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COUNTERINSURGENCY: THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE

18 January 1963

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NOTICE

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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Dr. Bernard B. Fall, Professor of Government, Howard University, was born in 1926. He received his M. A. degree in Political Science from Syracuse University in 1952, and his doctorate from the same university in 1954. A French citizen, Dr. Fall served in the French underground from 1942 until the liberation of France, thus gaining first-hand experience in guerrilla warfare. Both his parents were killed in underground action. From 1944 until 1946 he served as platoon commander in the infantry and pack artillery in the 4th Moroccan Mountain Division. After discharge he was assigned to the Nürnberg War Crimes Tribunal as a research analyst and in 1950 served with the International Tracing Service of the United Nations as a search officer. He came to the United States for the first time in 1951 as a Fulbright Scholar. In 1953 he went to war-torn Indochina at his own expense to do field research for his doctoral thesis. As a French citizen, he was allowed to accompany French Union forces and to participate in combat operations in nearly all sectors, including deep behind Communist lines north of Dien Bien Phu, thus seeing action at first-hand and gaining personal experience in Communist combat methods. He returned to the United States in 1954. He again went to Indochina in 1957 for further research. In 1959 Dr. Fall was awarded a SEATO fellowship for a field study of Communist infiltration in certain southeast Asian countries. In the course of his study he was able to observe at close range the hostilities in Laos. Since 1957 he has been an associate professor of international relations at Howard University. He spent 1961-1962 again in Indochina, where he was able to interview North Vietnamese leaders. Dr. Fall was promoted to full professor in September, 1962. He is the author of three books and of numerous studies and magazine articles in several languages. This is his first lecture at the Industrial College.

COUNTERINSURGENCY: THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE

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DR. LEIGHTON: Counterinsurgency marches on. Up to now in our program of counterinsurgency studies we have seen something of the environment in which insurgency breeds, something of our economic aid and civic action programs, and a glimpse at the experience of one of our major allies, Great Britain. Today we turn to the experience of another important ally in this area, France, from whom, I'm sure we'll all agree, we have learned and can learn about this phase of the Communist offensive.

Our speaker, Dr. Bernard Fall, of Howard University, is a scholar, author, and a Frenchman. He brings to this subject, moreover, something that most of us lack, the special insights of a man who was there and saw it happen. Dr. Fall was there with his countrymen in northern Indochina in 1953 when the last battles with the Communist Viet Minh were being fought. Before that he was with the French Resistance in World War II. More recently, again in southeast Asia where he saw Communist subversion and infiltration at work. Most of you know him as the author of the most widely read account of the Indochina War, "Street Without Joy."

Dr. Fall, it's a pleasure to present you for your first lecture to the students and faculty of the Industrial College.

DR. FALL: It is indeed a pleasure to be here at the school.

When we look at our subject of today, "Counterinsurgency: The French Experience," we should really split the subject into two separate fields: the French experience in Indochina and what the French learned from their own experience in Indochina and applied in Algeria. There is a hard fact of military life which is very often forgotten, and that is that you usually learn much more from a defeat than from a victory. Victories are particularly dangerous in terms of lessons. For example, the French came out of World

War I absolutely persuaded that the key to victory is a strong, deep defensive system. The Germans, who lost World War I precisely against the deep defensive system, came out perfectly persuaded that the way to win a war is with deep, air-supported, armored penetrations. It took us five years of bitter fighting to beat them at their own game.

We also came out of World War II perhaps with the persuasion that guerrilla forces cannot win a war. Guerrilla forces may be precious adjuncts to winning a war, but they may not really "win" in the accepted sense of the term. That, too, was based, perhaps, on the fact that we did win the war and did not lose any battles against enemy guerrillas. Nearly all the guerrillas in World War II were on our side and not the opponent's side. The Germans never succeeded from the beginning to the end--thanks to some of their own political mistakes--in having guerrillas permanently operating on their side.

I remember very well, since I did come in at the end of World War II--I'm perhaps not as young as I look--now we were told to watch out for the "Werewolves," and as you all know, there weren't any Nazi "Werewolves." As a matter of fact, I talked that over with a German general just about two weeks ago at a dinner at which General Stoughton also participated, and I asked that precise question, "What happened to the 'Werewolves?'" The German general said to me: "It's a funny thing that you should mention that, because when I surrendered to a French Division, the Commander made me sign a special pledge that I would have the 'Werewolves' in my area disarmed, and I thought to myself: 'There aren't any 'Werewolves,' so I might as well sign the thing anyway. '"

It was only later that the German general learned that the French particularly (since the French had a successful underground movement in France) were particularly sensitive to the possibility of the Germans mounting an underground operation, which never got off the ground. The German general said that Nazi Germany no longer had the political and social environment in which to mount a "Werewolf" underground operation. Thus, we come now to one of the major elements in an insurgent situation; that, of course, is the civilian environment in which the insurgents must operate. There exist several books on this subject.

I'm sure you have at this, as at many other schools, received quite a few books on the subject. One book that is making the rounds right now is the book by General Giap. Having written a Giap

"profile" for the American edition--Mr. Roger Hillsman from the State Department wrote the foreword--and though it may be un-American to "knock" a product with which one had anything to do oneself--let me "knock" Giap. The Giap book was written ex post facto in 1960 precisely for foreign consumption.

There is another thing about the Giap book. In a Communist country it is not the armed forces who writes political theory, but as might be expected, the Secretary General of the Communist Party. In any case, Giap was in no position politically to sell the goods. Giap, if you look at the book, spends three-fourths of it describing one single battle, the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, which was one of the vastest monstrosities ever concocted by my own country's General Staff.

The Battle of Dien Bien Phu was one of the things least likely to recur in a revolutionary war. The best proof is that nothing like it occurred anywhere else and did not occur in Algeria, either. However, there are some other books which are worth reading. For example, here is a small book by Mao Tse-tung, published in 1936. It is called "Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War." I would very much like to commend to you this little book; it only costs 35 cents. Here is another book, and this one you can not yet find in the United States. This book is by Truong Chinh: "The Revolution Will Win." Truong Chinh was the former Secretary General of the Vietnamese Communist Party. He was demoted in 1956, and he wrote his opus in 1947, long before the Viet Minh ever knew they were going to win the war against the French. I will come back to both books later.

While I am on debunking operations, I would like to come back to one particular point; it is our use of terminology: The terms "insurgency," "paramilitary operations," "guerrilla operations," "limited warfare," "sublimited warfare," etc. We have gotten to the position of the doctor faced with a strange disease. Whenever doctors are faced with a strange disease they give it a long name. It does not cure you, but at least it makes you feel good because you think they know what they are talking about. And this is what we have done with this particular subject.

My own view is that all of those words which I just mentioned do not do justice to the subject. Mao Tse-tung, that old master, and the French after him, use one expression which is, I think correct; It is, "revolutionary war." Revolutionary war, or RW, I feel, does fit the bill, because there is one thing about the kind of

war we are facing, and that is that it constitutes a mix between political and military operations. In fact, if I were to allocate, arbitrarily, a percentage to both, I would say it is about 25 percent military and 75 percent political.

The French have studied this pretty closely. In fact, there again is a book on the subject, though it has not been translated. This book is actually the French text on the subject, by a French colonel who was a professor at the French War College, Gabriel Bonnet, entitled "Insurrectional and Revolutionary Warfare from Antiquity to Today." This is as solid a book on the subject as you can get. It is the French "Bible" on it. It has a very solid bibliography including American, as well as French and Russian sources. Bonnet defines revolutionary war in a sort of quasi-mathematical formula: $RW = G + P$. Or: revolutionary war is the product of guerrilla plus political action. I will put this in a somewhat more sophisticated way. Revolutionary war is the product of the application of guerrilla methods to the furtherance of an ideology or of a political system.

This definition applies very exactly to the situation in South Vietnam. When the Communists fight, as they do in South Vietnam, do you really think that their major objective is the destruction of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and of the American Military Assistance Command? Of course not. What they are out for is to destroy the authority of the South Vietnamese Government over its own population--particularly the peasantry.

Basically, what we have forgotten, because we have too many "experts" in this business now (someone said recently, I think it was the "Washington Post" book review section, that the guerrilla experts are like streetcars; there is one coming by every 10 minutes) is the basic purpose of war. We simply have to go back to some of the basics. The purpose of war is to break the enemy's will to resist. That is something that everybody knows, from ROTC to the War College, but, it has been forgotten. The Communist revolutionary warfare warrior, if you want, is exactly out for that, to break down the enemy's will to resist.

There are two ways of doing this: one, the old conventional way which is to break down the enemy's armed forces as the expression of national will. You knock out the enemy's armed forces and you are in business. You have broken down the enemy's will to resist. If he has 5 cents worth of brains he raises the white flag and he signs a peace treaty or cease-fire in a schoolhouse, etc., and the war is over and you go home. This is one way of doing it.

The other way is by leap-frogging the regular armed forces, wherever they are. If you like, the armed forces constitute a barrier between the friendly countries and the hostile countries /drawing on blackboard/. And what we usually expect in this model is the knockdown, headlong, attack against the barrier constituted by the enemy's armed forces. What happens then is that you leap-frog the military barrier and attack the civilian population. Now we have always attacked the civilian population. I might mention General Sherman here; there was a certain amount of intimation in his operations that the best way to knock the South out of the Civil War was to get the psychological and economic centers of southern resistance.

After all, what was the blockade of Germany and the other central powers in World War I except a hope of reducing their civilian capacity to resist, or their industrial capacity to resist? The same thing occurred in World War II. As we all know, (and I notice several Air Force uniforms in the room) the strategic bombing of German factories proved rather ineffectual. The Germans simply put more and more factories underground. I was at the Nürenberg trials, and I remember the reports which at first seemed almost incredible. But actually, Germany hit the peak of its industrial capacity in July 1944, after one and one-half years of daylight bombardment. The hard and brutal fact is that the one real target that was left was really hurting the Germans and that was the civilian population in the cities. The factory worker who has to spend all his nights in an underground shelter or racing up and down from his apartment to the underground shelter is going to be a very unhappy factory worker and not exactly suited to eight hours of precision work on a machine tool.

So, basically, we too, obviously felt that civilian targets were useful. The hard fact is that the revolutionary warfare warrior pushes this one step further. He gets into the friendly country's population, and then gradually works his way into a psychological "vertical-envelopment" system, and eventually gets the friendly armed forces by plucking them when they are ripe, as it were; when they are ready to collapse because there is no country behind them to back them up.

This is what happened to the French in Indochina and this was substantially what happened to the Chinese Nationalists on the mainland. Here again, it is remarkable that there has not been a single book yet in the United States, on the military collapse of the Nationalists on the mainland. In France, you can read a book written by Air Force Lieutenant General Lucien-Max Chassin who was in

command of the French Far Eastern Air Force and who is a Chinese expert, in which you will find about 35 maps, etc., on the ChiCom military operations. And you will find that this really was a war. The ChiComs were picking certain targets and they were almost always political-economic targets.

Another French lesson is the purpose of revolutionary war. I have already intimated that the purpose of RW is, as in any war, to break down the will to resist. I say this is an extremely basic purpose and it has to be understood. Yet, here again, we have some very highly-placed people who are writing on the subject and who have made, what is to my mind, a very crucial mistake. Granted, and this is very obvious and I am sure you have had it in a previous lecture here--people do pay lipservice to the fact that there is something "political" in the problem.

But the next thing to do if you want to explain away the political facet of the problem is to say: "Basically, the Communist approach is negative." That is a very important mistake that is being made, for even if all their political action is ultimately negative or destructive, its immediate action is far from destructive, but we fail to see this. We tend to look at the enemy revolutionary warfare operator as essentially a negative force: the man goes ahead and destroys a factory or kills a village headman. Now, if he does that and does not put anything in its place he actually would be a nihilist or an anarchist. Well, the Communists are quite a few things but they are not anarchists. As a matter of fact, they are trying to build a competitive system to ours. In a way, most aspects of political subversion remind me of cancer. Let me give you an example of what I mean: We have several types of disease. One is the degenerative type where you have muscle shriveling away. You lose something that you have and nothing is being put in its place. In the case of cancer, a malignant disease, a group of normal human cells goes "wild." Something not part of the normal process is being constructed in lieu of a healthy body, in a weird way it is not all negative. Way back some people have understood this, but not too often. I recall one article in "Life Magazine" when the mainland China was lost to the Communists--the article was 6 June 1949, by Max Ways, one of the foreign editors of "Time"--and Max Ways caught on to the problem. He said, "The Communists in Asia"--this is an almost verbatim quote--"do not come as the bringers of chaos, but are the bringers of a perverted kind of Western order." Now, this is very important. In Western Europe where we have a fully established industrialized society with a working government, etc., obviously

the Communists have to come as a totally negative force--operating through strikes, sabotage, revolution, etc.

In Asia where the new governments are not yet as solidly established, or where they are corrupt, etc., the Communists can afford to come in with what is at first glance a rather "constructive" ideology: "You just let us take over and you'll have clean government, sound land reform, good roads, etc." The joke very often is--and this is our fault--that we allow the Communists to come in, as Max Ways said, with a perverted kind of sound Western program, which is absolutely not negative. And that is the danger of the whole thing: it is not negative, but this is one thing that is not often understood at high government levels.

For example, Professor Walter W. Rostow, an excellent economist and now Chief of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, defined the impact of the guerrilla upon a friendly country in the following terms:

The guerrilla force has this advantage: its task is merely to destroy, while the government must build and protect what it is building The Viet Cong are not trying to persuade the peasants that Communism is good; they are trying to persuade them that their lives are insecure unless they cooperate with them.¹

There is, to my mind, too much of an emphasis here of the destructive aspects of the Communist RW operator. As we shall see presently, while the killing of village headmen is a part of the pattern, it (and Communist ideology, which obviously is too sophisticated to be peddled to peasants) does not play a major role in the operation. But administrative control does.

The actual warfare phase just about ceases at the time the Communists take over an area. In my mind, the most important kind of reporting we can get is what is happening in an area after the Communists have taken it over. This is what I want to know in Vietnam. (What is happening on our side we will find out sooner or later, believe me, from the squawks.) What does happen in a South Vietnamese village after the Communists have come in? What is happening in the so-called "liberated areas?" What happens in a "base area?" What

¹W. W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in Underdeveloped Areas," Marine Corps Gazette, January 1962, pp. 46-49.

happens in a "resistance zone?" These are the things we have to know.

The French studied quite carefully the constructive element--if you want, "construction" with a negative sign--of revolutionary war and came up with an expression (there's one thing about such terms; they always sound better in French) hierarchies paralleles. They found that what the Communists are really doing is actually setting up their own type of administration in the areas they hold solidly but particularly in the areas they do not hold militarily.

What they are actually doing progressively, if they have the chance to, is doubling in brass the whole existing administrative machinery. You have government village chiefs and you have Communist village chiefs; you have a government district chief and a Communist district chief; you have a loyal provincial governor and an underground Communist provincial governor. And, finally, you have the Vietnamese Government in Saigon and you have the Communist Liberation Front Central Committee.

The French call this a parallel hierarchy; and consider it by far the most dangerous of the aspects of the RW operator's means of attack, for it is the only means which insures permanent control. The important thing, of course, is to find out who "the man behind the man" is at each level, but that is very difficult. What the Communists have often done in South Vietnam and in several other areas (or for that matter, the Algerian Nationalists--the system works whether you are Communist or not) operates on the following pattern: a little man in a black peasant suit would walk in, knock at the door and speak to the village chief. This would have been perhaps in 1957. He would knock on the door about eight o'clock at night, walk in and say, "Mr. Mayor, I'm the local representative of the Southern Liberation Front. My comrades need three tons of rice. We need them three days from now."

Of course, the village chief still being faithful to the Vietnamese Government in Saigon, says something in Vietnamese like, "Get to hell out of here." The little man, without a weapon, in the black peasant suit, will say to him, "You're going to be sorry about this." The Mayor would reply, "Get out before I call someone and have you arrested." The little man disappears and about Wednesday night about eight o'clock when it's dark--it gets dark very early in Vietnam, being close to the Equator--there again is a knock at the door and there is the same little man, still without any weapon, but behind

him are two other little men in the same black peasant suit except that they have submachineguns, or broad-bladed machetes.

The little man will say, "Mr. Mayor, where are the three tons of rice" My comrades have been waiting for the rice at the crossroads." The little mayor knows that this is not going to be a very happy occasion, what with those two submachineguns pointing at him, gets white, trembles and stammers; and the other man says: "You know the punishment which the Liberation Front metes out to those traitors who disobey them." There will then be a burst of submachine gunfire or vicious machete slashes and the mayor will collapse in front of his two kids and wife, and that's the end of that. They may even leave a little note pinned to his body, "Thus die the traitors to the Liberation Front."

The report of his death will get back to the Vietnamese District Officer the next day, who is in charge of about 35 or 40 villages down in the Mekong Delta. Now, this may have happened in 1951, or 1949, or 1963--but in all likelihood, in 1960 or even 1957--and the District Officer would say, "Damn it, we've got bandits in this area." We'll get to the "bandit remnant" theory in a few minutes.

Anyway, the District Officer has a Provincial Chief sitting on top of him and there is the President of Vietnam sitting on top of all the Provincial Chiefs; and the little D. O. appoints the deputy to the mayor as Acting Mayor. The Acting Mayor takes over and about a week later the little man in the black suit appears again. In the meantime two Bao-An (militarized policemen) have been assigned to protect the new mayor. One day as he sits at home, the little man walks in again and says: "We need five tons of rice this time at the crossroads, by tomorrow night." The little mayor, of course, is scared stiff. He gets his two armed guards and he goes into his little dugout boat or a slightly larger boat, or perhaps they get on bicycles, and race over to the District Office which is six or seven miles away, and say, "The Viet Cong have asked us to have five tons of rice for them tomorrow night." The District Chief says, "I'm glad you told me that. We'll have a Bao-An platoon come up tomorrow; don't worry about a thing. Thanks very much for telling me."

So, the little mayor with his two little civil guards get back on their bikes or into their little boat and take off for their village. About 200 yards before they get to the village there is a clump of bushes, and all of a sudden there is a short burst of submachine-gunfire and they lie there in a heap. Again a note is pinned to them, "Thus die traitors to the Liberation Front." In at least a few verified

cases (notably in the proceedings of a Vietnamese Army court-martial of 13 February 1963), the two guards themselves VC members murdered the village chief while escorting him.

Well, how would you like to be number three on that kind of list? The next day the District Officer, now thoroughly worried, gets on the phone or on the two-way radio and calls the Provincial Governor. He tells him that all hell has broken loose in his district and also asks for instructions. The Provincial Governor, of course, says, "I'll send down a Civil Guard company. You hang on and name the most senior member of the village council as mayor pro tem." And that is what happens.

Now, the little pro tem mayor gets out in the village square and calls in all the citizens. He says, "Fellow citizens, you know that I didn't ask for this kind of honor, to be appointed pro tem mayor. They made me take it and I had no choice. But I want you to know that I shall do everything in my power to keep our friends from the Liberation Front happy." And, of course, there will be one or two members of the Liberation Front right there in the crowd.

The Liberation Front has a very nice slogan that says, "Wherever there are three of you, there is one of us." This may be mathematically exaggerated, but the idea is there. Well, that little acting mayor will in all likelihood deposit three tons of rice at the crossroads the day after tomorrow.

Well, that village, as the French say, has "tipped over" (bascute) Nothing will have changed; the village is still there. The Civil Guard company may come through and ask how things are and the little acting mayor will say, "Fine, fine." "Have you had any more trouble with the Viet Cong?" "No sir, no more trouble with the Viet Cong." He is right, of course, since the village has gone over to the other side.

Well, the District Officer is going to be pretty happy about this apparent peace and quiet. There are no more killings in that village, and he will probably say to himself--at least he did two years ago, before he knew better--"Maybe it was just a passing band of bandits going through, or a bunch of Viet Cong who hadn't had food for a week, and wanted it for recuperation. They have moved out of my area. I'm glad I kept my nose clean."

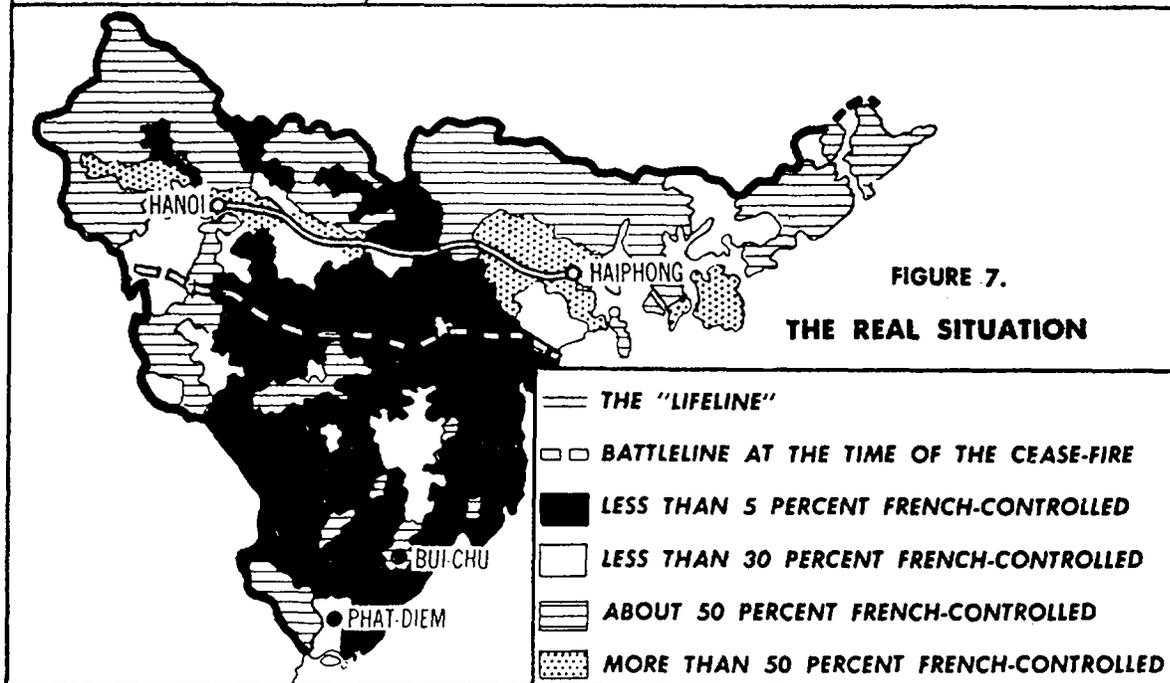
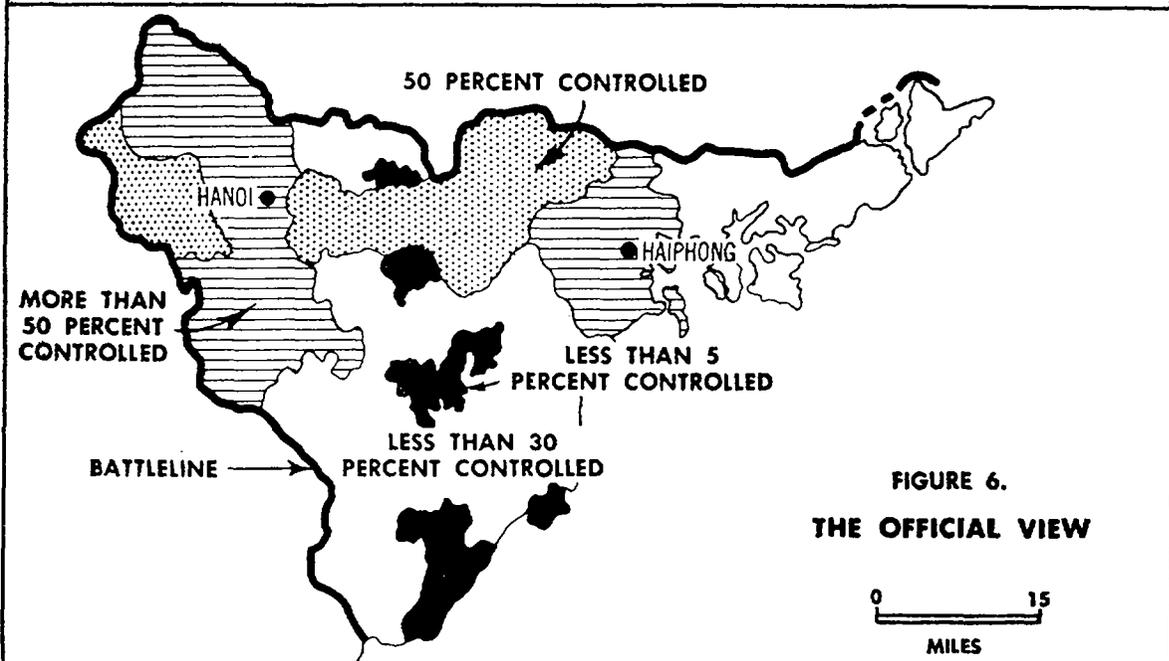
And of course, the Provincial Governor does the same thing; and at the Ministry of Interior in Saigon, the men who keep track of killing statistics will take comfort from the fact that in District X-Y-Z things apparently have again settled down to "normal."

Gentlemen, this process has been going on in Vietnam since mid-1957. The first inkling that we had publicly was about three years later. Thus, of such blindness revolutionary wars are made. When I was there in 1957 I made my first unclassified map of guerilla depredations in South Vietnam. Based on what? Based on obituaries in the press. Those obituaries worked out to a beautiful pattern in certain areas such as the Chau-Doc area in the Mekong Delta, in the U-Minh area here, and another area here around Mytho. Some people said: "Well, you know, Fall is just a sorehead Frenchman. The French got kicked out of Indochina and he's just sore about it." I am a political scientist and bear no national grudges. I did the same map for them on French-held North Vietnam in 1953, and this pretty grim map was published in my Ph.D. thesis in 1954, showing how the French had lost control of the Red River Delta.

In North Vietnam, the French held a roughly triangular area /pointing at map/. Here was the sea, the Gulf of Tongking. Here was the port city of Haiphong. Here was Hanoi. And here were 980 French forts with 2,200 bunkers: De Lattre Line--The Vietnamese Maginot Line; manned by about 60,000 men. There were about another 45,000 French forces inside the delta, as mobile forces. Now, when I arrived in Hanoi in March 1953 to do my doctoral thesis for Syracuse University, I wanted to find out what was really happening in the area. The French were perfectly willing to tell you, "There are certain areas here inside the delta where you will get shot at if you go near them." There were about three such areas--not very large areas. Now, by military standards, they were enemy-held. They were marked red on all French maps, which, because of the splotches, were known as "scarlet fever" maps.

Then, I went with large-scale maps to the Vietnamese provinces. The Provincial Governors, after many periods of tea drinking, got down to business. I said, "I'm a student of political science and I'm interested in provincial administration. All I would like to know is, how is your taxation system here? Do you collect taxes?" The reason for this question, gentlemen, was very simple: one thing a government will do to its last breath is collect taxes, as you very well know. As a matter of fact, we do judge a government by its ability to collect taxes.

VIETMINH GUERRILLA INFILTRATION BEHIND FRENCH LINES SITUATION MAY 1953



The Vietnamese Provincial Governor said, "You know, I have quite a bit of difficulty with taxes. I just collect taxes in this area and that area, etc." Then I went back to the tax rolls in Hanoi--they are completely unclassified--and found that 85 percent of the delta villages were not paying any taxes. They hadn't been paying any taxes for years. Therefore, I, on my own maps, charted out those areas which did not pay taxes as areas highly unlikely to be effectively administered by the Vietnamese National Government.

But I needed a cross-check. The cross-check was indeed very simple. Another thing any government that is worth its salt will try to do is to keep the schools open and schoolteachers in them. So, I went over to the Office of Public Education for North Vietnam and went through the schoolteacher lists. And you guessed it; the same places that didn't pay any taxes didn't have any schoolteachers. With this information I went back to the Provincial Governors and we had it out in 10 minutes flat. "Yes, Monsieur, this is a very unfortunate area. We have not been able to keep schoolteachers in that particular area." "Why?" "They get killed." "And how about your tax collectors?" "They, too, get killed." So, I said, "In fact, you don't administer the area, do you?" He said, "Really, Monsieur, I do not administer this area." I said, "There's a French Army post there, isn't there?" He said, "Monsieur, the French Army post controls its field of fire but that is all." Oh yes, the French patrols went out. "What do they find?" "Nothing." The title of a very funny American book would be a good sum-up of the history of the war of Indochina--"Where did you go?" "Out." "What did you do?" "Nothing." P.S. It hasn't changed much, as yet.

I came out with a map of North Vietnam--it's in my book¹--which roughly looked like this--the French held Hanoi, Haiphong, and several other large garrison areas. And the rest of the area was Communist-administered right inside the French De Lattre Line!

Well, gentlemen, I made a similar map for South Vietnam in 1957-58. Here, too, I needed a cross-check and got a very nice unclassified cross-check. I went to the International Control Commission--composed of Canadians, Indians, and the Poles--and I went to see the friendly ones (the Canadians) and I said: "Would you mind if I just looked at the list of complaints addressed to you by the Vietnamese Communist Liaison Mission?" You know, those complaints

¹Bernard B. Fall, Street Without Joy: Insurgency in Indochina, 1946-63 (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Co., 1963).

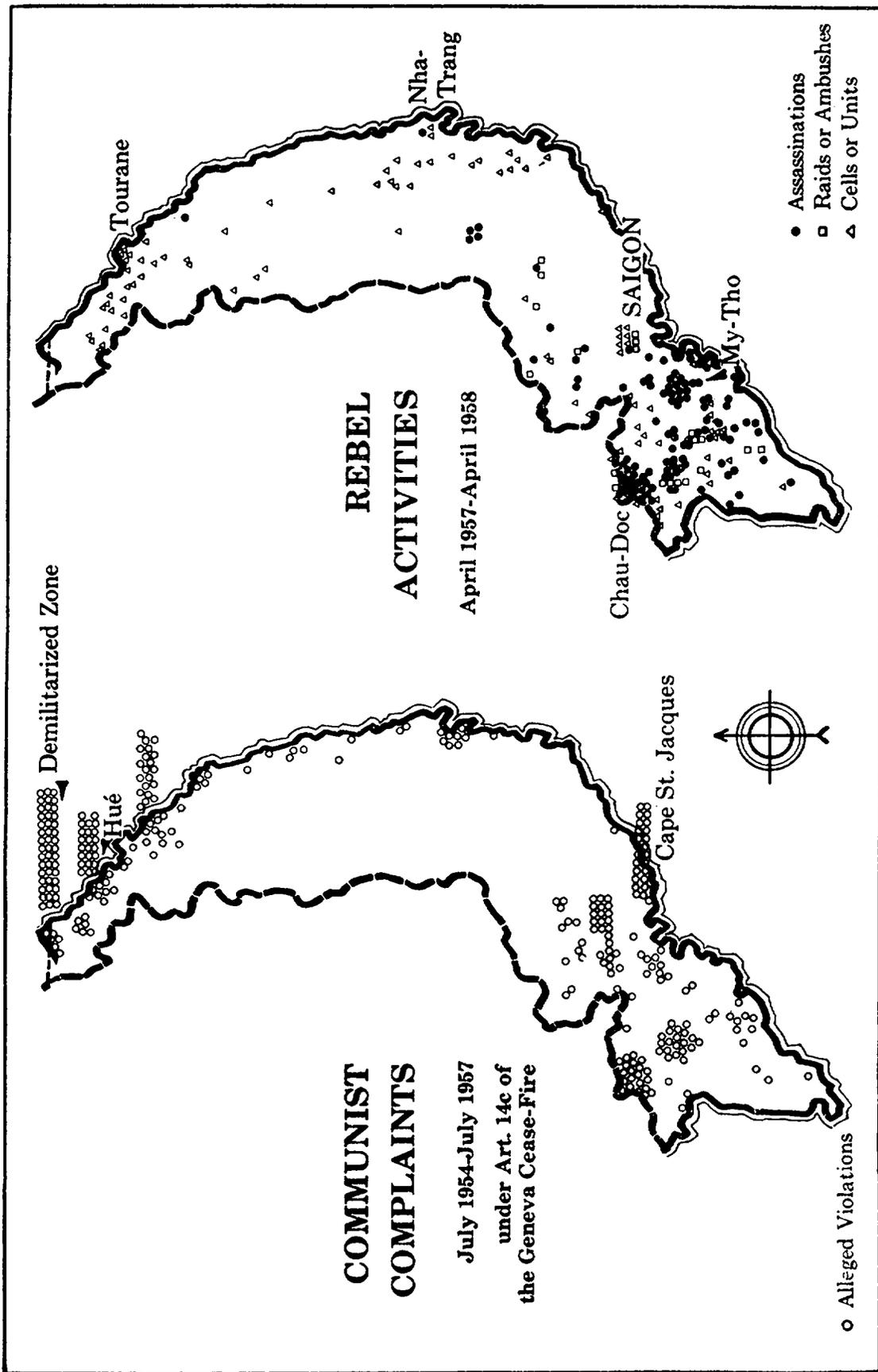
say, "On the 28th of May 1959 two 'Diemist' soldiers or 'Diemist' officers, accompanied by an American 'imperialist' officer, violated the demarkation line." Or, "On June 28, 1962 a Diem platoon, accompanied by two American 'imperialist' instructors, savagely hit village such-and-such, killing 25 people."

Now, these things are very, very precise and detailed. And I said to myself, "The only way the VC's can get that kind of detailed information is from their own men on the spot, those little fellows in the black peasant suits." Because, as I checked, there was always at least a grain of truth in the alleged incident. Those Americans had been in the village, but they were just going around taking snapshots of the kids. But they had been there. And sure enough you get a wonderful map of South Vietnam showing on one hand those killings based on the obituaries in the press, and in the same spots a high density of Communist complaints, meaning that the Communists were using their own guerrillas as a source of information for the Vietnam People's Army.

This, gentlemen, I did not do in 1960, but I did it in 1957.¹ It did not take a large-scale intelligence network, it took one inquisitive mind with a flair for maps and a fair grounding in public administration. And the 1959 map shows you a clear shift of the killings in an encircling pattern around Saigon. The war was "on" therefore, as early as 1957, and not, as supposed, 1961.

So, to put it in one single sentence: "Subversion is negative administration." Subversion is administration with a "minus" sign in front. That, too, the French learned the hard way. Of course, anyone can quit paying taxes, but in a revolutionary warfare situation it does not mean that you quit paying taxes altogether; you just quit paying taxes to the legal government. The Communists operate according to the same principle: they need money, and they will put in schoolteachers. So, what actually happens, then, is that the Communists just as the legal government, need money, recruits, and supplies, etc. Therefore, whatever the government does not get, believe me, doesn't just simply disappear; somebody else is getting it.

¹Pacific Affairs (September, 1958).



For example, during the Algerian War the Algerian Nationalist rebels set up an extremely efficient "taxation" system inside France which produced each year--this figure was given to me in Paris last year--about \$30 million a year from their 500,000 citizens working in France. And any of you who were stationed in France during the Algerian War, or who were concerned with the problem, will remember the horrible things the FLN did--Algerians found face down in the river with their throats cut, etc.--to exact those taxes. Exactly the same principle prevailed, as in Indochina.

The little Algerian tax collector came in and said, "Mohammed, you've got to pay to the Liberation Front." The Moslem factory worker may have said, "you go to hell; I'm faithful to the French," or more likely: "I just want to keep the money for myself." The next day, Mohammed was found with his throat cut and a little note, "Thus die traitors to the Liberation Front." And so, everyone paid taxes to the Algerian rebels.

In other words, it was what the French called the OPA--the Political and Administrative Organization that was actually the key of the movement. This was the backbone of victory, regardless of what happened on the military front. So, what you actually did have in both Algeria and Vietnam the key prize of RW is the civilian environment. The real victories are won there. In fact by the time you start losing military battles you are cooked anyway. Or worse yet, as the French learned in Algeria, you may even "win" militarily and still get licked politically, administratively, and diplomatically.

You see, the Algerian War was perhaps more frustrating to the French Army than the Indochinese War, because in the Indochinese War, Dien Bien Phu was, after all, a fair and square defeat. There was no Dien Bien Phu in Algeria. In Algeria, in fact, the French Army can point with a certain amount of pride to the fact that it had learned lessons from Indochina; that from 65,000 Nationalist rebels inside Algeria the number had dwindled to less than 8,000 in 1962, that the military organization of the ALN--the Algerian Liberation Army--had gone from small partisan brigades based on regular battalions, to hunted squads of eight to nine men fighting it out in the hills, etc., etc. This is a solid military achievement of no mean size.

Of course, the price of that military achievement was the commitment of 600,000 men to Algeria for eight years at a price of over \$3 million a day, or over \$1.5 billion a year. Here again, you see

the frightful price of revolutionary war; on the rebel side less than 10,000 men at any one time, except for 1955-56. On the French side, 600,000 men at \$3 million a day, and just about everything short of the kitchen sink, in terms of military equipment.

The French Navy had to maintain an airtight blockade around all of North Africa, practically from Suez to Mogador in southern Morocco. The French Air Force was doing likewise; they were flying coastal surveillance and on top of that--and this may come as a shock to you--the French used 605 helicopters in Algeria; not 180 or 200 as the United States is now using in the general Indochina area.

So, I read with a certain amount of wry amusement in the "Washington Post" the other day that, after all, we must expect a certain amount of reverses with helicopters because the book is just being written and "nobody ever had a large-scale helicopter operation before." Do you know what the French used? Three hundred and eighty H-21's! If you ever want to learn how the H-21's perform in combat, just ask the French; they can tell you.

The fact is that there is a body of experience in the RW field, negative as well as positive. Yet, with all these little items of military victory, they are just a "side show." For what were those items against the fact that politically, inside France, the French were divided against each other to the point of civil war? The French Army was in a state of almost mutiny--not totally--I am glad to say, but at certain times and in certain amounts at certain places. France, abroad, was about the second most isolated nation in the world after South Africa. Not one of her allies stood by her in the U.N. And on top of that, that "little war" cost her about \$1.5 billion a year.

There were some people who were holdouts. They said, "After all, we are getting lots of guerrilla training." But what are you going to do with that kind of "training" in a place like the Soviet Union? This, by the way, is the argument we are often getting now: the Vietnam War may be a messy thing, but we are getting lots of jungle training. I have not yet learned that the Soviets are planning to invade New Guinea and in any case, our shortcoming is revolutionary war--not jungle war. Therefore, even this limited military experience is not exactly a total benefit.

It may sound like I am here hawking books, but here is a small book written by two young professors, Peter Paret and John Shy,

called "Guerrillas in the '60's"¹ I'd like to recommend that to you. (a) It's cheap, (b) it's slim, and (c) it's concise. There is one passage particularly which I would like to quote: "The current assumption that the popular mind, especially in illiterate and unsophisticated societies, can be manipulated at will, is false. Unlike machinegun bolts, ideologies are not easily interchangeable." This is something I would like you to think about. If you remember nothing else, this is one of the important things to remember. Ideologies are not interchangeable. The Communists are offering a certain program and that program will have to be fought on its own ground.

Now, what do the Communists offer in South Vietnam? They offer land reform. They offer a locally elected village administration and honest government at the top. And they offer peace. The trouble with that kind of program is: (a) It isn't Communist, and (b) up to a point they can deliver it. This is very serious. The fact is that obviously in an area which they have conquered, peace will prevail. It may be the peace of the graveyard, but peace will prevail. This is one thing.

Secondly, land reform is something they can always "deliver" particularly in South Vietnam. There you do have a line of large estates and you do have absentee landlordism. So, they can do it. And as to honest village administration, you and I know that this is a farce; there is no such thing as an unfettered village administration, period, in a Communist country.

But the villager will for the first time, have a semblance of a choice, at least in the beginning. And that is where it counts. What will happen after the country goes Communist is going to be of no concern to you and me because the situation will then be hopeless. But in the transitional process, the Communists will offer that program and will be capable of delivering it. So, knowing that this is what the Communists are offering, let's see where our shoe hurts.

Simply and plainly we will just have to find ourselves an ideology, or for that matter, just plain realism. We will have to say: "The Communists say that they can offer land reform. Well, let them top this. Here is our land reform. The Communists say that they can offer honest village administration. Well, look at this election; let them top this, etc."

¹Peter Paret and John Shy, Guerrillas in the '60's (New York: Praeger, 1962).

Unfortunately we are not topping anybody at the present moment in South Vietnam. I will be quite candid about this. I have heard of a few people who have started a belated number of reforms; we have not. We have started again on what I call a "crisis cycle of South Vietnamese reforms." What happens in South Vietnam is that periodically we get into a "flap." Last week we had some helicopters shot down. A year ago we had three trains simultaneously ambushed and completely plundered. In 1960 we had a whole Vietnamese battalion cleaned out of its weapons--400 weapons plus machine guns and recoilless rifles.

Everyone says, "We have to reappraise the Vietnam situation." Then someone is sent out there on a special mission and gets the same kind of information as all the other special missions. He comes back and says, "All we have to do is do more of the same." Now, that is a very convenient way out, but this is not the way to success.

Gentlemen, Churchill once said that the worst thing that can happen to an aging actress and to a politician, is when he starts to believe his own mail. I would add to this that it gets even worse when he starts writing his own love letters. I would say that we have been writing our own love letters for a long time in that area.

I recall when there was an earlier Vietnam crisis back in 1959. There was a senatorial investigation and one major general from MAAG, Vietnam, was called in to testify under oath. He said,

The Vietnamese situation is considerably improved. There are only a few bandit remnants left over from 1954, and those remnants can be adequately taken care of [this is a verbatim citation] by two territorial regiments of the South Vietnamese Army. And, in fact, the South Vietnamese Army is capable of offensive operations against the other side.

Now, this was put on the record at the time we were losing 60 village chiefs a month in South Vietnam. Don't ever forget that. That was one statement.

When I was with SEATO back in 1959 doing my study on Communist infiltration, the reports of the security experts stated that the Communists had been so badly beaten militarily in southeast Asia that they were resorting to "legal-struggle tactics." If you

think that those helicopters were shot down two weeks ago by "legal-struggle tactics," these are the hardest hitting legal-struggle tactics I have ever seen.

In other words, we have to cut through a great wad of illusions. One of the illusions is that this is going to be easy. The other is that it only takes military tactics. The third one is that the reforms in South Vietnam are really taking hold, etc. (they may eventually, but they certainly have not as of early 1963). These are the sort of delusions that the French traveled under for a long, long time. The French too, obviously, did not like to contradict their own chiefs; they, too, liked to believe that the Vietnamese who were working with them were telling them the whole truth, and that they were the best of all Vietnamese in the business. The truth is, that so far, very little has changed.

Thus far we are still on a counterinsurgency operation, but we are not yet countering revolutionary war. There is a very, very strong difference between those two elements. But in the military field there is still a great deal that will have to be learned in sheer tactics alone.

For example, I have an article here, the diagrams of which are enclosed.¹ This was actually an article written on guerrilla experience in certain areas in Korea. It won the Merit Award of the "Marine Corps Gazette." The maps show what the author thinks is a typical ambush.

This is a road. Here is the ambush across the road. And here is the convoy on that road. It runs into the ambush, draws fire, and the article says that you disembark the convoy covering element sideways, and proceed with a turning attack against the ambush. Unfortunately, that kind of ambush went out with the Battle of the Fallen Timbers.

Here is what a Viet Cong ambush really looks like. Somewhere in the bushes you will have a little man sitting with his hand on the plunger of an electrically-controlled mine. As the first vehicle of the convoy passes over it the vehicle goes up and blocks the road. If at all possible, the same thing will happen somewhere in the rear of the convoy. Now, obviously, the convoy commander will say, "Off the trucks and into the bushes." What will happen is that all of

¹J. B. Wilkinson, Capt. "The Company Fights Guerrillas," Marine Corps Gazette, January, 1962, pp. 54-57.

a sudden heavy fire--machinegun, mortar, recoilless rifle--will come from one side. And obviously, your reaction will be that if that is the side I am going to get shot on, that is not where I am going to get out of my truck.

That reaction will get you right into a Communist mine field, or those wonderful little planks with nails sticking out, which are called "caltraps" in the guerrilla business. After you have lost your first platoon because of those mines you will get the point that this is not the right way out. But by that time, of course, you are completely disorganized and all you can do is die heroically around your trucks.

Now, this does happen! In my book "Street Without Joy" you saw what happened to a whole French combat team of 3,500 men. It has happened to several smaller American-Vietnamese convoys around Saigon, 20 or 30 miles from Saigon, and some very good American officers were killed that way.

The Vietnamese solution to this thing is, that if the Viet Cong fire from this side, this is where the Communist infantry is going to come in. Obviously their own infantry is not going to run around in a mine field. So, your only good chance lies in heading right for the machineguns. That, as you know, is not exactly a healthy exercise, but it is a great deal healthier than dying under the trucks.

So you see, this is a perfect example of the vast hiatus between the schoolroom lecture and rough reality in Vietnam at the present moment. Another example is that of the helicopters. The helicopters have been "sold" as the end of all antiguerrilla operations. Well, gentlemen, do you know what happened in April, 1961--almost two years ago? The Viet Minh Government sent a high-powered mission of diplomats and officers to north Africa. They went to Morocco, Mali, Guinea, Tunisia, etc. In Tunis, Rabat, and Marrakech, there were two North Vietnamese major generals among that mission, and some colonels, and they met with Algerian rebel leaders.

It is very likely--I have no particular details on this--that they probably spoke about the care and feeding of American helicopters. (The French had 400 American helicopters as well as 200 French "Alouettes" with rockets and machineguns.) The Viet Cong thus got everything they wanted to know on their flying characteristics and tactical employment. You see the French, too, had run into trouble with the helicopters. They had started having pretty heavy losses, and they finally decided to use the helicopters in a far different way from that in South Vietnam.

An Algerian mission went to Hanoi last year, and the same thing went on. Then, on 18 December 1962 the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service intercepted--this is all unclassified--a long broadcast from Hanoi, in the clear, to the Southern Liberation Front units explaining the flight characteristics of the HUIA, the H-21's; their relative speeds and the difference in the sound they make. They also emphasized that neither of them were armored; also, that one of the helicopters had particularly poor lift characteristics that it was rather slow in getting off the ground and away.

The big helicopter ambushes started about two weeks later. In other words, we are not dealing with fools; we are dealing with people who, perhaps because they are Communists, are reading history--perhaps misreading it, but they are reading it. With regard to the helicopters there is something that can be done. For example, I was told by the French that they would put machineguns into helicopters, pointing rearward. I am not an Air Force expert and I do not know how well this works out, but the French had some machineguns pointing rearward. I was told that this gives you a much better chance to stay on target longer, than if you shoot at it as you head toward it. Shooting forward at a target, I was told, is a good characteristic for fast-moving fixed-wing aircraft, but if you have a vulnerable helicopter you are better off shooting out the back and staying on target as you fly away from it.

I don't know whether this has been tried in South Vietnam or not, but this is an example of what American-French cooperation in this particular field could do. Of course, there is a certain amount of innate pride, I am sure, on both sides. One side not offering the advice and the other side not asking for it. But after all, this is a war in which everyone has a stake and I am afraid it is not going to be an easy one.

One last thing--and I think my talk concerning guerrilla war has been a morning of "debunking"--there is one example which has been traveling around Washington and which I would like to kill if I could and that is: "Well, the British did it in Malaya and we can do it in Vietnam." The situation between the two is so different that any resemblance between the two is strictly coincidental. The fact is that the Communists in Malaya, like the Huks in the Philippines, did not enjoy a sanctuary. The second point is that in Malaya, the Communists were recruited out of the Chinese population; they never could make any headway with the Malays, and within the Chinese element of the population only 423,000 "squatters" worked with them for a time, not the 2.5 million Chinese overall. The urbanized

Chinese who had good jobs and money were no more willing to support the Communists than the Malays were.

So, once the British had the 423,000 squatters pretty much under control in 410 so-called "new villages," they had deprived the guerrilla of his immediate popular support environment. Now to do this in Vietnam is another kettle of fish altogether. In Vietnam the guerrillas are natives and the population, with the exception of the mountain tribes, is the same throughout the country.

There is another thing about the Vietnamese guerrillas. I said the guerrillas are natives; they are better than that. Even the majority of the North Vietnamese infiltrators are southerners! Here again is a piece of "brainwashing" that escaped us for a long time. That is, that while 860,000 North Vietnamese moved south of the dividing line in 1954, about 100,000 South Vietnamese moved north. Those 100,000 were: (a) the dependents of the hard-core guerrillas who were going to stay behind on orders of the Communist regime, and (b) the green recruits, both lowland and tribal.

The hard-core guerrillas were now freed from having to worry about the women and children and they became a mobile, hard-hitting guerrilla force--the Viet Cong Regulars whom we are now meeting. And the greenhorns, having received eight years of Communist training, are now coming back. Now, all these people are southerners in the real sense of the word. You grab one of them and say, "You dirty so-and-so, where are you from?" He'll say, "Sir, I am a South Vietnamese from Sadec, or elsewhere," and it's true. You can look at the city register and the guy is right down on the city rolls.

On the other hand a good part of the South Vietnamese Army is made up of North Vietnamese refugees. They know the country about as well as you do and are probably less willing to worry about it. They have the wrong accent, because North Vietnamese has a nice flat accent like the American New England accent, and there is a very nice soft southern accent just like the accent in Alabama or Mississippi, etc. And we know how northern troops are liked in Alabama and Mississippi. And the same problem arises in Vietnam.

Those South Vietnamese "northerners" very often have little contact essential for sound intelligence with the South Vietnamese population. So, the joke to us is we are faced with North Vietnamese "infiltrators" who are southerners and are fighting them with a South Vietnamese Army which is partly northern and I wonder whether

anybody has ever figured it out; I am sure I have never seen it in writing--not in an unclassified source, at any rate.

On top of that--I'll leave the map out for you to look at later-- we have the mountaineers on both sides. This map, along with the physical map there, are the two most important maps anyone should look at. Look at the mosaic of tribes. The South Vietnamese lowland population is depicted by this little filligrane here along the coast. No South Vietnamese, or for that matter, no Vietnamese lowlander, if he can help it lives above 300 feet of altitude. If you draw an altitude line of 300 meters, you get everybody in South Vietnam below it except for the tribesmen. But the tribesmen occupy 65 percent of the territory. Yet, the mountaineers, too, were left to the Communists for about eight years of indoctrination, until we finally found out last year that they existed.¹

Thus, all we can say as we look at the situation, is that revolutionary wars can best be compared to Indian wrestling in the dark. You may have wrestled the other fellow about over the middle, but you won't know it because you are doing it in pitch blackness. This is exactly the way a war such as this may look. It does not look very bright at the present moment, but that should not surprise you because it does take on the average about four or five years before you know what you are doing. And in Vietnam, as I said, we have been reading far too much of our own mail for much too long.

On the other hand, politically, the situation is not bad at all. I was in North Vietnam during the summer of 1962. The North Vietnamese, you see, are now no longer a guerrilla movement. They have cities, towns, and big industries--and they have done quite an impressive job with these industries. Well these things can be bombed. In fact, in my article in "The Saturday Evening Post"² I made the point that we actually have a very good political leverage on Hanoi. Hanoi would not like to get bombed and lose all its factories in one saturation fight in one night. This is important.

Another thing: whether the Vietnamese is red, green, or blue, he hates the Chinese. And Ho Chih Minh is in a squeeze. He can

¹Jerry A. Rose, "I'm Hit! I'm Hit!" The Saturday Evening Post, March 23, 1963, pp. 34-46.

²Bernard B. Fall, "Master of the Red Jab," The Saturday Evening Post, November 24, 1962, pp. 18-21.

afford to feed a low level revolutionary war in South Vietnam almost ad infinitum, but there is always the danger that he may himself be outflanked at this very moment by the pro-Chinese wing in his own party which in fact is being told by the Chinese: "Now look, you poor devils, this guy Khrushchev is soft. But if you are willing to fight a real war against the dirty American imperialists in South Vietnam, we'll give you all the weapons and troops you need to fight it." And we don't know for how long Ho Chih Minh can resist that kind of siren song within his own party. So, Ho Chih Minh and the North Vietnamese are caught between the American deep blue sea and the Chinese red devil.

So, this political and military gambit--the threat of bombing of North Vietnam and our obvious ability to bomb--gives the United States political and military leverage, but it has not yet been made use of. In other words, to sum it up, while the "small picture" in Vietnam looks pretty messy, the "big picture" is not bad at all. But on the whole, this will take a great deal of cool courage, brains, and above all, a willingness to learn.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: One element you have not mentioned, and I wonder if you could spend a minute on it, is the question of the Government of South Vietnam and its usefulness.

DR. FALL: If I have not mentioned the present Government of South Vietnam it is simply that my views on its performance are in the record. I think it has subperformed, and I am putting it about as mildly as I can. We are often told that it may not be the best government there is, but it is the best they can come up with. That, of course, again is something I like to question for 30 seconds.

The next point that is being made is that we do not change horses in midstream. Now, that is nonsense. The United States changed horses in midstream practically all over in these things. For example, Magsaysay came in right in the middle of the Huk War. In fact, very often those changes are the prelude to political improvement or military improvement.

I believe Churchill came in right in the middle of the Battle of Dunkirk, Clemenceau came in right in the middle of the Battle of Verdun, etc. In other words, I am not as scared of political changes as some people are. On the contrary, I would say that I am afraid

we are going to be faced one day with a political change over which we have no control whatsoever--such as those pilots who flew down and machinegunned the Vietnamese presidential palace, or the paratroops that rebelled in November 1960. It may, at least, be something to think about, but the only people thus far who have rebelled against President Ngo Diem are those people who have been trained by the United States.

There is a very important misconception to think that you can actually train a man in a certain way without instilling some of your own ideas in him. Most of the Vietnamese officers who came to the United States have returned not only impressed with American training, but impressed with American democracy. And as long as we have a government there which doesn't take any backtalk, etc., this isn't so good. The very officers whom we train technically, we also train politically, even though we don't try to do it.

Personally, I would say that more persuasion on the Diem regime for real change, not for fake change, will do us a great deal of good in the political aspects of the war.

QUESTION: Dr. Fall, your message comes through to us loud and clear. What success have you had with people in the hierarchy of the Department of Defense in our Government?

DR. FALL: I would not say I have not been heard. As you all know, it is very hard, particularly in a democracy--and that is a wonderful part of it; ideas get kicked around back and forth--to come up with single solutions, and there are other considerations which I am not aware of, which play in this. But I will stick to my answer; I have definitely been heard; I do not know how high up. I have spoken to some Assistant Secretaries of State. I have spoken to quite a few Army generals. But how much of this will "stick" I don't know, let us give it a little time.

QUESTION: Since southeast Asia appears to offer the Chinese Communists only more of the same kind of economic problems that they already have plenty of at home, why do the Communists want southeast Asia?

DR. FALL: I am sorry, it does not offer them the same problems. For example, between South Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma, they have 10 million tons of surplus rice. That is precisely the cure for one major Chinese problem. In other words,

this is an area where the Chinese can get something that they certainly do not get in the mountains of Ladakh or the overcrowded plains of India. This is one area that is not overcrowded and it does have surplus food, which is precisely what the Chinese need. On top of that I need not underline the fact that having submarine bases or airbases in the southern part of the southeast Asia Peninsula would just about cut the world in two along a vertical line as far as we are concerned. Australia and New Zealand would just about be cut off from the Indian Ocean.

So, the Communist Reds have a very good reason for putting pressure on southeast Asia. And we have an excellent reason ourselves to prevent them from going ahead with it.

QUESTION: Sir, could you relate some French political experiences in Algeria based on lessons learned in Vietnam?

DR. FALL: Yes. The French colonels who went through the Indochina War--and some of them were in Communist prison camps--came out unbrainwashed by the Communists, but with a very, and to my mind, erroneous interpretation of the capabilities of political action. This is what led, eventually, to the rebellion in Algeria and the mutinies in Algeria in 1961. However, the basic principle of the interconnection between military and civilian operations is, of course, a very important lesson that should not be forgotten.

The French SAS groups, the Special Administrative Sections, were integrated with the Army in the way that military government was integrated with G-5 back in the early days of World War II--1942 and 1943. It proved to be very successful. That is why I feel that more of this in South Vietnam could help. The fact is, however, you can misread Mao Tse-tung just as well as you can misread something in the Bible, for that matter, and come up with exactly the wrong impression. That is why Lacheroy and some of the other colonels who actually worked on this are now in exile or in jail.

I suggest that you read the book called "The Centurions" if it is available here in the library. "The Centurions" shows you the road of some of these colonels all the way from the Vietnamese prison camps to Algeria. The book, to a Frenchman, is quite an open book. All the officers actually exist; only the names have been changed. But you can actually recognize every one of them in the book. I suggest you look at it; it's quite good.

QUESTION: You mentioned the International Control Commission. I wonder if you could tell us something about what its job is today and its effectiveness?

DR. FALL: The ICC is a commission established after the 1954 cease-fire, under Indian Chairmanship, and with Canadian and Polish members. The Poles, of course, are Communist and the Canadians are pro-West. And the Indians are wobbly, as usual. The International Commission is supposed to see to it that neither our side nor the other imports weapons in excess of those allowed under the cease-fire agreement.

The fact is, of course, that both sides have violated the agreement, the Communists first and our side later, under pressure of time and the war. The International Control Commission in Vietnam has not been an impressive success. However, it has been useful in several ways. Thanks to the Canadian element, they are the only people from the West who have traveled in certain areas of Communist North Vietnam. So, in that particular intelligence sense they are useful. I am sure, of course, that the Poles provide a similar kind of intelligence to their side regarding South Vietnam. That is one of the risks you have to assume.

I'll give you an example of the frustration the International Commission runs into in North Vietnam. The largest Communist airfield is Cat-Bi near Haiphong which has a C-54-type double runway. We believe it also can take jets. The Canadians requested to inspect the airfield. The Communist government at Hanoi said: "You can't inspect Cat-Bi," and the Canadians said, "Why not?" The Communists answered sweetly: "Because it's a private flying club--with 7,000-foot runways--you know." This is the sort of frustration the ICC runs into. There is nothing you can say. Once either side has said they don't want you to inspect things too closely, that's the end of that. On the other hand it branded the Hanoi regime as having helped the Viet Congs but again with many reservations.

So, it's not terribly useful and in a way it sort of casts a pall over our belief that there is such a thing as on-site inspection that will do any good in other fields.

QUESTION: You mentioned the extremely large part played by helicopter armament in Algeria. Did you get any idea of how extensive this was?

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DR, FALL: I have not seen them in operation in Algeria; I have seen films on their operation. Frankly, the whole business of air operations in a revolutionary war is one thing that will have to be rethought. I know there is a very strong USAF counterinsurgency effort going on at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, actually going back to the B-26's which the French used, etc.

Air support in Vietnam has not yet been overly successful. Neither has it been under the French. The fact is that we get high kill figures such as "62 Viet Cong killed." The Vietnamese Army report for 14 February 1963, for example, listed a total of 71 killed, of whom 66 allegedly were killed by strafing. Out of the 66 there may be 8 or 9 who were actually Viet Cong, and the rest are just hapless villagers who were caught in the strafing.

The French found in Algeria, for example, that this caused more villagers to become rebels, rather than vice versa and I know that the same question is being debated in Vietnam today. I would say, on the other hand, that the air support has been tremendously important in supply operations. Considering the ground that you have to face in Vietnam, aerial supply operations are extremely important and can cut down a great deal on resupply time. So, whether it is rockets, light- or 50-caliber machineguns or 20-mm. cannon; right now there just are not the kind of targets around that will make this very useful.

As long as we realize the limitations of air support we are going to be in business. Vice versa, the pilots--the French pilots--complained very often because they were made to do jobs which the Air Force felt--in my view, correctly--that the ground forces should have been able to do with 75-mm. howitzers or with their mortars. It became sort of an over-babying of the ground forces just because the air support was available.

The French had ground liaison officers trained by the Air Force in Vietnam and this worked out very well. There was a great deal of interplay in the later stages of the war when the ground force officers became more aware of the capabilities and limitations of the Air Force, and it worked out very well.

QUESTION: You talked about the effectiveness of terror and intimidation. How do these measures work as a countermeasure, using terror and intimidation? Would they be successful, or would they work?

DR. FALL: Terror and intimidation is always counterproductive in the long run; if the Communists had had nothing else to offer except the killing of village chiefs it would have backfired on them long ago. The population would either completely move over to our side or simply become completely neutral between both sides, and report something to both sides just in order to stay alive.

I will come back to what I have said; the Communists do use terror at the beginning, or, upon very human narrow targets. They will focus on one village chief who may not be popular, anyway. But as soon as this killing has happened, peace ensues immediately. The Communists will see to it by their own "civil affairs" teams, if you like called Dich-Van, that the village will suffer as little as possible from their presence. But then, when we come in and say: "This is a Viet Cong village" and plaster it with napalm, we merely prove the Communist point; it is we who are "nasty."

This also happened in Algeria. The French found that after a certain point, mass-destruction is counterproductive, just as much as individual terror may boomerang.

I would like to say one more thing about terror, and that is the delicate subject of torture. Torture has been used by the French earlier, and now by the South Vietnamese. As a matter of fact, it is a problem that Americans will have to face up to: A French colonel who wrote a great deal about the subject--Trinquier--wrote a book called "Modern War" (an English version will be published by Praeger late in 1963) in which he deals with revolutionary war. He makes the following point: that when you are in the infantry, your bane is the machinegun and the enemy tank. When you are in the air force you are going to get shot down by flak or rockets. When you are in the navy it is going to be torpedoes or a mine. And when you are in a revolutionary war you are going to get tortured. And if you are in the revolutionary war business you might as well reconcile yourself to it, or quit.

As a precise example, in the French underground, this was exactly true for us. We knew that if we were caught by the Germans we were going to be tortured. (If we were very lucky we would be shot on the spot.) This was to compensate for the advantage we enjoyed by fighting in civilian clothes, or being able to shoot the other fellow in the back if we felt like it.

Some among us, of course, say "Well, sure, but torture is a horrible thing." And they are right, we will have to face up to that.

The French in Algeria for example--and this was cited in several books--said:

Where is your moral standing as an officer? You know that this fellow just placed two bombs in a department store. If those bombs go off, about 50 people will be killed on the spot and another hundred will be maimed in the ensuing trampling. Now, you have 50 minutes to get information out of that guy as to where he placed those bombs.¹

You have two choices. You are going to stand on your lilly-white honor and say, "I'm not a torturer; I'd rather see 50 people dead and another 100 maimed--innocent people, perhaps your wife--rather than clout the other guy in the face."

But Major Tillion also gives you the guerrilla side of the same picture: an Algerian terrorist was captured by the French and one French officer said: "You dirty so-and-so, what you are doing with your bombs is wanton murder." The little guerrilla looked up at the French officer and said: "You know, I'm a great deal more precise with my hand-thrown bombs than you fellows with 1,000-pound aerial bombs." And he was right. Obviously, the block-buster is a great deal less selective than the individually-placed bomb in a department store.

So, you see the dilemma. One of the by-products of revolutionary war--to come back to the question the gentleman asked me about the French officers--is that after awhile not only the front lines get fuzzy (because there aren't any front lines), but your higher front lines, of what is morally acceptable and what is not, also get fuzzy. This is really the permanent danger to anyone who has to fight that kind of war. This is what led those French colonels to practice the same tactics which they practiced on the Algerians and Vietnamese, on their own government and people in France.

This is a real danger factor. An army which has to fight a revolutionary war for 10 or 15 years changes in character--it changes very seriously in character. This has not yet been studied, but it must be clearly recognized and is certainly worth the study.

DR. LEIGHTON: Dr. Fall, you gave a most stimulating performance and we want to thank you very much.

(10 July 1963--7, 600)H/dm:pd

¹Cf. Germaine Tillion, Algeria--The Realities (New York: 1961).