

zozo sag

yy ljp

shakeup 1 (normass/deepe)

Saigon, March 30--President Nguyen Van Thieu has initiated a modest reorganization of the Vietnamese armed forces and the beginnings of a multi-phased shakeup of its command.

The ~~m~~ military shake-up may possible reach all the way to the top of the Vietnamese high command, with the re-assignment of General Cao Van Vien, reliable sources report.

--more reuter

yy ljp

shakeup 2 (normass/deepe)

The shake-up is also expected to spill over into the civilian government. A major Cabinet re-shuffle, involving at least a quarter of the government's ministries, is in the works, informed sources report. Possibly even Prime Minister Nguyen Van Loc may be replaced, these sources report.

Already, two of the four corps commanders have been replaced; at least one more is ~~==more reuter~~ slated to go and two of the corps areas are to be ~~sub~~ subdivided so that two more corps regions will be created and two more commanders appointed. Of the ~~nine subordinate di~~ ten subordinate division commanders, none have yet been replaced, but changes are reported ^{LY} to be in the mill. Of the 44 province chiefs, ¹⁴ 12 have already been changed and more are slated to go. A whirlwind of changes among the 250 district chiefs is also ~~also~~ scheduled, reliable sources report.

==more reuter

2020 sag

yy ljp

shakeup 3 (normass/deepe)

The shakeup is designed to galvanize the military and administrative capabilities of the Thieu government in the wake of the disruptive Communist Tet onslaught. It has had several concomitant effects. First, it has enhanced the position of President Thieu over his powerful field commanders--because because because they commanded the troops and guns that could overthrow the government--by removing these field generals from the political and administrative decision-making process. ~~Second~~ Thus, it has simplified the administration of the government, with orders Saigon instructions by-passing the field corps commanders and moving directly to the 44 province chiefs, who wield both civil and military powers. Second, the shakeup has also strengthened Thieu in his rivalry with his own vice president, Nguyen Cao Ky. This Thieu-Ky split has reportedly not been momentarily at scotch-taped over, but not irrevocably patched up, informed sources indicate.

--more reuter

zozc sag

yy ljp

shakeup 4 (normass/de epe)

While American officials, ~~speaking officially~~, are pleased with the progress ~~The~~ Thieu has shown in coping with the staggering problems confronting his nation, many knowledgeable Vietnamese believe he has moved too slowly and timidly. While the present President has progressed in comparison to the pre-Tet Thieu, these sources argue that the Communists have far outdistanced him since Tet in ~~the~~ political, economic, ^{HND military} psychological /gains.

General Vien represents a special problem for President Thieu. Since assuming command of the Vietnamese armed forces--shortly after his counterpart, General ~~West~~ William C. Westmoreland assumed command on the ~~Army~~ American side in 1964--General Vien has been under a steady, but subdued stream of criticism within and without the Vietnamese military establishment. His detractors ~~do~~ not question his competence in military affairs--but his control over his own wife, ^{WHO} ~~whif~~ is widely pictured in Vietnamese circles as ~~a~~ particularly shrewd, ~~but~~ but corrupt ~~businessmen~~ businesswoman. Following the Communist Tet offensive, Vien has been under about as much criticism in Vietnam as Westmoreland has been in the United States--but for a different reason. The looting of the Vietnamese troops in the cities they failed in the first place to protect and then ruined in f regaining has again highlighted the problem of corruption and anarchy--which is in a way symbolized by the activities of Vien's own wife.

--more reuter

zczo sag

yy ljp

shakeup 5 (normass/deepe)

American civilian officials, speaking in private, have been increasingly critical of Westmoreland for ignoring the problem of the political ~~map~~ ^{malpractices} of the Vietnamese armed forces—including those of his own direct counterpart. However, Vietnamese junior officers unhappy with the state of the Vietnamese armed forces—blame Westmoreland—and not Vien—for the lack of reform in the military affairs, arguing that the total financial support of the Vietnamese armed forces rested with the ~~Americans~~ ^{WESTMORELAND} and whoever controls the purse strings in Vietnam controls about as much as one chooses.

Not a politically inclined or ambitious general, Vien was nevertheless ~~an~~ one of the few mutual friends of both Thieu and ^{DURING} Ky their past bitter moments, and frequently served as a peacemaker between them.

==more reuter

zczo sag

yy ljp

shakeup 6 (normass/deepe)

While Thieu has announced his current and upcoming reforms as part of a broader anti-corruption ~~of~~ crusade, the drive has been directed thus far mainly at captains and major who absconded with monies in the field. But, if the anti-corruption crusade is to have meaning to Vietnamese officers and the population, ~~Vietnam~~^{V.I.E.M} must be given the axe--and not the traditional one of ~~exile~~^{exile} to a an ambassadorship abroad, ~~where, where,~~^{V.I.E.M} in fact, Vietnam has already requested ~~vietnam has already requested~~ as an escape for his wife and her war profits.

--more reuter

yy ljp

shakeup 7 (normass/deepe)

If General General Vien is a biting problem, however, for Thieu, however, he has already created other problems for knowledgeable Vietnamese with his policy of half-solutions!

regarding the dismissal of two corps commanders—important because they were both his political supporters when Thieu succeeded in grabbing the political nomination from Ky as a p the sole military candidate during the p Presidential election last fall. Americans and Vietnamese sources alike note that Thieu strengthened his hand own hand by his move against the two generals, and at the same time judiciously quieted the fears of general ky by dismissing his own two supporters withu without their permission or k foreknowledgeab foreknowledge.

These were the dismissals of General Vinh Loo of the second military corps and General Nguyen Van Manh of the fourth corps in the Mekong Delta. These two officers, long considered by American officer officers to possess questionable military confi ~~competence~~ competence and highly almost unquestiona unquestionably were politic lly the most corrupted of senior field officers. These views were also exacerba exacerbated during the Tet offensive when General Manh reported collapsed as a military commander, when the Viet Cong began attacking or overrunning several of h theci cities in his area, and

= = *more* *Rest*

yy ljp

shakeup 8 (normass/deepe)

And, in the case of General Vinh Loc, he and his ~~senior~~ American advisor reportedly hurled insulting shouts at each other as "Vinh Loc wanted to lead ~~his~~ own squads ~~to~~ save the city of Pleiku rather than commanding the whole corps which was falling around his ears," one source reported.

~~and~~ while Thieu has removed them from their command positions—
 and their ^{RESPECTABLE} ~~estraps~~ of ~~corruptio~~ corruption, he has negated the vigor of his anti-corruption drive by appointing the two generals to senior, ¹⁹ staff positions in Saigon. Most ironic was the appointment of General Manh as Vietnam's chief inspector general, theoretically the investigative arm for corruption and malpractices in the Army.

"Isn't that ~~ironic~~ paradoxical—Thieu appointed one of the most corrupt generals to be inspector general, who is supposed to investigate ~~cor~~ corruption," one ~~xxxx~~ source ventured.

ZCZC sag

JY 1jp

shakeup 9 (normass/deepe)

~~Nevertheless,~~

Nevertheless, Thieu's attempts on paper to change the ^{PRACTICES} ~~practices~~ of ~~corrupt~~ corruption are nearly historic--~~in~~ in their own ~~paper~~ paper-world perspective. Appointments of province chiefs are now controlled by the Saigon government, rather than being bought from the corps commanders. These province chiefs are being thrust into the ~~the~~ most difficult administrative, political, economic and military situation in the history of Vietnam's rice roots government--and they'll be making mistakes, but, as one source explained, "hopefully they won't be making ~~the~~ kickback money ~~of~~ like their ~~predecessors~~ predecessors."

Whether these newly appointed province ~~chief~~ chiefs will be competent enough in confronting the Viet Cong--and ~~be~~ dedicated enough to ^{RISK} ~~risk~~ their lives without ~~see~~ stashing away the ~~big~~ bank accounts of ~~the~~ their predecessors ^F is ~~one of~~ the most important questions of the ~~the~~ future.

"If they fail, Thieu is going to fall," one source explained.

"And if Thieu falls, the Americans go with him."

= more reuter

zeze aag

yy ljp

shakeup 10 (normass/deepe)

While ~~Thieu~~ Thieu's political leadership in battling corruption and the Communists is still open to question, his politics within the Vietnamese military establishment is regarded here as daring and superb. He has in effect implemented—only on paper thus far—the military reform his critics have for so long sought. But, the reform was pushed through when his primary critic, Maj. Gen. Nguyen Cu Duc Thang, was already transferred from the Saigon high command to a ~~of~~ the fourth corps to replace General Manh. Thus, Thang, as a corps commander, is the power of Thang, as a corps commander, is ironciall ironcially-ironcially curtailed by the ~~sa~~ very same reforms he had once unsuccessfully sought.

—more reuter

zozc sag

yy ljp

shakeup 11 (normass/deepe)

Reliable sources here report that, on the American side, the long+ over-due reorganization was pushed through at the urging of General Earl Wheeler, who over-rode Westmoreland's lethargy in this area, as well as that of his deputy, General Creighton Abrams, ^{FIBRAITMS} who for the past year has been responsible for the Vietnamese armed forces and is now rated as a likely successor to Westmoreland.

The reorganization has come about in the apportionment of the upcoming 135,000-man increase in the Vietnamese armed force--and who controls what troops. Thieu, with both political skill and military wisdom, gave all subordinate commands what they had long wanted--to settle the continuous bickering within the military institution--and then, so none were totally happy, or too powerful, Thieu took away from each a portion of their respective empires.

--more reuter

zczc sag

yy ljp

shakeup 12 (normass/deepe)

The province chiefs got an additional battalion per province under their personal command, but they lost their hopes of controlling the regular army battalions in their own province. ~~The division commander retains this authority.~~ ^{on PAPER,} But, at least theoretically, the province chief is now expected ~~neither~~ neither to buy his job nor to line his pockets. ~~rather than the province chiefs~~ rather than the province chiefs. The division commanders retain control of their battalions assigned to pacification, and also even more important, four of ~~the~~ ^{division's} ~~his~~ twelve battalions are to be formed into a special mobile, highly trained divisional ~~staff~~ striking force with new equip^{ment} equipment supplied by the American government. The four corps commanders have thus retained their military status with full control of their subordinate divisions, rather than having their troop strength and staff ~~headquater~~ headquarters radically shaved away from them, as Thang wanted.

==more reuter

ZCZC SAG

JY 1JP

shakeup ¹³ ~~12~~ (normass/deepe)

Specifically, the 135,000-man increase in the Vietnamese armed forces, raising the ~~shd~~ scheduled total to 805,000 by the end of 1968, is slated to be apportioned in the following manner:

1. Two new regiments; one for the 23rd ~~infantry~~ infantry division headquartered in Ban Me Thuot, which with its two current regiments is grossly understrength in covering its assigned eight provinces.

L. BE GAMED
The second regiment is to reinforce the authorized three ~~standard~~ standard three regiments of the 1st Infantry Division, which requires beefing up to ~~me~~ meet its ~~com~~ commitments in the ~~tn~~ tenuous provinces of Thua Thien and Quang Tri bordering the demilitarized zone.

=more reuter

JY 1JP

shakeup ¹⁴ (normass/deepe)

2. Ten more batteries of Vietnamese artillery.

3. Replacements for battlefield casualties and desertions.

4. ~~Adm~~ Additional strength for the regional and popular forces, the paramilitary "Ruffs and ~~Puffs~~ Puffs" assigned to ~~protect~~ protect the villages.

5. Increasing the authorized strength of each Vietnamese infantry battalion from 650 men to 720 men. With the authorized—and largely theoretical strength of 650 men per battalin, only 300 to 350 men were assigned as a battlefield force at one time, with the others remaining behind for leaves, guards ~~for the~~ and ~~typists~~ clerks at the headquarters and ~~extra~~ ^{gross} ~~extra~~ extravagant lack of replacements for combat ~~wounded~~. ^{CASUALTIES} The increase would ~~theoretically~~ theoretically mean 450 to 500 men per battalion could be committed as a ~~batte~~ battlefield unit—to ~~be~~ counter a Communist battalion of the same strength, but more heavily armed.

==more reuter

zczc sag

yy ljp

shakeup ¹⁵ ~~14~~ (normass/deepe)

6. ~~There~~ Fifty separate "~~are~~" striking battalions" of 700 men each. Forty four of these are to be assigned as a provincial battalion under ~~the~~ the control of the provincial chief for offensive operations with each province. The remaining six are slated ^{to} be ^{to} fused with the three existing Ranger battalions to be used as a striking force for the defense of Saigon and its immediate environs.

These 50 separate battalions, a new kind of force, are to be used only ~~not~~ within their assigned provinces, unlike the role of the Vietnamese divisional regulars. They are ~~also~~ to be recruited from the same province in which they will be assigned to fight--also unlike the regulars. They are a ~~also~~ scheduled to be paid, equipped and clothed the same as the Vietnamese regulars, but are to be commanded by the respective province chiefs, rather than the division commander.

--more reuter

2020 sag

yy ljp 16

shakeup 15 (normass/deepe)

On paper, these to 135,000 upcoming trop troops are scheduled to be recruited, trained and in their foxholes by September--in time to meet the next Communist winter offensive--and the American election.

But, to ~~strengthen~~ streamline the administrative structure, the Vietnamese division and corps commanders are scheduled to be stripped of their civil powers. As General Tahng wanted some time ago, the orders from Saigon will be transmitted directly to the 44 province chiefs, thus short-circuiting the previous system of moving from the central government to the corps commanders, then, at times through to the ten division commanders, and then to the province chiefs. In addition, six ~~admin~~ administrative officers are to be appointed by Thieu to fill this civil administrative vacuum and to keep the ~~cor~~ military command honest and efficient.

--more reuter

2020 sag

yy ljp

shakeup 18 (normass/deepe)

Whether these changes actually transpire from their world of paper into the sphere of reality, and whether, even if they do, they will be a match for the momentum of the ~~org~~ organizationally-minded Communists is a question which ^{will} partially determine the future of the Thieu government—and the American posture—in Vietnam.

(Hank: My London edition supposedly terminated today;

can you arrange to ~~keep it coming~~ or perhaps to send the Western edition to my APO address instead. It would have been useful during the Tet offensive to be getting the paper ^{regularly} when the Vietnamese airport and post office was closed. Also John Hughes suggested I get an ~~RAO~~ RCA card which I can use to cable to all addresses, instead of just ~~Bostoh~~ Boston, which might be useful in an ^{ever} emergency. I've also airmailed a ~~long-ass~~ memo which is about as long-winded as some of my stories. I'll file ~~3~~ three or four more stories this week, but what depends on how the interviews fall into place. Regards Bev).

-end reuter