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*Pentagon Papers: Vietnam Study
'65-'66 G.I. Build-Up to Failure*

By FOX BUTTERFIELD

The Pentagon's secret study of the Vietnam war indicates that the rapid expansion of American forces in 1965 and 1966 occurred because "no one really foresaw what the troop needs in Vietnam would be" and because the ability of the enemy forces "to build up their effort was consistently underrated."

"It would seem," the study asserts, that the American planners would have been "very sensitive to rates of infiltration and recruitment by the [Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army]; but very little analysis was, in fact, given to the implications of the capabilities of the VC/N.V.A. in this regard."

As a result of the unanticipated enemy build-up, the Pentagon study discloses, Gen. William C. Westmoreland's troop requests jumped from a total of 175,000 men in June, 1965, to 275,000 that July, to 443,000 in December and then to 542,000 the following June. Neither the requests of the American commander in Vietnam nor President Lyndon B. Johnson's rapid approval of all but the last of them was made public.

At the same time, the study says, the Johnson Administration's continual expansion of the air war during 1965 and

1966 was based on a "colossal misjudgment" about the bombing's effect on Hanoi's will and capabilities.

In particular, the study discloses that the Administration's decision in 1966 to bomb North Vietnam's oil-storage facilities was made despite repeated warnings from the Central Intelligence Agency that such action would not "cripple Communist military operations." Instead, the study says, Washington apparently accepted the military's estimate that the bombing would "bring the enemy to the conference table or cause the insurgency to wither from lack of support." But the flow of men and supplies to the South continued "undiminished."

The Pentagon study of this period of

This is the sixth in a series of articles on a secret study, made in the Pentagon, of American participation in the Vietnam war. The study was obtained by The New York Times through the investigative reporting of Neil Sheehan. The series was researched and written over three months by Mr. Sheehan and other staff members. Two pages of documentary material begin on Page 9.

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