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Move to Cut Pentagon's Viet Role

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The State Department has recommended the virtual elimination of the Defense Department's role in pacification efforts in South Vietnam.

The proposal, according to officials here, is aimed at establishing civilian control over major United States social and economic programs.

The long-dominant military role in running purely civilian and humanitarian programs has been the target of frequent criticism within the administration and in congress. The Pentagon and intelligence agencies have been accused of often distorting the programs into operations with military objectives.

CHANGE

The change would be accomplished, the State Department said, through a transfer to the civilian Administration for International Development of the program to assist war victims in South Vietnam.

The bulk of this program is currently managed by the war victims directorate of an agency under the Penta-

gon's control known as CORDS, for Civilian Operations Rural Development Support.

Parallel to the Vietnamization program, which gradually switched combat responsibilities from American to South Vietnamese forces, pacification was aimed at securing the Saigon government's hold over rural populations through operations ranging from care of refugees and resettlement to the training of the Vietnamese national police and the joint anti-Viet Cong program known as Operation Phoenix.

VIEW

The State Department said that long-range rehabilitation programs "are more compatible with the development aims of AID than with CORDS, which is a short-term agency."

The recommendation to transfer the refugee program to civilian control was contained in an internal departmental document sent on December 6 by Anthony Faunce, the acting inspector general of foreign assistance, to John A. Hannah, the AID administrator.

Faunce is a senior state department official who is directly responsible to Secretary of State William P. Rogers. His office supervises all U.S. aid programs, which Hannah administers.

The report was highly critical of the performance of South Vietnamese officials running the refugee programs in conjunction with the U.S., urging the removal of "corrupt administrators"

and charging South Vietnamese "sloppiness in administration."

Administration officials said that the National Security Council would make the final decision to recommend the transfer of the program.