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Chieu Hoi

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The Chiêu Hồi Program ([tliạwl hojII] (also spelled "chu hoi" or "chu-hoi" i English) loosely translated as "Open Arms"[1]) was an initiative by the South Vietnamese to encourage defection by the Viet Cong and their supporters to the side of the Government during the Vietnam War.

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Campaign [edit]



Chieu Hoi Mission by Craig L. Stewart, U. S. Army Vietnam Combat Artists Team IX (CAT IX 1969-70). Painting shows army soldiers airdropping Psy Op leaflets during the Vietnam War.

Defection was urged by means of a propaganda campaign, usually leaflets delivered by artillery shell or dropped over enemy-controlled areas by aircraft, or messages broadcast over areas of South Vietnam.[1] A number of incentives were offered to those who

chose to cooperate, along with psychological warfare to break enemy morale.

To further this aim, invitations to defect, which also acted as safe conduct passes, were printed on clear plastic waterproof bags used to carry ammunition for the US soldiers' M16 assault rifle. Each bag held one magazine and was sealed to prevent moisture from the jungle's humid climate from damaging the contents. When the magazine was needed during a firefight

with the enemy, the bag would be torn open and discarded, in the hope that it would later be discovered by enemy troops who would read the text and consider defection.

By 1967, approximately 75,000 defections had been recorded, but analysts speculate that less than 25% of those were genuine. [2] The program had some difficulty catching on, due in part to culture gap—errors, such as misspellings and unintentionally offensive statements—and worsened by communist reprisals against defectors and their families. [3][4] To make matters worse, as testified by Sergeant Scott Camil during the 1971 Winter Soldier Investigation, the passes were sometimes ignored by U.S. forces, and their holders shot while surrendering. [5]

Overall, however, the Chieu Hoi program was considered successful. [6] Those who surrendered were known as "Hoi Chanh" and were often integrated into allied units as Kit Carson Scouts, operating in the same area where they had defected. Many made great contributions to the effectiveness of U.S. units, and often distinguished themselves, earning decorations as high as the Silver Star. [1] The program was relatively inexpensive, and removed over 100,000 combatants from the field.



There is nowhere to run...nowhere to hide! The tanks and armored vehicles of the Blackhorse Regiment will find and destroy you! It is too late to fight. Beware Wist Cong, we are every-where! Rally now under the Chieu Hoi Program;

"Viet Cong, beware!" - Chieu Hoi leaflets

Safe conduct pass



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See also [edit]

Kit Carson Scouts

Notes [edit]

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- 5. ^ Testimony of Scott Camil, Winter Soldier Investigation

6. ^ Carafano, James Jay (2008). Msmanaging Mayhem . Greenwood Publishing Group. p. 98. ISBN 0-313-34892-8.

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External links [edit]

Archival collections [edit]

 Guide to the Joseph M. Carrier Collection on the Chieu Hoi Program and Vietnamese Conflict. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California.

Other [edit]

- The Chieu Hoi Program of Vietnam
- Chieu Hoi Leaflet Collection
- Vietnam War "Flag" Safe Conduct Passes
- Vietnam War Chieu Hoi



Categories: Vietnam War | Psychological warfare | Counter-insurgency | Military operations of the Vietnam War

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