

23 June 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Memorandum Entitled "South  
Vietnam: Estimated Manpower Balance,  
Age Group 15-45, 1967"

1. Transmitted herewith is the memorandum on the manpower balance in South Vietnam that you requested for Ambassador Lechnart's office.

2. Because of the data problems noted in the memorandum, this has turned out to be an exploratory study with the conclusions indicating a broad range of possibilities. Moreover, we have not attempted to distribute the derived residuals by geographic areas, because the low degree of accuracy that could be achieved from existing data would make such a distribution almost meaningless.

3. It appears that surveys are currently underway in Saigon to improve the data base. As additional statistics become available, we will hopefully be in a position to improve on this initial effort.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

23 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

South Vietnam: Estimated Manpower Balance,  
Age Group 15-45, 1967

Summary

It is not possible at the present time to make a firm estimate of the manpower resources available to the Viet Cong because of an almost complete lack of population statistics on South Vietnam. Nevertheless, on the basis of certain assumptions about the sex, age and control of the population, it is estimated that the Viet Cong have at best some degree of access to a pool of about 2.5 to 2.6 million people between the ages of 15 and 45, exclusive of those currently in Viet Cong service. Of this total, about 1.0 million are males and 1.5 million females. Almost 60 percent of these people, however, are in contested areas where Viet Cong recruitment has become difficult. As a result, those readily available for Viet Cong recruitment would number only 1.0 to 1.1 million consisting of 420,000 to 460,000 males and 620,000 to 630,000 females. Moreover, about 25 percent of these people probably are physically unfit for service with the Viet Cong.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Research and Reports and was coordinated with the Office of Current Intelligence and the Office of National Estimates.

GROUP 1  
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downgrading and  
declassification

~~SECRET~~

Availability of Statistics

1. Population and manpower statistics on South Vietnam are inadequate to permit a reliable estimate of the manpower resources available to the Viet Cong. These statistics allow such a wide range of Viet Cong manpower estimates that they exclude neither the possibility that the Viet Cong are running out of useable manpower nor the opposite possibility that they have ample supplies of manpower.

2. South Vietnam population statistics are rough approximations at best and many of the most basic data are lacking. The last national census was in the 1930's. Since then there has been no systematic study of the rural population. A partial census of major cities was taken in 1958, but there is no measure of the growth of the urban population. There are no estimates of the distribution of the total (or rural) population by age or, except in the aggregate, by sex, although some sample studies of age and sex distribution have been undertaken in a few urban areas. Employment data cover only GVN military, GVN and US employed civilians, and some of the larger industrial establishments.

Assumptions

3. In an attempt to estimate the manpower situation in South Vietnam, the following assumptions were made:

- a. The current total population of South Vietnam is 16.5 million.
- b. Population totals 9.9 million (60 percent) in areas under GVN control; 2.75 million (16.7 percent) in those under VC control; and the remaining 3.85 million in contested areas.
- c. Roughly 45 percent of the population is in the age group 15 through 45 in South Vietnam as a whole and in the controlled and contested areas.
- d. The male-female ratio for the total population and for the population in the controlled and contested areas is 47-53 percent.
- e. Present Viet Cong manpower, including military and political personnel numbers between 400,000 and 500,000.

GVN Controlled Population

4. Of the GVN controlled population in South Vietnam of 9.9 million, an estimated 4.455 million are in the age group 15 through 45. GVN employment is estimated to be 914,000, including the military services, national police, revolutionary development cadres and civil service; and 129,000 are employed by the US including military and civilian agencies. (Attached table gives estimated data and detailed sources and methodology.) It is estimated that approximately 850,000 are employed in private non-agricultural occupations, and that an

additional 300,000 are temporary refugees. Given these figures and the assumptions stated above, there is a residual of about 2.3 million persons unaccounted for in GVN controlled areas. Of these, slightly more than 70 percent are female -- a result of the fact that a larger percentage of males are accounted for in military service. It is known that the bulk of the residual is in rural areas and is engaged in private farming, forestry, and fishing. Because the area is presumably under GVN control, it possibly can be assumed that this population is generally not subject to VC recruitment.

Population Subject to Viet Cong Recruitment

5. The population in areas under Viet Cong control and in areas undergoing pacification (contested areas) totals about 6.6 million, of which 2.97 are assumed to be within the age group 15-45. Estimates of the numbers employed by the Viet Cong are under current scrutiny and may soon be revised. For purposes of this paper, Viet Cong forces within the ages 15-45 are estimated to range from 384,000 to 480,000, including regular main and local military forces, guerrillas, administrative service units, militia, and political cadre. The residual available population in Viet Cong controlled and in contested areas numbers about 2.5 million. Of this population available for recruitment by the Viet Cong males would make up 1.0 to 1.1 million, given the assumed sex distribution.

6. An estimate of a million males of military age does not at first glance support the increasing number of reports indicating Viet Cong recruiting difficulties. About 58 percent of these males, however, are in contested areas, according to our assumption on "control" areas, and recruiting in contested areas has become increasingly difficult as the GVN and US military forces make more frequent incursions therein. The readily available male population -- that in VC-controlled areas -- exclusive of those already in service would be in the range 420,000 to 460,000. Possibly 25 percent of these would be unfit for useful service. The remaining eligible males in the VC-controlled areas would number less than 400,000.

7. A similar situation exists with regard to the availability of females for recruitment by the Viet Cong. Of a total of roughly 1.5 million females potentially available to the VC, slightly less than 60 percent are assumed to be in contested areas where VC recruitment has become difficult. The readily available female population, exclusive of those already in service, would range between 620,000 and 630,000, not all of which would be physically fit for service with the Viet Cong.

8. The population available to the Viet Cong is largely rural. Almost one-half of total VC-controlled population is in the delta area. Rice production in the delta provides a major portion of Viet Cong food requirements and an important source of

revenue for the Viet Cong. Although women have always played an important role in Vietnamese agriculture it is still necessary to have able bodied males perform certain of the tasks in rice farming. It is not possible, without serious loss of productivity, therefore, for the Viet Cong to press into service all of the able males from the farms.

#### Limitations of the Estimate

9. All of the assumptions made in this study are important to the results, but two of them are crucial. These are the age distribution and the sex distribution of the population according to the areas of control. In the absence of data, we have used the same age distribution for the total population and for the population under VC control, in contested areas, and under GVN control. It is possible, however, that with the shift of population from rural areas to urban areas and the build-up of military forces the percentage of the age group 15-45 remaining in rural areas may be smaller than in urban areas. Since VC controlled and contested areas are primarily rural, this suggests that a smaller percentage of the population in these areas than in the total population is in the age group 15-45. If the age group 15-45, represented, for example, only 40 percent of the total population in VC controlled and contested (rural) areas, instead of the 45 percent assumed, the 2.5 million available military age manpower would be reduced to about 2.2 million, and the 1.0 to 1.1 million persons readily available for Viet Cong recruitment would be reduced to about 900,000, of which about 420,000 would be males.

10. Similarly, the same sex ratio of 47 percent male to 53 percent female has been used for the total population and the populations under VC control, in contested areas, and under GVN control. Migration to urban areas and the drafting of males for military service has increased the percentage of females in the rural population. The question is from which rural areas did the population shift come? The assumption in this study as to the male-female ratio by area is consistent with the assumption that the GVN recruited only in the areas it controls. But some of the GVN recruitment must have come from other areas. If females in the VC-controlled and contested areas (almost all rural) were as much as 60 percent of the population, instead of the 53 percent assumed, the male population of about 1.0 million estimated to be available for recruitment by the Viet Cong would be reduced to about 800,000, and that assumed readily available would number about 340,000



South Vietnam: Estimated Manpower Balance,\*  
Age Group 15-45, 1967

(In Thousands)

Line	Totals	Male	Female
1 Total population	16,500	7,755	8,745
2 Population, ages 15-45	7,425	3,490	3,935
3 GVN Employed Of which:	914	881	33
4 GVN Military	660	660	0
5 GVN National Police	61	61	0
6 GVN RD Cadres	33	32	1
7 GVN Civil Service	160	128	32
8 US Employment of Vietnamese Of which:	129	58	71
9 US Military	78	35	43
10 US Contractors	47	21	26
11 US Civilian Agencies	4	2	2
12 Private Sector - non-agriculture	853	427	426
13 Refugees	300	100	200
14 Total Accounted for, GVN control	2,196	1,466	730
15 Total GVN controlled, ages 15-45	4,455	2,094	2,361
16 Not accounted for, GVN control (rural)	2,259	628	1,631
17 Total in VC controlled areas	1,238	582	656
18 Total in contested areas	1,732	814	918
19 Estimated VC manpower, ages 15-45	384-480	312-384	72-96
20 Available to VC, in VC controlled and contested areas	2,490-2,586	1,012-1,084	1,478-1,502

\* Methodology is explained by line in notes on following pages.

ne 1  
Total population for 1967 as agreed upon by representatives of the Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, Agency for International Development and Central Intelligence Agency. Male-female breakdown estimated to be 47 percent male, 53 percent female -- the actual percentages that prevailed in 1963 as reported by the GVN, National Institute of Statistics in Vietnam Statistical Yearbook 1964-65, Vol. 12, Saigon, 1966 (Unclassified). Although outdated, these percentages are believed to be still valid and are similar to the current male-female breakdown for North Vietnam (49 percent male; 51 percent female) as estimated by the US Bureau of the Census, Foreign Demographic Analysis Division, Estimates and Projections of the Population of North Vietnam: 1960-1981. (Unclassified).

ne 2  
Military age population includes those between ages 15-45. It is estimated that 45 percent of the total population of 16.5 million is in the 15-45 age group. This estimate is based on the UN estimate of 44.6 percent for East Asia in 1965, UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects as Assessed in 1963, New York, 1966, page 128, and is close to that of 43.7 percent for North Vietnam as estimated by Census, Estimates and Projections, op. cit. The male-female breakdown of the 15-45 age group was obtained by applying the 47-53 percent breakdown used for the total population.

Line 3 Totals of lines 4 and 5-7.

Line 4 GVN military data include Regular Forces, Regional Forces, CIDG, Popular Forces and Armed Combat Youth. Data are as of March 1967 as reported in DOD, OASD/Systems Analysis, Southeast Asia Programs Division Statistical Tables, May 19, 1967, Table 1A. SECRET. It was assumed that these categories consist <sup>entirely</sup> of males in the age group 15-45.

Line 5 DOD, Southeast Asia Tables, op. cit. Table 1A. It was assumed that GVN National Police consists entirely of males in the age group 15-45.

Line 6 Includes Census Grievance and Montagnard Teams. Data are for May 1967 as reported by OCO/RDC Saigon. It is estimated that females account for 2.5 percent of total RD cadre.

Line 7 Total civil service estimated at roughly 190,000 as of May 1967. This estimate was made by subtracting the figures for GVN military, national police, and RD cadre from the total GVN employment figure of 950,000 reported in State, Saigon 26270, 20 May 1967. CONFIDENTIAL. The residual of roughly 190,000 was then decreased by 15 percent to exclude those over age 45. The estimate of 15 percent was calculated from the age breakdown for employment in the public sector contained in GVN, National Institute

of Statistics, Enquetes Demographiques Au Vietnam en 1958,  
Saigon, 1960, page 26. The male-female breakdown for the  
civil service is based on the male-female breakdown reported  
by the GVN Civil Service Supreme Council in 1964 as presented  
in GVN, National Institute of Statistics, Vietnam Statistical  
Yearbook 1964-65, Saigon, 1966, page 411. UNCLASSIFIED. The  
actual percentages in 1964 were 17.6 percent female and 82.3  
percent male; for 1967 a 20-80 percent breakdown was used.

lines 8-11

Data are as of 31 March 67 as presented in State, Saigon,  
A-713, 29 May 1967, UNCLASSIFIED. The male-female breakdown  
is based on a report of the deputy general secretary of the  
Federation of Korean Trade Unions following his visit to  
Saigon in February 1967. This report states that due to  
conscription of males, females account for 55 percent of total  
US employment of Vietnamese. State. Seoul A-433, 6 April 1967,  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

line 12

Private sector, non-agriculture, is estimated as part of  
a residual obtained by deducting accounted-for manpower,  
lines 3 and 8, from the total secured population ages 15-45 -- a  
methodology used in State, Saigon A-322, 21 December 1966,  
SECRET. For the estimate of secured population see the note  
in line 15. Of the 4,455,000 secured in ages 15-45, 1,043,000  
are accounted for in lines 3 and 8. It is estimated that



25 percent of the residual of 3,412,000 is employed in the private sector in non-agricultural occupations. State, Saigon A-322, 21 December 1966. SECRET. The male-female distribution of this residual assumed to be 50-50 on the basis of fragmentary data which suggests a higher percentage of males in this group than in the total population. In June 1965, 69 percent of the workers surveyed in private enterprises in Saigon were male and 31 percent female, while private enterprises surveyed in eight provinces of southern South Vietnam showed a male-female breakdown of 60-40 percent and a similar survey in eight provinces of central South Vietnam showed a 50-50 percent breakdown. GVN, National Institute of Statistics, Evolution de l'Economie du Vietnam en 1965, Saigon, 1966, pages 44-45. UNCLASSIFIED. The average of these three surveys yields a 60-40 percent male-female breakdown. It is assumed that by June 1967 this percentage breakdown probably changed to the 50-50 percent used, as more women entered the labor market and males continued to be conscripted.

Line 13

The cumulative total number of refugees as of 28 February 1967 was 1,789,058. USAID, Public Administration Bulletin, Vietnam, No. 36, 1 April 1967, page 86, UNCLASSIFIED. Of this total 915,000 have returned to their original villages or have been resettled. The remaining 874,000 are classed as

temporary refugees. Although the age-sex ratios are not available on the total temporary refugee population, a recent survey conducted by the Special Commissariat for Refugees in conjunction with OCO indicated that children under age 16 represented 48 percent of the surveyed refugee population. Reducing the total by 48 percent and an additional 15 percent to account for those over 45 years yields an estimated 300,000 temporary refugees, ages 15-45. The sex ratio was taken from the survey which showed that females were in the majority in every age group and outnumbered men in ages 20-34 by 2 to 1.

ne 14 The sum of lines 3, 8, 12-13.

ne 15 Total secured population is estimated at 60 percent of total population as of February 1967 by DOD, OASD/Systems Analysis, Southeast Asia Programs Division Statistical Tables, Table 6B, May 19, 1967. SECRET. Age group 15-45 was estimated at 45 percent as in the total population.

e 16 The difference between lines 14 and 15.

e 17 Estimates of VC controlled population range from 15.3 percent to almost 18 percent as of the end of February 1967. This yields an absolute VC controlled population in the range 2.5 to 3 million. Using a median of this range, 2.75 million and applying the 45 percent factor for the age group 15-45 yields a VC controlled population in this age group of 1.238 million. The male-female ratio used was that for the total population, 47-53 percent.

Line 18 Population in contested areas, ages 15-45, is a residual of line 2 minus lines 15 and 17.

Line 19 VC manpower estimates are tentative. Total VC manpower of from 400,000-500,000 includes VC main and local forces, guerrillas, administrative service units, militia and political cadre. In order to obtain a male-female breakdown it was assumed that there are a negligible number of females in VC main and local forces and that females account for the following percentages of the other categories: guerrillas, 25 percent; administrative service units, 10 percent; militia 33 percent; and political cadre, 13 percent. Based on a Rand Corporation study of 1348 Quy Chanh, it is estimated that 96 percent of total VC manpower is between the ages of 15-45. Rand Memorandum RM-4830-ISA/ARPA. Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, May 1966, page 164.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Line 20 The difference between line 19 and the sum of lines 17 and 18.