

Vietnam continued . . .

"if any member of his large family disappears (from the camp), the rest will be stricken from food-distribution rolls." Thoroughly screened groups of refugees, however, will be administratively relocated in the countryside by the Thieu regime, but only when their return can be employed as a strategic weapon for the consolidation of Saigon's military-political position.

As a supplement to his army, Thieu plans to rely on an expanded paramilitary police force, paid for, and trained largely outside of Vietnam by the U.S., for social control and "political competition" with the PRG. Michael Klare has recently exposed official U.S. documents originating in the Agency for International Development's Office of Public Safety in the State Department (USAID) which indicate that Washington plans to maintain Saigon's National Police organization as a key element in Thieu's hoped-for survival. According to these documents and other sources, in spite of the cease-fire the U.S. has every intention for the infamous Operation Phoenix to continue in full swing under the direction of the "Special Branch" (political police) of the South Vietnamese National Police. (Program spokesmen admit that between 1968 and 1971, over 20,000 people were killed for political reasons under the Phoenix program.)

And not only will Operation Phoenix continue under U.S. auspices, but the Public Safety program will be generally upgraded, and increased U.S. assistance will be made available commensurate with its acknowledged, increased importance to continued U.S.-Saigon political control of the South Vietnamese people during the cease-fire.

Under Diem in 1962, there were only 19,000 men in the South Vietnamese police force. By January 1972, the U.S. had financed and trained an increase to 114,000 men. During fiscal 1972 the U.S. planned to increase this number to 124,000 with the same overall target set for fiscal 1973, but with an increase in the number of National Police assigned at the village level from 11,000 in 1972, to 31,000 by the end of 1973. To finance this effort, during FY 1971-73 USAID asked Congress for \$17.9 million, of which no less than \$13.6 million would be intended to cover the salaries of 200 U.S. advisers to the program. The fact that under the terms of the January agreement the U.S. is obliged to withdraw all so-called

"paramilitary" as well as military advisers to the Thieu regime has not altered in the least the U.S.'s intention to carry on the activities traditionally performed by these personnel.

Since 1967 the U.S. Public Safety and pacification programs in Vietnam have been run jointly by USAID and the Pentagon's Civil Operations and Rural Development Support apparatus (CORDS). Under the provisions of the cease-fire, CORDS is being officially disbanded because of its reputation as an arm of the U.S. military. However its staff and USAID's are now simply resuming their previous role ostensibly under the civilian authority of the "Resettlement and Reconstruction Directorate". This is a new office of the U.S. embassy in Saigon whose policing and advisory function will be administered through newly established consulates general in Danang, Nhatrang, Bienhoa and Cantho. According to the Washington Post their personnel will be drawn "primarily from the former pacification program, including a number of retired military men who have been around South Vietnam for years. Virtually all of the senior civilians in CORDS . . . are being kept on."

During the months ahead our continued political vigilance is essential. This much, certainly, all Westerners owe the Vietnamese people. Every opportunity to, first of all, understand, and then challenge, individually and collectively, the motives of the U.S. government in the matter of Vietnam must be seized upon by responsible people everywhere until the U.S. ceases its involvement entirely. One very important way in which everyone can contribute to the Vietnamese independence struggle is through the donation of funds to the reconstruction effort. There are a number of responsible groups in the U.S., Canada, and throughout the world which collect money and materiel for the Indochinese liberation organizations.

However the best, and fastest way to help in this respect is to send contributions directly to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. Checks should be made payable to, SPARKONTO: 3217 40 00172, and sent to the SVERIGES KREDITBANK, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. Further information can be obtained by writing the PRG INFORMATION BUREAU, BOX 315, STOCKHOLM 1, SWEDEN.

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