

Who's Boss In Viet: CIA Or Lodge?

CIA Chief Recalled

SAIGON, Oct. 5 (UPI).—John H. Richardson, U.S. Central Intelligence chief in South Viet Nam, flew to Washington today for "consultations," reliable American sources reported.

There was speculation that Mr. Richardson was being called on the carpet for CIA's alleged failure to learn in advance of the Vietnamese government's Aug. 21 crackdown on Buddhists.

By MARIANNE MEANS

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 5.—Reports out of Saigon of the confusion and contradiction within the U. S. mission prompted a fresh examination today of whether the Central Intelligence Agency should not get out of the "Department of Dirty Tricks."

Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge arrived at his new post in South Viet Nam determined to be boss of his own embassy staff, the various economic aid program officials, the military mission, and the CIA agents. President Kennedy insists that his ambassadors control all government branch operation in the country involved.

Feud With General Denied

But Mr. Lodge discovered that the CIA and the military don't much like reporting to an ambassador, and sometimes embassy staffs tend to regard new ambassadors as transitory appointees not to be bothered with.

Mr. Lodge' task of analyzing what was really happening in the Diem government was dangerously complicated by the widely differing accounts and opinions he was given by the various branches of the U. S. mission there. Officials in the various branches were so emotionally involved in the political crisis that Mr. Lodge could not get a clear account of the situation.

Reports have indicated that Mr. Lodge and Gen. Paul Harkins, head of the military operations there, have clashed. And a Pentagon spokesman hinted at possible trouble by sniffing at the suggestion that Gen. Harkins ought to report to Mr. Lodge as well as his direct military commander, Adm. Harry D. Felt, chief of U. S. military operations in the Pacific.

"A military man does not report to a civilian," he said curtly.

High administration sources denied vigorously that Mr. Lodge was feuding with Gen. Harkins over U. S. policy in South Viet Nam or their respective authority. One source pointed out that Gen. Harkins and Mr. Lodge were long-time friends and that this friendship was a factor in Mr. Lodge's selection as ambassador.

A source also said that Gen. Harkins has been

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extremely careful to show Mr. Lodge his reports to Adm. Felt or the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, recently cabled Gen. Harkins for his opinion on the military and political situation. Gen. Harkins cabled back that he was submitting his views only after showing the report to Mr. Lodge, this source said.

HARKINS' ORDERS

Gen. Harkins is under military instructions to help the Vietnamese win their war against the Communist Viet Cong, not just direct a military assistance group. Therefore, acting as a field commander, he has authority to prosecute the war on his own—so long as it does not conflict with basic U. S. policy. Only when policy questions might be involved is Gen. Harkins under obligation to clear his moves with the ambassador.

It is now clear that Mr. Lodge's biggest problem in establishing control over U. S. operations in South Viet Nam has been with the CIA. CIA activities are always shrouded in mystery and agents prefer traditionally to operate independently under instructions from their chief, John McCone, without consulting with outsiders—and to their way of thinking ambassadors are as outside as anybody.

RECALL REPORTED

This conflict resulted yesterday in the reported recall by President Kennedy of John H. Richardson as chief CIA agent in Saigon. The recall is supposedly for "consultation," but it is not likely he will return to Viet Nam. Mr. Lodge, despite official denials, is said to have asked for a replacement.

Central to the clash between Lodge and the CIA is the question of the intelligence agency's proper function. Mr. Richardson, a former career diplomat who entered U. S. spy work in World War II, believes the CIA should not only gather information but take an active role in financing and master-minding plots to advance U. S. interests. Mr. Lodge insists the CIA, at least in Viet Nam, must leave policy to the State Department and suspend its so-called "department of dirty tricks" in the area.

DEEPLY INVOLVED

The CIA has been deeply involved in tricks in South Viet Nam at least since 1954, when Viet Nam was partitioned after the defeat of the French in the Indochina war. According to one version, the then-chief CIA

agent, Col. Edward G. Lansdale, was primarily responsible for setting up Ngo Dinh Diem as president over other contenders for power.

Col. Lansdale also persuaded CIA director Allen W. Dulles—who in turn persuaded his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles—to support Diem as the best prospect for a strong anti-Communist government, the version goes.

Now some CIA agents would like to press hard to get Diem out, being sadly disillusioned with the man of their own making. Mr. Lodge—backed up by blunt words from Secretary of Defense McNamara and Gen. Taylor on their trip to South Viet Nam—has laid down the firm U. S. policy line of support for the Diem regime so as not disturb the war effort. And CIA, according to sources here, has been ordered to go along and confine itself within the bounds of U. S. policy as supervised by Mr. Lodge.