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Development 1 (normass/deepe)

Saigon, May 4⁵—The strategic Revolutionary Development program—
the crucial key to an Allied victory or a camouflaged defeat here—is ^{tottering the} on
the verge of ^{collapse} ~~complete failure~~. ^{Call AP 8:00}

This is the grim assessment of experts closely involved in the
crucial program, mostly Vietnamese officials who are substantially more
pessimistic than the American officialdom.

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Development 2 Saigon (normass/deepe)

From Vietnamese province chiefs and battalion commanders in the war zone to Saigon officials behind cluttered desks, maps and progress charts, the "gloom and doom" over the program is ~~continually~~ growing. One Vietnamese officer explained the problem briefly this way:

"The R. D. (Revolutionary Development) program has failed. It's too late to salvage it. It can still appear to work for a while—but it is only an illusion. Our R. D. teams are not good enough—they are supposed to be revolutionaries, but they're only draft-dodgers. And now we have problem recruiting enough to meet our 1967 quota.

Even worse, there is no security in the villages or for the cadre to work. We need an new strategy of how to ~~win~~ secure the countryside and win over the peasant. But no repeat no American or Vietnamese leader has even started to think about that yet." More Router

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Contributing to, but not a cause of, the grim assessment was today's enactment of the final phases of the ~~Washington~~ "LBJ coup d'etat"—a Vietnamese expression for the President Lyndon B. Johnson's whirlwind change-over in the American civilian leadership here, which will affect the Revolutionary Development program.

Today, President Johnson's special assistant, Robert Homer, arrived as part of the "new team" to replace Deputy Ambassador William Porter, who was in charge of Revolutionary Development on the American civilian side of the organizational ledger. Porter is scheduled to leave tomorrow. This important change of leadership, coupled with the introduction of ~~Franklin D. Murphy~~ Eugene Murphy, a friend of President Johnson's, has added to the confusion of the Allied's most confusing program in the war. And, it comes at ~~an uncertain~~ on of the most uncertain political periods—the prelude to Vietnam's Presidential elections in September.

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Development 4 Saigon (normass/deepo)

Informed sources believe a contributing, perhaps decisive, factor in the bureaucratic ~~confi~~ ^{Stacy Clark} confusion is that no "supremo" or "boss man" ~~apparent~~ yet appears to have been appointed by the President to quell the vicious, counter-productive in-fing in fighting between American military and civilian elements. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker is regarded as a "peace-fooler with the Communists and a Vietnam-persuader with the nationalists"—but not as a powerful enough policymaker to counter-balance or over-ride General William C. Westmoreland, commander of American forces. Furthermore, these informed sources believe that Bunker was never keen about assuming the Ambassadorial post here and that he is currently planning to leave shortly after the Vietnamese elections this fall. ~~Further~~ More confusion ~~err~~ arises, they say, ~~in~~ within the American civilian establishment, since thus far there is no clear definition of duties, ~~c~~ and authority between Komer, Locke and Bunker.

"Bunker will soon find himself a figurehead to meet VIP's at the airport," one informed American source explained. "He'll find he came here at the top of his career pedestal with only one way to go—down. Who can expect ~~h~~ ~~him~~ him to stay here long?"

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Vietnamese sources say there are three ~~reasons~~ simple, but ~~unmistakable~~ "hard-core" reasons for the current failure of the Revolutionary Development program.

First, the villages can be secured, protected and economically developed ^{only} if the Communist main force units are tied down or knocked out, which is the responsibility of American offensive operations. But, the sources say, the American combat units, despite a string of successes, ^{are} barely breaking even against the increased infiltration from North Vietnam plus the Communist recruitment ~~from~~ ^{UN, TS} within the South. Hence, the American tactical victories are ~~nothing~~ ^{just a temporary} still only marching on a treadmill; and hence, General Westmoreland's urgent need for more American troops, especially before the unfavorable monsoon rains begin in July. These sources say that roughly seven thousand North Vietnamese troops a month are flooding into South Vietnam and that Soviet-made trucks and bulldozers, elephants and bicycles are bringing in supplies from by road from ~~the~~ Communist-held Attapeu in Laos ^{the Laotian panhandle} to the frontier of South Vietnam. American commanders say the real Communist escalation in the war is coming in heavier, more sophisticated weapons, including longer-range rockets, artillery.

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Second, while the American troops are confronting the Communist main force units, the elite battalions of ~~South Vietnamese~~ ARVN's (Army, Republic of Vietnam)—roughly twenty thousand regular troops—are supposed to clear out local Communist companies so that the R. D. teams can weed out the ~~the~~ Communist infrastructure, organize the ~~the~~ village population and economically develop the village with schools, wells, dispensaries and the like. This, however, is one of the weakest links in the strategic concept.

As in the past, the ARVN's are reluctant, if not totally totally unwilling, to do the ~~the~~ necessary night patrolling and ambushing to stave off attacks on the lightly-armed R. D. teams, numbering only 59 men when at full strength.

As a ~~consequence~~ consequence, the officialdom ~~working~~ working on Revolutionary Development was ~~initially~~ initially shocked and is now dismayed at the ferocity of the Communist attacks against the R. D. teams. "We did not expect the V. C. (Communist Viet Cong) to attack the teams until late this year," one informed source said. "But, instead they started in January."

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In four months since the beinmin beginning of the year, the R. D. casualties are: 218 killed, 299 wounded, 51 missing in action, out of a total of roughly thirty thousand. In four months, the Viet Cong have launched 309 incidents or attacks against the teams, as compared to twenty five attacks ~~in~~ all ov of last year.

"On the V. C. brownied point list, to knock off an R. D. cadre is as good as to knock off an American," one source explained, "and that's a high rating for any Vietnamese' worker."

Another source, discussing the consequences of this, ~~in~~ explained, "If these teams aren't given security fast, the whole program will step dead in ~~ig~~ it's tracks."

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Even on the outskirts of Saigon, where six American combat battalions and one Korean combat battalion are based, the security is still not considered tight enough to allow the R. D. teams to function ~~seamlessly~~ properly ~~of~~ without ~~seamlessly~~ ^{worrying} about their own lives.

Third, the quality of the R. D. ^{team workers} teams is not considered to be good enough--yet, even now the government is finding it difficult to recruit ~~make~~ the necessary quotas. A critical manpower vacuum has developed in the thin slivers of government-controlled zones after the years of fighting that has nearly bled Vietnam white. The ~~major~~ ^{CADRE} Vietnamese government regular troops regard the R. D. ~~teamworkers~~ ^{team-workers} as draft-dodgers, with an easier job than fighting Viet Cong companies and platoons. Furthermore, many of the government soldiers, long the king of their chunk of countryside, view the R. D. cadre as intruders into their corruption rackets of gambling, ~~shakd~~ ~~shakd~~ ~~shakd~~ ~~downs~~ and living off the peasants.

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Development 9 (saigon (normans/deeps)

One of the recurring examples of the varied theme of unsatisfactory calibre of R. D. team-workers occurred outside the district town of Lai Thieu, 12 miles northeast of Saigon. Once the R. D. team moved into a hamlet to be developed, like some of the team-workers began to woo the village girls. The Viet Cong sent in two female cadre to receipt reciprocate with dinner and drinks in one of the homes. When the government workers were well inebriated, the two girls slipped away and the Viet Cong strung up two and detonated two calypso claymore mines, killing and wounding a dozen dozen of the workers and capturing their weapons.

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