



CINCPAC/MACV DISSENT
TO THE CIA ORDER OF BATTLE ANALYSIS
SOUTH VIETNAM

NOTE:

This document represents the views of the delegations of J-2 CINCPAC and J-2 MACV. While the position was approved in general, all details have not been accepted and are subject to command approval.

ARMY review(s) completed.

PACOM review(s) completed.



CINCPAC/MACV DISSENT
TO CIA OB ANALYSIS, SVN

1. (S/NFD) CINCPAC and MACV do not concur in the CIA analysis of enemy strength in South Vietnam. CIA's presentation portrays, in effect, an enemy force of a half-million or more -- about twice the size previously estimated by USIB. The presentation exaggerates the threat conceptually as well as numerically.
2. (S/NFD) The attempts to affix numbers to specific elements of the broad base of willing and unwilling popular support of the enemy in SVN, or even to quantify that base in total, are fruitless and very misleading. On the one hand, harmless individuals are added to the hostile elements, exaggerating the threat; on the other hand the true size of the very large population base still subject to enemy exploitation is grossly understated.
3. (S/NFD) We believe that the description of the enemy strength in late 1967 contained in SNIE 14-3-67 was reasonably accurate and a more valid estimate than the CIA analysis. We note that the CIA analysis is essentially the same as that presented and rejected prior to the publication of the SNIE, with the exception of new minor differences with MACV concerning details of enemy order of battle. We believe that evidence acquired since publication of SNIE 14-3-67 attests to its general validity. In particular, we believe that enemy behavior during and after Tet offensive argues strongly against the general magnitude of strength indicated by the CIA analysis. We know that administrative personnel, political infrastructure, convalescents from VC hospitals, and even innocent bystanders werethrown into the Tet attacks. This suggests that VC manpower reserves were limited, i.e., not available in the large numbers indicated in the CIA view. Further, enemy forces were under the heaviest pressure to continue attacks after Tet, but were unable to do so -- a second wave of attacks on 17-18 February was rather feeble. An enemy document captured in May 1967 states that the total enemy strength in SVN (probably in mid-1966) was 285,000. MACV's retroactive

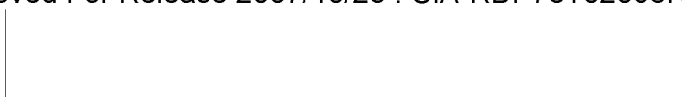
adjustment of strengths based on the SNIE 14-3-67 figures gives 286,300 for about the same period. We have strong evidence that North Vietnam is hurrying large numbers of personnel to the south to replace Tet losses. We believe that all the evidence above indicates that the previously agreed estimate of enemy personnel strength was probably about right, and argues strongly against the proposition that there are a half-million or more militarily important personnel now available to the enemy in SVN.

4. (S/NFD) We believe that the CIA analysis relies much too heavily upon extrapolation from enemy documents, most of which are neither current nor complete. MACV figures are based in part on documentary evidence and extrapolations therefrom, but where possible also upon reports from US and Allied officers in the provinces and districts of SVN. This basic difference in approach to available evidence is fundamental to the differences of analyst opinion as to enemy strengths.

5. (S/NFD) We believe that the field reports are unduly denigrated in the CIA approach. The MACV order of battle figures are essentially the sum of numerous small estimates of enemy strength in each of the units, districts and provinces of SVN. As such they almost certainly contain errors, but in the aggregate constitute the basis for the best estimate available for US planners and policy makers. Recognition of possible margins of error in the MACV estimates was the basis of the September 1967 agreements in Saigon to range figures upward toward the CIA views. However, we believe now as we did then that MACV estimates are not likely to contain errors of the magnitude implied by the CIA analysis.

6. (S/NFD) We believe that enemy strength including political cadres in SVN as of October 1967 was about 300,000-335,000 as indicated in SNIE 14-3-67. Since then the enemy launched his Winter/Spring Campaign to include

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the Tet offensive which has been enormously costly to him in casualties. During the same time period he also launched a campaign to impress or recruit large numbers of South Vietnamese especially young teen-age boys and women. The enemy also infiltrated two additional divisions and a separate regiment during the period. We are especially uncertain as to the results of the enemy's recruitment drive. This tends to increase our range of uncertainty in strength figures. However, we estimate with reasonable confidence that enemy strength is now somewhere in the range of 278,000-328,000 men (including political cadres).

7. (SS/NFD) The following is our position on the strength of various components of enemy strengths:

a. COMBAT FORCES (Maneuver and Combat Support).

(Communist "Main and Local Forces" in CIA order of battle). The CIA analysis attacks MACV order of battle on the following three bases: (1) MACV collateral Order of Battle does not consider enemy units

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(2) MACV OB omits large numbers of small units subordinate to echelons above village level; and (3) certain MACV accounting procedures tend to minimize the number of soldiers carried in units held in OB. The total of all these, CIA holds, would add as much as one-third to the MACV-held enemy combat forces.

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(1) We accepted the obviously true contention that MACV's

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OB does not contain enemy units. However, it should be noted that normally this has little effect on total enemy personnel strengths. CIA has built its case based mainly on the one obvious exception -- the entry of the 304th and 320th NVA Divisions into SVN in January 1968. evidence of the presence of these units in SVN was not available until February 1968. Nevertheless, to arrive at the CINCPAC/MACV current estimate for this category of enemy strength, every additional unit suggested by other conference participants was accepted for strength accounting. At the conclusion of the conference, all participating agencies agreed with the CINCPAC/MACV holdings of enemy combat units.

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(2) CIA contended that, in addition to the agreed enemy combat units referred to in the preceding paragraph, there are an additional 10-11,000 combat personnel not carried



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in MACV OB. This contention was based on a review of 1966 and 1967 documents all of which have been available to and considered by MACV analysts. CIA analysts have interpreted certain of these documents to imply that many sapper, engineer, special action, and intelligence/reconnaissance cells, squads, and platoons exist on a country-wide basis and are not carried in MACV OB. It is interesting to note that the CIA analysts had interpreted documents pertaining to only 33 of the 225 VC districts and then had extrapolated the figures thus arrived at to give them their 4,000 additional persons. The same methodology was employed to arrive at the CIA estimate of 2,000 to 3,000 persons in specialized units at VC Province level. MACV analysts maintain that the majority of these small specialized units are, in fact, presently carried in MACV OB holdings. Some of these special units are actually a part of an existing local force battalion, company, or platoon with its own unique designation. Others are directly subordinate to a district or province committee and are carried in that area's administrative services strength. CIA further contends that "all significant urban areas maintain city units -- although only two city units are identified in MACV OB." CIA analysts again extrapolate this belief country-wide and arrive at the estimate that there are an additional 3,000 enemy personnel not carried in MACV OB. MACV contends that there is no evidence to indicate the presence of a city unit in each and every province capital. Further, if CIA analysts had studied MACV OB holdings they would have discovered that several enemy local force companies with a numerical designation are, in fact, city units. Some examples are the 480th LF Co (AKA Phan Thiet City Unit), C165 Co (AKA C Mau City Company) and, the C207 Co (AKA My Tho City Company). Additionally, MACV holds indications that some so-called city units are in reality political/military administrations and control-type elements and are carried within the political infrastructure figures. One example of this is the Da Nang City Agency which controls the 402d Sapper Bn.

(3) The CIA order of battle analysis further contends that there are an additional 11,000 to 16,000 enemy personnel that are missing from MACV OB totals because of faulty MACV accounting procedures. Six thousand of these are attributed to the belief that MACV probably carries enemy units at "on board" strength rather than at "assigned" strength. An additional 5,000 to 10,000 personnel are attributed by CIA to "unlisted service support personnel probably integral to divisions." The CIA analysis asserts that every enemy division in SVN must have a certain number of integral support units. After making this assumption, another mathematical extrapolation is used to arrive at the CIA figure. Evidence available to MACV indicates that no similarity or standard TO/E can be applied to every division. A good

example of this can be drawn from the 304th and 320th Divisions which entered SVN at the same time and place. The support elements organic to these divisions vary widely. In other cases, hard intelligence shows that some divisions have only company-size support units where other divisions are supported by battalion-size units. MACV feels that allied forces in SVN have had sufficient contact with all enemy divisions to have established division headquarters holdings far more valid than could be reached by mathematical extrapolation.

b. Administrative Service Forces: We believe that the description and strength estimate of this category as stated in paragraphs 26 and 27 of SNIE 14.3-67 was based on the best evidence available. There has been some attrition to this category of enemy strength since the publication of the SNIE. We now estimate that there are 30,000 to 40,000 administrative service personnel in SVN. We agree that there are some administrative service personnel not counted in this figure outside the boundaries of SVN who support enemy forces in the DMZ and the Western Highlands. The CIA view holds that VC/NVA administrative service personnel are present in SVN on a one-to-one ratio to infantry troops. This idea is based on a small sample of documents which we believe to be incomplete and outdated. For example only five documents, covering a small geographical area, are used by CIA to support the 1:1 ratio (infantry to admin/serv) at province level, none dated later than December 1966. More documents are used to argue the 1:1 ratio at district, but only six of these documents are of 1967 vintage. These would indicate a lesser ratio of administrative services to combat forces, i.e., about one to 0.8 (infantry to admin/serv). If the documentary evidence since mid-67 were applied the ratio would be 1:05. Later documentation than that used for the CIA analysis exists which if included in their sampling would significantly lower the ratio. Further, the small sample of documents used in the CIA analysis is pertinent almost exclusively to III and IV CTZs. Because of obvious differences between enemy forces in these and the northern two CTZs we do not accept the view that any ratio is applicable country-wide. We do not believe that there is any standard ratio of administrative personnel applicable throughout the enemy force structure.

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c. Guerrillas

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(2) MACV's determination of guerrilla strength is based on a study of captured documents and interrogation reports both at the grass root level where they are used in the preparation of the RITZ reports, and also by MACV analysts who verify and utilize these reports. Each district is treated separately and not extrapolated from other areas. A third element in the system which serves as a check is the derived guerrilla figure which results from the application of recruitment and attrition estimates to previous figures. We remain convinced that the MACV utilization of these methodologies to estimate guerrilla strength provides cross checks not used in the CIA extrapolations and results in more valid figures.

(3) We believe that the estimate of guerrilla strength contained in paragraphs 28, 29 and 30 of SNIE 14.3-67 was essentially accurate. Documentary evidence and field reports since that time show a definite further drawdown of this category of enemy strength, through both direct battlefield attrition and the upgrading of guerrillas to the enemy's main and local force units. The wholesale, countrywide upgrading of guerrillas was particularly evident just prior to the enemy's abortive Tet offensive. Considering available evidence, we estimate that the current strength of the guerrilla force is 50,000 to 70,000. If the enemy's recent recruiting efforts have been much more effective than current evidence indicates, the actual figure could be toward the high side of the spread. Even the lower end of our estimate assumes double normal recruitment since Jan 68.

d. Political Cadres: We believe that paragraph 31 of SNIE 14.3-67 adequately describes and accurately estimates the strength of the VC political organization in SVN. The higher CIA estimate includes in its total typists, guards, and other low level personnel serving in a support role to the infrastructure. While MACV acknowledges the existence

of these support people and their possible necessity for the internal functioning of the political apparatus, we do not consider them to be in significant leadership positions or in professional positions that may influence either the enemy's political decision making process, or his overall effectiveness in directing the insurgency in the south. They are therefore clearly in support of and outside the definition of the political infrastructure threat in SVN as interpreted by MACV. Although the VC political organization suffered some casualties and probable depreciation of cadre quality during the recent Tet offensive, we continue to believe that the SNIE estimate of 75,000 to 85,000 political cadre is valid.

e. We believe that the descriptions of other VC organizations contained in paragraphs 32-36 of SNIE 14.3-67 remain generally accurate. We support that document's essential conclusion that the size of Self-Defense, Secret Self-Defense, Assault Youth, and other such organizations could not be estimated with any measure of confidence. In an effort toward providing some estimative beginning, the SNIE noted that some documents over a year old had suggested a figure of 150,000 as a Self-Defense total. Other documentation, however, indicates that two-thirds of the people are to be organized as Self-Defense Militia. The CIA position ignores many people whose local support -- willing or unwilling, organized or levied -- is of great significance to the enemy insurgency effort; for example, the VC "Foster Sisters' Association" performs the necessary military function of caring for large numbers of enemy wounded. The Communists organize and use everyone with any capability, as was clearly pointed out by paragraph 32 of the SNIE. If any estimate of the number of people providing significant aid to the enemy (i.e., an "insurgency support base") were feasible, it would be a far higher figure than CIA proposes, and even less meaningful in terms of enemy threat. We believe it remains impossible to provide any meaningful quantification with respect to such elements as Self-Defense Guerrillas/Militia, Assault Youth, Secret Guerrillas, etc., and we consider that CIA's presentation inflates the enemy threat.

8. Attrition:

a. We believe that the subject of attrition must be addressed in this paper for the following reasons.

(1) The subject of attrition was incidental to discussions of all categories of enemy strength.

(2) CIA insisted, throughout the conference, that non-military elements (self defense, assault youth, etc) must be quantified in order that they can be attrited. Their argument insisted that MACV had been assessing significant losses against enemy armed forces strength which should properly have been assessed against the non-military elements such as self defense, secret self defense, and assault youth. We note that in CIA's 68 paper addressing attrition, no attrition was ascribed against these non-military elements during the period 1 January-31 March 1968.

b. MACV/CINCPAC views concerning attrition are based on the following inputs and losses to the total enemy armed forces.

(1) Enemy losses consist of KIA (body count), died of wounds/disabled, PW, Military Returnee (Hoi Chanh), and non-battle losses. We do not believe that any significant number of these losses should be ascribed to any but armed forces elements. We do not attempt to deny that the body count includes some civilians, self defense, assault youth and the like. On the other hand we know that large numbers of military personnel are killed by air and artillery strikes and are not included in body count figures. We believe the latter to be a significantly larger figure than non-military personnel included in the body count. Even if one could quantify the numbers of non-military personnel in the body count, he could not separate the innocent civilians from self defense, assault youth personnel and other persons from similar elements.

(2) Enemy gains come from recruiting and infiltration. In the last few months, impressment has been on a scale that might merit consideration separate from recruitment. It should be noted that all enemy gains are estimates for at least six months. The estimate of infiltration becomes hard data after six months; however, if during the six month period actual infiltration exceeds the estimate the actual figure is used in adjusting enemy strength. MACV estimates of monthly recruiting and infiltration have been revised upward to reflect evidence of increased enemy input since the first of the year from impressment and infiltration.

c. The following tables illustrate in detail the MACV/CINCPAC views of attrition to enemy forces for the period 1 Jan-31 Mar 68.

[Redacted Box]

Enemy Gains 1st Qtr 1968

Recruitment/Impressment (est 7,000 per month)	21,000
Infiltration (est 7,000 per month) (plus 304th and 320th NVA Division)	38,000
Possible Other Undetected Gains (Infiltration and/or Recruitment)	0 - 15,000
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	59,000- 74,000

Enemy Losses 1st Qtr 1968

KNOWN (KIA, DOW/DIS, PW, Returnee - excluding 10,000 Tet KIA ascribed to civilians, porters, etc)	80,000
OTHERS (non-battle losses, estimated at 2,000 per month)	6,000
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	86,000

NET Enemy Losses, 1st Qtr 1968 12,000-27,000

MACV STRENGTHS - 1 JAN 68

COMBAT	ADM/SER	GUERRILLA	POL	TOTAL
120,000-130,000	35,000-40,000	70,000-80,000	80,000-90,000	305,000-340,000
<u>MACV STRENGTHS 31 MAR 68</u>				
123,000-133,000	30,000-40,000	50,000-70,000	75,000-85,000	278,000-328,000
<u>NET GAIN/LOSS 1st QTR 1968</u>				
Plus 3,000	Minus 0-5,000	Minus 10,000-20,000	Minus 5,000	Minus 12,000-27,000

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1 MAY 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH: Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT: Results of Community Negotiations on Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

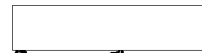
1. This memorandum is to report the results of the recent intelligence conference and subsequent negotiations with DIA on the strength of enemy forces in South Vietnam.

2. As directed by you the CIA draft assessment of enemy strengths was presented to a conference with representatives from DIA, MACV, CINCPAC, State, NSA and observers from the military services and OSD. The conference meetings were held from 10-16 April 1968 and several additional meetings were held with DIA.* The views of each participant were discussed at length and the CIA draft was subjected to detailed examination and comment. Much of the criticism was constructive and beneficial, enabling the CIA delegation to make several changes in its estimate.

3. Despite these changes the difference in views could not be reconciled. Our revised and best estimate of enemy forces in South Vietnam for the two dates discussed at the conference is shown in the Table on Page 4.

4. Our estimate presents enemy strengths in three major categories -- Combat Forces, Irregular Forces, and Political Infrastructure. We view these categories as composing the enemy's organized insurgency base and estimate their number to be in the range of 450-600,000 persons. MACV, CINCPAC and DIA do not accept the concept of an insurgency base. They have figures only

* A report on the conference and the positions of each participating agency is attached as Annex A.


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for the Combat Forces and Political Infrastructure which they estimated to be from 280-330,000 persons on 31 March 1968.

5. The differences between the CIA and the military intelligence estimates vary from category to category:

Combat Forces: The CIA estimate for Combat Forces on 31 March 1968 is 285-335,000, compared with military estimates of 203-243,000. Within the category most of the difference is accounted for by our higher estimates for Administrative Services and Guerrillas as shown in this tabulation:

	<u>CIA</u>	<u>MACV/CINCPAC/DIA</u>
<u>Combat Forces</u>		
Main and Local	125-145,000	120-140,000
Administrative Services	60- 80,000	35- 40,000
Guerrillas	80-110,000	70- 80,000

Although DIA has stayed with the MACV figures for Administrative Services it has indicated that at least 10-20,000 probably should be added to the MACV estimate, and that further consideration should be given to Administrative Service personnel located in the border areas of Laos, Cambodia and the DMZ.

Irregular Forces: CIA estimates these forces to be in the range of 90-140,000 persons including 80-120,000 Self Defense forces and 10-20,000 Assault Youth. Both MACV and CINCPAC feel that these forces cannot and should not be quantified. DIA feels that a decision to quantify them is a policy matter but that if such a decision were made the CIA figures should be reasonable best estimates.

Political Infrastructure: CIA estimates this category to include 85-115,000 persons as of 31 March 1968, including 75-85,000 professional cadre and 10-30,000 full time workers in supporting staffs. MACV, CINCPAC and DIA concur with the CIA estimate for professional cadre but do not believe that the personnel in supporting staffs should be considered as part of the Political Infrastructure.

6. The use and characterization of these figures remains a serious problem. The military services would prefer to include

only those elements listed under combat forces -- 225-260,000 -- as representing enemy strengths. We agree that this number represents the prime combat threat but prefer to use the total insurgency base of 450-600,000 as the best estimate of enemy strengths. We feel most strongly that the total figure is the one that most accurately describes the enemy forces that are the main target and concern of those charged with the military and political resolution of the Vietnam problem. For in addition to regular combat forces, the total insurgency base includes those organized groups that actively support regular combat troops, provide manpower inputs to regular units, sustain casualties from Allied attacks and, in turn, inflict casualties on Allied forces. The inclusion of all elements, therefore, is essential to meaningful and useful intelligence appraisals.

7. The choice of numbers and groups to be included in any presentation will vary, of course, according to the threat that is being described. Almost any choice presents delicate political problems. We would have to be meticulous in describing the precise functions and relative effectiveness of each element since there are substantial qualitative differences among them. The form in which these figures should be presented in any public statements and decisions as to inclusions or exclusions of particular categories are beyond our domain.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
Conference Report with
Annexes

Distribution:
Cy 1 & 2 - Addressee w/att.
3 - DDCI w/att.
4 - DDI w/att.
5 & 6 - OD/OER w/att.
7 - Ch/D/I w/att.
8 - Ch/I/SV w/att.

DD/OER [redacted] 1 May 68)

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Strength Estimate of the Organized
Insurgency Base in South Vietnam*

	<u>1 January 68</u>	<u>31 March 68</u>
<u>Combat Forces</u>		
Main and Local	120-140,000	125-145,000
Administrative Services	60- 80,000	60- 80,000
Guerrillas	<u>80-120,000</u>	<u>80-110,000</u>
Sub-total	260-340,000	265-335,000
<u>Irregular Forces</u>		
Self Defense	80-120,000	80-120,000
Assault Youth	<u>10- 20,000</u>	<u>10- 20,000</u>
Sub-total	90-140,000	90-140,000
<u>Political Infrastructure</u>		
Professional Cadre	80- 90,000	75- 85,000
Supporting Staffs	<u>10- 30,000</u>	<u>10- 30,000</u>
Sub-total	90-120,000	85-115,000
TOTAL	<u>440-600,000</u>	<u>440-590,000</u>

* The methodologies used for deriving these estimates are presented in Annex B.

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Report on the Conference on
DCI Assessment of Enemy Strengths
10-16 April 1968

I. Purpose of the Conference

The conference was convened at the request of the Director of Central Intelligence as a result of increasing concern that current estimates of the strength of enemy forces are understated, are too restrictive in scope, and do not properly account for enemy manpower losses.

As a result of both his concern and that of the White House Mr. Helms had directed his staff to prepare an assessment of enemy strength that he, as the Director of Central Intelligence, could issue as a formal statement of his views. This conference was called in order that this assessment could receive the full benefit of the advice and comment of the responsible components of DIA, CINCPAC, MACV and other concerned services and agencies. It was the hope of the Director of Central Intelligence that in this process the conference would be able to develop an agreed community estimate. It was also anticipated that the participants would be able to devise an acceptable definition of the elements to be included in the assessment and a satisfactory method for determining their numbers.

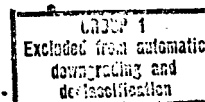
II. Participants

The principal participants in the conference were representatives of the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC. Observers from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, and the military services were also present. A list of the delegates and observers is attached to this report.

III. Conference Results and Recommendations

The conference provided a full opportunity for a frank exchange of views by all representatives. As a result of the evidence presented at the conference all parties were able to make some adjustments in their pre-conference estimates. Nevertheless, the conference failed to reach an agreed community estimate of the strength of enemy forces.

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The differences in estimates of total enemy strength are shown in the following table.

	<u>Estimates of Total Enemy Strength a/</u>	
	<u>MACV/CINCPAC/DIA</u>	<u>CIA b/</u>
1 January 68	305-340,000	440-600,000
31 March 68	278-328,000	440-590,000

a. The MACV/CINCPAC/DIA estimates do not include all categories of forces estimated by CIA nor would they add the military and political elements.

b. The Department of State concurs in the CIA estimates. The National Security Agency agreed with the CIA methodology and position but feels it lacks the data base and research staff to provide an independent estimate of the strength of enemy forces.

The positions of each element of their estimates are presented in Part IV of this report. A DIA position paper follows at the end of this report.

The question of methodologies for attriting enemy forces and the base that should be attrited were discussed at length by the conference. CIA and the other Washington-based delegations expressed reservations about MACV's method of accounting for gains and losses and its adequacy for providing current estimates of total enemy strengths. Because of the complexity of this problem no agreement could be reached at this conference. MACV did agree, however, to provide the Washington community with a pilot study demonstrating how losses and gains are handled in Saigon. The Washington community will examine this study and then enter into discussions with MACV of any apparent problems in the methodology and possible means of correcting or improving the model.

The discussions during the conference were particularly fruitful in identifying problem areas that account for many of the differences among members of the intelligence community. The following recommendations were unanimously agreed by the conference and their implementation should facilitate elimination of some basic problems and differences in estimates.

1. Need for an All Source OB - The unit holdings in a OB based on rigid acceptance criteria will always lag behind those in OB. Over the long term these differences tend to be eliminated but they can be highly significant in terms of current estimates of enemy strength. Although they amounted to only slightly

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more than 4,000 troops for the two dates considered by the conference, the differences have been well over 20,000 at various times during the first quarter of 1968. The conference recommends unanimously, therefore, that MACV undertake [] supplement to its OB holdings and that this supplement be transmitted to Washington on a periodic basis. The conference also recommends that effective procedures be established so that both headquarters and field commands can make inputs to this supplement.

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2. Out-of-Country Threat - The conference also agreed that there is a continuing need for better and more timely estimates of the threat represented by enemy forces located in areas contiguous to South Vietnam. It recommended, therefore, that MACV undertake steps to define this threat and to provide recurring estimates of its size and significance.

3. Infiltration - The conference agreed that present methods for handling infiltration data account for much of the lag in OB holdings and consequently in estimates of enemy strength. It recommended, therefore, that MACV, [] take steps to provide more meaningful and timely estimates of infiltration and their incorporation into estimates of enemy strength.

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4. Publication - Much of the confusion and apparent inconsistencies in OB holdings and estimates of enemy strength result from requirements that these data be published on a monthly basis in great detail and with unwarranted specificity. These detailed monthly reports are invaluable to working analysis and for briefing purposes. Their publication, however, creates unnecessary problems and leads to erroneous judgments, because of the frequent and sharp fluctuations in end-of-the-month figures. The conference recommends strongly that these publication practices be discontinued and that consumers be requested to settle for reasonable spreads in Order of Battle and strength estimates.

IV. Summary of Positions Taken on the CIA Draft Presentations of Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

General

All conferees agreed that the assessment of enemy strengths is a difficult estimative problem. The information base is spotty and varies significantly for each category of the estimate and the methodologies which must be used do not permit extremely firm and narrow-ranged estimates to be made.

All conferees agreed that any assessment should include a careful and deliberate identification of the relative hardness and

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softness of each element of the assessment. Moreover, the conference agreed that any assessment should carefully describe qualitative as well as quantitative trends and that the relative quality of all elements should be clearly described.

CIA presented its draft assessment of enemy strength as an approach that was more suited to national intelligence needs and the requirements of policy makers than the conventional Order of Battle figures now in general use. In the CIA view a more meaningful assessment of the enemy's strength is derived from the use of a concept of an insurgency base that includes all of the principal organized groups that most directly determine the enemy's strategic capabilities. This base is estimated by CIA to be in the general order of 450-600,000 persons. It includes regular combat forces, organized irregular groups and the political infrastructure.

The CIA concept of an insurgency base includes forces that have long been present in South Vietnam but are not presently quantified. With the exception of the force increases resulting from the recent surges in infiltration, the CIA changes to conventional OB holdings resulted from intensive analysis of intelligence data on the existing force structure and from efforts to offset the lag in MACV's acceptance of units.

With the exception of the MACV/CINCPAC and DIA delegations, who have submitted independently a statement of their position, the conferees were in general agreement with the CIA approach toward estimating enemy strengths. The derivation of the CIA estimates and their differences from previously agreed estimates were considered in separate discussions for each element of the insurgency base. A brief summary of the conference positions follows.

Main and Local Forces

* CIA: In the CIA view the existing estimates of Main and Local Forces require several adjustments. These adjustments should include the incorporation into OB holdings of units [redacted] not listed by MACV because they have not met the MACV acceptance criteria [redacted]; the inclusion of estimates for small units omitted from the OB; an estimate for TDY personnel who are not included in the OB because units are carried at on-duty rather than assigned strengths; and the inclusion of an estimate of unlisted division support elements. The sum of these additions for an OB as of 1 January 1968 totalled from 25,000 to 31,000 persons.

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As a result of the conference discussions the following adjustments were made to the 1 January 1968 estimates of Main and Local Forces:

- a. All representatives agreed to the addition of 4,100 persons in units [redacted] 25X1
- b. CIA reduced its estimate of the forces in small units from a range of 10-11,000 to a range of 5-10,000.
- c. CIA dropped completely its estimate of 6,000 TDY personnel when assured by MACV that units are carried at assigned rather than on-duty strengths.
- d. CIA reduced its estimate of 5-10,000 troops in unlisted division support elements by 2,000 troops because this number had been picked up by MACV.

25X1 Thus, CIA reduced its initial proposed add-ons [redacted] of 21-27,000 persons to 8-18,000 persons. This yielded an estimative range of 130-140,000 for Main and Local Forces. In their discussion of the CIA figure, the military representatives pointed out that the CIA estimate might be overstated because of the many problems inherent in attributing losses to combat forces. In view of this discussion CIA, in order to avoid an upward bias, agreed to reduce the lower end of its range and to revise its estimate to 120-140,000 persons. 25X1

In the discussions of the strengths of Main and Local Forces as of 31 March 1968 the conference agreed on [redacted] add-ons of 4,150 troops (some 19,000 of the [redacted] add-ons estimated by CIA for the month of January were picked up by MACV in its 29 February adjustment of the end-January OB). CIA also reduced its estimate of troops in unlisted division support elements by 1,000 to reflect additional units picked up by MACV. These adjustments resulted in a CIA estimate for Main and Local Forces of 125,000-145,000 troops as of 31 March 1968. 25X1

25X1 MACV/CINCPAC/DIA: The MACV/CINCPAC and DIA representatives were in agreement that [redacted] evidence warranted the inclusion of about 4,100 persons in the Main and Local Forces OB, thus increasing their estimate for 1 January 1968 from 118,700 to 122,800. They also acknowledged that these figures contained some general areas of softness but that any upward biases probably would be offset by a downward bias. They would handle this by using a range around their revised estimate and express it as 120,000-130,000.

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MACV/CINCPAC and DIA felt that the other additions proposed by CIA were in large measure already included in the OB or were not justified by the evidence. Their estimate for 31 March 1968 is 123,000-133,000 troops.

STATE: Agreed to the CIA position.

NSA: Agreed with the CIA assessment but does not have an independent capability to make estimates.

Administrative Services

CIA: The proposed CIA range of 75-100,000 represented a rounding of an estimate of 85,000 Administrative Service troops. This range was adopted because of the tenuous nature of much of the evidence and uncertainties about some of the components of the estimate. The CIA estimate also includes a number of troops serving out-of-country but subordinate to headquarters elements operating in the South. In the discussion of the estimate a case was made that CIA might well have used too high a ratio of Administrative Service forces to Combat forces. For this reason and because of the fact that its estimate might include some troops out-of-country and not subordinate to in-country headquarters, CIA agreed to lower its estimate to a range of 60,000 to 80,000 as of 1 January 1968. CIA estimates that any net gains or losses during the first quarter 1968, are well within its estimative range. CIA also estimates that any losses during the period were probably made up by the heavy infiltration observed during the quarter.

MACV and CINCPAC: Both MACV and CINCPAC believe that their current estimates are the best that can be provided for this category. They also estimate that these forces suffered a net loss of 5,000 during the quarter.

DIA: DIA observed that Administrative Services might be increased by 10-20,000 troops for a 1 January estimate and have set forth their views in the attached position paper.

STATE: Concurred in the CIA position.

NSA: Concurred in methodology for the estimate but has no independent estimate.

Guerrillas

CIA: The CIA estimate of guerrilla forces was 110-120,000 for 1 January 1968 and 90-110,000 for 31 March 1968. The CIA estimate also includes about 10,000 secret guerrillas not included in the

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MACV numbers. CIA agreed with all representatives that the guerrilla element was one that particularly warrants further study. Because of the discussions of the many uncertainties in handling attrition of guerrillas, and a lack of data on upgrading of guerrillas and VC recruitment, CIA reduced the lower end of its estimates, yielding final estimates of 80-120,000 for 1 January 1968 and 80-110,000 for 31 March 1968. These estimates imply a net loss of about 10,000 guerrillas during the quarter.

MACV/CINCPAC and DIA: All representatives stood by MACV's 1 January estimate of 70-80,000 which they would reduce because of attrition to 50-70,000 for 31 March 1968.

STATE: Agrees with the CIA estimate.

NSA: Does not take a position on the estimate.

Political Infrastructure: This estimate was discussed in two categories:

Professional Cadre - All parties agreed with a MACV estimate of 84,000 on 1 January 1968 expressed as a range of 80-90,000. All parties also agreed with a MACV estimate of 75-85,000 as of 31 March 1968. In addition all parties agreed there were additional personnel serving the professional cadre in a full-time support role at district level and above.

Support Personnel

CIA/STATE/NSA - All agreed that this category belongs in the political infrastructure and should be quantified. With the exception of NSA, which did not take a position on the actual number, CIA and State agreed on estimates in the range of 10-30,000 persons.

• MACV/CINCPAC and DIA: All representatives did not regard this group as members of the infrastructure as defined and did not wish it to be quantified.

Self Defense Groups

CIA/STATE - CIA and State agreed that self defense groups are a proper component of the insurgency base and should be quantified. State concurred in a CIA estimate of 80-120,000. All parties at the conference agreed that Self Defense elements are qualitatively inferior to combat forces and that their quality is probably declining. The CIA representative concurred in a conference request that any published assessment of self defense forces would highlight the qualitative inferiority of these groups.

DIA: DIA agreed that self defense groups exist and if quantified the CIA figures appear to be a reasonable best estimate.

MACV and CINCPAC - Both representatives acknowledged that these elements exist and that all conferees could agree on a definition of them. MACV and CINCPAC feel, however, that they cannot and should not be quantified and that it would be misleading to quantify them.

NSA - Agrees with the CIA but does not have an independent estimate of the numbers.

Assault Youth

These elements were estimated by CIA at 10-20,000 persons. The positions of each delegation were the same as those taken on Self Defense Groups.

Position Paper

SUBJECT: Enemy Order of Battle, South Vietnam (U)

1. (S) The Defense Intelligence Agency generally supports the CINCPAC and MACV Order of Battle figures for 1 Jan 1968 as shown below:

Military Forces

Combat	120,000-130,000
Admin Svcs	35,000- 40,000
Guerrillas	70,000- 80,000
Total	<u>225,000-250,000</u>
<u>Political</u>	80,000- 90,000

At the conference, MACV provided an estimate of strength figures for 1 April 1968 which DIA supports as follows:

Military Forces

Combat	123,000-133,000
Admin Svcs	30,000- 40,000
Guerrillas	50,000- 70,000
Total	<u>203,000-243,000</u>
<u>Political</u>	75,000- 85,000

2. (S) DIA makes the observation that in MACV's figures regarding Administrative Services there appear to be from 10,000 to 20,000 personnel which cannot be identified in the OB. DIA's rationale on this subject is being forwarded to MACV for further study and comment, and subsequent incorporation into his Order of Battle as warranted. In addition, DIA believes that in any estimate that is computed on the basis of the need for a particular level of Administrative Services support, consideration must be given to those substantial numbers of additional personnel who are located in the border areas of Cambodia, Laos, and the DMZ, and who are primarily tasked in administrative type support of enemy elements in SVN. These personnel are not carried in MACV's In-country Order of Battle, since they have not been located in South Vietnam; and do not normally become involved in MACV's attrition computations.

3. (C) The MACV 1 January 1968 estimate of guerrilla strength in SVN -- 70,000-80,000 -- is based primarily on the quarterly RITZ reports developed by US advisors in the field. The RITZ collection program is closely coordinated between the US advisor and his Vietnamese counterpart at district and province level, and reflects an ever-improving effect to measure both the numerical strength and quality of the guerrilla organization at the "rice-roots" level. The RITZ report concerns itself with the guerrilla within the village and hamlet who is considered to constitute a military threat. The Communists

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RORS NOT APPLY

themselves describe guerrillas as being comprised of full-time and part-time personnel with a large percentage of women, youths, and over age persons in the part-time groups. Since the armed personnel constitute only a portion of the total guerrilla force, it is believed the 70,000-80,000 carried by MACV adequately quantifies the elements of both full-time and part-time groups ~~and~~ ^{that} constitute a military threat.

4. (S) In the event that a policy decision should be made to quantify the Assault Youth and Self Defense Organizations, the figures proposed by CIA appear to be a reasonable best estimate. However, it is to be noted that there is very little firm evidence upon which to base such a quantification, and only a low level of confidence can be ascribed to these figures. DIA also notes that for planning purposes, the appropriate paragraphs of SNIE 14.3-67 do describe the role, functions, and composition of these elements together with a general order of magnitude for the self-defense organization.

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List of Delegates to Conference on DCI
Assessment of Enemy Strength
10-16 April 1968

SAIGON

Colonel Daniel O. Graham, USA (Chief of Delegation)
Colonel Paul Weiler, USMC
Cmdr. James A. Meacham, USN
1st Lt. Kelly L. Robinson, USA

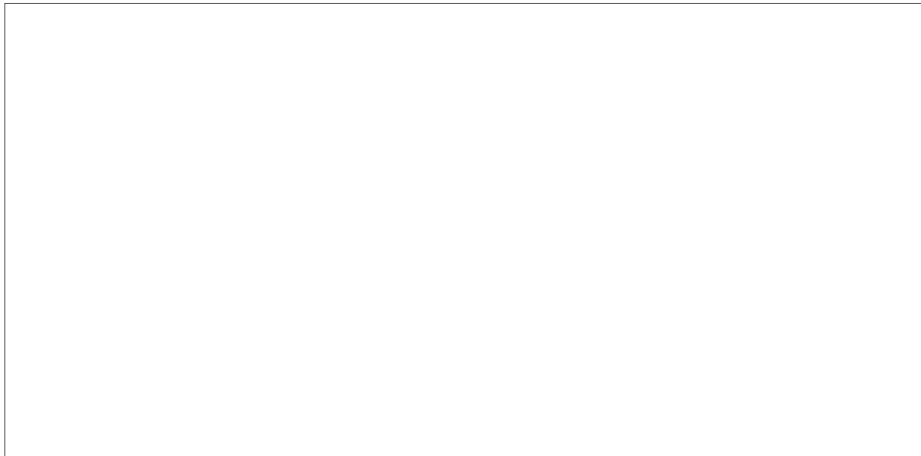
HONOLULU

Lt. Colonel George M. Hamscher, USA
Lt. Colonel James S. Wilson, USMC

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, COMPTROLLER

Jerry E. Bush*

DIA



SERVICES*

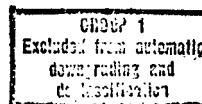
ARMY - Major Joseph R. Dinda
NAVY - Cmdr. Roy L. Beavers
MARINE - Lt. Colonel Edward W. Dzialo
 Lt. Colonel Neil B. Mills
AIR FORCE - Lt. Colonel Scott S. Porter
 Captain Richard L. Bohannon (alternate)

STATE

Daily representation from among the following:

Louis G. Sarris
Richard W. Teare
James H. Cheatham
Stephen R. Lyne
Joseph H. Weiss

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METHODOLOGIES FOR ESTIMATING
ENEMY STRENGTHS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

I. Main and Local Forces

A. General

A full review of MACV's method of maintaining the Main and Local Force OB and of available intelligence information indicates that the strength of these forces may have been 132,000-142,000 or higher on 1 January 1968. The retroactively adjusted MACV [] OB estimated the strength of these forces at 118,700. The higher estimate includes the following components:

The 31 December Collateral OB	118,700
Units not picked up in the OB	[] 4,100
Small units omitted from the OB	5,000 - 10,000
Unlisted Service and Support Personnel Integral to Divisions	3,000 - 8,000
Total	131,700 - 141,700

There are additional factors which have tended to minimize the number of men carried in the OB, but to which estimates were not assigned, so that this estimate is believed to be conservative.

C. Small Units Omitted

The Main and Local Force OB omitted large numbers of cell through company size units subordinate to echelons in the Communist organization between the village and the national levels. It was initially estimated that approximately 10,000 to 11,000 such soldiers were omitted from the OB. On the basis of the evidence offered at the conference, this range has been reduced to 5,000 - 10,000. Such a range is undoubtedly conservative. These units belonged to the following formations:

Specialized units (sapper, engineer, intel/recon, special action etc.) subordinate to districts	4,000
Specialized units (same as above) subordinate to provinces	2,000 to 3,000
City units	3,000
Small units subordinate to unusual echelons	1,000
Total	10,000 to 11,000

The Main and Local Force OB carried virtually no small specialized combat units subordinate to districts. These include sapper, engineer, special action, and intelligence/reconnaissance units organized into cells, squads, and platoons. A review of captured documents written in 1966 and 1967 that pertain to 33 of the Viet Cong's 225 districts (as of late 1967)* suggested the average number of soldiers assigned to such units in each district was 18. As far as can be determined, none of the specialists in the reviewed districts was carried in the OB. If 18-man contingents of specialists were present in 225 VC districts in South Vietnam on 1 January 1968, the number of such soldiers serving at district level was then slightly over 4,000.

The OB also omitted large numbers of sapper, engineer, special action, and intelligence/reconnaissance units subordinate to the 33 or so VC provinces (as of late 1967). As of 1 January 1968, the OB had identified only one sapper battalion (the 36th in Binh Dinh) and a total of eight smaller sapper, engineer, and reconnaissance units subordinate to a total of six VC provinces throughout the country. On the basis of captured documents, which suggest that the average number of soldiers attached to specialized combat units subordinate to each province exceeds 100, it is estimated that there were as many as 2,000 to 3,000 such soldiers absent from the OB as of 1 January 1968.

All significant urban areas maintain "city units," generally

* The Viet Cong reorganized their administrative boundaries countrywide in South Vietnam in late 1967. MACV now carries 244 VC districts in Vietnam instead of the 225. Because most documentation in this memorandum is dated prior to the reorganization, it uses the older number.

subordinate to the provinces in which they are located and on an organizational par with district units within the provinces. Only two city units (those of Nha Trang and Hue) are identified in the MACV OB, although captured documents and POW reports indicate they are common and have been in existence at least since 1964. City units vary in size from a platoon (reported in Nha Trang) to units in excess of battalion size (in Hue and Da Nang). On the basis of available evidence, which suggests that the average city unit consists of a company with some additional support troops and therefore has a strength of about 100, the number of city unit soldiers absent from the OB -- if it is assumed that such units existed in each VC province capital -- was on the order of 3,000 on 1 January 1968.

Small units assigned to unusual command entities seldom appear in the OB. Examples of such formations are plantation units, certain vung (area) units, and units assigned to American bases. On the basis of fragmentary evidence, it is estimated that there could be at least a thousand soldiers in such units but not listed in the OB on 1 January 1968.

The quality of the soldiers in the omitted units is generally high. Sapper, engineer, intelligence/reconnaissance, special action, and city formations, which have an unusually large percentage of party members, undergo rigorous and extended courses of instruction in their specialties. Captured documents and field reports indicate that these types of soldiers were heavily engaged during the urban phases of the Tet offensive.

D. Unlisted service and support
personnel integral to divisions

Most divisions in the OB appear to have unrealistically small numbers of integral service and support troops accounted for. Such troops are usually carried in the OB under one of two categories:

a. "Headquarters and support" troops, which include the military, political, and rear service staffs of divisions, and in some cases (for example, the VC 9th Division) soldiers subordinate to unidentified integral support units, and

b. Personnel subordinate to identified integral support battalions (such as engineer, transport, signal medical, sapper, air defense, and artillery units).

The number of soldiers in both categories totaled 10,255 in the 1 January OB, including 3,475 "headquarters and support" personnel, and 6,780 belonging to 25 identified battalions.

An inspection of the divisional totals reveals certain anomalies:

a. The NVA 325C and the NVA 5th Divisions are listed as having only 100 headquarters and support troops each, with no integral support units.

b. The NVA 7th and VC 9th Divisions, although heavy on "headquarters and support" personnel (900 and 750 respectively), are listed as having no integral support units.

On the basis of what is known about the organizational structure of a Communist division, the complete absence or near absence of integral support units (as opposed to infantry regiments) is unlikely. A recent study by the US Army Pacific (USARPAC) G-2 carries the TOE of a North Vietnamese Army division as having -- in addition to three infantry regiments -- an artillery regiment, an antitank battalion, an antiaircraft battalion, a signal battalion, a medical battalion, a training battalion, a transport company, a reconnaissance company, a chemical company, and a security guard company integral to the division echelon -- that is, some nine battalion-equivalents.

It is apparent that all Communist divisions in South Vietnam do not have all the integral support units listed in the USARPAC study. Divisional support structures -- will also vary from area to area; for example, a division on the DMZ may not be organized identically to one operating near COSVN headquarters. However, every Communist division needs a certain minimum number of integral support units to operate effectively.

A recent document indicated that on 24 September 1967 the VC 9th Division had a signal battalion, a reconnaissance battalion, a training battalion, an artillery battalion, an antiaircraft battalion, a mortar battalion, an engineering company, a transportation company, a medical company, and convalescence company. None was identified in the OB. Some of these formations had probably been with the division for a considerable time. The artillery unit, for example, had been attached to the division at least since April 1966, some seven months after the 9th Division was organized.

In the case of the VC 9th Division, the 750 "headquarters and support" troops carried is unusually large and includes soldiers attached to integral, but unidentified, support elements. Even taking this into account, it would still appear that the 9th Division has more than 750 support troops. If one assumes that the support battalions listed in the document have 270 men each* and the companies have 70 men each (and that the division has an additional headquarters element of 250 men), then the number of support troops integral to the 9th Division

*The MACV OB lists the average division-level support battalion at 270 men.

is 2,150, or some 1,400 more than are listed in the OB.

Because full evidence on the support and service structures of Communist divisions is lacking, their size must be estimated. On the basis of available documentary evidence and TOE's, it is estimated that the seven three-regiment Communist divisions carried in the OB had between six and eight battalion-equivalent integral support and service units. It is further estimated that the two two-regiment divisions carried in the OB had between four and five battalion-equivalent integral support and service units. In addition, it is estimated that the three-regiment divisions each had 250-man headquarters contingents and the two-regiment divisions each had 200-man headquarters contingents. Thus, on 1 January 1968 there were an estimated 16,650 and 19,970 service and support personnel subordinate to divisions listed in the OB. A breakout of these personnel is as follows:

Seven three-regiment divisions with between six and eight 270-man battalion equivalents each, plus a 250-man headquarters contingent each.	13,090 to 16,870
Two two-regiments divisions with between four and five 270-man battalion-equivalents each, plus a 200-man headquarters contingent each.	2,560 to 3,100
Total	15,650 to 19,970

The 1 January OB carried only 10,255 men subordinate to the nine divisions listed, indicating that there were between 5,395 and 9,725 divisional service and support troops missing, or, rounded to the nearest thousand, 5,000 to 10,000. This add-on has been reduced to 3,000 to 8,000 as a result of the addition at the conference of 2,100 support troops to the 325C Division in March.

E. Other Factors Suggesting the Main Force/Local Force OB Was Low

Additional factors make it probable that the Main Force/Local Force OB was low prior to the Tet offensive and suggest that the range of 132,000-142,000 is conservative. They are:

- a. Soldiers on TDY from their units are often not included in the strength of their units or picked up in other areas of the OB.
- b. In adding gains and subtracting losses from units listed in the OB, the methods used by MACV have favored losses over gains.
- c. Large numbers of upgraded guerrillas were added to Main Force/Local Force units just prior to the Tet offensive.

On the basis of assurance by the MACV representatives at the conference that units are carried at assigned rather than on-duty strength, an estimated 6,000 troops were withdrawn from the CIA estimate. It should be noted, however, that this procedure has not always been followed and that the number of TDY soldiers is often high relative to assigned strength.

The process of adding and subtracting personnel from formations in the OB to take into account gains and losses seems to favor the latter over the former. Soldiers are customarily deducted from Main and Local Force units on the basis of body counts. On the other hand, strengths of units are adjusted upward on the basis of captured documents and POW reports. Body count reports are current and provide coverage of most actions in which Main and Local Force units are engaged. POW interrogations and captured documents which provide information on strengths are available only sporadically and in the case of the latter contain dated information. In the absence of a reported reinforcement, or new strength figure, unit strengths are often increased as a result of battle action reports which give estimates for the size of opposing forces. When the enemy's replacement capability is great or when the reported KIA figures are incorrect, the differences between estimated and actual strength may be substantial.

A case in point is the experience of the 273rd Regiment of the VC 9th Division, which was engaged in battles in the Loc Ninh area in late 1967. As a result of battlefield body counts, MACV attrited the 273rd from 1,750 (as held in the 31 October OB) to 1,200 (as held in the 31 December OB). Yet a captured VC report dated 27 January 1968 indicated that the strength of the 273rd was at that moment 1,802. It is likely that in subsequent OB's, the document will be taken into account. Were no such report received, however, the OB figure probably would have remained low for some time.

Finally, variety of reports from the countryside indicate that prior to the Tet offensive unusually large numbers of village and hamlet guerrillas were upgraded as individuals or attached as units to Main and Local Force formations to bring them up to strength or to expand them. The number of such guerrillas has been estimated at 20,000. Because it is not clear how many of these guerrillas were to stay permanently with the higher level units, this methodology did not take guerrilla upgrading into account.

II. Administrative Service Troops

The term "Administrative Services" was adopted at an intelligence conference held in Honolulu, Hawaii, during February 1967 to include all "military personnel in identified COSVN, military region, military subregion, region, province, and district staffs and rear service technical units subordinate to these headquarters." Support and service troops subordinate to divisions, regiments, or battalions are not included in this definition. MACV lists such troops with the Main and Local Forces.

Administrative Service personnel are engaged in staff and command, transportation, clerical, courier, training, medical, financial, and ordnance activities. Combat support units such as artillery and anti-aircraft are excluded from the concept. Although the quality of such personnel varies within units, available evidence indicates that the bulk of these troops are high caliber. Their quality is reflected in the relatively high proportion of Party membership among their ranks and the extensive training many of them receive.

In addition to estimates of the numbers of these troops, there are at any given time many thousands of laborers supervised by them. These laborers are used for a number of duties but transportation -- acting as the enemy's wheels -- is their primary function. Less than 10 percent of Administrative Service troops are in transport units. Laborers augment these troops; they do not replace them. MACV tends to view laborers as substitutes for low caliber service troops and consequently excludes large numbers of administrative service personnel identified in documents as being part time or ineffectual. The evidence does not support such contentions. MACV also has not yet made estimates for Administrative Service troops subordinate to some in-country and border area commands. In summary, a full estimate of all elements has not been made, and the elements that are carried are understated according to the evidence.

The 1 January 1968 OB carried 37,650* Administrative Service troops subordinate to the following echelons:

National (COSVN)	10,100
Region and Subregion	8,150
Province	9,900
District	9,500
	<u>37,650</u>

Evidence collected from documents captured during the past two years indicates that for most areas of South Vietnam on the order of one

* The MACV OB holding for Administrative Services dropped from 37,650 to 33,725 as of 29 February 1968. The decline was apparently justified by an estimate of losses suffered during the Tet offensive.

support soldier is required for each main and local force combat soldier. In light of this evidence, the estimate of 37,650 Administrative Service troops would appear to be considerably below the actual number required by the Communists to support their insurgency in South Vietnam. Even if some 25,000 of the 130,000-140,000 Main and Local Force soldiers in South Vietnam were performing administrative service functions, the ratio of combat and combat support to service troops would not approach 1:1. If, for example, 25,000 is deducted from the 130,000-140,000 in the Main and Local Force OB and added to the Administrative Service OB, the resulting ratio is 62,000 service and staff troops to 105,000-115,000 combat and combat support, or about 1:2. Where evidence is available, such a ratio is not supportable.

Based on a recent review of the evidence, it is estimated that there are at least 60,000-80,000 Administrative Service troops and that of these, about 15,000-20,000 are located out-of-country in border areas of Laos and Cambodia and in the DMZ. Most of these out-of-country personnel are judged to be subordinate to the border area fronts, COSVN, and the Military Regions, but some may be subordinate to other entities providing close-up support to these commands. The MACV estimate conceptually includes a few thousand of these border area troops.

Although this estimate was calculated to reflect the situation as of the first of the year, it is believed that it is also a reasonable estimate for 31 March (1968). Losses amongst these troops are light, relative to the combat elements, and should be well within the range of 60,000-80,000. Further, the losses were probably compensated by new Administrative Service units moving into the country in support of the approximately 22,000 men who arrived in identified new combat units.

The overall estimate is based on a rather narrow evidence base, but the methodology, nonetheless, provides a reasonable order of magnitude. The evidence is best -- in fact quite good -- for the estimate of support troops at the district level. With somewhat poorer evidence, it is estimated that the relative number of staff and support troops to combat-type troops at the province level is about the same as that found at the district level. These district and provincial level support troops number about 27,500 -- somewhat less than the 30,000 Local Force troops which they support.

Local Force Service Troops Subordinate to Districts and Provinces

A review of captured documents pertaining to 29 of the 225 VC districts indicates that the ratio of service and staff troops to soldiers attached to infantry units is about 1:1. This ratio, when applied to the 15,000 district-level infantrymen carried in the 1 January

1968 OB suggests that the number of service and staff personnel serving at district level -- assuming the infantry figure is correct -- is also 15,000, or some 5,500 higher than carried in the MACV OB.

A review of captured documents pertaining to five of 33 VC provinces indicates that the ratio of service and staff troops to soldiers attached to infantry units was about .9:1. This ratio, when applied to the 15,000 province-level -- assuming the infantry figure is correct -- is about 13,500 or some 3,600 more than carried in the OB.

It can be argued that although the ratios in the above paragraph were relevant in 1966 and in 1967 -- the years during which the documents were prepared -- they no longer pertain, because of evidence that the Communists have attempted to draw down on staff and service units to maintain combat strength.

The Communists have been only marginally successful in obtaining combat personnel from staff and service units. The principle reason for this failure is that their Administrative Service units were hard pressed to service past regular force levels. As the level of combat and enemy force size increased, so did ammunition expenditures, signal transmissions, and food and medical requirements. Under such conditions, it would appear almost impossible to provide more support with fewer people. Some Communist documents even suggest that the ratio of staff and service personnel to combat troops may have increased in certain areas.

Service Troops Subordinate to COSVN, the Military Regions, and Fronts

To estimate the remainder of the Service troops -- those who support the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong Main Force combat structure -- two basic methodologies with some varying assumptions have been utilized. These estimates, added to the Local Force estimate, fall within the overall estimated range.

Separate estimates within this category can be made for COSVN and some of the military regions in III and IV Corps. There is little documentary order of battle data on the situation in the North -- Military Regions V, VI, and Tri-Thien, Hue, and the B3 and DMZ Fronts.

To indicate the adjustments which need to be made in the MACV estimates from some of these commands in the cases where good evidence is available, the following comparative data are presented.

	<u>Estimates Based on Documents</u>	<u>MACV Estimates</u>
Region IV (and its subregions)	3,500	600
Region VI	750	500
Rung Sat Special Zone (SR 10)	250	150
COSVN Level	15,000	10,100

For the first of the two methodologies mentioned above, a north-south concept was utilized, with the southern boundaries of Military Regions V and VI as the dividing line. With the reasonably good sub-estimates available in the south, a ratio was developed between the figures carried by MACV for Administrative Service and combat elements for the South. This ratio was applied to MACV's figures for combat strength in the North to complete the estimate. The calculations are shown in Table I and Table II. The result of this approach is that approximately 12,000 Administrative Service troops would be added to the OB.

MACV Administrative Service OB, northern half	5,000
MACV Administrative Service OB, southern half	13,250
Added to northern half OB to equalize ratio	12,300
Subordinate to district and provinces	27,500
Total Administrative Services	<u>58,050</u>

Table I

Southern Half

Main Force and NVA Strength	37,000
Less estimate of staff and support troops subordinate to divisions and regiments	8,300
Infantry-type and fire support strength	28,700
MACV-carried Administrative Service strength subordinate to subregion, region, front, and COSVN which support the above troops	13,250
Staff and support troops listed above	8,300
	<u>21,550</u>
Ratio of support-type strength to combat strength (21,550:28,700)	<u>.75:1</u>

Table IINorthern Half

Main Force and NVA Strength	62,000
Less estimate of staff and support troops subordinate to divisions and regiments	16,700
Infantry-type and fire support strength	45,300
MACV-carried Administrative Service strength subordinate to subregion, region, and front which support the above troops	5,000
Staff and support troops listed above	16,700
	<u>21,700</u>

Ratio of support-type strength to combat strength (21,700:45,300) .48:1

Additional troops needed to relieve support to combat ratio in the southern half of the country - 12,300.

If the CIA estimate of 24,500 Administrative Service troops supporting Main Force troops in the South is utilized in place of the 13,250 carried by MACV in these calculations, 30,000 troops would be added to the northern OB and the total strength would exceed the upper end of the 60,000-80,000 range somewhat.

The second methodology consisted of utilizing the ratio of Administrative Service to maneuver troops at the province and district levels -- 1:1 -- to calculate the strengths of elements supporting the NVA and VC Main Forces. This methodology produces an estimate of 76,500 when the CIA estimates for Main and Local Forces are assumed. Where necessary the calculations used mid-points of ranges.

Component I - Subordinate to province and district level

38,100 - CIA 1 January Local Force OB.
 less 7,500 - CIA added small units at province and district levels.
 30,600 - CIA 1 January 68 Local Force infantry-type strength. (30,000 used in Admin. Service estimate)

15,000 X .9 = 12,500* - Province level.
 15,000 X 1.0 = 15,000 - District level.
27,500 - Administrative Services subordinate to province
 and district levels, 1 January 1968

Component II

137,000 - CIA 1 January 68 OB.
 less 38,100 - CIA 1 January 68 Local Force OB.
98,900 - CIA 1 January 68 Main and NVA OB.
 99,000
 less 25,000 - CIA estimate of staff and support troops in Main
 Force and NVA OB subordinate to divisions and
 regiments. (Projected from 21,000 identified
 in MACV OB of 84,000)
 74,000 - CIA 1 January 68 infantry-type and fire support
 Main Force and NVA OB.

	<u>Combat Side of Ratio</u>	<u>Support Side of Ratio</u>
Infantry-type and fire support OB	74,000	
Staff and support troops		25,000
Admin. Services identified by MACV in Main Force-NVA OB	_____	<u>18,000</u>
Subtotals	74,000	43,000
To achieve 1:1 combat:support ratio, add Admin. Services	_____	<u>31,000</u>
Totals	74,000	74,000

18,000 - Identified by MACV as associated with Main
 Force troops.
31,000 - Added above.
49,000 - Administrative Services serving Main Force-
 NVA and subordinate to subregion, region,
 Front, and COSVN.
 plus 27,500 - Subordinate to province and district levels.
76,500 - Total Administrative Services estimate.

*Conservative estimate used at province level. The calculation
 yields 13,500.

III. Guerrilla Strengths

It is estimated that there were about 110,000-120,000 village and hamlet guerrillas in South Vietnam prior to the beginning of the current Winter-Spring campaign (Nov 67). This number is 30,000-40,000 higher than MACV's accepted guerrilla OB for 31 October, but the evidence substantiates the higher figure.

MACV carried an end of year estimate of 70,000-80,000. The CIA estimate of 110,000-120,000 was reduced to 80,000-120,000 for this date. Substantial upgrading of individual guerrillas and reorganization of units had taken place, and recruiting into guerrilla ranks had also intensified. The adjustment in the range of the CIA estimate reflects an uncertainty as to the relative magnitudes of these personnel changes.

The problem with the MACV base figure for the last of 1967 is fundamentally methodological. MACV bases the estimate on quarterly reports submitted by sub-sector J-2 advisors. The MACV estimate for the end of the second quarter of 1967, based on these reports, was about 65,000. When these reports were examined during the September 1967 conference, they were found wanting in several respects. For some provinces, documents which indicated higher figures had been misread or disregarded. For others, hamlet guerrillas, which usually outnumber village guerrillas by at least 2-1, had been omitted. By making adjustments for the omissions and by taking into account other discrepancies such as the omission of an estimated 10,000 "Secret Guerrillas," an estimate of 110,000-120,000 was calculated.

MACV representatives contend that the reporting system admittedly did not work well when first instituted in the second quarter of 1967, but that the results of more recent reports are valid. A systematic comparison of the provincial figures carried by MACV with evidence from documents has been continued. The comparison shows, by and large, that MACV's overall estimate remains understated. For example, MACV estimated the guerrilla strength in Pleiku Province to be 430 for the third quarter of 1967. A recently captured document states that the guerrilla strength in Gia Lai, the VC equivalent province, was 8,803 in March 1967. A document dated January 1968 reveals the guerrilla strength to have been 11,355 in GVN Quang Nam Province. The MACV OB published in November 1967 carried half this number -- 5,150.

Two additional methodologies have been used to check this estimate. More than any other VC force, the guerrilla force strength shows a close relationship to the size of the VC population base. The more hamlets and villages under VC control, the greater the number of guerrillas.

A reasonably good picture of a general decline in guerrilla strength over the past two years can be developed from documents and prisoner

testimony. It is clear that upgrading requirements and the loss of population base were the primary causes of the decline. A few of these documents have provided numerical fixes from which crude trends can be calculated. Documents showed guerrilla strengths of 170,000-180,000 in early 1966, and 150,000 in early 1967. Continuing this decreasing trend and relating it to the decline in the VC population base, the guerrilla strength would have been about 120,000 in the fall of 1967.

A third methodology for estimating guerrilla strength has been developed recently. The results of this methodology should be considered preliminary because the formulation of the model is not complete and additional data are being compiled. Nonetheless, initial calculations suggest that more refined estimates produced by the method will fall somewhat above 100,000-120,000 for the first three quarters of 1967.

The method correlates guerrilla strengths of hamlets, villages, and districts obtained from captured documents with a number of factors. These are, in addition to time, population, population density, degree of VC control, military activity, political activity, terrain, and rice availability. Utilizing the correlation co-efficients obtained, the model is used as a predictive device to estimate for the entire population over time with appropriate weight being given to the other factors. Strengths given in documents and those calculated for districts and provinces can, in turn, be used to check the results obtained from the hamlet and village data.

The quality of guerrillas varies widely and the military threat of guerrilla forces is uneven. A more accurate representation of guerrilla strength may be to divide them by functions. Based on an average ratio of village guerrillas to hamlet guerrillas, the 80,000-120,000 estimate can be broken down to 30,000-50,000 village guerrillas and 50,000-70,000 hamlet guerrillas. Although there are numerous exceptions, typically, the village guerrillas are organized into a platoon, are fully armed, are composed of reasonably good personnel, serve full time, and generally constitute an effective combat force. In many cases, these platoons are comparable to district level Local Force infantry units. This group of village guerrillas could be placed with the Main and Local Forces and Administrative Service troops in a concept of Regular or Combat Forces.

The 50,000-70,000 hamlet guerrillas are typically organized into squads and cells, are not usually fully armed, and serve part time. More importantly, the quality of their personnel is low, and in many cases, resemble the Self Defense Force rather than village guerrillas. The hamlet guerrillas could be placed along with the Self Defense and Assault Youth in a separate category of Other Irregular Elements.

Because of continuing uncertainties concerning attrition, upgrading, reorganization, and recruiting, the 80,000-120,000 range has been reduced

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to 80,000-110,000 to produce a 31 March 1968 estimate. MACV's guerrilla estimate for the end of the quarter now stands at 50,000-70,000. This estimate is thought to be even more unrealistic than the estimate for 1 January. It is low because an unaccountably high attrition rate has been ascribed to the Guerrilla Forces, the original base figure going into the quarter was too low and insufficient allowance has been made for recruiting.

IV. Self Defense and Assault Youth

Self-Defense and Assault Youth elements should be included in any assessment of the enemy's strategic capabilities. Estimates of their numbers can be made which provide a reasonable order of magnitude. In the case of the Self-Defense Forces the estimate is based in part on a September 1967 MACV study which estimated that there were then about 100,000 Self-Defense and about 20,000 Secret Self-Defense. For purposes of this estimate a range of 80,000-120,000 has been used.

The Self-Defense Forces is usually organized only on the hamlet level but in some areas village units are formed. Their primary function is to provide support to the parallel Guerrilla structure. They provide lookout guard and general hamlet security duties, provide labor for LOC interdiction missions and to construction of fortified hamlets and other defensive positions. They often join with the Guerrillas in the defense of hamlets and occasionally join in light offensive missions such as harassment of RF/PF posts.

In terms of quality they are the least effective of all of the enemy's irregular elements. They have fewer arms than the Guerrillas, On the average only about 10 percent are armed with individual weapons. This varies by area, however. As is the case with the Guerrillas, units deep in VC territory are more lightly armed than units that are more likely to come in contact with Allied Forces. In addition, small arms, grenades, and mines are often issued to Self-Defense units when they are to be employed in actions that warrant it. The majority of these people are women or males outside the prime military age group.

The strength of the Self-Defense Forces is difficult to estimate with precision because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence. Some documents suggest that the ratio of Self-Defense to Guerrilla components averages slightly better than 1 to 1, which is well short of the goal of about 2 to 1 indicated in other documents. Self-Defense strength will tend to fluctuate widely with the ebb and flow of the war in rural areas, since it is closely tied to the matter of population control. Figures cited in a document of mid-1966 indicated an over-all strength of about 150,000 for the Self-Defense forces. The loss of Communist control over the rural populace after that date would suggest that the figure declined through last year, but this population loss was not sufficient in itself to have brought Self-Defense strength below about 100,000.

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The Assault Youth serve full time at district level and above, and are organized into companies and platoons. Although some are armed and they are an integral part of the military organization, the Communists do not consider them an offensive combat force. Their primary mission appears to be logistical, frequently in battlefield areas. This organization also serves as a manpower pool and provides a training program for youths who later go into the VC Main and Local Forces. A number of Assault Youth groups are permanently attached to maneuver units.

The evidence indicates that about 10,000-20,000 is probably a reasonable estimate of the strength of this element. This estimate is based on the number recruited during the first half of 1966 when the Communists achieved a recruiting goal of 15,000. In addition, other more recent documents, which give strengths of individual units or groups of units suggest that they have been maintained at about this level.

Although the Assault Youth are not primarily combat troops, they sustain significant casualties. Of the 1,840 Assault Youths listed in a September 1966 document covering certain units in the Delta, 62 were killed in action during "the first part of the year."

V. The Political Infrastructure

The size of the Viet Cong political infrastructure depends largely on how it is defined. If the definition includes only those in command positions at the various echelons of the Communist apparatus, then it numbers only a few thousand people. If the definition includes every one who performs some political or administrative function for the Communists in South Vietnam, then the size of the infrastructure is substantially greater than any estimate yet advanced.

This estimate is based on a concept of personnel in full time service and in accordance with the following official definition:

"The Viet Cong infrastructure is defined as the political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the party (Peopel's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office of South Vietnam) at the national level and the leadership and administration of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam), both of which extend from the national through the hamlet level."

Using these criteria, CIA estimates that the political infrastructure numbers on the order of 90,000-120,000. This estimate includes the 80,000-90,000 estimated by MACV plus an estimate of 10,000-30,000 for the number of full time supporting personnel such as guards, clerks, and low-level administrators, most of whom are valuable to the daily operation of Viet Cong bureaucracies not included in the MACV estimate. These personnel should be considered an integral part of the infrastructure as defined.

In a MACV Combined Study entitled the "VC Political Infrastructure Strength," dated 1 September 1967, MACV took into account:

- a. All members of the party echelon organization (emphasis supplied),
- b. The leadership only of the parallel front organizations, and
- c. The leadership only of the Military Affairs Committee in each organization.

The study concluded there were then 84,900 members of the infrastructure in South Vietnam. The current MACV OB carries their numbers at 84,900. In arriving at this number, MACV has taken into account the common Viet Cong practice of officials wearing two hats. If a person wears both a

military and civilian hat, he is ordinarily counted in the military OB. The above cited range of 90,000-120,000 is compared below by echelon with the MACV data.

	<u>MACV</u>	<u>CIA</u>
COSVN	1,200	2,000
Regions	1,100	5,000
Provinces	4,500	10,000
Districts	6,400	17,000
Villages	34,400	37,000
Hamlets	<u>37,300</u>	<u>40,000</u>
	84,900	111,000

The 84,900 is expressed as a range of 80,000-90,000, the 111,000 is expressed as a range of 90,000-120,000.

It should be noted that the largest differences are at district level and above. Personnel were added at these echelons for two reasons: first, because MACV's methodology for arriving at their numbers -- a combination of name counting, and a tallying what MACV called "identified positions" -- had an inherent downward bias because of incomplete information; second, because captured documents strongly suggest that the size of the infrastructure is substantially larger than MACV estimated. Most of the additions, as noted, consisted of low-grade Viet Cong bureaucrats (who, incidentally, are always counted when they are "eliminated" or when they defect).

The higher CIA estimates at village and hamlet levels reflect evidence that the Viet Cong gained control of large areas of the Vietnamese countryside during the recent Tet offensive.

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