

SAIRAD

PROREUTER TOKYO

ARMY 1 (Normass/deepe)

SAIGON, August 10—The Vietnamese Army will ~~more~~ ^{be} hastily be shifted from a convention war machine into more of a counter-guerrilla security force, reliable sources reported today.

~~yet to be made public~~
The decision was made by the ruling Vietnamese ~~the~~ ^{the} generals on August 3; the American military command here has agreed to the plan in principle, but not in detail, these sources said.

The decision involves transforming roughly sixty per cent of the ten Vietnamese army divisions into counter-guerrilla forces to support the pacification program—up from the current level of roughly twenty percent. These counter-guerrilla forces are called "territorial forces for the defense of the ~~surface~~." ^{TERRAIN.}

The remaining forty per cent of the division strength will be re-organized into sixteen units comparable to American light, mobile brigades, which the Vietnamese call task forces. Although officials resent the comparison, these task forces will also be comparable to the French groupement mobile (ital), which were consistently defeated during the French Indo-China War here more than a decade ago.

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ARMY 2 SAIGON (NORMASS/DEEPE)

The six-battalion Vietnamese Marine Brigade and eight-battalion Vietnamese Airborne Division will remain as the Vietnamese strategic reserve to reinforce the ~~mak~~ task forces in emergencies. Both the strategic reserve and task forces will carry search and destroy operations in the populated, lowland areas ~~against Communist~~ against Communist main force units, while the American and ~~all~~ other Allied troops concentrate on fighting the Communist main force units infiltrating into the south, mainly in the highland jungle area.

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ARMY 3 (Norman/deepe)

The military sources said each of the sixteen task forces—or light brigades—will average four thousand men. Each will be composed of four battalions of infantrymen, one battalion ~~of~~ (sixteen tubes) of .105 and .155 mm. howitzers, one squadron (seventeen) of M-113 amphibious armed personnel carriers, one transportation company of fifty trucks and one company of ~~eight~~ eighty men for reconnaissance and intelligence collection. ~~gather.~~ gathering.

Each of the four battalions has five companies and each company has five platoons—indicating an increased emphasis on more Vietnamese riflemen to combat the Communist unit strengths.

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ARMY 4 Saigon (Normass/daoep)

This military plan was presented by the Vietnamese ~~General~~ High Command in late 1965 to the American command under General William C. Westmoreland just prior to the Honolulu Conference with President B. Lyndon Johnson. But, the American command here has pigeonholed ~~it~~ it until last month when secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara visited here and became visibly unhappy with the effectiveness of both the Vietnamese and American forces. SOURCES SAID.

The military re-organization plan is ~~now~~ considered to be political dynamite in both America and Vietnam. First, it means the Vietnamese Army will be doing less fighting against Communist main force units at a time when more American troops are earmarked for Vietnam. And hence, American forces will be involved in the fiercest fighting and suffering a higher casualty rate.

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ARMY 5 Saigon (Normass/deepe)

Second, within Vietnam, the plan is ~~criticized~~ criticized by the powerful Vietnamese corps and division commanders, who will have their powers and prestige sharply curtailed. It is also criticized by Vietnamese officers, conscious of their nationalism, who say:

"The Vietnamese Army is going backwards into smaller units while the Communists are marching forward from guerrilla to semi-conventional forces."

To cushion this political shock both in Vietnam and in America, the plan will be unveiled in two phases stretching over the next six months, these sources said.

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ARMY 6 Saigon (Normass/deepe)

At a higher level, the plan is considered as publically unveiling the shocking failure of the American military establishment here over the past 12 years to conceive and train the right kind of ~~Vietnamese~~ military machine to fight this new kind of Communist revolutionary warfare.

The heart of the American failure: 12 years ago, American military advisors created a conventional Vietnamese army capable of defeating a Korea-like invasion of South Vietnam. # The American military leaders rejected at the time a plea by the Vietnamese government to train, equip and ~~finance~~ ^{finance} ~~instead~~ a force of provincial militiamen.

But, the Communist forces never invaded along a defined frontline in conventional formation--and for twelve years the anti-Communist war effort has been fought on an upside-down, topsy-turvy basis against a conventional army that never existed.

"America began to lose in Vietnam in Korea," one counterinsurgency expert explained. "Because of the Korean invasion, American generals were always obsessed with the fancy that the Communists in Vietnam would pull a repeat performance." They never did."

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ARMY 7 Saigon (Normass/deepe)

Hence, the current military plan is designed to create a Vietnamese ~~counter-ga~~ counter-guerrilla force operating in small units in villages—which was the kind of military machine the Vietnamese government had pleaded for in 1955.

But, in the past twelve years, the military discipline of the Vietnamese ~~armed force~~ armed forces has been broken to such an extent it will be decidedly difficult to re-establish it. While the plan is the only alternative of the Vietnamese military left untried, few observers here believe there is any ~~sure~~ sure-fire guarantee of ~~sucess~~ success.

If the Vietnamese Army fails in its ~~oun~~ newly-assigned ~~counter-ins~~ counter-guerrilla role as badly as it has in American-conceived conventional role, the three ~~alternatives~~ long-term alternatives facing America are: first, more American troops to secure the villages as well as to fight the main force units—which will require at the very minimum a million troops, or a ~~prolonged~~ prolonged stalemate, or a political and military defeat.

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