

INFORM ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COUNTRY Indochina
SUBJECT Vietnamese Military Tactics - Tonkin

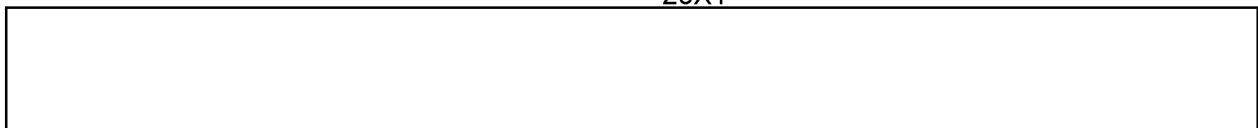
FILED
157
CONFIDENTIAL

DATE DISTR. 23 September 1948
NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE ACQUIRED [] 25X1
DATE OF INFO [] 25X1

CIA LIBRARY
25X1

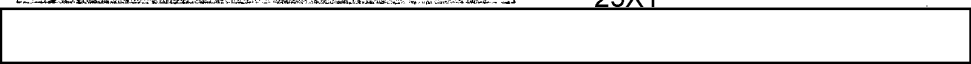
NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)
SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE ACT OF U. S. C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED. HOWEVER INFORMATION CONTAINED IN BODY OF THIS FORM MAY BE UTILIZED AS DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE RECEIVING AGENCY.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION FOR THE RESEARCH USE OF TRAINED INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS

25X1



1. The Viet Minh, in the earlier stages of the war, employed scorched earth tactics with great thoroughness and ruthlessness when faced with a French attack too strong to resist. In mid-1947, however, a new tactic was developed and, at present, the scorched earth policy is hardly employed at all. For want of a better name the new tactics might be called "collapsible". The scorched earth tactics were abandoned in part because of the large proportion of large installations and big houses which had already been destroyed; and partly because it was found that the "collapsible" tactics were less costly and equally effective. The new tactics, in general, are characterized by the following:
 - a. Construction and use of a simplified form of house which may easily be taken apart and the pieces scattered before the French arrive, and then easily reconstructed after the departure of the French.
 - b. Stocks of rice are largely removed from the locality before the French attack, but sufficient is left for the nourishment of the population during the expected period of French occupation. These stocks are removed from their bags, and the grains scattered on the ground over a large area so that it is impossible for the French either to gather the grain or to destroy it. The local population, at night, gathers enough of it for the next day's use.
 - c. Growing rice is dealt with in the following manner. Neither side wishes to destroy it while it is still green. When it ripens there is a sort of race between the French and the Viet Minh to see who can get at the grain first to harvest it. The Viet Minh is usually successful as most of the crop ripens at one time and they are far more numerous. In threatened zones the Viet Minh employs large battalions of local residents who are able to harvest a large field in a single night.
 - d. As many cattle as possible are removed before the French attack. The remainder are left in stables which are heavily guarded with booby traps.
 - e. The population retires from the villages and reappears only at night. Every one must be prepared to evacuate at short notice, carrying only absolute necessities.
 - f. An elaborate watching system has been developed to observe the movements of the French. Binoculars are in great demand.
 - g. In threatened zones markets themselves are "collapsible". There are no installations. The word is simply passed around the night before that the market will be held the next day at a certain spot. The peasants arrive with their produce to sell. A system of fixed prices, plainly marked

CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CONTROL U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

STATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NAVY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NSRB		DISTRIBUTION				
ARMY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AIR								

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WARNING NOTICE: THIS DISTRIBUTION LISTING MUST BE EXCISED BEFORE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Document No. 2
NO CHANGE in Class.
 DECLASSIFIED
Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C
DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77
Auth: DDA [] 11735
Date: 01 MAY 1978

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ AGENCY

-2-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

or listed, is used so that no time will be wasted in bargaining. The markets are not held twice in the same place.

h. Markets may be held as close as 6 kilometers from a French post. In such a case there is usually a screen of watchers and Tu-Ve at varying distances up to 2 kilometers from the post. Between the Tu-Ve and the market, a distance of about 4 kilometers, there is a screen of Du-Kich (literally "walking attack" or guerrillas). If the French attack in the direction of the market, but in small force, the Tu-Ve and Du-Kich may counterattack. If the attack is in relatively large force, the market disperses. The Tu-Ve and the Du-Kich also go into temporary hiding. Normally, however, the French would not dare to make a very deep attack as it is usually necessary for them to return to their post at night.

2. From the point of view of weapons the backbone of the "collapsible" tactic of the Viet Minh is land-mines, grenades and booby traps. The Japanese left large stocks of 200, 300, and 500 kilogram aerial bombs in the Thai Nguyen and Bac-Kan regions. The explosive in these bombs has been extensively used by the Viet Minh for making mines, grenades, and booby traps.
3. The Viet Minh have succeeded in establishing numerous, though not very large, security zones. The principal ones are in the Thai-Nguyen Tuyen-Quang area. It is in this zone that the various seats of the Viet Nam Government, dispersed and mobile, are at the present time.
4. The French, being unable to launch a large-scale attack on the whole of Tonkin, have been obliged to divide it up into triangles and attempt to deal separately with the various triangles. The effort is to occupy the three sides of the triangle and push inward, attempting to pocket the Viet Minh inside and gradually reduce them. The Viet Minh countermeasures have been:
 - a. To break off the French pincers movements. For this purpose it was found necessary to have the army under unified command. This explains the incorporation of the Tu-Ve into the Regular Army in 1947. When the Viet Minh have been able to make advance preparations in the battle areas they have nearly always been successful in breaking off the pincers movements.
 - b. When the Viet Minh are unable to make advance preparations of the battle area they find it wiser to retire for the time being and prepare a later attack to coincide with an attack from within the triangle, in order to break the siege and permit the recovery of the Viet Minh personnel and material besieged within the triangle. These tactics have been quite successful inasmuch as the French have not sufficient forces to besiege several pockets at once.

~~CONFIDENTIAL CONTROL / U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~