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2-19-63
DEF-6
Hamlet Defense

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.


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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. B. Chalmers Wood
Director, Working Group, Vietnam

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Memorandum Concerning
Manpower Utilization in South Vietnam

Attached for your background information you will find a paper setting forth the various groups involved in the CIDG activities in South Vietnam. We have attempted to set forth as clearly as possible the various objectives and missions of each of these activities with some emphasis on how they are coordinated and how they fit into the over-all picture.

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (PLANS)


William E. Colby

Attachment - *copy*

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUN 2000

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GROUP 1
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downgrading and
declassification

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13 February 1963

SUBJECT: Manpower Utilization in South Vietnam

I. Summary

1. Some [redacted] Citizens' Irregulars are participating in the protection of their home areas in Vietnam. This figure is expected to increase to approximately [redacted] by the end of calendar year 1963. Since there are 16,000 hamlets approximately in Vietnam this works out to a rough average of approximately [redacted] per hamlet. This is a minuscule figure for the job of local hamlet protection even when supplemented by the approximately 385,000 regular and semi-regular forces and 92,000 police services. As the regular forces must concentrate on offensive actions, the protection of the population rests in the hands of the irregular forces. The task of protection is a difficult one for a province chief, who is responsible for an average of 300,000 persons in an average area of 2,400 square miles.

There is attached hereto a brief description of the various counterinsurgency activities being conducted in South Vietnam.

II. Discussion

2. The recent rapid increase in strength of the Citizens Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) elements (from approximately [redacted] in September 1962 to [redacted] in January 1963) and the fact that they appear under a variety of different organizational titles has given some concern as to the effects of this manpower drain on the available resources of Vietnam. It has also raised some concern as to the possibly uncoordinated aspect of these different organizations which might lead to a wastage or misuse of available manpower resources. A review of the specifics of the situation however will reveal a coordinated concept in the development of these forces and the fact that they will not work in adverse effect upon the total use of manpower in Vietnam, especially in relation to the character of battle going on there at this time.

3. In 1960 the regular Army, Navy and Air Force of Vietnam totalled 150,000. These were supplemented by a poorly trained and equipped 60,000 Civil Guard and approximately 50,000 Self-Defense Corps. These forces were given priority in augmentation, stepped-up training and improved equipment, so that they are today at the following strengths:

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Army	198,000
Navy	5,595
Air Force	5,817
Marines	5,281
Civil Guard	75,908
Self-Defense Corps	95,828
Total	<u>385,787</u>

Experience during this build up period revealed, however, that these forces were barely able to hold their own by acting as regular forces and using conventional tactics.

4. Since the nature of the war became clearly a 'people's war' rather than a soldier's war, it became essential to engage the population actively in its own defense. For this reason the program of developing the Citizens' Irregular Forces was initiated in 1961. In order to increase the "people's" content of these forces and to avoid the delays and failures which had accompanied efforts to build many national organizations, it was decided that this effort to develop Citizens' Irregular Forces should begin at the bottom rather than the top. An intensive search thus took place for individuals and leaders capable of participating in the development of the Citizens' Irregular Forces. It was apparent however that some coordination was needed in the development of such forces, among other things to maintain GVN approval of their growth. Since the "people's" character was paramount, and since the organizational structure of the Vietnamese Government as it affects the population is centered around the province and district chiefs, it was decided that this coordination function should best be exercised through and with these officials. As a result each and every Citizens' Irregular Defense Force which was discussed in detail with the local province and district chief and extensive efforts were made to maintain their full awareness, control and support of the activity.

5. In order to provide the mechanism for national organization of such forces a variety of national level units was used, such as the Presidential Survey Office, the Directorate General of Youth, and the Directorate of Social Affairs for the Highlands. In all cases their contributions to a particular area situation were funnelled through the province and district chief. Since the province and district chief also controlled the Self-Defense Corps and Civil Guard and police in their areas, this brought about an automatic coordination between these semi-regular forces and the irregular groups. Since 33 of 41 province chiefs are military men, they are well equipped to employ and coordinate these various groups. At the national level a similar total view was held by President Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu.

6. Concurrently with the development of the above two categories of forces, regular and irregular, the GVN itself undertook a number of programs in the irregular field. These were later consolidated into the Strategic Hamlet Program under which local defense forces were built in many areas, in part using weapons and other equipment available to the GVN which had been freed by the reequipping of regular forces with more modern U.S. equipment. We do not have precise figures available as to the total numbers involved, but we are aware that they are substantial. These activities are also included in the automatic coordination process, as they too are conducted through and by the province and district chiefs.

7. In the irregular field, the basic concept is one of citizens providing their own local defense. Available resources make it impossible for every citizen to be provided with the means for his own defense and consequently efforts are made to group these citizens, provide them with protective shields, and a nucleus of armed and trained men in their community. As a typical example a hamlet which might comprise 500 people would be surrounded by a protective defense and would contain a group of 40 young men trained in defense techniques. Of this 40 approximately 10 to 15 might be armed with guns, the others being armed with homemade weapons, and the remainder of the population participating in the defense work in other ways. Where possible and where sufficiently concentrated effort can be made, it has proved desirable and in some cases essential to organize more formal units among neighboring hamlets to operate in patrols in the areas between the defended hamlets. (Strike Forces). In some more uninhabited areas it has been essential to organize roving patrols or teams to penetrate mountain or jungle areas on a transient basis within a general territory of familiarity to them. (Mountain Scouts). Since most of these forces are essentially local, they obviously will involve more people than would be necessary in a more regular force available for transfer among various areas, wherever the threat might be the greatest at the moment. An idea of the total figures involved can be gained from the fact that there are approximately 16,000 hamlets in Vietnam organized into approximately 2,500 "villages". The average population of the latter "village" is approximately 4,800. Even an average of 10 men per hamlet then would total some 160,000, although both of these figures are obviously open to considerable variation one way or the other.

8. The question is asked why the more regular forces could not supply this type of protection or at least a substantial degree of it. A review of the arithmetic again would indicate

that the Self-Defense Corps which normally is under the control of the "village" chief, has a total strength of approximately 95,000. Taking the figure of 2,580 villages, this would give approximately 40 Self-Defense Corps men per village. Recalling that the average population of a village above is approximately 4,800, this displays the basis for the frequently heard complaint that the Self-Defense Corps is well named since it generally confines its activity to the occupation of a fort at the village center and the defense of its own security. The Self-Defense Corps thus obviously gives the village chief very little handle for the protection of his entire village, and is instead used as a protection for the administrative nucleus. The protection of the population is consequently in the hands of the Irregular Forces. The Civil Guard, some 75,000, is generally under the control of the Province Chiefs (approximately 40 in total) and thus each Province Chief could normally hope to have somewhat less than 2,000 Civil Guardsmen or a battalion and a half to cover his area (average population 300,000 average area 2,400 square miles). The Regular Forces are obviously used as the mobile reserve with an offensive mission against the enemy wherever he can be found. To the extent the above Irregular Forces can protect areas against enemy attack, the Regular Forces are freed for offensive roles rather than static defense duties.

9. The Police Services obviously offer a possible tool for population control in areas where sufficient security can be provided to permit them to operate on other than military or self-defense basis. As in the Koum Enao complex, when a degree of security is provided to an area the government can be expected to recover a substantial amount of the weapons given to the population of their local defense. A police force would then fill the need for a local control mechanism.

10. Against this background the Attachment will identify the various types of Citizens' Irregular Forces which have been developed over the past two years. Despite their variety of nomenclature they are brought into a coordinated whole by the province and district chiefs.

Attachment

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ATTACHMENT

13 February 1963

SUBJECT: Counterinsurgency Activities in South Vietnam

Since the CIDG program involves a wide variety of programs (see below) all designed to meet specific needs of various rural areas in South Vietnam, the CIDG approach to a particular region is called an area development program. CIDG training installations are thus called Area Development Centers (ADC). At present, there are [redacted] ADC, and by April 1963, [redacted] are scheduled to be in existence. At each ADC, all of the CIDG programs directed toward a particular area are carried out. In some cases, specific CIDG groups are trained at some distance from their home areas, but as the number of ADC increases, more and more CIDG training can be carried out close to the home areas of the various trainees.

A. CIDG Activities to be Given Over to Special Forces Control

1. Hamlet Militia

By 31 December 1962, [redacted] had been trained and armed. The hamlet militia are simply people living in Vietnamese villages who have volunteered to accept training and weapons in order to participate actively in defense of their village and immediate areas. In addition to defensive duties, hamlet militia carry out aggressive patrolling in the general area of their villages.

2. Strike Forces

These troops are full-time parasilitary forces which have been recruited from local volunteers and have been given more advanced training than that given the hamlet militia. They are organized and trained aggressive patrol elements but can be committed in platoon or company strength as required. Strike force units patrol continuously throughout areas in which CIDG programs are in progress checking village defenses, weapons, and re-training hamlet militia. Strike forces are prepared to move quickly to assist any village under attack. They are capable of conducting large and small-scale raids and ambushes in VC controlled areas and long suspected routes of VC movement. Most strike force personnel are paid (currently by CIA) on the same scale as the civil guard. Over 5,000 strike force personnel have been trained as of 31 December 1962.

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3. Fighting Fathers/Catholic Youth

This is a local designation applied to Catholic priests who have brought their parishes into active participation under area development programs. Their parish centers become combat villages with the youth of the villages serving as the paramilitary force. [redacted] "Sea Swallows" in An Xuyen Province and [redacted] group in Ninh Thuan Province are examples of these groups. Approximately [redacted] men have been trained under this program. (This does not include [redacted] man Sea Swallow force, which is currently being trained and supported by a [redacted] [redacted])

The eventual goal of the CIDG/SWITCHBACK program is to train 100,000 people in the programs listed above. By the end of FY 1963, it is anticipated that more than fifty percent of this goal will have been achieved. By that date, approximately [redacted] hamlet militia and [redacted] strike force personnel should have been trained.

B. CIDG to be Retained by CIA

The activities included under the CIDG/non-SWITCHBACK category and those either of a clandestine nature or those which have political overtones and thus fall within the range of CIA's responsibilities. The main categories of CIDG/non-SWITCHBACK activities are defined below:

1. Mountain Commandos

The mountain commandos, which operate in 15 to 18 man teams, are men locally recruited by province and district chiefs from among montagnard tribes in their areas. Their mission is to act in areas influenced or controlled by the Viet Cong (VC) in which GVN military or civilian presence is rarely found, and is to penetrate deeply into enemy-controlled territories, particularly in the central highland region of South Vietnam adjacent to the border of Laos/Cambodia. These teams act as hunter-killer units which seek out VC units, for either interdiction or reporting purposes. A civic action capability has also been built into each of the mountain commando teams in teams of three men who have had specialized training. The teams thus act as a pro-GVN presence in areas normally under VC control, and seek to counter VC cadre who on their part try to win the montagnard

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people to their cause. The mountain commando program also has a related intelligence network which is coordinated through the Vietnamese province and district chiefs. As of 31 December, approximately [redacted] of these mountain commandos had been trained with approximately [redacted] more in training.

2. Popular Force

The popular force (PF), also known as the Force Populaire, is an attempt to establish a pro-GVN presence in Vietnamese villages which have not yet been fortified under the strategic hamlet program. Specially selected youths, many of whom have had relatives killed by the VC, are given weapons and civic action training prior to being sent to villages removed from their home areas, where they help defend the villages against VC incursions and establish a pro-GVN presence. This program has been implemented in central Vietnam and, approximately [redacted] PF personnel have been trained.

3. Trailwatchers (border surveillance units)

Members of the border surveillance units (BSU) are recruited from more promising elements of the strike forces (see above) and other CIDG groups. It is planned that these units will be used to check and report on infiltration of VC cadre into South Vietnam from Laos and Cambodia. These units will remain in place along the border only until border residents themselves can be recruited and integrated into a comprehensive border surveillance net. In those border areas where there is no permanent population, the BSU will remain in place, establishing ties with those ethnic groups which constantly shift back and forth across the ill-defined border. Four units of [redacted] men have been trained.

4. Republican Youth Movement (RYM)

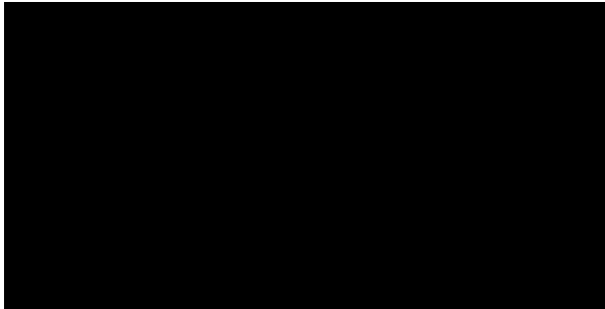
The RYM was started in October 1956 and now numbers approximately [redacted] youths of both sexes. Of this number, [redacted] have received basic paramilitary training while approximately [redacted] RYM members have received advanced military and civic action training from CIA. The main contribution of the RYM has been and will continue to be assisting in the defense of the Strategic Hamlets. In the delta region the RYM have replaced many civil guard units in defending recently constructed Strategic Hamlets. In order to exploit the psychological potential of the RYM, a civic action cadre program supported by both AID and CIA has been developed in conjunction with the RYM. Selected RYM members are trained at various area development centers in medical, economic, social and recreational techniques in order to assist the peasantry to improve their living standards.

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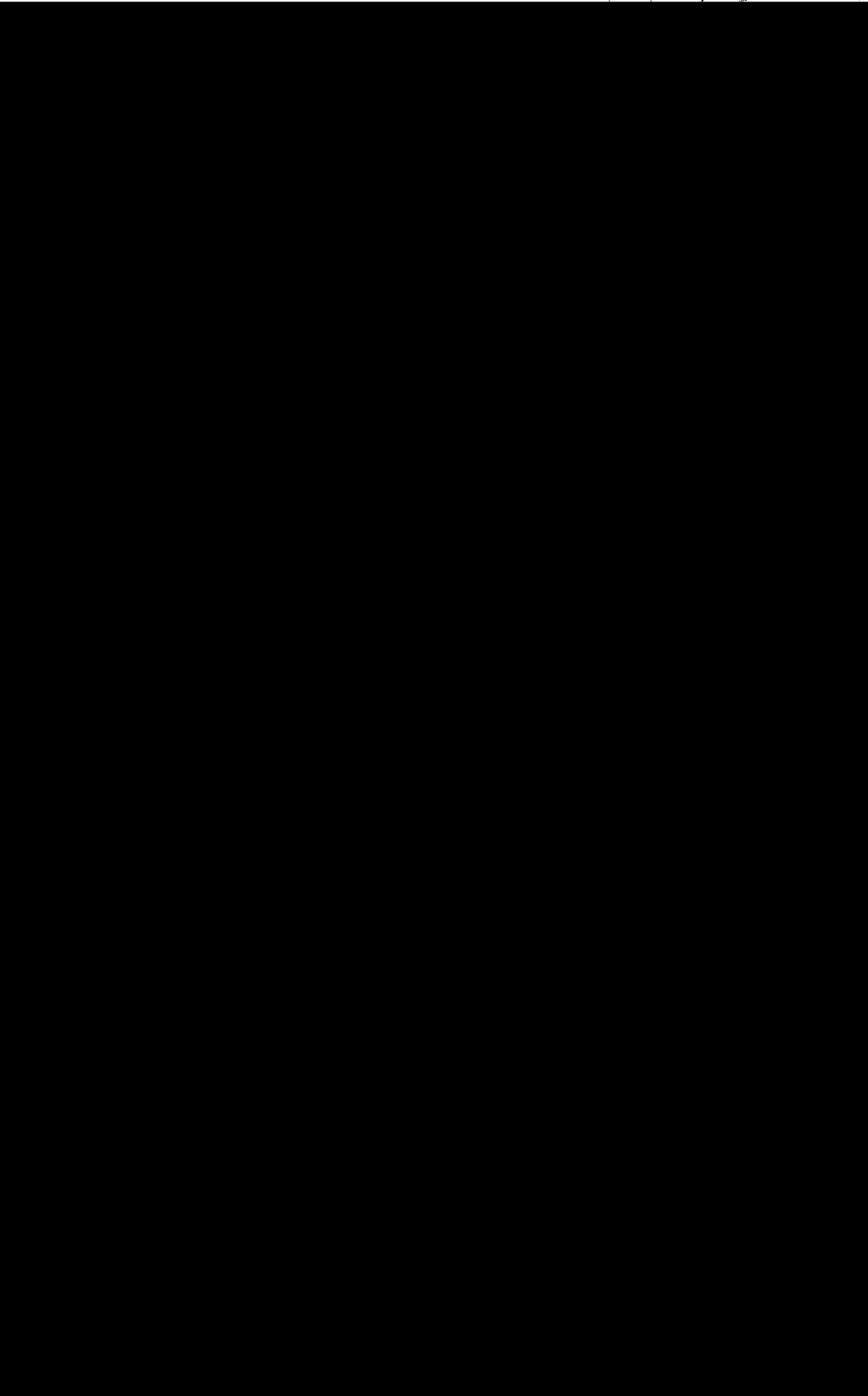
5. Combat Intelligence Teams

These teams are the activated units of what was originally intended to be a staybehind mechanism. (Planning for this program was implemented at a time that it was thought all of South Vietnam might be lost to the communists.) These teams are selected and recruited by an area organizer and given special training at one of the area development centers. They are directed by Vietnamese area organizers who use them to collect and act on their own intelligence and that which is provided by other clandestine parts of the staybehind mechanism. Combat intelligence teams are composed of 18 men each. By 31 December, [REDACTED] of these men had been trained.

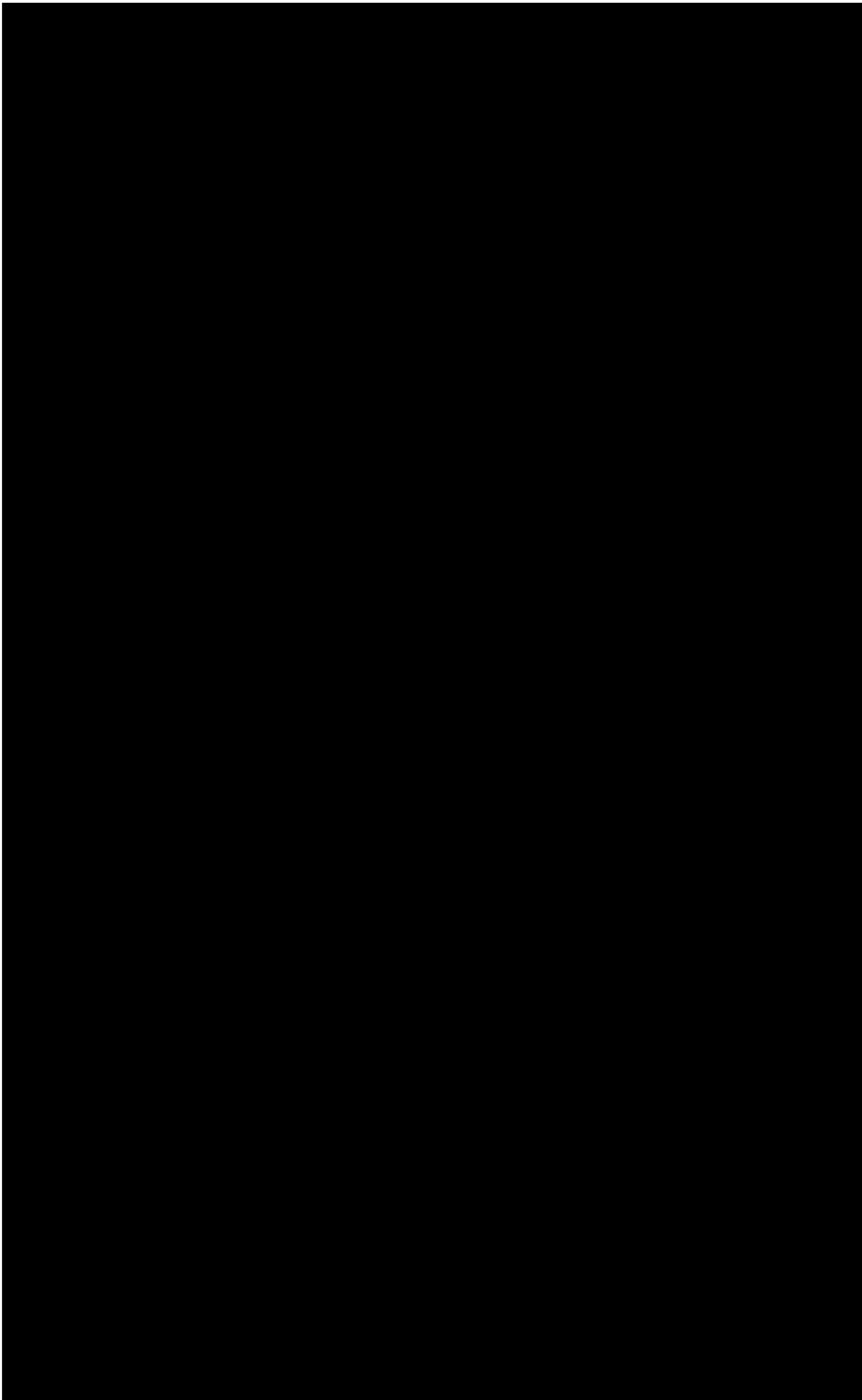
6. The number of personnel to be trained by the end of FY 1963 under CIDG/son-SWITCHBACK activities are as follows:



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42.85
26.40
24.00
33.20
45.80
60.00
27.30
15.10
49.80
15.30
18.10
3.80
16.90
16.40
24.90
49.10
26.00
23.40
11.70
40.00
8.60
17.20
30.20
10.80
1.60
2.00
27.60
9.00
32.10
22.40
25.00
9.10
24.30
14.64

804.59

TOTAL HAMLET
+ MILITARY
YOUTH

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Mr. Wood
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COMMITTEE ON PROVINCE REHABILITATION

SUMMARY REPORT OF MEETING FEBRUARY 11, 1963

(Meeting originally scheduled for February 2)

At the request of General Adams, MACV, the following is to be inserted in lieu of the first paragraph, page 4, Summary Report of the meeting of February 1, 1963:

"General Adams reported that General Harkins had sent a command letter to Chief MAAG and the four Corps Senior Advisors. This letter placed command emphasis on the Province Rehabilitation Program and pointed out the necessity for close cooperation between the U.S. military and U.S. civilian agencies involved."

Mr. Trueheart complimented Colonel Schaad, MAAG, on the latest issue of the Status Report prepared by Colonel Schaad's section.

Agenda Item I -- Interim report by Subcommittee on resources control.

Mr. Adkins, USOM, reported that although PSD was in possession of some items of information as a result of a survey conducted on resources control, he believed it would be preferable to postpone the interim report until the February 15 meeting. The Committee so agreed.

Agenda Item II -- Discussion and acceptance of such province plans as are ready for submission.

Discussion of the plan for Kontum province (the MAP portion was approved at the February 1 meeting) continued. Mr. Phillips, USOM, stated he was satisfied with the proposed relocation effort involving several thousand montagnards and satisfied also that the plan had been coordinated with Special Forces representatives. He added that it was his understanding that the montagnard program would be tailored to fit montagnard needs and that the Ministry of Interior had already issued guidance on this approach to province officials. More specific instructions and guidance will be issued in the future. Following this discussion, the Kontum province plan was approved.

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Major Steinberg, MAAG, opened the discussion of the Pleiku province plan. He summarized the information given at the prior meeting as to the number of hamlets to be built; the number of barbed wire fences to be erected; the number of steel fence posts to be used, etc. Mr. Trueheart inquired why the 2,240 militia were to be trained for thirty days whereas militia recruits in other provinces have received fifteen days' training. Mr. Phillips, USCM, and [REDACTED] believed that the additional training period stemmed from the province chief's desires to give the trainees additional political indoctrination. During the discussion, the Committee was informed that the province chief wanted to train more than 2,240 militia and that the excess over this number were to be trained by Special Forces at Plei Mrong. Colonel Calloway pointed out that the Special Forces capability at Plei Mrong, and at other camps in the area, was such that they could not absorb more trainees without additional cadres. Mr. Phillips stated that at a meeting attended by Minister Hieu (Civic Action) a plan for the training of additional cadres was outlined. It appeared, therefore, that additional cadres would be available in the future should Plei Mrong be called upon to undertake militia training over and above the 2,240 scheduled by the province chief.

The Committee approved the Pleiku province plan with the understanding that the thirty-day training cycle for the militia would be utilized fully and profitably.

Major Steinberg then introduced the plan for the province of Phu Bon. He outlined the MAP support material to be furnished and the number of hamlets to be constructed in the two phases. Although weapons would not be required, since Special Forces projects had made sufficient weapons available, the province chief did want fifty shotguns and fifty carbines to hold in reserve should the need for them arise. Colonel Patton, MACV, commented that Special Forces were getting more deeply into the hamlet militia training and observed that the "B" team commanding officer in each province has to adapt himself to the province chief, the population, and the specific problems. Therefore, a set approach was not possible since no two provinces or province chiefs or province populations were the same.

The Committee approved the Phu Bon province plan.

Discussion of the Darlac province plan was reopened by Major Steinberg who pointed out that regroupment had reduced the number of defended villages to 162 and that this figure was included in the total of 316 planned strategic hamlets in this province. MAP support

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would be allocated for the excess over 162, that is, 154 strategic hamlets. The 154 would be broken down into 61 in the A Zone, each with one squad of militia, and 93 in the C Zone, each with two to three squads of militia. The 162 were broken down into 20 in the A Zone and 57 in the B Zone and 85 in the C Zone. When completed, the total of 316 will break down into 81 in the A Zone, 57 in the B Zone and 178 in the C Zone.

It was noted that 77 strategic hamlets had been completed in addition to the 31 defended villages turned over to province control. However, it is not planned to turn over any more Special Forces-created units until the procedures for the turnover process proposed by MACV J-5 have been accepted. Mr. Trueheart inquired as to the amount of money earmarked for the teacher training school. Mr. Phillips reported that there was an extreme need for teachers and unless montagnards were trained as teachers, it would be necessary to bring in outside Vietnamese teachers which are also in short supply. During the discussion, the Committee was informed that the 31 villages turned over to province control would not be eligible for emergency relief or grant in kind for the construction of hamlet defense perimeters.

The Darlac province plan was approved.

Major Blake, MAAG, outlined a plan to construct 15 new strategic hamlets in Binh Duong and 7 in Tay Ninh province. He summarized the forces to be involved and the construction phases. The purpose of the new hamlets is to clear the highway from a point south of Ben Cat to Tay Ninh. Also, a start will be made to clear the highway from Ben Cat north to Binh Long. The additional funds required are necessary for the additional teams, trainees, self-help projects and supplies for the bulldozers to be used to clear the land.

Mr. Glaser, USOM, outlined the economic projects planned for the new hamlets. USOM would make available livestock, fertilizer, etc., in an effort to make the villagers more self-sufficient.

Mr. Pike, USIS, reported that his agency had been asked to produce two editions of Kien Quoc for these two provinces. He stated that this effort would place an extremely heavy burden on his agency's capability. Mr. Trueheart suggested that USIS might get an agreement to do one edition for both provinces. Colonel Schaad, MAAG, suggested that the publication might be alternated weekly between the two provinces. Given this guidance, Mr. Pike will proceed to work out a mutually acceptable agreement with the province officials concerned.

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The proposal for construction of 22 new strategic hamlets in Binh Duong and Tay Ninh was approved.

Agenda Item III -- Discussion of revised memorandum re MACV Concept For Approach to the GVN Takeover of CIDG Areas.

Colonel Cleland, MACV, submitted the revised memorandum and requested additional comments. Mr. Trueheart stated he would examine the memorandum and that if a Committee member had comments or suggestions, he should phone them to Mr. Trueheart. The memorandum will then be submitted to the GVN under cover of a letter addressed to the Minister of Interior as Secretary General of the Interministerial Committee on Strategic Hamlets.

Agenda Item IV -- Other Business

General Adams, MACV, circulated a copy of a letter to Chief MAAG and to the Senior Advisers in which General Harkins expressed the desire that the addressees direct their attention to the Clear-and-Hold Operations in progress and planned within their respective areas. They should make every effort to insure that military forces provided are adequate, operational plans are sound, MAP supplies are properly utilized and that there is continuous coordination between U.S. military and U.S. civilian agencies involved. General Adams said that the letter had been discussed with the GVN but a copy had not been made available to them. The Committee was of the opinion that a copy might be sent to General Te for his information.

Colonel Cleland reported on the JGS briefing. His notes will be put into memo form for circulation to the Committee.

Colonel Kendrick, Special Forces, submitted an interim report on the overall CIDG effort. He stated the report would be up-dated in the near future.

Colonel Schaad informed the Committee that carbines were to be released to hamlet militia.

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting in the USOM Conference Room on Friday, February 15 at 1000 hours.

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