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sept. 2, 1965

SOUTH VIETNAMESE

SAIGON--The use of airpower in the Viet Nam war will be slightly tempered in some cases to ~~pay~~ pave the way for Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge's program of social revolution in the countryside, according to reliable sources.

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"You can carry a military program so that it will ~~en~~ create political hatreds," one reliable source indicated. "We could win the war, ^{HAVEN} hold a referendum and lose that." (Source 1.).

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The adjustment of the employment of airpower, most of which is American-piloted U. S. Navy, Marine or Air Force ~~air~~ fighter-bombers-- is considered necessary by American officials in the political field to prevent possible ~~adv~~^s adverse political repercussions among the Vietnamese peasants in the countryside. In addition, the increased number of American combat forces on the ground gives military commanders the chance to follow-up airstrikes ~~in~~ on the ground in the "contested areas", where previously only ~~f~~ slow-moving forward air controller aircraft directed and appraised the ~~multi-mission~~ air operations. (Source 2).

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Observers here ^{HAD} ~~have~~ predicted a full-scale clash between the Lodge viewpoint, which is considered to be more sensitive to the political repercussions of the airstrikes, and the viewpoint of American military commanders who considered airpower as a primarily means of ~~crushing~~ ^{PAR T I C U L A R L Y} crushing the Viet Cong large-scale offensives, ~~mostly~~ in late February before the arrival of American ground units.

The Lodge viewpoint, ^{WAS} succinctly expounded by his top aide Edward G. Lansdale, a retired U. S. ~~Army~~ Air Force general, when he wrote that the Communists ^{had} had set loose a revolutionary idea in Vietnam that would not be destroyed by bombs or bullets. While this statement reportedly irked Pentagon officials, reliable sources here indicate that "there is no conflict ~~bet t~~ between the ^{Lansdale} ~~Lansdale~~ ^{viewpoint} ~~viewpoint~~ and the military viewpoint yet." (Source 1).

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The employment of airpower within South Vietnam falls into three broad categories. The first, called "mass air attacks," mostly by Strategic Air Command B-52 bombers, pound stronghold areas of hard-core Viet Cong concentrations. This program will be continued and ~~intensified~~ accelerated to ~~almost~~ one ~~six~~ massive airstrike a day, according to reliable military sources. (Source 2). The second category of air employment is called close tactical air support which comes to the aid of trapped and encircled Vietnamese and American ground troops. Military sources ~~but~~ say this has turned the tide of ~~many~~ some ~~of the~~ battles in favor of the government and has prevented the annihilation of some government units, especially before the arrival of American combat units. ~~THESE AIRSTRIKES~~

The third category is the most controversial. It is called "combat sorties" of fighter-bombers ~~which~~ ^{H/T} which Viet Cong structures and troop concentrations--but unlike, the first category--the ~~st~~ airstrikes are not solely in Viet~~o~~ Cong stronghold areas.

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Rarely do ground troops follow up the "combat sorties" to determine exactly what structures have been hit and ~~who have be~~ who has been killed or ~~is~~ wounded; ~~because of the~~ statistics are based mostly on pilot's estimates and not by confirmed evidence on the ground.

These missions are ~~extremely~~ exceptionally more difficult than strikes against the "death zones" ~~areas where~~ Viet Cong ~~minimamaxxxxx~~ stronghold areas, which contain the sparsest of civilian population, except for the members of the Viet Cong families. The "combat sorties" are launched against small Viet Cong guerrilla bands, who ~~can~~ easily and readily mingle with the civilian population.

The problems of the "combat sorties" mirror the most pressing ~~problems~~ and complexities of the war in Viet Nam.

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The Vietnamese government controls only a small fringe of villages surrounding each of the major population centers in the country; the remaining villages in the countryside are considered by counter-insurgency experts to be either partially or totally dominated or controlled by the Viet Cong--not only with guerrilla troop strength, but also by Communist political cadre.

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~~Reliable~~ ~~source~~

Reliable sources who have escaped from the Viet Cong-dominated hamlets said that the Communist political cadre, sometimes working underground, organized all the peasants--including women, children, and elders--into Communist associations, intelligence nets or liaison teams. In some cases, he explained, ~~some~~ small children act as guards and check the Communist credentials of other villagers.

^{BEEN} Hence, to bomb the Viet Cong-dominated villages, which have in some cases ~~been~~ outside of the government control for two years when the strategic hamlet program collapsed, means to bomb both the Viet Cong ~~and~~ ^{its} military ~~and~~ ^{and} political activists as well as the pro-Communist sympathizers among the population, these ^{Sources} ~~sources~~ indicated. (Source 3).

"The basic problem on our side is that we have not yet found the answer for guerrillas in small groups," one reliable source explained. ~~*****~~ "We have not yet found the answer to the Communist political cadre and the one-man terrorist. We will find the answer, but we have not yet." (Source 1.)

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On the mass air attacks by B-52 bombers in the Viet Cong strongholds, one reliable source explained, "it is an achievement if we can keep the Viet Cong from becoming a regular army, or if we can hit them when they get in large groups, or if we can keep them from getting together in large groups." (Source 1).

One reliable military source ~~indicated~~ said intelligence ~~and~~ reports indicated that the increasing number of ~~air-strikes~~ B-52 air-strikes had ~~forced~~ forced the Viet Cong to infiltrate their headquarters elements into ~~the~~ the populous areas controlled by the government.

"This will cause the Viet Cong alot of problems," one reliable source indicated. "But it will cause us alot of problems too."