 1965 was their scant knowledge of and response to propaganda emanating from the South.* Generally, their answer was that they had never seen a leaflet, had heard no radio appeals from planes, and, while still in the North, had listened to no radio transmissions except Radio Hanoi. This also accounted for the fact that they generally did not know of the Chieu Hoi** program: "I don't even understand what Chieu Hoi means." (8) Apparently, ignorance of the program was sufficiently widespread for some cadres not to feel the need to engage in counter-propaganda on that score: "They (the cadres) said that if anyone was captured on the battlefield he would be killed; therefore we had to fight to the end. That was their propaganda. They did not say anything about the Chieu Hoi program." (13)

It might be added in passing that insufficient communication is of course not the only problem in "reaching" the PAVN soldier, as evidenced by an answer to the question: "Would a thorough knowledge of the Chieu Hoi program make many of your friends rally?" "No. I don't think they will rally. What would they rally for? They will fight to the end, until peace is restored and national reunification achieved, so they can go back to North Vietnam. However, I am not saying that no Northerner will rally...." (14) The PAVN soldier, after hearing loudspeaker appeals, may witness negative responses to such propaganda appeals by his comrades: "The majority of the fighters said: 'Let them talk! We are not going to join the GVN!'" But: "The rest of the fighters did not make any comments, and kept their thoughts to themselves." (31) Still, out of 40 in one group, 8 had rallied.

Some soldiers may have seen leaflets in the North: "The people who had been out in the forest or out at sea fishing came back saying they had seen some." (24) But: "They did not dare to bring the leaflets

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*Data from the last quarter of 1965 are much brighter in this respect: almost all PAVN soldiers interrogated during that period had been exposed to some aspect of our propaganda.

**The Saigon government's "Open Arms" program, designed to attract deserters from VC ranks.

back." (24) "Why not?" "I don't know...they said they were frightened to do so." The PAVN soldier may have collected some packages dropped by plane in the North and opened them, finding children's socks and sewing needles, in which case he may also have observed that villagers who found and kept such packages were publicly criticized.

If he has heard an appeal made over a loudspeaker, the Northern soldier is likely to complain that he could not hear it very well. (1) If he had found leaflets, he may say that he did not dare to read them for fear of being criticized, or, if he was higher in rank than private, of being broken. (1) Yet, even if he has heard loudspeaker appeals and read leaflets, he may still not know anything about the Chieu Hoi program (1) (not to mention American war aims or other aspects of the struggle). Finally, with regard to the Chieu Hoi program, whatever appeal it may have for him seems neutralized in many cases by his general perplexity regarding the mechanics of rallying, his fear of ill-treatment by the ARVN, and his apprehension about the eventual consequences to himself and his family. (With regard to the latter point, one PAVN soldier said that he did not think the news of his defection would reach his native village for about three years. If true, it points to the stark sense of isolation that besets some PAVN soldiers in the South.)

One preliminary propaganda aim--to throw the target into a quandary--is apparently being achieved occasionally: "I had just reached the South and did not believe the broadcasts. But I wondered what would happen to me if I believed them and rallied? If I rallied, what would become of me?" (35) (Such a passage confirms the precept that any appeal to an enemy soldier should always be specific about "what happens next," and preferably illustrated with photographs.)

When he thinks seriously about rallying, the PAVN soldier is likely to be torn by conflicting emotions and bewildered by the problem of how to go about it. In short, he may "make too much of it," for the propaganda to which he has so far been exposed does not seem to help him cross that bridge. Once the soldier really decides that he has done enough fighting for the Front, things seem to become startlingly simple in some cases: "My three comrades and I stopped a bus on

National Route 14. We said to the driver that we were infiltrators from the North and wanted to desert. He suggested he should drive us to the GVN authorities. We agreed." (33) And off they went into the open arms of the Chieu Hoi program. Though stories of such easy and casual surrender are rare, the setting in which the soldiers find themselves is favorable for it. With most units apparently camping in the woods and moving around a great deal, the problem of "getting lost" may not be overwhelming, even though there is a danger of getting lost in the jungle and starving there. There is, of course, a direct connection between such a favorable setting and certain tactical propaganda opportunities.

Apparently, our propaganda addressed to the PAVN soldier has so far not tried to cope with one big worry on his mind connected with defection--the long-range consequences: "Sentimentally, I'd like to return to the North again. But that would cause me a lot of trouble. I wouldn't be killed, just detained for some time. I'd be treated as a defector, a bad element. My status would never be the same as before." (33)

Yet, even for that dire contingency, there is at least a temporary palliative--poor communications. "Despite the trouble you expect your family to have, you still rallied?" "It will take a long time for news of my rallying to reach home. Some Resistance soldiers were dead for ten years before their families learned about it. The news of my having rallied will reach home only two or three years from now." (33)

A fitting note on which to conclude this section on propaganda might be the answer an interrogator received from one PAVN soldier (18) to his question: "In your opinion, what could be done to encourage the men in your unit to rally?" The soldier replied: "That depends on the character of each person concerned." As will emerge from subsequent sections of this Memorandum, the matter is perhaps not quite as overwhelmingly difficult as all this; but the statement, which is not entirely unrealistic, does give an indication of the complexity of the task.

With respect to what effects our propaganda has had on PAVN soldiers, two points need to be made here. First, feedback on PAVN

responses to our propaganda is still quite rudimentary. Only the more recent data--since September 1965--have begun to show that the PAVN soldier is being reached and influenced. The other is that propaganda addressed to him thus far has been more or less restricted to surrender appeals. The latter is distinctly only a minor part of all possible psywar operations in a protracted military action.

VII. LEADERSHIP AND CONTROL

Aside from the ordinary pressures that are brought to bear on all soldiers in all armies--to persist and to obey--the PAVN, like other VC soldiers, is subjected to two special forms which are direct applications of Chinese Communist methods: the three-man cell and the criticism-self-criticism system. The North Vietnamese Chinese-inspired methods of political control, which the Chinese originally took over from the Soviets, bear everywhere the mark of the refinements that Mao introduced in the political, physical, and emotional control over soldiers serving the Communist cause.

The three-man cells are organized before the PAVN soldier is sent South to fight. On the way down "there was a three-man cell walking 50 yards in front of the column and a three-man cell 50 yards behind the column, to protect the unit. The men in the column were also organized into three-man cells." (37) "We were organized into three-man cells even in battle; the fighters were told to stay close to their cell leaders during combat and obey their orders and guidance." (37) Who were the cell leaders? "The cell leaders were appointed. For example, if a man is promoted to sergeant, he will also be appointed cell leader. Or a cell leader might be a veteran with two to three years of service in the Army." (37) Was the system useful in battle? "If a cell member split from his cell during combat, our actions would become uncoordinated and our casualties would be higher." In other words, the PAVN believes that the cell system, which is one of the mainstays of Communist control, improves his chances for survival, and therefore presumably accepts it gladly at least during battle. And after battle? "If a cell member left the cell with the intention of surrendering, he would be criticized severely and warned. If he had gotten lost during combat he would be warned, too, and told to stay closer to the cell the next time." (37) Yet, the control system does not seem to be ironclad: "If a man wanted to desert, he could easily do so...he could escape during rest-period after lunch or at night when he was alone. The three-man cell system does not require that the cell members should always be close to each other. During the day

each fighter has his own work to do. Only in battle must the cell members stay close together." (37)

What was the purpose of the three-man cell? "The cadres said the three-man cell was created in order that members might help each other in every circumstance of the life they were leading in the army. They had to live, eat, march and fight together, and were to be together in life and death." And apparently members were indeed quite close: "Whenever we were together, we spoke about our daily work, our family, our health, our joys and worries, so that we knew one another better. We also practiced self-criticism, so that we would be guided in our thinking." (39) This breaking down of barriers and providing of opportunities for intimate communication may be important inasmush as the Vietnamese soldier appears from the interrogations as a fairly reserved person. To many questions regarding the feelings of his fellow soldiers or his people back home he will reply: "I don't know what they thought...we never talked about that...people did not express their thoughts on that."

In all, the three-man cell seems to be of great assistance to our PAVN soldier. It apparently succeeds in counteracting any feelings of isolation he might otherwise have in what for him amounts to a foreign, far-away country. The three-man cell--a form of virtual symbiosis of three separate individuals--apparently is an effective antidote, indeed a preventative, for such emotional afflictions. And it is also a powerful tool of mutual surveillance and control.

Complementary to the three-man cell are the sessions in which the soldier is first criticized by his fellows and is then expected to criticize himself. The sessions, which take place very frequently (and are also practiced within the three-man cell, so that the two systems overlap), seek to bring out all that troubles a man about himself or his comrades. Evidently, inferiors are free to criticize superiors, at least within limits: privates do criticize non-coms, for example, though the net flow of criticism seems to go from higher to lower ranks, and from party members to non-party members. Such sessions apparently provide an emotional catharsis in that they serve to release undesirable tensions or to prevent them from even arising. They are

also useful in building up other tensions that can be mobilized and employed by the leaders. In short, they provide a kind of group therapy, Communist style.

The PAVN, like the VC, is likely to have some very ambivalent attitudes to these sessions. He hates, of course, to be publicly criticized. In fact, he is really terrified at the prospect, to such a degree, in some cases, that it becomes the reason for his rallying. But he also likes to be praised and to do some criticizing himself, especially of his superiors. The reason he hates so much to be criticized in public is that the leaders can control the sessions in such a way as to turn the audience against him. The man being criticized must thus bear the full weight of a hostile public opinion, an emotional force against which even the strongest personal conviction or best-founded individualism seems to provide insufficient protection. Of course, some of the audience may secretly sympathize with him, but find it wiser to declare themselves against the offender. On the surface, at least, the transgressor is completely isolated and will be harshly denounced. After the session he will have no chance of canvassing among the participants in private to find out whether they did not secretly agree with him. He would only be found out and criticized again. Besides, his original transgression is likely to be presented in such horrendous terms as malingering, betrayal, or cowardice that nobody will really side with him.

What must make the sessions even more searing is their probing a soldier's innermost motivations. If, for example, he has not fought well in battle, or even attempted to defect, he may plead anxiety about his family at home. But the group will not let it go at that. It will tell him that his concern for his parents and their problems really had nothing to do with his behavior, that it was his fear of the enemy and death that made him act as he did.

The reader of the PAVN interrogations is forever being surprised by how serious a soldier's transgression can be and still elicit no disciplinary action in the conventional sense--just public criticism. Such transgressions actually include the gravest of military offenses: desertion, refusal to fight, and so on; those, in fact, for which a

soldier in a Western or Western-oriented army might be summarily shot.*

Probably this form of psychological control--which is distantly related to, but entirely different from, indoctrination--is one of the principal bonds by which the PAVN army, just like the Front itself, is held together. For psywar operations by our side, in the broadest sense of the term, it surely is a very great challenge. To operate effectively psywar must learn, somehow or other, to neutralize the cohesion-generating and morale-building effects of these two devices: the three-man cell and the systematized sessions of self-criticism. A subsequent chapter in this Memorandum will address this problem in more detail.

It might be added in conclusion to this section that the PAVN army seems to be encountering some problems among its leaders, i.e., the cadres: "The majority of the cadres are enthusiastic, but one-fourth of them were unenthusiastic because they had fought for eight or nine years during the Resistance, so they were tired of fighting. They were only concerned about their families and hated war and death." (40) Which only goes to show that in the PAVN army, as in other armies, veterans either get battle-hardened or battle-softened, as the case may be.

As for the political officer, what evidence we have indicates that he does not correspond to the conventional image of the "dreaded political commissar." He may not necessarily be popular: "The assistant political officer of the company was a native of South Vietnam, 32 years old, risen from the ranks. He was bad-tempered and disliked his men." (39) But the same respondent, with fine impartiality, added that the "company political officer was a senior lieutenant, 35 years old, risen from the ranks. He was very supple and affable." In other words, the political officer in the PAVN army seems to be patterned on the Chinese rather than on the early Soviet model.

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*Still, limits now seem to have been set, and some of the most recent POWs have reported that they were threatened with court-martial for attempted defection, an indication, perhaps, that public exposure cannot solve all disciplinary problems.

VIII. INDOCTRINATION AND MORALE

INDOCTRINATION

One factor closely related to morale and motivation is indoctrination.* How well indoctrinated is the PAVN soldier? And what, in this instance, does "well" mean? The PAVN soldier's "indoctrination" with regard to such things as life and events in North Vietnam is markedly different from his "indoctrination" on international Communist affairs, or on "imperialism." The North he has seen and experienced, and his views of it, by and large, are moderate, differentiated and personally reasoned. He accepts certain things and is doubtful about others. Therefore, what is established in his mind may be regarded as rather firmly ingrained.

With regard to the world at large, the PAVN soldier is likely to intone the Communist line, whether about the "Socialist camp" itself or its adversaries. However, in no respect does he represent an ideal indoctrinee from the point of view of the Communist regime. He is much too reserved and skeptical for that, and too inclined to use his own mind, even if he knows and often stresses its limitations. Thus he is not, and is never likely to be, an unreserved believer, and therefore not an unshakable adherent to the Communist cause.

MORALE

Ultimately, a soldier's morale is the product of about half a dozen major interlocking factors: his situation (and what he knows and thinks about it), his cause (and what he knows and thinks about it), his attitudes and expectations, his character, and, finally, his view of life and what that life could and should be.

The PAVN soldier, as he emerges from this group of interviews, presents us with many problems about his morale. But what does he

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*While this is not the place to go into a discussion of the term, the reader should keep in mind that not all statements by men or women from the Communist world are results of some mechanical indoctrination process, but often are genuine opinions based on thought processes similar to our own.

himself think of his own morale and that of his comrades? "Half of my comrades had high morale. Working or fighting, they were always enthusiastic, and never complained of anything. The others had low morale." (25) "How can you tell about the 'others'?" "I often heard them talking among themselves, some complaining that their families missed them, others saying they were afraid of dying in battle. At least one-third of our company tried to obtain permission to return North under the pretext of being sick." (25) If we can trust the informant, we can at least conclude that his unit's fighting spirit was not of the best; only "half of my comrades had high morale." The impression is reinforced by a subsequent statement, made by the same respondent: "It was forbidden to talk about such things as might affect morale.... For instance, the men could not talk about their families, as this might make them think of their families and miss them, which would have dampened their fighting spirt. Nor could they speak of enemy weapons, as they might make them afraid to die." (25)

What chance do the cadres have of keeping up the morale of their men? In answering that, one must first of all point out that the PAVN leadership has at least one leadership problem on its hands. The PAVN soldier is not sure that he has always been told the truth. Coming South, he met with serious disappointments and hardships exceeding his expectations. This has somewhat unsettled him. However, he is inclined to make two distinctions. First, he gives the benefit of the doubt to the cadres in the North who misled him on what he would find in South Vietnam. They were presumably misinformed themselves about the true situation and were not deliberate liars. (6) Second, he makes a distinction between them and his "commanders" in the field who, he states, "always tell the truth." (6)

Whatever the current nature of leadership problems may be, the cadres work hard at raising morale and in some instances seem to succeed almost magically: "Before battle, the cadres mobilized our spirit. They said: 'Go ahead, don't be afraid.... On the battlefield you can take cover and fire from there. If you are frightened and refuse to go into battle, we won't have any troops to fight the ARVN.' After they told us this, the fighters felt better and cheerfully left for

the battlefield....after the cadres had mobilized their spirit the fighters went off to fight." (18) Yet, there seem to have been serious limits to this form of persuasion. The same soldier (18) reports: "During engagements some of the fighters were scared and remained in their communications trenches, while some were very enthusiastic and fought with ardor. Of every ten fighters, about three or four were too scared to fight." These, of course, may have been relatively green troops.

How about the cadre? As is to be expected, the morale of at least some of the cadres is better. When hard-pressed by questions on a multitude of subjects, one sergeant said: "As for fighters like myself, if we were ordered to do anything or go anywhere, we would have to obey our orders. Even when we were scared we would not dare to say it out loud. If we did we would be criticized for being demoralized." (24) A really tough soldier seems to be talking here. However, lest this should lead the reader to the conclusion that only the cadres have adequate morale, let him consider this statement by one private: "How did you feel about the hardships you suffered in the Front?" "I have been through many hardships before." (18)

But there are several factors that adversely affect PAVN morale. One is that the PAVN soldier, contrary to his expectation, finds that Vietnamese fight and kill Vietnamese; another is that the dead and wounded are often abandoned in battle. Having expressed his regret at being obliged to fight Vietnamese, one soldier (6) turned to his interrogator and added: "You must hate people like me because we come here to fight," at which point, according to the report, "he looked sad." We do not know how widespread this feeling may be. We do know that the PAVN soldier first gets an inkling of it when he discovers that he is not going to be welcomed with open arms by his compatriots in the South, despite what his cadres in the North have told him. These are feelings that psywar needs to exploit.

In several cases our PAVN POW is likely to have been captured quite casually, somewhere in the countryside, while performing some chore or other, or in the course of some minor engagement. That is, he did not "fight to the end." At first glance, that might suggest

low morale. But it would be dangerous to conclude from this that PAVN morale on the whole is poor. Our indiviudal PAVN soldier may have been captured precisely because his morale was not high to begin with. He may have been greatly outnumbered by those who fought and died because their morale was higher and so were never captured at all.

It might be added parenthetically that certain PAVN practices undoubtedly make for low morale in some instances. One man (5), used as an ammo carrier, was not even given a rifle, because he was a poor shot. However reasonable it is to turn a poor marksman into an ammo carrier, it seems rather brutal to deprive him of his weapon in the combat area. In another case the ration issued to members of a PAVN transport unit was lower than that of the fighters, despite the fact that the transport workers often performed harder labor and were equally exposed to ground attacks and air or artillery bombardment. If such practices are widespread, they are hardly conducive to good morale.

The general impression gained from the interviews is that while morale is neither near the breaking point nor very high, it is apparently sufficient to hold the fighting forces together for some time, unless new ways and means are found to break it down. It shows vulnerabilities rather than serious cracks. The outstanding vulnerability would seem to be that the mission in which the PAVN soldier is engaged at great risk and with much hardships, contrary to what he is still being taught and still believes, objectively makes little sense on two counts: (1) he can no longer expect his side to win, and (2) the South need not be "liberated" from the Americans as the Americans are not "oppressing" it, and people there are better off than he is led to believe. As the PAVN soldier seems to be quite rational and intelligent, he presumably would be potentially receptive to these two facts if they were really brought home to him, at which point his fighting spirit might collapse.

One factor sustaining his morale--his emotional resignation in the face of a long and hard war--might also give way if he could be convinced that there was a chance, after all, of a short war, without victory, and a concomitant hope that he might return North and resume

his work and see his family again before he gets killed or maimed or succumbs to sickness. But a termination of the war without a VC victory would presumably be acceptable to him only if he could be convinced that such an end to the war was to the benefit of the Vietnamese people or, at least, that it was no longer his duty to his compatriots or their social progress (the Revolution) that he go on fighting. As he seems to take his obligations very seriously (which in turn consolidates his morale in the face of adversity), this insight that no such obligation really exists would remove one of the principal pillars on which his morale rests.

The central pillar of all fighting morale is whether an army and the individual soldier in it believes that the war is "really necessary" and therrfore must (and can) be won. On the basis of the group studied one may say that the PAVN soldier does believe that this war is necessary. Even those who rallied did so because they no longer could stand the hardships, and not because they thought their cause was bad and the war unjustified. The PAVN soldier believes that the Americans are responsible for the war, have invaded the South, have prevented reunification, and must be driven out. On that point the data are very clear. This indicates, in turn, that the principal morale factor, holding the PAVN soldier to his mission, is so far unimpaired. Thus his morale, even when depressed by various disappointments, is better than it may seem even to him.*

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*Whether his morale is high or low by comparison with other PAVN units not yet committed in the South, i.e., whether the PAVN regiments fighting for the Front are "crack troops" by Northern standards or not, cannot be determined from our data with any degree of certainty, and should be the subject of further data collection and analysis. The interviews suggest that the PAVN forces in the South are not "crack troops" because of superior political indoctrination. Nor are they all veterans, for a large portion of them are draftees.

IX. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF TRAITS

The PAVN soldier, as one may picture him from the interviews, seems a rather nice fellow: modest, self-assured, fairly balanced in his judgment and his emotions, and well aware of his own limitations. He is resilient rather than tough. He is courteous and reserved. He knows his own weaknesses and limitations. He wants to see Vietnamese stop killing Vietnamese and be reunited, but he wants this because he wants to see his people happy rather than strong. He does not hate the ARVN. As a general rule, he does not seem to hate Americans either, though he does not like them. Actually, he is ignorant of them, and tends to be appalled by some of their actions (bombings in the North, crop and tree spraying* in the South). In general, he believes what Communist propaganda (and Chinese Communist propaganda at that) says about the Americans, and seems to wish that they would just "go away."

The PAVN member certainly is not an ardent soldier, even though his own propaganda glorifies military heroism quite a bit. He is very depressed (as we would say in the West) or very sad (as he puts it) because he must fight, be away from home, and face death on the battlefield. If he fights well, it is because he believes his compatriots in the South need his help, and because, once in it, he cannot get out of it without too much danger to his person or prestige. Unlike the VC, he is trapped and cannot reach home by defecting. To a very considerable extent he is kept in line by the psychological controls inherent in the three-man cell and the criticism-self-criticism system.

Politically, he is at least a partial Communist, both as a reasonably satisfied member of his own co-op (and youth group chapter) in the North, and as a fairly docile believer in what his political cadres have told him.

Where is his Achilles heel? Unlike the very strong, he does not seem to have one. But he is not weak, either. His strength is his resilience, his patience, his great frugality, his fatalistic (but not negativistic) approach to life and what it offers and demands. He is

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*One soldier described this as impermissible "sabotage" as compared to legitimate acts of war.

also intelligent. Although losses and defeats have a considerable effect on him, force is not, as we like to say about Communists in general, the only thing he understands. In fact, force is what he seems to "understand" least. When used by the United States against the North, it baffles him; and when employed against him in the South in the form of planes, tanks, artillery, napalm, etc., it frightens but fails to drive him--the little fellow with his rifle, knife, and can of rice--into quick surrender. He wants to live, get along, eat, return North, improve himself, and see his son acquire an education and exceed his own station.

Because he is a very serious fellow, he will respond only if he is taken seriously. Indeed, he will be more receptive to appeals that are "over his head" than to those that talk down to him. Any propaganda foray of the old-fashioned kind ("the murderers with the blood-stained hands in the Kremlin, or in Peiping, or in Hanoi, or in the Front") will not move him, nor will overemphasis on Western power, goodwill, and virtue. Because he is least of all an extremist, some of our appeals for sweeping reforms are likely to be lost on him. This probably goes also for what might be regarded as indirect expressions of our Western idealist and sometimes sentimental ideas, which often find expression in, say, CARE packages or an excessive concern for children.

The PAVN soldier is very patient. From the psywar point of view, this is significant. Unlike Western man, who is inherently impatient, the Vietnamese need not be assailed only with brief slogans or dramatic messages. Instead, he appears to be a man who would read a long leaflet or even a tract of several pages if he dared to look at it at all.* This should be of great help to the propagandizer in the Vietnamese situation, which cannot be reduced to simple slogans.

On the whole, the PAVN soldier is modest without being obsequious. His humility seems based on a ready acceptance and comprehension of the limits to his personal and collective powers, as well as to his

*Such suggestions can, of course, be pre-tested in detention camps and also in the field.

religion and general view of the universe. This is a strength rather than a sham or a weakness. Therefore, somewhat like the Finns when they fought the Russians, he will take on vastly superior enemies.

Is he a courageous foe? For anyone who has read POW interrogation reports from other theaters of operation, the frequency of the PAVN's unabashed references to his fears--of losing his way in case of defection, or just simply of being killed--is astonishing. Soldiers in other armies may all be afraid, too, but will rarely admit it. What does this candor mean? It certainly does not seem to mean that the PAVN is a cowardly soldier; evidence proves that he is not. A strong love for country and compatriots, a sense of duty and countervailing fears--of criticism or punishment, for example--keep him stable. Yet the PAVN is not a military hero and does not try to be. He is rarely out for blood or glory. Therefore, and also because of the pragmatic tendency he generally displays, his attitudes will be decisively affected by which side he thinks will win. To fight until a Gotterdammerung is clearly not in his character.

One of the PAVN's outstanding traits--and one of obvious significance for us--is that he is a skeptic. A skeptic, not a cynic. Rather typically, he will add to his answers: "At least, that is what I was told. I myself haven't seen any evidence to that effect." He wants to be shown. A truly surprising number of his statements clearly distinguish between what "I was told" and what "I believe." But he is not the disbeliever who prides himself on being tough-minded, who disbelieves everything. Slow to give credence, he seems greatly to respect his own ability to see and judge for himself. In that sense he is genuinely sophisticated.

The PAVN soldier of the interviews is somewhat materialistic, but rather inoffensively so. He measures political systems or even life's satisfactions in terms of some rice to eat, a decent dwelling, the possession of a bicycle. These material things--though he asks for only a modest amount of them--are paramount on his scale of values.* Unlike Poles or Czechoslovakians, he has few quarrels with Communism's

*One soldier reported that his father had taught him that material things ranked highest in this world in every respect.

non-material aspects, such as mental and physical coercion or intolerance for individuality. His inoffensive materialism strikes one as the other side of his perhaps equally inoffensive opportunism. Yet even here, as in other respects, he is not free of ambiguity, for he does respond to such altruistic appeals as the one to "liberate his brothers in the South."

The PAVN soldier is also a believer in truth and justice. This can go so far that, having been beaten by ARVN soldiers after an interview, he may say he deserved the beating because he was lying to his captors! (14) But he is no starry-eyed idealist, nor--except for very few instances--a confirmed ideologist; he is much too skeptical, practical, and pragmatic for that. He is certainly not a man to be turned into a blind follower by Communism, but he is not one to be easily swayed or captivated by opposite appeals either.

Both as a person and as a citizen of his small and comparatively powerless nation, he is not moved by the global and often abstract ideas and concepts that stir Westerners so much. However much he is concerned with himself and his family, he still feels that he has a mission: to help "liberate" his compatriots from "American invasion." He does not dramatize or sentimentalize. This is one of his most striking differences from Western man, and should put us on notice that he is likely to be impervious to some of our favorite dramatic or sentimental political appeals.

Though willing to die for his cause, he obviously would rather be anything than dead. Mainly he wants to stay alive. This may yield an important key for us in dealing with him, for, given his unconditional desire to live, would he not also be "rather democratic-capitalist than dead?"

How broad is the chasm between him and our side? One Vietnamese interrogator, a member of the RAND team, added spontaneously at the end of a long talk with one of her captured compatriots: "The prisoner seemed earnest and sincere in his conversation. He did not seem to be a dangerous adversary. It would require little to bring him to the GVN side." Is she right? She may well be, if we can find what that "little" is, and use it to overcome the force of the control mechanism that keeps him committed to the PAVN's cause.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS: A "PSYWAR WEAPONS SYSTEM"

The overall purpose of this study is to identify targets for strategic psychological warfare planning. Strategic psywar--contrary to direct appeals designed to produce quick responses--is not aimed at immediate results, but at gradually preparing the ground by altering the target's pattern of thoughts and inclinations, with a view to leading him ultimately to the desired end. To change a man we must know him. For this reason we have allowed the PAVN rank-and-file soldier to speak pretty much for himself, and, in the concluding Summary of Traits, have tried to analyze him in some depth.

Before recommending what psywar might do in the Vietnamese war, a word needs to be said about psywar itself. At its heart, of course, is communication--words specifically tailored and addressed to the target. However, because all our statements and even actions--whether military, political, economic, or social--have some psywar implications, the boundaries of psywar are wide indeed. For the same reason it is often difficult to define a set of psywar recommendations. However, in our current struggle against the PAVN, some things emerge so clearly that they allow us to frame recommendations in relatively simple terms. If some of these recommendations turn out to be applicable to psywar directed against the National Liberation Front in general, that is purely coincidental. Those made here are based strictly upon an analysis of the PAVN soldier's morale and motivation.

THE U.S. ROLE

Clearly, with regard to U.S. intentions and capabilities in Vietnam, the PAVN soldier is laboring under the most striking misconceptions. He believes that the Americans have "invaded" the South in order to suppress it and, perhaps, use it as a springboard for an invasion of the North, for the purpose of gain and exploitation. He thus believes that his government is justified in sending him to the aid of his fellows in the South. He seems also to believe that he can somehow win this war. As stated earlier, his conviction that the war must be fought and can be won is the linchpin to his fighting morale.

Yet, in reality, he cannot "win" this war by staging another Dien Bien Phu, nor need he "liberate" his compatriots from the Americans, whose purposes are quite different fwom what he is being told--and believes--they are. Thus, first of all, it should be made clear to him exactly what American intentions and capabilities are. If done convincingly, it might go a long way toward collapsing his fighting morale. In that connection--as in all others--it must be remembered that the PAVN soldier is intelligent, sober, and surprisingly sophisticated. Slogans will not cause him to shed his misconceptions. Rather, a process akin to adult education will be required to make the points that are so obvious to us but so foreign to him.

Presumably, to convince him, we must tell him not only the truth but the whole truth. We must explain to him what our own national self-interests are in this war. Though he does not say so specifically, the PAVN is not likely to understand, much less have any confidence in, any power purporting to play the good Samaritan role. We cannot deny our own self-interests and still have his trust.

WAR AIMS FOR VIETNAM

Because the PAVN rank-and-file soldier is concerned about the fate of his country as a whole, psywar cannot disregard the question of reunification. It is a difficult topic to treat. The PAVN who is generally satisfied with socialization in the North naturally wishes for a unified Vietnam so that the blessings of the Revolution may be brought to the South as well. Thus, the more belligerently anti-Communist we sound to him, the more urgently he believes he is needed to fight in the South. Psywar will have to convince him that the American presence is not intended to thwart the Revolution that began when the French were driven out. Obviously, there are some very complicated policy problems involved here that are not within the compass of this study.

HIS PERSONAL FATE

Like everybody else, the PAVN soldier is very much concerned with his personal fate. Being human, he does not like to fight, but he does not like to rally either. This reluctance is based not just on his--often justified--fear of mistreatment by the ARVN, but also on repercussions back home, even if they should come only years after the event, and finally on his own image of himself as a fighter. "To retreat in the face of difficulties," or "to be afraid of the enemy" are mortal sins to the Communists as they are to most others as well. Therefore, psywar must try to persuade the PAVN that desertion is neither a dishonorable act, nor necessarily detrimental to him in the end. To attain that aim, psywar must provide him with rationalizations for rallying, such as, for example, that contrary to what his own leaders say, such an act serves his country's best interests--not just his own. Concomitantly with that should go a continuing siren song about the benefits to himself of an early peace and a return home to his land and his family. With regard to his fears of adverse repercussions in his home village in the North, psywar might try to convince him that his homefolks are likely to feel differently about his rallying if the war fails to end in a victory by the North.

The possibility of an early peace and a return home is a potentially very profitable theme for psywar purposes, not only because this is the outcome that almost every PAVN soldier wants, but because so few of them expect it to happen. It thus has the added value of surprise. However, an early end to the war would seem desirable to the PAVN only if--after his side fails to win--he were assured that the Americans would not persist in doing what he now thinks they intend.

It would be unrealistic, however, to expect just any psywar effort to produce vast numbers of defections if the enemy's forces are not actually disintegrating. The main thrust of psywar should therefore seek the less spectacular but highly profitable goal of persuading the PAVN not to "fight to the end" but to allow himself to be captured. To this end he must be convinced that, contrary to desertion, capture is not really dishonorable, and cannot therefore be held against him or his family. To weaken the PAVN fighting spirit, psywar must undo

the psychological effects created by the PAVN leadership.

HIS LEADERSHIP

Much attention has been paid in this study to the Communist use of the three-man cell and the systematized form of self-criticism. These two go a long way toward keeping the PAVN soldier under control by neutralizing whatever antagonism or doubt may be building up in him, and by making him impervious to direct and indirect appeals addressed to him from the outside. Psywar must attack this nerve center of his leadership. It must inject itself into the control process, first by speaking knowledgeably about it and thereby impressing the PAVN with the ubiquity of our eyes and ears, and our comprehension of his physical and emotional situation. The next step is to strengthen that element in the PAVN soldier that makes him fear and dislike to be stripped of all his defenses and then to be exposed and criticized before his peers and seniors. Psywar should ask him insistently why he submits to that indignity and what he thinks its purpose is. Attempts should be made to persuade him that the purpose of self-criticism, as well as that of the three-man cell, is to dupe him into casting aside, under group pressure, perfectly legitimate doubts, fears, and aspirations of his own that are in conflict with the VC cause. And it should be conveyed to him that the three-man cell, even if it occasionally assists him in combat in the short run, is only an insidious system of de-individualization and control, designed to force him into doing things he would otherwise--wisely--refrain from doing, that it really is a glorified spying system his leaders use because they do not trust him.

Finally, the point might be made to the PAVN soldier that being held up to public obloquy is not, as it pretends to be, a process of producing decisions by some consensus honestly arrived at, but that the outcome of such sessions is always predictably the same and invariably in line with the needs of the command mechanism.*

*The author of this study was confirmed in advocating this approach by a conversation with Desmond S. Palmer, formerly high-ranking police official in Malaya, who told him that a similar approach had been effectively used in psywar operations in that area.

In this regard our psywar starts with a great advantage, for many PAVN soldiers already have an intense loathing for and fear of these humiliating sessions.

THE FUTILITY OF HIS EFFORT

Nothing impedes a soldier's effort so much as his growing awareness that his efforts are futile, particularly if they are futile because they are both unnecessary and impossible. To have his countrymen in the South live in peace, freedom, and prosperity, and be able himself to live in peace and freedom up North, the PAVN need not fight and sacrifice for an end he cannot achieve to boot, i.e., the driving of the Americans out of Vietnam by military force. Although it may be undiplomatic to insist that, with regard to political or economic objectives, the U.S. is not France and that Danang or Bien Hoa or Saigon are no potential Dien Bien Phus, these arguments in psywar seem to be absolutely essential. The point is to drive it home to the PAVN, his cadres, and also his officers, that, politically, he is tilting against windmills. Of course, some of the PAVN's war aims make more sense, objectively, than that of "liberating the southern brothers from American oppression." Such aims as reunification, eradication of feudalism, raising of the poor classes, and so on must not be treated as quixotic by psywar. But psywar must convince the PAVN soldier that he is not fighting another France, that he cannot drive his adversary into the sea even if he should fight for the rest of his days, and that the "Socialist camp" cannot and will not help him win, even if it should render some assistance eventually. At best he can hope to survive for a while, but only to see his chance of surviving, or not becoming wounded or captured, drastically decline each day. His cause--psywar must tell him--is the most hopeless and at the same time the most illusory in the history of warfare: the war is not necessary, and victory not possible. This theme is potentially so powerful that it can be effectively presented by understatement, tailored to the PAVN's own simple, undramatic way of thinking and speaking.

ORCHESTRATION

It is no accident that the five basic themes discussed above overlap to some extent--all basic psywar appeals are always functions of each other. Only an orchestration of all themes can hope to have the desired results. This need for orchestration applies even to local, tactical psywar operations: surrender appeals will be more effective if, say, the Chieu Hoi program is improved, and the PAVN is already told about it by leaflet before he leaves the North, and told about it again after he arrives South, and if his ex-comrades speak well about it to him over the radio, and if the local people are told to help him, and if the psychological sting is taken out of surrender, and so on. In a word, in view of the PAVN soldier's multifarious concerns and opinions, experiences and inclinations, only the proper appeals mix can hope to be effective.

CONTINUITY AND VOLUME

Even though it does not specifically emerge from this particular study, the following observation has its place among the recommendations. No psywar can be fully effective without having continuity--continuity in this case being reiteration plus development of themes. It must also operate in very large volume. Quite clearly, the individual leaflet or broadcast, or the simplistic direct surrender appeal, is as much a thing of the past as are the military tactics of World War II. Orchestration, appeals mixes, and an unprecendented volume and variety of operations, forged together into completely thought-through systems, are in psywar, as in all other military operations, the order of the day.

Appendix A

A PAVN OFFICER

As stated in the Introduction, only two Northern commissioned PAVN officers, both senior lieutenants, have been interviewed by the RAND team. One of them has revealed himself as such a dedicated and "hard-nosed" Communist that it was decided to let him speak here for himself. His story is instructive. No army could wish for a better indoctrinated, more purposeful leader at the company level than this man appears to be.

***

My family lived in the countryside. My wife taught literature in high school.... I was chosen to go South... but if we didn't want to go, they would not force us to do so. If we refused to go, the government would wait for another occasion to send us here.... We were trained for six months.... In the military field, we studied about the organization and equipment of the ARVN, and about the system of defense of the GVN forces. We also studied the five main combat techniques.... The aim of my unit was to form, together with already existing units in Central Vietnam, a Main Force Regional unit to liberate the plains region, and to enlarge the liberated area, so that the rear could supply manpower and materiel. If this could be achieved, it would end to a large extent the reliance of Front units in the area on supplies from the North...each company received 30,000 piasters to buy rice from the people in case we were ambushed or got lost on our way South.... On our way South, when we were in Laotian territory... we were informed that our path in Thua Thien Province was blocked by a helicopter troop landing. So we had to stay where we were for ten days....

In my case, when I went home to visit my family prior to my departure from the North, I told them only that I was going to go far away on a mission; I was not allowed to tell them that I was going South.... My family assumed that I was going abroad to study.... When I started to operate, I went down to Phuoc An and Phuoc Hiep where the situation was exactly as I had studied in the North. After we had liberated some strategic hamlets in this area, I talked to the population to find out about the situation there. The people told me that before

they were liberated, they didn't enjoy any freedom of movement, they were under the tight control of the village councils, they didn't have enough to eat (rice mixed with corn or manioc) and they lacked salt. Generally speaking, the areas I visited in the South were as they had been described to me in the North.... Generally speaking, there was no conflict between the regroupees and us. We considered each other as coming from the same region. However, there were some men in the unit who, because of their temperament, didn't get along well with the regroupees. Thus, there were some conflicts of personality which disrupted unity, but these conflicts were straightened out and unity was re-established.... No one in my company had a radio. The battalion had one. My company had just arrived in the South, and none of us had any money to buy radios.... When I was in the North I learned that the GVN Chieu Hoi program tried to lure the Front fighters into rallying by using the prospect of an easy life as a bait. We were told that in a Revolutionary situation we would lack food and we would encounter many difficulties in carrying out our mission. We were warned that we should not let ourselves be won over by the GVN. We were told that when one is unhappy and one sees happiness on the other side, one would naturally want to be happy also, but we were warned against falling for the GVN bait....

My first combat experience in the South was an ambush near the route leading from Tam Ky to Duc Phu. We destroyed two ARVN companies; we captured 24 ARVN soldiers; the rest fled in the mountains or were killed in the fighting. After this attack we rested and consolidated our ranks.... (The lieutenant then reported on four more engagements.).... We were told that we would have to behave nicely toward the people, that we would have to observe the "three togetherness rules": help the people, educate, and indoctrinate them, and that we should not threaten them.... Through my experiences I observed that the morale of the ARVN was rather low and that their fighting capability was not good.... When we captured 24 ARVN, we tied them and brought them back to our area to interrogate them.... When we were through with our interrogation we gathered the people for a meeting and then released them.... We didn't mistreat them. They ate the same food as we. We tore our hammocks in half to give to them....

The people were very happy over our victory, because from then on they could work in peace. After the attack they gave us eggs, and chickens, and milk to the wounded.... Six fighters were killed and eleven were wounded.... Since our first combat experience was a success, we were all very enthusiastic. We were encouraged by our victory and tried our best to achieve our mission and to overcome difficulties.... Nobody in my company defected. However,

one fighter from the 3rd Company defected, taking his weapons with him to rally to the GVN.... Since he was the only fighter to defect, his defection didn't have any effect on the other fighters.... Generally speaking, the ARVN operations in my area didn't cause any damage to the Front troops. Let me give you an example. The ARVN operation in Phuong Sa Dong didn't achieve anything. At the time they came, we were still studying and resting, and we didn't intend to fight. They clashed with small combat units (squad size) and three-man cells. After clashing with these small units, they turned around to go back to the GVN area....

...The Militia and SDC are very weak. When the Front was still in the phase of guerrilla warfare, our targets were the SDC and the Militia. However, starting in July 1964, the morale and fighting capability of the Militia and the SDC were considered by our units as not worth our attention. Starting in July 1964, our targets were the ARVN. We concentrated our attacks on ARVN military and armored units, and on the commanding agencies of the ARVN. If we could defeat these, the Militia and SDC would disintegrate by themselves. We had been proven right in this case. After we had destroyed Viet An outpost, we went in the surrounding hamlets and discovered that all the Militiamen had fled from the village. According to the documents which we captured, there was from one squad to 20 Militiamen in each hamlet. But when we transported our war booty through the village there were no Militiamen left. We met with no resistance.... When we were shelled at Viet An, two other fighters and I were wounded. I was carried away. However, we were ambushed by the ARVN reinforcing unit. It would have taken the stretcher bearers about six hours to transport me from Viet An to the dispensary. We had been on our way for about three hours when we ran into the ARVN ambush. The laborers got scared and abandoned me to run away. The ARVN captured me... according to the Front policy, all dead and wounded should be carried from the battlefield, because all fighters struggle for the same goal and the same ideal. In my case, after I was wounded I was bandaged and then transported toward the dispensary. We had walked for about 5 kilometers when we ran into the ARVN ambush. I was transported by laborers. When we fell into the ambush and were fired on with machine guns, the laborers got scared and left me behind. If I had been carried by my unit or by the guerrillas, they would have carried me away, no matter what....

The capability and the strength of our troops at the present time enable us to enter this new phase of the war.... To replace the losses we recruit the youths in the areas which we liberate.... We only recruit the people who volunteer to join our ranks. After we liberate an area,

we explain to the people the aim of our struggle. Those who want to join are accepted into our ranks. We don't force people to join our movement.... We make propaganda, indoctrinate, and educate the people in their duty in the face of the present situation...in areas that have been newly liberated, the people don't know anything about the Front policy. Therefore, first of all, we have to explain to them our policy. When they understand our policy and volunteer to join, then we recruit them....

Naturally life in the Front is much harder than life in the ARVN or life during a period of peace.... While I was still in the North... I lived with my family and I enjoyed holidays. In the Front, because we were carrying out our duty to liberate the nation and the country, we had to endure hardships. However, these hardships were necessary if we wanted to restore peace and ensure our own and the people's future happiness.... In this struggle the people have to endure hardships, let alone us fighters. We knew that war meant hardships. Take the case of the ARVN, for example. They have airplanes, modern weapons, and adequate equipment, and they get paid well. However, when they go on operations they have to endure hardships all the same.... The Front fighters don't get paid, but we feel that our active life requires all these hardships....We go ahead with our mission because we will be happy only when our mission is completed.... I joined the Party in 1954 while I was still in the North. After I had...learned about Communism, which brought a plentiful life, equality, freedom, and social justice to the people and which treated the people in a humanitarian way and valued them as individuals, I volunteered to join the Party.... In the battle of Dien Bien Phu I was a squad leader.... The Front is planning to have another Dien Bien Phu in the South...our plan is "to liberate the countryside and to encircle the cities." Our operations prior to my capture were to disrupt communication facilities, such as the communication lines between Da Nang and Tam Ky, Da Nang and Hoi An, and Da Nang and Hue. We will completely cut off the communication lines between these centers. Then we will attack and capture some small cities or district capitals so as to enlarge the rear area which will supply us with food and manpower. We have passed from guerrilla warfare to mobile and positional warfare. On the basis of these accomplishments we will build up our force and it seems likely that we will have the capability to stage another Dien Bien Phu in the South.... One cannot predict either the time or the location of such an operation.... But I'm sure that if and when this happens, the attack would be aimed at large military installations, such as Da Nang or Bien Hoa.... I heard that this year will be a key and decisive phase in the war.... A key phase means that there is a complete change in the

situation, i.e., from stalemate to offensive.... If the Front can occupy the center, South Vietnam will be cut in half.... The delta in South Vietnam is a flat region where ARVN heavy equipment can maneuver easily and where air operations can be more effective.... The Front doesn't have the capability as yet to occupy the delta because of the ARVN air operations and heavy equipment.... Therefore, the Front operations in the South are only designed to immobilize the ARVN.... Before, we attacked in battalion strength at most, but now we attack in regiment strength. We will expand our forces. We will have more and bigger units at our disposal.... I think that the Front will be able to achieve victory. The aim of the Americans in landing troops in the South is to conduct a swift offensive to achieve a swift victory. However, our motto is "use weakness to defeat strength, use rudimentary weapons to defeat modern weapons, and use a drawn-out struggle to defeat a swift offensive." No matter how many troops the Americans land in South Vietnam to conduct their swift offensive, we will drag out this war and cause them to get bogged down. If necessary, we will drag out this war for ten or twenty more years....

The man who rallied could not endure the hardships in the Front. His level of self-enlightenment was low. He could only see his immediate interests but not his future interests.... The other men had a higher level of self-enlightenment and understanding. They could distinguish between their immediate and future interests. This is why they didn't do such a thing. If the rallier were captured...nothing would be done to his family because they were not the ones who committed the error. The rallier was solely responsible for his action. If he were captured he would be subjected to a thought reform course and then he would be reassigned to his unit.... When he first arrived in the South...we didn't have enough rice and salt, and the fighters were rather discouraged and unenthusiastic about their mission. Later on, when we started to operate in the plain region, we had enough to eat and we began to recover our strength. After our victory at Dat Do, the fighters were very enthusiastic about their mission. Because of our high morale we were able to defeat the ARVN on Hill 159 in spite of all the difficulties we encountered....

At first the people in the countryside didn't understand our policy and they were very afraid of us. But as we stayed in their villages they got to understand us more through our daily activities, and their fear disappeared. They became closer to us, and confided in us.... Even if Hanoi stopped sending arms, supplies, and men to the Front, the Front would still be able to win because the Front responds to the aspirations of the people. I admit that

the GVN is stronger than the Front militarily, but the GVN doesn't have the support of the people. In many instances the GVN actions go counter to the people's aspirations. Let me give you an example: U.S. aid. The GVN says American aid is designed to assist the people in the countryside. But I've seen that the peasants, generally speaking, have not benefited at all from American aid. The U.S.A. gives more military than economic aid to the GVN. If the GVN wants to win the support of the people, it should be strong and stable to lead the Revolution toward its success. However, the GVN is unstable. One government after another is overthrown. No government has been strong and stable enough to lead the Revolution....

...I have found out that the Americans haven't brought any civilization to the South Vietnamese people. During my stay in the hospital following my capture, I read in the newspapers about the increase in prostitution and juvenile delinquency in Saigon and in Da Nang. I also read about the increase in unemployment. Is this civilization? The Americans bring nylon fabrics to the South but the people in the countryside have no need for nylon.... I don't think the Americans have brought any civilization to the South.... The American policy is to bomb the North and they can pursue it. The bombings in the North will neither end the war nor intensify the war. The bombings will not draw Red China into the conflict...no matter how strong the American actions are, the Front will drag out this war.... I personally do not want Red China to send troops here to help the Front.... because if Red China sent troops here, the war would turn into a Third World War. And if World War III broke out it would be a nuclear war, Vietnam would be a desert and the Vietnamese nation would be annihilated.... We are confident that we will win. No matter how rich and powerful the Americans are, they will not be able to defeat the Revolution because we will drag out this war. We are not going to fall in their trap and conduct a big and swift offensive....

Appendix B

IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVIEWEES

Number	Age	Rank or Position*	Attached to**	Arrived in South	Captured or Rallied	Service in South--Months	Date of Joining Army	POW or Rallier
1	23	ASL	MF	Feb 64	Jun 64	4	Feb 61	R
2	21	Sgt/ASL	MF	Sep 63	Jul 64	10	Nov 60	POW
3	26	Pvt	MF	Oct 63	Jul 64	9	Feb 63	POW
4	21	Pvt	MF	Sep 64	Nov 64	2	Jun 63	POW
5	19	Pvt	MF	Nov 64	Dec 64	1	Aug 63	POW
6	21	PFC	MF	Aug 64	Nov 64	3	Apr 62	POW
7	29	Sgt/SL	MF	Jul 64	Nov 64	5	Feb 61	POW
8	24	Pvt	MF	Oct 64	Nov 64	1	Feb 62	POW
9	21	Pvt	MF	Jun 64	Oct 64	4	Mar 64	R
10	23	Pvt	MF	Oct 64	Dec 64	2	Mar 64	POW
11	23	SL	MF	Dec 64	Jan 65	1	Feb 62	POW
12	21	Pvt	MF	Aug 64	Nov 64	3	Apr 63	POW
13	19	Pvt	PAVN	Feb 65	Mar 65	1	Feb 64	R
14	22	Sgt	MF	Dec 64	Jan 65	1	Feb 62	POW
15	24	Sgt	MF	Feb 64	Sep 64	7	Mar 59	POW
16	24	Pvt	MF	Mar 64	Apr 65	13	Feb 63	POW
17	19	Pvt	MF	Dec 64	Apr 65	4	Feb 64	POW
18	23	Pvt	MF	Apr 64	Apr 65	12	Apr 63	POW
19	23	Pvt	MF	Feb 65	Apr 65	2	1963	POW
20	21	Pvt	MF	May 65	Jun 65	1	Apr 65	POW
21	31	SLt	MF	Apr 64	Feb 65	10	1952	POW
22	31	PL	PAVN	May 65	May 65	0	Mar 60	POW
23	27	Sgt	PAVN	May 65	May 65	0	Apr 62	POW
24	20	Sgt	PAVN	May 65	May 65	0	Apr 63	POW

For footnotes, see p. 62

Appendix B -- continued

Number	Age	Rank or Position*	Attached to**	Arrived in South	Captured or Rallied	Service South-- Months	Date of Joining Army	POW or Rallier
25	28	ASL	MF	Jan 65	May 65	4	Jun 64	POW
26	20	Pvt	MF	Feb 65	May 65	3	Feb 64	POW
27	23	Pvt	Local forces (Dia Phuong Quan)	May 65	May 65	0	Oct 63	POW
28	20	APL	PAVN	Feb 65	Jul 65	5	Jun 63	POW
29	18	Pvt	PAVN	May 65	Sep 65	4	Nov 64	POW
30	21	Sgt/SL in Transp. unit	PAVN	May 65	Sep 65	4	Apr 62	R
31	20	Pvt	PAVN	Jan 65	Jul 65	6	Oct 63	R
32	27	Cook	PAVN	Oct 65	Oct 65	0	Apr 65	R
33	21	Pvt	PAVN	Oct 65	Oct 65	0	Apr 65	R
34	23	Pvt	PAVN	Sep 65	Oct 65	1	Oct 63	POW
35	19	Pvt	PAVN	Sep 65	Nov 65	2	May 65	POW
36	29	Pvt	PAVN	Aug 65	Nov 65	3	May 65	POW
37	19	Pvt	PAVN	Sep 65	Nov 65	2	Feb 65	POW
38	27	Cook	PAVN	Sep 65	Nov 65	2	Oct 63	POW
39	24	Pvt	PAVN	Oct 65	Nov 65	1	Apr 64	POW
40	35	SLt	PAVN	Sep 65	Nov 65	2	1950	R

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*ASL -- Assistant Squad Leader
SL -- Squad Leader
PL -- Platoon Leader
APL -- Assistant Platoon Leader

**MF -- Main Force
PAVN -- People's Army of Vietnam