

SOUTH VIETNAM

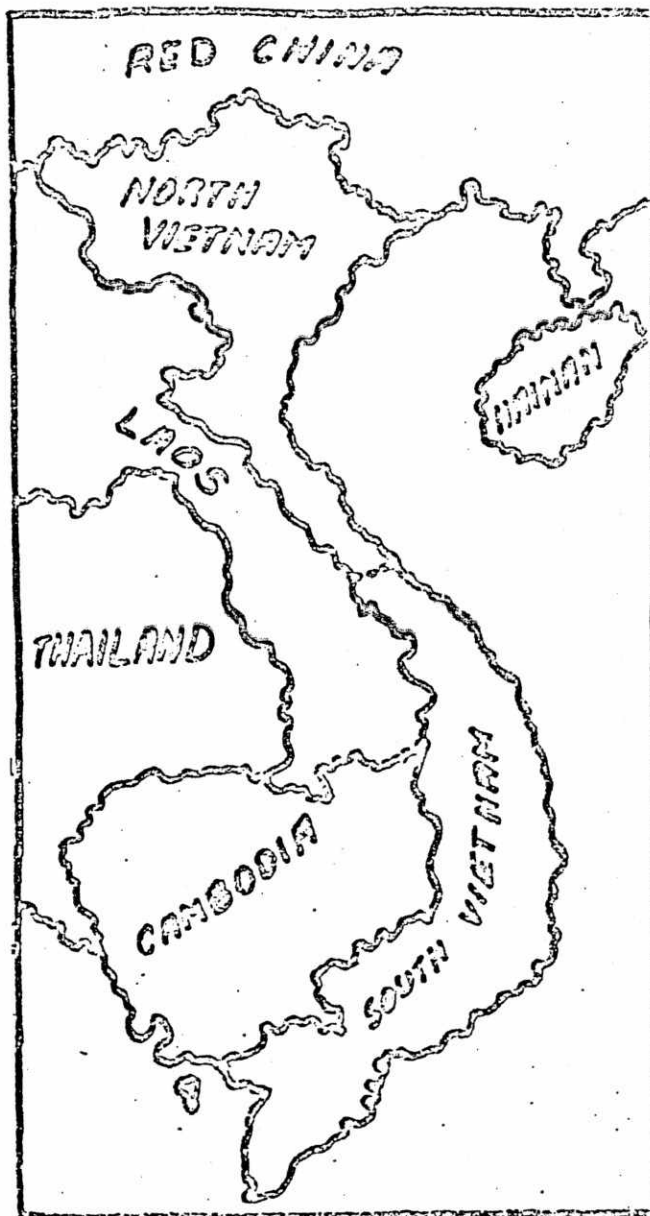
INTRODUCTION

In January 1965, United States military strength in South Vietnam was 23,000 men. By April 1966, United States military strength in South Vietnam had increased to more than 250,000 and further increases are expected. In 1965, the Air Force of both the U.S. and South Vietnam flew more than 60,000 sorties over South Vietnam and Navy and Marine Corps planes, carrier and land based, flew 39,000. In carrying the fight to North Vietnam, Navy and Marine Corps flew more than 6,600 sorties while the U.S. and South Vietnamese Air Force hit North Vietnam with almost 12,000 sorties. As the war continues to grow and U.S. military increases its strength, more and more servicemen are finding Vietnam is not just a name--but a destination. For those of you that are here now this pamphlet will acquaint you with South Vietnam and its people.

GEOGRAPHY

The Republic of Vietnam is somewhat less than half the size of California and long and narrow like that state. It occupies the southern-eastern section of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, and borders the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. Countries located to the west are Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. Beyond Communist Vietnam to the north is Red China.

The southern section of the rugged Annamite mountains forms a spine down to the Mekong Delta region around Saigon. In places mountain spurs jut out to sea, dividing the coastal plain into sections. Sand dunes 10 to 60 feet high are common along the coastline. The country is narrow up near Hue--so narrow that only a 30 to 50 mile



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strip lies between Laos and the South China Sea. Southward from Hue towards Nha Trang, the country widens to make room for high plateaus, 1,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level. The major water supply in the Republic of Vietnam is the Mekong River. The Mekong River is one of Asia's great waterways. From its source high in Tibet, the 2,800 mile river flows through that country and China to the northern border of Laos. There, it separates Laos and Burma, and farther downstream, Laos and Thailand. Where the river approaches the South China Sea, it fans out into many paths along the coastal plain, until there are more than 9,000 square miles of delta land under rice cultivation. There are some 1,500 miles of canals crisscrossing this area.

South Vietnam has typically tropic climate of two seasons: hot and dry and hot and rainy. In the southern delta region, the rains usually begin in late May and continue through September. April and early May are the hottest and most humid months of the year. Along the central coast, the rainy season begins in October, causes periodic floods through December, and continues with drizzles from January to March. July and August are the months when heat and humidity reach their peak. At Hue, the average rainfall is 128 inches while at Saigon the average annual rainfall is 80 inches.

Like other tropical countries, Vietnam has the usual variety of bugs, flies, mosquitos, and other insects.

POPULATION

The population of the Republic of Vietnam is about 14 million, four-fifths of them farmers. The majority of the people of South Vietnam are ethnic Vietnamese. There are over half a million tribespeople; about the same number of Chinese (most of whom now hold Vietnamese citizenship); just under half a million ethnic Cambodians, and a few thousand each of French, Indians and Pakistanis.

Compared with most Asian nations, South Vietnam is uncrowded. But the population density varies from 19 per square mile throughout the six high plateau provinces to 43,100 people per square mile in Saigon, the capital. Saigon is the largest city, with nearly three million people. Da Nang runs a distant second with about 110,000. In the urban areas, French and English are second languages but once you leave the cities, most people you meet speak only Vietnamese.

AGRICULTURE

South Vietnam is an agriculture country with rice being its main product. Rice along with locally grown vegetables and fish from the sea make South Vietnam largely self-sustaining in food. Topping rice as a money-making export is rubber. Other exports from South Vietnam include lacquer, konaf, peanuts, tea, coffee, quinine, raw silk, sugar cane, copra, tobacco, and mint oil. The country has some cattle but more pigs and poultry. Water buffalo are used primarily as draft animals, especially in

the rice paddies, and only occasionally for meat. In the plateau and hill region the elephant remains the primary work animal. Wild elephants are sometimes hunted, as are stags, roe-bucks, wild boars, bears, wild oxen, panthers, tigers, and crocodiles. Vietnam has the usual variety of tropical snakes, including cobras.

Vietnam contains many fruits and vegetables which are familiar to you and others you have probably not heard much about. Among those familiar to you are bananas, apples, pears, oranges, potatoes, turnips, carrots, onions, and beans. Among the more exotic ones are pomegranates, papayas, jujube, litchi, and water bindweed. You should avoid eating raw vegetables or unpeeled fruit and drinking water that is not boiled or otherwise purified.

Seafood is the main meat in South Vietnam. Among these are sole, mackerel, tuna, squid, sardine, crab, lobster, shrimp, oysters and turtles. There are also many exotic foods prepared from seafood. One specialty is eel wrapped in aromatic leaves and grilled over charcoal, or boiled with green bananas, vegetables, saffron, and onions. Another is bird nest soup, a version of which is made from the sea swallow nest. The nests are golf-ball size--white, pale green or grayish, made of entangled fibers of a hardened gelatinous substance similar to the jelly from seaweed. Pork, beef, and fowl are also available.

Tea is the principal Vietnamese beverage. In towns and cities you can generally get cognac, whiskey, French wines, and champagne. Alcoholic beverages produced locally are principally beer and "ruou nep," made from fermented glutinous rice.

HISTORY

Vietnam has one of the world's oldest living civilizations. It dates back to hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, with roots in Asian religions and philosophies.

Legend has it that from the union of a dragon and a goddess came the hundred venerable ancestors of all Vietnamese. Belief in their common origin united the people and gave them a symbol around which to rally in the face of foreign invasion. Until 1955, the Vietnam coat-of-arms displayed a dragon carrying the country on its back.

The Viets originally occupied southern and southeastern China and the east coast of the Indo-Chinese peninsula almost as far south as Hue, the old capital of Vietnam. In 111 B.C. their kingdom of Vietnam was conquered by the Chinese who renamed it Annam ("pacified country to the south"). The Chinese controlled the country almost continuously for the next thousand years.

At times the Viets rebelled--usually unsuccessfully. A revolt led by the Trung sisters drove out the Chinese for a time and is still celebrated with an annual festival. The history of this revolt is reminiscent of Joan of Arc's story. Mounted on elephants, the two Trung sisters led 80,000 of their countrymen against the Chinese governor who had beheaded the husband of the elder sister when he asked for reform of the regime of terror.

But the Chinese were vanquished only temporarily. In a few years they came back and the Trung sisters committed suicide by throwing themselves into the river.

For part of the period of domination by China, the Chinese provincial governors let local feudal lords govern the people, and even collect taxes, which the Chinese then extracted from the lords. Later they began paying more attention to their subjects and introduced Chinese civilization into Vietnamese life. The Viet people were such apt pupils that by the year 950 they had developed enough strength to rid themselves of the Chinese yoke.

The Viets made another courageous stand for survival as a free nation when, in 1284, they repulsed the Mongolian hordes of Jublai Khan. In the next century they pushed southward to conquer the once great kingdom of Champa which occupied much of what is now South Vietnam. They also met the Khmers (Cambodians) on the field of battle and forced them to retreat to their present boundaries.

Under a dynasty founded in the 15th century by Emperor Le, Vietnam enjoyed a period of brilliant progress. Arts, crafts, agriculture, and commerce flourished. The code of laws developed during this time remained in effect until almost modern times.

During this period, government service was recognized as the highest calling a man could pursue. Nine grades of civil and military positions were held to determine which one a person qualified for. The competitions and civil service examinations based on the ancient Chinese model were still conducted in the former capital of Hue as late as the early 1900's.

Emperor Le's dynasty went through periods of strength and weakness. Two powerful families, the Trinh and the Nguyen, finally reduced the Le regime to puppet status and divided the country between themselves. The Trinh controlled the northern region, the Nguyen controlled the central and southern regions of Vietnam.

In 1802, the last scion of the original Nguyen family--Gia Long--managed to gain the throne and unite all Vietnam under a single government administration and set of laws. China granted the nation formal recognition and no longer insisted on the age old payment of tribute by the Vietnamese. In this enlightened era, there were schools in most villages, and foreign trade was encouraged and carried on through settlements of Dutch, Portuguese, French, and Japanese merchants in several towns.

Conflicts between the Vietnam people and French missionaries are said to have sparked the French military action that resulted in the takeover of the province of Cochinchina by the French in 1863. Before another decade had passed, the other two regions, Tonkin and Annam, also went under French rule. From that time until World War II, the country was part of French Indochina.

Although their administrative policies led to deep resentments by the Vietnamese, the French did much to advance the standards of living of the country. They built roads and railroads, canals, dikes, churches, hospitals, and scientific institutions, and sent many Vietnamese to France for advanced education.

After the fall of France in 1940, the Japanese began to establish control over the entire Indo-Chinese peninsula. The French colonial administration remained loyal to Vichy, the government of defeated France under Nazi domination. The Japanese were therefore able to govern Indo-China through the existing administrative apparatus with the French appointed Emperor, Bao Dai.

Meanwhile, by the time of the Japanese occupation, a group of expatriate, anti-French Vietnamese had formed in South China. One of these was Ho Chi Minh, a dedicated Communist, who entered Hanoi secretly in 1944. This united front organization, the Vietnam Independence League, afterwards came to be called the Viet Minh.

When the Japanese saw themselves faced with losing the war, they brought an abrupt end to French rule in Indochina. They persuaded the Vietnamese Emperor Bao Dai to proclaim the independence of Vietnam under Japanese "protection." Meanwhile, the Viet Minh undertook a liberation campaign of their own and went into action in Hanoi, using guerrilla units as the "National Liberation Army."

Exploiting the fact that Bao Dai had been unable to form an effective government, the Viet Minh launched a powerful propaganda campaign portraying itself as a strong resistance movement which had won the support of the Allies. Bao Dai abdicated in favor of the Viet Minh in August 1945, and handed over his symbols of office to Ho Chi Minh. At the same time a "Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam" with seven Communists among its nine members, took control of Saigon.

The French, supported by the British, began to re-occupy Vietnam in September 1945. After several attempts to work out accommodations with the French, the Viet Minh government decided to risk a long "War of Liberation," and in December 1946, launched the first attack of the Indochina War.

The war lasted eight years, from 1946 to 1954. Early in the struggle, the French sought to encourage the anti-communist Vietnamese nationalists to take a stand against the Viet Minh and cooperate with France, but the effort failed. Two years of negotiations dragged by. Finally, in March 1949, France approved of self-government for Vietnam within the French union. Bao Dai became chief of the state of Vietnam. Dissident nationalists refused to unite behind him, charging that the French did not offer complete independence. Ho Chi Minh gathered his forces for an attack on the Bao Dai government.

There are now, as a result, two governments in Vietnam, both claiming to be the government of the entire country. During this period, Ho Chi Minh

purged his government of moderates and showed his intention to have a communist take-over in all Vietnam. In early 1950, after North Vietnam began to receive assistance from Communist China, offensive action was initiated against the French Union forces, which were defeated in a number of strategic locations. In 1951, the advances of the communist forces in Vietnam were temporarily halted with the aid of American equipment.

In 1952, the Viet Minh started a new offensive in several areas. Vigorous counterattacks brought no decisive results and a military stalemate followed; where tanks could go, the French Union forces held, but in the mountains and the mud of the rice paddies, the Viet Minh consolidated its control. Steps were taken to bring a negotiated end to the Indochina War. In April, 1954, representatives of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Communist China, Laos, Cambodia, the State of Vietnam, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam met at Geneva. Two days after the opening of the conference, a Franco-Vietnamese statement declaring Vietnam to be fully independent was made public, but communist troops still fought on.

In May, the supposedly strongly fortified position the French had established near the small mountain village of Dien Bien Phu fell after an unexpectedly heavy attack from Viet Minh forces. A military truce agreed to on 21 July 1954, partitioned the country near the 17th Parallel, and provided for the evacuation of French forces from the north and Viet Minh forces from the South. France then proceeded to complete the transfer of its military and administrative control to the State of Vietnam with its capital in Saigon. Ho Chi Minh switched the capital of his communist government to Hanoi, but despite the Geneva agreement left a sizable Viet Minh underground in the south.

Ngo Dinh Diem, who was serving as Bao Dai's Prime Minister after the Geneva settlement, replaced Bao Dai as President in 1955 and established the Republic of Vietnam. Ngo Dinh Diem served as President until November 1963, when his regime was overthrown by a military coup. This military coup was the beginning of a long series of governmental changes in South Vietnam.

PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS

Vietnam has 40 provinces and four cities with provincial status--Saigon, Hue, Dalat, and Da Nang. Within the provinces are districts made up of several cantons which, in turn, are each composed of several villages, called "lang." The villages are made up of hamlets which may be from a hundred yards to several miles apart. To at least eight out of every 10 Vietnamese, "the Government" is the administrative group that runs his village.

An old Vietnamese proverb states that "...the power of the Emperor comes only to the bamboo hedge of the village." This is indicative of

the traditional dislike of interference from higher authority in village affairs. Village government is administered by a Council of Notables who elect their president, the Huong Chu, to act as village representative.

THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

The Vietnamese are small and well proportioned people, with dark, almond-shaped eyes and black hair. The slender, small-boned women move gracefully in their national dress of long trousers under a long sleeved tunic slit from hem to waist.

Most non-laboring Vietnamese men wear Western clothing on the street, but you will see an occasional Chinese in traditional Mandarin dress. Workmen and peasants dress in loose black trousers and short black or white jackets. Often a black turban tops the male costume.

You will find many areas of common interest with the Vietnamese but there are also many differences between their culture and customs and our own. Some of these differences are small things, like the way a Vietnamese seems to be waving goodbye when he is actually beckoning you to come toward him.

More important differences are attitudes towards older people, manual labor, display of emotions, and time. For instance the average Vietnamese is less compulsive about time than the average American and regards punctuality with less reverence.

The Vietnamese are justifiably proud of their culture and national identity but their primary social out-look revolves around their family and village. These claim first allegiance. Members of a family, for instance, have an absolute obligation-to-be violated only at the risk of serious dishonor-to care for their relatives and to prevent any of them from being in want. Even after a girl marries, her love and respect for her parents traditionally continue to overshadow her love and respect for her husband.

UNUSUAL CUSTOMS

The Vietnamese have always felt that a deep division exists between manual and "intellectual" labor. Traditional Vietnamese who have achieved positions with the government as a result of long and patient study, or who have become doctors, teachers, and so on, avoid using their hands for tasks they feel they have graduated beyond.

If you want to ask a favor, you should remember that hinting and indirection are preferable to making an outright request. Also avoid launching too quickly into a new topic or disagreeing too vehemently. Exercise moderation in your conversation.

The Vietnamese regard men and women who walk arm-in-arm as vulgar. But you may occasionally see two boys or men walking down the street hand-in-hand. This is an ordinary mark of friendship common to many Asian and other countries.

MINORITIES

About 85 per cent of the approximately 30 million people of Vietnam belong to the native ethnic group which has lived in the area for over 1,000 years. The other 15 per cent compose minority groups which indicate a considerable range in national types. The largest of the minority bodies are the highland dwelling groups collectively called "Montagnards," or mountain folk. About 500,000 to 700,000 Montagnards live in the south; between one and two million in the north. They have their own way of life and regard lowland people with suspicion. As a consequence, they have developed a distinct cultural pattern which has been quite different from that of the rest of Vietnam.

The chief economic activity of the Montagnards is a soil depleting form of farming. They clear a piece of land by burning it, cultivate it until the soil is exhausted in a few seasons, then move on to another burned over clearing. This somewhat nomadic way of life clashes sharply with that of the more settled Vietnamese, so much so that there is little contact between the Vietnamese majority and Montagnard minority. The French recognized this difference when they controlled Indochina. They helped perpetuate this sense of apartness by governing the Montagnards under a separate administration. Efforts have been made to integrate the life of the Montagnards with that of the rest of the nation in South Vietnam so that they might be better protected against the Viet Cong. The problem of integration is further complicated by the fact that few tribes can understand another tribe's language. However, thousands of their own accord have moved to the lowlands for better protection.

The Khmers and Chams are lowland minorities. Like the Montagnards, they have been in the region for centuries. The Vietnamese regard them as less advanced than themselves.

The approximately 400,000 Khmers are of the same stock as the dominant population of Cambodia and remain distinctively Cambodian in language and culture.

The 35,000 Chams live in poor villages of straw huts on low pilings surrounded by palisades.

Both groups belong to ancient Southeast Asiatic cultural groups which have failed to keep progress with the other ethnic groups of Vietnam.

Of the foreign minorities in Vietnam, the Chinese have long been the largest. They entered Vietnam many hundreds of years ago and through the years played an increasingly important role in the economic life of Indochina before, during, and after the French era of control.

After the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, a heavy influx of Chinese occurred; the immigration is estimated to have reached as high as 400,000. A 1960 estimate of the Chinese population of South Vietnam (very uncertain because of considerable illegal immigration) puts the figure at one million.

As rice brokers, money lenders, and retail dealers, Chinese were said to control some 90 per cent of all retail trade in urban centers. In 1956, South Vietnam granted citizenship to all Chinese born in the country, outlawed the conduct of certain businesses by foreigners, and forbade them to practice certain professions. Chinese married to Vietnamese women were allowed to continue to operate their businesses in their wives' names. Many Chinese institutions were brought under government control, and a number of Chinese left the country rather than accept Vietnamese citizenship. By 1962, it was thought that only 2,000 Chinese in South Vietnam had not become citizens.

Other ethnic minorities in Vietnam are the Eurasians, and various foreign communities, including the French and other Europeans, Americans, Indians, and Pakistanis.

Many French nationals are of Vietnamese and Vietnamese European ancestry. Among this group are some French businessmen who had left the area in 1954 and later returned, along with commercial representatives from Japan, Germany, and the United States.

Most of the Eurasians in Vietnam have French fathers and Vietnamese mothers, and speak French as their first language and Vietnamese as their second. Leaning to the Western side of their cultural inheritance, they have tended to seek European or Eurasian, rather than Vietnamese marriage partners.

The small number of Indians and Pakistanis are known mainly as shop-keepers and money lenders in Saigon.

RELIGION

Instead of saying that one religion is right and all others wrong, the Vietnamese are more apt to take the position that one is right and another is not wrong either. For instance a man who makes offerings in a Buddhist temple probably also pays reverence to the ancestral altar in his own home in keeping with the teachings of Confucius. You may even find Christ, Confucius, Mohammed, and Buddha all honored in the same temple.

Consequently, it is not too meaningful to say that a certain percentage of the Vietnamese are Buddhists and another per cent something else. The percentages may be made up of individuals who are both Buddhists and something else. Nevertheless, religion has been a significant factor in the Vietnam way of life throughout history.

To get along in Vietnam you must have some understanding of these traditional beliefs. If, for instance, you did not know that the parts of the human body are believed to possess varying degrees of worthiness, starting with the head, you would not see why patting a child on the head might be considered a gross insult. Or why it would be insulting for you to sit with your legs crossed and pointed toward some individual. Either of these actions could cause you to be regarded in a poor light by Vietnamese who follow the traditional ways.

Confucianism

Confucianism establishes a code of relations between people; for example, the relation between sovereign and subject, father and son, wife and husband, younger and older people, friend to friend. Teaching that disorders in a group spring from improper conduct on the part of individual members, achievement of harmony is held to be the first duty of every Confucianist.

When he dies, the Confucianist is revered as an ancestor who is joined forever to nature. His children honor and preserve his memory in solemn ancestor rites. At the family shrine containing the ancestral tablets, the head of each family respectfully reports to his ancestors all important family events and seeks their advice.

Buddhism

Buddhism goes hand-in-hand in many Vietnamese homes with Confucianism. The religion of Buddhism was first taught in India some 26 centuries ago by Prince Gautama, also known as the Gautama Buddha. In Buddhism the individual finds a larger meaning to life by establishing identity with eternity-past, present, future-through cycles of reincarnation. In the hope of eventual "nirvana," that is, oneness with the universe, he finds consolation in times of bereavement and special joy in times of weddings and births.

The "Greater Vehicle" form has more followers than the "Lesser Vehicle" in Vietnam. This branch regards the Gautama Buddha as only one of many Buddhas (Enlightened Ones) who are manifestations of the fundamental divine power of the universe. They believe that, theoretically, any person may become a Buddha, though those who attain Buddhahood are rare.

"Lesser Vehicle" believers follow the teachings of Gautama and regard him as the only Buddha.

Taoism

Taoism, like Confucianism and Buddhism, came to Vietnam from China centuries ago. Like Buddhism, its philosophy focuses on the idea of man's oneness with the universe. In modern Vietnam, Taoist priests are regarded as skilled magicians, adept at controlling the spirit world through intercession with Taoist gods. The priesthood is a family calling taught by father to son.

Christianity

Christianity reached Vietnam in the 16th and 17th centuries, mainly through the efforts of Roman Catholic Spanish and Portuguese missionaries and later French missionaries. Today, approximately 10 per cent of the population of the Republic of Vietnam are Catholics. This is the highest proportion of Catholics in any Asian country except the Philippines.

American Protestant missions have been in Vietnam since World War I. At first their activities were mainly limited to the mountain tribes of the high plateaus. With the gradual rise of American assistance and influence, there has been an increase in Protestant activity in the lowlands. Today, Baptist, Mennonite, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Seventh Day Adventist missions exist in several cities.

New Religions

In addition to the religions and philosophies brought to Vietnam from other countries, new ones were developed. Chief among these are the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao.

The philosophy and practices of Cao Dai are examples of religious and ethnical borrowing--organization and some ritual from Catholicism, reincarnation and not eating meat from Buddhism, man's obligations to society and veneration of ancestors from Confucianism despising honor and riches from Taoism.

Cao Dai morality is based on the duties of man toward himself, his family, society, and humanity. Its philosophy preaches the attainment of pure spirituality without seeking honor and riches.

At one time Cao Dai claimed a following of three million. Now the religion is much less widely practiced, but you may still see Cao Dai temples throughout Vietnam.

Hoa Hao is an offshoot of Buddhism that came into being in An Giang province in southwest Vietnam in 1939. Its founder was a young man named Huynh Phu So, and he gave the new religion the name of his village of birth. He became famous as a teacher and miracle healer, preaching that temples, rituals, and priests were not necessary to the worship of God. This greatly appealed to the poor people and peasants. Some 20 years after its founding, Hoa Hao had a million and a half or more followers, though Viet Minh Communists murdered the founder in 1947 and no leader of comparable stature appeared to take his place.

CONCLUSION

To better understand the people of South Vietnam who we are assisting in their fight for freedom it is necessary and important that we learn as much as possible about the people of Vietnam, their social habits, customs, and the country itself.

THE VIET CONG

The Viet Cong is well trained, organized and equipped for his mission. He employs the tactic of the guerrilla because they suit his means. VC forces sometimes lack uniforms, but in most cases their weapons are modern and effective. If he is prepared to fight, or has good reason, he will stay and fight, but frequently, when hit hard, he will disband into small groups and melt away into the jungles. On occasion he travels with his family and is not above using women and children to cover his withdrawal, leaving them to fend for themselves. He digs in well and uses concealed tunnels and bunkers extensively. He moves mostly at night and prefers to fight under cover of darkness. Normally he will not attack unless he has great numerical superiority. The VC is smart but far from unbeatable - - even on his own ground.

The Viet Cong military organization is an integral part of the apparatus which controls all aspects of VC activity throughout RVN. Each VC political headquarters at hamlet, village, district and province levels includes a military component which exercises some control over the Viet Cong military units assigned to its area of jurisdiction. The organizational technique subordinates the military to the political and promotes unity of effort. VC organization is patterned after that used in North Vietnam.

Military units are divided into three general categories: combat, combat support and militia. The combat units consist of three distinct types of military forces: North Vietnamese Army (NVA) (North Vietnamese Army units infiltrated into Vietnam), VC main forces and VC local forces.

(1) During 1965 a number of NVA units were infiltrated into RVN and are presently integrated into the VC military structure. The units were encountered frequently during the latter half of 1965. Being regular Army units, they revealed a greater tendency to stay and fight than the local VC forces have in the past. They are better armed, equipped and supplied than other units because of their more direct ties with North Vietnam.

(2) VC main forces are those units directly subordinate to the VC military regions of RVN. They may be found as regimental, battalion, separate company and platoon size units. They are better trained and equipped than VC local forces. Their leadership consists of experienced and dedicated Communist personnel with long experience in guerrilla warfare.

(3) VC local forces are organized in units up to battalion size and are normally subordinate to an individual VC province or district. Their operational area is usually defined by territorial boundaries.

VC combat support forces form a category which has been devised by the RVN military authorities to represent VC headquarters personnel and special combat support units such as communications, engineer, reconnaissance and food production elements which are not assigned to a particular VC combat unit.

VC militia are subdivided into three types of irregular forces: guerrilla, self-defense, and secret-defense.

(1) The most important militia forces are the full time local guerrilla units. They are used to harass friendly units, conduct assassinations and other acts of terrorism and sabotage. However, they do participate in actions in conjunction with local or main forces when the latter operate within their areas. They are used as guides, porters and rear guard riflemen in this supporting role.

(2) VC self-defense and secret self-defense forces are part time irregulars primarily responsible for local security and for providing early warning of approaching enemy forces. Such defense forces rarely exceed squad size. The self-defense units are normally found in VC controlled areas while the secret self-defense units are found in contested or RVN controlled areas.

NVA units operating in South Vietnam set the pattern for the organizational structure of the VC main force regiment. A typical regiment has two to four rifle battalions and one artillery or heavy weapons battalion. Separate main and local force battalions are similar and have three or four rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. The main forces usually have the newer model small arms and heavier caliber crew served weapons. VC companies have three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon. The rifle platoons have three rifle squads. VC units vary considerably in strength and equipment. The regular units are usually encountered in platoon or squad strength but are quite flexible in organization.

VC operations are usually planned in detail and based on careful reconnaissance. Emphasis is placed on speed, security, surprise and deception. The VC usually attack when they feel the odds are greatly in their favor or the tactical situation is most advantageous. A certain lack of flexibility is noticeable in some VC operations. Once a plan has been made they seem reluctant to depart from it. They show great caution in determining in detail the size, disposition and direction of movement of their opponent. The VC use the ambush as one of their most effective offensive weapons. The normal practice is to ambush along roads, trails, landing zones and streams. Attacks on outposts or cities are used as bait to lure reaction forces into prepared ambush areas. Their ambushes are usually short, violent actions followed by a rapid withdrawal.

Other VC offensive tactics are raids, harassing operations and infiltration. Raids are conducted by units from squad to regimental size. Harassing operations include sniper fire, mortar and recoilless rifle attacks, and other methods. Infiltration is a tactic at which the VC are experts. Particularly important is their habit of infiltrating friendly positions during periods of reduced visibility and adverse weather. Object of infiltration are sabotage, assassination, demoralization of enemy troops and collection of intelligence. Agents disguised as civilians are also infiltrated.

VC defensive tactics are centered around ways and means of escaping from enemy action. They utilize ambushes, almost limitless hiding places to include tunnels, spider holes, and other underground means. They prepare extensive defensive positions throughout their operational area. Their positions are characterized by defense in depth, mutual support, overhead cover and maximum use of cover and concealment.

Booby traps are favorite weapons of the Viet Cong. Grenades, spike traps, poison arrows, and other means are used to harass, slow down, confuse and kill their enemies. Grenades are commonly used as booby traps as they are readily adaptable. Artillery and mortar shells are often rigged for detonation as booby traps. Spiked foot and man traps, crude but effective trip wire devices, and explosive pens and cigarette lighters are also employed. Their imagination in the use of booby traps is unlimited.

Antipersonnel and antivehicular mines are used extensively in VC operations. They are often of crude home-made varieties. Others are similar to those in the U.S. inventory. Some are contact detonated and others are detonated on command from a distance. AP mines are used to defend entrances to VC underground hiding places and along trails. AT mines are used on roads and trails.

The present VC weapons inventory consists of a mixed grouping of French, U.S. and Bloc individual and crew served weapons. Local manufacture of crude weapons has decreased. Many main force units are in possession of CHICOM 7.62mm small arms. Captured US carbines, M1 rifles, and BAR's are still found among VC units. Pistols are usually reserved for political and military cadre. The VC have a wide variety of machine guns. German, Soviet, and CHICOM 7.62mm light and heavy machine guns are the most common types but some units are equipped with .50 caliber heavy machine guns for use against personnel, vehicles and aircraft. They also employ recoilless rifles and mortars in heavy weapons support units, 57 and 75mm recoilless rifles are available to the VC as well as rocket launchers, 60, 81 and 82mm mortars.

The VC is an elusive and determined foe. He is well organized along political and military lines and employs his tactics well. He is an expert in many fields and is a ruthless fighter. He is not, however, an invincible foe. He can and will be defeated.

WINNING AND MAINTAINING CIVILIAN SUPPORT

The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) has been harassed by Communist-instigated guerrilla warfare since it first obtained independence from France. In order to meet this threat the government has committed a major portion of its human and material resources to defeating the Viet Cong. At the same time, it has attempted to provide its rural people with the economic and social benefits of development. Free World military and economic assistance programs are designed to support the efforts of the Vietnamese government and people toward both these objectives.

Political power in the Government (GVN) is concentrated at the national level; most important decisions and major programs originate and are directed from Saigon. The Prime Minister is the real head of the government and is assisted in the development of policies by the heads of the various ministries. These policies, decisions, and programs are then passed to the lower echelons of the government -- corps, division, province, district, village and hamlet -- for execution.

The first command level of government below Saigon is the corps - each of the four corps commanders acts as the government representative in his Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). Not all instructions originating at the national level pass through the corps headquarters. Routine administrative instructions from the various ministries in Saigon normally go directly to the province chief, bypassing the corps and division headquarters which are primarily concerned with tactical operations. There are 43 provinces in the country. Below the province, the next subdivision of government is district, which is similar to our county. Districts are divided into villages, with an average of 8 - 12 per district. Villages normally consist of 4 - 6 hamlets. Historically, the village has been the most important organization for local government, and even today, it retains many essential legal and tax collecting functions.

Winning and maintaining the friendship and cooperation of the Vietnamese civilians living within the operational area is an essential step in reducing the effectiveness of the local Viet Cong guerrilla -- they can not operate effectively without civilian support. A major aspect of our military presence that contributes toward good civil-military relations is the soldiers positive attitude in his dealings with local civilians.

The Viet Cong attempt to separate our soldiers from the local civilians by showing that we are cruel, unthinking, and not concerned with the welfare of the local people. The VC can be defeated in these efforts by the strength and generosity we show in our daily life. The "Nine Rules" for the military man in Vietnam provide the guide for doing this. They are:

1. Remember we are guests here: We make no demands and seek no special treatment.
2. Join with the people: Understand their life, use phrases from their language and honor their customs and laws.

3. Treat women with politeness and respect.
4. Make friends among the soldiers and common people.
5. Always give the Vietnamese the right of way.
6. Be alert to security and ready to react with your military skill.
7. Do not attract attention by loud, rude or unusual behavior.
8. Avoid separating ourselves from the people by a display of wealth or privilege.
9. Above all else, we are members of the US military forces on a difficult mission, responsible for all our official and personal action. Reflect honor upon ourselves and the United States of America.