

NAVY DIVISION
 TRAINING RELATIONS AND INSTRUCTION MISSION
 SAIGON (VIETNAM)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

15 January 1956

MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO. 1-56

Subject: Amphibious Corps within the Vietnamese Armed Forces

1. PROBLEM. To recommend the general organization of an amphibious corps within the Vietnam Armed Forces.

2. ASSUMPTIONS.

- a. Vietnam, with its 1300 miles of coast and 1800 miles of navigable waterways, will require amphibious troops within its Armed Forces.
- b. The Vietnamese Navy, which has a relatively large River Force, will require the support of amphibious troops for normal operations.
- c. In view of the difficulties of overland movements the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff will require an airborne and/or waterborne general reserve force or forces under its immediate control which can be moved rapidly to threatened areas.
- d. The amphibious force, as indeed the airborne force, will have to be composed of highly trained and well equipped combat elements suited to the snock actions involved.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.

- a. On 13 October 1954 Presidential Decree No. 991/QP provided for the creation of a Corps of Marines within the Navy as of 1 October 1954; (Annex A)
- b. On 28 April 1954 a letter from TRIM, Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM) to the Secretary of State for National Defense (Annex B) presented recommendations for the development of Vietnamese Naval Forces. It was proposed therein that, by 31 December 1955, the Marine Corps be reduced to 1137 officers and men. However it was noted that an amphibious battalion of 700 officers and men was carried under Army totals.
- c. On 31 December 1954 the Vietnamese Marine Corps consisted of 2373 officers and men (Annex B).
- d. On 21 March 1955 the Chief of the Organization Branch of (TRIM) forwarded a memorandum (Annex C) to the Chief Navy Division (TRIM) stating that the Commando Battalion of the General Reserve (Amphibious Battalion) within the 100,000 man ceiling for the Vietnamese Armed Forces belonged to the Army. However, he added, the battalion would be organized with a view to its employment in close coordination with the Navy. This battalion was in actual fact in the Navy as provided in the Presidential Decree cited as

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Annex A. Its retention in the Army was due to the necessity of not exceeding the 3000 man ceiling prescribed for the Naval Forces of Vietnam.

- c. On 28 May 1955 Chief TRIM recommended to the Deputy Minister of National Defense (Annex D) that 24 LVT 4 and 4 LVT A 5 be obtained for the Vietnamese Marine Corps.
- f. On 15 September 1955 the G-1 of the Vietnamese General Staff informed the Naval Deputy (Annex E) that the 700 man amphibious battalion was to be included in the Naval Forces ceiling now announced as 4000 naval/marine personnel and 150 civilians. This increased ceiling was accorded as a result of the United States support agreements for 150,000 in the Vietnamese Armed Forces.
- g. Under the new authorized ceiling of 1837 officers and men to be attained by the Vietnamese Marine Corps on 31 December 1955 the organization was to be as follows:

Headquarters and Services	197
3 River Companies	516
LCVP Training Flotilla	26
4 Light Support Companies	308
1 Commando	100
1st Marine Battalion	690
Total	1837

- h. On 21 December 1955 the Naval Deputy FAVN submitted to the Vietnamese General Staff a recommended reorganization plan for the Vietnamese Marine Corps (Annex F). This proposed plan, supported by the United States Marine Corps advisers, provided for the consolidation of the units of the Marine Corps into 2 Amphibious battalions and 1 LVT company. No increase in personnel was required to carry out this plan. However the recommendation did state that the ultimate objective was the creation of an Amphibious Regiment. While no written reply has been received to this proposal the Commandant of the Vietnamese Marine Corps and the FAVN General Staff G-1 verbally stated, during the week of 3 January 1956, that the proposals were being implemented.
- i. There exists in the Vietnamese Army on this date (15 January 1956) an Amphibious Battalion (T/O and E Nos 110, 111, 112) consisting of 15 officers and 405 enlisted men. This battalion is in the Armored Forces of the Army and is equipped with 37 M29C (Weasels) and 13 LVT. It must be noted that this Amphibious Battalion is a different unit from the Amphibious Battalion assigned to the Naval Forces as indicated in Annex E.

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- j. There exists at this date (15 January 1956) at Nha Trang an Army Commando Training School which according to the G-3 Division of TRIM provides Commando type training to a limited number of Army personnel. The Staff of this school consists of 31 officers 239 enlisted, according to records in the G-1 office at TRIM.
- k. The Vietnamese Naval Forces staff prepared a study on the development of Vietnamese Naval Forces in December 1955. While this study has not been forwarded to TRIM officially, the Navy Division TRIM has been informally furnished a copy for information. It is noted therein that it is proposed to add to the presently authorized 1837 Marines a 3rd Battalion of 688 officers and men and a heavy mortar Company of 163 officers and men. These increases are to be progressive and are to be realized by the end of 1957. According to this plan the Marine Corps by the end of 1957 would include,

Headquarters	26
Headquarters Company & Services	127
3 Marine Battalions	2064
1 Heavy mortar Company	163
1 LVT Company	253 (24 LVT 4 & 4 LVT 4)
Detachments at Naval Headquarters	13
Instructors at Naval School	25
Personnel under Instruction	17

- l. The LVTs available in Vietnam are badly worn. Further the LVT 4, LVT (A) 4 and LVT (A) 5 are obsolete equipment for which spare parts are virtually no longer procurable. The difficulty of obtaining spare parts was further confirmed during a visit to the Chinese Nationalist Marine Corps which has over 100 LVT 4.
- m. The maintenance of these type LVT is difficult and requires special skills above those normally required for automotive mechanics.
- n. The LVT is an excellent vehicle for crossing coral reefs. However because of its weight and relatively high track pressure it tends to bog down in swampy terrain.

4. DISCUSSION.

- a. The French and Vietnamese, who have had considerable combat experience in Vietnam, provided for the creation of a Vietnamese Marine Corps before the organization of TRIM. Hence the existence of this Corps predates any United States influence in the organization of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.
- b. The efforts of the United States advisors have been directed toward a reorganization of the Corps with the view of providing a more effective and flexible amphibious combat force available as an Armed Forces

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general reserve. The presence of an airborne regiment with some transport aircraft, and of an amphibious force with suitable naval lift, should provide a strong deterrent to Communist elements. The utilization of such mobile forces to counter local disturbances would permit the divisions of the Army to continue their reorganization and training with minimum interruption. In the event of large scale operations these forces could seize airheads and/or beachheads for eventual reinforcement and expansion by the less mobile Army elements.

- c. In armed forces of limited size and technical capabilities, such as exist in Vietnam, close attention must be given to the maximum utilization of the people and the skills available. The existence of an amphibious force in the Navy, and an amphibious Battalion and a Commando school in the Army indicates a lack of unity in the organization and provisions for training of amphibious units for the Armed Forces.
- d. The value of LVTs in the Vietnamese Armed Forces must be weighed against:

- The difficulties of maintenance
- The difficulties of obtaining spare parts.
- Their limited cross country mobility in swampy areas.

- e. The effectiveness of a military organization is measured, among other factors, by the balance found among its subordinate elements. The reorganization of the Marine Corps within its present 1837 man ceiling, reportedly under way will result in a two battalion regiment. The regimental commander, should he be called up to fight his whole corps, will therefore lack a maneuver element. Further he will lack a fire support element which permits him to influence the course of the action. The proposed plan of providing a 3rd battalion and a heavy mortar company will remedy the above deficiencies. Without these additional forces the largest effective balanced combat unit that the Marine Corps could put out in the field would be the battalion.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. The effectiveness of the Vietnamese Armed Forces would be increased by the availability of an amphibious force within its general reserve elements. This force should consist of balanced units of highly trained troops capable of exploiting the mobility and fire power of the Navy.
- b. To assure the fullest utilization of man power and skills, all amphibious units and schools of the Armed Forces should be grouped into one corps.

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- c. To assure the most effective coordinated training and in order to permit the maximum exploitation of naval support, the amphibious corps should be part of the Naval Forces of Vietnam. The River Forces of the Navy require the support of amphibious elements in their routine operations. This latter fact further supports the conclusion that amphibious forces belong in the naval service.
- d. Because of the limited usefulness and difficulties of maintenance the LVT should be discarded as an item of equipment. The M29C although more versatile on swampy terrain than the LVT, is subject to frequent breakdown and should be assigned to Army reconnaissance units until no longer serviceable.
- e. The ideal amphibious force for Vietnam, considering the limitations imposed upon its Armed Forces, appears to be a Regiment composed of 3 battalions and one heavy mortar company. According to the proposed Marine Corps development plan this force can be obtained by the addition of 598 officers and men to the present 1837 man ceiling. Of this increase 420 officers and men could be made available by transferring the Army's present Amphibious Battalion to the Marine Corps. There would remain 178 additional personnel to be provided from other sources. The closing of the Army's Commando School at Nha Trang and transfer of the area to the Marine Corps would release 270 additional personnel and also make available an area well suited to become a Marine Battalion camp.
- f. It must be emphasized that at the moment 1837 men in the Marine Corps provide only one battalion. It is understood that shortly 2 battalions will be obtained within this ceiling. The addition of the present Army Amphibious Battalion to the Marine Corps would go a long way towards providing a full Regiment of Marines. The remaining 178 additional personnel can be made available from the Commando School at Nha Trang or from other Army units.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

- a. That a Marine Corps ceiling of 2435 officers and men be authorized.
- b. That the Marine Corps consist of one Regiment of 3 battalions and heavy mortar company.
- c. That the Marine Corps as part of the Naval Forces of Vietnam be charged with providing all the amphibious units of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.
- d. That the Marine Corps as part of the Naval Forces of Vietnam be recognized as an element of the General Reserve Forces of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. That as such the Marine Corps be controlled directly by the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff through the Naval Deputy thereon.

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- e. That the LVT be discarded as an item of equipment in the Vietnamese Armed Forces.
- f. That the personnel required to augment the Marine Corps be obtained by:
 - 1) Redesignation of the present Army Amphibious Battalion as the 3d Battalion of the Marine Corps.
 - 2) The dissolution of the Army Commando School at Nha Trang and the assignment of this training responsibility to the Marine Corps.
- g. That adequate support in the way of suitable personnel, necessary equipment and proper facilities be provided by the General Staff to assure the most rapid realization of an effective well trained Amphibious Force.

V. J. CROIZAT

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps.
Senior Marine Corps Advisor

ANNEX A TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO 1-56

STATE OF VIETNAM
 MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
 NO. 991/QP

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT

DECREES

ARTICLE 1 . - Effective 1 October 1954 there is created within the Naval Establishment a corps of infantry specializing in the surveillance of waterways and amphibious operations on coast and rivers, to be designated as:

"THE MARINE CORPS"

ARTICLE 2 . - The Marine Corps will, in principle, be commanded by a field grade officer of the rank of Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel who will be directly subordinated to the Naval Deputy of the Armed Forces General Staff.

ARTICLE 3 . - The Marine Corps shall consist of various type units suited to their functions and either already existing in the Army or Naval Forces or to be created in accordance with the development plan for the armed forces.

ARTICLE 4 . - These units will be of the following types:

River Companies
 Landing Battalion
 Light Support Companies
 Commands
 Naval Assault Divisions

The integration of such units into the Naval Forces or their creation will be the subject of individual decisions in each case.

ARTICLE 5 . - These units will be supported administratively and logistically by the services of the Naval Establishment.

ARTICLE 6 . - The funds for the maintenance and operation of the Marine Corps will be allocated in the National Defense budget.

ARTICLE 7 . - Special instructions will prescribe the organization and operation of the Marine Corps.

ANNEX A (1)

ARTICLE 8 . - The Minister of National Defense and the Minister of Finance
are charged with carrying out, in accordance with their respons-
abilities, the provisions of this decree which is to be published
in the Official Journal.

Saigon 13 October 1954

Signed: Ngo Dinh Diem

ATTESTED

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CABINET

Signed: MAI THO TRUYEN

PRESENTED BY
MINISTER, DEPUTY FOR
NATIONAL DEFENSE.

NAME: HO THONG MINH

ANNEX A (2)

ANNEX B TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO. 1-56

Headquarters, Training Relations and
Instruction Mission

S.P. 4, 141. 28 April 1955

Lieutenant General J. W. O'Daniel
Chief TRIM
to
The Secretary of State for National Defense

Subject: Recommendations concerning the development of Vietnamese Naval Forces

Enclosures: Annex 1 - Development Plan for equipment
Annex 2 - Development Plan for personnel

I have the honor to submit for your approval plans for the development of Vietnamese Naval Forces drawn up by the Navy Division of my staff.

These plans, intended to serve as guides for the Navy Department, have been based upon a consideration of the following factors:

- a) Mission of Naval Forces
- b) actual strength
- c) Personnel ceiling of 3250 of which 250 are to be civilians
- d) Increases of personnel considering actions already taken and the experience of the past two years.

With regards to the Marine Corps the landing battalion shown in Annex II will temporarily be counted in the Army figures.

Signed: J. W. O'Daniel

ANNEX B (1)

ANNEX I

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR EQUIPMENTa. NAVY

	Number of Units on Dates Indicated			
	1965		1966	
	10 MAR	30 JUNE	31 DEC	30 JUNE
LSSL	1	1	2	2
LSIL #	2	3	4	4
LAM	-	-	-	1
LCJ	4	4	4	4
LCU WORKSHOP	-	-	1 # #	1
LCH #	28	29	29	29
LCVP #	21	28	28	28
PC	-	1	1	3
YMS	3	3	3	3
YTL	-	-	2	2
10 IN PATROL BOATS	-	5	10	10
0 OUTBOARD MOTOR BOATS	24	30	30	30

1 LSIL per Heavy Dinassaut; Dinassaut consists of 1 LSIL, 1 Command LCH, 5 LCH, 4 LCVP, 5 OMB.

To be provided by United States

b. MARINE CORPS

LCH	12	7	7	7
LCVP	91	28	28	28
MYTHO BOAT	129	40	40	40
MOTOR BOAT	60	28	28	28
OUTBOARD MOTOR BOAT	0	15	15	15

c. RESERVE

LCH	-	7	7	7
LCVP	-	37	37	37
MYTHO BOATS	-	40	40	40
MOTOR BOAT	-	78	78	78
PATROL BOATS	-	12	7	7
OUTBOARD MOTOR BOAT	-	30	30	30

ANNEX 1 to ANNEX B

ANNEX IIDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PERSONNEL

The figures given include personnel under instruction

a. NAVY

	Strength on Dates Indicated			
	10 MAR 55	30 JUN 55	31 DEC 55	JUN 56
OFFICERS	120	130	145	160
NETTY OFFICERS & SEAMEN	1480	1670	1705	1840

b. MARINE CORPS

OFFICERS	27	41	40	40
MEN	1630	1096	1096	960

<u>CIVILIANS</u>	-	250	250	250
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Total		3187	3237	3250
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LANDING BATTALION #

OFFICERS	11	19	19	19
MEN	616	681	681	681

This battalion is part of the Marine Corps but is temporarily carried in the Army strength totals.

ANNEX II to ANNEX B

ANNEX C TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO. 1-56

21 March 1955

From: Organization Branch, (TRIM)
To: Navy Division (TRIM)
Via: Army Division (TRIM)

Subj: Commando Battalion of the General Reserve

1. It is specified that the Commando Battalion of the General Reserve included in the plan of 5 March 1955 for 100,000 men belongs to the Army.
2. It will be organized with the view of its employment in close coordination with the Navy.

Signed: Jacques THIBIERGE
LTColonel Infantry
Chief, Organization Branch

ANNEX C

ANNEX D TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO 1-56

HEADQUARTERS
TRAINING RELATIONS AND INSTRUCTION MISSION
Saigon, Vietnam

28 May 1955

SUBJECT: Request for Amphibious Craft for the Vietnamese Marine Corps

TO: Deputy Minister of National Defense.

1. In addition to the amphibious craft recommended for the V.N. Navy as indicated in my letter of 28 April the following additional craft are recommended for the V.N. Marine Corps:

- a. For the First Marine Infantry Battalion, Nha Trang
 - 24 LVT 4
 - 4 LVT (A) 5 (or LVT (A) 4) with 75 mm Howitzer
- b. For the Marine Commando, Nha Trang
 - 12 Rubber boats (12 man capacity each)
 - 12 Outboard motors (for rubber boats)

2. The LVT are required for advanced amphibious training of Vietnamese Marine Corps units. The availability of such vehicles will greatly increase the combat effectiveness of the Vietnamese Marine Corps by increasing the tactical mobility of units of the Corps both afloat and ashore. The rubber boats are urgently required to replace present equipment which is so badly worn as to be almost useless.

JOHN W. O'DANIEL
Lieutenant General, USA
Chief TRIM

ANNEX D

ANNEX E TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO 1-56

Note
for the Navy Department

D.10.9.55
STATE OF VIETNAM
MINISTRY
OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
FIRST BUREAU
No. 3925/TTN/I/I/SC

The attention of the Naval Deputy on the General Staff is invited to the fact that within the strength authorized for the Navy (1), will be included the Marine Battalion and two river platoons, one of which will be created in the 2d Military Region.

Saigon 15 September 1955

FOR Major General Le Van Ty
Chief of the General Staff PAVN
By Direction of Colonel Le Van Kim
Acting Chief of
Staff

Signed Le Van Kim

For Action Major Tu Can
Acting G-1

(1) 4150 of which 150 are civilians.

ANNEX E

ANNEX F TO MARINE CORPS STAFF STUDY NO 1-56

S. P. 4,222, 21 December 1955

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
 MINISTRY
 OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
 DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
 No 234/TTH/HQ NTC

Lieutenant Commander LE QUANG MY
 NAVAL DEPUTY, VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES
 GENERAL STAFF

to

THE MAJOR GENERAL, CHIEF OF THE
 VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF

SUBJECT: Reorganization of the Marine Corps

PLACE: General Plan of the Vietnamese Armed Forces
 Study by the Navy Division TRIM
 Conferences at the General Staff Level

I. Decree 991/QP dated 13 October 1954 prescribes the creation of a
 Marine Corps composed of units of various types.

Experience acquired during operations conducted in 1955 reveals
 the desirability of a different organization for this amphibious corps.

II. This proposed reorganization, studied with the Navy Division TRIM
 involves the following:

- a) Elimination of dissimilar units.
- b) The creation of 2 battalions based on United States
 Marine Corps organization, with a view of ultimately
 forming a Marine Regiment
- c) The creation of an LVT Company

It will be noted that the personnel ceiling of the Corps will remain
 the same, i.e. 1837 officers and men.

Tables of Organization and Equipment are appended.

III. Such a reorganization, which would also include the selection of
 qualified Marine Corps Non commissioned officers and men to augment ships crews,
 involves a program which may be expressed as follows:

1ST PHASE1 January 1956

Reorganization of the Marine Corps Headquarters

ANNEX F (1)

Assignment of Marine personnel detached to the Navy Department and the Direction of Personnel.

Recruiting Campaign

Transfer of all the Marine Corps under the administration of the Administration Center of the Navy and the Supply Center of the Navy. (This transfer will have to be studied by the Marine Corps Headquarters staff and the heads of the Administrative and Supply Centers of the Navy during January in order to permit the preparation of the necessary forms, documents, etc.)

1st February 1956

Assignment of instructors at the naval school Phu Trang after agreement on the organization of instruction for specialists.

Reorganization of the 1ST Marine Battalion according to the new plan.

Disbandment of the Commands and the 1ST Training Flotilla (the personnel to be temporarily assigned to the 1ST Marine Battalion).

Assignment of Marines, eventually to be the cadre for the LVT company, to the 1ST Dragoons for a course of instruction.

Demobilization of personnel whose enlistments have expired (1ST part)

2d PHASE

1 MARCH 1956

Disbandment of the 3 River Companies

Transfer of River Company personnel to the Navy.

Transfers of personnel and disbandment of units to be terminated by 31 March.

Demobilization of personnel whose enlistments have expired (2d Part)

1 APRIL 1956

Disbandment of the 4 Light Support Companies and the creation of the 2d Marine Battalion

Redesignation of the Depot Company as the Headquarters and Service Company.

Demobilization of personnel whose enlistments have expired (3d part)

ANNEX F (2)

1 MAY 1956

Organization of LVT Company (if LVT available)

Demobilization of remaining personnel whose enlistments have expired.

3d PHASE1 JUNE 1956

Completion of the reorganization of the Corps

Inspection (during June)

Execution of Training Programs

Additional details are presented hereunder:

PERSONNEL:

The Marine Corps is a Corps in the Naval Service. Promotion of officers will be from within this Corps. It is evident that it is necessary to spread the number of officers throughout the various ranks.

The LVT Company, a large unit, is to be commanded by a Major.

The Marine Battalion which may operate independently with the support of different naval elements will be commanded (as the United States Marine Corps Battalion) by a lieutenant-colonel.

It is evident that these ranks are theoretical and that officers of such rank are not to be immediately placed in these assignments.

Young officers coming out of the Naval School at Nha Trang, after a course at the Inter-Corps School at DaLat will be assigned to the Marine Corps and will, in the future, have a normal promotion program within the Corps.

RECRUITING

The Commandant of the Marine Corps will be delegated the authority to recruit the personnel required to bring his units up to strength.

TRAINING

Recruiting will be carried out at Nha Trang and Saigon. Recruits enlisted at Saigon will be assigned to the 1st Marine Battalion for basic training. This will be done until the Naval Schools are in position to provide all the instruction for Marines as well as for the Naval personnel.

ANNEX F (3)

EQUIPMENT

The 28 LVT involved are the subject of a letter dated 10 June 1955 from the President to the Commander-in-Chief (French).

ADMINISTRATION

The four major units of the Marine Corps; i.e. the 1st and 2d Marine Battalion, the Headquarters and Service Company and the LVT Company will come under the Administrative Center and the Supply Center of the Navy.

Therefore all logistic and administrative support will be provided by the two centers in accord with the Direction of Technical Services of the Navy. The intervention of Commanders of Regions and Subdivisions will thus be limited to questions of garrison services.

The transfer of the Marine Corps to naval administration can take place on 1 January 1956.

UNIFORMS

The uniform for marines will remain distinct and different from that of the Navy. Clothing allowances will be prescribed by separate letter.

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

Pay, allowances to include clothing allowances authorized for the Navy will apply equally to the Marine Corps.

CONCLUSION:

I therefore have the honor to request your decision on this reorganization. The required texts (decrees, special orders, etc) pertaining thereto will then be prepared by my services and submitted for your signature with the approvals of the G-1, G-4 (General Staff) and the Navy Department.

Signed: LE QUANG MY

ANNEX F (4)

~~SECRET~~Saigon, Vietnam-
10 December 1955NAVAL FORCES OF VIETNAM-CONTENTS-

- PART I - Origins of Vietnamese Naval Forces (1949 - July 1954)
- PART II - Post Cease-Fire Developments (July 1954 - November 1955)
- a. Transition Period (July 1954 to September 1955)
- b. Present Situation (1 September 1955 to 10 December 1955)
1. Training
2. Command Relationships
3. Organization
- PART III - Development Plan 1956 - 1957
- PART IV - Conclusions

Prepared by:

V. J. CROIZAT
Lieutenant Colonel
U.S. Marine Corps

Concurred in by:

Commander J. ROSS, U.S. Navy
Commander C. WALL, U.S. Navy
Commander R. BERTRAND, U.S. Navy~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

PART I
THE ORIGINS OF VIETNAMESE NAVAL FORCES
(1949 - July 1954)

The Vietnamese Navy and Marine Corps are based on French concepts. An understanding of the French background and influence is therefore essential to a proper evaluation of the present naval force and in arriving at an estimate of its future development.

On 30 December 1949, a Franco-Vietnamese Military Agreement was signed providing for the creation of Vietnamese Armed Forces. These were to include Naval Forces for which the French Navy was to provide the cadres, basic training, and instruction.

The preliminary plan prepared in April 1950 applied only to a River Navy. In July 1950, the French Secretary of the Navy authorized 5 or 6 places for Vietnamese Students at the French Naval Academy. Only three students actually were sent to France and all of these resigned before the end of the year.

In April 1951, at the renewed insistence of French Naval Headquarters in Paris for some definite action, the Commander of French Naval Forces, Far East (FMEO) submitted a new development plan for the Vietnamese Navy. This included the following program:

- 1951 - Organization of 2 Naval Assault Divisions
- 1952 - Establishment of a Recruit Training Center
- 1953 - Organization of River Flotillas
- 1954 - Transfer to the Vietnamese Navy of 4 Motor Mine Sweepers (YMS)
- 1955 - Organization of one seaplane squadron.

It will be noted that in this plan the instruction of officer candidates and specialist ratings was to be conducted entirely in France.

The Secretary of the Navy in May 1951 accepted the above proposal but added a requirement for seagoing ships. He proposed the following additional forces:

- 1952 - The transfer to the Vietnamese Navy of 1 CORVETTE type "Chevreuil" (600 tons)
The construction in France of, 2 escort type ships, type E 50 (1250 tons) and 4 minesweepers, type D 1 (365 tons)

In addition, the Secretary asked the Commander of French Naval Forces, Far East, to propose a budget covering:

- The construction of a Recruit Training Center
- The recruiting of Vietnamese cadres for the Navy
- The construction of ships as planned

These various proposals were studied by a number of interested offices and were eventually modified because:

- The French High Command in Indochina wanted to create a single armed force and hence was not party to the idea of a regular separate Navy.

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PART II
POST CEASE-FIRE DEVELOPMENTS
(July 1954 - November 1955)

A. TRANSITION PERIOD (July 1954 to September 1955)

At the end of hostilities the Vietnamese Navy was in fact a part of the French Naval Forces in Indochina. During the period under consideration the Vietnamese Navy became increasingly independent and on 1 September 1955 Vietnamese control of their Navy became a fact. This period also coincides with increased United States interest in the Vietnamese Naval Forces.

The last development plan for the Vietnamese Naval Forces to be prepared without United States cognizance was drawn up by the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff and signed by the Chief of the General Staff on 27 October 1954. In brief this plan provided for the following to be achieved in 1954:

a. Shore establishment to comprise:

1 Naval Headquarters
 Naval Schools, Nha-Trang
 Administrative Center and Depot
 River Posts at Mytho, Cantho, Vinh Long, Paifoo, Tam-Ky and Quang-Ngai
 River craft repair centers at Hue, Mytho and Cantho
 Marine Corps bases as required

b. River and Seagoing Vessels to include:

2 escort ships (600 tons)
 2 Coastal Patrol Vessels
 3 YMS
 2 LSM
 2 LSSL
 4 LCU
 3 LCU Workshops
 16 Coastal Patrol Boats
 4 Naval Assault Divisions (Dinassauts)

c. Marine Corps Units as follows:

Marine Corps Headquarters
 4 River Companies (comparable to Navy Dinassauts)
 1 Amphibious Battalion

The plan further included provisions for adding the following units in 1955:

a. Navy

3 Coastal Patrol Vessels
 3 YMS
 2 LSM
 1 Hydrographic ship

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- The Admiral, FMEO, was afraid that recruiting for a Vietnamese Navy would interfere with the recruiting of Vietnamese for the French Navy in Indochina.

The result of these deliberations caused the Secretary of the Navy to agree to the original plan of a River Navy. In November 1951, construction of the Recruit Training Center began at Nha-Trang. At the same time an officers' candidate course for deck and engineering officers was organized aboard a corvette.

At the beginning of 1952, the French High Commissioner in Indochina and the Admiral Commanding French Naval Forces, Far East, agreed on a proposal submitted to Paris which provided for:

- 1952 - Opening of the Recruit Training Center at Nha-Trang
- 1953 - Organization of two Dinassauts and transfer of 3 YMS
- 1954 - Creation of a Vietnamese Navy Staff, an administrative and technical service, and the creation of a coast guard by integration of craft assigned to the customs service.

On 6 March 1952, Imperial Ordinance Number Two was signed. This provided for the establishment of a Vietnamese Navy as of 1 January 1952. On 20 May, the Navy Department was organized and at the same time the first French cadres arrived at the Recruit Training Center at Nha-Trang which was officially opened in July.

With the creation of a Vietnamese Navy and a Navy Department a new series of development plans were prepared. The Secretary of the Navy in Paris proposed a 5 year plan broken down into two phases, 1953-1954 and 1955-1959. The Paris proposals coincided with the proposals made in Saigon with respect to the year 1953. These were:

PARIS PROPOSAL

Organization of:

- 2 Dinassauts
- 1 River Flotilla (30 craft)
- 1 Division of 3 YMS

SAIGON PROPOSAL

Organization of:

- 2 Dinassauts
- 1 River Flotilla
- 1 Division of 3 YMS
- 1 Recruit Training Center
- Service Units

It should be noted that the Paris Proposal for 1954 through 1959 listed 6 coastal patrol vessels, 2 corvettes and 2 seaplane squadrons for inclusion in the Navy during that period.

In December 1952, the first Vietnamese Naval Unit was created. This was the Cantho Dinassaut (3 LCM and 2 LCVP) which retained its French cadres although it flew the Vietnamese flag. In June the Vinh Long Dinassaut of similar composition was organized. On 11 February 1954, 3 YMC were transferred; in March, 2 LCU and Dinassaut 22 were added; and in August, Dinassaut 25 passed into the Vietnamese Navy.

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Since Vietnamese Naval Forces were all to be river and coastal units, the addition of a Marine Corps as an integral part of these forces was considered essential as early as 1953. Recognition of this fact became official when on 13 October 1954 a Marine Corps within the Naval Establishment was created by Presidential Decree. This Corps was to consist of an Amphibious Battalion, several river companies (comparable in organization, equipment and mission to Dinassauts), several commandos, and several light support companies, for service with Dinassauts.

It should be noted that the basic river organization developed by the French for operations in Indochina is a Dinassaut (or Marine Corps River Company). These units consist of LCM and LCVP and may be augmented by LSL, LSSL and LCU as needed. Their organic craft are armored and armed with 50 caliber and 20MM machine guns. They are used primarily to patrol inland waterways, transport troops and supplies. In combat zones they embark Marine Light Support Companies whose mission is to land and clear enemy elements interfering with the movement of friendly craft.

At the end of hostilities (July 1954) the Marine Corps consisted of some 2400 officers and men. At the same time the Navy consisted of some 1500 officers and men.

SUMMATION

A review of the situation existing and the plans prepared at the end of the hostilities reveal the following significant points:

- a. The missions assigned to the Naval Forces of Vietnam included:
 1. Patrol of Navigable waterways and coast.
 2. Transport of personnel and equipment.
 3. Limited amphibious operations.
- b. It was generally agreed that the existence of a Marine Corps was essential to the effective functioning of the Navy. There were, in addition, certain proposals that all river craft be assigned to the Marine Corps and that the Navy man only seagoing ships.
- c. The only shore establishment in existence was the Naval Schools at Nha-Trang, which although under French Command was intended solely for instruction of Vietnamese naval personnel. This establishment had been expanded from its original concept of a Recruit Training Center and now also trained specialist ratings and reserve officers.
- d. The Command of all Naval and Marine Corps units as well as all key billets in the Naval Headquarters were assigned to French personnel.
- e. Logistic support for the Vietnamese Naval Forces was entirely assumed by the French.
- f. A number of development plans for the Vietnamese Naval Forces had included seaplanes for coastal patrol missions.
- g. There were no indications that French forces in Indochina were to be drastically reduced as subsequent events were to prove. In fact considerable quantities of engineer equipment and supplies, evacuated from Tonkin during September and October 1954 were sent to Tourane where a French military construction program was being carried out. Construction at Tourane was abruptly halted in November 1954 but a similar construction program for the Cap St. Jacques area east of Saigon continued. This fact led to the natural assumption that French naval units would remain in Indochina in quantity. The development of an autonomous Vietnamese Navy capable of eventually relieving French units would therefore be a gradual process.

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PART II
POST CEASE-FIRE DEVELOPMENTS
(July 1954 -- November 1955)

A. TRANSITION PERIOD (July 1954 to September 1955)

At the end of hostilities the Vietnamese Navy was in fact a part of the French Naval Forces in Indochina. During the period under consideration the Vietnamese Navy became increasingly independent and on 1 September 1955 Vietnamese control of their Navy became a fact. This period also coincides with increased United States interest in the Vietnamese Naval Forces.

The last development plan for the Vietnamese Naval Forces to be prepared without United States cognizance was drawn up by the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff and signed by the Chief of the General Staff on 27 October 1954. In brief this plan provided for the following to be achieved in 1954:

a. Shore establishment to comprise:

- 1 Naval Headquarters
- Naval Schools, Nha-Trang
- Administrative Center and Depot
- River Posts at Mytho, Cantho, Vinh Long, Faifoo, Tam-Ky and Quang-Ngai
- River craft repair centers at Hue, Mytho and Cantho
- Marine Corps bases as required

b. River and Seagoing Vessels to include:

- 2 escort ships (600 tons)
- 2 Coastal Patrol Vessels
- 3 YMS
- 2 LSM
- 2 LSSL
- 4 LCU
- 3 LCU Workshops
- 16 Coastal Patrol Boats
- 4 Naval Assault Divisions (Dinassauts)

c. Marine Corps Units as follows:

- Marine Corps Headquarters
- 4 River Companies (comparable to Navy Dinassauts)
- 1 Amphibious Battalion

The plan further included provisions for adding the following units in 1955:

a. Navy

- 3 Coastal Patrol Vessels
- 3 AMS
- 2 LSM
- 1 Hydrographic ship

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~~SECRET~~b. Marine Corps

6 Light Support Companies
3 Commandos

The personnel strengths to be attained by Vietnamese Naval Forces by the end of 1955 in order to carry out the above program were:

NAVY	160 Officers	3300 enlisted
MARINE CORPS	90 Officers	3730 enlisted
FRENCH CADRES	81 Officers	535 enlisted

Towards the end of 1954 Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina, in anticipation of imminent United States participation in the training of Vietnamese Armed Forces organized a team of French Army officers and United States officers to commence planning. A document was prepared by the "United States Member of Senior Team, Advisory, Training and Operations Mission" (ATOM), dated 15 January 1955 on the subject of the "Vietnamese Navy, Recommendations concerning Force Levels". At this time it will be recalled that the United States was prepared to support Vietnamese Armed Forces at a total strength of 90,000 men (shortly thereafter changed to 100,000 men).

The above mentioned document contained the following information:

MISSION OF VIETNAMESE NAVY

1. PROPOSED MISSION. The mission of the Navy is to conduct operations which may involve any of the following tasks:

- a. Limited Amphibious Operations
- b. River and Coastal Patrol
- c. Mine Sweeping
- d. Direct Fire Support
- e. Logistic Support for military forces

FORCE LEVELS OF SHIPS AND CRAFT VIETNAMESE NAVY

<u>Type Ship or Craft</u>	<u>Total number of units on hand by indicated dates</u>			
	<u>31 Dec 54</u>	<u>30 June 55</u>	<u>31 Dec 55</u>	<u>30 June 56</u>
LSSL	1	2	2	2
LSIL	2	3	4	4
LCU	4	4	4	4
LSM	-	-	-	1
LCU Workshop	-	-	1	2
LCM	35	39	39	39
LCVP	26	26	28	28
PC	-	1	1	3
YMS	3	3	3	1
YEL	-	2	2	2
CGUB	-	5	10	10
Riverboats	60	60	60	60
Hydrographic Ships	-	-	-	1
Mytho Boats @	90	90	90	90
OMB @@	-	20	20	50

@ Mytho boat has wooden hull with jeep engine

@@ OMB is plastic boat with 25 horse power outboard motor

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The recommended force levels of personnel within this proposal were:

	<u>31 Dec 54</u>	<u>30 June 55</u>	<u>31 Dec 55</u>	<u>30 June 56</u>
Navy	1602	1810	1863	1915
Marines	2373	1535	1137	1085
Total	<u>3975</u>	<u>3345</u>	<u>3000</u>	<u>3000</u>

At the time that this "United States Team Recommendation" was prepared it should be remembered that the French commanded the Vietnamese Navy and all units and craft therein. Furthermore, the French had a development plan for the Navy which they were carrying out. It must be admitted that the Franco-Vietnamese plan was being modified because of budgetary limitations and the changing political situation. Nevertheless, at this time the Vietnamese Navy was a reality and was virtually an annex of the French Navy.

The "United States Team Plan" was unrealistic in several respects. First, it proposed missions for a naval force without providing adequate personnel and ships required to carry out such missions. Secondly, the plan made no provisions for the necessary shore establishments, presumably depending on the French to provide facilities. Third, there was no mention of how the Navy was to obtain its own logistic support. It is known that this plan was prepared primarily to satisfy the 3000 men ceiling imposed. It must also be assumed that this proposed plan was drafted with little information of Franco-Vietnamese plans. It must be admitted that at the time in question the French Navy had the means to carry out the missions proposed for the Vietnamese Navy and an autonomous Vietnamese Navy under its own command was not planned for by the French until the middle of 1956.

In early 1955, the Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, assumed the responsibility for the organization and training of the Vietnamese Armed Forces under the overall direction of the French High Commissioner in Indochina. To carry out his mission, Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, created a Joint Franco-American Staff designated the Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM). Whereas all United States personnel assigned to Indochina for training were transferred to Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM), this same situation did not obtain for the French personnel assigned to the French Training Mission. This was particularly true for the Navy where the only training facility for the Vietnamese Navy, the Naval Schools at Nha-Trang, remained outside of the Training Relations and Instruction Mission.

The Navy Division, Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM), was headed by a French Navy Captain who was at the same time the Commander-in-Chief of the Vietnamese Navy, and the Senior French Naval representative on the French Training Mission Staff. United States Naval and Marine Corps personnel assigned to the Navy Division, Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM) found themselves in the position of trying to act as advisors to French personnel who were in fact running the Vietnamese Navy. The French had both the personnel and the plans to continue the development of the Navy; neither of these assets were possessed by the United States. Further, they assured the necessary logistic support for the Vietnamese Navy through their Navy Yard and other repair facilities. The United States' function was in fact solely one of agreeing to the transfer of ships and craft, excess to French requirements, to the Vietnamese Navy in accordance with force levels prescribed.

On 28 April 1955, Chief, Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM) submitted to the Minister of Defense a proposed development plan for the Vietnamese Navy. The essential elements of this plan were:

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SHIPS AND CRAFT

A. NAVY

Totals on hand by indicated dates

<u>Type of Ship/Craft</u>	<u>10 March 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1955</u>	<u>31 Dec 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1956</u>
LSSL	1	1	2	2
LSIL	2	3	4	4
LSM	-	-	-	1
LCU	4	4	4	4
LCU (workshop)	-	-	1	1
LCM	28	29	29	29
LCVP	21	23		22
PC	-	1	1	3
YMS	3	3	3	3
YTL	-	-	2	2
CGUB	-	5	10	10
OMB	24	30	30	30

B. MARINE CORPS

Totals on hand by indicated dates

<u>Type of ship/craft</u>	<u>10 March 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1955</u>	<u>31 Dec 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1956</u>
LCM	12	7	7	7
LCVP	91	28	28	28
Mytho Boats	129	40	40	40
Motor Patrol Craft	60	28	28	28
OMB	-	15	15	15

C. RESERVE

LCM	-	7	7	7
LCVP	-	37	37	37
Mytho Boats	-	40	40	40
Motor Patrol Craft	-	12	7	7
Coast Patrol Craft	-	12	7	7
OMB	-	30	30	30

PERSONNEL

A. NAVY

Officers	120	130	145	160
Enlisted	1480	1670	1705	1840

B. MARINE CORPS (to supplement the Navy's river forces)

Officers		41	41	40
Enlisted	1630	1096	1096	960

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	<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
	<u>10 March 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1955</u>	<u>31 Dec 1955</u>	<u>30 June 1956</u>
C. <u>CIVILIANS</u>	-	250	250	250
D. <u>AMPHIBIOUS BATTALION</u>				
Officers	11	19	19	19
Enlisted	816	681	681	681

The Amphibious Battalion although admittedly to serve in the naval forces was shown as being temporarily carried in the Army totals. This was done in spite of the fact that at this time this battalion was, according to the Vietnamese, actually in the naval establishment.

This TRIM plan continues to reflect some of the inadequacies of its 15 January predecessor. The personnel and ships proposed did not meet the needs required to accomplish the missions. Again no provisions existed for shore establishments and adequate supporting forces. This plan like the previous one was based upon an attempt to provide a Navy within fixed personnel ceilings. No evidence exists to assume that a detailed evaluation of requirements and missions for naval forces was made prior to determining what these forces should include.

In the first half of 1955 as independence for Vietnam became increasingly real, the French Forces in Indochina were severely reduced. Whereas the French had planned that autonomy for the Vietnamese Navy could be realized by June 1956 there was increased pressure to accelerate this date. In actual fact both French and United States Naval personnel agreed that by 30 June 1956 the Vietnamese could begin to run their own Navy retaining the services of United States and French as advisors. The senior Vietnamese officer in the Navy was a young Lieutenant Commander. There were no officers with the background, training or experience required to administer the complex requirements of even a modest Navy. However, political factors outweighed purely military objectives.

On 30 June 1955 the Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Army was assigned, by the President, additional duties as Commander of the Vietnamese Navy. This officer was already most preoccupied with problems of reorganization of the Vietnamese Army. The United States government had now agreed to support 150,000 men in the Vietnamese Armed Forces and this entailed a great deal of new work. Thus, while titular command of the Vietnamese Navy now rested in Vietnamese hands, the chiefs of all offices in the Naval Headquarters remained French. It must be admitted, however, that by this date virtually all ships and units of the Vietnamese Naval Forces were under Vietnamese command.

On 20 August 1955 the senior officer of the Vietnamese Navy was appointed commander-in-chief. The first act of this young officer was to replace all

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French officers on the headquarters staff by Vietnamese officers. By 1 September the French retained command only of the Naval Schools at Nha Trang, and headed the Direction of Technical Services (The Vietnamese Navy Supply Department); all other command and staff assignments being filled by Vietnamese officers.

The net result of these sudden events was that the French personnel formerly in the Vietnamese Navy Headquarters moved to the Navy Division TRIM. United States Naval personnel at TRIM were now able to work in close collaboration with French officers who had a detailed knowledge of the Vietnamese Navy.

With the increase in the armed forces levels that the United States government now agreed to support (150,000 in lieu of 100,000) the Navy/Marine Corps was now authorized 4000 officers and men. Once again this increased ceiling was granted not on a basis of missions and requirements but purely on a mathematical proportional increase of 1000 men for the Air Force and Navy. At the same time, the Amphibious Battalion, which was actually in the Navy but which the Army G-1 Division of TRIM carried under Vietnamese Army totals, was assigned to the Navy. This assignment was not to be in addition to the 4000 man ceiling of the naval forces already prescribed but was to be included therein. The result of these paper transactions was an authorized ceiling for the Vietnamese Navy of 2200 officers and men and 1800 officers and men for the Marine Corps.

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SECRETB. PRESENT SITUATION (1 SEPT - 10 DEC 1955)1. TRAINING

All training of Vietnamese Naval personnel is currently conducted under French control either at the Naval Schools, Nha Trang or in Naval Schools in France.

On 1 November 1955 there were the following naval personnel under instruction:

	<u>FRANCE</u>	<u>NHA TRANG</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
OFFICERS	28	21	49
PETTY OFFICERS	16	-	16
SEAMEN	<u>7</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>387</u>
TOTALS	51	401	452

On 7 November 1955 command of the Naval Schools at Nha Trang passed to the Vietnamese. However, all instruction continues to be directed by a French group of 7 officers and 37 enlisted men. United States Naval personnel have been advised that the French consider their instructional staff adequate and no United States assistance is required.

President Diem has recently announced that no more Vietnamese military personnel will be sent to France for schooling. Current Chief of Naval Operations Instructions require that foreign nationals entering our schools must have a working knowledge of English. Unfortunately very few Vietnamese naval personnel possess even the rudiments of English. As long as the French control instruction at Nha Trang the introduction of English in the syllabus appears impossible. The problem of qualifying Vietnamese naval personnel for admittance to United States schools appears most serious. The availability of trained personnel will be severely curtailed by the elimination of French schools as a source to complement the graduates of Nha Trang.

The French have no objection to United States personnel providing underway training. However, since nearly all naval forces have been engaged in pacification operations which started in May 1955, and still continue, there has never been any ship available for such training.

The Marine Corps, being at full strength, faces a less serious training problem. The main effort is to give to the Army trained Marines a Navy orientation course. It was recommended by TRIM and accepted by the Vietnamese that all Marine Corps officers and NCOs be given a one month orientation course on naval subjects at Nha Trang. This proposal has never been put into effect because the Vietnamese Marine Corps has been engaged in operations together with the Navy.

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It has further been proposed, and this also has been accepted, that henceforth recruit training and certain specialist training for Marines be combined with the Navy at the Nha Trang schools. In addition, a one year cyclic training program, up to battalion level, has been prepared for the Marine Corps by the United States Marine Corps advisors. This program only awaits the return of Marine units from current operations before it can be implemented.

Lastly it has been agreed that training of Marine Corps officers will be carried out concurrently with that of Naval officers at Nha Trang.

2. COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

The commanders of the Vietnamese Navy and Air Force are designated as Deputy Chiefs of Staff for their respective services on the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff. Unfortunately these two officers are a Lieutenant Commander in the former case and a Major in the latter case. Their ranks hardly permit their voices to be heard in staff deliberations.

Organizationally the Navy and Air Force are on the same level as the Vietnamese Army Quartermaster, Chief of Engineers and similar offices. The Army provides common type supplies to both the Navy and Air Force. Neither of these two services have any control over funds or budgetary problems. Inasmuch as the Armed Forces General Staff Offices are all staffed with Army personnel, the Navy and Air Force are at the bottom of any priority list for supplies or other staff services.

This most undesirable situation has been brought to the attention of the Vietnamese several months ago. However no action has been taken. The Navy Division TRIM concurs in the opinion that the Navy must have control over the expenditure of funds allotted to it and should enjoy a degree of supply autonomy. Complete dependence on the Army for common type supplies has introduced numerous delays in obtaining even a moderately efficient Navy. Essential communication equipment for example had to be obtained through United States pressure because the Vietnamese Navy could not get satisfaction from the Army on its own initiative.

One other problem peculiar to the Navy command relationships should be mentioned. The Marine Corps, which is by law under the Navy, is commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel senior to the Lieutenant Commander who heads the Navy. This fact has been the source of some friction within the naval establishment.

The President has been advised of the urgent need to promote the commander of the Navy to the temporary rank of Captain. Such a step would make him senior to the Chiefs of the Armed Forces General Staff divisions and would lend weight to his requests. However the President has not seen fit to act on this matter, nor on filling the large number of rank deficiencies which exist elsewhere.

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3. ORGANIZATION

In the field of organization it is evident that the Franco-Vietnamese plans had preceded any United States plans. The latter because of lack of information on previous plans and rigid personnel ceilings imposed had been made with only limited reference to the actual requirements. One of the very first undertakings of the Navy Division TRIM reinforced by the presence of the French was a detailed review of the organization of naval forces. Out of this review there evolved a proposed organization for the Vietnamese Naval Forces which reflected wherever possible the limitations imposed by United States support agreements on personnel strengths and the numbers of ships and craft.

The proposed organization for the Vietnamese Naval Forces submitted to the Vietnamese Staff in early November was based upon the following facts and assumptions:

Vietnam has a coastline of about 1300 statute miles. In Cochinchina there are some 1800 statute miles of waterways navigable by ships and craft down to LCVP types.

In the absence of adequate repair facilities it was assumed that the Vietnamese should begin their own maintenance and limited repair of boats up to LCM. The maintenance and overhaul of larger craft and ships would have to remain in the hands of the French.

A small supply center could be established to form the nucleus of a Navy supply system eventually to be expanded.

A Vietnamese Navy communication system had to be established because the French Navy was no longer able to handle Vietnamese naval traffic.

Coast and River patrolling had to be assumed by the Vietnamese because the French no longer maintained such surveillance.

The Naval Schools at Nha Trang could under an accelerated program, turn out 300 trained recruits quarterly, 300 specialist ratings semi-annually, and 60 reserve ensigns every nine months.

The United States naval personnel assigned to TRIM could conduct underway training for the Vietnamese without interfering with French controlled school instruction.

The Vietnamese Navy was to man all ships and craft. The scattered dissimilar units of the Marine Corps were to be grouped into two battalions and constitute a true amphibious element for the Navy.

The TRIM plan of 1 November 1955 provides for the following:

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	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Total</u>
1) <u>Shore Establishments</u>			
Navy Headquarters and Services	23	128	151
Coastal Commands:			
Saigon	6	96	102
Nha Trang	6	13	16
Quinhon	5	71	76
Tourane	5	71	76
Naval Schools, Nha Trang (2 LCM, 4 LCVP)	10	304	314
River Bases:			
Mytho	2	50	52
Cantho	2	50	52
Vinh Long	2	50	52
Long Xuyen	2	50	52
Boat Repair Bases:			
Saigon	3	50	53
Tourane	2	30	32
Cantho	2	30	32
Reserve Boat Pool (27 LCM, 17 LCVP)	2	52	54
2) <u>Naval Forces</u>			
5 PC	25	210	235
3 YMS	12	93	105
2 LSSL	10	110	120
2 LSM	10	90	100
10 Coast Patrol Boats	6	50	56
3) <u>River Forces</u>			
5 Dinassauts each of:	15	425	440
6 LCM			
4 LCVP			
5 OMB			
4 LSIL	20	245	265
5 LCU (1 workshop)	5	75	80
2 YTL	-	20	20
4) Pipeline of 15%	25	345	370
<u>Total for Navy</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>2650</u>	<u>2845</u>

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<u>MARINE CORPS</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Marine Corps Headquarters	14	139	153
1st Marine Battalion	30	658	688
2d Marine Battalion	30	658	688
Instructors at Naval Schools	5	20	25
LVT company (to be formed on receipt of LVT)	7	153	160
Pipeline	<u>10</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>Total for Marine Corps</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>1739</u>	<u>1835</u>

It should be noted that the above plan, is purely a modest definition of the immediate requirements for Vietnamese Naval Forces. Once this reorganization is achieved the Vietnamese Navy should be able to:

- Provide limited transport facilities for other services.
- Patrol the navigable inland waterways.
- Provide limited patrol of the coast.
- Engage in limited amphibious operations.
- Engage in limited maintenance and repair of its own small craft.

The differences between the present plan and authorized force levels are reflected hereunder:

SHIPS AND CRAFT

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>US APPROVED</u>	<u>TRIM PLAN</u>	<u>IN VN NAVY</u>	<u>RETAINED BY FRENCH</u>
LSM	2 @	2	2	6
LSSL	2	2	2	3
LSIL	5 @@	4	5	4
YMS	3	3	3	0
PC	2	5	2	5
YTL	2	2	2	7
LSU	4	5 @@@	5	3
LCM	36	59	66	59
LCVP	93	41	100	99
CGUB	10	10	4	8
OMB	30	45	20	-

NOTE: @ LSM approved by CNO Secret Msg 271709Z Oct.

NOTE: @@ 5th LSIL approved as temporary loan CinCPac Secret MSG 280038Z Oct.

NOTE: @@@ 5th LSU to be converted to floating shop.

PERSONNEL

PRESENT FORCE BASIS NAV/MAR CORPS	4000
TRIM PLAN NAV/MARCORPS	4680
STRENGTH AVAILABLE 1 NOV 55 NAV/MAR	3716 (incl. 452 under instruction)

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The differences that exist between the TRIM Plan and the force levels approved are essentially minor. In personnel a modest increase of 680 officers and men is indicated. This is most conservative in view of the expanded responsibilities which have been assigned to the Navy subsequent to the withdrawal of many French Forces. With reference to ship force levels the major increase is from 2 approved PC to 5 recommended. With responsibility for coastal patrolling now under the Vietnamese, the need for such vessels is evident. A considerable increase in smuggling has aroused concern at the highest levels of government. The Vietnamese Air Force has to date not been assigned to assist the Navy in such a mission and even if it were its most limited aircraft would be largely ineffective.

It must again be emphasized that this TRIM plan, worked out in detail by French, Vietnamese and United States Naval personnel concerns itself only with what can and should be done immediately. This is not a development plan but a reorganization plan. It does involve certain additions in personnel and ships but these are the very minimum required for the immediate present.

The value of the November TRIM Plan for the immediate reorganization of the Naval Forces of Vietnam lies in the following factors:

- a) It is capable of immediate execution.
- b) It provides the minimum means which are required to carry out urgent missions.
- c) It lends itself to an orderly expansion.
- d) The ships and craft are all available in Indochina from MDAP deliveries made to the French. The only exception lies in 46 S.T.C.A.N. motor patrol boats, (well suited to replace worn LCVPs in the river forces) which will be delivered by the French. The 46 boats were financed by the Reimbursable Aid program.

The above TRIM plan was approved by the Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Armed Forces General Staff at a conference held at his headquarters on 7 December 1955. Based upon this approval the ceiling for the Vietnamese Naval Forces for 1955 is now:

Navy	195 officers	2650 men
Marine Corps	96 officers	1739 men
	291	4389
Grand Total: 4680 officers and men		

It will be noted that the realization of this plan in its entirety is contingent upon the authorization by the United States government for an increase of three PC above the present ceiling of two PC.

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Based upon the mission listed above and the capacity of the Naval Schools of Vietnam, it is the considered opinion of United States, French and Vietnamese naval personnel that the Vietnamese Naval Forces should be expanded to include the following by the end of the calendar year 1957:

a) COAST PATROL FORCE

4 DE or similar type ships
10 PC
27 Motor Patrol Boats (CGUB type)

COMMENT: This expansion involves an increase of 4 DE, 8 PC and 17 Motor Patrol Boats over present authorized levels. The DE would also serve as gunfire support ships during amphibious operations and for training cruises of personnel under instruction at the Naval Schools Nha Trang.

b) TRANSPORT FORCE

4 LST
4 LSM

COMMENT: This involves an increase of 4 LST and 2 LSM over present levels. In view of the configuration of Vietnam and the poor road and rail net in existence a sea lift available to the Army in case of conflict is imperative. The sea lift is modest in that it provides for only the simultaneous lift of one regiment over a short distance.

c) RIVER FORCE

5 Dinassaut each with 9 LCM and 8 LCVP
4 LSIL
2 LSSL
4 LCU

COMMENT: This force could patrol the extensive navigable waterways of Cochinchina and provide a lift and gunfire support for Army units. It should be emphasized that Cochinchina is infested with Vietminh and dissident elements. No increase in craft or ships above present ceiling is required.

d) CORPS OF MARINES

1 Regiment of 3 Battalions reinforced with 2 LVT companies.

COMMENT: An increase of 1 Battalion and 1 LVT company would provide this force. Marines are essential to support operations on rivers. Further the long coastline of Vietnam is well suited to amphibious raids in the event of conflict with the Vietminh.

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<u>SHIPS/UNITS</u>	<u>AUTH.</u>	<u>1955 ORG</u>	<u>ADD 1956</u>	<u>ADD 1957</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
3. <u>TRANSPORT FORCE</u>					
LST	0	0	2	2	4
LSM	2	2	2	0	4
4. <u>RIVER FORCE</u>					
5 <u>DINASSAUT:</u>					
LCM	36	30	15	0	45
LCM (Reserve)	-	29	0	0	29
LCVP	93	20	20	0	40
LCVP (Reserve)	-	21	0	0	21
LSSL	2	2	-	-	2
LSIL	4	4	-	-	4
LCU	4	4	-	-	4
LCU (Workshop)	1	1	-	-	1
OMB	30	45	-	-	45
5. <u>SERVICE FORCE</u>					
YMS	3	3	-	-	3
YTL	2	2	-	-	2
6. <u>NAVAL AIR FORCE</u>					
1 Squadron	0	0	1	-	1
7. <u>MARINE CORPS</u>					
Hqts & 2 Bns	1	1	3d Bn	0	1 RCT
2 LVT Co's (each with 24 LVT 4 & 4 LVT(A) 4)	0	0	2 Co's	-	2 LVT Co's

NOTES:

a) Whereas a total of 61 LCVP are provided for, it should be noted that 46 motor patrol boats S.T.C.A.N. to be delivered to the Vietnamese by the French under Reimbursable Aid Program agreements already made, will replace like numbers of LCVPs. Thus, only 15 LCVP of United States origin are actually required. The Vietnamese Navy has 100 LCVP at the present. Many of these are in poor condition but a certain number could be returned to the United States. It should be added that the S.T.C.A.N. motor patrol boats are more suitable for river operations than LCVP.

b) The wooden hulled YMS are in poor condition and can serve only as school ships.

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The unstable situation in Vietnam appears to continue and there is little evidence to support the belief that a change for the better will occur in the near future. In fact, signs of increased Vietminh activity appear to decrease the possibility for peace in Vietnam. Without being unduly pessimistic it appears reasonable to assume that fighting on at least a limited scale will continue in Vietnam for some time to come. It is thus imperative that Vietnam be given the means essential for its own internal security.

The proposals made for the expansion of Vietnamese naval forces are not made to give Vietnam the naval means to defend itself in an all out war with the communists. Should such an event occur Vietnam would be forced to depend upon external assistance for survival. However, such external assistance cannot be counted upon by Vietnam in its struggle against enemy elements within its own frontiers. A small but effective naval force is a vital part of the forces required by Vietnam if that country is to achieve internal stability and thereby be better able to withstand a communist attack from without its borders.

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