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I. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

General Assessment. In appraising the various regimes in Saigon, in analyzing the crises that confronted them, and in estimating their prospects for survival, the Bureau attained a high and consistent record of accuracy. It emphasized the various governments' administrative weaknesses, lack of popular support, and inability to sustain an adequate war effort. When viewed retrospectively and in terms of their operational utility, these evaluations were realistic appraisals that were made with adequate emphasis. These judgments often ran counter to opinions that prevailed among policy makers (and sometimes parts of the Intelligence Community) in Washington and Saigon. Finally, the Bureau discerned and clearly expounded the underlying factors that brought about this dim prospect, so that it was able comprehensively to define for the policy makers the particular elements in the situation.

Correspondingly, to the degree that the Bureau did go astray, it generally erred in overdoing its concentration on the weaknesses displayed by the Saigon governments, as it did in estimating the capacity of the Buddhists to harm the regime in 1966, and in its concern over the dangers the Thieu administration might encounter upon entering negotiations in 1968. However, it also gave the South its due, and at times took a minority position in so doing, as when it argued that the country could survive coup attempts without falling to the Communists, that the political turmoil in the years after Diem reflected a strong democratic sentiment,

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and that there were important limits to Communist political appeal, particularly in the cities.

In general the Bureau was most sensitive to the risks of going along with an established order which had seriously dangerous drawbacks--whether it was the repressive Diem or an unpopular "do nothing" military regime--whereas policy officials were more sensitive to the risks inherent in change, with its potential for producing instability or causing loss of expert personnel. Such sensitivity extended even to the risks of pressing heavily upon Saigon regimes to reform. On this point of pressure, in particular, the implication of INR's position was that policy makers could exert much more leverage than they were willing to employ in impelling the Saigon government toward high performance in areas of action critical to the war effort.

Diem as a Leader. The Bureau's highly critical estimate of Diem's performance was proven valid in almost all respects. From the outset, INR's evaluations perceptively noted the risks and problems he presented to the attainment of both his own purposes and US objectives. It rightly judged his reputation for administrative efficiency to be overestimated; it repeatedly pointed up specific shortcomings in his conduct of the war; and it stressed the harmful consequences of his failure to delegate authority. In particular, it constantly emphasized that he was not carrying through on socio-economic reforms, and consequently was failing to gain the support and legitimacy he needed to counter the enemy's growing unconventional war effort. The Bureau presented the policy implications of this situation

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most graphically when, in discussing the pacification program of reform and security in the countryside, it observed that the net intent and effect of the Diem programs appeared to be to extend the regime's control over the peasants rather than to improve their condition.

On the other hand, the problems typified by the catch phrase "we can't win with Diem" were complicated by the tendency of US military elements to lay blame for lack of progress in the war wholly on Diem and other political factors, obscuring strictly military considerations. Hence, in early 1963, INR argued against an NIE section implying that in the long term the Communists could not be defeated under Diem, even though this conclusion was implicit in much of its own pessimistic analyses.

The Bureau accurately observed that the US policy of support for Diem and the war effort played a major role in sustaining Diem on his deleterious course, because it shielded him both from the consequences of his failures and from US efforts to foster reforms. A problem of this nature classically illustrates how difficult it is to distinguish sharply between policy recommendations and intelligence appraisals--in this instance because the US policy itself was a major input in an intelligence appraisal of the situation and because in executing its assignment to explore possible future developments, intelligence had to consider the alternative that the US might change its policy to make help effectively contingent on reform. In any event, the Bureau's argument that the US could exercise more control was in all likelihood correct. Just how, in concrete terms, Diem could

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be induced to operate more effectively and what could be done should he not prove responsive were questions never adequately developed by the Bureau. In all fairness, such studies would have run even more deeply into the policy field and would first have required a confrontation of sorts with the policy bureau over the premises of the approach itself. Whatever the reason, there was little in the Bureau's analysis, even inferentially, to indicate how one could cope with the complexities and hazards of this approach.

In the one area where it did make projections of this sort, the Bureau held that Diem was not irreplaceable and, on occasion, noted that Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho could be a valid alternative. Later, when the coup took place, it felt that a coalition of Minh and Tho could provide leadership adequate to give the new regime the needed stability and legitimacy. In these estimates and more generally, the Bureau proved too optimistic about there being a pool of competent leadership available in South Vietnam, as also about the capacity of South Vietnam to reconstitute a government that would provide orderly access to power and constitutional legitimatizing of a regime. In sum, the Bureau's view that Diem was replaceable may well have been right; certainly, its observation of his many faults was accurate; and its prognoses of what would happen if he continued in power seem prescient. But the difficulties of effecting change were profound and in fact derived from the very weaknesses in the body politic that INR was continually reporting; these difficulties deserved more thorough consideration in this context.

The Coup Against Diem and Its Aftermath. The Bureau was particularly acute in judging the likelihood and prospects of a coup against Diem during 1961-63, especially in light of actual attempts made from 1960 on. Along with other components in the Intelligence Community, it found the causes in failure to handle the Viet Cong threat, discontent over methods used, and reaction to a repressive and non-reformist regime. The Bureau made its own unique contribution in arguing from the outset that the coup would be non-Communist and would in all likelihood prevail if there were no outside interference. Furthermore, the Bureau correctly held that the coup would come from within the government itself and would be led by elements committed to counter-insurgency, and that the new leadership would remain committed to prosecuting the war. The Bureau also added, whereas the US might not know the nature of the coup in advance, it could intervene to prevent a power struggle among the successors and so help keep the war momentum going in its aftermath.

This appraisal was most accurate in its repeated assurances that the Communists would not be able to exploit the coup for political advantage either to take over from the immediate successors to power or even to gain much political ground. Others in the Intelligence Community felt that the South Vietnamese Army might not be able to keep the situation in hand and that the Communists would consequently have a quite good prospect of exploiting the chaotic situation that would ensue. By the Spring of 1963, however, the other agencies came around to the INR view, though they still noted some

prospect that the Viet Cong would gain ground in the course of a coup. Earlier, to be sure, INR had gone along with estimates that rated Communist chances for exploitation much higher than the Bureau had done in its own writings. INR could clarify differences, but also sharpen them by stating its position separately in a footnote to the NIE, or it could by compromising induce others to compromise and so edge them toward its view. The path of compromise proved here, and at other times, to be an effective way of bringing about changes in the general consensus. Its drawbacks are that it muffles actual differences at the time when they may be most relevant to operations, and that it relies on a process of change through adjustments which is bound to be slow in bringing about extensive alternation in the Community's basic position.

The Bureau's appraisals were particularly timely during the Buddhist crisis of 1963, in judging the intensity of the Buddhists' feelings, the legitimacy of their claims, and most particularly the unreliability of the Army as an instrument for suppressing the surprisingly activist Buddhists. They may have been less accurate in estimating that any of several possible alternatives to Diem might serve US interests, that success of Tho and the junta offered a good prospect of avoiding a military power struggle, and that in that case the counter-insurgency effort would not suffer a major setback. Thus certain judgments of INR, particularly on the capacity of the US to control factional conflict after a coup, or on the ability of the new leadership to work as a coalition and to prevent a polarization of domestic politics, were to prove ill-founded. In

particular, its expectations that the civil-military combination behind the coup would act with self-restraint reflected a serious underestimation of the strength and will of the military to assume and maintain power in Saigon.

The Minh and Khanh Regimes. The major misjudgment by the Bureau during this period stemmed from its belief that Minh, largely by dint of his popularity, could unite disparate political elements into an effective regime. Recognizing in 1962 his military talents and potential appeal as a political leader, INR had observed that Diem's failure to give Minh a position commensurate with his importance could lead him to join in coup efforts. Once Minh was in power, the Bureau tended to judge his regime's performance with optimism. There were reasons for giving him the benefit of the doubt, since revelations regarding the difficult state of affairs at the end of 1963 reflected honest reporting by the new regime about a general situation that had developed under Diem--a situation, furthermore, concerning which Diem's regime had given false or inaccurate reports that made matters seem better than was actually the case. The Bureau had already judged the situation to be worse than Diem had reported, so it was not as shaken as others were by this year-end news. Also, it argued that the regime was taking the right steps to re-establish effective government and regain momentum in the war effort. In these respects it differed markedly from the judgment expressed in January 1964 by Mr. McCone following his trip to South Vietnam; he took a most gloomy view of the government's stability and capacity to maintain the war effort.

It is difficult to decide which view was more accurate. The INR approach certainly rested on a deeper historical perspective and a more comprehensive view of the prevailing situation, in light of its analysis of the trends in South Vietnam during Diem's last year. Perhaps, as INR itself believed, Minh was not in power long enough for INR's estimate of his potential to be given fair trial under reasonable circumstances. While the success of Khanh's coup that followed so soon reflected poorly on Minh's capacity for effective and unifying leadership, knowledge of American dismay over the performance of the Minh-Tho government was also a critical factor. (The extreme pessimism expressed by the DCI and Mr. McNamara thus may have had a self-fulfilling force by revealing deep uncertainty about Minh's regime.) The same may be said for Minh's inability to regain power during Khanh's era of rule: for, although his failure to capitalize on Khanh's lack of political support and an adequate power base testified to Minh's ineffectiveness, he also was hindered by the evident American preference for Premier Khanh.

As to Khanh, the converse could be said of INR's judgment: it had earlier commented on his ineffectiveness as a military commander and now was quite accurate in depicting his inadequacy as a political leader. The judgment that he could not constructively reshape a dynamic and revolutionary situation proved all too sound; INR was correct in its military judgment as well, and soon observed that the counter-insurgency situation was worsening as Khanh failed to revive momentum in the war. On the other hand, for most of 1964 the Bureau underestimated the tenacity with which he would cling to power.

The New Political Atmosphere in the South. Since the Bureau felt that Minh was a more popular leader than Khanh, it traced much of the political instability of mid-1964 to Khanh's effort to discredit Minh. In effect it judged correctly when it argued that Minh's presence in the regime was essential to Khanh's own political survival; but it erred in concluding that Khanh would recognize this fact and endure his colleague's presence. INR was therefore surprised by Khanh's effort to exile Minh, and his success in doing so. However, INR had correctly predicted that under these circumstances the Khanh regime would become increasingly unstable; in fact, it did not last more than another half year.

On a broader political canvas, the Bureau performed a notable service in setting the political turmoil of this period in a useful historical and ideological setting. It noted that, after decades of suppression, a genuinely revolutionary political atmosphere -- and one that was truly non-Communist -- followed the coup against Diem. It felt that there were important constructive and positive aspects inherent in this seemingly chaotic situation--in particular, that the disorder had to be measured against growth of a sense of national identity and greater popular involvement in the political process. These trends, it observed, contained the seeds of the genuine political development so necessary for effective prosecution of the war. It was in this setting that INR found Khanh particularly wanting. If it overestimated Minh, who was out of power, it at least provided a sobering balance to officers in the US government who saw in Khanh's appearance of incisiveness and alleged commitment to action the makings of an effective national leader. In the Bureau's judgment,

Khanh could neither broaden his regime effectively nor deal with the upsurge in strong popular sentiment; instead, his policies generated greater tension and added to the factionalism that was growing throughout the country.

However, INR was also aware of how fragmented these interest groups were. The Bureau repeatedly observed that the great flaw in their insistence on participation in government was their disposition to use power essentially to foster or protect their own interests, and to give little thought to the needs of the nation as a whole. Still, it saw in this resurgence of popular interest, however disruptive it might be at first, a long, if early, step toward the political integration of this beleaguered state. In this context, it accurately perceived both the potential and the danger in the grouping of military and Buddhists that finally overthrew Khanh in February 1965. It signalled the possibility that a coalition of civilians and military might make a more cooperative approach to government; but it also warned that the leaders in both camps were still all too prone to sacrifice political stability for personal power. In short, the Bureau took the position that a genuine non-Communist social and political revolution was emerging and was now extending itself beyond the environs of Saigon, with great constructive potential--but of a sort not conducive to orderly or responsible government in the short run.

The implications for policy were that the US would derive maximum benefit from keeping both tracks open, with contacts to both the established and the upcoming forces, thus giving the country its best chance for political

rejuvenation and, ultimately, an effective war effort. INR was to take a critical position, once the military leadership had firmly established its control in Saigon, toward the policy the US then adopted that, in its view, placed too much emphasis on political stability. The Bureau held that, formal constitutional progress notwithstanding, this policy did not devote sufficient effort to cultivating true popular involvement and participation in the central processes of government, even at the risk of generating a degree of instability.

Appraisal of the Buddhists. For the most part, the Bureau provided accurate and timely analyses of the political role played by the Buddhists in the pivotal years 1963-1966. It correctly appraised their revolutionary temper as well as their capacity to generate great crises. However, while it recognized that their political power did have limits, the Bureau at times overestimated their capacity for sustained political action. Generally the Bureau proved most accurate in the 1963 crisis, and somewhat less so during 1966-67, at least in estimating the consequences of the uprisings.

In the spring of 1963, INR correctly forecast the crucial role of the Buddhists in the burgeoning crisis with Diem; it observed that he failed to grasp the seriousness of the situation and arbitrarily rejected the quest of the Buddhists for legal equality, which was based on a position of strength in both the urban and rural sectors of the society. Well ahead of others, the Bureau judged that the Buddhist crisis presented a greater threat to Diem than the Communists did. INR also differed markedly from

Embassy Saigon that summer when it described the Buddhists' negative response as warranted, and as justifiable to the Vietnamese, in view of the regime's repressive measures.

Similarly, in 1964, the Bureau thought that Khanh's removal of the Huong Cabinet afforded the Buddhists an exploitable issue which they could use to advantage. As noted above, this judgment was sustained when the coalition of military and Buddhists ousted Khanh. However, after the military assumed power and prospects for a coalition ended, INR returned in 1966 to the theme that the Buddhists were awaiting their opportunity to challenge the regime. INR felt that the Buddhists were centrally concerned with the timing of promised elections by the Ky regime, and that those in the I Corps area used the ouster of General Thi, the commanding officer there, as the occasion to try to compel the regime to restore civil government immediately. The Bureau rightly noted that this crisis was a showdown, presenting the most serious challenge to government since the fall of Diem. In all likelihood, the Buddhist challenge ultimately derived from fear, not of the military reneging on its timing, but of the regime carefully working out a program that would in the end leave the military still in power.

The Bureau respected the Buddhists' ability to generate a crisis, but it made a more modest estimate of their political strength, judging that they could not dominate an election as an organized political force. It did, however, overestimate Buddhist strength when, after the Ky government, backed by the US, quelled the disturbances, it judged that the situation remained explosive and that Ky was premature in judging these challengers to be beaten. Actually they were, and the Buddhists did not again mount a serious challenge.

In another example of sound judgment during the 1966-67 period, INR pointed out that the Buddhist challenge had the constructive aspects of providing for political expression while reducing Communist chances to exploit dissatisfaction. This interpretation signified, at least by inference, that the Communists enjoyed a low degree of appeal among Buddhist and other groups, and that the Viet Cong had limited capacity to disrupt democratic processes, even those weakly rooted and under grave pressure. INR also, after noting in 1966 that the Buddhists could boycott an election, in the following year estimated correctly that a campaign of this sort against the choice of a Constitutional Assembly would meet with little response. But this judgment was marred when INR again overestimated Buddhist strength (or misjudged its intent) in adding that if Buddhists and Communists combined to exert pressure they could make it very easy for Vietnamese voters to abstain. In fact, the Vietnamese voted in what were then record numbers.

The Maintenance of De Facto Military Rule. The advent of stable military rule during the premiership of Ky again led INR to question the assumption that continuity of rule under these conditions was preferable to change toward a truly responsible civilian regime. On its side of the argument, the Bureau could point to the regime's lack of popular support, and its inability to change fundamental political conditions in the country, which thus far had not been conducive to a successful war effort. It further made the point, often overlooked elsewhere because the new political stability in Saigon compared so favorably with the turmoil of previous years, that this regime was much like its predecessors--essentially

a "do-nothing" government in terms of the activities necessary for effective administration, reducing corruption, mobilizing resources to conduct the war, and gathering popular support. It thus favored efforts to press Saigon, already committed to a constitutional regime, to make this government genuinely civilian, with popular support; it considered this change preferable to continuation of a de facto military regime in constitutional clothing, even if some instability should follow. Arguing in 1967 that the US would fare better if it did not favor order at the expense of active political self-expression, the Bureau maintained that the political situation would eventually gain strength from a freer play of political forces and a more genuine popular participation. INR estimated that by committing itself to this process, the US would prevent a recurrence of the type of military coups that had occurred in recent years.

It is of course impossible to judge in any way definitively whether this position was correct, because the alternative was not attempted. When, to be sure, it is a matter of evaluating a particular military regime, centering on the personalities of the specific military leaders in power as in the competition between Ky and Thieu discussed below, it is possible to approach a conclusion. But the general principle remains difficult to judge, even granting the Bureau's major assumptions. It was not simply misdirected policy that led the US government generally to go along with a group in power even if, as with Ky, it had not desired this type of outcome but had, in fact, unsuccessfully pressed for a reversion to civilian

rule in 1964-65. The problem reaches down to the most fundamental of issues--how the US, even if it desired to do so, could achieve a major shift in the domestic political balance of an allied state. The question of viable alternatives in political leadership was never satisfactorily answered; and the Bureau itself was on record to the effect that the political groups in the country were heavily self-centered in their interests, lacked commitment to a higher national purpose, and were split into conflicting factions within themselves. More realistic and sympathetic than others in its appraisal of the Buddhists, the Bureau nonetheless noted this group's inability to organize itself as a coherent political force or to stand for a constructive policy. Thus the policy burden of its analyses would have been to put upon the US the double task of getting military elements, who were fully aware of political power, to transfer office to civilians at the same time that it fostered among these civilians new qualities of political cohesion and administrative competence. Still there was much to be said for INR's position, the strongest argument being that the continuation and legitimizing of the existing arrangement would at best only maintain the stalemate; the country would under this arrangement be unable to realize the political potential it had shown in recent years so as to construct a dynamic machine that could cope with the Communists.

INR was on much stronger grounds regarding the immediate issues involved in the transition to a constitutional regime, especially in its estimates of the damage Ky could do even to these more modest prospects

of sustaining a stalemate. After the constitution was promulgated and the issue centered on the choice of a president, the Bureau pointed up Ky's illegal preparations to subvert the elections by misusing the police apparatus and engaging in other activities reminiscent of Diem's era. It noted that a continuation of these practices would jeopardize the basic US objective of maintaining the credibility of the elections and so give the Communists a decisive political victory. For this reason, but especially because it did not believe that Ky had the presidential nomination in the bag, the Bureau argued during the first half of 1967 that the US should not throw him its support. In contrast to opinions widely held in the US government, INR estimated as early as December 1966 that Thieu had a stronger position among the military and would probably win a free election. The Bureau therefore recommended that the US should not support any one candidate. This aspect of its argument was validated in mid-1967 when Thieu emerged at the head of a joint ticket with Ky.

The Meaning of Voting Patterns. A series of elections took place during the 1960's, including Diem's victory in 1961, the provincial election of 1965, the choice of a constituent assembly in 1966, and the election of a president in 1967. In general, INR noted that the elections were mechanically honest, and that the returns were not altered by manipulation of voters. However, it attributed the regime's triumph in 1961 and 1966 to the suppression or default of an opposition. In 1966, for example, the lack of an effective challenge as well as the massive US presence that insulated the regime from the consequences of its weaknesses, seemed to the Bureau to

explain the surprisingly large turnout. Yet in fact the Bureau had said that the central issue in the 1966 vote would be its size rather than which assembly candidate would win, and INR was admittedly surprised by the turnout of 80.8 percent, topping the level of 73 percent in the relatively tranquil provincial elections the year before. The turnout of 81 percent the following year (Thieu winning with 35 percent) indicated a fairly consistent high voter turnout.

This pattern certainly deserved, and still deserves, closer scrutiny than it has received thus far, not only by the Bureau but by the Intelligence Community as a whole. Does it, for example, validate the INR view that the populace is getting politically more sophisticated and anxious to participate in a process that would represent and reflect its views? It seems inadequate to attribute a large turnout and victory for the "ins" solely to the presence of US forces and the lack of a strong alternative. Issues of passivism as against activism, patterns of policy preferences, traits in voting and other political behavior, might be extrapolated from a careful study of election campaigns and results. A most important issue, of course, is the degree to which the peasantry is committed to a non-Communist regime, even if not to the one that conducts and wins the particular election in question. Communist efforts to have the populace boycott elections never were successful and, as the Bureau repeatedly observed, the Viet Cong felt itself limited in its capacity to use terror as a deterrent to voting for fear that thwarting popular desires by this method would cost it dearly in political appeal.

Finally, electoral patterns could be compared, admittedly in a limited way, to estimates of security control over the countryside. Thus, at the start of 1966, MACV noted that 52 percent of the rural area was pacified, in contrast to the more bearish 30 and 25 percent estimates of Thieu and Ky. Is there any consistent national correlation between these totals and voter turnout? Do useful regional or provincial patterns of correlation occur? Given the possibility that a peasant might be free to vote even though some Communist influence--such as infrastructure, political support--may exist in a region, can these aspects of the complex political situation in the country be discerned from a comparison of figures of voters (and voter preference) and pacification?

Stability of the Thieu Regime and Negotiations. During the negotiations in Paris between Washington and Hanoi during 1968, INR consistently observed that Saigon desired to keep the discussions bilateral, related only to matters directly of concern to the two parties and away from consideration of the political future of the South. The Bureau judged that Saigon, having accepted talks in this context, would do its utmost to prevent discussions from extending to its vital political interest, and would stress the need for sustained military pressure. This appraisal proved generally correct, though the Bureau overstated Saigon's will (or capacity) to resist the extension of negotiations to embrace the political future of the South. Similarly, Saigon did not pose as great a problem as the Bureau had anticipated with respect to scaling down the war effort, as when the US completely ceased bombing the North.

The Bureau was, however, closer to the mark than most policy makers were in its doubts that Thieu had accepted the "our side, your side" formula in the summer and fall of 1968. Its ability to write on this subject was severely circumscribed because much information was inaccessible to all REA personnel save the Office Director, and even to him on a limited basis. Nevertheless, in oral conversations with EA in the fall of 1968, the Director judged that Saigon was not on board regarding this formula, because it had not, according to the information at hand, accepted what in its mind was the equality of treatment these arrangements afforded the NLF. In any event, the Bureau had long been on record as estimating that, whatever the arrangements, Thieu would engage in delaying tactics on political negotiations and do his utmost to minimize the role played by the NLF, for fear that to do otherwise would undermine his political position at home and open the way for the NLF to gain too great a role in the future of South Vietnamese affairs. As events developed in October 1968, this issue turned out to be of major importance and, as INR had predicted, led to a considerable delay in the opening of formal negotiations to end the war.

However, on the more general subject of the capacity of the Thieu regime to maintain its stability under the pressure of conducting negotiations with a diminished US war effort, the Bureau was somewhat too pessimistic. It felt that this situation might unravel the constitutional system, unleash irresponsible political activity, cause a general decay in morale, and increase the possibility of a military takeover, even against Thieu. The Bureau did conclude that these dire conditions would not come to pass if the

talks were widened, estimating that the regime would accept a widening of the talks without great damage to its own position or to the general political stability of the South. However, it added that this relatively favorable estimate had only a slightly better than even chance of eventuating, a judgment that proved excessively pessimistic. Apart from this problem, the Bureau did not devote much attention to other possible political repercussions from negotiations, apart from noting that the new American position could temporarily bring about a reduction in factionalism within the GVN, spurred by the realization that the US commitment to the ground war could no longer be taken for granted. Yet INR did not estimate whether, or how, this improved mutual cooperation among Saigon leaders could be sustained, or whether Thieu would prove able and willing, as he later did, to pave the way for a reasonable GVN negotiating position regarding a political settlement.

Viet Cong Political Strengths and Weaknesses. This has been and still remains a great gap in the political analysis of the situation in the South. INR never undertook a systematic and thorough analysis of the Viet Cong's organization or its political strengths and weaknesses, nor did it establish benchmarks for measuring the degree of its political attraction, the causes of its appeal, and changes that occurred in these factors over the years. Pressure of time and shortage of personnel were important considerations that do much to explain this gap; another important factor has been the difficulty of garnering a sufficient body of reliable

information regarding the Viet Cong. Still, as in the case of learning more about infiltration, had this become a high priority matter, the Bureau might have insisted successfully that more US government resources be devoted to reducing this gap in our information. There now have been various RAND studies on organization, ideology, recruitment of cadre, and Viet Cong morale, but these studies were slow to come out and generally reflected the situation as it stood a few years earlier. Systematic and continuing coverage by the Intelligence Community on as current a basis as possible was and remains a most rewarding possible use of the Community's resources. The Bureau did perform a useful service in challenging some RAND reports in 1966 that deduced a major problem in enemy morale from interviews with prisoners and defectors. INR repeatedly pointed out that the level of defectors was too low to justify concluding a morale crisis existed in the core of the enemy's key personnel, and that captured documents that stressed the problem of morale also indicated that the enemy was endeavoring to cope with this problem. The Bureau also noted frequently and consistently that enemy morale and discipline in combat remained high and gave no indication of significant deterioration. This analysis proved to be one of the major factors affecting our next topic, INR's appraisal of the war in the South.