

IV.B Evolution of the War (26 Vols.)

Counterinsurgency: The Kennedy Commitments, 1961-
1963 (5 Vols.)

3. The Advisory Build-Up, 1961-67

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UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

1945 - 1967



VIETNAM TASK FORCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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IV. B. 3.

THE ADVISORY BUILD-UP, 1961-67

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THE ADVISORY BUILD-UP, 1961-67

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The United States decided, shortly after the Geneva Accords and during the period of French withdrawal from Indo-China, to give military assistance and advice to the newly proclaimed Republic of Vietnam. It might as easily have decided not to undertake this effort to prevent South Vietnam from falling to communism.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were pessimistic. The creation of a Vietnamese Army, they said, might not even lead to internal political stability, much less assure the capability to protect South Vietnam from external aggression. The JCS also believed that the limitations imposed by the Geneva agreements on the number of U.S. military personnel would make it impractical to attempt to train a new Army -- particularly given the paucity of experienced leaders which was the legacy of French colonialism. The President's military advisors did not wish to assume the responsibility for failure without the resources and influence which would offer a better chance for success.

THE AMERICAN GAMBLE

The available record does not indicate any rebuttal of the JCS's appraisal of the situation. What it does indicate is that the U.S. decided to gamble with very limited resources because the potential gains seemed well worth a limited risk. "I cannot guarantee that Vietnam will remain free, even with our aid," General J. Lawton Collins reported to the National Security Council, "But I know that without our aid Vietnam will surely be lost to Communism."

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was instrumental in deciding for political reasons to undertake a modest program of military advice aimed at producing political stability. Once launched, however, the program of advice and assistance came to be dominated by conventional military conceptions. Insuring internal stability is a "lesser included capability" of armed force, the reasoning went; the principal purpose of such a force is to protect the territorial integrity of the nation.

It was such a conventional force that the small USMAAG attempted to produce from 1955 until about 1960. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was made to "mirror image" the U.S. Army to the extent permitted by differences in equipment and locale. The number of U.S. advisors (approximately doubled by "The Equipment Recovery Mission" -- a thinly veiled device to increase the number of Americans in Vietnam) remained stable throughout this period. ARVN developed into a multi-divisional

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force oriented primarily toward conventional defense. The later transition to a force designed for counterinsurgent warfare was thereby made more difficult.

It seemed for a while that the gamble against long odds had succeeded. The Viet Minh were quiescent; the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) were markedly better armed and trained than they were when the U.S. effort began (at which time they were unarmed and untrained), and President Ngo Dinh Diem showed a remarkable ability to put down factions threatening GVN stability and to maintain himself in office.

This period of apparent stability disappeared, however, in the events of 1949-51 as the Viet Minh (relabeled Viet Cong -- a contraction for Vietnamese Communist) stepped up terrorism, sabotage, and military action by increasingly large units. By mid-1961, the prospect for South Vietnam's independence was at least as dark as it had been six years earlier.

But the U.S. military advisors in Vietnam had learned -- or at least thought they had learned -- during this period of gradual disintegration the true nature of the battle in which they were engaged by proxy. This was an unconventional, internal war of counterinsurgency rather than a conventional struggle against an external foe. It was a battle for the "hearts and minds" of the indigenous (and especially the rural) population rather than a contest to win and hold key terrain features. It was an intermeshed political-economic-military war rather than one in which political and economic issues were settled by military victory.

U.S. advisors in Vietnam -- and U.S. military and civilian theorists in other places, as well -- formulated during this period a rudimentary doctrine of counterinsurgent warfare. In response to Premier Khrushchev's endorsement of "wars of national liberation" they proposed to help free world nations save themselves from communism by a series of sequential actions that dealt with the symptoms of social revolution (the insurgency) as well as its causes (the frustration of expectations for social justice).

Thus, at almost the same time that the U.S. began its advisory build-up in South Vietnam in late 1961, military and civilian practitioners found themselves in possession of a simple, apparently logical, outline sketch of a method by which to counter the communist-captured insurgency. Physical security from the acts of the insurgents was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success. In addition to security the Vietnamese government had to establish the services which would link it in classic terms of legitimacy to its subjects. We would fight fire with fire and we would fight it with water, too.

THE LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

The decisions made by the Kennedy Administration from mid-1961 onward,

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culminating in the expansion of the U.S. advisory effort following General Maxwell D. Taylor's mission to Saigon in October, did not simply set out to explain this newly-articulated counterinsurgency theory and doctrine to the GVN. They attempted to induce the GVN to reform itself so that identification with its populace would be possible. Beyond this, they chose to attempt to help the Vietnamese, in Taylor's words, "as friends and partners -- not as arms-length advisors -- /and/ show them how the job might be done -- not tell them or do it for them."

The "limited partnership" which General Taylor proposed -- and which President Kennedy accepted -- was designed to place U.S. advisors at many levels within the RVNAF and GVN structure rather than merely at the top. An earlier proposal, to concentrate on advisors at the top with wide discretionary authority and to count on influence as the product of the demonstrated commitment of a carefully selected handful of men, was rejected in favor of many advisors at many levels, each serving normally only for a twelve month period, and with the advisory manpower furnished through normal personnel selection and assignment processes within the military services.

The expectation among U.S. policymakers -- recorded in NSAM 111 -- was that the GVN and U.S. would mutually agree upon necessary steps to end the insurgency. The U.S., for its part, would underwrite an increase in RVNAF and provide advisors throughout the military structure down to battalion level and in each provincial capital. The GVN would rationalize its lines of authority and begin reform measures to bring it closer to the Vietnamese people. This was, of course, a U.S. expectation, not an agreed quid pro quo. Diem was unwilling to permit the U.S. to share in his formulation of plans. He was even afraid to discuss the U.S. expectations candidly with his own cabinet ministers. It is a matter of record that he did not reform his government. ("He will not reform because he cannot," J. Kenneth Galbraith cabled President Kennedy.) What remains in issue is whether he could have done so. If he could not, the U.S. plan to end the insurgency was foredoomed from its inception, for it depended on Vietnamese initiatives to solve a Vietnamese problem.

COMMITMENT AND EXPECTATION

Thus the U.S. overall plan to end the insurgency was on shaky ground on the GVN side. Diem needed the U.S. and the U.S. needed a reformed Diem. As U.S. advisors began deploying to Vietnam for service with tactical units in the field, the gamble of the mid-50's was transferred into a broad commitment. President Kennedy and his advisors were determined to save Vietnam from communism by helping the Vietnamese to save themselves. One side of the dual U.S. thrust (GVN reform) was already in trouble. What of the "friends and partners" who were to share the dangers and tasks of RVNAF in the field? What was expected of them? What advantages would accrue from their presence in Vietnam?

The available record is almost totally devoid of any explication

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(much less any debate) on these questions. General Taylor's report of his mission to Saigon implies an unambiguous convergence of interests between the advisors and the advised. All that was needed was greater competence. More U.S. advisors at more places working on problems of Vietnamese training and operations could not but have an overall beneficial effect.

It is necessary to surmise the expectations in the policymakers minds of just how this would come about. First, they seem to have expected the increased U.S. advisory presence to lead directly to increased RVNAF competence in technical and tactical areas. Basic military skills -- how to move, shoot, and communicate -- could be improved and the improvements sustained by a continuing U.S. presence at many operational levels. Second, the U.S. policymakers could receive reports from an omnipresent U.S. "network" which would permit them to become better informed about what was really taking place in Vietnam, not only with respect to VC activity but with reference to ARVN plans, operations, and problems as well. Finally, the U.S. expected to realize increased influence within RVNAF from the presence of advisors. (And it expected, as NSAM 111 made clear, to realize increased influence with GVN in exchange for increasing its visible commitment to South Vietnamese independence.)

Increased influence can, of course, be gained in many ways. U.S. advisors could, by example, promote more aggressive Vietnamese leadership and improved standards of conduct. A well-coordinated advisory network could exert persuasive pressure throughout RVNAF to adopt certain policies or practices. And the U.S. providers of the material resources could, if they wished, keep a tight hand on the spigot and control the flow. They could exert influence negatively. The U.S. was anxious to avoid this last-mentioned approach to increased influence. "Leverage," as it is now commonly known, was a subject rarely discussed, much less practiced. The "limited partnership" finessed the whole issue of sanctions by assuming (or hoping or pretending, one cannot know which) that no problem existed.

PACIFICATION AND STRATEGIC HAMLETS

The process of countering insurgency, most commonly called pacification, received a great amount of attention and publicity at the same time the U.S. was increasing its field advisors with ARVN from a handful to over 3,000. Earlier, in 1960, the USMAAG had pressed upon the GVN a national Counterinsurgency Plan for Vietnam (CIP) which was really an organizational blueprint for reordering the GVN-RVNAF lines of command to permit effective action. The nub of the problem was that the political leaders in rural areas (Province and District Chiefs -- almost all military officers) were responsible to Saigon directly while RVNAF had a separate chain of command. In 1961, the MAAG presented its complementary Geographically Phased Plan which specified the relative priority for clearing out the VC, holding, then building GVN at the "rice roots."

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The object, as the U.S. advisors saw it, was to have a workable national plan upon which to base the entire US-GVN effort.

The Strategic Hamlet Program soon became the unifying vehicle to express the pacification process. The theory was that of physical security first, then government programs to develop popular allegiance. The fact was over-expansion, counter-productive coercion in some areas, widespread mismanagement, and dishonesty. U.S. policymakers were not, however, aware of how badly things were going until they became much worse. Optimism dominated official thinking. No need was perceived for new departures. Throughout the period of the Strategic Hamlet Program -- that is, until Diem's regime was toppled in late 1963 -- the number of U.S. advisors remained relatively stable at its new (1962) plateau.

The expectation that more U.S. advisors would mean better information for U.S. policymakers was not realized. One cannot judge accurately the reasons why U.S. leaders in Vietnam and Washington thought the counter-insurgent effort was making headway, but the fact that it was not is crystal clear in retrospect. The expectation that GVN and U.S. interests were sufficiently parallel to permit greater U.S. influence solely as a result of a larger U.S. presence foundered on the personalities and the felt necessities of the Ngo brothers. The extent to which RVNAF technical-tactical competence was increased during this period remains a subject of disagreement but it was not increased sufficiently to "turn the tide" of the war. That much is indisputable.

ANOTHER ROUND OF INCREASES

After Diem's fall there was a brief period of optimism based on the expectation that the new military regime in Saigon would be more receptive to U.S. advice than its predecessor had been. By the summer of 1964, when the decision was made to expand the advisory effort again, this optimistic hope had foundered on the fact of continued VC victories and instability within the GVN.

NSAM 288 had, in March 1964, stated U.S. objectives in Vietnam in the most unambiguous and sweeping terms. If there had been doubt that the limited risk gamble undertaken by Eisenhower had been transformed into an unlimited commitment under Kennedy, that doubt should have been dispelled internally by NSAM 288's statement of objectives:

We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. We do not require that it serve as a Western base or as a member of a Western Alliance. South Vietnam must be free, however, to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security. This assistance should be able to take the form not only of economic and social measures but also police and military help to root out and control insurgent elements.

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If we cannot save South Vietnam, the NSAM continued in a classic statement of the "domino theory," all of Southeast Asia will probably fall and all of the Western Pacific and South Asian nations will come under increased pressure.

There were at this time several steps which the U.S. could have taken to increase its assistance to the GVN. Carrying the war to Hanoi was one; introducing U.S. combat forces was another. Neither appealed much, however, in terms of helping the South Vietnamese to win their war. Both were anathema in the midst of Presidential election year politics. Bombing was discussed and plans laid, but no action taken. Troop commitments were not even discussed -- at least in the written record of proposals and decisions. Rather, a number of palliative measures to help the GVN economy and RVNAF were adopted and the advisory effort was expanded.

The 1964 expansion of the advisory effort consisted of the beefing-up of the battalion advisory teams and the establishment of district (sub-sector) teams. Thus, a new dimension of American presence was added and the density of U.S. advisors in operational units was increased. There is nothing in the available record to suggest either a challenge to the old, unstated assumption that more U.S. advisors would lead to increased performance or any change in the assumed expectations of U.S. policymakers had changed. The determination remained to advise rather than to command, to develop Vietnamese leadership rather than to supplant it, and to induce the GVN to take the steps necessary to pacify its own dissident elements.

ADVISORS TEMPORARILY FORGOTTEN

The expansion to district level placed U.S. military advisors throughout almost the entire RVNAF hierarchy (from JGS to battalion, with enough men at the lower level to advise companies on a "when needed" basis) and the political hierarchy as well (sector/province and sub-sector/district). U.S. advisors were not present in large numbers with the old Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps -- now re-labelled the Regional Forces and Popular Forces under province and district control respectively -- but they advised the military men in political positions who controlled these paramilitary forces.

Still the situation continued to deteriorate. Political instability within the GVN had by 1965 become a perennial rather than a transitory problem. The U.S. had initiated a continuing series of military air war measures to dissuade North Vietnam from support of the war in the South. The results were obviously inadequate; they may even have been opposite to those expected. Then ARVN suffered a series of disastrous defeats late in the spring of 1965 which led knowledgeable observers to fear an imminent GVN collapse. U.S. combat units -- a few of which were already in-country with restrictive missions -- began to be deployed to South Vietnam in earnest.

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When the build-up of U.S. combat forces got underway the build-up of U.S. advisors had already been essentially completed. Being an advisor in the field had been the most challenging assignment a U.S. soldier could seek; being with a U.S. unit in combat now became the aim of most. The advisory effort sank into relative obscurity as the attention of policymakers (and of the press and public) focused on the U.S. force deployments, on building the base complexes from which U.S. military might could project itself into the countryside, and in exploring the new relationships and new opportunities occasioned by the commitment of U.S. land forces to the Asian mainland.

A number of measures which would have changed materially the U.S. advisors' relationship to their Vietnamese counterparts were examined briefly in mid-1965. Each was dropped. The encadrement of U.S. and ARVN units was favored by President Johnson. General Westmoreland opposed it -- apparently because of language problems and the difficult logistic support problem it would create -- and the issue quickly died, except for the experimental Combined Action Platoons (CAPs) formed by the Marines. The subject of a combined U.S.-RVNAF command was brought up. Secretary McNamara was more favorably disposed toward achieving "unity of command" than were his senior military advisors and the U.S. Mission representatives in Saigon. They were keenly aware of GVN sensitivity to any measures which would explicitly finger the increasing Americanization of the war effort. So combined command was shelved, too. The GVN even opposed a joint US-JGS staff to coordinate the war effort. The staff was never formed.

PACIFICATION REEMPHASIZED

As the build-up of U.S. combat forces reached a level permitting offensive forays against the VC (and North Vietnamese Army) forces, there gradually evolved a division of responsibilities between U.S. and Vietnamese forces in which the former were to concentrate on defeating the main forces of the VC/NVA and the latter were to give primary emphasis to the pacification program. Half of ARVN was to operate in support of pacification.

This division of effort threw most U.S. advisors into pacification -- with ARVN units as well as in the province and district advisory teams. It also threw the U.S. military advisors into closer contact -- and competition and conflict -- with the growing number of advisors on civil functions (many of whom were U.S. military men on "loan") representing the CIA, AID, and USIA. The question was raised of the optimal internal U.S. organization to support the Vietnamese pacification program.

The result of a drawn-out, occasionally acrimonious debate on this question was an intermixed civil-military organization embracing the entire pacification effort, headed by a civilian of ambassadorial rank under COMUSMACV's direction. Called Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), it replaced a bilinear system in which

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military advisors were controlled through a military chain of command and all civilian advisors were controlled (at least in theory) through an Office of Civil Operations (OCO). The creation of CORDS was hailed as a victory for the "single manager" concept even though some very substantial U.S. programs were defined as outside the pacification program and, hence, beyond CORDS' competence.

RF/PF ADVISORS

The creation of CORDS affected only the organizational context of U.S. advice to the South Vietnamese. It did nothing to change the relationship between advisor and advised. U.S. expectations continued in the well-worn furrows in which they had travelled from the beginning: better information, more U.S. influence over Vietnamese plans and actions, and improved GVN (including RVNAF) performance were the hoped for products of the advisory effort.

This pattern was repeated in 1967 when an increase of over 2,000 military advisors was proposed by MACV to assist the Regional and Popular Forces -- whose security missions were almost exclusively devoted to support of the pacification program. The RF and PF were, at that time, the only RVNAF components without a sizeable U.S. advisory complement. When the question of improving their effectiveness was addressed the old assumption that more U.S. advisors would equate to improved effectiveness again went unchallenged.

The question debated was whether this new dimension of the U.S. advisory effort should be structured to give continuing advice to RF companies and PF platoons or should be constituted on a mobile training basis. The decision was to form mobile teams for both tactical and logistical support training. Advisors were detached from their parent U.S. combat units and detailed to these duties pending the manpower accounting change which would transfer these individuals to MACV advisory control and replace them in U.S. units with newly deployed fillers.

AVOIDED ISSUES

This was the situation when the VC/NVA launched a massive series of attacks against urban population centers and surrounding pacification program forces during the 1968 lunar new year (Tet) offensive. In the confused aftermath of this radical change in VC/NVA strategy the U.S. announced in Washington its intention to give renewed attention to modernizing RVNAF so that a larger share of the war effort could be turned back to the Vietnamese. This policy decision, following as it did an unprecedented six-year period of U.S. attempts to wage counter-insurgent war by proxy, constituted an adequate reason to reexamine the experience of the past and to explore more fully some difficult questions which have been consistently avoided in the desire to assist South Vietnam.

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The most basic of these questions is whether the U.S. can in any way serve as a makeweight sufficient to change the continuing unfavorable trend of the war in South Vietnam? Can it, that is, overcome the apparent fact that the Viet Cong have "captured" the Vietnamese nationalist movement while the GVN has become the refuge of Vietnamese who were allied with the French in the battle against the independence of their nation? Attempts to answer this question are complicated, of course, by the difficult issue of Viet Cong allegiance to and control by Communist China. But this is the nature of the situation. The issue of whether the U.S. can energize the GVN has been too long submerged by repeated assertions that it must do so.

A part of any tentative answer to this fundamental question will turn on the issue of how the U.S. might better promote a more adequate pace of GVN reform and improved RVNAF effectiveness to cope with the VC/NVA threat. (A related question, of course, is whether reform and increased effectiveness can proceed simultaneously.) Asking this question would open for examination two aspects of the advisory program that have come to be treated by reflexive response: where are advisors needed and what should be the relationship of the advisor to the advised?

The continuing U.S. unstated assumption has been that more advisors somehow equate to better performance. This can be traced in the successive expansions of the military advisory effort -- first to the provinces and down to battalion level within ARVN, then to the districts, and most recently to the paramilitary forces within RVNAF. It may be that large numbers of advisors are, in fact, the best way to influence events but one cannot reach such a conclusion validly without first asking the question.

The relationship of advisor to advised has gone through recurrent changes relative to judging an advisor's performance according to the performance of his counterpart. It has almost never deviated, however, from the belief that the conscious and continuing use of leverage at many levels would undercut Vietnamese sovereignty and stultify the development of Vietnamese leadership. Given the results of this policy over a number of years it is fair to ask whether the stick ought not to be more routinely used in combination with the carrot. Again, the answer is not obvious but it is obvious that there can be no sound answer in the absence of inquiry.

Finally, and closely related to any examination of the leverage issue, there is the question of the adequacy of counterinsurgent theory and doctrine. The progression from physical security through the establishment of socially oriented programs (political and economic) to the objective of earning and winning popular allegiance seems both simple and logical. It may also be simplistic, for its transformation into operational reality bumps head-on into some very difficult questions. Is security a precondition to loyalty, for instance, or must some degree of loyalty be realized as a precondition to intelligence information

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adequate to make security feasible? This chicken-and-egg argument has been debated for years without leading to any noticeable consensus on guides to operational action.

Seeking answers to any of these questions is a difficult, frustrating business. There exists no "control" by which laboratory comparisons of alternative courses can be made. There is almost surely no hard choice which will not carry with it very real liabilities along with its advantages. But if the lives and effort expended in the U.S. military advisory effort in South Vietnam in the 1960's are to be justified, a substantial portion of that justification will consist of a closer examination of past assumptions in order better to guide future policy.

CHRONOLOGY

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CHRONOLOGY

21 Jul 54	Geneva Cease-fire Accord	Ended fighting between Viet Minh and French; divided Vietnam at 17th parallel; limited U.S. military personnel in RVN to current level (342).
22 Sep 54	Memo, JCS for SecDef, Retention and Development of Forces in Indochina	U.S. resources could better be used to support countries other than RVN.
11 Oct 54	Letter, J. F. Dulles (Sec State) to C. E. Wilson (SecDef)	Only small U.S. training forces to RVN to promote internal stability.
19 Oct 54	Memo, JCS for SecDef, Development and Training of Indigenous Forces in Indochina	Opposed U.S. training RVN army. Risk not worth the gamble.
22 Oct 54	Msg, State to Saigon 1679	Set in motion "crash program" to improve RVN forces.
26 Oct 54	Memo, SecDef to JCS	JCS to prepare long-range program to improve RVN forces.
17 Nov 54	Memo, JCS for SecDef, Indochina.	Development of effective forces and prevention of communist takeover cannot be prevented without Vietnamese effort that is probably not forthcoming.
20 Jan 55	Memo, Gen. J. Lawton Collins for SecState, Report on Vietnam for the National Security Council	Vietnam might be "saved" with U.S. aid; would be "lost" without it.
21 Jan 55	Memo, JCS for SecDef, Reconsideration of U.S. Military Program in South-east Asia	Outlines alternative U.S. courses of action in RVN: present program, advice with <u>leverage</u> , U.S. forces, or <u>withdrawal</u> .

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24 Oct 55 - 31 Aug 60		Lt Gen Samuel T. Williams, Chief of MAAG to Vietnam.
9 Dec 55	Memo for SecDef, Raising U.S. Military Personnel Ceiling in MAAG Vietnam	MAAG needed twice the current 342 personnel to train RVNAF.
16 Dec 55	Memo, Director CIA from SecState	TERM also to serve as cover for intelligence gathering.
1959	Report, The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program	Emphasized need for promoting internal security, coined term "mirror imaging."
7 Jun 59	Msg, State-Defense-ICA- CAS to Saigon 28	Forbids advisors to participate in combat.
27 Feb 60	Msg, Saigon to State 2525	Abolished TERM but added equal number of spaces to MAAG, Vietnam, increasing it from 342 to 685.
10 Jun 60	U.S. Army Command & General Staff College, Study on Army Aspects of the Military Assistance Program in Vietnam	Prepared for Gen. Lionel C. McGarr, described Viet Cong strategy but deprecated ARVN participation in pacification.
1 Sep 60 - 5 Mar 62		Lt Gen Lionel C. McGarr, Chief of MAAG to Vietnam.
4 Jan 61	Counter Insurgency Plan for South Vietnam (CIP), enclosure to msg, Saigon to State 276	Blueprint for RVNAF reorganiza- tion, containing Gen McGarr's recommendations for integrating ARVN and CG/SDC in a common chain of command to promote internal security.
17 Jan 61	Memo, General Lansdale for SecDef, <u>Vietnam</u>	Proposed extra-bureaucratic advisory effort carried out by specially selected and qualified personnel.

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15 Mar 61 - 1 Aug 63		Frederick E. Nolting, Ambassador to South Vietnam
28 Mar 61	NIE 50-61, Outlook in Mainland Southeast Asia	Report that VC controlled most of countryside.
12 Apr 61	Memo, Walt W. Rostow to the President	Suggested appointment of Presidential Agent to oversee Vietnam programs in Washington.
19 Apr 61	Memo, Gen. Lansdale to SecDef, <u>Vietnam</u>	Proposed creation of inter- departmental task force on Vietnam.
20 Apr 61	Memo, SecDef for DepSecDef	McNamara asked Gilpatric for program to "prevent communist domination" of Vietnam, in response to Lansdale proposal.
27 Apr 61	Memo, DepSecDef for President, Program of Action for Vietnam	Recommended expanded U.S. effort in Vietnam, MAAG increase of 100, MAAG takeover of CG/SDC, U.S. advisors in field operations creation of Presidential Task Force. Foreshadowed later decision.
1 May 61	Memo, R. L. Gilpatric for Presidential Task Force	Recommended augmenting MAAG by 2 training commands (1600 each) and deploy 400 Special Forces (increasing MAAG from 685 to 2285). Marked shift to con- ventional approach.
3 May 61	Memo, State Department to members of Task Force on Vietnam	Recommended revision of Gilpatric task force, proposed interdepart- mental task force under State leadership.
11 May 61	NSAM 52	Recorded President's decision to increase U.S. forces slightly and re-emphasized U.S. commitment.
15 May 61	Msg. Saigon to State 1743	Recorded Diem's refusal of U.S. combat troops on bilateral treaty.

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18 May 61	Memo BG Lansdale for DepSecDef, <u>Vietnam</u>	Recorded Diem's acceptance of U.S. forces for training but not for fighting.
23 May 61	Memo, Vice President Johnson for President Kennedy	Report from Johnson's trip to Vietnam that "deeds must replace words."
27 May 61	Letter from President to each American Ambassador abroad. (See Memo, Presi- dent for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 29 May 1961, "Responsi- bilities of Chiefs of American Diplomatic Mis- sions," <u>Federal Register</u> , Vol. 26 Nr 22, 17 Nov 1961, p.10749 (F.R. Doc. 61-11012).	Set forth coordinating authority for ambassadors.
9 Jun 61	Letter, President Diem to President Kennedy	Proposed 100,000 increase in RVNAF and corresponding expan- sion of MAAG.
15 Sep 61	MAAG, Vietnam, Geograph- ically Phased National Level Plan for Counter- insurgency	Suggested operational sequence of priority areas for coordin- ated counterinsurgency effort under single chain of command.
1 Oct 61	Msg, Saigon to State 421	Diem asked for bilateral defense treaty with U.S.
Oct 61	JCSM 717-61	JCS proposal to send 20,000 U.S. combat troops to central highlands.
5 Oct 61	DF, Distribution Division, DCSPER, DA to Multiple Addressees, Improvement of Personnel Continuity and Effectiveness in Short Tour Overseas Areas.	OSD decision to increase tour of duty to 30 months with dependents, 18 without, instead of 24 and 12. Never put into effect.
10 Oct 61	SNIE 10-3-61, Probable Communist Reactions to Certain SEATO Undertakings in South Vietnam	Examined proposal for U.S. troop intervention.

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11 Oct 61	Study, Concept of Intervention in South Vietnam, n.d., discussed at NSC meeting, 11 Oct 61	Proposed sending U.S. combat troops.
11 Oct 61	Memo for Record Roswell Gilpatrick	Recorded decision to send Taylor to Vietnam and outlined alternatives to be considered.
25 Oct 61	Msg, Saigon to State	Diem's assurance that he favored deployment of U.S. troops.
25 Oct 61	Msg, Saigon 537, General Taylor to White House, State, Defense, JCS; Msg, Baguio 005, 1 Nov 61, Eyes Only for the President from General Taylor	Proposed sending 6-8000 troops under guise of "flood relief."
1 Nov 61	State Dept, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, RFE-3, 1 Nov 61, Communist Threat Mounts in South Vietnam	Reported increased VC activity in first half 1961: 500 assassinations, 1000 kidnappings, 1500 RVNAF KIA.
3 Nov 61	Report on General Taylor's Mission to South Vietnam.	Discussed VC strategy and threat and the weaknesses of the Diem regime. Proposed shift in U.S. effort "from advice to limited partnership."
14 Nov 61	Msg, State to Saigon 619	Recorded U.S. expectation of sharing in GVN decision-making.
22 Nov 61	NSAM 111, First Phase of Vietnam Program	Outlines U.S. actions and expected improvements in GVN.
22 Nov 61 25 Nov 61	Msg, Saigon to State 687; Msg, Saigon to State 708.	Ambassador Nolting reported that Diem refused to bow to U.S. pressure.
Dec 61	Msg, State to Saigon 693	Dropped insistence on explicit U.S. influence on GVN decisions, but assumed such influence as by-product of close partnership.

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16 Jan 62	Hq, CINCPAC, Record of Second Secretary of Defense Conference	Recorded decisions of Honolulu Conference: establish battalion advisory teams, province advisors CG/SDC training.
13 Feb 62 - 1 Aug 64		Gen. Paul D. Harkins, COMUSMACV
23 Jul 62	Record of 6th Secretary of Defense Conference	McNamara plan for phased withdrawal of U.S. forces, based on optimistic 1962 expectations.
1 Aug 63 - 1 Jul 64		Henry Cabot Lodge, Ambassador to South Vietnam.
2 Oct 63	White House Statement	Announcement by President Kennedy of U.S. hopes for planned phased withdrawal of troops.
1 Nov 63		Diem overthrown by military coup d'etat.
1 Nov 63 - 16 Aug 64	Military Revolutionary Council	Duong Van Minh, Chief of State and Chairman, Military Revolutionary Council.
26 Nov 63	NSAM 273	Reaffirmed and continued Kennedy administration policies in Vietnam; placed emphasis on Mekong Delta; maintained military assistance at least as great as to Diem; reiterated plans for troop withdrawal; proposed no new programs nor increased U.S. assistance; authorized operations up to 50 km. within Laos.
7 Mar 64	Briefing Paper, Establishment of Critical District Advisory Teams (C), Briefing Book for McNaughton, Saigon [May 1964]	MACV extended U.S. advisory effort to district level in 13 key districts around Saigon.

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17 Mar 64	NSAM 288, Implementation of South Vietnam Programs	The situation in Vietnam had deteriorated and was grave; VC controlled much of country; North Vietnamese support of V.C. had increased; RVNAF should be increased by 50,000; contingency plans for operations in Laos and Cambodia and overt retaliation against DRV should be developed; however, no major increase of U.S. advisory effort was called for.
17 Apr 64	Memo, DIA for SecDef, Status of the Vietnamese Hamlet Survey	Aerial photo reconnaissance revealed far fewer fortified hamlets than province officials claimed.
22 Apr 64	Memo, DepSecDef for CJCS	Secretary insisted that he personally approve every manpower space for MACV.
May 64	Briefing Book, Miscellaneous Messages, Status Reports, and Recommendations for Secretary McNamara, n.d.	Reported great instability in province governments, decline in GVN controlled population, increase in VC control; important provinces were in "critical condition."
12 May 64	Draft Memo for the Record, Lt. Col. S. B. Berry, Jr., Mil. Asst. to SecDef, n.d., <u>U.S. Embassy Briefing, Saigon.</u>	USOM 25% understrength, half this shortage in rural affairs staff.
12-13 May 64	McNamara trip to Saigon	Situation appeared critical.
22 May 64	Msg, JCS to COMUSMACV 6448, Vietnamese Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps.	COMUSMACV asked to study encadrement of CG/SDC with U.S. teams similar to White Star teams in Laos. JCS was examining alternative advisor expansions (1,000, 2,000, 3,000).
23 May 64	Msg, CINCPAC to JCS 230418Z, Vietnamese Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps	MACV opposed to "flooding" RVN with U.S. personnel; preferred build-up on selective basis, challenged "encadrement."

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25 May 64	Msg, JCS to CINCPAC 6473, Vietnamese Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps	JCS plan for 6 Mobile Training Teams in each province and training center, 70 advisors to each critical province, increase of 1000 personnel.
27 May 64	Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC 4259, 270045Z.	Gen. Harkins disputed the value of U.S. conducted training for CG/SDC and of Mobile Training Teams; proposed advisors be used at district level for operations; accepted 1000 man increase.
27 May 64	Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 270805Z, Vietnamese CG and SDC	CINCPAC agreed with COMUSMACV and outlined specific advisory build-up recommended: 956 personnel by end CY 65.
27 May 64	Msg, White House to Saigon (Personal for Gen. Paul Harkins)	Gen. Harkins requested to return to U.S.
28 May 64	Msg, Saigon to State 2338	USOM desire for gradual, not rapid, build-up; need for effective local administration and security.
30 May 64	JCSM-464-64, Pilot Program for Provision of Advisory Assistance to Paramilitary Forces in Seven Provinces	One of two JCS proposals submitted to McNamara outlining pilot program for advisory build-up: teams in 49 districts over 6 month period, 300 advisors.
30 May 64	JCSM-465-64, U.S. Advisory Assistance to the Vietnamese Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps.	Second proposal - Broader advisory increase program: 1000 personnel for all 239 districts over 1-1½ years.
30 May 64	JCSM-466-64, Provision of U.S. Advisors to Company Level Within Vietnamese Regular Ground Forces	JCS opposed extending U.S. advisors to company level, because of increased casualties, language problems, ARVN opposition.

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1 Jun 64	Honolulu Conference	
25 Jun 64	Msg, COMUSMACV to JCS, MAC 7325380, Extension of U.S. Advisory Assistance	Elaborated decision of Honolulu conference to expand advisory effort to district level, and to increase battalion-level advisory groups to make company level advisory teams available.
1 Jul 64 - 31 Jul 65		Maxwell Taylor, Ambassador to South Vietnam.
17 Jul 64	Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MACJ-316180, Support Requirements for Extension of U.S. Advisory Program.	COMUSMACV reached 4200 personnel in addition to 926 battalion and district advisors - "the straw that broke the camel's back" of the overburdened support base.
28 Jul 64	Msg, COMUSMACV to JCS, MACJL 7044, Personnel Augmentation.	COMUSMACV requested 4200 personnel by 1 Dec 64 and remainder of 4772 total increase by 1 Feb 65.
Jul 64	Hop Tac	Idea for Hop Tac, special combined US/GVN effort to secure critical area round Saigon, proposed by Amb. Lodge at Honolulu Conference.
1 Aug 64 - 30 Jun 68		Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of MACV.
2 Aug 64	Tonkin Gulf Incident	U.S.S. Maddox allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.
4 Aug 64	JCSM-665-64, Additional Support in RVN on Accelerated Basis	McNamara wanted additional men provided more quickly than Westmoreland's plan.
5 Aug 64	Tonkin Gulf Resolution	Congress passed joint resolution supporting "all necessary action" to protect U.S. forces and assist Vietnam.
7 Aug 64	Memo, SecDef for CJCS, Additional Support for Republic of Vietnam on an Accelerated Basis.	McNamara directed that accelerated deployment be completed by end of September.

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11 Aug 64	Msg, COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, MACJ3 7738, Additional Support for RVN	Westmoreland replied that he could not absorb build-up in time requested by McNamara.
15 Aug 64	Msg, JCS to CSA, CNO, CSAF et al, JCS 7953, Additional Support in RVN.	McNamara cancelled accelerated deployment, services instructed to deploy personnel in accordance with Westmoreland's initial recommendations.
16 Aug 64 - 26 Oct 64	Khanh coup.	Nguyen Khanh, President, Head of State and Chief, Revolutionary Military Council (30 Jan 64 to 26 Oct 64, 27 Jan 65 to 21 Feb 65).
12 Sep 64	Hop Tac	Hop Tac launched with a sweep through Gia Dinh Province. Mission aborted following day by coup.
4 Nov 64 - 11 Jun 65		Phan Klac Suu, Chief of State
Dec 64		Crisis between Amb. Taylor and Gen. Khanh resulted from Taylor's attempt to use U.S. decision to begin bombing DRV as lever to get GVN reform. Taylor abandoned further attempts at leverage.
Dec 64	"Troika sign-off" for piasters abolished	USOM Director Killen decided to abandon joint sign-off for release of piaster funds for pacification - important leverage tool.
23 Jan 65		McNamara approved RVNAF force increase proposal for MAP support. New strength authorizations: 275,058 Regular Forces, 137,187 RF and 185,000 PF. (Alternative 1).
7 Feb 65		FLAMING DART reprisal attacks against DRV launched.

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22 Feb 65		Gen. Westmoreland recommended sending two Marine Battalion Landing Teams to DaNang for base security.
26 Feb 65		ROLLING THUNDER, sustained bombing of DRV, initiated.
26 Feb 65		Decision to send Marines to DaNang made in Washington.
6 Mar 65		Marines went ashore at DaNang.
16 Mar 65	JCS message 0936	Gen. H. K. Johnson returned from trip to Vietnam with recommendation for deployment of U.S. combat forces and creation of joint command.
20 Mar 65		Westmoreland requested authorization to implement Alternative 2 RVNAF strength increase (greater than alternative 1 by 15,000).
21 Mar 65	COMUSMACV message 1566	Westmoreland opposed any formal merging of commands, preferred informal cooperation.
26 Mar 65	MACV "Commander's Estimate of the Situation"	As a strategy alternative, Westmoreland rejected proposal for accelerated RVNAF build-up as insufficient to prevent VC victory.
1-2 Apr 65		Washington strategy conference with Brig Gen De Puy, Amb. Taylor.
6 Apr 65	NSAM 328	President approved dispatch of two more battalions and an air wing and authorized their employment for active combat missions.
12 Apr 65	MACV Command History 1965	McNamara approved JCS recommendation for RVNAF expansion of 17,247. 160 additional U.S. advisors approved.
15 Apr 65	Defense Department message 009164, Joint State/Defense Message	Defense Department sought to have U.S. Army civil affairs officers introduced in provinces to improve civil administration. Amb. Taylor's opposition killed proposal.

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15 Apr 65	Department of State message 2332	McGeorge Bundy informed Amb. Taylor that President wanted to try "encadrement of U.S. troops with Vietnamese."
15 Apr 65	DOD message 151233Z	DOD requested COMUSMACV's opinion about feasibility of encadrement of U.S. officers in ARVN divisions to improve effectiveness.
18 Apr 65	Honolulu Conference, MACV Command History	Based on study by Gen. Throck- morton, encadrement proposals were rejected because of language problem, expanded support requirement, and adverse effects on South Vietnamese morale.
Apr 65	MACV Command History 1965	Westmoreland suggested joint MACV-JGS staff. Gen. Thieu and Gen. Minh were opposed.
3 May 65	Hop Tac pacification	Corps commanders for I, II, IV Corps presented Hop Tac plans for their zones, each to extend "oil blot" pacification from its headquarters city. (By end of 1965 became scheme for National Priority Areas.)
11 May 65		Viet Cong attacked and overran Song Be, capital of Phuoc Long Province, and a U.S. advisory compound in the city.
14 May 65	JCS message 142228Z	McNamara authorized creation of formal combined command in Viet- nam and coordinating MACV-JGS staff.
21 May 65	COMUSMACV message <u>Combined Command</u> ; JCS message 240603Z	Westmoreland recommended against proposed combined command because of Thieu's and Ky's opposition.
26 May 65	CINCPAC msg to JCS 3027, 260332Z	CINCPAC supported COMUSMACV's opposition to combined command because of fears of Vietnamese hostility.

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late May 65		VC force ambushed and decimated ARVN 51st Regiment and 2 battalions near Ba Gia, west of Quang Ngai City.
Jun 65	Origin of CAP	Several Marines assigned to work with local PF near Phu Bai, I Corps.
7 Jun 65	MACV message to CINCPAC and JCS 19118	Moratorium on RVNAF build-up required because trainees needed as fillers in existing units to replace heavy casualties. Westmoreland requested 44 additional U.S. battalions; reported severe ARVN deterioration.
19 Jun 65 - present		Nguyen Van Thieu, Chief of State and Chairman, National Leadership Council, 20 Jun 65 to 9 Nov 67, elected President 31 Oct 67.
Jun 65		Viet Cong attacked Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai with more than two regiments.
25 Jun 65		VC Central Highlands offensive began, district headquarters at Tou Morong, Kontum Province, was overrun.
26 Jun 65	MACV Military Report, 19-26 June	MACV noted 5 ARVN regiments and 9 battalions combat ineffective.
Jul 65		18 US/FW combat maneuver battalions were in Vietnam.
Jul 65	MACV Command History, 1965	11 of 15 ARVN training battalions had to be disorganized to provide fillers for line units due to heavy casualties.
7 Jul 65		Six district capitals had been abandoned or overrun.

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20 Jul 65	SecDef Memorandum for the President	McNamara urged U.S. to lay down terms for continuing assistance before introduction of more forces; suggested exercise leverage through control of rice policy.
25 Jul 65	Saigon message 266	Amb. Taylor did not want to appear to impose conditions for increased aid.
28 Jul 65		President announced expanded U.S. effort and increased troop commitment to Vietnam.
7 Aug 65	MACV Command History 1965.	CG III MAF designated as Senior Advisor to ARVN I CTZ Commander.
Sep 65	Lodge Ambassador	Lodge returned to Vietnam for second term as ambassador. Term of office: 31 Jul 65 - Apr 67.
Sep 65		COMUSMACV evaluated 3-month experiment with "single manager" teams in 3 provinces, found it partially successful but scrapped the idea.
1 Oct 65	MACV Command History, 1965.	MACV created separate contingency fund for each subsector advisor for urgent projects, in attempt to overcome delays in Vietnamese pacification system.
16 Oct 65 18 Oct 65	State Dept msg 1039 Saigon msg 1324	USOM sought to restore troika sign-off but State Dept. opposed this idea. The attempt was abandoned.
21 Oct 65		Commander of HQ Field Force, Vietnam (FFORCEV) designated as II CTZ Senior Advisor. (At insistence of ARVN Corps commanders, who felt they would suffer loss of prestige if advised by less than Senior U.S. officer in corps.)

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3 Nov 65	SecDef Draft Memorandum for the President	McNamara recorded impatience with GVN, recommended giving larger role to advisors at province and district level.
5 Nov 65	MACV Command History	Westmoreland recommended increased RVNAF force levels for FY 66 and FY 67, to limit of available manpower.
* Nov 65	CAP Program	Agreement between I Corps Commander and CG III MAF permitting integration of Marine squads into PF platoons in DaNang area to form Combined Action Platoon (CAP): Marine Rifle Squad (14) and PF Platoon (32-38).
28 Nov 65		McNamara trip to Saigon, approves RVNAF force increase recommendation.
15 Dec 65	Lodge memorandum for Gen. Lansdale; MACV Command History	Lodge specified that GVN pacification effort was primarily civilian, consequently on U.S. side the two civilian agencies, USAID and CAS, should be generating support agencies.
8-11 Jan 66	Warrenton Conference Report	Members of Saigon Mission, Vietnam Coordinating Committee and other senior officials met at Warrenton, Virginia, to review pacification problem. It foreshadowed a redirection of advisory effort toward pacification.
Jan 66	MACV Analysis of RVNAF for CY 66	At Mission Council meeting, Amb. Lodge expressed concern that the number of U.S. advisors not smother the Vietnamese at all levels.
4 Feb 66	State to Saigon 2252	U.S. requested Honolulu meeting with Thieu, Ky to express concern about pacification, economic problems, GVN lack of popular support.

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6-8 Feb 66	Honolulu Conference	LBJ concern about the "other war," Thieu and Ky made pledges of increased pacification, promised elections. Amb. William Porter was assigned responsibility for civil support of RD.
28 Feb 66	Mission Council Minutes, Feb 28, 1966	Porter described his understanding of his duties to Mission Council: coordinating effort for all civil aspects of revolutionary development, through the Mission Liaison Group.
Feb 66		MACV subsector pacification contingency fund abandoned after 4-month trial period due to opposition of GVN RD Minister Thang; it would encourage Vietnamese dependence on U.S.
Mar 66	PROVN Study Summary Statement, Mar 66	Program for Pacification and Long Term Development of South Vietnam (PROVN) completed for internal army use. Revealed lack of coordination among U.S. agencies in pacification.
23 Apr 66	Saigon to State 4160, Apr 23, 1966; 4200, Apr 26; 4435, May 7; 5546, June 15	Lodge reviewed prospects for introduction of U.S. leverage in Buddhist "Struggle Movement"; desired to bring dissidents under GVN control, but saw no way to achieve decisive results. Recommended to Washington that a sign-off system be reinstated to reduce corruption and increase U.S. influence at lower levels.
Jul 66		Stepped-up pacification effort: Operation Lam Son, combined RD "Search and Seal" operations with U.S. 1st Infantry Division and ARVN 5th Division in Binh Duong. U.S. 25th Division "adopted" districts in Han Nghia Province.

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Jul 66		"Roles and Missions" Study Group began work for Amb. Porter. Completed in August. Recommendations for support for a reemphasis on pacification.
Sep 66		McNamara proposed that responsibility for sole management of pacification be assigned to COMUSMACV, who would have a Deputy to command all pacification activities. AID, CIA, USIA opposed such reorganization; Komer and JCS concurred.
29 Sep 66	Komer, "Memorandum for Secretary McNamara"	Komer stressed that unified management of pacification was needed.
23-25 Oct 66	Manila Conference	At Manila Conference Thieu and Ky formally accepted commitment of ARVN to support RD, and "National Reconciliation" program to attract VC back to government was announced.
Oct 66		McNamara trip to Saigon. Ky agreed to shift in combat missions for U.S. and RVNAF forces: U.S. to conduct large-scale offensive operations, RVNAF to provide security to RD.
7 Nov 66	MACV/JGS Combined Campaign Plan 1967 (AB 142)	Spelled out new division of labor between U.S. and RVNAF. JGS agreed to keep 53 ARVN battalions (50% of ARVN combat units) assigned to support RD.
7 Nov 66	Memorandum, Amb. Lodge for the Secretary of State, SecDef and Komer; message, Saigon 11125, Nov. 17.	Lodge defined terms of reference for what was established as the Office of Civil Operations (OCO).

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8 Dec 66	MACV msg 52414 to CINCPAC	Westmoreland reported to CINCPAC on poor quality and performance of ARVN. First 10 months of 1966, the number of ARVN maneuver battalions with minimally acceptable operational strength fluctuated from 31 to 78 of total of 121 organized units.
17 Dec 66	W. W. Rostow, Memorandum to Secretary of Defense and Acting Secretary of State, draft NSAM attached	Pacification listed as third strategic objective and five programs concerned with pacification were outlined, heralding re-emphasis on pacification in 1967.
27 Dec 66	JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, JCSM-792-66, line-in, line-out revised draft NSAM attached.	JCS replied to Rostow's draft after consulting CINCPAC; stiffening and making more specific U.S. commitment to war, introducing term "revolutionary development," eliminated references to "national reconciliation" for ex-VC, and watered down commitment to constitutional-electoral efforts underway.
9 Jan 67	MACV msg 00949	In Dec 1966 a 12-officer team from each ARVN had undergone training on RD support so that each might instruct its division on the new duties. The division training programs began in Jan 67.
18 Jan 67	MACV msg 02149 to CINCPAC from MACCORDS	MACV described new Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) to CINCPAC.
20 Jan 67	ASD(ISA) John T. McNaughton Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Draft NSAM on "Strategic Guidelines for 1967 in Vietnam;" McNaughton's line-in, line-out revised draft and the JCS revision attached.	McNaughton draft for Vietnam strategic guidelines incorporated most JCS recommendations, emphasized security, anti-infrastructure and intelligence in support of R/D, pushed "National Reconciliation."
24 Jan 67	MACV msg 02916, Westmoreland sends	Westmoreland stated that the effectiveness of RVNAF must be increased and that its image must be improved.

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28 Jan 67	Deputy SecDef Cyrus Vance Letter to W. W. Rostow	Vance sent McNaughton version to Rostow as Defense Depart- ment reply to his memorandum. No NSAM was ever promulgated.
Feb 68	"Pacification Slowdown" Southeast Asia Analysis Report, Feb 68, OASD(SA) SEA Programs Directorate	OASD(SA) reported that pacifica- tion effort in 1967 had failed.
18 Mar 67	MACV msg 09101, Westmore- land sends	Westmoreland cabled CINCPAC requesting an "optimum force" increase of 4-2/3 divisions (201,250 men) or as a "minimum essential force", 2-1/3 divisions (100,000 men). No major expan- sion of RVNAF called for: 6,307 more spaces for ARVN, 50,000 more RF/PF.
20-21 Mar 67	Guam Conference	President Johnson met with Thieu and Ky in Guam. They presented draft constitution and agreed to a proclamation on National Reconciliation. Johnson decided to transfer control of pacification to MACV and send Robert Komer to head new opera- tion in Saigon.
25 Mar 67	Embassy Saigon msg 21226, Eyes Only for the Presi- dent from Lodge	Lodge stressed importance of RVNAF for MACV success, praised Abrams as man to oversee RVNAF improvement.
Mar 67		Gen. Creighton Abrams became Westmoreland deputy and assumed responsibility for U.S. advisory effort to RVNAF.
1 Apr 67		New South Vietnamese Constitution promulgated.

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24 Apr 67	R. W. Komer Memorandum for the President	Komer asserted that decisive contest lay in pacification in the South, rejected Westmoreland's request for additional 200,000 troops, proposed methods to improve RVNAF and pacification, suggested increased pressure on GVN for reforms.
1 May 67		New Ambassador, Ellsworth Bunker, arrived in Saigon.
7 May 67	MACV msg 15064	Reported Jan. decision to make a unit by unit effectiveness evaluation and to cut off support for superfluous or below standard units. Resulted in several warnings but no suspension of support. Also reported RVNAF desertions were won for Jan-Feb 1967 from Jan-Feb 1966.
9 May 67	NSAM 362	Komer's appointment as single manager for pacification announced internally.
12 May 67	Embassy Saigon Airgram 622, Subject: Revolutionary Development	Gloomy account of progress of RD in first three months of 1967.
13 May 67	Ambassador Bunker statements to the press in Saigon, May 13, 1967	Announcement of transfer of OCO to MACV, Bunker stressed combined civil-military nature of pacification.
15 May 67	Embassy Saigon msg. 25839	First meeting of Komer with Ky. Ky declined to place GVN RD efforts under JGS.
28 May 67	State Department msg DTG 092304Z; MACV Dir 10-12, 28 May 1967.	MACV issued directive with instructions on new RD organizational arrangements.
May 67	JCSM-530-67, Subject: Increase in FY 1968 RVNAF Force Level, 28 Sep 67 (a review of the year's actions).	McNamara imposed a temporary ceiling on RVNAF to prevent further inflation in Vietnam and to arrest some of the balance of payments flow of U.S. spending.

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14 Jun 67	Amb. R. W. Komer, Memorandum for General W. C. Westmoreland, Subject: Organization for Attack on V.C. Infrastructure	Komer recommended consolidation, under his direction, of U.S. anti-infrastructure intelligence effort. Desired unified GVN/US, civil/military "management structure targeted on infrastructure." ICEX (Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation) structure was developed.
14 Jun 67	Embassy Saigon msg 28095, For the President from Bunker	Bunker described MACV actions underway to improve RVNAF: improving leadership, better pay, improving command structure and equipment of RF/PF training, integrated US/RVNAF operations, reviews.
17 Jun 67	MACCORDS, Project Take-off, prepared by the ACoFS, CORDS, Headquarters MACV	Project TAKEOFF contained analysis of reasons for part failure, appraisal of current situation, and recommendations for future emphasis in RD; suggested increased use of U.S. leverage and control.
4 Jul 67	ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven Memo for the SecDef, Subj: Improvement in RVNAF Force Effectiveness	Enthoven claimed that primary reason for RVNAF ineffectiveness was the quantity and quality of leadership and recommended that the Secretary query MACV on leadership problems.
13 Jul 67	ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven Memorandum for the Record, Subj: Fallout for SecDef Trip to South Vietnam (TS-SENS-EYES ONLY for Dr. Heyman); and OASD(SA) General Purpose Forces, W.K. Brehm, Memo for the Record, Subj: SEA Deployments, Jul 14, 1967	In Saigon, McNamara gave planning authorization for U.S. augmentation up to 525,000 spaces, and civilianization of 10,000 additional spaces to fulfill Westmoreland's lower force alternative.
14 Aug 67	ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven Memo for the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Assistant Secretaries of Defense, Subj: Southeast Asia Deployment Program #5	New U.S. force level of 525,000 promulgated as Deployment Program #5.

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30 Aug 67	DASD(SA) Memo for the SecDef	Amb. Komer complained that the CORDS advisory element's actual strength was seriously below authorization due to bureaucratic delays.
31 Aug 67	Dept of State Msg 30023	Study of leverage by Hans Heymann and Lt Col Volney Warner recommended increased use.
7 Sep 66	COMUSMACV Memo for Ambassador Lodge	Westmoreland disagreed with Roles and Missions Study Group recommendation to remove division from chain of command below CTZ level and strengthening role of Province Chief.
15 Sep 67	JCSM 505-67, Subj: U.S. Forces Deployments Vietnam (Refined Troop List)	JCS submitted final detailed troop list for Program #5. Contained 2,577 additional advisors and 666 Special Forces to perform advisor-like functions.
16 Sep 67	Review and Analysis System for RVNAF Progress, MACV-J341	First published Review and Analysis for RVNAF appeared: long catalogue of RVNAF deficiencies.
19 Sep 67	Embassy Saigon msg 7113	Komer replied to recommendation for increased use of U.S. leverage that it must be done discreetly. Proposed comprehensive system of country-wide leverage was never adopted.
28 Sep 67	JCSM-530-67, Subject: Increase in FY 68 RVNAF Force Level	JCS forwarded with endorsement the MACV-CINCPAC recommendation on FY 68 RVNAF force increases: total increase of 63,586; 47,839 for RF/PF and 15,747 for regular forces. MACV requested further increase of 78,204 for FY 1969.
7 Oct 67	SecDef Memo for CJCS, Subject: Increase in FY 68 RVNAF Force Level, and attached OASD(SA) memo for the SecDef, 5 Oct 67	McNamara approved the requested FY 68 augmentations for RVNAF, against the wishes of Enthoven, who would have authorized only half as many.

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26 Oct 67	"Information on MATs (Mobile Advisory Teams) and MALTs (Mobile Advisory Logistics Teams)," 8 May 1968, working paper prepared by the ACoFS MA, MACV	MACV conference on RF/PF, convened to study problems of RF/PF expansion and to plan for expansion of advisory effort, recommended complete reorientation of advisory concept for RF/PF, establishment of Mobile Advisory Teams to be used on a rotating basis.
15 Dec 67		Westmoreland approved new RF/PF advisory system: MATs and MALTs, to be phased in during 1968.
31 Jan 68	Tet Offensive	VC/NVA initiate massive attacks on population centers throughout Vietnam during Lunar New Year (Tet) holiday period.

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IV. B. 3.

THE ADVISORY BUILD-UP, 1961-67

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IV. B. 3.

THE ADVISORY BUILD-UP, 1961-67

INTRODUCTION

From shortly after the founding of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in 1954 until the first year of the Kennedy Administration the U.S. supported RVN with a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) which was reasonably stable in size. Beginning in 1961 the number of U.S. military advisors to RVN increased sharply. This increase continued unevenly throughout 1967 and into 1968.

This U.S. military advisory buildup did not mark the first U.S. attempt to conduct "advisory warfare" in the post-World War II era. The first such attempt was in Greece. Nor did it mark the initial U.S. program aimed at creating a modern military force from meager beginnings in a foreign nation. The first attempt of this kind was made in the Republic of Korea. What it did mark was the first sustained U.S. effort to advise foreign national forces engaged in combatting what the communists have termed a "war of national liberation," a struggle which took the form of a civil war with external assistance to both antagonists and in which winning the adherence of the population was at least as central an issue as was the tide of military battle. This has been the first sustained U.S. advisory effort to be concerned in a major way with "pacification by proxy."

The present study examines the major decisions to undertake and to expand this large military advisory effort. It attempts to describe the context in which successive decisions were made to send advisors to South Vietnam, to record the expectations of the policymakers or, when appropriate, to note the absence of explicit expectations, and to trace the expansion of the U.S. military presence in the advisory role through the various levels of the South Vietnamese military and administrative machinery. Finally, this study attempts to assess the impact of the U.S. advisory buildup in terms of the extent to which U.S. expectations have been realized or frustrated.

The main study is divided into two parts. Part One describes briefly the U.S. advisory effort in RVN from 1954 through 1960. It sets the stage, as it were, for the more comprehensive examination of the advisory buildup from 1961 through 1967 in Part Two. (The latter year marks roughly the final period for which information is available at this writing, not any necessary end to the general process described.) The summary and analysis which accompanies this study constitutes in effect Part Three of the study. It assesses the U.S. advisory effort in terms of expectations and developments and examines persistent issues throughout the period under discussion. Finally, the growth of the U.S. military advisory effort and related data

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is shown in tabular form at the end of the study.

The development of the U.S. military advisory effort from 1954-1959 is presented in another document in the present series.* The purpose of the initial part of the present study is not to replot the same furrows but to highlight the legacy of this earlier period as it affected the later advisory buildup. Although the U.S. attempt to conduct revolutionary warfare by proxy may be said to have begun in 1961, it did not proceed entirely free of the inheritance from earlier situations, attitudes, and actions.

* Vol. IV.A., Evolution of the War: U.S. Training of the Vietnamese National Army, 1954-1959.

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PART ONE

ADVISORY STABILITY, 1954-1960

A. The U.S. Gamble With Limited Resources

ORIGINS OF THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN RVN

The U.S. decision to attempt, generally within the strictures imposed by the Geneva Accords, to shore up the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) and to prevent the new nation's fall into communist hands appears in retrospect to have been, in Wellington's phrase, "a close run thing." The prevalent American attitude in 1954 was that the deployment of large U.S. forces to the mainland of Asia should be permitted "never again." Spending on national security was to be pegged at tolerable levels which would not threaten the well-being of the domestic economy, yet communist expansion was to be deterred by the threat of massive retaliation combined with U.S. support for free nations capable of managing their own internal order and insuring that any act of armed aggression would appear as just that -- the unambiguous precondition for nuclear retaliation.

INITIAL MILITARY RELUCTANCE

The policy solution to this problem in national security strategy has been accurately and exhaustively described in recent literature. 1/ It need not be repeated here. The important thing to note is that the attempt to achieve stability in RVN was recognized to be a marginal gamble to retain a small but potentially important piece in the larger jig saw puzzle which was U.S. national security policy. As such, it seemed worth the risk of a moderate outlay of assistance and advice. General J. Lawton Collins stated the case succinctly in his assessment for the National Security Council:

...There is at least an even chance that Vietnam can be saved from Communism if the present programs of its government are fully implemented....I cannot guarantee that Vietnam will remain free, even with our aid. But I know that without our aid Vietnam will surely be lost to Communism. 2/

The gamble consisted in making available to the GVN that material support and advice which would enable it to assure its own viability. Much of the military equipment was already in RVN, the residue of earlier efforts to support the French war against the Viet Minh. The framework for military advice was present, too, in the form of MAAG Indochina which had assisted (and attempted to influence -- generally unsuccessfully) the French struggle.

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The military establishment was not eager, however, to undertake this effort. The JCS feared that the advisory limit imposed by the Geneva Accords (342 military personnel) was too restrictive to permit a successful training program even if all administrative tasks were performed by civilians and all military personnel freed for advisory duties in training the army of the new nation. Even this would create a situation, the JCS argued, in which the U.S. would have only very limited influence, yet assume the responsibility for failure. 3/ The same resource allocations would bring a greater return, in the JCS view, if devoted to the support of military forces in other nations. 4/ The Joint Chiefs were agreed that the creation of a Vietnamese Army might not even be adequate to the task of establishing a stable GVN, let alone to protecting that nation from external aggression:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff further consider that the chaotic internal political situation within Vietnam will hamper the development of loyal and effective security forces in the support of the Diem Government and that it is probable that the development of such forces will not result in political and military stability within South Vietnam. Unless the Vietnamese themselves show an inclination to make the individual and collective sacrifices required to resist communism no amount of external pressure and assistance can long delay a complete Communist victory in South Vietnam. 5/

Their conclusion, "from a military point of view," was that the risk was not worth the gamble:

.../The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the United States should not participate in the training of Vietnamese forces in Indochina. However, if it is considered that political considerations are overriding, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would agree to the assignment of a training mission to MAAG, Saigon, with safeguards against French interference with the US training effort. 6/

THE DECISION TO GAMBLE WITH LIMITED COMMITMENT

Political considerations were indeed overriding. Reasonable fears of failure, claims about the inadequacy of resources, and caveats on the necessity for Vietnamese initiatives are inherently inconclusive arguments when one is speaking of a calculated gamble. Indeed, low value chips for high stakes made the gamble all the more appealing. Secretary of State Dulles' position immediately prevailed: only relatively small military forces were needed; their principal purpose should be to promote internal stability rather than to guard against external aggression; nations acting in concert (under the umbrella of U.S. nuclear superiority)

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would guard against external aggression. 7/ On 22 October 1954 Ambassador Heath and General O'Daniel in Saigon were instructed to "collaborate in setting in motion a crash program designed to bring about an improvement in the loyalty and effectiveness of the Free Vietnamese forces." 8/ Four days later the JCS were directed to prepare a "long range program for the reorganization and training of the minimum number of Free Vietnamese forces necessary for internal security." 8a/ The earlier objections of the JCS were neither refuted nor ignored; they were accepted tacitly as part and parcel of the policy gamble.

FROM INTERNAL TO CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE

The language of this decision to train the Vietnamese National Army (VNA), as it was then called, would indicate that internal (rather than external) security would be the principal purpose of that force. That is not the way it developed, for three reasons. First, basic U.S. national strategy (embodied in NSC 162 and NSC 5602 during the period under examination) and Southeast Asia policy (NSC 5429 and NSC 5612) were both ambiguous on a key point: to what degree were indigenous military forces to be expected to defend against a conventional, "limited war" attack by an aggressor? The continuous, unbroken tendency throughout the 1950s was to desire ever more capability for conventional defense.

Second, U.S. military forces were unprepared by their own experience to assist in the structuring of forces designed for other than conventional warfare. The U.S. advisory experiences that were current in terms of institutionalized memory were those of aid to Greece and Korea where the job had been one of training for technical and tactical competence along conventional lines. It was eminently natural for the U.S. advisory effort to follow in this identifiable path. Indeed, to have expected the advisory effort to have stressed "counterinsurgency" early in this period would have been completely unrealistic: the term had not been invented and its concepts had not been either developed or articulated. This natural tendency to develop conventional forces was not only in step with the dominant trend in U.S. military strategy, it was also reinforced by a third factor, the generalized assumption that the ability to promote internal security was automatically provided for in the creation of forces capable to promote external security.

The confluence of all three factors led, in fact, to an attempt to create Vietnamese forces along lines which were later called "mirror images" of conventional U.S. force structures. MAAG Vietnam proposed and led in the creation of the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) in formations comprising divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies organized as closely parallel to U.S. organization as local differences in equipment and support would permit. 9/ This was not, for the reasons already indicated, an unreasonable or indefensible development -- at least not until about 1959 or 1960 -- and by that time efforts were underway to transform the focus of ARVN to internal security. These later efforts were faced with the reality of a sizeable

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army -- conventionally organized, trained, and equipped -- which had been created under different circumstances and for different purposes. One is forced to wonder, if Vietnamese institutions are as difficult to remould as their American counterparts, whether the later advisory effort was not faced from its inception with an almost insurmountable task.

THE EARLY MAAG AND THE EQUIPMENT RECOVERY MISSION

The number of U.S. advisors to the fledgling Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) were, as already indicated, limited by the Geneva Accords. Article 16 of the Accords limited military personnel in Vietnam to the number present at the time the Accords were signed. The magic number was 342. The U.S. MAAG Chief, General O'Daniel, complained that he needed twice this number to train the new RVNAF and to oversee the redistribution of U.S. equipment already in RVN as a result of U.S. support for the French during the war just ended. 10/ The eventual outcome, when it was learned informally that the Indian Government would instruct its representative on the ICC to interpose no objection, was the creation of the Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (TERM) with 350 military personnel. TERM served as the principal manager for the redistribution of equipment, assisted in developing RVNAF's embryonic logistical support system, and provided a convenient cover for a larger intelligence effort. 11/

This combined administrative-advisory force remained stable in size during the period prior to 1961. American military advisors were located physically at only a very few locations in RVN. They were notable by their absence in field units. The U.S. effort was concentrated in training centers and in Saigon. In the former it was largely technical; in the latter it consisted primarily of attempts to persuade GVN to adopt measures recommended by the U.S. advisory group. It was essentially an attempt to give advice from the top. This does not mean that the question of leverage was never considered; it was. Early in our involvement, in January 1955, the JCS laid out available U.S. courses of action in South Vietnam and urged that a decision be made at "the highest level" to indicate which of these should be followed:

- a. To continue aid to South Vietnam as currently being developed with the cooperation of the French and Vietnamese.
- b. To institute a unilateral program of direct guidance to the Vietnamese government through an "advisor" system. Under this course of action, the amount of U.S. aid should be dependent upon Vietnamese adherence to U.S. direction.
- c. In the event the courses of action in a and b above are not sufficient to insure retention of South Vietnam to the

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Free World, to deploy self sustaining U.S. forces to South Vietnam either unilaterally, or as a part of a SEACDT /Southeast Asia Common Defense Treaty -- a term used prior to SEATO/ force.

d. To withdraw all U.S. support from South Vietnam and concentrate on saving the remainder of Southeast Asia. 12/

No such decision was made. Indeed, as explained in the summary and analysis, there is no reason to believe that the need for such a decision was even seriously considered at "the highest level."

MAAG Vietnam was by 1960 still quite small in size, though it loomed ever larger in importance. (It was the only U.S. MAAG commanded by a Lieutenant General; all of the other MAAG Chiefs were officers of lesser rank.) It was essentially city-bound, training center and Saigon-oriented, devoted to technical-tactical training and high level persuasion aimed at influencing RVNAF organization. The personnel limitations imposed upon it resulted in highly centralized advice. But through its efforts and material support this MAAG assisted in the creation of a sizeable (140,000 man) conventional army and of small naval and air forces of approximately 5,000 men each.

The U.S. MAAG was also concerned with the establishment and training of paramilitary forces, but it was not as directly concerned as it was with the creation of conventional forces in ARVN. The Civil Guard (CG) and Self Defense Corps (SDC) were at various times under the control of the Ministry of the Interior or directly under President Diem. In the field they were invariably under the direction of the Province Chiefs. The U.S. civilian advisors who had been called in to give assistance with police and internal security matters tended to favor making these paramilitary forces less military per se and more police intelligence-minded. MAAG tended to favor making them more consciously military and territorially oriented in order to free ARVN for mobile, offensive operations rather than tying its forces down in static defense duties. 13/ By 1960, when Civil Guard training was passed to MAAG control, neither course of action had been followed consistently but it was highly probable that MAAG's views would henceforth prevail. Thus, questions of local physical security would almost inescapably be decided with reference to the effect they would have on the functions of ARVN, itself created with an eye to external defense. This may be said to be an awkward structure from which to launch an effort aimed primarily at internal security. It was, however, the structure that existed.

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B. The Transition Period: 1959-1961

EARLY STEPS TOWARD EMPHASIS ON INTERNAL SECURITY

By the time of the Draper Committee (The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program) in 1958-1959, there was an almost imperceptible but growing U.S. awareness of the requirement to promote internal stability. The committee's papers, for instance, sought to popularize military civic action programs and to link them to politically acceptable precedents -- such as the U.S. Army's role in the development of the American West. ^{14/} The very term "mirror imaging" was coined in a Draper Committee staff study. ^{15/} One of the committee's studies questioned even the easy assumption that internal security was a "lesser included capability" of forces structured to promote external security:

It is seldom that a government considers its military forces to have only a mission of maintaining internal security. Their size, organization, equipment, habitual deployment, and so on, are nearly always related to real or supposed requirements of defense against external attack. They are usually considered capable of performing internal security missions as part of this larger role. However, the requirements of the two missions are different, if overlapping; and tailoring a military force to the task of countering external aggression -- i.e., countering another regular military force -- entails some sacrifice of capabilities to counter internal aggression. The latter requires widespread deployment, rather than concentration. It requires small, mobile, lightly equipped units of the ranger or commando type. It requires different weapons, command systems, communications, logistics.... ^{16/}

THE MCGARR EMPHASIS ON COUNTERINSURGENCY

These developments were only harbingers of a dawning awareness, however, not indicative of a fundamental shift in focus which had already occurred. The degree to which ARVN and paramilitary forces should be consciously structured to deal with internal security rather than to protect against external invasion was the subject of a developing debate rather than a settled issue. It fell to Lieutenant General Lionel C. McGarr to head the U.S. MAAG during the confusing period of transition which accompanied this debate. He did not come to Vietnam unaware of the issues; a long study prepared for him by his staff at the Army's Command and General Staff College (his post before coming to Saigon) laid out in some detail the Viet Cong's strategy as adapted from the Viet Minh's struggle with the French:

This form of warfare permitted the Viet Minh to retain the mobility so essential to jungle and mountain operations, facilitated the gathering of detailed, accurate, and timely

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intelligence information, kept the level of violence at a low enough level to preclude the active intervention of another major power, accomplished the slow attrition of the French while permitting the Viet Minh to build the regular forces necessary for the final battles, offset the serious logistics problem by the very primitiveness of transportation methods, and surmounted the manpower shortage by making political and economic operations inseparable from military operations. 17/

One could conclude from this assessment that RVNAF should be restructured to deal with this essentially internal challenge to South Vietnamese stability. In a statement which may reflect the difficulty of reversing institutional thought patterns -- at the U.S. Army's principal doctrine formulating institution, in this instance -- it was claimed that pacification operations were undesirable because they detracted from training. The suggestion was that the CG and SDC takeover of pacification should be expedited:

The [South Vietnamese] Army is still required to engage from time to time in major pacification (internal security) operations, pending the development of a higher state of operational effectiveness of the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps. Since units have considerable personnel turnover and are filled out with draftees, who have had only basic and perhaps advanced individual training before arrival in units, the orderly pursuit of a progressive unit training schedule is essential to unit effectiveness. Each commitment to an operational (pacification) mission, though of some training value, in general interrupts the planned training of participating units and delays arrival at a satisfactory state of operational readiness. 18/

THE COUNTERINSURGENCY PLAN FOR SOUTH VIET-NAM

General McGarr's approach was to give emphasis in his advice to recommendations designed to integrate the activities of ARVN and the CG/SDC. He consistently (and persistently) recommended the establishment of a single chain of military command to guide all three forces. He also pushed for steps which would free ARVN from static security (pacification) missions in favor of offensive operations against the Viet Cong. The vehicle for the first of McGarr's desired reforms was the "Counterinsurgency Plan for Viet-Nam" (CIP), produced in late 1960. 19/ The CIP was a blueprint for RVNAF reorganization, not an outline of the strategy to be pursued. Not until September 1961 did MAAG present GVN with a set of operational proposals in the form of a "Geographically Phased National Level Operations Plan for Counterinsurgency." 20/

The CIP marks something of a halfway house between concern with external defense and internal security. Both military tasks were recognized, but internal security assumed primacy for the first time:

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Military force, in the form of increased communist insurgency, is clearly the immediate threat to the stability of Viet-Nam today. South Viet-Nam is unique in that it is the only country in the world which is forced to defend itself against a communist internal subversion action, while at the same time being subject to the militarily supportable threat of a conventional external attack from communist North Viet-Nam. The RVNAF force basis is inadequate to meet both these threats.

The problem is twofold, although at present the counter-insurgency phase is the more dangerous and immediate. In this counterinsurgency fight RVNAF is on the defensive. Approximately 75% of ARVN is committed to pacification missions, about half of these being committed to static guard and security roles....The guerrilla problem has [as a result of fragmented lines of authority] become much more serious than the Civil Guard can manage, thereby requiring a disproportionately large RVNAF commitment, which has further resulted in a serious weakening of the RVNAF capability for defense against internal or overt attack in force. 21/

This last point reflected General McGarr's apparently very real concern that ARVN was becoming incapable to meet internal (as well as external) threats posed by the VC in conventional troop formations. As the VC became stronger and formed larger regular units -- as distinct from guerrilla bands -- the differences between conventional and unconventional warfare seemed to disappear. The problem, as MAAG viewed it, became one of guarding against a spectrum of dangers by means of a short run emphasis on meeting the internal challenge in both its conventional and unconventional (guerrilla) form. In this view ARVN should become the conventional offensive and mobile defensive force, the CG should be the static force in support of pacification efforts. The two should be under a common chain of command, it was argued in the CIP, as should the logistical organization for their support. Such a common chain of command did not exist in 1960-1961:

The military chain of command has usually been violated at the expense of unity of effort and command. No adequate operations control or overall planning system presently exists....The President has exercised arbitrary control of operations, by-passing command channels of the JGS [Joint General Staff] and often Corps and Division staff. Resources have been fragmented to provincial control. The above practices appear to have been designed to divide responsibility in order to guard against the possibility of a military coup through placing too much power in the hands of a single subordinate. 22/

Poor organization, then, was seen as the principal roadblock in the way

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of organizing the military and paramilitary forces of South Vietnam into an effective combination. Only through a single chain of command could ARVN be freed to take the offensive, the CG be built up to cope with local guerrillas, and the GVN place itself in a position to start developing useful intelligence -- a field which was judged to have been, thus far, a notable failure. 23/

THE SUPPORTING OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Geographically Phased National Plan laid out the priority areas for this coordinated effort under a single chain of command. A three phase sequence of actions (preparation, military action to clear and secure, and combined action to establish civilian political control and consolidate intelligence and security programs) would take place, sequentially, in each of these priority areas. The process would be repeated in expanding spheres as successive areas became pacified. 24/

Together these two American-generated and proposed plans constituted a comprehensive blueprint for GVN action to end the insurgency. Two things common to each should be noted for the purposes of the present inquiry. The first is the simple fact that each was U.S.-generated and proposed. The proposals addressed President Diem's persistent fears of a coup by asking him to ignore those fears. The second point is that neither had anything to say about U.S. advisors. Each was an attempt to give advice, but neither recommended that the U.S. advisory effort in RVN be expanded in scope, size, or content.

STABILITY IN THE NUMBER OF U.S. ADVISORS

The number of military advisors had remained fairly level throughout this transition period (roughly, 1959 to mid-1961). TERM had finally been abolished but an approximately equal number of spaces was added to MAAG Vietnam, increasing it from 342 to 685. 25/ The ICC agreed that this increase was consistent with the limitations imposed by the Geneva Accords. 26/ MAAG advisors had been authorized down to regimental level but expressly forbidden to participate directly in combat operations or to go near the South Vietnamese national boundary. 27/ The U.S. had begun to provide Special Forces teams to GVN in an effort to train Vietnamese ranger companies in anti-guerrilla tactics, but this was regarded as a temporary undertaking. 28/ As late as November 1961, the total U.S. military strength in South Vietnam was only about 900 personnel. 29/ Discussions and arguments had been underway for some time, however, with a view toward increasing U.S. involvement in South Vietnam. The nature of this debate, which took place largely during 1961 and terminated in the decisions at the end of that year to establish a "limited partnership" with GVN, is important to an account of the U.S. advisory build-up. It was in the shadow of opposing contentions about how to make the U.S.

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contribution most effective in helping GVN to defeat the insurgents that the advisory build-up was to begin in earnest in late 1961. These opposing views, in turn, were cast against the situational developments already outlined: U.S. military desires to make RVNAF more effective in counterinsurgency by improving the military chain of command, increasing the mobility and effectiveness of ARVN, and upgrading the CG/SDC for the performance of pacification tasks.

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PART TWO

THE ADVISORY BUILD-UP, 1961-1967

A. The Kennedy Programs (1961-1963)

THE CONTEXT OF DECISIONS

By the end of 1961, the U.S. had decided to double its military advisory effort in South Vietnam by establishing advisory teams at the province (sector) level and within ARVN's battalions. The decision to take this step was one of a large number of decisions designed to "buy time" in RVN so that GVN could mobilize its resources and swing over from the defensive to the offensive. All of the major participants appear to have agreed that the situation in RVN was bad and becoming worse, that additional U.S. actions were needed if South Vietnam was to be saved, and that the issue was of sufficient importance in terms of U.S. interest to justify doing whatever was necessary. The question was what should be done, not if anything could be done. Defeat was too catastrophic an outcome to bear examination. Moreover, decisions about Vietnam in 1961 were, until the very end of the year, made in the shadow of more pressing emergencies--the Berlin crisis and events in Laos.* It is most important to recognize this relative lack of centrality if one is to understand the apparently incomplete process by which decisions on Vietnam were reached. Moreover, the dimensions of the Vietnamese problem were clear and agreed to by all. Elusive solutions had to be sought in the interstices, as it were, of the policymakers' limited time.

It is difficult to imagine any responsible individual or group, for instance, taking exception to the litany of problems ticked off by General Taylor in his report following his important October 1961 mission to South Vietnam:

Lack of intelligence

ARVN's defensive posture

Poor command and control

Poor GVN administrative procedures

Lack of initiative

GVN failure to communicate with and mobilize its people, particularly the intellectuals and the young people. 30/

* This period is described more fully in a volume in the present series, IV.B.1., Evolution of the War: The Kennedy Programs, 1961.

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But various individuals and groups would stress the importance of different shortcomings and propose quite different methods of "persuading" GVN to overcome them.

The prevalent military view, as already suggested in the summary explanation of the CIP and the Geographically Phased Plan, was that organizational reform and national planning were prerequisites to effective action. If these could be achieved, the military foresaw a pacification process which would proceed from the provision of physical security in the rural areas through the establishment (or reestablishment) of civilian political administration to a state of political stability. The first nut to crack was that of military security. Political analysts, including those of the Department of State, emphasized the need for the Diem government to liberalize itself, to attract dissident groups at least into a loyal active opposition and away from indifference and disaffection. In this view the heart of the matter was essentially political, rather than military.

In both views, it should be noted, advocates agreed that the GVN must be persuaded to take certain necessary steps. Just how such persuasion was to be achieved was a prime subject for discussion. Who was to persuade whom and in what organizational framework was another such subject. But although these subjects were bound to be discussed, neither was the central issue -- by late 1961 the question of whether or not to send U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam had clearly earned that title.

The U.S. determination of what steps to take was driven as much by events as by arguments. By late 1961 the course of events dictated that physical security would take primacy over governmental liberalization, not because the arguments for security were inherently more persuasive but because of the very real fear that there would be no GVN to save if the U.S. did not do something very quickly. During the first half of 1961, terrorists and guerrillas had assassinated over 500 local officials and civilians, kidnapped more than 1,000, and killed almost 1,500 RVNAF personnel. 31/ The VC had gained the upper hand in most of the countryside and were drawing an increasingly tight cinch around Saigon. 32/ Viet Cong regular forces were now estimated to number 25,000 and were being organized into increasingly large regular formations. The terrorist-guerrilla apparatus had grown to embrace an estimated 17,000. 33/ The operative question was not whether the Diem government as it was then moving could defeat the insurgents but whether it could save itself.

The deteriorating situation was one reason why the military security argument quickly gained the ascendancy. Another reason was the military's recognition that, while security was an important precondition, political, economic, and social reforms were necessary to the realization of viability within South Vietnam. Thus, security was recognized as a means to a political end. The process outlined in MAAG's Geographically Phased Plan, described earlier, gave recognition to this fact. This process would shortly become known as the "pacification process," widely accepted throughout important places in the U.S. Government (specifically to include what is usually referred to euphemistically as "the highest level") and still widely accepted at this writing (1968).

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A PROPOSAL FOR EXTRA-BUREAUCRATIC ADVISORS

If the deteriorating situation and the potential breadth of the military's view of the pacification process both augured for at least the short run primacy of security considerations, that still left the question of how best to enhance security and to lay the groundwork for the governmental programs which would, hopefully, begin to operate behind a geographically expanding security screen. These questions were addressed, but in a rather one-sided way. An approach to U.S. advice-giving and the organizational context in which it should proceed was tabled as a radical proposal. First the approach, then the organizational framework were struck down. The U.S. decided to take an opposite advisory approach in a very different organizational context as much because of disagreement with the debated proposals as because of reasoned elaboration of the benefits to be realized from the course which was eventually followed. In the process, the difficult question of U.S. leverage got shunted off to the side. GVN reform was simply stated as an expected quid pro quo for increased U.S. aid. What the U.S. should do if no reforms materialized was apparently a subject too unpleasant to be considered.

The radical proposals were first floated in January 1961 by a uniquely qualified professional military officer serving in Secretary McNamara's office: Brigadier General Edward Lansdale. Although an Air Force officer, Lansdale had worked closely in the Philippines with Ramon Magsaysay in the latter's successful campaign against the Huk rebellion and served later as head of the U.S. intelligence mission in South Vietnam in the mid-50's. He knew President Diem well and was trusted by the GVN leader. He had gained some notoriety as the real-life hero of the pseudo-fictional best seller, "The Ugly American." His views on counterinsurgency commanded attention.

Lansdale's proposals lend themselves to summarization, not to comprehensive description. That is, he put forward a proposed attitude of mind which should govern U.S. actions, not a program in the usual sense. The thrust of his argument pertaining to advisors was that the U.S. should select dedicated Americans with empathy for the Vietnamese and send them to advise GVN "with sensitive understanding and wisdom." ^{34/} The course of action he recommended was to get such men on the scene, give them total responsibility to match their total commitment, and free them from the encumbrances of the regular bureaucratic machinery (be it military or civilian) in order that they might operate effectively according to the situation:

When there is an emergency, the wise thing to do is to pick the best people you have, people who are experienced in dealing with this precise type of emergency, and send them to the spot with orders to remedy the situation. When you get the people in position and free them to work, you should then back them up in every practical way you can. The real decisions will be made in little daily actions in Vietnam, not in Washington. That's

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why the best are needed on the spot.

Our U.S. team in Vietnam should have a hard core of experienced Americans who know and really like Asia and the Asians, dedicated people who are willing to risk their lives for the ideals of freedom, and who will try to influence and guide the Vietnamese towards U.S. policy objectives with the warm friendships and affection which our close alliance deserves. We should break the rules of personnel assignment, if necessary, to get such U.S. military and civilians to Vietnam. 35/

Not only should the U.S. depend on advisors who earn the trust of their counterparts, Lansdale argued, it should depend on them to get the job done without coercion and threats. Leverage should be the product of persuasion and trust, not the result of control over funds and materiel:

...Many of the Vietnamese in the countryside who were right up against the Viet Cong terror were full of patriotic spirit. Those who seemed to be in the hardest circumstances, fighting barefoot with makeshift weapons, had the highest morale. They still can lick the Viet Cong with a little help. There's a lesson here on our giving aid. Maybe we should learn that our funds cannot buy friends or a patriotic spirit by mere materialistic giving. Perhaps we should help those who help themselves, and not have a lot of strings on that help. 36/

If the U.S. could adopt this free-wheeling approach to advice, said Lansdale, it would do well to do it at the action level, to get down and share the risks and discomforts of the ARVN rather than to restrict its advice to paper plans and confrontations in offices:

...U.S. military men in Vietnam should be freed to work in the combat areas. Our MAAG has a far greater potential than is now being utilized. U.S. military men are hardly in a position to be listened to when they are snug in rear areas and give advice to Vietnamese officers who have attended the same U.S. military schools and who are now in a combat in which few Americans are experienced. MAAG personnel from General McGarr on down expressed desire to get more into real field work; let's give them what they want as far as U.S. permission is concerned and let them earn their way into positions of greater influence with the Vietnamese military in the field. 37/

BACK TO NORMAL CHANNELS

In sum, General Lansdale urged an extra-bureaucratic, uninhibited advisory system consciously built on shared U.S.-Vietnamese goals (validated by shared experiences) and based on mutual trust and admiration.

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It was--he would be the first to admit--the kind of unstructured, unprogrammed, "non-organization" which was antithetical to that which the professional military might be expected to propose and so foreign to the typical views of the State Department, with its traditional anti-operational bias, that diplomats would inevitably regard it as a proposal for power without responsibility. Thus, one contemporary account suggests that Lansdale's approach was eventually rejected because of governmental inertia and bureaucratic in-fighting:

When Lansdale returned to Washington -- after he had submitted his report to his own superiors -- he was suddenly summoned one afternoon to the White House and, much to his surprise, ushered into a conference room where the President was presiding over a mixed group of high Pentagon, State Department, and National Security Council officials. To his further surprise, President Kennedy, after commending his report, indicated that Lansdale would be sent back to Vietnam in a high capacity. Kennedy's declaration at the meeting obviously raised the hackles of many officials whose agencies had been criticized by Lansdale. The upshot was that nothing further happened about Lansdale's appointment. It is now known that objections to it were raised in the highest levels of the Kennedy administration; in fact, there were threats of resignation. In the sense that some drastic action in Vietnam should have been taken at this time, whether it involved Lansdale or not, this was another vital turning point in the long and tortuous history of America's Vietnamese involvement. There was still a chance to do something to save the Diem regime, depending largely on getting Nhu out of the country. Difficult as it would have been to achieve at this late date, Lansdale might have been able to persuade Diem to do it, because he had remained one of the few Americans Diem had ever trusted. More important, some feasible ideas about how to fight a guerrilla war might have been set in motion, and the miscalculation of what had always been essentially a revolutionary situation might thereupon have been altered. 38/

This account simply does not square with the existence of several cogent objections to Lansdale's proposals for "unfettered quality"--though there most certainly was a fair share of bureaucratic in-fighting as the proposals were studied, expanded, and reshaped. Moreover, it compresses the time frame within which Lansdale's two major theses were struck down. His first proposal, for selected individuals to act as advisors, implied --at the very minimum--continuity of personnel selected by an extra-bureaucratic process. Extra-bureaucratic selection was dead by mid-1961; the issue of continuity was finally settled in favor of year-long tours in December 1962 (and has remained in effect since that time). The issue of a supra-departmental organization was fought out in mid-1961. It succumbed to an organizational principle with very deep roots.

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The specific form which Lansdale's supra-departmental organizational proposal advanced was that of a Presidential Agent to manage the U.S. effort in RVN. On 12 April 1961, Walt W. Rostow sent a memorandum to President Kennedy which suggested, among other things, that it was imperative to appoint a "fulltime, first-rate back-stop man in Washington" to oversee the U.S. involvement in RVN. 39/ Lansdale was either aware of a meaning not conveyed literally by the memorandum or interpreted it to fit his preferences. In any event, he used this springboard to propose, in a 19 April memorandum to Secretary McNamara and his deputy, Roswell Gilpatric, that the President create an interdepartmental task force on Vietnam to "supervise and coordinate the activities of every U.S. agency carrying out operations...in Vietnam to ensure success of the [President's] approved plan." 40/ On the following day Secretary McNamara, presumably after discussing the matter with the President, requested Gilpatric to prepare within a week a report for the President, setting forth any actions necessary to "prevent communist domination of that country." 41/

On 27 April Secretary Gilpatric submitted his recommendations. Much of the flavor of the earlier Lansdale pleas for a select, individualistic advisory effort was missing from this product of an interdepartmental committee. The earlier recommendations for an expanded U.S. effort were still there, however. These included an RVNAF force increase of 20,000 with a corresponding increase of 100 MAAG advisors, a MAAG takeover of the entire CG and SDC programs, the employment of U.S. advisors in field operations, the continuation of U.S. Mission efforts to get GVN to carry out reforms, the initiation of covert operations with CIA assistance against lines of communications in Laos and North Vietnam, and a U.S. economic team to help GVN speed up national development. 42/ One would be hard pressed to identify any other document which, over six months before the operative decision, so closely foreshadowed the U.S. actions that would be agreed to at the end of 1961.

But beyond these programmatic recommendations (hence, contrary to Lansdale's initial proposals) Gilpatric recommended the creation of a Presidential Task Force to provide "over-all direction, interagency coordination and support" for this program of action. Gilpatric was to be Director of the Task Force; Lansdale its operating head in Vietnam. In order to appear not to fly into the face of Ambassadorial primacy in Saigon the memo was forced into some rather fancy obfuscation:

The Ambassador as head of the Country Team is assigned the authority and the responsibility to see that the Program is carried out in the field and to determine the timing of the actions. He is authorized to advise the Director of the Task Force of any changes which he believes should be made in the Program.

In carrying out his duties in the field, the operations officer of the Task Force will cooperate with the Ambassador and the Country Team. 43/

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This equivocation charged directly against the mainstream of current thought as it related to the question of integrating operations abroad. The "Country Team" concept of the late 1950's, buttressed by a series of increasingly comprehensive Executive Orders on the subject, assigned clear primacy to the Ambassador. The State Department was not long in asserting its claim to leadership in accordance with this prevailing concept. On 3 May it provided a recommended revision of Gilpatric's task force proposal in which it proposed an interdepartmental task force under State Department leadership to coordinate the Washington effort and a counterpart task force in Saigon under Sterling J. Cottrell, then POLAD to CINCPAC. 44/ It was this proposal which was incorporated into NSAM 52 later in May. 45/

In retrospect, the Lansdale-Gilpatric proposal to conduct the U.S. participation in the Vietnamese war through a supra-departmental agency--whether by a Presidential Task Force or by some other means--probably never had much of a chance. The Department of Defense had too large an operational role to agree to leadership of such an undertaking by anyone other than one of its own principals. (Thus, Gilpatric was acceptable, but few others would have been; Lansdale almost surely was not acceptable as the operating chief in RVN.) The State Department had at stake both the legacy of theoretic interdepartmental primacy and the oft-expressed hope of giving this theory more meaning abroad. Indeed, it was during this same month (May 1961) that President Kennedy sent his oft-quoted letter to each American Ambassador, reminding the recipient of his coordinating duties even while reaffirming that these did not extend to supervising operational military forces. The effect in South Vietnam, as distinct from some other countries, was to preserve claims for independent authority for each of the major governmental departments involved. The Presidential letter to Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting in Saigon read in part:

In regard to your personal authority and responsibility, I shall count on you to oversee and coordinate all the activities of the United States Government in the Republic of Vietnam.

You are in charge of the entire United States Diplomatic Mission, and I shall expect you to supervise all of its operations. The Mission includes not only the personnel of the Department of State and the Foreign Service, but also the representatives of all other United States agencies which have programs or activities in the Republic of Vietnam. I shall give you full support and backing in carrying out your assignment.

Needless to say, the representatives of other agencies are expected to communicate directly with their offices here in Washington, and in the event of a decision by you in which they do not concur, they may ask to have the decision reviewed by a higher authority in Washington.

However, it is their responsibility to keep you fully informed of their views and activities and to abide by your decisions unless in some particular instance you and they

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are notified to the contrary.

If in your judgment individual members of the Mission are not functioning effectively, you should take whatever action you feel may be required, reporting the circumstances, of course, to the Department of State.

In case the departure from the Republic of Vietnam of any individual member of the Mission is indicated in your judgment, I shall expect you to make the decision and see that it is carried into effect. Such instances I am confident will be rare.

Now one word about your relations to the military. As you know, the United States Diplomatic Mission includes Service Attaches, Military Assistance Advisory Groups and other Military components attached to the Mission. It does not, however, include United States military forces operating in the field where such forces are under the command of a United States area military commander. The line of authority to these forces runs from me, to the Secretary of Defense, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington and to the area commander in the field.

Although this means that the chief of the American Diplomatic Mission is not in the line of military command, nevertheless, as Chief of Mission, you should work closely with the appropriate area military commander to assure the full exchange of information. If it is your opinion that activities by the United States military forces may adversely affect our over-all relations with the people or governments of the Republic of Vietnam you should promptly discuss the matter with the military commander and, if necessary, request a decision by higher authority. 46/

It is reasonable to surmise that in mid-1961 events did not seem pressing enough to cast aside a developed--if imperfect--concept of operational integration in favor of an untried substitute arrangement. In fact, if one wanted firm leadership one would have had less radical alternatives to which to turn. To mention two, Secretarial involvement to a degree tantamount to taking charge of the war (much as Secretary McNamara did in 1962) or the appointment of an Ambassador to RVN with such military preeminence that he need not defer to other military judgments (as, General Taylor in 1964).

The decision to supervise the American effort in a more or less conventional way had a direct bearing on the nature of the advisory build-up then being discussed. It was highly unlikely that General Lansdale's radical advisory proposals would be kindly received under a system managed along conventional lines. Even before the Presidential Task Force idea

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was abandoned Lansdale's proposals for a select, committed advisory group had been reshaped by interdepartmental committee. Instead of "old Vietnam hands" in key spots, the discussion turned to the use of existing organizations and much larger numbers of advisors:

Augment the MAAG with two US training commands (comprised of approximately 1600 instructors each) to enable the MAAG to establish in the "high plateau" region of South Vietnam two divisional field training areas to accelerate the U.S. training program for the entire GVN army....

Deploy, as soon as possible, a Special Forces Group (approximately 400 U.S. military personnel) to Nha Trang in order to accelerate GVN Special Forces training. 47/

Under this proposal the size of MAAG Vietnam would be increased from 685 to 2285, not including the Special Forces or training commands mentioned above or the 100 man increase already proposed to advise the 20,000 men which were to be added to RVNAF. 48/

After the shift to thinking in terms of existing military organizations (or, alternatively, of individuals drawn as it were by "requisitions" in normal channels) and the understandable--if not inevitable--demise of the Gilpatric-Lansdale proposal for supra-departmental direction, U.S. thinking about possible steps in Vietnam remained firmly within conventional channels. There were subsequent attempts to reintroduce an alternative advisory scheme and an organizational framework compatible with it but these appear to have not been seriously considered.

President Kennedy did not permit the Gilpatric Task Force recommendations to commit him to action. Rather, he used them in an attempt to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to Vietnam. The proof of this contention is in NSAM 52, which records the President's decisions. Only about 14 personnel were to be assigned, for instance, in U.S. Army civic action mobile training teams to assist ARVN with health, welfare, and public works projects. Although it was decided to deploy the Special Forces group of 400 men to Tourane [Da Nang], this was in support of a CIA-directed effort which could be kept largely covert. Increased aerial surveillance assistance required only 6 U.S. personnel. The establishment of a Combat Development and Test Center in RVN required only 4 additional U.S. personnel. 49/ The point is not how much was done but, in retrospect, how firmly the probable lines of future actions had been drawn as a result of what it had been agreed not to do.

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PLANNING BEGINS IN EARNEST

The President did, however, issue several "hunting licenses." The Defense Department was directed to examine fully (under the guidance of the State Department's Director of the continuing Task Force on Vietnam) "the size and composition of forces which would be desirable in the case of a possible commitment of U.S. forces to Vietnam." 50/ The Ambassador was authorized to sound out Diem on a bilateral defense treaty. 51/ President Kennedy also apparently decided to feel out Diem's reaction on the subject of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam. Vice President Johnson left almost immediately to visit South Vietnam and other Asian nations. He was empowered to bring up the question of troops as well as the treaty.

But discussions are one thing; firm commitments are quite another. The range of alternatives that President Kennedy was willing to consider seems clear. What he was willing to do was quite another matter. Unless he was most unlike other politicians and unless the many personal accounts of his style are completely erroneous he was willing to do what he believed he had to do -- and events in mid-1961 did not force action even though the "drill" that the Administration went through was instrumental in defining the probable responses when events did force action.

As it quickly turned out, President Diem wanted neither U.S. troops nor a treaty at that time. He told Vice President Johnson that he wanted troops only in the event of overt invasion and showed no interest in a treaty. 52/ Nevertheless, the Vice President, upon his return, was trenchant in his observations that the time for deeds to replace words was fast approaching if the U.S. was to make its declared commitment credible:

Our mission arrested the decline of confidence in the United States. It did not -- in my judgment -- restore any confidence already lost. The leaders were as explicit, as courteous and courtly as men could be in making it clear that deeds must follow words -- soon.

We didn't buy time -- we were given it.

If these men I saw at your request were bankers, I would know -- without bothering to ask -- that there would be no further extensions on my note. 53/

Diem may not have been quite so disinterested in U.S. troops as he appeared to be. NSAM 52 of 11 May had discussed, inconclusively, the proposed buildup of RVNAF from 170,000 to 200,000 in order to create two new divisions to help seal the Laotian border. When President Diem responded (on 9 June) to Vice President Johnson's invitation to prepare a set of proposals on South Vietnam's military needs, he recommended a quantum jump in strength to 270,000 and suggested a substantial increase in the US MAAG, perhaps even in the form of U.S. units:

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To accomplish this 100,000 man expansion above the strength recommended in the CIP, which was 20,000 above the existing strength of our military forces, which is perfectly feasible from a manpower viewpoint, will require a great intensification of our training programs in order to produce, in the minimum of time, those qualified combat leaders and technical specialists needed to fill the new units and to provide to them the technical and logistical support required to insure their complete effectiveness. For this purpose a considerable expansion of the United States Military Advisory Group is an essential requirement. Such an expansion, in the form of selected elements of the American Armed Forces to establish training centers for the Vietnamese Armed Forces, would serve the dual purpose of providing an expression of the United States' determination to halt the tide of communist aggression and of preparing our forces in the minimum of time. 54/

The response to this letter is not part of the available record. No doubt the initial reaction was one of surprise. The U.S. was not accustomed to GVN initiatives; it seldom sought them. "We have not become accustomed to being asked for our own views on our needs," Diem remarked in his letter to Kennedy. 55/ But Diem's proposal did certainly strike one appealing chord: the joint benefits of training coupled to demonstrated commitment through the deployment of existing troop units. As the situation in South Vietnam continued to deteriorate throughout the summer and early fall the issue of U.S. military advice continued to be addressed in terms of U.S. units. These could, of course, do even more than had been suggested by President Diem: they could fight as units. Diem's generally consistent position, however, continued to be that he would accept U.S. combat forces, but only to train GVN forces. He had said as much to Vice President Johnson:

General McGarr, who was also present at this discussion between Johnson and Diem reported that while President Diem would not want U.S. combat forces for the purpose of fighting Communists in South Vietnam, he would accept deployment of U.S. combat forces as trainers for the Vietnamese forces at any time. 56/

GVN ASKS FOR ADDITIONAL U.S. ASSISTANCE

By October the situation within South Vietnam had become sufficiently grim for President Diem to reverse his earlier sentiments and to ask for a bilateral defense treaty with the U.S. 57/ His new willingness, coupled with the deteriorating situation, kicked off a new series of proposals within the U.S. Government. Walt Rostow proposed that the U.S. place an internationalized force of about 25,000 men into RVN to perform a border sealing mission. The JCS responded with a counter proposal emphasizing Laos and calling for the deployment of a sizeable (initially 20,000) U.S. contingent to the central highlands. 58/ Another proposal blended elements

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of both the JCS and Rostow papers. 59/ A Special National Intelligence Estimate weighed in with a hard look at this rash of proposals. 60/ The President's reaction, on 11 October, was to decide to send General Taylor on a mission to South Vietnam to examine several alternative courses of action:

(a) The plan for military intervention discussed at this morning's meeting on the basis of the Vietnam task force paper entitled "Concept for Intervention in Vietnam";

(b) An alternative plan for stationing in Vietnam fewer U.S. combat forces than those called for under the plan referred to in (a) above and with a more limited objective than dealing with the Viet Cong; in other words, such a small force would probable go in at Tourane [Da Nang] and possibly another southern port principally for the purpose of establishing a U.S. "presence" in Vietnam;

(c) Other alternatives in lieu of putting any U.S. combat forces in Vietnam, i.e. stepping up U.S. assistance and training of Vietnam units, furnishing of more U.S. equipment, particularly helicopters and other light aircraft, trucks and other ground transport, etc. 61/

THE TAYLOR MISSION TO SAIGON

This range of alternatives suggests, even without "20/20 hindsight," that if something was going to be done, and if the President were to decide not to send U.S. combat units to Vietnam, there would be an advisory build-up of some kind almost by default. This is close enough to what happened to warrant the risk of oversimplification. It does not do justice to the Taylor Report, of course, but Taylor's mission and his reports have been covered fully in another study in the present series.* For their impact on the advisory effort, and to place this in perspective, it is sufficient to describe only a few salient features. First, the Viet Cong were pursuing, in Taylor's appraisal, a political-military strategy aimed at overthrowing Diem and opening the way to unification of Vietnam on Hanoi's terms. Military action by the insurgents was aimed at this objective rather than at a complete military victory:

The military strategy being pursued is, evidently, to pin down the ARVN on defensive missions; to create a pervasive sense of insecurity and frustration by hit-and-run raids on self-defense corps and militia [CG] units...and to dramatize the inability of the GVN to govern or to build....

Despite the considerable guerrilla capabilities of the Viet-Cong, Communist strategy now appears, on balance, to

* Volume IV.B., Evolution of the War: Kennedy Program and Commitments, 1961 (TS).

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aim at an essentially political denouement rather than the total military capture of the country, as in the case of Mao's campaign in China....The enemy objective seems to be to produce a political crisis by a combination of military and non-military means out of which would come a South Vietnamese Souvanna Phouma, willing to contemplate unification on terms acceptable to Hanoi, including disengagement from the U.S. 62/

In order for the Diem government to defeat this insurgency, General Taylor reasoned, the Saigon regime must reform itself. It had allowed two vicious circles to develop which vitiated its effectiveness. In the first, poor military intelligence resulted in a defensive military posture which put most of the forces under provincial control. This, in turn, meant that reserves could not be expeditiously employed. The resultant high losses in unsuccessful defensive battles further dried up the sources of intelligence and completed the circle. The second vicious circle was attributable to Diem's instinctive attempts to centralize power in his own hands while fragmenting it beneath him. His excessive mistrust of criticism and fears of a coup caused large elements of society to stand aside from the struggle while the province chiefs and generals were forced into frustrating struggles, further increasing Diem's fears and his inclination to fractionalize authority. The task, then, was to strengthen Diem while, at the same time, inducing him to reform so as to break both of these vicious circles.

In order to strengthen Diem with a U.S. military presence--very much along the lines of the smaller US deployment discussed at the NSC meeting prior to his trip--Taylor recommended the deployment to South Vietnam of a task force of 6-8,000 troops under the guise of flood relief work. This task force, primarily logistical, would necessarily become involved in some defensive operation and sustain some casualties, but its deployment need not commit the U.S. to a land war on the Asian mainland:

As the task is a specific one, we can extricate our troops when it is done if we so desire. Alternatively, we can phase them into other activities if we wish to remain longer....

Needless to say, this kind of task force will exercise little direct influence on the campaign against the VC. It will, however, give a much needed shot in the arm to national morale, particularly if combined with other actions showing that a more effective working relationship in the common cause has been established between the GVN and the U.S. 64/

Taylor had already received President Diem's assurances that he favored the deployment of U.S. forces for this purpose. 65/

In conjunction with this U.S. troop deployment, Taylor argued that the U.S. should initiate increased assistance to GVN in a new relationship:

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A shift [should occur] in the American relation to the Vietnamese effort from advice to limited partnership. The present character and scale of the war in South Vietnam decree only that the Vietnamese can defeat the Viet-Cong; but at all levels Americans must, as friends and partners--not as arms-length advisors--show them how the job might be done--not tell them or do it for them. 66/

General Taylor was most explicit that the purpose of the proposed troop deployments and the new "limited partnership" was to buy time for the Vietnamese so that they could marshal their considerable resources and assume the offensive against the VC. As mentioned above, this would require internal reform in GVN. The limited partnership would contribute to both of these interacting objectives:

The present war cannot be won by direct US action; it must be won by the Vietnamese. But there is a general conviction among us that the Vietnamese performance in every domain can be substantially improved if Americans are prepared to work side by side with the Vietnamese on the key problems. Moreover, there is evidence that Diem is, in principle, prepared for this step, and that most--not all--elements in his establishment are eagerly awaiting it. 67/

THE KENNEDY DECISIONS: NSAM 111

It is useful to approach the effect of General Taylor's mission on the advisory effort from the simple recollection of what President Kennedy decided not to do. He decided not to deploy U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam. This meant -- given the U.S. assessment of the importance of RVN and the felt necessity to do something -- that the expansion of U.S. assistance was a foregone conclusion. This was the general course of action that would be followed as the ineluctable result of having decided not to do something else which was more dramatic, involved more risk, and was more contentious.

Given the decision not to send troop units, then, the general thrusts of U.S. actions were determined -- but the specifics were not. Just how did Taylor's "limited partnership," for instance, propose to influence GVN's attitudes and organization, to develop initiative matched by competence, and to insure that the Vietnamese would assume successfully the responsibility for winning the struggle which it was said only they could win? How was this expanded U.S. effort to be organized? From whence would come the new junior partners of the firm? What would be their preparation, their instructions, their duties?

The first of these two groups of questions is more easily answered than the second; the answer to neither of them is retrospectively very

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satisfying in terms of suggesting that the U.S. entered into its expanded effort at the beginning of 1962 with its eyes wide open and fully aware of just what it was doing. The available record indicates that the U.S. hopefully assumed that material aid and good intentions would be adequate to the task, that a larger U.S. presence would spur the Vietnamese to effective action without incurring the stigma of a U.S. "takeover," and that the increase in assistance would be -- in and of itself -- accepted as an adequate quid pro quo for the desired reforms within GVN.

GVN organizational reform would be realized, NASM 111 suggested, by getting Diem to agree to clean up his lines of authority in exchange for the U.S. commitment to the limited partnership. One section of the document is a list of approved U.S. actions; another sets forth the expected improvements to be accomplished by GVN. 68/ Ambassador Nolting was instructed to use the substance of these decisions in talks to secure Diem's approval. He found Diem despondent that the U.S. asked so much in return for so little, played into the hands of those who claimed undue American infringement upon Vietnamese sovereignty, and placed him in a position where he feared even to make known to his own cabinet the American expectations. 69/ Unless the U.S. were to suspend its increased aid, and at the very time it was just gearing up to provide it, Diem had made it clear at the beginning that he would govern South Vietnam in his way and that the U.S. had no choice but to support him wholeheartedly, get out, or find an acceptable alternative to him. The U.S., in turn, had refused to consider the last two of these alternatives. It was stuck with supporting him, at least for the time being.

WORKING OUT THE BASIS FOR U.S. ADVICE

But the U.S. approach was only partially framed to secure Diem's acceptance. There was a parallel suggestion that the existence of U.S. advisors in the field, working hand-in-hand in a counterpart relationship with Vietnamese, would reform GVN from the bottom up. This line of policy was neither spelled out in detail nor thought out in terms of operational implications, risks, and costs. But it clearly existed:

Through this working association at all levels, the U.S. must bring about de facto changes in Diem's method of administration and seek to bring all elements of the Vietnamese Government closer to the Vietnamese people -- thus helping break the vicious political circle.

By concurrent actions in the fields of intelligence, command and control, mobility, and training, the U.S. must bring about a situation where an effective reserve is mobilized and brought to bear offensively on clearly established and productive offensive targets -- thus helping

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break the vicious military circle....

Behind this concept of a strategy to turn the tide and to assume the offensive lies a general proposition: when an interacting process is yielding a degenerative situation, the wisest course of action is to create a positive thrust at as many points as are accessible. 70/

Thus, the U.S. addressed the critical leverage issue as the expected product of its own willingness to increase its participation in the counterinsurgency effort. It did so, moreover, without any conscious examination of the question beyond stating its expectations. There was no plan to make the provision of additional assistance contingent upon GVN actions, only a statement that GVN actions were expected. There was no willingness, in fact, to consider the conscious exercise of leverage; the situation was too critical, the available time too short, the issue too important.

The effect of this avoidance of hard choices -- for good and understandable reasons, but avoidance nonetheless -- was to place a very large burden on the benefits to be realized by an expansion of the advisory effort. The language of General Taylor's report is reminiscent of Lansdale's earlier proposals for an unstructured, flexible advisory effort comprising totally committed, carefully selected individuals who would earn the respect and cooperation of the Vietnamese. Lansdale had renewed these proposals at the time the Taylor Report was prepared. 71/ But when it was suggested to the GVN that the U.S. would expect to share in decisions the Vietnamese reaction led the U.S. almost immediately to modify this expectation. The original communication on the subject to Ambassador Nolting stated that "...we would expect to share in the decision-making process in the political, economic and military fields as they affected the security situation" as compared to the earlier arrangement of "acting in an advisory capacity only." 72/ By early December insistence on this point was quickly dropped in favor of a view which suggested that close collaboration would produce automatic unanimity:

What we have in mind is that, in operations directly related to the security situation, partnership will be so close that one party will not take decisions or actions affecting the other without full and frank prior consultations.... 73/

Unless such exchanges invariably resulted in unanimity one of the partners would have to give way to the other or inactivity would result. What line to follow if this occurred seems not to have been examined. This simply would not happen.

The "close partnership" envisaged by General Taylor -- and endorsed by President Kennedy -- suggested something akin to the "total commitment" which General Lansdale had earlier urged as one criterion in selecting

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advisors for South Vietnam. This, in turn, implied at the very minimum a period of long exposure to the operational problem (and personalities) with which these advisors would deal. In the event, it was decided to expand both the military and sector (provincial military) advisory efforts without any such long term exposure. These questions were settled in detail when Secretary McNamara met in mid-January 1962 at Honolulu with the principal managers of the U.S. effort. It was decided to establish battalion level military advisory teams within ARVN, each to consist of either 5 (infantry battalion) or 3 (artillery battalion) personnel. Each province (sector) would receive 3 U.S. advisors, one officer and 2 enlisted intelligence specialists. The Civil Guard would be trained in a series of 6 training centers by 120 advisors (20 in each center) plus 12 mobile teams of 3 men each. The SDC would be trained in 30 centers. 74/ Secretary McNamara made it clear that he wanted these deployments completed as quickly as possible. He suggested that if an ARVN unit was not prepared to receive its advisors the designated individuals be sent to RVN and placed temporarily with another unit to gain experience. 75/ He agreed that temporary duty assignments to Vietnam were generally undesirable and asked the JCS to address the question of optimum tour length for advisors. 76/

The length of time a military member spent in Vietnam at that time varied slightly from service to service, according to whether or not dependents accompanied the serviceman and whether he served in Saigon or in some other part of the country. In October 1961 it was allegedly decided at OSD level -- without consulting the services -- to make the tour of duty 30 months with dependents and 18 without dependents rather than the 24 and 12 month tours that were then typical. 77/ The effect of this decision would have been to increase the field advisors' tours of duty from one year to one and a half years. Each of the assignment branches within the Army opposed this change as one which would be inequitable unless reflected in changed tour length for other "unaccompanied" (by dependent) tours. The order was not put into effect. Thus, there was some background against which to reexamine the time which advisors (among others) should spend in RVN. The decision -- again based on considerations of equity in "hardship" assignments, health, and resultant morale issues -- was to retain the one year tour in the field.*

U.S. EXPECTATIONS: THE BENEFITS FROM MORE ADVISORS

To sum up the decision to expand the advisory effort to battalion and province level, it was one reached without extended study or debate. There was neither opposition to it nor any comprehensive explication of

* It has remained basically unchanged, it should be noted, until the present. An unstructured program of voluntary 6 month extensions was inaugurated throughout Vietnam in 1967, a voluntary extension program begun for "selected officers" in key positions in the same year, and a small program initiated in 1968 by which selected Province Advisors would agree to serve two years in Vietnam, then receive almost one year's training prior to deployment. No officers have departed the U.S. under this last program as of the present writing (mid-1968).

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what would be involved and the benefits to be expected. This was due in large part to the fact that it was a decision made almost offhandedly in the shadow of a larger issue, the deployment of U.S. combat forces to RVN. When it was decided not to send the combat forces it was a foregone conclusion that more advisors would be sent. This was consistent with the U.S. desire in late 1961 to demonstrate its commitment to South Vietnam and apparently compatible with the oft-expressed belief that only the South Vietnamese could bring their struggle to a satisfactory conclusion.

But the decision to expand the advisory effort attempted, at the same time, to finesse the question of leverage. GVN was informed that the U.S. expected certain reform measures to be adopted in exchange for increased U.S. assistance. It received no clear signals about withholding U.S. help if these actions were not taken. The U.S. had, in fact, made no decisions along this line; it had avoided addressing the issue because of conflicting desires to act forcefully, yet to avoid Americanizing the war. Thus, the U.S. did not know what it would do if GVN failed to respond as it was hoped that it would. In this sense the U.S. advisors became potential pawns in a leverage game of uncertain intensity with no set rules. This de facto position was in continuous potential conflict with the expressed hope that a greater U.S. presence would lead -- by example, persuasion, and mutual interest -- to increased effectiveness both within ARVN and in the political administration of the provinces governed by U.S.-advised ARVN officers.

Not only did the Kennedy Administration decide to enter in General Taylor's "limited partnership" without a careful examination of the relationships being established, it also apparently did not state or debate precisely what benefits were expected as a result of an increased advisory effort. There was, it appears, a generalized and unchallenged assumption that more Americans in more places addressing Vietnamese training and operations could not but have an overall beneficial effect. The available record reflects no explicit discussion of expected benefits. While oral discussions must have addressed this point at some time, it seems most likely that policymakers agreed tacitly on three overlapping categories of expectations -- each susceptible to varying interpretations and degrees of relative importance and emphasis -- which were neither clearly stated nor critically examined.

The first, and most obvious, was the expectation that an increased U.S. military presence with tactical units and at training centers would lead to improved technical-tactical competence within ARVN. The assumption which underlay this expectation was that the teaching of basic military skills was probably a sufficient (rather than merely necessary) condition to enable ARVN to begin to operate more effectively -- and more energetically and aggressively. Earlier experience in Greece and Korea would have seemed to validate this expectation within reasonable limits.

Second, U.S. policymakers probably expected the increased military advisory effort to result in a more effective informational "network."

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It must have seemed reasonable to expect that an increased but diffuse U.S. presence would not only enhance information on VC actions and probable plans but also improve U.S. knowledge of ARVN plans and performance.

Finally -- and most difficult to pinpoint in terms of what policy-maker or policymaking group emphasized which aspects -- the U.S. expected to gain additional influence from an increased advisory effort. General Taylor viewed this as the natural product of individuals with parallel interests working hand-in-glove in the field (as distinct from large headquarters). This would enable them to escape the petty differences which grow up in the absence of operational responsibility and permit the U.S. advisors to "lead by example" even though they would not be technically empowered to lead.

Other expectations of increased U.S. influence could take a variety of forms. Improved information, for instance, in a hierarchically ordered U.S. advisory system, would permit the U.S. to push more effectively any line of endeavor which it wished GVN to adopt. This potential for improved "salesmanship" was not unrelated to an increased potential for coercive influence. What the U.S. would give in material support it might also withhold selectively. Influence need not be dependent upon example alone.

None of these expectations were, however, articulated fully or spelled out in terms which would provide operational guidelines for the new U.S. advisors who were being deployed to SVN. The expectations of benefits were implicit and generalized. The potential existed for a comprehensive, coordinated U.S. approach to advising but the potential was not the reality.

IMPLEMENTING THE FIRST BUILD-UP

The decision just examined to increase the U.S. advisory effort was preceded by a series of marginal increases in the U.S. military strength in Vietnam. (Actual "in-country" strengths are available for only a few months during the early build-up period so it will frequently be necessary to use authorization figures and to realize that newly authorized spaces were generally not filled until some time had passed after their establishment.) Presidential decisions in April and May 1961, taken in the light of a central concern with Laos rather than Vietnam, increased the authorized size of MAAG Vietnam from 685 to 785. The 100-man increase was divided almost equally between technical advisors and advisors for ARVN's tactical training centers. 78/ In October 1961 the authorized strength was increased again, to 972, of which 948 spaces were for U.S. Army personnel; 603 of these 948 spaces were actually filled by the end of November. 79/

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The increases in advisory strength which reflected the NSAM 111 decisions were authorized in December 1961 and January 1962. By the end of 1961 MAAG's authorized strength had been more than doubled, to 2067. This number was increased again in January to more than 3000. Included in these increases were the new dimensions of U.S. advice: battalion advisors, province advisors, and an additional 500 Special Forces advisors (making a new total of 805 in the Special Forces program under CIA control). 80/

It has already been noted that Secretary McNamara gave forceful impetus to manning these newly created positions in the shortest possible time. They were, indeed, filled quickly. By April 1962 the total number of Army field advisory personnel in RVN exceeded the authorized number. By this time, too, the authorized total for all services had been stabilized at about 3400. This total was reduced in November to 3150, then remained essentially constant until a new round of increases was inaugurated in mid-1964. 81/ Thus, the build-up associated with the Taylor mission consisted of a fourfold increase in U.S. advisory presence (a much larger increase if one counts U.S. support units). After the build-up was completed, in the spring of 1962, the number of advisors remained stable until many months after the fall of the Diem government.

While the total number of advisors remained fairly constant, however, shifts occurred in the distribution of advisory personnel. From the completion of the build-up, for instance, until the coup which overthrew Diem, the number of field advisors at corps and division level increased severalfold and the number of province advisors doubled while other field advisory strengths remained about the same. These developments are shown in detail in the tabular summary at the end of this study and summarized in the following table:

Selected Field Advisors, April 1962 and November 1963 82/

<u>Activity Advised</u>	<u>April 1962</u>	<u>November 1963</u>
Corps	63	380
Divisions	162	446
Regiments	150	134
Battalions	366	417
Provinces	117	235
Schools & Training Centers	212	201
CG/SDC	281	215
Total	1351	2028

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THE U.S. VIEW: 1962 - 1963

Six months after Diem fell the U.S. would conclude that these advisory levels were inadequate, but during the Diem era the predominant official attitude was one of sustained optimism. The war was being won, it was maintained, by adherence to the newly articulated theory of counterinsurgency. The U.S. even made tentative plans to begin reducing the American presence in Vietnam. By the time the U.S. began seriously to consider attempts to exercise leverage against the Ngo family's conduct of affairs Diem's regime was already well down the road to its eventual overthrow.

The Strategic Hamlet Program was the principal operational vehicle by which the recently articulated theory of counterinsurgency was to be translated into reality. In general, the plan was to begin by providing to the rural populace a degree of security sufficient to serve as a precondition for further military and political action. In the military field the peasants' increased security was to be the wedge by which more effective intelligence gathering could take place. The rural population could not be expected to inform on VC whereabouts, it was reasoned, unless it was safe from retaliatory acts by the insurgents. Political action to promote identification between the central government and the rural population was also to take place in the shadow of these improved physical security arrangements. Security was viewed, then, as the precondition to the military and political gains at which General Taylor's mission had aimed its recommendations.

The evolution and demise of the Strategic Hamlet Program is examined in another volume of the present series.* It is pertinent to the present study, however, to note the points of stress in this program as they pertained to RVNAF. Most of the new American advisory effort was directed to improving ARVN, in its equipment and mobility capability and in its aggressiveness. The central U.S. expectation was that a greater capability to move quickly could be combined with improved leadership so that ARVN could, on one hand, be capable of responding quickly and in force wherever and whenever the VC chose to concentrate for local superiority and, on the other, be made aggressive enough to beat the Viet Cong at their own game -- to "take the night away" from the VC and to use guerrilla techniques to hunt down and defeat the insurgents in their own bailiwicks.

The realization of these expectations was dependent upon several developments, each of which had to occur if ARVN was to become capable of turning the tide in the insurgent battle. First, the CG and SDC had to become sufficiently effective to permit ARVN to be used as a mobile reserve for protective purposes rather than as part of the static protection force. Second, ARVN had to be given adequate capability to move quickly, whether in reacting or in seizing the initiative. Finally, both ARVN's leaders and the political leaders to whom they were responsible had to accept and put into operational practice a spirit of aggressiveness to take advantage of the existing static defenses and the newly-gained mobility.

* Volume IV.B. Evolution of the War: The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961-1963 (TS).

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THE ACTUALITY: 1962 - 1963

What happened during 1962 - 1963 is that only the second of these developments actually occurred to any significant degree. The U.S. provided helicopter companies for rapid tactical transport, small arms and automatic weapons for increased firepower, and tactical air and artillery support to assure ARVN firepower superiority over the insurgents. There were complaints -- as there have been ever since -- that individual weapons were too heavy for the Vietnamese, that one helicopter company for each Corps area was too little, and that supporting air and artillery were an inducement to rely on indiscriminate firepower as a substitute for aggressiveness. But the basic tools were provided.

The other developments did not take place. Training of the CG and SDC was speeded up at Secretary McNamara's insistence in order to get a more effective protective force quickly in being. Even by cutting the course of instruction in half it required the remainder of CY 1962 to give a basic familiarization course to even the bulk of the CG and SDC. GVN was not eager to put weapons into SDC hands, fearing that the weapons might wind up in the possession of the VC. ^{83/} In the event, both forces emerged as something much less effective than had been expected. The strategic hamlets which they were to protect proliferated in quantity in an uncontrolled manner and varied widely in quality. It never really became possible for ARVN to free itself from static defensive duties.

Even if it had become possible for ARVN to be cut loose from static duties it is questionable that it could have risen to U.S. expectations. The period in question is one in which the Ngo family felt itself constrained constantly to play off the military against the provincial officials (who controlled the CG and SDC) in order to forestall attempts at a coup d'etat. Military leaders seemed inclined to rely increasingly on firepower as a substitute for aggressive maneuver. Rosy reports from the provinces made it unappealing to sustain casualties engaging an enemy who was said to have already been driven from the area. ^{84/} The all-too-common result was that ARVN did not improve as the U.S. had expected it would. U.S. advisors became frustrated and embittered. Even rare opportunities for decisive engagement on the ground were allowed to pass or were mishandled. The debacle at Ap Bac, in _____, 1962, stands as a landmark of this continued impotence.

The failure of ARVN to develop as expected was, however, not officially recognized until much later. Even then the reasons for this failure were variously interpreted. In mid-1962, after the initial advisory build-up had been completed, the commander of the recently established U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), General Paul D. Harkins, estimated that the U.S. task was simply one of training ARVN leaders on a one-time basis and that the VC could be eliminated as a disturbing force within a year after this had been accomplished. (This was a clear instance of

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the "technical-tactical competence" expectation.) Secretary McNamara -- probably wishing also to form prudent contingency plans and to have the capability to exert pressure on the Diem regime -- directed that the U.S. plan for a phased withdrawal of U.S. forces over a three year period. ^{85/} This decision and the subsequent plans for its implementation, chronicled in another volume of this series,^{*} indicates the extent to which optimistic expectations existed at some high official U.S. levels even while (as we were later to learn) the situation in the countryside continued to deteriorate. This, in turn, helps to explain why the advisory build-up completed in April 1962 was not followed by any additional increases in advisors for more than two years.

The central problem in this regard was that the U.S. had neither a firm grasp on reliable indicators to determine how the war was progressing nor a willingness to accept claims that it was not going well. The second of these tendencies was attributable to the approach which finally emerged from the decisions following the Taylor mission: The U.S. would support Diem unstintingly and expect, in return, meaningful reforms and improvements within GVN. But it was caught in a dilemma when the expected reforms did not take place. To continue to support Diem without reforms meant quite simply that he, not we, would determine the course of the counterinsurgent effort and that the steps he took to assure his continuance in power would continue to take priority over all else. To deny him support in any of a variety of ways would erode his power without a viable alternative in sight. The tendency may not have been precisely to "sink or swim with Ngo Dinh Diem," as Homer Bigart phrased it, but it came very close to this.

The inability to know just how things were going presented an even more difficult problem. The tendency was to use forces retrained or newly equipped, strategic hamlets constructed, and trends in VC activity, as indicators of the progress of the war. But training does not necessarily equal effectiveness, the number of hamlets constructed does not tell one of the loyalty of their populations, and enemy attacks might be a misleading guide. Were GVN making progress in a contested area, for instance, Viet Cong reactions might be expected to increase rather than to diminish in frequency and intensity. Conversely, the insurgents would have no good reason to attack populated areas which they had already succeeded in penetrating and over which they had established effective de facto control. ^{86/} Data and observations could be variously interpreted -- so variously, in fact, that President Kennedy was led to ask two observers just returned from Vietnam who gave him divergent reports, "You two did visit the same country, didn't you?" ^{87/}

^{*} Volume IV.B.4., Evolution of the War: Phased Withdrawal of U.S. Forces, 1962-1964 (TS).

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THE STAGE IS SET FOR "BETTER GVN RECEPTIVITY"

While the U.S. groped for a better way to determine how the counter-insurgent effort was going and debated how (or if) to exercise leverage against Diem, it was overtaken by events. The 1963 Buddhist crisis in RVN was met by increasingly repressive measures by the GVN. These developments finally led the U.S. to reassess its support for Diem and to consider other non-communist alternatives to his leadership.* On 1 November 1963 Diem was overthrown by a military coup d'etat. The pacification effort organized around the Strategic Hamlet Program died with him; the advisory effort was left untouched in terms of size and scope. To the extent that Diem and his family were the ones preventing ARVN from meeting the expectations of late 1961, it was reasoned, now was the time for the military advisory system to begin to function more effectively. To the extent that ARVN commanders in the field had been unresponsive to U.S. advice because of indifference and opposition in the Gia Long Palace, it was hoped the difficulties of the past might be rectified by the new military regime.

* See Volume IV.B. in the present series, Evolution of the War The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May-November 1963 (TS).

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B. District Advisors and the Beef-Up of
Battalion Advisory Teams (1964-1965)

The initial U.S. reaction to the Diem coup was thus one of modest optimism. Even given the U.S. disappointment at the death of the Ngo brothers the fact remained that the new regime in the Saigon saddle was expected to be more responsive to U.S. advice than the previous government had been. It was necessary that GVN programs be redirected into more realistic channels, that the efficiency of operations be increased, that additional steps be taken to seal the infiltration routes through Laos, and that the U.S. reaffirm its commitment to GVN in a credible way. The key to success--the pacification process--had already been discovered; the task was one of skillful, sustained execution.

Each of these points was addressed by National Security Action Memorandum 273, approved 26 November 1963. The immediate cause for NSAM 273 was the assassination of President Kennedy four days earlier; newly-installed President Johnson needed to reaffirm or modify the policy lines pursued by his predecessor. President Johnson quickly chose to reaffirm the Kennedy policies. Emphasis should be placed, the document stated, on the Mekong Delta area, but not only in military terms. Political, economic, social, educational, and informational activities must also be pushed: "We should seek to turn the tide not only of battle but of belief...." 88/ Military operations should be initiated, under close political control, up to within fifty kilometers inside of Laos. U.S. assistance programs should be maintained at levels at least equal to those under the Diem government so that the new GVN would not be tempted to regard the U.S. as seeking to disengage. 89/

The same document also revalidated the planned phased withdrawal of U.S. forces announced publicly in broad terms by President Kennedy shortly before his death:

The objective of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remains as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963. 90/

No new programs were proposed or endorsed, no increases in the level or nature of U.S. assistance suggested or foreseen. The emphasis was on persuading the new government in Saigon to do well those things which the fallen government was considered to have done poorly.

OPTIMISM TURNS TO FRUSTRATION

This attitude of cautious optimism changed gradually by the early summer of 1964 to one of deepening gloom. No radical shift marked this

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transition; it was one of a heightened awareness of instability in the central government in Saigon (the Khanh coup and maneuvering for advantage by the generals), of a deteriorating situation in the countryside, and of the discovery that things had been worse to begin with than the U.S. had suspected. Not only did events indicate a Viet Cong ascendancy in the countryside; the U.S. was not even able to determine with assurance just how things stood. The informational returns were inadequate from the existing advisory effort, ARVN had not become an effective fighting force, and the extent of U.S. influence was questionable.

This deterioration of the counterinsurgent effort (including the growing awareness that earlier reports had been unrealistically rosy) was one factor which was to lead to an expansion of the U.S. military advisory effort. A second, and complementary, factor was the increasing conviction in official circles that the struggle in Vietnam was so important that we could not afford to lose it. Although these two factors in juxtaposition created a determination to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure a free non-communist South Vietnam, this commitment operated in the shadow of an equal determination to work through the GVN rather than around it and to avoid radical policy departures during the Presidential elections.

A further buildup in U.S. advisors was not the major product of this determined commitment. Rather, there was in 1964 a growing conviction that only by consciously expanding the war -- by "going North" in order to punish and dissuade the DRV from support of the insurgency -- could the deteriorating situation be arrested and reversed. Governmental stability in South Vietnam and the reduction, if not the elimination, of pressures from the north came to be regarded as desiderata which would turn upon actions outside RVN rather than within it. The decisions to expand the U.S. advisory effort were overshadowed by plans to carry the war to the DRV.*

NSAM 288

NSAM 273 had, as described above, limited cross-border operations to an area 50 kilometers within Laos. NSAM 288, published in March 1964, reaffirmed these measures but went considerably further in authorizing contingency preparations to be employed in the event that border control operations proved inadequate:

To prepare immediately to be in a position on '72 hours' notice to initiate the full range of Laotian and Cambodian "Border Control actions" (beyond those authorized...above) and the "Retaliatory Actions" against North Vietnam, and to be in a position on 30 days' notice to initiate the program of "Graduated Overt Military Pressure" against North Vietnam. 91/

* The sensitive files of the Secretary of Defense for the period under discussion consist in large part of detailed plans to bring increasing military pressure against DRV under careful political control and under "scenarios" which would ensure adequate domestic and foreign support for these actions.

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This initial official signal to prepare to expand the war was cast against a conviction that U.S. objectives in South Vietnam were critically important:

We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. We do not require that it serve as a Western base or as a member of a Western Alliance. South Vietnam must be free, however, to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security. This assistance should be able to take the form not only of economic and social measures but also police and military help to root out and control insurgent elements.

Unless we can achieve this objective in South Vietnam, almost all of Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance (all of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), accommodate to Communism so as to remove effective U.S. and anti-Communist influence (Burma), or fall under the domination of forces not now explicitly Communist but likely then to become so (Indonesia taking over Malaysia). Thailand might hold for a period with our help, but would be under grave pressure. Even the Philippines would become shaky, and the threat to India to the west, Australia and New Zealand to the south, and Taiwan, Korea, and Japan to the north and east would be greatly increased.

All of these consequences would probably have been true even if the U.S. had not since 1954, and especially since 1961, become so heavily engaged in South Vietnam. However, that fact accentuates the impact of a Communist South Vietnam not only in Asia, but in the rest of the world, where the South Vietnam conflict is regarded as a test case of U.S. capacity to help a nation meet a Communist "war of liberation."

Thus, purely in terms of foreign policy, the stakes are high....

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

1. In terms of government control of the country-side, about 40% of the territory is under Viet Cong control or predominant influence. In 22 of the 43 provinces, the Viet Cong control 50% or more of the land area, including 80% of Phuoc Tuy; 90% of Binh Duong; 75% of Hau Nghia; 90% of Long An; 90% of Kien Tuong; 90% of Dinh Tuong; 90% of Kien Hoa; and 85% of An Xuyen.

2. Large groups of the population are now showing signs of apathy and indifference, and there are some signs of frustration within the U.S. contingent:

- a. The ARVN and paramilitary desertion rates,

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and particularly the latter, are high and increasing.

b. Draft dodging is high while the Viet Cong are recruiting energetically and effectively.

c. The morale of the hamlet militia and of the Self Defense Corps, in which the security of the hamlets depends, is poor and falling.

3. In the last 90 days the weakening of the government's position has been particularly noticeable. For example:

a. In Quang Nam province, in the I Corps, the militia in 17 hamlets turned in their weapons.

b. In Binh Duong province (III Corps) the hamlet military were disarmed because of suspected disloyalty.

c. In Binh Dinh province, in the II Corps, 75 hamlets were severely damaged by the Viet Cong (in contrast, during the twelve months ending June 30, 1963, attacks on strategic hamlets were few and none was overrun).

d. In Quang Ngai province, at the northern edge of the II Corps, there were 413 strategic hamlets under government control a year ago. Of that number, 335 have been damaged to varying degrees or fallen into disrepair, and only 275 remain under government control.

e. Security throughout the IV Corps has deteriorated badly. The Viet Cong control virtually all facets of peasant life in the southernmost provinces and the government troops there are reduced to defending the administrative centers. Except in An Giang province (dominated by the Hoa Hao religious sect) armed escort is required for almost all movement in both the southern and northern areas of the IV Corps.

4. The political control structure extending from Saigon down into the hamlets disappeared following the November coup. Of the 41 incumbent province chiefs on November 1, 35 have been replaced (nine provinces had three province chiefs in three months; one province had four). Scores of lesser officials were replaced. Almost all major military commands have changed hands twice since the November coup. The

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faith of the peasants has been shaken by the disruption in experienced leadership and the loss of physical security. In many areas, power vacuums have developed causing confusion among the people and a rising rate of rural disorders.

5. North Vietnamese support, always significant, has been increasing. 92/

The major new action under consideration to help achieve critically important U.S. objectives in the face of this gloomy recording of recent events was, as already noted, that of carrying the war to North Vietnam. Secretary McNamara, whose memorandum to the President was published en toto as NSAM 288, did not foresee the need at that time for a further major buildup of the advisory effort or for U.S. steps to take greater control of the war. Again, the approach already selected was deemed adequate. Only qualitative improvement was needed:

A. The military tools and concepts of the GVN/US effort are generally sound and adequate....Substantially more can be done in the effective employment of military forces and in the economic and civic action areas. These improvements may require some selective increases in the U.S. presence, but it does not appear likely that major equipment replacement and additions in U.S. personnel are indicated under current policy.

B. The U.S. policy of reducing existing personnel where South Vietnamese are in a position to assume the functions is still sound. Its application will not lead to any major reductions in the near future, but adherence to this policy as such has a sound effect in portraying to the U.S. and the world that we continue to regard the war as a conflict the South Vietnamese must win and take ultimate responsibility for. Substantial reductions in the numbers of U.S. military training personnel should be possible before the end of 1965. However, the U.S. should continue to reiterate that it will provide all the assistance and advice required to do the job regardless of how long it takes. 93/

Two actions which were explicitly considered and rejected indicated that the U.S. would still adhere to its oft-stated (and sometimes ignored) position that the South Vietnamese must win their own war through their own efforts:

Furnishing a U.S. Combat Unit to Secure the Saigon Area.
It is the universal judgment of our senior people in Saigon, with which we concur, that this action would now have serious adverse psychological consequences and should not be undertaken.

U.S. Taking Over Command. It has been suggested that the U.S. move from its present advisory role to a role that would

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amount in practice to effective command. Again, the judgment of all senior people in Saigon, with which we concur, is that the possible military advantages of such action would be far out-weighed by its adverse psychological impact. It would cut across the whole basic picture of the Vietnamese winning their own war and lay us wide open to hostile propaganda both within South Vietnam and outside. Moreover, the present responsiveness of the GVN to our advice -- although it has not yet reduced military reaction time -- makes it less urgent. At the same time, MACV is steadily taking actions to bring U.S. and GVN operating staffs closer together at all levels, including joint operating rooms at key command levels. 94/

Thus, it was stated national policy that the critically important struggle in South Vietnam must be won by the South Vietnamese, that the U.S. would do all within its power to help arrest and reverse a deteriorating situation, and that plans should be made to employ graduated overt military pressures against the supporters of the insurrection, the DRV. This was the principal thrust of NSAM 288 even though a sizeable portion of the document was devoted to programmatic steps which GVN and the U.S. should take in order better to mobilize South Vietnam's assets. Specifically, RVNAF needed to be increased in size by at least 50,000 men, reorganized, and provided with selected items of modern equipment. 95/ These programs presaged more U.S. advisors because there would be more RVNAF units to advise, but there was no mention of more advisors for given units or advisors to perform new functions.

INCREASING POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE PROVINCES

The dark picture painted in NSAM 288 in March had become even darker by May 1964. Secretary McNamara visited Saigon on 12 and 13 May to inquire into progress in the "oilspot" national pacification program. What he learned could scarcely be called encouraging. A follow-on conference was scheduled for 1 June in Honolulu and the planning wheels began to turn -- or, more accurately, the wheels began to churn -- for there was barely two weeks' time in which to propose and coordinate U.S. actions acceptable to the GVN which might reverse the downward spiral of events, and "going North" was not yet feasible in terms of domestic U.S. politics.

Illustrative statistics (the same which Secretary McNamara saw) give the tone of events in South Vietnam. In an effort to determine exactly how many rural communities even existed -- much less whose control they were under -- the Department of Defense had earlier initiated an aerial photographic survey of the rural areas of RVN. Even this expensive undertaking left great factual gaps. In Tay Ninh Province, for example, photointerpreters identified 39 fortified hamlets; U.S. reports from provincial officials claimed that there were 106. 96/ The discrepancy was not one to appeal to those who wished to base policy determinations on solid facts.

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Other facts were more easily ascertainable. Since the Diem coup, for instance, only 5 of RVN's 42 provinces had not experienced a change in Province Chief. Change is, of course, inescapable in the aftermath of a coup, but by 8 May 15 provinces were under their third chief since 1 November 1964, 7 had their fourth, and 2 provinces were governed by the fifth officer since the Diem government fell. Instability in administration was accompanied by a marked GVN decline in numbers of population controlled and a comparable increase in VC population control. These trends were reflected in the official estimates (themselves suspect of being overly optimistic) of control in the rural villages:

Comparison, Number of Rural Villages Controlled 97/

	<u>Sep 63</u>	<u>Apr 64</u>
RVN	1682	1485
VC	709	866
Contested	139	187

Of the 14 provinces considered critical in terms of location and population, all were reported by their advisors to be in "critical" condition. The prospects in 10 of these were judged to be "poor." Four provinces were regarded to have "fair" prospects. 98/ It was apparent that the U.S. could not depend on eventual actions against DRV to save the day in South Vietnam. By the time such actions were politically feasible there might be nothing to save. It was time to take some further direct action within South Vietnam itself -- and to take it quickly. Increasing U.S. advisors was an obvious and available action.

MACV'S GRADUALISTIC APPROACH TO EXPANSION

As early as December 1963, MACV had studied the desirability of extending the U.S. advisory effort to district level in 13 certain key districts, mostly around Saigon. No action was taken at that time but the proposal was revived in February and implemented during late March 1964. 99/ Each of the original 13 "key districts" was assigned one Captain and one noncommissioned officer. Of the original 26 persons selected for this pilot project, 21 were newly arrived in RVN. 100/

This gradualistic, experimental approach to expanding the advisory effort typified the method preferred both by the military and civilian agencies in Vietnam -- although for somewhat different reasons. MACV was concerned with the experience and skill levels it could command among necessarily lower ranks as it expanded deeper into ARVN and the political (staffed by ARVN) hierarchy, about increased support requirements, and about increased casualties. USOM claimed that its operatives could work effectively at the "spigot" end of the aid pipeline only where the local

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administration was energetic and effective and where some modicum of security had already been provided. 101/ USOM had severe recruiting difficulties, too. Secretary McNamara discovered on his 12-13 May visit to Saigon that it was about 25 per cent understrength and that approximately half of this personnel shortage was concentrated in the expanding rural affairs staff. 102/

McNAMARA'S WILLINGNESS TO APPROVE EXPANSION

Thus, the general attitude among the U.S. agencies in Saigon was to go slowly, to avoid the danger, as it was frequently expressed, of "strewing Americans all over the countryside." Secretary McNamara apparently had other thoughts after his May visit in Saigon. The available record does not reflect that he directed an expansion of the advisory effort -- but the Joint Staff was almost immediately hard at work examining which of several levels of increase would be most desirable. The available record leaves little doubt that the Secretary of Defense wanted it made clear that he would approve any reasonable proposals for personnel, materiel, or funds. Those sections of NSAM 288 which dealt with recommendations for South Vietnam had concentrated on programs which would assist GVN to mobilize its resources. By May it was clear that the hoped-for actions had not taken effect. The obvious conclusion -- given the importance which the U.S. attached to success in South Vietnam -- was that additional steps must be taken to halt the deterioration in the countryside.

THE INITIAL PROPOSALS AND RESPONSES

The initial recorded exchange among the planners occurred when COMUSMACV was asked on 22 May 1964 to provide an input to a JCS study then in progress on "...encadrement of South Vietnamese Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps with U.S. teams along lines of White Star teams in Laos, with objective of making these units as effective as possible in Vietnamese pacification plan." 103/ The message made it clear that the JCS was examining alternative levels of increased advisory effort (1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 personnel), not asking if the advisory effort should be increased. The compressed time frame available for prior coordination on a recommended course of action was also clear: COMUSMACV was asked to provide his comments on the draft JCS proposal by the following day (23 May). "Regret circumstances do not permit more time," the message stated. 104/

The reply from Saigon, processed through CINCPAC, adhered to the established MACV preference to undertake new departures only in a selective, experimental way:

I do not think we should flood RVN with number of personnel you mention. Think better solution is to do [this] on selective basis starting with critical districts and provinces and once we get feel of problem expand to remainder of RVN as experience dictates. 105/

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Then, in a significant passage, the reply from the field asked in blunt language just what the intended purpose was for the proposed expansion of the advisory effort. The "White Star Teams" used in Laos, the message noted, had the purpose and effect of establishing U.S. control over foreign forces:

The question arises as to whether you mean encadrement or increase of "advisory" effort. Do you want to take control or improve the performance of CG and SDC by step-up within current policy? 106/

Although this direct question was never answered, the JCS' initial proposal for encadrement was quietly dropped. The U.S. might wish to be in a position to control elements or all of RVNAF but it would not consciously follow any scheme explicitly aimed at such control. Instead, the JCS countered with a plan for six Mobile Training Teams in each province backed up by a Training Center Team and a small Provincial Training Detachment. This proposal would put an additional 70 U.S. training advisors in each selected province in an effort to improve the level of effectiveness of the paramilitary forces. Its recommendation was that the U.S. military advisory effort should be increased by 1000 personnel, enough to provide this new dimension of advice in the fourteen critical provinces which had experienced so much recent instability. 107/

This JCS proposal for Mobile Training Teams for the RVNAF paramilitary forces was tied to an explicit statement of how best to organize this effort without any mention of how much influence or leverage the U.S. would or could exert through this expanded system. The problem was treated as one in the development of technical proficiency; the issue of the extent of U.S. control was largely ignored--though surely not forgotten:

Concept of US Advisory Effort

a. General

(1) An underlying principle in the oil-spot concept is accordance of maximum flexibility to province officials in solving individual province problems which vary widely from province to province. This study recognizes that principle and outlines a plan for assignment of additional US instructor and training resources to the province to provide the training and advice needed to improve the effectiveness of the provincial paramilitary forces.

(2) The shortage of trained personnel is acute in the paramilitary forces because of the nature of the forces themselves. They are recruited at province or district level to perform military tasks in those same regions. While the CG and SDC are considered full-time troops, many of the individuals, in fact, must combine earning their livelihood with military duties. Movement of these people long distances away from their homes to training centers disrupts their lives, creates morale problems, and

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undoubtedly contributes greatly to the high desertion rates which have been experienced. It appears appropriate, therefore, to bring the trainers and training facilities to the areas where the paramilitary forces live and operate.

(3) According to US standards, the military training needs of the Vietnamese paramilitary are extremely modest. There is no requirement for elaborated technical schools or complex instructional courses. Instead, the Vietnamese paramilitary require military schooling at the most basic levels, with emphasis on basic infantry weapons and small unit tactics. Such instruction would be provided by the additional numbers of US military personnel.

b. Organization for Advisory Effort. The training deficiencies and problems of the paramilitary are as many and varied as the number of provinces and districts in which those forces operate. Needs in Quang Ngai, for example, may be extremely different from those in Dinh Tuong. Within the provinces, each district also may have different training needs. The reasonable method of approaching this problem, then, appears to be establishment of highly flexible training detachments operating under supervision at province level, which can provide local mobile training teams, small training centers, and temporary encadrement for the smaller paramilitary units when dictated by a specific situation. 108/

MACV FOCUSES ON OPERATIONS RATHER THAN TRAINING

COMUSMACV and CINCPAC were asked to comment within two days on this study which had been "...considered at the highest levels, where initial reaction has been favorable." 109/ Their replies, in which the theater commander supported his nominal subordinate in Saigon, contested the value of U.S.-conducted training for RVNAF paramilitary forces, proposed that advisors be used at the district level to assist in operations, accepted the 1,000-man magnitude, but stretched out the target date 18 months -- thereby proposing a gradualistic approach without candidly saying so. General Harkins devoted most of his reply to the question of training teams:

A. A basic premise of the study is that training at the established centers is at the root of many morale and desertion problems. This premise is incorrect as regards the Civil Guard (Regional Forces). It is in part true with respect to SDC (Popular Forces); but the underlying cause thereof - lack of per diem - is in the process of being removed by the new allowances that are about to be promulgated. This is not to say there

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are not formidable morale problems (one manifestation of which is desertion) within both categories of forces. These need to be and are being tackled. However, basic point is that they do not stem from the present system of training.

B. Mobile training teams have been organized under special circumstances when units have had prior combat experience and/or as an expedient measure only. Experience has proved that units trained by such teams have subsequently required formal training at an established training center where proper facilities are available. The Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps had many units trained by mobile training teams in 1962 in order to provide an immediate operational force. Almost all of these units have since been retrained in the complete unit poi [program of instruction] because it was determined that the mobile team training was inadequate. The mobile training teams consisted of U.S. personnel and Vietnamese interpreters.

C. While the training requirements of paramilitary forces are relatively modest by U.S. standards, an adequate poi must be backed up by firing ranges, training areas, class rooms, training aids and other facilities. These requirements are met by the regional and popular forces training centers. There are five regional force unit training centers; nine regional force/popular force leader training centers; and thirty-seven popular force training centers. They are properly distributed geographically; they are staffed with qualified Vietnamese instructors; and can be expanded, with little difficulty to support programmed force increase. Some augmentation of the U.S. advisory element at these several centers is desirable, on a selected basis.

D. The concept of U.S. personnel conducting training for the paramilitary forces on either a training center or MTT basis (and especially the latter) is not realistic.

(1) The Vietnamese have an adequate training base with experienced instructors; the latter are doing a satisfactory job. For the U.S. to assume the instructional effort, vice the Vietnamese, would generate serious morale problems and would probably be unacceptable.

(2) The interpreter support requirements would be prohibitive.

(3) Previous experience (sub-paragraph B above) of using U.S. advisors as instructors was unsuccessful due to the inability to communicate.

2. As indicated above, the current method of training both the regional and popular forces is adequate, although we do have under review the length and content of the training. Where the

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U.S. can make its best contribution to the paramilitary forces effectiveness is in the area of operations. Our formula, discussed in 23 May telecon on this subject, is to increase greatly the U.S. advisory effort at the district level. Therefore, strongly urge that you support our position that approximately 1000 advisors, in the general proportion of one officer to three NCO's be authorized as district detachments, with the precise composition and deployment of said teams left to the determination of COMUSMACV. 110/

CINCPAC informed the JCS that he agreed with COMUSMACV's arguments and quoted the telecon referred to above to explain the course of action preferred by the military commanders in the field:

1. Our comment is based on CG/SDC reorganization concept of 7 May which includes elimination CG Bn Hq in provinces and establishment 90 man sector Hq in lieu thereof with TAC CP capability, and sub-sector Hq 16 men at each 239 districts. This is expected to be accomplished in two to three months.
2. Recommend use of one team composed of mature company grade officer and other specialist as you suggest (Wpns/Demo, Commo Med) per district.
3. Proposal para 2 represents end requirement for 239 teams, totaling 239 officers, 717 enlisted spec aggregate 956 personnel, by end calendar year 65.
4. MACV current plans call for 1 officer and 1 NCO at 116 districts by June 65. Requisitions have been submitted for 100 of these by end CY 64. Two man detachments now assigned to 13 districts.
5. Assume GVN will agree to use US teams at district which represent reasonable security risk. At present time approx 40 of 239 districts are not sufficiently secure to enable use of US advisors. 111/

THE JCS ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

The JCS, given the very few days remaining until Secretary McNamara was to meet in Honolulu with COMUSMACV and Ambassador Lodge, did not attempt to reconcile the time-phasing and eventual size of the proposed advisory effort at district level. Rather, it submitted to the Secretary, just prior to his departure for the conference, two separate memoranda: One laid out a prospective program for district advisors throughout RVN; the other outlined a pilot program at the district level. The purpose of both outline advisory efforts was the same -- "improving the effectiveness of these paramilitary units in the Vietnamese pacification plan" -- but the rate of advisor buildup differed.

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In the proposed "pilot program," for instance, the concept envisaged the phased establishment of teams in 49 districts of seven key provinces during a six-month period. This would require approximately 300 additional advisors. 112/ The broader program called for an additional 1,000 advisory personnel, phased over a period of 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years, to cover all 239 districts by the end of CY 1965. 113/ The more comprehensive program estimated that 63 districts (compared to 49 districts in the "pilot program") would be manned by the end of CY 1964. Both were represented as suitable bases for the Secretary's impending discussions in Honolulu. Both were hurriedly drawn up alternative schemes for expanding the advisory effort to district level. Both, moreover, incorporated the arguments of COMUSMACV: concentration on operations rather than training and a time-phased buildup with due attention to existing security conditions and interpreter availability. The point was also made that the total number of additional personnel would necessarily include a support slice of approximately 35%. 114/

One other question of expansion was addressed before the Secretary of Defense's conference in Honolulu in June. The JCS studied the possibility, also in late May, of extending the advisory effort to regular ARVN units at the company level. The JCS agreed with the COMUSMACV and CINCPAC reasoning that such an extension would be undesirable because it would lead to greatly increased U.S. casualties, would be unsupportable in terms of necessary language training (one year to 18 months necessary to provide 500 "bilingual" advisors), and would meet resistance from ARVN commanders faced with strange new relationships and potential loss of face. 115/

MACV'S PREFERRED APPROACH ACCEPTED

The prevailing military advice, then, when the Secretary met on 1 June with the principal U.S. managers of the Vietnamese effort, was that it was desirable to expand the advisory effort to district level on a careful basis in order to promote better effectiveness in the paramilitary forces engaged in pacification activities, but that U.S. advisors should not be extended to company level in the regular forces. The available record does not make clear the exact positions and arguments put forward at Honolulu. What is clear is that it was decided, following basically the revised estimates proposed by COMUSMACV, to expand the advisory effort to district level at some rate (to be worked out later in detail) and to increase the size of battalion-level advisory groups by two noncommissioned officers in infantry battalions and cavalry troops and by one commissioned and two noncommissioned officers in artillery battalions. 116/ The acknowledged effect of the latter decision was to make company-level advisory teams available on an ad hoc basis without assigning them on a permanent basis. 117/ It is unclear how this scheme solved the previous reservations relative to language training, higher casualties, and Vietnamese sensibilities. A likely

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explanation is that MACV was under a new commander, General Westmoreland, who was more willing to expand the advisory effort and less inclined to cite the potential disadvantages of a larger American presence. General Harkins had already returned to the United States to receive the Distinguished Service Medal in a ceremony on 24 June and, at the request of President Johnson, remained in the U.S. until he retired. 118/

At any rate, it was a new COMUSMACV who cabled on 25 June his proposals for the buildup discussed at the beginning of the month in Honolulu. In sum, he asked for 900 additional advisors for battalions and districts, suggested a small increase at province level, and noted that "significant" numbers of personnel would be needed for administrative and logistical support of the new advisors. He also suggested, in the emphasized portion of the message quoted below, that many of the district advisory teams could complete their work and be moved to new areas for pacification within a year:

1. Augmentation of current US Advisory detachments at the battalion level and further extension of the advisory effort at the district level are necessary now to influence the successful planning and execution of the National Pacification Plan. These additions to the currently authorized advisory detachments have been discussed with and agreed to by GVN, and will enable us to place advisors at the lowest level, as needed, in order to insure that all possible actions are properly coordinated....Extension of US Advisory effort to the districts as an initial step toward intensifying the Pacification Program at the lowest level is essential. This will insure supervision and coordination in the employment of paramilitary forces and a general reinforcement of the pacification effort at district level. Initially, teams of two (2) officers and three (3) enlisted men (one (1) of whom will be a radio operator) be placed in the forty-five (45) districts of the eight (8) priority provinces. In ten of these districts, and in three (3) districts of two other provinces, a limited effort is now being made by district teams of one (1) officer and one (1) enlisted man; these teams will be increased to full strength district teams. In the provinces outside of the eight top priority provinces teams will be placed in another sixty-eight (68) districts. Starting 1 Jan 65 it is envisaged that an additional fifty (50) teams can be placed, and that by 1 Jul 65 teams from the original districts can be placed into the remaining districts in SVN. This extension of US Advisory effort to the district level must be conducted on a phased basis with actual composition and employment as determined by COMUSMACV. Two (2) officers and three (3) enlisted men are considered as average team strengths for planning purposes....

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2. RECAPITULATION OF REQUIREMENTS

	Cpts/Lts	E6	E5/4
123 Inf Bns (Incl 4 Marine)		123	123
29 Arty Bns (Incl 1 Marine)	29		58
14 M113 Troops, Armd CA Sqdns		14	14
45 District Adv Teams (Priority province)	90	90	45
68 District Adv Teams (Other provinces)	136	136	68
	255	363	308

TOTAL, adjusted for 13 districts teams now in place, 900 (242 officers; 658 enlisted).

3. While this message deals only with the increased advisory effort at the battalion and district levels consideration is also being given to increases at sector level, also discussed at Honolulu. Those recommendations which will be submitted separately will not approach the magnitude of the increases recommended in this message for battalion and district levels....

5. Administrative and logistical support personnel and equipment requirements will be studied separately. From our earlier studies it is apparent that requirements will be significant.

6. An increase of approximately eighty (80) US Naval Advisors will also be recommended. Chief US Naval Advisory Group, in coordination with CNO VNN, has identified areas in need of additional advisory effort. I concur in the need and will support recommendation to be submitted separately. 119/

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: SPEED AND DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY

The decision to increase the advisory effort in the magnitude and fashion just cited had already been made in effect. It was necessary, however, for the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense personally to approve every manpower space for MACV or MAAG Vietnam -- not because such decisions could not be delegated but because the Secretary chose to reserve them to himself. 120/ The questions which remained were, first, how much freedom to adjust numbers to situations (a discretionary authority COMUSMACV had consistently requested) would be permitted and, second, the rate at which the agreed expansion would take place. There could have been other questions, of course: should the district advisory effort spread in close geographic relation to the pacification plan or follow some other scheme; should the advisors be conscious agents to increase U.S. leverage or essentially technical-tactical assistants to their counterparts; how deeply involved should advisors become in local political administration? There is no indication that these and other related questions of the advisors' role were brought "up the tape" for examination. The principal issue was simply how quickly they should be brought into South Vietnam and at what level discretionary authority would be exercised.

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The latter question was settled by default. MACV's proposed Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) of 15 May 1964, replete with errors and omissions and antedating the decision to expand the advisory effort, became the base line for authorizations to expand. Nobody in the game seemed quite able to keep the detailed numbers straight. OSD came quickly to focus on the total authorization for U.S. personnel in Vietnam and, as the papers in the Secretary's files demonstrate, found itself pencilling new numbers in even final draft copies which had undergone several checks and redrafts. 121/ The product of this concentration on minutiae at high Washington levels was almost complete freedom of employment in the field. The Washington policymakers asked how many men were authorized in various activities and how many were assigned. There is no evidence that, once the decision was made to establish district advisory teams, these same policymakers probed into priorities of employment or the roles of these advisors.

The rate of the build-up was a much more complicated matter, not because of the additional battalion advisors and the new district advisors but because the numbers represented solely by the additional advisors quickly became a relatively small percentage of the total U.S. build-up -- all of which was justified as contributing to the GVN pacification plan and a sizeable portion of which was specifically earmarked to provide administrative and logistical support to the newly arriving advisors. By mid-July COMUSMACV was recommending 4200 personnel in addition to the 926 battalion and district advisors, at least two more helicopter companies, one Caribou company, and numerous major items of equipment as part of the required build-up. 122/ The increased advisory effort was identified as the cause of this large increase:

The increases envisaged...will provide for the extension and reinforcement of the advisory effort at the combat unit level and, concurrently, a major extension and reinforcement of the advisory effort at the district level in order to improve and accelerate pacification operations. That extension and augmentation of effort has an immediate impact upon the administrative and logistical support base. In a sense the addition of advisors in this quantity becomes the "straw that broke the camel's back" to an already overburdened support base. 123/

SECRETARIAL PRESSURE FOR A SPEED-UP

The Secretary of Defense and JCS met on 20 July to discuss these requirements. The JCS supported COMUSMACV. Secretary McNamara had no argument with the levels of men and equipment requested; his question was why they could not be provided more quickly than indicated by the time-phasing in General Westmoreland's detailed breakdown. 124/ COMUSMACV

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had asked for almost 4200 personnel by 1 December 1964 and the balance (comprising only Special Forces units) of the 4772 total increase by 1 February 1965. 125/ Secretary McNamara asked the JCS to study the feasibility of accelerating the build-up so that it would be completed by 30 September. The JCS replied that the advisory personnel could be made available this quickly but that several support units -- particularly aviation units -- could not reach South Vietnam by 30 September without causing extreme difficulties and the degradation of tests of the airmobile concept then in progress. 126/ The Secretary of Defense directed on 7 August that the accelerated deployment, except for certain critical aviation items and jeeps, be completed by the end of September. He further directed that COMUSMACV be queried as to his ability to absorb these personnel and units by that date. 127/

General Westmoreland's reply stated that he could not reasonably absorb this build-up in the time desired by Secretary McNamara. To do so, he said, would generate an unorderly situation with respect to support facilities and an undesirable hump in personnel rotation. The proposed acceleration would not, moreover, satisfy the desired standards of advisor training or dovetail with the planned expansion of the advisory effort:

The required training/schooling of Bn/District advisors will be further sacrificed under the proposed compression. A two week in-country orientation is being established to handle the Sep-Oct increments which will not receive CONUS schooling prior to arrival. Any further compression would create a requirement for in-country training which is beyond our capability.

Districts must be able to accept advisors based on their status of pacification. The present scheduling of district advisors is phased with the pacification plan and projected to coincide with its progress....

In summary, the compression of personnel and units would overload our existing facilities and create administrative problems beyond our capacity to handle in an orderly manner. COMUSMACV has discussed with Amb. Taylor who concurs. 128/

MACV'S PREFERENCE UPHELD AGAIN

Faced with this reply from the individual responsible for managing the U.S. contribution to the advisory and support effort, Secretary McNamara cancelled the accelerated deployment. The military services were instructed to deploy personnel and units to South Vietnam in accordance with General Westmoreland's initial recommendation forwarded to Washington, a month earlier, in mid-July. 129/

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The effect of this sequence of decisions stretching from mid-May to mid-August 1964 was to increase the advisory effort by over 1000 personnel:

District Advisors:	553
Battalion Advisors:	350
Naval (and Marine) Advisory Group:	82
Air Force Advisory Group:	<u>80</u>
TOTAL	1065 <u>130/</u>

This expansion, and the rate at which it was to proceed, was the product of what may be termed "tacit bargaining" between Washington and Saigon. Washington typically assumed the initiative in proposing increases and in recommending that they be accomplished as quickly as possible. The dominant concern was the fear that the countryside was being lost to the VC and that the impending U.S. moves to exert direct military pressure against DRV might come too late unless the pacification program could be vitalized. U.S. officials in Saigon tended to prefer to expand gradually and to insure that adequate support facilities were in place before additional advisors were deployed to the field. The product of desires driven by political awareness of impending failure, on one hand, and desires driven by managerial awareness of operational conditions, on the other, was an advisory increase almost precisely of the magnitude and rate preferred by the managers in the field.

EVENTS OVERTAKE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPANSION

The really important points to be noted, however, do not concern the relative influence of General Westmoreland, Secretary McNamara, the JCS, or other participants in determining the size and rate of this buildup. Rather, the important points are, first, that the carefully studied decisions did not address some central issues and, second, that events acted to overtake the decisions which were made. The policymakers did not really examine how district and additional battalion advisors would improve the execution of the pacification plan: they simply assumed that a greater U.S. presence would produce beneficial effects. The basis for operational advisors for the paramilitary forces was, quite simply, COMUSMACV's reasoned elaboration of the disutility of training advisors. There was no complementary assessment of the usefulness of operational advisors. It was necessary to do something in South Vietnam to try to reverse a clearly deteriorating position. The provision of more advisors came very close to being a reflexive response to this situation.

The overall magnitude of the advisory increase bears directly on the second major point, in which events in RVN overtook the new U.S. response. This is particularly true in the instance of the new dimension in the

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advisory effort, the provision of advisory teams at the district (sub-sector) level. Thirteen teams of one officer and one noncommissioned officer had been deployed in critical districts, it will be recalled, in March 1964. The final August decisions to make 553 district advisors available in RVN by 1 December was designed to provide for a larger team (2 officers, 3 EM) for each of 113 of the total 239 districts. The MACV plan, then, was to provide U.S. military advisors only to about one-half of the total number of districts in RVN.

By the end of CY 1964 all 113 teams were actually deployed. Their total strength at that time was 532 as against the authorized total strength of 565.* By January 1965 the number of district advisors assigned exceeded the number authorized. These teams were deployed, it will be recalled, in the expectation that by some time in 1965 a substantial number of them would have worked themselves out of a job and be available for reassignment to new areas. This expectation was, to put it mildly, not validated by events.

In February 1965, roughly a month after the limited expansion to district advisors had been completed, the Khanh government was replaced by the Quat regime. Over a year of U.S. effort to bring about political stability within the GVN seemed to have been fruitlessly wasted. The U.S. began the sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam, ROLLING THUNDER, on 26 February. Shortly thereafter, two Marine Battalion Landing Teams (BLTs) were landed at Da Nang for air base security. These measures presaged a growing U.S. material commitment; the trend was heightened by ARVN's performance later in the spring of 1965.

During May and June ARVN suffered a series of near catastrophic defeats that were instrumental in deciding the Johnson Administration to act on General Westmoreland's recommendation for a greatly expanded U.S. ground combat role in the war. On 11 May, the Viet Cong attacked and overran Song Be, the capital of Phuoc Long Province, and a U.S. advisory compound in the city with more than a regiment of troops. Both the U.S. and Vietnamese took heavy casualties. Before the end of the month, a VC force of undetermined size ambushed and decimated the ARVN 51st Regiment near the small outpost of Ba Gia a few kilometers west of Quang Ngai City in I Corps. The ARVN commander in the area immediately rushed reinforcements to the battle scene only to have them become victims of a second ambush. The battle dragged on for several days, but ended in a total defeat for ARVN. Two battalions were completely decimated, but more importantly, the ARVN senior commanders on the scene had displayed tactical stupidity and cowardice. With a crisis of confidence in leadership clearly developing

* The discrepancy between the 553 additional authorization and the total district advisor authorization of 565 is accounted for by the transfer of some of the spaces involved in the initial experimental program at district level. 565 is the correct total -- 113 teams of 5 men each.

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within the armed forces, the very real possibility of a complete ARVN collapse could not be excluded. COMUSMACV summarized the situation in his 7 June cable to CINCPAC:

ARVN forces...are already experiencing difficulty in coping with this increased VC capability. Desertion rates are inordinately high. Battle losses have been higher than expected; in fact, four ARVN battalions have been rendered ineffective by VC action in the I and II Corps zones. Therefore, effective fighting strength of many infantry and ranger battalions is unacceptably low. As a result, ARVN troops are beginning to show signs of reluctance to assume the offensive and in some cases their steadfastness under fire is coming into doubt. 131/

If anything, Westmoreland's assessment may have been too generous. The next week the Viet Cong launched an attack on the new Special Forces camp and adjoining district headquarters at Dong Zoai on the northwest corner of War Zone D. ARVN forces were committed piecemeal to the engagement and successively chewed up by more than two regiments of enemy troops. The battle lasted for five days and marked some of the bitterest fighting of the war to that date. The VC summer offensive continued unabated through June and July. On 25 June, the long expected offensive in the central highlands began when a district headquarters at Tou Morong in Kontum Province was overrun, reportedly by an NVA regiment reinforced with local guerrillas. Other remote district capitals came under attack in the following weeks and by 7 July a total of six had been abandoned or overrun.

Casualties soared on both sides; ARVN alone sustained 1,672 in the second week of June. But the important factor was the dangerous degradation of ARVN unit integrity. By the end of May, the heavy fighting had rendered two ARVN regiments and three battalions combat ineffective by MACV ratings. By 26 June, MACV was forced to rate 5 ARVN regiments and 9 separate battalions ineffective. 132/ Losses were so high that in July, 11 of 15 ARVN training battalions had to be temporarily disorganized to provide fillers for the line units. 133/ It was this major degradation of unit effectiveness that evoked the alarm and sense of crisis in Saigon and Washington and constituted the seemingly incontestable arguments in favor of substantial American forces. ARVN units were defeated in most cases by their own tactical ineptness, cowardice, and lack of leadership rather than by overall weight of numbers or inferiority of firepower. The U.S. advisory effort had sought to strengthen precisely these military intangibles, in addition to equipping, training and generally supporting ARVN troops. These skills and qualities are, of course, difficult to teach or impart, but a successful advisory effort must at some point produce a force capable of engaging the enemy and defeating him when the ratios of strength and firepower are roughly equal.

Far from finding many of its advisory teams finishing their task and moving on to new areas or to new units, the U.S. found itself in

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mid-1965 beginning the commitment of major ground forces to South Vietnam. The deployment of these forces marked the end of a major phase in "advisory warfare." From this time forward the role of U.S. military and political-military advisors would be determined and practiced in a radically changed environment.

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C. U.S. Combat Forces and the Possibility
of New Relationships (1965)

THE ABORTIVE LIMITED EXPANSION OF ARVN

During the spring of 1965 General Westmoreland's staff prepared a full-blown "Commander's Estimate of the Situation." The estimate, delivered to Washington at the beginning of April, examined three courses of action for dealing with the crisis in South Vietnam. Among these was an accelerated RVNAF build-up.

Even by accelerating the rate of ARVN expansion, COMUSMACV concluded, the ratio of ARVN to VC battalions would decline by the end of 1965 from 1.7:1 to 1.6:1. General Westmoreland rejected this alternative on the grounds that it could not prevent a VC victory. It would take too long to accomplish the build-up and there was little assurance that ARVN performance would match that of a constantly improving enemy. (His lack of confidence in ARVN is further reflected in his argument for U.S. forces, in which he estimated that one U.S. Army battalion is the fighting equivalent of two ARVN battalions and one Marine BLT the equivalent of three ARVN battalions.) 134/

These reservations notwithstanding, Westmoreland had requested authorization on 20 March to implement the Alternative 2 RVNAF strength increases proposed by him the previous November. After the April 1-2 conference in Washington and a review of the "Commander's Estimate," the JCS recommended approval and Secretary McNamara agreed on 12 April to expand RVNAF by an additional 17,247 spaces. An additional 160 U.S. advisors were approved at the same time. 135/ In late May, the JCS asked the Secretary of Defense to authorize MAP support for another 2,369 ARVN spaces to fatten out division bases for the eventual creation of a tenth ARVN division out of existing separate regiments. 136/ This request was approved on 4 June. 137/

Thus, while it was decided not to continue to depend exclusively on larger Vietnamese forces with U.S. air and naval support, the plan was to conduct a modest expansion of ARVN in conjunction with the deployment of U.S. forces. In the event, even the modest plans went down the drain in the aftermath of the heavy casualties sustained in combat during late May and early June. On 7 June, General Westmoreland informed CINCPAC and the JCS that a moratorium on RVNAF build-up was unavoidable because trainees in the pipeline would have to be used as fillers for existing units. 138/

The U.S. build-up continued during the spring and early summer, particularly as a result of ARVN reverses in combat. By the end of July there were 18 US/FW combat maneuver battalions deployed in South Vietnam. In the same message in which he advised of the halt in ARVN

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expansion, General Westmoreland had requested a significant increase in the number of U.S. troops for Vietnam (the famed "44-Battalion" request). After more than a month of deliberation, the President finally approved the request sometime in mid-July. His historic announcement of the expanded U.S. effort came on 28 July.* Understandably, this momentous expansion of the U.S. involvement in the war completely overshadowed the advisory program and the growth of RVNAF during the remainder of 1965.

NEW POSSIBILITIES

But the deployment of U.S. forces to South Vietnam did, however, open up a new range of possible relationships which would not have been possible without the presence of substantial U.S. combat forces. Each of these relationships might conceivably promote one or all of these several purposes which this study has reasoned to be behind the U.S. military advisory effort: the development of improved tactical and technical competence in RVNAF, the generation of better intelligence (both friendly and enemy), and increased U.S. influence.

Two categories of new relationships were considered: the encadrement of U.S. and ARVN units (in several forms) and the establishment of a joint command to conduct the war. Both of these courses were rejected by COMUSMACV. In their place General Westmoreland attempted to create a Joint US-RVNAF staff to coordinate independent national efforts. The basic arrangement enabling tactical independence--within limits--was the creation of mutually exclusive Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAORs) for each combat maneuver force.

ENCADREMENT CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Deficiencies in ARVN leadership had long been recognized by U.S. military advisors as one of the key impediments to increased ARVN performance. In April, when the first major input of U.S. combat troops took place, consideration was given to the encadrement of U.S. officers in ARVN units as a way of solving this problem. The proposal was touched off by a DoD request on 15 April for COMUSMACV's opinion about the feasibility of using U.S. cadres to improve effectiveness in the ten ARVN divisions. 139/ The same day, McGeorge Bundy sent a personal NODIS message to Ambassador Taylor stating among other things, that "The President has repeatedly emphasized his personal desire for a strong experience in the encadrement of U.S. troops with the Vietnamese." 140/ General Westmoreland turned the issue over to his deputy, General Throckmorton, for a recommendation. Throckmorton's study considered

* See Task Force Paper IV.C.6., Phase One in the Build-Up of U.S. Forces: The Debate, March-July 1965.

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three alternative encadrement possibilities: (1) assumption of officer and senior NCO command positions by U.S. personnel within the designated ARVN battalions; (2) assignment of U.S. personnel as staff officers, and in technical and specialist positions within the battalions; and (3) the employment of U.S. troops as fire support elements within ARVN-commanded battalions. Two critical difficulties applicable to all of these schemes were identified: the language barrier and the expanded support requirement that would be generated for U.S. personnel. Another negative factor was the expected adverse effect of any such step on South Vietnamese morale. These formed the basis for General Throckmorton's recommendation that encadrement be rejected. COMUSMACV endorsed his deputy's recommendation and the general encadrement idea was officially pronounced dead during the 18 April Honolulu Conference. 141/ Only three days had elapsed from the birth of the proposal to its burial.

MARINE COMBINED ACTION PLATOONS (CAPs)

But while general encadrement was effectively killed by COMUSMACV a specific, limited experiment in encadrement was begun later in the year almost off-handedly by the U.S. Marines near Phu Bai. Since the Marine units had been assigned TAORs larger than they could secure, innovative commanders sought ways to maximize local security resources. In June, a company commander of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines near Phu Bai assigned a few Marines to the villages in his tactical area to work with the Popular Forces platoons. Marine leadership, training, and access to powerful fire support brought measurable improvement in the PF units. As a result the Commanding General, 1st ARVN Division, placed six PF platoons under the operational control of the Marine battalion.

By November, the effort had achieved such results that it was brought to the attention of the CG III MAF. Later that month an agreement was reached between the I Corps Commander and the CG III MAF permitting the integration of Marine squads into PF platoons in the DaNang area to improve their effectiveness and stiffen their combat performance. The basic unit of the new venture was the Combined Action Platoon (CAP) formed by adding a Marine Rifle Squad of 14 men plus a Navy corpsman to a PF platoon (32-38 authorized strength). The PF platoon retained its own organization and the integrated Marines advised the entire unit, living with it, sharing its food, conducting combined patrols, and training counterparts. At the end of 1965, there were seven such Combined Action Platoons, but the success of the experiment in enhancing PF performance and extending security prompted a rapid expansion during the next year. The Marines have continued to press for expansion of this program and to see in it an effective method by which to produce increased performance in PF units. Critics have noted that the Marine advisors quickly become de facto leaders of the CAPs and argued that a higher level of current performance is purchased at the cost of stultifying the development of South Vietnamese leadership. No general consensus has developed on the relative merits of this assumed trade-off.

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JOINT COMMAND CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The 1965 commitment of U.S. forces also prompted a high level U.S. debate on the advisability of creating some form of unified combined command. The question was first raised in Washington in mid-March when General H. K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, returned from a visit to Vietnam with the recommendation for deployment of U.S. combat forces. 142/ The idea had the same conceptual origins as the encadrement proposals, namely that if RVNAF could be commanded by or associated with U.S. troops it might be molded at last into an effective fighting force. In addition, such a unified allied command would have given the senior commander--presumably COMUSMACV--far greater freedom to deploy forces and fight the war in the straightforward pursuit of unambiguous objectives, rather than restricting him to coordination with Vietnamese counterparts whose motivations at all times were a composite of political and personal as well as military considerations.

When queried on the matter, General Westmoreland opposed any formal merging of commands, preferring instead the maintenance of informal cooperation and coordination together with a limited combined staff under an American chief with a Vietnamese deputy. This arrangement would better assuage the GVN's sensitivities to questions of sovereignty and "neo-colonialism." Full integration of command, General Westmoreland advised, should be deferred until some later time when the influx of U.S. forces might require it and GVN sensibilities might be more disposed to its acceptance. 143/ In May, Secretary McNamara authorized the creation of a formal combined authority in Vietnam. 144/ But since both Ky and Thieu had just publicly condemned any joint command idea in press interviews, both Ambassador Taylor and General Westmoreland recommended against the proposed action. 145/ CINCPAC backed up COMUSMACV's concern about alienating the South Vietnamese:

Refs A and B /Saigon message 3855, 24 May; and COMUSMACV message 17292, 240603Z May/ again point out the formidable disadvantages which obstruct early establishment of any formal combined command authority in South Vietnam. I am fully in accord with the views of the Ambassador and General Westmoreland in this regard.

The long-range nature of the actions directed by Ref C /JCS msg 3159, 142228Z May/ is recognized. At the same time it is apparent that we should anticipate continued public speculation as to the purpose and motive of any consolidation of multi-national forces into a single command if we pursue even the most limited measures. Although a combined command might generate an outward illusion of unity, many divisive influences will remain at work beneath the surface to exacerbate claims of American neo-colonialism and self-assumed leadership.

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Conventional operations of Corps-level magnitude, in contrast to counterinsurgency operations, would of course require closer coordination and possibly some form of international command mechanism. Until a combined command is clearly in our best interests we should continue to stimulate RVN resolve to fight a counterinsurgency war which is and must remain their primary responsibility. Premature experimentation with new command arrangements would be counterproductive should it weaken national unity within the RVNAF or promote a feeling of apathy in the countryside. 146/

TAORs, SENIOR ADVISORS, AND A COMBINED STAFF

These exchanges effectively ended the question of unified command. In the absence of unity of command, General Westmoreland had already accepted the concept of the Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR), an expedient coordinating mechanism originally worked out between the local ARVN commanders and the Marines defending the DaNang perimeter. The concept was a practical one for a war in which there are no front lines and in which military units operate throughout the country. Specific geographic areas were assigned to specific units who then had exclusive authority and responsibility to operate within them. Military units could not enter or fire into another unit's TAOR without the permission of its commander. Subsequently, the concept would raise some problems as the requirement for rapid redeployment and the extensive use of air mobility made such formal, fixed arrangements awkward. But in 1965 the TAOR provided a simple and effective solution to the coordination problem raised by units under different commands operating throughout the country. Its adoption may be viewed as an attempt to provide limited, territorial unity of command in the absence of an overall, national unifying mechanism.

General Westmoreland attempted to compensate for this absence of unity (which he had endorsed for non-military reasons) by the creation of a combined coordinating staff at the national level and by making the senior U.S. military commanders also the senior military advisor within their respective areas of concern. In April he decided to raise with the GVN the question of a combined MACV-JGS staff. (He had already extended the tour in RVN of the general officer he had chosen to head this staff.) Such a staff might have permitted the development of agreed operational plans based upon agreed priorities. It would have been a possible intermediate step toward unity of effort. But the GVN (represented by Generals Thieu and "Little" Minh) resisted any suggestion for an integrating mechanism of this kind. The proposal was quietly dropped. 147/

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On the U.S. side, where his suggestions had the force of orders, General Westmoreland took one step to integrate the U.S. combat and advisory functions. The Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, the senior U.S. officer in the area, was designated on 7 August as the Senior Advisor to the ARVN I CTZ Commander. The former U.S. Senior Advisor became the Deputy Senior Advisor under CG, III MAF, although no further integration of the advisory structure into the U.S. chain of command was attempted. This pattern was soon extended to the other two Corps areas where major U.S. units were operating. The latter changes were made at the insistence of the ARVN Corps Commanders who felt that they would suffer a loss of prestige if they were "advised" by anyone other than the senior U.S. officer in the zone. Thus, on 21 October, the commander of Hq, Field Force, Vietnam (FFORCEV), with operational control of all U.S. units in II Corps, was also named II Corps Senior Advisor. On 1 December, CG, 1st Infantry Division was named III Corps Senior Advisor, following the pattern already established. No such arrangement was made, however, in IV Corps since the U.S. had no major units deployed there. 148/ Later, when U.S. force deployments had led to the establishment of another FFORCEV headquarters, each ARVN Corps Commander was advised by a U.S. Lieutenant General with equivalent U.S. responsibilities and a U.S. general officer was appointed Senior Advisor in the Delta area, which had no U.S. combat maneuver units.

LEVERAGE: THE HIDDEN ISSUE

It is relevant to ask why COMUSMACV (backed up without exception by the Ambassador and CINCPAC) uniformly opposed integrative measures designed to provide that which was and is almost an article of faith in the military profession--unity of command. U.S. troops in both World Wars and in Korea had fought under at least nominal command unity. There had been reservations for national integrity, to be sure, but the principle of unified command was both established and generally accepted. Why then did the U.S. military commander in Vietnam recommend against its adoption?

The answer to this question is not to be found by an examination of military factors. The issue, rather, was a political one, as CINCPAC's message quoted above makes clear. The U.S. military leaders feared the exacerbations of US-SVN differences which they thought would accompany an overt Americanization of the war. They wished to increase U.S. influence in the conduct of the war but only as a result of persuasion and example. They tended to eschew the use of leverage. A unified command arrangement would have provided--assuming that a U.S. officer would have been the overall commander--an open and obvious means by which to exercise leverage. The U.S. leaders in Saigon rejected its adoption for this reason.

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WITHDRAWING FROM OVERT INFLUENCE

The rejection of a unified military command is only one example of the tendency in 1965 to renounce leverage oriented mechanisms at the very time that the U.S. was committing major land forces to the war. It was as though the U.S. increased its determination to avoid arrangements which smacked of direct, open leverage at the same time that the inadequacy of earlier, indirect measures was made obvious by the deployment to South Vietnam of U.S. ground combat forces.

This may, in fact, be what happened. Some sporadic earlier attempts at leverage had not borne the desired fruit. Ambassador Taylor had had a disastrous experience in trying to use the U.S. decision to commence bombing North Vietnam as a lever to get GVN reform in December 1964. The net outcome was a violent reaction by General Khanh, who very nearly had Taylor thrown out of the country as persona non grata. In the end, it was Khanh who went, but the political turmoil that this produced in the first months of 1965, when the course of the war was taking a dramatic turn against the GVN, convinced Taylor that such attempts should not be made again at the national level.*

Concurrently, one of the most direct U.S. tools for influencing policy implementation at lower levels, the joint sign-off for release of piaster funds for pacification, was also being abandoned. The decision was made in December 1964 by the USOM Director, Mr. Killen. Early in 1965, AID stopped buying piasters for the U.S.-controlled sector funds and, in June, agreement was reached with the GVN for province chiefs to begin requisitioning and releasing AID commodities on their own authority. 149/ Thus, the "troika sign-off" came to an end. While elaborate arrangements were made for getting reports of U.S. advisor concurrence or non-concurrence, the practical effect was to remove the advisor's leverage and restrict his influence. In October, USOM began to have second thoughts on the wisdom of abandoning control of its resources in the field and proposed a restoration of the "troika sign-off." The Mission Council endorsed the plan and had already launched discussions with the GVN when the State Department objected to the idea, insisting that it would undermine our efforts to make the Vietnamese more independent and effective. 150/ There the matter died.

In a somewhat related effort to overcome the delays in the Vietnamese pacification system, MACV acceded to its advisors' recommendations and, on 1 October, created a separate contingency fund of 50,000 piasters for each subsector (district) advisor to be used for urgent projects. Sector advisors were also given access to special funds. The program was highly successful and toward the end of the year consideration was given to permanent establishment of such revolving funds. 151/ The plan was

* See Task Force Paper IV.C., Evolution of the War: US/GVN Relations, 1963-67, Part I, pp. 54-59.

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abandoned, however, after the four-month trial period due to the strong opposition of the GVN Minister for RD, General Thang, who contended that such funds were undermining the legitimate efforts of his organization to meet urgent province needs; it would encourage Vietnamese dependence on the U.S. 152/

But USOM did use successfully a form of direct, selective leverage in the late summer of 1965. The Province Chief of Binh Tuy Province, Lt Colonel Chi, was accused of misusing some \$250,000 in AID funds. When USOM pressure on the GVN for his removal produced no results, aid to the province was suspended on 23 September, and USOM field personnel were withdrawn. In spite of Chi's friendship with the Defense Minister and Deputy Premier, General Co, Premier Ky removed him six weeks later. Aid to the province then resumed, but Ambassador Lodge made it clear to the Mission Council that he disapproved of the action and did not want it repeated (particularly the press coverage). 153/

As already indicated, both Ambassadors Taylor (after his near-disastrous experience in December 1964) and Lodge preferred not to force the GVN or attempt to use high-level pressure to reach solutions we felt necessary. The fragility of the political arrangements in Saigon at any point in time seemed to dictate against any U.S. action that might precipitate coups or disruption from elements even less disposed to be cooperative than the current group, whoever they might be. In this view, the successive Ambassadors were strongly supported by the State Department. Thus, while we resented the Ky coup in June, we did nothing to exacerbate our delicate relations with Ky. In July, during Secretary McNamara's visit, the GVN requested a devaluation of the piaster and a hefty increase in aid. 154/ Rather than use the request as an opportunity to press the GVN for action on matters of U.S. concern, Ambassador Taylor preferred to restrict our counter-demands in the interest of quick agreement:

We would avoid giving the impression of asking for new agreements or imposing conditions for our increase AID....
We do not want to raise conditions in terms likely to be rejected or to require prolonged debate. 155/

Consequently, agreement was reached between the two governments on 28 July, providing only for "joint discussions to precede policy decisions...for control of inflation," and scarcely mentioning GVN obligations. 156/

McNAMARA'S MINORITY POSITION ON LEVERAGE

The only consistent supporter of increasing and exercising U.S. leverage with the GVN during 1965 was Secretary McNamara. As previously noted, he was one of the principal proponents of the joint command idea and a supporter of the encadrement proposals. In April, the Defense

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Department had launched an ill-fated effort to have U.S. Army civil affairs officers introduced in the provinces to assure competent, corruption-free civil administration in the combat zones. 157/ Ambassador Taylor's stout opposition had killed the proposal, but the Secretary continued to push for stronger U.S. action with the GVN. After his July visit to Saigon he sent a memorandum to the President urging the U.S. to lay down terms for its continuing assistance before the introduction of more U.S. forces. He suggested that we exercise leverage through our control of rice policy and gain a "veto on major GVN commanders, statements about invading NVN, and so on." 158/

Again in November, McNamara recorded his impatience with the GVN and his belief that we should give a larger and more active role to our advisors at the province and district level. 159/ But the overall U.S. approach to the GVN in 1965 was dominated by our felt need for any kind of governmental stability which would provide a base from which to conduct the war. Proposals for taking a tough line were widely regarded as rugs that if pulled out from under the GVN would bring it crashing down, rather than as levers that might bring effective change.

U.S. PROPOSALS FOR GVN EXECUTION: AN EXAMPLE

With leverage-oriented arrangements effectively ruled out, U.S. advisors in South Vietnam were left with the alternatives of advising their counterparts only on how best to conduct a decided course or of expanding their advice to embrace what ought to be undertaken. The tendency was to follow the latter course, to urge upon GVN plans and programs American in concept and design for execution by the South Vietnamese. The Chieu Hoi ("Open Arms" for VC who return voluntarily to GVN control) program was one example of this tendency. The Hop Tac ("cooperation," in Vietnamese) program, to clear and hold the immediate area around Saigon, is another. Hop Tac's significance with respect to U.S. advisory activities resides in the fact that it was the most concerted attempt to apply the "oil blot" concept to rural pacification since the demise of the Strategic Hamlet Program. Its failure can be attributed in large measure to GVN lack of interest in and support for what was widely regarded as an "American" program.

The idea of a special combined US/GVN effort to secure the critical area ringing Saigon was first advanced by Ambassador Lodge in July 1964, at the Honolulu Conference. His concern with the problem went back to late 1963 when the re-appraisals of the war following Diem's overthrow revealed a dangerous deterioration in the III Corps area. A special USOM report on Long An Province had particularly troubled the Ambassador. In July 1964, as he was returning from his first tour in Vietnam, he proposed a special effort in eight provinces (Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Hau Nghia, Long An, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Vinh Long, and Quang Ngia), all but one of which was near Saigon. The proposal was picked up by Ambassador Taylor and the program set in motion during the summer of 1964. The

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initial objective was to stabilize the situation around Saigon and protect the capital, then extend the zone of security in an ever widening ring around the city. MACV appointed Colonel Jasper J. Wilson to head the effort and by September 1964 a plan had been produced and the Vietnamese reluctantly induced to set up a special council to coordinate the multiple commands operating in the area. The plan created four roughly concentric zones around the capital, each to be successively cleared and secured, working from the "inside of the doughnut out." Conceptually, three phases were involved in each zone: first, search and destroy missions to eliminate main force units; then a clearing phase using primarily squad and platoon size forces in patrols and ambushes; and finally, the securing phase in which ARVN turned over responsibilities for security in a zone to RF/PF and national police and in which heavy emphasis was to be laid on positive rural economic and social development efforts.

Hop Tac was launched on 12 September 1964, with a sweep through Gia Dinh Province to the west and southwest of Saigon by the ARVN 51st Regiment. The mission was aborted the following day, however, by withdrawal of the forces to participate in a coup. Nevertheless, organizational efforts continued and more ARVN forces were concentrated in the Hop Tac area. A special survey of the area by USOM, USIS, and MACV in October revealed that little real progress was being made. In spite of the lack of any visible evidence of genuine momentum, the Ambassador and MACV continued to be encouraged by the modest statistical progress of Hop Tac at a time when nearly every other activity in the country looked blacker and blacker. The 1964 MACV Command History 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." 160/

Whether in response to Hop Tac or not, the VC substantially increased their forces in the Hop Tac area in the first six months of 1965. MACV estimated the growth at 65 percent and also noted that the new troops were frequently equipped with Chinese weapons. This growth in enemy strength in turn prompted some redeployment of RVNAF to strengthen capabilities in the Capital Military Region. In February, 1965, just at the time the U.S. was initiating the sustained bombing of North Vietnam and beginning the first Marine combat deployments in the South, COMUSMACV asked the I and IV Corps senior advisors to review current programs and to develop Hop Tac-like plans for their respective areas as a basis for discussion with their counterparts. General Westmoreland hoped to concentrate the available resources of each Corps into its most critical areas at a time when VC activity and successes were continually mounting and enemy control of the country increasing dangerously. Again, the operative concept was to be the oil blot. By April General Westmoreland had convinced Minister of the Armed Forces Minh to ask each of the ARVN Corps Commanders (except III Corps, in whose area Hop Tac was being conducted) to draw up similar plans for their own areas of responsibility.

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The U.S. effort was clearly aimed at spurring the practical application of the "oil blot" analogy. The effects, however, were to demonstrate how difficult it was to translate simple counterinsurgent theory into practice, how convoluted and personal were the ARVN lines of influence, and how frustrating it was under these circumstances to exercise influence by persuasion.

In May, the Prime Minister proposed organizational changes in Hop Tac to return much of it to the operational control of the III Corps commander. These changes were rejected by COMUSMACV, but he did agree that the III Corps commander might be named chairman of the Hop Tac Council. In June, before anything could be done on this proposal, a coup with General Ky at its head returned the military to power. By the summer of 1965, Hop Tac was being completely overshadowed by the build-up of U.S. forces.

In September, Lodge returned to Vietnam for his second stint as Ambassador. He immediately asked a U.S. Mission officer for a private assessment of the Hop Tac program. The report frankly described Hop Tac as a failure and stressed as reasons the unrealistic goals of the program, the irrelevance of the concentric circle concept to actual areas of GVN and VC strength, the fact that it was an American plan never really given first priority by the Vietnamese, the area's political vulnerability to fallout from Saigon political changes, and General Ky's lack of support for it. The report recommended letting Hop Tac slowly die. On September 15, the Mission Council deliberated inconclusively on the fate of the program:

General Westmoreland said that while Hop Tac could be said only to have been about 50% successful, it had undoubtedly averted a VC seige of Saigon. Ambassador Lodge then briefly reviewed the original reasons for the emphasis placed on the area surrounding Saigon and said that they were still valid, primarily because of the heavy density of population. He noted, however, lack of a clear commitment to Hop Tac on the part of the GVN, possibly due to the fact that the Vietnamese consider the program an American scheme. The view was also expressed that the trouble may also lie in US/GVN differences over some fundamental concepts in Hop Tac. 161/

By the end of 1965, the proposal for Hop Tac programs in I, II, and IV Corps had refined itself into the scheme for National Priority Areas that became the focus of attention in 1966. Hop Tac itself, in the Saigon vicinity, continued on into 1966 to be finally phased out at the end of the year and replaced by the III Corps R/D Council and a U.S. military effort to protect the capital known as Operation FAIRFAX.

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As a test case for the ever popular oil blot theory of pacification, Hop Tac left much to be desired. It did, however, point up some of the difficulties to be encountered in any attempt to implement this appealingly simple--and perhaps simplistic--concept. The oil blot theory, like all abstract analogies, emphasizes the similarity between phenomena and ignores the differences. The important similarity of the pacification problem to the oil blot is the expressed goal of progressively extending the secure zone until it embraces the entire country. Unlike a blank piece of paper, however, the environment in which pacification must take place is neither neutral nor passive; and unlike the oil blot, the pacification forces are not impervious. Moreover, implicit in the theory is the notion that the secure area, like the oil blot, will expand in all directions simultaneously, at roughly the same speed, and that expansion is irreversible and irrevocable. Further, the analogy fails to take into account unique problems of terrain or variances in government and insurgent strength in different areas. One need not belabor the point; the concept is fine as a theory, but not as a program design. In fairness, it must be said that the idea does focus the need for concentration of resources in priority areas. All this notwithstanding, III Corps was less than the optimum place to test such a program. It contains several longtime Viet Cong strongholds and base areas and is extraordinarily sensitive to political changes in Saigon (28 of 31 district chiefs were replaced during the lifetime of Hop Tac).

The most important reason for the failure of Hop Tac, however, was the lack of South Vietnamese support for it. From its inception to its demise, it was an American idea, plan, and program. While the GVN adopted it, established a high-level council to supervise it, and committed some troops and other resources to it, this was seen as a way of appeasing the Americans. The South Vietnamese never accorded Hop Tac a high priority in their own thinking. Moreover, its low status was further emphasized by the massive U.S. force build-up. As this U.S. build-up became relatively routinized, however, the issue of pacification reasserted itself.* When it did so, the primary U.S. concern came to focus on the issue of how best to organize the military, paramilitary, and civilian advisory efforts. Since even the civilian advisors in the field were military personnel on loan in many instances, the account of the military advisory build-up decisions became essentially an account of organizing advice for pacification.

* See Task Force Paper, Vol. IV.C.8., Reemphasis on Pacification: 1966 - 1967.

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D. Organization as the Key to Effectiveness
in Pacification (1966-1967)

THE BASIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PREOCCUPATION

Several factors contributed to the persistent U.S. preoccupation in 1966 and 1967 with reorganizing the advisory effort in order better to support pacification activities. First, it had been an article of faith for several years within U.S. policymaking circles that only by winning the "other war" of pacification could the U.S. hope to realize its objectives in South Vietnam. Secondly, the pacification struggle was still regarded essentially as a task to be performed by the GVN -- as the "main force war" no longer was after the introduction of major U.S. combat forces. Reinforcing this belief was a third factor, the widely held conviction that U.S. forces could best concentrate on the main force war while RVNAF focused on pacification.

Such a U.S.-RVNAF division of effort, it was reasoned, would permit U.S. forces to take advantage of their greater tactical mobility and fire support without endangering civilian life and property, employ RVNAF in a manner calculated to minimize the adverse effects of its persistent inability to generate an offensive-minded esprit, and avoid the cultural acclimitization and language difficulties which would face U.S. forces in the pacification role. It seemed, in short, that RVNAF concentration on pacification and U.S. concentration on the main force enemy would constitute the optimal use of available resources.

This division of effort meant that most U.S. military advisors would be directly involved in pacification -- at least periodically if not continuously. Advisors to regular ARVN units could expect to spend a considerable portion of their time securing pacification programs. Those advisors whose counterparts had political and administrative responsibilities (e.g., province and district advisors) and paramilitary advisors (RF and PF) could expect pacification to be their major concern.

But while the majority of U.S. military advisors would be engaged in pacification activities they would not be the only U.S. advisory personnel whose responsibilities focused on pacification programs. Advisors from USOM, CAS, and USIS had overlapping and in some instances competing responsibilities. Thus it was logical for the U.S. to attempt to devise an organizational framework which would serve to coordinate adequately the activities of the large and diverse body of advisors and which would be capable to integrate their overlapping functions.

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UNRESOLVED ISSUES

At the beginning of 1966, three important issues concerning the pacification effort were unresolved. Each of these issues was tentatively resolved during late 1966 or in 1967 -- in the sense that decisions were made rather than that these decisions were final. The remainder of 1967 and early 1968 (until the Tet offensive) constituted a period of consolidation and refinement based on limited experimentation. The shock caused by the Tet offensive then brought to the fore new questions of RVNAF effectiveness and of U.S.-RVNAF roles and missions.

The first of the unresolved issues in 1966 was that of which U.S. agency or group should take the lead in coordinating pacification programs. The role which RVNAF should assume in support of pacification was the second unresolved issue. Finally, the extent to which the U.S. should be willing to exert leverage in order to influence pacification activities was also unresolved at the beginning of 1966.

The following account of the decisions addressed to these three issues may seem to suggest that a master list of problems was somehow approached as part of an orderly, comprehensive, logical process. This is not, of course, the way it happened. The policy process was confusing and the policymakers were occasionally confused. Decisions were made in the reflection of both U.S. and South Vietnamese domestic pressures and in the shadow of an on-going war. They were affected by personalities on all sides and involved no small amount of bureaucratic in-fighting. The account that follows attempts to reorder and to explain this evolution, not to recreate it.

WHO SHALL LEAD?

The "reemphasis on pacification," as another study in this series aptly names it, may conveniently be dated from the Honolulu Conference of February 1966.* With the build-up of U.S. combat forces proceeding rapidly and with expectations high that 1966 would see the U.S. take the offensive, policy attention returned to address the "other war" in which the object was to provide rural security followed by steps to improve living levels and establish a link between the GVN and its populace. President Johnson made it clear in his informal remarks to the conferees at Honolulu that he wanted concrete results to follow the splendid phrases of the U.S.-GVN communique:

Preserve this communique, because it is one we don't want to forget. It will be a kind of bible that we are going to follow. When we come back here 90 days from now, or six months from now, we are going to start out to the

* Task Force Paper, Evolution of the War: Reemphasis on Pacification, 1965-1967, Part II.

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the announcements that the President, the Chief of State and the Prime Minister made....You men who are responsible for these departments, you ministers and the staffs associated with them in both governments, bear in mind we are going to give you an examination and the "finals" will be on just what you have done.

...How have you built democracy in the rural areas? How much of it have you built, when and where? Give us dates, times, numbers.

...Larger outputs, more efficient production to improve credit, handicraft, light industry, rural electrification -- are those just phrases, high-sounding words, or have you "coonskins on the wall?" 162/

All parties regarded it as necessary for some mechanism to coordinate the U.S. advisory activities which would help the Vietnamese to turn promises into solid accomplishments. But they did not agree on how broad should be the unit of the coordinator. Was he, or his office, to be primus inter pares or a single manager? Did effective coordination require policy primacy or operational supervision -- or both? Above all, the participants did not agree on which individual or agency should exercise whatever supra-departmental authority was needed.

Ambassador Lodge, who had consistently stressed the centrality of the "other war," began by assigning responsibility for all civil support for Revolutionary Development (read "pacification") to his deputy, Ambassador Porter. The latter described his concept of his duties in traditionalist Foreign Service Officer terms:

Ambassador Porter described briefly his new responsibilities as he sees them in the pacification/rural development area. He pointed out that the basic idea is to place total responsibility on one senior individual to pull together all of the civil aspects of revolutionary development. He sees this primarily as a coordinating effort and does not intend to get into the middle of individual agency activities and responsibilities. As he and his staff perceive areas which require attention and action by a responsible agency, he will call this to the attention of that agency for the purpose of emphasis; he intends to suggest rather than to criticize. 163/

Porter's "coordination by suggestion" approach was not only an example of extremely limited effective authority, it was also restricted explicitly

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to the civil side of support for pacification. Whether the coordinator-in-chief emerged as a persuader or a director it was clear that his charge had to embrace both military and civil advisors. (In this respect "civil" is more accurate than "civilian", for a sizeable number of the civil advisory duties had devolved upon active duty military officers who were "loaned" to other agencies for this purpose.)

It is not surprising that MACV viewed itself as preeminent in this area. It was, as General Westmoreland rightly claimed, the only U.S. organization advising the GVN at all levels and -- in one way or another -- in all functions. It was to MACV that General Thang, the Minister of Rural Construction (read "pacification") looked for advice and assistance. 164/ It is equally unsurprising that Ambassador Lodge was of a different persuasion, as he explained clearly in a memo setting forth his views to General Lansdale in December 1965:

I consider the government of Vietnam's effort in this domain (apart from the military clearing phase) to be primarily civilian, economic, social and political in nature and in its aims. Consequently, on the American side, it is preferable that the two civilian agencies most directly concerned, i.e., USAID and CAS, be the operating support agencies upon whom you should rely for the implementation of the necessary programs as they develop. Other sections of the Mission, including MACV, JUSPAO...should consider themselves associated with...USAID and CAS, but not as agencies directly responsible for operations.

The foregoing is intended to insure that the number of persons and agencies contacting the GVN and particularly the Ministry of Rural Construction, on the subject of pacification and development is reduced, and in fact is limited to yourself or your representative, plus the representatives of the two operating agencies, USAID and CAS. 165/

Operational and coordinative responsibilities remained on this particular wicket throughout most of 1966 while Washington fumed over the slow pace of pacification. These months saw the development of sufficient frustration in Washington to permit the growth and final acceptance of the proposal that all U.S. advice for pacification be placed under MACV. An account of this development is treated more fully in another document in this series and will only be summarized here.*

President Johnson's Washington coordinator for pacification, Robert W. Komer, set forth in August 1966 three alternative organizational approaches:

* Task Force Paper, Evolution of the War: Reemphasis on Pacification, 1965-1967.

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Alternative No. 1 -- Give /Deputy Ambassador/ Porter operational control over all pacification activity....

Alternative No. 2 -- Retain the present separate civil and military command channels but strengthen the management structure of both MACV and the U.S. Mission....

Alternative No. 3 -- Assign responsibility for pacification, civil and military, to COMUSMACV. 166/

Mr. Komer's categorization was prescient. Ambassador Lodge's personal preference and the fact that most pacification advisors were military seemed to rule out the first course of action. 167/ The second alternative described essentially the organization followed under the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) from November 1966 until June 1967. By this late date the U.S. decided to follow the third of Komer's alternatives.

The first of these reorganizations, that which created OCO, was quite literally forced upon Ambassador Lodge. Particularly in view of the fact that OCO was to be given only a 90-120 day trial to produce identifiable results, he was not eager to undergo the turmoil and lost motion of one major reorganization only as a prelude to yet another reorganization. He wanted to retain as much non-military flavor to the pacification effort as possible -- regarding it as complementary to military programs, yet separate from them. Military security activities were, in his view, essentially the negative precondition to pacification activities which were the positive acts leading the GVN to vitalize itself at the same time that it developed real ties to its own people. 168/

CORDS REPLACES OCO

Thus OCO entered the world foredoomed by the combination of too short a prescribed life span and the tendency of some of its unwilling partners to do more than support it tacitly while they maneuvered to get their blue chips into another basket. Secretary McNamara had recommended in October 1966 that MACV take responsibility for pacification. Undersecretary of State Katzenbach had marshalled a strong case against this step at least until embassy leadership of civil operations was given a chance. The upshot was that it was given half a chance -- which may have been worse than none at all.

OCO did, however, accomplish the creation and selection of Regional Directors and OCO Province Representatives. One individual was made responsible for all civil operations in each Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) and in each province. The U.S. military chain of command had already adapted itself to parallel the RVNAF organization, but below Corps level it was more complex. Each division within ARVN was advised by a senior advisor (a colonel) who was given supervisory authority over the military Sector (Province) Advisors within the Divisional Tactical Area (DTA)

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for which his division had responsibility. Thus, while civil lines of authority went directly from corps level (the region) to province, the military advisory chain added an additional link at division. Sector advisors under this arrangement found themselves working under a military officer whose advisory responsibilities were actually military whereas theirs were only partly (and sometimes only nominally) military.

OCO attempted to have the ARVN divisions removed from pacification responsibilities, but without success. When the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) was established under MACV in mid-1967 as the single manager for all pacification advisors, the issue could not be argued with the same force. For by the time COMUSMACV assumed responsibility for pacification (through a civilian deputy -- Ambassador Komer), ARVN had also expanded its role in the pacification effort. The ARVN division, it could be argued, was as much a part of the pacification effort as were the programs supported by the U.S. civil agencies.

But although the argument for removing the Senior Division Advisor from the U.S. chain of command over provincial advisors lost theoretic weight with the creation of CORDS, the new civilian deputy to COMUSMACV secured General Westmoreland's approval to remove the division advisors from the pacification chain of command and to work to get ARVN to take parallel action. This step illustrates the extent to which civil influences were able to operate within this new section of MACV. CORDS was of such size that it became quasi-independent. One would have to carry an issue in dispute all the way to COMUSMACV before it moved outside of CORDS channels.

The comprehensiveness of this reorganization may be seen in the following MACV Directive, reproduced in its entirety, and especially in the schematic diagram laying out the new U.S. command structure for a Corps area:

MACV Dir 10-12

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO San Francisco 96222

DIRECTIVE
NUMBER 10-12*

28 May 1967
(MACCORDS)

ORGANIZATIONS AND FUNCTIONS
ORGANIZATIONS AND FUNCTIONS FOR CIVIL OPERATIONS
AND REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

1. PURPOSE. To provide for the integration of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support activities within MACV.
2. GENERAL.
 - a. To provide for single manager direction of all US civil/military Revolutionary Development activities in the Republic of Vietnam, responsibility has been assigned to COMUSMACV.
 - b. The position of Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support to COMUSMACV is established and carries the personal rank of Ambassador. The Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support to COMUSMACV assists COMUSMACV in discharging his responsibilities in the field of military and civilian support to the GVN's Revolutionary Development Program. Specifically, he is charged by COMUSMACV with supervising the formulation and execution of all plans, policies and programs, military and civilian, which support the GVN's Revolutionary Development program and related programs.
 - c. All activities and functions of the former Office of Civil Operations (OCO) and the MACV Directorate for Revolutionary Development (RD) Support are combined in the office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS).
 - d. The Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support is assigned functions as follows:
 - (1) Advises COMUSMACV, MACV staff elements and all US civilian agencies on all aspects of US civil/military support for the Government of Vietnam's RD Program.

*This directive supersedes MACV Directive 10-12, 20 October 1966

MACV Dir 10-12
28 May 1967

(2) In conjunction with Government of Vietnam authorities, develops joint and combined plans, policies, concepts and programs concerning US civil/military support for Revolutionary Development.

(3) Supervises the execution of plans and programs for US civil/military support of Revolutionary Development.

(4) Provides advice and assistance to the Government of Vietnam, including the Ministry of Revolutionary Development, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Joint General Staff and other GVN agencies on US civil/military support for Revolutionary Development including US advisory and logistical support.

(5) Develops requirements for military and civil assets (US and GVN) to support Revolutionary Development.

(6) Serves as the contact point with sponsoring agencies for RD programs. Maintains liaison with sponsoring agencies in representing their interests in civil non-RD programs and activities in the field. Maintains direct operational communications with field elements for these programs.

(7) Is responsible for program coordination with the various Mission civil agencies in the planning and implementation of non-RD activities as they impinge upon or affect RD-related activities.

(8) Provides MACV focal point for economic warfare to include population and resources control, and for civic action by US forces.

(9) Evaluates all civil/military RD activities including provision of security for RD by US/FWMA/GVN military forces and reports on progress, status and problems of RD Support.

(10) Acts on all RD Support policy matters pertaining to subordinate echelons.

(11) Directs advisory relationships with GVN on RD and RD-related matters.

3. IMPLEMENTATION.

a. Integration and consolidation of OCO and RD Support activities will be accomplished at all levels: Headquarters MACV, region/CTZ, province and district.

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b. Organization for CORDS will conform generally to the schematic organizational diagram attached at Annex A, allowing for differences in the situations in the various regions/CTZ's, provinces and districts.

c. Additionally, in developing detailed organizations and functions at each level, force commanders/senior advisors will be guided by the following principles:

(1) Region/CTZ.

(a) The OCO regional director will be designated the Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support to the force commander/senior advisor. As such, he will be charged with supervising the formulation and execution of all military and civilian plans, policies and programs which support the GVN's RD program to include civic action performed by US units.

(b) For all matters relating to RVNAF military support for Revolutionary Development, the deputy senior advisor will operate under the supervision of the Deputy for CORDS.

(c) The deputy OCO regional director will be designated the Assistant Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support or the Assistant Chief of Staff, CORDS. In this capacity, he will head an integrated civil/military staff which parallels, as appropriate, the MACV CORDS organization. Further, he will direct headquarters-based RD-related and non-RD technical programs.

(d) Except for psychological operations and intelligence, those elements of the staffs of the force commander/senior advisor and deputy senior advisor engaged primarily in RD Support activities will be integrated into the staff of the Assistant Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support or the Assistant Chief of Staff, CORDS. At a later date, after on-going studies are completed, further guidance may be issued if needed for the integration of civil and military intelligence and psychological warfare functions which represent special cases.

(2) Province.

(a) At province, an integrated provincial advisory team composed of the current OCO provincial team and MACV sector advisory team will be organized.

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(b) The new provincial team will continue to carry out all functions currently performed at province. However, the province representative may organize, with the approval of the Deputy for Revolutionary Development Support at region/CTZ, his personnel and functions as he sees fit.

(c) A single team chief, designated the Senior Provincial Advisor, will be assigned to each province. The senior provincial advisor will be chosen by the Deputy for CORDS and the force commander/senior advisor, with the concurrence of the Deputy CORDS to COMUSMACV, on the basis of security in the province, civil-military balance in the RD effort and qualifications and experience of the current OCO senior provincial advisor and MACV sector advisor. The individual not selected will serve as the other's deputy as well as being his principal advisor for civil operations or military support as the case may be.

(d) The province senior advisor will receive operational direction from and report through the Deputy for CORDS to the force commander/senior advisor. The military element of the provincial team will receive logistical and administrative support from the division advisory team.

(e) Where RVNAF units are attached to the province chief for direct support of RD, advisors to these units will come under the operational control of the senior province advisor.

(f) The senior province advisor will serve as the Vietnamese province chief's principal advisor. However, technical advice, military or civil, should continue to be given to the province chief or his representative by the most qualified member of the provincial team. In all cases, the senior province advisor must be aware of the advice given and will set the policies to which advice will conform.

(3) District.

(a) At district an integrated district advisory team composed of the current MACV sub-sector team and OCO district representative will be organized.

(b) The new district team will be responsible for civil/military advice to the GVN district organization and for the implementation of all US civil and military support programs at district.

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(c) A single team chief, designated Senior District Advisor will be assigned to each district. The senior district advisor will be chosen by the senior province advisor with the concurrence of the Deputy CORDS to the force commander/senior advisor on the basis of security in the district, civil-military balance in the RD effort and qualifications and experience of the current OCO district representative and MACV sub-sector advisor. The individual not selected will serve as the other's deputy as well as being his principal advisor for civil operations or military support as the case may be.

(d) Where no OCO district representative is present, the MACV sub-sector team will become the district Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development staff and the sub-sector advisor will be designated senior district advisor.

(4) The III CTZ organization for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support will conform generally to the schematic organizational diagram attached at Annex B.

(5) For the time being there will be no change in the present IV CTZ organization. Implementing instructions for the IV CTZ organization for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support will be provided at a later date.

(6) Force commanders/senior advisors will revise their organizations and redraft their statements of functions to comply with the guidance set out in this directive. The revisions will be forwarded to this headquarters for approval by 15 Jun 67.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT.

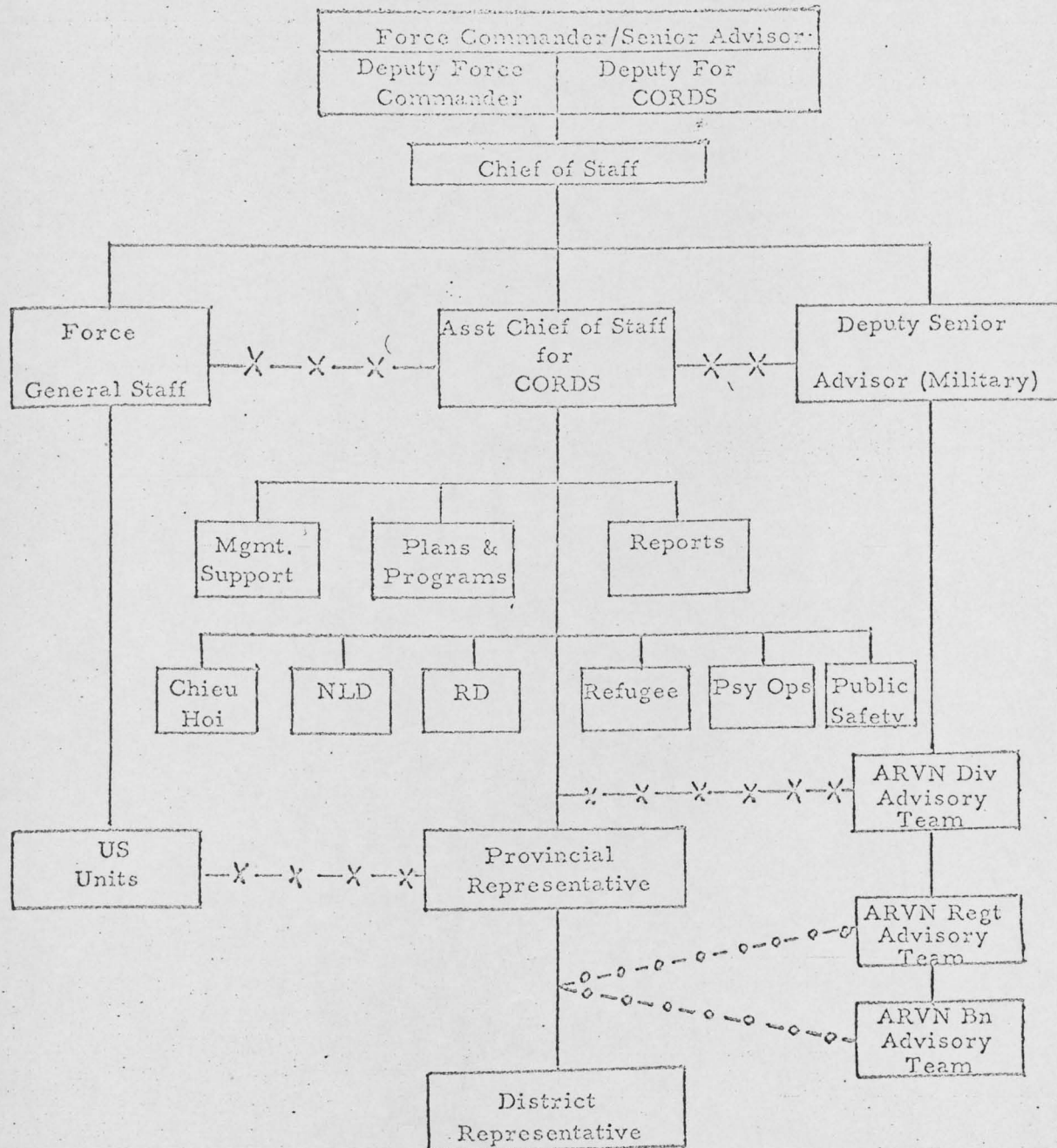
a. For the time being, there will be no change in administrative and logistics support. Civilian elements of the integrated organization will continue to be supported (funds, personnel, and other requirements) by their respective agencies, i.e., Embassy, AID, JUSPAO, USIA and OSA.

b. It is intended that a continuing effort be undertaken toward logistic and administrative economy through consolidation and cross-servicing of appropriate support activities.

5. REFERENCE. State Department MSG DTG 092304Z May 1967 (C).

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-x-x-x- Coordination--Military and CORDS matters.
-o-o-o- Operational Control when unit assigned on
RD direct support mission.

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RVNAF'S ROLE IN PACIFICATION

It has already been noted that the U.S. gradually came to espouse a division of effort between U.S. forces and RVNAF in which the former would concentrate on defeating the main forces of the insurgents in the unpopulated areas while RVNAF concentrated on securing pacification operations in the populated areas.

General Westmoreland first informed Washington of his intention to follow this general division of effort in late August 1966. But his emphasis was one of degree, he made clear, rather than of mutually exclusive categories:

...Our strategy will be one of a general offensive with maximum practical support to area and population security in further support of Revolutionary Development.

The essential tasks of Revolutionary Development and nation building cannot be accomplished if enemy main forces can gain access to the population centers and destroy our efforts. US, Free World Forces, with their mobility and in coordination with RVNAF, must take the fight to the enemy by attacking his main forces and invading his base areas. Our ability to do this is improving steadily. Maximum emphasis will be given to the use of long range patrols and other means to find the enemy and locate his bases. Forces and bases thus discovered will be subjected to either ground attack or quick reaction B-52 and tactical air strikes. When feasible B-52 strikes will be followed by ground forces to search the area. Sustained ground combat operations will maintain pressure on the enemy.

The growing strength of US/Free World forces will provide the shield that will permit ARVN to shift its weight of effort to an extent not heretofore feasible to direct support of Revolutionary Development. Also, I visualize that a significant number of the US/Free World maneuver battalions will be committed to tactical areas of responsibility (TAOR) missions. These missions encompass base security and at the same time support Revolutionary Development by spreading security radially from the bases to protect more of the population. Saturation patrolling, civic action, and close association with ARVN, regional and popular forces to bolster their combat effectiveness are among the tasks of the ground force elements. At the same time ARVN troops will be available if required to reinforce offensive operations and to serve as reaction forces for outlying security posts and government centers under attack. Our strategy will include opening, constructing and using roads, as well as a start toward opening

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and reconstructing the national railroad. The priority effort of ARVN forces will be in direct support of the Revolutionary Development program; in many instances, the province chief will exercise operational control over these units. This fact notwithstanding the ARVN division structure must be maintained and it is essential that the division commander enthusiastically support Revolutionary Development. Our highly capable US Division Commanders, who are closely associated with corresponding ARVN commanders, are in a position to influence them to do what is required.

We intend to employ all forces to get the best results measured, among other things, in terms of population secured; territory cleared of enemy influence; VC/NVA bases eliminated; and enemy guerrillas, local forces, and main forces destroyed.

Barring unforeseen change in enemy strategy, I visualize that our strategy for South Vietnam will remain essentially the same throughout 1967. 169/

General Westmoreland had already reached agreement with General Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff (JGS), to reorient ARVN to pacification support. General Tillson, MACV J-3, had briefed the Mission Council in Saigon on the general plan:

In the 1967 campaign plan, we propose to assign ARVN the primary mission of providing direct support to RD and US/FW Forces the primary mission of destroying VC/NVA main forces and base areas. Agreement has been reached between General Westmoreland and General Vien that, in I, II, and III Corps areas, ARVN will devote at least 50% of its effort directly in support of the RD program. In IV Corps, where there are no US forces, it was agreed that ARVN might have to devote up to 75% of its effort to offensive operations....170/

General Taylor, now serving as a personal advisor to President Johnson, immediately recognized the importance of this communication. A considered response should be sent to COMUSMACV, he advised the President, lest General Westmoreland regard silence as tacit consent for his proposed strategy. Taylor was enthusiastic about the expressed intent to reemphasize revolutionary development (pacification), seeing in it the best hope for bringing the war to a speedier conclusion. But he was uneasy about future charges that the U.S. had taken over the main war and was sustaining larger numbers of casualties than RVNAF. He was also concerned about involving any U.S. troops in pacification -- suggesting that U.S. displacement of GVN leadership would, in the long run, be counterproductive. 171/

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Ambassador Lodge, on the other hand, waxed ecstatic over the involvement of U.S. units in pacification work. The crux of the problem, he argued, was security. To promote security U.S. units should be used in a kind of advisory function. They would energize ARVN by example:

To meet this need we must make more U.S. troops available to help out in pacification operations as we move to concentrate ARVN effort in this work. U.S. forces would be the catalyst; would lead by example; and would work with the Vietnamese on the 'buddy' system. They would be the 10 percent of the total force of men under arms (90 percent of whom would be Vietnamese) which would get the whole thing moving faster.

This has been done on a small scale already by elements of the U.S. Marines, 1st and 25th U.S. Infantry Divisions, and the Koreans. We think it can be made to work and the gains under such a program, while not flashy, would hopefully be solid. Everything depends on whether we can change ARVN habits. Experience already made indicate that U.S. casualties would be few. 172/

General Taylor's doubts about the benefits of involving U.S. troop units in pacification carried some weight in Washington. State was later to signal Saigon to go slow on U.S. participation:

We understand General Westmoreland plans use of limited number of US forces in buddy system principle to guide and motivate RD/P. However, we have serious doubts about any further involvement US troops beyond that....We fear this would tempt Vietnamese to leave this work more and more to us and we believe pacification, with its intimate contact with population, more appropriate for Vietnamese forces, who must after all as arm of GVN establish constructive relations with population. Hence we believe there should be no thought of US taking substantial share of pacification. The urgent need is to begin effectively pressing ARVN. 173/

THE 1967 COMBINED CAMPAIGN PLAN

The upshot of these exchanges, which illustrate the wide acceptance in U.S. quarters of the proposed division of effort between U.S. forces and RVNAF, was that the MACV/JGS Combined Campaign Plan for 1967 (AB 142), published 7 November 1966, reflected "primary missions" for US/FWMAF and RVNAF and implied that few U.S. forces would be committed directly to the pacification effort. The exact number of such forces was not specified; it was left to COMUSMACV's discretion within the restraints already suggested by Washington. The JGS did agree, however, to keep 53 ARVN battalions in support of revolutionary development during 1967. In addition, 230-odd RF companies and over 800 RF platoons were to support the pacification program.

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Conceptually, the regular ARVN units were to conduct the more difficult clearing operations and then turn over responsibility for the "securing phase" to the RF/PF outfits. All of this was outlined in considerable detail in the Combined Campaign Plan, with specific assignments to certain kinds of units for each phase of the pacification effort. The pertinent sections of AB 142 follow:

" 2. (C) ARVN REGULAR FORCES:

PHASE	ARVN REGULAR FORCES
Clearing	<p><u>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conduct operations to clear VC/NVA main force units from provincial priority areas and other critical areas in accordance with established provincial RD plans.2. Conduct, in conjunction with provincial military forces and civil intelligence and police elements, operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure in specified hamlet or village areas in accordance with established provincial RD plans.
Securing	<p><u>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Conduct, in conjunction with provincial military forces and civil intelligence and police elements, operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure when provincial forces are inadequate for this task.

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PHASE	ARVN REGULAR FORCES
	4. Provide, in conjunction with provincial military forces and National Police, local area security and security for the population and GVN cadre elements when provincial forces are inadequate for this task.
Developing	<u>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</u> 5. Provide, in conjunction with provincial military forces and National Police, local area security and security for the population and GVN cadre elements when provincial forces are inadequate for this task.
All Phases	<u>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</u> 6. Conduct military PSYOP in support of RD activities with emphasis on operations in support of the Chieu Hoi program. 7. Conduct, in coordination with sector commanders, military civic action to help win the support of the people for the government with emphasis on the proper behavior and discipline of troops. 8. Assist sector commanders in the recruiting and training of RF/FF. <u>Related tasks:</u> 9. Conduct offensive search and destroy operations against VC/NVA main forces to prevent their incursion into areas undergoing RD. 10. Provide elements for reserve/reaction forces in support of military forces in areas undergoing RD.

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3. (C) US/FWMAF.

PHASE	US/FWMAF
Clearing	<p>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conduct combined and unilateral operations to clear VC/NVA main forces from provincial priority areas and other critical areas in accordance with established provincial RD plans.2. Conduct combined operations in conjunction with ARVN and/or provincial military forces and police elements, operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure in specified hamlet or village areas in accordance with established provincial RD plans.
All Phases	<p>Tasks in direct support of RD activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Conduct other combined battalion and smaller unit operations with RVNAF to accomplish specific RD tasks in areas undergoing clearing, securing, and developing as appropriate.4. Conduct, in coordination with sector and subsector commanders, military civic action to help win the support of the people for the government with emphasis to ensure that credit is given to the GVN.5. Assist sector commanders in the training of RF/PF. <p>Related tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Conduct combined and unilateral offensive search and destroy operations against VC/NVA main forces to prevent their incursion into areas undergoing RD.

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h. (C) PROVINCIAL FORCES:

a. Regional Forces (RF).

PHASE	REGIONAL FORCES
Clearing	<p>1. Assist, within capabilities, ARVN regular forces and/or US/USMACV to clear VC/NVA main force units from provincial priority areas and other critical areas in accordance with provincial RD plans.</p> <p>2. Assist, within capabilities, ARVN regular forces to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure.</p>
Securing	<p>3. Conduct, in conjunction with civil intelligence and police elements, operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure.</p> <p>4. Provide local area security with priority to major communications complexes and other sensitive areas.</p> <p>5. Provide local security for the population and GVN civil cadre elements in hamlet and village areas where RF are inadequate for this task.</p> <p>6. Assist GVN cadre elements to perform economic and social development projects.</p> <p>7. Assist National Police in population and resources control and/or to maintain law and order and protect public safety.</p> <p>8. Assist in the recruiting and training of RF.</p>

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PHASE	REGIONAL FORCES
	9. Assist GVN civil cadre elements to organize and train people's self-defense forces.
Developing	10. Continue tasks 4 and 5 until relieved by National Police or other authorized provincial police forces which may be established. 11. Provide elements for reserve/reaction forces to counter the return of VC/NVA main or irregular forces into areas undergoing developing. 12. Continue task 6. 13. Continue task 7 as necessary.

b. Popular Forces (PF)

PHASE	POPULAR FORCES
Securing	1. Provide local security for the population and GVN civil cadre elements in hamlet and village areas. 2. Assist RF to provide local area security. 3. Assist GVN civil cadre elements to perform economic and social development projects. 4. Assist National Police in population and resources control and/or to maintain law and order and protect public safety.

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PHASE	POPULAR FORCES
	5. Assist GVN civil cadre elements to organize and train people's self-defense forces.
Developing	6. Continue tasks 1 and 2 until relieved by National Police or other authorized provincial police forces which may be established. 7. Continue task 3. 8. Continue task 4 as necessary.

c. National Police Forces.

PHASE	NATIONAL POLICE FORCES
Clearing	1. Develop and maintain informant nets and other intelligence nets. 2. Supply intelligence to military forces. 3. Participate with military forces in operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure. 4. Assume custody of and interrogate VC suspects.
Securing	5. Continue tasks 1 through 4 above. 6. Initiate population and resources control.

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PHASE	NATIONAL POLICE FORCES
	<p>7. Maintain law and order and protect public safety.</p> <p>8. Assist, within capabilities, military forces to provide local area security and security for the population and GVN cadre elements.</p>
Developing	<p>9. Maintain population and resources control.</p> <p>10. Continue tasks 1, 2, 4 and 7 above.</p> <p>11. Prevent the reorganization of the VC infrastructure.</p> <p>12. Prevent and control riots and sabotage of public security.</p> <p>13. Relieve military forces, when capable, and provide local area security and security for the population and GVN cadre elements.</p>

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LEVERAGE AND SOVEREIGNTY

The decision to effect a division of effort between RVNAF and US/FWMAF suggests how far U.S. policymakers were willing to go (perhaps "determined" would be more accurate) to carve out an area for independent GVN conduct of at least some major phase of the war. It suggests, too, their relative dissatisfaction with RVNAF improvement during the years in which the U.S. advisory effort had been directed toward such improvement. The question remained whether U.S. influence could be brought effectively to bear through example and persuasion or should be backstopped by more direct measures -- by the use of a range of negative measures gathered under the rubric of "leverage."

General Taylor's recommendations at the beginning of the U.S. advisory build-up in 1961, it will be remembered, emphasized a "limited partnership" in which U.S. advisors would actually work alongside their Vietnamese counterparts instead of merely "advising them at arm's length." By means of this closer working relationship in the field rather than just in various headquarters, Taylor had suggested, RVNAF effectiveness would become the product of mutually shared goals pursued through mutually shared experiences. Conscious adoption of an alternative course, the use of leverage, would have changed the relationship from one of nominal "partnership" to one of de facto U.S. leadership -- bordering in some instances on U.S. command. This, in turn, would have been a very real infringement of Vietnamese sovereignty and an admission that the GVN could not manage adequately its own affairs. It would have undercut Vietnamese independence in both a legal sense and in terms of GVN competence.

When the Diem regime did not respond as it had been expected (or hoped) it would, and after Diem's government was overturned, the U.S. again refused consciously to adopt leverage procedures to compel improved performance. First with General Minh, then with General Khanh, the hope was that improved receptivity (as compared to the most recent past experience) on the part of the GVN would permit the carrot to work effectively without the stick. The period just ended in mid-1965 when U.S. troops were committed to South Vietnam marked another occasion to examine the putative advantages and disadvantages of the use of leverage.

Generally speaking, Washington policymakers (less so in the State Department), were prone to suggest the use of leverage in the abstract. The U.S. Mission and MACV tended to oppose such proposals. Field advisors were, as a group, most favorably disposed toward the use of leverage. Those whose dealings included establishing a close working relationship with GVN (to include RVNAF) officials found that the threat of leverage was a stumbling block to such a relationship. Some also

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found that the price of acceptance without leverage was the virtual absence of influence. Robert Shaplen summarized this phenomenon in a pessimistic 1965 evaluation of the U.S. advisory effort:

The advisory program, while it had been a tribute to the politeness of both parties, had failed in its primary aim of persuading the Vietnamese officers to get their men out into the countryside and to stay there, if necessary, day and night, for weeks on end in order to beat the Communists at their own game. This view of the failure of American efforts at persuasion was privately expressed to me by most of the advisers I spoke with during my trip through the vital plateau area, and it was reinforced by what advisers from other battle areas told me. The consensus was that the system was inherently anomalous and unworkable in that it reflected the American predilection for trying to get a difficult and probably impossible job done in what a British friend of mine described as "your typical nice American way." 174/

Having rejected proposals for a combined command (presumably under U.S. leadership) and for the encadrement of U.S. troops with RVNAF units, the U.S. was left -- in late 1965 -- with the continuing and perplexing issue of whether or not to adopt the use of leverage in some comprehensive and planned manner. Earlier decisions had been to avoid the issue by side-stepping it. But the isolated occasions on which its use had been attempted did little to substantiate the argument that cries of neocolonialism were simply the price one had to pay for short run effectiveness. Indeed, some backfires tended to have the opposite effect. Ambassador Taylor, for instance, had had a disastrous experience in trying to use the U.S. decision to commence bombing North Vietnam as a lever to get GVN reform in December 1964. The net outcome was a violent reaction by General Khanh who very nearly had Taylor thrown out of the country as persona non grata. In the end, it was Khanh who went, but the political turmoil that this produced in the first months of 1965, when the course of the war was taking a dramatic turn against the GVN, convinced Taylor that such attempts should not be made again at the national level.* It was at this time that the "troika sign-off" was abandoned because of claims that it stifled GVN development. Then in late 1965 USOM began to have second thoughts on the wisdom of abandoning control of its resources in the field and proposed a restoration of the troika sign-off. The Mission Council endorsed the plan and had already launched discussions with the GVN when the State Department objected to the idea, insisting that it would undermine U.S. efforts to make the Vietnamese more independent and effective. 175/ There the matter died.

* See Task Force Paper, Evolution of the War: US/GVN Relations, 1963-67, Part I, pp. 54-59.

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In a related effort to overcome delays in the Vietnamese pacification program, MACV acceded to its advisors' recommendations and, in October, created a separate contingency fund of 50,000 piasters for each subsector advisor to be used for urgent projects. Sector advisors were also given access to special funds. The program was highly successful and toward the end of the year consideration was given to permanent establishment of such revolving funds. 176/ The plan was abandoned, however, after the four-month trial period due to the strong opposition of the GVN Minister for RD, General Thang, who contended such funds were undermining the legitimate efforts of his organization to meet urgent province needs. They would encourage, he said, Vietnamese dependence on the U.S. 177/

But USOM did experiment successfully with one new form of direct, selective leverage in the late summer of 1965. The Province Chief of Binh Tuy Province, Lt Colonel Chi, was accused of misusing some \$250,000 in AID funds. When USOM pressure on the GVN for his removal produced no results, aid to the province was suspended on September 23, and USOM field personnel were withdrawn. In spite of Chi's friendship with the Defense Minister and Deputy Premier (General Co) Premier Ky removed him six weeks later. Aid to the province then resumed, but Ambassador Lodge made it clear to the Mission Council that he disapproved of the action and did not want it repeated (particularly the press coverage). 178/

As already indicated, both Ambassadors Taylor (after his experience in December 1964) and Lodge preferred not to force the GVN or attempt to use high-level pressure to reach solutions we felt necessary. The fragility of the political arrangements in Saigon at any point in time seemed to dictate against any U.S. action that might precipitate coups or disruption from elements even less disposed to be cooperative than the current group, whoever they might be. In this view, the successive Ambassadors were strongly supported by the State Department. 179/ The one consistent Washington advocate for an increased use of leverage was Secretary McNamara. 180/ But the Secretary of Defense's views did not prevail in this issue as they did in so many others. The overall U.S. approach to advice in South Vietnam continued to be dominated by the felt U.S. need to avoid undercutting governmental stability. U.S. support was figuratively regarded as a rug which if pulled out from under the GVN would cause it to fall, not as a lever whose use might spur increased effectiveness.

THE INCONCLUSIVE DEBATE OVER LEVERAGE

This persistent U.S. avoidance of the planned use of leverage was, until about 1966, paralleled by an equally persistent avoidance of any candid examination of the whole Pandora's box which was conjured up by the mere mention of the subject. But during 1966, and continuing into 1967 and beyond, there were repeated attempts by lower echelons within the policymaking apparatus to promote an internal examination of the issue.

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Those who made such proposals were in favor of some kind of authorized, premeditated use of leverage, of course, else they would not have pushed for an examination of this hitherto avoided topic.

When operational groups -- as distinct from policymakers who could defer when to implement -- urged the adoption of leverage measures the recommendations tended to be summarily struck down. In 1966, for instance, an inquiry by the MACV staff into the poor performance records of the 5th and 25th ARVN Divisions -- both stationed near Saigon -- concluded that if other measures failed to improve these units, COMUSMACV should withdraw U.S. advisors and Military Assistance Program (MAP) support. General Westmoreland deleted from the study the recommendation for the withdrawal of MAP support. He further directed that sanctions against ARVN be avoided. The U.S. 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions were instructed to assist the two ARVN divisions and to increase their own participation in pacification operations in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia Provinces. 181/ It was clear that the time was not ripe for action; there was no agreed basis upon which action might be taken.

But another Army staff effort, the PROVN Study referred to earlier, set out to rectify this omission. Commissioned in mid-1965 by Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson, the PROVN group was charged with "developing new sources of action to be taken in South Vietnam by the United States and its allies, which will, in conjunction with current actions, modified as necessary, lead in due time to successful accomplishment of U.S. aims and objectives." After eight months of intensive effort this select group of middle ranking officers produced a comprehensive argument calling for emphasis on the pacification effort. A radical decentralization of U.S. and GVN directive authority was held to be necessary for this purpose. And to make sure that national plans were turned into concrete actions at the operating level, PROVN called for the calculated use of leverage:

The situation in South Vietnam has seriously deteriorated. 1966 may well be the last chance to ensure eventual success. 'Victory' can only be achieved through bringing the individual Vietnamese, typically a rural peasant, to support willingly the GVN. The critical actions are those that occur at the village, district, and provincial levels. This is where the war must be fought; this is where that war and the object which lies beyond it must be won. The following are the most important specific actions required now:

- Concentrate U.S. operations on the provincial level to include the delegation of command authority over U.S. operations to the Senior U.S. Representative at the provincial level.

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- Reaffirm Rural Construction as the foremost US/GVN combined effort to solidify and extend GVN influence.
- Authorize more direct U.S. involvement in GVN affairs at those administrative levels adequate to ensure the accomplishment of critical programs.
- Delegate to the U.S. Ambassador unequivocal authority as the sole manager of all U.S. activities, resources, and personnel in-country.
- Direct the Ambassador to develop a single integrated plan for achieving U.S. objectives in SVN. 182/

The PROVN Study proposed that leverage be employed at all levels within GVN to achieve U.S. objectives. Noting that past uses had been haphazard, it recommended the employment of a "continuum from subtle interpersonal persuasion to withdrawal of U.S. support" following U.S.-GVN agreement on specific programs. The South Vietnamese would, in short, be aware that leverage would be employed if they failed to live up to agreed obligations. 183/

After an initial period during which no discussion of the PROVN Study was permitted outside the Army staff, the study finally received wide distribution. Secretary McNamara was briefed on it, as were the Joint Chiefs of Staff. MACV's comments were also solicited. The carefully worded reply from Saigon stated succinctly the case against the use of leverage.

MACV is in complete agreement with PROVN position that immediate and substantially increased United States direct involvement in GVN activities in form of constructive influence and manipulation is essential to achievement of U.S. objectives in Vietnam. PROVN emphasizes that "leverage must originate in terms of reference established by government agreement," and "leverage, in all its implications, must be understood by the Vietnamese if it is to become an effective tool." The direct involvement and leverage envisioned by PROVN could range from skillful diplomatic pressure to U.S. unilateral execution of critical programs. MACV considers that there is a great danger that the extent of involvement envisioned could become too great. A government sensitive to its image as champion of national sovereignty profoundly affected by the pressure of militant minorities, and unsure of its tenure and legitimacy will

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resent too great involvement by U.S. Excessive U.S. involvement may defeat objectives of U.S. policy: development of free, independent non-communist nation. PROVN properly recognizes that success can only be attained through support of Vietnamese people, with support coming from the grass roots up. Insensitive U.S. actions can easily defeat efforts to accomplish this. U.S. manipulations could easily become an American takeover justified by U.S. compulsion to "get the job done." Such tendencies must be resisted. It must be realized that there are substantial difficulties and dangers inherent in implementing this or any similar program. 184/

NO DECISION AS A DECISION

Events remained stuck on this fundamental disagreement. The subject of leverage came, during 1967, to be discussed more fully, but there was no real authoritative decision to employ it or to reject its use under all circumstances. Thus, when CORDS completed its first major study of pacification programs (Project TAKEOFF) in June 1967, it included some candid discussion of the need for some kind of leverage. Entitled "U.S. Influence -- The Necessity, Feasibility and Desirability of Asserting Greater Leverage," the analysis proceeded from problem to alternative courses of action:

A. Necessity of Leverage.

1. The most crucial problem in achieving the goals and objectives of the RD program is that the programs must be carried out by the Vietnamese. Present US influence on Vietnamese performance is dependent upon our ability to persuade, cajole, suggest, or plead. Political and practical considerations usually have argued against developing any systematic use of the various levers of power at our disposal. The potential reaction of the Vietnamese may become even greater now that they appear to be reasserting themselves and when the question of sovereignty is an increasingly sensitive one.

2. However, the factors of corruption, antique administrative financial procedures and regulations, and widespread lack of leadership probably can be overcome in the short run only if the US increases its influence on Vietnamese performance. The increasing magnitude of corruption and its damage to any program make the need for developing and applying a system of leverage which forces the Vietnamese to take US views into account greater now than ever before. Even the best conceived and executed RD program will result in failure in terms of gaining the allegiance of the people so long as such extensive corruption prevails. 185/

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The study argued that leverage was feasible either at the national level with the GVN leadership in the classic "oriental" style or on a more systematic basis to be applied through the control of resources at all levels down to province and district. The study concluded:

D. Courses of Action. US influence over key decisions must be attained as quickly as possible. We recommend the "oriental" approach. However, should the other alternative of more open exercise of power be selected, the system would have to include US control of resources. As a tactical measure, such control could be associated initially with the introduction of additional resources. The introduction of greater US control and the procedures that would be necessary to ensure an adequate US voice in the decision-making process should be tied to the "New Team" and the new US organization for RD. For that reason, too long a delay would be unfortunate. 186/

Whether or not Komer approved this recommendation, it did not figure in the presentations of pacification given to Secretary McNamara during his 7-8 July visit to Vietnam. The Saigon policymakers were simply not prepared to come down on one agreed line of conduct in this contentious area. This tendency was exhibited later in the summer of 1967 when a long study on leverage produced in Ambassador Komer's old White House staff office by two staff members, Dr. Hans Heymann and LTC Volney Warner, was forwarded from State to Saigon:

In anticipating the US/GVN relationship in the post-election period, it is generally agreed that the US should find ways to exercise leverage with the Vietnamese government which are more commensurate in degree with the importance of the US effort to South Vietnam's survival and which reflect the climate of growing restiveness in the US....In its impatience to get results and make progress, the US has increasingly resorted to unilateral programs and action with inadequate consultation with the Vietnamese. On the other hand, the indiscriminate and careless exercise of US leverage could undermine the self-respect of the Vietnamese government in its own eyes and in the eyes of the South Vietnamese people.

To be effective, US leverage must be exercised in the context of a relationship of mutual respect and confidence, and in ways commensurate with the objective sought. It must also be backed by credible sanctions. 187/

Might not the post-election period, State suggested, be a proper time to consider such a new emphasis on the use of leverage. Ambassador Komer, who had been ardent in his advocacy of leverage while working as a Presidential assistant, replied in tempered language which reflected the chastening effect of several months on the firing line in Saigon:

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All of the above forms of leverage, and yet others, could be useful at the proper time and in an appropriate way. But they must be applied with discretion, and always in such manner as to keep the GVN foremost in the picture presented to its own people and the world at large....The exercise of leverage in a personal manner and hidden from the public view is likely to be most effective, while of the more operational means establishment of combined organization under a JCRR-type concept, to include joint control of resources, would be most desirable. In sum, we're gradually applying more leverage in Pacification, but wish to do so in ways that least risk creating more trouble than constructive results. 188/

What Komer really meant -- as his opinions expressed in a time frame later than that embraced by the present inquiry would make clear -- was the necessity to reserve the use of leverage for those few occasions in which all else had failed, in which copious records detailing the failure had been accumulated over time, and in which the proven offender could be severed from responsibility after his shortcomings were presented behind the scenes to his superiors. Thus, the GVN would serve as executioner, the U.S. as observer-recorder. Leverage would be a last resort rather than a continuing tool. The product of the intermittent debate on leverage was not so much a decision pro or con as it was a decision to resort to leverage when all else had failed. In this sense it dodged the difficult choices.

GROPING TOWARD BETTER INFORMATION

One of the programs that came under Komer's jurisdiction after he took over CORDS was the controversial Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). Secretary McNamara had requested, during his October 1966 visit to Vietnam, the development of some ADP system for evaluating the status of rural security on an on-going basis -- data which would make possible comparative judgments of progress over time. In November, he sent Mr. George Allen and Colonel Carter Clark to Saigon with a proposal. MACV revised their suggested system and recommended it to the Mission Council which endorsed it on 13 December. MACV described the new system to CINCPAC in January 1967:

HES provides a fully automated procedure for evaluating hamlet Revolutionary Development progress and establishes a hamlet level data base. Data input for HES is provided by MACV subsector advisors and district representatives, where assigned, who evaluate all hamlets not under VC control. They record their assessments in terms of 18 entries on a hamlet evaluation worksheet utilizing six factors, each with three indicators. Also, eight problem areas are evaluated. 189/

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The system operated throughout the year as something of a barometer for the entire pacification effort. It also became one of the focal points of criticism of the excessive reliance on statistical measures of progress, a criticism favored by the press in particular. Nevertheless, it was the most systematic attempt to compare results over time ever used in the assessment of rural security in Vietnam. As such it is a useful indicator. The following tables give summary data from HES for 1967. 190/ The first table shows population distribution according to security and development factors. The second table depicts the distribution of hamlets according to different measures of security.

POPULATION DATA
TOTAL SCORE - COUNTRYWIDE
THROUGH DECEMBER, 1967

POPULATION IN THOUSANDS

	1967 MARCH	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	DECEMBER	NET CHANGE MAR - DEC
POPULATION WEIGHTED INDEX*	2.33	2.42	2.50	2.54	.21
SECURE / GOOD					
A HAMLETS	300.9	489.4	646.8	674.9	394.0
B HAMLETS	2861.9	3128.7	3489.7	3481.3	619.4
C HAMLETS	4221.8	4360.5	4044.2	4279.1	57.3
NON-HAMLET	3210.1	3277.3	3135.1	3059.4	- 150.7
TOTAL	10594.7 (63.3%)	11255.9 (65.6%)	11315.8 (66.5%)	11514.7 (67.0%)	920.0
CONTESTED/POOR					
D HAMLETS	2235.7	1976.2	2087.2	2157.6	- 78.1
E HAMLETS	480.0	402.3	337.2	318.6	- 161.4
**OTHER HAMLETS	.0	152.3	91.7	68.3	69.3
NON-HAMLET	274.0	290.8	237.4	263.6	- 10.4
TOTAL	2989.7 (17.9%)	2821.6 (16.4%)	2753.5 (16.2%)	2808.1 (16.3%)	- 181.6
VC CONTROLLED					
VC HAMLETS	2955.8	2923.2	2809.5	2748.4	- 207.4
NON-HAMLET	196.4	164.2	134.1	112.5	- 83.9
TOTAL	3152.2 (18.8%)	3087.4 (18.0%)	2943.6 (17.3%)	2860.9 (16.7%)	- 291.3
TOTAL POPULATION	16736.6	17164.9	17012.9	17183.7	447.1

*MEAN SCORE FOR POPULATION IN HAMLETS RATED A=5,B=4,C=3,D=2,E=1,VC=0.
**UN-EVALUATED HAMLETS- INCLUDES ABANDONED, PLANNED.

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HAMLET DATA
TOTAL SCORE - COUNTRYWIDE
THROUGH DECEMBER, 1967

NUMBER OF HAMLETS

	1967 MARCH	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	DECEMBER	NET CHANGE MAR - DEC
SECURE / GOOD					
A HAMLETS	99	168	213	231	132
B HAMLETS	1639	1776	1902	1809	170
C HAMLETS	3138	3245	3137	3300	162
TOTAL	4876	5189	5252	5340	464
CONTESTED/POOR					
D HAMLETS	2348	2156	2206	2230	- 118
E HAMLETS	599	528	483	445	- 154
**OTHER HAMLETS	0	686	713	825	825
TOTAL	2947	3370	3402	3500	553
VC HAMLETS	4262	3978	3987	3882	- 380
TOTAL HAMLETS	12085	12537	12641	12722	637

**NON-EVALUATED HAMLETS- INCLUDES ABANDONED, PLANNED.

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In February 1968 an analysis of 1967 pacification-R/D results as revealed in the HES was published by OSD Systems Analysis.

Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) reports for CY 1967 indicate that pacification progressed slowly during the first half of 1967, and lost ground in the second half. Most (60%) of the 1967 gain results from accounting type changes to the HES system, not from pacification progress; hamlet additions and deletions, and revised population estimates accounted for half of the January-June increase and all of the June-December increase. In the area that really counts--VC-D-E hamlets rising to A-B-C ratings--we actually suffered a net loss of 10,100 people between June and December 1967. The enemy's offensive appears to have killed the revolutionary development program, as currently conceived. Recent reports state that to a large extent, the VC now control the country-side. 191/

Written in the pessimistic atmosphere of the 1968 post-Tet period this view may over-emphasize negative factors. Ambassador Komer wrote a stinging dissent that appeared in the next monthly issue of the Systems Analysis Southeast Asia Analysis Report. 192/ Statistical analysis aside, pacification clearly failed to make the significant strides that the President had hoped for in 1967. It certainly did not initiate any Revolutionary Development likely to transform the quality of life for the Vietnamese farmer or to alter fundamentally the course of the war.

Concurrently with attempts to improve information on the security programs, MACV exhibited increased interest in 1967 in improving RVNAF effectiveness. Early in the year it was decided to undertake an extensive, unit-by-unit effectiveness evaluation. Units judged to be superfluous or consistently below standard were to be cut off from U.S. support. 193/ Decisions on support withdrawal were to be made semi-annually as new evaluations were received. MACV explained to CINCPAC that the review would include:

...all VNAF, VNN, VNMC, ARVN tactical and logistical units, and RF/PF units in the current projected FY 68 force structure. The methodology for the evaluation includes: identification of the credibility and feasibility of current plans of RVNAF officials to guarantee increased effectiveness; study of unit performance trends during the past six months; determination of availability of necessary plans to train personnel in the required skills; and evaluation of the degree of command interest at all levels for improvement of the ineffective or non-productive units. Considering these factors, units are categorized as improvement probable, doubtful, or unlikely. For those units categorized as

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improvement doubtful or unlikely, justification for continued military assistance will be required or action will be initiated to reduce the FY 68 Military Assistance Program. 194/

The first review (completed in March) cut two marginal navy vessels from the list of U.S. supported units, but only warned JGS of the unacceptable effectiveness of two marginal ranger battalions and an armored cavalry squadron. The June review, while producing recommendations from U.S. advisors that aid be suspended in several cases, again resulted only in warnings and threats. There was no suspension of U.S. support.

RVNAF EFFECTIVENESS

Quantitative efforts to rate RVNAF effectiveness continued in the field, at MACV, and in Washington throughout the year with no clear agreement on what set of statistical indicators best portrayed RVNAF performance and potential. During 1966 MACV had relied on a minimum present for duty strength as a means of evaluating ARVN battalion effectiveness. This method permitted wide fluctuations and was unreliable. The 1967 statistics on RVNAF desertions revealed an improving ability of units to hold their men. MACV soon began to use this trend as an indicator of effectiveness. In May, for instance, COMUSMACV noted with satisfaction the marked reduction of January and February 1967 desertions compared to desertions in the same period in 1966. The average improvement for this period was about 50 percent:

	<u>Desertions/Rates (per 1000 assigned) 195/</u>	
	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
1966	9,251/16.0	14,110/24.3
1967	5,900/9.6	5,860/9.6

In the same message, MACV noted with satisfaction recent aggressive actions by the JGS to correct the unacceptably high incidence of desertions, including the singling out of three regiments for special warning on their excessive desertion rate. Year-end statistics compiled by OSD Systems Analysis indicate that the figures quoted by MACV in May erred on the optimistic side somewhat by undercounting RF desertions in both months by about 1,000. Nevertheless, the trend to which MACV was pointing was confirmed during the rest of the year. After rising slightly to 8,127 in March, RVNAF desertion rates leveled off at between about 6,000 - 7,000 per month for the remainder of 1967. 196/ Thus, 1967 produced only 80,912 desertions compared with 117,740 in 1966, an overall reduction of almost one-third. 197/ (It also should be noted in passing, that VC/NVA desertions reached a peak in March and thereafter fell off sharply.)

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At the Pentagon, Systems Analysis sought measures of RVNAF effectiveness in a comparison between the performances of Vietnamese and American units in selected categories: VC/NVA KIA ratios, battalion days of operations, days of enemy contact, number of operations, weapons loss ratios, etc. Summarizing the results of some of these statistical studies, Systems Analysis stated in September 1967:

Per man, Vietnamese forces were about half as effective as U.S. forces in killing VC/NVA during the eleven months (Aug 66 through Jun 67) for which detailed data are available. Effectiveness differs widely among Vietnamese units of the same type and between units in differing parts of the country. Poor leadership is the key reason for inefficiency in most cases. 198/

The MACV staff rebutted many of the premises on which the statistical comparisons had been based and again revealed the difficulty in developing meaningful statistical measures with respect to anything Vietnamese. Their most telling criticism of the Systems Analysis comparison of U.S. and Vietnamese units was the following:

(a) It is generally accepted that US maneuver battalions have a combat effectiveness ratio of about 3:1 to RVNAF maneuver battalions due to their greater unit firepower and depth of combat support/combat service support forces; RVNAF also lacks the mobility assets available to US units.

(b) Approximately one-third of the RVNAF maneuver battalions are committed to direct support of Revolutionary Development, a mission which constrains the overall potential to find, fix, and fight the enemy forces. In this analysis an RVNAF unit that is 45 percent as effective as US units which have three times the RVNAF combat effectiveness would appear to be doing very well. In fact, anything over 33 percent would reflect superior performance. 199/

But here again one can be misled. One reason that ARVN was given the R/D support mission in the first place was its demonstrated inability to engage effectively and destroy the enemy main force. R/D was regarded as a residual and semi-passive role more suited to ARVN capabilities. And so the statistical arguments raged, partisans marshalling whatever statistics they could to defend what in most cases were their own preconceived notions.

All of this is not to imply that qualitative estimates, diagnoses, prescriptions, and prognosis were lacking in 1967. At the Guam Conference with the President, General Abrams' appointment as the new Deputy COMUSMACV had been announced along with the others already mentioned and his responsibility for overseeing the U.S. advisory effort with RVNAF re-emphasized. Upon return to Saigon prior to his own departure, Lodge

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sent a message to the President stressing the importance of RVNAF:

MACV's success (which means the success of the United States and of all of us) will...willy-nilly, be judged not so much on the brilliant performance of the U.S. troops as on its success in getting ARVN, RF and PF quickly to function as a first-class counter terror, counter-guerrilla force. 200/

Lodge concluded with a glowing endorsement of Abrams as the man to see that RVNAF did become an effective force. There is ample evidence that Abrams did work with great energy to do just that.

In mid-June, after Abrams' first quarterly review of RVNAF, Bunker included a report on actions to improve RVNAF in his weekly report to the President:

- A) Improving the leadership and enhancing the personnel effectiveness of the ARVN/RF/PF through such things as improvement in the awarding of commissions and promotions, selection procedures, training of officer candidates, the introduction of an effective personnel management and accounting system, tightening up on discipline, improvement in the treatment of veterans in order to clear the rolls of those incapable of further active duty and an expanded advisory effort to support properly the Revolutionary Development program;
- B) To improve motivation and morale through more equitable pay scales, improvement in rations, and revitalization of the dependent housing program;
- C) Improvement in the command structure and equipment of the Regional/Popular Forces and a revised motivation and indoctrination program to reflect the role of the PF soldier in Revolutionary Development;
- D) A comprehensive training effort to improve intelligence and reconnaissance operations and to improve the combat effectiveness of battalions; training of ARVN/RF/PF for support of Revolutionary Development particularly in providing security and support to the civil population;
- E) Experimentation with various forms of integrated US/RVNAF operations.../discussed already/;
- F) Institution of quarterly reviews at which time progress is measured against objectives, problems discovered and decisions taken. First of these reviews was held last month. 201/

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In May, General Abrams established a Program Review and Analysis System for RVNAF Progress. This was essentially an internal MACV effort to examine the problems facing RVNAF in order that MACV might structure its advisory assistance to make the most headway against these problems. The first published review, covering the January-June 1967 period, appeared in September. Like many similar efforts it was a long catalogue of RVNAF deficiencies by U.S. standards. 202/ The benefits of these reviews were supposed to be reaped as they were brought to bear during the quarterly RVNAF self-review called for in the Combined Campaign Plan. There is no available information as to how effectively this has worked in practice. This plethora of programs and activities through which we sought either to improve the effectiveness of RVNAF directly or to promote it indirectly by improving the lot and life of the soldier received a full-blown exposition during Secretary McNamara's trip to Saigon in July. 203/ With respect to improving RVNAF morale -- in addition to the pay scale adjustments, improved rations, and provision of dependent housing -- the U.S. has helped the South Vietnamese develop a miniature U.S. style Commissary/PX system.

The leadership problem received very detailed attention by MACV during the course of 1967. Prior to the Secretary's departure for Vietnam, Alain Enthoven, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis, sent McNamara a memo that flatly stated, "There are a number of reasons for the ineffectiveness of many of the RVNAF units, particularly ARVN combat battalions, but the primary one is the quantity and quality of the leadership." 204/ After itemizing the contributing factors to this deficiency, he recommended that the Secretary query MACV in detail on leadership problems during his visit. In the briefings for Secretary McNamara in July, fourteen different MACV/JGS actions or programs were cited as ways in which this problem was being addressed. These ranged from better officer career management to regular merit promotion procedures and the publication of leadership materials. 205/ One example of the lengths to which we have gone in efforts to remedy the leadership deficit in RVNAF is the replication in South Vietnam of the U.S. elite officer schooling system -- a four-year Vietnamese Military Academy, enlarged Command and General Staff College, and, most recently, a National Defense College.

THE LATEST EXPANSION OF ADVISORS

COMUSMACV faced difficult choices in determining whether he wished to emphasize more U.S. advisors for RVNAF -- or advisors for new functions -- or to stress a build-up of the number of U.S. combat forces in-country. RVNAF strength had increased by 152% from 1960 to 1966, going up by over 100,000 in the 18 months preceding the beginning of 1967. The table below shows the growth and distribution of RVNAF over the 1965-1967 period. The slight decline in forces from January to April 1967, reflects efforts to weed out absentee personnel still being carried on padded unit rolls.

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RVNAF STRENGTHS

	<u>1 Jul 65</u>	<u>1 Jan 66</u>	<u>1 Jul 66</u>	<u>1 Jan 67</u>	<u>30 Apr 67</u>
<u>RVNAF</u>					
ARMY	234,139	267,877	276,473	283,898	283,200
NAVY	9,037	14,559	16,380	17,349	16,000
MARINES	6,842	7,380	6,848	7,049	7,100
AIR FORCE	12,081	12,778	13,895	14,647	15,600
REGIONAL FORCES	107,652	132,221	141,447	149,844	142,018
POPULAR FORCE	<u>149,029</u>	<u>136,398</u>	<u>137,689</u>	<u>150,096</u>	<u>142,491</u>
Sub Total	518,780	571,213	592,732	622,883	606,405
<u>PARA-MILITARY</u>					
National Police	42,700	52,300	54,600	58,300	63,457
CIDG	21,700	28,400	30,400	34,700	31,477
Armed Cmbt Youth	<u>39,000</u>	<u>39,600</u>	<u>22,800</u>	<u>20,000</u>	<u>19,930</u>
Total	625,800	691,500	700,500	735,900	721,269 <u>206/</u>

In March, two days before the Guam Conference was to meet, General Westmoreland sent an important cable to CINCPAC requesting an "optimum force" increase, above and beyond the approved Deployment Program 4, of 4-2/3 U.S. divisions (201,250 personnel spaces), or a "minimum essential force" of an additional 2-1/3 U.S. divisions (84,100 spaces). 207/ The optimum force would have raised total U.S. manpower in Vietnam to over 670,000 troops. This request was to kick off (after Guam, where it was not specifically addressed) another prolonged internal administration debate and review of forces in Vietnam which would eventually culminate in Secretary McNamara's July trip to Saigon and the subsequent decision to adopt deployment Program 5, raising total authorized strength to 525,000. COMUSMACV's orientation toward RVNAF's role in the war is clearly revealed in this message:

Whereas deployment of additional US forces in FY 68 will obviate the requirement for a major expansion of the RVNAF, selective increases will be necessary to optimize combat effectiveness. Regular forces proposed for FY 68 total 328,322, an increase of 6,367 spaces over the FY 67 authorization. As US, Free World and RVNAF operations are expanded, additional areas will be made available for the conduct of Revolutionary Development operations. Based on experience gained thus far, an increase of 50,000 RF/PF spaces will be required to provide a planning figure of 350,000 spaces for this force. The increase will accommodate necessary support of Revolutionary Development and concomitantly, will be compatible with requirements incident to implementation of the constabulary concept. 208/

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Without going into detail on the debate and decision on Program 5, from the advisory standpoint the important development was COMUSMACV's view of RVNAF. In March, RVNAF had been regarded almost as a residual, but by September, when the ambitious U.S. force proposals had been rejected in favor of only a modest increase of about 45,000 COMUSMACV reasserted the importance of RVNAF and asked for a major increase in its authorized strength. Slowly, then, the realization that there was a ceiling on the number of U.S. forces which could be deployed without calling up reserves turned everyone's attention once again to RVNAF.

The one significant increase proposed in the MACV message cited above was the increase of 50,000 in RF/PF. This was not to be immediately forthcoming. In May 1967, Secretary McNamara imposed a temporary ceiling on RVNAF at the level authorized for end FY 66 to prevent further inflation in South Vietnam and to arrest some of the balance of payments imbalance stemming from U.S. Vietnam spending. 209/ Subsequently, CINCPAC was authorized to make adjustments among the various components within that limit, thereby permitting augmentation of RF/PF at the expense of ARVN.

The question of additional U.S. troops had refined itself considerably by the time the Secretary went to Saigon in July. Of the two force increase proposals presented by MACV at that time, the first was merely a restatement of the old "minimum essential force" which would have brought total U.S. troops to 571,071 (2-1/3 division force equivalents); the second proposal was a much smaller request for an authorized strength of 535,390 (1-1/3 division force equivalents). 210/ Both of these proposals contained a request for 2,577 additional advisors -- primarily to support the anticipated expansion of RF/PF and to flesh out the sector and sub-sector advisory teams supporting the pacification effort. The following table shows the breakdown of the 1967 advisory increases, including the request presented to McNamara in July and subsequently approved.

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ACJ311 SUPPLEMENTAL DATA SHEET A

SUBJECT: MACV Recognized Advisory Requirements (U)

22 Oct 67

<u>STRUCTURE ELEMENT</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Required Add-ons</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>Jan 67</u>	<u>Feb 67</u>	<u>Apr 67</u>	<u>Jun 67</u>		
Joint General Staff	265	23		8		296
Other National Level	740	30	52	6		828
Naval Advisory Group	517					517
Air Force Advisory Group	493					493
ARVN and RF/PR						
Corps Hq and Support (4)	1,147	29				1,176
Capital Military District	59	7		1		67
Divisions (10) & 24th Special Zone and Support	266	84		11		361
Regiments (31 Infantry)	98	12				110
Battalions (120 Infantry)	613	143		120		876
Ranger Command (5 Gps/20 Bn)	130	12				142
Regional Force Battalions (12)	31	21				52
Popular Force Training Centers	122	13				135
Armored Cavalry Squadrons (10)	107					107
Sector Advisor Teams (Province)	853	56	341	92		1,342
Subsector Advisor Teams (District)	969	137	294	6		1,406
Regional Force Companies				2,243		2,243
Regional Force Camps (Converted from CIDG)		20	12	90		122
Totals	6,910	251	699	2,577	10,437	211/

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The large RF/PF advisory element in this request included spaces for 824 RF Company Advisory Teams of two men each and 119 Company Training Teams of five men each. Before returning to Washington, the Secretary gave planning authorization for a U.S. augmentation not to exceed 525,000 spaces, but fulfilling Westmoreland's lower alternative by civilianizing an additional 10,000 military spaces. 212/ A month later, after approval by President Johnson, this new force level was promulgated as Program #5. 213/ The final detailed troop list for Program #5 submitted by the JCS on September 15 contained, in addition to the regular advisory spaces already mentioned, a 666-man Special Forces augmentation to perform advisor-like functions with their Vietnamese counterparts. 214/

Even before the Program #5 troop list was completed by MACV and submitted by the JCS, however, Ambassador Komer was complaining that the CORDS advisory element actual strength was seriously below its authorization and that bureaucratic delays had forestalled even the deployment of the 100 priority advisors requested in July. 215/ The following day, OSD Systems Analysis advised Secretary McNamara that the shortfall in the actual strength of the overall advisory complement was a longstanding problem. In March, the advisory program had been understrength 600 men while MACV headquarters exceeded its authorization by 473. In response to Systems Analysis prodding this discrepancy had been partially rectified, but as late as July the advisory staff was still short 237 while MACV had an overage of 130. Systems Analysis further advised the Secretary that while total strength authorizations had been made, MACV's delay in submitting detailed lists of grades and specialties of desired personnel had, in turn, engendered delays at this end in filling the billets. Moreover, the requirement that advisors receive preliminary Stateside background and language training further delayed the actual deployments. Only priority requests could be filled very rapidly, and these necessarily could only constitute a small percentage of the total.

In order to study the problems presented by the anticipated expansion of RF/PF and to plan for the significant expansion of the U.S. advisory effort to these forces, MACV convened a conference on RF/PF matters on 26 October for all interested elements of MACV and USARV. 216/ The conference recommended a complete reorientation of the advisory concept for RF/PF. Rather than assigning teams to RF companies and PF platoons on a permanent basis, the conferees recommended the establishment of 354 seven-man Mobile Advisory Teams (MATs) to be used on a rotating basis under the direction of the Province Advisor to whom they would be assigned. Further, the conference recommended the deployment of an Engineer Advisor to each province, an S-1 advisor to all provinces without one, increasing the Administrative and Direct Support Logistics (ADSL) companies from three to seven, and creating 7 seven-man Mobile

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Advisory Logistics Teams (MALTs) to support the RF/PF. Altogether, the conference produced some fifty-odd recommendations from which a 30-point package was forwarded to COMUSMACV.

On 15 December, General Westmoreland gave his approval to the new system which was to be phased in during 1968, the first half by the end of March and the rest by the end of that year. By the end of December 1967, MACV was recommending a further increase of 366 advisors for the FY 1969 program, primarily for district level intelligence slots.

Meanwhile, on September 28, the JCS had forwarded with their endorsement the MACV-CINCPAC recommendation on RVNAF force increases, of which the RF/PF component was the largest. 217/ Requested was an increase in FY 68 RVNAF authorized strength from 622,153 to 685,739, a net of 63,586. Of this number, 47,839 were RF/PF spaces, and only 15,747 were for the regular forces (of which ARVN's share was 14,966). To achieve these higher levels, MACV proposed the reduction of the draft age from 20 to 18 and the extension of tours of duty for active RVNAF personnel. The advisory support for these new Vietnamese forces had already been provided for by Program #5. In their concluding paragraph, the JCS took note of a MACV request, to be considered separately, for an FY 1969 RVNAF authorized strength of 763,953, a further increase of 78,204 over the newly proposed FY 1968 level. Of these new troops, 69,000 were to go to RF/PF (including some draftees) and only 9,000 to ARVN. Secretary McNamara approved these requested FY 1968 augmentations for RVNAF against the recommendation of his Systems Analyst, Alain Enthoven, who would have authorized only half of the request pending better justification. 218/ But the JCS were informed that a judgment on the proposed FY 1969 increase would be reserved until the military had responded to a series of questions relating to equipment availability, officer supply, costs, and distribution of the new forces between ARVN and RF/PF.

Thus, by the fall of 1967, two factors were pushing U.S. leaders toward increasing the size and role of RVNAF in the war -- a step which would increase the importance of the U.S. as advisor rather than combatant: (1) the approaching ceiling on U.S. forces deployable to Vietnam without mobilization (politically unpalatable in an election year); and (2) a growing U.S. Congressional and public clamor for a larger South Vietnamese contribution to the war and assumption of burdens.

This was essentially the situation that existed when, on 31 January 1968, the VC/NVA launched a series of major attacks on South Vietnamese population centers. This radical change in enemy tactics challenged the efficacy of the division of effort between U.S. forces and RVNAF, shook U.S. public support for the war, and marked the beginning of a new, uncharted phase in the history of U.S. attempts to advise the government and armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam.

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210. Briefings for the Secretary of Defense, op. cit., pp. 171-176.
211. MAC-J311, Supplemental Data Sheet A, dated 22 Oct 67, Subject: MACV Recognized Advisory Requirements (U).
212. ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven, Memorandum for Record, July 13, 1967, Subject: Fallout from Secretary of Defense Trip to South Vietnam, (TS-SENSITIVE-EYES ONLY Dr. Heyman); and OASD(SA) General Purpose Forces, W. K. Brehm, Memorandum for the Record, Subject: SEA Deployments (TS), July 14, 1967.
213. ASD(SA) Alain Enthoven Memorandum for the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Assistant Secretaries of Defense, 14 Aug 67, Subject: Southeast Asia Deployment Program #5 (TS); refers to SecDef decision memorandum, 10 Aug 67.
214. JCSM 505-67, 15 Sep 67, Subject: U.S. Force Deployments Vietnam (Refined Troop List) (TS).
215. OASD(SA) Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 30 Aug 67 (S-EYES ONLY).

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216. Information in the paragraph is from "Information on MATs (Mobile Advisory Teams) and MALTs (Mobile Advisory Logistics Teams)," 8 May 68, working paper prepared by the ACoFS MA, MACV.
217. JCSM 530-67, 28 Sep 67, Subject: Increase in FY 68 RVNAF Force Level (S).
218. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 7 Oct 67, Subject: Increase in FY 68 RVNAF Force Level (S) and attached OASD(SA) Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 5 Oct 67 (S).

APPENDIX I

U.S. Advisory Effort - Manpower ^{1/}

Date	Hq MACV		Hq MAAG		USA Section		USN Section		USMC Section		USAF Section		Total	
	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd	Auth	Asgnd
Jun 1956-Jun 1959			459	^{2/}	170		22				34		335	
April 1961			54		530		41		-		73		685	
November 1961			89		454		53		-		74		746	
June 1962	216	206	172	169	2658	2409	123	119	21	21	211	216	3401	3138
December 1962	335	291	141	164	2586	2466	143	123	19	17	261	219	3485	3280
June 1963	354	330	142	171	2585	2598	143	135	15	14	271	232	3510	3480
December 1963	339	321	225	169	2493	2582	143	140	17	14	245	388	3462	3614
June 1964	921	910			2276	1854	135	130	19	15	229	411	3580	3320
December 1964	1072	1107			3067	3135	215	216	20	29	305	306	4619	4793
June 1965	1820	1820			5054	3573	466	471	30	29	422	340	7792	6233
December 1965	2482	2030			5409	4452	1516	617	32	33	499	391	9938	7523
June 1966	2535	2527			5446	5341	710	718	38	35	505	502	9234	9123
December 1966	2571	2636			5394	4575	465	467	38	32	493	488	8961	9123
June 1967	2797	2831			5607	5380	479	485	39	37	493	494	9415	9227
December 1967	3067	3268			5811	5995	475	479	39	35	464	477	9856	10254

^{1/} Data on Assigned manpower not available prior to June 1962

^{2/} Includes 350 men in TERM

Source: 1956-1961 data, ODCSOPS (OPS OD), 15 September 1965; 1961-1967 data, MACV Monthly Strength Report, RCS CINCPAC 5314

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Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3
NND Project Number: NND 63316. By: NWD Date: 2011

APPENDIX II

Distribution of U.S. Army Field Advisory Effort (End of Period)

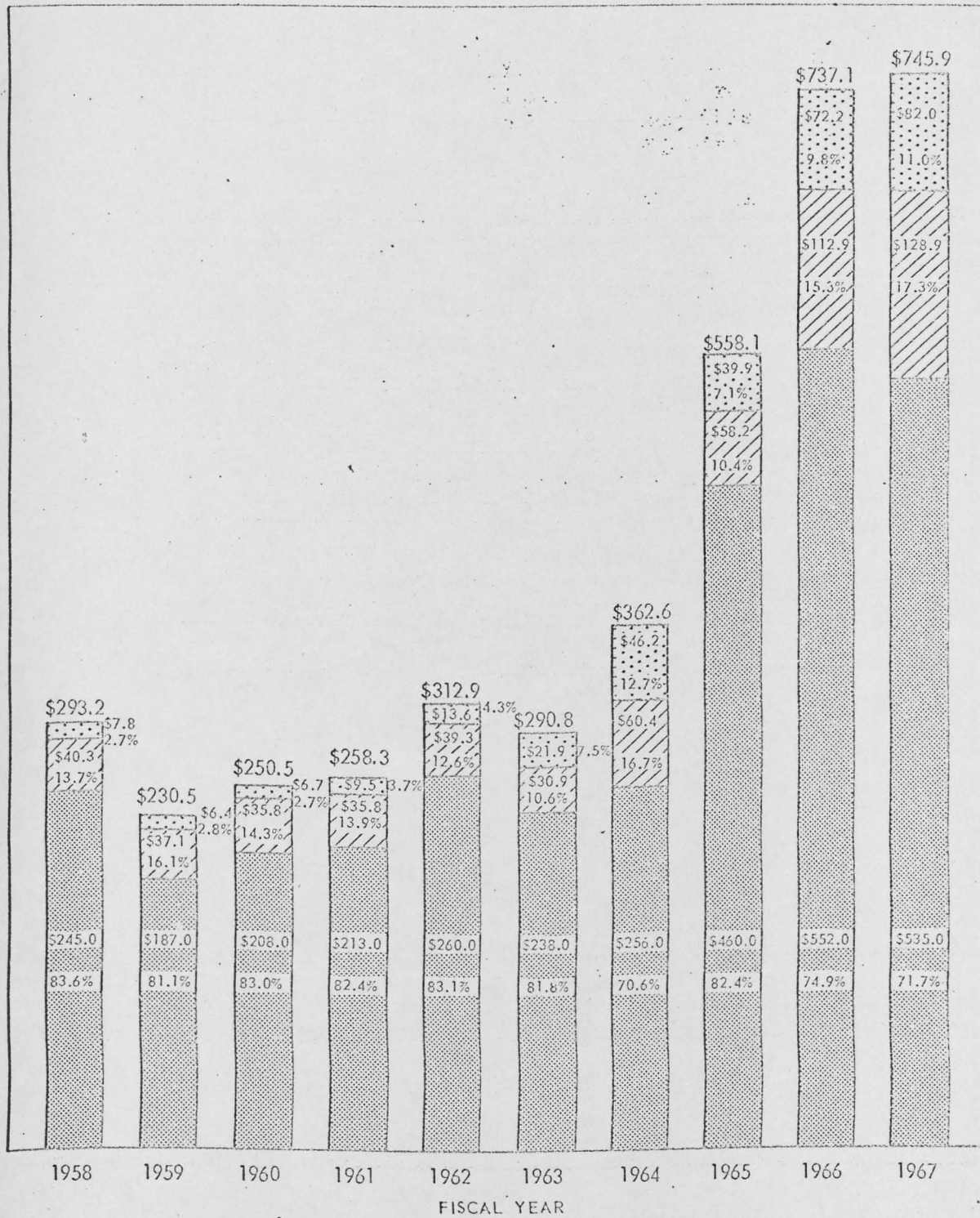
	<u>Corps Hq</u>		<u>ARVN Units</u>		<u>Ranger</u>		<u>Armor</u>		<u>Airborne</u>		<u>Capital District</u>		<u>Sectors</u>	
	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>
CY 1956	0		65		0		4		1		0		0	
1957	5		65		0		4		1		0		0	
1958	10		61		0		4		1		0		0	
1959	15		61		0		4		1		0		0	
1960	15		61		7		4		1		0		0	
1961	100		92		18		4		4		0		37	
1962	380		605		36		4		33		0		117	
1963	380		785		33		20		26		4		235	
1964	370	422	956	967	101	77	42	39	39	27	14	21	447	469
1965	791	871	1466	1368	108	117	113	8	39	35	52	43	757	627
1966	788	777	1371	1213	127	118	115	122	7	8	85	78	711	576
1967	1009	965	1348	1535	106	120	77	103	6	8	53	67	838	982
1968	978	892	1734	1384	93	86	85	100	7	6	68	62	1434	1042

	<u>Subsectors</u>		<u>RF Units</u>		<u>PF Units</u>		<u>RF/PF Units</u>		<u>Other</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Asgnd</u>
CY 1956	0		0		0		5		53		128	
1957	0		0		0		5		48		128	
1958	0		0		0		5		47		128	
1959	0		0		0		5		42		128	
1960	0		0		0		3		37		128	
1961	0		0		0		3		8		266	
1962	0		3		0		3		1405		2586	
1963	0		3		0		55		1041		2582	
1964	541	512	45	55	79	69	54	58	463	517	3151	3233
1965	851	633	63	39	91	82	87	75	662	555	5080	4453
1966	1025	789	59	51	88	72	84	69	1031	751	5491	4624
1967	1160	1238	66	76	99	88	57	56	1035	802	5854	6040
1968	1259	1056	55	55	74	68	54	27	3182	1172	9023	5950

Source: ODCSOPS (OPS OD), 15 September 1965, MACV Monthly Strength Report, RCS CINCPAC 5314

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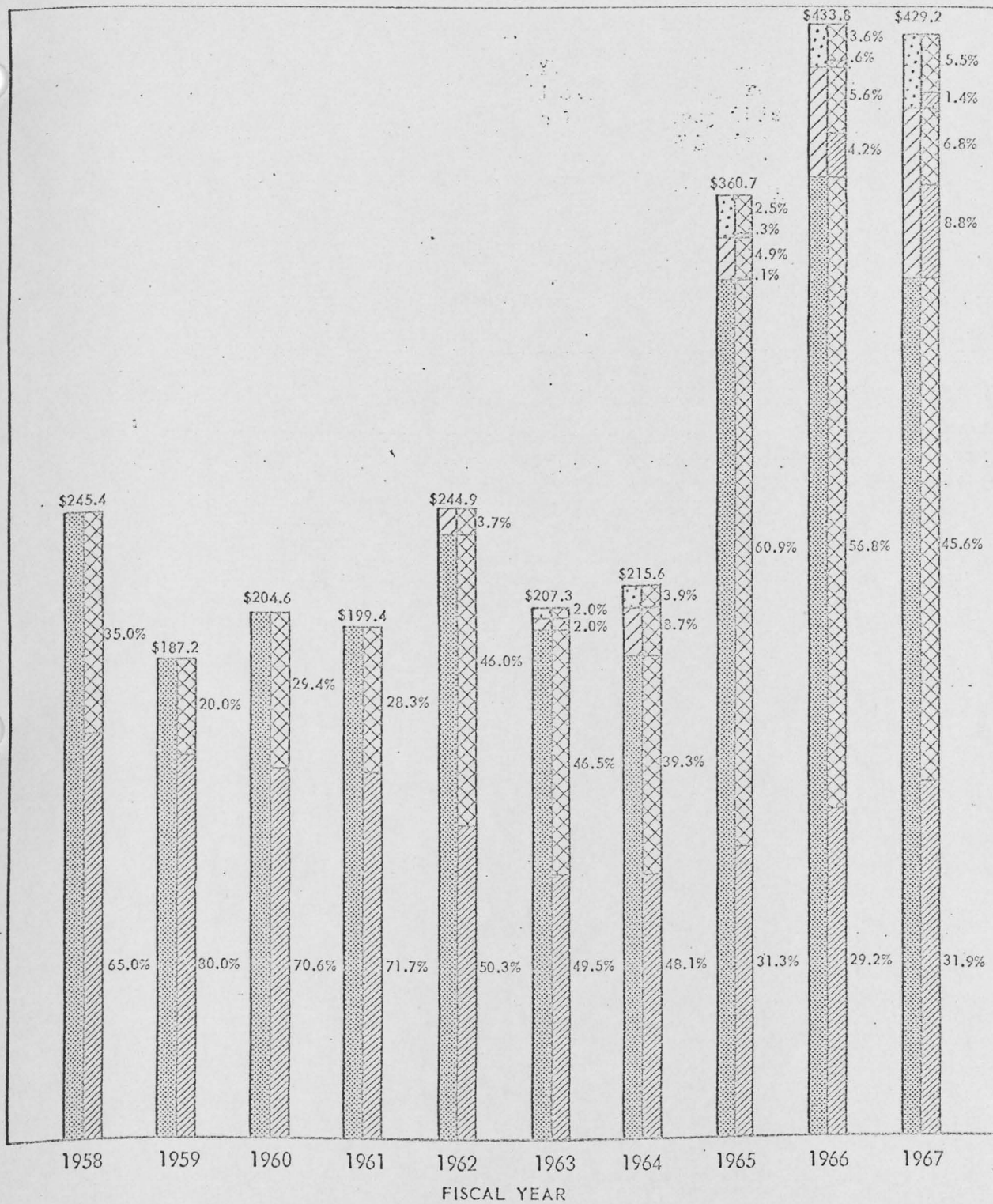
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APPENDIX III



-Total Cost of RVN Army Regional Forces and
Popular Forces
(In Millions of dollars)

Popular Forces
 Regional Forces
 RVN Army

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APPENDIX IV



Distribution of US Financial Resources in Support of RVN Army,
Regional Forces, and Popular Forces
(Cost in millions of dollars)

RVN Army
 Regional Forces
 Popular Forces
 US Support of RVN Budget
 Military Assistance Funds

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APPENDIX V



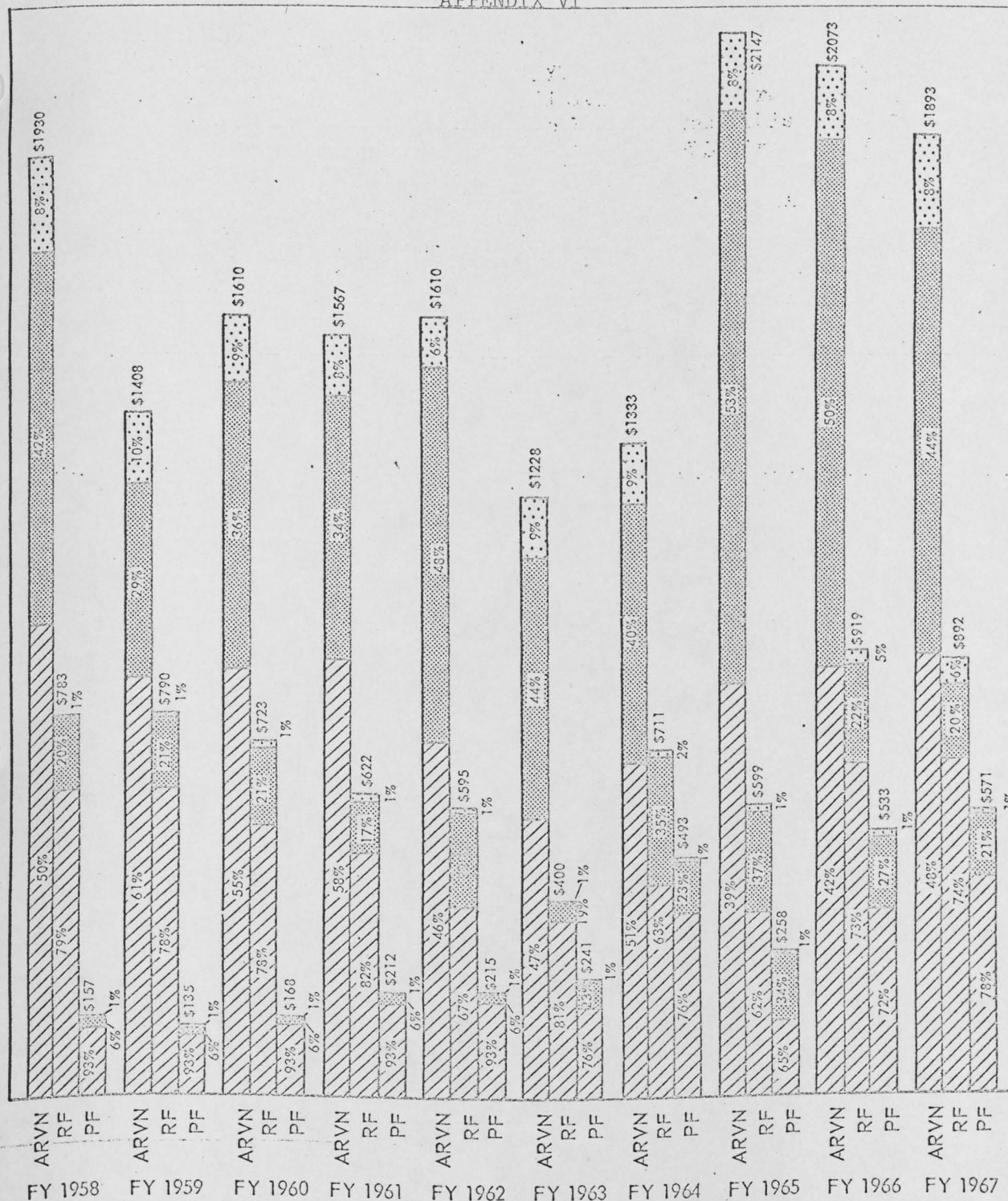
Distribution of RVN Army Financial Resources in Support of
RVN Army, Regional Forces, and Popular Forces
(Cost in millions of dollars)

Popular Forces
 Regional Forces
 RVN Army

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APPENDIX VI



Annual Per Capita Costs for RVN Army,
Regional Forces and Popular Forces

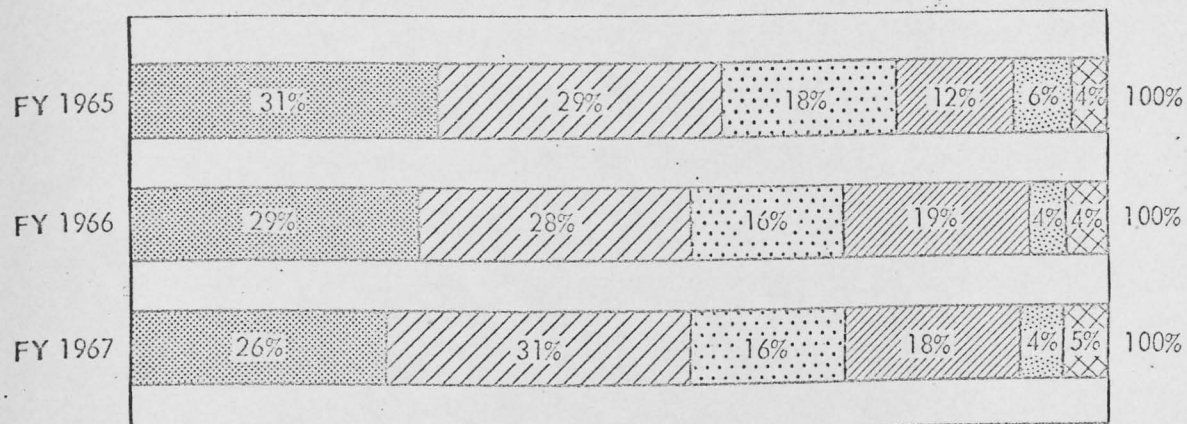
Pay & Allowances Materiel & Maintenance Other

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APPENDIX VII



-Distribution of US Army Advisors By Assignment

- Corps Hq and Hq Units and Capital Military Region
- Divisions
- Sector and Subsector
- Army training installations
- Other non-divisional elements
- Regional and Popular Forces

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APPENDIX VIII

RVNAF TOTAL STRENGTH
(End of Period in 000)

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>
RVNAF Total Strength								
Regular	148.0	179.3	218.8	216.0	250.0	302.6	322.9	342.9
Regional	55.2	66.6	77.0	85.9	96.0	132.2	149.9	151.4
Popular	<u>44.5</u>	<u>60.1</u>	<u>99.5</u>	<u>95.5</u>	<u>168.3</u>	<u>136.4</u>	<u>150.1</u>	<u>148.8</u>
Subtotal	247.7	306.0	395.3	397.4	514.3	571.2	622.9	643.1
CIDG	-	.5	15.0	18.0	21.5	28.4	34.7	38.3
Armed Combat Youth	10.0	15.0	40.0	90.7	44.5	39.6	20.0	n.a.
National Police	<u>16.7</u>	<u>16.7</u>	<u>16.9</u>	<u>19.7</u>	<u>31.4</u>	<u>52.3</u>	<u>58.3</u>	<u>73.4</u>
Grand Total	<u>274.4</u>	<u>338.2</u>	<u>467.2</u>	<u>525.8</u>	<u>611.7</u>	<u>691.5</u>	<u>735.9</u>	<u>754.8</u>

Source: Table 1A, OSD(SA) Statistical Tables, July 1968.

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APPENDIX IX

DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. FIELD ADVISORS BY ASSIGNMENT
(End of FY)

	<u>Corps</u> <u>Hqs a/</u>	<u>Combat</u> <u>Units b/</u>	<u>Sector</u> <u>Subsector</u>	<u>RF/PF</u>	<u>Training</u> <u>Installations</u>	<u>Other c/</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Number</u>							
FY 64	333	745	375	116	138	113	1,820
FY 65	463	1,145	1,000	218	123	548	3,497
FY 66	961	1,543	1,495	250	230	692	5,171
FY 67	966	1,735	1,913	195	245	678	5,732
FY 68	960	1,570	2,098	150	182	990	5,950
<u>Percent</u>							
FY 64	18%	41%	21%	6%	8%	6%	100%
FY 65	13	33	28	6	4	16	100
FY 66	19	30	29	5	4	13	100
FY 67	17	30	33	4	4	12	100
FY 68 <u>d/</u>	16	26	35	3	3	17	100

a/ Includes Capital Military District Advisors.

b/ Includes ARVN divisions, regiments, battalions, ranger, airborne, and armor units.

c/ Includes MAT, intelligence, and logistic units.

d/ May 1968.