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## AREA HANDBOOK for SOUTH VIETNAM (U)

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**AREA HANDBOOK  
for  
SOUTH VIETNAM (U)**

Research and writing were completed on  
April 15, 1966

April 1967

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**FOREWORD**

The contents of this document represent the views of Foreign Area Studies of The American University.

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## SOUTH VIETNAM

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## CHAPTER 28 (S)

### SUBVERSION (U)

(U) Since emerging as a separate national entity in mid-1954, South Vietnam has been continuously confronted with grave subversive threats. During the first 2 years of its existence the central government's effective authority extended little beyond Saigon, and even the capital city's municipal government and police were in the hands of hostile organized racketeers. Two sizable areas in the Mekong Delta were virtually ruled by religious sects (the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao) (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety). It was only after these dangerous contenders for state power had been eliminated that the government was free to turn to the Communist challenge which was being carefully prepared in the countryside.

(U) By 1960, Viet Cong insurgency had become the principal threat to national security. Supported, directed and controlled by North Vietnam since the mid-1950's, the insurgents sought to infiltrate every sector of South Vietnamese society and undermine Saigon's authority by various means, including armed attack, assassination, kidnaping, intimidation, terrorist activity, agitation and propaganda. They attempted to capitalize on all popular grievances against the government to bring about physical insecurity and political confusion. Politically, their avowed objective was to establish a neutralist coalition regime, which they regarded as an intermediate step toward the eventual communization of South Vietnam.

(U) Ostensibly, the Viet Cong insurgents operated within the framework of the self-styled National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV)—a Communist front designed to give the insurgency the facade of a spontaneous popular indigenous movement. Overwhelming evidence shows, however, that the real force behind the insurgents and the National Front is the so-called Vietnamese People's Revolution Party, which, in effect, is the southern branch of the ruling Communist Party in the North, commonly referred to as the Lao Dong.

(U) Viet Cong strength is largely rural based. Partly because of Saigon's long indifference to peasant problems and partly because of the government's failure to protect the rural population from Com-

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minist terrorists, the insurgents, usually posing as self-appointed patriots and crusaders, were able to spread their influence, almost by default, in many parts of the countryside. By mid-1966, however, the Viet Cong's initial advantage in the rural areas seemed to be waning. In the latter half of the 1950's they were able to score propaganda victories, almost unchallenged, by making luring promises without having to assume the responsibility of fulfilling them. They were also able to extend their influence steadily and bring a large portion of South Vietnamese territory under their control. In the early 1960's, however, they were increasingly plagued by the problem of satisfying the socioeconomic needs of the people within their areas. The list of unfulfilled promises lengthened, and by late 1965 there were indications that some of the insurgents themselves were also disillusioned with the growing prospect of a protracted conflict—possibly a 20-year war—contrary to their earlier optimistic prediction of a certain Communist victory by the end of 1965.

(U) Apart from its military operations, the Saigon government began to emphasize, especially after February 1966, socioeconomic means to improve the living conditions of the people, both rural and urban. The government placed high hopes on a comprehensive scheme, officially called the Revolutionary Development Program, to gain trust and confidence of the population. It appeared that this program, if successfully carried out, would materially enhance the government's capability to defeat the Viet Cong insurgents in these nonmilitary fields, which heretofore constituted the weakest link in the overall anti-Communist efforts.

### BACKGROUND

(U) More than a century of active or passive resistance to colonial rule has accustomed the people of South Vietnam, particularly the peasants, to view the central government as an alien authority and to express dissatisfaction with it by conspiracy and violence. Time has been too short, opportunities too infrequent and indoctrination too limited, during the 12 years of independence, for the population as a whole to become accustomed to the use of democratic processes in seeking relief from what they regard as governmental injustices.

(U) The establishment of the Republic of Vietnam south of the seventeenth parallel after the Geneva Agreement of 1954 prevented the Communists from seizing control of the entire country. Before the Agreement the Communists, using the popular themes of anti-colonialism and "national independence," played a dominant role in organizing opposition against the French throughout the country.

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In the North they wrested power from the French, first in rural areas, then in the towns. In the South their agents and guerrillas operated freely in parts of the countryside, but they were unable to consolidate their control and failed to win the principal towns.

(U) The withdrawal of the French and the emergence of the Republic of Vietnam headed by President Ngo brought a shift in the tactics of the Communists. Calling for "unification of Vietnam" and "opposition to foreign intervention," they apparently expected to gain control of South Vietnam by means of a nationwide referendum, proposed in the Agreement, which was to be held in 1956. But the South, contending that inadequate provisions had been made for free discussion of the issues and for impartial supervision of the balloting, declined to participate in the proposed election. The Communists then turned to a militantly subversive campaign against the Republic; United States assistance became a major propaganda target (see ch. 16, Public Information).

(U) President Ngo, during his first 2 years in office, was preoccupied with eliminating the military strength of the religious sects and of the Binh Xuyen, a political and racketeering organization which actually controlled certain sections of the delta region (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety; ch. 27, The Armed Forces). The Communists took advantage of this situation to work in the villages to undermine the government by means which ranged from propaganda to sabotage and terror. They played on the peasants' grievances against the Saigon regime's practice of appointing urban-oriented district and village officials. Many of these officials were Catholics and "northerners" and were more concerned with their self-seeking ventures than with the welfare of the villagers. The Communist insurgents, posing as self-styled patriotic nationalists, were able to sustain and intensify, after mid-1959, a campaign of guerrilla warfare and terrorism in the rural areas of the South. By December 1961 the pace of Viet Cong insurgency became so heightened that President Ngo formally requested more military assistance from the United States (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations; ch. 27, The Armed Forces).

(U) The Communist insurgents, labeled by the South Vietnamese Government as the Viet Cong, were supported and directed by the Hanoi regime. Although most of their lower-level elements were recruited within the South, top echelon personnel consisted mainly of those who had infiltrated from the North. From 1959 through the end of 1961 at least 4,500 agents had joined the Viet Cong in the South. The number of infiltrators for 1962 and 1963 were 5,400 and 4,200, respectively.

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(U) After mid-1963 the insurgency became increasingly widespread, largely because of political instability in Saigon, accompanied by rapid changes in governmental leadership (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics). A change in top leadership more often resulted in personnel shifts involving key positions in both military and civil establishments, usually down to the district level. Thus, the lack of political stability, coupled with the traditional wait-and-see attitude so pronounced on the part of many government officials, contributed to bureaucratic inaction. In some instances, because of insecurity stemming from Viet Cong terror—which in itself was the intended goal for the insurgents—local officials refrained from manifesting initiative. By late 1964 a Viet Cong victory seemed to be imminent. Beginning in early 1965, Saigon's counterinsurgency efforts significantly improved as a result of direct United States military participation in the war (see ch. 27, The Armed Forces). By mid-1966 there were growing indications that the tide of the war had turned in favor of the Saigon regime, and the Viet Cong appeared to be bracing themselves for a prolonged military conflict rather than for a quick victory (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

### ATTITUDES TOWARD SUBVERSION

#### Government Position

(U) Until early 1966 there was no statutory provision designed to cope exclusively with the problem of subversion. Instead the government of Prime Minister Ky, like its predecessors, relied on broad emergency powers in determining what constituted a subversive threat, real or potential. The government's general position was that a threat to national security emanated not only from actual or attempted armed insurgency but also from disruptive activities, including those in the economic and financial realms. Similarly, any attempt to advocate a neutralist political solution for the country was also declared to be contrary to national interests. Thus, a decree issued on July 19, 1965, empowers the government to prosecute before a military court any persons suspected not only of armed insurgency or of professing sympathy for communism or neutralism, but also those charged with official misconduct and such economic crimes as hoarding and speculation. Prime Minister Ky, for example, declared repeatedly that dishonest officials and self-seeking businessmen were even "more dangerous than the Communists" and that they should be punished as "the nation's enemies" (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

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(U) The government also relied on other official decrees promulgated under the Ngo regime. Decree Number 6, of January 11, 1956, for example, provided that "individuals considered dangerous to national defense and common security" might be confined by executive order or obliged to reside in a fixed place under police surveillance. Another legal instrument was Decree Number 13 of February 20, 1956, pertaining to press offenses. Although somewhat liberalized after November 1963, this decree still empowers the government to bring the publication of newspapers under a licensing system. The decree further provides that the printing of misleading statements which could be exploited by subversive elements or could otherwise endanger public security is punishable by imprisonment, heavy fines or by suspension of license. In January 1964, for example, nine dailies were suspended by the authorities on charges of violating internal security. Still another instance was the suspension in March 1964 of two Saigon dailies charged with carrying reports likely to harm national defense plans.

(U) During President Ngo's rule the actions of all dissidents and political opponents were regarded as potentially subversive in intent, and a meaningful distinction between legal political opposition and subversive activities was not readily apparent. Prime Minister Ky's regime, however, has shown a much more permissive attitude toward the political activities of non-Communist elements (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

### Public Attitude

(U) Throughout the course of its history, especially during the long period of Chinese rule, Vietnam has known much of secret societies, conspiracies and rebellions. That background and several decades of experience in clandestine political activity under French colonial rule familiarized the people with the art of radical political activities and subversion. During this period persons accused of subversion or political crimes were usually regarded as nationalists. With this heritage and probably heavily influenced by the official tendency under President Ngo's regime to brand even non-Communist oppositionists as potentially subversive, the South Vietnamese today generally appear to attach no particular stigma to the person accused or convicted of subversion. Moreover, to many of the people in early 1966 the sense of belonging to the Saigon regime was not firm enough to arouse feelings of shame or guilt in connection with subversion. In addition, records of penal servitude on grounds of political crime or participation in attempts to overthrow the government through

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violent means are regarded in South Vietnam less as a political liability than as an asset.

(U) In mid-1966 the armed forces, as a group, appeared to be most militantly anti-Communist, although there was evidence of some communist infiltration within the ranks. Other strongly anti-Communist elements were the Catholic refugees from North Vietnam, numbering about 700,000. Similarly, small numbers of Buddhist refugees from the North, commonly known in Saigon as the Vinh Nghiem group, were fiercely anti-Communist; this group was led by Thich Tam Giac, a leading figure within the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and in 1966 head of the Buddhist chaplaincy in the armed forces. The adherents of the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao sects were also regarded as anti-Communists, but their main interest in opposing the Viet Cong appeared to have their desire to preserve their regional autonomy. In this sense, the attitude of the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao toward the Viet Cong is largely defensive and manifests little of the aggressive characteristics shown by the Catholics (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

### SUBVERSIVE GROUPS

#### Viet Cong Insurgents

(U) In mid-1966 the Viet Cong was the principal subversive group, operating, superficially at least, within the framework of the self-styled National Front of the Liberation of South Vietnam, supported, directed and controlled by Communist North Vietnam. The Viet Cong's antecedents go back to the founding of the Indochinese Communist movement in South China in 1925 under the direction of Soviet-trained Nguyen Ai Quoc, later known as Ho Chi Minh. In 1936, after a decade underground in Indochina, the movement emerged, during the "Popular Front" period in France, as a legal Communist party. Pursuing the Communist "united front" policy of the time, the party grew in size and attracted some support from non-Communist groups. It was suppressed again on the eve of World War II, and most of its leaders fled to South China. It continued its clandestine activity under the unpopular Vichy regime, however, and by 1941 it was the dominant force in the Vietnam Independence League (Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh—popularly, the Viet Minh), which it had been largely instrumental in organizing.

(U) The Communist-led Viet Minh, representing itself as a coalition of nationalist groups, soon gained enough strength to mount

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harassing guerrilla attacks against both the French and the Japanese throughout Vietnam, although in the South non-Communist nationalist groups were stronger and more active than were the Communists. By mid-August 1945 the Viet Minh had seized power in North Vietnam and had set up a provisional government in Hanoi. Cao Dai, in view of the increasing strength of the Viet Minh, apparently decided that he had no alternative but to abdicate, on August 25, 1945, as Emperor of Vietnam (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Thereafter, the Viet Minh, strengthened with arms left by the evacuating Japanese, led the attack against the French forces sent to reoccupy the country and intensified their organizational activities in South Vietnam—particularly in rural areas where government controls were traditionally weak or lacking.

(U) In an effort to conceal the increasingly evident Communist dominance within the Viet Minh coalition, Hanoi, in February 1951, incorporated the old Viet Minh into a new political coalition organization called the National Popular Front of Vietnam (Lien-Hiep Quoc Dan Viet Nam—commonly referred to as the Lien Viet); the Lien Viet, established in May 1946, had a much broader and more inclusive political base than the Viet Minh. In March 1951 the Communist component of the Viet Minh merged into the Vietnam Workers' Party (Dang Lao Dong Viet Nam—better known as the Lao Dong), the ruling Communist Party in the North, descended directly from the old Indochinese Communist Party. In order to play down its own Communist character, the Lao Dong itself became a member of the Lien Viet.

(U) Having signed the Geneva Agreement of 1954, which, in effect, partitioned Vietnam into two zones at the seventeenth parallel, the Communist regime focused its propaganda on national unification, confident that it could win the referendum by which this was to be achieved. Apparently as insurance in case the newly proclaimed Republic of Vietnam refused to participate in a referendum, the Communists proceeded with plans for a military and subversive effort to overthrow President Ngo's administration and seize control of the entire country.

(S) When withdrawing their forces into North Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement, the Communists had left behind caches of arms and ammunition, groups of carefully selected staunch party members and some of their best guerrilla fighters, estimated to total about 10,000 men, who were dispersed to hideouts in remote jungles of the delta and in the mountainous areas along the boundaries with Cambodia and Laos. Driven underground by the authorities in the South,

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they created several front organizations, the most important of which was the South Vietnam Committee for the Protection of World Peace, which attracted a number of intellectuals, including doctors, lawyers, journalists and at least one Buddhist prelate.

(U) Disappointed and somewhat demoralized by the South's refusal to participate in the election scheme, the Communists changed their tactics and devoted the next 2 years mainly to recruitment and reorganization. Many South Vietnamese Communists who had withdrawn with the North Vietnamese forces in 1954 and had completed instruction courses in subversive tactics returned to the South to take up responsible positions in the Communist movement. Peasant morale was generally low, and the shortage of trained and competent administrators created a confused situation in the rural areas that was easy for the Communists to exploit. Organizing cells wherever they could, especially in the villages, they posed as "patriotic liberators" and sought by agitation and propaganda to alienate the people from the government. Their appeals were effective. Living and working with the peasants, their voices were heard above those of the usually aloof functionaries of the distant central government in Saigon.

(S) In 1958, after having received substantial aid in personnel and materiel from the North, the Viet Cong embarked on a campaign of terror and intimidation, accompanied by renewed propaganda for the unification of Vietnam, the removal of the "traitorous Ngo Dinh Diem clique" and the elimination of the "United States imperialists." The strength of the Viet Cong forces of all types had mounted to an estimated 15,000 men, and guerrilla harassment increased in intensity and scale. By 1960 the Viet Cong were attacking in groups of up to several battalions in strength. Meanwhile, political and military reinforcements infiltrated from the North in increasing numbers, and local recruits were obtained by propaganda, intimidation and kidnaping.

(S) By early 1955, Viet Cong combatants, numbering about 250,000, could be divided into three general categories: full-time guerrillas, part-time guerrillas and village-based activists. Full-time guerrillas—an estimated 90,000 (including slightly more than 11,000 North Vietnamese regulars)—constituted the "main force" of the hard core of the Viet Cong forces. They were organized on a provincial or regional basis into companies and battalions composed of highly disciplined, well-trained, seasoned, politically indoctrinated guerrilla fighters. They were commanded by experienced leaders, many of them native to the North. Until late 1964, however, many of the leaders were native to the South, although trained in North Vietnam.

(S) The part-time guerrillas, numbering about 120,000, were or-

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ganized by districts into platoon or company-sized units of 50 or more men each. Provided with small arms, grenades, landmines and explosive charges, they received some training while assembled in hideouts or engaged in guarding cached supplies.

(S) Guerrillas in the third category, estimated to total about 40,000, were village-based activists. Working at their regular occupations during the day, they took part in night missions at the order of the guerrilla leader in their area. A typical village in an area where government control is weak may have had 10, 15 or more of these activists. Their usual arms were knives and machetes, but a village group may have had several submachineguns as well as rifles, grenades and landmines. Viet Cong of this type, notwithstanding their lack of military training and their casual discipline, played an important role. They were the eyes and ears of the provincial and regional groups and frequently their mouthpieces. They identified promising military targets, procured recruits and food supplies by persuasion or intimidation and furnished information on the vulnerability of village defenses and the activities of administrative officials and the security force.

(U) The routine Viet Cong methods of operation included, in the early 1960's, assassination or kidnaping of government officials and civilians, many of them district and village chiefs and other "recalcitrant" local notables. Other Viet Cong activities included the destruction of public health facilities, schools and bridges; the mining of roads and rail lines; the blocking of canals; the cutting of telephone lines; and the theft of such equipment as electric generators, well-drilling rigs and hospital supplies. To obtain food and funds for the maintenance of regular military Viet Cong units, rice was extorted from peasants; "taxes" were exacted from plantations and other enterprises in payment for immunity from sabotage; kidnap victims were held for ransom; and buses were held up and their passengers robbed of money and valuables. Arms and ammunition were obtained in surprise raids on isolated Regional Force (formerly Civil Guard) outposts, weak Popular Force (formerly Self-Defense Corps) units and police stations.

(S) According to official sources, the total number of military and civilian losses from January 1957 to June 1962 alone amounted to 35,000. Since then, civilian losses averaged about 5,000 a year, including 1,500 village chiefs either assassinated or kidnaped during 1964. During the first 4 months of 1965, out of a total of nearly 1,200 civilian casualties, over 400 village leaders were reported to have met a similar fate. (1)

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### National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

(U) The Communist Hanoi regime announced in January 1961 that the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam had been established on December 20, 1960, in South Vietnam by "various forces opposing the fascist Ngo Dinh Diem regime." The announcement came 4 months after the ruling Lao Dong Party had declared its intention to "liberate" the South and also exhorted the South Vietnamese to set up a "broad national united front directed against the United States-Diem clique."

(U) Jean Lacouture, a Far Eastern specialist of *Le Monde* of Paris, in 1966 a visiting member of the faculty of Harvard University, asserted that in March 1960 a group of the old Viet Minh resistance fighters of South Vietnam, identified by Professor Bernard Fall as the Nam-bo (Southern Area) Resistance Veterans Organization, met and called upon "patriots to regroup with a view toward ultimate collective action." He declared that the March 1960 gathering was "in some ways the 'general call' for the creation of the Front, the signal that, coming from the South, was to force the government in the North to assume its responsibility."

(U) On the other hand, George A. Carver, Jr., writing in *Foreign Affairs*, takes the position that the blueprint for the National Front and for the whole future course of the Viet Cong insurgency was adopted by Hanoi's Lao Dong Party, probably in early 1959. According to Carver, there is evidence to show that the proposed plan was submitted to the Lao Dong in early 1959 by Le Duan upon his return to Hanoi from a clandestine tour in the South. The second most important figure in North Vietnam in early 1966, Le Duan directed the Viet Minh resistance in the South from 1949 to 1951.

(S) The National Front, posing as a coalition of groups representing all segments of South Vietnamese society, provides the Communists with a facade covering all facets of Viet Cong activity in South Vietnam, military as well as political. Although the initial announcement establishing the Front stressed its political objectives, shortly thereafter all the insurgent forces in the country allegedly were organized into the "Liberation Army of South Vietnam" and put under its "control." This action completed the fiction that the Front represented an alternative to the government of South Vietnam.

(S) Although carefully avoiding reference to communism in their public pronouncements, Front leaders adhere strictly to Lao Dong policies on all issues. In addition to claiming to be the sole legitimate voice of the South Vietnamese people, it also asserts that it effectively

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controls 75 percent of South Vietnam's territory and more than 70 percent of its population.

(U) The Front's initial announced objectives included: union of all classes, parties, nationalities, religious factions, mass organization and "patriotic" personalities in a struggle to overthrow the rule of the "United States imperialists and of the Diem clique"; unification of all "patriotic forces" in South Vietnam; and achievement of "independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and national reunification." In early 1966 these objectives continued in effect, except the term "Diem clique" was changed to "Thieu-Ky clique."

(U) National Front leaders, working clandestinely in the South, try to organize demonstrations, prepare and covertly distribute leaflets and posters and display banners. They foment strikes, particularly in public transportation and other vital economic areas, and encourage members of the armed forces to defect and join the "people's ranks." Following the Communist line on foreign policy questions, they call for cancellation of all "unequal treaties" with foreign countries; establishment of diplomatic relations with all countries in accordance with the "peaceful coexistence" theme of the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian Nations; rejection of political alliances or blocs; and acceptance of economic aid from any country, provided no political conditions are attached (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

(S) Subsidiary associations were formed to voice opinions as new public issues arose. By early 1966 at least 40 functional organizations had been formed with the objective of creating the impression that the Front had gained broad acceptance among representative elements of the population. Among these organizations were groups of workers, writers and artists, youths, women, journalists and veterans, as well as a South Vietnamese "Red Cross." Ethnic and religious organizations were also formed to enhance the plausibility of a mass appeal. The Front subsidiaries send representatives to congresses and conferences in Communist-bloc countries where they commonly make addresses and hold press conferences denouncing United States "imperialism" and "armed intervention" against the "liberation efforts of the people of South Vietnam" (see table 1). (2)

(S) The Front's well-organized news and propaganda organ is the Liberation News Agency, which includes the Liberation Radio. The latter does not identify its place of operation and most likely operates clandestinely from several sites in South Vietnam. Radio Hanoi and the Vietnam News Agency, also of Hanoi, cooperate closely with the National Front. The Front's radio and news output is so similar in quality and orientation to that issued by the Hanoi

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agencies as to suggest that they have a common origin (see ch. 16, Public Information). (2)

(U) The first congress of the Front, according to the Liberation Radio, was held in the last half of February 1962 at an unnamed place, presumably in North Vietnam. It issued a policy statement reiterating the current Communist themes in the area and declared its intention to replace the National Assembly of South Vietnam with a new parliament which would prepare a new constitution. It harshly condemned the United States and asserted that it was ready to accept any group which would join in the struggle against the "United States imperialists and their agents." It proclaimed friendship with Laos and Cambodia and support for them in opposition to all "schemes, acts of sabotage and aggression by the United States imperialists and their henchmen." The congress also declared that the Front and its armed forces would not encroach upon the territories of Cambodia and Laos.

(S) The congress, according to the Liberation Radio, elected a Central Committee of the National Front, to be composed of 52 members. The Communist apparently experienced great difficulty in securing a sufficient number of the right type of people to fill all of these

*Table 1 (S). Organizations Associated With "The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam," Early 1966 (U)*

Type of Organization	Organization*
General-----	Committee for the Protection of World Peace Committee for the Peace and Amelioration of South Vietnam Liberation News Agency (includes Liberation Radio) Liberation Peasants Association (Liberation Agricultural Association) Liberation Red Cross Liberation Women's Association Saigon Cho Lon Peace Committee
Ethnic-----	Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee for Solidarity with the Latin American People Highland People's Autonomy Movement Vietnamese Nationals of Chinese Origin
Military-----	Association of Former Resistants Association of the Families of Patriotic Soldiers Council of Heroic Disabled Servicemen Group of Fighters for Peace, Reunification and Independence of the Vietnamese Fatherland—Patriotic Servicemen in the Ranks of the US-Dier Army

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*Table 1 (S). Organizations Associated With "The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam," Early 1966 (U)—Continued*

Type of Organization	Organization*
Military-----	Group of Soldiers Who Have Returned to the People Liberation Army and Popular Armed Forces South Vietnam Veterans Association
Political-----	Democratic Party People's Revolutionary Party Radical Socialist Party
Professional-----	Association of Writers and Artists of the Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh Area Democratic Lawyers Association Industrialists and Businessmen Against the US- Diemists Liberation Federation of Trade Unions Liberation Writers and Artists Association Military and Civil Medical Council
Religious-----	Patriotic and Democratic Journalists Association Association for the Improvement of Morality (of the Hoa Hao Sect) Khmer Buddhist Research Institute of South Vietnam Patriotic Khmer Monks Solidarity Association Reformed Cao Dai Sect South Vietnam Patriotic Buddhists Association
Youth and Education---	Association of Patriotic Teachers of the Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh Area Association of Patriotic Teachers of the Western Region of South Vietnam Liberation Students and Pupils Association Liberation Youth Association Patriotic and Peace-Loving Boys and Girls Group People's Liberation Youth Group South Vietnam Patriotic Teachers Association

\*Many of these groups exist only on paper. Some use names of bona fide organizations without permission; others may be totally fictitious. (2)

top public posts, since the published list actually contained only 31 names, most of them relatively unknown even in South Vietnam. The Front claimed that the meeting at which the Central Committee was elected was "truly representative of the people" and well attended. Actually, fewer than 200 people were known to have been present.

(S) The second Central Committee was announced in January 1964, with only 41 members. Of the original 31 listed on the first Committee, only about half were retained. In early 1966 the chairman of the Central Committee was Nguyen Huu Tho, a lawyer with a long history of activity in Communist-front causes. Since August 1954

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he has been vice chairman of the "Movement for the Defense of Peace," an organization which Tho has claimed to be the forerunner of the National Front.

(S) The six vice chairman of the Central Committee were Huynh Tan Phat (who also serves as Secretary General), Phung Van Cung, Thom Me The Nhem, Tran Nam Trung, Vo Chi Cong and Y Binh Aleo. Front biographies contain the following notes concerning the background of these individuals. Huynh Tan Phat is an architect who has been active in the Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh area throughout most of his revolutionary career, which began in his student days in the 1930's. He is also secretary general of the so-called Democratic Party of South Vietnam (see ch. 32, Biographies of Key Personalities).

(S) Phung Van Cung, a physician, is chairman of the Committee for Protection of World Peace and president of the Liberation Red Cross, two organizations affiliated with the Front. Thom Me The Nhem, a Buddhist priest most of his life, has been most active among Buddhists of Khmer nationality. Tran Nam Trung is a representative of the "Liberation Army of South Vietnam" and holds the post of chairman of the Military Committee of the Central Committee. Vo Chi Cong, a "seasoned revolutionary" is a member of the "People's Revolutionary Party" and functions as its representative within the Front. Y Binh Aleo, an influential Rhade tribesman from Darlac Province, is chairman of the Front-associated Highland Peoples Autonomy Movement. He once was an officer in the French Colonial Army and has been active in tribal independence movements for some years, serving as a Viet Cong commander in Darlac Province since 1962. His rank was identified as brigadier commander in 1963. (3)

(U) In mid-June 1966 a National Front communique announced that the patriotic self-defense forces, as the insurgent units are commonly called by the Communists, would not encroach upon the lives and property of any foreign resident who refrains from working for the "United States-Diem clique." This was the first publicized threat with implications that the foreign residents who refused to support the guerrillas would be regarded by them as legitimate targets for sabotage and terrorist operations.

(U) For external propaganda activities, the National Front was represented by nine "permanent missions" at Algiers, Budapest, Cairo, Djakarta, East Berlin, Havana, Moscow, Peking and Prague. In mid-1966 another mission was also expected to be set up in Pyongyang, North Korea.

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## Vietnamese People's Revolutionary Party

(U) The Vietnamese People's Revolutionary Party (Dang Nhan Dan Cach Man Viet Nam), according to Radio Hanoi, was formed late in December 1961 by a group of "South Vietnamese Marxists-Leninists." It was stated that the new party, operating within the framework of the National Front, was pledged to replace President Ngo's regime with a "People's Democratic Government." The party called upon the workers, peasants, soldiers, officers and the members of President Ngo's administration to work toward this goal. The announcement was the first public admission from the North that the guerrilla campaign against the Republic was other than a spontaneous uprising of South Vietnamese patriots.

(U) There is enough evidence to show that the new party was created by Hanoi as the primary instrument for controlling the unwieldy coalition of the National Front. The action parallels that taken by the Hanoi Communists in 1951 when the Lao Dong Party was formed in the North to take firm control of the similarly unwieldy Lien Viet coalition.

(U) In early 1966 there were indications that in both political and military matters, the People's Revolutionary Party had been exercising the ultimate power of control and leadership. The party was in effect the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party. This fact was brought to light in May 1962 in a captured Viet Cong document from the Ba Xuyen provincial committee of the Lao Dong Party in the Mekong Delta to the party's district committees concerning formation of the People's Revolutionary Party. The instruction, dated December 7, 1961, reads in part:

The People's Revolutionary Party has only the appearance of an independent existence; actually, our party is nothing but the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam (Viet-Minh Communist Party), unified from North to South, under the direction of the central executive committee of the party, the chief of which is President Ho. . . . During these explanations, take care to keep this strictly secret, especially in South Vietnam, so that the enemy does not perceive our purpose. . . . Do not put these explanations in party bulletins . . . .

Another Viet Cong document seized in Chuong Thien Province, also in the delta region, in November 1964 stated that ". . . we should realize that our country is one country, that the Vietnamese People's Revolutionary Party and the Vietnam Lao Dong Party are one party. . . . There is nothing different between the two parties."

(U) The leader of the People's Revolutionary Party, variously

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known as Nguyen Van Muoi or Muoi Cuc, is strongly suspected to be a secret member of the Lao Dong's Central Committee. Supreme military authority in South Vietnam, subject to the political control of the Lao Dong Party (Hanoi) and the People's Revolutionary Party, is said to be exercised by Tran Nam Trung, the "representative" of the so-called Liberation Army of South Vietnam and a deputy chairman of the Presidium of the National Front for Liberation. Tran Nam Trung is believed to be in charge of the Military Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party, which is reported to be known to the Saigon authorities also as the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). Several Viet Cong prisoners reportedly have suggested that he was actually Lieutenant General Tran Van Tra, a deputy chief of staff of the North Vietnamese army and an alternate member of the Lao Dong's Central Committee. Another source asserted, in February 1966, that Nguyen Chi Thanh, one of Hanoi's two four-star generals, possibly was the military commander in the South. He is a member of the Political Bureau and of the Secretariat of the Lao Dong Party.

### Potentially Subversive Elements

(S) While there are many non-Communist groups in the country which have grievances against the Saigon government, none of these groups represents a significant organized subversive threat to the central authorities. Since the downfall of President Ngo in November 1963, armed elements of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects which had engaged in insurgent activities against the Ngo regime have been largely conciliated. Most of these elements and their leaders have been incorporated into the military and governmental structure or have ceased their active opposition to Saigon authority. Some minority elements of these sects, particularly the Hoa Hao, reportedly remain antagonistic to the government, and this residual opposition constitutes a nucleus for future potential unrest. (4)

(S) The only identifiable active non-Communist insurgent group, excluding scattered lawless gangs, is the Khmer of Lower Cambodia (Khmer Kampuchea Krom—KKK). This militant organization is located near the Cambodia border in An Giang Province and consists chiefly of predominantly anti-Vietnamese Khmers (Cambodians). Its strength is not great, but it has persistently attempted to arouse irredentist sentiment among all Cambodians living in South Vietnam. Not achieving notable success in this venture, KKK bands have resorted, from time to time, to terrorizing pro-Saigon Cambodians and Vietnamese in the area. These

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bands apparently cross the Cambodian border with considerable freedom, and the Saigon government has claimed that they are receiving support from the Cambodian Government. Contention is also made that their membership includes some Cambodian citizens and possibly even Cambodian military elements. It is not unlikely that the KKK movement has been a target for Viet Cong penetration. (4)

(U) Almost all non-Communist groups are subject to varying degrees of Viet Cong infiltration. For example, according to one source, a recent study of Vietnamese village attitudes suggests that about 10 percent of the total number of villagers were true believers in communism. A veteran Far Eastern correspondent, Robert Guillain, citing what he regarded as the optimistic estimate of a Vietnamese source, calculated that at least 10 percent of the members of the armed forces were clandestine Viet Cong agents. Moreover, according to the correspondent, a Cabinet minister in Prime Minister Ky's government declared that 40 percent of his administrative personnel were Viet Cong. In July 1965, Thich Tam Chau, chairman of the Vien Hoa Dao, stated in a press interview that the Viet Cong had infiltrated every organization in South Vietnam, including the military, the churches, the administration and even the United States military installations.

(U) In their efforts to agitate and infiltrate non-Communist groups, the Viet Cong agents usually followed the tactics of arousing and sharpening a feeling of enmity against the government authorities, by blaming them for whatever grievances the various groups might have. Themes which the Viet Cong sought to exploit included: nationalism; anti-Americanism; land reform based on the recognition of ownership rights for all, except those collaborating with the "United States puppets"; establishment of a neutral South Vietnamese government, ostensibly free of control from the North; promises of autonomy for the *montagnards*; and the encouragement of draft-dodging for the students and youth. Other potential themes were the Buddhist-Catholic frictions, worsening living conditions and civilian agitations for an early end of military rule (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

(U) The determined efforts of the Communists to exploit undercurrents of tension, strife and dissatisfaction wherever found have the unvarying objective of undermining the central government. Recognizing the probable involvement of this pattern in the political disturbances of Hue and Da Nang after mid-March 1966, Lieutenant General Nguyen Huu Co, minister of war and reconstruction, on March 31, 1966, issued a directive announcing that the civilian and military participants in these disturbances were, in effect, aiding the

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Viet Cong. He, in fact, declared the participants in the demonstrations as being involved in "subversive activities."

### GOVERNMENT COUNTERMEASURES

(U) The scope and intensity of Communist activity have been such that the government employs not only the police but also the military and paramilitary forces on counterinsurgency missions. In addition, the government's civilian and military propaganda and information organizations have the overriding objective of generating popular support for the central government against the Viet Cong (see ch. 16, Public Information; ch. 26, Public Order and Safety; ch. 27, The Armed Forces).

#### Under the Ngo Dinh Diem Regime

##### Strategic Hamlets

(U) To reduce the vulnerability of isolated rural communities to Viet Cong terrorism, a program—conceived in mid-1961—was launched in early 1962 to construct special defenses around selected strategically situated hamlets. Under the program, which was supervised by the Department of Interior in cooperation with the Department of Civic Action, villagers in vulnerable localities were concentrated, by persuasion or force when necessary, into these so-called strategic hamlets. In areas that were relatively secure the movement was voluntary, and the concentrations were called "defense hamlets." The scheme served the dual purpose of protecting the peasants from terrorist raids and of isolating the Communist guerrillas from the villages, thus depriving them of food, information and recruits.

(U) The defensive works of the strategic hamlet typically consisted of an inner fence of bamboo spikes and thorn bushes; a moat, the sloping sides of which were planted with mines and traps; and an outer barrier of barbed wire. A short section of the barriers could be moved to permit passage.

(U) Cement, brick or stone watchtowers, manned by members of the local Self-Defense Corps (now known as the Popular Force), commanded good fields of fire in all directions. Arms were also distributed to 100 to 150 selected men in the hamlet. Other special security precautions taken within the strategic hamlets included curfew restrictions, identity cards, checks of the inhabitants to prevent Communist infiltrations, police intervention, fire drills and security force alerts.

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(U) The national government, assisted by the United States aid program, financed the cost of materials and equipment for schools, first-aid stations and lecture halls. It also helped with public works projects, such as the construction and repair of roads, bridges and canals, and provided funds for medicines, fertilizers and seeds. Most of the labor for the defense works and for civic improvements was done by the villagers themselves, without pay (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations).

(U) The Strategic Hamlet Program progressed at a rapid pace, although there were indications that most of the peasants were reluctant to move from their established homes into hastily constructed relocation camps. In many instances, it also appeared that the local authorities were more concerned with complying with Saigon's orders for the speedy construction of hamlets than with the actual problem of local defense. As initially planned, the number of hamlets was to reach 12,000. By November 1963 some 8,500 hamlets had been established, as against 3,240 in October 1962; each hamlet contained an average of about 1,000 persons.

### Civic Action Teams

(U) The Special Commissariat for Civic Action, created in 1955 as an agency of the presidency, was charged primarily with mobilizing popular support for the government's civic programs. After an expansion of its mission to include countersubversive functions, the Commissariat was combined with the Department of Information in 1962 to become the Department of Civic Action (see ch. 13, The Governmental System). Civic action teams were trained in part by army specialists who, in some instances, were aided by United States military advisers. The teams assisted the villagers in carrying out special projects, particularly those in the fields of public health, education, land reform and security. Working closely with the villagers, they were in a position to detect and report on Communist infiltrations.

(U) When first organized the Commissariat's main effort was limited to work among the refugees from North Vietnam who were settling in the Mekong Delta region. By 1962 civic action teams were operating in virtually every province, and about 300 teams were working in the villages of the Central Highlands and Central Lowlands regions after having completed a special 2-month course in preparation for popularizing the Strategic Hamlet Program. These teams, composed of 20 to 30 men each, helped to construct defenses. They were also provided with funds from which they could make small grants to the poor and buy medicines, fertilizers,

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seeds and material for public works projects, such as the construction and repair of roads, bridges or canals. When a guerrilla-infested area was cleared by the security forces, the civic action teams were expected to move in and watch for Communist reinfiltration while they helped the peasants repair combat damage.

### Five-Family Units

(U) In urban areas the government utilized the five-family unit system in which families living in the same neighborhood were organized in groups of five. The head of each was directly responsible to the local administrative authorities for the conduct of the members of his group. An important function of these units was to cooperate with the police in detecting and preventing subversion and other illegal activities.

### Other Measures

(U) Captured Communists and others taken into custody as subversive were given a course of indoctrination at provincial prisons, known as rehabilitation centers, and also at several special centers for the detainment of political offenders, a practice which was still in use in early 1966 (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety).

(U) To counter Communist subversive efforts among tribal peoples of the Central Highlands, government administrators in 1961 received special instructions to respect the customs and views of the *montagnards*, whom the Vietnamese had tended to look down upon as primitive and backward. Army psychological warfare units were assigned to develop programs to cultivate friendship between troops and the *montagnards*, and civic action teams were sent to their villages to win their confidence and support.

(U) An example of the application of subversive countermeasures in an emergency situation was provided following the air attack against the presidential palace on February 27, 1962 (see ch. 14, Political Dynamics). The first step taken was the cancellation of all exit permits issued before the attack in order to prevent the flight of any plotters. Next, all planes and pilots were grounded until loyalty investigations of crewmen were completed. Finally, the Director of Psychological Warfare in the Department of National Defense sent radio instructions to all psychological warfare cadres throughout the country to use every possible means to inform the armed forces and the public of the actual situation and encourage the people to carry on their daily work and be alert for Communist efforts to exploit the situation.

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Since November 1963

(U) After the overthrow of the Ngo regime, the Strategic Hamlet Program was almost immediately subjected to a critical reevaluation. Apart from its unpopularity among most peasants, the program was criticized because of its defensive concept and its deficiencies arising mainly from ineffective official guidance. Many of the hamlets were infiltrated by the Viet Cong, and, as a result, from a total of about 8,500 hamlets, only about 1,500 were regarded as reliable and fulfilling their intended functions.

(U) In December 1963 the provisional government of Major General Duong Van Minh halted the program; in early 1964 a similar type program was continued under Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh. Strategic hamlets were redesignated as new life hamlets, and the Ngo regime's practice of forcing villagers into them was discontinued. Many of the former strategic hamlets were abandoned, and by mid-1965 only about 3,000 new life hamlets existed. Each was served by a so-called new life hamlet cadre team consisting of five to seven specialists paid by the provincial authorities. Trained for 2 weeks and expected to stay in its assigned hamlet from 3 to 4 months, the team was to organize local defense, initiate limited social and economic improvements, help train hamlet councils, screen out Viet Cong infiltrators and issue identification cards to persons over 18 years of age.

(U) After mid-1965, in an effort to counter the mounting Communist insurgency, increased emphasis was placed on social and economic activities which became known interchangeably as Pacification, Civic Action or Rural Reconstruction Programs. These efforts, as under all post-Ngo Dinh Diem regimes, tended to be little more than sporadic ameliorative measures designed to uplift the rural people, hopefully to make them less vulnerable to Viet Cong agitators. Realizing the ever-pressing need for a more systematic and effective nonmilitary counterinsurgency formula, Prime Minister Ky initiated, in February 1966, a new scheme of pacification and rural reconstruction called the Revolutionary Development Program.

## Revolutionary Development Program

(U) Administered in the Department of Revolutionary Development in the Ministry of War and Reconstruction, this program, in mid-1966, was being carried out by some 23,000 "revolutionary development cadres," largely of village origin. After a 13-week training course at Vung Tau in information dissemination techniques, military skills, political matters, basic medical service, civic affairs, intelligence work, economic development and census taking, trainees were assigned,

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in teams comprising 59 to 80 armed men, to specially selected villages. Operating only in those areas regarded as militarily secure, each team was expected to stay in one village for about 13 weeks, with the ultimate aim of winning the trust and affection of its residents to the government side. The teams' functions included initiating locally needed welfare and developmental projects, organizing local paramilitary defense measures, listing local grievances for corrective action and issuing identification cards to the villagers. Unlike the earlier Strategic Hamlet Program, the relocation of villagers was not undertaken under the new program. In essence, these revolutionary development teams were attempting to defeat and uproot the Viet Cong agents through the use of their own methods: building the basis of popular support at the village level by winning the confidence of the peasants. Their mission was to convince the villagers that the Saigon regime recognized their grievances as legitimate and was ready and willing to respond to them; another important objective was to spread the notion that the national government has more to offer than the Viet Cong in terms of peace, spiritual and material welfare and "social justice."

(U) In mid-1966 it appeared that, if successful, the Revolutionary Development Program, operational in only 980 hamlets (out of some 15,000), would materially cut into the Viet Cong capability to exploit rural areas as bases for their operations. Despite some encouraging results it seemed more likely that the fruition of the program would require years rather than weeks or months. Its successful outcome was hampered by such factors as bureaucratic red tape, the continuing need for dedicated and experienced specialists, perennial political instability in Saigon and rapidly rising living costs in both urban and rural areas (see ch. 8, Living Conditions; ch. 13, The Governmental System; ch. 18, Character and Structure of the Economy).

### The Open Arms Program

(U) In early 1966 the government also maintained a program designed to win the allegiance of Viet Cong insurgents. Officially labeled as Chieu Hoi or Open Arms, this concept was first announced in January 1963 by President Ngo. As initially conceived, the Open Arms campaign had three purposes: to encourage defections from the Viet Cong; to weaken the enemy by fomenting dissension, distrust, doubt and suspicion within the insurgents' ranks; and to secure intelligence about the Viet Cong from returnees (*quay-chanh*). Because of the importance attached to this program, a special section, named after it, was added to the former Department of Psychological Warfare, which

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was then renamed, in February 1966, the Department of Information and Open Arms (see ch. 16, Public Information).

(U) Leaflets urging the Communists to defect are scattered over Viet Cong-controlled territory by South Vietnamese and United States aircraft. Messages offering incentives and encouragements to those who turn themselves in to Open Arms' stations located throughout the countryside are transmitted from helicopters equipped with loudspeakers. The returnees are given full amnesty and are placed in one of the 200 camps which are maintained for them. In the camps they receive food and clothing and attend political reeducation courses. After a 4-month stay they are released and usually return to their home villages. Others join the Vietnamese Army or participate in psychological warfare campaigns to induce other Viet Cong members to defect.

(U) According to a Saigon daily, *Song Mai*, of April 13, 1966, a total of 33,503 Viet Cong cadres returned to the government between February 18, 1963, and early April 1966. Of this number, 22,538 went back to their families. During the 8 months from February to October 1965, some 31,000 Viet Cong were reported to have voluntarily defected to the Saigon side; of these, 5,300 were soldiers, and the rest included propaganda agents, couriers, and supporters.

### EVALUATION OF THE SUBVERSIVE THREAT

(C) There is little doubt that the high level of insurgent action of the Viet Cong military forces, coupled with the clandestine activities of Viet Cong agents, poses a strong and continuing threat to the Saigon government. The many vulnerabilities of the country make it a fairly easy prey to persistent Communist attacks on all fronts.

(S) The South Vietnamese terrain is favorable to guerrilla warfare, and the Viet Cong are highly proficient in the art. They have established and expanded, over a long period of time, many fairly secure base areas which in turn have permitted them to exercise continued control over a considerable segment of the rural population. Also, the peasant-based society of the country has proved highly vulnerable to Communist infiltration. Social conditions, including isolated living areas, have made the peasant traditionally antagonistic toward central authority and fairly susceptible to Viet Cong encouragement to support its cause. Also, the inability to distinguish the Communist sympathizer from his non-Communist neighbor at the village level has proved to be an important advantage to local Viet Cong activities. (4)

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(C) Religious and ethnic differences are weaknesses which give the Communists additional opportunities to exploit. The deep-seated antagonism between the Buddhist majority and the Catholic minority has developed into a cleavage of major proportions, and the hostility between the Vietnamese ethnic majority and *montagnards* has also helped the Communists. The long-desired autonomy sought by the *montagnards*, which the central government opposes, has been fully supported by the Viet Cong.

(S) Probably the greatest weakness in the South Vietnam struggle for peace and independence is the political instability which has existed since the fall of President Ngo in 1963. Lacking modern governmental institutions, this young nation is faced with the formidable task of developing a national consciousness under the most adverse conditions. The major problem has been, and continues to be, the finding of some acceptable method of achieving popular support for the central government and to simultaneously arrange for popular participation in the governmental process. The Communists undoubtedly will continue to devote their major efforts to escalating this endemic political unrest into a totally chaotic situation which will hasten the complete disintegration of the Saigon government.

(S) To counterbalance these vulnerabilities only a few factors can be listed. Food and land are relatively plentiful in the country, and under secure conditions they can be further utilized in stabilizing and strengthening the country and the government. Most of the South Vietnamese have common ethnic and linguistic characteristics, and population pressures, except for wartime dislocations, are not great. The pacification tasks undertaken by the government in its counterinsurgency program are well conceived. Trial and error has shown that the counterinsurgency effort must be total—effective security, skillful government administration and positively oriented political and economic developmental programs. However, experience has also demonstrated that successful pacification must be based on a continued physically secure environment which is proving extremely difficult to obtain. (4)

(S) The most significant element of strength and stability in the difficulties facing South Vietnam is the external factor of continued and increasing United States military, economic and political support. Its withdrawal, heavy dilution or neutralization would virtually guarantee the success of the subversive forces working against the country and would quickly bring the country under Communist domination. (4)

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## CHAPTER 29 (S)

### THE ARMED FORCES AND THE NATION (U)

(S) South Vietnam in late 1965 maintained a military establishment of approximately 574,000 officers and men, almost equally divided between the regular armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the paramilitary forces, composed of three well-developed groups. Within the regular forces the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (commonly referred to as ARVN, or the Army) predominated with an estimated strength of nearly 253,000. Naval strength was about 20,000 and the Air Force totaled slightly more than 12,000 men. The paramilitary groups, which supplemented the regular forces, included the Regional Force (formerly Civil Guard) of about 119,000 men, the Popular Force (formerly Self-Defense Corps) of approximately 140,000 and the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) of nearly 24,000. These paramilitary organizations were utilized almost exclusively for regional security, static defense and special counter-insurgency operations. (S)

(S) All components had been provided equipment supplied by the United States, and after 1954 the training in the regular forces, with the assistance of United States advisers, had followed closely American military concepts adapted to accommodate specific Vietnamese capabilities and modified to meet the country's needs in its prolonged struggle to defeat the Communist insurgency within its borders. (S)

(U) Throughout the history of Vietnam the people have regarded their precolonial warriors with great respect, second only to that accorded to their scholars, because of their part in the centuries-long struggle for independence from the Chinese. The people also supported the military expansion southward against their neighbors to the south, the Chams and the Khmers (Cambodians), in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. National holidays commemorate military leaders' successes, and lyric poetry praising war, honor, loyalty and militant Confucian morality has always been a favorite literary form (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

(U) The Army in 1965 was a relatively young army with an increasing number of combat-seasoned officers and men. Many general

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officers were still in their forties and had held a variety of assignments in operational fieldwork. A large proportion of the officers had received commissions after attending Da Lat Military Academy, had been commissioned from officer candidate schools or had received battlefield commissions. Educational requirements were being revised in order that more combat-experienced soldiers and noncommissioned officers could qualify for officer training. Most of the enlisted men were youths who had been enlisted or drafted after 1957 and who had only limited experience in counterinsurgency action against the Viet Cong (a condensed form of the term Viet Nam Cong San, meaning Vietnamese Communists—see Glossary).

(S) Since 1954 the Army has gradually developed from a disension-torn, poorly led, poorly trained force into a well-organized, better-led, cohesive force of appreciable effectiveness. This progress was achieved despite repeated harassments and interruptions in training caused by Viet Cong terrorist campaigns and guerrilla operations, encouraged and materially aided from North Vietnam (see ch. 28, Subversion). Experience in dealing with increasing Viet Cong activity in the early 1960's did much to improve its battle worthiness. United States advisers, however, continued to be hampered in raising the level of training by the shortage of capable Vietnamese officers and by the necessity of fighting a full-scale guerrilla war coincidentally with training. The increase in the counterinsurgency effort and the introduction of United States combat troops served to establish a spirit of mounting confidence within the Army and within the country. (4)

### THE PLACE OF THE MILITARY IN NATIONAL LIFE

#### Heritage

(U) The Vietnamese pride themselves on the courage and fighting ability of their men, and they look back on a long history of bloody wars, generally defensive but sometimes offensive in nature. In the tenth century they expelled the Chinese who had ruled them for nearly 1,000 years and thereafter, except for a later brief period of reasserted Chinese occupation, resisted both Chinese and Mongol invasions (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

(U) The first Vietnamese military academy was established in the mid-thirteenth century. The government at that time had a dual hierarchy of civil and military mandarins under the emperor. Many generals distinguished themselves in successful defensive actions against stronger enemy forces. Vietnamese historians take special

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pride in their country's forces which stopped the formidable Mongol army of Kublai Khan in 1285.

(U) During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Vietnamese engaged in intermittent wars with the Chams and the Khmers, their neighbors to the south who occupied most of the southern part of what is now South Vietnam. Eventually the Vietnamese decisively defeated the Chams, seized their lands and all but exterminated them. The Khmers were also subdued, and Vietnamese control was extended throughout the Mekong Delta.

(U) A cult of military heroes eventually developed; their exploits are celebrated in song and story, and temples have been erected in their memories. These celebrated events include heroic defeats as well as great victories, as in the case of the Trung sisters who led a revolt against the Chinese in the first century A.D. and chose suicide rather than surrender (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The episode has long been a source of inspiration to Vietnamese artists, writers and orators, and it is commemorated annually as an example of self-sacrificing devotion to country.

### Development of Modern Forces

(S) In 1949 the French, faced with the problem of the growing strength of the Viet Minh (see Glossary), altered their previous policy which had frowned on independent indigenous military establishments and formed the first Vietnamese regular military contingents from the Vietnamese auxiliaries then serving with the French Union Forces in Indochina. These early formations contained cadres of French officers and noncommissioned officers, had no units larger than a battalion and were entirely dependent upon the French for logistical and technical support. By 1952 a Vietnamese General Staff had begun to function, and by the end of hostilities in July 1954 the Army numbered about 200,000.

(S) French cadres were withdrawn in 1955 when the Republic of Vietnam was created, but French advisers remained until 1957. In that same year the South Vietnam Air Force was officially established by governmental decree, giving formal recognition to an active air component which had been in existence since 1953. The Civil Guard (redesignated Regional Force in 1964) was created in 1955; the Self-Defense Corps (redesignated Popular Force in 1964) in 1956; and a naval coastal force in 1960. The Civilian Irregular Defense Group emerged shortly after the 1954 armistice and in 1963 was placed under military control. Since 1954 the armed forces have

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undergone an almost complete reorganization with United States equipment and assistance.

### Attitude of the People Toward the Military

(U) The Army suffered severe physical and psychological damage as well as a distinct loss of prestige as a result of its participation in the Indochina War, which culminated in the French defeat in 1954. Many people in South Vietnam considered that those who fought with the French were fighting against independence. In general, those who survived the war and became the basis for the later Army were bitter about this attitude of the people.

(U) The Army's prestige was low, not only because of the defeat of the French but also because the ordinary soldiers, even those from France, had always been looked down on by the French residents of Vietnam, and this attitude was adopted by the Vietnamese middle and upper classes. The relatively rough treatment the peasants received from both warring factions had not endeared the Army to them.

(U) Succeeding governments, which depended on military support for their survival, carried on extensive campaigns to enhance patriotic fervor and to raise the prestige of the Army by identifying its military and political roles with the improvement of national character and the achievement of national aims.

(S) Recognizing that security is the primary requirement in bringing stable conditions to the country, the various governments after 1962 adopted several different programs designed to improve security conditions in rural areas. The earliest of these was the Strategic Hamlet Program which sought to protect villages against Viet Cong attacks by regrouping certain of them for improvement of common defense. Later, a number of civic action and rehabilitation programs were attempted in a continued effort to raise security and economic standards and to repair war damages. Most of these programs involved the Army and were implemented with a minimum of hardship to the rural inhabitants. As a result, the majority of the peasants probably developed a friendlier regard for soldiers. An appreciable segment of the population, however, was still distrustful of the Army, and some peasants were definitely hostile to it.

(U) This is particularly true of the mountain groups (*montagnards*), who are highly resistant to assimilation and show little enthusiasm for any South Vietnamese governmental institutions. However, the outstanding fighting qualities of these people have generally made them highly suitable for service as Special Forces troops, and particular efforts have been made to enlist them in those units

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(see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages; ch. 13, The Governmental System).

(S) The replacement of French forces by the South Vietnamese Army in 1955 had a profound effect on the status of officers. Almost no senior officers or field-grade officers of Vietnamese origin were trained by the French. When the French forces departed, the few trained Vietnamese officers advanced rapidly to the top ranks of the Army. Some officers achieved high prestige among the social elite through personal popularity; others, who achieved high social rank on the basis of high military rank alone, were subject to criticism because of their lack of education and family background.

(S) As the best-trained officers moved into the top ranks of the Army, the lower ranking officers and noncommissioned officers moved into the middle ranks and set the pattern for general acceptability on the part of the middle-class society. There continues to be a social mobility upward, paralleling the advance of officers into the field grades.

(S) The armed forces in general enjoyed a rise in popularity among the urban population after their dominant role in the removal of President Ngo Dinh Diem from office in November 1963, and they continue to be held in fairly high regard. The rural population however, has maintained its usual lack of enthusiasm for any type of central authority. (5)

### POSITION OF THE MILITARY IN GOVERNMENT

(U) The overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem by a military coup d'etat in 1963 projected the military into a position of overall political control which it continued to maintain through early 1966, although no fewer than seven abrupt changes in governmental leadership took place since the overthrow. The previous constitutional position of the armed forces, subordinate to the authority of a civilian president, was initially set aside by the military coup d'etat of November 1963. After June 1965 supreme authority was vested in the Congress of the Armed Forces of South Vietnam (see ch. 13, The Governmental System; ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

(U) The Vietnamese have preferred civilians as a source of national leadership and they feel that they have had good leaders in the historical past. Since its creation as a republic in 1955, however, South Vietnam has been beset with political, economic, social and security problems which have increasingly threatened its national survival. The popular dissatisfaction with President Ngo's regime, and the

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intensification of the Communist insurgency led to the takeover by the military.

(S) Before the seizure of power in 1963 none of the military leaders of the country played an important part in the formulation of national policy. Under President Ngo the military forces were an instrument of rule, but they played almost no part in formulating that rule. After taking over governmental control the military gave evidence of being troubled by factionalism resulting from personal relationships and differences. They took little part in civilian political activities and movements and, as a group, succeeded in retaining their collective strength and unity. With the passage of time this corporate unity may be subject to dilution through the emergence of political alignments when the ruling group moves toward a more civilian type of government.

### INSURGENCY

(U) The end of the Indochina War in 1954 left Communist North Vietnam with a highly developed composite politicomilitary organization, under the direction of Ho Chi Minh, capable of waging war both as a guerrilla underground force and as a conventional ground army. This organization was deployed throughout Vietnam, with about 90,000 military troops occupying portions of South Vietnam. With the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1954, which partitioned the country, most of these troops were regrouped and evacuated to North Vietnam. Nevertheless, Ho Chi Minh left about 10,000 men and caches of arms and equipment behind in hideouts throughout the remote jungles of the Mekong Delta and in the mountainous region north of Saigon as insurance against Communist failure to win the 1956 referendum provided for by the Agreement. The newly formed Republic of Vietnam refused to participate in the referendum, and the stay-behind Communist force, consisting of skilled party functionaries and well-trained guerrilla fighters, became known as the Viet Cong and served as the nucleus of military and subversive efforts to overthrow the government of South Vietnam and seize control of the country (see ch. 28, Subversion).

(U) During 1956 and 1957 the Viet Cong elements devoted most of their time to recruiting and expanding their bases throughout South Vietnam. Many South Vietnamese Communists who had withdrawn with the North Vietnamese forces in 1954 and had completed instruction courses in subversive tactics returned to the South to take up responsible positions in the Communist movement. Military units were strengthened in manpower and equipment, and strong efforts

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were made to exploit the unrest and confusion which accompanied the establishment of the new government of South Vietnam.

(U) Having received substantial increases in men and materiel in 1958, the Viet Cong embarked on a new campaign of terror and intimidation. Their strength mounted to about 15,000, and with relatively small units, they increased the tempo of guerrilla harassment, sabotage and intimidation of additional areas of the country. By 1960 the Viet Cong began attacking in company-sized units and, on occasions, in groups of up to several battalions in strength. Meanwhile, reinforcements infiltrated from the North in increasing numbers, and more local recruits were obtained by propaganda, terror tactics and kidnapping.

(U) By 1962 the Viet Cong numbered close to 80,000 and were divided into three main categories: full-time guerrillas, part-time guerrillas and village activists. The full-time guerrillas, organized into companies and battalions, numbered about 20,000 and constituted the hard core of the Viet Cong forces; the part-time guerrillas, approximating 40,000 in strength, were organized on a district basis into platoons or company-sized units. They were provided with small arms, grenades, landmines and explosive charges and received some training while assembled in hideouts or guarding cached supplies.

(U) The village activists, also with an approximate strength of 20,000, were, in effect, an active reserve in the villages. Working at their regular occupations during the day, they participated in night missions on the orders of the area guerrilla leader. Their usual arms were knives and machetes, but a village group on occasion possessed several submachineguns as well as rifles, grenades and landmines. Viet Cong of this latter type played an important role, identifying lucrative military targets, procuring recruits and food supplies by intimidation or persuasion and furnishing information on the vulnerability of village defenses as well as the activities of local government officials and security forces.

(U) These three groups, which became known as "main force" units, "local" units and guerrillas, steadily intensified the campaign of Communist aggression by stepping up the number of armed attacks and increasing terrorism and sabotage despite vigorous governmental countermeasures.

(U) Between 1963 and 1965 the armed conflict in South Vietnam reached new high levels of intensity. Internal political difficulties in the country's government gave the Viet Cong opportunities which it exploited. Increasingly, it enlarged its scope of activity on a broad basis. In 1964 alone, 436 hamlet chiefs and other government officials

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were killed, and 1,131 were kidnaped. More than 1,350 civilians were killed in bombings and other acts of terror, and at least 8,400 civilians were kidnaped by the Viet Cong. This level of activity continued well into 1965.

(S) By the end of 1963 total Viet Cong personnel in South Vietnam rose to about 30,000, exclusive of local irregulars and part-time guerrillas. Since that time the figure has steadily mounted. Military infiltration from the North continued in growing numbers, and the flow of weapons from North Vietnam and Communist China, particularly those of larger caliber, increased. By the end of 1964, North Vietnam apparently exhausted its reservoir of South Vietnamese who had gone North at the time of partitioning, and it began infiltrating native-born North Vietnamese to bolster the Viet Cong. In 1965 this infiltration began to include regular units from the North Vietnamese Army, and by early 1966 the hard core Viet Cong was estimated to be close to 90,000, reportedly including over 11,000 regular North Vietnamese Army troops organized into about 12 regiments. The number of irregulars, including sympathizers and Communist Party workers supporting the hard core troops, probably has reached 160,000 or more. (2)

### HIGH COMMAND

(U) Pending the promulgation of a permanent constitution, supreme command of the armed forces as a part of the national sovereignty was vested temporarily in the Congress of the Armed Forces, composed of all the general officers of the armed forces, including the four corps commanders, Commander of the Capital Military Region and all division commanders, under the Provisional Government established on June 19, 1965. The Congress of the Armed Forces, in turn, delegated to the National Leadership Committee the exercise of all power and authority over the affairs of the nation, including military (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

(U) The Chairman of the National Leadership Committee acts as Chief of State and, upon recommendation of the Minister of War and Reconstruction and with the approval of the Committee, appoints and promotes all general officers. The Chairman is also empowered to award decorations and grant amnesty; based on the approval of the Congress of the Armed Forces, he also has the authority to declare war, make peace and conclude international agreements. The National Security Council was created to assist and advise the Chief of State in carrying out his duties concerning states of emergency, martial law or actual war in parts or in the whole of the national

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territory. This Council is composed of the Chief of State, the Secretary General of the National Leadership Committee, the Prime Minister, the Minister of War and Reconstruction and the Chief of the Joint General Staff (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

(U) The position and title of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces was not established within the Provisional Government, but the military authority commonly associated with that office is apparently discharged by the Minister of War and Reconstruction within the complex of the Central Executive Committee (Cabinet). Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky as Chairman of the Central Executive Committee acts as Prime Minister and has retained the position of Commander of the Air Force. The Minister of War and Reconstruction, who has broad directive power over defense matters, Major General Nguyen Huu Co, concurrently holds the position of Secretary of Defense and in October 1965 was designated Deputy Prime Minister. Upon this latter appointment he was relieved of the post of Chief of the Joint General Staff, an office which in practice also included the functions of Commander of the Army (see fig. 1).

(U) The Minister of War and Reconstruction has an extensive staff organization through which he directs the defense establishment and reunification efforts of the government. With concurrent control of the office of Secretary of Defense, he has direct control of all aspects of military activities, both administrative and operational.

(U) Directly subordinate to the Minister of War and Reconstruction (and Secretary of Defense) is the Chairman of the Joint General Staff with a Chief of Staff through whom he directs the commanders of the Air Force and Navy as well as the commanders of principal field commands, installations and facilities. The so-called Joint General Staff is in fact an army general staff composed almost entirely of army officers who also perform staff functions for the Navy and Air Force. As in the case of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, the title and position of Commander of the Army is non-existent. The responsibilities of such an office are included for all intents and purposes within those of the Chief of the Joint General Staff.

(U) The Joint General Staff is organized along United States Army staff lines, adjusted and modified to meet the particular requirements of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. There are four deputy chiefs of staff who have supervisory responsibility over the general staff divisions and offices. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, supervises J-1 (personnel) as well as the Staff Judge Advocate and the Adjutant General; the Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, is respon-

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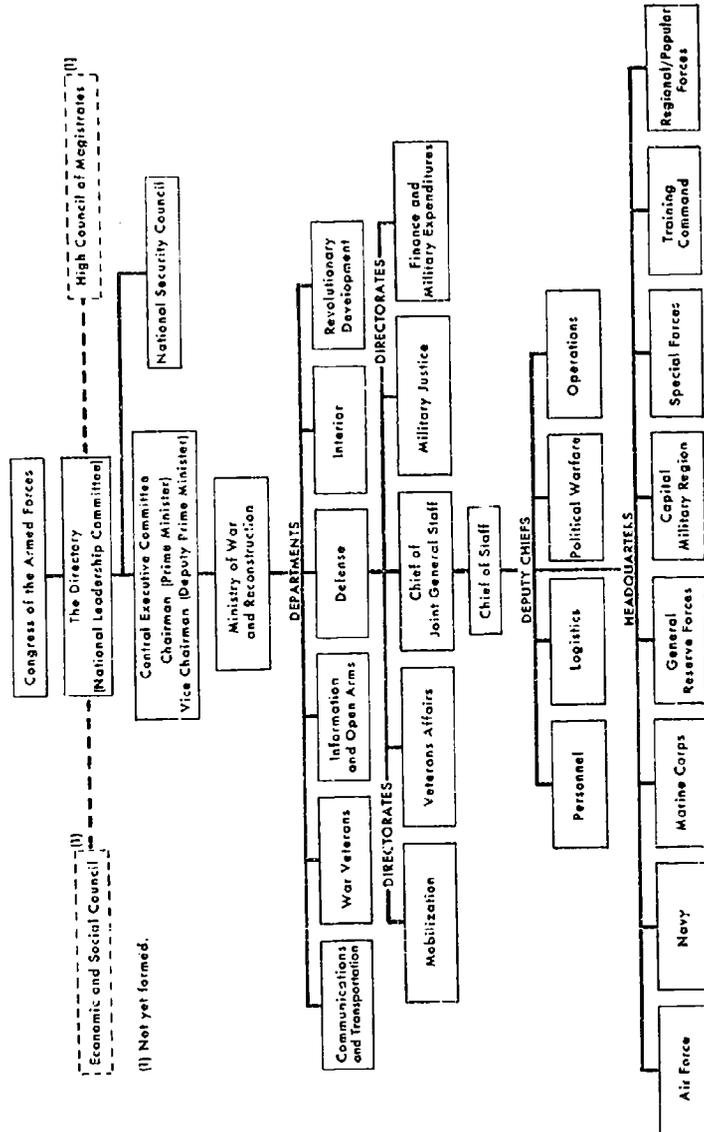


Figure 1 (U). High Command of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, 1966 (U).

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sible for the Logistics Division and the Technical Services; the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, directs J-2 (intelligence), J-3 (operations), J-5 (plans) and J-6 (communications); and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Political Warfare, supervises the work of the Political Warfare Division.

### COMPOSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES

#### Regular

(S) The armed forces consist of three separate services, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The so-called Joint General Staff consists almost entirely of army officers and is in reality an army general staff which, in addition to its army duties, supervises the small naval and air forces. In late 1965 the authorized strength of the regular establishment consisted of 290,530 men: 257,730, ground forces; 20,100, naval forces (including 6,800 marines); and 12,700, air forces. With the gradual stepping up of the war in 1965, further increases in the armed forces were planned and will probably take place concurrently with the buildup of United States military combat forces in the country. (5)

(S) The combat elements of this force were: 10 operational divisions; 1 airborne brigade; 1 general brigade; 2 special forces groups; 1 separate infantry regiment; 34 separate battalions (20 ranger, 10 artillery, 4 infantry); 6 armored cavalry squadrons; 5 battalions of marines; 79 patrol and river craft; 139 amphibious craft; 30 support and service craft; 475 junks; and an air force of 363 light bombers, transports and helicopters in tactical units. In addition, the United States continued to operate several helicopter companies in South Vietnam to transport South Vietnamese troops and supplies and to help evacuate casualties. (5)

(S) These forces had adequate equipment, most of it received from the United States. Each division had one 105-mm howitzer battalion and a 4.2-inch mortar battalion (or two 105-mm howitzer battalions), in addition to three infantry regiments, a pioneer battalion and an armored reconnaissance company. Along with projected strength increases, augmentation of ground force firepower was planned by permanently replacing the divisional mortar battalion with a second 105-mm howitzer battalion, and by creating corps artillery through the addition of five separate 155-mm howitzer battalions. In addition, ground force elements were equipped with 60-mm and 81-mm mortars, rocket launchers, recoilless rifles and 75-mm pack artillery. Armored units organically controlled light tanks, armored cars, scout cars and

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armored personnel carriers. Motor transport ranged from quarter-ton trucks to 6-ton general purpose vehicles. In the Air Force only a limited number of B-57 jet aircraft was being phased into the inventory. The South Vietnamese forces were almost completely dependent on the United States for almost all logistic support, technical maintenance and training. (5, 6)

### Paramilitary

(U) In addition to the regular military forces several types of paramilitary organizations have been established, with the assistance of the Army, to assist in dealing with the special problems created by the Communist insurgency. Organized on a provincial basis, these forces include the Regional Force, the Popular Force and the Civilian Irregular Defense Group.

(S) The Regional Force is an armed, rural constabulary-type organization composed of full-time personnel engaged in counter-insurgency operations at the province level. In 1965 it had an authorized strength of about 119,000 and was organized principally into rifle companies. It was armed with light infantry weapons and was employed jointly with regular armed forces or on separate security missions. The Regional Force was dressed along army lines, received regular army training and supplemented the strength of the Army by taking over the security responsibilities in certain regional areas. (6)

(S) The Popular Force is a nonuniformed part-time force utilized primarily in providing static security and maintaining law and order at village and hamlet level. Members serve in their own villages and receive their training from Regional Force and nearby army units. In 1965 the Popular Force was in the process of absorbing various low-level volunteer groups, such as Combat Youth (sometimes called Combatant Youth), which had sprung up in some areas to bolster the local defense and to carry out limited actions against the Viet Cong. By the end of 1965 the Popular Force had increased in strength to approximately 140,000, organized into rifle squads and platoons. (6)

(S) The third paramilitary organization, the Civilian Irregular Defense Group, was about 24,000 strong in late 1965 and was composed of *montagnards*, formed into special paramilitary groups under control of the South Vietnamese Special Forces. They also received training and assistance from United States Special Forces teams. These special units conduct guerrilla operations against the Viet Cong insurgents in remote areas not under government control and are used for territorial border surveillance. (6)

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(S) The competence and effectiveness of the paramilitary forces has improved with continued regular Vietnamese and United States Army instruction. Improved leadership and close identification with the local population, in addition to sound training, have served to raise these units to a position where they have made a significant contribution to the country's combat strength. (6)

(C) The Coastal Force of the Navy was originally established as a paramilitary group known as the Junk Force. The revitalization of this force under a United States assistance program and its demonstrated value in inland waterway patrol led to its incorporation into the regular Navy in 1965. The Air Force, still evolving as a regular service arm, has not yet developed techniques or procedures to serve as a basis for organizing an Air Force-type paramilitary force.

### MISSIONS

(U) The dual mission of the armed forces is to defend the nation's sovereignty and to eliminate the Communist insurgency within the national territory. Since the withdrawal of the French Union Forces from Vietnam in June 1956, the principal task of the military has been the internal one of ending threats to the security of the state—first from armed religious sects and lawless groups and currently from the Viet Cong (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety; ch. 28, Subversion).

(U) The Army, as the major component of the armed forces, is expected to exert the main effort in offensive operations against the Viet Cong and at the same time to act as a ready reserve in support of the operations of the local Regional Force and Popular Force against the Viet Cong. In addition, elements of the Army perform many important noncombat functions, most of them indirectly related to the improvement of internal security. Most district, provincial and regional chiefs are army officers, and many others are on temporary duty with government civilian agencies. The Army also participates in many aspects of various civic action projects and provides considerable assistance in the overall rural reconstruction program.

(U) The official mission of the Regional Force is to enforce the law and maintain public order and security in rural areas. It is also responsible for assisting other components of the armed forces in the pacification of the national territory.

(U) The local Popular Force groups are charged with helping the authorities in the villages and other administrative units in which they are organized to maintain public order and security. They guard against sabotage and terrorist activities and protect public works. They are also used on emergency relief missions to local areas stricken

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by fire, flood and devastating storms. Despite their wide range of responsibilities their police powers are limited to the apprehension of offenders for handing over to the police (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety).

(S) The Civilian Irregular Defense Group has the broad mission of preserving national security through territorial border surveillance and active anti-Communist operations in areas not under government control. These units are also employed in various unconventional operations along Special Forces lines. (6)

(U) The general mission of the Navy is to provide for the security of the sea approaches to the country and for the protection of the inland waterways in the Mekong Delta. It may also be called upon to furnish water transportation for army personnel and materiel. It is charged with maintaining a marine group capable of conducting operations either alone or in conjunction with army forces. The Navy also is responsible for maintaining coastal and inland waterway counterinsurgency patrols and for assisting, when called upon, customs officials or internal security authorities operating against smugglers or others engaged in illegal activities.

(U) The Air Force, besides providing close air support for ground troops, has additional missions which include attacking guerrilla groups and installations, transporting ground forces and their supplies, airlifting airborne troops, aerial reconnaissance, and search and rescue operations.

### **THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMY**

#### **Manpower**

(S) Late in 1965 the authorized strength of the military establishment was about 574,000, or about 3.5 percent of the total population. This included those on active duty with the paramilitary forces as well as those in the Army, Navy and Air Force. Further increase in both the regular and paramilitary forces have been forecast as a result of the upsurge in Viet Cong activity. It is estimated that there were approximately an additional 4,370,000 fit males between the ages of 15 and 49 in South Vietnam as of January 1, 1965, not all of whom were necessarily under the continuous jurisdiction of the government, because of Viet Cong interference. About one-half of this total were regarded as fit for military service. Each year about 140,000 males reach military age (20 years), which is sufficient manpower base to keep units up to their authorized strength. (5)

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(S) There is no organized reserve system in the Army, Navy or Air Force, but a source of general reserve manpower exists in those individuals who have served on active duty with elements of the armed forces and have since been demobilized. In 1965 the government initiated a census of males in this category, between the ages of 20 and 45. (5)

(S) The manpower available in South Vietnam is sufficient for any wartime force which can be mobilized and effectively equipped and trained. It is estimated that the maximum ground force which could be raised, equipped and trained in 2 years' time would be a 13-divisional force of about 304,000 men. A higher mobilization total would threaten the country's economic structure by diverting manpower from activities essential for maintaining the economy. (5)

### Military Budget

(U) The struggle against the Communist insurgency imposes a burden of military expenditure which the country's economy can carry only with extensive foreign aid. Since independence in 1954, South Vietnam's yearly contribution toward the development and maintenance of its military establishment has been well under 20 percent of the actual cost, and the percentage has decreased with rising costs as the security forces have been enlarged and strengthened (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations; ch. 24, Public Finance).

(U) The funds allocated for defense in the annual budget remained fairly constant from 1958 to 1962 when they mounted sharply because of a substantial increase in the armed forces. After 1962 the military expenditures rose steadily from this higher plateau and by the end of 1965 were expected to have doubled the 1962 rate. In relation to the total budget, the portion allocated for defense declined from 41 percent in 1958 to less than 39 percent in 1961, but as indication of growing concern over the security situation, it increased to approximately 50 percent in 1962 and was expected to move slightly higher by the end of 1965. Forecasts for fiscal year 1966 indicated that close to 63 percent of the total national budget would be earmarked for defense (see ch. 24, Public Finance).

(S) In 1965 the military budget amounted to approximately 25,700 million piasters (for value of the piaster, see Glossary). The United States aid program, however, provided for an additional 70,350 million piasters, exclusive of the cost of such materiel as weapons, vehicles, aircraft, naval craft and ammunition, which were also acquired under the aid program. Including the cost of these items, the South Vietnamese Government actually paid for about 10 percent of the national

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defense costs. At the same time the allocation to the military establishment was larger by far than for any other single governmental agency. (b)

(U) Military expenditures have not roused any significant popular criticisms, although the subject is exploited overtly and clandestinely by Communist propagandists. The human and material sacrifices required to counter Viet Cong aggression are felt keenly among the rural population, but the people are in a position to reflect on the division and expenditure of government revenues.

### FOREIGN INFLUENCE

(S) The armed forces are almost completely dependent on the United States for logistical support, except for food, clothing and shelter. The economy of the country, devastated by a war and by increasing Communist insurgency, is still incapable of maintaining an effective military establishment able to defend the country against an attack from North Vietnam.

(U) Late in 1954 the South Vietnam Government requested the United States to undertake training functions on an equal basis with the French. By 1957 all French training missions had been withdrawn, and a United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) took over the major task of training the Vietnamese forces and substituting United States methods for French ones. The training mission increased steadily in size from about 800 in 1960 to about 2,000 in 1961, to nearly 11,000 in 1962, to approximately 15,000 in 1963 and to more than 23,000 in 1964. The great interest and continued determination of the United States was expressed in 1962 when the United States Military Assistance Command for Vietnam (MACV) was formed in order to deal more effectively with the problems of increased military support.

(U) In 1965, with South Vietnam critically involved in an ever-mounting struggle, the United States initiated direct participation in the war against the Viet Cong with combat troops, in addition to supplying advisers. The Commanding General of MACV assumed the additional role of commander of combat forces. United States troop strength increased to more than 200,000 in late 1965 and was expected to reach about 230,000 or more early in 1966. In addition, major United States naval forces were deployed off the coast in a direct support combat role. Extensive United States Air Force elements were moved to South Vietnam, and others were assigned long-range bombing missions against Communist targets in North and South Vietnam from off-shore United States bases.

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(U) Direct United States combat troop presence has fortified the United States influence imparted by the American advisers operating at all command and staff echelons of all components of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Also, over the past few years, a sizable number of Vietnamese officers and men have attended military schools in the United States or have been sent on orientation visits to American military installations.

(U) Aside from the United States, which is carrying the main burden of support for South Vietnam, foreign influence of a far less significant degree has resulted from the assistance of some 32 other allied nations. These nations have contributed various amounts of military and civilian aid in one form or another. Australia, New Zealand and South Korea have contributed limited numbers of field troops, and a small unit is likely to be made available by the Philippine Government. Other assistance has included aviation crews, police and counterinsurgency instructors, surgical teams and various forms of noncombat aid (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

(U) Of the Far Eastern nations, the Chinese Nationalist armed forces are probably the most favorably regarded by many ranking officers, some of whom have attended military courses in Taiwan. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek is admired as a military leader, especially for the manner in which his Chinese Nationalist forces have been organized, indoctrinated and controlled.

(U) South Vietnam has no military alliances with other nations. Although it is not a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), it receives protection as a protocol state under Article IV as a result of military aggression by North Vietnam. The almost total dependence on the United States for maintenance of its economy and armed forces gives the United States virtual veto power over its actions.

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## CHAPTER 30 (S)

### ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES (U)

(U) The armed forces of South Vietnam were actively engaged in early 1966 in countrywide warfare against strong Communist-led and -controlled insurgent forces. The extensive military aid rendered by the United States had resulted in noticeable modification of much of the French heritage of the South Vietnamese forces as they had developed and expanded in the previous few years. Although appreciable progress was made in improving the overall framework and posture of the military forces on the field of battle and on, severe limitations still existed, and the government was striving to overcome them through improved and more effective training and administrative procedures.

(U) The high degree of centralization of authority and control over virtually all phases of military activity caused delays and inhibited individual initiative. The continuing disruptive action of the Viet Cong (a condensed form of the term Viet Nam Cong San, meaning Vietnamese Communists) and the conditions of insecurity prevalent throughout the country greatly increased the difficulties of logistic support and added materially to the burden of overall administration and management.

#### FIELD COMMAND

##### Army

(S) The Army Field Command, which had been created in 1961 and given overall responsibility for the conduct of counterinsurgency operations, was abolished in 1963, and direct channels between the Joint General Staff and field commands were reestablished. This centralized chain of command extends from the Chief of the Joint General Staff through the Chief of Staff to corps commanders. From corps level it passes to commanders responsible for the conduct of tactical operations who may be either division commanders or commanders of separate units organized to carry out special operations (see fig. 2). (6)

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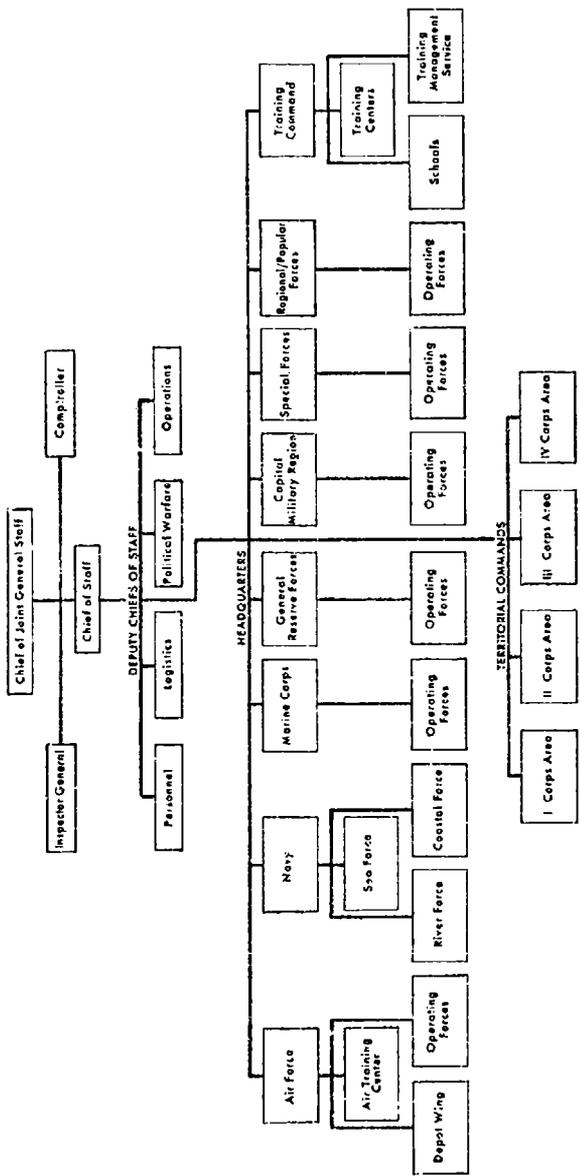


Figure 8 (U). Field Command of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, 1966 (U).

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(S) Territorially, the country is organized into four corps areas and a Capital Military Region for purposes of command, administration and logistics. Each corps area embraces several provinces and has two or three divisions assigned to it. The Capital Military Region includes the Saigon-Cho Lon metropolitan area, the surrounding Gia Dinh Province and the Con Son special subsector. The corps areas function as tactical military zones, and corps commanders, being responsible for internal security within their zones, exercise operational control over all military and paramilitary units located in the area for the purpose of combating active insurgent operations. Air and naval units supporting ground forces in large-scale operations are also sometimes under control of the corps commander (see fig. 3). (6)

(S) At the end of 1965 corps designations, with the location of corps and division headquarters and the corps areas of responsibilities, were as follows: I Corps, Da Nang, with two divisions, one at Hue and the other at Da Nang, responsible for the northernmost provinces; II Corps, Pleiku, with one division at Kontum and another at Ban Me Thuot, with responsibility for the central provinces; III Corps, Bien Hoa, with one division at Piu Cuong, a second at Xuan Loc and a third at Duc Hoa, responsible for the provinces between the central provinces and the Mekong Delta; IV Corps, Can Tho, with one division at My Tho, one at Sa Dec and another at Vinh Loi, with responsibility for the Mekong Delta. Concentrated at Saigon in the Capital Military Region are various headquarters, including the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces, Headquarters of the General Reserve and the Region Headquarters itself. (6)

(S) The corps areas are divided into divisional tactical zones, each generally comprising several civil provinces. For military control purposes the civil provinces are designated as military sectors. In most cases, military officers serve concurrently as province chiefs and as sector commanders and are subordinate to their respective division commanders for the conduct of security operations in their provinces. In those cases where a civilian administrator is the province chief, the senior military commander in that province is usually appointed sector commander and serves concurrently as deputy province chief. In addition, when special security measures dictate, provinces may be designated, singly or in groups, as special zones and operations conducted therein are commanded directly from corps headquarters or the Joint General Staff. Two such sectors, War Zones "C" and "D," have been so designated in III Corps area, and intensive counterinsurgency operations took place there in 1965 and early 1966. (6)

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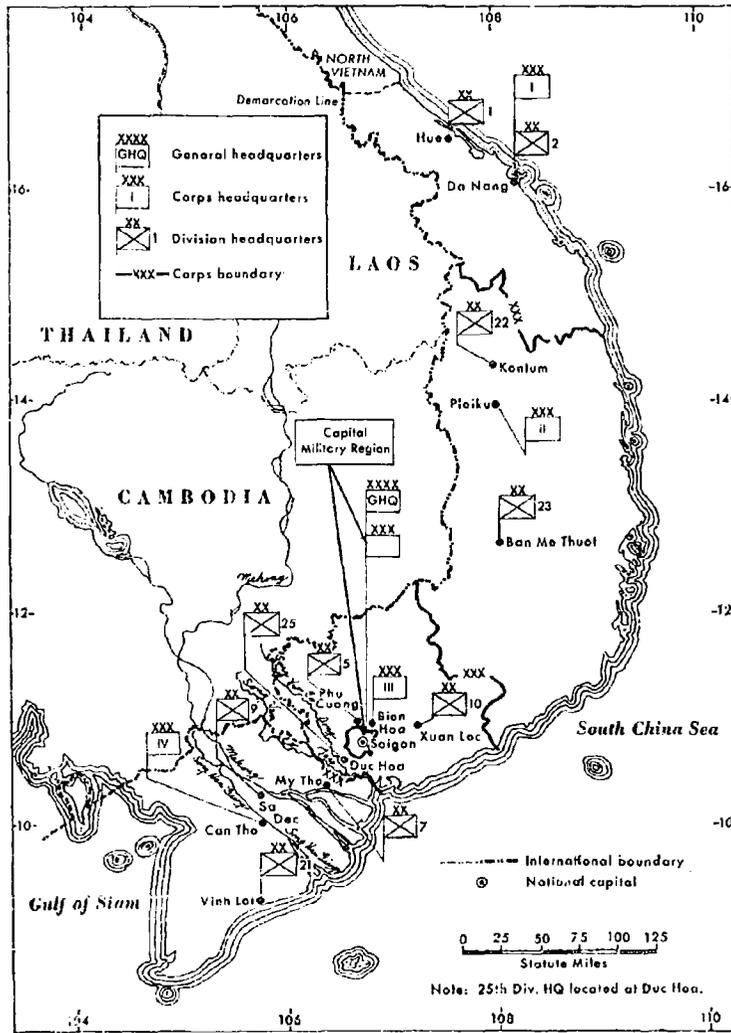


Figure 3 (U). South Vietnamese Army Dispositions, December 1965 (U).

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## Navy

(S) The Navy, under a Chief of Naval Operations, is composed of a small staff section and a Naval Command which consists of Operating Forces and the Shore Establishments. The Operating Forces include the Sea Forces, River Forces, Coastal Force and the Marine Corps. The Sea Forces are divided into patrol, amphibious and mine flotillas; the River Forces are organized into 6 river units; the Coastal Force, a former paramilitary group (Junk Force) incorporated into the Navy in 1965, consists of 28 divisions assigned to four coastal districts with headquarters at Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Vung Tau and An Thoi; the Marine Corps is composed of a marine group which is part of the General Reserve in Saigon. The Shore Establishments include the Naval Headquarters, Supply Center and Shipyard, all in Saigon, and the principal naval training center at Nha Trang. (6)

## Air Force

(S) The Air Force is organized into four composite wings, one each in Da Nang, Pleiku, Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut (Saigon). There is also one support wing at Tan Son Nhut. Operating units include two transport squadrons, four helicopter squadrons, six tactical fighter squadrons, four liaison squadrons and one psychological warfare liaison detachment. The principal air training center is located at Nha Trang. Air Force Headquarters with supporting staff elements is situated in Saigon. (6)

## MANPOWER

### Quality

(U) The average South Vietnamese soldier has given a good battle account of himself over the years. Exhibiting many basic soldierly qualities, he has always responded to good leadership with determination and courage. He is a peasant, accustomed to hard work, inured to hardship, highly realistic and possessed of a well-developed sense of field craft. As an individual, he is hospitable, human and moderately aggressive. His peasant environment and limitations have never permitted him the luxury of thinking very far ahead, and, consequently, he is prone to accept conditions which circumstances thrust upon him. As a result, he is fairly fatalistic about war, accepts pain and death with a high degree of patience and endurance, and responds with self-discipline to adversity. On the other hand, he shows little initiative in unexpected contingencies.

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(U) Despite his many favorable qualities the average South Vietnamese soldier possesses some physical limitations. By United States standards he is small—only slightly more than 5 feet tall and weighs about 120 pounds. For this reason he sometimes has difficulty in using certain items of United States equipment. The introduction of the light United States Army AR-15 "Armalite" rifle alleviated this situation in the field of individual weapons.

(U) On the whole, the strong qualities of the South Vietnamese soldier far outweigh his weak ones. Nevertheless, two serious limitations remain in the makeup of the Army—poor junior leadership and the low level of education (the illiteracy rate within the country in 1965 was estimated at more than 80 percent). The latter, less important than the former in counterinsurgency operations, is to some extent mitigated by the inherent intelligence and manual dexterity of the common soldier, as well as by his adaptability to guerrilla warfare.

(C) The shortage of trained junior leaders results from a combination of factors. Initially, the French trained very few Vietnamese for leadership positions, and those so trained have now reached fairly high positions. Junior officers and noncommissioned officers were moved up, but their numbers required considerable augmentation to meet the demands of increasing armed forces strength and the losses resulting from attrition. To help meet these shortages, officer candidates were selected in large numbers directly from civil life; selection was based on a minimum of qualifications, primarily educational.

(C) The quality of junior military leadership has been improved since January 1965 when battlefield commissions and promotions were introduced emphasizing battlefield performance without regard to educational qualifications. Further improvement is expected to take place from a plan, also approved in 1965, to select from the ranks non-commissioned officers and enlisted men of demonstrated combat competence under reduced educational criteria to attend officer candidate schools. When fully implemented, inservice personnel will comprise almost 50 percent of all officer candidates.

(C) Desertion rates appear to be increasing in both the regular and paramilitary forces. The average monthly rates through the fall of 1965 compared to the monthly averages for 1964 were: Regular Forces, 3,559 versus 1,831; Regional Forces, 1,435 versus 1,135; Popular Forces, 4,353 versus 3,050. While worrisome, these figures are not considered alarming and in many cases do not reflect the actual situation.

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(C) In general, the new conscripts taken into the armed forces to meet planned increases in 1965 consisted of city dwellers, many of whom were previously deferred or had avoided earlier draft calls. An appreciable proportion of these desert or absent themselves without leave soon after they have received basic training in further attempts to avoid service. Many return later, and others show up in units other than those to which assigned. A further complicating factor is the system employed in determining actual deserters. A South Vietnamese soldier who is absent without leave (AWOL) for more than 7 days after being in the service at least 90 days, or who is absent more than 30 days after having been in the service less than 90 days, is declared a deserter. Those who return to their units voluntarily may be reassigned to duty without punishment; consequently, it is possible for a soldier to show up several times in the statistics as a deserter.

(C) The desertion problem is beset with other difficulties to which the government is devoting considerable effort to eliminate. The lack of an allotment system, low pay and family allowances (a pay raise in mid-1965 produced early salutary results), the effects of a long war, the separation of families and the concern of the peasant soldier for the safety of his village home are all factors requiring official attention in order to improve the situation. Despite the seriousness of the desertion problem and the manpower drain produced by it, as well as by casualties and discharge, the planned increases in the armed forces are being achieved.

### Source

(C) The armed forces are composed to a large extent (nearly 80 percent) of soldiers of Vietnamese ancestry and of peasant upbringing. The remaining 20 percent is made up largely of Chinese, *montagnards* and Khmers. There are representative numbers of Buddhists and Roman Catholics among the larger segment, but these two religious groups in South Vietnam have adopted many of the Confucian ethics, thus eliminating sectarianism as a major consideration in military personnel planning. Consequently, it has been possible for the governmental authorities to increase their efforts toward making greater use of ethnic and religious minority elements in the military establishment. These efforts succeeded in raising the number of Chinese in the Regular Forces from about 250 in 1964 to nearly 2,500 in mid-August 1965, and further increases were expected. Similarly, the number of *montagnards* in the army has multiplied, certain units experiencing as high as a sixfold augmentation.

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(C) Further additions to the military establishment have come from the absorption of local irregular groups. The "Sea Swallows," a predominantly Chinese civil-defense group of about 1,000, located in the southern delta area and recruited and led by Father Augustin Nguyen Lac Hoa, was incorporated into the regular army in early 1965. During the same period the Regional Forces assumed control of 12 additional local civil-defense companies raised and maintained by religious sects, 9 from the Hoa Hao and 3 from the Cao Dai. These successful assimilation moves have been followed by continued efforts to enlist religious sect personnel as individuals and not as members of sect units.

(C) Unlike the soldiers, the bulk of whom are from rural villages, the officers are mainly from the cities. Most of the top leaders have considerable education and experience and have benefited from both French and United States training. An increasing proportion of field-grade officers are receiving professional military schooling, particularly in the United States, and with combat experience are becoming qualified for higher command positions. With the adjustment of educational criteria, the junior officer ranks are becoming balanced between those entering from civil life and those being commissioned from the active ranks.

(C) The South Vietnamese Army is a young army. Senior leaders, including corps and division commanders, are in their early forties or younger. With conscription filling the bulk of the armed forces needs, the rank and file of the Army is bound to remain a young group. The Department of Defense determines the compulsory retirement ages for officers, but, in view of the youth of the officer group, this determination is highly academic, except as a means of eliminating unwanted officers.

### Procurement

(C) The personnel needs of the armed forces are met through voluntary enlistments and by conscription. The compulsory military service program was initiated in 1957 and provided for the callup of all male citizens aged 20 and 21 for a 12-month period of service. The service period was extended to 18 months in 1959 and to 24 months in 1961. In 1964 a further decree made physically fit males between the ages of 20 and 30, with no more than four children, subject to induction. This same decree provided for a 3-year term of service in the Regular Forces, 4 years in the Regional Forces and 5 years in the Popular Forces. In the same year a nationwide collective callup of specific age groups replaced the issuance of individual draft notices,

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and a mobilization directorate was established to administer the conscription system.

(C) By late 1965, virtually all classes of youths in the 20- to 30-year age category had been called for induction. The number reporting has fallen short of established goals, and stricter measures have been instituted to increase the effectiveness of the system. Greater use has been made of an Interministerial Deferment Committee to consider and decide on deferments for individuals within occupational categories regarded as essential to nonmilitary programs within the economy. Previously, such deferments had been made on a "blanket" basis, which exempted large blocs of draft eligibles without detailed scrutiny and justification. Individuals with critically essential skills who are given deferments remain subject to induction in place and are to be given limited military training during certain periods of the workday, in the evenings, over weekends or during slack periods on the job. These individuals are considered available for active duty in case of general mobilization.

(C) Additional steps taken to reinforce conscription have included intensified efforts on the part of all law enforcement agencies to apprehend draft evaders and the issuance of a governmental directive calling on all public and private enterprises to stop salary payments to all workers between the ages of 20 and 30 who do not have a valid deferment or a physical disability. In the case of students and civilians who have been studying abroad, a late 1965 government order limited deferments to 6 and 12 months, respectively. While it is hoped that these measures will raise the induction rate to more satisfactory levels, the government is reportedly prepared to adopt more extreme measures, if necessary. One such plan would reduce the draft age to 18 and further tighten deferments, particularly for students.

(S) Initially, all conscripts are sent to military training centers for basic training. Facilities at these training centers are sufficient to accommodate the more than 50,000 yearly input of both conscripts and recruits. After completion of basic training, a proportion of the enlisted men are selected for further training, but the majority are assigned directly to receiving units; a small proportion go into the Navy and Air Force. (4)

(U) The Viet Cong have been using every means to disrupt conscription in South Vietnam. They conduct intensive recruitment for their own units, utilizing the techniques of false promise, intimidation and terror. Their propaganda campaigns urging draft evasion are both subtle and direct, and in certain areas they have employed

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carefully executed civic-action programs to sway the loyalties of the youthful peasant population.

### TRAINING

#### Army

(C) Since its formation in 1949 the South Vietnamese Army has been faced with the major problem of organizing and improving itself while concurrently engaged in active military operations. Under these circumstances training has been difficult and slow in reaching desired levels. The switchover to United States methods in 1957 and the introduction of United States advisers have proved increasingly effective in raising training standards and improving results.

(S) The Training Command, under direct control of the Joint General Staff, provides staff guidance and direction for all military training in the armed forces. The general system of military training and education is patterned after that of the United States and consists of installations and facilities which conduct basic (recruit and conscript) training, technical and specialist training and leadership training. The military education system provides schooling for regular and reserve officers from branch to Staff College level. (4)

(S) Army training, supervised by United States advisers, is based on standard training cycle programs. The 32-week cycle consists of six phases which begin with basic combat training of 8 weeks and continues through various unit training levels, including division maneuvers. The increased activity of the Viet Cong, particularly since 1959, has caused a shift in emphasis from conventional to counterinsurgency and counter guerrilla training. (4)

(S) After entry into the Army and receipt of their initial basic training, about 40 percent of both recruits and conscripts are selected for specialized branch training. The majority move on to units within their assigned combat branch where they participate in basic and advanced unit training. Noncommissioned officer (NCO) training and specialized training, such as Ranger, are conducted concurrently with other phases of individual training for especially qualified personnel. (4)

(S) The principal source of regular officers is the National Military Academy which trains officers for all branches of the armed forces. Cadets are appointed second lieutenants after graduation and are either assigned directly to troop units or sent to branch schools for specialized training. The major source for reserve officers is the officer candidate school. Candidates who successfully complete the course of instruc-

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tion are not commissioned upon graduation (as in the case of military academy graduates) but are assigned to troop units as student officers and become eligible for promotion to second lieutenant after a 6-month period of satisfactory service. Attendance at higher military schools is by selection, as is overseas training (principally in the United States). (4)

### Navy

(S) The replacement of French advisers by United States personnel in 1957 did much to spur the development and expansion of specialist training in the Navy. Three phases of shipboard training have received increasing emphasis under United States naval advisers: bridge techniques, underway training and team gunnery. (4)

(S) In addition to receiving inductees and recruits from army training centers, the Navy also trains a limited number of its own recruits in naval training centers. This permits the introduction of certain naval aspects into basic training and lays the groundwork for later technical naval training. Technical training of selected naval enlisted personnel for specialty ratings is provided in technical schools which conduct both basic and advanced courses. Advanced training is offered to limited numbers of selected personnel, either through attendance at United States Navy schools or aboard United States fleet units on station in Far Eastern ports. (4)

(S) The preponderance of junior naval officers enter the service from the Naval Academy rather than from the National Military Academy or the officer candidate school. After commissioning, naval officers receive practical training in ship-handling tactics afloat. Advanced training is also made available at United States Navy schools and with United States fleet units. (4)

(S) The Marine Corps trains most of its enlisted recruits in its own training center and provides unit basic training at the home bases of various marine battalions. Specialist and advance training for enlisted personnel follows the army pattern, and much of it is provided at army facilities. The majority of marine officers are supplied by the National Military Academy, although small numbers come from the officer candidate school or are commissioned directly from the ranks. Those officers receiving direct commissions are trained in short courses with field units. Marine officers enjoy the same opportunities as those in the other services for selection for advanced training in the United States or with the United States Naval and Marine fleet units. (4)

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## Air Force

(S) Air Force training is conducted under the direct supervision of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Training, Air Force Headquarters. United States advisers are assigned throughout the Air Force, but much of the United States assistance is provided through contract technical representatives, mobile training teams and various operational and school programs conducted at United States Air Force installations overseas and in the United States. Considerable progress was made in 1965 in establishing new training courses in fields such as electronics and air observer training. (4)

## Schools

(U) The increased tempo of military action against the Viet Cong and the gradual expansion of the armed forces have caused the establishment of a comprehensive system of training installations and military schools. These installations and facilities are improving steadily and are turning out increasing numbers of trained officers and skilled technicians available to the armed forces (see table 2).

(C) The Command and General Staff College, which was organized in 1956, is the highest institution in the military education system. Its 12-month course for field officers offers instruction in staff and command techniques, in combined operations and in general academic subjects. The 5-month course for selected company grade officers provides training in staff procedures. Short refresher courses for limited numbers of officers in the grades of lieutenant colonel and colonel are held periodically to keep them abreast of important policy changes and acquaint them with the employment of new weapons. The course of instruction is well developed and well conducted by a capable staff and faculty.

(C) The National Military Academy was established by the French in 1948 in Hue and moved to Da Lat in 1950. Originally a 3-year institution, its program was extended to 4 years in 1961. In August 1962, however, due to the shortage of junior officers in field units, the government placed the Academy on a wartime basis and reduced its curriculum to 2 years. The first United States advisers were assigned to the academy in 1955, and since that time much has been accomplished in converting the school into a true academy that can produce career officers with a sound, if limited, basic college education and a broad knowledge of military subjects. In order to increase the flow of junior officers into the career ranks, a junior military academy has been developed at Vung Tau. This facility reportedly functions

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as a general preparatory school for selected personnel interested in a permanent service career as military officers. The actual source and method of selecting students is not clear.

(S) The Thu Duc Military Schools Complex, started in the mid-1950's, has become one of the largest and one of the most important military training institutions in the country. Originally, it was the site of the Thu Duc Officers' Candidate School which was established to prepare students for reserve commissions. The installation was expanded progressively with the addition of special courses in artillery, engineering, ordnance, transportation and signal communications, and by 1958 it had graduated almost 3,300 reserve officers. Branch schools developed out of these special courses, and the combined schools became known as the Thu Duc Military Schools Complex. Increased military needs have caused further expansion of the Complex, and by late 1965, 12 branch schools, the Marine Corps Training Center and the Band School had been included within its operations. The Officer Candidate School conducts a basic course lasting 8½ months, but the branch schools, which train both officers and enlisted men, offer courses which range from several weeks to several months, depending on the difficulty of the subject matter. (4)

(U) The Armed Forces Language School was established in 1956 as an English-language school, and its courses are designed to give officers and enlisted men a working knowledge of English before entering foreign military courses or engaging in advanced training with United States military units.

(S) Training at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy is conducted principally in cycles of 3 months. The course content is similar to that used by the United States forces and reportedly is producing very good results. (4)

(U) The Military Dog Training Course is a relatively new phase of training which has been adopted to increase the effectiveness of security systems in general. Most of the dogs have been obtained from the United States, and the initial instructors in this program have been United States advisers.

(U) The Military Medical School, an adjunct of the University of Saigon, occupies modern facilities and conducts a comprehensive program of medical instruction with a capable staff of instructors. Of the 13 courses taught during the 1964 calendar year, only 1 was offered to medical officers. This course, lasting 26 weeks, dealt with the techniques of field surgery and qualified graduates as unit surgeons. Three other courses, ranging from 4 to 12 weeks in duration, offered orientation to medical students and enlisted men in general

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Table 2 (S). Schools and Training Centers of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, 1965 (U).

School	Location	Courses	One-time capacity	Trained	
				1974	1965
Command and General Staff College	Da Lat	Field grade officers	160	210	260
National Military Academy	do	Company grade officers Officer candidates for career service	1,000	391	300
Junior Military Academy	Vung Tau	Preparatory school	1,400	527	1,400
Thu Duc Military Schools Complex	Thu Duc				
Officers' Candidate School	do	Candidates for reserve officer commissions	1,500	n.a.	Variable
Marine Corps Training Center	do	Recruit (basic training)	n.a.	n.a.	Variable
Band School	do	Enlisted men	150	19	340
Branch Schools:					
Armor	do	Officers and enlisted men	200	1,919	680
Infantry	do	do	2,600	3,125	6,000
Engineer	Phu Cuong	do	1,000	1,129	2,129
Ordnance	Hanh Thong Tay	do	475	231	2,309
Quartermaster	Saigon	do	200	474	785
Signal	Vung Tau	do	1,200	2,165	2,362
Adjutant General	Saigon	do	340	305	1,050
Transportation	Quang Trung (near Saigon)	do	700	4,830	3,979
Finance	Saigon	do	400	290	502
Intelligence	do	do	2,000	1,405	1,428
Military Police	Vung Tau	do	150	67	680
Artillery	Duc My	do	550	1,998	1,665
Armed Forces Language School	Saigon	Officers and enlisted men	460	649	1,750

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Noncommissioned Officer	Nha Trang	Enlisted men	2, 200	5, 549	6, 600
Academy	Thanh Tuy Ha <sup>1</sup>	Dog sentry	100	429	562
Military Dog Training Course	Saigon	Officers and enlisted men	1, 100	2, 405	2, 171
Military Medical School	do	do	170	620	529
Logistics Management School	do	do	290	869	2, 436
Psychological Warfare School	Quang Trung	Recruit basic training	18, 000	n.a.	variable
Quang Trung Military Training Center	Chi Lang <sup>2</sup>	paramilitary training	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Chi Lang National Training Center	Dong Da <sup>3</sup>	Recruit basic training	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Dong Da National Training Center	Lam Son <sup>4</sup>	do	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Lam Son National Training Center	Van Kiep <sup>5</sup>	do	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Van Kiep National Training Center	Duc My	Officers and enlisted men	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Duc My Ranger Training Center	Trung Hoa <sup>6</sup>	do	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Trung Hoa Ranger Training Center	Hai Ninh <sup>7</sup>	Guerrilla warfare (enlisted men)	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Regional Force Training Center	Nha Trang	Career officer	200	n.a.	200
Naval Training Center	do	Recruit basic training	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Naval Academy	do	Technical specialties	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Recruit Training Center	Saigon	River force recruit basic training	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Technical Training School	Nha Trang	Pilot training (officer)	n.a.	n.a.	variable
Naval Training Center					
Air Force Training Center					

1 Near Hue.  
 2 Near Duc My.  
 3 Near Vung Tau.  
 4 20 miles southeast of Vung Tau.  
 5 South of Da Nang.  
 6 18 miles northwest of Nha Trang.  
 7 10 miles southeast of Saigon.  
 8 Capacity probably increased beyond this figure by early 1974.  
 9 10 miles south of Bao Me Thuat.

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medical subjects. The remaining 9 courses trained enlisted technicians as general medical attendants, aidmen and litter bearers or as medical specialists in the fields of general medicine, dentistry, anesthesiology and laboratory and X-ray techniques.

(U) The Military Medical School is also responsible for the conduct and supervision of a program designed to procure doctors, dentists and pharmacists for the armed forces. Each year a 3-day competitive examination is given at the school to select medical, dental and pharmacy students for direct commissions. Students selected under this program are commissioned and receive regular military pay in accordance with their rank while they continue their studies at the Faculty of Medicine. Upon graduation they are required to pay back each year of training under the program with 2 years of active duty. Since medical students study for 6 years, a student could enter the program in his first year of study and be given the rank of student officer. At the end of his first year he would progress to second lieutenant, and at the end of his third year he would be promoted to first lieutenant. He would continue as a first lieutenant and after 3 additional years would graduate and enter on active duty with a 12-year obligation. Similar rank progression takes place for pharmacy and dental students, but their course of study lasts for 4 and 5 years, respectively.

(U) The Logistics Management School and the Psychological Warfare School train personnel in these two important specialties in courses of varying lengths. Logistics management is a comparatively new doctrine which is taking on increasing importance, and much of the instruction has been devised by United States advisers. Psychological warfare has long been recognized at all levels as a most important ingredient in the type of insurgent warfare faced by the Vietnamese. In recognition of this fact and of the rising need for more personnel trained in this specialty, the intelligence training, a part of the former Intelligence and Psychological Warfare School's curriculum, was transferred to a school of its own, permitting the scheduling of additional classes at both facilities.

(S) The various basic training centers operated by the Training Command are primarily engaged in the training of recruits or conscripts. Courses average 9 weeks in length and cover elementary subjects relating to military combat. Courses at the ranger and regional warfare training centers are variable and relate to "commando" and guerrilla-type tactics, respectively. Personnel receiving this instruction are either selectees or individuals who have previously received some basic military training. (4)

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(S) The Naval Training Center at Nha Trang provides the full spectrum of naval training for both officers and enlisted men. In addition to basic training, specialist courses ranging from 8 to 29 weeks are given at the technical training schools. Advance specialist courses of from 8 to 16 weeks are available for advanced personnel in critical skill areas. (1)

(C) The Naval Academy provides 2-year courses, and two classes of about 100 midshipmen each are conducted concurrently. The curriculum is patterned after the United States Naval Academy and includes seamanship, ordnance, communications, navigation, naval architecture, electricity, gunnery, shiphandling and meteorology. The various craft attached to the training center are utilized to provide practical training exercises.

(S) The Naval Training Center at Saigon is used primarily for the training of conscript personnel of the River Force. Every 10 weeks an 8-week course is given to newly inducted personnel in basic military and naval training. A course for naval reserve officers is also provided at the Saigon center. (4)

(S) The Air Force Training Center conducts the only in-country pilot training for officers in the South Vietnamese Air Force. Most pilots, however, complete their training in the United States. Courses for observers, mechanics and other specialists are provided at the Center on a variable basis. (4)

## LOGISTICS

### Army

#### Supply and Maintenance

(S) Within the Joint General Staff, the Deputy Chief of Joint Staff, Logistics, exercises overall staff supervision of the logistic support system. The Army maintains a logistical command in each of the five corps areas, which supports all units and facilities throughout the corps area. Each logistical command operates a number of forward field depots from which supplies are distributed to using units. The five Technical Services—Signal, Ordnance-Chemical, Quartermaster, Engineer and Medical—operate base depots which serve as stock control points and maintain inventory stocks for issue to field depots. In the case of POL (Petroleum, Oils, Lubricants), ammunition and rations, supply points are established as may be necessary to bring these classes of supplies as close as practicable to the field forces. The Technical Services provide common-item support to all elements of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. (4)

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(S) The receipt, storage and issue of supplies follow a pattern similar to that employed by United States forces. However, the supply system is seriously affected by the lack of adequate roads and rail lines, limited numbers of trained personnel, lack of proper storage space and shortages in equipment. A complicating factor is the increased difficulty being experienced by the United States in bringing in heavily expanded quantities of military aid. In early 1963 new port areas under development since mid-1965 still lacked deepwater piers and warehouse space, causing long delays in unloading cargoes and subjecting supplies to deterioration from open beach storage. The number of transoceanic jet transport and cargo planes which can be utilized in supply operations is also limited by crowded conditions at existing airfields and by the nonavailability of additional runways at new airfields still under construction. The use of ground transportation to move supplies inland has been seriously impeded by Viet Cong interdiction, but the extensive use of helicopters has alleviated this condition to a certain degree. (4)

(S) The general scheme of maintenance and repair of materiel follows the four-level system currently used in the United States Army. Primary maintenance is performed by the using unit; second and third levels are performed by direct-support field units and fixed facilities, respectively. Major repair and overhaul is accomplished at central or base depots. The average Vietnamese soldier is lacking in mechanical skill and has little appreciation of the need for preventive maintenance and periodic inspection procedures. Improvement along these lines is being made through intensified United States instruction and training. (4)

### Medical Service

(U) The Chief Surgeon, Vietnamese Armed Forces, is responsible for medical care in all three of the military services. Key members of his staff are an army surgeon, a navy surgeon, an air force surgeon and a special forces surgeon. All hospitals in the armed forces are army facilities; the Navy, Air Force and Special Forces operate only dispensaries. Medical sections with limited patient-holding capacity are located in the administrative and logistical elements of the Regional and Popular Forces.

(U) The military medical program includes general station and field hospitals and is being expanded to cope with casualties which have increased with the intensification of the war effort against the Viet Cong. About 3,500 beds are now available in the two general hospitals in the vicinity of Saigon and the one situated in Da Nang, but each facility is reportedly to be expanded under construction pro-

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grams projected for completion in fiscal year 1966. Thirteen station hospitals are located throughout the country, and four field hospitals are serving strategic areas in which major counterinsurgency operations are taking place. A United States-supported rehabilitation program for disabled veterans was initiated in the fall of 1965.

(U) The basic system of evacuation of sick and wounded is based on the utilization of ambulance sections, organic to the Division Medical Company, to transport patients from tactical units to medical facilities located in rear areas. Evacuation of patients from the division zone to station and general hospitals and the movement of patients from one hospital to another are performed normally by fixed-wing aircraft. For battlefield evacuation, heavy use is made of helicopters because of the inaccessibility of many operational areas and the insecurity or inadequacy of road nets. One deterring feature of helicopter evacuation is that in many instances casualties are being overevacuated to fixed hospitals far to the rear instead of being treated and returned to duty by the regimental or divisional medical units.

(U) Indicative of the role the Army plays in the program of rebuilding the country is the participation of military personnel under the Medical Civic Action Program (see ch. 8, Living Conditions). These medical teams have been very effective in convincing the rural population of the government's interest in their welfare.

### Navy

(S) Immediate supervision of the naval supply and maintenance system is performed by the Logistics Division of the Naval Staff. The hub of this system is the naval supply center and shipyard at Saigon which supplies and repairs most of the navy's ships. Facilities at this installation include well-equipped machine shops, adequate drydock facilities and machinery which will permit the overhaul of oceangoing vessels as well as small craft. While some spare parts can be made at this shipyard, heavy naval materiel support of all kinds is supplied from United States sources. (4)

### Air Force

(S) Since the United States provides all the aircraft in the South Vietnamese inventory, almost all support materiel is also of United States origin. While military aid and supply support move directly into Vietnamese Air Force channels, a high percentage of aircraft maintenance is performed directly by United States contract personnel. (4)

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(S) The chief air force depot at Bien Hoa, just north of Saigon, is the major supply and maintenance center. It is comparable to an augmented United States Air Force field maintenance unit and is capable of providing satisfactory support for all assigned aircraft. Plans reportedly were developed through fiscal year 1966 which included activation of four materiel squadrons. These additional units are expected to be sufficient to develop adequate field maintenance and base support capability at all primary airbases. (4)

### PERSONNEL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

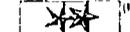
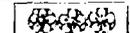
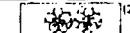
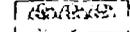
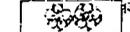
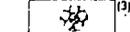
#### Ranks

(U) The structures of rank in the Army, Navy and Air Force broadly resemble those of the corresponding French forces, but since 1962 increasing numbers of changes based on the United States systems have been introduced (see figs. 4, 5 and 6). The normal duties and responsibilities of officers and enlisted men in the various ranks and grades parallel those in the United States forces. There are no warrant officer grades, and only a few active duty officers hold senior general officer rank as high as lieutenant general.

(U) The latest adjustment in the rank structure of the armed forces occurred in November 1965 and was limited to general officer grades. The title of general of the army was created as the highest grade in the Army, and the other general officer grades were adjusted to correspond exactly with those in the United States Army. Being the predominant service element, the Army has more senior officers on duty in both command and staff positions. Because of its limited size the Navy is commanded by a captain. The command of the Air Force was retained by Major General Nguyen Cao Ky when he assumed the position of prime minister in 1965. General Ky also enjoys the title of air vice marshal, an honorary distinction awarded him in 1964.

(U) The insignia of rank of all general and flag officers corresponds to that of the United States. General and flag officers wear silver stars, the number ranging from one for a sub-general or sub-admiral to four for a senior general or admiral in the Navy and Air Force and to five for a superior general (general of the army) in the Army. The basic insignia for other officers in the Army and Air Force is a stylized plum blossom in silver for field grades and in gold for company grades. Senior-grade superior officers (colonels) and senior-grade junior officers (captains) wear three; intermediate-grade superior officers (lieutenant colonels) and intermediate-grade junior officers (first lieutenants) wear two; junior-grade superior officers

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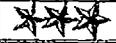
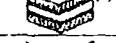
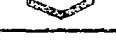
Vietnamese Title	Translation	United States Equivalent	Rank Insignia
OFFICERS			
Thuong Tuong	Superior General	General of the Army	 (1)
Dai Tuong	Senior General	General	 (1)
Trung Tuong	Intermediate General	Lieutenant General	 (1)
Thieu Tuong	Junior General	Major General	 (1)
Chuan Tuong	Sub General	Brigadier General	 (1)
Dai Ta	Senior Grade Superior Officer	Colonel	 (2)
Trung Ta	Intermediate Grade Superior Officer	Lieutenant Colonel	 (2)
Thieu Ta	Junior Grade Superior Officer	Major	 (2)
Dai Uy	Senior Grade Junior Officer	Captain	 (3)
Trung Uy	Intermediate Grade Junior Officer	First Lieutenant	 (3)
Thieu Uy	Junior Grade Junior Officer	Second Lieutenant	 (3)
Chuan Uy	Student Officer	None (Cadet Military Academy)	 (4)
Sinh Vien Si Quan	Student Officer Candidate	None (Officer Candidate)	 (5)
ENLISTED MEN			
Thuong Si Nhat (6)	Senior Grade Superior NCO	Sergeant Major	 (7)
Thuong Si (6)	Superior Grade NCO	First Sergeant	 (8)
Trung Si Nhat (6)	Senior Grade NCO	Sergeant First Class	 (9)
Trung Si (6)	Intermediate Grade NCO	Sergeant	 (10)
Ha Si Nhat (6)	Junior Grade NCO	Corporal	 (11)
Ha Si (6)	Low Grade NCO	Private First Class	 (12)
Binh Nhat	Private First Class	Private	 (13)
Binh Nhi	Private Second Class	Recruit	NONE
Trung Dinh	Able Bodied Man	None (Conscript)	NONE

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) Silver stars.<br>(2) Silver plum blossoms.<br>(3) Gold plum blossoms.<br>(4) Gold disc with raised letter in gold.<br>(5) Gold disc with raised letter in red.<br>(6) "Si," the Vietnamese term for "lieutenant," is also applied to NCO's. | (7) Gold disc.<br>(8) Silver disc.<br>(9) Three silver chevrons.<br>(10) One silver chevron.<br>(11) One silver, two gold chevrons.<br>(12) Two gold chevrons.<br>(13) One gold chevron. |
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Figure 4 (U). Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Army, 1966 (U).

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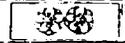
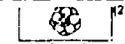
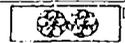
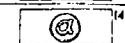
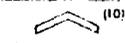
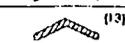
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Vietnamese Title	Translation	United States Equivalent	Rank Insignia
<b>OFFICERS</b>			
Do Doc	Senior Admiral	Admiral	 (1)
Pho Do Doc	Intermediate Admiral	Vice Admiral	 (1)
Da Doc	Junior Admiral	Rear Admiral	 (1)
Pho Da Doc	Sub Admiral	Commodore	 (1)
Hai Quan Dai Ta	Senior Grade Superior Naval Officer	Captain	 (2)
Hai Quan Trung Ta	Intermediate Grade Superior Naval Officer	Commander	 (2)
Hai Quan Thieu Ta	Junior Grade Superior Naval Officer	Lieutenant Commander	 (2)
Hai Quan Dai Uy	Senior Grade Junior Naval Officer	Lieutenant	 (2)
Hai Quan Trung Uy	Intermediate Grade Junior Naval Officer	Lieutenant Junior Grade	 (2)
Hai Quan Thieu Uy	Junior Grade Junior Naval Officer	Ensign	 (2)
Chuan Uy	Student Officer	None (Cadet Naval Academy)	 (2)
<b>ENLISTED MEN</b>			
Thuong Si Nha(3)	Senior Grade Superior Petty Officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer	 (4)
Thuong Si	Superior Grade Petty Officer	Chief Petty Officer	 (4)
Trung Si Nha	Senior Grade Petty Officer	Petty Officer First Class	 (4)
Trung Si	Intermediate Grade Petty Officer	Petty Officer Second Class	 (4)
Ha Si Nha	Junior Grade Petty Officer	Petty Officer Third Class	 (5)
Ha Si	Low Junior Grade Petty Officer	Seaman	 (4)
Thuy Thu	Low Grade Seaman	Seaman Apprentice	 (4)

- (1) Silver stars  
 (2) Gold colored stripes.  
 (3) "Si," the Vietnamese term for "student," is also applied to NCO or petty officer.  
 (4) Center stripes: white  
 (5) Center chevron: light blue.

Figure 5 (U). Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Navy, 1966 (U).

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Vietnamese Title	Translation	United States Equivalent	Rank Insignia
OFFICERS			
Dai Tuong	Senior General	General	 (1)
Trung Tuong	Intermediate General	Lieutenant General	 (1)
Thieu Tuong	Junior General	Major General	 (1)
Chuan Tuong	Sub General	Brigadier General	 (1)
Dai Ta	Senior Grade Superior Officer	Colonel	 (2)
Trung Ta	Intermediate Grade Superior Officer	Lieutenant Colonel	 (2)
Thieu Ta	Junior Grade Superior Officer	Major	 (2)
Dai Uy	Senior Grade Junior Officer	Capt.	 (3)
Trung Uy	Intermediate Grade Junior Officer	First Lieutenant	 (3)
Thieu Uy	Junior Grade Junior Officer	Second Lieutenant	 (3)
Chuan Uy	Student Officer	None (Cadet Air Force Academy)	 (4)
Sinh Viên Sĩ Quan	Student Officer Candidate	None (Officer Candidate)	 (5)
ENLISTED MEN			
Thuong Sĩ Nhạ <sup>(6)</sup>	Senior Grade Superior NCO	Sergeant Major	 (7)
Thuong Sĩ <sup>(6)</sup>	Superior Grade NCO	First Sergeant	 (8)
Trung Sĩ Nhạ <sup>(6)</sup>	Senior Grade NCO	Sergeant First Class	 (9)
Trung Sĩ <sup>(6)</sup>	Intermediate Grade NCO	Sergeant	 (10)
Ha Sĩ Nhạ <sup>(6)</sup>	Junior Grade NCO	Corporal	 (11)
Ha Sĩ <sup>(6)</sup>	Low Grade NCO	Airman First Class	 (12)
Binh Nhạ	Private First Class	Airman	 (13)
Dinh Nhi	Private Second Class	Recruit	NONE
Trung Dinh	Able Bodied Man	None (Conscript)	NONE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(1) Silver stars.<br/>                 (2) Silver plum blossoms.<br/>                 (3) Gold plum blossoms.<br/>                 (4) Gold disc with raised letter in gold.<br/>                 (5) Gold disc with raised letter in red.<br/>                 (6) "Sĩ," the Vietnamese term for "student," is also applied to NCO's.</p> | <p>(7) Gold disc.<br/>                 (8) Silver disc.<br/>                 (9) Three silver chevrons.<br/>                 (10) One silver chevron.<br/>                 (11) One silver, two gold chevrons.<br/>                 (12) Two gold chevrons.<br/>                 (13) One gold chevron.</p> |
|---|---|

Figure 6 (U). Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Air Force, 1966 (U).

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(majors) and junior-grade junior officers (second lieutenants) wear one. Student officers and student officer candidates (no equivalents) wear a round disc with a gold and red "a" (*aspirant*), respectively. The two highest noncommissioned officers wear a gold or silver button. The foregoing insignia of rank are worn on the shoulder boards of the dress uniform, on the collar of the shirt or on the center of the left breast of the field uniform. The insignia for other ranks in the Army are inverted chevrons worn on the left sleeve: three silver for senior-grade noncommissioned officer (sergeant first class), one for intermediate-grade noncommissioned officer (sergeant), one silver above two gold for junior-grade noncommissioned officer (corporal), two gold for low-grade noncommissioned officer (private first class) and one gold for private first class (private).

(U) Navy insignia of rank closely follows that of the United States Navy. Officers below flag rank and rated enlisted men wear gold stripes; seamen wear inverted blue chevrons.

(U) The characteristic air force insignia consists of a pair of separated gold wings situated above a gold star. This device, in addition to rank insignia, is worn on the shoulder boards by officers and senior noncommissioned officers. Other enlisted men wear it on the sleeve patch, below the chevrons (upright) and bordered by a white stripe. Flying personnel are further distinguished by the wearing of wings on the left breast pocket of either the shirt or the blouse. These wings are of silver and have a silver star (pilot) or other specialty (navigator, observer) device in the center.

### Pay

(U) The base pay rates of the armed forces were established in 1957 and partially revised for the first time in 1964. A 50 percent increase in enlisted pay went into effect on July 1, 1965. Base pay in all grades is supplemented by cost-of-living, family and food allowances, scaled according to grades and number of dependents. In addition, enlisted men, student officers and student officer candidates who possess special skills are granted a proficiency pay called supplemental technical allowance. There is a great variety of special allowances which are paid to military personnel who hold distinctive positions, are assigned technical duties or belong to a branch of service receiving particular emoluments. Among these special allowances are hazardous duty pay, special uniform grants, entertainment authorizations for attachés and high-ranking officers and increased payments for duty involving extraordinary expenditures. Conscripts receive

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only nominal pay until they have completed 4 months of service, at which time their pay is raised to that of privates.

(S) In general, the armed forces are regarded as being poorly paid, particularly in view of almost continuous service in the field away from home and in view of inflationary trends caused by the economic dislocation brought on by incessant warfare.

### Rations

(U) Enlisted men of the lower three grades are authorized a ration allowance consisting of a basic food allowance and an administrative food allowance. The basic food portion is intended to provide cash for the purchase of the fresh food component of the ration (meat, fowl, fish and vegetables). The administrative portion, covering rice, salt, tea, sugar and shortening, is issued in kind by the quartermaster and is worth about 4.50 piasters (for value of the piaster, see Glossary) per man per day. The basic food allowance varies from 14 to 17 piasters per man per day, depending on the area of assignment.

(U) Separate rations may be authorized when personnel are living with dependents or when the unit to which they are assigned does not operate mess facilities. In such cases the entire ration allowance is paid in cash. Individuals wounded in line of duty and receiving treatment in a hospital or troop unit dispensary continue to receive their ration allowance while being fed free of charge by the hospital mess.

(C) The military ration compares favorably with that of the populace as a whole. It averages about 3,000 calories per day and is considered well balanced in protein, fat, carbohydrates, iron and vitamin A. Consistently good food service programs in the military have resulted in food being regarded as a morale-sustaining factor.

### Uniforms

(U) The uniforms worn by the armed forces are generally similar to those worn by the French in the tropics. United States Army influence, however, is quite strong and extends to a great number of articles of the uniform, including service caps, helmets, boots and fatigue clothing. Olive-drab cotton garments are worn during most of the year, but woolen uniforms are supplied when needed. On special occasion, officers and top-ranking noncommissioned officers wear dress uniforms—white for summer and light-green gabardine for cooler weather. Field uniforms include both the standard and the camouflage cloth types of United States Army fatigues.

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## Decorations

(U) The Vietnamese tradition emphasized formal honors for achievement, and the attitude persists in the military service. Soldiers are proud of their medals and, when feasible, wear the full decoration rather than the ribbon bar on their duty uniforms. Whenever practicable, decorations are presented by the Chief of State or the Prime Minister or their representatives at ceremonies which are held as soon as possible after the achievement for which they are awarded.

(U) Five principal state decorations were authorized by statute in 1958: the National Order of Vietnam; the Medal of Military Merit; the Cross of Valor; the Wound Medal; and the Medal of Honor of Vietnamese Merit.

(U) The National Order of Vietnam, the Republic's highest decoration, which resembles the French Legion of Honor, is composed of five classes—from highest to lowest: Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer and Knight. Admission to the National Order is usually granted in the rank of Knight, and promotions (additional awards) to higher rank are made only after the recipient has held the next lower rank for a specified period of time. The medals of the two highest ranks are pinned on the left side of the chest below the breast pocket and are worn with a shoulder cord; the medal of the middle rank is suspended on a ribbon worn around the neck; the last two are suspended from ribbons pinned on the chest. The medal is also awarded to South Vietnamese civilians and foreigners for distinguished service to the nation.

(U) The Medal of Military Merit, comparable to the United States Silver Star, is awarded to student officers, noncommissioned officers and enlisted men for exceptional military valor. Under exceptional circumstances the medal may be awarded to service personnel of allied forces who have distinguished themselves in military action on Vietnamese territory.

(U) The Cross of Valor resembles the French Croix de Guerre in appearance and is comparable to the United States Bronze Star. It is awarded in four grades—from highest to lowest: Bronze Palms (army citation), Gold Star (corps citation), Silver Star (division citation) and Bronze Star (brigade or regiment citation). Multiple citations can be received for separate acts, and various citations are represented by palms or stars affixed to the ribbon. Awards of the Cross of Valor can be made to units as well as individuals.

(U) The Wound Medal, comparable to the United States Purple Heart, is awarded to service personnel wounded in action against an

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enemy. The right to wear the medal is granted after the serviceman has received a certificate from the proper medical authorities. The medal is worn on the left breast, following the Cross of Valor.

(U) The Medal of Honor of Vietnamese Merit is awarded for outstanding service, in either first or second class. First Class awards, as a rule, are made to officers and Second Class to noncommissioned officers and enlisted men. Holders of the Medal Second Class, however, may be recommended for First Class upon a second outstanding period of service at least 1 year after the original award.

(U) In addition to the state decorations, various service awards are authorized. These include the Air Force Order, Air Force Honor and Air Merit medals, the Gallantry Medal, the Medal for Bravery and the Distinguished Flying Medal. These medals are awarded to both officers and enlisted men, and, under certain circumstances, to civilians, both Vietnamese and foreign.

### MILITARY JUSTICE

(U) The basis of military justice in Vietnam is the Code of Military Justice, which was promulgated in 1951 and which, with relatively few amendments, remains in effect. The Code is based largely on French legal procedures and concepts and is administered centrally by the Minister of War and Reconstruction for all the armed forces. The Minister is assisted in discharging his responsibilities under the Code by a Military Justice Corps which is roughly equivalent to the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. These men are generally law graduates, although some perform their duties while still serving the required probationary period before admission to the bar as qualified lawyers.

(U) The South Vietnamese place considerable stress on pretrial investigation, which is performed by the Criminal Investigation Service of the Military Police. This function previously was performed by the National Gendarmerie, whose personnel was absorbed into the National Police and Military Police when it was abolished in January 1965.

(U) The military court system provides for only two types of military courts: regular military courts and field courts. These courts are generally similar to the American general court-martial in composition, jurisdiction and award of punishment. There are no South Vietnamese counterparts to the summary and special courts-martial of the United States Army. Regular military courts usually are convened at Hue for cases arising in I Corps, at Nha Trang for II Corps

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cases and at Saigon for those cases arising in the III and IV Corps areas and the Capital Military Region, except for those cases handled by the IV Corps Field Court at Can Tho.

(U) A regular military court is composed of a civilian president, four military members, a chief prosecutor and an examining magistrate, plus necessary administrative and clerical personnel. No defense counsel is provided the accused, although he may hire civilian counsel of his own choosing. If the accused cannot pay for counsel, a civilian lawyer is designated by the local bar association to defend him without pay.

(U) The civilian president is usually a judge from the local court of appeals and is assigned to the military court for a period of 6 months. The four military members may be from any of the military services, are appointed from units within the area by the corps commander and are customarily senior in grade to the accused. Both the public prosecutor and the examining magistrate are generally officers appointed from the Military Justice Corps.

(U) Cases referred to regular military courts include offenses of moderate gravity (punishable by a fine and imprisonment not exceeding 5 years), as well as the most serious offenses (punishable by death or imprisonment for more than 5 years). An accused, if found guilty, may appeal to the Court of Cassation, the highest civilian court of appeals in the country. In cases where the death sentence has been imposed the accused always has the right to petition for amnesty, even after his appeal has been rejected.

(U) A field court has the same composition as a regular military court, except that the president is a military officer instead of a civilian judge. Although the pretrial procedure is simplified and abbreviated much more than for cases appearing before a regular military court, the same classification of offenses are assigned to it for trial. The characteristic features of cases assigned, however, are that they must have arisen during an emergency and they must be of a flagrante delicto nature. The South Vietnamese, however, apply the flagrante delicto concept in a somewhat wider sense than is done under American law, in that greater latitude is permitted in the presumption that the accused was involved in a crime. While both military personnel and civilians can be brought before these courts, civilian cases usually are limited to the most serious crimes involving the security of the state. Sentences pronounced by field courts are final and not subject to appellate review as in the case of regular military courts. As a matter of established procedure, however, death sentences are not carried out without the approval of the Chief of State.

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(C) Nonjudicial punishment is not recognized by the Code of Military Justice, but it has long been authorized by various directives and orders of the Minister of War and Reconstruction. In general, the permissible types and amount of punishment under this disciplinary action vary according to the grade of the offender and the rank of the person imposing the punishment. The usual type of punishment is restriction or confinement, the forfeiture of pay not being authorized by regulations. The lowest grade Vietnamese punishing authority is a corporal, who can impose a maximum of 2 days' restriction on any enlisted man under his command. The highest is the Minister of War and Reconstruction, who may order solitary confinement for up to 60 days. The Vietnamese soldier does not have the option of electing trial by court-martial in lieu of nonjudicial punishment.

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## CHAPTER 31 (S)

### GENERAL EVALUATION (U)

#### LOYALTY

(C) The armed forces have played a decisive role in the various attempts to bring political stability to the country since 1954. During the fairly quiescent period from 1954 to 1959, when Communist-directed internal subversion was in its formative stage, President Ngo Dinh Diem relied heavily on the military to overcome politicoreligious and other dissident elements and permit the formation of an effective national government. In accomplishing this, President Ngo eliminated high-ranking officers of doubtful loyalty to him and tried to instill in the minds of the people at large the idea that the freedom of the country depended upon the wholehearted support of the country by the military establishment. These early efforts to strengthen the loyalty to his government of the military had considerable success, but he did not succeed in equating loyalty to the country with loyalty to the government.

(S) Popular dissatisfaction with the oligarchical character of the Ngo regime, coupled with discontent of the military with his prosecution of the counterinsurgency effort, led to the overthrow of President Ngo in 1963 and the emergence of the armed forces as the dominant power elements in political affairs. Since that time, military factions have engaged in a series of coups, brought about largely by intramilitary rivalries, which have produced only superficial changes in the form and functioning of military rule. (4)

(S) Undercurrents within the armed forces are still evident, and their presence is one more factor making for a continued state of political fluidity. Officers with strong political feelings and ambition are found in various groups or cliques which lack clear definition because of shifting loyalties. The leadership which inspired the latest coup in mid-1965 has revealed a noticeable degree of personal instability, chargeable in part to youth and lack of experience in public affairs.

(S) There appears to be no reason to suspect the loyalty of lower ranking officers. As a group they are largely apolitical, with pri-

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mary interest in improving their careers within the military system. To this end they are concerned with remaining alert to possible power shifts among groups of high ranking officers in order to identify themselves with those that are most likely to achieve positions of influence either in the armed forces or in the government.

(S) Career noncommissioned officers are not an entity whose reactions to governmental problems are of major concern. They are considered dependable in time of crisis and would be expected to follow the actions of their immediate superiors. As in many armies whose rank and file have peasant roots, the allegiance of the basic soldier is heavily conditioned by the personal qualities and professional skill of lower level unit leaders with whom he has the most contact. His personal attitude is quickly formed and is largely based on personal experiences, a process which is greatly influenced by the condition under which he serves.

(C) Both officers and enlisted men are exposed to a continuous and systematic Communist psychological warfare campaign to undermine their confidence in the central government and its ability to win the struggle for national survival. Every effort is made to incite defections and desertions, spread terror, damage facilities and discredit the established order in all possible ways. To offset these Communist efforts, the government has increased its indoctrination instruction, which stresses the benefits of freedom and seeks to strengthen loyalty and enhance patriotism.

### MORALE

(S) Morale within the armed forces has varied greatly and has been tied very closely to the course taken by the war against the Communist insurgency. Also, many of the shortcomings in the military service are still traceable to the conditions which arose under the overly centralized and personalized government of President Ngo. At that time political favoritism was prevalent, and advancement was governed more by personal loyalty than by superior performance and bravery in the field. Vestiges of these practices still underlie much of the noticeable dissatisfaction among the lower ranking officers in the matters of reward and recognition. Many of them continue to feel that desirable assignments, honors and promotions are still not fully predicated on military merit alone. (4)

(S) The prolongation of counterinsurgency warfare has magnified other problems affecting morale: long absences from families, poor housing for dependents, long service in isolated areas, mediocre medi-

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cal standards, poor leadership and inadequate pay. All these matters are known to the government, and although they are receiving varying degrees of attention, full corrective action will probably require a considerable period of time. (4)

(C) The rising desertion rate in the Army is also reflective of the intensity of the current war efforts. While definitely a matter of concern, it probably does not indicate an overall drop in Army morale. It is a factor, however, which affects buildup rates and militates against keeping operational units up to full strength.

(C) Troop morale has also been adversely affected by the variations in the policies which have governed the prosecution of the war against the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists). Under President Ngo, aggressive displays of military initiative and acceptance of calculated risks were frowned upon as leading to high casualty rates and thereby detracting from the appearance of strength and stability which his government strove to portray. Morale was not improved by the reversal of this policy under later governments. The Viet Cong insurgency had generally intensified by then, and heavy fighting conditions produced heavy casualties and provided only intermittent relief and virtually no regular leave or rotation patterns among combat units. Under these general conditions it has been difficult to develop an esprit de corps or a strong military character which are basic to good discipline and combat dependability.

### VULNERABILITY TO PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

(C) The intensification of the Communist insurgency has been accompanied by a concurrent increase in all aspects of psychological warfare. Communist propaganda, always profuse, was intensified both by North Vietnam and by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

(C) The most effective themes have been, and still are, designed to appeal to nationalist sentiment, to blame internecine strife on the "colonialist" United States and its "puppet" government in Saigon and to claim for Communist North Vietnam total credit for the "heroic struggle" for the independence and freedom of all Vietnam.

(C) Typical Communist propaganda assertions are: "In South Vietnam, American imperialism has replaced French colonialism"; "The unswerving objective of our struggle is to defeat the United States imperialists' aggressive war, in order to liberate South Vietnam, to achieve an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral South Vietnam, and to move toward national unification"; "Like the French colonialists in the past, the United States spread its money around to create a sizable mercenary, puppet army, thus creating an internecine,

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fratricidal war"; "With the wholehearted support of the northern kith-and-kin compatriots and the generous support of friends the world over, the southern liberation revolution of our revolution will surely achieve many other glorious victories."

(C) Such propaganda is calculated not only to win actual converts to the Communist side, but to create in the minds of South Vietnamese troops a feeling of inferiority, weakness and guilt. Although there is no indication that it has had significant success in the first respect, it undoubtedly constitutes a threat to troop morale.

(C) Communist propaganda is disseminated primarily by radio and secondarily by pamphlets and leaflets printed in North Vietnam, or clandestinely in South Vietnam, and distributed to villagers throughout the country. Posters, placards and slogans are also put up in public places at night. The Viet Cong make extensive use of civic action programs to provide opportunities to propagandize the rural population at meetings and gatherings intended for other purposes. Demonstrations are also organized by infiltrated agents to embarrass the government by protesting against certain official actions or failures to act.

(C) The government and military authorities, with the assistance of the United States, have instituted countermeasures which, since 1962, have proved increasingly effective. As organizational controls are strengthened after periods of buildup in the armed forces, greater emphasis on training and indoctrination of new conscripts can be accomplished, and the propaganda vulnerability of the troops is correspondingly reduced. In general, even under combat conditions, the armed forces have become inured to the Communist psychological campaign and are successfully withstanding it.

### EFFECTIVENESS

(S) Despite the number of coups since 1963, the armed forces have remained effective, although their effectiveness might well have been greater if many of the higher ranking officers had not been preoccupied with political entanglements in the capital. With the exception of the senior commanders and staff officers, the military establishment has not reflected the instability of the central government, nor have many of the changes in the various high-command elements seriously affected the overall proficiency and combat effectiveness of the armed forces.

(S) The four military corps commanders are key figures in the conduct of combat operations as well as important links in the political control of the country. Their military responsibilities are broad

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and generally involve important decisions regarding the allocation of troops and resources to military tasks.

(S) The principal combat and tactical duties devolve more upon the divisional and lower unit commanders than on province or district chiefs who only occasionally become involved in political affairs. Consequently, the course of the war retains much of its regular pattern and progresses more in relation to lower level problems and how well they are solved. In early 1966 the corps and division commanders were considered stronger and more able, on the average, than their predecessors, a factor which tended to further offset the effects of political involvement.

(S) The expansion of the Regular Forces over the past 2 years, to meet increasing counterinsurgency needs, has served more to increase their overall capabilities, but it has not raised their effectiveness in equal proportion because of increased desertion rates, higher casualties and a greater negative impact from poor leadership and incomplete training. During this same period the Regional Force and the Popular Force were increasingly less effective in providing adequate security in areas cleared of the Viet Cong, with the result that an inordinate number of regular army troops were employed on internal security operations and in performing static security missions. Other problems remained or were intensified for the Army, including those relating to the improvement of motivation and aggressiveness.

(S) The few compensating factors do not offset the identifiable handicaps, but they are a sound basis upon which long-term constructive improvements can be made. The troops are more combat experienced, and individual bravery and adaptability continue to be evident. Also, increased United States combat participation reduces the advantages which lie with the Viet Cong and enhances the opportunity for South Vietnamese forces to conduct more offensive operations than heretofore. A most important element in raising the effectiveness of the military is the progress which is made in the civil and political aspects of the counterinsurgency effort. The government is acutely aware of this relationship and has been alert to stress the combination of these efforts in its policy.

### CAPABILITIES

(S) The armed forces have shown a steady increase in combat capability, largely as a result of the long-term support and assistance of the United States. The need for heavy concentration of military effort on the counterinsurgency, however, has deprived the Army of the opportunity of developing a strong conventional war capability.

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Nevertheless, it is regarded as being capable of conducting offensive operations against the less powerful adjacent countries. Prolonged resistance against a strong invading force such as North Vietnam in an all-out aggressive effort is considered beyond its present capacity.

(S) Considering the emphasis given to the special tactics and techniques needed for counterinsurgency operations, the ground forces are strongest in that role but still lack the ability to neutralize the Viet Cong insurgency at its increasingly high level. Defeat or elimination of the Viet Cong is conceded as beyond South Vietnamese ground force capacities, without the massive outside assistance of the United States. The Army is considered capable of maintaining internal security in selected areas of the country. Such security as could be attained, however, would depend to a large extent on the facility of movement, sympathy and support of the population and the availability of support units. (4, 5)

(S) The combat capabilities of the Navy are increasing as it gains operational experience. The Coastal Force has improved steadily in its surveillance of intracoastal shipping. The long coast and relatively few number of ships, however, restrict intensive naval patrol capabilities, both in open waters and along rivers. The Navy is capable of supporting the ground forces logistically and of providing limited sealift for short-term operations. The Marine Corps is limited to the conduct of small-scale assaults of approximate battalion-size against light resistance. (5)

(S) The Air Force must complete its present planned expansion and development into a four-composite wing force before it achieves the capability of meeting current requirements. The introduction of few modern aircraft into the present inventory and the continued emphasis on training and support functions should serve to raise its ability to fly more successful strike missions against ground targets. (5)

(S) Within the paramilitary forces, the Regional Force and the Popular Force both have low capabilities. Primarily, more aggressive leadership is needed, as well as better discipline, stronger motivation and greater acceptance by the peasant population. The Civilian Irregular Defense Group, although limited in size, is regarded as capable of conducting effective special forces-type operations. (5)

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## CHAPTER 32 (S)

### BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY PERSONALITIES (U)

(U) The personalities presented here are those regarded as having a significant influence, either actual or potential, on the political and military future of the country.

(U) The general governmental instability following the coup d'etat which unseated President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963 projected the military into a position of overall political control which has continued. Of the 22 personages considered in the civilian category, eight military were included because they occupy or have occupied positions normally filled by civilians. Four of those in the civilian category are included because of their prominence in the Communist-directed insurgency movement.

(C) Although relatively young (the average age is 40.8 years), the military leaders seem to have been selected for governmental positions and for positions of command on the basis of ability and experience as well as political reliability. It is also evident, however, that careful consideration was given in their selection to region of origin (North or South) and to religious preference, in an effort to achieve a harmonious balance.

(C) Despite these efforts, frictions have developed, and a serious crisis occurred on March 10, 1966, when Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky removed Lieutenant General Nguyen Chanh Thi from command of I Corps in the north. The removal of General Thi, a native northerner, a Buddhist and a popular commander, provoked strong anti-government reactions by the leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, accompanied by widespread demonstrations. This crisis also had a divisive effect on military leadership, the troops involved and various government officials. The threat to the Saigon government resulting from continued unrest had not been resolved by April 15, 1966.

#### CIVILIAN

(S) DINH TRINH CHINH. Secretary of State for Information and Open Arms (formerly Psychological Warfare) since June 1965.

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(S) Is experienced in governmental affairs. Displayed outstanding energy and intelligence while serving about 2 weeks as secretary of state for information under Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat before entering Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky's military government. Helped to draft the new government's charter, and then became head of the Department for Information and Open Arms in the Ministry of War and Reconstruction. As secretary, supervises the military psychological warfare activities and, presumably, the reindoctrination procedures for returnees from the Viet Cong forces. (7)

(S) As a prominent Saigon lawyer, has served as legal consultant for the National Legislative Council and for a number of publishing firms, including Time-Life in Saigon. Early in 1965, was mentioned as a possible choice to head the South Vietnamese Central Intelligence Organization. (7)

(S) Born in Hanoi on December 17, 1927; is married; and has six children. Speaks French and English very well. Reportedly served with Vietnamese army units, under French command, that were driven out of North Vietnam into China in 1945 by the Viet Minh forces; was wounded in this action. (7)

(S) After receiving a law degree from Hanoi University in 1953, worked for the United States Operations Mission in Vietnam as special assistant to the Program Support Division in 1953-54. Took a 6-month course in press relations and in radio and television at the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1955. In 1955-56, was news editor for the *Times of Vietnam*; in 1957, became press attaché with the South Vietnamese Mission to Cambodia. From 1959 to 1961, was technical adviser to the Royal Laotian Government in Vientiane. Meanwhile, in 1960, was admitted to the bar in Saigon. While working in Vientiane, reportedly completed a Laotian White Paper documenting complaints against Communist aggressions in Laos. Also did research work preparatory to Laotian air transportation agreements with France. (7)

(S) After the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963, the ruling military leaders apparently sought his advice frequently on political matters. Attended conferences held by the Asian Peoples Anti-Communist League of Saigon in October 1963 and at Taipei in November 1964. Early in 1965, was one of the civilian advisers named to assist some of the military leaders, including Commander of the Air Force Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky (later air vice marshal and prime minister), on political matters. (7)

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(U) DUONG VAN MINH (nicknames: MINH SUN and BIG MINH). Has been living abroad as an unofficial roving ambassador since November 1964, after he was superseded as Chief of State.

(S) Headed the coup which overthrew the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in November 1963, and became chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Military Council (frequently called the Council of Generals), which was replaced by the Provisional Leadership Committee. In these positions, functioned as Chief of State until October 20, 1964, except for two brief interruptions: from January 30 to February 8 and from August 16 to September 8. Was removed as chairman on January 30 by Lieutenant General Nguyen Khanh, who had taken over the government, stating that he acted to prevent a group of Revolutionary Military Council members from plotting, with French assistance, to establish a neutralist government in Vietnam. (7)

(S) After first refusing to join General Khanh's new government, finally agreed to participate as Chief of State and as supreme military adviser to the newly re-formed Revolutionary Military Council, largely ceremonial roles. Served in these positions from February 8 to August 16, when his powers and titles were assumed by General Khanh, touching off Buddhist and student riots which led to General Khanh's resignation and the formation of a 3-member Provisional Steering Committee. Was elected chairman of the Steering Committee on September 8 and served in this capacity as Chief of State until the establishment of a civilian government by the High National Council which swore in Phan Khac Son as Chief of State on October 26, 1964. (7)

(S) After appointment as roving ambassador by the new government, left Vietnam in November; visited India, Nationalist China and Hawaii, but has spent most of his time in Bangkok with his brother, who in 1965 was the South Vietnamese military attaché to Thailand. Remains an admirer of the United States military establishment. Insists that he is not in exile, but in May 1965, when he tried to return to Saigon, his plane was not permitted to land, and he went back to Bangkok and continued writing his memoirs. Was retired from the Army on May 24, 1965. Asserts he is anxious to become active again as a soldier, but never as a politician. (7)

(S) His rivalry with General Khanh undoubtedly contributed to his loss of power and his isolation from governmental affairs. Formerly, was highly admired and respected by the military and general population for his leading role in the overthrow of President Ngo. His popularity, particularly among the military officers, declined after

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his removal from chairmanship of the Revolutionary Military Council. Loss of prestige is also attributed to his inability to bring about needed internal reforms and to carry on an effective war against the Viet Cong. Was also charged, some say at the instigation of General Khanh, with financial irregularities and of improper associations with the French and the Viet Cong. Experienced and respected as a military commander, never pretended to be an accomplished politician and appeared reluctant to assume the role of a national leader. (7)

(S) Evidence is lacking to determine whether his rumored connection with the Viet Cong has any factual basis, but opposition is so strong among militant Catholics and younger military officers, including Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, that his return to Vietnam under present conditions remains doubtful. Still retains considerable personal prestige and popularity, however, particularly among the southern Vietnamese and the Buddhists. His supporters say he has matured politically and that enforced exile has enhanced his popularity and status. They apparently are awaiting favorable conditions for him to again take over the functions of Chief of State. (7)

(S) Born February 19, 1916, at My Tho, Dinh Tuong Province, 35 miles southwest of Saigon. Is married; has a daughter and two sons. His nickname "Big Minh" is attributed to his unusual height (almost 6 feet) and weight (about 200 pounds). His front teeth, except one, were pulled out by the Japanese in 1945 when he was their prisoner. Drinks and smokes moderately. Is a dignified and likeable person. His hobby is gardening, and he enjoys playing tennis. Speaks French fluently and English fairly well. Is a Buddhist and was accepted by them, in the coup of November 1963, as a successor to President Ngo—an ardent Catholic. (7)

(S) Completed secondary school at Lycée Chasseloup Laubat in 1933. Enlisted in the French Colonial Army in 1940; was commissioned a second lieutenant in October 1942. While fighting against the Japanese, was captured, in March 1945, but was released a month later. Was promoted to first lieutenant in 1948; transferred to the French-sponsored Vietnamese National Army in 1952. After attending the Ecole Etat Major (General Staff College) in Paris, became chief of staff of the I Military Region (Mekong Delta area) in 1953. In February 1955, was appointed commander of the Saigon-Cho Lon Subdivision of I Military Region; served in this capacity until August 29, 1956, when he became permanent secretary-general for national defense, with the additional duty of supervision over I and II Military Regions. In February 1957, was appointed commander of the Capital Military Region as well. During this period, gained a wide reputa-

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tion as commander of the successful operations against the Hoa Hao and Binh Xuyen dissidents north, west and south of Saigon. (7)

(S) After attending the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, from January to May 1958, became inspector general of I Army Corps. Was selected to command the Army Field Command when it was established in May 1961. His mounting popularity and his reputation as the best operational commander in the Army seemed to arouse President Ngo's suspicions regarding his political ambitions. His nonparticipation in the attempted coup of 1960, however, apparently raised his standing with the President but lowered it among the anti-Ngo army officers. Nevertheless, his opposition to the Ngo regime was well known, and government authorities reacted in December 1962 by transferring him from field duty to staff duty as President Ngo's special military adviser. Despite this precaution, was mentioned frequently in suspected coup plans. By virtue of his aggressive and forceful nature, as well as his prestige as a successful military commander untainted by political trickery, seemed to be well suited as a leader in the military coup of November 1963 against the increasingly unpopular Ngo regime. (7)

(S) HUYNH TAN PHAT (also uses the name TAM CHI). Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist-directed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam since March 1962; concurrently Secretary General of the Central Committee since January 1964.

(S) Described in National Front's biographic sketch as a talented intellectual architect, involved in revolutionary activities since his student days in the 1930's. Besides holding the second-ranking post in the Front hierarchy, is also secretary general of the Central Executive Committee of the so-called Democratic Party of South Vietnam, associated with the National Front. In February 1962, was elected chairman of the Front's Committee for the Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh Special Zone, where his antigovernment activities have been centered. Apparently, still retains this position, and, since August 1965, has been director of the National Front's publication, *Giai Phong* (Liberation). (7)

(S) Born about 1915 in My Tho, some 35 miles southwest of Saigon. Is married. His wife reportedly was released from prison in 1964 after serving 5 years for refusing to salute the South Vietnamese flag. Graduated from College of Fine Arts, University of Hanoi, about 1936, but before 1950, was said to be working as an architect. During his student days, reportedly helped to form the so-called Vanguard Youth Organization. Is a Buddhist. (7)

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(U) In 1944 and 1945, was director of the anti-French newspaper, *Thanh Nien* (Youth). In 1944, was a founding member of the Democratic Party (Dang Dan Chu Mien Nam Viet Nam—lit., Democratic Party of Southern Vietnam), covertly organized under the guidance of the Communist Party of Indochina and allied with it to form the Viet Minh front. This Democratic Party later became associated with the Communist Fatherland Front Party of North Vietnam and is not to be confused with various non-Communist parties of similar label that have since been formed.

(U) Between 1945 and 1958, was mentioned repeatedly as a member of the Communist-dominated Viet Minh's Directing Committee for the Nam-bo (lit., Southern Area, a term applied by the Viet Minh to the Cochinchina area, generally southwest of the Central Highlands) and as propaganda commissioner of the Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh Special Zone. During this period, was twice arrested, in 1945 and 1947, by the French for subversive activities. Communist North Vietnamese sources claim he was imprisoned for 2 years in Saigon's central prison, where he is said to have drawn attention to himself as a "trainer of men." Was sentenced to death by a French military tribunal, but was released after intervention by Vietnamese authorities.

(S) From 1947 to 1951, was a member of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam Branch of the Vietnamese Youth League. In 1950, was a member of the so-called Current Affairs Committee in the Nam-bo Conference of Writers and Artists and was mentioned by Communist sources as the "Viet Minh Mayor of Saigon." In 1951, was a member of the Administrative Committee of the Sino-Vietnamese Friendship Association and of the Campaign Committee for the Saigon-Cho Lon Branch of the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Association. (7)

(S) In late 1955, was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist-directed Fatherland Front (Mat Tran To Quoc), which at that time controlled the joint activities of the Viet Minh and Hoa Hao in South Vietnam. Operating from a headquarters in the Plaine des Jones, about 25 miles northwest of Saigon, he and the Executive Committee were under the general supervision of Lo Duan, who since 1960 has been first secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party (Dang Lao Dong Viet Nam—the Communist Party of North Vietnam). (7)

(S) While head of a National Front delegation to the Indochinese People's Conference at Phnom Penh in February and March 1965, reportedly told Prince Norodom Sihanouk that South Vietnam would

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never submit to North Vietnam. He added that the Front sought a neutral government with no foreign bases in South Vietnam and that a government run by the Front would seek aid from all countries, particularly from France. Furthermore, he reportedly asserted that reunification of South and North Vietnam was a desirable future goal, but it was neither needed nor necessary for several decades. (7)

(U) LU VAN VI. Minister of Justice since June 19, 1965.

(FOUO) Is a respected and talented member of the legal profession. Has served as Minister of Justice in two previous Cabinets. Was first appointed to that post by Prime Minister Tran Van Huong in November 1962 and reappointed by Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat in February 1965. Was described by Prime Minister Quat as being unusually proficient and honest in administering his judiciary duties. This evaluation is reaffirmed by his reappointment to the same post in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky.

(FOUO) Born February 1, 1905, at Long Xuyen, An Giang Province, about 90 miles southwest of Saigon. Is a Roman Catholic; speaks French.

(FOUO) Obtained a master's degree in law in Bordeaux (1933), and a doctorate in law in Paris (1938). Was admitted to the Saigon bar in 1939; served as chairman of the Saigon Bar Association in 1960 and 1961. Was a member of the Council of Notables under the government of Major General Nguyen Khanh from January to April 1964.

(U) NGUYEN CAO KY. Prime Minister and Air Vice Marshal. Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the National Leadership Committee since June 12, 1965; Commander of the Air Force since December 1963.

(S) Has been the leading figure in the public life of South Vietnam since emerging as chairman of the Central Executive Committee (having prime minister's functions) and as the head of the new government which, its leaders assert, is to hold "temporary sovereignty" until a new one is installed by electoral processes scheduled for sometime in 1967. Meanwhile, continues to retain post as commander of the Air Force. As one of the country's most colorful, capable and courageous military leaders, has played an important role in the various governmental shifts since the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. (7)

(S) Is fiercely anti-Communist, and his international outlook is oriented toward Western concepts. Favors forceful and aggressive action against the Viet Cong; was among the first military leaders

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to advocate large-scale bombing of North Vietnam. In professional and social matters, has shown considerable friendliness toward Americans. Attended military courses in France in 1954 and in the United States in 1958. (7)

(S) After becoming prime minister in June 1965, his 5-day goodwill visit to Nationalist China in mid-August was followed by a 3-day visit to Bangkok, Thailand, to promote closer relations among non-Communist countries in Southeast Asia. Early in the following October, visited Malaysia for 4 days, accompanied by the director general of the National Police, to inquire into Malaysian experience with Communist guerrillas. Made a 4-day visit to Seoul, South Korea, early in November, accompanied by the Minister of War and Reconstruction and the Minister of Economy and Finance. Accompanied by the Chief of State, Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu, attended a 2-day conference with President Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk at Honolulu, February 8 to 10, 1966, to discuss affairs of common interest to the two countries pertaining to the situation in South Vietnam. A scheduled visit to Argentina in early June 1966, officially announced the previous March, was suspended in April until after South Vietnamese elections. (7)

(S) As an ardent nationalist, seems to favor an authoritarian type of government, particularly under the emergency conditions imposed by the Communist insurgency. Speaks of himself as a career air force combat officer and professes a dislike for political activities and governmental administrative duties. Apparently wishes for authority to deal summarily with corruption or inefficiency inside and outside the government. Has not been popular among Catholics, who fear that he has become unduly influenced by the Buddhists through their appeals to his vanity and their threats to undermine his prestige. Was once a favorite of Major General Nguyen Khanh, who in 1964 conferred upon him the honorary title of air vice marshal. In return, twice displayed the power of the Air Force over Saigon to help thwart coup attempts against the Khanh government. Supported General Khanh's successful efforts to oust Prime Minister Tran Van Huong's government in January 1965, but soon became one of the leaders opposing the General's assumption of further power. (7)

(S) In May 1965, reportedly resisted the Armed Forces Council's proposal to remove Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat from office. By early June, however, apparently aggravated by what he termed "continued corruption and civilian bickering" over composition of the government, helped to install a military government in the belief that civilian governments had failed to be effective. (7)

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(S) Born at Son Tay in North Vietnam, 20 miles northwest of Hanoi on September 8, 1930. Is married. After divorce from his first wife, Clotilde Barbe, of Algerian-French extraction, with whom he had four children, married an attractive 24-year-old Air Vietnam stewardess in November 1964. They have a daughter born in August 1965. Is a Buddhist; speaks English and French fluently. (7)

(S) Despite his tendency to be flamboyant as well as impetuous in action and speech, is admired and respected by most South Vietnamese Air Force officers for his skill and imaginative aggressiveness in combat situations. Enjoys flying with them on attack missions. Usually wears a black flying uniform, of his own design, and a purple scarf. Apparently offsets his lack of aptitude for administration by careful selection of staff personnel. Before becoming prime minister, was a fairly heavy drinker and gambler and was generally regarded as somewhat of a playboy who enjoyed driving sport cars and the night life of Saigon. His style of living seems to have moderated somewhat in his new position because of lack of time, increased responsibilities and maturity. (7)

(S) Was called into military service and attended the officers' reserve course in November 1951; became a second lieutenant, reserve, in May 1952. After attending the French aviation school at Marrakech, Morocco, in October 1952, was integrated into the active service. Was promoted to first lieutenant, February 1, 1954; the following September, graduated from the French Advanced Flying School, then at Avord, some 45 miles southeast of Orléans. Was assigned to Combat Aérienne Extrême Orient (Group Senegal) on December 21, 1954. Was promoted to temporary captain on June 20, 1955, and to temporary major the following August; reverted to regular captain after November 1955; became commander of the 3d Air Force Support Base on February 1, 1956. After transfer to command the 1st Transport Squadron, was promoted to major in February 1957; held this post until the November coup of 1963, except for 6 months of training in 1958 at the command and staff officers' course at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama. (7)

(S) Was a lieutenant colonel in November 1960 when arrested and detained briefly after the attempted coup by a few military officers leading some paratroopers and collaborating with several opposition politicians. Was detained again briefly after the February 1962 bombing of the Presidential Palace by two air pilots. Participated in the November 1963 coup; within a month was promoted to colonel and appointed commander of the Air Force. (7)

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(S) His support of Major General Nguyen Khanh's overthrow of Major General Duong Van Minh's government in January 1964 was indicated by promotion to sub-brigadier general in the following April and to brigadier general in July, and by becoming third deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council in August. Helped to thwart the attempted coup by students and Buddhists protesting against General Khanh in September 1964. Despite his assertion then that the Air Force opposed any coup, was prominent in the dissolution of the High National Council on December 20, 1964, by the generals who were acting against Prime Minister Tran Van Huong's civilian regime, because they claimed its weakness threatened the stability of the government. (7)

(S) Became minister of youth and sports from January 18 to February 16, 1965, under Prime Ministers Tran Van Huong and Nguyen Xuan Quat, after assurance that he could retain command of the Air Force. Accepted selection of Phan Huy Quat as prime minister in February 1965 and supported him until his government became ineffective because of his irreconcilable political differences with Chief of State Phan Khae Suu. Advanced in grade to major general in the reorganized military rank structure on November 16, 1965. (7)

(S) During this period, disputes with Major General Nguyen Chanh Thi, I Corps Commander, became noticeable. Apparently was willing to avoid an open break as long as General Thi continued to support Prime Minister Quat's government. Relationship with the General continued inharmoniously, and, finally, on March 10, 1966, the General was suddenly removed from command of I Corps and from his duties on the National Leadership Committee. (7)

(S) NGUYEN DUC THANG. Major General. Secretary of the Department of Revolutionary Development (formerly called Rural Reconstruction) since October 1, 1965; Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, of the Joint General Staff since July 1965.

(S) Was suddenly called upon to become secretary of a department charged with responsibilities of increasing importance to the government while continuing his duties with the Joint General Staff. Reportedly is disliked personally by Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, who, believing the job required a military man and that he was the best qualified candidate, nevertheless selected him for the Cabinet post. Primarily a military career officer, relatively uninvolved in politics and intrigues, has served industriously in a variety of difficult assignments with competence. Is generally respected for his ability, dynamism and apparent determination to make the Revolutionary Development Program a success. (7)

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(S) Is Western-oriented, anti-Communist, strongly nationalistic and friendly toward United States officials. In furtherance of the Revolutionary Development Program, has readily adopted some of the indoctrination methods and promotional practices found by the Communists to be effective in South Vietnam's rural areas. Studied in France in 1954 and in the United States in 1958; visited Thailand in 1964 and the United States in 1965. (7)

(S) Primarily a career military officer, has shown a preference for field command assignments or for operational planning rather than for administrative duties on a headquarters staff. Has been relatively uninvolved in politics in factional intrigues, civilian or military. United States military officials have described him as mature and professionally competent. Is generally regarded as an excellent commander. (7)

(S) Born on January 1, 1930, in Cao Bang Province, north of Hanoi near the boundary with Communist China. Is married and has two daughters. Speaks French fluently and has a good command of English. Is a Roman Catholic. (7)

(S) Graduated from the University of Hanoi about 1951, majoring in mathematics. After completing the Officer Candidate School course at Thu Duc (near Saigon) in 1952, was assigned to a field artillery battalion. Attended the Vietnamese Artillery Center in 1953 and the French artillery school in 1954. Then, commanded a field artillery battalion until 1957 and the Vietnamese Artillery Center until September 1958, when he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The following June, became G-3 at the Thu Duc Armor School, and in 1960, was commandant of the Thu Duc Military Schools Complex. (7)

(S) During 1961 and 1962, successively commanded the 1st and the 5th Infantry Divisions. From December 1962 until November 1963, was J-3 (Operations) of the Joint General Staff and director of the Military Operations Center in Saigon. After the overthrow of President Ngo in November, became J-2 (Intelligence) of the Joint General Staff and concurrently was in charge of the Joint Operations Center. Was J-3 (Operations) and director of the Joint Operations Center from February 1964 until July 1965, when he became Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations. Was promoted to sub-brigadier general in August 1964 and to brigadier general on November 1, 1965 (rank of brigadier general was reclassified as major general later in November). (7)

(U) NGUYEN HUU CO. Lieutenant General. Deputy Prime Minister since October 1, 1965; member of The Directory (Na-

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tional Leadership Committee) since June 12, 1965; Minister of War and Reconstruction and Secretary of State for Defense since June 10, 1965.

(S) Holds the most important portfolio in the Cabinet. As Minister of War and Reconstruction, is responsible for the activities of six departments: Defense (a portfolio held concurrently with his primary post); Information and Open Arms; Revolutionary Development; War Veterans; Communications and Transportation; and Interior. Is a competent professional army officer, who, before entering the Cabinet, performed well in command and staff positions. (7)

(S) Throughout his service career, was relatively uninvolved in political maneuverings and has managed to avoid clear identification with any cliques. Possible exceptions, however, are the key role he played in the coup overthrowing President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963 and the active support given to Major General Nguyen Khanh's takeover of the government in January 1964. His relations with General Khanh subsequently became somewhat strained on the grounds that General Khanh, as prime minister, had tacitly agreed to Buddhist plans for the neutrality of South Vietnam. Was among those who openly welcomed General Khanh's removal, in February 1965, as chairman of the Armed Forces Council and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. (3, 7)

(S) Is strongly anti-Communist, opposes neutralism in any form, and has shown considerable friendliness toward United States officials. Attended a military course in the United States in 1957. Accompanied Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky on a 4-day goodwill visit to South Korea in November 1965. (3, 7)

(S) Besides being a dedicated officer and Cabinet member, is a strong nationalist and favors vigorous military action against the Viet Cong. At the same time, is among those who have asserted that success against the insurgency in South Vietnam will depend in the long run upon the degree of popular support the government can achieve. (3, 7)

(S) Is a professional soldier, apparently without political party affiliations. Regards the armed forces as the essential means for achieving national security enabling civilian leadership to establish political stability. (3, 7)

(S) Born on February 23, 1925, at My Tho, Dinh Tuong Province, southwest of Saigon. His father was a career army officer. Completed his secondary education in 1943. His wife, in December 1965, was chairman of the Vietnamese Red Cross Grey Ladies Association. (3, 7)

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(S) Speaks French fluently and has good command of English. Has been identified as a Buddhist, but apparently has not accepted any of the Buddhist political demands. Indications are that he no longer claims any religious affiliation. Reports of early 1965 allege that he had some connections with an anti-Communist and primarily Catholic group called the National Defense Force which opposed neutralist sentiment in South Vietnam. (3, 7)

(S) Began his military career at Da Lat Military Academy where he specialized in communications. In 1948, attended the first Vietnamese officers' school at Hue, graduating first in his class. Attended the Command and Tactical Course at Hanoi in 1952 and 1953. While an infantry battalion commander in 1953, was awarded the French Légion d'Honneur for his outstanding combat performance. (3, 7)

(S) After the Indochina War, commanded the 31st Infantry Division in Quang Ngai and Quang Nam; in March 1955, was named Chief of Can Tho (later called Phong Dinh) Province in the Mekong Delta, where he reportedly participated in the defeat of the Hoa Hao sect forces. By 1957, was a colonel and in that year was sent to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. On returning to South Vietnam, became commander of the 16th Light Division; in September 1958, was transferred to command the I Military Region; in 1960 and 1961, served as deputy commander of the II Corps and the IV Military Region and from 1961 to 1963, as chief of staff of the II Corps. (3, 7)

(S) By early 1962, reportedly was dissatisfied with President Ngo's governmental policies, becoming openly critical of the suppression of Buddhist demonstrations in August and September 1963. Was an active member of the coup group. Immediately after the coup, was promoted to brigadier general and named commander of IV Corps, and became a member of the Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Military Council, serving until its dissolution in August 1964. (3, 7)

(S) Although reportedly a staunch supporter of Major General Duong Van Minh, participated in Major General Nguyen Khanh's coup of January 1964 which overthrew the Revolutionary Military Council headed by General Minh. Despite his support of General Khanh in this instance, apparently lost favor with Khanh and was relieved as commander and appointed deputy commander of the IV Corps. In September 1964, however, became commander of II Corps and presumably was promoted to major general. (3, 7)

(S) By December 1964, was reported to be favored by the so-called Young Turk group of officers to succeed General Khanh as Commander

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in Chief of the Armed Forces. Is said to have opposed General Khanh's decision to dissolve the government of Prime Minister Tran Van Huong in January 1965, contending that it would be a mistake to accede to the Buddhists' demands to remove the Prime Minister, but he accepted General Khanh's wishes without protest. Continued as commander of II Corps until appointed Minister of War and Reconstruction by Prime Minister Ky. Advanced in grade on November 16, 1965, to lieutenant general in the reorganized military rank structure. (3, 7)

(S) NGUYEN HUU THO. Chairman, Central Committee of the Communist-directed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and its Presidium since March 1962.

(S) Is a French-educated Cochinchinese lawyer with a long history of activity in Communist-front causes. After escaping in December 1961 from a concentration camp in Phu Yen Province, was present at the organizational meeting of the self-styled Communist-directed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam on March 3, 1962. At the meeting, was elected chairman of the Central Committee and its Presidium. When accepting the chairmanship, represented himself as a patriotic non-Communist, concerned primarily with the establishment of a "free and democratic Vietnam." To enhance his value, is portrayed by the Communists as a patriotic intellectual committed to the reunion of South and North Vietnam. (3, 7)

(S) Serves as a public spokesman for the Front, granting interviews to news reporters and signing messages sent on numerous occasions, such as birthdays, anniversaries and other official or semi-official events, to other Communist leaders and governments and to some neutralist officials. The extent of his authority and of his personal influence in the Front is difficult to determine, but he appears to be highly regarded within the Front's Central Committee as an intellectual. (3, 7)

(S) His experience in international affairs appears to be extremely limited, and his expressed viewpoints on external matters are closely patterned after those of Ho Chi Minh and other North Vietnamese Communist leaders. Reportedly, has some connections with Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and praises him in speeches for his "enlightened policies." Visits to foreign countries, outside the Indochina peninsula, have been rare—apparently restricted to a trip to France to study law in the early 1930's, a reported visit to Warsaw in February 1963, as a delegate to a meeting of the International Asso-

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ciation of Democratic Lawyers, and a possible visit to Peking in December 1965 on occasion of the fifth anniversary of the founding of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. (3, 7)

(S) In domestic politics, also, his viewpoints coincide with those of North Vietnamese Communists. As early as 1947, in league with French Communists, began cooperating with the Communist-directed Viet Minh. Has continued to support Communist-front groups, such as the Movement for the Defense of Peace, established in 1954, at Saigon. Contends that the so-called National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam represents all segments of the country's population and is the country's only legitimate government and therefore must have a decisive voice in any political solution for South Vietnam. (3, 7)

(S) Born in Cho Lon on July 10, 1910, into a prominent civil service family. His father is said to have been assassinated by the Viet Minh. Received his law degree in Aix-en-Provence (about 20 miles north of Marseilles), France, in the early 1930's and returned to Saigon where he practiced law beginning in 1934. His French is fluent. (3, 7)

(S) While practicing law in Vinh Long Province in 1947, was leader of a nationalist group called Mouvement Populaire Cochinchinois (Popular Movement of Cochinchina). Was arrested by the Viet Minh in 1947, and after 3 months' confinement, emerged a pro-Communist. In 1949, was president of the tribunal of Can Tho. (3, 7)

(S) In June 1949, was a member of the delegation which presented to French authorities a manifesto purportedly signed by nearly 900 leading intellectuals of the Saigon-Cho Lon area urging France to resume direct negotiations with Ho Chi Minh. At the same time, was identified as an editor of *Pour La Paix*, a clandestine Viet Minh-supported newspaper in Saigon. On March 19, 1950, when the United States Seventh Fleet visited Saigon in behalf of the French, made a speech which incited a riot protesting against the presence of the United States vessels. Arrested by the Vietnamese authorities, was released on bail a few days later but was rearrested by the French in April and detained at Lai Chau northwest of Hanoi near the Laotian border until October 1952, when the French Government granted him amnesty. Returned to Saigon immediately and was not heard of again until 1954. (3, 7)

(S) Became a vice chairman and Central Committee member of the Movement for the Defense of Peace when it was established in August 1954 at Saigon. Contributed articles to the organization's

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newspaper, *Thoi Bao* (Current Times), founded in October 1954 but banned by the government after only one or two issues for printing pro-Communist material. Was arrested within a month along with about 23 other Movement members and imprisoned at Gia Dinh (a northern suburb of Saigon) until the following February, when he was sent to Haiphong. Was removed from Haiphong by May 1955 and transferred to a concentration camp in Phu Yen Province, about 50 miles south of Qui Nhon, where he remained for almost 7 years. Has been out of prison since December 1961, but accounts of his release, whether by parole and desertion or by escape, are obscure and contradictory. (3, 7)

(S) NGUYEN KHANH. Former Lieutenant General. Former political and military leader; exiled since February 1965.

(S) Became prominent as a national figure for the first time on January 30, 1964, when he led a coup d'etat overthrowing the chief of state, Major General Duong Van Minh, and took over the reins of government. Retained power until a civilian government was installed late in the following October after a series of student and Buddhist demonstrations charging that "anti-Buddhist remnants" of former President Ngo's regime were still active in the government. His stature and influence were indicated by his promotion to lieutenant general within a month after leaving the government and by retention of his military post, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. His influence was again demonstrated on January 27, 1965, when, as chairman of the Armed Forces Council, he deposed Prime Minister Tran Van Huong whose government had become the target of strong agitations by Buddhist and Catholic groups claiming that he had not consulted religious leaders when forming his Cabinet and that he had excluded Buddhists from Cabinet membership. (7)

(S) Within a month, army leaders, suspecting that he intended to return to power, removed him from his posts as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and as chairman of the Armed Forces Council. Was appointed roving ambassador early in March and left for the United States, where he served briefly as Vietnamese observer at the United Nations. Later, was named ambassador to Spain. The National Leadership Committee on August 8, 1965, announced a decision to deprive him of his diplomatic title and his rank of lieutenant general and to recall him to Saigon for investigation of his connection with certain funds seized in the Central Highlands provinces after the overthrow of President Ngo in November 1963. By April 1966, had not returned but had moved from Spain to a Paris suburb. (7)

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(S) Despite his loss of power, seems to have maintained his political ambitions. Some observers feel that he still represents a potential threat to the government and, at a propitious time, may return to Saigon as a supporter of politicians from his homeland, the Mekong Delta area, who may be aspiring for power. Is a capable organizer, and, in military and governmental positions, has manifested excellent leadership qualities, characterized by vigorous action and aggressive temperament. (7)

(S) Is pro-Western, but has appeared suspicious of any pro-French sentiments, which, in his opinion, might lead to compromises or negotiations with the Viet Cong insurgents. Is strongly anti-Communist. United States officials found him to be generally amiable and receptive toward Western practices; even uses the Western given name of Raymond. Studied military courses in France in 1948 and 1949 and in the United States in 1957. Visited China and Thailand in March 1961. Significantly, when appointed roving ambassador early in March 1965, went to the United States, staying until August before leaving for his new post as ambassador to Spain. (7)

(S) Was a professional soldier, apparently without political interests or party until January 30, 1964, when he successfully led a coup d'etat which overthrew the ruling Military Revolutionary Council headed by Major General Duong Van Minh. There were reports, however, that he previously had been connected with coup groups and was a member of the Revolutionary Personalist Labor Party, commonly called the Can Lao Party, a Catholic-oriented group opposed to Communist and French influence in Vietnam. (7)

(S) After the coup, by virtue of his successive positions as prime minister, chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, remained in dominant power positions through five changes in government until finally deposed in February 1965. During this period, operated persistently and ruthlessly, using dictatorial methods in a hard-driving aggressive manner against military or civilian leaders who stood in his way. His political aim apparently was to win support of the so-called Young Turk officers so as to retain the reins of government even at the expense of the counterinsurgency effort. (7)

(S) In January 1965, before his removal from power, seemed to be advocating an increased role for the military in governmental affairs and the formation of a military-civilian council which would be a supreme body giving orders to the Chief of State, the prime minister and armed forces. Impressed American military observers as a skillful and effective officer and tactician, who had shown little com-

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prehension of the political problems involved in fighting communism. (7)

(S) Born November 8, 1927, in Tra Vinh, a provincial capital about 65 miles southwest of Saigon, of wealthy landowning parents. Is married and has two children. Is a Buddhist. Speaks French fluently and English fairly well. (7)

(S) Attended secondary school in Cambodia from 1938 to 1944, where his parents resided for a time. Received further academic education at French schools in North Vietnam. Is not particularly sociable, has few close friends and is frequently referred to as a "loner." Has a tendency to become involved in details, which could hamper his effectiveness as an administrator. (7)

(S) Graduated in 1947 from the Military Academy at Da Lat and was commissioned a second lieutenant. After 2 years at the Infantry and Airborne Schools in France, became the military aide of the minister of national defense. From 1951 to 1955, successively commanded a company as a captain, a battalion as a major and a mobile group as lieutenant colonel. Was promoted to colonel on December 25, 1955, and commanded the 1st Field Division at Huo from 1956 to 1958. During this period, served under Major General Duong Van Minh, who at that time commanded the Army Field Command. Meanwhile, attended the associate course for army officers at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. (7)

(S) Served as the permanent secretary general for national defense from 1958 to 1960; in October 1960, became chief of staff of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and deputy chief of staff of the Army. Meanwhile, in November and December 1959, was reported to be under discreet surveillance by the National Police and Security Service because documents seized from Communists had implicated him in one of their intelligence operations. Investigations, however, produced no evidence to establish his guilt or innocence. (7)

(S) As commander of V Military Region in the Can Tho area southwest of Saigon from January to October 1960, showed a lack of tact in dealing with parochial-minded provincial officials; emphasized military rather than political tactics. During the coup attempt in 1960, distinguished himself by his personal bravery and effective command of forces loyal to President Ngo Dinh Diem. Emerging from the incident as one of the strongest figures in the Army, was named commanding general of the Army. (7)

(S) In December 1962, became commander of II Corps, and concurrently of II Tactical Region, which borders on Laos. This assignment was influenced in part because of his familiarity with the country

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and his friendship with Phoumi Nosavan, the Laotian deputy prime minister. (7)

(S) During the suspected coup planning of August and September 1963, gave no indication of involvement, but some sources say he associated with the coup leaders; significantly, within a month after the coup, was promoted to major general and named commander of the IV Corps in the Mekong Delta area. In the following month, was transferred to command the I Corps, just south of the Demarcation Line and far from the center of activities in Saigon. (7)

(S) Undoubtedly, his organization of the bloodless coup of January 30, 1964, against the Revolutionary Military Council, headed by Major General Duong Van Minh as chief of state, was motivated by personal dissatisfaction with his transfer to the I Corps, augmented by rumors that he was being considered for appointment as ambassador to Nationalist China. (7)

(U) NGUYEN VAN HIEU. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist-directed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam since early 1962; appointed director of the Front's office in Prague in November 1963 and permanent representative of the Front in East Germany, in March 1964. Presumably holds both positions concurrently.

(S) According to Front sources, is regarded as one of the best educated members of the National Front hierarchy. Seems to serve as an unofficial roving foreign minister, authorized to make frequent public policy statements and trusted as a spokesman for the Front in a wide variety of foreign contacts. Is usually described in the Communist press as a former teacher and journalist. Reportedly, is favorably inclined toward Communist China. (7)

(U) Before his appointment to Prague, had served as secretary general of the Front's Central Committee and had held numerous other posts in Front-associated organizations, such as secretary general of the Radical Socialist Party (Dang Xa Hoi Cap Tien) and of the South Vietnam Peace Committee; vice chairman of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and of the South Vietnam Patriotic and Democratic Journalists Association.

(S) Born in 1922 at Ca Mau (now called Quan Long) in the southwestern tip of South Vietnam. His wife, Ma Thi Chu, a pharmacist, is also active in the Front as a member of its Central Committee (since 1962) and several of its associate organizations; was arrested with her husband in 1958 but later released. She has accompanied him on some of his trips to Communist and Communist-friendly countries and is stationed with him in Prague. (7)

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January; Budapest in March, to attend the World Federation of Democratic Lawyers, and in April, to attend a World Peace Council meeting; Albania in May, for a Communist celebration, stopping in Paris en route to meet a North Vietnamese trade delegation; Peking in August, heading a Front delegation to a symposium presumably on the Southeast Asian situation; Peking again in October, to attend nationalist day celebrations; Algeria in November, also to attend nationalist day celebrations; Cuba late in November to attend a so-called international conference for solidarity with the Vietnamese people. (7)

(S) In 1965 his travels included visits to Peking in January, heading a Front delegation for discussions relating to the Cambodian-Vietnamese border; Phnom Penh in February for the Indochinese People's Conference; Indonesia in April for the Bandung Conference anniversary celebrations; North Korea in May for a 10-day friendship visit; Algiers, with stops at Cairo and Moscow, in June to attend the Afro-Asian Conference; Syria and Tanzania in November; Cyprus in December. (7)

(U) NGUYEN VAN THIEU. Lieutenant General. Chairman of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) and Chief of State since June 19, 1965.

(S) Served as deputy prime minister and as minister of defense in the government of Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat. Was elected as chairman of the National Leadership Committee (vested with chief of state functions) by its members on June 14, 1965, when the Committee was formed by a group of some 20 generals to take over Prime Minister Quat's government. (3, 7)

(S) Is one of the outstanding figures in South Vietnam; has acquired prestige and authority by virtue of having operated effectively in a variety of important military and government positions since 1961 and having survived nearly every government since the assassination of President Ngo in 1963. Regarded by some Americans as a mature, able officer unaffiliated with any political, religious or army clique; apparently is capable of cooperating with various factions without becoming exclusively identified with any one of them. (3, 7)

(S) Is staunchly anti-Communist, supports nationalist policies, favors Western practices and has shown considerable friendliness toward United States officials. In connection with military training, visited France in 1950 and the United States in 1957 and 1963; in connection with governmental affairs, visited South Korea in 1963 and Nationalist China in 1964 and in 1966. (3, 7)

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(S) Is characterized by many Vietnamese Buddhists and some military persons as a self-seeking member of the southern faction of the Nationalist Party of Greater Vietnam (Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang—DVQDD), commonly called the Dai Viet Party. Was relieved as chief of the Joint General Staff of the Vietnamese Armed Forces on September 12, 1964, as a sympathizer with the extreme right wing of this Party and was suspected of complicity in the attempted coup of September 13, 1964, against Prime Minister Khanh, planned by Catholic officers within the Dai Viet organization. Is believed also to have been a backer of Colonel Pham Ngoc Thao's attempted coup in February 1965. Manifested satisfaction with the result of Colonel Thao's action—the loss of power by General Nguyen Khanh. (3, 7)

(S) Reportedly refused an offer to become prime minister in February 1965, preferring to remain as a deputy under Prime Minister Quat. Some have suggested, however, that this offer originated with General Khanh's hope that Buddhist opposition to General Thieu would discredit him as a national leader. Apparently endeavors to portray himself as a philosophic elder statesman rather than as a soldier with political ambitions. (3, 7)

(S) Born on April 5, 1923, of a relatively well-to-do family at the coastal town, Phan Rang, in Ninh Thuan Province about 150 miles northeast of Saigon. Is married to Nguyen Thi Mai Anh, born in 1930 at My Tho, some 35 miles southwest of Saigon. They have a daughter born in 1954. Appointed an older brother, Nguyen Van Kieu, a long time Dai Viet member and a former commissioner of youth and sports, as commissioner general for rehabilitation of flooded central provinces and, later, as his personal adviser. Another older brother, Nguyen Van Hieu, is ambassador to Australia. Is slim, even for a Vietnamese; has a high forehead with receding graying hair. Smokes a pipe. (3, 7)

(S) Speaks French and English fluently. Was a nominal Buddhist until converted to Catholicism upon marriage to his Catholic wife. (7)

(S) Attended secondary schools in Saigon and Hue from 1940 to 1947. Studied navigation at the University of Saigon from 1947 to 1948. Graduated from a 6-month officer's training course at Hue in 1949 and, in 1950, from a 7-month infantry application course at Coetquidan in northwestern France (the site of St. Cyr after 1945). (3, 7)

(S) Began his military service as a company commander, taking part in operations from 1950 to 1951 in the northern part of the Mekong Delta area. Was an instructor at the Da Lat Military Academy from 1951 to 1952. After attending a 3-month command and staff

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course in Hanoi, in 1952, was appointed as S-3 of the Hung Yen sector along the Red River, about 30 miles south of Hanoi, and served in this capacity until October 1953, when he became G-2 of II Military Region. (3, 7)

(S) Commanded an infantry regiment from March until October 1954; then deputy commander of II Military Region. Was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed commandant of the Da Lat Military Academy in October 1955. While serving in this capacity, was sent to the United States where, by June 1957, graduated from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, and the Air-Ground Operations Course at the Marine Corps Training Center at San Diego. Attended a 2-month course in 1958 at the Joint and Combined Planning School in Okinawa. Was promoted to colonel in 1959 and served as chief of staff, Army Field Command. Attended the 1-month Guided Missile Orientation Course in 1961 at Fort Bliss, Texas. In 1962, became commander of the 1st Infantry Division in July, and of the 5th Infantry Division in December. (3, 7)

(S) Was promoted to brigadier general after the assassination of President Ngo, in November 1963, and was appointed a member of the Revolutionary Military Council, while retaining command of the 5th Division. The following month, was a member of the South Vietnamese delegation to the inauguration of Park Chung Hee as President of the Republic of Korea. (3, 7)

(S) Was prominent in the coup in January 1964 which brought Major General Nguyen Khanh to power; in February was appointed secretary general of the Revolutionary Military Council and chief of the Joint General Staff; the following August, was appointed to serve concurrently as deputy minister of defense. In September 1964, denied rumors of his involvement in Dai Viet Party plans to overthrow Prime Minister Khanh; persistent suspicion of implication, however, apparently brought about his transfer to command of IV Corps. Nevertheless, was promoted to major general on January 1, 1965, and later in the month, was named second deputy prime minister. In February, when Phan Huy Quat took office as prime minister, was appointed deputy prime minister and minister of the armed forces. In May 1965, after dissolution of the Armed Forces Council, his title was changed to minister of state for defense. Advanced in grade to lieutenant general in the reorganized military rank structure on November 16, 1965. (3, 7)

(U) PHAM XUAN CHIEU. Lieutenant General. Secretary General of The Directory (National Leadership Committee), and member of the National Security Council since June 1965.

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(S) Is experienced in a wide variety of important positions in the military establishment and in the government. Served as chairman of the National Legislative Council for 5 months before the military takeover of the government from Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat. Attained support among Council members for the Prime Minister during his controversy with Chief of State Phan Khac Suu. Is highly regarded by Buddhist and Catholic leaders. Native of what is now North Vietnam and reportedly a member of the northern faction of the nationalist-oriented Dai Viet Party of which Prime Minister Quat had been a leader. His pleasant disposition, diligence, superior intelligence, ability to make decisions and willingness to work behind the scenes qualify him for important military or governmental posts. (7)

(S) Is Western-oriented, strongly anti-Communist and particularly friendly toward United States officials. In 1956, while director of the police and security bureau, was said to have ignored his superior's advice that he cease unauthorized contacts with Americans. Attended military courses in France from 1949 to 1950 and in the United States in 1960 and again in 1961-62. (7)

(S) Is a zealous nationalist. Generally regarded as a competent career officer but, possibly because of his intelligence service experience, seems inclined to become involved in political issues and civilian programs. (7)

(S) Born on November 20, 1920, in Ninh Binh Province about 60 miles south of Hanoi. Has a wife, Nguyen Thi Ha, and eight children. Speaks good French and fair English. Is a Buddhist. (7)

(S) Received his secondary education at the Lycée Albert Sarraut in Hanoi. Entered medical school at University of Hanoi in 1939; interrupted his medical studies to work with forces resisting the Communist-led Viet Minh and, reportedly, to attend the Chinese Whampoa Military Academy near Canton. After World War II, resumed his studies at the University of Hanoi and continued to work with the anti-Communist resistance forces until going to France about 1948. (7)

(S) His military career began with schooling at Ecole Militaire in Paris from 1949 to 1951. Commissioned first lieutenant in a provisional Vietnamese force created by the French in North Vietnam; commanded a battalion until June 1952. Meanwhile, apparently worked with Thich Tam Chau and Father Hoang Quynh in Ninh Binh Province. (7)

(S) After completing a 4-month course at the Tactical Formation School in Hanoi in October 1952, became an infantry lieutenant with

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the French forces and served on the General Staff in Paris until July 1953. From August 1953 until December 1954, was chief of staff of the Soc Trang Sector in the Mekong Delta area, some 100 miles southwest of Saigon; from December 1954 to December 1956 was chief of staff of the I Military Region. (7)

(S) Served as director of the Police and Security Bureau from December 1956 until March 1958, when he was promoted to brigadier general and appointed chief of staff of the General Staff. As director, made considerable progress in restoring internal security and in combating Communist subversion. During this period, reportedly irritated President Ngo Dinh Diem's younger brother, Ngo Dinh Can, then supreme counselor of political groups in Central Vietnam, by investigating some of his political workers in the area. Refused, also, to subordinate his police and intelligence services to the presidential intelligence organization. (7)

(S) Attended a modern weapons familiarization course at Fort Bliss in 1960. In November 1960, was among the five persons listed as members of the self-proclaimed revolutionary committee involved in the unsuccessful coup attempt against President Ngo. Despite disclaimers, the committee members were investigated. Suspected of disloyalty, was sent to the United States in January for 18 months of training at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. Returned to South Vietnam in July 1962. Remained unassigned for a year and was named an inspector for the Strategic Hamlet Program. (7)

(S) Became assistant to the acting chief of staff of the Army under the martial law promulgated on August 20, 1963. After participating in the coup which overthrew President Ngo in November 1963, was appointed head of the Intelligence Coordinating Committee and promoted to major general. Advanced to lieutenant general in the reorganized military rank structure on November 16, 1965. (7)

(S) Supported Major General Nguyen Khanh's takeover of the government in January 1964, but apparently was not enthusiastic about the new government. Became deputy commander of the II Corps in February 1964; the following month, was named third vice chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council. In July, became the first Vietnamese ambassador to the Republic of China, an appointment which seemed to please him; asserted that it would remove him from the developing power struggle in Saigon. Meanwhile, reiterated his support of General Khanh, but, at the same time, disagreed with some of his policies and appointments. (7)

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(S) After the overthrow of Prime Minister Tran Van Huong's government, returned to Saigon in February 1965 to become chairman of the National Legislative Council under Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat. Despite reports that he was being considered for appointment to high-level military posts, remained with the Council while Prime Minister Quat was in power. (7)

(S) PHAN HUY QUAT. Former Prime Minister (February 16 to June 12, 1965) under Chief of State Phan Khac Suu.

(S) Despite his short-lived incumbency as head of a government, his political and administrative qualifications place him in an outstanding position among potential leaders in a future civilian government. Was selected as prime minister by the 80-member Armed Forces Council headed by Major General Nguyen Khanh. Although he was not General Khanh's choice for the position, the majority of the Council regarded him as the one civilian most acceptable to the various religious and political groups. (7)

(S) Accepted his appointment, which was supported by then Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky, on condition that he would resign if the military prevented the government from working effectively. Attempted to choose a Cabinet composed of representatives from political, religious and regional areas. Most of the important posts, however, were given to persons from the northern and central sections of South Vietnam. Mutually irreconcilable political differences developed with Chief of State Phan Khac Suu. This led to their resignations, handing the reins of the government back to the military. (7)

(S) In the international field, was against the French presence in Vietnam, and in the cold war, is against neutralism, strongly anti-Communist and favorably disposed toward the United States. In 1965, two of his children were attending schools in the United States. His comprehension of international affairs has been broadened by travels to France in 1953, 1954 and 1962. In April 1964, visited the Philippines to attend the foreign minister's conference of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization; in May, headed a South Vietnamese delegation to the United States to support his country's interests at the United Nations Security Council's discussion of the South Vietnamese-Cambodian dispute. (7)

(S) In dealing with domestic affairs, has manifested honesty, intelligence and a pleasing personality. At one time, favored an educated authoritarian ruling elite and a return to Vietnam's ancient cultural and family traditions. Was formerly described as a monarchist,

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but evidently those views have been changed by events since the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem. (7)

(S) In general, has been an oppositionist to the country's successive governments, under the French, under Chief of State Bao Dai and under President Ngo Dinh Diem. In February 1964, however, favored the reformation rather than the overthrow of Major General Nguyen Khanh's government. As minister of foreign affairs from February to October 1964, frequently expressed concern about what he regarded as weaknesses of General Khanh—impulsiveness and making decisions without adequately consulting his advisers. When General Khanh was removed in October, refused the offer of a post in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Tran Van Huong but agreed to accept the Huong government as long as it did not attempt to remain in power indefinitely. (7)

(S) Born on July 1, 1909, at Huu Phuong, near Ha Tinh in North Vietnam, about 115 miles north of the Demarcation Line. Is the son of a wealthy landowner who was a doctor of letters and a mandarin. Is married; his wife seldom appears in public. They have seven children of their own and are raising several others who are children of relatives living in North Vietnam, possibly including those of his cousin, Hoang Ming Giam, North Vietnam's minister of culture in 1964. (7)

(U) Regarded by many South Vietnamese as a gentle, thoughtful, judicious, introspective intellectual; has a slender frame, and flashing penetrating eyes. Enjoys tending his flower garden and the company of his numerous dogs and cats.

(U) Speaks French fluently; his English is good; and he has some knowledge of Chinese. Is a practicing but not militant Buddhist. Was educated at Ecole Pollerin in Hue and at the Lycée du Protectorat in Hanoi. Studied at the Faculté de Médecin in Hanoi until 1937 when he received a degree as doctor of medicine. In 1950, wrote a treatise entitled "Vietnam and the Defense of Southeast Asia."

(S) Owned a maternity clinic in Hanoi where he actively engaged in his profession until 1945. At the same time, taught at the Faculté de Médecin and became widely respected as a distinguished parasitologist. Because of his birthplace, schooling and other attachments in North Vietnam, he is still regarded by many South Vietnamese as a "northerner." (7)

(S) After gaining a wide reputation as medical doctor in Hanoi, began his public service career with the establishment of the State of Vietnam on July 1, 1949, when he was appointed undersecretary of state for education in the Bao Dai Cabinet. Served as minister of

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national defense in the Nguyen Phan Long Cabinet from January until March 1950 when he resigned, contending that the government lacked popular support and was not carrying out the program of Chief of State Bao Dai. Returned to Hanoi and resumed his medical work and became associated with an import-export firm. Meanwhile, became one of the principal organizers and officials of the National Popular Movement, the political action arm of the National Party of Greater Vietnam (Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang), the strongest of the politically independent nationalist organizations. Was leader of its northern faction. It achieved little success, however, and was subsequently suppressed by Vietnamese authorities. (7)

(S) Was appointed minister of national education in February 1951, but resigned before the Cabinet was installed. Was minister of national defense from May 1953 until June 1954. Was personally selected by Chief of State Bao Dai for this portfolio, specifically to develop a national army, during the critical period immediately following the country's newly achieved independence. With the widened experience in international affairs gained in this post, his approach to the new responsibilities became statesmanlike and intelligent. (7)

(S) Was relieved as minister of national defense in June 1954, when Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem refused to take him into the government on the basis of opposition of various sects resentful of action taken against their forces by Quat as defense minister. (7)

(S) During the Ngo regime, presumably engaged actively in opposition movements and in April 1960, was a member of the so-called Caravelle Group which signed a widely circulated paper known as the Manifesto of the Eighteen petitioning the government for liberalized reforms. In connection with the November 1960 coup attempt, was among those arrested for possible participation. Was released later, however, and the government paid him for damages done to his office by its forces. By 1961, had begun to organize the Front for National Unity (Mat Tran Doan Ket), composed of antigovernment and progovernment persons, whose common desire was to fight communism. The group remained fairly quiescent with its following small but loyal to its founder. (7)

(S) Rejected the offer to be minister of health on November 3, 1963, under Chief of State Nguyen Khanh, because he thought his political status was worthy of a more important office. Served on the Council of Notables, however, as head of the Foreign Affairs and Information Commission. On January 23, 1964, the Commission, under his direction, submitted a motion for the suspension of relations with France.

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because of increased French pressure for the neutralization of Vietnam, but the motion was never passed by the Council. (7)

(U) PHAN KHAC SUU. Former Chief of State (October 26, 1964 to June 12, 1965).

(S) Unanimously elected Chief of State by the High National Council, the constitution-drafting body which promulgated the Provisional Charter of October 20, 1964, to establish the facade of civilian rule after continuous military government since the overthrow of President Ngo in November 1963. Resigned on June 12, 1965, transferring his office back to the military, under Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu. His resignation reportedly was caused by mutually irreconcilable political differences between himself and his prime minister, Phan Huy Quat. Was named to the High Council when it was formed in September 1964; subsequently elected as its chairman, and finally, on October 24, 1964, was unanimously elected by the Council to serve as Chief of State, a post he accepted with the proviso that he could relinquish it as soon as a national convention was convened. (7)

(S) Is described as a moderate progressive and as an astute politician. Has a reputation for integrity and courage and continues to be an outstanding figure among the former political leaders. Apparently has support among the Buddhists and Catholics as well as within the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects. During his public life, was long associated with movements promoting peasant and worker welfare. Is said to be particularly influential in the southern provinces of South Vietnam, and his name is sometimes mentioned in plans to form new political parties envisioned after the return to a civilian government. (7)

(S) His experience in international affairs is limited to the economic field. In January 1950, attended the Asian Regional Conference of the International Labor Organization at Ceylon. In March 1953, was a member of the South Vietnamese delegation to the eleventh session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East at Tokyo. In August 1964, as a former member of the defunct National Assembly, attended the International Conference of Congressmen at Copenhagen. (7)

(S) Born on January 9, 1905, at My Thuan, a village near Can Tho, about 85 miles southwest of Saigon. Comes from a family of wealthy landowners. Has a dignified appearance, gray-white hair and a gentle voice; has a reputation for honesty, sincerity and courage. Appeared to be in poor health while serving as Chief of State and was a hospital

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patient in November 1964, but after retirement, appeared physically fit, tanned, relaxed and rested. (7)

(S) Speaks French fluently and some English. Is a member of the Cao Dai sect but has always been on good terms with leaders of the Buddhist Institute (Vien Hoa Dao), including Thich Tam Chau. (7)

(S) Educated in Saigon, Tunis and France. Received a degree in agricultural engineering from Ecole Nogent in France in 1930, and entered public service in the same year. (7)

(S) Began his public life as director of the Economic and Agricultural Research Service and as secretary general of the Chambre d'Agriculture, from 1930 to 1940, in what was then the French colony of Cochin China. Arrested by the French authorities in 1941 for founding the Unified Democratic Party of Vietnam; sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment on Con Son (formerly called Poulo Condore), the penal island. After World War II, was released and appointed by the postwar French administration as director of economic affairs for Cochin China. In the first Bao Dai government, served as under-secretary of state for agriculture, labor and social affairs from 1949 to 1950 and as a technical adviser in the Ministry of Agriculture from 1951 to 1954. Meanwhile in 1949, became the secretary general of the newly organized People's Association for Vietnamese Independence (Vietnam Doc Lap Dan Chung Lien Doan—commonly called Viet Doan), the nationalist political organization of the Binh Xuyen, and in 1952, reportedly was a leader in the National Resistance Movement (Phong Trao Quoc Gia Khang Chien), said to be an anti-French and pro-United States political group. (7)

(S) Was appointed minister of agriculture in the first government of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem in July 1954, but was relieved of his post in September of that year because of implication in a Binh Xuyen anti-Ngo plot. By January 1957, was serving as director general of agrarian reform in a district 20 miles north of Saigon. (7)

(S) Became a delegate, the only oppositionist, in the National Assembly in 1959. Continued technically to hold this position even after his arrest and imprisonment by the Ngo regime shortly after his name appeared among the signers of the so-called Manifesto of the Eighteen issued by the Caravelle Group in April 1960 petitioning the government for liberalized reforms and urging popular support for the leaders, who attempted a coup the following November. Awaited trial until July 1963, when he was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment. Was released immediately after the coup of November 1963, and in the following month, became a member of the short-lived

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Council of Notables under Major General Duong Van Minh as Chief of State. After its dissolution early in 1964, was named to the High National Council, appointed by the Provisional Leadership Committee, actually a triumvirate consisting of Major General Nguyen Khanh, Major General Duong Van Minh and Major General Tran Thien Khiem. (7)

(S) After resigning as Chief of State, retired to a small dwelling in Saigon. Claims that he bears no grudges against Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu and the other generals for taking over the government. His reflections on the state of affairs appear to be weighted with apprehensions regarding the Communist threat. In September 1965, asserted that the rise in juvenile delinquency could be traced to Communist sources and that the Buddhist Institute may be a prime target for Communist infiltration. Gives the general impression that he still has political ambitions and, as of late in 1965, seemed confident that he could win in an electoral contest for the presidency of the Republic. (7)

(S) PHAN QUANG DAN (alias PHAN HUY DAN until 1951; sometimes uses name SEBASTIAN DAN). Leader of the banned Free Democratic Party.

(S) Until his arrest and detainment for participation in the attempted coup of November 1960, was widely regarded as the most active, able, experienced and successful political opposition figure in South Vietnam. Aided by an established reputation as an outstanding physician, author and publisher with a special interest in public affairs, became the only opposition candidate to win a seat in the National Assembly elections of 1958. His immense popularity in Saigon was demonstrated by his overwhelming 6-10-1 margin of victory in the election, in spite of 8,000 troops placed in his electorate with instructions to vote against him. Continues to be regarded by many South Vietnamese as one of the most prominent figures in the political field, notwithstanding his forced removal from the political scene by President Ngo's regime in 1960, followed by the limited opportunities for political expression and the absence of elections under the subsequent governments. (7)

(U) General respect for his significant political potentialities was attested by his election on April 12, 1960, as chairman of the National Political Congress' Executive Committee. In this position, heads the important body composed of some 100 delegates from groups representing all segments of national life, called by the Armed Forces Council to prepare the way for drafting a new constitution—one of

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the first steps in the transition from a military to a civilian-type government.

(S) Is generally pro-Western and anti-Communist. Supported the Japanese-backed regime of Tran Trong Kim in 1945. Strongly opposes the Communist government of Ho Chi Minh. His favorable attitude toward the United States apparently developed even before it was strengthened by study at Harvard University from 1952 to 1954. (7)

(S) Criticisms of some United States policies and procedures appear to be offered in a friendly spirit. Speaks bitterly of the French political and military role in Indochina during the colonial period, but admires French culture and favors continued recognition of French economic interests in South Vietnam. His understanding of the world situation is enhanced by visits to numerous foreign countries, mainly in connection with his medical studies or political activities. Travels included: China, in 1946-47; France, in 1949; the Philippines, Thailand and Switzerland, in 1951; Sweden, Switzerland and Egypt, in 1954. Has traveled in other countries of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, including the Philippines revisited in 1955. (7)

(S) An enthusiastic nationalist, fled to China in 1946, when France recognized Ho Chi Minh's so-called Democratic Republic of Vietnam as an "independent state." During 1947 and 1948, was political counselor to Bao Dai, then living in Hong Kong. Advocated establishment of a Bao Dai government in Saigon to rival Ho's Communist regime based in Hanoi. (7)

(S) Participated in Bao Dai's negotiations with the French in Saigon, Geneva and Paris, in reference to forming a government. Became minister for information, press and propaganda in the new Provisional Central Government of Vietnam. Founded Vietnam Presse, the government-owned domestic news agency but resigned from the Cabinet soon thereafter in protest against continued French controls. Broke with Bao Dai, contending that the terms under which he became Chief of State were unsatisfactory to nationalist aspirations. In July 1949, refused to accept appointment as under secretary of state for interior in Bao Dai's first government. At about the same time, formed the Republican Party (later named the Free Democratic Party) to foster Vietnamese independence from France. Traveled abroad for a number of years thereafter, studying, attending international medical meetings, promoting his nationalist views and writing on political subjects. Urged Bao Dai to resign for the good of

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the country in May 1955 when he tried to dismiss Ngo Dinh Diem as prime minister. (7)

(S) Became the leading opposition spokesman soon after Ngo assumed the presidency and had frequent clashes with the government. After announcing, in February 1956, his formation of a Nationalist Bloc for the Struggle for a Democratic Congress (commonly called the Congress Bloc), was arrested and detained overnight, charged with distributing Communist propaganda. (7)

(S) Helped form a new coalition called the Democratic Bloc having programs which included demands for common goals to defeat communism, guarantees of civil rights, collaboration with the United States, a long-range program for economic and industrial development and guarantees of French economic and cultural interests in South Vietnam. Withdrew from the Bloc after dissensions developed in mid-1957 and began writing and printing political articles severely criticizing the government. Was a frequent contributor to *Thoi Luan* (Public Opinion), the Bloc weekly newspaper which was closed by court action in March 1958. Sought authorization to form the Free Democratic Party and to publish his own newspaper, but both of his applications were disregarded. By June 1959, three papers had been closed down after printing his antigovernment articles. (7)

(S) After election to the National Assembly in August 1959, was disqualified from taking his seat on charges that he violated election procedures by offering free medical treatment to his constituents. Bitterly denying these accusations, joined the group of military officers who attempted to seize power in 1960. Was arrested and more than 2 years later was tried and sentenced to 8 years of hard labor. When released after the anti-Ngo coup of November 1963, reportedly offered his services to the Council of Generals headed by Major General Duong Van Minh. Finding no position available, retired from political activity and began compiling a dictionary of Chinese characters. Except for becoming chairman of the Gia Dinh Provincial Council and running a health clinic in a Saigon suburb, remained in relative seclusion until appointed a member of the National Political Congress in April 1966. (7)

(S) Born November 6, 1918, reportedly near Vinh in Nghe An Province (now in North Vietnam) of a middle-class family. Is married and has several children. Speaks competent English and French and presumably reads Chinese. Is a Buddhist. (7)

(S) Attended secondary school at the Ecole Pellerin in Hue, and a school in Hanoi from which he graduated cum laude in philosophy. Received a degree in medicine from the University of Hanoi

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in 1945 and one from the Sorbonne, University of Paris. Received further medical training in Shanghai where he was a physician at the municipal hospital in 1946. Attended Harvard University from 1952 to 1954, where he received a master's degree in public health. Was professor of preventive medicine at the Medical School of Saigon in 1955-56. His published articles deal with medical, political, public health and military subjects. (7)

(U) THICH TAM CHAU (real name reportedly is DOAN VAN HOAN). Chairman of the Buddhist Institute for the Execution of Dharma (Vien Hoa Dao), commonly called the Institute for Secular Affairs (or the Buddhist Lay Institute) since January 1964.

(S) Was one of the most prominent leaders in the Buddhist opposition to the government of ex-Prime Minister Tran Van Huong (from October 20, 1946 to January 27, 1965), and, along with Thich Tri Quang, is generally regarded as instigating the numerous Buddhist antigovernment demonstrations during all of 1964. Wields less influence, however, than politically ambitious Tri Quang, compared to whom he seems to be relatively moderate in his aims, less ambitious for political power, less anti-Catholic and more willing to cooperate with other groups. A suave man, has adeptly used tactful and diplomatic methods in efforts to soothe, placate and win over factions opposing his stand on various issues. (7)

(S) Has rationalized his opposition to Prime Minister Huong's government by asserting that many of its Cabinet members were unacceptable to Buddhists and that he deplored the support accorded to it by the United States. Despite this mood, his contacts with United States officials have been cordial, and they have described him as calm and moderate with a conciliatory temperament. His attitude toward subsequent governments appears to be tempered with reason. In late March 1966, continued to meet frequently with Prime Minister Ky on a friendly basis. Has reportedly asserted that South Vietnam needs a government that can remain in power for at least 2 years. His relations with the militant Buddhist Thich Tri Quang seem to have become cool, if not unfriendly. (7)

(U) In December 1965, headed the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam's delegation on a 25-day tour of Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China and Hong Kong -- a goodwill visit to places that had "voiced sympathy with Vietnamese Buddhists during their persecutions under the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem." During this trip the delegation refuted the allegations that the Buddhists

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were pro-Communists and promoted the idea of a World Buddhist Church as proposed by Vietnamese Buddhists. In mid-January 1966, led the Unified Buddhist Church's delegation to the Buddhist Convention in Ceylon.

(S) Born in 1921, some 25 miles south of Hanoi, in Ninh Binh Province, came to South Vietnam as a refugee in 1954 and since then has been active in the Association of Vietnamese Buddhists who came from North Vietnam. His strength lies mainly among refugees in the Saigon area. Besides Vietnamese, presumably speaks Chinese, as he has translated articles on Buddhism from the Chinese language. (7)

(U) THICH TRI QUANG (real name reportedly is PHAM BONG) Secretary General of the High Council of the Buddhist Hierarchy, the supreme clerical body of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, since it was formed in January 1964.

(S) As one of the most militant bonzes and foremost political leader in the South Vietnamese Buddhist hierarchy, is the preeminent representative of the youngest and best-trained elements in the Buddhist leadership. Is recognized for outstanding political astuteness and intellectual brilliance and is regarded as the hierarchy's foremost strategist. His importance is indicated by his dominant role in the violent Buddhist agitations, which contributed largely to the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Was publicly accused of having Communist connections by President Ngo, who admitted that his only evidence was a French intelligence report made during the Indochina War. (7)

(C) By early 1966 his fanatical anti-Catholic utterances and his persistent opposition to military rule had incited many noisy demonstrations, particularly by students, calling for the removal of Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky and his government of generals. His demands included a return to a government by elected officials, within a few months. Offered no plans, however, for making this major transition of authority under wartime conditions in a new and politically inexperienced country.

(S) Born about 1922 at Diem Dien in Quang Binh Province, just north of the Demarcation Line. His father was a prosperous farmer. One brother is in the South Vietnamese Army. Denies reports that another brother is a North Vietnamese monk or a member of the secret police in North Vietnam. (7)

(S) Has a round pale face and appears more youthful than the average person of his age. Requires frequent hospital treatment for

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recurring asthma and tuberculosis. Customarily stays in an air-conditioned but austere furnished maternity hospital room when in Saigon. Is frequently described as sober and introverted but can be a cheerful and an engaging conversationalist. Enjoys Mozart and Beethoven and has contributed an American record collection to a Buddhist pagoda. Keeps current with Western cultural and intellectual trends. (7)

(S) Is proud, ambitious and aggressive and exhibits supreme self-confidence. Seems determined to gain recognition for Buddhist demands and their enactment. In pursuing these aims, has been changeable in his attitudes toward various issues and is continually restless until his demands are met. Is highly intelligent, has great poise and is endowed with considerable personal magnetism, as evidenced by his ability to control and influence a crowd. (7)

(S) Was sent to a pagoda in Hue at age 13 to train for monkhood. After some disciplinary difficulties, developed into a mature student with a photographic memory and an inquisitive mind. Although holding no known degrees from a non-Buddhist school, is a well-educated person. Is said to have been a licensed lawyer before becoming a bonze. Reads Chinese, French and classical Vietnamese. Speaks only in Vietnamese. Claims he cannot comprehend spoken English or French. (7)

(S) Early in his career, was a follower and student of Tich Tri Do, a prominent bonze in North Vietnam. During President Ho Chi Minh's self-proclaimed government in the early 1940's, was a member of the pro-Viet Minh Buddhist Association; reportedly studied Marxism at Hanoi in 1945. In 1946, was appointed a professor in a Buddhist school in North Vietnam. Later, went to Hue and lectured at Da Lat. In 1951, represented the Vietnamese Central Region at the Vietnamese National Buddhist Congress. In 1952, was chief of the Department of Information and General Association of Vietnamese Buddhists and attended the Second Congress of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Tokyo. Meanwhile, was editor of *Viet An*, a Buddhist review; in 1954, headed the semimonthly Vietnamese-language periodical *Phat Phap* (Law of Buddha), published in Hue. (7)

(S) After 1954 his activities appear to have been limited to Buddhist affairs in South Vietnam. Working from his home pagoda at Hue, reportedly set up an organization modeled somewhat after that of the Communists he had seen develop in North Vietnam. In 1963, reportedly was responsible for student activities in Hue and the surrounding Thua Thien Province. On the basis of numerous conversations with him in 1963, United States official sources concluded

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that he was an anti-Communist Vietnamese nationalist seeking expansion of Buddhist influence in the South Vietnamese Government. (7)

(S) Besides leading the militant Buddhist demonstrations of May 1963 in Hue, appears to have encouraged and organized the self-immolation of Buddhist monks in increasingly spectacular protests against the Ngo regime. Charged the regime with corrupt practices and with using dictatorial methods to stamp out civil and religious freedom, meanwhile insisting that his protests were motivated solely by religious principles. For his disruptive activities, was arrested and imprisoned for 10 days in August 1963, but escaped and fled to the United States Embassy in Saigon where, on September 1, he was granted asylum. (7)

(S) After the November 1, 1963, coup, the government of Major General Duong Van Minh requested him to join it as Buddhist adviser, but he left the United States Embassy on November 4, stating that he would be available to the government only for consultation. Apparently, concluding that religion should be separate from the government, claimed that his only aim was to consolidate and strengthen the Buddhist organization in South Vietnam, especially in the Central Lowlands and the Central Highlands. Indications were that his personal ambition was to become leader of a powerful and revitalized Buddhism in the country. (7)

(S) At the time of entering the Embassy, was critical but basically sympathetic toward United States policy in Vietnam. Later, became very friendly with Americans, appeared grateful for United States protection and cooperated with Embassy officials. After the coup, seemed to favor continued United States presence in South Vietnam to promote stability and, above all, to prevent a revival of the Ngo regime policies. (7)

(S) After leaving Embassy protection, resumed his position as secretary general of the Buddhist Association of Central Vietnam, within the General Buddhist Association. Was elected secretary general of the High Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in January 1964, when that body was formed in an effort to unify the various Buddhist groups. By May 1964, was engaged in a power struggle with the influential but less militant Thich Tam Chau. The struggle intensified after the September 13, 1964 abortive coup, when Thich Tam Chau opposed Buddhist support of a Saigon general strike. Virtually an open break between the two men resulted. Thereafter, Thich Tri Quang increased his opposition to military leaders (such as General Minh, then Chief of State, and General Khanh, then prime

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minister) remaining in the government unless they resigned from the Army. Also, reiterated his opposition to neutralists and their "French-inspired" activities which he claimed were designed to bring about a negotiated settlement with North Vietnam. (7)

(S) During the summer of 1964, his attitude toward the government of General Khanh appeared to moderate somewhat, but he continued to encourage demonstrations by militant student groups in Hue, particularly if they were in support of any Buddhist policies. By October, was actively promoting a Buddhist political party and an unofficial party publication. In a Hue speech, however, stressed that he did not want Buddhism to become a state religion, since he feared conditions might develop similar to those under the Ngo regime. Meanwhile, to United States officials frequently voiced fears of a Catholic plot against the Buddhists and the government. At the same time, expressed his growing opposition to Prime Minister Khanh. (7)

(S) By the beginning of November 1964, had aroused opposition among his followers against the new government of Prime Minister Tran Van Huong, whom he had at first supported. At the same time, his differences with Thich Tam Chau appeared to lessen as the latter also expressed opposition to Prime Minister Huong's government. Meanwhile, openly advocated replacing the government by one with Phan Huy Quat as prime minister, and urged United States official intervention to bring these changes about. Possibly disappointed by United States inactivity in this direction, began a 7-day hunger strike on January 12, 1965, and threatened immolations in front of the American Embassy if results were not forthcoming. Stopped his campaign, finally, when Prime Minister Huong was ousted on January 27, by General Khanh, chief of the Armed Forces Council. (7)

(S) His opposition activities were relatively limited from February 16 to June 12, 1965, when the government was under civilian leadership. His dislike for the military in power continued, as evidenced by expressions of displeasure toward the Chief of State, Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu, and Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, chiefs of the new government, which, on June 12, 1965, replaced the one headed by civilians. (7)

(U) TRAN BUU KIEM. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist-directed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam since February 1962 and of its Presidium since January 1964; Chairman of the Central Committee's Liaison and Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman of its Commission for External Relations also since 1964. (These Central Committee Depart-

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ments apparently merged in 1965 to become the External Relations Committee.)

(S) Is an experienced youth leader and apparently is highly regarded in the Communist-directed National Front as a person suitable for handling various types of organizational agencies and for meeting foreign representatives. Was elected secretary general of the Central Committee in November 1963 to replace Nguyen Van Hieu, who was assigned to Prague, but in turn was replaced by Huynh Tan Phat in January 1964. Before becoming secretary general, was authorized to act as spokesman for the chairman of the Central Committee on at least one occasion. As chairman of the External Relations Committee, presumably would represent the Front in any negotiations it may have with foreign governments. Is also a member of the Central Committee of the Democratic Party (Dang Dan Chu), associated with the National Front. Was named chairman of the so-called Union of Students for the Liberation of South Vietnam in September 1963, and apparently still retains this position. Is described in Front biographies as "an intellectual and ardent patriot." (7)

(S) Born about 1920 in Cochin China (now the southern part of South Vietnam). Is married. His wife reportedly was active in the Communist-infiltrated Defense of Peace Movement formed at Saigon in 1954; she was arrested in 1960 by South Vietnamese Government authorities because of her connections with the Viet Cong and 3 years later was sentenced to life imprisonment at hard labor, resulting in his relief as secretary general of the Central Committee, allegedly because he was then regarded as a security risk. (7)

(S) In 1946, was a Democratic Party delegate to the Provisional Central Committee of the South Vietnam Section of the Lien Viet Front, one of the Hanoi-sponsored organizations, which later was incorporated into the Viet Minh. As a zonal chief of the executive committee of the South Vietnam branch of the Communist-oriented Vietnamese Youth League, reportedly headed a youth delegation which, in 1949, spent several months in North Vietnam training for resistance against the French. (7)

(S) By the early 1950's, was said to be a member of the Resistance and Administrative Section of the Communist-dominated Viet Minh's Directing Committee for the Nam-bo (literally Southern Area, a term applied by Viet Minh to the Cochin China area, generally southwest of the Central Highlands). In 1958, headed the Economic and Financial Affairs Section of the Viet Minh's Directing Committee for the Nam-bo. Was identified in 1960 as chief of the Viet Cong Sûreté, engaged in "reforming and reorganizing" guerrilla and commando units

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in Saigon, and, at the same time, was said to be in close liaison with Chinese Communist agents in Cho Lon. (7)

(S) In 1961, was reportedly a member of the Communist Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh Committee and became active in the so-called National Front at the time of its inception. Was elected to the Front's Central Committee early in 1962 as a representative of the self-styled Liberation Student Association. Meanwhile, reportedly was still engaged in reorganizing guerrilla commando units in Saigon and attended a Viet Cong military organizational meeting at the Chinese Communist embassy in Phnom Penh which was also attended by representatives from North Vietnam and the Soviet Union. In February 1965, headed the Front delegation to the preliminary meetings of the Indochinese People's Conference at Phnom Penh. (7)

(U) TRAN THIEN KHIEM. Lieutenant General. Ambassador to the Republic of China since November 1, 1965.

(S) Was a leading figure in the coup overthrowing President Ngo Dinh Diem on November 1, 1963. Supported his longtime friend and associate, Major General Nguyen Khanh, in his takeover of the government in January 1964, but within 6 months their friendship seemed to cool. Claimed that General Khanh, yielding to Buddhist pressure for the neutralization of South Vietnam, was intriguing against him, and, to remove him from direct participation in Saigon affairs, secured his assignment to visit several European countries. The establishment of the civilian government under Tran Van Huong in October 1964 left General Khiem without an official post until he was appointed ambassador to the United States later in the month. (7)

(S) Intensely anti-Communist, has often advocated strong military action against North Vietnam and firmly opposes any ideas which, in his opinion, might lead to the neutralization of South Vietnam. Has manifested frankness and friendliness toward United States officials and gratitude for United States aid but has obdurately rejected suggestions from American and other sources that negotiations with the Viet Cong might solve the insurgency problem. (7)

(S) In furtherance of his Army career, attended a military course in France in 1949-50, and another one in the United States in 1959-60. In a governmental capacity, his official trips to foreign countries include: a visit to the Republic of Korea in December 1963 as South Vietnam's representative at the inauguration of President Park Chung Hee; a mission to Taipei in March 1964 to discuss military organization matters and the possibility of receiving military aid; a goodwill

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mission to Thailand and Malaysia, in August 1964, actually seeking aid; a visit to Bonn and London in October 1964 to convey thanks for aid already received and presumably to arrange for its continuation. (7)

(S) Throughout his career, has been associated with various political groups, apparently preferring to work behind the scenes with whatever group he believes best suited to advance his own interests. At the same time, has avoided direct political responsibilities. Belonged to the tightly knit Revolutionary Personalist Labor Party (Can Lao Nhan Vi Cach Mang Dang), popularly known as the Can Lao Party, which, until the coup of November 1963, was headed by Ngo Dinh Nhu, President Ngo's brother. Was personally close to President Ngo for a number of years; seemed reluctant to commit himself to any anti-Ngo movements and reportedly joined the anti-Ngo coup forces only at the last moment. Although voicing opposition to some of President's Ngo's policies, apparently observed developments closely before making any move against the Ngo regime. Reportedly accepted bribes from President Ngo's influential brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who was attempting to buy loyalty. Became a member of the Revolutionary Military Council after President Ngo was overthrown, but continued serving as chief of the Joint General Staff and as chief of staff for Operations. By early 1964, was said to be associated with a faction of the fragmented Nationalist Party of Greater Vietnam (Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang--DVQDD), commonly called the Dai Viet Party, which was bent on ousting Major General Nguyen Khanh from his post as prime minister. (7)

(S) Meanwhile, became commander of the III Corps, an important regional command which surrounds but excludes the Saigon-Cho Lon metropolitan area. His units provided the military forces for General Khanh's coup, on January 30, 1964, ousting Major General Duong Van Minh from Office as Chief of State. Subsequently, was appointed minister of defense, commander in chief of the armed forces and first deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council. Became a member of the Steering Committee under the joint chairmanship of Generals Khanh and Duong Van Minh in August 1964 when General Khanh was forced to resign as president because of Buddhist rioting in opposition to his assumption of additional powers. (7)

(S) Resigned as minister of national defense in September 1964, but retained the post of commander in chief of the armed forces until relieved and sent abroad as ambassador to the United States in October 1964 by the civilian government of Prime Minister Tran Van Huong. (7)

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(S) Bera, December 15, 1925, in Saigon. Is married and has two children. His wife, Dinh Thuy Yen, was elected in October 1963 as delegate to the Third National Assembly, from Kien Giang Province (bordering on Cambodia and the Gulf of Siam). She is said to exercise considerable influence over him. (7)

(S) His civil education is limited to primary and secondary schooling in Saigon. Speaks French fluently and English fairly well. Was generally regarded as a Catholic until April 1966 when, with his wife, was reportedly converted to Buddhism in Taiwan. It is probable that he originally was a Buddhist but for political reasons became a Catholic during President Ngo's regime. (7)

(S) Reportedly, in 1915, while in the military service, was tortured by the French; in 1916, was one of 14 officers who defected to the Communist-led Viet Minh but returned to the French forces a year later. Attended Da Lat Military Academy in 1916 and 1917. After completing the Command and General Staff School course at Coetquidan, France, from 1949 to 1950, became assistant to G-4 in the I Military Region. In 1952, as a captain, joined a combat group in North Vietnam; was promoted to major while chief of staff of the II Military Region 1953 to 1955; was deputy chief of staff for Logistics until 1957, when he became acting chief of the General Staff. In February 1958, was appointed commander of the 4th Field Division. (7)

(S) Attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, in 1959, in August 1960, was appointed commander, 1st Infantry Division. Commanded the 21st Infantry Division and the V Military Region concurrently from the end of 1960 to December 1962, when he was promoted to brigadier general and appointed chief of the Joint General Staff under President Ngo. Was promoted to major general in November 1963 and to lieutenant general on August 10, 1964, while Major General Duong Van Minh was Chief of State. (6)

(U) TRAN VAN DO. Minister of Foreign Affairs since June 21, 1965.

(S) Served as deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in the government of Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat (February 16 to June 12, 1965). Felt that Prime Minister Quat, fearing that he sought to become prime minister himself, refrained from delegating responsibilities to him. Reportedly, was unhappy also over the lack of trust and harmony among the high officials in the Quat government. (7)

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(S) In 1965, went to India, stopping briefly in Thailand, on an official visit seeking support for the South Vietnamese Government's policies; apparently made a favorable impression on this trip. Because of his naivete, his superiors in Saigon were apprehensive lest he make frank statements to the press, appearing to endorse India's proposals for the use of military force to control the border with North Vietnam. Such statements, the Saigon authorities feared, might jeopardize the stability of the Quat government, which, at that time, seemed to be eager for negotiations with North Vietnam. Regarded by his associates as a respected nationalist, is strongly anti-Communist and opposes neutralism. (7)

(S) Before entering the government in 1954, was a well-known medical practitioner in Saigon. Turned down several offers for Cabinet posts before agreeing to be minister of foreign affairs in the first Cabinet of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, a longstanding friend. Disapproval of the regime's methods resulted in a deteriorating relationship with the Prime Minister, and this forced his resignation. Returned to his medical practice, and became active in opposition groups and movements. Was a member of the so-called Caravelle Group which, in April 1960, issued the Manifesto of the Eighteen, petitioning the government for liberalized reform; actively supported the attempted coup of the following November. Continued his opposition activities during the successive military governments in 1963 and 1964. Served briefly, nevertheless, in the short-lived Council of Notables early in 1964. (7)

(S) Reportedly refused the offer of a Cabinet post under Prime Minister Tran Van Huong (October 26, 1964 to January 27, 1965). Despite his lack of support of Tran Van Huong, did not favor his removal from office by force. In late 1964, joined Phan Huy Quat and a number of others in plans to use the Buddhist movement as a political base without directly involving Buddhist leadership. Apparently became convinced that the participation of Buddhist groups is needed for a sound and stable government. During his years outside the government, often stressed his concern for the dearth of political leadership in South Vietnam. (7)

(S) Born about 1905 into a well-to-do family in South Vietnam, but early in life he resided for some time in North Vietnam. His brother is Tran Van Chuong, former ambassador to the United States, and Madam Ngo Dinh Nhu is his niece. (7)

(S) Is soft spoken, courteous, earnest and has an alert mind. Despite a relatively undynamic appearance, expresses himself firmly and works energetically. Speaks French and English fluently.

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Claims he is not a Buddhist but an agnostic; apparently, however, he is acceptable to Buddhist leadership, as well as to the Catholic and military leaders in the government. (7)

(U) TRAN VAN HUONG. Former Prime Minister, from October 26, 1964 to January 27, 1965, under Chief of State Phan Khac Suu.

(S) Served as prime minister and concurrently as minister of defense under Chief of State Phan Khac Suu in the civilian Cabinet formed on November 4, 1964, to replace the government headed by Major General Nguyen Khanh. Is known primarily as an educator and businessman. Until this appointment his experience in politics, economics or government administration had been limited. His in-born good judgment, calmness and willingness to work appear to compensate somewhat for a lack of intellectual brilliance. Is described as a dedicated, sincere and honest person with no stigma or scandal attached to his name. Reportedly, is favorably regarded by General Khanh and by some Buddhists. (7)

(S) Born in 1906 in Vinh Long Province, some 70 miles southwest of Saigon. Graduated from Hanoi Teachers College in 1926, then established his residence in My Tho (40 miles southwest of Saigon), where he taught French, literature and history. Subsequently, was named inspector of education for Tay Ninh Province (some 50 miles northwest of Saigon). (7)

(S) Reportedly was earning a very modest living by operating a pharmacy in Saigon in September 1954 when he entered public life as prefect (mayor) of Saigon-Cho Lon, appointed by President (then Prime Minister) Ngo Dinh Diem. Resigned his position in 1955, however, complaining that he had not been given adequate force to eliminate the Binh Xuyen Society from Saigon. Remained relatively inactive politically for several years, as a member of the Movement to Win and Preserve Freedom, composed mainly of eminent intellectuals and high government officials. The Movement was defunct by 1957. In April 1960, was one of 18 prominent oppositionists known as the Caravelle Group, which issued the so-called Manifesto of the Eighteen, a petition calling for liberalized governmental reforms. (7)

(S) Was indicted and jailed for involvement in the attempted coup of November 1960. After release in April 1961, worked as an administrative assistant for the Vietnamese Dental Association. In December 1963, was appointed to the short-lived Council of Notables and subsequently became chairman of the Political Affairs Commission. Led the group opposing the resignation of the Council members and

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the disbandment of that body. In September 1961, was appointed again as mayor of Saigon Cho Lon, this time serving under Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh, whom he replaced as prime minister the next month. (7)

(S) After about 3 months in office was ousted with his Cabinet by generals of the Armed Forces Council, mainly because of strong opposition by the Buddhist Institute and in part because of the military's dissatisfaction with "civilian weakness." At the time it was said that South Vietnam had two governments: one, a civilian government with authority but no power, and the other, a military government with power but no authority. (7)

(S) After removal from office, spent a period of rest at Da Nang and at Vung Tau. In mid-1965, expressed intention to return to his home in My Tho and await developments. (7)

(U) VU VAN THAI. Ambassador to the United States since September 1965.

(S) Was made an economic adviser on the staff of the United Nations in 1961. Was first named ambassador to the United States late in 1963 when Major General Duong Van Minh was Chief of State, but the appointment was canceled; returned to his United Nations' post after Major General Nguyen Khanh took over the government. Is known internationally as an economist and an engineer. Was one of the original promoters of the Mekong River development plan, known as the Mekong River Project (see Glossary). Reportedly has refused offers of the governorship of the National Bank of Vietnam and is said to have accepted the assignment to Washington with reluctance. Soon after reporting at United Nations Headquarters, was assigned to assist with economic development in Togo, where he remained until the overthrow of the Ngo regime in November 1963. (7)

(S) His viewpoint on international affairs appears to be influenced by a long sojourn in France early in his career. While a student in Paris during World War II, reportedly worked with the French underground against the German occupation forces. Was an adviser to Ho Chi Minh at the Fontainebleau negotiations with France in 1945, but broke with Ho when he insisted on signing conciliatory agreements with the French. From 1946 to 1949, was chief of a section in the Building and Public Works Laboratories; from 1949 to 1951, headed the Normandy-Brittany regional department of the Societe de l'Installation Rationnelle. Was director of Les Presses Scientifiques Internationales from 1951 to 1954. While still in

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France, became a strong Vietnamese nationalist and, reportedly, was a member of a Paris group connected with the Viet Minh, the Communist-led organization posing as a nationalist coalition which advocated Vietnamese independence and reunification. Has not been identified with any political faction. (7)

(S) After returning to Vietnam late in 1954, became a supporter of Ngo Dinh Diem, then prime minister, said to be his father's friend. Early in 1955, was appointed director general of planning; by December of that year, became head of the Foreign Aid General Administration, meanwhile continuing informal supervision of the Planning Directorate. His title was changed to director general of foreign aid and the budget in 1956 when, at his suggestion, the administration of foreign aid, in the interests of efficiency, was placed directly under the presidency. Became one of the country's most capable civil servants with an international reputation for personal honesty and administrative ability. (7)

(S) After more than 6 years in the same post, resigned in August 1961, stating that he was disillusioned with the regime because of its corrupt practices and inefficient administration of the foreign aid program. Refused to compromise his principles by authorizing expenditures that reflected the purely political and personal motives of the President's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. Sympathized fully with the United States policy of overseeing the administration of its aid funds and felt that the United States should insist on economic reforms in President Ngo's government, which he came to regard as intolerably corrupt and dictatorial. Was virtually forced to seek employment outside South Vietnam; considered lecturing at Harvard University and working for the Ford Foundation, but he finally accepted a position on the staff of the United Nations. (7)

(S) While serving in the foreign aid post, gained a reputation as a self-taught economist and represented South Vietnam at several international conferences, including meetings of the Colombo Plan countries, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, and the International Monetary Fund. Also accompanied President Ngo on state visits to the United States and to Korea in 1957. In 1959, led a goodwill mission to Israel. (7)

(S) Born in Hanoi on January 26, 1919, into a well-to-do family. His father, Vu Van An, a zealous nationalist, joined the Viet Minh but was executed by the Communists after they seized control of the Viet Minh movement. His wife is a French citizen; they have three daughters. Has a slim, rather frail appearance. Speaks forcefully

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and often bluntly. His sensitive, vain and temperamental qualities contributed to his difficulties with the Ngo regime. (7)

(S) Speaks French and heavily accented but understandable English. Completed his secondary education at the Lycée Albert Sarrant in Hanoi. Continued his studies in France and, in 1944, received his *licence* (master's degree) in science from the Ecole des Arts et Manufactures in Paris. Studied under a scholarship at the National Center of Scientific Research until 1946, when he accepted employment at the French Building and Public Works Laboratories. (7)

### MILITARY

(U) CAO VAN VIEN. Lieutenant General. Chief of the Joint General Staff; member of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) and member of the National Security Council since October 1, 1965.

(S) Is one of the leading military figures in the government and as chief of the Joint General Staff is, in effect, also commander of the Army. Basically a professional officer and reportedly an excellent troop leader, has exhibited strong personal dependability and stability in securing and maintaining loyalty of superiors and subordinates. Prefers a completely military career for himself and has supported all governments since President Ngo Dinh Diem, motivated principally by desire for a strong stabilized government capable of vigorously opposing the Viet Cong. (3)

(S) A strong nationalist and anti-Communist, favors the West and is highly regarded by United States officials with whom he has had dealings. Studied in the United States in 1956 and 1957. Reportedly joined the Can Lao Party in 1961 under pressure from the Ngo government, but, since then, has remained relatively free of political machinations and military factionalism. Succeeded in keeping the Airborne Brigade loyal to each successive government from March 11 to September 14, 1964, while he commanded it. (3)

(S) Born on December 11, 1921, in Vientiane, Laos. Is married and has at least three children. About 5 feet 6 inches, weighs approximately 140 pounds and has an excellent military bearing. Possesses strong qualities of leadership; is capable, organized, aggressive and thorough as a staff officer and as a field commander. Known for his courteous, amiable disposition, is, nonetheless, a good disciplinarian and capable of maintaining high morale and combat efficiency of troops under his command. Is fluent in Vietnamese and French, but has only a fair command of English. Was wounded in action against

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the Viet Cong and awarded the Cross of Gallantry in March 1961. (3)

(S) Although originally a Buddhist, was converted to Catholicism. Recent reports, however, indicate that he claims no religious affiliation. Is an ancestor worshipper and is critical of attempts of religious sects to foment discontent. (3)

(S) Before entering military service in 1948, graduated from a French secondary high school in Vientiane, Laos. Commissioned from Da Lat Military Academy in 1949; served in the Recruiting and Press Offices of the Department of Defense until 1952 when he attended a tactical course in Hanoi. Commanded a battalion in action in North Vietnam in 1952 and 1955; held various staff positions with field units until 1955 when he became G-4 of the Army General Staff. In August 1956, attended the Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. After promotion to lieutenant colonel in 1959, became chief of the Special Military Staff, Office of the President and, concurrently, commander of the presidential guards. In 1960, completed airborne training and was promoted to colonel. In March 1961, was named to head the Airborne Brigade, a post he held until September 1964, interrupted only by a 3- or 4-day suspension of command after the November 1963 coup, which he reportedly joined belatedly and played an unimportant part. Did not participate in the January 1964 coup but supported General Khanh's assumption of control of the government. Was promoted to brigadier general in March 1964 and continued to demonstrate his personal dependability by taking no part in the September 13 coup attempt to unseat General Khanh, which led to his being named chief of staff of the Armed Forces Joint General Staff and commander of the Army on September 15, 1964. Later in that year, became commander of the III Corps and retained that post until October 1, 1965, when he was reinstated by Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky as chief of the Joint General Staff and functioned as commander of the Army; promoted to major general on November 1, 1965, and advanced to lieutenant general in the re-organized military rank structure announced on November 16, 1965. (3, 7)

(U) DANG VAN QUANG. Lieutenant General. Commander, IV Corps, since January 18, 1965, and member of the Directory (National Leadership Committee) since June 19, 1965.

(S) Is responsible, as one of the four principal regional commanders, for the administration and security of the provinces of the lower Mekong Delta. Is an able, well qualified commander. Not known to have participated in the anti-Ngo coup of November 1963

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or subsequent governmental takeovers since that time. Has been assessed as a stable, dependable and a sound thinker. (3, 7)

(S) Attended military courses in France and the United States and is believed to be pro-Western; made an observation tour of the border control system as applied in Hong Kong in 1958. Extremely intelligent, has been flexible in his political leanings and has shown loyalty to the various governments in power. Was a member of the Revolutionary Court which tried Ngo Dinh Can, brother of President Ngo Dinh Diem in April 1964. Also sat with the court which tried defendants in the February 1964 abortive coup against Major General Nguyen Khanh. Is generally regarded one of the group of military leaders known as "Young Turks" who united against General Khanh in mid-1964. (3, 7)

(S) Born June 21, 1929, in Khanh Hung, capital of Ba Xuyen Province, about 65 miles southwest of Saigon. Is married and has four children. Is somewhat stocky at 170 pounds, 5 feet 5 inches tall, and has black hair and eyes. Quiet, cooperative and very conscientious, appears to be confident and self-assured. Is fluent in Vietnamese and French, and possesses good command of English. Is a Roman Catholic; holds the National Order of Vietnam and the Cross of Valor. (7)

(S) Received secondary education in Saigon and was commissioned from the Officer's Candidate School at Hanoi in 1948. In 1949 and 1950, attended the Infantry School at Coetquidan, France. Served as company commander in 1950 and later attended a battalion commander's course as well as a staff course in Hanoi. Was promoted to major in 1955 and to lieutenant colonel in 1956. After attending the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, in 1957 and 1958, was appointed chief of staff of the Capital Military Region. Became Director General of the Civil Guard in late 1958; was named J 1 of the Armed Forces General Staff in 1960. Served as chief of staff, I Corps, and J 3, Armed Forces General Staff, from 1962 to 1964. Was promoted to brigadier general in December 1964; the following month was assigned to command the IV Corps. Was promoted to major general on November 1, 1965; advanced to lieutenant general in the reorganized military rank structure on November 16, 1965. (3, 7)

(U) LE NGUYEN KHANG. Major General. Commander of the Marine Brigade and Commandant of the Marine Corps since February 28, 1964; Commander of the Capital Military Region and member of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) since June 21, 1965.

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(S) Generally regarded as one of the best officers in the South Vietnamese armed forces, is commander of the key capital area involving the security of the government. Not easily swayed, objective in his thinking, resists infringement upon his command prerogatives. Favors a strong authoritarian government and believes that, unless a civilian leader of sufficient stature and ability is produced, continued military control of South Vietnam is essential. Aggressive, forceful and ambitious, apparently enjoyed the confidence of President Ngo Dinh Diem, and, although a member of the November 1963 coup group, allegedly was not an enthusiastic participant in the event. (3, 7)

(S) Strongly pro-Western and an unequivocal anti-Communist, is a sincere admirer of the United States and has reportedly declared he would take on United States citizenship if he could. While distrustful of French political motives, has a deep-seated but well-concealed admiration of French culture. Attended schools in the United States in 1956-57 and in 1958-9. In 1964, had a short assignment in the Philippines; later that year, accompanied Major General Tran Thien Khien, then chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, on an official visit to Thailand. (3)

(S) An ardent patriot and fervent nationalist, avoids entanglements and is steadfast to those in authority. Prefers a benevolent but firm one-man rule under present conditions; consequently, favors determined control of all dissident elements. Allegedly, has, on occasion, threatened to lead marine units against government opposition. Although a "northerner" himself, personally feels government administration should be in hands of "southerners" as more representative of the people. (3, 7)

(S) Born in Son Tay, North Vietnam, on June 14, 1937. His wife, Nguyen Thi Minh Tau, is also a northerner, born on October 18, 1938, is extremely competent, pro-American, has an admirable personality, speaks fair French, good English and exercises considerable influence over her husband. Has a son, Loe, born in 1960 and daughter, Khanh, born in 1961. (3)

(S) Approximately 5 feet 11 inches tall, weighs about 130 pounds, has heavy eyebrows, many inconspicuous moles and is meticulous in both military and civilian dress. Recognizes limitations in his subordinates, but demands best results consistent with ability. Extremely ambitious, sensitive, enthusiastic and polished but not conceited, is extremely loyal and uses excellent judgment. Reads widely, weighs opinions carefully, and is believed fully capable of decisive action if driven to desperate circumstances. Does not drink, but smokes heavily. (3, 7)

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(U) Speaks excellent French and English; knows and uses many American colloquialisms. Although a Buddhist, has indicated some doubts as to Buddhist commitment to anticommunism and has reportedly declared that the Catholics best understand and have the greatest ability to counter Communist aims in South Vietnam.

(S) Awarded the French Croix de Guerre in December 1953, the Cross of Valor with Silver Star in 1952 and 1955 and with Palm in 1963, and the National Order of Vietnam in the rank of Knight in 1963 (3, 7)

(S) Completed secondary school in Son Tay, North Vietnam, and believed to have done tutorial work in North Vietnam before entering military service in 1952. Commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation from Da Lat Military Academy and served in the South Vietnamese Army until 1954, when he transferred to the Marines as a first lieutenant. Until 1956, served in command and staff positions with marine units, including assignment as Chief of Staff of the Marine Brigade. After attending the Allied Officers' Associate Advanced Course, Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1956-57, became commander of the 2d Marine Battalion and was promoted to captain. In 1959, graduated first among all allied officers from the Junior School, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. Appointed commander of the Marine Brigade in 1960; was promoted to lieutenant colonel in June 1962 and to colonel in November 1963. A month later the November 1963 coup, in which his participation was not considered impressive, was sent to the Philippines as military attaché for less than 3 months. Was recalled to Saigon and reinstated as commander of the Marine Brigade (senior marine commander who concurrently serves as commandant of the Marine Corps) on February 28, 1964. Was promoted to brigadier general on October 15, 1964, and advanced to major general in the reorganized military rank structure announced on November 16, 1965. Was appointed commander of the Capital Military Region on June 21, 1965. (3)

(U) NGUYEN BAO TRI. Major General. Commander of the III Corps and member of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) since October 1, 1965.

(S) Is a highly respected and capable professional soldier, and one of the four principal regional commanders responsible for the security of those provinces in the northern portion of the Mekong Delta, including both the political administration and the conduct of military operations. Has been relatively uninvolved in political intrigues and is highly regarded by Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky. Has shown

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consistent loyalty to the various governments which have been in power, including that of President Ngo Dinh Diem. (3, 7)

(S) Is intensely patriotic, anti-Communist and definitely pro-United States, where he was sent for military study. One of the group of young officers known as the "Young Turks," is also rumored to be a protege of Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu, Chief of State. Was allegedly considered by Prime Minister Ky for post of secretary of state for revolutionary development before appointment as commander of the III Corps. Although he is respected as a competent commander, some Buddhist opposition to his appointment was expressed because he is a Catholic and a native of North Vietnam. (3, 7)

(C) Born in Hanoi, on January 26, 1929. Is married; has no children; his wife, who is also a Catholic and a "northerner," reportedly exerts considerable influence over him. Is very able, energetic, intelligent, aggressive and decisive. About 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighs approximately 130 pounds and has dark hair and eyes. Regarded as having considerable potential for advancement in the Army. Is fluent in French and English. (3, 7)

(C) After graduating in law from the University of Hanoi in 1951, entered Nam Dinh Military Academy, from which he was commissioned in 1952. For the next 4 years, served in various infantry units, including a Command Battalion. In 1956-57, attended the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth; upon return to South Vietnam, was assigned as an instructor on the staff of the South Vietnamese Command and General Staff College at Da Lat. Was promoted to lieutenant colonel in October 1957 and to colonel in 1963, during which period he commanded the 11th and 22d Infantry Divisions successively. In 1963-64, was made commander of a Special Zone in the III Corps area; in September 1964, was given command of the 7th Infantry Division. Was promoted to sub-brigadier general in October 1964; on October 1, 1965, was made III Corps commander; 1 month later, was promoted to permanent brigadier general. Was advanced to major general in the military rank structure reorganization of November 16, 1965. (3)

(U) NGUYEN CHANH THH. Lieutenant General. Former Commander of the I Corps from November 1964 to March 1966.

(S) Is controversial, colorful, politically active and generally regarded as the most prominent and logical rival of Prime Minister Ky. Has been a key figure in military leadership since the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. Was abruptly removed from the I Corps com-

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mand on March 10, 1966, ostensibly for reasons of health, but actually for insubordination and purportedly allying himself with opposition political activities. His removal touched off a series of Buddhist-dominated, antigovernment demonstrations and disorders. (3, 7)

(S) Is generally regarded as anti-Communist and highly nationalistic, but has varied in his attitude towards the United States. Allegedly is opposed to neutralism and dislikes the French; has studied in the United States. Lived in exile in Cambodia until 1963 after participating in the abortive coup of November 1960 against the Ngo regime. Accompanied Prime Minister Ky to Malaysia on a goodwill trip in October 1965. (7)

(C) Has been associated with the Dai Viet Nationalist Party (Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang--DVQDD) and the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang--VNQDD), and is widely reputed to be allied with the militant Buddhist leader, Thich Tri Quang. Exiled in Cambodia, did not take part in the coup of November 1, 1963, but shortly thereafter was restored to military duty and played an important role in placing Major General Nguyen Khanh in power in January 1964 and in his ouster in February 1965. In this latter action, was closely associated with Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky. (7)

(S) Born in Hue, on March 20, 1923. Is married, but since his Cambodian exile, has been separated from his wife, who is 14 years younger than he is. Has four children, the two oldest reportedly attending schools in the United States in 1966. (3, 7)

(S) Variousy described as opportunistic, unstable, temperamental, easily influenced and susceptible to flattery, has also been characterized as tough, unscrupulous, fearless, dedicated and highly competent. Is a nominal Buddhist, although allegedly has no deep religious attachment to that faith; has long been target of Catholic opposition. Is fluent in French, and has some knowledge of English. Holds the National Order of Vietnam, and reputedly has received the French Croix de Guerre several times. (3, 7)

(S) Completed primary and secondary schools in Hue, before joining the French army in 1948. Attended the Officer's School at Vung Tau in 1949; served as junior officer in an airborne battalion; completed a course at the Quartermaster School and rose to command a battalion within the next 6 years. Was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1955; in 1956 was appointed commander of the Airborne Brigade. Completed an Airborne Orientation and Observation Course in the United States in 1958. (3)

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(S) While in protective custody of the Royal Khmer Government, was tried in absentia in July 1963 by a special Saigon military court. Was convicted, sentenced to death, property confiscation and loss of rank. Returned to Saigon in November 1963 and resumed his military status. Was assigned as deputy commander of the IV Corps in January 1964; 1 month later was transferred to a similar position in the I Corps. Commanded 1st Infantry Division from February to October 1964; was promoted to sub-brigadier general in May 1964, to brigadier general in October of the same year and raised to major general on November 1, 1965. Assigned to command the I Corps on November 11, 1965, and became a lieutenant general in the reorganized military rank structure announced on November 16, 1965. (3)

(U) TON THIAT DINH (nicknamed the "Lion," and known familiarly as "Ahu"). Lieutenant General. Commander of the I Corps and member of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) since April 9, 1966.

(S) A particularly well-qualified combat commander, is regarded as aggressive, ruthless and capable of organizing and controlling operations over relatively wide areas. Is one of the four principal regional commanders and responsible for the security and stability of the five northernmost provinces. Was the second Corps commander to be selected by Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky within 1 month to reestablish government control in the area experiencing serious disorders after the abrupt dismissal on March 10, 1966, of Lieutenant General Nguyen Chanh Thi as I Corps commander. Replaced Major General Nguyen Van Chuan, who allegedly sympathized with the dissident elements. (3, 7)

(S) Attended military courses in France and the United States; is believed to be pro-Western. In 1960, was reported to be a member of the People's Counter Coup d'Etat Committee and the Can Lao Party military committee. Apparently was highly regarded by President Ngo Dinh Diem; however, disciplinary action taken against him in July 1963, while military governor of Saigon, is believed to have led to his renouncement of loyalty to President Ngo and to support the coup against the Ngo government in November of the same year. From January to September 1964, was under house arrest for alleged plotting with French agents for the neutralization of South Vietnam. Restored to duty but apparently was mistrusted by colleagues for his capriciousness and political pliability. (3, 7)

(U) Born on November 20, 1926, in Hue of a wealthy and powerful mandarin family. Is married and has at least three children.

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(S) Is slender, about 5 feet 4 inches tall; has tremendous drive and energy, with noticeable flair for showmanship. Disliked by many associates, is considered vain, impetuous, impulsive in his actions and an overly harsh disciplinarian. Is fluent in French and has a fair command of English. Reportedly is a nominal Buddhist. (7)

(U) Holds the National Order of Vietnam in three orders, awarded in 1954, 1955 and 1963, respectively. Received the Cross of Valor in 1963. Decorated seven times by the French; received the Croix de Guerre twice in 1951; once in 1952; once in 1955; twice in 1963; made a Knight of the Legion of Honor in 1955.

(S) Completed primary and secondary schools in Da Lat and Hue. Attended the University of Da Lat from 1942 to 1944 and entered the Army in 1947. Commissioned in 1949 after completing the Vietnamese Officer's School and the French Ecole d'Extrême Orient in Hue. In 1950, was promoted to first lieutenant and attended Cavalry School in Saumur, France. From 1951 to 1957, successively commanded a battalion, a tactical mobile group and the 2d Division, completed a Staff Course in Hanoi, and received promotions through colonel. In 1959, attended the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth; was assigned to command the 1st Division; was promoted to brigadier general in 1958, and during the next 5 years, commanded both the II and III Corps. Was made military governor of Saigon under martial law in August 1963, but was suspended from command between September 12 and 23, allegedly for enforcement of excessively harsh measures. Was reinstated to command the III Corps and promoted to major general in November 1963. In 1964, served briefly as minister of security before his house arrest from January 30 to September 9, charged with plotting the neutralization of South Vietnam. Was released, and between 1964 and 1966, successively held positions of deputy chief of operations of the Armed Forces Joint Staff, and deputy commander of the armed forces. Automatically raised in rank to lieutenant general under the reorganized military rank structure of November 16, 1965. (3)

(U) TRAN VAN PHAN. Captain. Acting Commander of the Navy (Chief of Naval Operations) since April 26, 1965.

(S) Largely apolitical and loyal to superiors, is reputedly a well-trained, dependable, professional naval officer. Replaced Admiral Chung Tan Cang who was ousted as Commander of the Navy (and concurrent Chief of Naval Operations). (3)

(S) Reportedly feels that continued support of the United States is essential to the future of South Vietnam. Has studied in the United

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States and in Okinawa. Appears to support whatever government is in power, regardless of his personal feelings. (3, 7)

(U) Born in Sa Dec, about 70 miles southwest of Saigon, on December 31, 1925. His wife, Thi Thu Cuc, was born in the same town, August 28, 1929. Has one son, born in 1949, and two daughters, born in 1951 and in 1954.

(S) Approximately 5 feet 3 inches tall, weighs about 132 pounds and walks with a rolling gait. Has black hair, brown eyes, and cherubic facial features. Holds himself well, dresses neatly but never wears a civilian hat with Western-style clothes. Although kind and humorous, is sensitive to personal slights and believed to be more perceptive than he appears. Not known as a strong leader, but is capable and well experienced. Has a nervous laugh, mixes well, does not smoke but will accept a social drink. Is a good musician, claims above-average judo skill and enjoys tennis. Is fairly fluent in French and English. He and his wife are Buddhists. (3, 7)

(U) Attended primary school in Sa Dec; graduated from secondary school in Saigon in 1944. Entered service in 1951; received a commission from the Nha Trang Naval Academy in 1952. Served with the River Forces until 1959 in various positions. Meanwhile, attended the Joint and Combined School in Okinawa in 1958. In 1959-60, completed a course at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, after which he commanded the River Forces for 3 years. Attended the Naval Command Course at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1963-64. Was appointed chief of staff of the Navy in June 1964 and served in that capacity until his selection as acting commander of the Navy.

(U) VINH LOC. Major General. Commander of the II Corps and member of The Directory (National Leadership Committee) since June 20, 1965.

(S) As one of the four principal regional commanders, is responsible for the security of the provinces in the north-central portion of the country, involving the coordination of extensive political and military activities. Highly regarded by Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, is a completely dedicated professional officer and a competent and forceful field commander. Participated in the November 1963 coup, but is largely apolitical; has supported all governments since President Ngo Dinh Diem. (3, 7)

(S) Is highly nationalistic, anti-Communist and pro-Western, but has had some friction with United States advisers. Has attended military schools in the United States and France. Reportedly was in

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exile for 3 years in Cambodia after the abortive coup against President Ngo in November 1960. (7)

(S) Born in Hue on October 7, 1923; is married and has one son, born in 1954. About 5 feet 6 inches tall and somewhat heavy at 140 pounds; has black hair and dark eyes. Speaks frankly, is courageous and poised. Is intelligent and not easily perturbed, but is not particularly quick mentally. Is interested in sports; especially enjoys riding, tennis and swimming. Speaks French fluently but only fair English. A nominal Buddhist, is allegedly fond of luxurious living. (3)

(S) Attended primary school at Qui Nhon and completed secondary schooling at Hue. Entered military service in 1949, and completed the Officers Training Course at the Ecole des Cadres in Hue in 1950. In 1950-51, attended the Cavalry School at Saumur, France. Was a company officer with armored and infantry units until 1953; then assigned to attend the Advanced Officers' Course at the Ecole Superieure Militaire in Hanoi. Was promoted to major in 1954; after 1 year as chief of staff of an armored squadron attended the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. Was instructor in the South Vietnamese Command and General Staff College from 1956 to 1958. Commanded the Armored School at Thu Duc in November 1958, retaining that post until exiled to Cambodia in November 1960. While serving in an armored regiment, took part in military action supporting the November 1963 anti-Ngo coup; shortly afterward was promoted to colonel and assigned as commander of the Armored Command. In 1964, was promoted to sub-brigadier general and transferred to command the 9th Infantry Division. Served as deputy chief of staff of Personnel, from March until June 20, 1965, when he was assigned as commander of the II Corps. Received the permanent rank of brigadier general November 1, 1965, and was advanced to major general when the military rank structure was reorganized on November 16, 1965. (3, 7)

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### **NOTE**

Additional unclassified sources used in the preparation of this Supplement appear at the end of the *Area Handbook for South Vietnam*.

**SUPPLEMENTARY**

**INFORMATION**

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(U) Reportedly, studied agriculture at the University of Hanoi, from 1943 to 1945, and law at the University of Saigon, from 1948 to 1950. In 1948, collaborated in covertly publishing *Gi' Ph'oc* (Liberation), a propaganda paper in the Saigon-Cho Lon area for the Lien Viet Front, one of the Hanoi-sponsored organizations later incorporated into the Viet Minh. Meanwhile, was mentioned as director of instruction and organization in the Communist-controlled Viet Minh resistance efforts against the French.

(U) From 1954 to 1958, worked among South Vietnamese intellectuals against President Ngo Dinh Diem's regime. Reportedly directed a group of journalists who remained in South Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement to oppose the Government of South Vietnam. Meanwhile, in 1955, was said to be engaged in training Viet Minh specialists and leaders in the Saigon-Cho Lon area. After release in October from arrest in June 1958, apparently hid in the jungles with his wife until sometime in 1959 when he was reported to be in Cambodia.

(U) (8) Continued his political activity, nevertheless, and, in July 1961, was named secretary general of the newly-formed Radical Socialist Party, a post he still holds in this component of the National Front. The Party, at that time, had an anti-Ngo program aimed at attracting intellectuals to oppose the Saigon government. Still represented in 1966 this Party on the Front's Central Committee. In February 1962, was elected the first secretary general of the Central Committee of the newly-formed National Front. Communist sources claim that he was the first director of the so-called South Vietnam Liberation News Agency and of the Voice of South Vietnam Liberation Radio. (7)

(U) (8) In June 1962, began his numerous trips to foreign countries with a 5-month tour heading a Front delegation making friendship visits and attending conferences, which included visits to Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Indonesia, Communist China and North Korea. Conferences included: the International Organization of Journalists Congress, in Budapest; the Sixth Assembly of Member Organizations of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, in Warsaw; the Seventh Congress of the International Union of Students, in Leningrad; and the World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace, in Moscow. (7)

(U) (8) Continued his travels after appointment to Prague in 1963, spending virtually as much time abroad as at his post. After speaking to the World Peace Council meeting at Warsaw in November, attended celebrations in Moscow commemorating the third anniversary of the founding of the National Front. In 1964, visited Cuba in

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