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U.S. PROGRESS REPORTS FOR THE VIETNAM WAR, 1967-68

A Study of the Hamlet Evaluation System and the Enemy Order of Battle

By

Donald S. Travis

B.A., Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1985

M.B.A., Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, 1987

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ABSTRACT

The U.S. war effort in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967 centered on two policies -- pacification and the strategy of attrition. U.S. policy-makers and key generals created reporting systems to measure progress of these two policies. The Hamlet Evaluation System and the enemy order of battle figures were the two most prevalent reports used to measure progress. As the war increased in U.S. commitment, casualties, and expenditures, the American people and nations throughout the world increased their voices of dissent against what they deemed was an immoral and senseless war. In response to protest, U.S. policy-makers embarked on a campaign of misinformation, knowingly or not, designed to quell dissent in order to buy time to see if Hanoi would back off from its campaign to unify Vietnam. It is the argument of this study that as political pressures on U.S. policy-makers increased, officially and publicly reported information designed to show progress in the war became increasingly inaccurate.



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## INTRODUCTION

During the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, how much influence did domestic and international political pressures have on the accuracy of official government reports emanating from South Vietnam? In any war, the consequences of erroneous reporting to a commander, President, or a people can be devastating. For the United States in the mid-1960s, dubious reporting in the misunderstood war in Southeast Asia led to an erosion of the values and principles which all Americans claimed to take pride in as citizens and as human beings.

A critical juncture in the Vietnam War occurred in mid to late 1967. Many factors were responsible. First, the 1968 presidential campaign was gathering momentum, with political parties and numerous candidates jockeying for a dominant position in the polls. Second, war protests were intensifying not only in the United States but throughout the world. Third, U.S. citizens were questioning the decisions made by their leaders but were not receiving satisfactory answers. The so-called "credibility gap", or discrepancy between the reality that existed in Vietnam and the perceptions conveyed within official government rhetoric, was widening. U.S. citizens were questioning the credibility of American institutional authority. Fourth, a bloody war was getting bloodier and more expensive with no apparent end in sight: By September, 1967, 13,000 U.S. soldiers were listed as killed and 75,000 as injured. The war was costing the U.S. taxpayers over \$2-billion each month. The generals running the war were unable to give any timetable as to when the war could end. The American war managers were nonetheless offering "proof" that they were making progress<sup>1</sup>. In the face of tangible evidence indicating U.S. failure, i.e., the huge expenditures and enormous number of casualties, they came up with

"hard facts" of success derived from enemy casualty reports and systematic methods of charting "nation building". The information dealt with two policies prosecuted by Washington and Saigon -- pacification and the war of attrition.

Although these two policies actually contradicted each other both in theory and practice, the statistics derived from their employment were often used together in claiming that progress was being made.

The American effort in Vietnam was carried out via a military mission known as the U.S. Military Assistance Command (MACV). Its official definition of pacification was as follows:

...the military, political, economic, and social process of establishing or re-establishing local government responsive to and involving the participation of the people. It includes the provision of sustained, credible territorial security, the destruction of the enemy's underground government, the assertion or reassertion of political control and involvement of the people in government, and the initiation of economic and social activity capable of self-sustenance and expansion. The economic element of pacification includes the opening of roads and waterways and the maintenance of lines of communication important to economic and military activity.<sup>2</sup>

The attrition policy incorporated a strategy of killing or capturing Vietnamese Communist insurgents (Viet Cong or "VC") and North Vietnamese forces from the north. The primary purpose was to gradually but steadily reduce their number and strength over time to such an extent that it would render the Communist insurgency ineffective in South Vietnam. The attrition policy relied on casualty lists consisting of dead, wounded and captured enemy. Tallying up lists of the dead became popularly known as "body counts." The war managers deemed it important to count enemy dead in relation to established figures of enemy size, or order of battle, as it was also termed. Comparing these numbers was the basis of progress reports

on the war in general. Based on these reports, the American people were informed that the U.S. was winning the Vietnam war in late 1967.

The objective of pacification was to create and establish a nation-state in the image of western culture. At the same time, the attrition policy was intended to keep the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces away from the hamlets and population centers so that pacification could be conducted smoothly. Often, killing by technologically advanced weapons of mass destruction, such as B-52 bombers, napalm or artillery, was indiscriminate, rendering pacification efforts fruitless.

The thesis of this paper is -- as political pressures on the war managers increased, officially and publicly reported information designed to show progress became increasingly inaccurate. Specifically, methods of data collection and analysis for several key reporting systems were not effective in measuring progress of the war. Further, data from the same reporting systems was altered and manipulated in order to produce information to demonstrate progress which, in fact, was not progress at all. As a result, the data became less reliable and valid as a means to detect meaningful trends toward a positive outcome of the war. The plethora of pressures, rising to an intense degree by mid-1967, caused key and highly influential policy-makers within the Johnson cabinet to insist on seeing positive, measurable gains in order to support Johnson's pledge to "stand firm" against communist aggression in Vietnam.

First, what were the political pressures facing the war managers in 1967? Why was the level of stress so high as to cause a compromise of integrity among our top leaders? Second, what types of reporting systems were used to measure progress of the war? How did they work and what did they indicate? Also, what did the war managers claim that they indicated?

Finally, what was wrong with the reporting systems? Why was the data, which was presented to President Johnson and the American people in late 1967, erroneous? Further, why was it impossible for these systems to report accurately on the situation in Vietnam?

Who was responsible for the propaganda campaign waged by the Johnson administration in 1967? This paper explores how the war managers claimed that the U.S. was making progress when the opposite was true.

CHAPTER I  
POLITICAL PRESSURES

It will be demonstrated in this chapter how political pressure on Johnson's war managers increased steadily over the course of U.S. intervention in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967.

First, it must be understood that early reporting mistakes and false premises led to overt U.S. military intervention. Second, it will be demonstrated how, from 1965 to late-1967, a crescendo of pressure from various sources culminated to a point which caused official misinformation to be reported to the American public.

A. EARLY REPORTING MISTAKES -- FALSE PREMISES

When examining the many illusions which led the U.S. into Vietnam, three stand out as being most prevalent. First, the inherent and irreversible weaknesses of the South Vietnamese government since 1955 made the whole idea of western styled nation-building absurd. Second, poor U.S. intelligence methods in the early 1960s led to ineffective intelligence habits which persisted throughout the war. Finally, when one combined the first two issues mentioned above with the primary U.S. policy -- dissuasion, the absurdity of the war became compounded to a degree which proved to be unacceptable to the American taxpayer. The U.S. policy of dissuasion involved the orchestration of communications intended to make peace with the North Vietnamese coupled with successive, aggressive/punitive military attacks on specified North Vietnamese targets which would increase in violence until the Communists in Hanoi discontinued further aggression toward South Vietnam. These "false premises" became the

catalyst which created the widespread perception of the credibility gap. Thus, various political pressures were created.

The South Vietnamese government, also known as the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) or Government of Vietnam (GVN), was from the very beginning a highly corrupt, banana-style republic. According to Bernard Fall, French journalist, political correspondent, and expert on Vietnam during the war -- "Without American aid to Viet-Nam's military and economic machinery, the country would not survive for ten minutes -- yet very little is known about the infrastructure of the machinery that is being supported at the highest per capita rate of American aid anywhere in the world."<sup>1</sup> The main problem was the fact that the RVN never possessed viable leadership in the mold in which Americans came to expect. In reality, the RVN was from the start a tenuous client of the United States. Specifically, they followed conventional American doctrine in the way they trained for, and fought, war. In order to pay for the war machines fitted for a conventional army, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) relied exclusively on the American "arsenal of anti-communism". Failure to come to grips with this fact by American policy-makers led to the increase in the absurdity of the war as it progressed. For American leaders to support a Vietnamese regime that was totally out of touch with the majority of its people, and killing them indiscriminately at the same time, was unpalatable to American citizens who finally began to discover the truth.

Since the eighteenth century, the French offered the Vietnamese exploitation. From 1954 on, the Americans offered them western values. The Vietnamese wanted neither. Mangold and Penycate explain the essence of Vietnamese culture in their book The Tunnels of Cu Chi:

Vietnamese culture has its roots in the village, where material possessions are seen as a mark of selfishness, denying one's friends or neighbors the right to equality. This is not a political attitude but, like the close relationship with the earth itself, is based on long historical accommodation with the village experience, the lack of social and physical mobility, and the acceptance of one's role in life.<sup>2</sup>

The values expressed by the majority of the Vietnamese people would prove to be a crucial issue when the GVN would attempt to carry out pacification. Ho Chi Minh was undoubtedly closer to the majority of the Vietnamese people in lifestyle, image and spirit than the leaders of the South, such as Diem, Ky, Thieu, and other fleeting and faceless strong-men.

\*

Since the Kennedy administration in 1961, and up until the Tet offensive in early 1968 and beyond, U.S. intelligence efforts, by whatever means from whatever agency, were hopelessly flawed. The poor performance was ultimately caused by poor leadership beginning at the top (LBJ and Kennedy) and working its way through their administrations down to the level where lack of integrity was taken for granted by key leaders in South Vietnam who came to realize that no amount of U.S. military and economic assistance could save a nation that was not really a nation, but a contrived artificial Saigon government which looked good on paper but had no national life or soul. These men knew the truth but did not pursue its importance to the war effort in the long run. Honest Generals became politicized in order to retain rank and stature. Not one American officer above the rank of Lieutenant Colonel resigned in protest over the course of the entire U.S. involvement. There were many questions raised by many Americans concerning what was happening in Vietnam, but no one could answer them satisfactorily. In the American democratic republic, U.S. citizens

were paying for efforts in Southeast Asia in money and human lives. The American people were going to have to find out what really went on from the free press. According to many journalists who worked in Vietnam from 1960 to 1968, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had no intention of informing the American people of the political, economic and social realities which existed in South Vietnam -- i.e. the flimsy Saigon government and the utter failure of pacification. American and international journalists came to believe, with real justification, that "President Kennedy's administration did everything in its power to ensure that the existence of a real war in Vietnam was kept from the American people."<sup>3</sup> The need for accurate and honest reporting existed along with the need to make competent policy that could adhere to basic American values. It is apparent that to some degree, both needs were never met.

General Maxwell Taylor, former U.S. Ambassador to Saigon in the early 1960s, provided in his book Swords and Plowshares a great deal of insight into the problems of intelligence gathering and reporting which he faced as the highest ranking man in South Vietnam at a crucial period of American involvement. He asked two key questions -- How did the U.S. get trapped into the Vietnam Conflict? and, Who or what was responsible for the miscalculation? The best answer he could provide was as follows:

"...by the nature of the undertaking, it was never possible for Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, or Johnson to have in time all the facts necessary to permit an accurate estimate of what we could expect either from our Vietnamese ally or from the enemy."<sup>4</sup>

He explained in more detail the reporting problem:

"Nothing resembling an integrated intelligence system existed in South Vietnam in 1961,...Cables from Washington poured daily into the Embassy and the American Military Mission asking for detailed information on the conduct of the war,



the state of the economy, the progress of social programs, and on scores of other complex subjects. To obtain answers to the questions raised, our American officials had to repeat them to the appropriate element of the government or the armed forces and could do little more than forward to Washington whatever answer was eventually forthcoming...the answers provided were not worth the cost of transmission. In many cases the government did not have the data requested and was faced with the dilemma of confessing its ignorance or making a quick "guesstimate". Usually the latter course was chosen. In other cases, the government did have the information requested but if furnished, it would reflect unfavorably on government performance. At such times the temptation was often great to doctor the information before releasing it into foreign hands. Under such circumstances it was not surprising that Washington plans and programs often did not correspond to the realities of the situation in Vietnam."

All information which Taylor received came exclusively from Vietnamese sources. If he knew that the information was unreliable, why did he play along with the charade? One must assume that he passed the truth on to President Kennedy by other than official methods since there is a strong indication of this in the Pentagon Papers.

General Taylor contended that up to 1961-62 the U.S. lacked sufficient personnel and resources necessary to provide effective intelligence to Washington of the true situation in Vietnam. The strategic hamlet program (later to be termed pacification), that was being carried out by President Diem's brother Nhu in the early 1960s was considered critical to the overall success of the GVN. Ngo Dinh Nhu was chief of police of the South Vietnamese government. He was considered corrupt, and was unusually ruthless with anyone he suspected of being Communist. He organized a secret police whose actions did more to embarrass their regime than to maintain law and order. McNamara received statistics on the progress of this program from the Saigon government. Many of the reports he received prior to the Diem assassination painted a favorable picture of progress.

Roger Hilsman explained the information problem in his book To Move A Nation:

...the statistics on the number of strategic hamlets and on the number of villages under effective government control were completely false. Vice-President Tho [GVN], for example, informed us that of the 8600 strategic hamlets claimed under the Diem regime, only about 20 percent actually met the standards. In one district, which is a typical example, the district chief had reported that he controlled all twenty-four hamlets -- but he now admitted that he controlled only three.

In May of 1962, Secretary of Defense McNamara made his first trip to South Vietnam. After 48 hours in the country he proclaimed, "every quantitative measurement shows that we are winning the war." Loren Baritz cites in his book Backfire:

Because he [McNamara] had no independent means to accumulate the essential data, he was forced to rely on the South Vietnamese to provide the "facts". One Vietnamese General said- "Ah, les statistiques! Your Secretary of Defense loves statistics. We Vietnamese can give him all he wants. If you want them up, they go up. If you want them down, they go down."

Despite the obvious lack of information and a shaky South Vietnamese government, the decision was still made by President Kennedy to continue to send in more advisors in order to "adhere to the goals of our Southeast Asian policy: an independent South Vietnam free from attack."

Charting progress of the war was important to President Johnson as it should be for any military leader who is furthering an international political goal by military, economic and political means. The Johnson administration sent trusted emissaries to report on progress. The following information was sent in memorandum format to the President from Secretary McNamara which was dated 16 March, 1964:

This report addresses two questions:

1. What is the present situation in Vietnam?...
2. How can we improve the situation?...

...C. The situation has unquestionably been growing worse, at least since September:

...In terms of government control of the countryside, about 40 % of the territory is under Viet Cong control or predominant influence. In 22 of the 43 provinces, the Viet Cong control 50% or more of the land area...The ARVN and paramilitary desertion rates...are high and increasing...Draft dodging is high while the Viet Cong are recruiting energetically and effectively...The morale of the hamlet militia and Self Defense Corps, on which the security of the hamlets depends, is poor and falling...In Binh Dinh province, in the II Corps, 75 hamlets were severely damaged by the Viet Cong (in contrast, during the twelve months ending June 30, 1963, attacks on strategic hamlets were few and none was (sic) overrun)...The political control structure extending from Saigon down into the hamlets disappeared following the November coup...

How did McNamara arrive at the figures stated above? How did he come to the conclusion that the Vietcong controlled 50% or more of the land area? How did he know that the morale of the South Vietnamese Self Defense Force was low? Obviously he based these conclusions on something. Prior to 1966, one can reasonably assume that Secretary McNamara based his information for the progress of the war on personal observation and the personal observations and judgements from key subordinates. Reports in memorandum format were sent to the President or the Secretary of Defense routinely throughout the conflict from key members of the policy formulation team which included William Bundy, John McNaughton, General Maxwell Taylor and Secretary McNamara. These men were sent to Southeast Asia periodically to get a first hand look at the situation. The following information was reported prior to 1965:

W.P. Bundy, August 11, 1964:

...South Vietnam is not going well...the leadership

(though not so much the people or the Army) has symptoms of defeatism and hates the prospect of slugging it out within the country...we have a major problem of maintaining morale.

J. McNaughton, 11/7/64:

...The situation in South Vietnam is deteriorating...the new government will probably be unstable and ineffectual, and the VC will probably continue to extend their hold over the population and territory...

WP Bundy/J McNaughton, 11/26/64:

...The political situation remains critical and extremely fragile. The security situation in the countryside has continued to deteriorate...GVN determination and authority could virtually give way suddenly in the near future, though the chances seem better than even that the new GVN can hang for this period and thus afford a platform upon which its armed forces, with US assistance, can prosecute the war and attempt to turn the tide. Even under the best circumstances, however, reversal of present military trends will be extremely difficult...

[Gen.] Taylor, 27 Nov, 64:

...Perhaps more serious than the downward trend in the pacification situation, because it is the prime cause, is the continued weakness of the central government...it is impossible to foresee a stable and effective government under any name in anything like the near future...Without an effective central government with which to mesh the US effort, the latter is a spinning wheel unable to transmit impulsion to the machinery of the GVN. While the most critical governmental weaknesses are in Saigon, they are duplicated to a degree in the provinces. It is most difficult to find adequate provincial chiefs and supporting administrative personnel to carry forward the complex programs which are required in the field for successful pacification...

William P. Bundy, January 6, 1965:

...I think we must accept that Saigon morale in all quarters is now very shaky indeed,...The blunt fact is that we have appeared to the Vietnamese...to be insisting on a more perfect government than can reasonably be expected,...stronger action obviously has grave difficulties. It commits the US more deeply, at a time when the picture of South Vietnamese will be extremely weak...we believe that such action would have some faint hope of really improving the Vietnamese situation, and, above all, would put us in a much stronger position to hold the next line of defense, namely Thailand...

The reports cited above are a partial representation of many reports which painted a similar picture. Bundy, McNaughton, Taylor and McNamara cited their misgivings in entering the conflict beyond what had been done up to late 1964. It is reasonable to assume that if LBJ had decided to cut his losses in Vietnam and withdrawal American support in early 1965, that these men would have supported him in their own minds. Nevertheless, the military, under General William Westmoreland as commander of MACV, was put in charge of carrying out the policies of LBJ.

The performance of the military leaders in Vietnam became critical. Their ability to face the truth head-on and report reality might have had an impact on the course of the war. Instead, U.S. advisors and intelligence experts targeted enemy main force units in the countryside. This neglected what turned out to be a more hazardous Vietcong infrastructure. The South Vietnamese army (ARVN) learned from their American teachers and pursued conventional style intelligence gathering and neglected the real problem in the war -- the national liberation front and the push for independence from western influences.

There was never a time when the South Vietnamese army was professional or effective enough as a fighting force to deal with their Communist enemies without massive U.S. support. They were constantly thrown off balance by assassination, enemy hit and run attacks, and a lack of commitment from their leaders. Yet, U.S. generals repeatedly contended that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was improving and becoming more professional all the time. Political leaders in the U.S. promoted the idea that it was the ARVN that had to eventually be trained well enough to stand alone. However, when American ground forces entered the war in 1965-66, the ARVN was relegated to the rear, and the U.S. forces bore the

brunt of the fighting. Besides, very few ARVN leaders had the courage to fight.

It was no secret that if someone dissented from the official view promoted by the president, that person would suffer negative consequences. In 1962 Chief of Staff General George Decker disagreed with President Kennedy over how to fight insurgent wars. Kennedy fired Decker and replaced him with General Earl Wheeler. The message was clear -- "...tell the politicians what they wanted to hear, or suffer the consequences. Reports were cut to fit the temper of the times."<sup>10</sup> Dave Palmer, author of Summons of the Trumpet, cited another example:

[Westmoreland] could have resigned in protest at the shackles placed on him, but generals of the 1960s had watched some of their predecessors take that route in the 1950s to no avail. Moreover, President Johnson had pointedly warned Westmoreland "not to pull a MacArthur on me."<sup>11</sup>

James C. Thomson, Jr., who was an East Asian specialist who worked among top U.S. policy-makers from 1961-66, offered an explanation to what can be considered a primary cause for poor policy making practices:

Through a variety of procedures, both institutional and personal, doubt, dissent, and expertise were effectively neutralized in the making of policy... Here I would stress the paramount role of executive fatigue. No factor seems to me more crucial and underrated in the making of foreign policy. The physical and emotional toll of executive responsibility in State, the Pentagon, the White House, and other executive agencies is enormous; that toll is...compounded by extended service...Complaints may be few, and physical health may remain unimpaired, though emotional health is far harder to gauge...The tired policy-maker becomes a prisoner of his own narrowed view of the world and his own cliched rhetoric.<sup>12</sup>

McNamara, Rostow and Rusk had occupied key positions in government since early 1961. By 1965-66, a form of policy making myopia might have set in. They were team players in the eyes of Johnson. They also were a

significant part of creating the policies that were being defended in late 1966-67. Their judgement and abilities as foreign policy advisors to the president were on the line. Rusk and McNamara stood up in the face of great opposition to defend the decisions of the Johnson administration. They stood side by side with their bureaucratic partner -- General Westmoreland. Westmoreland was commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) since 1965. He invented the policy of attrition. Also, he was in good graces with LBJ due to his unwavering loyalty, "can do" spirit and unshaken optimism. It seemed he was only able to find the positive indicators in the war. The reality of the war for McNamara, Rusk, Rostow and Westmoreland existed in the fixed figures and ideas contained in the reporting methods which they relied on so heavily to prove that they were winning the war. These reporting methods were created in 1966. Their results were put to use by the Johnson Administration in 1967. They are explained in Chapter II.

\*

Daniel Ellsberg spoke for many in 1971 when he gave a plethora of possible motivations as to why the U.S. got sucked into the Vietnam quagmire. There was a fear of a return to McCarthyism if the U.S. lost Indochina (Johnson said this in his memoirs). The domino theory was still very much alive. Another was buying time (accepting stalemate) so that the particular president in office would avoid losing Indochina, thus, the next president ended up inheriting the problem. Also, political timing for domestic elections and party power struggles were being tied to a loss to Communism in a far off land. Finally, in the case of LBJ, having advisors tell him at the hour of decision in 1965 -- "Lyndon, don't be the first

American President to lose a war."<sup>13</sup>

Leslie Gelb, who was director of the task force formed by Secretary McNamara to study the history of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam (which came to be known as the Pentagon Papers), suggested:

Our Presidents and most of those who influenced their decisions did not stumble step by step into Vietnam, unaware of the quagmire. U.S. involvement did not stem from a failure to foresee consequences.<sup>14</sup>

Gelb suggested in an article in Foreign Policy (1971) that there was some logic to escalation and policies used in Vietnam. The main motivation for the American effort was to stop Communism. He proposed three explanations of "why the United States became involved in Vietnam, why the process was gradual, and what the real expectations of our leaders were:"

First, [Vietnam was] a story of why U.S. leaders considered that it was vital not to lose Vietnam by force to Communism... judgements of Vietnam's "vitalness" -- beginning with the Korean War -- were sufficient in themselves to set the course for escalation...

Second, our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory in Vietnam. They were doing only what they thought was minimally necessary at each stage to keep Indochina, and later South Vietnam, out of Communist hands...

Third, our Presidents and most of their lieutenants were not deluded by optimistic reports of progress and did not proceed on the basis of wishful thinking about winning a military victory in South Vietnam. They recognized that the steps they were taking were not adequate to win the war and that unless Hanoi relented, they would have to do more and more. Their strategy was to persevere in the hope that their will to continue -- if not the practical effects of their actions -- would cause the communists to relent.<sup>15</sup>

Attempting to "cause the Communists to relent" should be termed a policy of dissuasion.

Franco Fornari, in his book The Psychoanalysis Of War (1974), gave an interesting perspective to America's primary policy toward Vietnam:

I should like to examine a specific politico-military doctrine - namely, the so-called McNamara's doctrine, also known as the doctrine of escalation. Reduced to its simplest



formulation this doctrine is a practice of dissuasion. Its starting point is the presupposition that the United States is a peace-loving nation which somehow regards itself as the guardian of world peace. As we know, the motto of the Pentagon is "Peace is our profession". McNamara's doctrine is based on a practice of dissuasion of the aggressors through successive, aggressive/punitive interventions which increase in violence until the aggressors no longer find it "convenient" to attack and, consequently, desist from further aggression.

Personally I believe that this doctrine is more psychological than military and that it is based on considerable distortions of reality and on a remarkable lack of information on the singular mechanisms which operate in war. McNamara's doctrine would be valid only if applied to a dispute between two individuals or two groups whose actions would be governed exclusively by concrete utility.

A doctrine based on the idea that a nation can perform the function of defensor pacis by virtue of its ability to retaliate with progressively deadlier attacks aimed at intimidating the opponent is in fact absurd, because the nations against whom such dissuasion is directed consider it a provocation to war. The inefficiency of such a doctrine in achieving its stated aims is explained on the basis of the lack of scientific information on the psychic mechanisms that operate in war.<sup>16</sup>

By practicing the flawed policy of dissuasion, the war managers brought upon themselves an untenable political situation. The biggest factor which caused them the most trouble was -- despite the tons of bombs dropped on the north, the high cost in dollars and lives, and the use of the latest in western technology, the Vietcong would not relent. The policy of dissuasion was the catalyst which set off dissension.

For many red-blooded Americans, it wasn't enough to just sit back and hope that the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese would "say uncle". Most Americans either wanted to finish the war by defeating North Vietnam, or get out without risking a wider war for the sake of ending needless bloodshed. LBJ found himself in a quandary which he chose not to get out of. He took the middle road. The policy of dissuasion was an attempt at compromise, and was his undoing.

Table 1 consolidates most of the various issues which contributed to increasing political pressure on the war managers.

Table 1

PRESSURES AT WORK - VIETNAM WAR. 1965-1968

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1965 - Justifications for escalation/ ongoing thru 1968:

- Don't be the first President to lose a war.
- If we lose Indochina, then Thailand, Japan, Australia and eventually Western Europe will fall...(Domino theory)
- We must stop the spread of Communism.
- We must help our ally (SVN) who is in need of our assistance.
- American Credibility and prestige is at stake throughout the world.
- Upcoming congressional elections are at stake - we must not be seen as "soft on Communism" by losing SVN.
- "Remember Munich!"
- The legacy from Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy.

1965-68 - Persistent - policy making pressures:

- We must not have a confrontation with China a la Korea.
  - LBJ must keep his 1964 campaign promise to avoid escalating war in Indochina.
  - We don't want to risk World War III.
  - If we widen the ground war to North Vietnam, then China or elsewhere, we might risk global nuclear war eventually with the Soviet Union.
  - Avoid bombing North Vietnamese harbors since this might provoke Soviets and Chinese if we happen to kill their people - even though we knowingly allow supplies to enter the North from their overseas allies.
  - Avoid moving into Laos and Cambodia with ground soldiers - this will provoke the Chinese. We must live with the Ho Chi Minh trail and bomb it covertly as well as use covert ground operations as best we can.
  - United States, the most powerful nation on earth, is impotent in the face of a backward, third world nation.
- 

The pressures listed in Table 1 should be considered intangible pressures. Many were vague illusions lacking any facts to support them. Most were fears which had no basis for support other than what had been

believed throughout the cold war by previous policy-makers such as Dean Acheson. For example, how was anyone sure if Communism would spread to Japan, Western Europe or the United States if it was not stopped in Indochina. The intangible pressures got the U.S. in South Vietnam. It would be the tangible pressures (battle casualties, huge expenditures, and public protests) which would get the U.S. out of Vietnam.

#### B. THE CRESCENDO OF PRESSURE

LBJ and his war managers felt tangible pressures in the face of dissent from various sources: Congress, intellectuals, potential political opponents, the free press, a large portion of the international community, and the young adults who were expected to fight in the jungles and rice paddies. By late 1966, indications of a flawed policy in the face of a determined Communist/nationalist foe, such as the Vietcong, began to come into view for many politically aware and reasonably astute Americans. The one year tour created many voices of dissent among soldiers who came back to the U.S. in increasing numbers beginning in early 1967.<sup>17</sup> State legislators and governors, U.S. Congressmen, and any other type of official accountable to voters received information from various participants of the conflict which did not correspond with the official party line. Many if not most American political leaders were briefed by State and Defense Department spokesmen in Washington D.C. and elsewhere. Yet, news reports, personal assertions from eyewitnesses, and returning veterans added critical information excluded from official sources. University students throughout the country intermingled with outspoken veterans. The American public began questioning why U.S. troops were being maimed or killed for a cause which was not fully understood.

In early 1965, there were 20,000 U.S. soldiers in Vietnam. By mid-1967, there were over 440,000. As U.S. troop strength increased, Vietnamese communist forces increased proportionally. Air missions increased from 200 per week in early 1966 to 700 per week in mid-1967. U.S. casualties (killed and wounded) increased from less than 100 per week in 1965 to 1000 per week in mid-1967. The cost of the war rose from \$103 million annually in 1965 to \$22 billion in the year 1967. Finally, according to both Harris and Gallup polls, American public approval of Johnson's handling of the war fell from 64% in mid-1965 to 40% in mid-1967.<sup>18</sup> Respected journalists, such as R.W. Apple of the New York Times, were reporting facts which did not correspond to official information. For example, in the same issue in which Secretary McNamara claimed that progress was being made in the clearing of roads, Apple gave a detailed analysis explaining that roads in Vietnam were far from safe to drive on, despite enormous efforts to clear them by U.S. and ARVN forces. As Dean Rusk, Westmoreland and other top officials were explaining the absurdity of the idea that the U.S. was in a stalemate, the New York Times published a lengthy article by Apple describing the war in great detail and providing convincing proof that the war was a stalemate and getting worse with every new U.S. increase in involvement. (see details from Apple's articles in Chapter III). The stalemate debate raged on from June 1967 to the Tet offensive. In the face of no believable evidence of progress from the Johnson administration, reporters were providing hard statistics illustrating increased casualties and highlighting events which seemed to indicate that the war was not progressing, but instead getting worse. U.S. News and World Report printed the following on July 24, 1967:

- 1964 - For every 50 South Vietnamese soldiers killed defending their country, 1 American also died.
- 1965 - For every 8 South Vietnamese soldiers killed defending their country, 1 American also died.
- 1966 - For every 2 South Vietnamese soldiers killed defending their country, 1 American also died.
- 1967 - For every 1 South Vietnamese Soldier killed defending his country, one American also died.

On the same page as the above, the following was printed:

MCNAMARA'S REPORTS ON 9 VIETNAM VISITS - THE RECORD

Since the spring of 1962, Defense Secretary McNamara has made nine trips to Vietnam. Here is what he said about the outlook during or following each of those trips:

April-May, 1962: "There is no plan for introducing combat forces in South Vietnam." He added that he was "tremendously encouraged" by progress in the war, and saw no reason for a major increase in military aid to the South Vietnamese.

September-October, 1963: [White House official statement]: "Secretary McNamara and General Taylor reported their judgment that the major part of the U.S. military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing requirement for a limited number of...training personnel."

December, 1963: Mr. McNamara said he was "optimistic as to the progress that can be made in the coming year."

May, 1964: Mr. McNamara said "excellent progress" had been made toward defeating the Viet Cong. [He also said] it might be necessary to send "certain additional U.S. personnel" to Vietnam, but only to expand the training of SVN forces.

July, 1965: "...in many aspects there has been deterioration since...15 months ago...But the picture is not all black by any means. The Vietnamese people continue to be willing to fight...and die in their own defense."

November, 1965: "We have stopped losing the war."

October, 1966: "I see no reason...to believe that deployments of U.S. forces to that country will change significantly in the future." U.S. forces in Vietnam [in 1966]: 331,000. [In July, 1967]: 466,000.

July, 1967: "...more progress had been made in the war in last nine months than in the previous six years."

These facts came to make up what many referred to as the "credibility gap." What McNamara, Westmoreland, Rusk, and LJB asserted or promised did not come to fruition. When they all contended that progress was being made, there were very few who could seem to concur with them based on the

printed facts emanating from the press.

To add to the negative press reports, there were several powerful political leaders who decided to make a stand in opposition to LBJ's handling of the war. In 1965, a group of prominent politicians visited South Vietnam to view the progress of the war. One powerful politician who made the trip, Governor George Romney (R-Michigan), publicly praised the Johnson administration in its handling of the conflict. However, in September of 1967 Governor Romney, who was considered a major contender for the Republican nomination for president in 1968, said the following in a public television interview concerning the tour of Vietnam he received in 1965:

I just had the greatest brainwashing that anyone can get when you go over to Vietnam, not only by the generals, but also by the diplomatic corps over there, and they do a very thorough job...I no longer believe that it was necessary for us to get involved in South Vietnam to stop Communist aggression in Southeast Asia and to prevent Chinese Communist domination of Southeast Asia...I think it was tragic that we became involved in the conflict there...and if Eisenhower remained President of the United States, I don't think we would have become involved in a land war in Southeast Asia.<sup>20</sup>

Secretary McNamara replied to Romney's assertions that he could not "recognize the truth when he sees it and hears it."<sup>21</sup> After a flurry of protest over the use of his term "brainwashing", Romney renewed his attack:

...the American people need a Government and a President we can believe...I'm not talking about Russian-type brainwashing, but LBJ-type brainwashing...[By brainwashing, I mean] the same thing you mean when you write about the credibility gap, snow jobs and manipulation of the news... I believe that the full record clearly indicates that there has been a systematic continuation of inaccurate reports, predictions and withholding of information. This has kept the American people from knowing the facts about the Vietnam war and its full impact on our domestic and foreign affairs... we can no longer rely on the statements made by our government and our own leaders...There was a systematic presentation of the idea that...we were merely there to support the South Vietnamese, that the Vietnamese officers were to make the

decisions, that the Americans were just advising and counselling...this was clearly not<sup>22</sup> in accord with the direction in which we were moving.

Romney was branded as not patriotic and a kook for his use of the word "brainwashed". However, the official picture presented by General Westmoreland in 1965 did not correspond to what actually took place. Westmoreland shifted ARVN forces out of the war zone and replaced them with U.S. combat units. U.S. units pursued the strategy of attrition while the ARVN's mission was to support the pacification program. Romney was told that ARVN forces would handle most of the fighting.

Open dissent from within the Democratic party began when in late 1967 Senator Robert Kennedy publicly asserted that the Johnson administration had turned away from the Vietnam policy of his assassinated brother, former President John Kennedy, by forgetting the moral responsibility at stake in the war. As a result, according to Kennedy, the moral fiber of the United States had been "seriously undermined". The New York Times quoted him as saying the following in the TV news show Face the Nation:

If there are mistakes that have been made, I have been involved in those mistakes. But perhaps, if you admit mistakes, you are a little wiser than you were when you were committing them...First, we were making the effort there [in Vietnam] so that people would have their own right to decide their own future, and could select their own form of government, and it wasn't going to be imposed on them by the North Vietnamese, and we had the support of the people on South Vietnam (sic)...Now we turned, when we found that the South Vietnamese haven't given the support and are not making the effort...Why, for instance, in the battle of Dakto, hasn't it been the South Vietnamese Army that has gone up the hill? Why hasn't it been the South Vietnamese army that has been on the demilitarized zone and stayed there? Why does it always have to be the Americans?<sup>23</sup>

Vice-President Humphrey replied to Kennedy on Meet the Press: "...the South Vietnamese army has been at Dakto, and has been on the DMZ..."<sup>24</sup>

The fact is that the battle of Dakto was fought primarily with U.S.

firepower consisting of B-52 bombers (1100 sorties/over 30,000 tons of bombs), two thousand fighter bomber sorties, one hundred and seventy thousand artillery shells, and predominant American ground force presence.<sup>25</sup> Every piece of equipment was manufactured in the U.S. Humphrey was telling the truth. ARVN forces were engaged in the battle - but only a token force compared with the Americans. This constituted a little white lie. This is an example of the growing credibility gap. Americans were sensing it with each new politician stepping forward in public opposition, and with each additional report on casualties, setbacks, and increase in U.S. involvement.

Johnson was caught between the Hawks and Doves. The hawks (Ronald Reagan, Senator Stennis, Gov. Rockefeller and Senator Goldwater) wanted to go in and win the war by being more aggressive. Some advocated invading Cambodia and the north. Johnson was preoccupied with the fear of war with China or even worse, World War three or nuclear confrontation. By late 1967, the Doves (Senators McCarthy, Javits and Fulbright), wanted out of Vietnam almost at any price. Those in the middle wanted a reevaluation of the war. No one seemed to agree with LBJ's handling of the war. Gallup maintained an ongoing popularity profile of Johnson. It displayed decreased approval as the U.S. increased its military involvement. In March 1964, 78 percent of the American public approved of Johnson's performance as president. By December 1966, his approval rating had fallen to 45 percent.<sup>26</sup>

Johnson's own advisors in the Defense Department were having second thoughts about the prosecution of the war -- specifically concerning the B-52 bombing raids against the North. Hawks residing in the war cabinet



considered the bombing as a way to make the northern Communists "say uncle" and come to the negotiation table. Secretary McNamara began having doubts and decided to canvass a group of prominent scholars to determine what effects the bombing might have had on the north. The findings of this group came to be known as the Jason Study. They concluded that the bombing had not decreased the North's ability to wage war. If anything, it made the people more determined. They assessed that North Vietnam was basically a subsistence agricultural economy that presented an unrewarding target for bombing raids. Besides, Chinese and Soviet assistance was more than making up for lost material, and an adequate flow of supplies continued to move south. These findings simply reinforced McNamara's doubts, which had the effect of creating dissension within the Johnson cabinet.<sup>27</sup>

Sizable public demonstrations against the war began as early as November, 1965. These early demonstrations were not considered credible considering the high popularity enjoyed by LBJ at the time, coupled with the fact that U.S. policies were only beginning to take shape with direct U.S. military intervention. Nationwide and international public demonstrations against the war flared up again "en masse" in 1967. These demonstrations were more sophisticated, less violent, and coincided with decreased popularity for LBJ. There was a general understanding that after two years of bloody conflict in a far off and misunderstood land, U.S. aims were far from being met which had led to a stalemate.

A "stop the draft week" was kicked off by many college campuses throughout the country. Campus demonstrations spread to large cities. It began on December 4, 1967 with sizable demonstrations against the war and the draft in San Francisco, Brooklyn, N.Y., Madison (Wisconsin), Jersey City, Tucson, and a number of other cities in the nation. Nationwide

protesting eventually culminated into a massive rally at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. There were worldwide protests as well: In London -- 1500, Berlin -- 10,000, Tokyo -- 200,000, Stockholm -- 4,000, Amsterdam -- 10,000, and Copenhagen -- 15,000 to name a few. In Washington, where over 50,000 protested for two days, protests became bitter. The chairman of the rally declared in the opening speech: "...this is a beginning of a new stage in the American peace movement in which the cutting edge becomes active resistance." Dr. Benjamin Spock spoke for many Americans during his speech:

...we are convinced that this war which Lyndon Johnson is waging is disastrous to our country in every way, and that we, the protesters, are the ones who may help to save our country if we can persuade enough of our fellow citizens to think and vote as we do. [The enemy], we believe in all sincerity, is Lyndon Johnson, whom we elected as a peace candidate in 1964, and who betrayed us within three months, who has stubbornly led us deeper and deeper into a bloody quagmire in which uncounted hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese men, women and children have died, and 13,000 young Americans too. <sup>28</sup> (sic)

A picture of McNamara looking out his office window at the Pentagon was printed in almost every newspaper throughout the country. Some banners in the protest were unusually harsh - "Where is Oswald when we need him?...LBJ-how many kids did you kill today?" There were also large colored pictures of mutilated Vietnamese children. <sup>29</sup>

Printed in the New York Times during the week of November 27, 1967 was an open letter to President Johnson and the Democratic party from dissenting Democrats. Accompanying the letter was a two page advertisement consisting of thousands of signers to the letter. Part of this letter read as follows:

This is to respectfully advise you, Mr. President, that as of this date we registered Democrats, who helped elect you in

1964, are dissociating ourselves from you and your administration because of your conduct in the war in Vietnam. We voted for you because you gave us hope of peace when in your election campaign you said: "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves." (October 21, 1964) This was a pledge, Mr. President. Since then we have suffered over 100,000 American casualties and countless Vietnamese have also been killed in this war...We want out of the war in Vietnam!... Mr. President, we advise you and those on every level of government that, from this day on, our campaign funds, our energies and our votes go to those-and only those-who work for an end to the war in Vietnam...<sup>30</sup>

The message to the Johnson Administration was clear. It was believed by many policy-makers at this stage that if the U.S. could hold on a little longer and continue the pressure on the North Vietnamese, then eventually the Communists would relent. It was critical that the war managers paint a positive picture of events in South Vietnam.

CHAPTER II  
THE PROGRESS REPORTS

In response to the intense political pressures, the Johnson Administration launched a propaganda campaign in the latter half of 1967 designed to convince the American public that a stalemate in the war was nonsense. Their purpose was to buy time in order to prolong their dissuasion strategy. The timing for this barrage of misinformation coincided with increasing public and political protests over the war and the upcoming 1968 elections. Not only was a war at stake, but also the strength of the political parties would again be tested.

The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) was created to deal with the complex business of nation building in South Vietnam. CORDS was linked with MACV and so became known as MACV Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (MACCORDS). MACCORDS was lead jointly by General Westmoreland and Ambassador Robert Komer. Although Komer was considered the expert on pacification and leader of CORDS, the results of the pacification effort were tied directly to the war in which Westmoreland was ultimately responsible under the direction of LBJ. Both Komer and Westmoreland were bona fide members of Johnson's "war cabinet" in 1967.<sup>1</sup> The mission of CORDS was to assist the South Vietnamese government in developing a responsible and effective central authority from Saigon. Pacification was the program intended to do this. Robert Komer became director of CORDS in January of 1967. He instituted, under the direction of McNamara, a fully automated reporting system. This system was known as the Pacification Evaluation System (PACES). Its most critical and influential part was the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). Concurrently,

General Westmoreland kept the official tallies of enemy order of battle (size and disposition of enemy forces) based on information derived from his many and sundry intelligence sources. He matched enemy casualties against what he perceived to be enemy size to determine enemy tactical and strategic capabilities, as well as to chart progress.

Charting pacification and war of attrition were the yardsticks used to measure success for the war. Data from these reports were used in American mass media as proof that a stalemate did not exist. Throughout the war, it was officially stated by U.S. government leaders that the outcome of the pacification effort would ultimately determine the future of South Vietnam. Further, the war of attrition was intended to compliment the pacification effort by placing a premium on enemy dead in order to deny the Communists the soldiers they needed to thwart the attempt at nation building.

This chapter brings into view what the war managers were promoting in their public relations campaign and how they came to their conclusions. First, a series of official statements and/or policy positions concerning the Vietnam war will be presented. They were made by the war managers from mid-1967 to February 1968. These were contained in popular news publications; especially the New York Times. They should be considered an adequate representation of what American mass media reported to the American people. Second, the primary mechanism for charting the pacification effort will be examined in detail. This mechanism was the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). Finally, reporting methods associated with the war of attrition will be discussed.

A. PUBLIC STATEMENTS -- JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

In the face of mounting political opposition to the war, the Johnson Administration sent out its messengers, whose job it was to assure the American public that all the perceived problems were not serious, and that progress was being made. The messengers were McNamara, Ellsworth Bunker (Ambassador to South Vietnam), Westmoreland, and Rusk. In time sequence beginning in July 1967, the war managers reported the following:

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, New York Times, July 13, 1967:

On the progress of the war, Mr. McNamara cited the judgement of several hundred officer's in Vietnam - all senior American and Vietnamese officers and many allied and many American junior officers - that reports of a stalemate were, "in their words, the most ridiculous statements they ever heard."... Mr. McNamara found "most dramatic" progress also in the opening of ever-larger sections of major roads for both military and civilian traffic. He cited improved technology as the major factor in making possible more effective all-weather air strikes with "significantly reduced" plane losses. [Pacification], as a whole, is making only slow progress... stressing that it is for the South Vietnamese and not for Americans to carry through this long, slow project of "nation building".<sup>2</sup>

General Westmoreland, New York Times, July 14, 1967:

Speaking of "very favorable trends," the General cited the opening of more roads for commercial as well as military use, the invasion of Vietcong base areas, the pushing of the enemy farther into the jungle, the imposition of "dreadful casualties" on the enemies and a provision of more security for more of the South Vietnamese. In addition, he said, progress may be seen in the greater professionalism of the South Vietnamese Army, the improved ratio of losses to enemy casualties and the vastly more favorable ratio of weapons captured to weapons lost -- now 2 to 1 and better. He does not know how the enemy forces would conduct the war in the future, the general went on, but he believes their major effort "must be discouraging when they realize they have nothing to show for it."<sup>3</sup>

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, New York Times, July 20, 1967:

Mr. Rusk presented a generally encouraging picture on the course of the war in Vietnam and political developments in Saigon. He dismissed the suggestion that a stalemate was

developing in the war, argued against any change in the current United States policy on negotiations and held out hope that a continuation of the present military pressure would eventually drive the enemy to a negotiated settlement... "I don't see a stalemate...I think that there is military progress" as well as economic and political progress. The Vietcong and the North Vietnamese have "suffered very substantial losses,"...Nevertheless, Hanoi has apparently not yet come to the political judgement that it is no longer in a position to achieve its objectives in South Vietnam. "But that time will come."

General Thieu, U.S. News and World Report, July 24, 1967:

The South Vietnamese Chief of State, Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, ruled out a general mobilization of his countrymen because of what he described as economic problems, a shortage of equipment and a lack of time to train new troops. The answer to the immediate problem, General Thieu said, is not more South Vietnamese, but more American troops.

There was one aspect missing from their reports claiming progress.

The Johnson Administration had no hard evidence to back up their claim that the war was being won, and not ending up in stalemate. Later in the year, official statements contained a degree of "hard" evidence, as shown below:

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, New York Times, November 14, 1967:

...Bunker...predicted today that the Saigon government would sharply increase its control of the South Vietnamese countryside next year. "My view is very definite and that is that we are making steady progress...I think there is every prospect, too, that the program will accelerate because I think that many factors point to it." He said he expected that allied forces would gain the allegiance of 1,500 to 2,000 hamlets next year, compared with about 1,000 this year. White House sources said that, at the end of August, 5,188 hamlets were under control of the Saigon Government, the Viet Cong controlled 4,038 and 2,723 were contested.

General Westmoreland, New York Times, November 16, 1967:

Gen...Westmoreland...said that the situation in Vietnam was "very, very encouraging...I have never been more encouraged in my four years in Vietnam,"

Westmoreland/Bunker, New York Times, November 20, 1967:

Gen. Westmoreland said that American and South Vietnamese forces were "winning the war of attrition"... "We are making

steady, not spectacular, progress," Mr. Bunker said. "We are at the point now not only of being able to continue, but to accelerate the rate of progress." Westmoreland added "I find an attitude of confidence and growing optimism...It prevails all over the country, and to me this is the most significant evidence I can give you that constant, real progress is being made." [Westmoreland and Bunker] criticized press reporting from Saigon and tried to correct what Mr. Bunker called erroneous impressions - for example, that the war is at a stalemate or that the South Vietnamese have been swallowed up in a basically American campaign.

Westmoreland/Bunker, Time news magazine, November 24, 1967:

Some reasons for [Westmoreland's confidence]:

> The total of South Vietnamese living under Viet Cong control is down from around 4,000,000 in mid-1965 to 2,500,000 today. About 68% of the South Vietnamese population live in reasonably secure areas, while 15% remain in contested sections. Another 17% are under Viet Cong control. The government has gained 12% of the country's population in the past year.

> The South Vietnamese have conducted five elections in the past 14 months in the midst of a war.

> Vietcong recruitment, running [in 1966] at 7500 per month, has now dropped to 3500...

The profile of war and pacification was sketched for the President from meticulously gathered statistics, Communist reports, prisoner interrogations, and U.S. and South Vietnamese intelligence sources.

Robert Komer, New York Times, December 2, 1967:

The procedures used to reach the conclusion that two-thirds of the inhabitants of South Vietnam are under the control of the Saigon Government were explained today by Robert W. Komer, who is in charge of the United States Pacification program... The administration presented the figures as an indication of steady progress in the war...Mr Komer said that the program, called the Hamlet Evaluation System, was "better than anything we've had before." "It properly focused on the key aspects of pacification," he said.<sup>10</sup>

Westmoreland, New York Times, December 3, 1967:

The reduced estimate of enemy strength in South Vietnam by U.S. officials was made public by Gen. William C. Westmoreland the American commander in Vietnam, during his recent visit to Washington. (sic) The total, previously given as 297,000 enemy troops in South Vietnam, was now given by the general as 223,000 to 248,000. The new figure was cited as proof that enemy strength was declining.<sup>11</sup>



Westmoreland/LBJ, Newsweek, December 4, 1967:

Westmoreland's most detailed and comprehensive report on the war came in the course of a speech before the National Press Club. There the general analyzed the Vietnam war in terms of four main phases and a timetable for sending some U.S. troops home in 1969. Westmoreland's four phases:

\*Phase One. "We came to the aid of South Vietnam, prevented its collapse...built up our bases, and began to deploy our troops."

\*Phase Two. "...the U.S. "drove the enemy divisions back into sanctuary or into hiding...improved the quality of the South Vietnamese armed forces...raised enemy losses beyond his input capacity...[and] unified the U.S. pacification assistance effort for better management."

\*Phase Three. "...the U.S. will reach the "point when the end begins to come into view." [during 1968]

\*Phase Four. "Infiltration will slow; the Communist infrastructure will be cut up and near collapse; the Vietnamese government will improve its stability; and the Vietnamese Army will show that it can handle the Viet Cong..."

The president was cheered principally by the optimistic front-line reports by his Vietnam topiders,...Westmoreland, ...Bunker and Pacification overseer Robert Komer.<sup>12</sup>

Rusk, New York Times, December 7, 1967:

We don't have pressures in the State Department to withdrawal from Vietnam. Nor do we sense any significant body of opinion in that direction. Also, we don't find pressures to escalate into a larger war. So what's happening is a discussion between those extremes...I cannot tell you how much longer it may take to achieve peace in Vietnam. Whenever anyone can produce anyone willing and able to discuss peace on behalf of Hanoi, I shall be there within hours. Meanwhile, the situation in South Vietnam is not a stalemate. And what has been done by the splendid Americans who are there has already yielded dividends of historic significance. Behind the shield which we have helped to provide, a new Asia is rising.<sup>13</sup>

Komer, New York Times, January 25, 1968:

The civilian leader of American Pacification efforts reported today that 67 per cent of the South Vietnamese people now lived in areas secure from the Vietcong. "That means that 11 1/2 million people of South Vietnam's 17 1/2 million population now live in secure or reasonably secure areas." said the official, Robert Komer.<sup>14</sup>

McNamara, New York Times, February 2, 1968:

The picture of allied military gains that Mr. McNamara pre-

sented was similar to earlier statements, although more qualified. In head-on clashes with the enemy, he said, "our forces have won every major battle." Total enemy losses from all causes, including disease and defection as well as combat, were "much higher" than in 1966, he reported, resulting in an over-all decline of enemy armed strength during 1967. He cited over-all enemy losses as 165,000, although he quickly warned that these estimates "must be used with a great deal of caution" because they involve complex and indirect calculations. American bombing of North Vietnam, Mr. McNamara reported, disrupted Hanoi's transportation system, its electrical output and its industry as well as increasing the cost and difficulty for North Vietnam to support the war in the south.<sup>15</sup>

The pacification effort was a collection of programs designed to compliment each other in a comprehensive effort to win the hearts and minds of the people. The various parts of the program are outlined below, as described in FORTUNE magazine in April 1967:

In itself an enormous effort, the pacification program is only one of the formally structured parts of the broad attempt to create sturdy, stable nationhood in Vietnam. To give an idea of how massive the program really is, here are some of the elements of assistance being provided by U.S. agencies in literally dozens of areas broadly related to pacification:

- >> ...\$30 million a year for the care and resettlement of refugees. Of 1,700,000 registered since 1965, about 800,000 are still in temporary camps.
- >> ...recruiting and training of Provincial Reconnaissance Units, ...who operate at night to track down and arrest or assassinate secret Vietcong cadres in the hamlets.
- >> Chieu Hoi (open arms) - an appeal to the Vietcong to surrender and be rehabilitated. ..."returnees" are being used in armed teams to circulate in the Hamlets and persuade other VC to defect.
- >> A massive effort to beef up the National Police for such pacification roles as "population control" to prevent the VC from posing as innocent civilians...[and], a \$25 million project to help the police issue some nine million new, forgery-proof identification cards to all Vietnamese citizens over the age of fifteen...
- >> Special aid to help the peasants raise and improve agricultural production. Two of the main programs are a vastly expanded agricultural credit arrangement and subsidized distribution of fertilizer and insecticides.
- >> An elaborate psychological offensive designed to disrupt Vietcong morale, turn the peasants against the VC, and advertise the benefits of supporting the Saigon government. Using a score of aircraft, "psyops" people last year sprayed

2.8 billion leaflets over the countryside, including one billion for the Chieu Hoi program alone...They program radio shows, produce educational and training films, broadcast to VC units from airborne loudspeakers, and plaster the countryside with posters.

>> Additionally, ...a dozen medical-aid programs, a rural electrification project, thirty-three rural water projects, a program to motorize fishing boats, rewards programs for people who persuade Vietcong to surrender as well as for surrendering VC who bring in their weapons, port-improvement work, etc...<sup>16</sup>

Westmoreland compared the war to Grandchildren -- "For those close to the scene, it is sometimes hard to notice, like the growth of children that you see every day. Visiting grandparents can detect progress much more readily."<sup>17</sup> He also compared the enemy forces to a knitted sweater, stretched worn until the threads have grown thin: "In time, it will unravel. It is difficult to forecast when it will unravel. But if we relieve the pressure, we prolong the war."<sup>18</sup>

#### B. THE HAMLET EVALUATION SYSTEM

The evolution of systematic pacification reporting from the American perspective began in 1965 and ended with an updated version of the Hamlet Evaluation System in 1970. The following is a brief description of how MACV came to create reporting methods to chart "nation building".

Up to 1965, J3 of USMACV used 101 indicators to measure developments in the approximately 27 objectives defined in the pacification program.<sup>19</sup> Some objectives would include road clearing, security, economic development factors, etc. The official MACV command history of 1965 explained the problems with the analysis of data collected:

Pacification reports from the beginning were in a constant state of flux, because of a continual search for a meaningful basis of comparison between past and present. Uncertainty as to what data were significant created a demand for more and more information, with the resultant introduction of statis-

tical methods into pacification reporting. As the search for significant indicators for pacification progress continued throughout 1964, reports became more numerous and unwieldy.<sup>20</sup>

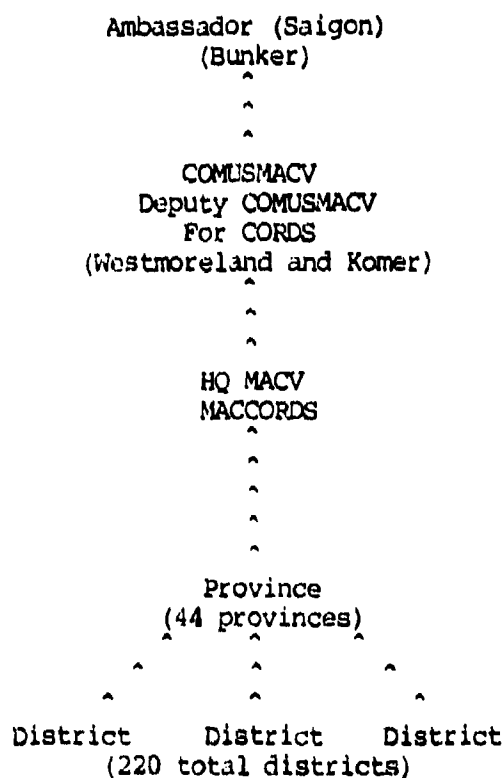
As a result of these problems, Westmoreland proposed a few basic "yardsticks" to be used as primary indicators in measuring pacification progress: 1) population control, 2) area control, 3) communication control, 4) resource control, 5) VC strength and viability, 6) RVN strength and viability.<sup>21</sup> The problem with these yardsticks appear to be the fixation on "control". Was Saigon trying to coerce, regulate or repress the population, land area and resources of southern Indo-China? Was viable government being created and a legitimate nation being built? Was General Westmoreland being what LBJ expected him to be -- a statesman, soldier and nation-builder? Or was Westmoreland merely conducting military operations against enemy units. Eventually, the introduction of statistical methods into pacification reporting evolved into two reporting systems. They were the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) and the Territorial Forced Evaluation System (TFES). The HES will be covered in detail since it was a more comprehensive system used to measure pacification progress from January 1967 to February 1968. TFES will be discussed further in Chapter III. HES was altered in 1969 because of obvious defects in the system used in 1967-68. It is the system used in 1967 that is important because the data used from the early system was considered to be valid as a yardstick by which to measure success of pacification prior to the Tet offensive of 1968 (as shown above).

In October, 1966 McNamara requested a new system for measuring pacification progress. In a three month period, a system was created by the Research and Development Division (RAD) of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS). The result was the Pacification

Evaluation System (PACES). PACES was divided into six sub-systems, the most important being the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES).<sup>22</sup> Other subsystems included the TFES and the Area Assessment System (AAS). HES was considered the data bank for PACES which provided the official U.S. statistics on hamlet and population control. The system was initiated in January 1967. By July, after various modifications, information from HES was being generated and used. HES was a fully automated (computerized) system designed to evaluate the state of pacification throughout South Vietnam. It was a monthly report. Designated U.S. advisors, or District Senior Advisors (DSAs), evaluated each hamlet within their district monthly according to standardized criteria covering military, political, economic and social considerations. The summation of the results determined whether the hamlet could be considered under Government of Vietnam (GVN) control, contested between the GVN or Viet Cong (VC), or totally under VC control. The data from the district was reviewed by MACV personnel at the Provincial level (Provincial Senior Advisors -- PSAs), and the completed reports were forwarded to HQMACV (Headquarters) in Saigon. The PSA could add comments or indicate his disagreements with the DSAs ratings, but he could not alter the ratings. A PSA was a Colonel or a civilian foreign service officer. A DSA was either an army Major or a foreign service officer. All advisors who worked for Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development (MACCORDS) were American. In Saigon, the information was compiled and fed into a fully automated system for a variety of analytic and management purposes. Figure 1 -- MACCORDS Reports Flow Chart -- displays the flow of reports from District level to Ambassador Bunker in Saigon.

Three questions must be answered. First, how did the DSAs rate the hamlets? Second, how were their ratings processed to assess hamlet security and development progress? Finally, how important was HES in decision making in the U.S. conduct of the pacification effort (the cutting edge of the war)?

FIGURE 1  
MACCORDS REPORTS FLOW CHART, 1968



MACCORDS - Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support

COMUSMACV - Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

\*\* Source: p 6-83, ARPA study.

There were approximately 12,000 hamlets evaluated within 220 Districts inside 44 provinces split up among 4 corps areas of responsibility. A district was a sub-sector of a province which had one or more villages or towns in its territory. The village was subdivided into hamlets. A hamlet was a collection of huts located in the fields or rice paddies. There was one DSA assigned to evaluate progress within a district. He normally had a staff of approximately ten officers and Sergeants working for him. A total of approximately 220 DSA's were each assigned to a district. DSA's were

TABLE 2

## HES Ratings, 1967-69

- 
- Category A. No incidents including harassments in village or nearby hamlets or on routes to village during month. (Complete government control)
  - Category B. No incidents in hamlet during month; infrequent harassments within village or nearby. (Almost secure)
  - Category C. Long range fire at night; VC activity in adjacent hamlets. Maybe occasional sniping AND/or MINES on routes to hamlet. (Government "clearly dominant" but perhaps half of guerrilla forces still on duty; VC collect taxes)
  - Category D. GVN activity under harassment. MAYBE MINES and/or frequent sniping on routes to hamlet. VC night activity in hamlet. (V.C. terrorism, night activities, and guerrilla forces 2/3 intact)
  - Category E. Armed VC units in hamlet at night; sometimes in day; MAY HAVE FIRED ON OR ATTACKED OR OVERRUN HAMLET. Little or no GVN authority at night. Routes to hamlet may be interdicted by day; may have been ambushed near hamlet. (Minimal government presence)
  - Category V. The enemy are reported to be in physical control of the hamlet. (V.C. supremacy, except for occasional allied forays)<sup>24</sup>
-

specially selected civilian and military personnel responsible for representing the U.S. government concerning civil operations -- pacification being the primary effort. Each hamlet contained anywhere from 60 to 300 villagers. A district could contain up to as many as 80 villages.<sup>23</sup> DSAs were to give each hamlet a rating. Possible ratings, or categories, are shown in Table 2.

Categories for each hamlet were derived from the Hamlet Evaluation Worksheet (HEW). The HEW had a matrix of 18 indicators that were grouped under six basic factors as listed in Table 3. In other words, categories

TABLE 3

HEW indicators and factors which determined HES categories

---

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>INDICATORS</u>
1. VC military activities	a. Village Guerrilla Unit b. VC external Forces c. Military Incidents Affecting Hamlet
2. VC Political and Subversive Activities	a. Hamlet Infrastructure b. Village Infrastructure c. Activities Affecting Hamlet
3. Friendly Security Capabilities	a. Hamlet Defense Plan and Organization b. Friendly External Force Assistance c. Internal Security Activities
4. Administrative and Political Activities	a. GVN Governmental Management b. Census Grievance Program c. Information and PSYOP Activities
5. Health, Education and Welfare	a. Medical Services and Sanitation b. Education c. Welfare
6. Economic Development	a. Self Help Activity b. Public Works c. Economic Improvement Programs <sup>25</sup>

---



explained in Table 2 were based on the (matrix) factors and indicators listed in Table 3.

HES ratings were determined by a simple averaging of the ratings for each factor. Each factor was given a numerical rating which was the same as the HES ratings, as shown below. Data compiled on the HEW was transcribed onto another form -- The Hamlet Evaluation Summary Form (HESF) -- then forwarded to the PSA. The PSA added his input without altering DSA ratings, and forwarded the reports to HQMACV in Saigon. At HQMACV, processing was performed by the following methods:

At HQMACV, the data from the HESF were keypunched, put on magnetic tape and processed by computer. (sic) It is important to note that the computer was used only as an adding machine, to save clerical time and expense. The overall rating for each hamlet was calculated by an unweighted averaging of 18 factors in which E = 1, D = 2, ... A = 5. The averages were then equated back to letter designations:

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>NUMERICAL DESIGNATION DERIVED FROM THE 18 INDICATORS</u>
E - contested hamlet .....	= 1.00 - 1.49
D - contested hamlet .....	= 1.50 - 2.49
C - secure hamlet .....	= 2.50 - 3.49
B - secure hamlet .....	= 3.50 - 4.49 <sup>26</sup>
A - secure hamlet .....	= 4.50 - 5.00 <sup>26</sup>

Each hamlet would receive a letter designation based on its numerical score derived from the factors contained in the worksheet shown in Table 3.

How important was the Hamlet Evaluation System to the war managers?

The HES was reporting on the pacification effort. DSA's were considered at the cutting edge of pacification. The HES was reported on from these men who led the U.S. side of the effort. However, most of the information the DSAs received had to come from Vietnamese sources. They had no choice based on the fact that the majority of people they interacted with were Vietnamese. To the Government of Vietnam (GVN), pacification

ranked high in their many efforts to win the war. According to Robert Komer, there was direct evidence to show that "In September and November 1968, both President Thieu and the Military Region commanders were using HES evaluations as report cards on their subordinates."<sup>27</sup> The South Vietnamese chain of command considered it important because the Americans were going to use the results of the data to report to President Johnson and the American people. Figure 2 shows hamlet loyalty figures which were printed in the New York Times in August and December, 1967. Understanding the importance placed on the HES from the South Vietnamese viewpoint underscores its significance when realizing that most Americans maintained that pacification was ultimately run by the Vietnamese -- that the Americans only provided the resources to carry out the program. HES received a great deal of attention from the highest of military and civilian authorities in Saigon and Washington, to include the Congress.<sup>28</sup> Not only was the HES considered an accurate assessment tool for pacification, but it was also viewed as a management tool for setting priorities, allocating resources, and placing emphasis on physical resources when implementing new programs.<sup>29</sup>

#### C. THE ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE -- STRATEGY OF ATTRITION

The strategy of attrition was an integral part of the order of battle figures which General Westmoreland quoted above. Dave Palmer, author of Summons of the Trumpet, defined the strategy of attrition:

With Allied ground forces restricted to the borders of South Vietnam, the...strategy was to try to kill North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers faster than they could be replaced. In Westmoreland's own words, written in August 1966, the conflict in South Vietnam had evolved into "a protracted war of attrition"...the air and naval campaign against the

North was also one of attrition...the campaign was designed to reduce the flow of men and material southward and to raise the threshold of pain sufficiently to induce Hanoi to back away...the bombing of the North, like the ground fighting in the South, was a campaign of attrition, a jabbing against supply lines and nerve ends rather than a knock-out blow at sources and command centers.

The war of attrition involved statistical methods, except there was less standardization in reporting. The standards by which numbers were collected and manipulated existed in Westmoreland's brain. There is no explanation as to how it was all done. The methods used to gather numbers which made up the official statistics on the war of attrition had no discernable systematic approach.

General Westmoreland requested from his subordinate commands a "body count" which was sent up to his staff at headquarters in Saigon. Numbers on enemy dead came primarily from two sources -- the ground war and the air war. The air war (strategic bombing and tactical air support) required a considerable amount of estimation. When a pilot returned from a sortie, the number of enemy dead could only be guessed at. The ground war involved "search and destroy" missions carried out by Company and Battalion sized units. After a day of operations, a company headquarters would inform higher headquarters of the number of enemy dead. The numbers went up the respective chain of command to eventually reach MACV in Saigon. What happened to the numbers can only be explained by Westmoreland himself, although much speculation from many authors exist, which adds to the confusion. What made counting enemy Vietnamese casualties so difficult was that it was sometimes impossible to separate innocent civilians from perceived Vietcong or north Vietnamese regulars.

The count of enemy dead was subtracted from the official numbers of enemy size, or order of battle (OB). For example, in 1966 enemy strength

in South Vietnam was determined to be 297,000 men. In 1966, 150,000 NVA/VC casualties were officially counted. When subtracting 150,000 from the official enemy size of 297,000, the result was approximately 147,000 enemy soldiers. It was recognized by the war managers that the OB figures went up due to infiltration through Laos and Cambodia. Nevertheless, the idea was to kill the enemy faster than they could replace their numbers. This defines Westmoreland's methods as far as how the numbers were used.

Determining enemy size involved the categorization of various types of enemy into groups. This point is critical because there was always a debate as to who should be counted as legitimate enemy and who should not. Categories of enemy used by Westmoreland included the following: North Vietnamese Communist Regulars (main force units which infiltrated from the north), Viet Cong Regulars (guerrilla militia originating from the south), Service Troops (Support Soldiers -- medical, logistical, etc.), and Political Cadres. Westmoreland and his intelligence empire did not include "irregulars" into the count of the enemy. Loren Baritz explains: (Note: "committee members" is a Congressional Committee which conducted an investigation after the war):

General Westmoreland's staff consistently refused to include the irregulars, the defense forces and others, of the NLF as part of the military threat. Mr. Colby tried to help the committee members understand the sort of guerrilla the military refused to count: "Take the occasional help you get from an individual who walks into a marketplace and throws a grenade. Is that a number or not?"...The military believed that it was not. Mr. Allen, under questioning, said that the military "were relatively conservative" and "tended to understate enemy's strength."<sup>31</sup>...

The strategy of attrition, and its relationship to order of battle, will be explained in greater detail in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III  
FALSE REPORTING

With a steady rise in political pressure came steadfast assertions from the war managers that the war was not a stalemate. U.S. policy-makers claimed that steady progress was being made in many respects: the Saigon government controlled 67 percent of the South Vietnamese population, the communist enemy was being killed off faster than the forces aligned with South Vietnam<sup>1</sup>, roads were being cleared of Viet Cong harassment, and the ARVN military was becoming more professional, to name a few.

These claims made by American leaders to the American people were false. This was the result of many factors. What is of prime concern is how the reporting systems themselves came to bear bad fruit.

First, each aspect of pacification described in the FORTUNE magazine article shown in Chapter II will be discussed to explain what actually happened to the program. Second, a number of articles from several journalists will be quoted to provide another perspective concerning the stalemate issue. Third, reporting methods associated with pacification will be examined based on three studies performed in 1968, 1969, and 1974. Finally, questions concerning the validity of the figures on the attrition policy will be examined.

A. PACIFICATION -- NATION BUILDING

FORTUNE magazine explained pacification in terms of the following programs: Resettlement, Counter Terrorist Teams, Chieu Hoi, Population Control, Agricultural Aid, and Psychological Warfare. Another perspective is offered below:

1. Resettlement - One can compare the resettlement of Vietnamese in the

countryside to what the white man did to the Indian on the North American continent in the 19th century. Their traditional lifestyle did not include social or physical mobility and the peasant was tied by deeply felt tradition to the land. Retired General Albert Hume, Chief of Staff of MACV under General Abrahms from late 1969 to late 1970, had witnessed the movement of some of the people. His opinion spoke for many when he said he believed that moving these peasants took them out of the war zone. He had negative feelings toward the policy but felt it was probably best.<sup>2</sup> Many servicemen who executed the policy were powerless to do anything about it. Where was the war zone? It was nowhere and everywhere. On January 31, 1968, it was the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, the entire city of Hue, and many private homes of loyal South Vietnamese officials throughout South Vietnam. On 8 January, 1967, the village of Ben Suc, within 80 miles of Saigon along the Saigon river to the northwest, was wiped off the face of the earth by U.S. forces attempting to "liberate" the Vietnamese from the communists. Mangold and Penycate, authors of The Tunnels of Cu Chi, describe the operation and its significance:

An entire battalion, five hundred men...commanded by a future secretary of state, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander M. Haig, were airlifted into the middle of the village by sixty UH-1 helicopters...There was no significant resistance in Ben Suc; the only American casualties were caused by booby-trap mines...The ARVN interrogators sorted through about 6,000 men, women, and children from the village and the surrounding hamlets...Of these they concluded that twenty-eight might be Viet Cong... Those thought not to be Viet Cong would be induced into the South Vietnamese Army...The next day, all the remaining villagers were shipped out, with whatever belongings they could carry and such animals as they could round up...General Bernard Rogers (then an assistant Divisional Commander of the Big Red One)...was moved to call this mass removal of the population a "pathetic and pitiful sight". "It was to be expected," he wrote in 1973, "that uprooting these villagers would evoke resentment, and it did...the village of Ben Suc no longer existed."...So long as the tunnels were not

eliminated, neither were the spirit and effectiveness of the guerrillas."<sup>3</sup>

Can the experience at Cu Chi and numerous other villages like it be considered a military operation exclusively? Or was it considered a part of the total pacification effort? Were the American people being given the information as to the consequences of these military acts on the political aspects of the war? In late 1967 there were approximately 4 million refugees in resettlement camps. They were a part of the number considered "secure" by the Hamlet Evaluation System.

2. Counter terrorist teams - These teams never really got off the ground because they could not identify (relate) with the villagers the way the VC could. It was the VC who had to live with and depend on the village for their survival. Further, in selected hamlets the VC had elaborate tunnel systems which linked one hamlet to another. The VC would always be back, day or night, and would spend more time living among the villagers than did the counter-terrorist groups who considered their mission a nine-to-five kind of job. The large majority of these teams could not stay in villages at night due to fear, intimidation, or death. The VC were fighting for their survival, and an ideal created by a legitimate leader -- Ho Chi Minh. It was common for some of these teams to defect to the VC.

3. Chieu Hoi - Statistics for this program came predominantly from the Saigon government/Government of Vietnam (GVN). None of the data that claimed how many were rehabilitated could ever be verified in any way. Many former VC came into the program to be double-agents for the Viet Cong, and it proved to be very effective. This program was based on the assumption that the U.S. cause was so obviously right that VC would see the truth and come running. Success of this program depended on competent

policies in other areas, such as resettlement -- there were none. It was common for a Viet Cong soldier to claim "Chieu Hoi" in order to receive a good meal and rehabilitate himself. When he was rested, he would return to the jungle with his communist comrades, or infiltrate into the GVN government or ARVN as a spy.

4. Population Control - Since there was no way to distinguish between VC and civilian, the idea of preventing VC from posing as innocent civilians was absurd. Furthermore, American policy-makers and the GVN were fixated on high numbers of policemen and not on quality. The idea of "more is better" led to horrendous corruption and widespread VC infiltration into the South Vietnamese police force.

5. Agricultural Aid - Since there was no way to adequately protect the villages, much of the supplies sent to the countryside were either destroyed or used by the VC. The peasants had no social incentives to improving crop production. It would have had to take more than a one hour block of instruction to convince the peasant farmer of the usefulness of fertilizers and insecticides. They had been farming in the rice patties since time began, and had no wish to become integrated into a western styled society as a part of a modern nation-state.

6. Psychological Warfare - Robert W. Chandler in his book, War of Ideas: The U.S. Propaganda Campaign in Vietnam, demonstrates with in-depth analysis the numerous shortcomings involved in the "psyops" operations during the war. Chandler concluded:

The interjection of U.S. psychological operations into the Vietnamese war of ideas was ill fated from the start. When used simultaneously as a means of achieving American foreign policy goals and as a substitute communications tool for the Republic of Vietnam in creating a potent nationalism among its countrymen, the objectives set for the propaganda instrument



were untenable. From the beginning, American leaders misjudged the dedication and tenacity of the communists to continue the revolution and bring about reunification;...and they failed to recognize the South Vietnamese people's strong passivity and reluctance to support any central government, especially while the Viet Cong were present in much of the countryside. Nor could the U.S. overcome the "foreign invader" stigma attached to it by the other side, and the persuasive power of mass media communications was insufficient. In the end, Americans could not win "hearts and minds" for Saigon, and the latter's actions often gave the populace little reason to fully support the anti-communist struggle.

Aside from the programs listed above, there were additional policies attached to the pacification effort to include clearing of roads, security of the hamlets from the Viet Cong, and winning allegiance from the peasants, who made up over 80 percent of the population in the South.

#### B. PERCEPTIONS -- JOURNALISTS, SCHOLARS, AUTHORS

Bernard Fall, R.W. Apple, William J. Lederer and others published numerous articles from 1964 to 1967 which brought into view many complexities associated with the pacification program. This led to many questions disputing the claim of progress made by officials in Washington.

Problems with the pacification effort were explained by Bernard Fall in a U.S. News and World Report interview in 1964:

Things started to crack [for the RVN cause] in 1957... Because village chiefs started getting killed in large numbers by the communists...and village chiefs are vital to victory or defeat in the countryside... Probably close to 13,000 were killed altogether [from 1957-1964]... The village chief is the key link in the whole governmental system...and the village chief is the government with a capital G...By killing village officials, the communists break the will to resist of the populace and take over.

Fall also made other critical points worth mentioning. First, it was too difficult to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. The Vietcong were the same race and ethnic group as South Vietnamese. This made

identifying enemy so difficult that too often innocent people would get caught in the cross-fire. Since Americans used more weapons of mass destruction, this tended to cause a large amount of indiscriminate killing, thus creating instant converts to the Vietcong. "Our weapons are mass destruction weapons -- napalm, rockets, artillery, tanks. They kill indiscriminately. By contrast, the dagger of the communist who kills one village chief or his deputy is a highly selective weapon."<sup>6</sup> Second, when asked the question -- "Is there any way for the U.S. to improve the situation in the countryside?" Fall's reply was -- "There ought to be more...civilian programs designed to produce better rapport between the Saigon Government and its people -- provided there is a Saigon Government." Fall then went on to describe the differences between Ho Chi Minh, who is often referred to affectionately as "Uncle Ho" by many Vietnamese, both North and South, and the "Musical Chair Generals" of Saigon who cannot seem to remain in power for more than a few months nor relate to 80 percent of the peasant population the way Ho can. Finally, he made a very poignant statement which was never repeated by anyone else during research but appeared to sum up the root of the problem involving the Saigon government:

If you want to put it down in one single sentence, you know what is wrong in Vietnam? There's no punishment for failure and there's not enough incentive for doing well. This is what is wrong with Vietnam.

After three years of intensive American buildup and activity, R.W. Apple published two articles in the New York Times amid the stalemate debate in July and August, 1967. The extreme contradiction to the official views were striking. Furthermore, Apple showed that the war really did not change as far as the fundamental problems facing the creation of a stable South Vietnamese society since Fall's article in 1964:

## SAFETY OF ROADS IN VIETNAM HELD DEBATABLE ISSUE

Headquarters' statisticians relying on monthly reports from American commanders in the field, divide highways into three categories: "secure," or passable by a jeep with no escort, "marginal," passable by armed convoy, and "closed."... Although conceding that "incidents may occur frequently" on marginal roads, the statisticians sometimes lump secure and marginal arteries together arriving at a total of 90 percent now theoretically open. The actual situation, according to other American military and civilian officials, is less hopeful...First, the classifications are highly subjective. They represent judgements, not facts...Second, the military figures apply only to military travel, in which weapons are always carried...Third, the military flatly refuses to classify any road in the country as safe at night — not even the four lane, 15-mile expressway that links Saigon with Bienhoa...Fourth, the military statistics cover only 1,743 miles of highways — a fraction of the national total -- that are considered "of strategic importance" by the military.

## VIETNAM: THE SIGNS OF STALEMATE

Victory is not close at hand. It may be beyond reach... American officers talk somberly about fighting here for decades... [Stalemate is used] for many reasons, including the following:

@ The Americans...having killed...200,000 enemy troops, now face the largest enemy force they have ever faced: 297,000 men, again by their own count.

@ The enemy has progressed from captured rifles and skimpy supplies to rockets, artillery, heavy mortars, a family of automatic infantry weapons and flame throwers.

@ 1.2 million allied troops have been able to secure only a fraction of a country less than one and a half times the size of New York State...

@ ...if the North Vietnamese and American troops were magically whisked away, the South Vietnamese regime would almost certainly crumble within months, so little have the root problems been touched...

The peasants, by and large, are apolitical. They stand by and watch as they are buffeted by the war. They want security more than anything else, but they can be rallied to an ideal, as the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have sometimes shown. The ideal is nowhere to be found in Saigon..."Every time Westy makes a speech about how good the South Vietnam Army is," [a] general has said, "I want to ask him why he keeps calling for some more Americans. His need for reinforcements is a measure of our failure with the Vietnamese."

Apple's articles actually reported basic truths which indicated that

official statements from the administration were whitewash. He went on to describe how the lack of leadership in the South Vietnamese Army rendered it useless as a fighting force, the central fact that there was a total lack of commitment from all aspects of South Vietnamese society, the tales of corruption reaching to the highest levels of the government, then he asks the question -- "Is it reasonable to expect young men to volunteer eagerly to fight for their country in this kind of atmosphere?"

The contention by Robert Komer that 67 percent of South Vietnam was "secure" is most important here. Figure 2 compares two separate sets of figures relating to how hamlet security was judged based on the Hamlet Evaluation System (see Figure 2). A number of observations were made concerning the figures derived from 1967. Michael Novak of The Commonweal explained:

If one studies these figures, it becomes clear that allied control is much more tenuous than Westmoreland and Bunker suggest...for example, less than one in fifteen South Vietnamese (category A) live in wholly secure areas. Or that only categories A and B -- representing about twenty-eight percent of the peasant population -- are secure government areas. Realism, it seems, would urge that categories C and D -- over forty percent of the peasants -- represent, at best, "hotly contested" areas. Effective control in Vietnam means control at night...A single attack can make a C hamlet into a D at any time, a C hamlet remains a C hamlet at the discretion of the Viet Cong...Another fascinating figure is reached by comparing A and V; 30 percent of the peasants under total V.C. control, less than 5 percent under government control. The games with these numbers are almost endless. To say that the government controls 2/3 of the peasants and the V.C. only 1/3 is one of the games our officials play.<sup>10</sup>

FIGURE 2

Comparison of Hamlet Loyalty Figures  
based on the Hamlet Evaluation System

August 6, 1967:

Following is a table, based on official United States data, breaking down South Vietnam's hamlet population according to degree of loyalty to the Saigon Government or the Vietcong. Added to the hamlet population, the nation's 3,732,500 city dwellers account for the total population, 17,165,300.

	HAMLETS	POPULATION	HES CATEGORY
Total Government Control.....	168	489,300	.....A
Partial Government Control.....	1,776	3,129,100	.....B
Contested (Government-leaning).....	3,245	4,360,600	.....C
Contested (Vietcong-leaning).....	2,156	1,976,100	.....D
Partial Vietcong Control.....	528	402,200	.....E
Total Vietcong Control.....	3,978	2,923,200	.....V
Unclassified.....	686	152,300	
 Total.....	 12,537	 13,432,800	

December 2, and 22, 1967:

(NOTE: Figures from both articles are identical)

The 12,600 hamlets in the country have been divided into six classifications, ranging from "complete government control" (A) to complete Viet Cong control (V)...The number of persons believed to live in hamlets of each category are as follows:

		POPULATION	HES CATEGORY
Complete Government Control..	BOTH A & B > 2,070	659,000	.....A
Almost Secure.....		3,462,000	.....B
Government Dominant.....		4,117,000	.....C
V.C. Terrorism, Guerrilla Forces 2/3 intact.		2,103,000	.....D
Minimal Government Presence.....		331,000	.....E
V.C. Supremacy.....	4,000	3,989,000	.....V
Unclassified.....		000	
 Total.....		 14,661,000	

SOURCES: For August 7, 1967 Data: Apple, R. W. Vietnam: The Signs of Stalemate. The New York Times. p 14.  
For Dec. 2, 1967 Data: Buckley, Tom. Komer Defends Data on Hamlets. The New York Times. p 5.  
For Dec. 22, 1967 Data: Novak, Michael. The Numbers Game in Vietnam. The Commonweal. p 373.

William Lederer of The New Republic gave his impression of HES reports of late 1967:

Bunker, Komer, Westmoreland, Rostow and Company have told us how many South Vietnamese are under government control -- about 12 million. The...figure is arrived at by adding together the approximately four million refugees and about one million Vietnamese, who directly or indirectly work for the United States;...the million who are in the South Vietnamese Army, National Police, and other para-military organizations; and the 2.4 million inhabitants of Saigon...[Then add] the four million living in areas where there are South Vietnamese and U.S. troops. From the grand total comes the misleading conclusion that the government controls 70 percent of the population. It is spurious, for it evades the central question: "How many South Vietnamese support the government."

One could say that the only aspect of the war that really did change, in terms of building a viable government in South Vietnam, was the ability of the war managers to try and display an improved image of the GVN by showing positive indicators of success in response to the increased political pressures in the U.S. and overseas. Another look at Exhibit 2 shows that the data given to the media concerning hamlet loyalty actually showed a decline in popular support for the GVN and an increase in support for the Vietcong from August 1967 to December 1967. Specifically, the Saigon government increased its "total control" over the hamlet population by a mere 169,700 Vietnamese. By contrast, the Vietcong increased its "supremacy" over the hamlet population by 1,065,800 Vietnamese. Komer claimed progress based on the fact that the GVN improved its A-B-C hamlet ratings by 259,000 people. The conclusion made by Komer, claiming that 67 percent of the population was "secure", should be considered a case of bureaucratic/political duplicity. Stanley Karnow wrote of Komer:

Komer...was a shrewd and energetic bureaucrat whose sensitive antennae were tuned to Johnson's desires. Once, after producing an implausibly buoyant "progress" report on Vietnam for the White House, he was discussing its

contents with a group of correspondents. "Come on Bob," said one of the journalists, "you know damned well that the situation isn't that good." Komer, undaunted, replied in his nasal twang: "Listen, the President didn't ask for a situation report, he asked for a progress report. And that's what I've given him -- not a report on the situation, but a report on the progress we've made."<sup>12</sup>

### C. THE HAMLET EVALUATION SYSTEM -- THREE STUDIES

There were three studies conducted which dealt specifically with the Hamlet Evaluation System. They will be examined as follows: first, a study conducted by two Army Colonels published by the Naval War College; second, an official Hamlet Evaluation System study conducted by a concept team in Vietnam; finally, a study conducted by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). (ARPA is known in the 1990s as DARPA -- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency).

Two U.S. Army colonels (Albert Bole and K. Kobata) conducted an evaluation of the measurements of the Hamlet Evaluation System in 1974.

The findings of their study was as follows:

HES was inflated. The DSA's perceived that their input was inflated. The processing of the input data exacerbated the inflation to produce an inflated output. Of the influences for inflation investigated, if a single one were to be identified as most pervasive, it was US command influence. Other influences were identified: the principle information source which the DSA used...; Vietnamese counterpart pressures; and whether or not the DSA was a volunteer. Combined influences were more powerful than unitary ones...<sup>13</sup>

Other influences they cited which were responsible for HES inflation were biased training of DSAs, negative and positive incentives when reporting certain results, language capability, and attitudes toward jobs (concerning the DSA).

Bole and Kobata gave the impression, based on input they received from

former District Senior Advisors (DSAs) and other sources, that the HES was not only inflated, but an ineffective means of reporting pacification.

First, they cited decisive frailties associated with a system designed to measure nation building:

- (1) The barriers of language and cultural differences in obtaining accurate data.
- (2) Pressures from higher authority to show progress.
- (3) The inherent euphoric optimism of the aggressive, "can do" American. This optimism is required if the US is to assist a nation, but it also operates as a rose-colored filter against accurate reporting.
- (4) The tendency to measure more easily obtained quantitative inputs rather than the more difficult subjective output. It is the latter which more closely measures "hearts and minds" -- commitment to US objectives. It may not be measurable. At best, it is extremely difficult.<sup>14</sup>

Second, they cited numerous personal accounts written by former DSAs explaining abuses of the system. These comments ranged from statements like -- "I had no faith in HES...I did not use HES." to a story told by one advisor in which he explained that many of the hamlets that were rated B by his predecessor were actually V hamlets (Viet Cong controlled): "If a village were completely VC and knew how to play the game with the RVN, no overt or covert [VC] tax collection was needed, since after all they had the village, and the villagers would not say a word about the setup."<sup>15</sup>

Third, they cited various other leaders and authors who actually visited Vietnam after the Tet offensive in 1968 in order to find out why 67 percent of the population (including major cities where the Tet offensive was most prevalent) were reported to the American people as being "secure", when it was proven by events that they were not secure. Congressman John V. Tunney of California inserted his criticisms of HES in a report to the House Committee of Foreign Affairs:

He the [hamlet resident] knows that the Viet Cong may well be there long after the American is gone. This is the



situation, then, in which the hamlet resident is approached by a US officer who is apparently always in uniform and usually unable to speak Vietnamese. The hamlet dweller is asked such questions as whether the Viet Cong are in the hamlet at night, whether they have been identified, whether their apparatus is still functioning, and many other related questions. Can anyone honestly expect a Vietnamese peasant to risk his life in answering these inquiries when the person questioning him is a uniformed foreign soldier who does not even speak his own language and who will not be in the hamlet that night although the Viet Cong are likely to be?...When such inaccurate data [based upon DSA's inadequate training, language, and unreliable sources of information to include the filter of interpreters and GVN officials, such as district, village and hamlet chiefs] is fed into a computer, inaccurate data will come out. As they say in the computer trade, "garbage in, garbage out."<sup>16</sup>

Author William R. Corson wrote in 1968:

What happens in Vietnam is that the U.S. Army advisor who wants to show how well his district is doing understates regression and overstates progress or improvement when the Vietcong leave a hamlet alone for a month or so...In sum, Komer's HES approach would not be too bad if we did not delude ourselves. As Goebbels proved, if one tells lies long enough it is possible to get people to believe them, but when the liars themselves begin to believe their own falsehoods an organization is in deep trouble.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, they pointed out how the manipulative practice of lumping

A-B-C hamlets together had evolved:

The A-B-C grouping was selected because it was the grouping used most often to show the better pacified statistics. In December 1967, this grouping was titled "GVN controlled." This title was changed to "Relatively Secure" in July 1968.<sup>18</sup>

Robert Komer was given an opportunity to critique the study in June of 1975. His comments were published in the study:

...pacification was a Vietnamese enterprise. We Americans were advisors, bankers, and suppliers, but command was always theirs...McNamara and I wanted a U.S. reporting system to avoid GVN over-optimism. This was genesis of HES...Don't give impression...that HES was DOMINANT! It certainly wasn't. You should mention other pacification measurement systems for balance...I seriously question how much HES was used in high-level Washington decision-making...So you tend to create a

straw man and then knock it down...one of the most important uses of HES [was] report cards and leverage on the Vietnamese... Since HES was an aggregate, it was naturally more useful at Saigon level than at Province or Region! Colby and I were making broad resource allocation decisions, and were also farther from the cutting edge...We thought it broadly accurate in terms of what it measured, but not popular attitudes, state of morale, condition of forces and people, etc. Otherwise why have all those other systems like PAAS, TFES, [pacification reports] etc., etc.

Komer's argument that HES was not dominant is bankrupt. As shown in this study, the assertion made in December 1967 that two-thirds of South Vietnam was secure cannot be considered realistic in light of the Tet offensive and basic truths which existed in the hamlets. Nevertheless, his ratings were broadcast throughout the nation beginning with the New York Times and ending in middle America. His report card on pacification was dominant in the press at a crucial moment in the life of the Johnson administration. It is not surprising that he made virtually no mention of his Hamlet Evaluation System in his book -- Bureaucracy at War - U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict, published in 1986. It always appears that the best of the bureaucrats never want to point a finger or admit a mistake.

Two other items mentioned by Komer must be addressed. First, he asserted that command of pacification was always with GVN leaders. In theory, the GVN was to maintain command over the program since, as LBJ and McNamara said many times in public statements -- the war must ultimately be won by the South Vietnamese. However, the U.S. funded every item used toward pacification. Advisors threatened economic sanctions against their district or province counterpart if GVN officials refused to go along with American ideas. Also, the GVN was so riddled with corruption that U.S. leaders had to fill the leadership vacuum that was often created.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, pacification was an American idea from the start. If Komer wants to claim that the South Vietnamese were in charge, so the success or failure remained with them, he must remember what happened when the U.S. Congress discontinued its economic and military support of South Vietnam in 1975. American lack of economic support rendered pacification impotent. Nation-building in the image of a western nation depended on western means of production. Second, to address Komer's assertion that other reports were used to measure pacification in order to broaden the picture of the outlook on progress, we should examine TFES and PAAS. This will be accomplished in the examination of the study performed by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) shown below.

A Hamlet Evaluation System study was conducted in 1968 "to assess the trustworthiness of the inputs that go into the HES." The concept team's conclusions were as follows:

The results of this study indicate that the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES),...is basically sound as a reporting device for the entire country and for political divisions down to the district level, and should be continued. A distinction is made, however, between security and development factors... the HES is a reasonably reliable method of estimating security trends. The interjudge reliability of the development factors is less clear.

The problem with this conclusion, which is printed in the first page of the report, is that not one single piece of information contained within the study confirms that HES, in any way, is reliable, valid or of any use whatsoever to anybody or anything when measuring security factors, development factors, or otherwise.

The entire document is thick with fuzzy euphemisms and scientific platitudes which make it very difficult to pin down any meaningful significance associated with their methods of study. For example, the

study devoted fifteen pages full of confusing graphs, tables and insignificant assertions in order to provide information concerning the DSAs data collection methods (i.e. how the DSA got his information in order to make his ratings). Comparing how different Corps areas of DSA's used "personal knowledge" of the hamlet to derive a rating should be considered frivolous. Personal knowledge was not adequately defined. Another example involved the use of scatter diagrams to graphically portray relationships between two variables. Three subjects for the variables were examined: DSA, Hamlet Chief, and hamlet citizen. The concept team canvassed 106 hamlets. They had village chiefs, DSAs and village peasants answer standardized questions concerning how hamlets should be classified according to the A - V criteria used in the HES. First, there was no relationship between DSA's HES ratings and hamlet citizen ratings. Second, there was no relationship between the DSAs ratings and the Hamlet Chief's ratings. Finally, there was no relationship between DSA's systematic ratings under the 18 indicators used to measure a hamlet, and subjective ratings which the DSAs were asked to provide.<sup>22</sup> Only a trained eye would have been able to discern confusion from reality inside this study.<sup>23</sup>

In evaluating the credibility of the rating methods used by DSAs, the study came up with a listing of the most commonly mentioned complaints of the advisors. Parts of that list are as follows:

- Advisors noted the lack of opportunity to reflect in the HES a measurement of popular loyalty to the GVN or the degree of civic organizational activity.
- [in judging] corruption or tyranny of hamlet or village officials, advisors have found it difficult to distinguish between "rumored" activity and activity that was "suspected, but no proof".
- Advisors found significant gaps between adjacent rating categories, with considerable numbers of difficult marginal decisions, especially for the factors relating to economic and political development.

- Advisors found that the ratings in the "A" category reflected an ideal situation. A not uncommon remark was that it would be difficult to give "A" ratings for the development factors even in many sections of the United States.<sup>24</sup>

It is the author's view that the Concept Team was under a degree of political pressure to create a report which supported the Hamlet Evaluation System. However, to provide any evidence of this would require an additional study.

In 1968, Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) conducted a highly detailed study of the reporting methods/systems used in Vietnam. The study -- Operational Reporting System For Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, had the following objectives:

Objectives were to conduct the necessary research in order to make recommendations leading to elimination, revision, or re-design and possible subsequent implementations of reports in the existing reporting system used by the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV).<sup>25</sup>

ARPA analyzed reports used by the following agencies: Commander, United States Military Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV), MACV Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (MACCORDS), United States Army, Vietnam (USARV), U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam (NAVFORV), Seventh Air Force, and the Third Marine Amphibious Force (IIIMAF).

MACV Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (MACCORDS) will be the focus of the present study. MACCORDS was lead jointly by General Westmoreland and Ambassador Komer.

It must be understood that in addition to the HES, TFES and PAAS there were other reports which dealt with pacification. These reports are listed in Appendix A. Furthermore, a number of factors must be considered which had direct bearing on whether the HES and other reports would be accurate. In light of this, the ARPA study team provided some ideas on reporting:

The basic reasons for all reporting may be divided into two areas. First, the senior staffs and their commanders must be made aware of the progress of the war and pacification efforts. Policies and plans are affected by this information...some action is taken as a result of this use of reporting. Secondly, analysis of the efforts is undertaken by information gathered in detail, enough detail to validate a trend or to support a contention that certain activities do or do not produce the desired result...The personnel in the field, quite often, are not cognizant of the use to which their report is aimed. Neglecting the "morale" of the reporter can be a serious mistake. The mass of statistics, contained in many required operational reports, have a detrimental effect for the first purpose of reporting.

[For example], A great deal of soul searching by higher authority may possibly eliminate the necessity for reporting tons of rice captured in so many reports...The continued submission of information by lower echelons, even though it is believed to be valueless is partly a function of the long standing military tradition of cheerfully complying with orders from higher authority...Given the realities of open ended "wars of liberation" and astronomical US Defense budgets, it would seem that this is an appropriate time to look into the necessity of collecting much of the data now being gathered. The question is this: Is what is being collected at great public expense justified?  
Is it being used for other than trivial reasons?<sup>26</sup>

A list of inherent problems were provided concerning operational reporting (those reports affecting the day-to-day operations and capable of immediate improvements). These problems were a lack of command definition from MACV, heightened statistical interest from "higher up" resulting in "Parkinsonian Results" from the agencies asked to provide those statistics, minimal military continuity involving the one-year tour, and the unique problem of quantifying "Revolutionary Development Concepts".<sup>27</sup>

As for the Hamlet Evaluation System, the conclusions of the study team were as follows:

The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) as it is now structured, imposes a great strain on the District Advisors. For obvious reasons it is impractical for the District Advisor to fill out the Hamlet Evaluation System Worksheet while talking to the Hamlet Chief. He must remember the questions and answers as he makes his rounds of the hamlets...At present there are

37 questions in the HES and the manner in which they are stated, quite often, makes it difficult to provide the proper answer...The study team...as a result of numerous discussions with personnel at all levels of command in the entire reporting system structure, as well as personal observations of the environment from which the HES reports are made, feels obligated to inject a note of caution as to the worth of the data...because of the considerable difficulties involved in gathering data about hamlet security, it should be re-emphasized that this data should be evaluated with great care, and should not be considered as being definitive in any sense whatsoever.<sup>28</sup>

The Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES) was to provide detailed information on tactical Regional Force/Popular Force (RF/PF) units. These are units under the control of the GVN. Summaries based on this information were utilized by MACV staff to prepare recommendations pertinent to planning, direction and control of RF/PF activities. The report which finally reached DOD and the JCS was described as follows: "A computer program edits the data [in Saigon] as they are sent in from the districts. An output tape is generated, containing two files: a summary and deployment of troops."<sup>29</sup> Take note: TFES was merely "a summary and deployment of troops". The conclusion of the study team concerning TFES was as follows:

(TFES) report is also made by the District Senior Advisor (DSA). It too receives a great deal of attention from higher authorities. It contains vital Security Data Elements, such as Security for Hamlets and Villages, Military Installations, Economic Installations, and Lines of Communication... the collection of data for TFES is an effort of considerable magnitude...from the time the data is gathered in the districts until it comes back to province headquarters in the form of computer listings, one and one-half months generally elapse. [Note: two and one-half months was provided by personnel at II Corps Headquarters; one and one-half months was provided by MACCORDS Headquarters]...by the time it was approved for publication, it was decided that it was too late to publish...Information months old on the one hand, and too late for inclusion in a vital report on another, might not have to be gathered in the first instance; at least in its present expensive form...There is the implicit feeling...that they [strength reports] are misleading, and that the arith-

metrical accommodation of the strength figures in the TFES and the Pacification report<sup>30</sup> does not tend to induce a sense of confidence in either!

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Defense (DOD), and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) only received four reports dealing with pacification (ie. from MACCORDS). This is illustrated in Appendix B. Besides HES and TFES, the remaining two were the Chieu Hoi Weekly Returnee report and the Assessments of Pacification, Weekly and Monthly. Only two reports, which originated at the district level, were received at the CIA, DOD and JCS level. They were HES and TFES. The information for the Chieu Hoi report originated exclusively from the Government of Vietnam and thus could not be considered reliable in any way. The Pacification Assessment report (PAAS) was generated at Corps level and could not contain the detail and perceived reliability expected from HES and TFES taken from the district level. Therefore, this study indicates clearly that HES and TFES were the dominant reports on pacification which were received all the way up to the war planners/managers in Washington, D.C.

Pacification Area Assessment System (PAAS) was an evaluation of security per square kilometer measured in terms of terrain controlled using the following categories: GVN controlled, VC controlled, contested, or uninhabited. HES was designed to replace PAAS. However, PAAS was kept for a number of unverified reasons. It was determined by the ARPA study to be misleading and basically worthless.<sup>31</sup>

Just as numbers were manipulated concerning the Hamlet Evaluation System, the same happened concerning enemy order of battle. There was always a great amount of confusion over the numbers which General Westmoreland rattled off concerning enemy size and strength, also known as Order of Battle (OB) figures.



#### D. THE STRATEGY OF ATTRITION

In November 1967, Westmoreland reported to President Johnson and the American people that the enemy was declining in strength. He showed LBJ a chart entitled "VC/NVA Strength", which showed enemy strength in 1965 as 207,000, in 1966 as 285,000, and in 1967 as 242,000.<sup>32</sup> In public, he reported a decline in enemy size from 297,000 enemy troops in 1966 to 248,000 in 1967. These incidents, which have been quoted in numerous publications, were subjects in the order of battle controversy between CBS and Westmoreland. Westmoreland's progress report in late 1967 excluded figures which he had included in the 1965-66 totals. Loren Baritz wrote:

Davis Boies, CBS's attorney in the case brought by General Westmoreland, told me that if the year 1967 on the chart had included the same groups as had been included in the other two years, the correct figure for 1967 would have been over 400,000, not 242,000. The difference was simple: Instead of winning the war, as the chart shows to the President indicated, the war was being lost.<sup>33</sup>

Sam Adams, former CIA employee who worked on enemy order of battle figures from 1965 to 1968, stirred up considerable controversy within the U.S. war bureaucracy in the late 1960s over his personal assessments of order of battle. Instead of having an enemy force of approximately 285,000, as was claimed by MACV in 1966, Adams believed that the size of the enemy was close to 600,000. Adams went out to the units fighting the war and collected captured Vietcong documents. Previously, enemy size was determined almost exclusively from third or fourth party sources such as the ARVN or GVN. He determined that the VC were taking extremely heavy casualties. Officially, allied forces were killing, wounding and capturing enemy soldiers at the rate of 150,000 per year. By determining the high rates of attrition on enemy size, Adams wondered how an army of 270,000

could last for very long. In late 1966, Adams came upon some captured VC documents which reported their size in Binh Dinh province at 50,000. U.S. official order of battle for Binh Dinh was 4,500. VC documents showed Phu Yen province to be at 11,000 guerrilla militia. U.S. figures indicated only 1400 enemy. Table 4 compares the official U.S. figures in 1966 with what Adams determined to be the true enemy size:

Table 4  
ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE FIGURES, 1966

	<u>Official MACV estimate</u>	<u>Adams/CIA estimate</u>
Communist Regulars -	110,000	100,000
Guerrilla Militia -	103,573	300,000
Service troops -	18,553	100,000
Political cadres -	39,175	100,000
TOTALS -	271,301	600,000 <sup>34</sup>

Adams explained how MACV determined their numbers. The communist regulars figure had more than doubled in the past two years. The South Vietnamese had determined the guerrilla militia figure of 103,573 in 1964; American intelligence had accepted the number without question and used approximately the same number for over two years. Adams could not find out how Service troops were determined. He contended that the figure on political cadres was derived from a report, given to him by the intelligence veteran George Allen, which was "full of holes...Among other things, it left out all the VC cadres serving in the countryside -- where most of them were."<sup>35</sup>

He explained why order of battle was so critical:

It was important because the planners running the war in those days used statistics as a basis for everything they did, and the most important figure of all was the size of the enemy army...If the Vietcong army suddenly doubled in size, our whole statistical system would collapse. We'd be fighting a war twice as big as the one we thought we were fighting...<sup>38</sup>

In theory, a conventional army needs at least a three to one advantage to defeat an opposing conventional army. To defeat an organized armed insurgency, military planners insisted on at least a six to one ratio of friendly to enemy, if not higher. If the enemy order of battle increased too much, the military would blame a loss in Vietnam on not being provided with enough troops. If enemy strength was at 600,000 men, U.S. reserves at home would have to be called up in full, the draft would increase in number, and the U.S. Army in Vietnam alone would have ballooned to over two million men. Furthermore, it was determined by the Ky and Thieu governments in Saigon that it was politically important to keep the Republic of Vietnam from being on a total war footing. General Westmoreland constantly asked for more troops. In mid-1967, he requested 200,000 soldiers to add to the 470,000 he already had. He only received 50,000. Table 5 lists official U.S. figures on enemy order of battle reported in December of 1967. By comparing the changes in categories used for various types of enemy units from 1966 to 1967, one can see the lack of continuity; thus, the potential for deception.

Table 5  
ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE FIGURES, 1967

		<u>Official MACV Estimate</u>
Main NVA/VC Units	-	118,000
NVA Units	- 54,000	
VC Units	- 64,000	
Administration/Support Units	-	40,000
Local Guerrilla Units	-	80,000
TOTAL	-	230,000 <sup>37</sup>

The deception existed by renaming categories and shifting numbers. In 1966, "communist regulars" were considered North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units; Guerrilla-militia were the same as Viet Cong (VC). Somehow, somewhere, the numbers were altered by some method. What that method was will probably remain a mystery.

Robert Komer made some pertinent observations:

The overall reliance on attrition helped spawn the quantitative measurement systems devised in an attempt to measure military "progress" in this strange war. If cutting the enemy down to size was the name of the game, then the "body count", comparative kill ratios, and weapons-captured to weapons-lost ratios were key indicators of progress... Since it was even harder to assess the impact of indirect firepower such as air and artillery, the usual measurement of their effectiveness was one of output, not impact: how many sorties flown, how much ordnance dropped, how many rounds fired... The U.S. and GVN military intelligence empires... were focused in classic style mostly on order of battle. Identifying and locating enemy main force units and movements (or targets) was the order of the day, to the neglect of such elements of a highly unconventional military establishment as local self-defense groups or the Viet Cong infrastructure.<sup>38</sup>

Enemy body counts came from primarily two sources -- U.S. commands and

ARVN commands. Body count at platoon, company, and battalion levels, all the way up to the top, were given high priority by both American leaders and South Vietnamese. The higher the enemy casualty rate; or the better the kill ratio of enemy dead to friendly dead, the more successful a commander became. The objective became numbers of dead, not a hill, town or bridge.

The debate over whether strategy of attrition was a real strategy was critical because its execution determined the accuracy of enemy order of battle. The moral issue of fighting a war exclusively for the purpose of killing other human beings came into sharp focus. Palmer wrote of the strategy:

Attrition is not a strategy. It is, in fact, irrefutable proof of the absence of any strategy. A commander who resorts to attrition admits his failure to conceive of an alternative. He rejects warfare as an art and accepts it on the most non-professional terms imaginable. He uses blood in lieu of brains...the United States was strategically bankrupt in Vietnam in 1966.

Retired Lieutenant General Davidson disagreed:

Here Palmer is wrong...Palmer's unqualified declaration that "attrition is not a strategy" is incomprehensible. Attrition is a strategy, and in the right time and place, it is a good one. The great Clausewitz wrote that if one could not immediately destroy the enemy's armed forces, then one could concentrate on what he calls "wastage" of the enemy (another name for attrition) -- making the war more costly to the adversary by laying waste to his territory, increasing the enemy's suffering, and eroding his morale and physical assets. American military history provides classic examples of this "wastage": World Wars I and II were wars of attrition. Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan won the Civil War using the strategy of attrition. In fact, Grant utilized pure search and destroy operations. From 1864 on, he focused on Lee's army, attacking it at every chance, and eventually eroding the Confederate force into impotence and surrender.

The idea promoted by General Davidson -- that the strategy of wastage was an acceptable strategy, and is a viable alternative in special cases,

is a highly emotional issue. At the same time, "wastage" is a moral issue, not a military one. To this author, Davidson's assertions are incomprehensible from a moral viewpoint. Grant, Sherman and Sheridan did not use a strategy of attrition against the south. In 1864, Lee was defending Richmond. Grant continued to hurl his Army at Lee by frontal attacks. Any "attrition" of life which resulted after Lee retreated was considered, then and now, an unfortunate outcome of a bloody war. World Wars I & II were not wars of attrition. The fact that whole generations of men died from seemingly endless bloodshed was not the result of a preconceived strategy intended to bleed the enemy of his able bodied men. Further, the strategy of attrition employed against the oriental man in Vietnam would not have ever been used against the white man of Europe. A full study could be devoted to the strategy of attrition and its moral and ethical implications. The point to be made here is that the strategy rendered order of battle figures inherently false.

Retired Brigadier General Albert Hume, former Chief of Staff for the Americal Division, and later MACV, asserted -- "There was no doubt that South Vietnamese reports of enemy casualties, friendly casualties, and many other statistics which we received from them were phony."<sup>41</sup> Hume went on to discuss his feelings on war of attrition which seems to reflect how many felt about it:

A Lieutenant goes out to the field, he will make body count high so that he and his unit could look good. There was no way to check it [for accuracy]...A soldier's natural feelings after a fight will cause him to be unconcerned with counting bodies. How can anyone get an accurate count? I disagree with the war of attrition. A system got placed on the military where a unit's success would be judged on body count...However, the reality was that small unit leaders also had the body count problem in their own minds. I was always skeptical of reports on numbers, but there was no way to validate them.<sup>42</sup>

This type of low level miscount was at the root of the body count problem. What General Westmoreland envisioned in his war of attrition progress reports and what actually took place on the ground, in the battlezone, probably did not correspond accurately. In addition to suspect reporting accuracy at the source of the report was the fact that it is difficult to piece together exactly how Westmoreland tallied his numbers at the top. One suggestion was given from an interview with Sam Adams by Loren Baritz:

Mr. Adams told me that there was a computer programmer, an enlisted man, in General Westmoreland's headquarters, who was forced to play a key role in juggling the numbers, what Mr. Adams called the "nut bag operation." This "poor bastard" had to adjust field estimates about the guerrillas' strength to stay under the military's figure. Mr. Adams said that there was a direct order in writing from the head of the OB section, marked "Internal Use Only," that no new units or numbers could be counted if they increased the total...If<sup>43</sup> something new was added, something else had to be dropped.

Innocent victims of war were counted as dead. It happens in every war. What made this war unique was the focus of attrition as the goal of U.S. operations in the field.

By not playing the numbers game accurately, McNamara, Westmoreland and all the other war managers engaged in the practice of self-delusion by manipulating charts, graphs and tables. They had no proof that they were winning because their intelligence networks were not focused properly on the Vietcong infrastructure and the insurgency.

## CONCLUSION

Evidence described in this paper indicates a possible correlation between rising domestic and international political pressures and an increase in misleading information reported to President Johnson and the American people in late 1967. Specifically, as domestic protests increased, public opinion of LBJ declined, international condemnation of the Vietnam War increased, and U.S. casualties and expenditures increased, there was a tendency by officials supporting Johnson's policies toward the war to publicly report manipulated information received from several key and influential reporting systems. Their purpose was to show the American people that progress was being made in order to buy time in the hope that the North Vietnamese would give up their struggle in the South.

These systems reported on two primary strategies employed by the United States in order to achieve the goal of a South Vietnam independent of Communist domination. The strategies were pacification and a strategy of attrition.

Numerous reports dealt with pacification. The Hamlet Evaluation System was the most dominant report which charted pacification progress. When Ambassadors Bunker and Komer reported to the American people at the height of anti-war protests that 67 percent of South Vietnam was "secure", they based their claims on data from the Hamlet Evaluation System.

It is necessary to place the concept of manipulation into two categories - unintentional and intentional. District Senior Advisors (DSAs) were victims of unintentional manipulation. They faced language impediments, cultural barriers, institutional pressures (to include pressures to display progress from superior officers), personal prejudices



and biases, and a tendency to inflate ratings for personal goal satisfaction. There is no evidence to indicate that DSAs willfully manipulated data for the sake of the dissuasion policy; or for the sake of any other reasons implying a conspiracy. Their mistakes were linked to human frailties. Generally, it is assumed that these middle level officers, on the whole, were honorable men performing a difficult mission and under limitations placed on them by their superior officers. The most important of these limitations were the hamlet evaluation ratings and criteria, and the mission they were expected to perform despite their frailties as foreign men in a foreign land. Although DSAs knew that a "C" hamlet was considered secure, they did not choose the option to consider it so.

Intentional manipulation could have existed at higher levels of government. The decision was made not only to create, build, and institute a reporting system such as the HES, but to also lump A-B-C hamlets together and label them "secure". Intentional manipulation in this case could have been the result of incompetence or professional malpractice carried out by highly educated, pretentious, and unscrupulous public servants. The effective use of words became a powerful tool. The word "secure" is one example. The label of secure had a different meaning for different people. For top Saigon Government officials, secure meant projecting their hegemony over the peasants in the hamlets. For the American people, secure meant living in domestic tranquility within a democratic polity governed by rule of law agreed to by all. To Robert Komer, secure might have meant a means to his end -- which was to provide a progress report to the American people in order to pacify domestic unrest over the conduct of the war. In any case, it has been clearly demonstrated that the HES did not measure up to

expectations -- that it did not measure the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese, nor did it accurately measure security. Informing the American people that progress was being made based on analysis of the hamlet evaluation data should be considered intentional manipulation.

Coupled with the pacification strategy was the strategy of attrition. The progress report for this strategy was the enemy order of battle. There is no evidence anywhere to indicate exactly how Westmoreland was able to derive the numbers he reported to LBJ and the American people in 1967. What is clear to all who served in Vietnam and all who study Vietnam was that as Westmoreland continued to claim that progress was being made, the opposite was actually the case. The strategy of attrition, by its nature as a strategy, was not palatable to many soldiers from the moral background and character derived from American culture. Conducting a mission to do nothing more than kill enemy, then counting bodies, and not understanding exactly why, was one reason why morale dropped severely in Vietnam for the U.S. servicemen. Further, and most critical, the U.S. was conducting a strategy of attrition on the same race of people which they were supposedly defending. This fact, coupled with indiscriminate killing from weapons of mass destruction, made collecting accurate body count of enemy dead tenuous, to say the least. In counting dead from a B-52 bombing raid, how was it possible to accurately determine who were NVA regulars, enemy service troops, or VC guerrillas? Let's assume that Westmoreland's figures were reasonably accurate. This leaves his strategy open for more criticism. Even if the allied successes in reducing enemy size was as effective as reported in 1967, it was apparent that enemy determination to resist was not reduced enough to convince anyone that a stalemate did not exist. As U.S. involvement intensified, Communist strength increased.

The thesis of this paper is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. First, the independent and dependent variables could be considered symmetrical in their relationship to one another. It is presumed that political pressures is the independent variable and falsely reported information is the dependent variable. This is based on the premise that political pressures resulted in increasingly inaccurate information reported to the American people from the Johnson administration. It is possible to invert the thesis by contending that as officially and publicly reported information designed to show progress became increasingly inaccurate, political pressures on the war managers increased. This fact will leave the assertion in the thesis open to questions and criticism. Second, it was not possible to secure enough information to prove conclusively that political pressures caused policy-makers to report erroneous information based on flawed reporting systems. The logistics involved in securing personal interviews with McNamara, Rusk, Westmoreland, Komer, etc., was not feasible for this study. Further, these men will probably live with personal biases, prejudices and established notions to the day they die. Men are frail, otherwise we would have perfect government. Finally, there is the question of false reporting. What is the definition of a false report? In other words, what is a lie in the context of Vietnam reporting from policy-maker to the public? George Reedy, former press secretary to President Johnson stated the following:

...in the modern world, we deal with huge numbers [that] statisticians have to handle. They always have assumptions underlying those numbers. And you can take optimistic assumptions or you can take pessimistic assumptions. Lyndon Johnson really did not tell very many, if any, lies in Vietnam. What he did was to accept the very optimistic assumptions, and after awhile, the whole federal government stopped sending him the pessimistic assumptions. You know, Westmoreland was very optimistic. An assumption, for instance, is that every Vietcong body you found meant three had been killed or four had

been killed. Every time you wiped out a Vietcong unit, you assumed that you actually wiped out seven units and they had hauled away the bodies, that sort of thing. That is where the White House gets into trouble. Its not because anybody has told a lie, its because they have taken a series of facts and arranged them in the most optimistic fashion. That's why the public is so convinced that there were a bunch of lies in Vietnam.

What is a lie? What is the truth? One fact is evident -- In the modern world, it is difficult for many people to distinguish between a lie and the truth. One man's truth is another man's lie.

Chapter II illustrated what was reported in late 1967 to the American people from the Johnson Administration. Below is a consolidated review of the selective use of rhetoric:

...I find an attitude of growing optimism, and to me this is the most significant evidence I can give you that constant, real progress is being made...

...The South Vietnamese have conducted five elections in the past 14 months in the midst of a war...

...the Hamlet Evaluation System was better than anything we've had before. It properly focused on the key aspects of pacification...

...The new figure was cited as proof that enemy strength was declining...

...U.S. forces raised enemy losses beyond his input capacity...

...Behind the shield which we have helped to provide, a new Asia is rising...

...11 1/2 million people of Vietnam's 17 1/2 million population now live in secure or reasonably secure areas...

...In head-on clashes with the enemy, our forces have won every major battle...

...He cited over-all enemy losses as 165,000, although he quickly warned that these estimates must be used with a great deal of caution because they involve complex and indirect calculations...

The words cited above were empty. They were based on false assumptions. By understanding how hollow these statements were, one can

see that they were a product of wishful thinking; they were born out of the need to stifle criticism -- to answer the critics; to claim that the policies which were rigidly adhered to and so self-righteously believed in were working because men of authority said they worked. All of the phony jargon cited above was the product of increased political pressures. These "false reports" proliferated beginning six months prior to the Tet offensive.

What is important is that Vietnam can provide a unique case study to examine how to deal with all the variables involved in governing in order to help create competent and effective policy-making for the future.

Political pressure was clearly demonstrated in chapter I. It is well documented that millions of people throughout the world began to openly voice disapproval for the Vietnam war. This overt attack on war policy prosecuted in Washington began in early 1967 and continued to the end of U.S. involvement in 1973. Public approval for Johnson's handling of the war was high in 1964-65. Approval dropped significantly in 1966-67.

False reporting existed since the beginning of U.S. involvement in the late 1950s. How was the increase in inaccurate reporting measured? Increase in erroneous reporting was a function of two factors. First, increase in frequency of official statements reported to the American public. Second, the war managers claimed that progress of the war was being made based on systematic reporting methods designed by "the best and the brightest" and reported on by professional cadre of "specially selected" public servants who were specially trained to report on pacification and war of attrition based on standardized and "technologically modern" reporting systems. In layman's terms, a group of misguided individuals created unproven and unreliable systems of reporting

on the situation of the war. They relied on U.S. Army officers to use their system, and ensured that the information they compiled could be fitted into optimistic estimates. The results were transmitted to LBJ and the American public. These systems were the body count and the Hamlet Evaluation System. Prior to their creation and implementation, no reliable system existed beyond what the Saigon regime provided to the Americans. Prior to 1967, the pacification effort and other matters were being evaluated by individual emissaries sent forth from Washington. These men trusted their own judgement to see the truth. This type of reporting method is simple, timeless, and proven to be the best in terms of reporting the irrational act of war. Personal observation by trusted individuals provides a means in which to develop accountability and responsibility for judgements, decisions and actions that have an impact on thousands or millions of human beings.

The policies of attrition and pacification were by-products of the dissuasion policy. Many assumptions were made when attempting to cause the Communists to desist from attempting to conquer the south. First, it was assumed that the government in Saigon was a legitimate government capable of true representation of the majority of people. The fact was that corruption was the rule in the Republic of Vietnam. The peasant in the countryside, who made up 80 percent of the population, did not fully understand, nor care to understand, his government in Saigon. Second, it was assumed that the Communists were seriously affected by strategic bombing against the north. These bombing raids were a critical factor in attempting to carry out the dissuasion policy. Attempting to intimidate the North was its aim. It was demonstrated in World War II that bombing serves to strengthen the morale of those subjected to it -- Great Britain

in 1940 is a prime example. In Vietnam, weapons of mass destruction had a muted effect against a largely agrarian based economy. U.S. bombing in no way cut the lifeline of Soviet weapons and equipment in key harbors and logistic routs for fear that a wider war would result. McNamara once asked the question -- "What assurances do we have that with the resulting force level we can prove to the Viet Cong they cannot win, and thereby force them to a settlement on our terms?"<sup>2</sup> A determined guerrilla movement does not need to win, they simply must avoid losing. The Communist leadership were willing to fight a protracted war on their soil, on their terms. Finally, although not all inclusive, is the fact that General Westmoreland failed to see the significance of the insurgency and its impact on the many operating factors existent in the war. He insisted, as late as 1990, that the main threat to South Vietnam was from main force units, and not guerrilla insurgents.<sup>3</sup> Thus, U.S. and GVN intelligence networks focused on enemy main force units using conventional methods of gaining information on the enemy. By contrast, the North Vietnamese used extensive intelligence networks embedded throughout the GVN and ARVN command structures.<sup>4</sup> Communist sympathizers were everywhere and at the same time nowhere. Enemy main force units relied heavily on their intelligence networks to foil Westmoreland's plans to smash their forces in a war of attrition. It is important to note that due to Westmoreland's inept handling of his intelligence empire, he failed to predict the coming of the Tet offensive launched in February of 1968.

These false premises concerning GVN viability, poor U.S. intelligence, and a policy of dissuasion, led to the only two strategies open to a general ill-suited to deal with reality -- the strategy of attrition and pacification. The Hamlet Evaluation System and the enemy

order of battle numbers were flawed by their nature. There was never any chance for these reporting devices to be accurate because the policies they were reporting on were based on false premises. This fact leads to the conclusion that in 1967, reports of progress to the American people and LBJ, based on these reporting systems, increased in inaccuracy as political pressures increased. The increased burden on an administration under a state of siege caused policy-makers to grasp at straws in an attempt to quell unrest against the war in order to buy time. The war managers were buying time to see if the North would relent. History proves they were mistaken.

Jeffrey Millstein in his book the Dynamics of the Vietnam War (1974), presents a possible scenario that might have happened during the Vietnam war known as the "miscalculation thesis". This thesis contends that U.S. policy in Vietnam was a series of miscalculations:

The "miscalculation" thesis explicates U.S. policy in Vietnam as the ultimate product of incorrect albeit conscientiously held assumptions and predictions made by principal policy-makers. The contradictory advice given by other governmental agencies and advisors was not followed because the principal policy-makers genuinely had greater faith in the reports that supported their initial convictions. These convictions led to military, economic and political commitments that became self-sustaining. As the war progressed, U.S. leaders were faced with a choice between admitting failure (and accepting all the negative political consequences they believed would accrue from such an admission) or declaring a self-fulfilling prophecy of success (and undertaking the concomitant increase in military commitments that such an attitude required). The latter course was chosen, and each successive step seemed to lead inevitably to a network of human and material costs that had to be further justified to domestic and international critics.

By integrating the miscalculation thesis with the thesis here proposed, one can draw a correlation. In order to justify the conduct of the war to domestic and international critics, the war managers manipulated



reports used to measure progress for pacification and strategy of attrition. In effect, they attempted to create a self-fulfilling prophesy of success.

## Appendix A

## MACCORDS REPORTS REQUIREMENTS, PROVINCE LEVEL, 1967-68

<u>Report</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Paddy Prices	Weekly report to Corps HQ. Paddy is raw rice.
Traffic Volume	Traffic is counted 2 hours per day on peak hours in order to obtain a weekly average. Source: SVN National Police on district level.
Psychological Operations (Psy Ops) Attitude report	A weekly report on opinions of, and attitudes toward, GVN/MACCORDS objectives. Report is made by Psy Ops advisor and is sent to Saigon.
Regional Force/ Popular Force (RF/PF) Weekly Report	To Corps HQ on items other than reported in TFES. For example, personnel status, number of companies and platoons, number of units assigned to Revolutionary Development, etc.
Chieu Hoi Weekly Report	To MACCORDS via Corps HQ. Corps merely collects reports for the GVN. A weekly report.
Public Safety Highlights	A weekly report of significant events during the past week by the National Police. For example, arrests of draft evaders, illegal residents, and discoveries of narcotics and weapons.
Economic Report	Bi-weekly to USAID/Saigon. Gave information about the rice and stocks and prices in province.
Public Safety Div./ National Police Field Forces (PSD/NPFF)	Bi-monthly report of operations of the National Police Field Forces (NPFF) sent to Corps HQ. Gives total strength of the NPFF and the number of patrols sent out with or without contact.
Province Report	A monthly report of all activities within the Province. Covers same topics as the monthly district report to province: enemy activity, revolutionary development, public health, civic affairs, etc.
Popular Force/ Mobile Training Team.	Sent monthly to Corps HQ and the Training Directorate at MACV (MACT).
The VC Crop Report	Monthly report on rice-paddies in VC territory. Report is based on air observance.
Hamlet Evaluation System (HES)	Explained in text.

<u>Report</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES)	Explained in text.
Civic Action Report	Monthly report to the Deputy of CORDS.
Agriculture Report	Sent monthly to USAID via Corps HQ. Reports on rice farming, use of fertilizer, insecticides, paddy harvest, average rice selling price, farmers applying for bank loans and generally anything that has to do with agricultural affairs.
Chieu Hoi Report	A monthly statistical report to Corps HQ. The statistics involve number of Chieu Hoi centers, hamlets and status on funds spent for the project.
Monthly Economic Report	Provides information about all available foodstuffs in the province, and includes unit prices of gasoline, cigarettes, kerosine, etc. Status of rice stocks received, general comments on prices, etc.
Monthly New Life Development Program	Provides information in regard to urban development, public works and self help projects. Sent to MACCORDS/Coordinator of Civil Operations.
Monthly Psy Ops Field Program Report	On local political climate and propaganda material on hand. Sent via Corps HQ to JUSPAO in Saigon.
Monthly Public Administration Report	States if there were any significant events. Comments briefly on progress, problem areas in villages, hamlet, province, or district administration. Source: Vietnamese Government. Sent via Corps HQ to USAID/Saigon.
Monthly Public Health Report	On health conditions in the province. Provides statistics about hospital beds, patients, preventive medicine, malaria, maternity, etc. Sent to MACCORDS Public Health Officer at Corps.
Monthly Public Safety Field Program Report	Statistical report providing the following statistics: training courses, ammunition, weapons, vehicles, disposition of police. Contains a narrative on events and operations. Sent via Corps to MACCORDS/Public Safety Division.

<u>Report</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Monthly Refugees Field Program Report	Gives statistics in regard to refugee population and education, training, commodity support, funds spent, and a narrative portion in regard to refugee matters such as refugees in camp, out of camp, movement of refugees. Collation and individual reports sent to MACCORDS/Refugees.
Monthly Revolutionary Development Cadre Field Program Report	On RD Cadre activities such as number of hamlets in which RD Cadre personnel are operating, number of RD Cadre losses, grievances by residences, etc. An assessment made at Corps HQ and MACCORDS/RD.
Commodity Status	monthly report on commodities available at province warehouse. Commodities include foodstuffs, blankets, cement, other building materials, etc. Sent to MACCORDS/Management Support Division in Saigon.
Nursing Report	Monthly to Chief nurse at Corps HQ. Covers health, education, acceptance by the Vietnamese of the instructions and health education and nursing services.
Public Health Administrative Report	Monthly report about events, complaints, etc. to the Corps Public Health Officer. Covers improvements needed, supplies required, etc.
Revolutionary Development Budget	Monthly forecast on RD funds needed. Sent to MACCORDS/RD Division.
MACCORDS Personnel Inventory	Roll call on all MACCORDS U.S. personnel in the Province. Sent via Corps to MAACORDS/MSD.
Vehicle Operations Report	Monthly report on operation of all MACCORDS vehicles, including maintenance and operating expenses. Report goes to MACCORDS/MSD in Saigon.
Popular Force- Revolutionary Development/Mobile Indoctrination Program. (PF-RD/MIP)	Monthly report on popular forces training. Sent via Corps RF/PF Division to MACV J3 Psychological Operations Directorate.
Regional Forces- Revolutionary Development Refresher/Mobile Training Team (RF-RDR/MIT)	Monthly report sent via Corps to COMUSMACV/MACT, the Training Directorate. Deals with guidance in the training of the Vietnamese militia and armed forces.

<u>Report</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Popular Forces-Center Report	Monthly report on the status of the Popular Training Forces in Training Centers, to RF/PF Division at Corps. Then sent to COMUSMACV/MACT, Training Directorate.
Verification Imprest Fund	The petty cash Assistance in Kind (AIK) is money MACV spends in the provinces. Monthly report goes via Corps to MACCORDS in Saigon.
Quarterly Public Health Report	On number of civilian doctors, dentists, nurses technicians, and midwives in provinces, goes to Corps HQ - Chief Health Officer.
Agriculture Field Report	Semi-annual via Corps to USAID/Saigon. Provides different items than monthly agriculture report.
Communicable Disease Report	Monthly report to Public Health Division at Corps. Contains figures on communicable diseases. Action taken at Corps after analysis.
Youth Activities	Monthly report on youth activities, such as the local Boy Scouts. Sent to MACCORDS in Saigon via Civic Affairs Division at Corps HQ.

\*\*\* Source: ARPA Study, pp. 6-105 - 6-114.

## Appendix B

## MACCORDS REPORTS DEPICTING LEVEL WHERE FOUND

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>CORPS</u>	<u>MACV</u>	<u>CINCPAC</u>	<u>JCS (CIA, DOD)</u>
Harlet Evaluation System	***	***	***	***	***	***
Territorial Forces Evaluation System	***	***	***	***	***	***
Monthly District/Province Report	***	***	***	***		
Monthly Civic Action Report	***	***	***	***		
Self Help/New Life, Monthly Report	***	***	***	***		
Training of Self-Defense Forces	***	***	***	***		
Reports on VC Terrorism	***	***	***	***		
Weekly Paddy Prices		***	***			
Weekly Traffic Volume	***	***	***	***		
Weekly Psy Ops Attitude Report		***	***	***		
Weekly RF/PF		***	***			
Chieu Hoi Weekly Returnee		***	***	***	***	***
Public Safety Weekly Highlights		***	***	***	***	***
Bi-weekly Economic Report		***	***	***		

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>CORPS</u>	<u>MACV</u>	<u>CINCPAC</u>	<u>JCS (CIA, DOD)</u>
Bi-monthly NFFF Report		***	***	***		
Monthly VC Corps Reports		***	***	***		
Monthly Agri- culture Reports		***	***			
Monthly Chieu Hoi Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Econo- mic Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Psy Ops Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Public Adm. Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Public Health Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Publ. Safety Report		***	***	***	***	***
Monthly Refu- gee Report		***	***	***		
Monthly RD Cadre		***	***	***		
Monthly Com- modity Status		***	***	***		
Monthly Nurs- ing Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Publ. Health Adm.		***	***			
Monthly RD Budget		***	***	***		
Monthly CGRDS Personnel Inventory		***	***	***		

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>CORPS</u>	<u>MACV</u>	<u>CINCPAC</u>	<u>JCS (CIA, DOD)</u>
CORDS Ve- hicles Oper. Report		***	***	***		
PF-RD/MIP		***	***	***		
RF-RDR-MIT		***	***	***		
PF TNG CTR		***	***	***		
AIK Funds		***	***	***		
Quarterly Public Health		***	***			
Semi-Annual Agric. Report		***	***	***		
Monthly Com- munic. Disease		***	***	***		
Monthly Youth Activities		***	***	***		
Memo to Bunker from Public Safety				***		
Assassinations and Abductions				***	***	***
Quarterly Tact Sheet from Publ. Safety to Bunker				***		
Monthly RD Cadre Loss & Strength				***		***
Assessment of Pacification, Weekly & Monthly				***		***

\*\*\* Source: ARPA Study, pp. 6-124, 6-127.



## FOOTNOTES

## Introduction

1. The war managers were: Gen. Westmoreland, William Bundy, McGeorge Bundy, John McNaughton, Robert McNamara, Maxwell Taylor, Dean Rusk, Robert Komer, Walt Rostow and the thousands of nameless, faceless workers who carried out their directives. I exclude LBJ from this list -- he should take ultimate responsibility for the actions of the war managers since they were all appointed by him.
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22. Ibid., p. 1, 36.
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24. Ibid., p. 1.
25. Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History, (New York, The Viking Press, 1983), p. 538-539.
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27. Karnow, p. 498-499.
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1. The war managers serving LBJ in 1967 were Westmoreland, McNamara, Gen. Earl Wheeler, George Christian, Walt Rostow, Hubert Humphrey, Robert Komer, Richard Helms, Dean Rusk, and Ellsworth Bunker.
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### Chapter 3

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9. R.W. Apple, Vietnam: The Signs of Stalemate, NYT, Aug. 7, 1967, pp. 1,4.
10. Michael Novak, The Numbers Game in Vietnam (Cont.), Commonweal, Dec. 22, 1967, p. 373.
11. William J. Lederer, Vietnam: Those Computer Reports, The New Republic, Dec. 23, 1967, p. 14.
12. Karnow, p. 502.
13. Bole & Kobata, pp. x, xi.
14. Ibid., p. 12.
15. Ibid., p. 51.
16. Ibid., p. 53.
17. Ibid., p. 52.
18. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
19. Ibid., pp. 198-200.
20. Since 1961, most ARVN field commanders were reluctant to use their forces against the Vietcong for a number of reasons. For one, many similarities existed between the American Civil war and the Vietnam conflicts. Often, a relative would be in charge of a local guerrilla group in the same District as the local ARVN commander. In some cases, a political state of equilibrium existed between the two forces. This often confused or irritated U.S. advisors. Often, ARVN commanders were not good leaders. Their appointments were based on degree of loyalty to the current Saigon regime. This weakness at the top tended to create a power vacuum which some U.S. advisors attempted to fill. See Neil Sheehan, A Bright Shining Lie, New York, Random House, 1988.
21. Ithiel de Sola Pool, Hamlet Evaluation System Study, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Simulatics Corporation, 1968), p. 1.
22. Ibid., pp. 143-145.
23. Dr. J. H. Rieger of the University of Louisville Department of Sociology provided invaluable insight concerning the System Study.
24. Sola Pool, pp. 58-60.
25. Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), p. 2-1.
26. Ibid., pp. 7-8, 8-3.
27. Ibid., p. 6-64. Note: Parkinsonian Results is defined as follows: "work expands to fill the time available for its completion..." - G. Northcote, English Historian.

28. Ibid., pp. 6-212, 6-213.
29. Ibid., p. 6-115.
30. Ibid., pp. 6-213, 6-214.
31. Ibid., p. 6-215.
32. Loren Baritz, Backfire, p. 263.
33. Ibid., p. 263.
34. Sam Adams, Vietnam Cover-Up: Playing War With Numbers, Harper's, May, 1975, pp. 44, 62.
35. Ibid., p. 62.
36. Ibid., p. 43.
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38. Robert Komer, Bureaucracy at War, (Boulder and London, Westview Press, 1986), pp. 60-61.
39. Palmer, Summons of the Trumpet, p. 117.
40. Phillip B. Davidson, LT Gen. USA (Ret.), Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-75. (Presidio Press, Novato, California, 1988), pp. 354, 355.
41. Interview, Gen. Hume, Dec. 20, 1989.
42. Ibid., Dec. 20, 1989.
43. Loren Baritz, pp. 257-258.

#### CONCLUSION

1. George Reedy, former Press Secretary under President L.B. Johnson, Kentucky Educational Television: 2 June, 1990. Host, John Chancellor, an interview with U.S. press secretaries since President Kennedy.
2. Larry Berman, Planning a Tragedy, (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), p. 95.
3. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, ...A Perspective on America's Unique Experience in Vietnam, Vietnam magazine, Feb., 1990, pp. 62-67.
4. See The Art of War, by Sun Tzu. Vietnamese guerrilla tactics were ultimately derived from this masterpiece. Basic tenets of intelligence operations are explained.
5. Jeffrey S. Milstein, Dynamics of the Vietnam War, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 176.

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## VITA

Donald Stuart Travis was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1963. He majored in Political Science at Xavier University (Cincinnati) and graduated in 1985. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in May, 1985, and served for five years as an Infantry Leader at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in December of 1989 and voluntarily separated from active duty on September 1, 1990. His assignments included Rifle Platoon Leader, Anti-Tank Platoon Leader, Battalion Adjutant, Logistician, and Company Executive Officer. During his tour of duty he has trained at Fort Benning in Georgia, Fort Bliss in Texas, Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Fort Drum in New York, and three deployments to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin in California. In 1985 he graduated from the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, and in 1990 from the Armor Officer Advanced Course at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He earned the coveted Expert Infantryman's Badge as a Platoon Leader in 1988. He qualified on the M1 Abrahms Main Battle Tank in 1990. From 1985 to 1987, he attended graduate night school at Fort Knox and in November of 1987 was awarded a Master's of Business Administration in Aviation from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. From 1987 to 1990, he attended night school at the University of Louisville and in August of 1990 was awarded the Master of Arts in Political Science.