

# Defoliation Failure Was Known in '67

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CHICAGO, Dec. 30 — The Army knew in 1967 that its Vietnam crop-spraying was destroying mainly civilian, not enemy food supplies, but spraying continued.

By this fall, it had five studies that showed in one way or another that its vast crop-killing was wreaking great harm on South Vietnamese civilians, but having little decisive effect on the enemy's rations.

Existence of the classified studies become known today. An American Association for the Advancement of Science commission stated the same conclusions yesterday.

By an overwhelming vote here today, the main governing body of the AAAS urged an immediate halt to all plant-spraying throughout In-

dochina—in effect voting “no confidence” in the Dec. 26 White House statement that U.S. forces are “initiating a program” for an “orderly yet rapid phaseout” of Vietnam spraying.

As they voted, AAAS board members knew about the armed forces studies.

On Nov. 26, in fact, two members of the AAAS Herbicide Commission wrote high U.S. officials in Saigon and Washington that “our observations lend additional weight to several official studies which have concluded that nearly all the food destroyed by the chemical crop destruction program would normally be consumed by civilians, not by enemy soldiers.”

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## DEFOLIATE, From A1

The first two of these studies were done by the Rand Corp., an independent scientific “think tank,” for the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency. Both were completed in October 1967 and labeled “confidential.”

Both were referred to briefly here by recently retired Brig. Gen. William Stone, former Army chemical commander.

The first study was based mainly on interviewing enemy prisoners and defectors and asking them how much rice they had been given daily. Some had huge rations, it turned out, some barely enough.

The answers were compared with crop destruction in areas where they had served. The result showed almost no correlation between ration size and crop spraying. Only about 5 per cent of the prisoners, it was concluded, had been depending on locally grown

crops.

The second Rand study mainly asked prisoners why they surrendered. If they said, “Hunger,” they were asked, “Was it the result of crop-spraying?” The answer almost always was “No.”

### Effect of Drift

This study did show, however, that unintended drift from crop-spraying was having a serious impact on the crops of friendly farmers.

The third study was done in December 1967 by a group under CINCPAC, the overall high command in the Pacific.

It included responses of prisoners as well as several pages of quotations from American officers on herbicide programs. They universally praised spraying, though independent observers have found widely varying opinions.

The study concluded that fewer than one South Vietnamese in 40,000 had his crops destroyed. But a mistake in arithmetic caused an error of a factor of 100. The study's acts actually showed damage to the crops of one South Vietnamese in 400.

The fourth military study—drawing to some extent on his misinterpretation—was a mission review” of herbicide use organized by the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in 1968. It showed as much as 99 per cent of all food destroyed in some provinces.

The fifth was a report this year by the U.S. high command in Vietnam saying that a mere 1 per cent or so of enemy troops got their food from their own farming efforts, while many more lived off civilian crops by buying, stealing or “taxing” them.

### Program Defended

Gen. Stone strongly defended the Army program at the AAAS meeting here, saying: “By selective crop destruction, we have been able to hurt the enemy's ability to live off the people of the land.”

He frankly said there were studies to the contrary, but maintained that there were studies with conclusions both ways.

He also said crop spraying denied food to enemy civilian “sympathizers.”

The feeling of many AAAS members who voted for an immediate halt to all spraying is that traditional U.S. policy has been not to starve civilians to harm the armed enemy.