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24 June 1966

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Hickman
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Copies of
Le Monde
27 June 66*

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence
THROUGH : Acting Chief, Far East Area *HC*
FROM : Chief, Indochina Division
SUBJECT : The Le Monde Articles by Robert Guillain

Introduction

A series of articles appearing in the Paris newspaper Le Monde in late May written by French journalist Robert Guillain presents the theme that the Americans, lacking political sophistication and awareness, risk failure on the political side of the war in Vietnam. American military actions, on the other hand, risk precipitating a war with China which could escalate into a worldwide conflict.

Guillain musters all the well-known problems, which have and are confronting the US in its effort to defeat the Communists in Vietnam. He adds little that is new to the arguments and fears raised by critics of US policy. The impact of the articles, however, may be that of a well-reasoned case against the present US course of action, since they are concentrated into a package and sensationalized for journalistic effect for a French audience.

General Content

1. The Le Monde series includes five articles. Two of them deal with the moral degeneration of the South Vietnamese in Saigon and with the virtual American "colonization" of the country as a result of the influx of US troops and wealth. A third article deals essentially with the Viet Cong politico-subversive effort, implying that it is far more pervasive than the Americans seem to realize. A fourth article concerns the suffering of the Vietnamese civilian population in the war, citing

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Viet Cong terrorism and abuse, but stressing the killing, maiming, and uprooting of the rural civilian populace as a result of US military and pacification tactics. A final article assesses the nature of Viet Cong guerrilla warfare and US military strategy, pointing out valid military problems and contending that the US may respond by rash escalation of the conflict.

Social and Economic Pitfalls Cited

2. The first article of the series, entitled Saigon, describes the heart of the capital as having been taken over by off-duty US troops. As a result, moral rot has set in from the lowest shoeshine boy to the high officials. US troops are described as relatively well-behaved, but with too much money to burn and too many imported PX goods and gadgets--a "Niagara of dollars and a Himalaya of goods." Guillain notes, rightly, that PX goods flood the local markets either as a result of resale by US troops or of hijacking from the port warehouses, through the complicity of local customs and police officials. He further adds, with some basis in fact, that prominent entrepreneurs, civil servants, and even high officials or their wives are taking their cut ~~by being involved in~~ *from* such activities as black-marketing, property rentals, and other financial manipulation. The problem of inflation is also cited--including its two causes, Viet Cong economic warfare and US spending; the true victims--honest civil servants and military on fixed salaries--are noted. The article concludes that the US, come to defend order, has contributed mainly to disorder.

3. All of these unfortunate side ^effects of the US build-up, both in men and installations, have been noted by US officials concerned, and by Vietnamese leaders. The chaos presented by Guillain, however, is overdrawn and distorted, ~~out of perspective~~. Similar problems arise in all countries where US troops are stationed. The Vietnamese do not yet seem to regard the Americans as "entrenched in Saigon" even more than were the French or the Japanese, and contrary to Guillain's contention, Saigon is probably no more immoral than ~~than~~ was Tokyo during the Korean war except insofar as the war is far more total in Vietnam than was the Korean war in Japan. What Guillain does not say is that US officials and responsible ministers in the Ky government are well aware

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of these problems, and if unable to eliminate all of them, are constantly taking steps and devising measures to try to reduce their effects.

4. A second article, actually the third in the series, takes off in much the same vein, but with the theme that Vietnam is for practical purposes being "re-colonized." The basic arguments here bear an element of truth--the overwhelming dependence of South Vietnam on US economic aid, both financial and material, including even the importation of rice. But as devices of this "colonization," he cites surplus agricultural sales, counterpart aid funds, underwriting of Vietnam's military budget, financing its "self-help projects," and the dispatch of US experts. Additionally, although not specifically named, the Morrison-Knudson combine which is responsible for military construction, is described as a fifth American "power" (in addition to the State Department, CIA, AID, and MACV) creating a revolution in employment and salaries. The South Vietnamese general staff is also described as dependent on the US not only for its "mercenary army," but for its equipment, its strategy, and decisions to undertake operations, because of the need for air support.

5. Again, the total effect of the article is to distort the picture. It repeats, for instance--without attempting to discredit--recent "rumors" that the US has leased the base under construction at Cam Ranh Bay for 99 years. As evidence, the author notes that, aided by Viet Cong propaganda, anti-American sentiment has been evident in the recent antigovernment struggle demonstrations.

Viet Cong Pervasiveness

6. An article entitled "The Viet Cong in the City" is one of the most snide indictments of alleged American naivete, and gives vent to an underlying French assumption that only the French truly understand the Vietnamese and the nature of the guerrilla war in Vietnam. Guillain cites three cases, not documentable in Washington but certainly plausible, of Viet Cong penetration of official Vietnamese circles. He claims that Viet Cong infiltration

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is everywhere and "invisible." To the "amazement" of old French hands, Americans in South Vietnam, he says, appear unaware of this widespread Viet Cong presence and influence, trusting their Vietnamese associates, their house servants, and their girl friends, all of whom are key Viet Cong targets.

7. There is little question that Viet Cong penetration is widespread, certainly reaching into the government and the Vietnamese army, although no evidence can be found to implicate Saigon's highest levels. Americans are undoubtedly lax in some respects. Some are careless to the point of unneeded risk, but most of them are aware of the prevalence of Viet Cong agents and sympathizers. Security checks are carried out on many Vietnamese, but beyond normal caution, most Americans probably conclude that they must assume the loyalty of their counterparts, or they cannot operate with effectiveness. Guillain probably overstates the degree of popular complicity and the Viet Cong capability. Very few Americans, for example, are attacked in Saigon's cities or towns. One obvious distortion is Guillain's contention that the Viet Cong have a full army division within Saigon in the form of some 20,000 agents. There is no official estimate of Viet Cong sympathizers in Saigon, although a figure of at least 10,000 is reasonable. Even if a fair number of such agents and sympathizers are armed with such weapons as pistols and grenades, they scarcely ~~are~~ equate to a military division which could suddenly rise up and seize the city.

Civilian Casualties

8. The most vicious of the articles deals with the civilian casualties of the war in South Vietnam, not so much because it repeats charges frequently heard and bearing some truth, but because of its implication that the magnitude of civilian losses is being deliberately concealed by US sources. Guillain estimates that civilian deaths are probably well in excess of published figures on Viet Cong killed, probably approaching 100,000 in 1965. His figures seem to us grossly exaggerated, but we have no firm alternate to offer.

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9. After several paragraphs purporting to illustrate the casualness and the frequent errors and excesses of US bombing attacks, the article comments on the number of civilian refugees in government-held zones, their poor lot, and alleged Vietnamese profiteering from the refugee "racket". Guillain concludes that US policy is actually designed to force the peasant, who is attached to his land, to uproot himself and make a firm choice between living among the Viet Cong--thus subjecting himself to military retaliation--or in government areas.

Military Strategy

10. The last in the series of Le Monde articles purports to deal with the prospects facing the US. As Guillain sees it, the US faces continued frustration in its military effort to beat the Viet Cong, or must choose ~~to~~ further to escalate the war in an effort to win it. After paying tribute to the tenaciousness of the Vietnamese Communists above all other Asians--"the Americans don't know what country they are taking chances in"-- Guillain cites the basic problem of Vietnamese guerrilla warfare, that of engaging Viet Cong forces other than on their own terms. He fails to observe that improved intelligence techniques are enabling the allied forces to "fix" and engage Communist units far more often than in the past. He rightly notes, however, that neither US nor South Vietnamese troop strength is sufficient to permit the holding of territory seized from the Viet Cong, and that, in most cases, the latter eventually return. He does not describe present pacification policies, which are aimed toward a long-range effort to establish and hold ground under government influence.

11. Guillain concludes that South Vietnamese endurance and US patience will crack long before that of Hanoi. He predicts that the US may resort to some rash form of escalation which he projects as: 1) a pincer operation across central Vietnam from both the China Sea and from Thailand to cut off the South at the southern terminal of the Ho Chi Minh trail, 2) a US landing in North Vietnam, probably at Vinh, to cut off that country at the northern terminus of the trail, 3) intensified

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bombardment of North Vietnam including its industries and possibly its dikes, or 4) a strike against Communist China. Guillain considers the fourth course unlikely, but declares that he fears that the US, by resorting to one of the other three options, may precipitate the fourth course by forcing China to intervene.

Guillain's Background

12. The author of the articles is "Le Monde's" Far East expert. He has written extensively on many Asian countries for a number of US publications including "The Saturday Evening Post" and the "Washington Post". He did a series of articles on Communist China in 1964 for the latter after a visit there. He has also written books on Japan and China and is married to a Japanese.

13. "Le Monde" itself despite its limited circulation of about 200,000, is probably France's most influential and respected daily newspaper. It is widely read in intellectual, professional, and government circles. The paper is often labelled as an "independent", although its political line varies somewhat with the by-line author. It has often been critical of the US, but it has also been critical of the French government and it opposed De Gaulle's reelection last December.

Prepared by: [REDACTED]

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THE SECOND "DIRTY WAR"

I. Saigon

Heads shaved, shoulders squared, immense legs -- these are the GIs in the streets of Saigon by the hundred. Almost all in civilian clothes, shirttails flapping above their trousers, they have the expression of vaguely uneasy boredom of soldiers on leave before a spree.

To these big black or white giants, an entire little yellow people-- three sizes smaller -- seems to be there only to serve them. They have themselves pulled in rickshaws by half-naked coolies. They have their boots shined by tiny ten-year-old shoeshine boys. They let themselves be led around by girls who hold them by the hand.

For them the girls have renounced the graceful Vietnamese tunic, with its silk pantaloons and floating veils, and rigged themselves up in the slacks of teenagers that cling to the legs. At the corners of the streets the GIs negotiate with the young urchins and the procurers in blue-jeans, who offer them girls, black market money, the addresses of gaming or opium rooms. For them the sidewalks of the Boulevard Charner display merchandise of atrocious taste, sold outdoors; it is chiefly erotic nudes painted on silk and ~~promiscuous~~ ^{contraceptives} camouflaged with silver dollars.

The center of the city belongs to them. Catinat Street, ironically renamed in Vietnamese Liberty Street, never saw so many blond, fair-skinned people. The cafes are overflowing with men, all of the same mold. The bars (there is one every 50 feet) have American names like the ones in Chicago or Texas, and they are full any time of the day or night.

The Core is Rotten

Abroad it is readily believed that Saigon lives in an atmosphere of war. War? Who here thinks of that except to detest it and flee it and profit from the influx of dollars and mock it by the pursuit of pleasures? Outsiders still think that Saigon lives in fear, under the threat of Vietcong grenades or machine guns at any minute. Well it's all not at all like that. Saigon thinks only of profit and amusement, at least when it is not caught up in the fever of political demonstrations. From time to time, it's true, the napalm plays havoc. But, except for a stroke of misfortune, each person feels safe, and Saigon is nothing like Algiers during the terror. Why should the Vietcong spread terror there when there is an evil which decays it much more surely from the inside: corruption? A Vietnamese told me: "In this war the core is rotten: it is Saigon".

They conduct themselves decently, however, these American "boys": not too often fighting, not too often drunk, always generous with their money. But when thousands of them each day spend ^{the} ^{100,} ~~their share~~ looking for girls, conducting their little deals (because each GI is a business in himself), when the flood of men, the Niagara of dollars, the Himalaya of goods descend on a poor and underdeveloped South Vietnam, on a people who, never very hardy, have undergone the wear and tear of twenty years of war -- how could it be hoped that this country would not become corrupt?

In the first days, before I got used to it, the spectacle of Saigon made me nauseous. From having lived the Asiatic drama for a quarter of

a century, have I become ~~more~~ too "Asiatic"? I'm sure, in any case, that the Japanese, the Indians, or the Chinese who pass through Saigon must feel the same disgust. And why not? After twenty-five years of struggles and costly revolutions so that Asia might belong to the Asiatics, all of a sudden we see again installed in an Asian capital (itself a ~~old~~ center of world news), all the old signs, all the loathsome ^e trappings of a foreign white supremacy that seemed gone forever.

III. Developments of the Vietnam Conflict

Saigon overrun as it never was under the French, more occupied than Japan after the defeat, more immoral than Tokyo during the Korean War -- the Whites masters of the city, the ^a compradores back in power (the indigenous businessmen who collaborate with the occupiers) -- the puppet administrators -- the Vietnamese beggars who hold out their hands -- the girls who sell themselves -- Don't the Americans see how shocking this spectacle is? In the fifteenth or twentieth year of decolonization, don't they fear the judgment of the rest of the world? Don't they realize what a weapon they are furnishing to their enemies when the Vietcong can say, "Look at Saigon. It's nothing but a brothel and a pigsty."?

Prostitutes and Traffickers

The biggest industry in Saigon today is prostitution. In Korea, during the other war, the Americans were boycotted by the proud Korean women. The GIs in Saigon have a happier lot: the Saigon girls hardly resist their youth and their dollars at all. Still less the refugees

reopening on condition of payment of a clandestine bribe which can amount to as much as a million piasters.

It is in these places, with the shadows, the jazz, and the whiskey, that the GI ^{comes to} finds what he is looking for. The rest takes place elsewhere, in the hotels, including the most expensive and the best known. Or in the thousands of rooms rented by the day or by the hour; countless Vietnamese families have set apart a room of their living quarters for this purpose. Or in the vast camps of huts or cabins which have sprung up on the edge of the American camps or along the routes leading out of Saigon towards Tu-Duc, Bien-Hoa, and Mytho.

To work with the Americans, or even to live near them, is the ideal of thousands of Vietnamese. Pro-American? No, pro-dollar. Money simply falls from the pockets of these GIs. By being near them one has access to all kinds of products, all the "gadgets". The American army imports everything; even its wastebaskets are "Made in USA". To approach it is to approach the miraculous P.X., and to enter into the tremendous traffic that surrounds the P.X. This traffic has two forms. First, hundreds of GIs resell each day on the black market all kinds of purchases which they have made at the P.X. for this purpose. Secondly, hundreds of tons of merchandise destined for the P.X. disappear regularly between the quay of the ^o part of Saigon and the warehouse in the city, a mile away. Entire trucks have been known to disappear as if by magic. And everyone knows that it couldn't happen without a vast network of conspirators which, besides the customs officials, the convoy officials, the Vietnamese police, etc. (who check each other from time to time), must involve even important bureaus in the American army.

The diverted articles reappear in the immense open air market on the sidewalks and in the boutiques of the entire city. Anything under the sun can be found there, from canned food to rare products marked "Not to be sold in trade". It is not only P.X. products which disappear. A certain "thieves' market" in the city specializes in the sale of brand new American uniforms. If you want to buy American weapons they can give you the address.

Civil and Military "Rackets"

Another large, lucrative traffic is in construction and rentals. To obtain the materials it is necessary to pay all kinds of bribes, but the rich Vietnamese contract villa after villa, paying off the house in two years. They ask up to \$800 per month for rent, knowing that their American tenants will always pay, ending by going in four together and sharing the rent. The Chinese of Cholon construct large buildings of eight or ten stories, profiting from the "cement racket", a traffic reserved for them. But ~~there is also a traffic in~~ shell cartridges, scrap metal from the battlefields, old food cans which are flattened for use as sheet metal on the refugees' cabins. The Vietnamese rival them: traffic in the importing of automobiles and scooters, pharmaceutical products, ~~and~~ military exemptions, etc. Vietnamese, Chinese, or American -- everyone quickly finds himself in one major traffic: that of the dollar and the piaster. There are at least three recognized rates of the dollar: the official rate, the rate of the military dollar (more than double), and the rate on the black market (more than triple). There are always, as one would suspect, those who have access to several rates and who thus build a fortune on clandestine exchange.

Many officials, even in the highest echelons, enjoy a large share in all these traffics. In a regime which pays its officials at a ridiculous rate (a maximum of about 50,000 old francs per month), the misappropriation is an accepted practice: one pays oneself from State money. "The mandarin ^{paid} ~~paid~~ himself too, but in a lifetime," a Vietnamese told me; "the minister of Tonton Dien in ten years; today it can be done in a year!" The "tip" is indispensable for all sorts of occasions, asked chiefly of Americans. The officials make a fortune. The customs men buy a Mercedes. The colonels build villas.

~~Since~~ The extortion does not spare the South Vietnamese army; it is, ~~and~~ in fact, a problem at all levels. The government soldier will raid the villages during an operation. The senior officer serves two ^{three} meals to the recruits instead of the ^{three} which are expected, and pockets the gain. Nevertheless, when such or such general or colonel is perfectly honest, and ^{many} ~~often~~ they are, it is too often his questionable wife who engages in vigorous trafficking, like the one who had cement transported by army airplanes to build her villa.

The first explanation of all these practices is simple: to escape insecurity. The war has been going on for twenty years. Death is perhaps around the corner, or ruin, or communism. To flee the war and ^{is} to hang on to something sure ~~and~~ the desperate reaction and the obsession of thousands of Vietnamese. Security for many of them is the piastre, or better, the dollar, or an account in a Swiss bank. For others it is the French civilization, a form of evasion, or a villa on the Cote d'Azur. Ah, to leave for France, to live in Paris, and never return... to leave a country that ~~has~~ is no longer habitable. If one could change the color

Inflation

Even in waiting for them the profits of these shady deals are subject to inflation. They coincided with the massive arrival of American troops, and hence, dollars. Prices increased 55% in 1965 and the rise continues because of the flood of money and the dearth of goods. The Vietcong know very well how to aggravate the situation by an economic war. They cut the provisions to Saigon of rice, milk, pork, ~~xxxxx~~ charcoal, etc.

It should be noted, and this is important, that everyone does not suffer (far from it) from the inflation and the economic upheavals. American enterprises bring employment for many of the little people and the rackets are profitable. In the hovels of the slum quarters there is sometimes more money than there ever was before: the father is a coolie for the Americans, the son a "shoeshine", and the girl, "^{du-ti-ful} ~~xxxxx~~". [¶] Those who suffer most are the honest officials (there are some), and the people with fixed incomes, especially the teachers, the intellectuals, the students...when they study. Many are in a tragic situation. The ⁿministry official pulls a rickshaw when he leaves the office (I know two such cases), the professor drives a taxi in ^hthis spare time.

It is an entire civilisation which is crumbling. The United States, come to defend order in this country, has brought a tremendous contribution to the general disorder. The State is decayed, the family ties are weakening, the social classes are disintegrating. "Confucian society had four classes," a Vietnamese told me, "of which the mandarin

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was the most respected. Today a popular saying lists the following four classes by order of power and respect: the ~~poor~~ ^{whores, the pedicab} driver, the Chinese, and the generals!" And he adds: "Besides, that changes very quickly. Six months ago it was the generals who were on top..."

Robert Guillain

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THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE VIETNAMESE CONFLICT

"THE SECOND "DIRTY WAR"

II. The Vietcong in the city. —by Robert Guillain

~~Several times~~
A Frenchman from Hué was venturing ~~into~~ into unsafe country, which was infested with Vietcong, when he had the unpleasant surprise of being stopped by a "Viet" officer in uniform who appeared out of nowhere. This officer threatened to keep him prisoner at first; he then released him after a forceful lecture on the National Liberation Front. Our Frenchman was very much amazed when a little later in Hué, during an official ceremony, he ~~met~~, ~~recognized~~ recognized ~~him~~ this same person; only this time, he was in civilian clothes amidst governmental officials.

Here is another story. This ~~is~~ is ~~the~~ a Vietnamese professor from Hué who ^{is speaking} ~~says~~: "Our students were obliged on order of the authorities to help the farmers with the harvest. As if by chance, the villagers, who were toiling in the rice-field with them, revealed that they were resisters. Now a certain number of students ride their bicycles into the country on Sunday to meet with the Vietcong."

A third story: the governor of Quantr³ province, north of Hué, had the chief of the provincial militia who was a former Vietminh sympathizer, as his confidential advisor. ^{The latter} was his constant collaborator, accompanying him (the governor) everywhere; he was very much in the public eye, ^{surrounded by} ~~invited~~ with the prestige of a repentant Communist. One day, after six years of work, he

the man disappeared--mission accomplished: he was a "Viet".

Invisible Invaders

The Frenchmen of Vietnam who know this country ~~the~~ best, in particular those who lived through the other war of Indochina, are analyzing the present situation. Their pessimism at first seemed beyond reason to me, but the hundred pieces of evidence accumulated ^{have} gradually convinced me that this analysis is probably the ^{one} closest to the truth. For them, very simply, the conquest of South Vietnam is already more than half done, but it is an invisible conquest of the regions held by the Americans themselves. The Vietcong ^{have} already infiltrated ^{everywhere} into the governmental system. They are in the police. They are in the army. They are no doubt present in the government. And certainly they are everywhere among the people.

What amazes the French is that the Americans, with a few exceptions, do not want to see to what extent this political decay has gone. Without experience in Vietnam, without insight into political analysis, they see the ^{ground level} world in black and white. On one side are very clearly the good Vietnamese, who are working for them and are thus their friends. On the other side are the bad whom they do not see because they are in the ^{darkness} of the jungle or ^{carrying on} clandestine activity. But very often the good and the bad may be the same, and the Vietcong may be right under their eyes without their even suspecting. This all passes above the Americans.

Then, an essential characteristic of the Vietnamese situation is precisely the interpenetration of the Vietcong system and of the governmental system. The Vietcong have learned that the main interest is not to create

a parallel organization but rather to establish themselves in every way possible in the official organization, like a microbe in blood. Their ammunition supply? That will most likely come by American ships. Their weapons? By the Vietnamese Army. Their money? ~~That~~ will be the same as that of Saigon. Their police? That is certainly the police of the regime. Its military information is furnished largely by the military of the governmental army.

Collusions and ~~Subversive~~ Infiltration

Appearances are thus deceiving, and there is really no contest. If the Saigon River is not blocked--one boat ^{SUNK IN it crosswise} ~~could~~ would be enough--it is not because the Vietcong cannot do it but because they would be penalizing themselves. If the big metal bridge in Hué is not blown up, it is because it is useful for the "Viets". If such and such road is not cut, ^{off} it is because it is more advantageous to let the travelers and merchandise pass and then tax ^{travelers} them for its use. Not very far from Saigon, near a French rubber plantation, the guerrillas in black uniform, ^{who are} standing in plain sight across the road, have controlled the traffic in the same place for months. It is known that the same thing is happening on the ~~Du~~ road from Dalat. The Vietcong have a real tax station at kilometer 138 and issue a receipt to those whom they tax. They let through up to five thousand people a day and also the entire vegetable supply for Saigon. It is estimated that the daily receipts must come to more than 700,000 piastres.

Very often the governmental army post that could put a stop to all this is nearby, only one kilometer away in the case of the plantation mentioned. But this garrison does not budge. It is obvious that in very many places a modus vivendi ~~(~~exists~~)~~

indeed exists between the government and the Vietcong. This is frequently

the case with the South Vietnamese "popular forces"; these are the poorly-paid members of the militia--receiving around 60 francs a month--who ~~are~~ ^{guard} ~~small~~ ^{of the village} ~~of the village~~. When the "Viets" go by, they look the other way. In exchange, they are left in peace, for the time being.

As for the regular army, ~~there~~ ^{has} ~~been~~ at least 10 percent clandestine Vietcong ~~infiltration~~ according to one Vietnamese source, and this is probably an optimistic estimation. Infiltration continues up into the high echelons. There was proof of this seen in the cabinet of General Khanh when two Vietcong were exposed in the superior council of the armed forces. They were put in prison without commotion and forgotten within six months; then they were released as model prisoners. Another ridiculous example of collusion is: The clandestine bureaus in Saigon issue passes ~~for~~ ^{as} safe conduct to soldiers of the governmental army who wish to spend their leave with their family in villages located in a completely "Viet" zone.

The administration is deeply infiltrated. The Vietnamese authorities realize this. One minister of General Ky's cabinet made this surprising statement to me after a good lunch: "What do you want me to do? I have 40 percent Vietcong in ~~my~~ ^{the} ~~administration~~ ^{personnel} of my administration.

Somewhere else, a high official ~~has~~ ^{personnel} the railroads as an example. It is impossible to keep the trains moving. Not only are the guerrillas blowing up the track (on an average, twenty bridges are blown up each day in the network), but also their friends, the railway employees, are helping them blow up the trains. The Vietcong knows through them what the ~~train~~ ^{train} is carrying and can thus make the ~~train~~ ^{plastic explode under} ~~explode~~ not just any ~~car~~ ^{car} but precisely ~~the~~ ^{under} the armored car protecting the ~~train~~ ^{train}. What if the

order of the cars is changed at the last minute? Those who are setting up the explosives along the line know immediately and place their mines accordingly.

The Complicity of the People

Infiltration of the Vietcong in the large cities is a big concern for the Americans, who are nevertheless in a state of alert on this point. The recent outbreaks have enlightened them, because these outbreaks have certainly been aggravated by the presence of clandestine workers. In February, there was an estimated four thousand Vietcong cells in Saigon; as a rule, each one was made up of five men. These twenty thousand agents, being both agitators as well as armed combatants, were the equivalent of one division ready for action in the capital. It was thought that there was a second which had infiltrated into Gia-Dinh, an extension of Saigon.

According to very well informed non-American observers, infiltration in every administration in Hue is already such that nothing is decided in the municipality without the Vietcong knowing; better yet, without their consent. Their agents, camouflaged in the form of governmental officials, give them a type of veto power against any measure that is unfavorable to the cause.

The ^{or}common people, constantly in contact with this clandestine activity, usually go along with it even though it is more out of fear than conviction. One of my colleagues, a non-American journalist, made friends with a ~~car~~^{pedicab} driver, whom he used every day; one day, the driver took him to his home. It was at the furthest end of a miserable outlying district. The family was very poor. But in the corner of the hovel had been placed the

"Vietcong tax": it was a glass filled with uncooked rice. "An agent will be by this evening to collect it," explained the ~~pedicab~~ ^{pedicab} driver.

The people possess above all a tremendous indifference to the war and refuse to participate in it. This general lack of interest obviously gives the Vietcong an advantage. For the people of the cities at least (the tragic situation of the ~~cities~~ ^{regions} is different--we will talk about it), it is a war that is going on above their heads, between two parties of madmen. For them, it is a matter of going below or through with the minimum devastation, of continuing to live, negotiate, and move about. But this is possible only by consent of the Vietcong. In no matter what city held by them, and all cities are held, the good people are seen crowded together in buses on which the destination signs ~~read~~ ^{denote} literally horrifying places, that is to say, localities located completely in enemy territory. ~~Any~~ governmental official, who would board ^{ed} the vehicle, would be assassinated at the first check point; an American would be torn to pieces during the first kilometers. But the good people have the right to pass, and this is still a form of collusion with the "Viets".

The American Imprudence

In face of the ~~universal conspiracy~~ ^{universal conspiracy which envelopes} them, the Americans have to surround themselves with extraordinary precautions, not only to protect themselves physically but also to defend themselves against spies and agents. Reality is certainly different, and the French, who learned this aspect from the war of Indochina, are amazed to see the imprudence with which the Americans are exposing themselves to ~~retaliation~~ ^{and betrayal} and deception.

Their installations, camps, and offices are full of Vietnamese employees. Secretaries; telephone ^{operators;} innumerable boys and servants ~~in~~ in the officer's and soldier's ^{mess;} ~~mess;~~ ^{maids} who move about in the barrack rooms, making the beds and doing the wash; chauffeurs; ^U care-takers; hair dressers; cooks; etc.; the Vietcong have only the problem of choice in order to recruit informants.

The large bases like Da Nang use an unbelievable number of Vietnamese coolies. There were nearly five thousand, mostly women, at the base of An Khê when I stayed there. Someone told me that when the number is counted, one often finds a dozen or more ~~more~~ than were even hired. I still remember this coolie ~~who~~ ^{had been} forgotten in a ^{shady} corner ^{on an airfield} ~~of the base~~ and who was ^{carefully} observing all that was happening. In his head, which resembled that of a Japanese colonel, I am sure that he was mentally recording the ^{locations} ~~locations~~ and the types of aircraft as well as the take-offs on the runway.

And then there are the ravishing, ~~the~~ ^a indispensable young friends with almond eyes. Nearly everyone has his, from the officer of the general staff to the important official of the civil services. Do they hide them? To the contrary...they are at cocktail parties; they are introduced to friends by American names by which they are already called: Suzy, Betty, Polly. They are a marvelous discovery, the comforting antithesis of the American woman: small, quiet, nice, docile, thin as bamboo. The wives are gone since the families have been evacuated, and ^{perpetual} ~~the~~ American ~~women~~ ^{which} would not believe ^{its} ~~her~~ eyes) is far away. But these protectors, who marvel at the rapid progress ^{make} ~~of~~ their protégées ^{in English}, do they not know that ~~surely~~ the young lady

inevitably
will be contacted by the Vietcong, if this has not already been done?
And they will say to her: "Alright, what are you doing for you country?
You are going to work for us, otherwise...."

THE SECOND "DIRTY WAR"

III. - VIET NAM RECOLONIZED

By ROBERT GUILLAIN

After the moral and social "Decadence" of Saigon, Robert Guillain has described the infiltration of the Vietcong into the government of South Vietnam (See "Le Monde" of the 21st and 22-23 of May). Here he shows the Americans forced against their will to direct everything and to do everything in a country torn by war.

At ~~S~~an^Santho, capital of the Cochinchinese delta, surrounded by guerillas, American civilians explained to me the brave efforts they are making in spite of great danger: It is a U.S. Aid team; that is, aid in pacification of the countryside, and these men told me: "Our absolute rôle is: no direct management. We don't want the Vietnamese to say that it is the Americans who have brought them such a school or such a hospital. We want them to say: it is the Vietnamese government which has built this. South Vietnam is independent. We are only advisors."

The independence of South Vietnam: there is no affirmation more often repeated by the Americans than that one, and that they have come only to defend that independence. But one of the tragedies of this war is the difference that exists in this matter, as in so

many other cases, between the good intentions and the realities of the situation. Moreover, Americans frequently contradict themselves on this fundamental point. At Cantho, I changed the subject deliberately and later asked them: "How much of the budget of this country is made up of American aid?" they answered, "U.S. aid makes up 80% of the budget."

This is the truth of the matter. This foundering and ruined country would not exist without American aid. The defense of its independence has made it more dependent than ever in another way. Its independence is nothing but a sham, overwhelmed as it is by foreign occupation. Vietnam has again become a colony or protectorate. The United States Embassy, behind the barbed wire and guards protecting it, with its enormous personnel and its multiple services, has more authority than the South Vietnamese government. Mr Cabot Lodge is as powerful as a French governor general ever was during the Indochina War, and "our" Bao-Dai had no more power than General Ky and his directorate of generals.

Economic Dependence

The dependence of South Vietnam is especially evident in the economic and financial sphere. As the people of Cantho say, this country continues to exist only because of United States subsidies. These subsidies are constantly increasing: \$300,000,000 in 1965,

\$600,000,000 in 1966. Without such aid, chaos and no doubt famine would be assured. It is a significant paradox that in this agricultural country which was largely an exporter of rice not long ago the Americans now furnish 400 million tons of rice a year.

The "blood transfusions" of American assistance take the form of supplying goods, in the first place. Besides these goods, the country buys little else, for it lacks the funds necessary. These are American goods. They are paid for by the United States. They represent an investment of about \$300 million a year. These goods arrive on American ships: it is practically a monopoly for American ship-owners, for whom the war in Vietnam means a fortune.

Next comes the second type of aid, the sale of surplus U.S. farm products to Vietnam, one of which is cotton. This costs a total of \$70 million which, by the action of counterpart funds, (the third type of aid) pays for part of the military expenses of the Saigon government and for certain civilian expenses.

A fourth type of aid is the assistance given to the many Vietnamese "plans" as the Americans call them, that is, every facet of public life and the economy: police, hospitals, factories, and workshops to be built or developed, agricultural equipment, importing of chemical fertilizers, construction of roads, school supplies, etc. The total figure is difficult to establish exactly, as there are more than three hundred categories of such aid, but it must be close to \$300 million a year.

With goods come men; the Americans send to Viet Nam the fifth and last type of aid, every imaginable of expert: farming experts, bankers, specialists in telecommunications, tax collectors, customs officers, policemen, manufacturers, economists, etc. While bringing to their protégés valuable aid, they teach them to put order into their administration and their businesses, to modernize them and to develop them; they are gearing in one way or another the whole South-Vietnamese machinery to the formidable American motor, and putting everything in the country in the service of American war needs.

AMERICAN CONTROL

To respect the fictional independence of South Viet Nam, at least two rules are applied. Regarding the men, all American civilians one finds in the most varied sectors of activity and in the very heart of the provinces, are in theory only advisors, not managers. Regarding the goods, all deliveries to Viet Nam by the United States belong to the Vietnamese government from the moment they arrive on the dock. Only Vietnamese lift them, transport them, and distribute them without American intervention.

This system has shown itself to be very disappointing in practice, unfortunately. It has left the field open for (a) misappropriation, which is committed (sometimes with the complicity of the Americans) by a large number of Vietnamese officials, and (b) for much incompetence.

A substantial^{part} of the supplies never gets to the people for whom they were intended. The goods, or the money, remain in the hands of the officials. Among a hundred examples, one can cite the case of pharmaceuticals which were to go to the Pleime camp, then engaged in a bloody battle, and which were rediscovered instead on the Black Market of Pleiku, the capital of the province.

A new aid director, after two others had proven ineffective, is now attempting to correct this dismal situation by imposing American control. To do this it will be necessary to double the man-power, to always require an American signature beside that of the Vietnamese official, and to have an American present at the moment of distribution. The lack of efficiency or honesty on the part of Vietnamese officials is forcing the United States, in a more or less disguised manner, to directly administer, to take over more extended areas of management or of the economic life. They would willingly do the same in the military sphere.

The American command is obliged to take great precautions to maintain the fiction of the independence of the Vietnamese army. It is forbidden to establish a unified command^f (that is, American) as it would be wise to do. Rather, joint operations are always mounted, that is, plans are made with the South Vietnamese leaders since the troops they command are participating in the operations.

It is nevertheless obvious that in the military sphere South Vietnam is a protectorate and that the Vietnamese army is a mercenary army. It depends almost completely on its protectors for its equipment, its ammunition, its fuel, its pay. During an operation, it can rarely do without the protection of American air cover and artillery, and depends mostly on their transport planes and helicopters. A South Vietnamese general cannot begin an operation on his own initiative if American support is refused him.

DESERTION OF THE VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES

The construction of enormous American installations renders the phrase "South Vietnamese independence" meaningless. One very important aspect of this enterprise is little known to the foreigner; it is the enormous space in South Viet Nam which is used by the Americans ^{Company} ~~who~~ ^{which has} obtained a monopoly on public works in the country. The four largest public works ^{enterprises} ~~ventures~~ of the United States are allied to create the Vietnam Builders company, and it represents a new power for the American services which too often rival one another - the State Department, the CIA, US Aid, the Army, etc. Its work program surpasses in its importance the famous Manhattan Project which created the Atomic Bomb.

A hundred work sites in more than thirty different places are going to completely upset the internal structure of South Vietnam. They presently employ 25,000 Vietnamese, 1,700 foreigners, 1,800 Americans. But these figures will increase to 50,000, 8,000 and 5,500 respectively. The amount of work planned for 1966 represents

240 million dollars, \$97 million of which is for the building of seaports, \$72 million for airports, and \$47 million is for the construction of buildings and camps.

The arrival of American forces has had the effect of attracting a great number of Vietnamese men and women to the service of the Americans. The monstrous growth of the Vietnam ^Bbuilders ~~has aggravated~~ ^{is aggravating} a veritable economic and social upheaval. There is, first of all, a revolution in salaries which accelerates inflation. The Vietnamese working for the Americans will make between five and ten times his normal salary, especially if he has a special skill. The last remnant of the French colonialists, with a French or a foreign passport, is sure of making more than \$500 a month merely for supervising the port longshoremen. ^{Philippines} ~~Philippines~~ and Koreans have arrived to get in on the gold mine. As for the Americans, the lowest salary is ^{around} ~~in excess of~~ \$1,000 a month.

The Vietnamese people are immediately attracted toward these fabulous jobs. If fifty thousand more workers join the Americans, there will be none left for the rest of Vietnam itself. This disastrous manpower drain is now occurring. The rubber plantations, for example, already hard hit, are losing many of their workers. Employees and officials leave their businesses or their ministries. One such minister was recently violently upset: he had only four office boys in his whole service.

Can it be said that this complete dependence of South Viet Nam on the United States is a passing phase which will disappear progressively with the end of the war and the reconstruction of the country? Following the example of Japan or Korea? The Vietnamese are skeptical about this development. In the final analysis, many of them despair of the future. The Viet Cong will never give up, they think. They think that the United States is weakening in its resolve, and that the Viet Cong grow stronger in theirs. South Vietnam feels condemned to a kind of permanent occupation, which will maintain the resistance itself by a vicious circle.

The long-term views expressed by the Americans do little to dispel these apprehensions. "If necessary, we will remain here twenty years, just as we have remained in Berlin for twenty years", Ambassador Porter told me. Ten years, fifteen years, twenty years have been the estimates of all ranks of Americans. In the same way, the Vietnamese are heard to say constantly "we will stay as long as necessary." The ~~importance~~^{size} of their bases would seem to confirm their words. A rumor persists in Saigon that the government of General Ky has ceded to the Americans the base at Ca^mranh for 99 years. The huge construction program which they are undertaking there, and which must make it one of the largest naval bases in the world, lends a great deal of likelihood to this affirmation.

This collapse of the country under the foreign presence is deeply resented by those of the South Vietnamese who still have some reaction. With the aid of the Viet Cong's propaganda, this anxiety is powerful support for anti-American sentiment, the strength of which has been shown by the recent disturbances.