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recruit 1 (normass/deepe)

(This is the second of a three-part series on Communist strategy for the remainder of 1968).

SAIGON, JULY 9--The Viet Cong High ~~Com~~ Command has ordered the urban population of this jittery capital city to be organized into Communist self-defense platoons.

The orders, issued in April, were contained in an elaborate, detailed directive recently captured by Allied forces. The directive also applies to Saigon's Chinese twin-city of Cholon and the urban sections of Gia Dinh province, which surrounds the capital city.

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recruit 2 (normass/deepe)

The directive reads in part:

"Any bloc^K or whole street of Saigon should be ~~organ~~ organized into one platoon of people's self-defense force.... This is a struggle for human power against the (anti-Communist) Vietnamese government to recruit the people and organize them into self-defense forces at blocs,^{BLOCKS,} streets or subprecincts."

Just how successful the Viet Cong have been is still unknown--and will probably remain so until a critical time, such as during a Communist ground assault from the outside of the city when the urban sympathizers would be ordered to emerge. ~~Any~~ ^{are often termed} of these new urban recruits ~~would be~~ ^{V.I.E.T.N.A.M.E.S.E} ~~called~~ ^{cards} "legal" Viet Cong; they hold valid/government identity/and residence papers, but would be working underground ~~for~~ for the Communists until ordered to reveal themselves at a decisive time.

The anti-Communist Vietnamese government is also attempting to arm some of the Saigonese and have met with some success.

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recruit 3 (normass/deope)

The Viet Cong directive, which called for the recruiting of at least one and a maximum of two platoons for a long street, also ordered that small base areas—or "safe places for Communist activity"—be established along urban Saigon streets where Communists could meet to ~~exchange~~ exchange information, hide out, receive instructions and store their munitions. Several light mobile ^{units} battalions of the elite C-10 sapper unit, currently estimated to total roughly 1200 men, have roamed through Saigon for months, carrying out terrorist, sabotage and assassination missions.

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recruit 4 (normass/deepe)

The urban Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh complex is ~~the militar~~ a military hub, called the T-700 region, operating directly under the Viet Cong High Command. This hub is currently expected to be a pivotal battleground in the future as Communist ~~big-3~~ big-unit and guerrilla formations slash into the city from the outside while underground Communist cadre ~~attempt~~ ^{attempt to} to spark ^{try} revolution from the inside of the city.

~~Immediate~~

Immediately outside this urban hub, the outer Saigon perimeter has been carved up into five Communist sub-divisions--like five slices of a pie, all leading towards the capital. Each sub-division also operates directly under the Viet Cong High Command, called the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN).

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recruit 5 (normass/deepe)

In the past several months, the Communist headquarters has also ordered a significant escalation in their command organization, with each of the five sub-divisions directed to establish a division headquarters. These five sub-divisions form an irregular circle around Saigon, with a ⁵⁰ radius varying from 35 miles from Saigon on the south to ~~fifty~~ miles from Saigon on the east.

Other intelligence sources also report the Communists have already begun recruiting, organizing the population into ~~a~~ self-defn defense forces and issuing weapons to the peasants in some villages of Gia Dinh province within twenty miles from Saigon.

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recruit 6 (normass/deepe)

mult-layered

The Viet Cong High Command has also laid down specific infantry and support unit requirements for each sub~~or~~ of the five sub-divisions, and for districts, villages and hamlets within each sub-division.

Each of the five subdivi sub-divisions surround Sai surrounding Saigon has been ordered to maintain the following: at least one full regiment infantry regiment of regular troops, one battalion of artillery (involving three types of weapons: ~~metal~~ mortars, recoilless we guns or rockets), one battalion of three companies of commandos (used in spearheading ground assaults), one signal company for the headq sub-division headquarters, one platoon for ground-line telephones, one platoon for radio communications, one company of eng engineers, used for sabotage of either ground or water communications into Saigon, and one platoon of flamethrowers.

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recruit 7 (normass/deepe)

Each of the five sub-divisions is then broken down into four to seven districts. In addition to the requirements at the higher sub-division level, each district has also been directed to maintain the following unit strengths: ~~one~~ one autonomous battalion of regular troops; one artillery company of four to ~~six~~ six ~~weapons~~ mortars, rockets or recoilless weapons; one engineering platoon, with a second one added for sabotage of waterways and bridges; one commando platoon; one reconnaissance platoon; ~~one~~ heavy weapons battalion; one platoon of sappers for sabotage, terrorism and assassinations.

In addition, the village level within each district has been ordered by the Communist High Command to maintain at least two and a maximum of three ~~quad~~ squads of local guerrillas. At the hamlet level ~~(several~~ (several hamlets comprise a village), Communist cadre have been ordered to recruit and organize "in order to develop the ~~guerilla~~ guerrillas as widely and deeply as possible." These ~~are~~ guerrillas are formed into self-defense forces, to defend their own home areas, but are also invaluable in acting as porters and guides for the regular, big-unit formations.

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recruit 8 (bor (normass/deepe)

Big-UNIT

The current Communist order of battle ~~around~~ in the environs of Saigon is estimated to be roughly the following: ~~eight infantry regiments~~ five division headquarters commands, ~~with~~ without divisional unit formations; eight infantry regiments (one for each of the five sub-divisions, plus three as general reserve); ~~one~~ the ~~1st~~ 208th Rocket and Heavy Weapons Regiment of four battalions; twenty separate regular and autonomous infantry battalions, operating independently from the regiments; six separate battalions of artillery, including two battalions of 122 mm. rockets, one battalion of 107 mm. weapons, one battalion of 120 mm. weapons, one battalion of recoilless weapons and one battalion of anti-aircraft weapons, plus many ~~speciali~~ specialized units.

Generally, the Communist battalions are manned by 300 to 450 ~~troopers~~ troops, but it is currently unknown whether the Communist units are up to full strength.

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recruit 9 (normass/deepe)

If the directive of the Communist High Command has already been fulfilled, the equivalent of at least five Communist divisions are within ready walking distance to Saigon. However, some Allied sources believe the Communist units around Saigon are currently withdrawing slightly to intermediate base areas. While these Allied sources believe the Communists will launch into another assault into Saigon, they admit the timing, scope, magnitude and form of the action is still un unknown. The Allied command here remains confident that the Communists will fail fail in their military efforts to occupy the capital to to and to topple the constitutional to South Vietnamese government.

(Hark: ^{send} sorriest I was unable to this off to you over the week-ends; I drove to Bien Hoa to check on this more. I'll ^{the} send third article late today or early tomorrow. I'll have to cable it, but will try to airmail all of the refugee articles. Tomorrow, I'll go to the Seventh Fleet on a press trip with President Thieu—I don't know if that will turn up a story or not. You might advise John Hughes that the situation is pretty quiet here now and no one is sure when that it will change. Regards Bev).

--end reuter