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• PRIORITY

IN 62542

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GROUP 1
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CITE

DIST 4 MARCH 1968

3.5(c)

COUNTRY: SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI:

3.3(h)(2)

SUBJECT: USE OF TEENAGERS AND YOUTH GROUPS BY THE VC IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE

ACQ: VIETNAM, QUANG TRI (26 FEBRUARY 1968)

3.5(c)

SOURCE:

3.3(h)(2)

1. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO PREVIOUSLY PREPARED PLAN BY THE VC/NVA TO SPECIFICALLY EXPLOIT TEENAGERS AND HAMLET YOUTH DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE. MOST OF THE INSTANCES OF THE USE OF YOUTH SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ON-THE-SPOT IMPROVISATIONS DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY AND LATER (FROM 10 TO 25 FEBRUARY) TO TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF THE VACUUM CREATED BY THE ALLIES IN THE RURAL AREAS WHEN THESE FORCES WITHDREW TO PROTECT THE URBAN CENTERS.

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2. IN THE NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT OF GIO LINH MANY REFUGEES REPORTED THAT YOUTHS HAD BEEN FORCIBLY RECRUITED AND PRESSED INTO SERVICE WITH COMBAT UNITS. THIS AREA HAS BEEN THE SITE OF MANY PRE-TET OFFENSIVE ATTEMPTS BY THE VC/NVA TO FLESH OUT THEIR UNITS WITH LOCAL YOUTH. AT LEAST TWO NATIONAL POLICE INFORMANTS IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN REPORTING PAST VC ACTIVITY DIRECTED TOWARD HAMLET YOUTH IN GIO LINH DISTRICT FOR THE PAST THREE MONTHS. USMC POW INTERROGATIONS HAVE ALSO CONFIRMED THESE INFORMANT REPORTS. (FIELD COMMENT: IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT THE RECRUITMENT OF YOUTH IN THIS DISTRICT PRIOR TO THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE WAS A NECESSITY CREATED BY THE EXTENT OF ALLIED OPERATIONS IN THE AREA AND NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO A SPECIFIC PLAN INTEGRAL TO THE TET ATTACKS.)

3. IN TRIEU PHONG DISTRICT, WHICH ENCOMPASSES THE MAJORITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT EFFORT, AT LEAST FOUR HAMLETS OCCUPIED EARLY IN THE VC OFFENSIVE HAVE GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT, ONCE THE VC/NVA FORCES REALIZED THAT THEY WERE GOING TO GAIN UNCONTESTED CONTROL OF THE RURAL AREAS, THEY BEGAN TO FORM HAMLET YOUTH FROM 15 TO 20 YEARS OF AGE INTO AN AD HOC CIVIL MILITIA APPARENTLY TO FREE THE MAIN FORCE BATTALIONS FROM "OCCUPATION DUTY" AND ALLOW THEM TO ASSUME GREATER MOBILITY OF OPERATIONS. THE SUCCESS ENJOYED BY THE

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VC/NVA IN THIS EFFORT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SMALL, SINCE MANY OF THESE MILITIAS DISSOLVED WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THE ENEMY FORCES AWAY FROM THEIR HAMLETS.

4. IN NHU LE AND NHAN BIEU HAMLETS, WHICH LAY JUST ACROSS THE THACH HAN RIVER FROM QUANG TRI CITY, ENTIRE POPULATIONS, YOUTH INCLUDED, WERE EITHER COERCED OR VOLUNTEERED TO MAKE STRETCHERS, LADDERS, SPEARS AND WOODEN SWORDS AT THE DIRECTION OF THE VC. THESE PEOPLE WERE CONTINUALLY PROPAGANDIZED THAT THEIR EFFORTS WERE TO AID IN THE "GENERAL UPRISING OF THE PEOPLE" THAT WOULD HAPPEN IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND THAT THE SAME THING WAS OCCURRING IN ALL THE HAMLETS AND VILLAGES IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE.

5. WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF THE FORMATION OF HAMLET MILITIA, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT TEENAGERS AND YOUTH WERE USED BY THE VC/NVA IN ANY OTHER FASHION THAN THEY HAVE IN THE PAST. THE KNOWN INSTANCES OF EXPLOITATION OF YOUTH INDICATE HAPHAZARD AND ILL-PLANNED USE OF THIS AGE GROUP.



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