

(Defoliation)

PENTAGON DISPUTES STUDY OF SPRAYING DEVASTATION

by Dana Adams Schmidt

[Story deals with Defense Department's reaction to study of defoliation in Vietnam made under supervision of Dr. Matthew S. Meselson, reported by NYTimes SFChronicle 30, filed Indochina. See that file for material following that date, also Indochina/Comment.]

[Jerry W. Friedheim, the Defense Department spokesman] said some parts of South Vietnam's economy, notably the forest industry and small farmers, might have benefited from defoliation.

"Parts of the hardwood forest have been destroyed and can now be lumbered," he said. "Defoliation permits easier access, so crews can go in and bring out the wood."

"At the same time," he said, "peasants now find room to grow garden crops right at the edge of the road, where they have easy access to the city."