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REPORT TO

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BY

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

JULY 6, 1970

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**Select Committee on United States
Involvement in Southeast Asia
House of Representatives
Congress of the United States
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515**

July 6, 1970

Dear Colleague:

Pursuant to H. Res. 976 adopted on June 8, 1970, the report of the Select Committee on United States Involvement in Southeast Asia is enclosed.

The Select Committee feels this report will give you additional information to help keep you abreast of our involvement in Southeast Asia. A detailed appendix containing supporting data for this report will follow.

Sincerely,



G. V. Montgomery
CHAIRMAN

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INTRODUCTION

On June 8, the United States House of Representatives adopted H. Res. 976. The resolution authorized the Speaker "to appoint a select committee of the House to study first-hand the recent developments in Southeast Asia and then report its findings to the House of Representatives within forty-five days of its adoption."

Pursuant to the resolution, the Speaker on June 15th, appointed the following members to the Committee:

G. V. Montgomery, Chairman	E. Ross Adair
Neal Smith	Howard W. Robison
Augustus F. Hawkins	Hastings Keith
William R. Anderson	Donald D. Clancy
Lee H. Hamilton	Albert W. Watson
Robert H. Mollohan	Orval Hansen

In preparation for its assignment, the Committee heard from persons, both in government and in private life, representing different points of view, who could from their experience and knowledge recommend subjects to be examined and people to see in Southeast Asia relative to the Committee's objectives.

On June 20th, the Committee left Washington for Saigon, which served as its base of operations during the two weeks it spent in Southeast Asia. Given the broad mandate of the House and the limited time available, it was decided that more could be accomplished if the Committee divided into groups

which were given specific missions. By so doing, the Committee was able to maximize its effectiveness and gather substantially more information than would normally be possible.

To collect the information that forms the basis for this report, the Committee, either as a complete group, working in teams, or as individuals, traveled thousands of miles. They moved extensively throughout all of South Vietnam. Some went to Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia and Singapore.

The Committee talked not only with U. S. military and civilian personnel of most ranks and specialities and Asian officials and legislators of the countries they visited, but also with South Vietnamese, Korean and Thai military personnel, South Vietnamese civilians in all walks of life, provincial, district and village representatives, religious and student leaders, missionaries, captured enemy soldiers and defectors, American and foreign newsmen, businessmen and others who it was thought could contribute to the Committee's objectives. Earlier the Committee had cabled the North Vietnamese government requesting permission to visit Hanoi to see U. S. prisoners of war being held there. Having received no response to this or another message, three Members met with a Third Secretary of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, in an effort to discuss the status of U. S. prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

This report represents a consensus of the views of the Committee. In some instances where individual Members may differ or may have made an individual study of a particular subject, supplemental views may be presented.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G. V. Montgomery". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

G. V. Montgomery, Chairman
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE ECONOMY OF SOUTH VIETNAM

The weakest link in South Vietnam's chain is its economy. Inflation is the most serious problem facing the country. The need for effective action to stabilize the economy is urgent. Failure to solve the major problems on the economic front will seriously and perhaps fatally weaken the pacification and Vietnamization programs. It will surely undermine efforts to develop viable democratic political institutions and processes. In short, a strong and stable economy must be developed as the foundation on which the nation's future progress will be built.

Controlling inflation is highest on the list of priority economic objectives. Inflation has been steadily eroding the value of the piaster and prices continue to rise at a rate of between one and two percent a week, according to some estimates. Among the hardest hit by inflation are members of the military and civil service, whose pay is notoriously low. Sharply rising living costs are a deterrent to investment, and make any kind of meaningful long-range economic planning almost impossible.

To come to grips with the economic ills that afflict the country, the government should begin a series of specific reforms without delay. Many of the measures needed will not be politically popular, but the consequences of failure to act could create even greater political difficulties.

The present official exchange rate is totally unrealistic. The official rate is 118 piasters to the dollar. The black market rate of 350 to 400 or more piasters to the dollar more nearly reflects the true value of the currency of South Vietnam.

Failure to devalue the piaster has helped to stimulate a flourishing black market in the currency. United States aid furnished at the official rate results in an indirect subsidy of the government of South Vietnam. Likewise, it penalizes American military and civilian personnel who must exchange at the official rate and are thereby forced to subsidize the government.

The war has greatly distorted the economy of South Vietnam, which is characterized by a huge trade imbalance. The country imports far more than it exports. This imbalance is further aggravated by the unrealistic official exchange rate, which is a powerful incentive to imports and a deterrent to exports.

Unrealistically low interest rates discourage the savings and investment that the country must develop to build a stable and expanding economy. Coupled with effective anti-inflation measures, interest rates should be raised to reasonable levels. This would help to attract the investment capital needed to provide enough jobs and productive capacity to sustain the country as it shifts from a wartime to a peacetime economy.

Tax reform is also high on the list of national priorities.

Most of the taxes are not collected. This deprives the government of needed revenue and is discriminatory in its effect on those who must pay taxes, such as government employees. The need to develop a fair system of taxation and to administer the tax laws effectively is urgent.

South Vietnam also suffers from the lack of a workable system of commercial law governing sales, credit and other commercial transactions. Attention should be given to the development of commercial law as an essential step in the creation of a healthy investment climate, and to otherwise stimulate expanded trade and commerce.

In the long run, South Vietnam must achieve near parity in its volume of exports and imports. This will require the building of a substantial export trade where virtually none exists today. The agricultural industry offers hope for the production of commodities for export. Recent progress that has been made in pacification in the Mekong Delta gives rise to prospects that the country will soon be able to produce rice in an amount surplus to the country's needs. As the goal of self-sufficiency in rice is reached, however, to the extent that there is no export market for this surplus rice, land should be shifted into the production of other products for which export markets can be developed.

The country is also blessed with vast timber resources that

are one of the most promising means of earning foreign exchange.

The United States has built for South Vietnam some economic assets of substantial value. An example is the ship-repair facility at Saigon, which is now being turned over to the South Vietnamese. They are developing the skills essential to its operation. Because of relatively low labor costs, it is likely that Saigon will be able to compete effectively with Hong Kong and Singapore in repairing ships from other countries. This will produce foreign exchange that is badly needed by South Vietnam.

The United States has also provided the country with a good system of roads and bridges, mostly built by units of the U. S. Army Engineers. The roads, most of which are built to U. S. standards, have not only been a tremendous aid to the pacification program but have been a strong stimulus to economic growth in the rural areas. Improved transportation and communication links between all parts of the country have resulted in building new hamlets and in the cultivation of land which had been idle. A good system of farm-to-market roads has caused the rapid expansion of trade between the rural areas and the major population centers.

South Vietnam is rich in resources and potential for a strong and growing economy. Much of its land is fertile and highly productive. Its people are intelligent and resourceful.

To achieve its potential, however, will require a major self-help effort by the people and government of South Vietnam and a fairly high level of outside economic assistance for several years. As long as South Vietnam must maintain a military establishment at or near the present level, it must have outside help to survive. Most of the economic assistance during the next few years will undoubtedly have to come from the United States. However, other industrial nations, particularly Japan, should be given every possible encouragement to share this burden. Japan has reaped substantial economic benefits through the sale of motorized vehicles, electronics and other goods to South Vietnam. It will be a prime beneficiary of the future economic growth of the country and of the successful efforts to stem the tide of Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. However, the level of economic assistance Japan has hitherto furnished to South Vietnam has been disappointing.

United States assistance should be furnished on terms that will provide effective incentives for the government of South Vietnam to institute the reforms and to otherwise take the actions that are essential to success. Our help can be justified only if there is a clearly demonstrated willingness by the South Vietnamese to help themselves.

The road to economic health for South Vietnam is a rocky one and uphill all the way. But it can make it.

PACIFICATION

To most of the Committee, especially those who have been in South Vietnam on previous occasions, significant surface gains seem to have been made in the all-important pacification program. Village and hamlet security was better than most of us had expected, as also was the security of travel by road throughout much of the countryside, at least in the daytime.

As the best evidence of this, Committee members traveled by highway singly and in groups - and much of the time without military escort - in nearly every area of South Vietnam, and moved at will into numerous villages and hamlets where the residents seemed to be living fairly normal lives.

The key to this capability - which is undoubtedly still restricted in too many areas at night - lies in the rapid build-up of the Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF), as well as of the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF). Regional Forces operate within a province and are roughly comparable to our National Guard. Popular Forces operate within a relatively small district and are similar to a trained local militia. Both forces are paid, armed with M-16 rifles, and fairly well-trained. Total strength of the RF and PF is 509,500. Upon the continued and vigorous promotion of this program in large part rests South Vietnam's future chances of reducing its

army (ARVN) strength from some one million men to a size that a nation of 17.8 million people could reasonably be expected to support.

The People's Self Defense Force, on the other hand, is a people's militia - the concept of a "nation-in-arms" - composed largely of those men and women not of prime military age, partially trained and armed, but not paid. Two years or so ago it would have seemed unthinkable to give weapons to the populace for fear they would end up in the hands of the VC - or that some of them might even possibly be used against the government itself.

Beginning in late 1968, however, the government of South Vietnam, showing some new degree of confidence at having survived the Communists' all-out Tet offensive of February of that year, has been making a strong effort in this direction. The result now is a "combat PSDF" force of over a million persons, sharing some 350,000 miscellaneous arms among them and engaged in the defense of their communities and families. There is also an additional indefinite figure of "support PSDF" - women, children and older citizens.

U. S. military personnel have assisted in training all these para-military forces. On their constant vigilance and combined capacity to contain VC terrorist assaults at the village and hamlet level depends the possibility of freeing ARVN for its

more appropriate role of combat with larger, regular enemy units still operating in South Vietnam and of conducting border patrol. But an even more important mission of these forces is to restore security to the countryside, thereby enabling the people to return to their homes, their rice paddies, farms, and villages from which so many have fled, either because of constant VC harrassment or the devastations of war.

Whether or not these programs can achieve lasting success is not yet clear, but representatives of the Civic Operations and Rural Development System (CORDS) with whom we talked are optimistic that it can, and there is some reason for their optimism.

CORDS, a combined military and civilian operation that seems to be functioning smoothly, maintains a Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) administered by the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). The HES system attempts to measure progress in the pacification program by monitoring trends in security of the villages and hamlets. The HES ratings have been criticized in the past for presenting an over-optimistic picture of developments. The ratings were revised earlier this year in an effort to make HES a more realistic guide.

In the judgment of the Committee, HES ratings are still by no means either foolproof or a measure of permanent improvement.

A hamlet rated at 90% on the HES scale could drop drastically overnight if the VC successfully conducted a full-scale and concentrated terrorist attack. An example would be the VC massacre of 75 civilians on June 10, at the Ba Ren Bridge near Da Nang, the site of which was visited by Committee members.

The Committee feels, instead, that the best measure of pacification progress is the willingness of the people to return to the countryside. Although the statistics on this are far from firm and can be misleading as well (since some "returnees" may now work their rice paddies by day but return to refuge at night), members of the Committee visited and observed numerous areas where such resettlement trends were evident.

There are several important reasons why it is essential to develop and maintain such a trend. Only in such a fashion can the costly and frustrating refugee problem be solved, and only in such a fashion can South Vietnam's urban problems be solved. Its major cities are now overwhelmed by persons displaced by the war. In addition, a successful pacification and re-settlement program is vital to South Vietnam's economy. Until the major agricultural areas, especially such populous areas as the Mekong River Delta, are secure, the nation's economy will continue to waver under the overburdening deficit in its balance of payments. Even though South Vietnam can potentially produce enough rice for its own needs, as well as a surplus for possible

export purposes, it is now importing rice. Its production of rubber and other products, which its rich natural resources can also provide, has likewise dropped sharply because of the war. These economic deficiencies are a direct result of the past insecurity of the countryside.

A "returnee" who may well find his home destroyed, his fields overgrown and local essential services lacking, now receives by way of assistance to rebuild his life an allowance of 7,500 piasters (\$63.56), 10 sheets of metal roofing, and a six-month supply of rice.

Brief mention should also be made of certain other aspects of pacification. A civilian National Police Force has been built up with a strength of some 95,000 men and women located all the way from the most remote Delta hamlet to metropolitan Saigon. The true capabilities of this partly-trained force have yet to be tested, but its existence is a necessary element in the hoped-for gradual shift in South Vietnam away from a military oligarchy and toward a republican form of government supported by competent civil service.

Alongside this program, and supported by it, is the so-called "Chieu Hoi," or Open Arms Program aimed at first identifying and then persuading VC to "rally" to the government. This effort has shown some encouraging numerical results. The total VC thus converted were 18,171 in 1968, 47,023 in 1969,

and 13,923, as of May 21, 1970. The trend shows a slight upturn of late, perhaps as a possible side benefit from the Cambodian operations. Any evaluation of these results must, however, be tempered by certain negative aspects. One must note the low rate of defection by officers and soldiers from the North Vietnamese Army, although there have been a few. On balance the Chieu Hoi program can be judged as showing substantial, if imperfect, success.

Next, there is the "Phoenix" program aimed at neutralizing the Viet Congs' carefully constructed infrastructure. This can be described as an "internal security" program. Despite some years in operation success of the program can only be described as mixed. For whatever it is worth, Committee members were given to understand that the government is aware of the shortcomings of Phoenix, and of the domestic and external criticism of the program. Attempts are supposedly being made to improve its operation.

Last, but by no means least, is the "self-development" part of the pacification program - an effort substantially supported by the U. S. The program is the beginning of an attempt to meet the educational, health and municipal needs, as well as encouraging local initiative.

A new approach to this was undertaken in 1969 when a fund for "village self-development" was created with one million piasters

(about \$8,500) being allocated to each village with an elected council. The use of the fund was required to be discussed in an open public meeting with the final selection of projects to be determined by the council. For 1970, allocations are being based on population, and the total funds amount to about 2.7 billion piasters (\$23 million).

The range of projects being selected run the gamut from new schools to bridges, to farm machinery purchased on a cooperative basis, and to pig-raising. To encourage greater local participation and initiative, the current program also requires local matching funds, except in instances where the hamlet or village is deemed too poor. With the election now of province councils, a comparable province development fund has also been cranked into the program for more regional planning purposes.

The Committee has commented on this overall program at this length because, for the strong majority of the members, pacification is the key to South Vietnam's future.

As the withdrawal of the U. S. presence in the country proceeds, and as our large military effort upon which South Vietnam's economy has become so dependent is scaled down, only a secure and productive countryside can maintain in South Vietnam a society economically viable and politically stable.

VIETNAMIZATION

The Committee was told that in December, 1968, President Thieu said that he believed it was time to start an orderly withdrawal of the American military presence, and that the South Vietnamese were approaching the capability to handle the requirements for military manpower. This is now the announced policy of the U. S.; therefore, the question to be resolved is how fast Vietnamization should take place.

The Committee believes the process of Vietnamization of the war is progressing and that all levels of our military command are planning to meet withdrawal schedules. The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) are increasing in their capability, both in experience and materiel, although there are still measurable differences between units. Our military commanders have their withdrawal schedules from now until October 15, and are making assessments to be used in determining the speed of the withdrawal thereafter.

Today, one person out of 17 is in the South Vietnamese armed forces. This is the level they believe will be necessary for a protracted engagement as long as North Vietnam furnishes manpower and China and the U. S. S. R. furnish the weapons. Most of our American soldiers of all ranks who have experienced close cooperation with the South Vietnamese forces say they are

a potent force and vastly improved compared to two years ago and are still improving. South Vietnamese operations in Cambodia have given the South Vietnamese soldier more self-confidence and poise than he has ever previously displayed.

The desertion and "absent without leave" rate is too high. However, 90% of the Vietnamese deserters end up back in the manpower pool by joining another military unit near their home.

Additional geographic areas and military functions will be turned over to the South Vietnamese, but not all areas and functions can be delegated simultaneously.

The Committee believes an orderly withdrawal requires training of additional men for the South Vietnamese Air Force and some other special categories. As far as ground troops are concerned, America should continue its withdrawal program at least as fast as is now scheduled. The only exception would be additional time to solve logistics problems.

In recent months, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong have avoided big-unit offensive operations indicative of a more or less limited conventional war. Instead, they have reverted to the "protracted war" approach of the guerrilla, as well as terrorist tactics. Some of their regular, or Main Force, regimental units apparently are being broken down into

numerous "local force" units of company size or less. This is not to say they are ineffective. To the contrary, one must expect renewed and increased small-scale offensive actions against small outposts and hamlets and increased terrorist attacks in both cities and the countryside. This is in fact happening at the present time.

While all of the American and Vietnamese military officials agreed on the announced troop withdrawal schedule, some expressed concern over its being announced publicly. That concern is shared by the Committee. The knowledge of specific details of our withdrawal may give an undue advantage to the enemy.

The South Vietnamese Air Force has continued to show improvement and the U. S. Seventh Air Force has recently accelerated considerably the plans to train Vietnamese pilots and Air Force support units.

The Committee believes plans could also be accelerated for the training and phasing in of ground support forces, such as artillery units.

The U. S. Navy's primary mission in South Vietnam has been that of interdicting infiltration into South Vietnam by waterways. The Navy has been conducting one of the most effective Vietnamization programs that the Committee observed. As evidence of this fact, only twenty percent of the patrol craft engaged in the recent Cambodian operations were U. S. Navy (USN) craft manned by USN crews.

The USN has adopted a Vietnamization policy that is relatively simple and may well be considered by the other services where such a policy proves feasible. A typical naval patrol craft normally carries a crew of five. The USN added one Vietnamese crew member, selected by the South Vietnam Navy (VNN) and when he is thought to be qualified, a VNN seaman replaced another USN seaman, and so on, until only one USN advisor was left on the craft. Eventually the patrol craft is turned over to the VNN.

In the opinion of the Committee, Vietnamization should continue to improve and be one of the stronger programs we have sponsored.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SOUTH VIETNAM'S JUNE 28, 1970 ELECTIONS

Essential to pacification in South Vietnam is not only the ability of South Vietnam's national leaders, but also of the country's leadership at the local level - the provinces, districts, villages, and hamlets. In South Vietnam, the 44 provinces generally equate to U. S. states, the districts to U. S. counties, the "villages" to U. S. townships or supervisor beats, and the hamlets to U. S. town or village communities.

For the most part, the Committee was favorably impressed with the capabilities and leadership attributes of the province and district chiefs. Because of past insecurity, these men are appointed by the Central Government, and are nearly all officers of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. However, the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam provides for popular election of these officials in 1972. Those members of the Committee who had toured South Vietnam in previous years found a marked improvement in the abilities of these men.

The Committee feels that as individual provinces and districts become secure and the people become more knowledgeable in a competitive political system, steps should be taken to see that province and district chiefs are elected by the people they govern. We were encouraged when President Thieu assured us that this would be the case. South Vietnam will not have

a truly democratic form of government until its officials at all levels of government are chosen through a process of popular self-determination. President Thieu stated his agreement with our view, and is apparently pursuing this objective with all practicable speed.

The Committee would also like to pay tribute to the American military and civilian personnel who have provided invaluable assistance to the province and district chiefs in administering to the needs of the people. These dedicated Americans live at the "rice roots" and share many of the dangers, discomforts and difficulties of the South Vietnamese. We think that nationals of both countries gain from the experience.

As to elections, the Committee observed firsthand the Provincial voting practices and procedures on Sunday, June 28, 1970. Seventy-two percent of the eligible citizens voted in these elections. This is commendable when one remembers that this was the first such election for Provincial Councils. There were numerous candidates, unusual interest in the campaigning, which was reflected in the presence of several hundred people at a campaign speech. The balloting was simple and secret. The South Vietnamese have adopted a simple method to assist the forgetful or less informed citizen in casting his vote. Each candidate and his party had a distinctive symbol on the ballot, so as to minimize confusion and permit the

illiterate voter to cast his ballot without outside assistance. While there is always the critic who questions the validity or meaningfulness of the elections, the Committee detected no justification for such criticism.

LAND REFORM

There have been several South Vietnamese land reform programs in previous years, which has resulted in elimination of all non-Vietnamese ownership of rice lands and have reduced maximum holdings to about 100 acres per person. A recently enacted new land reform program is designed to reduce maximum holdings to 7.4 acres per person in the rich Delta area, and a maximum of 37 acres in other parts of the country. Present land owners would be paid twenty percent of the value of the land in cash and the balance in bonds, redeemable over a period of eight years and bearing ten percent interest.

There is not unanimous agreement that the new program will in fact be as popular as some have believed. Some of the land to be divided is held by a member of a family who supports dependent relatives or common village activities. The land may be in one family member's name, while in fact other family members own part of it. This possibility is enhanced by the fact that a substantial transfer tax has been in effect in South Vietnam. Some Vietnamese have avoided paying the tax by merely failing to transfer title. In these family situations, taking land which by the legal record may appear to belong to one person will result in either great dissatisfaction on the part of the people or in

paying for land to give to a "tenant" **who** was the owner in the first place. An additional difficulty is the lack of sufficient land records, such as are kept in the United States. In the rural areas, family records are relied on heavily to ascertain ownership.

Since the United States pressed for the new program, the cost of \$300 million to \$500 million would presumably have to be borne largely, if not entirely, by American assistance.

The Committee found reason to doubt that the new land reform program will be the panacea some have claimed, and there is a possibility it could have adverse effects. While not passing final judgment on the new program, the Committee believes the above facts must be taken into consideration when making an appraisal of the program.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS

The Committee became increasingly interested in and concerned about the public information programs conducted by the South Vietnamese and U. S. governments. Two members investigated the public information programs in as much detail as time and circumstances would permit.

South Vietnam, although relatively small by U. S. geographical standards, is an incredibly disjointed nation. At one extreme is a sprawling and overpopulated Saigon, and at the other is remote villages and hamlets. Within South Vietnamese governmental officialdom, there are fairly good lines of communication extending to the chiefs of most remote and pacified hamlets. Despite considerable progress in establishing democratic forms of government, nearly all provinces, villages and hamlets have military officers as their chiefs. Thus, the country is tied together by a quasi-military communications network.

Outside of Saigon and the other municipalities, the man on the street is the Vietnamese farmer. He has little present knowledge of, or feeling about, the government of President Thieu. However, some evidence of increased interest was observed. The real interests of the farmer revolve around his extremely close knit family and its members - their security, how well they are

nourished and housed, and the extent to which an education can be provided his children. The farmer's ancestors had had to contend for centuries with a Chinese presence. He himself had seen and felt the French presence. Now he sees and feels an overwhelming American presence. This situation has endured for centuries and the Vietnamese farmer can only surmise that it will go on forever. These are the Vietnamese civilians who are prime targets of VC and NVA propaganda and the most frequent targets of VC recruiters and abductors.

As in the United States in the late 1940's, the most intriguing new development in South Vietnam is television. Outside the large cities and the Delta area, there is not a great deal of coverage by television. There has been a recent rapid increase in the number of privately owned television sets, with some estimates running as high as 300,000. Of these U. S. AID and DOD have furnished 3,500 mainly "community sets." Where television can be received, it is not uncommon for scores and even hundreds to watch TV during the small time of day that programs are aired. More frequently than not, reception in the countryside is limited to the U. S. Armed Forces Network. This programming is in English, and for the most part consists of American television serials and variety shows. Beside television, there are estimates that from 10% to 90% of the families in each hamlet own transistor radios.

The Joint U. S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) estimates that 75% of South Vietnam is covered by GVN radio programs. Local citizens report, however, that Radio Hanoi was the most powerful station available on the dial, although the North Vietnamese do not broadcast television in either North or South Vietnam.

The Committee is concerned over the apparent lack of effort being made by the U. S. and Vietnamese governments to increase the availability and use of television messages and radio programs to help unite the nation, as has been done in Thailand, and to explain the U. S. presence as being on behalf of democracy for South Vietnam. Colonel Tran Van Doc, a defector from the North, said "The Communists are far better at telling a lie than the U. S. is at telling the truth." From its observations, the Committee can only report that the Colonel's views were not overstated.

General Lee, Commanding General of the ROK Tiger Division, feels that civic action and psychological warfare are just as important as military action. This is a lesson in which the United States needs a cram course. One high ranking U. S. official with noticeable hesitation characterized U. S. psychological actions as "notoriously sorry." The sad fact is that our failure to learn and practice effective psychological warfare has contributed to the loss of American lives and national resources.

The pitiful paradox is that we are the world's best in communications technology, but among the world's worst in using it as an instrument in helping to achieve our foreign policy goals, particularly in Southeast Asia. The Committee feels it is high time for the U. S. and South Vietnamese to take the communications offensive.

The official policy of the Joint U. S. Public Affairs Office in Saigon appears to be "to work itself out of a job." We are furnishing some nominal technical assistance to South Vietnamese television, which is plagued with acute growing pains and a shortage of skilled manpower. Apparently our public affairs leadership feels it is better for mass radio and television communications in South Vietnam to develop according to its own speed. One can only partially respect this point of view. The Committee feels, on the contrary, that the anti-Communist stance of the South Vietnamese, the processes of pacification and Vietnamization, and thus the prospects of rapid withdrawal of American combat forces can be considerably enhanced by effective in-country communications. The Committee was encouraged that President Thieu recently included stepped-up public communications as one of his high priority goals.

The Committee strongly recommends that the United States should immediately re-evaluate its public information policies

in Southeast Asia, and that the communications industry in America should recognize its ability to furnish invaluable assistance. One obvious suggestion would be a program similiar to ETV's "Sesame Street" aired in Vietnamese and based on Vietnam's own rich cultural heritage.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

Of primary concern to the Committee and all Americans is the plight of U. S. servicemen held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action. Before leaving for South Vietnam, the following telegram was sent by the Committee on June 19, to the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry in Hanoi, as well as its Minister in Paris, Xuan Thuy.

"Sincerely request a part or all of our group be granted a visa as private citizens to come to Hanoi for the purpose of visiting with a representative group of American prisoners of war sometime between the dates of June 22 and July 2. Our request is for humanitarian purposes. Your thoughtful consideration of our request will be gratefully appreciated. We look forward to a favorable reply at your earliest convenience."

Having had no reply, the Committee sent the following follow-up telegram to the Foreign Ministry in Hanoi on June 25.

"On June 24, Members of this Select Committee made a visit to and inspection of the Republic of South Vietnam prisoner of war camp at Da Nang. Our inspection of conditions at the camp and of the treatment accorded both North Vietnamese and members of Viet Cong held there as prisoners of war confirms and supports the official inspection reports of the International Red Cross that all provisions of the Geneva Convention regarding treatment to be provided prisoners of war have been and are being met. Because of this visit by members of the Select Committee and as a result of

"their findings, we again request that we receive an early and favorable response to our telegram of June 19, 1970, regarding approval of a visit to prisoner of war camps in North Vietnam where American and South Vietnamese prisoners of war are being held."

Unfortunately, neither of the telegrams elicited a response from Hanoi.

Three members of the Committee pressed the matter further during their trip to Laos. While in Vientiane, the Members met with a Third Secretary of the North Vietnamese Embassy. They made a strong plea for North Vietnam to allow the sending of an international committee of Red Cross representatives to North Vietnam to investigate the condition of our servicemen being held prisoners there. An attempt was also made to leave a petition containing 50,000 names calling for humane treatment of American POW'S. The Third Secretary refused to accept the petition.

The upshot of the brief meeting was a loud denial by the North Vietnamese official that North Vietnam has any American prisoners of war. Rather, he said the men they held were war criminals. The Third Secretary ended the meeting after fifteen minutes by storming out of the room.

The Committee would like to point out most strongly the seriousness of the situation involving 1,500 American POW's and MIA's. It is a known fact that many POW's are being held by North Vietnam in Hanoi. What is not general knowledge is the fact that some Americans are held prisoner by the Pathet Lao in Laos and by the Viet Cong in unknown and isolated areas of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam.

The Committee knew it would probably be a futile effort to try to go to North Vietnam. But at the same time, the Members felt it imperative to take every possible step in hopes of bringing us closer to a solution to this most pressing problem. The necessity of constantly pressing the government of North Vietnam concerning our American POW's and MIA's cannot be over emphasized. We must never cease working on behalf of these Americans and their families.

NARCOTICS AND CONTRABAND PROBLEMS

There are no certain statistics as to how many U. S. servicemen in South Vietnam use -- or have -- marijuana. Undoubtedly, the number of our troops in Vietnam who have done so is substantial. We have seen reports of studies claiming that at least 30 percent of such personnel are using marijuana, at least on an occasional basis. Certainly, as Committee members could discover for themselves, although such sales are not illegal, a "stick" of marijuana can be purchased for pennies on almost every Saigon street corner.

In any event, U. S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (U. S. MACV) has instituted a number of efforts at control, including an expanded educational program, and encouraging the Judicial Branch of the National Police of South Vietnam to form "narcotics teams" to cooperate with U. S. military police in cities with high concentrations of military personnel. Also, "raid teams", consisting of U. S. Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID) personnel and South Vietnamese narcotics policemen have been established to locate and apprehend distributors and "pushers" of both marijuana and the so-called "hard drugs."

However, of equal seriousness has been the problem of narcotics smuggling out of Vietnam, an activity in which some

U. S. servicemen have participated. Given the extremely high number of daily departures from South Vietnam of both servicemen and materiel of one kind or another, this has been an extremely difficult problem to control. At one point it reached such proportions as to cause host Rest & Recreation countries -- particularly Australia and Hong Kong -- serious concern.

Besides this principal problem with marijuana, the use of "hard drugs" by military personnel in South Vietnam is also of concern to MACV. Again, the problem is accentuated by easy access to such habituating and debilitating narcotics.

Another facet of all this has been the surge of contraband articles of all kinds, but particularly of weapons (other than qualified "war trophies") and ammunition for them, along with such items as "live" grenades, being sent or brought back to the U. S. Several months ago, a test "operation-intercept" was conducted by the U. S. Customs Service at one of the major West Coast Army Post Offices. The number of such dangerous and illegal weapons, ammunition and other contraband, along with a quantity of marijuana and hashish seized, confirmed the existence of a problem requiring the immediate attention of military authorities.

Corrective measures have since been taken. A team of six experienced U. S. Customs agents was sent to South Vietnam to work with the Provost Marshal at Headquarters, MACV. With their help, over 80 military men have been recruited and trained

as "Acting Customs Inspectors." These persons, under the direction of the Provost Marshal, in accordance with new and detailed procedures perform a pre-clearance inspection of military personnel and their personal possessions before they leave for the United States.

For the purpose of this report it is not necessary to detail such procedures, although such information is in the files of the Committee. The important thing is that such procedures are working, a point verified both by the MACV Provost Marshal and by the U. S. Customs Service Commissioner.

CON SON ISLAND PRISON

In view of the fact that U. S. aid is given to South Vietnamese national penal institutions, some members of the Committee visited one of these facilities on Con Son Island. While there, they observed some conditions which required remedial or corrective action. These matters were called to the attention of an appropriate Vietnamese official, as well as the American Ambassador. Assurances were given the Committee that our authorities would thoroughly investigate this situation.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS PERTAINING TO U. S. TROOPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

While the Committee concentrated its efforts upon the South Vietnamese capability of assuming the military burden for the defense of their country, it also investigated the morale prevailing among the American troops deployed in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Generally, morale was found to be very good with a significant boost from the operations to destroy the enemy's sanctuaries in Cambodia. Here the consensus, both among American and ARVN forces, was that the strike in the country was an outstanding military success, and would give the United States the breathing space needed to accelerate troop withdrawals. There can be little doubt that the anticipation of this acceleration contributes materially to the high morale.

Out-of-country R & R (rest and recreation) is also a considerable factor in the morale of our troops.

Concern was voiced by American servicemen over the dissent in the United States which obviously has been maximized in Vietnam as well as at home. Some expressed doubts about being accepted on college campuses after completion of their tour of duty. The Committee shares the concern that the amount and character of dissent adds to the already heavy burden which the individual soldier bears.

The Committee also visited the U. S. military stockade at Long Binh. The prison has a capacity of 500 and had 427 inmates at the time of our visit. Of these, one-third were being held in pretrial status, another third has been tried but not sentenced, and the remaining third has been tried and sentenced but not transferred to permanent prisons.

While the charges varied on which these men were being held, a significant portion of them were the result of actions taken by servicemen seeking separation from military service. Approximately 15% of those incarcerated were charged with some form of drug abuse. It should be noted that most of these charges, especially simple possession and usage of marijuana, were disposed of by nonjudicial punishment at the company level.

Although there have been allegations of racial discrimination, the Committee found no evidence of such charges in the administration of the stockade. It is significant in light of these charges that the commanding officer, who impressed the Committee as being most capable, is a black. The Committee found the stockade to be extraordinarily well run.

AMERICAN CIVILIANS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

The Committee noted and heard of the presence of large numbers of U. S. government-associated civilians in South Vietnam. Upon inquiry, the following breakdown of civilian personnel as of April 1, 1970, was furnished the Committee.

Embassy, USAID, JUSPAO	2,222
DOD direct hire	2,065
Contractors.	6,738
Employees on contract to USAID and CORDS . .	719

American civilian personnel are not bound by the same regulations as military personnel, but any unacceptable activity by U. S. civilians damages our image just the same, if not more so.

The Committee feels that the reduction of American civilians (including personnel of contractors) in South Vietnam should be continued and even accelerated wherever possible.

INTERVIEW WITH NVA DEFECTOR

(The following is a summary of an informal discussion between a high ranking North Vietnamese defector and a Committee member.)

The use of propaganda directed toward the North Vietnamese by Hanoi is intensive. The people believe what they hear and read. Until the Tet offensive of 1968, there was no doubt in the minds of the people that the war was being won decisively. They tended to anticipate a complete victory over South Vietnam at an early date. After Tet they have become increasingly "puzzled."

Virtually all of the NVA and VC infrastructure have broadcast-band radios. About 30% of the civilian families in North Vietnam own receivers. There are strong prohibitions against listening to foreign broadcasts, but this is apparently directed toward the civilian populace. Most of the infrastructure listen. The most heard station is the BBC; VOA was the fourth station mentioned. The extent to which the public listens surreptitiously to foreign broadcasts cannot be estimated.

The officer's most recent assignment was as deputy commander of forces in a section of South Vietnam consisting of two provinces and part of a third. Therefore, he had no direct

knowledge of the casualties resulting from US bombing of the North, although he gathered that they were considerable. He did not believe the bombing caused either a decrease or an increase in the determination to fight. Rather, it "worried" the populace. The bombing and other factors contributed to a failure to meet North Vietnam's own in-country development timetables.

In North Vietnamese propaganda, the U. S. is portrayed as a war mongering nation which is trying to dominate South Vietnam permanently. However, the defector said the North Vietnamese did not hate Americans as persons (this may have to be taken with a grain of salt because of the Oriental quality of going out of the way to avoid hurting one's personal feelings).

Victory claims as to enemy killed, territory "liberated," and aircraft destroyed have tapered off. The more enlightened North Vietnamese privately tend to question prior claims. (If all claims were true, would not victory have come soon after Tet?).

War dissent and related incidents in the U. S. are played up highly. America has been portrayed as on the verge of internal collapse. More recently, however, many North Vietnamese are starting to perceive that internal dissent must

not be a fatal disease in the U. S. system (otherwise, would not the predicted collapse already have occurred?). The government of North Vietnam has no desire to negotiate for peace, because its unshakeable goal is to have South Vietnam.

Ideologically, North Vietnam is far more closely tied to the Soviet Union than it is to Red China. The tensions between the two latter nations "worries" the North Vietnamese very much. Direct Chinese military intervention in Southeast Asia is highly improbable, unless the war expands beyond Cambodia and Laos (presumably into Thailand and Burma).

The defector did not attach any great military significance to China's road network being built toward Thailand and Burma (he may not have been very well informed on this subject).

The officer had no direct knowledge regarding the treatment of American POW's. In his judgment he felt confident they are treated fairly well because "they want to keep them alive." When asked, "In other words, they want to milk the last ounce of propaganda and political value out of the American POW's," his answer was a firm, "Yes." The people of North Vietnam have a satisfactory amount of food, primarily due to large imports by sea.

The economy of North Vietnam has suffered because of the

large percentage of personnel and other resources devoted to the war. The currency, however, is fairly stable, and inflation is not a large problem because wages and prices are rigidly controlled.

Asked what additional steps he thought the U. S. could take to help achieve peace and stability in Southeast Asia, he replied with some feeling, "Win the war."

Asked why he chose to return to Saigon (he was born near Saigon of a peasant family), he replied that he was upset over NVA war plans for this summer. He felt that the recent US-ARVN operations in Cambodia had contributed to an alteration of those plans. (This discussion was not pursued because it would have led to classified military matters, which were beyond the purpose of the meeting).

U. S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM CAMBODIA

On June 29, six members of the Committee went to the sanctuary areas of Cambodia to view the withdrawal of U. S. troops. Elements of the 101st Calvary Division were the last to return to South Vietnam. There were still some U. S. military advisors with ARVN troops on June 29, but all of them were out of Cambodia by late afternoon of June 30.

Based on personal observations and talks with American, Vietnamese and Cambodian officers and servicemen, the Committee concluded that all American combat troops were out of Cambodia by June 30, 1970.

CAMBODIA

Cambodia has less than seven million inhabitants. From the end of French rule in 1953, until the spring of 1970, the dominant political figure has been Norodom Sihanouk, first as King and then as Prince. Although the country has a popularly elected legislative body, its powers were progressively diminished. Prince Sihanouk claimed to be a nationalist anxious to maintain the independence of the country, but the leaders who deposed him now say he was a "traitor".

South Vietnam and Laos are contiguous to Cambodia and much of the border area is covered by jungle. Several years ago the North Vietnamese established large sanctuaries in Cambodia from which to carry on the conflict in South Vietnam. Cambodia's present leaders say that since Sihanouk approved the sanctuaries, the country really has not been "neutral". In May of 1965, Sihanouk broke relations with the United States. Relations were re-established in 1969 when we sent a charge d'affaires to Phnom Penh.

Although the Khmers (Cambodians) comprise about 85% of the population, there are sizeable numbers of Vietnamese and Chinese in the country, along with Chams of Moslem descent and hill tribes. Although Cambodians have been traditionally suspicious of all Vietnamese and Thais, but officials in Phnom Penh said they want and need South Vietnamese aid in resisting North Vietnamese and Viet Cong aggression.

The policies of Sihanouk steadily created a growing uneasiness in the country. In late 1969, as nearly as can be determined, other leaders discussed cautiously how to cope with the situation. Sihanouk's departure for Europe this January provided the opportunity to do something about it. Demonstrations started in several Cambodian border areas against the occupation by North Vietnamese. These were followed by demonstrations in Phnom Penh, resulting in the sacking of the North Vietnamese and Chinese embassies on March 11. Resentment against Sihanouk on the part of Cambodian leaders - the Army, intellectuals, and students - ended in the displacement of the Prince as Chief of State by unanimous action of the National Assembly, and the establishment of a new government under Lt. General Lon Nol, who had already been Prime Minister. Even before that action, Prime Minister Lon Nol had issued an ultimatum demanding that North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces leave Cambodia within 72 hours. When these demands

were not met, Cambodia requested and received some direct support from the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN). Penetration of the eastern sanctuaries has continued by the ARVN. On April 30 President Nixon announced that U. S. forces would cooperate with those of South Vietnam to "clean out" enemy sanctuaries, but that such U. S. forces would be withdrawn by June 30.

About a third of the country is now the scene of conflict with forces opposed to the new Cambodian government, nearly all of them NVA. Elsewhere these forces occupy a number of cities and towns. Most of the principal highways are interdicted by anti-government forces ranging from a few men to large units. VC, NVA and possibly some small pro-Sihanouk groups of the Communist Khmer Rouge are active in the countryside.

When military operations began, the Cambodian army numbered about 39,000. Its effectiveness was limited by inadequate training and neglected equipment. Communications, mobile equipment and air support were lacking. The present Cambodian leaders list their immediate needs as including arms and ammunition, plus communications and transportating equipment. Even if these items are made available, additional time will surely be needed to provide training of personnel.