that there was a lack of hard intelligence on the Communists; this lack was acutely felt by both Vietnamese and Americans. With the concurrence of the RVN government, the United States agreed to deploy US Army advisers to all ARVN intelligence organizations from the Joint General Staff (JGS) level to corps, divisions and sectors (provinces).

At the JGS, the US intelligence advisory team which was assigned to J-2 in April 1962 was a pioneering effort at this level. The team consisted of nine officers, two of whom served as senior and deputy senior advisers to the chief, J-2. The others were assigned to each of the operating divisions of the J-2: collection, training, interrogation, aerial photo, order of battle, and technical intelligence. The mission assigned to the team was not so much to provide advice to the J-2 personnel but rather to help keep track of and record intelligence data on the enemy situation throughout South Vietnam, especially information pertaining to the enemy's order of battle and infiltration from North Vietnam, as collected by ARVN sources. It did have an advisory role, however, and the US team with J-2 suggested ideas concerning policies and procedures to improve ARVN intelligence activities at all levels in three aspects: organization, training and operations. The team thus functioned in a dual capacity, collecting intelligence data and providing advice at the same time. To the J-2, JGS, the US team was particularly useful in providing training assistance since through its efforts, all intelligence courses, both in-country and offshore, were conducted with regularity and responded effectively to ARVN intelligence training requirements.

What the J-2, JGS needed most from the US advisers at that time was assistance in obtaining modern equipment, especially for imagery interpretation, to replace obsolescent equipment. Another urgent need was for US-produced intelligence information. The US team's failure to respond immediately to these requirements made its advisory effort look suspicious in the eyes of ARVN intelligence officers. But gradually the team's contributions to ARVN intelligence, in terms of agent reports and signal intelligence, became significant.

Unit 300, which was activated in 1962 as a collection agency subordinate to J-2, JGS, was assisted in its operations by the 1st Detachment, US Army 500th Military Intelligence Group. The US Army detachment assumed an advisory role in addition to coordinating its collection activities with Unit 300. The ARVN human intelligence collection system was organized into groups, teams and nets operating at all echelons in the field from corps to subsectors (districts). Agents operated under civilian cover in professions or businesses appropriately selected for each type of objective or operation. These organizations cooperated with US Army intelligence advisers who were deployed to the sector (province) level.

This form of coordination proved very effective. On the one hand, ARVN agents were provided detailed guidance for every step of their operations and they were able to absorb quickly the fine points taught by practical experience. On the other, by operating together, US advisers readily shared the difficulties and challenges met in each specific local environment by ARVN operatives whose successes or failures affected US operations as well. A drawback of the system was the poor credibility of the US cover. Although US Army advisers also posed as civilians, their cover was ineffective. To the highly suspicious Vietnamese population of that time, most American civilians were considered intelligence operatives and those Vietnamese who associated with them were, ipso facto, considered their agents.

By 1962, technical exploitation of materiel was still a novelty within the ARVN intelligence system. Communist materiel and armament during that time were a heterogenous assortment of different types and models making the task of exploitation and classification extremely difficult. In addition, the Communists also employed locally-produced weapons, grenades and mines whose effect was more propagandistic than practical, but whose use created additional work for the technical intelligence branch. The testing and exploitation of enemy materiel and weapons were made easier by the wealth of technical data provided by US Army advisers, especially those pertaining to new Communist weapons. These data proved extremely useful to ARVN units. The advisers also provided professional guidance to the Technical Intelligence Section, J-2, JGS, on the methods used in exploiting technical data from captured war materiel.

This was a period of large-scale, division-size combat operations pitting US forces against main force units of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). In keeping with the force buildup, United States collection agencies and intelligence units were gradually brought into South Vietnam. For the first time, modern US techniques such as the OV-1 side looking airborne radar (SLAR) and infra-red imagery (Red Haze) were put to use. Other airborne detection devices, such as the "people-sniffer," were also employed. Air reconnaissance and aerial photography missions were flown by sophisticated USAF jet aircraft such as the RF-4C and the RF-101. The number of Mohawks increased to 115 by 1968. All these modern assets contributed to improving knowledge about the enemy to an extent never before reached during the war. In signal intelligence, the use of airborne radio direction finding (ARDF) helped pinpoint enemy units with accuracy and continuously keep track of their movements.

Effective as it was in collection, through the use of modern technology, the US intelligence effort during these early months seemed to be somewhat deficient in analysis and lacked depth when it attempted to assess the true nature of the war and the determination of the enemy. This was understandable since never before had the United States faced such a pernicious enemy on terrain which thoroughly favored him and under a form of warfare in which he made the rules. Other constraints in language and culture added to the difficulties faced by US intelligence personnel in South Vietnam. These weaknesses, by contrast, were the very strengths of the Vietnamese who unfortunately did not have the technological capabilities possessed by the Americans. It appeared then that if they joined forces in intelligence work, a perfect union could be achieved from which both would benefit. At the very least, this union could alleviate some of the difficulties encountered by Americans and at the same time would help the Vietnamese attain maturity in advanced intelligence collection operations.

The requirement for cooperation and the concept of mutual compensation were recognized by the Vietnamese and the Americans and led to a substantial increase in US advisory personnel in the field, from corps level to the district, and to the establishment of combined intelligence

agencies. The number of US Army intelligence advisory personnel at sector level, for example, increased from three to seven. More important, however, was the activation of four combined intelligence agencies: the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), the Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC), the Combined Materiel Exploitation Center (CMEC) and the Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC). The operation of these centers by a mixed Vietnamese-American staff with US-provided modern assets and Vietnamese indigenous resourcefulness greatly enhanced collection and analyses activities and provided effective intelligence data support for MACV J-2, J-2, JGS, and combat units for all allied forces at all levels.

The senior intelligence adviser for an ARVN corps was usually a colonel or a lieutenant-colonel. His counterpart, the corps G-2, until 1971, was almost always a major or lieutenant colonel. Though not seriously impeded by rank discrepancy, the relationship was somewhat affected by it. The corps intelligence adviser regularly provided his counterpart with intelligence data collected by US sources such as ARDF, SLAR, Red Haze, Sniffer and aerial photography. He also made available to the corps G-2 human intelligence gathered from prisoners and ralliers under temporary US custody and certain agent's reports. Information obtained from communications intelligence, however, was not subject to systematic dissemination by US advisers. If and when such information was made available to the corps G-2, it was usually carefully edited and restricted to general information. It was apparent that in this respect, US advisers were bound by national security codes which precluded complete disclosure of this type of intelligence even to an ally in war.

During this period, US intelligence advisers also provided liaison between G-2, ARVN corps and G-2, US Field Forces. As such, they played a key role in all intelligence activities in the corps area. To ARVN tactical commanders, the most valuable and useful intelligence data were those concerning enemy unit locations or movements as detected by ARDF. Fully aware of this fact, US commanders often provided this information directly to ARVN corps commanders. Therefore, one of the corps G-2's major concerns was how to obtain this same data before or at

least at the same time as his commander received it from the US Army corps senior adviser. Obviously, no G-2 enjoys being fed intelligence data by his own commander. Thus, for a relatively long time, US intelligence advisers were evaluated by their ARVN G-2 counterparts on the basis of their ability to supply timely, critical intelligence.

But the role of the American adviser was not confined to the exchange and provision of intelligence data. It also encompassed US supply and support of intelligence equipment, and funds needed to operate an effective ARVN humint system. The amount of this support, however, was not equally available to all ARVN units. It depended greatly on each individual senior adviser, his interest in intelligence operations, and his own evaluation of ARVN agent net-effectiveness.

During daily working contacts, US intelligence advisers seldom made professional remarks concerning their counterparts' way of doing their job. Advisory comments, if any, usually consisted of explaining US techniques and procedures which had been found effective. This non-meddling attitude reflected a tactful respect toward ARVN intelligence officers who reciprocated in kind. A mutual respect developed which helped maintain a good working relationship and rapport between the adviser and the advisee.

At the division level, US intelligence advisers earned extra esteem and enhanced their professional standing through direct participation in combat operations with the division operational staff and by giving a helping hand to the division G-2, supplying him with US intelligence data or interceding for the employment of US collection resources. The sharing of the increased intelligence workload occasioned by combat operations resulted in making the rapport between the US adviser and his counterpart closer and more firmly founded.

In contrast to tactical units, the ARVN territorial commands at province and district levels had much more complex intelligence organizations which made the role of the US intelligence advisers many times more difficult. At the provincial level, for example, the intelligence structure encompassed a vast array of committees and units operated by different agencies, such as the provincial security committee, the

provincial intelligence-operations coordination committee (PIOCC), the Phoenix committee, the province intelligence and security platoon, the province reconnaissance unit (PRU), etc. Each committee in which the sector S-2 participated was oriented toward a different set of objectives and problems and involved such different resources and intricate procedures that it would take an adviser a long time to familiarize himself with his task and the local intelligence activities. Most US intelligence advisers at sector level were army officers whose professional background sometimes consisted solely of an intelligence officer basic course at Fort Holabird, Maryland. Their professional experience was consequently minimal and whatever knowledge they had was primarily technical or procedural. Naturally, the advice they provided was based on the US Army manual on combat intelligence, FM 30-5, and often had little applicability to improving intelligence effectiveness at the sector level. The problems faced by the sector were usually beyond the scope of US Army field manuals.

The problems faced by US intelligence advisers at the district level were even more difficult and made their advisory role more demanding. As an adviser attempted to have a closer look at the intelligence problems at the grassroot level, he came to grips with so many complexities inherent in the enemy's infrastructure that it usually took him months to understand the basics. He learned to differentiate, for example, between a resident guerrilla and an unattached guerrilla, between a tax collecting agent and an econo-finance cadre, a liaison-communication cadre and a simple messenger, between front organizations and sympathizers, etc. Meanwhile the district resources and assets available for the collection of intelligence were severely limited. The district S-2 was usually a young second lieutenant or aspirant fresh out of school and still groping around in his job. What little guidance and supervision that both the S-2 and his adviser received from above came mostly from the sector headquarters, which was usually too preoccupied with its own problems to devote much time to district intelligence affairs. For both the ARVN and US systems, guidance and support seemed to stop at the sector (province) level. The result was obvious. Left to themselves in a totally strange environment, US intelligence advisers in the districts could

do little more than learn from experience and try to adapt as rapidly as possible to the new environment.

Intelligence cooperation and coordination at the central level were entirely different from those in the field. They constituted an effort which was more of a co-worker partnership than an adviser-advisee relationship. Most indicative of this relationship was the way the four combined intelligence centers referred to above were organized and operated. In each center there were separate United States and Vietnamese elements organized along the same functional lines and almost paralleling each other but under separate commands. But section by section, personnel of the two elements sat together and worked together. Although the work schedule was separately established by each element, it was usually the same since both elements had the same tasks and worked toward the same objectives. The advantages of this co-working system were apparent; it accelerated and enriched the exchange of data and enabled ARVN personnel, through exposure to US work methods and practice, to learn new techniques and a modern approach to their profession. For example, ARVN intelligence personnel learned from their counterparts how to develop an activity pattern analysis for a certain area, how to keep track of the situation in a Communist base area, how to use automatic data processing to store and retrieve intelligence data, how to exploit and copy these data when required, how to test new materiel captured from the enemy, etc. As a result, and with the assistance of modern US technology and assets, the production and dissemination of intelligence became more methodical and faster and since intelligence was made available to all units on an equal basis, the professional relationships among American and ARVN commanders and staffs at all echelons were greatly enhanced.

At the four combined intelligence agencies, US personnel usually outnumbered their counterparts. Nonetheless, their working relationship was generally good from the very start and caused no problems over the years. This happy and productive cooperation was possible for two reasons: First, the relationship was based on a formal agreement reached between MACV and the JGS, which determined the procedures for cooperation covering a wide range of subjects, such as the sharing of office space

and facilities, guard and security duties, the authority of each element commander, and the approach to be used in problem-solving. Second, and more important was the exemplary spirit of cooperation displayed by the top intelligence officers of both sides, the MACV Assistant Chief of Staff J-2 and his counterpart, the ARVN chief, J-2, JGS. On his initiative, for example, Major General William E. Potts, US Army, ACS/J-2, MACV held regular meetings in which he briefed the MACV commander, the Chief of the JGS and his Chief of Staff and J-2 on the current enemy situation as viewed from the US side. This innovation in US-ARVN intelligence cooperation set the tone for the pervasive spirit of cooperation at all echelons. It also provided the opportunity for General Abrams, COMUSMACV, and General Vien, Chief of the JGS, to discuss in detail the current enemy situation, trends and intelligence estimates for the future.

Anatomy of a Relationship

The formal MACV-JGS agreement on combined intelligence activities served as a useful basis for coordination and cooperation. It provided the RVNAF a number of basic guidelines regarding the American advisory role which had been mentioned only summarily in a JGS memorandum in April 1955. In April 1958, the JGS published another memorandum intended as a "reminder" to ARVN unit commanders concerning their duties and responsibilities toward American advisers. Both documents only indicated briefly what ARVN commanders should do to provide support and assistance to US advisers but failed to tell them how to work with their advisers to obtain maximum results. As a result, each ARVN commander had to figure out for himself how he would approach the delicate problems of the relationship, learning as he went from his own experience or from others.

By and large, the attitude of each Vietnamese commander toward his adviser depended on his own enlightened experience and education. It was largely a matter of personal improvisations, never the subject of formal guidance. By contrast, every US adviser was briefed and aided by handbooks on the role he was going to assume, on the country where

he was to live, its geography, history, social customs and manners and on the specific branch or unit with which he was going to work.

In addition to this general background, the US adviser sometimes even had advance knowledge on the very person he was going to advise, his biography and his character as reflected by the remarks or comments of his predecessor.

Despite the hospitable and accommodating nature of Vietnamese in general and all the preparatory work that US advisers accomplished prior to their assignment, the relationship between them seemed to be affected by certain unfounded prejudices or misconceptions, especially during the early years of US direct participation, instilled perhaps by superficial reports of the communications media—movies and television in particular. The fact was, due to cultural differences and the language barrier, Vietnamese were generally inhibited and almost never took the first step in dealing with foreigners. Whatever contacts they maintained with US advisers were made primarily by commanders or responsible staff officers since they were the only persons qualified both by the requirement of their jobs and a certain ability to speak the English language.

The cultural inhibition of ARVN personnel seemed to be a reason why some US advisers complained about the lack of enthusiasm and the apparent lethargic approach to work on the part of the Vietnamese. Whatever their merits, critical remarks along these lines certainly did not improve adviser relationships. In defense, the Vietnamese usually argued that US advisers served only one year, enjoyed a good life and were not immediately concerned about family affairs or anything other than their jobs. As a result, they reasoned, the Americans were able to devote all their energies to their short tours while they themselves had to live with the war for all their lives.

One year was indeed short as a tour of duty since it included the unproductive time spent in familiarization with environment and job, usually about three months. In some instances, an adviser would be transferred to another job even before completing his one-year tour. As a result, it was impossible for some ARVN commanders to work with any particular adviser long enough to develop a fruitful relationship.

The commander of one combined intelligence agency once observed that during the period of a year he had had six different US counterparts. This high turnover rate for advisers seriously affected the combined effort, especially since it was a long-range effort requiring a certain continuity in job relationship. Some ARVN commanders even found, to their dismay, that what had been agreed previously by a certain adviser was not necessarily palatable to his successor. As a result, both sides often abstained from committing themselves to any long-range undertaking. In view of the nature of intelligence work, which required steadiness and continuity, a longer tour of duty for those advisers assigned to intelligence duties would have been advisable. Eighteen months would have been reasonable but two years would have certainly been better for the sake of the combined effort. I was especially fortunate that my counterpart, Major General Potts who had completed previous tours in Vietnam, was held in his position of MACV J-2 for almost four years. This is a good indication of the emphasis placed on the importance of the intelligence program by General Abrams.

Although US intelligence officers were uniformly well versed with what they were supposed to do as advisers, there were greatly diverging personal approaches or techniques, especially in the exchange of intelligence data with ARVN counterparts. This was most noticeable at the sector and division levels. Some operated on a broadly conceived approach to their duties by striving to meet ARVN essential requirements by all means even when this involved bending some rules or regulations. They could always manage to do this, for example, by direct voice communication. Others, however, tended to be overcautious. For example, the cautious ones always made a point of checking with superiors before releasing any piece of intelligence or only supplying it upon request and after the counterparts had learned about it through another source.

Because of this cautiousness, the general belief among ARVN intelligence officers was that their advisers often withheld information from them for some unknown but possibly sinister reason or another. Several ARVN intelligence officers indeed suspected that in early 1968, their advisers were unwilling to release intelligence reports concerning the

enemy's preparations for the general offensive. They reasoned with the dangerous conviction that by withholding this vital information, the US apparently wanted to quickly solve the war through a major ARVN defeat. This misapprehension naturally dissolved with time but a certain suspicion still persisted among some ARVN intelligence officers that under certain circumstances, US advisers were not free to exchange essential information with ARVN ounterparts.

Some ARVN units were also convinced that certain United States intelligence reports were solely disseminated to US advisers to the exclusion of their counterparts, especially when the tactical situation became imminently dangerous. It was then that the attitude and countenance of the senior adviser and the intelligence adviser were apt to have a decisive psychological impact on their counterparts. It was as if US advisers were some kind of guardian angels without whom all hell would break loose. The examples were few but convincing enough. The evacuation of US advisers from the forward CP of the ARVN 22d Infantry Division at Tan Canh early in the morning of 23 April 1972, minutes before enemy tanks and troops overran the CP, was a deadly blow to the morale of the ARVN defenders. Then, in Quang Tri, the disorderly retreat of the 3d Infantry Division, which took place even before any orders were given, appeared to be the only sensible thing to do once US advisers had been hastily extracted from the CP.

Normally, when an adviser was assigned to an ARVN intelligence unit, the ARVN counterpart usually tried to evaluate him, not on the basis of the courses he had attended but in the light of intelligence duties he had previously assumed and the length of time he served in these assignments. Much of what he later offered as advice would be weighed on the basis of his professional experience.

As for the ARVN staff and personnel, company-grade officers, NCOs and privates alike, those who did not have the chance to be in close touch daily with the adviser, what really counted in their eyes was the latter's behavior toward their commander and how he treated them. If he spoke some Vietnamese, something that most US advisers tried to do, the troops were certainly delighted and the ice would be broken, if only

because his weird accent brought them some amusement. The same was true with his counterpart even if the latter could speak English. In most all cases, however, the adviser's Vietnamese proficiency did not carry him beyond an exchange of courtesies.

In general, most US advisers were defeated in their effort to use spoken Vietnamese in work discussions. This was understandable, first because Vietnamese, being a tonal language, was phonetically difficult for most Westerners to master in a short time. Then, the eagerness of the Vietnamese to practice their English—which most of the educated spoke with some degree of proficiency—really discouraged the US advisers to carry on his Vietnamese language practice. For an American intelligence officer to be really effective in his job, especially when it required a profound knowledge of the Vietnamese Communists, the mastering of Vietnamese was essential. But then not every US Army officer had the time or inclination to develop this ability and in view of the variety of intelligence objectives, only a few truly proficient in the language were required.

Outward appearances were sometimes a matter of importance to ARVN personnel. Experience showed that in combined intelligence agencies, ARVN personnel usually watched US advisers come and go to see if proper military courtesy was rendered to higher ranking ARVN officers. To them, this was a way to find out for certain whether US personnel considered their ARVN counterparts as rank-for-rank equals and whether they had any respect for the ARVN in general. Concerned about equality and discrimination as they were, ARVN personnel usually felt gratified when they could share every facility, whether at work or at rest, with Americans on an equal footing. The examples given by US personnel always worked on their counterparts. For example, in a jointly-shared facility, if US troops did house cleaning every morning by themselves, ARVN personnel automatically joined them and usually tried to perform just as well.

In general, in their relations with US advisers or co-workers throughout the years, ARVN personnel usually came to the same generalizations as they judged their counterparts. They were convinced that US personnel were:

1. Very punctual, always neatly dressed, highly disciplined, and respectful of orders.

2. Responsible and professionally competent.

3. Sociable and compassionate.

4. Tactful for the most part. They were well aware that advisers did not command.

5. Very well trained, especially the technicians and specialists.

Other qualities that ARVN personnel found common among US intelligence advisers were: they usually monitored events in minute detail and promptly reported them to superiors; they were also willing to help their counterparts overcome difficulties, especially those related to resources needed in the performance of their tasks and this assistance was always swift.

The traits that the Vietnamese attributed to intelligence advisers were perhaps similar to those found among all advisers, regardless of their branch or specialty. However, objectively speaking, intelligence advisers were more successful in their role than most others. This was perhaps due to the fact that the intelligence advisory effort was undertaken in a most tactful but very effective manner in which the adviser acted both as a co-worker and an adviser. This dual approach to advisory assistance made both adviser and counterpart understand each other better since they shared a common task and worked toward the same objective in a similar environment. As a result, the advice given was more realistic, more essential to the common task and apt to be more willingly accepted. This approach also made the advisory effort a two-way, mutually-benefitting enterprise since it compensated for the inherent shortcomings found among advisers such as constraints imposed by culture, language, a short tour of duty and lack of continuity.

During the course of cooperation and coordination, certain sensitive problems concerning the authority of each partner were all solved in a rational and formal manner, thus averting possible conflicts and disagreements. The differences that remained and occasionally arose were usually resolved with relative ease due to a similarity of intelligence

concepts, procedures and organizations and more importantly, to a spirit of genuine cooperation built on mutual assistance and respect.

As a result of this assistance, ARVN intelligence improved markedly with every passing day and proved responsive to the requirements placed on it by the need to know more about the enemy even during the post-cease fire period when the US advisory role was terminated. The spirit of cooperation and coordination, despite this, was maintained up to the very last moment when South Vietnam collapsed.

CHAPTER V

The Logistic and Technical Adviser

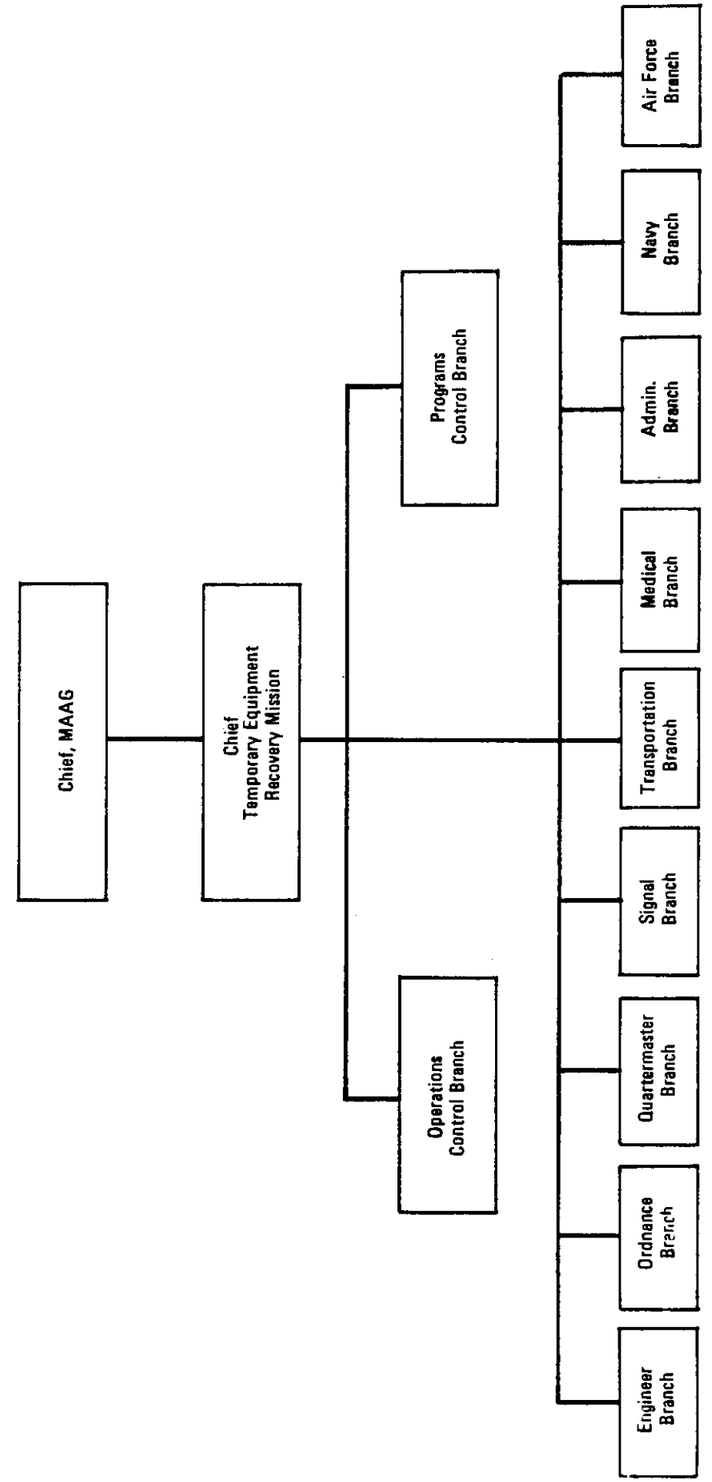
Significant Milestones

When the first US field advisers were deployed to major units and military schools of the Vietnamese National Army in early 1955, the Vietnamese Army logistic system still functioned under the aegis of French officers and NCOs who assumed most of the key command and staff positions. The Vietnamese Army logistic system was then at its embryonic stage. It functioned as a separate organization but its young cadre only served in an assistant capacity.

In 1956, the French High Command was dissolved. In its wake, the French Expeditionary Corps and all French cadre of the Vietnamese Army logistic system departed in haste. It was only then that the US Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (TERM) was established and the Vietnamese Army logistic system began to receive US advisory assistance through TERM. *(Chart 8)*

A senior US Army colonel of the Quartermaster branch was introduced to the Chief, G-4, General Staff. He was to work with this staff division and assist in developing a workable logistic support system for the Vietnamese Army. An office was immediately installed for him within the G-4 compound, staffed by a Vietnamese NCO who spoke good English. The adviser's office became part of the G-4 staff division in all respects, and its occupant became known to the Vietnamese personnel as the "Adviser-Colonel." The adviser-colonel seldom stayed in his office. He came and went with unpredictable irregularity, sometimes showing up every day, sometimes appearing only once every two or three days. But the G-4 staff knew that he was extremely busy and worked with total dedication.

Chart 8 — Organization, Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission, 1956



Every time he came to his office, he brought something new and a lot of work for the G-4 staff. At first, there were stacks upon stacks of manuals, pamphlets, and assorted publications. Then came unsigned, typewritten memoranda containing certain recommendations that he suggested might improve the organization and operation of the system. Sometimes, there were pictures taken of glaring deficiencies in preventive maintenance and storage, accompanied by still more memoranda, usually unsigned, but sometimes bearing his signature. He and Vietnamese logisticians held many discussions, always through the intermediary of the NCO-interpreter.

It was with a deep sense of appreciation that Vietnamese logisticians welcomed the growing pile of manuals and memoranda because they responded exactly to what he had always sought: a new direction for the Vietnamese logistic effort. Months of hard work for all of us would follow each time he came. We were gratified but felt greatly frustrated by our own inability to understand the language. He seemed to share our eagerness to learn, not only the new things but also the language through which they were to be learned. He cheerfully gave us English lessons in the afternoon after duty hours. Communication between us therefore improved with every passing day as we progressed. The first difficult steps had been taken; they were in the right direction. With his devoted help, we felt confident we could overcome any obstacles that lay in the way of our new direction toward progress.

By the end of 1957, the logistical structure of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN, as it became known to all US advisers) had been realigned to the technical service concept then being used by the US Army. Standing operating procedures for the new system were prepared and enforced. At technical services, TERM officers helped in the task of inventorying, storing and maintaining equipment and supplies that the departing French forces had left behind. Excess and unserviceable equipment were turned in to TERM for disposal. And in the reorganization task undertaken under the General Staff G-4's supervision, technical service chiefs received the same kind of advisory assistance that had benefited G-4. The eagerness to learn, to improve on the part of most

technical service chiefs was to a great extent influenced by the exemplary close cooperation between the G-4 division and its US advisers. It gave impetus to the progress being made throughout the system.

Because of stepped up activities, the MAAG began in 1961 to attach technical advisory teams to ARVN base depots to assist their commanders in the operation and control of stock and storage. Each advisory team, whose members included civilian technical representatives (techreps), was considered an element of the base depot organization. Its mission was to train ARVN depot personnel in addition to working as specialists or technicians themselves. At each base depot, US advisers were paired off with ARVN section chiefs with whom they shared the same office, usually adjacent to the depot commander's.

The pair-off concept applied to work as well as to recreation. During coffee-breaks, for example, US advisers and their counterparts retired to the same officers' club or cafeteria on the base for refreshments. They usually contributed to the operation of these facilities by donating PX items as gifts such as coffee-makers, paper cups and plates, napkins, etc. Sometimes they also lived in quarters close to each other on the base. For all practical purposes, they displayed an admirable spirit of teamwork.

The only thing that usually caused disagreement between advisers and counterparts was the amount of aid equipment to be requisitioned. ARVN officers frequently complained about the excessive cutbacks made by US advisers in their requisitions; the adviser would usually cite the limitations in the aid budget without disclosing the figures, except in a few instances to prevent hard feelings.

From 1962 to 1965, with the activation of Area Logistics Commands (ALC) and in keeping with increased activities of ARVN field support units, US logistical and technical advisory teams were deployed to ALCs, field depots and direct support units. Technical advisory teams were directly controlled by the ALC's senior adviser; they served both as the senior adviser's technical staff and as advisers to ARVN logistical units. Logistical and technical advisory teams shared the same cantonement with the ALC and ARVN technical service units. In each instance, the senior

adviser was provided a separate office but his staff shared office space with ARVN personnel. This greatly facilitated communications and made daily work more effective and productive. While logistical advisers were primarily concerned with planning and staff work, technical advisers would mainly look after stock control, maintenance shop activities and the preventive maintenance performance within troop units. Staff and command visits augmented by "end use inspections" were the normal operating procedures of US advisers, whether performed separately or with the participation of ARVN counterparts. Each end-use inspection was followed by written reports but staff and command visits normally resulted only in oral reports accompanied by discussions.

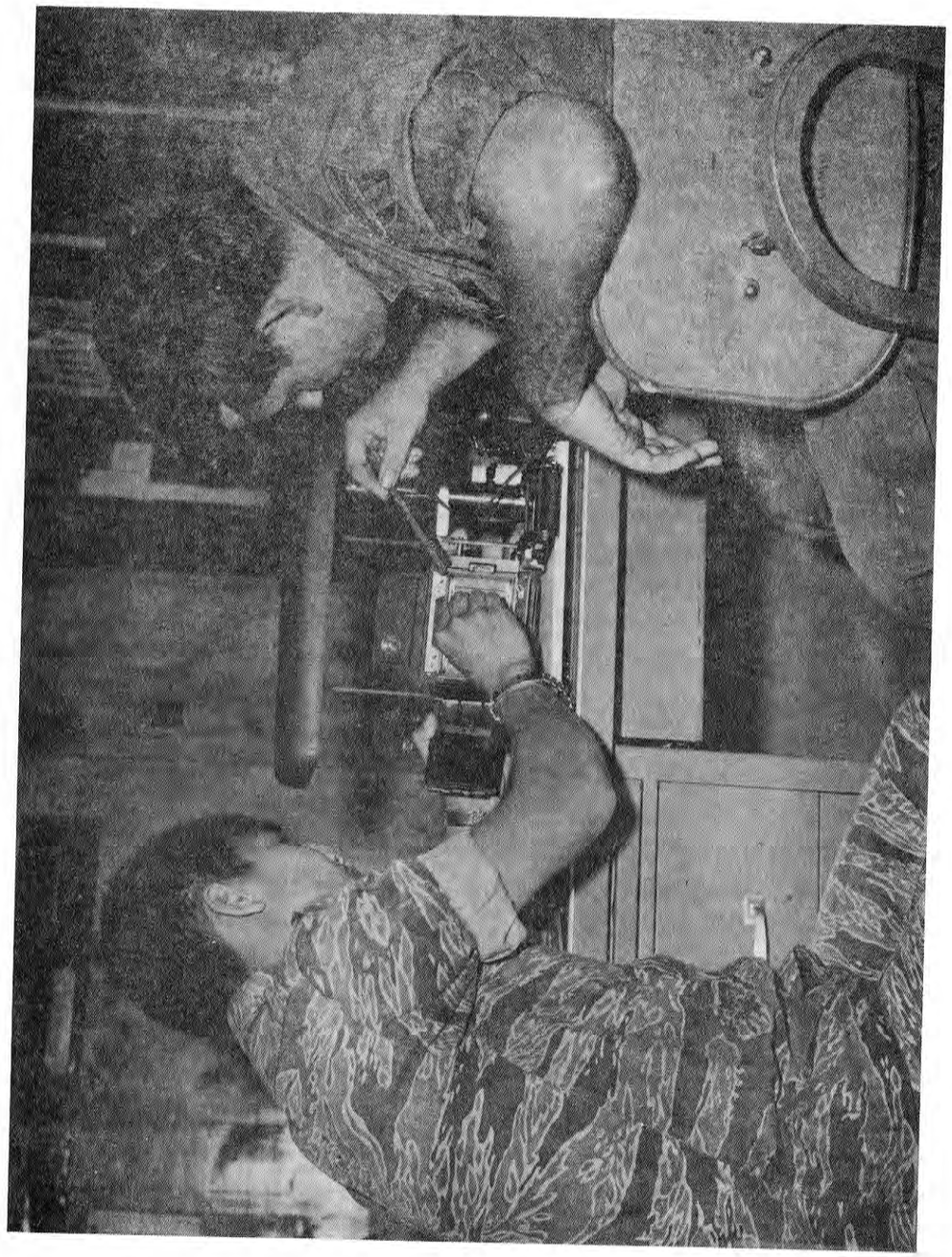
As of 1965, following the direct participation of US combat forces and the activation of the US 1st Logistical Command and US Army, Vietnam (USARV), the logistical advisory responsibility was transferred from MACV J-4 to USARV headquarters, in keeping with the service component principle. As a result, advisory teams working with ARVN technical services reported to USARV instead of MACV J-4. The problem with this new arrangement was that it did not exactly correspond to the way the Joint General Staff (JGS) of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) was organized and operated. The JGS was both a joint service and an Army general staff. Consequently, the commander of the Central Logistic Command (CLC) which was activated in 1966 to replace G-4, was both Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics of the JGS and the ARVN. In this capacity, he received advisory assistance from two US headquarters, MACV and USARV. For all practical purposes, however, the MACV logistical liaison team which had been attached to the JGS since the early days continued to function as an advisory team for the CLC; the only difference noticeable was the augmentation of its staff with personnel.

As was the case with most other ARVN agencies, the senior logistic adviser was accommodated in a separate office adjacent to the CLC commander's but his staff members were scattered among the CLC divisions, particularly the Supply and Maintenance Division, the Movement Control Division and the Base Development Division whose operations required the permanent presence of US advisers since they dealt with the

coordinated employment of both Vietnamese and American assets. In 1968, the sole responsibility for providing advisory assistance to the ARVN was assumed again by MACV J-4.

Also, as of 1965, in each of the five logistical support areas, there were US field logistical support units under the control of the US 1st Logistical Command which supported US combat units under US Field Forces. Although these field support units were not responsible for providing advisory assistance, they contributed a great deal in helping to expand the ARVN logistical support system. In particular, at the beginning of the Vietnamization program and during the following years, 1969-1972, US general and direct support units under the 1st US Logistical Command provided, through the intermediary of US advisers, on-the-job training for a large member of ARVN personnel from support units of the same or corresponding level. This training task focused on the operation and maintenance of new types of equipment and the effort was intended to prepare RVNAF to cope both with the increasing requirement for specialists and the receipt of new equipment from US combat units when they were phased out as a part of the Vietnamization program. American POL units for example received and trained ARVN field depot personnel in the operation of 5,000-gal tank trucks and fuel pumping stations. US general support units received and trained ARVN Ordnance direct support units' personnel in the maintenance of M48A3 medium tanks and 175-mm guns while ARVN engineer direct support units' personnel received training in the maintenance of road building machines and bulldozers such as DC-6 and DC7E, Rome plows and 75-ton rock crushers. ARVN signal direct support units' personnel, meanwhile, learned on the job how to maintain new types of field radio sets such as the AN/GRC-122, -106, and AN/TRC-35.

At US logistic support units, which were to transfer their operational responsibility, bases, and facilities, such as fuel pumping stations, river groups (LCM-8/LCU), floating cranes, transportation, terminals at Saigon, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and Nha Trang, integrated communications terminals and relay sations, ARVN personnel were authorized, upon completing training, to stay and work at the US bases until they eventually took over.



On-The-Job Training Provided by U.S. Photography Technician (Oct 1970)

In addition to providing on-the-job training for ARVN personnel, US Army logistic support units were also models of functional efficiency for ARVN unit commanders. For area logistics commanders in particular, the US Army Support Commands at Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, and Saigon provided them the opportunity to learn staff planning and asset management through liaison visits. US transportation battalions also provided ARVN transportation groups the opportunity to learn through combined operations how to organize truck convoys efficiently and how to manage efficiently their assets. Additionally, US Army logistic units provided effective advice to assist ARVN units in solving their temporary difficulties in supply and transportation especially for the support of combat operations.

As of 1970, in keeping with the gradual redeployment of US forces and the progress made by ARVN cadres and specialists, US logistic and technical advisers were reduced at the Area Logistics Command and unit levels. As a result, a US technical advisory team had to work with several ARVN technical service units at the same time and the team chief was no longer assigned to any particular unit but rotated among the units he advised. The team still kept a home office but this office was now installed at the direct support group or field depot headquarters or at the ALC advisory group headquarters. US advisory teams working at the central base depot echelon were little affected by the redeployment plan, however.

To keep pace with the momentum of Vietnamization, ARVN logistic units, with the assistance of US logistic and technical advisory teams, feverishly worked with US advisers and units concerning plans for the reception and operation of integrated communications, calibration, lines of communication and ports.[1] By the end of October 1972, preparatory work for the turnover of these systems accelerated to an even more hectic pace in view of a possible cease-fire agreement

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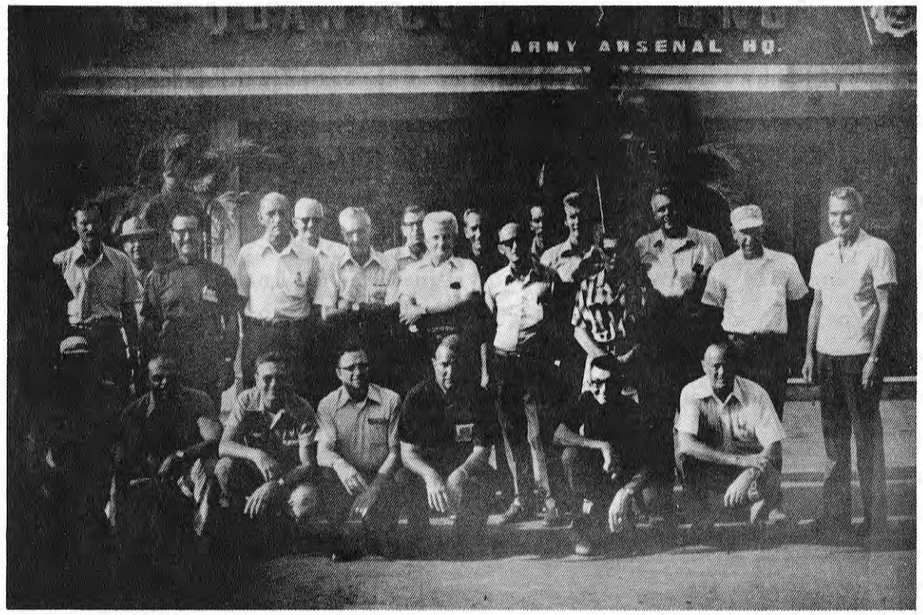
[1]The operation of major base depot maintenance facilities requires the use of advanced test, measurement and diagnostic equipment. This equipment must be precisely calibrated to be of any use. Intensive training of RVNAF personnel was necessary to prepare them to take over this vital function. For more on this subject, see pp 112-114, RVNAF Logistics, a Report in the Indochina Refugee Authored Monograph Program, by Dong Van Khuyen.

This agreement, however, did not materialize until three months later, on 27 January 1973. In full implementation of the agreement, all American advisers and military specialists were withdrawn from South Vietnam during the following two months. The US Defense Attache office (USDAO) which was activated on 28 January 1973, took over the MACV compound but not MACV advisory functions. Its responsibility was to manage the continuing Security Assistance Program in coordination and cooperation with the RVNAF. Its role was that of a co-worker, not an adviser. Due to strength limitations, imposed by the Paris Agreement, USDAO had to rely on American civilian contractors to perform certain management tasks. With the objective of facilitating cooperation, a small number of USDAO personnel and most contractor personnel were assigned to those RVNAF agencies responsible for establishing military aid requirements such as the National Materiel Management Agency (NMMA) and the Logistic Data Processing Center (LDPC) where they helped translate these requirements into a dollar program. Although they did not have advisory responsibilities, members of the USDAO and personnel representing contractors were always provided necessary management data by the ARVN agencies with which they enjoyed a close relationship. In contrast to the practice of US advisory teams, USDAO personnel and employees did not make regular visits to ARVN logistical units in the field, but they frequently received reports on ARVN activities through US consular personnel posted in each of the military regions. USDAO officers occasionally visited ARVN logistic installations in the Saigon area and in the field, sometimes as members of the tours conducted for foreign military attaches. Like the foreign attaches, they also brought along cameras and mixed well as a group. The big difference was that they asked more informed and intelligent questions and were more systematic. Despite the formal relationship occasioned by the new circumstances which prohibited the Americans from acting as advisers, ARVN logisticians placed their total confidence on USDAO officers and treated them as if they were advisers. In difficult moments, they could always count on frequent visits by USDAO officers, and this further bolstered their confidence in continued United States assistance.



Civilian Technicians and Specialists of the U.S. Army Materiel Command as Advisers to the Army Arsenal, 1972

The Base Depot Upgrade Program

During 1969, among the major tasks tackled by ARVN logisticians in an effort to improve logistical operations was the modernization of three major base depots, the 80th Ordnance, 40th Engineer and 60th Signal. This upgrade effort was aimed at increasing in-country rebuild capabilities and curtailing overseas rebuild programs. As part of the Vietnamization plan, the base depot upgrade program was a complex enterprise involving many areas of endeavor and many different agencies and organizations. To be successful, the program needed to be carefully studied and developed prior to implementation.

Major General R. Conroy, MACV-J-4 and I, as CLC commander and his counterpart, agreed to establish a combined US-ARVN committee to study the program. Chaired by Colonel McNair, senior ordnance adviser, the committee included several US and ARVN signal and engineer officers as permanent members and a few specialists of the US Army Materiel Command. After initial guidance given by both the MACV J-4 and myself during the first meeting, the committee settled down to work at the office of the senior ordnance adviser. Every month the committee reported in a joint session to General Conroy and myself concerning progress being made and received additional guidance. After three months of work, the results of the study were submitted, with our endorsement, to the Commander USMACV and Chairman of the JGS for approval.

When the program was implemented in 1970, the combined study committee was transformed into a program management committee which continued to utilize the same successful staff procedures: combined staff meetings for review of progress and joint action to obtain desired results. The committee was disbanded in early 1972 when modernization objectives had been achieved.

Funded at US $17 million, construction at the three base depots included new warehouses, rehabilitation of the existing warehouses, a refrigerated storage system, a drainage system, latrines, utilities, and road and open storage surfacing. The entire upgrade project cost US $25 million and included machinery installed in 1970 and 1971.

The program transformed the old, run-down facilities into modern industrial plants that were similar to those in the most advanced countries. Under the tutelage of the American adviser-specialists, the ARVN technicians, military as well as civilian, trained hard and learned the skills they knew they would need when the Americans departed.[2]

The ingredients of success in this program were hard work and a sincere desire to cooperate. On their part, US advisers were motivated by a desire to help the RVNAF acquire modern rebuild facilities. ARVN officers also fully devoted themselves to the task and were driven by an eargerness to learn at every stage of the program. Finally, the success of the program could be attributed to the harmonious atmosphere of cooperation in which every problem was studied and every decision made as a combined action.

Path-Finder I and Path-Finder II

During the years 1968 and 1969, ARVN logisticians were greatly encouraged from the results obtained through the reorganization of logistical support along functional lines for the infantry division. This was followed by the consolidation and automation of the RVNAF supply system through the establishment of the National Materiel Management Agency (NMMA) and the Logistic Data Processing Center (LDPC), both of which constituted the new Republic of Vietnam Automated Materiel Management System (RAMMS). Elated by this progress and in view of the eventual turnover of US logistical bases and facilities to the RVNAF, I was convinced that this was the time to reorganize the whole RVNAF logistical system along functional lines. During a meeting with Major General Maples, then MACV J-4, I outlined my idea and obtained

[2]For more on the depot upgrade program, see pp. 109-112, RVNAF Logistics, op. cit.

his concurrence for planning purposes.

At the request of MACV J-4, a group of specialists from the US Army Materiel Command came to Saigon with the specific mission of studying the feasibility of my reorganization project. The group formed a committee which became known as Path-Finder I. After two weeks of study and observation, the committee submitted its findings to MACV J-4 and the CLC. The report concluded that my proposed reorganization was entirely feasible in view of the success obtained at the division level and the availability of modern facilities which were soon to be transferred to RVNAF. It recommended the consolidation of supply base depots into three general depots to be located at (1) Da Nang, for the support of MR 1; (2) Qui Nhon, for the support of MR 2, and; (3) Long Binh, for the support of MR 3 and MR 4. At the same time, technical service field depots were to be deactivated. The committee also recommended a standardized form to be employed by direct and general support units for the purpose of evaluating and reporting achievements.

Path-Finder I's assessment and recommendations were considered rational and useful, particularly with regard to the reporting of supply activities. Both MACV J-4 and the CLC approved the use of the new reporting form and directed that the functional reorganization be planned in detail pending an appropriate opportunity for implementation.

The opportunity arrived sooner than expected because of the accelerated redeployment of US logistic agencies from South Vietnam. To implement the reorganization, Major General Jack Fuson, MACV J-4 and I agreed to establish a combined US-ARVN committee known as Path-Finder II. The committee's missions were to (1) continue the studies and review the recommendations made by Path-Finder I; (2) review the entire ARVN supply system and procedures with particular emphasis on weak areas; and (3) recommend improvements in order to bring about maximum efficiency with existing facilities.

The Path-Finder II committee was chaired by Colonel Vu Van Loc, assisted by Colonel H. W. Sheriff from the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Department of the Army. It included as members several ARVN technical service officers, MACV staff officers and American

civilian specialists in supply, storage, logistic planning, communications and automatic data processing. The committee established an office at the CLC and spent the first four weeks visiting and holding seminars in ninety logistical units across the country from the sector level to the JGS. Each month, the committee held a meeting with ARVN technical service chiefs; General Fuson and I attended as co-chairman. The meeting was intended to review progress and provide guidance for the work being done. After three months of intensive work, during which the ARVN and American logisticians worked side-by-side, the committee submitted its final report on 16 October 1972; it concurred with all Path-Finder I recommendations and presented a total of 21 recommendations of its own concerning organizational and management improvements. All recommendations were approved by MACV J-4 and the CLC.

The ARVN logisticians, who were to be charged with implementing the Pathfinder improvements, had learned much during this 90 days of intensive study of logistic organization, doctrine and operations. In intimate contact with experienced American logistics specialists, they learned by exchanging views, observation, and by sharing in the preparation of the final report.

The US element of Path-Finder II left South Vietnam upon completion of the report but the ARVN committee members were retained and given the responsibility for implementation of the improvement program until it was completed near the end of 1973. The most significant achievements were centralized and automated management under CLC, the creation of divisonal logistics battalions and the consolidation of technical service field support units, all under the functional concept.[3]

Two notable differences between the Base Depot Upgrade program and Path-Finder II mentioned above pertained to the chairmanship of the Joint committees and in program management during implementation. In

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[3]For more on Pathfinder, see pp. 139-141, RVNAF Logistics, op. cit.

Path-Finder II, the chairmanship was assumed by an ARVN officer; his deputy was an American officer who, despite an equal rank, was more senior in terms of professional experience and age. This was perhaps a unique instance during the entire process of cooperation between US advisers and ARVN logisticians. Normally, a US officer would serve as chairman or at least co-chairman of such a committee since US officers were in general more professionally experienced and knowledgeable than their younger counterparts. The merits of this unique arrangement, which was encouraged by the MACV J-4 himself, were self-evident. Responsibility helped ARVN logisticians meet the challenge and reach maturity with the backing of experienced, knowledgeable US technicians. As a result, ARVN committee members effectively managed this project until final success even though US advisers were no longer at their side. Path-Finder II was a resounding success during both the study and the implementation phases.

Observations of the U.S. Logistical Advisory Effort

Over the years, the US arrangement for advisory command and control underwent several changes as a result of the military situation, US authorized strength, and the organization of US combat forces and logistical support in South Vietnam. Apart from a gradual expansion in strength and deployment, the logistic advisory organization was at first placed under the MAAG, then under MACV control. For some time, US advisers were separately controlled by each service component: Army, Navy, Air Force, but finally control was unified under MACV J-4. Each change was made with the apparent purpose of streamlining command and control on the United States side. But the final arrangement seemed not be be in keeping with the objective for better and more effective advisory service. To ARVN logisticians, what really mattered was whether or not the arrangement provided for better and more effective support for the RVNAF. The question was: Were the RVNAF better served if US logistical and technical advisers were placed under the Commanding General of USARV or MACV J-4?

A definite advantage resulting from US advisers being placed under USARV was that field support and assistance were swifter because most US Army logistical facilities were deployed in close proximity to ARVN logistical units. Therefore, any intercession on the part of US advisers for the benefit of ARVN units, regardless of the purpose, would be direct and made easier by the fact that advisers operated within the same USARV structure. However, this arrangement seemed to be incompatible with the relationship between MACV and the JGS. First, there was no Vietnamese counterpart to USARV. The JGS was in fact both a joint staff and an Army general staff. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, JGS, therefore, performed the combined duties of J-4 of the joint staff and G-4 of the Army general staff in addition to being commander of the Central Logistics Command. In this capacity, he had to work with MACV J-4 and USARV G-4 at the same time instead of a single agency. The co-ordination and monitoring of all military assistance activities, as far as the JGS was concerned, were not facilitated by this dual arrangment. And in case a transfer of responsibility was required when USARV and US logistical units stood down for redeployment, the transition was apt to cause delays and discontinuity to logistical support activities.

On the other hand, the consolidation of all logistic and technical advisory efforts under MACV J-4, although not conducive to better support in the field, was fully compatible with the JGS organization in that it provided for a single agency responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring military assistance activities and ensured continuity in the face of eventual changes in US force structure and deployment.

Regarding advisory strength and the diversity of specialties required for the advisory effort, there was an opinion that since all requirements were initiated by the US and not actually based on RVNAF estimates, there may have been an excess in some areas of US technical advisers. That was only partially true. It was true that estimates of US advisory strength and specialties were all made by MACV (or the MAAG) and that the JGS indeed never formally asked for any specific number of advisers or specialties. But it would be wrong to say that this had never been discussed nor had any agreement been reached between

MACV and the RVN leadership concerning general logistic advisory requirements. The fact was ARVN logisticians were unable to determine the RVNAF needs in terms of advisory strength and advisory specialties for the simple reason that they had neither the experience nor the knowledge in these matters. If MACV had asked what kinds of US specialists the RVNAF would require for assistance in operating and maintaining the new M-48A3 medium tank, for example, the best that ARVN logisticians could have done was to state in very general terms that assistance in supply and maintenance would be required at all echelons, nothing more. As to a specific MOS and how many of them would be required, ARVN logisticians always considered that only the MACV staff would have both the knowledge and the experience to provide this information. As a result, specific estimates and requirements for advisory assistance were always provided by MACV.

Could there have been an excess of technical advisers? I doubt it. Being on the receiving end of US military aid and advisory assistance for over twenty years, through periods of relative calm as well as intense fighting, my colleagues and I only found a shortage, never an excess, of advisers. As has been said, for many years it was impossible for ARVN logisticians to determine the type and number of advisers required, however, it was equally true that in time, they learned to estimate their own needs in categories of specialists. Consequently, during the period 1973-1975, they contributed effectively in establishing, in cooperation with USDAO, programs for the replacement and reduction of American specialists working under contract with ARVN logistic agencies.

The effectiveness of advisers depended in a large measure on how long they stayed in their jobs. This was especially true of logistic and technical advisers. The one year tour was definitely too short for these advisers to acquaint themselves with the environment, the procedures, the human relations aspect of their assignment in order to effectively contribute their experience and know-how to the task of helping improve the RVNAF logistics system. It is my personal opinion that, now having to face the same harshness and hazards as their tactical colleagues, logistic and technical advisers would have contributed much more to the

RVNAF if their tours had been longer, 2 years at the ALC level and 3 years at the central level. But perhaps this would have placed too much of a strain on their families. A balance, therefore, should have been struck between the results desired in South Vietnam and the personal sacrifices.

The success of giving advice or receiving it is an art that depends a great deal on personal virtues and the individual's approach to human relationships. Professional competence and experience did not always make a good adviser if he was not at the same time a man of tact and good manners. Irascibility and haughtiness would not solve problems, but only make them worse. The key to success depended on flexibility, restraint and understanding. A good adviser was neither too passive nor too aggressive. He would accomplish little if he waited for his counterpart to come to him for advice and only provided it when asked. On the other hand, if by overzealousness, he flooded his counterpart with a cascade of problems, real or imagined, and aggressively told him to do this and that or tried to do everything by himself, his good intentions would be defeated. For unmeasured aggressiveness sometimes gave a counterpart the impression that he was being spied on or under scrutiny or surveillance. His self-preservation instincts would prevent him from cooperating wholeheartedly or worse, push him into rebellion and he would refuse to cooperate and let the adviser do it all.

From my experience in dealing with advisers, I think that discussions between advisers and counterparts would lead nowhere if, in the heat of debate, the advisers adamantly stuck to their positions and by criticizing the arguments of their counterparts, sought to impose their own solutions to the problem at hand. The best approach to convince counterparts in this case was tactful persuasion. If the discussion was in deadlock, the advisers could always suggest postponement and further study of the problem by both staffs. After taking time to reconsider all arguments and in the absence of immediate pressure, the counterpart would readily accept what they had earlier rejected.

To all Vietnamese and most Asian people, face is important and it is difficult to convince a RVNAF counterpart if he feels he would lose face by yielding. A useful rule of thumb for advisers was that they should never impose ideas or preconceived solutions. What they should do was to tactfully induce their counterparts to become cognizant of the problem and through suave discussions and cool persuasion, lead them to willing agreement.

Daily personal contacts between advisers and counterparts were the best and fastest means of getting things expedited at the lower levels. At higher echelons, periodic and even impromptu meetings also served well the advisory effort. But written memoranda often proved the least effective, chiefly when they were signed by a higher authority. Experience shows that these memoranda were usually received with nonchalance and some irritability by ARVN commanders despite the good words and well thought-out ideas. But if correspondence was a must to place important recommendations on record or to confirm some verbal communication with a view to keeping higher commands informed, the contents should have been thoroughly discussed with the counterpart and prior agreement achieved if possible. Only in this way, would the counterparts gladly and willingly comply with the ideas and recommendations contained in the official letter. The important thing was to avoid taking the counterpart by surprise with the unexpected.

During the first few years of the advisory effort, however, written memoranda were the only working instrument for US advisers. It was a transitional period during which ARVN logisticians were still not familiar with the American language and methods. In these circumstances, written suggestions and recommendations became necessary and useful. But as ARVN officers became proficient with the language and thoroughly familiarized themselves with American doctrine and techniques through US manuals or courses at US service schools, they preferred to deal with advisers directly rather than through written communications.

Personal contacts between the US senior adviser and his counterpart at either one's office also provided a good opportunity to discuss the problems of leadership or efficiency concerning the counterpart's subordinates. Since this was a delicate matter, it could not be the subject of an exchange of letters but kept confidential and informal between the two principles. Most subjects of leadership brought up by US advisers usually pertained to commendations of meritorious ARVN personnel, weaknesses of ARVN commanders, misuse of equipment, inefficient control, and of supply pilferage.

With regard to personnel commendations, US advisers were extremely straightforward in recommending promotions or awards for those ARVN personnel they considered particularly deserving. As to the question of an ARVN commander's weaknesses, the subject was usually tactfully brought up with the implication that it was up to the ARVN to decide. US advisers usually abstained from recommending disciplinary measures or relief from command as a remedy but despite their customary hands-off policy, they usually kept a close eye on ARVN-initiated measures to correct situations until there was a significant improvement or the officer in question improved or was replaced. US advisers had to contend with the fact their suggestions to remove some unworthy commander were seldom acted on immediately. The ARVN procedures for removal involved lengthy investigations and the faulty commander was always given a chance to improve. Only when improvement failed to materialize were disciplinary measures taken which might include removal from office.

Problems of equipment misuse and lack of control were usually discussed by US advisers and substantiated by photos or local and foreign press articles. These cases involved such irregularities as private use of military vehicles, pilferage at ports or sale of military gasoline. Particularly during the years of US force redeployment, US advisers complained about widespread vehicle thefts from American units, mostly utility vehicles and prime movers. They sought to enlist the cooperation of ARVN logisticians and Vietnamese authorities to curtail military vehicle thefts and gain more effective control of the commercial vehicles used by US forces. The most important statement on this subject was by a high-ranking US adviser during one of our meetings:

> Losses and pilferages during the course of clearing up a war are a normal thing. This is true of any war anywhere. I only ask that you do your best to help stop this vice and return to our forces whatever lost items you happen to find. But if there is nothing you can do, then Vietnamese authorities should be alerted to keep these lost materiels from being sold abroad. In this way, you can help both curtail the drain of foreign currency and contribute toward restoring the national economy.

The subjects of misuse, abuse or theft of military property were only briefly raised by US advisers and never discussed at length. US advisers also deliberately avoided using the term "corruption" in conversations. It was as if they felt the allusion to corruption was untactful and might hurt ARVN logisticians' feelings. But it was true that ARVN logisticians were never self-conscious about the subject whenever it was brought up. Indeed, they always admitted, without irascibility, the existence of corruption as an inevitable social vice occasioned by a long, destructive war and general impoverishment. They always appreciated the concern of US advisers about this debilitating vice that they themselves and the RVNAF in general tried hard to combat and eradicate. So it was with full cognizance of the problem, with candor and openness that ARVN logisticians discussed corruption with US advisers and even asked for their cooperation in combating it. During the intensive anti-corruption drive, US advisers were always kept informed of investigative results and disciplinary measures being taken. But US advisers seemed to make a point of never making allegations nor helping identify any corrupt individual on the basis of hearsay or rumors. In fact, they abstained altogether from providing names.

Some advisers were too reticent about reporting what they believed to be instances of misuse or misdirection of equipment or supplies. On the other hand, others saw it as part of their mission to observe and report on how US-supplied military assistance was being employed and they tactfully reported irregularities to their counterparts. In cases where they believed the counterpart might himself be involved, the proper course would have been to see to it that the counterpart's superior was made aware of the matter. In all instances where allegations

of this nature were made, prompt and fair investigations were ordered by the ARVN authorities and appropriate action followed.

Field visits regularly conducted by US advisers and ARVN counterparts were by far the best and most effective means of getting things accomplished. Such "pair-off" visits not only helped US advisers, and ARVN counterparts to obtain a clear understanding of unit activities, achievements and problems, but they also provided excellent examples of cooperation and inspired confidence among subordinates by the extent of concern and solicitation with which US advisers helped ARVN units overcome difficulties, especially with the supplies that only US advisers could provide. Apart from joint visits, US advisers frequently made separate visits to ARVN units where they were also warmly welcomed.

Other effective devices of advisory assistance were monthly or quarterly full-fledged staff meetings during which the senior adviser, his ARVN counterpart and staff members of both sides reviewed progress made by units, discussed shortcomings and decided on actions to be taken. These meetings helped pinpoint and analyze ARVN weaknesses and place emphasis on measures required for remedy or improvement.

With regard to important and extensive problems requiring careful study and research, experience revealed that full cooperation under the form of combined study committees worked far better than if the problem was tackled separately by each side. The question of who chaired the committee was insignificant as long as principles and working methods were jointly established and approved. Reciprocity and mutual respect were the keys to success in these ventures and were consistently applied to every phase of the project, whether it was progress review or providing guidance for the next step. If a committee chairman was required, I felt this position should be assumed by the side who was actually responsible for implementing the project. This not only made sense politically, it was also psychologically sound since once given the primary management responsibility, ARVN officers were naturally inclined to work harder, and were more deeply involved in obtaining success. They were also able to learn more, make progress and gain self-reliance which after all was exactly what the advisory effort sought to achieve.

A prerequisite of good management was the adequacy of information. By contrast with US advisers who were usually supplied with all required information concerning ARVN logistical activities either by ARVN logistical units or through their own system, ARVN personnel were usually denied management information by the US side. Vietnamese logisticians resented this fact but could not explain it to themselves except by assuming that the Americans were bound by security regulations which forbade them to disclose certain management data to ARVN counterparts. A case in point was information related to the Military Assistance Program and other special programs of military aid. ARVN logisticians were usually kept in the dark as to annual appropriations and quarterly allocations to each technical service. As a consequence, ARVN logisticians were unable to make timely decisions and take appropriate actions in keeping with authorized capabilities. In time, they developed the idea that US resources were inexhaustible and tended to request far more than was actually needed. They did so with the sure expectation that the advisers would cut the requests to fit the program.

During the post-cease-fire period, 1973-1975, the need for management data required by USDAO and the CLC became more acute since they were both held responsible for justifying military aid requests and had to be prepared to face eventual cutbacks. The type of information that had previously been supplied by US advisers was no longer available. As a result, USDAO depended on ARVN logisticians for information. Since military aid was a matter of life and death to the RVNAF, USDAO felt that there should be very close cooperation and that we should share the responsibility for results obtained. Consequently, USDAO gave ARVN logisticians all the management data required. This cooperation took the form of a management data center installed at both USDAO and the CLC during the second half of 1974 with the objective of exploiting all data pertaining to the RVNAF and US military aid. The center became a meeting place for the US Defense Attache and the CLC commander to discuss and solve the many problems occasioned by US military aid cutbacks. The success with which USDAO and the CLC kept the RVNAF adequately supplied on the battlefield, although not at a level comparable to previous

periods, could be attributed to the adequacy and timeliness of management data supplied by both sides.

Some Lessons Learned

United States advisers were assigned an exalted but most difficult task. To succeed in this task, they had to perform it with tact and diplomacy. On the other hand, making full use of each adviser's service was not easy either. It required the same ingredients for success from the Vietnamese.

In addition to human relations and cooperation, two factors seemed to affect the effectiveness of the US advisory effort to a certain degree: language and culture, and standing operating procedures concerning US advisers. But despite its limiting effect on communication, the problem of language was effectively solved through the use of interpreters and a constant effort by ARVN personnel to learn to speak English. Language, therefore, was eventually no big problem. The understanding of local customs and manners naturally helped US advisers establish good rapport with Vietnamese counterparts. The same could be said of Vietnamese officers if they knew American customs and manners. If both were able to understand each other culturally, then mutual respect and affection would develop naturally.

As previously mentioned, during the 20 years of benefiting from the US advisory effort, the RVNAF published only two short memoranda, in 1955 and 1958, concerning the relationship of US advisers and ARVN officers. From 1958 on the US-ARVN relationship was the subject of no further directives or instructions. This was indeed an omission of great consequence which gave rise to many unsettled complaints by both sides. Some ARVN commanders thought that US advisers spied on them while some US advisers contended that ARVN commanders deliberately withheld information concerning their units. But these complaints would have been infrequent had a comprehensive set of instructions been published by the JGS telling each ARVN officer exactly what to do and how to benefit from the program. It was indeed regrettable that this subject was neglected.

The fact that most US officers selected for advisory assignments had to attend an orientation course in the US prior to reporting overseas was an excellent means to prepare them for advisory duties. But US logistic advisers could have benefited even more if a similar but shorter course had been conducted in Vietnam under the CLC sponsorship. Such a course would have greatly enhanced the US adviser's knowledge in terms of Vietnamese culture, the RVNAF logistic structure, operations, and dissimilarities with the US system. Such a course would have made US advisers thoroughly conversant with current programa and problems and the most effective techniques to be used. It certainly would have made the US advisory effort more successful.

An orientation program for advisers such as this could have been jointly prepared and updated by MACV J-4 and the CLC. Lectures on important subjects could have been given by the MACV J-4 and the CLC commander or by both ARVN and US staff members. If properly conducted, such a program would have had a tremendous effect on the RVNAF logistical system since it emphasized the ARVN interest in the advisory system and inspired a strong cooperative spirit among ARVN logisticians.

Before terminating his tour of advisory duties, each adviser should have been required to write and end-of-tour report to record with candor his own assessment of performance and results and the strengths and weaknesses of the unit he had advised with particular emphasis on special areas for improvement. This report should have been made available to his successor who could have used it as a basis for continuing what had been achieved between him and his counterpart. Copies of this report should also have been sent to MACV and the JGS to serve as confidential documents on which to base actions and plans for future improvement. Such end-of-tour reports were indeed made by all senior advisers upon their depature from South Vietnam but unfortunately they were not made available to the JGS.

In conclusion, the logistical advisory system as it was established for the benefit of the RVNAF was extremely effective and entirely responsive to our requirements. Despite a difficult task, logistical

advisers always accomplished their missions and duly earned the respect and enthusiastic cooperation of ARVN logisticians. The allegation that US advisers acted as policemen only existed among a few near-sighted ARVN commanders who invariably were either incompetent or lacked confidence. In any case, the major offense of US advisers in the eyes of Vietnamese was perhaps an overanxious propensity for immediate results and overzealousness. US advisers were indeed indispensable to the RVNAF as long as we depended on US war materiels. The quantity and categories of advisers of course could vary according to the progress and experience gained by ARVN logisticians, but the RVNAF could not get along without American military aid budget managers and supply and maintenance managers at the central level whenever new types of equipment entered the RVNAF inventory.

CHAPTER VI

The Pacification Adviser

The U.S. Response to Insurgency

Only one year after the Geneva Armistice was signed in 1954, which allowed South Vietnam to stand on its own pending reunification, the Communists initiated subversive activities. As early as July 1955, signs of security deterioration were appearing in the provinces of Quang Tri and Quang Nam. In October of the same year during the country-wide referendum, many polling stations were targets of sabotage.[1] Then in 1957 there was a significant increase in guerrilla operations, assassinations, kidnappings, and sabotage directed primarily against GVN officials in the countryside. By the fall of 1959, the insurgents seemed to have gained the upper hand despite all security measures taken by the Government of Vietnam; their actions gradually became bolder. In September 1959, they ambushed two companies of the 23d Infantry Division in the Duc My area and in early 1960, they launched attacks against the rear base of another division located in Tay Ninh. It was obvious that GVN control was eroding and the cities were being isolated from the countryside where the Communists seemed to be able to operate freely.

In the face of this mounting crisis, US officials in Saigon began to show more concern for security in the rural areas and improving GVN representation and control. The US Ambassador, together with the Chief, MAAG and other senior officials of the "Country Team," developed a

[1]This referendum resulted in a vote of confidence for Ngo Dinh Diem and the rejection of Bao Dai as chief of state.

Counterinsurgency Plan outlining the political, military and economic efforts required to help the GVN combat insurgency. Many reforms, mostly political and social, recommended by the US-conceived plan unfortunately were ignored by the Diem administration. Militarily, however, the GVN was eager to accept an expansion of the US advisory effort and increased military aid. The US Military Assistance Advisory Group immediately placed new emphasis on counterinsurgency training and began attaching field advisers to ARVN battalions on a selective basis. At the end of 1960, the MAAG also initiated training and support for the Civil Guard and People's Militia. In addition, US Special Forces teams undertook the training of the newly-created ARVN Ranger companies. It was very obvious at that time that the US was increasing its commitment in South Vietnam.

After President John F. Kennedy took office in January 1961, his new administration increased support for the RVN in the face of stepped up Communist aggression. The formation of the National Liberation Front (NLF) which was announced in Hanoi in December the previous year left no doubt as to North Vietnam's ultimate objective in the South. Soon after the visit of Major General Edward G. Landsdale to South Vietnam in January, the United States Government created an interdepartmental action group known as Task Force, Vietnam, with the mission of studying, planning and coordinating actions for the support of South Vietnam against the Viet Cong. In Saigon, a corresponding task force was also established; it included all members of the country team.[2]

The security situation throughout South Vietnam, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate. During a twelve-month period ending in May 1961, there were well over 4,000 GVN officials at the grass-roots level killed by Communists. In September, during an attack against the provincial city of Phuoc Thanh, the Communists employed a concentrated force of several battalions. It was obvious that the war of insurgency being

[2]Major General George S. Eckhardt, Command and Control, 1950-1969, Vietnam Studies (Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.: 1974) pp. 20-22.

waged by the Communists in South Vietnam had taken on a double aspect: that of guerrilla warfare augmented by conventional attacks. To assist in countering this double crisis, the GVN instituted the strategic hamlet program, its first politically-cohesive pacification effort to combat insurgency and restore control over the countryside. At the same time, a mission to South Vietnam headed by General Maxwell D. Taylor recommended a further increase in US advisory effort and combat support, continued expansion of the RVNAF, and support of the GVN strategic hamlet program. These proposals provided a new direction and emphasis to the US military effort during the following years. To improve command and control of the expanding effort, the United States established the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) and assigned General Paul D. Harkins as its first commander on 8 February 1962.

At this time it appeared that United States support for RVN in terms of advisory assistance for pacification and security was operated by and channeled into two uncoordinated systems: civilian and military. The US Ambassador received from the US State Department policy guidance as it pertained to political and economic problems while the MACV commander was responsible for military matters and reported to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINPAC). However, as the senior US representative in South Vietnam, the US Ambassador had the overall responsibility of coordinating and supervising all American efforts, military and civilian. His relationship with the MACV commander was one of coordination, consultation and information; all disagreements between the two were to be referred to Washington.[3]

Until the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963, the strategic hamlet program received only modest support from the United States on the civilian side. At the start of Operation "Binh Minh" (Sunrise), which launched the program in March 1962 in Binh Duong

[3] Ibid, p. 29.

Province, for example, the United States Operations Mission (USOM) initially supplied only $300,000 for support of resettled families. Another type of contribution was the printing by USIS of a small pamphlet depicting the new "Good Life" in strategic hamlets. But military support for the program was much more significant in that it nearly doubled the force structure of territorial forces, so vital to the maintenance of security in the provinces and districts, to a total of 108,000 in addition to providing them with proper training and equipment. However, the political instability that immediately followed President Diem's overthrow in late 1963 almost shoved the pacification effort into complete disarray.

In the face of this setback and increased Communist subversive activities, the US decided to revitalize its support and dispatched a new team to South Vietnam composed of Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, Deputy Ambassador Alexis Johnson and General William C. Westmoreland. Together with the Directors of the US Agency for International Development (USAID, Formerly USOM), the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO, which absorbed USIS in its organization), and the Office of the Special Assistant to the Ambassador (OSA or CIA), the new team formed what was known as the "Mission Council." Like its predecessor, the Task Force, the Mission Council served as an advisory body for the US Ambassador. At about the same time, MACV also established a new staff division, the Rural Development Support Division to respond more efficiently to support requirements for pacification.

The deterioration of security throughout South Vietnam reached such proportions in late 1964 that the US introduced combat troops for the ground war and in 1965 began a sustained bombing campaign of North Vietnam. Consequently, the immediate danger of South Vietnam's collapse was averted and with improvement in the military situation, there was a need for further consolidating US activities in support of pacification. When Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was reassigned to Saigon in early 1966, he placed Deputy Ambassador William J. Porter in charge of coordinating all pacification support activities. In Washington, President Johnson appointed Mr. Robert W. Komer as his special assistant to look after the

"other war" in Vietnam. Later in the year, the US Embassy created the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) in an effort to consolidate the activities of all US civil agencies in support of pacification. On the military side, MACV elevated its Revolutionary Development (RD) Support Division into a Directorate and assigned a general officer as director. Also, to increase civil-military coordination, another general officer was assigned to the office of Deputy Ambassador Porter.

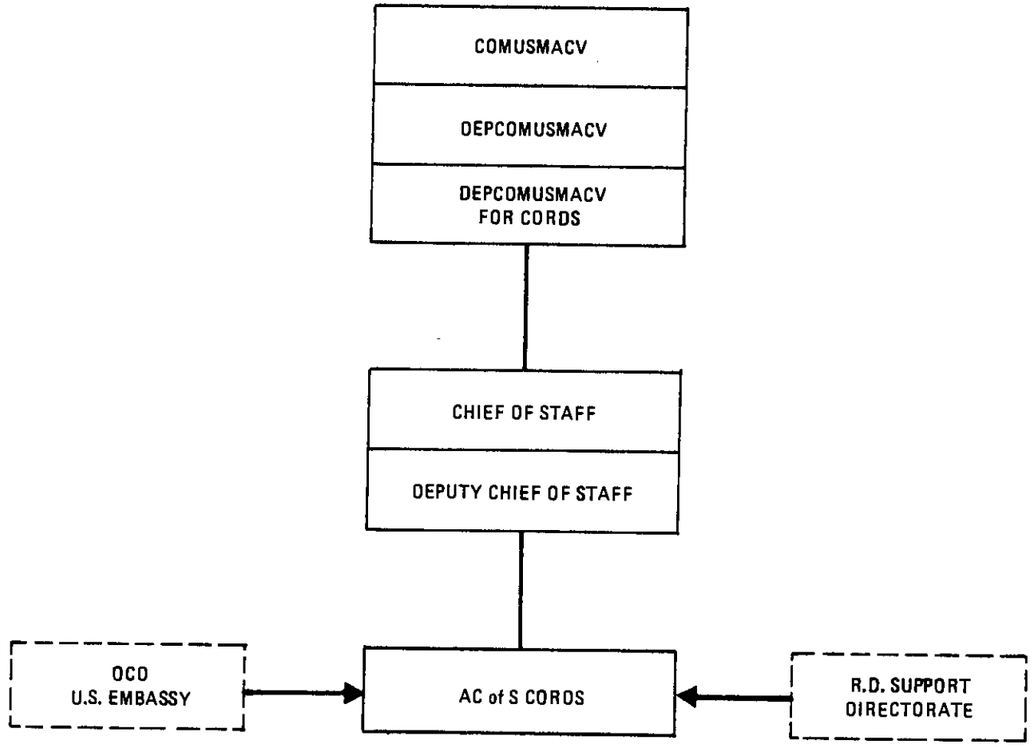
CORDS Organization and Operations

As the fighting escalated, it became obvious that progress in pacification depended primarily on the military effort; it was impossible to pacify a rural area in the face of an enemy battalion. Its prospects of success necessarily depended on effective coordination of civil and military operations. Recognizing this need for an unified effort, President Johnson in early 1967 placed the MACV commander in charge of all pacification support activities, a move which was announced by the new US Ambassador, Ellsworth Bunker, in May 1967. The Office of Civil Operations was merged with the MACV RD Support Directorate to form the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (ACS/CORDS), headed by a civilian. At the same time, Mr. Robert W. Komer, Presidential Assistant, was appointed Deputy Commander MACV for CORDS with ambassadorial rank. *(Chart 9)*

The advent of CORDS and the new arrangement for command and control within MACV represented a unique effort especially tailored to the requirements of the war being fought. Perhaps this was a major test to see whether civilian and military elements could mesh together in an integrated effort designed to provide support for a special aspect of the war. An unprecedented arrangement, CORDS quickly solved and eliminated all problems which usually characterized civilian and military organizations working together.

The CORDS organization also reflected a certain flexibility of response in the face of complex requirements occasioned by the pacification task. Its staff elements were in charge of supporting almost all

Chart 9 – CORDS in MACV Command Channel



the major GVN programs associated with pacification. Other specialized areas such as economic development, agriculture, farm credit, land reform, etc. continued to be supported by USAID. *(Chart 10)*

At the corps tactical zone level (military region after 1970), a similar arrangement was instituted. The senior advisers — III Marine Amphibious Force and Field Forces I, II commanders and the commander, Delta Military Assistance Command — were each assigned a civilian Deputy for CORDS and their CORDS staff organizations were also a mixture of civilian and military personnel under the control of his Assistant Chief of Staff for CORDS. *(Chart 11)*

The Deputy for CORDS was responsible for the establishment and implementation of all plans and operations in support of the GVN pacification program, including civil operations conducted by US units within the CTZ/Region. The Deputy Senior Adviser assisted him with problems concerning the ARVN forces employed in pacification support.

The Division Tactical Area (DTA) or Special Zone (SZ) was a level immediately under the CTZ/Region in the pacification support structure. However, its role was tactically oriented and mostly confined to providing regular force units for the support of pacification. In 1970, the DTA was abolished and as of that time ARVN infantry divisions no longer played a direct role in the conduct of pacification. As a result, US tactical advisers assigned to ARVN divisions were not as active in pacification activities.

By far the most important and extensive organizations for pacification support was the US advisory effort at the province and district level. As early as 1962, following President Kennedy's decision for increased emphasis, US military advisers were deployed to all provinces at the same time as USOM field representatives. The need for increased assistance in restoring security during the following year led MACV to test-assign US advisers to the 13 districts surrounding Saigon in April 1964 as the Hop Tac pacification campaign was launched in this area. Results produced by this pilot program proved so encouraging that two months later, the US Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, concluded that more districts should have advisers. By the end of 1965, when the

Chart 10 — Organization, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for CORDS, MACV

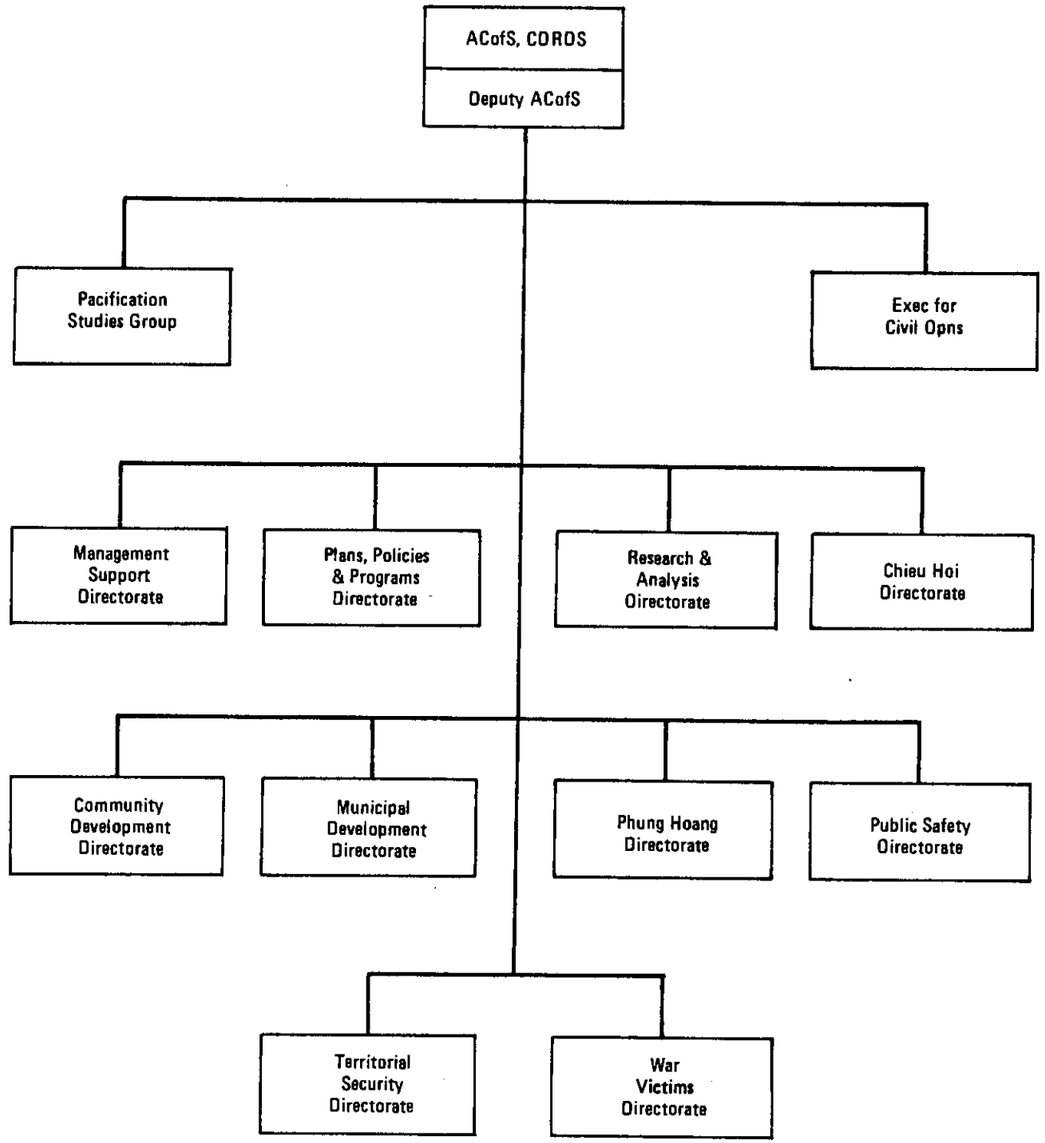
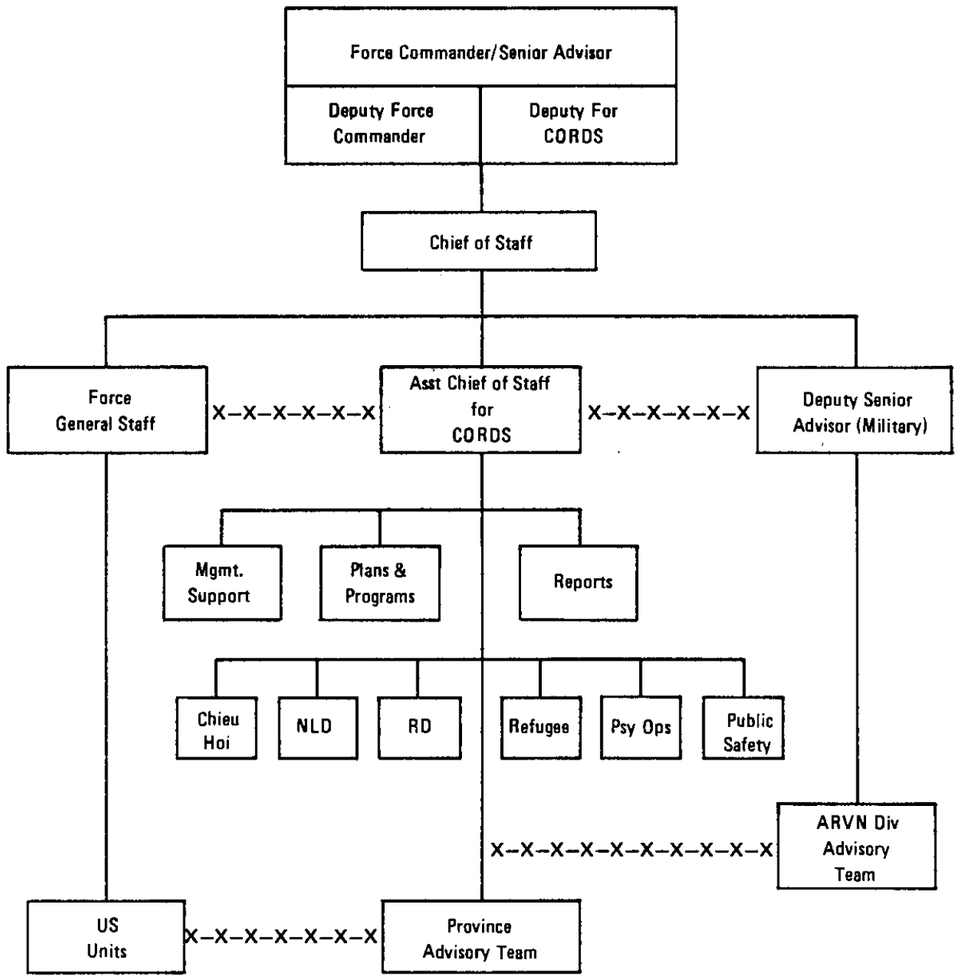


Chart 11 — Organization, CTZ/Region CORDS



X–X–X Coordination – Military and CORDS matters.

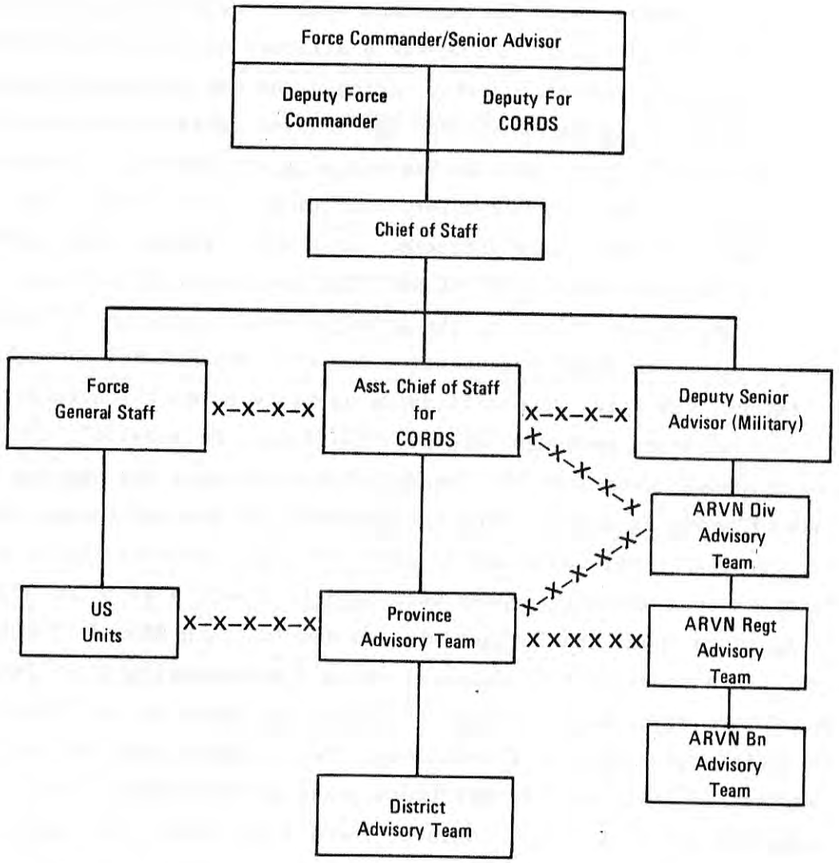
RVNAF assumed the primary role of pacification support, the total number of US advisers had increased substantially in provinces and districts.

With the advent of CORDS in May 1967, the US civilian and military advisory efforts at the province and district levels began to consolidate into a single organization. The province senior adviser could be a military officer or a civilian. If he was a military officer, his deputy would be a civilian, and vice versa. Although he was the senior adviser to the Vietnamese province chief, the specialized advisers who made up his staff were authorized, each in his own area of interest, to make recommendations to the province chief. At the district level, most senior advisers were military officers. When ARVN regular force units operated in a province in support of pacification, their US advisers were operationally controlled by the province senior adviser. *(Chart 12)*

By the time the CORDS organization was well established throughout South Vietnam, the total US pacification advisory strength included about 4,000 military personnel and 800 civilians. By mid-1967, these figures increased even more but the additional strength was devoted to the task of advising and training the Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF, formerly Civil Guard and People's Militia, respectively). Most of the additional advisory spaces were used to create a total of 353 Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT) whose mission was to train RF and PF units. Each MAT was authorized two officers, three non-commissioned officers and one interpreter; it was tasked to train from three to six RF companies and an additional number of PF platoons. The training provided by these MATs emphasized small unit combat tactics and pacification support. At the same time Mobile Advisory Logistic Teams (MALT) were also organized to help improve logistical support for the RF and PF.

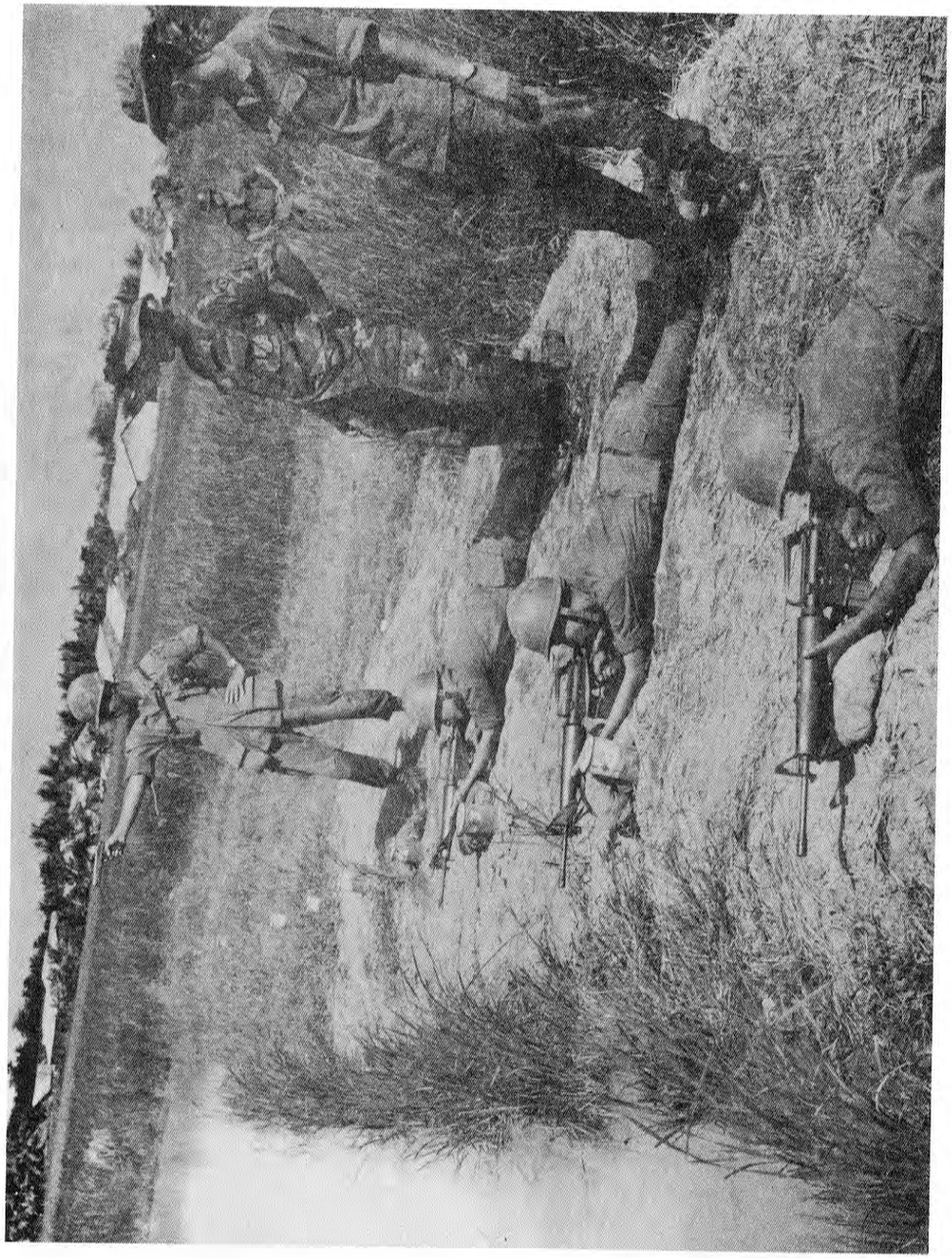
In addition to field advisers attached to provinces and districts and mobile advisory teams, the US pacification advisory effort also included training advisers assigned to RF and PF training centers across the country, and by extension, the Marine squads that participated in the Combined Action Program in I Corps area and the US Special Forces personnel who advised and trained the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG). The accomplishments of the Combined Action Program and the CIDGs will be discussed later in this chapter.

Chart 12 — Advisory Relationships, Corps, Province and District Levels



X–X–X–X Coordination – Military and CORDS matters.

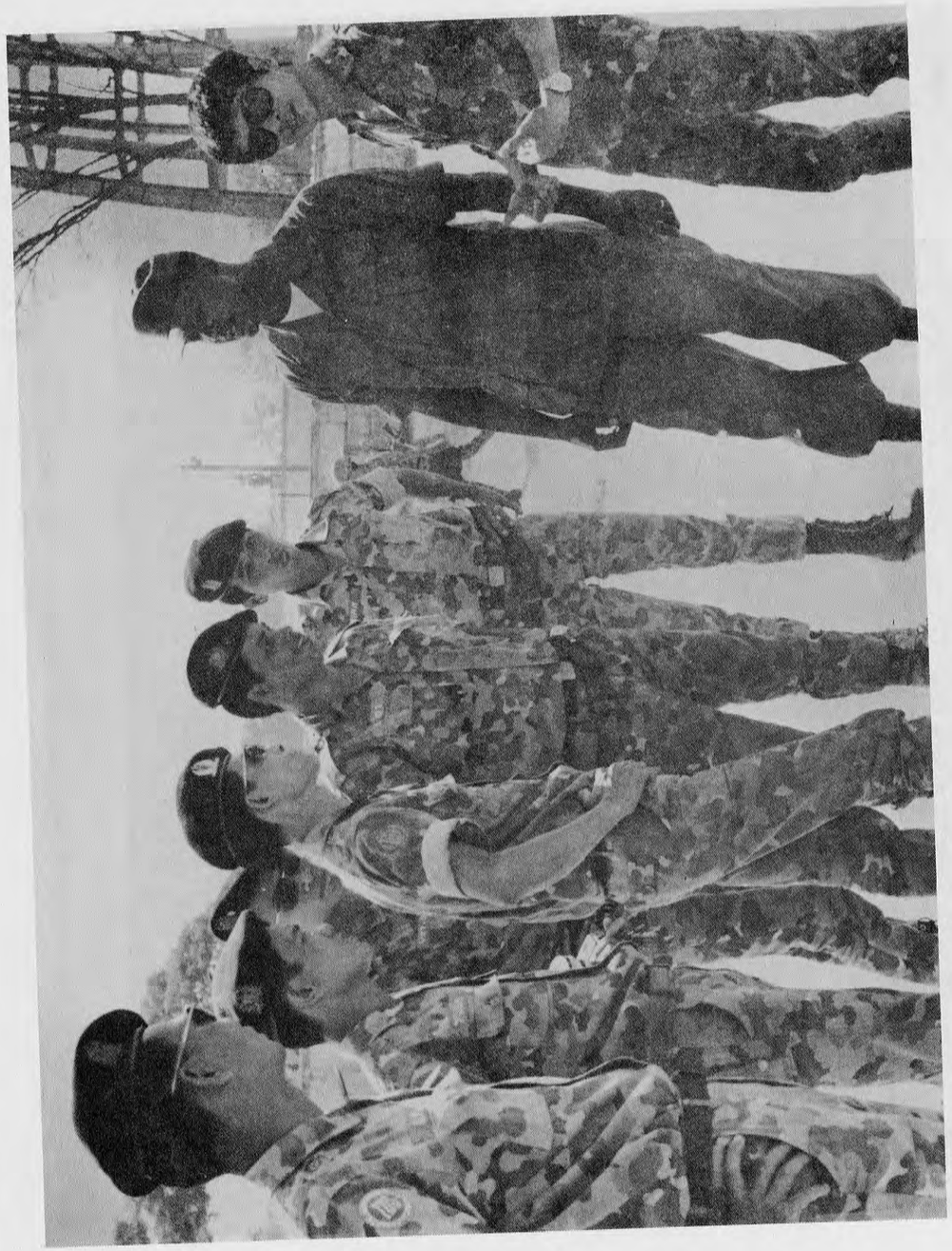
XXXXXXX Operational Control when unit assigned on RD direct support mission.



MAT in Action:
On a Firing Range with PF Troops (Long An, December 1970)

MAT Members Checking Targets After PF Troops Practice
Firing the M-16 Rifle (Long An, Dec 1970)

A First-Aid Class for PF Troopers by MAT Member (Dec 1970)



MAT Member as Adviser to Vietnamese NP Field Force
(Da Nang, 1970)

By 1969, total US advisory strength in South Vietnam was about 16,000, including 1,000 civilians. By mid-1969, US Army advisers alone numbered about 13,500, including 6,500 in CORDS organizations; 95% of these pacification advisers were assigned to field duties outside Saigon, to provinces and districts and to mobile advisory teams. This was perhaps the greatest emphasis ever devoted by the US in support of the RVN pacification program.

After the cease-fire of 28 January 1973, as US military units were phased out, MACV was dissolved and replaced by the US Defense Attache Office (USDAO) whose mission was to continue to manage the Security Assistance Program for the RVN. The CORDS organization was terminated at the same time as the United States advisory effort. Those CORDS functions related to economic affairs and development were transferred to USAID. To supervise and coordinate civilian operations across South Vietnam, the US Embassy created the Office of the Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations (SAAFO).

At each of the military regions, a US Consulate General was established which absorbed all the residual elements of regional CORDS. At the district level, all advisory teams were redeployed after the cease-fire. The province advisory teams, however, were consolidated into 20 area offices after the removal of military personnel. Each area office was responsible for civil operations within from two to four provinces except for the more important provinces such as Binh Dinh which was covered by one area office. But area offices were subsequently disbanded and finally the US presence in each RVN province was reduced to a small "civilian liaison team."

Relations and Contributions

American aid and assistance provided to South Vietnam immediately after 1954 effectively assisted the nascent nation in overcoming its initial difficulties. With this aid, South Vietnam was able to resolve many of its economic problems, especially those concerned with the resettlement of nearly one million North Vietnamese refugees fleeing South.

These accomplishments, coupled with a considerable reduction in internal dissention, gave the new administration of Ngo Dinh Diem a solid basis of popular consent. And after regaining political stability by defeating rebellious sects and setting aside the difficult problem of reunification for the moment, the RVN was well on its way toward healing the wounds of war and developing its national economy.

To achieve its national goals, the RVN desperately needed US economic and technical assistance. Through the United States Embassy in Saigon and its specialized agencies, the US systematically channeled aid required into programs undertaken by the GVN ministries. However, North Vietnam was determined that its foe south of the 17th parallel would not develop too rapidly. Subversive and sabotage activities directed from the North increased throughout South Vietnam. To counter this growing Communist threat, the Ngo Dinh Diem government implemented certain anti-subversive measures involving some degree of participation by the total population. But US support did not become deeply involved in such political programs as People's Action, Communist Denunciation and even in developmental projects such as Agrovilles and Land Reform. It was obvious that during this time, the emphasis of US aid was more economic than military.

Indeed, owing much to American financial and economic aid, the RVN was able not only to overcome its budgetary deficits but also to initiate several economic development projects. As a result, productivity in rice, rubber and several secondary crops and cattle breeding was slowly but consistently on the rise. Rice production in 1959, for example, reached the 5 million ton mark, doubling the figure of 1954. At the same time, roads, canals, railways, and ports were rehabilitated or reconstructed to assist in providing a strong economic infrastructure.

On the other hand, in cooperation with the Vietnamese General Staff, the MAAG devoted its efforts to building, training and modernizing the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. Predicated on its experience of the Korean War, the US provided support for a conventional 150,000-man force, predominantly army and composed of well equipped infantry divisions. All organization, equipping, and training efforts were directed toward the objective of countering an overt, conventional invasion from North Vietnam.

By the early 1960's, the Communist subversive threat had become so critical that the United States increased its assistance to the RVN. To help the RVN fight the unconventional war, the MAAG agreed in mid-1960 to support and train Ranger companies and subsequently Ranger battalions. In Saigon, the Country Team under the US Ambassador's direction, developed a Counter-Insurgency (CI) plan which was perhaps the first cohesive and determined effort aimed at meeting the insurgent challenge. Among other things, this CI plan recommended a 20,000-man increase in the RVNAF force structure and some reforms in the security-keeping apparatus of the RVN.

The Counter-Insurgency plan was approved by Washington as soon as President Kennedy took office in early 1961. The ARVN was therefore increased to 170,000. Also, in keeping with the plan, the US provided support for an authorized 68,000-man Civil Guard and a 40,000-man People's Militia (these forces were eventually redesignated Regional and Popular Forces, respectively). Subsequently, the US signed with President Ngo Dinh Diem a Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations and sent Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson on an official visit. In rapid succession, two fact-finding missions, one led by Dr. Eugene Stanley and the other by General Maxwell D. Taylor and Dr. Walt W. Rostow, confirmed the US determination to pursue its economic and military support for the RVN along the lines suggested by the CI plan. More US advisers were assigned to ARVN units and the revitalized territorial forces. By the end of 1961, all the RVN provinces had received an advisory team, to include civilian advisers.

In 1962, the revised CI plan became the Comprehensive Plan for South Vietnam. Its principal goal was to support the Strategic Hamlet program which had been conceived by the Diem administration in late 1961. With increased American aid, and the development of strategic hamlets, the general security situation throughout South Vietnam by the end of 1962 had taken on a brighter outlook.

But the prospects were soon darkened by the Buddhist uprising in the summer of 1963 which led to the coup of 1 November 1962 in which President Diem was killed. During the rapid succession of military governments which followed, South Vietnam was edged into a period of utter political instability and turmoil which found the Strategic Hamlet

program disrupted and finally neglected. The countryside, therefore, was plunged again into insecurity despite US advisory and assistance efforts.

As the situation deteriorated, US authorities in Saigon became more concerned with pacification but it was impossible for pacification to make desired progress as long as the regime remained shaky. The "Victory Plan" which was implemented in 1964 did not achieve any significant results. Also, the Hop Tac pacification campaign around Saigon was not fully successful because of the lack of interest among GVN pacification authorities. But the US experiment of assigning advisers to districts did prove successful and soon developed into an extensive program.

During the years following 1965, while US combat troops were pouring into South Vietnam, US authorities also endeavored to help the GVN solve its pacification problems. But during the initial period of US buildup and subsequent intensification of the fighting, most resources were devoted to the military effort which outwardly overshadowed the "other war." However, as the GVN regained political stability when Generals Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky were installed in power, pacification became again a matter of national priority with the creation of the Ministry of Rural Construction. During the Honolulu Conference of February 1966, RVN leaders expressed their special concern over pacification and the US promptly gave its commitment for additional support. Under the US-inspired idea of Revolutionary Development, the Ministry of Rural Construction (also called Revolutionary Development) headed by Major General Nguyen Duc Thang set about organizing cadre teams and establishing a large training center at Vung Tau for training personnel. At the same time, USAID channeled substantial funds into "New Life" development projects and also began helping the National Police activate its Field Police forces. Major General Edward G. Landsdale was designated by Ambassador Lodge as senior adviser to General Thang for the revolutionary development effort.

As US and RVNAF forces were gaining the upper hand in military operations across the country, US authorities also kept the pressure on

the GVN to emphasize its pacification effort more vigorously. At the Manila Conference in October 1966, South Vietnamese leaders were willing to commit up to 60% of ARVN infantry battalions to the task of pacification support. The Combined Campaign Plan for 1967 (AB-142), translated this idea into action and formally assigned the primary mission of pacification support to the ARVN. Subsequently, ARVN infantry battalions underwent special training courses in pacification support in order to be able to carry out this mission more successfully.

Concurrently, on the US side, a significant effort was made to consolidate advisory and support activities. First, the Office of Civil Operations was created in late 1966. It was soon superseded by CORDS, a new civil-military organization which was made an integral part of the MACV command structure in May 1967. With the advent of CORDS, Vietnamese authorities found it easier to coordinate and cooperate. As US support for pacification was unified under a single-manager system, its relationship with the GVN pacification structure also became closer and more responsive.

Inspired by this move, the GVN instituted a system of interministerial Revolutionary Development (later redesignated Pacification and Development) Councils throughout the governmental hierarchy down to districts. At the central level, the fact that the council was chaired by the Prime Minister and later by the President of the Republic himself emphasized the national priority and duly gave pacification a strong incentive for progress. By mid-1969, the pacification and development (PD) councils at every level down to province were effectively assisted by centers for the coordination of PD which served as permanent staff organizations in charge of plans, coordination, and evaluation of pacification operations.

In retrospect, from the Vietnamese point of view, US contributions to pacification in South Vietnam were immense and all-incompassing. They covered all areas of endeavor and included every aspect of support, from financial and material to ideological and technological. Their impact on the program was far-reaching at all levels, in all areas of effort, and much of this credit must be given to the US pacification adviser.

By far the most important and outstanding among US contributions was the expansion and upgrading of the Regional and Popular Forces which in time made up over one half of the RVNAF total strength and became as modernized in armament as the regular forces. This achievement was directly attributable to CORDS authorities who untiringly worked toward developing the RF and PF and providing them adequate support. Upgrading the combat effectiveness of these forces was also a prominent program conducted with dedication by US advisers at provinces and districts and in RF/PF training centers. For many years, US mobile training teams — MATs and MALTs — tenaciously devoted themselves to their difficult task under the most spartan conditions and in the roughest areas of South Vietnam. Other cohesive efforts such as the Marines' Combined Action Program in MR-1 and pair-off or combined activities programs in MR-2 and MR-3 also significantly contributed to the marked improvement of territorial forces, the mainstay of security and pacification.

The next significant US contribution to pacification was the sizable expansion of national police forces which ranked among the most important elements of pacification. With USAID support, the national police developed into a formidable force, 121,000-man strong by 1972. Its combat elements, the field police units which were created in 1966, became the main operational force against the enemy infrastructure. Police advisers who were assigned to practically every aspect of policy operations, constantly strived to develop this para-military force into an effective instrument for the identification and destruction of the VC infrastructure.

Many other contributions made by US advisers directly or indirectly to the pacification effort were equally signficiant. They included civilian or para-military forces that US advisers helped activate, train and provide operational guidance; RD cadres; Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU); Census Grievance Teams; and more significant, the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG).

The idea of forming RD cadres, a Communist-inspired concept, was adopted by US advisers and implemented with the backing of the CIA. The first RD cadre groups, characteristically enough, were activated in late 1965 with locally recruited youths in the province of Binh Dinh, a former

stronghold of the Viet Minh for many years. US advisers also helped activate and train the Truong Son or Montagnard RD cadre. Two RD cadre training centers were established with American funds, support and advisers, one in Pleiku for the Truong Son cadre and the other in Vung Tau, the bigger of the two. The Vung Tau RD training center later became a national center for the training of village and hamlet administrative cadres. By 1968, total RD cadre strength including the Truong Son cadre numbered 50,000 but after 1970 this figure decreased when the Ministry of RD was dissolved.

Census grievance teams and provincial reconnaissance units were entirely an American creation. They were organized with the purpose of polling popular attitudes toward the GVN and carrying out unconventional activities required for the identification and elimination of the Communist infrastructure. PRUs were eventually placed under the control of the National Police to obtain desired results. Their members included some carefully selected personnel who were recruited from Communist ralliers.

The CIDG program was a substantial US effort to help organize and train Montagnards for the defense of border areas that dated back to the early years of the insurgency. These groups were a para-military force created in 1961 by the US Embassy with the purpose of rallying the support of and controlling the Montagnard tribal groups living in the central highlands and border areas. In 1962, US Special Forces detachments assumed the responsibility for training CIDGs but the program was turned over to MACV control as of 1963. Over the years, the CIDGs expanded considerably in strength, reaching a record high of 42,000 in 1968. Although they were a para-military force, CIDGs were well trained, well equipped and well supported. They also included in their ranks a number of ARVN deserters seeking higher pay and more adventure. In view of the traditional suspicion of Montagnard motives and the connection of a few CIDG units with the rebellious FULRO movement, the GVN was always concerned with this para-military force and even suspected the involvement of some US advisers in the CIDG rebellion which erupted in Ban Me Thuot in 1964. But as a combat force, the CIDGs contributed significantly to

the control of enemy infiltration routes along the border. This was one reason why the GVN did not oppose the presence of this separate military force which it did not initially control. To resolve the political sensitivity of this problem, MACV eventually transferred the CIDGs to GVN control. CIDG troopers subsequently became rangers or regional troops and were integrated into the RVNAF.[4]

Throughout the years of the war in South Vietnam, US forces undoubtedly contributed much to the pacification effort, directly or indirectly, through tactical operations on the ground, in the air, or at sea and by providing combat support to ARVN forces such as helilift, gunships, medical evacuation, and helping destroy and clear enemy base areas. As to US advisers, although they did not participate significantly in all pacification activities such as the People's Self Defense Force program, there were specific areas of pacification which could not have been successfully undertaken by the GVN without their assistance and contributions.

The Phoenix program was an excellent example. Eliminating the enemy infrastructure had been a major concern and objective of the GVN since the beginning of insurgency. But the program had lacked cohesiveness, purposefulness and an efficient organization. At the instigation of US authorities associated with CORDS, the Phoenix program was initiated with a view to consolidate and provide a more effective effort against the VCI. But even after Phoenix was established at the central level, it would have been extremely difficult to activate in the provinces and districts had it not been for the contributions made by US pacification advisers in terms of facilities and resources. For the PIOCC and DIOCC, for example, US advisers in addition to their regular duties even had to supply the typewriters and typists. Despite assistance and guidance provided by US advisers, the National Police, primary executor of the program, did not appear to be effective enough for the task at hand. A major shortcoming was the lack of specialized cadre, chiefly in the

[4]The primary role of CIDG, strike-forces and border security, is discussed on p. 51.

Special Police branch which was responsible for collecting information and identifying members of the enemy infrastructure. All efforts at solving this and other shortcomings of the program were never completely successful.

Other pacification-related programs such as Chieu Hoi and most particularly, refugee relief and resettlement, and land reform benefited substantially from US support and the work of US advisers. The Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program was rather a slow starter in the RVN anti-subversive effort because of the rigid anti-Communist stand adopted by the Diem administration which outlawed Communism altogether and also because of the lack of resources. The program became a full-fledged effort only after 1963 when through US advisers, the GVN learned that the Philippine amnesty policy had produced handsome dividends. The RVN Chieu Hoi effort made excellent progress after 1967 when a ministry was created to give it cohesive direction. In this effort to win over the enemy, the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) made substantial material contributions, helped print and drop leaftlets, conducted broadcasts and provided money for the ralliers. The US also provided funds for the establishment of Chieu Hoi centers and vocational training courses. As a result, the number of enemy personnel rallying to the GVN side increased steadily and reached an all-time high (47,000) in 1969. Over the years of its existence, the program resulted in a total of over 200,000 ralliers, which was a remarkable return for the costs involved.

But US contributions were even greater in the relief and resettlement of refugees and the land reform program. As the fighting intensified in 1965 and during the following years, the number of refugees also increased manyfold. With its meager resources, the GVN was unable to handle this growing influx of refugees in a satisfactory manner without US support. The direct participation of US combat troops in the war led US authorities to take a greater interest in the refugee problem. With increasing financial and material aid from the US government and private US charity organizations, the GVN built camp facilities, and brought relief to and helped resettle millions of refugees. The biggest inflows of refugees happened during 1968 and 1972, the years of Communist general

offensives, reaching a record high of nearly four million in 1972. US financial contributions amounted to approximately $100 million every year but were gradually reduced after 1971. Still, they made up about 80% of total GVN budgetary outlays for refugee relief and resettlement.

The land reform program which was regarded as an unprecedented and most resounding success was partially the product of studies and research conducted by US experts who advised the GVN. The resulting "Land to the Tiller" act which was proclaimed on 26 March 1970, sought to distribute about 1 million hectares (2.47 million acres) of farmland to landless farmers within a period of 3 years. Three years later, this objective had been met on schedule. The GVN paid out a total of 15 billion piasters in cash and another 82 billion piasters in bonds to land owners. The rapidity with which this ambitious program was successfully implemented was largely attributable to the effective assistance provided by US expert-advisers in the areas of land survey and cost computation. In addition, the United States provided over $500 million for the entire program, and more importantly, made certain that its advisers at the province and district levels helped guide the land distribution and compensation effort to success.

Aside from these more conspicuous achievements of pacification attained with US money and advisory assistance, there were imperceptible but no less beneficial contributions that helped the RVN administration and armed forces improve their day to day operations and bring more scientific knowledge to bear on the conduct of national affairs. The progressive reforms in management and administration achieved throughout the RVN governmental hierarchy were but one of many examples. By exposure to American methodology and procedures, GVN officials learned how to apply modern management techniques to their own operations. And to keep up with the rapid pace of American business practice, GVN agencies naturally had to adjust their own routine so as not to be left behind in the race toward common objectives. The constant stimulation and encouragement of US advisers were largely responsible for this marked improvement. As a result, the traditional functionary lethargy of colonial times was deeply shaken and gradually gave way to a much more efficient bureaucracy in every aspect.

The same learning and adaptation process was the major reason for improvement in planning by the military staffs at the JGS and field levels. Several years had elapsed since the CI plan of 1960 and the Comprehensive Plan for South Vietnam of 1962 were published before the RVNAF conceived and developed a program worth calling a national plan. The first cohesive planning effort, the Victory Plan of 1964, although militarily oriented, led the way toward comprehensive planning on a national scale for the years that followed. Successive Combined Campaign Plans, initially drafted by the MACV staff and subsequently by the JGS, gradually bore testimony to the improving RVNAF planning capabilities. Without the cooperative guidance of US advisers, this improvement would never have been achieved. Beginning in 1968, pacification planning came of age and was perfected with every passing year. The most notable national-scale product was the Four-Year Community Defense and Local Development Plan, 1972-1975, an effort which was entirely Vietnamese but bearing the indelible mark of several years of US contributions.

Another very significant contribution by the CORDS staff and US pacification advisers that radically improved the assessment of pacification progress was the modern evaluation system which used scientific analytical methods and advanced operations research technology. The problem included the requirement to effectively manage and evaluate complex pacification operations conducted under scores of programs and encompassing 44 provinces, 250 districts, over 2,000 villages and 10,000 hamlets, all with the participation and support of hundreds of thousands of troops, policemen and cadres. It was obvious that only scientific management methods and timely reporting procedures could help our Vietnamese leaders fully understand the situation throughout South Vietnam and make appropriate decisions. Responding to this critical requirement, CORDS experts and advisers carefully and methodically developed several evaluation and reporting systems, all in apparent cross-connection with one another and covering almost every area of pacification-related activities: PSDF, Chieu Hoi, National Police, Refugees, RD Cadre, Information, Self-Help projects, land reform, Communist terrorism, and Territorial Force Management. A pacification data bank was established in Saigon to store the

experience of several years of performance. Among the systems used to assist in the evaluation of territorial forces was the MACV originated Territorial Forces Evaluation System. The advisers furnished the data for this system which provided ARVN commanders with reasonably valid assessments of progress and shortcomings in the territorial forces. But the most noteworthy and more important was perhaps the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). Despite some adverse criticism, this system proved the best and most valuable tool ever devised for the purpose of efficiently managing a program as complex as pacification. Not only did it contribute to a better evaluation and management of pacification, it also taught our Vietnamese pacification authorities more about their overall program.

I have presented in general terms and from the Vietnamese point of view some of the most discernible contributions made by United States advisers to the pacification program in South Vietnam. Most of these contributions, although made at top levels, had a major impact in the field. But at the field level, there was another aspect of US contributions, more human and personal in nature, where the United States pacification adviser was personally assisting his counterpart in solving daily problems.

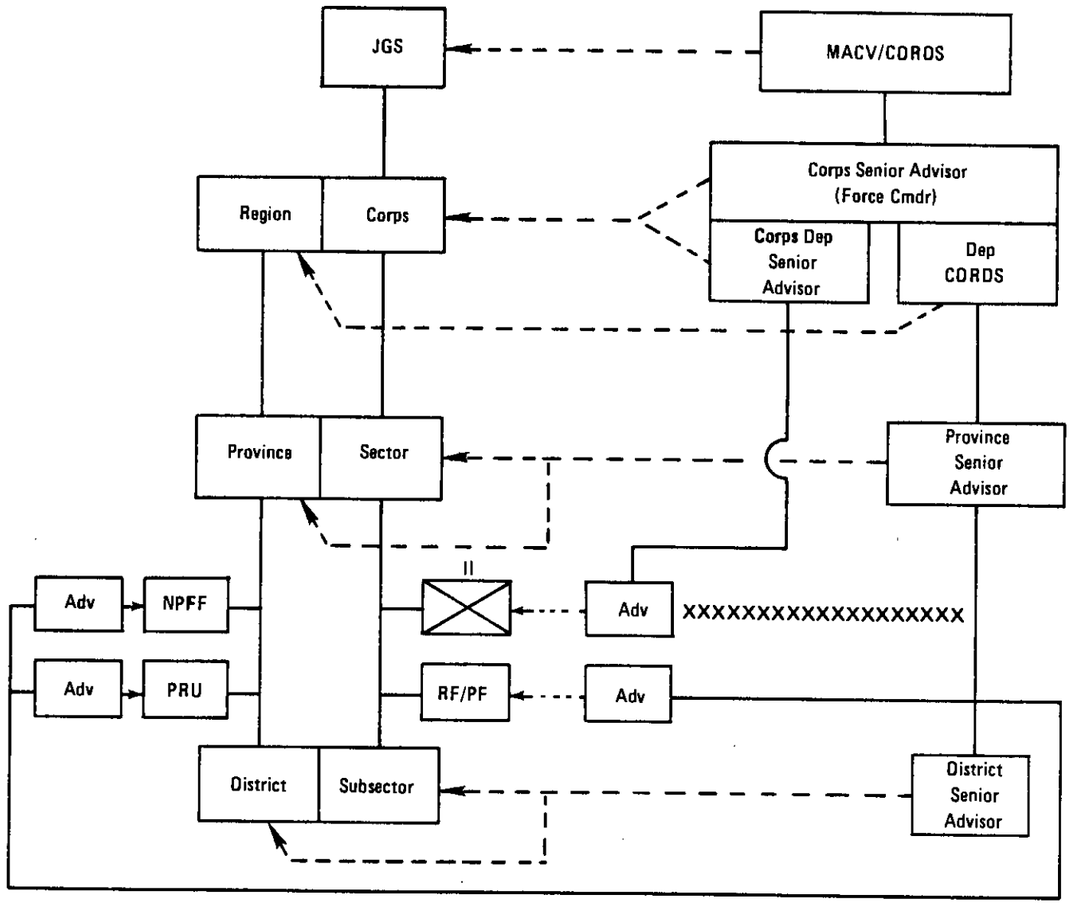
At the corps level, US contributions were more evident in that they complemented admirably the inherent shortcomings of ARVN commanders and staffs with regard to pacification. Long the participants of a continuous, armed but predominantly ideological conflict, many ARVN field commanders had become, strangely enough, strictly professional, militarily-minded soldiers. Although there was nothing wrong with this, it seemed that the many lessons learned concerning pacification during both the First Indochina War, 1946-1954, and the years of counter-insurgency in South Vietnam were all forgotten by them. Most ARVN field commanders acted as if they were totally detached from the problems of pacification and concerned themselves solely with military matters. The truth was, after fighting alongside US units, ARVN commanders and their staffs had become more professional in an orthodox manner and had successfully mastered the modern tactics of conventional warfare, but they were

woefully inadequate as contestants of the "other war." For one thing, pacification demanded much more than the ability to use conventional military techniques and tactics. It required from military commanders a strong awareness of the political and socio-psychological problems involved in winning the battle of the "hearts and minds" or at least an attitude favorably disposed toward these problems. Consequently, under such leadership, ARVN Corps staffs were hardly prepared to tackle the complex tasks of pacification without constant assistance and guidance from a well qualified US adviser.

Another glaring deficiency was the ARVN Corps staff's weakness in the ability to conduct addquate planning for the military support of pacification and the review of provincial pacification plans. This weakness was attributable to the fact that most ARVN Corps commanders were neither demanding enough nor endowed with planning habits. Inevitably, when staff studies or evaluations were desired ARVN staffs were not qualified to produce desired results. Some attributed this to the lack of training and the inadequacy of an educational system which did not emphasize research and analysis. Regardless of the reason, it appeared that most ARVN officers were not prepared for the planning task nor were they required by their commanders to think and plan ahead. The presence of US advisers, however, immediately assisted in correcting this shortcoming. Initially in many cases, they drew up plans for the benefit of the ARVN staffs who simply adapted them for ARVN purposes. But through constant exposure to and learning from US advisers, ARVN staffs gradually improved and became entirely self-reliant when US advisers were no longer available. This is one example of the productive aspect of a close personal relationship which existed at those levels of the ARVN hierarchy requiring staff work and planning. *(Chart 13)*

With respect to operations and management, US advisers also assisted in filling most gaps found on the Vietnamese side. Because of close cooperation with US advisers and commanders, ARVN commanders were able to discharge their duties in a more satisfactory manner. Thanks to accurate reports such as HES and periodic evaluations of pacification, ARVN commanders had a clearer view of the situation and could better

Chart 13 – Advisory Relationships, ARVN Hierarchy



determine what actions to take. This was the result of mutual support and the exchange of information between CORDS and the Corps Center for Coordination of Pacification and Development. Regional CORDS staffs were usually creative and always planned ahead for every foreseeable requirement. Therefore, they sometimes seemed to lead the way for their ARVN counterparts by presenting them with drafted plans to include recommendations for consideration.

For the pacification program, the province and the district were the key levels in the command and control structure. The success of the entire program depended on the success of the Vietnamese and their advisers at these two echelons. The district was the lowest level to have the benefit of US advisers. The province was the level which was responsible both for planning and execution. In terms of US-RVN cooperation, it seemed that the lower the level, the closer the relationship. Indeed, it seemed that the province chief, the district chief, and their advisers were always together and it was a rarity when a province chief or a district chief was seen making visits without his adviser. Their close cooperation was reflected in every phase of pacification activities to include staff planning, determination of objectives and requirements, employment of forces and assets, follow-up, evaluation and field inspections.

The Vietnamese province chief was usually a senior, combat-experienced officer. Several of them stayed in office for many years. Therefore, they were very familiar with their provinces and were highly capable as leaders and administrators. But the province senior adviser, except for those few who came back for a second or third tour of duty, was seldom familiar with the local environment and since the majority of them were military officers, they would usually confine themselves to military matters. By and large, however, the province US advisory staff, especially provincial CORDS, was usually much more capable than the sector staff or the provincial bureaucratic staff. The reasons for this were the same as mentioned above. In addition, at the province-sector level, staff members were for the most part Regional Force officers and the few regular officers who served at that level were usually the unwanted black sheep

of the ARVN family. The employment of forces and resources at the province level was also a very complex task in view of its extensiveness. Finally, the province chief was usually busy with his many responsibilities and could not devote enough time for any particular area of major interest, whether it be military, political, social or economic.

At the district level, the situation was even more difficult. The district staff was usually limited and inexperienced. It was routine to find that the more remote district headquarters would always have the most problems with pacification. Apart from a few experienced and capable field-grade officers, most district chiefs were young officers. Although their youth provided a certain enthusiastic, gung-ho approach to their jobs, they were usually not qualified for the task of managing a sizable pacification apparatus comprising an average of from 3 to 6 RF companies, 40 PF platoons, and a few thousand PSDF, not to speak of hundreds of village and hamlet officials, RD cadre, policemen, and other people's organizations. A district chief, like his superior at the province, was faced with myriad tasks, from combat operations, hamlet security, to Phoenix activities and developmental projects in every imaginable area of endeavor. The presence of district advisers, therefore, was most useful. District advisers were usually military officers but performed the dual role of military and civilian advisers. Many district advisers succeeded in developing an excellent rapport with the local population; they were well liked and respected.

In general, the presence of US pacification advisers at the province and district levels effectively increased the local government's capabilities of managing complex tasks, and made the employment of forces and resources more effective for the pacification effort. The presence of US advisers at these levels also indicated that support from US forces was readily available on call, whatever the purpose. Finally, until they were removed from the scene, US advisers constituted the main source of stimulation, incentive for better performance and more devotion by all Vietnamese concerned with the pacification program.

Some Lessons Learned

United States involvement in Vietnam spanned two long decades, progressing from providing materiel and economic aid to active participation by its own combat troops, all for the purpose of helping South Vietnam counter Communist aggression. In terms of pacification and development, the progress made by the RVN over the years had its ups and downs depending on the tempo of the hot war and United States interest and emphasis concerning the other war. If there were depressing periods such as the first insurgent war years, 1960-1961, the hopeless deterioration of 1964-1965 and the tense months during 1968 and 1972, there were also brighter times when pacification seemed to have firmly stood on the pedestal of glorious success. The short-lived Strategic Hamlet program, 1962-1963, for example, despite its shortcomings and modest US support really reflected the way for effective counterinsurgency. For some time, it succeeded in depriving the Communist fish of some of its water, but it was only a modest achievement. The next period 1966-1967 saw the military initiative and advantage firmly held by US-Free World-RVNAF combat forces who gradually drove enemy main force units across the border and prepared the stage for pacification to proceed. But four long years had elapsed during which the other war seemed to have been completely forsaken. Pacification was given a new and positive start in 1967 and its momentum was accelerating when the enemy chose to launch the Tet general offensive of 1968. This major effort by the enemy again delayed the pacification program. However, new hopes were restored in 1969 and during the following years, conditions in the countryside radically improved and prospects for the future were never so bright. Under the protective shield of military advantage, the total pacification effort was making rapid progress throughout all of South Vietnam. What lessons then could be learned from our experience? What in fact were the merits and demerits of the advisory effort at the field and local levels which were the main battlegrounds where the pacification war was fought?

First and foremost, the United States organization for pacification support, CORDS, proved to be an elaborate, efficient structure which was resourceful and flexible enough to meet all requirements, current and foreseeable, generated by the double war in South Vietnam. The commander, USMACV, who exercised exclusive control of all combat assets for the miltiary war, also had at his disposal the resources with which to fight the other war which was more political and socio-psychological in nature. From the Vietnamese point of view the consolidation of command and control over both military and civilian resources under the USMACV commander was a sound and productive concept. Our experience seemed to indicate that although under military control, CORDS had enough flexibility and delegated authority to meet all requirements effectively.

Next, the ubiquitous US advisory presence in all provinces and districts was a most realistic and effective response to an emergency situation in which the enemy had made inroads into practically every corner of the countryside. When the United States brought in combat troops, the so-called "war of liberation" waged by the Communists had entered its phase of mobile warfare. Most of the South Vietnamese rural areas had by then become cancerous tumors in which the Viet Cong infrastructure cells were eating away at the GVN control body. The best that a conventional military force could do under such circumstances was to push back and defeat the predators, the NVA main forces units. But the scavengers — the VCI and the guerrillas — were still there. To join in the battle of clearing the countryside, restoring security, and reestablishing control, the presence of US advisers at all local levels was indeed a vital necessity. As has been said, the ARVN basic weakness in leadership and staff work, particularly in connection with the pacification effort, could have only been offset by the US advisers whose involvement rapidly turned the tide in favor of the GVN.

A common observation among ARVN commanders and province and district chiefs was that a US adviser in pacification was really effective only when he began his second tour of duty. It was true that generally speaking, most advisers needed a certain familiarization period after arriving in the country. This period of time depended on the nature of

the assignment and the environment. Not only was Vietnam a totally alien country, the nature of the war being fought there was also unfamiliar to American military experience. While US officers assigned to staff duties were able to perform satisfactorily as advisers during their short first tours, it appeared that senior advisers at all levels and key positions could have contributed much more to the common effort had they stayed longer in a single tour or better still, returned to the old scene for additional tours. A pacification adviser's role was usually all encompassing. To be truly efficient and productive in every aspect of that role, a living experience was required. One year was certainly not enough to acquire that experience.

Before his assignment, a US officer selected for pacification advisory duties had to undergo a brief orientation course on Vietnam. He was given a fast glimpse of Vietnamese history and culture and the war at the grass-roots level. This preparatory work was useful for all advisers. But for advisers assigned to the pacification program, especially those expected to have contact with the local population, it was not enough. Pacification advisers at the province and district levels should have been required to speak the language too, because this was the only means of obtaining an insight into the local problems of pacification and developing the kind of rapport with the local people that was conducive to success. Although US advisers could usually communicate with their counterparts in English, they were always at a disadvantage when meeting with the local population and GVN officials in villages and hamlets. Experience showed that even with a smattering of conversational Vietnamese, a US adviser could always establish instant rapport and affection. The ability to speak the language, therefore, was a most effective tool of winning the battle of the "hearts and minds."

Finally, because of constant exposure to the local population who for the most part lived under the most spartan conditions, there was a requirement for US advisers to be modest and self-effacing in their way of life and work. Not only were the Vietnamese extremely sensitive to the presence of foreigners, they were also self-conscious about their condition. The reputation of the American adviser among them was made

even more difficult by vicious slanderings of Communist propaganda. Although not every adviser was expected to live as a Vietnamese, it certainly helped him mix with people more easily if he cautiously concealed the material opulence of the American way of life. With his counterparts, it was important that he exercise tact and persuasion instead of leverage to get things done, because no Vietnamese could stand a loss of face. The best approach for any adviser was to mention a problem, let his counterpart think about it and in the process, inject suggestive ideas as to how he thought the problem could best be solved. After this process was completed the adviser should then let the Vietnamese voluntarily initiate actions as if they were his own ideas. In this way, a counterpart would be more inclined to listen to his adviser since his authority as a leader was not impaired.

In general, apart from a very few exceptions, all US advisers assigned to the pacification program at all levels discharged their responsibilities in a most admirable way. Many were highly respected and well liked. Over the years, several individual relationships developed into lasting personal friendships. Taken together, all of these individual performances contributed to the overall success of the US advisory effort, especially with regard to pacification. Credit for much of the success of pacification, in the final analysis, must be given to US advisers with a special tribute to those at the district and province levels.

CHAPTER VII

The Training Adviser

A Monumental Achievement

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Murphy, a crew-cut, dark-tanned tall man with a Texan drawl and in khaki shorts reported to the Inter-Arms School of Thu Duc in February, 1955. A lone figure among the dozen or so French instructors who still remained there, he really did not know where to begin. He did not speak French and the commandant of the school did not speak English. A young Vietnamese instructor who spoke English well was called upon to help them eliminate the language barrier, but the communication process was slow. However, only a short time later, Colonel Murphy accompanied Vietnamese instructors in the field where he demonstrated, using sign language, marksmanship techniques and the correct use of the Garand M-1. Thus was the beginning of a long training assistance program which would terminate eighteen years later. Colonel Murphy was one of the first US training advisers assigned to the nascent Vietnamese National Armed Forces and a pioneer for the many Americans who would subsequently assume similar responsibilities.

Less than a year before, when all troops of the 3d Military Region had regrouped from North Vietnam after the Geneva Armistice, the Vietnam National Armed Forces numbered about 210,000 men, including nearly 40,000 regular troops. Predominantly army, this force consisted basically of infantry battalions, some of them grouped into larger tactical formations, the mobile groups, a French organizational concept.[1] Most of the Vietnamese mobile group and battalion commanders came from the

[1] There were two mobile groups, the 31st and 32d.

French Union forces where most had started as non-commissioned officers. Only a few had graduated from the first Reserve Officer Candidate School activated when the partial mobilization law became effective in 1951. These few young officers of the new generation later became key leaders of the armed forces and the nation, but regardless of their origin, they had been trained by French cadre and had learned the military doctrine and tactics of the French Expeditionary Corps.

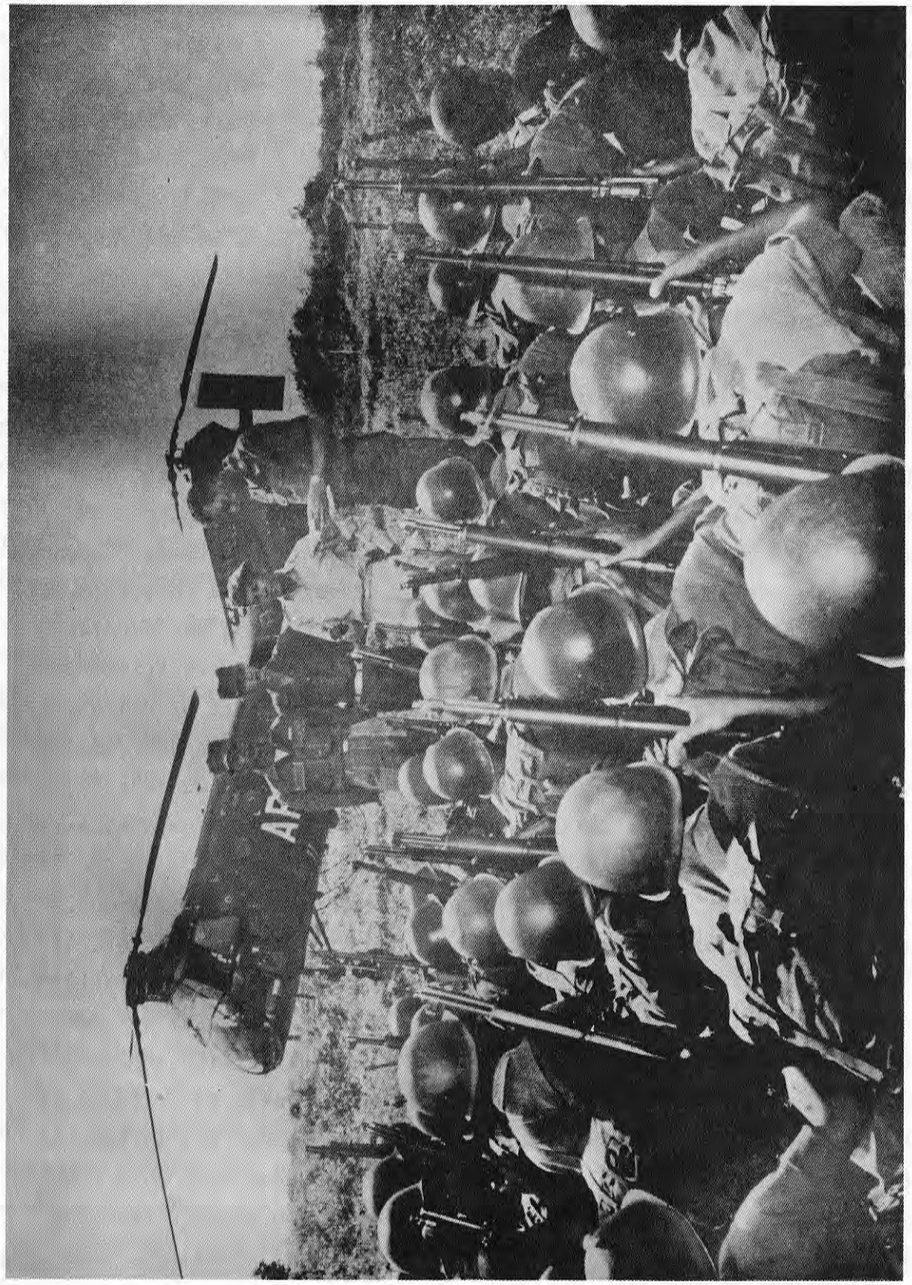
During this period the basic infantry armament of the Vietnamese National Armed Forces consisted of World War II vintage and older weapons of assorted types from America, France and England. Combat Support assets were few, ineffective and included 105-mm howitzer battalions and four armor squadrons which were equipped only with AM-8 scout cars and half-tracks. At this time the Air Force and Navy were insignificant, embryonic forces, numbering about 4,000 men each, equipped with a few trainers and transports and small landing craft and river boats, all turned over by French forces.

The first task given the Training Relations and Instructions Mission (TRIM) created under MAAG was enormous since it involved reorganizing, refitting and re-training a sizable military force in accordance with US Army doctrine and tactics. First priority was given to trimming down this force to a manageable and supportable peace-time level of 150,000, a move that received strong opposition from the Vietnamese General Staff which was hard-pressed with problems of surplus auxiliary troops and operations against dissident sects. A second priority involved a longer range process of upgrading the battalion-based Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) into a modern force composed of major, self-supporting units, capable of assuring internal security and countering an overt invasion from North Vietnam. Influenced by lessons of the Korean War, the Chief MAAG, Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel and his staff advocated the activation of divisions tailored to the local environment and requirements. His opinion was not fully shared by several key members of the Vietnamese General Staff who thought that a more flexible type of unit, such as the mobile group, would be more responsive to the kind of war that would probably be fought should

aggression occur. MAAG's insistence on the division prevailed but a compromise was reached with the activation of "light" divisions, a stripped-down version of the "field" or regular division. The search for the optimal division continued into the following years, and finally, after many tests and trials, the 10,500-man infantry division was selected in 1957 as the major unit for the ARVN.

After this basic pattern for organization had been established, subsequent force structure increases simply added more combat support assets to the infantry division, activated more divisions and their tactical control headquarters, the corps. As reorganization progressed, ARVN units also became uniformly equipped with standard US equipment and armament and trained in US Army doctrine and tactics. In 1961, as insurgent activities increased, the United States began to introduce combat support assets, mainly airlift and helilift, to augment ARVN mobility and limited tactical air support of combat operations. Support and training assistance for the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) increased most significantly when the auxiliary Regional and Popular Forces (formerly Civil Guard and People's Militia) became eligible under the Military Assistance Program (MAP) as an integral part of the RVNAF. And in keeping with subsequent increases in military aid under various improvement and modernization plans, the RVNAF gradually expanded, both in force structure and in combat support assets, reaching a total strength of 435,000 by the end of 1964.

This expansion and modernization trend accelerated significantly following the Tet offensive of 1968, resulting in new weapons for the RVNAF arsenal and the addition of several new units to the force structure. But this trend was accelerated most dramatically by the momentum provided by the Vietnamization program, officially announced in 1969, which ultimately brought the RVNAF total strength to 1.1 million by the end of 1972. By this time, the RVNAF had become the largest and most modern military force in Southeast Asia, equipped with over one million M-16 rifles and M-60 machineguns, over 1,500 armored vehicles, including M-48 medium tanks and over 1,500 pieces of artillery, including long range 175-mm guns. The Vietnamese Air Force in the meantime had



U.S. Adviser Instructing ARVN Troops
on Helilift Procedures (March, 1962)

ARVN Paratroopers in Combat Assault Training, 1966

increased in strength to 61,000, equipped with over 1,700 aircraft of all types, including about 500 UH-1 helicopters. The Navy had also expanded its strength to 41,000 and controlled about 1,600 ships and craft of various sizes.

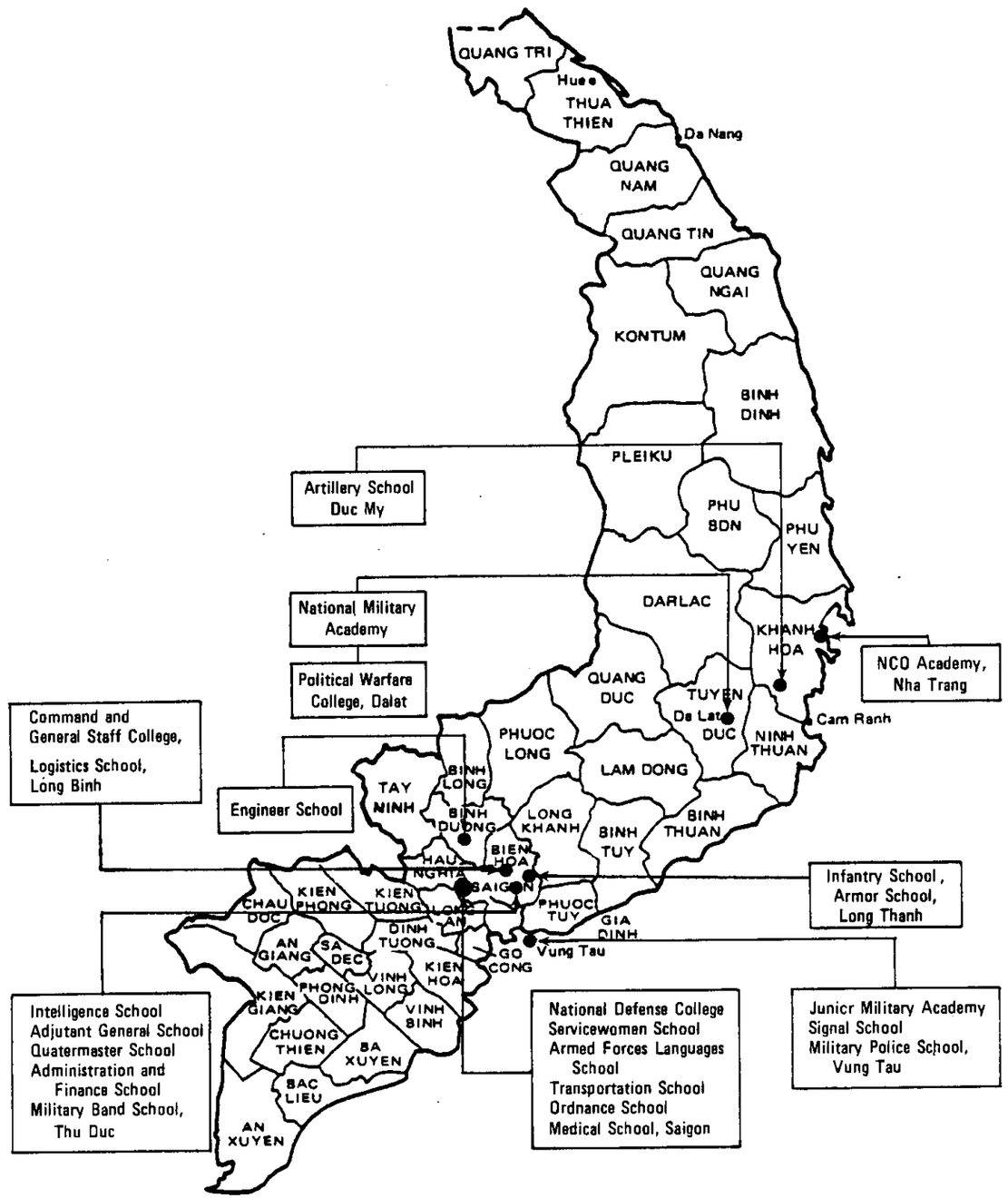
During these eighteen years of dramatic development, the RVNAF had been transformed into a modern combat force, total strength increased more than fivefold and new organizations, doctrine and operational techniques adopted. In terms of human effort and material support, this achievement surpassed anything the United States had contributed to any country since the end of the Korean War. Throughout this period the United States training adviser played a major role and made a most significant contribution to the RVN Armed Forces. As a former Division G-3, Corps G-3 and the last J-3 for the RVNAF Joint General Staff, a position I held for seven years, I was personally involved daily in the improvement and effectiveness of the RVNAF and will present from the Vietnamese point of view an evaluation of the US training adviser as he performed his challenging assignment.

Organization for Training and Training Support

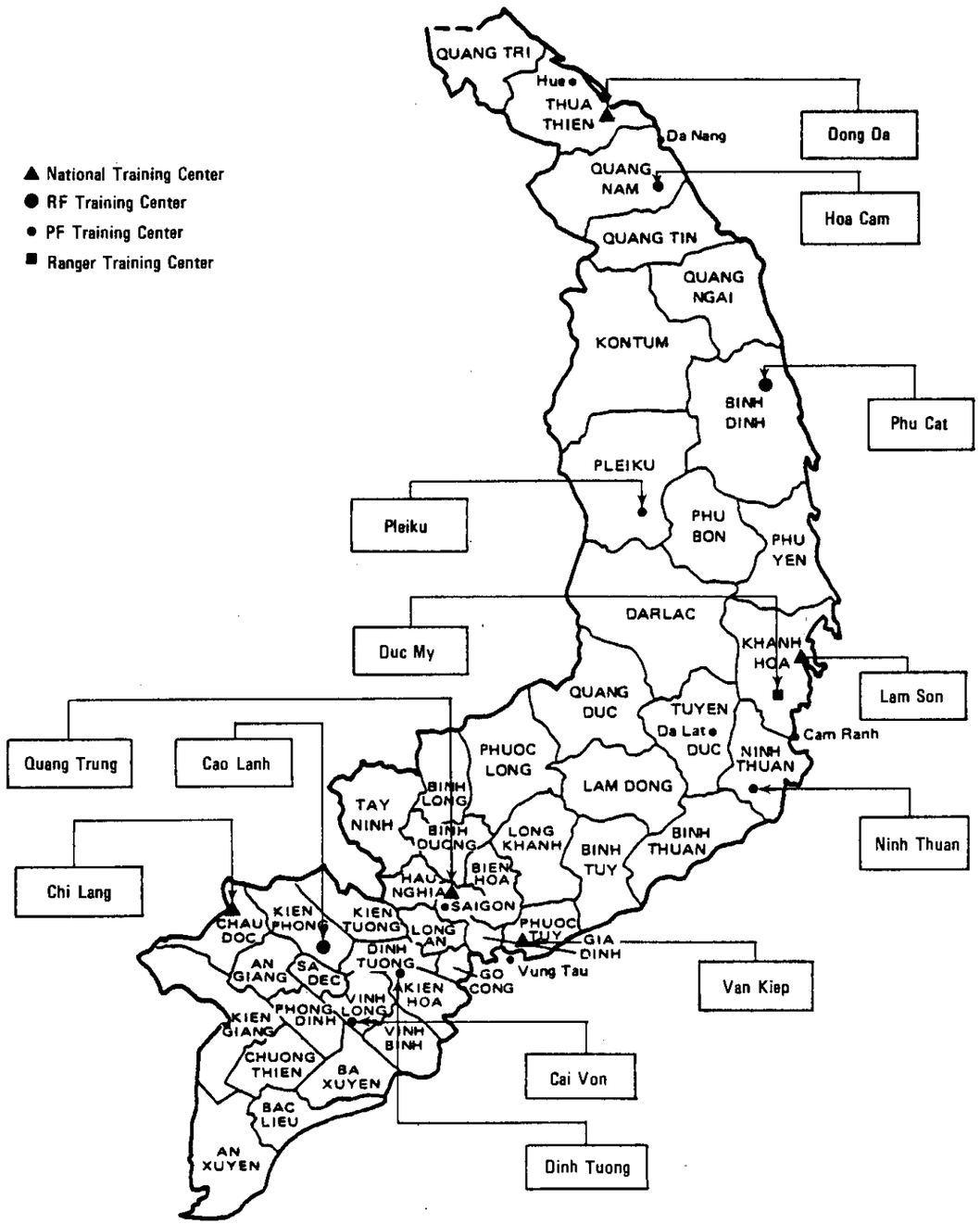
To accomplish its mission during the continuous process of expansion and modernization of the RVNAF, the ARVN school system grew and developed considerably over the years. From a skeletal frame of small service schools and local training centers, this system developed into a complete array of modern facilities accommodating well over 100,000 students at any one time. RVNAF training facilities fell into three major categories: (1) military and service schools, of which there were 33; *(Map 1)* (2) national and regional training centers (for ARVN and territorial forces, respectively), of which there were 13, *(Map 2)* and; (3) divisional training centers, of which there were 14, to include the Airborne Ranger Group Training Center.

This extensive system of schools and training centers was under the control and supervision of the RVNAF Central Training Command (CTC). This major command was established in 1966 to replace our Training Bureau in an effort to consoliate training functions and provide better training support. The CTC was advised and supported by the MACV Training Direc-

Map 1 — Location, Military Academies and Service Schools



Map 2 — Location, National and Territorial Force Training Centers



torate whose staff divisions paralleled the major supervisory functions performed by the CTC except for direct advisory and training support for the Armor, Artillery and Ranger Commands. *(Chart 14)* The CTC training support functions were performed by two permanent committees, one for Doctrine and Manuals and other for Battlefield Studies in addition to a Training Aids Center, which were all part of its organization. *(Chart 15)*

The CTC commander was responsible for all matters pertaining to training and training support in the RVNAF, including (1) plans, policies and programs for the training of RVNAF regular and territorial forces, combat arms and services and para-military forces; (2) development and modernization of training facilities; (3) preparation of ARVN military doctrine, manuals and training materials for the school system; (4) research of combat experience and development of tactics; (5) conduct of special training courses as required, demonstrations and field exercises, marksmanship competition; and (6) programming of offshore training courses and selection of students.[2]

The Director of Training, MACV was the principal adviser to the Commander, CTC and coordinator of the United States training advisory effort. To assist the latter in performing his duties, the Director of Training, MACV, was responsible for: (1) providing advice and assistance in the development of an effective military training system for the RVNAF, to include evolving doctrine and training literature, annual training ammunition requirements, training budget and facilities development programming; (2) planning, preparing, and executing the Army portion of the military assistance training programs; (3) coordinating training matters involving combined US and RVNAF participation and exercising coordinating authority over the MACV advisory effort on RVNAF training matters, and; (4) providing advice and assistance in the organization, training and utilization of the Armor, Artillery and Ranger Forces.

[2]The commander of CTC exercised control and supervision over most training centers and schools. Exceptions were made in cases where the center or school was commanded by an officer senior in rank to the CTC commander. In these cases, such as the Thu Duc Training Center and the CGSC, the commandants reported directly to the Chief, JGS. Nevertheless, the CTC commander supported and inspected these facilities on behalf of the chief, JGS. The source of the information on the CTC was an interview with Lieutenant General Nguyen Bao Tri, the last commander of CTC.

Chart 14 – Organization, MACV Training Directorate

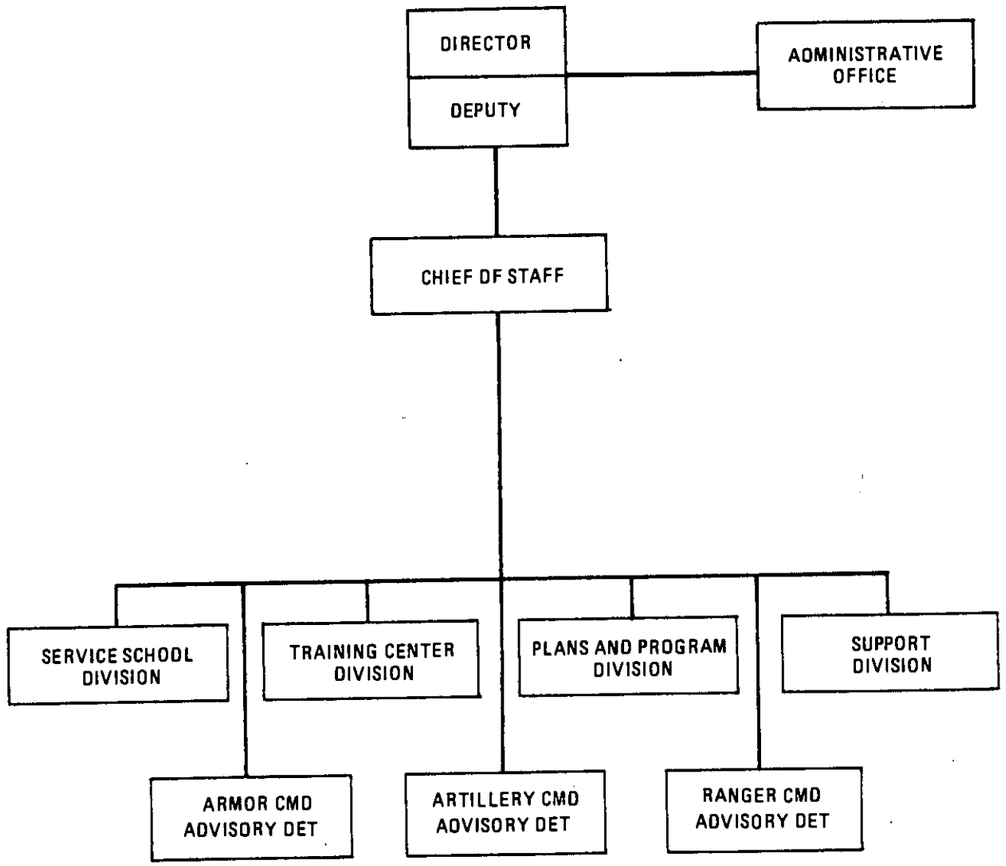
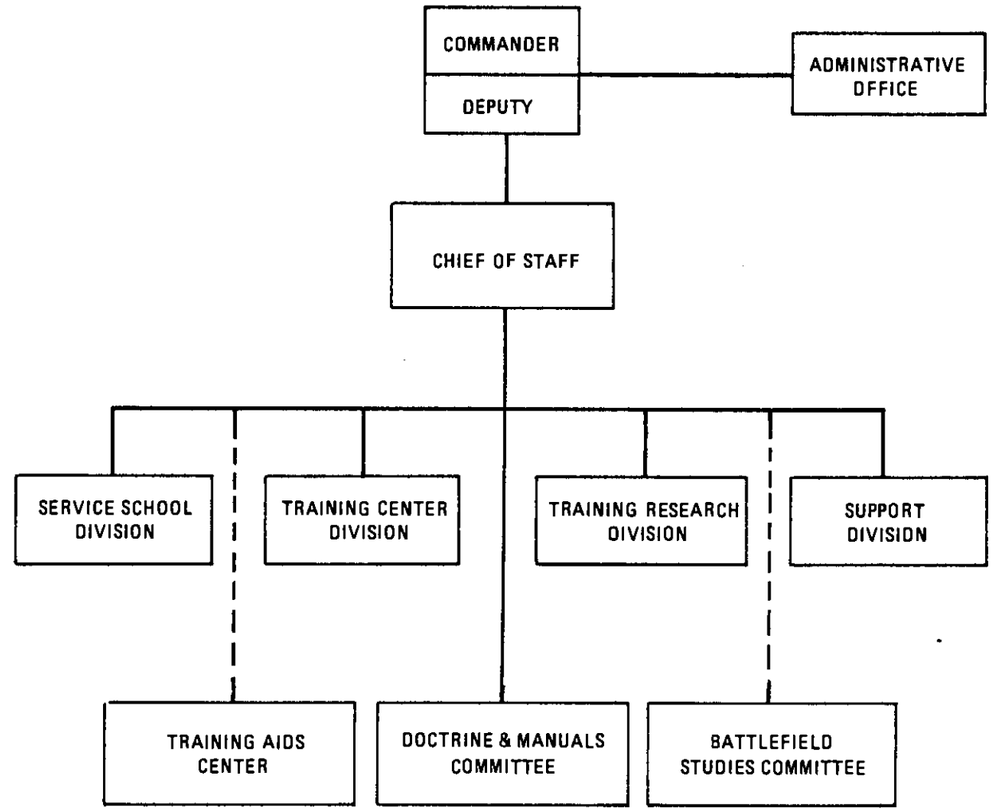


Chart 15 – Organization, Central Training Command



For the convenience of advising the CTC and coordinating the US training advisory effort with RVNAF training activities, the MACV Training Directorate was located adjacent to the Central Training Command in the Joint General Staff compound from where it exercised coordinating authority over US advisory teams, fixed and mobile, detached to ARVN service schools and training centers. In full cooperation and coordination, the CTC and MACV Training Directorate jointly developed plans, policies and programs for the training of both ARVN regular and territorial forces and for the development and improvement of ARVN training facilities. At the schools and training centers, US advisory teams assisted ARVN commandants in preparing and conducting training programs and monitored the progress and results achieved.

Training Advisory Activities

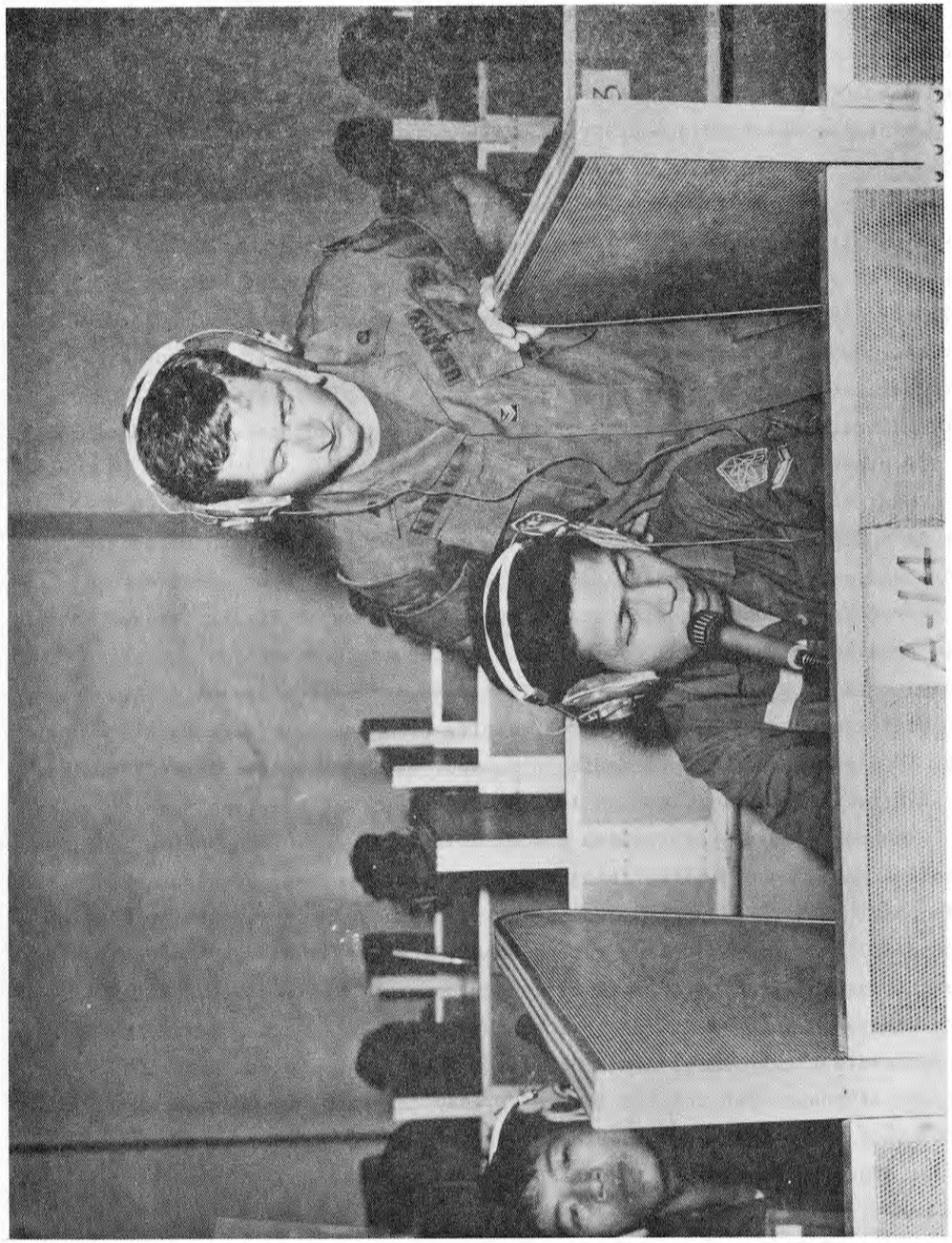
The training of leadership cadre and specialists for the Vietnamese Armed Forces began in earnest in early 1955 in conjunction with the reorganization process. In order to familiarize ARVN officers and NCOs with US Army doctrine, operational techniques and methods, an effort was made by TRIM, then CATO, to send selected personnel (English proficiency was the primary requirement) to US service schools beginning in July 1955, except for intelligence students who attended special courses in the Philippines. At about the same time, a Command and Staff course was initiated by US advisers at the 1st Training Center (later redesignated Quang Trung) for Vietnamese field-grade officers with the objective of introducing more senior personnel to US doctrine and tactics.

One of the major problems for the training advisory effort during this early period was language. Except for a very limited number, the only foreign language most ARVN officers spoke was French, and that with varying degrees of proficiency. The selection of students for US service schools, necessarily based on English proficiency, was very limited. The first contingent of ARVN officers who attended US service schools during the second half of 1955, for example, totaled only a dozen. To provide training for a greater number of ARVN officers, it was decided

in early 1955 to send officer-interpreters to some US service schools such as the US Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, the Signal School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and the Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Concurrently, US advisers attached to Vietnamese schools and major units began giving English lessons on an improvised basis and with the encouragement of the MAAG, a large scale effort was made by the Vietnamese General Staff to conduct English courses at the Language School, established in 1957. The period from 1955 to 1969, therefore, was devoted primarily to training instructors for the ARVN school system since it received priority assignment of ARVN officers returning from US schools. During this period, over 5,000 ARVN officers and NCOs received training in the United States in addition to 952 others who were given short orientation tours.

Next to the need of introducing US Army doctrine and tactics to the ARVN leadership, and training instructors for the ARVN school system, there was a requirement to expand and improve the ARVN school system which had been established, equipped and turned over by French forces. When French representation departed in 1956, there were only six major training facilities for the entire Vietnamese Armed Forces, including the Military Academy of Dalat and the Inter-Arms School of Thu Duc. With US support and adviser assistance, only two years later the number of ARVN training facilities had increased to 18.

The next decade, 1958-1968, saw a rapid expansion of the ARVN school system whose facilities increased manyfold. This expansion was made possible by US funds channeled into the Military Assistance Service Funded/Military Construction Program (MASF/MILCON). The year 1968 was a significant milestone of this construction program since, in keeping with the rapid increase in force structure, the RVNAF were provided funds to proceed with the large-scale building of training centers not only for the ARVN but also for the RF and PF. By the time the program was completed, there was a RF and PF training center for almost every province of the RVN, and the total ARVN-RF/PF training center system throughout the country was capable of handling up to 12,000 students at any one time, a six-fold increase over the capacity of the previous decade.



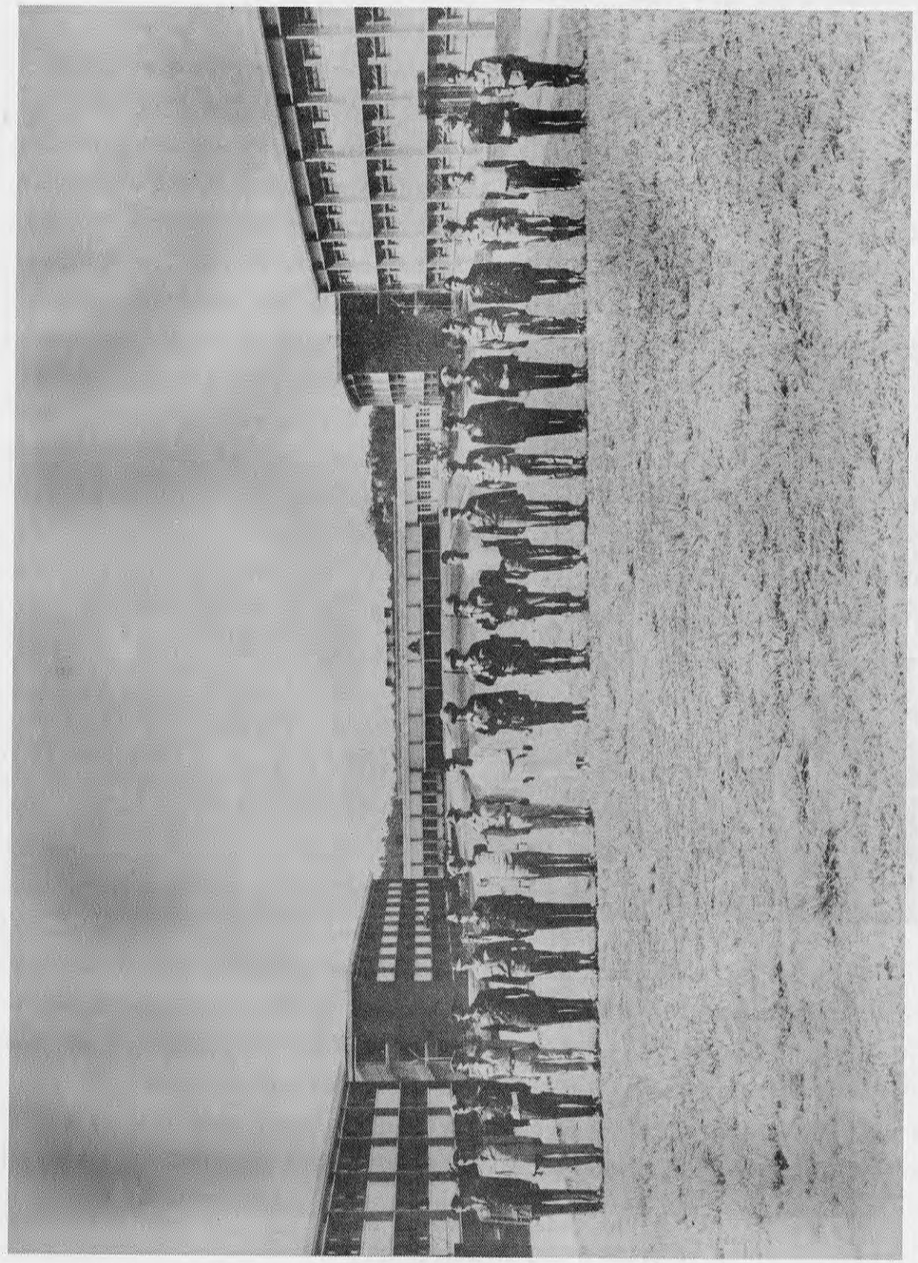
Assisting Students at the RVNAF Language School (Dec 1970)

To assist RVNAF in handling this upsurge of training activities, US training advisory personnel in the field were increased accordingly with particular emphasis on infantry unit and leader training. By 1966, for example, of the eight advisory detachments assigned to ARVN service schools, the more heavily staffed were those at the Thu Duc Infantry School and NCO Academy in Nha Trang. But the US training advisory effort was most significant at the eight ARVN National Training Centers where emphasis was placed on ARVN basic individual and unit training. The largest advisory detachments were those attached to the Lam Son and Quang Trung National Training Centers which also handled the largest contingents of recruits. For the training of the RF and PF, an equally significant advisory effort was expended at the six RF leader and unit training centers and 38 combined RF/PF or PF training centers where US advisory detachments varied in strength from two to 14 personnel. At each of these schools and training centers, the role of US advisers was particularly important. They advised faculty members and instructors on training techniques, assisted them in organizing instructional materials and conducting classes, and provided them with the stimulus needed to inspire cooperation and diligence among students. Although not always directly exposed to the students, US training advisers invariably earned their respect and affection. They were particularly held in high esteem by the Vietnamese private soldiers and NCOs.

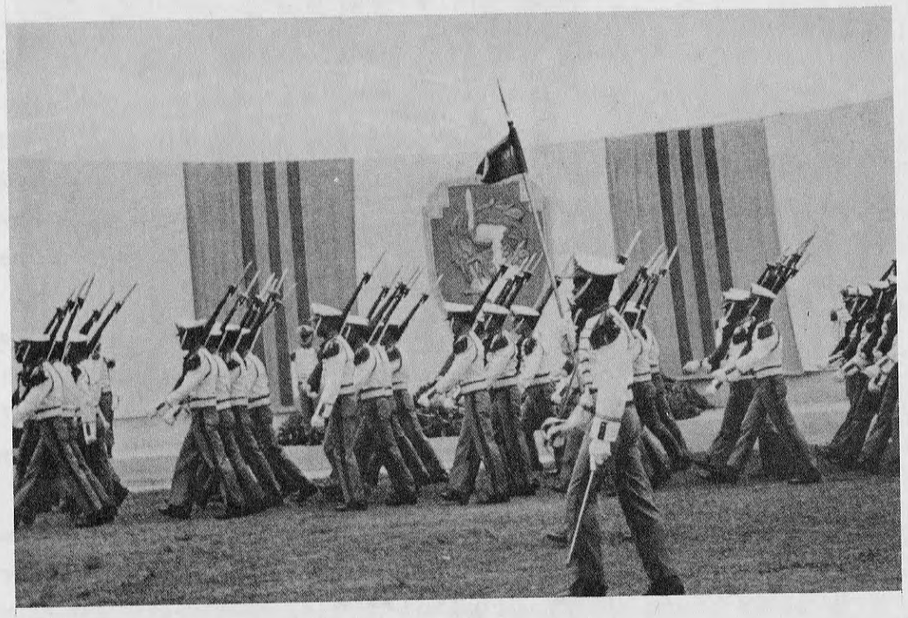
Programs of instruction were also subjected to extensive revision by US training advisers and the MACV Training Directorate to provide updated currcula for over 650 various courses. Most noteworthy of this combined MACV-JGS effort was the establishment in 1970 of a five-year training program for the entire RVNAF and the joint budgetary planning and programming for its support. In addition, a sponsorship program was initiated whereby ARVN service schools became directly affiliated with their counterparts of the US Army. The Dalat National Military Academy, for example, was affiliated with its American sister, the US Military Academy of West Point where one Vietnamese cadet was accepted for the first time in 1970.

In 1970, MACV Training Directorate initiated a new program for the continued improvement of all training centers. This plan consolidated the training base by merging some under under-utilized facilities and instructor staffs in order to reduce expenditures and turn National Training Centers into more modern facilities. The MASF/MILCON program provided a fund of US $28 million for this program which was completed in late 1972. In 1971, MASF/MILCON funded the construction of the Infantry School at Long Thanh at a cost of US $7 million. Upon completion in early 1973, this new facility became the home of the Infantry School whose basic mission was to train reserve officers. The old training complex at Thu Duc was used to accommodate other requirements such as the Quartermaster, Finance and Administration, Adjutant General, and Intelligence Schools.

Among ARVN service schools, the most celebrated was the National Military Academy at Dalat whose concept and construction received full support from General Westmoreland, US MACV commander. New construction, which was completed in 1966, provided modern facilities for the academy to replace old French-built barracks. As a major science and engineering institution, the academy was equipped with the most modern laboratory facilities which even the University of Saigon did not have. The cadets who graduated from the Academy's four-year curriculum, instituted in 1966, received a Bachelor of Science degree in addition to an officer's commission and a solid military background. The institution of the four-year curriculum, patterned after West Point, gave the Dalat Military Academy a standing equal to other modern academies in the world. In fact, rated as one among the best in Asia, it became a source of pride for the RVNAF and a showcase for foreign dignitaries and visitors. Much credit for this accomplishment must also be given to the US training advisers assigned to our military academy. A detachment or team of six officers, one warrant officer and two enlisted men was authorized by MACV to assist with almost every requirement to include academic, military and the cadet regiment. It was obvious to all Vietnamese that these personnel had been carefully selected, were thoroughly familiar with academic programs and the procedures of West Point and were highly



The National Military Academy at Dalat:
A Significant Contribution of U.S. Advisory Effort



The Cadets of Dalat NMA:
A Source of Pride for the RVNAF

dedicated and professional in every respect. They held the admiration and esteem of the staff, faculty and cadets and were always most helpful in anticipating and solving any problem.

In early 1968, with the full support of General Abrams, the National Defense College was established. It was the first military school at the national level created with a one-year curriculum and devoted entirely to the study of national defense and national security activities. The first class began in May 1968 with 21 high-ranking military officers and civil servants. Students were selected from candidates among outstanding colonels and general officers and high-ranking civilians earmarked for key positions affecting national security. Guest lecturers for the National Defense College included high-ranking US general officers and officials, top Vietnamese university professors and cabinet ministers. As one requirement for graduation, students had to submit individual research papers on national defense matters. Some of these papers turned out to be the best studies ever made on these important subjects.

The US training advisory effort took a vigorous step forward as US forces began to redeploy in accordance with the Vietnamization program. The goal to be achieved, according to General Abrams, was to expand and improve the RVNAF to the extent that they could "hack it" alone. As a result, MACV endeavored on the one hand to increase US advisory strength and select the best qualified officers for advisory duties on the other. By 1970, advisory strength, especially for the training effort, was filled 100%, as compared to 55% during the pre-Vietnamization period. Among these training advisers, whose total strength reached 3,500 by the end of 1971, about 90% had received combat experience in Vietnam.

To accomplish the objective of improving combat effectiveness of RVNAF so that they could gradually take over from US forces and also to provide for a smooth redeployment, MACV implemented three major programs: (1) on-the-job training, (2) combined operations, and; (3) mobile training.