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9 July 1968

Executive Registry
68-3155

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : New Book: The Betrayal by Lt. Col. William R. Corson, USMC (ret.)

1. This memorandum is for information only to invite your attention to a new book entitled The Betrayal by Lt. Col. William R. Corson, USMC (ret.) (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1968). Col. Corson has just retired after 25 years in the Marine Corps, following a last minute flap while the Marine Corps considered giving him a court martial for releasing this book without departmental clearance. The Corps finally opted for a reprimand, in order to avoid the publicity of a court martial over a book bound to reopen old Marine Corps versus Army feuds.

2. The Betrayal is a bitter, cynical and smart alecky book highly critical of the Army, the State Department, the South Vietnamese hierarchy and ARVN. Only the Marine Corps comes out unscathed; the author's hero--General Krulak. The jacket blurb states that Col. Corson has lived, worked and traveled throughout Southeast Asia and participated in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. His final months on duty were spent in Washington as a Systems Analyst in the area of pacification and insurgency in the Southeast Asia Programs Division.

3. Col. Corson has several references to CIA in The Betrayal. At page 36, he writes of Robert Blum's mission during the Truman Administration as head of the United States Special Technical and Economic Mission. Corson calls Blum "a protégé of Allen Dulles and notes that General DeLattre described Blum "as the most dangerous man in Indochina." In the 1950-54 period, Corson finds that all of the American components in Indochina pursued their own course in the "other war" (Civic Action). He states that

"Ostensibly Blum was in charge, but the military-political bureaucrats resented the free-wheeling antics of the CIA and failed to support Blum fully. During this period the CIA went

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'where the action is,' while the rest of the U. S. mission remained in their American ghettos, venturing out only to talk, dine, and play with their French counterparts." (p. 36)

4. Corson finds that General Duong Van Minh's coup against Diem was a surprise to the U. S. Mission (citing David Halberstam as the source). He adds that

"Allusions to a CIA-directed coup as set forth in fictional accounts are just that--fiction. The CIA in November 1963 was like the 'husband' --that is, the 'last to know.' " (p. 50)

5. Regarding control of the Montagnards, Col. Corson states that

"The 40,000 members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups are superficially a part of the South Vietnamese armed forces; however, they actually make up the Central Intelligence Agency's and U. S. Special Forces' 'shadow army.' Prior to the Taylor mission to South Vietnam in 1961, the Montagnards ('hill people') who make up the CIDG were strictly under the control and direction of the CIA and its little-brother Vietnamese counterpart, but as part of a 'gentleman's agreement' the Vietnamese were cut out early in 1962 and the Montagnards were divided between the CIA and the Special Forces." (p. 88)

He then alleges that the Montagnards felt that the U. S. was a party to double dealing with them, a record which Corson feels to be as "stupid" as OSS and subsequent U. S. handling of the Kachins during and after World War II.

6. Corson believes that CIA organized the "Census Grievance" cadres which "do their work well." He adds that General Ky had his eyes on these cadres for some time, but that the "CIA thought the CG were their 'boys' until Thang took them over." (p. 119)

7. Corson makes further mention of the independence of the various components of the Country Mission, writing that the Ambassador rarely runs or controls their activities, partly because he has no control over

"the internal workings of the so-called support organizations. For example, in many countries, until President Kennedy negotiated an uneasy peace between the CIA and the State Department in 1961, the ambassador was frequently in the unenviable position of not even knowing the identity of the CIA Chief of Station in the host country. Today the ambassador may know who the man is, but he usually has only a faint idea of what mischief the CIA people are up to as they 'gather information.' Thus while the ambassador is supposed to be the Chief of Mission, he actually sits uneasily on top of a loose confederation of interests." (p. 201)

The author feels that the situation was slightly improved when General Taylor, as Ambassador, set up the Mission Council on which, Corson notes, "John Hart, the CIA Station Chief" had a seat. (p. 202).

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8. Corson makes George Carver's article in Foreign Affairs a special target of his disapproval. He calls the article an "Administration-inspired essay" which uses its evidence "for rather obvious political reasons." He sums the article up in two words: "Carver misleads." (p. 135). The full text of Col. Corson's "analysis" of the Carver article is attached as Tab A. Another to receive Corson's dislike is Robert Komer whose failures he ascribes to the fact, among others, that Komer was a manager but not a leader. Mr. Komer's rebuttal from Saigon is attached as Tab B.

Enclosures
Tabs A and B
Distribution:

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The Kid Next Door

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tain. Leaving aside the implications of the oppressive actions against the Vietnamese people committed by their own military and government, the question "Who is the enemy?" is quite nettlesome, for the Communists have put together an organization which makes drawing the line between the good guys and the bad guys very difficult.

George Carver of the CIA, writing in the April 1966 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, referred to the enemy in Vietnam as the "faceless Vietcong." Carver's Administration-inspired essay was designed to show who guides the Vietcong in South Vietnam and how this control is exercised. From his evidence, for rather obvious political reasons, Carver contends that the Vietnam war is a result of the expansionist and militant policies of Vietnam's Communists, North and South, with the Dang Lao Dang Party (Vietnam Labor Party) of Hanoi at the head. Carver misleads. The "liberation" struggle started in 1957 as a result of President Diem's political-economic-physical oppression without benefit or assistance by the North Vietnamese Communists. However, this is not to say the North Vietnamese did not take over the movement. They did and they run it today.

Carver's article is not worth considering except as an example of the commonly held false assumption that the Communists are the initial cause of trouble. The record throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America is quite clear—locally discontented groups or persons do not respond in the beginning to those whom they consider to be "outsiders." Wars of national liberation start with hometown leadership, but are soon taken over by the more experienced Communists who may or may not be nationals of the given country.

In his article Carver plays the role of a demonologist who sees Communists behind every expression of dissatisfaction with the status quo. However, such expressions often have very legitimate bases which we tend to overlook by focusing our national displeasure on the Communists. The Communists, meanwhile, are very cleverly utilizing these basic causes of the people's discontent in conducting the revolution to their advantage. Consequently, a far better perspective of how this is done is required to oppose the Communists effectively.

The very foundation of the enemy's strength in Vietnam is

New York Times
7 July 1968

FAILURE OF PROGRAM IS DENIED BY KOMER

SAIGON South Vietnam, July 6 (AP)—The American responsible for the pacification program in South Vietnam labeled as "grotesque" today charges in a book published this week that the program is "dead, finished, kaput."

Robert W. Komer, assailed "The Betrayal," by Lieut. Col. William R. Corson of the Marines, who retired Monday, the day the book appeared.

"His book is grotesque and is an insult to the thousands of hard working Vietnamese and Americans who are out trying to make these programs work," Mr. Komer said.

The book is a sweeping indictment of United States programs in South Vietnam and of corruption and incompetence among South Vietnamese military and civilian officials.

Mr. Komer said the book accused him of setting back efforts by United States advisors to help civilians by ordering that all projects be cleared by the South Vietnamese Government.

"I am totally unaware of what he's talking about," Mr. Komer said. "Pacification is entirely a Government of South Vietnam-operated program. We are only here in an advisory role."

