

~~TOP SECRET~~

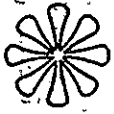
ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE SPECIAL APPENDIX  
FILED ON JUNE 21, 1971 WITH THE  
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

II. Portions of Exhibits 7 and 7A the disclosure of which would slow the U.S. program of shifting military responsibility in Vietnam to South Vietnamese forces

VOL IV, C. 8, pages i-viii, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 14 and following pages. VOL IV, C. 9(a) pages iii, iv, vi-ix, 1, 17, 20, 21, 32, 55-58 and following pages. VOL IV, C. 9(b), pages ii-iv, vi-vii, 7, 15, 17, 23, 25, 33 and following pages - Comments on the Pacification Program in the basic volume on Pacification and in volumes on "The Evolution of the War" endanger the essential Government of Vietnam interest in and support of the pacification program by:

- (1) Citing overparticipation by the US in a program which should have been essentially Vietnamese in character.
- (2) Documenting friction and competition between US agencies in Vietnam and Washington to the detriment of the program.
- (3) Documenting efforts by the US to use foreign aid or US withdrawal as "leverage" to exert pressure on the GVN despite its status as a sovereign state.
- (4) Criticising the Vietnamese Government for lack of interest and emphasis on Pacification.
- (5) Describing prominent Vietnamese, many of whom are still active in the government, of corruption, inability, inertia, or lack of interest in the essential program.

Disclosure of these statements in an official Top Secret report presumably would subject the GVN and key officials to vituperation; cause the Pacification Program to be considered as US rather than Vietnamese; result in diversion of GVN emphasis to less critical programs; jeopardize US advisor relations with their Vietnamese counterparts; and endanger other critical programs in Vietnam.



# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

1945 - 1967

IV. C. 8.

RE-EMPHASIS ON PACIFICATION:

1965 - 1967

The United States Re-Emphasizes Pacification - 1965 to Present

An Examination of a Major Trend in our Effort

SUMMARY

By the summer of 1967, pacification had become a major ingredient of American strategy in Vietnam, growing steadily in importance and the amount of resources devoted to it. The U.S. Mission in Vietnam had been reorganized three times in 15 months and each reorganization had been designed primarily to improve the management of the pacification effort and raise its priority within our overall effort.

Pacification -- or as it is sometimes called by Americans, Revolutionary Development (RD) -- had staged a comeback in priority from the days in 1964 and 1965 when it was a program with little emphasis, guidance, or support. It has by now almost equalled in priority for the Americans the original priority given the Strategic Hamlet program in 1962-1963, although the Vietnamese have not yet convinced many people that they attach the same importance to it as we do.

This study traces the climb in pacification's importance during the last two years, until it reached its present level of importance, with further growth likely.

This study concentrates on American decisions, American discussions, American papers. It will be clear to the reader that, if this version of events is accurate, the Vietnamese played a secondary role in the move to re-emphasize pacification. It is the contention of this paper that this was indeed the case, and that the Americans were the prime movers in the series of events which led to the re-emphasis of pacification. This study does not cover many important events, particularly the progress of the field effort, the CIA-backed PAT/Cadre program, and GVN activity.

The process by which the American government came to increase its support for pacification is disorderly and haphazard. Individuals like Ambassador Lodge and General Walt and Robert Komer, seem in retrospect to have played important roles, but to each participant in a story still unfolding, the sequence may look different. Therefore, it is quite possible that things didn't quite happen the way they are described here, and someone else, whose actions are not adequately described in the files available for this study, was equally important.

Nor was there anything resembling a conspiracy involved. Indeed, the proponents of what is called so loosely in this paper "pacification" were often in such violent disagreement as to what pacification meant

that they quarreled publicly among themselves and overlooked their common interests. At other times, people who disagreed strongly on major issues found themselves temporary allies with a common objective.

Moreover, there is the curious problem of the distance between rhetoric and reality. Even during the dark days of 1964-1965, most Americans paid lip service, particularly in official, on the record statements, to the ultimate importance of pacification. But their public affirmation of the cliches about "winning the hearts and minds of the people" were not related to any programs or priorities then in existence in Vietnam, and they can mislead the casual observer.

The resurgence of pacification was dramatically punctuated by three Presidential conferences on Pacific islands with the leaders of the GVN -- Honolulu in February, 1966, Manila in October, 1966 (with five other Chiefs of State also present), and Guam in March, 1967. After each conference the relative importance of pacification took another leap upward within the U.S. Government -- reflecting a successful effort within the U.S. Government by its American proponents -- and the U.S. tied the GVN onto Declarations and Communiques which committed them to greater effort.

In addition, each conference was followed by a major re-organization within the U.S. Mission, designed primarily to improve our management of the pacification effort. After Honolulu, Deputy Ambassador Porter was given broad new authority to run the civilian agencies. After Manila, Porter was directed to re-organize the components of USIA, CIA, and AID internally to create a single Office of Civil Operations (OCO). And after Guam, OCO -- redesignated as CORDS -- was put under the control of General Westmoreland, who was given a civilian deputy with the personal rank of Ambassador to assist him.

The low priority of pacification in 1965 was the understandable result of a situation in which battles of unprecedented size were taking place in the highlands and along the coast, the air war was moving slowly north towards Hanoi, and the GVN was in a continual state of disarray.

But a series of events and distinct themes were at work which would converge to give pacification a higher priority. They were to meet at the Honolulu conference in February, 1966.

## I. Threads That Met At Honolulu

### A. Hop Tac

The first was the hold-over program from 1964-1965 -- pacification's one priority even then, the Hop Tac program. It had been suggested first by Lodge on his way home from his first Ambassadorship, and Taylor and Westmoreland had given it recognition as a high priority program. Although Westmoreland judged it repeatedly as a partial success, it appears now to have been a faultily conceived and clumsily executed program. It was conceptually unsound, lacked the support of the Vietnamese, created disagreements within the U.S. Mission which were never resolved, and then faded away. So unsuccessful was it that during its life span the VC were able to organize a regiment -- 165A -- in the Gia Dinh area surrounding Saigon, and thus forced MACV in late 1966 to commit three U.S. infantry battalions to Operation FAIRFAX to protect the capital. No one analyzed Hop Tac before starting FAIRFAX. With the beginning of FAIRFAX, Hop Tac was buried quietly and the United States proceeded to other matters.

### B. Ambassador Lodge and the True Believers

Henry Cabot Lodge returned as Ambassador in August of 1965, and immediately began to talk of pacification as "the heart of the matter." In telegrams and Mission Council meetings, Lodge told the President, the GVN, and the Mission that pacification deserved a higher priority. Because he saw himself as an advocate before the President for his beliefs rather than as the overall manager of the largest overseas civil-military effort in American history, \* Lodge did not try, as Ambassador Maxwell Taylor had done, to devise an integrated and unified strategy that balanced every part of our effort. Instead, he declared, in his first month back in Vietnam (September, 1965), that "the U.S. military was doing so well now that we face a distinct possibility that VC main force units will be neutralized, and VC fortresses destroyed soon," and that therefore we should be ready to give pacification a new push. While his involvement was irregular and inconsistent, Lodge did nonetheless play a key role in giving pacification a boost. His rhetoric, even if vague, encouraged other advocates of pacification to speak up. The man he brought with him, Edward Lansdale, gave by his very presence an implicit boost to pacification.

### C. The III Marine Amphibious Force

Meanwhile, to their own amazement, the Marines were discovering that the toughest war for them was the war in the villages behind them near the Da Nang air base, rather than the war against the main force, which had retreated to the hills to build up. In the first 12 months of their deployment, the Marines virtually reversed their emphasis; turning away

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\* No other American Ambassador has ever had responsibility and authority even close to that in Saigon; only military commands have exceeded it in size.

from the enemy to a grueling and painfully slow effort to pacify the villages of the central coast in their three TAORs. It was a job that Americans were not equipped for, and the Marine effort raised some basic questions about the role of U.S. troops in Vietnam, but nonetheless, the Marines began to try to sell the rest of the U.S. Government on the success and correctness of their still unproved strategy. The result was a major commitment to the pacification strategy by a service of the U.S. Armed Forces, and influence on the other services, particularly the Army.

#### D. Washington Grumbles About The Effort

When Lodge was Ambassador, there was widespread concern about the management of the Mission. Lodge was admittedly not a manager. This concern led to a major conference at Warrenton in January of 1966, during which increased emphasis on pacification and better organization within the U.S. Mission were the main topics. Improving the Washington organizational structure was raised, but not addressed candidly in the final report; Washington seemed far readier to tell Saigon how to reorganize than to set their own house in order. But Warrenton symbolizes the growing dissatisfaction in Washington with the Mission as it was.

#### E. Presidential Emphasis on the "Other War" and Press Reaction

Finally, there was the need of the President, for compelling domestic political reasons, to give greater emphasis to "the other war." With the first full years of major troop commitment ending with victory not yet in sight, there was a growing need to point out to the American public and to the world that the United States was doing a great deal in the midst of war to build a new Vietnam. While this emphasis did not necessarily have to also become an emphasis on pacification, it did, and thus the President in effect gave pacification his personal support -- an act which was acutely felt by Americans in Vietnam.

#### F. Meanwhile, Back at the War...

A summary of the MACV Monthly Evaluations and other reports is contained here, showing how the U.S. command saw its own progress. The summary suggests that MACV foresaw heavy fighting all through 1966, and did not apparently agree with Ambassador Lodge's predictions and hopes that a major pacification effort could be started, but the issue was not analyzed before decisions were made.

## II. Honolulu

### A. The Conference - February 1966

The details of the working sessions at the Honolulu conference do not appear, in retrospect, to be nearly as important on the future

emphasis on pacification as the public statements that came out of Honolulu, particularly the Declaration itself. The discussions and the Declaration are summarized, including the President's final remarks in plenary session.

B. Public Impact...

The press reaction to the conference is summarized.

III. Honolulu to Manila

A. Saigon: Porter in Charge

The first reorganization now took place, and Deputy Ambassador Porter was put in direct charge of the civilian agencies. His responsibility and his ability to carry out his responsibility were not equal from the outset, and Porter saw his role in different terms than those in Washington who had given him his difficult task. A major problem was the lack of full support that Porter received from Ambassador Lodge, who had never been fully in favor of the reorganization. Another problem was the lack of a parallel structure in Washington, so that Porter found himself caught between the Washington agencies and their representatives in Saigon, with Komer (see below) as a frequent participant. Nonetheless, Porter accomplished a great deal in the months this arrangement lasted; it just wasn't as much as Washington sought.

B. Washington: Komer As The Blowtorch

In Washington, the President selected a McGeorge Bundy deputy, R. W. Komer, to be his Special Assistant on non-military activities in Vietnam. Komer did not have the same kind of authority over the Washington agencies that Porter, in theory, had over the Saigon extensions. Komer pushed pacification hard, and became the first senior official, with apparently ready access to the President, who put forward the pro-pacification position consistently in high level meetings. His mandate was contained in a loosely worded NSAM, 343, dated March 28, 1966. During the summer of 1966, Komer applied great pressure to both the Mission and the Washington agencies (thus earning from Ambassador Lodge the nickname of "Blowtorch"), with a series of cables and visits to Vietnam, often using the President's name.

C. Study Groups and Strategists: Summer 1966

With Porter and Komer in their new roles, a series of Task Forces and Study Groups began to produce papers that gave a better rationale and strategy to pacification. These included the Army study called PROVN, the Priorities Task Force in Saigon, and the Roles and Missions Study Groups in Saigon. At the same time, Westmoreland, whose year end wrap-up message on January 1, 1966, had not even mentioned pacification, sent

in a new long range strategy which emphasized pacification, to Lodge's pleasure. MACV also produced a new position on revamping ARVN, and briefed the Mission Council on it in August, 1966. The Honolulu emphasis was beginning to produce tangible results on the U.S. side.

#### D. The Single Manager

Despite the movement described in the above three sections, Washington wanted more, and was not satisfied with the rate of progress. Komer, therefore, in August of 1966 had produced a long paper which offered three possible changes in the management structure of the Mission. They were: (1) put all pacification responsibility and assets, including MACV Advisors, under Porter; (2) reorganize the civilian structure to create a single office of operations, and strengthen MACV internally, but leave the civilians and the military split; (3) give Westmoreland full pacification responsibility. The Mission rejected all these ideas, offering in their stead the proposal that Washington leave Saigon alone for a while, but the pressure for results and better management was too great, and the inadequacies of the Mission too obvious, to leave it alone. Secretary McNamara weighed in at this point with a draft Presidential memorandum proposing that Westmoreland be given responsibility for pacification. Komer and JCS concurred in it, but State, USIA, AID, and CIA nonconcurred. McNamara, Katzenbach, and Komer then went to Saigon to take a look at the situation. When they returned, Katzenbach, new to the State Department and previously uninvolved in the problem, recommended that Porter be told to reorganize the civilians along the lines previously discussed (similar to Komer's Alternative Number 2). The President agreed, discussing it with Lodge and Westmoreland at Honolulu. But he added a vital warning: he would give the civilians only about 90 to 120 days to make the new structure work, and then would reconsider the proposal to transfer responsibility for pacification to MACV.

#### E. The Manila Conference

The decision had not yet been transmitted to Saigon, but it had been made. At Manila, with six other heads of state in attendance, the discussion turned to other matters. At Manila, in the final Declaration, the GVN announced that they would commit half the armed forces to securing operations in support of pacification/RD. This had previously been discussed, but it was the public commitment that really mattered, and now it was on the record.

### IV. OCO to CORDS

#### A. OCO on Trial: Introduction

The Office of Civil Operations was formed, creating confusion and resentment among the agencies, but also marking an immediate and major



step forward. The example of the civilians moving at this pace also created pressure and conflict within MACV, which was for the first time confronted with a strong civilian structure. The GVN indicated that it understood and approved of the new structure.

#### B. OCO on Trial: Too Little Too Late -- Or Not Enough Time?

Although it was slower than Washington desired, OCO did get off to a start in December of 1966. Wade Lathram, who had been USAID Deputy Director, was chosen to head up OCO -- a choice that was unfortunate, because Lathram, a skilled and cautious bureaucrat, was not the kind of driving and dynamic leader that OCO -- in a brink of disaster situation from its inception -- needed.

Even worse, Porter was almost immediately diverted from OCO to pay more attention to other matters. While the planners had hoped that Porter would take OCO in hand and give Lathram direct guidance, instead he left Lathram in control of OCO and was forced to turn his attentions to running the Mission, during a long vacation (one month) by Lodge.

The most dramatic action that was taken was the selection of the Regional Directors, a move which even attracted newspaper attention. They included Henry Koren, formerly Porter's deputy; John Paul Vann, the controversial former MACV advisor; and Vince Heymann of the CIA.

Slowly, the OCO then turned to picking its province representatives. All in all, OCO accomplished many things that had never been done before; given time it could no doubt have done much more. But it was plagued from the outset by lack of support from the agencies and their representatives in Saigon, and Washington made higher demands than could be met in Saigon.

#### C. Time Runs Out

It is not clear when the President made the decision to scrap OCO. He communicated his decision to his field commanders at Guam, but there was a two-month delay before the decision was announced publicly or discussed with the GVN.

#### D. The CORDS Reorganization

As Bunker took over the Mission, there was a considerable turnover in key personnel. Bunker asked Lansdale and Zorthian to stay on, but Porter, Habib, Wehrle, all left just as Locke, Komer, Calhoun, Cooper, and General Abrams all arrived.

In the new atmosphere, Komer took the lead, making a series of recommendations which maintained the civilian position within MACV, and Westmoreland accepted them.

An example of Komer's influence was the question of the role of the ARVN divisions in the RD chain of command, and here Westmoreland took Komer's suggestion even though it meant a reversal of the previous MACV position.

E. The Mission Assessment as CORDS Begins

The situation inherited by CORDS was not very promising. Measurements of progress had been irrelevant and misleading, and progress by nearly all standards has been slow or nonexistent. At this point, the study of CORDS and pacification becomes current events.

## I. Threads that Met at Honolulu

### A. Hop Tac

While pacification received a low emphasis during troubled 1964-1965, there was one important exception: the Hop Tac program, designed to put "whatever resources are required" into the area surrounding Saigon to pacify it. The area was chosen by Ambassador Lodge in his last weeks as Ambassador in June, 1964, and Hop Tac deserves study because both its failures and limited achievements had many of the characteristics of our later pacification efforts -- and because, like all pacification efforts, there was constant disagreement within the Mission, the press, and the Vietnamese as to how well the program was doing.

Hop Tac -- an intensive pacification effort in the provinces ringing Saigon -- was formally proposed at a high level strategy session in Honolulu in July of 1964 by Lodge, then on his way home from his first assignment as Ambassador. In a paper presented to Secretaries Rusk and McNamara and incoming Ambassador Taylor at Honolulu (dated June 19, 1964), Lodge wrote:

"A combined GVN-US effort to intensify pacification efforts in critical provinces should be made...The eight critical provinces are: Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Hau Nghia, Long An, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Vinh Long, and Quang Ngai. Top priority and maximum effort should be concentrated initially in the strategically important provinces nearest to Saigon, i.e., Long an, Hau Nghia, and Binh Duong. Once real progress has been made in these provinces, the same effort should be made in the five others." 1/

General Taylor and General Westmoreland began Hop Tac, setting up a new and additional headquarters in Saigon which was supposed to tie together the overlapping and quarrelsome commands in the Saigon area. The Vietnamese set up a parallel, "counterpart" organization, although critics of Hop Tac were to point out that the Vietnamese Hop Tac headquarters had virtually no authority or influence, and seemed primarily designed to satisfy the Americans. (Ironically, Hop Tac is the Vietnamese word for "cooperation," which turned out to be just what Hop Tac lacked.)

Hop Tac had a feature previously missing from pacification plans: it sought to tie together the pacification plans of a seven-province area (expanded from Lodge's three provinces to include the adjacent provinces of Phuoc Tuy, Bien Hoa, Phuoc Thanh, and Gia Dinh, which surround Saigon like a doughnut), into a plan in which each province subordinated its own priorities to the concept of building a "giant oil spot" around Saigon. In a phrase which eventually became a joke in the Mission, the American heading the Hop Tac Secretariat at its inception, Colonel

Jasper Wilson, briefed senior officials on the creation of "rings of steel" which would grow outward from Saigon until the area from the Cambodian border to the South China Sea was secure. Then, according to the plan, Hop Tac would move into the Delta and North. Colonel Wilson ordered his staff to produce a phased plan in which the area (Map 1) to be pacified was divided into four circles around Saigon. Each ring was to be pacified in four months, according to the original plan, which never had any chance of success. But Wilson, under great pressure from his superiors, ordered the plan produced, got his Vietnamese counterparts to translate it, and issued it. The kickoff date for Hop Tac was to be September 12, 1964: the operation, a sweep into the VC-controlled pineapple groves just west and southwest of the city of Saigon -- the VC base nearest to the city, which had not been entered by the GVN since the last outpost had been abandoned in 1960.

The operation began on schedule, with elements of the 51st Regiment moving toward their objective west of Saigon. During the second day of the operation, the unit ran into a minefield and took numerous casualties. Shortly thereafter, instead of continuing the operation, the unit broke off contact and, to the amazement of its advisors, turned back towards the city of Saigon. When next located it was in the middle of Saigon participating in the abortive coup d'etat of September 13, 1964.

From that point on, Hop Tac was a constant source of dispute within the U.S. Mission. Almost to a man, the civilian agencies "supporting" Hop Tac felt that the program was unnecessary, repetitive, and doomed. They claimed that they preferred to work through existing channels, although these, in MACV's view, were inadequate. This view was not stated openly, however, since the Ambassador and General Westmoreland had committed all U.S. agencies to full support. On October 6, 1964, for example, General Taylor sent Washington an EXDIS cable in which he discussed and rejected a suggestion to decentralize the pacification effort, and instead listed several actions that the Mission would take. First among these was a "unanimous recommendation" that the Mission "give full support to Hop Tac Plan, assuring it the necessary priority to give it every chance to succeed...When Hop Tac priorities permit, concentrate on selected weak areas." 2/ Thus there was a reluctance to criticize the program directly.

Deadlines slipped continually; phase lines were readjusted; the official count of "pacified" hamlets climbed steadily. But a special study of the area made in October, 1964, by representatives of USOM, USIS, and MACV concluded: "Generally speaking, Hop Tac, as a program, does not appear to exist as a unified and meaningful operation." 3/

The official view of Hop Tac was that the new coordinating machinery was doing some good. Thus, during a period in which cables on the general situation were rather gloomy, Ambassador Taylor could tell the President

in his weekly NODIS that while "pacification progress throughout the rest of Vietnam was minimal at best, largely because of the political climate...Some forward movement occurred in the Hop Tac effort growing out of U.S. Mission discussions with the Prime Minister on September 25. The number of operating checkpoints in the Hop Tac area increased markedly; command areas were strengthened; available troop strength increased." 4/ Minor statistical advances, taken out of context, were continually being used in the above manner to prove overall progress.

The MACV Command History for 1964 reflects the official view: "At the end of 1964, Hop Tac was one of the few pacification areas that showed some success and greater promise." 5/ But subsequent events in the area do not bear out this view. In February of 1966 for example -- 18 months after the birth of Hop Tac -- when the Hop Tac area was designated as one of the four "National Priority Areas," the briefers were unable to show Ambassadors Lodge and Porter any progress in the preceding year. They could not even produce a plan for the coming year. Originally Hop Tac was focused on cleaning out the nearest VC base areas, but by February of 1966 -- with the GVN unable to stop the growing VC build-up, the emphasis was "placed on lines of communications, with special attention to be given vital installations including Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut air bases and ammunition and gasoline depots." 6/ The best the briefers could do, in the final briefing prior to the Honolulu Conference, was to say that they hoped to pacify 72 hamlets in the entire seven-province area, and "consolidate" 144 hamlets in Gia Dinh -- which meant the hamlets ringing Saigon, including many which were really part of the city. Lodge and Porter were told that day "there has been a lessening of security in Hau Nghia and Gia Dinh provinces. RF and PF units generally are not up to authorized strengths. The new cadre program should be helpful in solving the problem of continued hamlet security after pacification...The 1966 plan is not overly optimistic from a military standpoint." 7/ (The memorandum recording of this meeting, made by a member of General Lansdale's staff, shows as the only Ambassadorial guidance after this sobering report: "Maps drawn to depict progress of Rural Construction (Pacification) should show as the goal only that area to be pacified during the year...The U.S. Mission manpower committee should look into the use of refugees in the national labor force.") 8/

The Vietnamese were cynical about Hop Tac; it was something, speculation ran, that General Khanh had to do to keep the Americans happy, but it was clearly an American show, clearly run by the United States, and the Vietnamese were reluctant to give it meaningful support. It was one of the first major programs with which the United States became publicly identified (since Diem had always kept the United States in as much of a background role as possible -- and its shortcomings were in part derived from this fact.

they commit the GVN to a continual expansionary effort on all sides of Saigon simultaneously, an effort which is beyond its capabilities. Above all, they ignore the political structure of the area around Saigon.

"3. The U.S. Mission has two broad courses of action available in regard to Hop Tac. First, the Mission Council may feel that the area encompassed by Hop Tac remains the first pacification priority of the U.S. and the GVN. If this is the considered judgment of the Mission Council, then we must seek ways of re-emphasizing, re-energizing and reorienting Hop Tac in order to achieve a dramatic and sustained success in pacification.

"4. There is an alternative open to the Mission Council. Perhaps it would be politically unwise to attempt to commit the GVN to re-emphasis of Hop Tac at this time. There are several facts which support this view:

"A. The GVN has never considered Hop Tac its own plan and its own number one priority. The staff planning for the plan was done almost entirely by the United States, and then translated into Vietnamese. It is, in the eyes of many Vietnamese, 'the plan of the Americans.'

"B. It is perhaps the most difficult area in the country in which to attempt pacification. Since it surrounds Saigon (but does not include it), every political tremor in the capital is felt in the neighboring area...the High Command has created chains of command in the area which are clearly designed primarily to prevent coups, and only secondarily to pacify the countryside. Another example: in the last 11 months, 24 out of 31 district chiefs and five out of seven province chiefs have been changed.

"C. Prime Minister Ky will never feel that Hop Tac is his plan. If he is seeking a major public triumph, and intends to devote his attention to achieving that triumph, it is unlikely that he will choose Hop Tac, which as mentioned above, is publicly considered an American plan. Moreover, to the extent that any Vietnamese is publicly connected with Hop Tac, it is Nguyen Khanh. For this reason, more than any other, the dangers of re-emphasizing Hop Tac outweigh the possible gains..."

Qui Nhon. This in turn led naturally to the later National Priority Area program, but had no other value.

With MACV reluctant to close down its Hop Tac Secretariat, with the civilian Americans giving Hop Tac only verbal support, and with the Vietnamese leaving a powerless staff at the headquarters, Hop Tac could well have survived as an appendix to the normal chain of command, as so many outdated structures survive in Vietnam because no one wants to admit their irrelevance. But General Westmoreland saw a way to dispose of Hop Tac cleanly and quietly in the summer of 1966, and he took it. At the Mission Council meeting of July 7, 1966:

"General Westmoreland then turned to the subject of Hop Tac. He summarized the purpose of the Hop Tac concept, which was implemented two years ago, and said that -- while it has enjoyed only modest success over the past two years -- the situation in the area surrounding Saigon/Cholon would be comparatively worse if we had not had the Hop Tac arrangement. He noted that recent organizational changes have taken place, which have resulted in the Capital Military Region becoming the Capital Military District (as part of the III Corps Tactical Zone) with Saigon remaining as an autonomous city. In view of these changes, there is some question of the validity of continuing with the original concept. More importantly, III Corps has a Revolutionary Development Council and a Hop Tac Council which results in some duplication of effort. Consequently, the General believes that these two councils should be merged, with the Revolutionary Development Council absorbing the Hop Tac Council. General Westmoreland asked the Mission Council to endorse this proposal for him to carry out. After brief discussion, Ambassador Lodge indicated his approval." 14/

By this time Hop Tac had long lost the "highest priority" which was supposed to justify it, and both the American and the Vietnamese had turned to other matters.

But Hop Tac was not adequately analyzed before embarking on other efforts, and its shortcomings were largely forgotten by the time that the still-deteriorating situation in Gia Dinh led MACV to commit three U.S. Army battalions to the inner area surrounding Saigon -- the original first phase of Hop Tac -- as part of Operation Fairfax in November of 1966. The Mission, with no institutional memory, forgot -- or never learned -- the lessons that Hop Tac could have offered.

Lodge), Sir Robert Thompson (whose Malayan experiences had led him to emphasize the police), Colonel Bohannon (who began as a Lansdale deputy, but whose views took a different line), the Marines (with their pacification efforts and CAP's near Da Nang), the CIA (which produced, with Lodge's strong support, the PAT's-turned RD cadre), USIA and AID (with their small but growing field programs), the Army (which entered the game late but elicited from Lodge on visits to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division and then the 1st Infantry Division, some of his longest and most glowing accounts of pacification in action. 19/)

These groups and individuals fought about details, sometimes debating minor points like medieval monks but also disagreeing on rather basic points -- such as whether the object was to gain the population's support or to control them by force. (A popular Marine saying, which tried to bridge the gap, went: "Get the people by the balls, and their hearts and minds will follow.") But each group found something that appealed to Lodge, and each in turn gained encouragement from him. The slow change in mood also affected Washington.

In dealing with his role in the re-emphasis of pacification, we must distinguish between Lodge's influence on our overall, or grand, strategy -- on which he was ultimately to have considerable impact -- and his influence on the operational details of the policy. The latter did not interest him on a continuing basis, and it is thus easy to underestimate his influence. There was, for example, a tendency in Saigon during his Ambassadorship to minimize his importance, since each agency could ignore him when he told them to do something and usually get away with it. But this popular view overlooked Lodge's impact in encouraging all sorts of people to emerge from parts of the USG with renewed hope for pacification. It overlooked the impact of his cables and statements, which added up to a massive endorsement of pacification. In his NODIS weeklies to the President, for example, pacification receives more attention than any other subject.

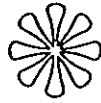
Alone, Lodge could have done little, if anything, to move the USG around. But his influence seems clear, more so in retrospect than at the time; at a time when frustrations were growing, he was emphasizing a different rhetoric and strategy.

The best way to show his emphasis is simply to quote from the cables and memoranda of the period. Each one shows Lodge, either directly or indirectly, putting forth his general beliefs -- sometimes contradictory. They form an important part of the background to Honolulu, where pacification was to get its biggest push to that date:

1. Lodge at the end of his first tour in Vietnam, defining pacification in his paper proposing Hop Tac:

"The first priority after the military have cleared an area is to bring about the selection of an able man for that area,





# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

## 1945 - 1967

IV. C. 9. (a)

EVOLUTION OF THE WAR

US/GVN Relations: 1963-1967

PART I

These problems were aggravated by the clear and growing lack of legitimacy of GVN. The generals led by Minh, who overthrew Diem, gained an aura of respectability by this act because Diem had so completely alienated the people. Whatever their "respectability" may have been worth went down the drain, however, when Khanh seized power and then later maneuvered Minh out of the country. Khanh's position as a brash usurper gave him little room for maneuver among Saigon's complex political currents, although for a time the U.S. counted on his "raw power." With subsequent shifts in the form and composition of government, the expediency and lack of legitimacy of GVN grew more conspicuous and more debilitating.

### Leverage

U.S. attempts to strengthen the GVN's will to govern and to pacify the countryside failed. Moreover, the attempts, conceived in haste, often backfired. In contrast to the steady discussion of alternatives among Washington agencies, the Embassy, and MACV on the subject of pressures on the North, the idea of pressures on GVN seldom surfaced. When it did surface, it was either brushed aside or rushed into. Leverage planning failed to receive even that quality and quantity of attention that pressures against North Vietnam planning did.

As a general rule, Washington was more interested in putting pressure on GVN than was the Embassy, with the notable exception of Taylor's initiatives in December, and MACV was the least interested of all. But these differences were less notable than was the almost universal consensus (most of the time) that the Vietnamese were too sensitive for such pressures to work, and that we had to accept the GVN's non-performance as the best available.

Starting with Rusk's conversation with Khanh at the end of May, 1964, and ending with Taylor's initiative in early December, the U.S. tried to use the prospect of U.S. force commitment as an inducement to the Vietnamese to do better. However, Taylor said that if this inducement were to fail, the U.S. should go ahead with its pressures against the North anyway. Taking this position meant that the attempted inducement was bluff. There is every sign, both in their non-performance and in their December-January defiance, that the GVN sized it up that way and called the bluff.

Our attempted leverage included both inducements and threats at one time and another; and neither worked out well. Rusk's May, 1964, conversation with Khanh, the intensification of pressures planning following the Honolulu Conference in June, and the shift of the Chairman, JCS to the post of Ambassador to SVN, all showed U.S. commitment. We hoped these measures and talks would directly contribute to GVN morale and effectiveness. However, they were followed by the July press leaks and by direct pressure to bomb North immediately. The July public endorsement of Khanh was intended to reassure all concerned of our support, and so to strengthen GVN. Then,

the Gulf of Tonkin incidents were followed promptly by Khanh's Constitution, which backfired against him and against us, weakening rather than strengthening GVN.

Taylor's bill of particulars against GVN in December was followed immediately by attacks on GVN by the Buddhists, and then shortly by the military, bringing down the government. Taylor's stern lecture to the Young Turks at this time met only with their defiance. They agreed to a compromise solution to the crisis when Taylor held up the GVN Defense Budget, and then reversed themselves after he released it. The first Flaming Dart raids, opening the deliberate U.S. bombing campaign against the North, were followed shortly by another coup attempt.

There was no disagreement among Washington, the Embassy, and MACV that U.S. commitments should be used to improve GVN's morale and performance. In contrast, however, they often disagreed about putting pressure on GVN. In January, 1964, State showed far more interest than did Lodge in using the AID negotiations to press GVN for more effort; in the upshot we gave them an AID increase with no strings attached. This disagreement continued for several months. McNamara leaned consistently toward giving GVN whatever it needed; only later did he begin to mention increasing our influence. But McNamara and JCS did prod Lodge into asking GVN why they were not progressing well. In May, 1964, Sullivan proposed direct entry of U.S. personnel into the Vietnamese chain of command; his idea was watered down considerably in the State Department, and disappeared at the Honolulu Conference because of opposition by Lodge and Westmoreland. Other proposals agreed to at the conference, relating to new actions and improved programs by GVN, interested State far more than they did the Embassy and MACV, as revealed in the follow-up.

By and large the same contrasts prevailed when Taylor was the Ambassador, although in December he was far more willing to press GVN than Lodge ever was. Even then, at the peak of the crisis, Taylor expressly rejected sanction. MACV generally rejected sanctions also, and seemed less willing to apply leverage in day-to-day matters than were U.S. civilians in the field. MACV studies on GVN ineffectiveness usually proposed more studies and never proposed pressure on GVN.

If U.S. force commitments and the record of GVN non-performance reflect the failure of leverage, what does the record tell us about how leverage could be made to work? Regrettably, the record tells us nothing about that; it merely shows that everything we tried went wrong. As noted, attempts at leverage or pressure on GVN were seldom thought through and studied carefully. One searches in vain for studies, memoranda, or widespread discussion of alternative techniques for leverage and of what our experience shows about how they might work. Pressures against the North, whose results have disappointed us, were a model of planning, foresight, and detailed consideration, compared to the subject of pressures on GVN. Yet GVN's failure was the heart of our policy problem throughout the period, as many feel it still is.

## The MACV Role

The MACV organization played an important, mostly hidden, role in US/GVN relations. At every level from Saigon to the districts, the advisory structure was the most pervasive instrument of intergovernmental contact. ARVN officers were accustomed to being spoon-fed military advice; so when military dominance of GVN brought these same officers to high positions in government, the advisor relationship conferred a latent diplomatic role upon MACV. Advisors were used as channels of communications on political matters and became the most reliable sources of information on impending coups. (On occasions such as the Rhade uprising and Ky's first attempt at a coup, senior MACV officers openly became diplomatic emissaries.)

We have less record than we would like of COMUSMACV's influence. He reported regularly to his military seniors only on strictly military matters. Detailed reports of his routine, daily dealings with counterparts were not required of MACV as they were of the Embassy.

From time to time COMUSMACV revealed his own independent objectives. He sought protection of the ARVN officer corps from political machinations and from unfavorable press stories in order to preserve their solidarity and morale; he pressed zealously for early introduction of U.S. ground forces and for their rapid build-up; he opposed encadrement and combined command with ARVN; he resisted exclusion of the military from pacification; he rejected sanctions against ARVN; he objected to the initial constraints on the use of American forces and wanted to be free to operate independently of ARVN.

General Westmoreland's strong position usually assured that his view prevailed. Extension of advisors, increased MAP resources, and the introduction of U.S. ground forces enhanced his relative position. His freedom from detailed reporting of daily contacts was itself an element of strength. When he received unwanted advice and directives, he set up studies (as in the Civic Action Program) to stall for time; when he lacked authority to operate freely, he planned ahead with the Vietnamese (as in the use of U.S. forces for independent offensive operations) and then presented the matter to Washington as a virtual fait accompli.

## Vietnamese Non-Performance and Sensitivity

Throughout this period the GVN failed to perform in almost every constructive respect. Pacification lagged, when not visibly retreating, even though the GVN was always willing to issue decrees, set up organizations we suggested, and so on. Khanh's promise to mobilize came to nothing. The VC defeated ARVN in bigger and bigger battles, until the military assessment of the situation permitted Westmoreland to call for over 200,000 U.S. troops.

Moreover, on issues purportedly relating to sovereignty or "face," the Vietnamese were and are quite sensitive, and the U.S. was consistently afraid to inflame this sensitivity. Both sides avoided many delicate topics. A prime example is the matter of the lack of a bilateral treaty. The U.S. operated, and still operates, under a Pentilateral protocol signed by the French and Bao Dai under the U.S. military assistance program to France before 1954. It gave U.S. advisers and officials virtual diplomatic status, which was reasonable back when there were less than two hundred of them in all Indochina. But it now applies to all U.S. personnel, and no one has wanted to stir things up.

The sensitivity problem cropped up often. For a time early in 1964, the GVN backed off from an agreement to extend U.S. advisors to district level, and when GVN did approve, they insisted that the advice be strictly military and that the advisors be labelled "subsector." In like manner, the III Marine Expeditionary Force became the III Marine Amphibious Force, because the French had called their Indochina force "expeditionary." But the GVN, and especially the military, agreed readily to new U.S. troop commitments.

The Vietnamese would often greet a U.S. representative, in moments of tension, with false or exaggerated stories of U.S. dealings, such as a complaint in January, 1964, about U.S. training and CIA contacts with the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao. In contrast, on cabinet appointments they often asked the Ambassador's opinion, and he customarily leaned over backward to avoid giving specific recommendations. Shared sensitivity, closely related to the lack of a treaty governing status of U.S. forces, prevented any move toward joint command and U.S. control of all military operations in Vietnam; both Westmoreland and the Vietnamese preferred to operate separately. The Embassy looked the other way from repressive police measures and political arrests unless these led to embarrassing press stories. When the Ambassador would raise this type of issue with the GVN, it proved always to be touchy.

Vietnamese sensitivity sometimes led to open displays of anti-Americanism. These happened on three main occasions: (1) when Khanh grumbled about being a puppet after the go-North leaks in July, 1964; (2) in the open rupture between Khanh and Taylor in December-January; and (3) in the January riots when rioters overran USIS buildings in Saigon and Hue.

#### Vietnamese Compliance More in Form Than in Substance

The Vietnamese nevertheless showed a ready willingness throughout the period to declare new policies, sign decrees, and engage in joint studies at our request. But as noted above, that did not mean we got the substance of what we wanted on such matters: The most important case of this kind was Khanh's ready agreement in March to "mobilize" South Vietnam. He promptly made a token announcement; and while students and other potential draft-eligibles waited anxiously to learn what he meant (as did we), he delayed

several weeks before any further announcement. Starting in May, he began announcing specifics and signing decrees, and kept the idea live for several months. However, strength of the RVNAF rose less in 1964 than it did in 1963\*, and the talk of non-military mobilization came to nothing.

The military and the more militant civilians, on whom the U.S. counted most heavily and regularly supported, turned out to have far more enthusiasm for going North and for other external adventures than they did for getting on with the job of effective government and pacification. They promised much on this latter score, but could not or would not deliver. Knowing that we had no one else to turn to, they continued their old habits and often openly did what they pleased about important matters. The go-North problem was particularly troublesome because the militants rejected the permanent division of Vietnam at the 17th parallel, upheld in practice by the U.S.

The following are interesting instances, among many, of their superficial compliance. They agreed readily to use U.S. advisers at the ministerial level (the brain trust), although there is no sign that the brain-trusters accomplished anything. Indeed, on all ten suggestions that accompanied President Johnson's 1964 New Year's Message to Minh, only the one on amnesty found them hesitant to express their full agreement. They regularly agreed on budgetary limits to keep inflation from getting out of hand, but never satisfied us on specifics through 1964 or the first half of 1965. They repeatedly agreed to relieve ineffective, corrupt commanders and officials, but delayed endlessly on doing it and generally promoted those whom they relieved. At Westmoreland's request, Khanh created the Hop Tac plan for pacification around Saigon; but it foundered, and eventually the Vietnamese killed it. When Lodge left Vietnam in June, 1964, he sealed his tour with a general agreement with Khanh on concept, scope, and organization of the pacification efforts; obtaining such agreements presented absolutely no problem. In December, 1964, the JGS issued a directive containing every MACV suggestion on how RVNAF should help pacification.

\* The end-year figures are as follows:

<u>South Vietnam</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>
Infantry-type Battalions	107	123	133
RVNAF Strength ('000)	397	514	571
Total Armed Strength ('000) (Included CIDG, police, etc.)	526	612	692

SOURCE: OSD SEA Statistical Summary, Tables 1 and 2

In July, 1964, Khanh created a National Security Council similar to ours, and it met regularly with the top group of Embassy people to talk agreeably about pacification and manpower problems. MACV set up joint inspection teams and joint studies with JGS people several times a year. The only thing of this class that had any visible follow-through was the joint planning group on bombing North and on other cross-border operations. Two battalions specifically declared ineffective by MACV suffered no penalty or improvement.

The militants' predilection for external adventures began to show in May, 1964, after the Embassy started pressing Khanh about his March agreements with McNamara. Khanh responded within a few days by saying he wanted to declare war, bomb the North with U.S. participation, bring 10,000 U.S. Army Special Forces troops into South Vietnam, "get rid of the politicians," and put Saigon strictly on a war footing. Lodge tried to cool him off, but Khanh brought up a less extreme version again with Rusk at the end of the month, saying that his government could not win without action outside South Vietnam. When Lodge returned from the Honolulu Conference in early June, Khanh responded to discussions of ARVN strength by trying to draw Lodge out on actions against the North. Then, when we did not move fast enough to suit him and Ky, they started a press campaign on the subject, and pressed Taylor more insistently. Finally, in December, when Taylor told GVN all the many ways they should improve to justify further U.S. involvement, their immediate reply included the comment that the U.S. program said nothing about Viet Cong use of Cambodia.

The press leaks about going North were the first major instance of their defiantly going ahead as they pleased against our wishes. Khanh's August constitution was a less flagrant case, because Taylor's words of caution were comparatively diffident. (Moreover, in the following August-September turbulence, Khanh let himself become clearly dependent on the Embassy when he talked to the Buddhist leaders.) In the December crisis the Young Turks defied Taylor at every turn following their dissolution of the HNC; and after a temporary agreement in January double-crossed Taylor, dismissed Huong, and took control of the formation of a new government. They guessed correctly that we saw no choice but to go along.

AFTERMATH OF THE DIEM COUPFirst Half of 19641. The Inheritance From 1963

The top ruling body of the Government of Vietnam at the end of 1963 was a Military Revolutionary Council of twelve generals, under the chairmanship of the affable and popular but seak General Duong Van "Big" Minh. The Council governed through an all-civilian cabinet headed by Premier Tho, having forbade all military officers to engage in politics. A Council of Notables served as a pseudo-parliament, with a purely advisory role; it included well-known Vietnamese politicians, but could not claim support of a broad popular base or the main political forces in Vietnam. While Premier Tho's previous connection with the Diem government was now a political liability, there was a shortage of national figures who were not tarred with this brush one way or another. 1/

On the U.S. side, General Harkins, COMUSMACV, who had long been known to be pro-Diem, was clearly on his way out, although his departure was to be delayed until the middle of 1964. Ambassador Lodge had replaced Nolting just before the Diem coup, and was held in that cautious respect appropriate to the widespread belief among Vietnamese that he had engineered it.

In the last weeks of 1963, the U.S. government reassessed the progress of the counterinsurgency effort and the policy options. Plans for phased withdrawal of 1,000 U.S. advisers by end-1963 went through the motions by concentrating rotations home in December and letting strength rebound in the subsequent two months. A realistic appraisal by Secretary McNamara showed that the VC were continuing to gain steadily, especially in the Delta. 2/ U.S. policy continued to be to provide U.S. resources and personnel to the extent necessary. 3/

The tone of USG internal documents and of its dealings with GVN was that of a benevolent big brother anxious to see little brother make good on his own -- but with the benefit of extensive advice. U.S. pressure induced the GVN to break up the palace guard and to move coup-protection Ranger units out into the countryside, though it turned out that other units stayed near Saigon for this purpose. A proposal to put all ammunition stocks in Vietnam under U.S. control surfaced in November, only to sink without a trace. 4/ There was gentle pressure to persuade the GVN to allow USOM economics staffs to share the offices of their counterparts, and to let them get involved extensively in GVN budgeting. 5/ The USIS and Ambassador



5. Opening Bids on Advice, Leverage, and AID, April-May, 1964

Armed with our declaration of support and with the promised further material assistance, General Khanh signed a mobilization decree on April 4; at the time the decree satisfied the USG as meeting McNamara's recommendation on the subject. 54/ However, Khanh delayed signing implementing decrees for the mobilization decree indefinitely; and it has never become clear what it would have meant, if implemented. In May, Khanh purportedly broadened the draft to include older and younger men, and announced formation of a new "Civil Defense Corps"; but neither came to anything. On April 4, Khanh also abolished the Council of Notables. This latter step he did on his own, without prior discussion with Lodge. As noted in section 1, Lodge, who always believed in the need and importance of constitutional government in SVN, felt no urgency for creating a democratic form of government, although many in State may have wanted to object to Khanh's actions. 55/ Such actions without prior consultation were to become a sore point later on with both State and the Embassy. Thus, what the USG actually got for the recognition and material support it gave Khanh in March was the dissolution of the Council of Notables. 56/

During April, Lodge and State continued to debate how hard to push GVN using AID leverage. Lodge agreed with the general principle that the Commercial Import Program (CIP) should not be increased until increased GVN expenditures quickened the economy and drove imports up. However, he noted that GVN had been given to understand that they could expect at least the \$95 million CIP in 1964 that Diem had in 1963, and that McNamara had said in Saigon and Washington that U.S. assistance to Vietnam would increase by about \$50 million. These assurances had spurred Oanh, Minister of National Economy, to ask for specific increases in CIP. Lodge thought the time unpropitious for detailed joint planning and for austerity measures as conditions for the last increment of 1964 CIP. Oanh received credit for being too busy with pacification planning and other matters to discuss such matters. Therefore, Lodge proposed to use the planning of the CY 1965 program as the right place to apply leverage. 57/

State reacted sharply, questioning whether the USG should let GVN off the hook on its March commitments that easily. Nevertheless, State acknowledged that "formal negotiations may not be desirable at this time," and settled instead for "constant dialogue to keep GVN aware of U.S. adherence to the new approach and of firm desire to see it implemented." The desired GVN actions included drawdown of foreign exchange reserves, promotion of exports, import austerity, and an anti-inflationary domestic policy. 58/

USOM then talked to Oanh about the commitments on the two sides. USOM felt that Oanh understood that GVN was to move first and be backed up by the USG as needed, but thought that some segments of GVN were dragging their heels to avoid living up to their commitments. USOM estimated a \$15-30 million drawdown of GVN foreign exchange reserves in 1964. 59/

In the last week of April, General Khanh asked Lodge for one American expert each in the fields of Finance-Economics, Foreign Affairs,

and Press relations to be assigned to him personally and to have offices, in "a convenient villa... We Vietnamese want the Americans to be responsible with us and not merely as advisors." This request revived the "brain trust" concept discussed with the Minh government around the first of the year. Commenting, Lodge noted that he had opposed pushing Americans into GVN because of Colonialist overtones; they would cause resentment, and a lessening of effort by the GVN, placing the blame on the U.S. Therefore, he had avoided raising the idea with Khanh. However, that Khanh himself now proposed it removed that objection, and Lodge felt that the U.S. should respond because it was an urgent necessity.

Late in the same meeting, Lodge told Khanh of a State Department proposal for civil administrators on a crash basis in partially pacified areas. His quick reply, "Yes...if you will accept losses."

Lodge recommended a Civil Administrative advisor to join the three others mentioned above, but he advised against more. He said there was no sense dumping several hundred advisors out there. In view of the "trail-blazing" nature of the move, he requested a member of the White House staff, possibly Forrestal, to come out for a conference. 60/ Ordinarily, it would be surprising that Lodge would make such a big issue of Khanh's revival of an idea that GVN had already advanced through Lodge and that the President himself had approved. However, his effusive reaction in this case merely underlines his oft-repeated reluctance to push GVN. Lodge presented the first three advisors to Khanh on May 6. 61/

On April 30, Lodge, Westmoreland, and USOM Director Brent met with several top members of GVN to discuss GVN's failure to disburse operating funds to the provinces, sectors and divisions and to correct the manpower shortage in ARVN and the paramilitary units. Lodge argued that the McNamara program was failing, not because U.S. support lagged, but because the necessary piaster support was missing. Moreover, he said, there was no shortage of piasters available to GVN. In reply, Oanh of the GVN said they had inherited a bad system from the French, and that he was now trying to implement new procedures. Khanh replied on the manpower problem that to raise the strength would require an ultimatum to the Corps Commanders, but then he also said that remedial moves were underway and were known to MACV. Khanh countered the budgetary argument by saying that he had still not received money from the U.S. to support increased pay for the paramilitary; Lodge replied that if he went ahead with the increased pay, the U.S. would meet the bill. Overall, the meeting was one of thrust and parry rather than of consultation. 62/ This meeting followed prodding from McNamara and JCS in a cable sent April 29. 63/

On May 4, Khanh told Lodge he wanted to declare war, bomb North Vietnam with U.S. bombers, put the country on a war footing, including "getting rid of the so-called politicians and having...a government of technicians," and bring in 10,000 U.S. Army special forces to "cover the whole Cambodian-Laotian frontier." Lodge was non-committal on U.S. forces, but said that the war came first and that democratic forms could wait. 64/ However, Khanh publicly called for an election by October of a Constitutional Assembly, apparently to bolster his public support; he had his share of rumors and political infighting. 65/

AMBASSADOR TAYLOR'S FIRST SEVEN MONTHS:Planning for "Bomb North" Amid Turbulence in the South1. Ambassador Taylor's Initiation, July, 1964

Ambassador Taylor arrived in Saigon amid the start of planning to extend the war outside the borders of South Vietnam. Rusk had discussed the options with Khanh on June 1, and the participants of the Honolulu Conference had mulled them over further. Although there was no formal decision to recommend new operations in Laos or North Vietnam, there was an atmosphere of expectation. A joint State-Defense message on June 27 authorized joint planning with the Vietnamese Joint General Staff for cross border operations in Laos; on June 30, Westmoreland discussed it with General Khiem, who agreed to initiate joint planning. 1/

Taylor came with a letter of support from the President that cleared up any previous doubt about the Ambassador's control over MACV:

"I want you to have this formal expression not only of my confidence but of my desire that you have and exercise full responsibility for the effort of the United States in South Vietnam...I wish it clearly understood that this overall responsibility includes the whole military effort in South Vietnam and authorizes the degree of command and control that you consider appropriate." 2/

Either the letter was intended to prevent confusion of authority such as existed among Lodge, Felt, and Harkins, or the expectation of greater militarization of the war made it appropriate to appoint Taylor Ambassador and to give him unchallenged authority.

Taylor met Khanh and presented his credentials on July 8. Khanh promised him "the frank cooperation of a soldier." He said the U.S. should not merely advise, but should participate in making and implementing plans; in this he still held the view he had expressed to Taylor when he, Khanh, was still a Corps Commander. (By referring to Zorthian's contacts with the Minister of Information, Khanh made it clear he had the brain trust idea in mind.) However, he noted that this degree of involvement should be kept secret, because of the criticism it would attract if known. They discussed Minh's trips around the country, and agreed these were useful and constructive. Finally, Taylor stressed the importance of Vietnamese unity and resolve. 3/

The next day Taylor called on the three Vice Premiers, Hoan, Do Mau, and Oanh, and received the civilian point of view. Hoan did most.

of the talking, saying that civilian politicians like himself wanted the Army to be supported by the people, but that Khanh and the MRC were difficult to work with: The ruling generals control everything. He said the II Corps Commander lived like a playboy, and that the people were outraged; "ever since we came to power we have been telling population we are soon going to have change, but it never comes. The people are becoming impatient." Moreover, he said, something must be done to raise the standard of behavior of the armed forces toward the population. Taylor received these views diplomatically. 4/

For a while there was a serious effort to go through with close meshing of USOM and GVN planning. On July 17 USOM met with Khanh, Hoan, Oanh and others as a group, which Khanh designated the National Security Council. They discussed joint planning and further meshing of US/GVN organizations, putting the stamp of approval on the arrangement in the Ministry of Information. On July 23 Taylor met Khanh and discussed a second meeting of the NSC. Khanh said the Vietnamese had some difficulty in adjusting their ministerial organization to the requirements of meshing with the U.S. mission subdivisions. Taylor responded that reciprocal adjustments were possible. 5/ Planning and discussion of cross-border operations continued actively. Offensive guerrilla operations in Laos were a major idea; small operations had already begun into North Vietnam, under OPLAN 34A. In the meeting on July 23, Khanh told Taylor he wanted to intensify the operations under 34A and to start air strikes against North Vietnam. He said again, as he had to Rusk on June 1, that he didn't like to look forward to the long, indecisive pull of the in-country pacification program, and doubted that the Army and the people would carry on indefinitely. 6/

The events of July 19-23 made it clear that GVN was straining at the leash; it started public lobbying for cross-border operations. On July 19 Air Marshal Ky spilled the beans to reporters on plans for operations into Laos. Khanh committed a similar indiscretion at a "Unification Rally" on the 19th, and these were followed by GVN press releases and editorials in the Saigon press urging a "march to the North." All these leaks directly violated Khanh's promises to Rusk on June 1 (above, p. 24). Taylor spoke to Khanh sharply about them, and pointed out that they could be interpreted as a campaign to force the USG's hand. Khanh insisted that such a campaign was the furthest thing from his mind; and then confirmed that it was exactly what he had in mind. Following a long, eloquent repetition of his remarks of other occasions on Vietnamese war-weariness, he asked: Why does not the USG recognize that the appearance of North Vietnamese draftees among the prisoners taken in the I Corps meant that the war had entered a new phase and the USG and GVN must respond with new measures? He said Vietnamese spirits had been raised by President Johnson's firm statements earlier in the year (specifically, Los Angeles, January 21), but that following them nothing had happened. The effect was wearing off, and the communists would conclude they were only words. Then Khanh took the offensive and complained to Taylor that U.S. officials were contradicting him

Young Turk leaders, Ky, Thieu, Thi, and Cang, and gave them a stern lecture, speaking, as he later put it, "as one soldier to another." As recorded just afterward by the U.S. participants, the meeting went as follows:

"...AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Do all of you understand English? (Vietnamese officers indicated they did, although the understanding of General Thi was known to be weak.) I told you all clearly at General Westmoreland's dinner we Americans were tired of coups. Apparently I wasted my words. Maybe this is because something is wrong with my French because you evidently didn't understand. I made it clear that all the military plans which I know you would like to carry out are dependent on governmental stability. Now you have made a real mess. We cannot carry you forever if you do things like this. Who speaks for this group? Do you have a spokesman?

"GENERAL KY: I am not the spokesman for the group but I do speak English. I will explain why the Armed Forces took this action last night.

"We understand English very well. We are aware of our responsibilities, we are aware of the sacrifices of our people over twenty years. We know you want stability, but you cannot have stability until you have unity...But still there are rumors of coups and doubts among groups. We think these rumors come from the HNC, not as an organization but from some of its members. Both military and civilian leaders regard the presence of these people in the HNC as divisive of the Armed Forces due to their influence.

"Recently the Prime Minister showed us a letter he had received from the Chairman of the HNC. This letter told the Prime Minister to beware of the military, and said that maybe the military would want to come back to power. Also the HNC illegally sought to block the retirement of the generals that the Armed Forces Council unanimously recommended be retired in order to improve unity in the Armed Forces.

"GENERAL THIEU: The HNC cannot be bosses because of the Constitution. Its members must prove that they want to fight.

"GENERAL KY: It looks as though the HNC does not want unity. It does not want to fight the Communists.

"It has been rumored that our action of last night was an intrigue of Khanh against Minh, who must be retired. Why do we seek to retire these generals? Because they had their chance and did badly...

"Yesterday we met, twenty of us, from 1430 to 2030. We reached agreement that we must take some action... We decided to arrest the bad members of the HNC, bad politicians, bad student leaders, and the leaders of the Committee of National Salvation, which is a Communist organization. We must put the trouble-making organizations out of action and ask the Prime Minister and the Chief of State to stay in office.

"After we explain to the people why we did this at a press conference, we would like to return to our fighting units. We have no political ambitions. We seek strong, unified, and stable Armed Forces to support the struggle and a stable government. Chief of State Suu agrees with us. General Khanh saw Huong who also agreed.

"We did what we thought was good for this country; we tried to have a civilian government clean house. If we have achieved it, fine. We are now ready to go back to our units.

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I respect the sincerity of you gentlemen. Now I would like to talk to you about the consequences of what you have done. But first, would any of the other officers wish to speak?

"ADMIRAL CANG: It seems that we are being treated as though we were guilty. What we did was good and we did it only for the good of the country.

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Now let me tell you how I feel about it, what I think the consequences are: first of all, this is a military coup that has destroyed the government-making process that, to the admiration of the whole world, was set up last fall largely through the statesman-like acts of the Armed Forces.

"You cannot go back to your units, General Ky. Your military are now back in power. You are up to your necks in politics.

"Your statement makes it clear that you have constituted yourselves again substantially as a Military Revolutionary Committee. The dissolution of the HNC was totally illegal. Your decree recognized the Chief of State and the Huong Government but this recognition is something that you could withdraw. This will be interpreted as a return of the military to power.

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Who commands the Armed Forces? General Khanh?

"GENERAL KY: Yes, sir....

"GENERAL THIEU: In spite of what you say, it should be noted that the Vietnamese Commander-in-Chief is in a special situation. He therefore needs advisors. We do not want to force General Khanh; we advise him. We will do what he orders...

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Would your officers be willing to come into a government if called upon to do so by Huong? I have been impressed by the high quality of many Vietnamese officers. I am sure that many of the most able men in this country are in uniform. Last fall when the HNC and Huong Government was being formed, I suggested to General Khanh there should be some military participation, but my suggestions were not accepted. It would therefore be natural for some of them now to be called upon to serve in the government. Would you be willing to do so?...

"GENERAL KY: Nonetheless, I would object to the idea of the military going back into the government right away. People will say it is a military coup.

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR and AMBASSADOR JOHNSON: (Together) People will say it anyway....

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You have destroyed the Charter. The Chief of State will still have to prepare for elections. Nobody believes that the Chief of State has either the power or the ability to do this without the HNC or some other advisory body. If I were the Prime Minister, I would simply overlook the destruction of the HNC. But we are preserving the HNC itself. You need a legislative branch and you need this particular step in the formation of a government with National Assembly...

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It should be noted that Prime Minister Huong has not accepted the dissolution of the HNC...

"GENERAL THIEU: What kind of concession does Huong want from us?

"Ambassador Taylor again noted the need for the HNC function.

"GENERAL KY: Perhaps it is better if we now let General Khanh and Prime Minister Huong talk.

"GENERAL THIEU: After all, we did not arrest all the members of the HNC. Of nine members we detained only five. These people are not under arrest. They are simply under controlled residence...

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Our problem now, gentlemen, is to organize our work for the rest of the day. For one thing, the government will have to issue a communique.

"GENERAL THIEU: We will still have a press conference this afternoon but only to say why we acted as we did.

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have real troubles on the US side. I don't know whether we will continue to support you after this. Why don't you tell your friends before you act? I regret the need for my blunt talk today but we have lots at stake...

"AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And was it really all that necessary to carry out the arrests that very night? Couldn't this have been put off a day or two?...

"In taking a friendly leave, Ambassador Taylor said: You people have broken a lot of dishes and now we have to see how we can straighten out this mess." 59/

Amid the hustle and bustle of meetings between MACV officers, Embassy officials, and their Vietnamese counterparts, Khanh and the Young Turks, stood fast. 60/

On the next day, December 21, Taylor suggested to Khanh that he resign and leave the country. This meeting brought to a head the Khanh-Taylor personal feud which then became public and continued for the balance of Khanh's tenure. Taylor's report of the meeting said his suggestion that Khanh leave the country came in response to Khanh's asking whether he should leave. But Khanh told a different story to the AFC, who were still smarting from the sharp interchange that Ky, Thieu, Thi and Cang had had with Taylor. Immediately they accused Taylor of interfering in GVN affairs. Commenting afterward, he said:

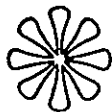
"If the military get away with this irresponsible intervention in government and with flaunting proclaimed U.S. policy, there will be no living with them in the future."

State supported Taylor in taking a strong line to bring the situation under control. It approved a Westmoreland proposal, sent by military channels to State, that Huong get the credit for dismissing Khanh and that MACV should bargain with the Armed Forces Council to offer a quid pro quo for reinstating the HNC. State spelled out the quid pro quo in detail:

"In support of your efforts persuade military to at least partially undo damage [Sunday's] actions, we have also been considering possible leverage we might apply in event you conclude it was necessary.

"If dispute continues unresolved, most obvious action might be withholding approval any pending U.S. assistance actions and letting this become known. You are in best position to evaluate whether these would impress generals or





# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

## 1945 - 1967

IV. C. 9. (b)

EVOLUTION OF THE WAR

US/GVN Relations: 1963 - 1967

PART II

important in U.S. thinking in 1964 and early 1965, subsided accordingly. The uneasy agreement between Thieu and Ky to run on the same ticket, resulting partly from U.S. pressure for military unity, and the subsequent transition to legitimacy, gave the U.S. a sense of relief and satisfaction, although no one suggested that GVN had yet built a broad political base or had solved its effectiveness problems. This GVN stability made possible the increased attention to pacification and nation-building.

The pacification parameter had changed as well. From 1961 to June of 1965, the U.S. flooded SVN with the advisory resources of men and money to keep the GVN afloat and RVNAF fighting. This input lacked a clear plan. After June 1965, we made a concerted effort to organize pacification. We exacted an agreement from the GVN in the fall of 1966 to shift half of its ground forces into pacification--although U.S. forces carried a share of this burden and attempted to show RVNAF how to do it. We tried to centralize pacification programs by creating a new GVN structure to control and allocate resources. This was made manifest by the establishment of a separate Ministry for Revolutionary Development. U.S. moves by stages to the unified civil-military CORDS organization in Vietnam paralleled this super-ministry for pacification. And, pacification statistics showed steady increase of GVN control in the countryside, reversing the downward trend of previous years--but, U.S. dissatisfaction with GVN performance also increased nonetheless.

Beyond and more important than all this were the U.S. efforts themselves. By the close of 1965, 170,000 U.S. combat forces were in SVN. By the end of 1967, this figure was almost half a million. By mid-1965, U.S. air strikes against North Vietnam had extended in geographic coverage up to 20°30', and approved targets had widened beyond LOC's. Total sorties rose to about 900 per week. By 1968, we were bombing throughout the North, with very few though important targets still being prohibited. Total sorties per week reached about 4,000.

It was in this context that U.S.-GVN relations took shape.

### Leverage

Having suffered several backfires in the attempts to require or encourage GVN effectiveness in 1964, the Embassy and Washington generally preferred to let well enough alone in 1965 through 1967. The U.S. limited itself to only a few demands, and usually avoided direct confrontations at the top levels of government-to-government contact.

The U.S. had one repetition of its old backfire problem following the Honolulu Conference of February 1966. President Johnson embraced Ky publicly and endorsed his government; Ky then felt strong enough to move against General Thi, who had been making trouble generally and was almost openly waiting for his chance to take over the GVN. Ky eventually succeeded in removing Thi and getting him out of the country, but at the cost of returning

to a degree of chaos in May that was in some ways worse than any suffered in 1964 under Khanh. At the height of the crisis, the U.S. went so far as to use force and the threat of force against both sides to keep the confrontation between GVN and the Struggle Movement within bounds. There was no sign of ill effects from our boldness in this instance.

Whatever interest there was in putting pressure on the top levels of GVN was stronger in Washington than in the Embassy, and stronger in the Embassy than in MACV, as it had been in the past. But the past failures of such pressures made everyone gunshy. At one point, Washington felt so strongly about the high GVN dollar balances that it sent out its own representative to negotiate with GVN, and he freely threatened to cut down U.S. dollar aid. However, neither Washington nor the Embassy suggested doing anything so drastic as holding up aid payments and projects until a satisfactory agreement could be reached. Confident that the threats were empty, GVN dug in its heels and gave us nothing but more promises.

Although the U.S. played down pressure or leverage on the top level of GVN, the idea of leverage at lower levels enjoyed a resurgence. Interest in the subject reached a low point in June 1965, when we abandoned the "troika signoff," which had given U.S. province representatives veto control over the use of AID direct-support commodities. For four months starting October 1, 1965, MACV experimented with giving its sector advisors a petty cash fund for urgent projects; however, MACV then dropped the idea. In April 1966, Lodge urged restoration of these types of leverage, and the idea kept coming up thereafter. Two major studies, one in Saigon in 1966 and one in Washington in 1967, came down strongly for regular procedures to use our material support to put pressure on lower echelons of GVN. They particularly emphasized signoff systems and the like, including U.S. distribution of MAP support within Vietnam. But the fear that such methods would prove counter-productive, either by provoking resistance or by making Vietnamese officials more dependent on our people and less able to perform on their own, prevented adoption of the proposals.

In at least three instances, AID cut off its support to a province in order to pressure the province chief. In September 1965, AID accused the province chief of Binh Tuy of misuse of AID funds, and had to withdraw its personnel from the province and cut off support to it after threats on their lives. The incident got into the papers and embarrassed both GVN and the Embassy; after several weeks GVN moved the accused officer to another job, and AID resumed its program in the province. In June 1966, AID cut off shipments to Kontum province for four days to force the province chief to account for the end uses of AID commodities. In August 1967, CORDS cut off shipments to Bien Hoa province for eleven weeks for similar reasons.

In contrast, MACV scrupulously avoided withholding MAP support from military units, regardless of circumstances. The single case of record of

taking away MAP support involved two fishing boats owned by the Vietnam Navy that were found ineligible for such support. In his reaction to the PROVN Report in May 1966, in his directives to advisers around the time of the Chinh-Hannicutt affair in the fall of 1966, and in his reaction to Washington inquiries in May 1967, COMUSMACV consistently brushed aside criticism of ARVN and told both his superiors and his subordinates to lay off. Whatever interest in leverage there was at lower levels in the field received no backing from COMUSMACV. In March 1966, a decision to transfer MAP for Vietnam to service funding had no effect on leverage because MACV continued to put material support in Vietnamese hands as soon as it entered the country.

Although AID tried some leverage in this period, and although the Ambassador, the Mission, and officials tuned to U.S. domestic pressures urged U.S. leverage for GVN reforms, there is still no documented study of GVN's failures, of the reasons for it, and of the ways that leverage of different types might help improve GVN permanently. The basic problem of concern is GVN's overall failure to do its civil and military jobs. Leverage in the hands of U.S. personnel might assure that GVN would do particular things we want; but we have no information on what kind of leverage, if any, would reform GVN. From 1964 onwards, high U.S. officials, including McGeorge Bundy and Secretary McNamara, have said at one time and another that thorough reform of GVN is necessary; but no one has found or even seriously proposed a way to do it. Encadrement proposals, prominent before June 1965, still received occasional mention; but these proposed to make up for GVN's deficiencies by substituting U.S. control for GVN control, and do not purport to reform GVN itself. If this problem has a solution, we have yet to find it.

#### The Embassy's Lack of Political Contact

The turbulent events of 1964 and early 1965 had shown that the Embassy had no effective system, either through overt or covert contacts, for finding out what was going on. Nothing was done subsequently to correct this problem. CAS people talked to a few official contacts, who told them things the Vietnamese wanted the U.S. to believe; but CIA had and has no mandate or mission to perform systematic intelligence and espionage in friendly countries, and so lacks the resources to gather and evaluate the large amounts of information required on political forces, corruption, connections, and so on.

General Thi began sounding out his U.S. contacts on whether the U.S. appreciated his superior qualities as a potential leader of Vietnam as early as August 1965; and in other ways we had plenty of warning that there would be trouble. However, we showed no feel for cause and effect. President Johnson's embrace of Ky at Honolulu in February, 1966, could only have had a divisive effect when Ky commanded so little solid support within his own country. On the one hand, civilians and the military had flouted U.S. wishes so often in the past that express U.S. support scarcely counted for much; but on the other hand, Ky's weakness and Thi's known ambitions tempted Ky to get whatever mileage he could out of our support. In the subsequent turbulence,

## Vietnamese Non-Performance and Sensitivity

Although population control statistics began to improve in 1966 and continued to do so in the first half of 1967, and although this seemed partly associated with the creation of the Ministry of Revolutionary Development and with the emphasis on its programs, few suggested that this progress could be held if U.S. forces withdrew. The drumbeat of criticism from field personnel, and the documented cases of non-performance on high-level matters, made it clear that there was no real improvement in GVN performance. Corruption and inaction showed no signs of improvement; province chiefs and military commanders singled out by U.S. advisers as urgently needing removal were simply shuffled around, if moved at all, and often promoted. Increasing traffic in the Port of Saigon led to acute congestion problems, which GVN failed to clear up or materially improve.

Moreover, on issues purportedly relating to sovereignty or "face," the Vietnamese continued to be quite sensitive, and the U.S. was afraid to inflame this sensitivity. Both sides avoided many delicate topics. A prime example is the lack of a bilateral treaty. The U.S. presence has always been based on the Pentilateral Protocol of 1950, signed by France, the Bao Dai government, Laos, Cambodia and the U.S., which gave U.S. advisers and officials virtual diplomatic status--an arrangement reasonable back when there were less than two hundred of them in all Indochina, but of dubious applicability to the hundreds of thousands now there. This matter has cropped up from time to time, as in the case of American civilians being tried for currency violations in Vietnamese courts, where they were subject to extortion. Both governments cooperated in smoothing things over after a momentary disagreement over jurisdiction, and have avoided stirring things up.

Shared sensitivity (and legitimate concern for an independent RVNAF role), closely related to the lack of a bilateral treaty, prevented any move toward joint command and U.S. control of all military operations in Vietnam. Both Westmoreland and the Vietnamese preferred to operate either separately or in loosely coordinated joint operations. The Embassy looked the other way from repressive police measures and political arrests unless these led to embarrassing press stories; and when the Ambassador would raise this type of issue with the GVN, it proved always to be touchy. Especially under Lodge, the Embassy tried to protect GVN from the press and to help it build a favorable image.

Vietnamese sensitivity sometimes led to open displays of anti-Americanism. These displays reached a climax in the Struggle Movement crisis in the first half of 1966, when the Buddhists openly accused the U.S. of helping GVN crush them, and they sacked and burned the U.S. Consulate in Hue. Moreover, newspapers reflecting officials' views would occasionally publish stories expressing fear of a U.S. sellout in negotiations, anger at U.S. intervention in Vietnamese affairs (as happened during the Chinh-Hunnicuttt affair), and other anti-American themes.

## Vietnamese Compliance More in Form Than in Substance

The Vietnamese, nevertheless, showed a ready willingness to declare new policies, sign decrees, and engage in joint studies at our request. But as noted, that scarcely means that we got what we wanted on such matters. Ky was always willing to issue decrees purporting to clear up the port problem, and to make public declarations against corruption. On economic policy, Ky and Hanh gave us one agreement after another promising to control inflation and to run down their dollar balances. The relations of their military with MACV showed the same pattern.

The Vietnamese military, on whom the U.S. counted most heavily, continued as in earlier periods to have far more enthusiasm for external adventures than they did for getting on with the job of effective government and pacification. They promised much on this latter score, but delivered little. Knowing that we had no one else to turn to, they continued their old habits and often openly did what they pleased about important matters, such as the airlift of troops to Danang in May, 1966.

Examples of superficial compliance are almost too numerous to mention. The Honolulu Conference of February 1966, produced over sixty agreed points between the two governments on all areas of mutual interest; getting any follow-up proved to be like pulling teeth, and then the follow-up we got was nothing more as a rule than more promises. Likewise, at the Manila Conference much the same thing happened, where GVN agreed to programs for social revolution, economic progress, and so on. However, at our insistence they did go ahead with the constitution and elections, and they shifted half of ARVN into pacification. How much substantive improvement these moves will produce still remains to be seen.

GVN taste for foreign adventure showed up in small, irritating ways. In July 1965, Thi planned unauthorized operations in the DMZ, but we stopped him.

## Conclusion

Increasingly throughout 1967, GVN legitimacy and performance became a domestic political issue in the U.S. as well as a source of concern for policy-makers. No matter what issue was raised, the central importance of the GVN remained. If we wanted to pacify more, we had to turn to the Vietnamese themselves. If we desired to push for a negotiated settlement, we had to seriously weigh the possibilities of SVN collapse. In the last analysis, it was and is a war which only GVN legitimacy and effectiveness can win.

the papers, and on the 7th Ky promised publicly to remove Chi. Lodge played no role in starting this episode, and told the Mission Council on October 7 that he did not want it repeated. After a six-weeks delay, Ky did remove Chi on November 25, and gave him a job in the Ministry of Defense. AID to the province resumed. 28/

Advisers in the field kept on complaining about the delays in the Vietnamese system, and pressed for restoration of some resources of their own. On October 1, 1965, MACV began giving its sector and sub-sector advisers piaster funds they could spend on urgent projects. Each subsector adviser had access to 50,000 piasters which could be replenished as necessary. Toward the end of 1965 it became obvious that this method was highly successful. Consideration was given to permanent establishment of the revolving fund. 29/

However, after the trial period of about four months MACV abandoned the plan because of strong opposition by General Thang, Minister of Revolutionary Development. He argued that under U.S. urging he had been developing an effective, flexible organization that would take care of urgent projects of the type the sector and subsector advisers wanted to promote; letting them bypass his people would encourage the latter to lapse into their old bad habits and thwart both governments' main objectives. 30/

USOM also had second thoughts about abandoning the sign-off system. Early in October 1965, the Mission Council approved a plan to restore the "troika sign-off" procedure as it had existed prior to June. After the Mission had already reopened the issue with the GVN, 31/ the State Department objected, saying that the United States wanted to make the Vietnamese more independent and effective.

After a time the frustrations of the advisers began striking a sympathetic chord at the highest levels. In a draft memorandum to the President dated November 3, 1965, Secretary McNamara stated his own impatience with the GVN and urged a more active role for our advisers at province and district. There is no sign of such high-level interest earlier, except as expressed by decisions to extend the advisory system to lower levels; as just noted State objected to the restoration of troika sign-off on October 16, 1965.

Some uncertainty and disagreement with respect to pacification developed within United States groups in Vietnam. In November, Major General Lansdale, Special Assistant to the Ambassador, asked who on the U.S. side should have the executive role in dealing with the Rural Construction Ministry? Lansdale envisaged that MACV and JUSPAO would be observers only.

COMUSMACV disagreed with the proposed limitation. USMACV was the only structure advising GVN at all levels; so MACV shared responsibility for pacification. Manpower required for cadre teams would impact directly

pressure on the GVN. 10/ (Through an intermediary the Embassy learned that General Thi said that the United States was too committed to leave; this belief may have led Thi and the Buddhists to feel free to use the theme as a weapon against GVN.)

On March 29, the Catholic leaders in whom Lodge had placed his hopes came out against the GVN and demanded a return to civilian rule. 11/

## 2. Ky's First Attempt to Suppress the Struggle Movement, April 1956

Events now happened in rapid succession. Assured of Lodge's sympathy, on April 3 Ky declared that Da Nang was in the hands of Communists. On April 5, despite mild questioning from State, MACV airlifted two battalions of Vietnamese Rangers to Da Nang under personal command of Ky, and they started to seize the city. That same day the 1st ARVN Division Commander declared for the Struggle Movement, with his officers backing him, and U.S. advisers were withdrawn from the Division. On April 6, "non-essential" U.S. civilians withdrew from Hue. On April 8, the GVN flew two more Ranger battalions to Da Nang, using its own airlift after MACV refused to provide any. On April 9, U.S. representatives protested to Struggle Movement leaders about Kowitzers under their control positioned within range of the Da Nang airbase; the leaders agreed to pull them back. Two hundred U.S. and third country civilians evacuated Da Nang. 12/

Washington played little role in all this. From time to time it offered mild advice, but Lodge had a free hand. It was his decision to withhold any further U.S. airlift on April 8, although after he acted State agreed by urging him to push GVN toward a political rather than a military solution:

Accordingly we believe you should not repeat not urge immediate Da Nang operations at present, but rather that entire focus of your efforts at all levels should be to get political process started.

(It was at this time that Lodge wrote his long cable, discussed in the next section below, saying that the U.S. does not have enough influence in Vietnam, and that it should set up a leverage system that bypasses Saigon and works at the Province level.) Lodge accepted the fact of Buddhist power, and wanted to avoid bloodshed, but as always his sympathies were squarely with the military leadership:

The political crisis which has been gripping VN is now almost one month old. The situation has deteriorated steadily as the Buddhist opposition has increased pressure on the GVN.

Buddhist demands, when stripped of hypocrisy [and,]... boil down to a naked grab for power.



in the DaNang harbor with CIP cement, rice, fertilizer, and miscellaneous commercial cargo... (C) Five chartered coastal vessels...operated for USAID...

With respect to military commodities, RVNAF maintains a 30-60 day supply of expendable combat items while their rice stocks are maintained at a 30-day level. However, under rationing these rice stocks can be extended to 60 days. The RVNAF items which are in short supply throughout Vietnam, as well as in the Hue-DaNang area, include vehicle batteries, brake shoes, and POL. We consider it unwise to interfere with the flow of supplies to RVNAF at this time since it would limit effectiveness of operations against Viet Cong forces...

Indeed any U.S. effort to withhold resources which it controls in this area may stimulate excesses by the struggle movement even though an attempt is made to conceal the U.S. role in the imposition of sanctions. 15/

### 3. Violence Explodes in May, 1966

After promising the elections by August 15, against Lodge's public disagreement, Ky said in a public statement on May 4 that "we will try to hold elections by October." In Lodge's absence, on a long trip to Washington, Porter protested privately to Ky that once he had made a public commitment on election timing he was risking further disorders to appear to shirk it. Nevertheless, Ky added to the flames by a further public statement that he expected to remain in office for another year. New disorders broke out, and DaNang and Hue again fell under overt control of the Struggle Movement. Without consulting the Embassy, the Directorate laid plans for several days and then on May 15 airlifted troops to DaNang and then to Hue. 16/

State first reaction showed unrestrained fury, and sanctioned "rough talk" to stop the fighting:

This may require rough talk but U.S. cannot accept this insane bickering...do your best in next few hours. Intolerable that Ky should...move...against DaNang without consultation with us. Urgent now to insist that fighting stop. 17/

State did not, at first, sanction the threat of force; for example, it said Gen. Walt should continue to harbor the dissident General Dinh in III MAF Headquarters, and that Walt should tell GVN he "can't foresee the U.S. Government reaction" if GVN forces should break into his Headquarters. Its overall guidance was to use persuasion, withdrawal of advisers, and a public posture of non-intervention, with the following specifics:

March 30 on the Honolulu agreements said:

1. Assure that Province Chief actually retains op con over necessary military forces to support program in his Province. Status: In Long An Province two regiments of the 25th Division are under Province control. This is encouraging, but tactical situation elsewhere makes it difficult. MACV plans to augment regular forces by 120 companies in 1966-67 (approximately 47 will go to priority areas.) This augmentation if successful will be major step forward.

2. Areas where the program is underway and four priority areas in particular should be placed under superior Province Chiefs who should not be removed while program is underway without serious cause. Status: Since Honolulu, eight Province Chiefs have been replaced. Most fall within category mentioned by General Co at Honolulu when he said GVN was about to make several changes to strengthen their ability to achieve plans. The Mission continues to emphasize at every level the need for continuity, but in most cases it is dangerous for U.S. to go down the line in support of individual Province Chiefs. 33/

The Mission report on the status of "Revolutionary Development" for April said:

RD remains behind schedule with progress slow. As reported in March, lack of effective leadership, military as well as governmental, marginal local security, and late availability RD cadre teams, continue to hamper program accomplishments. 34/

The corresponding report for May said:

Lack of effective low-level leadership and lack of local security continued to have adverse effects on RD program ...progress primarily reflects consolidation of hamlets and population already under a lesser degree of GVN control rather than direct gains from VC control. There was no appreciable expansion in secured area or reduction in VC-controlled population. 35/

An incident in June highlighted the frustrations of U.S. field representatives, and showed that leverage could work, at least on procedural matters. In Kontum, the Province Chief flatly refused to set up any end-use control procedures (filling out requisitions, etc.) for USAID commodities. This refusal could not be accepted, and AID suspended all commodity shipments to the Province. After four days, the Province Chief gave in, and AID resumed shipments. 36/

- (4) Relieve the divisions of their primary responsibility of fighting VC and leave them to pacification.
- (5) By expression of COMUSMACV's concern, encourage intensification of adviser efforts to solve the divisions' underlying problems. If there were no improvement, withdraw all advisers. If there were still no improvement, withdraw all MAP support.

COMUSMACV vetoed the last proposal and had it removed from the study. His guidance was to avoid sanctions against GVN, to intensify the effort to associate and integrate the 5th and 25th ARVN Divisions with the 1st and 25th U.S. Division, and to consider the possibility of greater U.S. participation in pacification in Hau Nghia and Binh Duong provinces. 44/

In April, a study based on exhaustive analysis of field adviser reports and interviews was presented to RVNAF. It concerned itself with several major problem areas: Leadership, discipline, and personnel management. RVNAF reacted positively and quickly to the recommendations by establishing a committee to develop a leadership program. 45/

In response to COMUSMACV guidance in May, J-5 studied courses of action to produce more dynamic progress in the counterinsurgency effort in RVN. It recommended establishing a Deputy COMUSMACV for RVNAF matters as a way to influence RVNAF more. General Westmoreland said in his endorsement that this step had already been taken with the appointment of Brigadier General Freund as Deputy Assistant to COMUSMACV. At the same time, he directed J-5 to review Brigadier General Freund's Terms of Reference and recommend changes or extensions. The completed J-5 study was forwarded to Chief of Staff Army on July 23, recommending that the Special Assistant to COMUSMACV not be given responsibility for any portion of the U.S. Advisory effort. 46/

Low personnel strength was another critical factor in ARVN effectiveness. Only one of 22 battalions rated combat ineffective or marginally effective in July did not report a shortage of personnel. COMUSMACV advised Chief JCS to form an inspection team at general officer level to inspect the strength situation of ARVN division. The Inspector General, JCS, headed the team and was assisted by COMUSMACV's personal representative. The team began its inspection with the 25th Division. 47/

### 3. Economic Policy and the Port of Saigon, April-June 1966

As noted, this period saw rising pressure for renewed direct negotiations with GVN. When the first phase of the Struggle Movement ended in mid-April, Washington was thoroughly dissatisfied with accumulated delays on the economic program agreed at Honolulu. The USG had gone ahead and delivered on its side of the bargain, but GVN had done nothing. State proposed the threat of sanctions; without apparently going that far, Lodge

Economic Policy and The Port, Third Quarter, 1966

Although in political affairs there was no significant friction between USG and GVN in the Third Quarter, GVN's accumulation of dollar balances and its inaction on economic matters caused growing impatience in USOM and in Washington.

In late July, 1966, Komer and Ambassador Lodge laid the basis for the US position, including a suggestion that from now on USOM should make sure it has the means to monitor and enforce GVN compliance with its commitments.

Komer said:

Devaluation, port takeover, CIP expansion, RD reorganization if all skillfully meshed -- could yet have early impact on VN public and do much in these critical weeks to refurbish GVN image at home and abroad.

So far, however, GVN has failed to move aggressively enough with supplies in country to curb rice and port speculation; has been unwilling to try to develop wage restraint policy in private sector, has dithered on promulgating and carrying out promised regulations re Warehouse removals; has gone about moving expanded CIP goods up country on business as usual basis; has shuffled about on RD reorganization, and Thang's or Ky's famous report to the nation. 61/

Lodge proposed specific means to monitor GVN, and wished to urge the GVN to fund Revolutionary Development with counterpart piasters, so that USG could assure that the funding was adequate. Komer agreed with these proposals. Porter further proposed:

We intend using budget review process and counterpart releases on leverage on GVN CY 67 programs and to seek GVN acceptance of both overall ceiling and commitment to essential revolutionary development programs before we agree to support any part of the budget.

Note degree our effectiveness dependent on credibility our leverage by GVN, which may not be great. 62/

But Porter opposed a complete takeover of the Saigon port, proposed by Komer. 63/