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Foe Picks Battle Time,

Nixon Told in '69

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WASHINGTON, April 28—

Every agency of government with any expertise in the matter told President Nixon when he took office in 1969 that it was the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong who controlled the rates at which Americans in Southeast Asia were killed.

The principle means by which the enemy accomplished this, the agencies reported, was to strike; then slip away from South Viet Nam to sanctuaries across the border in Laos and Cambodia.

"Like a criminal in the city, he decides when and where he will strike," Nixon was told by the Defense Department in a secret memorandum. "If the climate gets too hot, he merely lies low for a while."

Nixon Ordered Report

The memorandum was part of a study called National Security Council Memorandum No. 1, which Nixon ordered when he took office. The memo covers virtually every aspect of the situation in Viet Nam at that time. The Chicago Tribune obtained a copy of the report this week.

The combat initiative belonged so much to the enemy, the Pentagon reported in the study, that during one period when American operations were intensified by more than 10 per cent, enemy combat deaths dropped 41 per cent.

The Defense Department was joined in this assessment by the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] and the State Department.

Altho the study is three years old, the reporting of it at this time provides an insight into some of the reasons President Nixon chose to send troops into Laos and Cambodia two years ago.

The administration publicly relied on some of the arguments in this secret memo-

when the Laos-Cambodia incursions took place.

"The enemy basically controls both sides' casualty rates," a summary of the study said.

Under the direction of Henry Kissinger, Nixon's chief adviser on national security, 28 questions were sent to various agencies and their replies were summarized by the White House.

"Three-fourths of the battles are at the enemy's choice of time, place, type and duration," the summary said.

Enemy contacts Infrequent

It pointed to CIA figures that less than one per cent of nearly 2 million allied small-unit operations over a two-year period resulted in contact with the enemy.

"With his safe havens in Laos and Cambodia, and with carefully chosen tactics, the enemy has been able during the last four years to double his combat forces, double the level of infiltration, and increase the scale and intensity of the main force war, even while bearing heavy casualties," the summary said.

The State Department reported that while it did not have the wealth of data available to the Defense Department "the NVA-CV [North Viet Nam

army and Viet Cong] have also proven that they can often break contact and escape into base areas or sanctuaries either within or without South Viet Nam when the fighting in specific engagements has become too intense."

Decides Timing and Type

"In addition to choosing the timing of the engagements," the State Department report continued, "the enemy is able

to determine the type of attack, ranging from a costly assault on a major urban center to a relatively inexpensive har-

assment of a village or hamlet. . . . We believe that to a considerable extent, the Communists are able to control the rate of attrition of their forces."

The Defense Department report was the most detailed. The Pentagon placed the responsibility for North Vietnamese, South Vietnamese, and allied combat death rates predominantly on activities of the enemy.

"Little or no relationship exists between the tempo of allied operations and fluctuations

in either enemy or U. S. combat deaths," the Defense Department Reported.

Can't Impose Big Losses

"Allied forces cannot persistently impose heavy losses on enemy forces except when the latter seek heavy combat.

"He [the enemy] tried to avoid contact with allied troops under unfavorable conditions by blending into the population or vanishing into jungle base areas during large allied operations.

"Despite increase in allied battalion days of operation,

large and small operations, and force strength, the enemy reduced the monthly average of his combat deaths by 41 per cent between the 2d and 4th quarters of 1968.

"The ability to control casualties is an integral part of the overall enemy strategy. His attacks are designed to have the maximum psychological impact by inflicting heavy allied casualties and projecting an aura of enemy-wide strength. The choice to stand and fight or to avoid contact rests with the enemy."

Credibility is lost

Kissinger did not have an adequate reply. The fact is that the credibility of the Nixon Administration was lost long ago, just as the Johnson Administration lost its, and the Kennedy Administration is beginning to lose its as a harder look is taken at its policies.

Another blow came this week. Tuesday the Washington Post published large sections of a study prepared by Kissinger for the new President, Richard Nixon, in 1969, dealing with Indochina policy and perspectives.

Newsweek also published excerpts. Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) tried to read the document into the Congressional Record but was blocked by Sen. Robert Griffin (D-Mich), co-author of the anti-labor Landrum-Griffin bill, and a supporter of Nixon's war policies.

Like the Pentagon Papers, this study, National Security Study Memorandum No. 1, reveals Administration double-dealing.

This study showed that so-called "pacification" of South Vietnam could not be accomplished in less than from 8½ to 13.4 years, that the DRV could not be eliminated without the use of much greater forces than had so far been employed, and, in the view of the State Department and Defense Secretary's office, "only a compromise settlement is possible."

The Defense Secretary's office also said that "at least 50 percent of the total rural population is subject to significant VC (liberation forces) pressure and influence."

The Central Intelligence Agency agreed with this, and the State Department boosted the ante, estimating that "the VC have a significant effect on at least two-thirds of the rural population."

In line with the official reasoning, the document refuses to regard the national liberation forces of South Vietnam as a major factor but maintains the fiction that the fighting and direction of the war is in the hands of the DRV. This serves to further confound the situation and increase the element of deception.

The main deception, however, was that Nixon refused to acknowledge the real situation in Indochina and continued to destroy lives and wealth in a futile and inhuman, genocidal war, gambling with escalation, such as the invasion of Cambodia and Laos, and the intensified bombing of the DRV.

For almost four years, the Nixon Administration has woven a tissue of lies about every aspect of its war policies and activities.

The most recent move was Nixon's national address Wednesday night, which offered no basis for negotiation and demanded surrender of what Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh said Thursday at the resumed session (the 148th) of the Paris talks on Vietnam is the basic issue of the struggle — "respect for the national rights of the Vietnamese people," and primarily, the right of the South Vietnamese population to self-determination. This, she said, is an indispensable prerequisite for attaining a peaceful settlement.

In brief, this means ending U.S. aggression, and letting the people of Vietnam, North and South, settle their problems among themselves, by themselves and for themselves.