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westy 1 (normass/deepe)

KHE SANH, VIETNAM, MARCH 25--In the annals of recent Vietnam warfare, the signature ~~is~~ imprint of General William C. Westmoreland, whose reassignment from here as over-all ~~general~~ American *AND Pacific* commander has been recently announced announced by President Lyndon B. Johnson, is most indelibly etched here at this besieged American Marine ~~our~~ outpost. *military*

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westy 2 (normass/deepe)

Khe Sanh represents the dead end, of the self-destruction, of Westmoreland's search-and-destroy strategy--the futility of his so-called forward strategy. <sup>his selection of</sup> ~~But,~~ <sup>STRATEGY</sup> Westmoreland's was not his foremost <sup>WAS</sup> downfall as much as his military objective--the Communist main force "hardhat" units, either North Vietnamese or Viet Cong. The Westmoreland strategy was based on the <sup>WESTERN</sup> ~~class~~ classical doctrine studied by young cadets at Westpoint where the general was once superintendent--namely, to aggressively and offensively carry the war to his main-force enemy, to search, find and then destroy him and his material. Khe Sanh, a miniature <sup>this,</sup> of ~~its~~, was born from a search-and-destroy operation, but now the American ground troops ~~are~~ here are sitting rather than searching, <sup>FIND</sup> are being destroyed without destroying their enemy. Instead of moving forward, the American elements are ~~us~~ immobilized in one four-square-mile base. <sup>THIS</sup> Khe Sanh is not the exception to the Westmoreland strategy, but ~~it is~~ its extreme, terminal version of it. There are ~~many other~~ <sup>more reuter</sup> Khe Sanhs in Vietnam, created for other ~~as~~ reasons in other regions.

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westy 3 (normass/deepe)

To ~~se~~ succeed fully, Westmoreland's ~~strag~~ strategy would have contradicted directly the stated war ~~aims~~ <sup>policy</sup> of the American government. For, the militarily logical extension of Westmoreland's strategy ~~had to be~~ <sup>was</sup> to search where most of his main-force enemy was most of the time in their ~~greatest~~ <sup>greatest</sup> mass. This demanded the invasion of North Vietnam— or any other country where they sought sanctuary. Westmoreland's strategy ~~ob~~ would obviously fail if he searched for his enemy where they did not exist; at best it could only partially succeed if he searched for his enemy where only some of them existed some of the time in their most scattered form. But, the Johnson Administration was opposed to the extension of the ground war. The Administrations ~~escalation~~ <sup>initial escalation</sup> of the war with the air three-year air bombardment of North Vietnam // did not solve General Westmoreland's main-force problem in the South.

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westy 4 (normass/deepe)

Khe Sanh is ~~isix~~ the precise miniature of this contradictio  
contradiction. To continue his forward strategy with any purpose  
around Khe Sanh, Westmoreland is logically forced to cross the border  
into Laos or into the North. But, the this is also unacceptable to  
the stated wair aims policy war policy of the American government.  
Unlike H<sub>o</sub>race Greeley, Westmoreland can not go west---or ~~mmmm~~ north.either.

In short, Westmoreland attempted to employ a conventional  
war strategy, which the his own government negated by never stating or  
possessing the conventional war aim of victory.--the final or decisive  
destruction of the enemy.

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westy 5 (normass/deepe)

Logically,  
policy Clearly, something has to give. Either the government's war aim is changed has to change--or Westmoreland's strategy has to change. To re- replace Westmoreland does not necessarily ~~mean~~ change his strategy.

Westmoreland's search-and-destroy strategy was nurtured by his obsession and shaped by his double dilemma. The Westmoreland obsession was the invasion by North Vietnamese battalions and regiments ~~across the 17th parallel~~. This was not Westmoreland's obsse obsession alone-- it was the fear of every American general here who advised and trained the Vietnamese army since 1954. Westmoreland, ~~whom the government had named as~~ the first American commander of American combat troops here, simply gave it an American overlay. Because of this obsession, Westmoreland, like his predecessors wanted a highly mobile, heavily armed conventional force to meet the invasion, which they was envisioned in Korean War-  
stoye terms of the Korean War nightmare.

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westy 6 (normass/deepe)

Westmoreland's obsession evolved into a reality, but ~~was~~ dissimilar to the nightmare of the Korean invasion. The ~~Vietnamese invasion~~ -- a mass of men marching un-amassed -- (B) depended on the support of their insurgency apparatus and machine; in Korea, it depended solely on a mass of men and material. Yet, when the North Vietnamese invasion was first confirmed in mid-1964, Westmoreland's command delend its existence. When the invasion began to <sup>fl</sup> flourish in ~~195~~ 1965-1966, Westmoreland was unable to stop it. And now, Khe Sanh epitomizes the ultimate frustration of that obsession, <sup>as the</sup> ~~as the~~ North Vietnamese, with tanks, trucks and artillery, swirl <sup>in</sup> in the environs of this American base camp.

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westy 7 (normass/deepe)

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It was during the initial buildup of American forces in 1965, when the Allied held the balance of forces, that the criticism of Westmoreland's obsession, mi main-force obsession held by Westmoreland and his precessor predecessors was most intense. The criticism of Westmoreland at the that time and since does not seem to appreciate his double dilemma.

His first dilemma, which shaped his conventionalized conventionalized strategy, was that he had~~to~~ to fight with the military machine he was given to command. "He obv "Westy obviously can not fight with a machine he doesn't have," one Western diplomat noted during the buildup period. "And he doesn't have the political-economic-military counter-insurgency machine he needs to wage this war." At a higher level, this was not simply Westmoreland's dilemma in Vietnam, but it is America's dileman in o dilemma in other under-developed countries for the next decade. The current criticism of Westmoreland here is tat that he never attempted to adjust, or de-conventionalize, American military power here.

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westy 8 (normass/deepe)

His second dilemma was that the Vietnamese army and para-military forces, delegated to try to control the insurgency aspects of the situation <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ outside his control and command, although not ~~of~~ outside his pocketbook and persuasion. If American troops were assigned to ~~xi~~ control the insurgency—even if they had the capabilities of doing so—then they could not <sup>be an ally</sup> ~~ally~~ <sup>ally</sup> ally if ally his main-force obsession. ~~But~~ And, if he attempted to command the Vietnamese army, then he again contradicted America's political aim—to support an independent government (of which the army is the most powerful part), rather than imposing the colonial will of the French in another era.

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westy 9 (normass/deepe)

And, so Westmoreland, having to fight with the machines  
in his hands, tossed the American units into the mainforce ~~z~~ battle  
arena, of which Khe Sanh is the dead-end, and he gradually shifted the  
Vietnamese <sup>CONVENTIONALIZED</sup> forces into the quasi-coo <sup>WITHOUT</sup> quasi-insurgency arena, ~~of which~~  
~~TRAINING THEM FOR THE MISSION. THE~~  
the ruj ruins of Hue symbolize his miscalculation. In Hue,  
the extreme symble symbol of the Vietnamese failure, North Vietnamese  
units marched into the city without a battle. The battle came as they  
the North Vietnamese held the city and the Allies attempted to retake it.  
Hue then logically symbolized the final failure of the Westmoreland  
~~search-~~ search-and destroy strategy; the enemy battalions were ~~annihilated~~  
battalions and regiments slipped under the nose of their seekers  
and appeared in the heartland of the "frei" "friendly" areas; they were  
destroyed not in North Vietnam, nor in the jungles of Khe Sanh, but in  
the streets of Hue where they also sparked the destruction of a Vietnamese  
city.

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westy 10 (normass/deepe)

Convention of Log Annihilation

In short, Westmoreland based his strategy

on the resources and military machine had had to command—he did not

base his strategy on meeting the Communists' strategy ~~across-the-board~~ <sup>of attrition</sup>

through of revolutionary revolutionary warfare. But, in 1965-1966, when

the balance of forces lay in Westmoreland's hands, critics did

propose an ~~adjustm~~ adjustment of the American military machine—

a different ~~del~~ deployment of American troops rather than in the

jungles searching for main-force units.

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westy ll (normass/deepe)

These critics argued that the strategy of Westmoreland's negative, destruction strategy of annihilation of his enemy should give way to the protection of the Vietnamese population; that the military objective was not the eney enemy's main force, but the local guerrillas and political cadre who fed nurtured the o in and supported the invasion; that instead of fighting the the in the jungles, American troops should be forging a shield around a perimeter of the people. For without the people, the Viet Cong could not win, even with a Korean-styled invasion.

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westy 12 (normass/deepe)

But Westmoreland overruled them, ~~specially~~ specifically ordering large-scale ~~off~~ offensives around the demilitarized zone, with the end result of a ~~small~~ number of Khe Sanhs.

~~But,~~ the concept of the people-perimeter is ~~quickly~~ <sup>presently</sup> losing its validy validity, for the Communists are not only massing around ~~the~~ <sup>perimeters</sup> perimeters, but in the suburbs and the city proper. To these critics, if Westmoreland has not ~~lost~~ lost their people's war, he has at least lost time.

For, under Westmoreland, the Vietnam war has come full-circle from one low point to another. On a tri-dimensional, vertical vertical spiral, Westmoreland's war escalated wildly, in the air over North Vietnam and Laos with high-altitude B-52's and double-the-speed-of-sound Phantoms, and ~~on~~ the ground with more than a half million American troops. But, horizontally, on a flat, one-dimensional plane, Westmoreland's war has come full circle. ~~But~~ The Westmoreland of 1964, when he assumed command here in mid-year, saw the Vietnamese strategic reserve, PARATROOPERS AND MARINES momentarily encircled and then defeated by Viet Cong regulars using ~~Phase II~~ ~~MO~~ Mobile warfare tactics. The Westmoreland of 1968 sees more and more of the American, airborne strategic reserve rushed to Vietnam, as American Marines in Khe Sanh are encircled by North Vietnamese units using Phase III positional warfare tactics. The Westmoreland of 1964 saw the Viet Cong seizing control of the

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westy 13 (normass/deepe)

The Westmoreland of 1968 sees the ~~Communis~~ Communists suffocating the cities and strangling the pacification program.

Will the Westmoreland strategy survive without Westmoreland? Or will the ~~new~~ Westmoreland's successor, still ~~unannounced~~ un-announced, reconsider the people's perimeter concept? Or is it too late to change? "If it's not too late, it's certainly getting later," one officer explained.

Vietnam has now maintained, ~~continued~~ its traditional heritage as a graveyard for generals, governors, governor-generals and ambassadors. And it ~~has~~ <sup>is increasingly</sup> becoming a limbo for military strategies. In this "Easty versus Westy" conflict, the illogic of the Occident has~~h~~ momentarily, at least, been ~~outflanked~~ outflanked by the dialectics of the Communists.

(Hank: I'll ~~probably~~ probably file only one more story this week. I feel in need of some rest. However, April first is first year anniversary of Vietnamese constitution. Do you want a two or three part series, using this as a pivot, to appraise the Vietnamese government developments? Do have we had ~~enough~~ enough series for awhile? Appreciate cable. Regards Bev).

--end reuter