

New Warnings of Failure

Before the opening of the air war in the spring warnings were sounded high in the Administration that it would not succeed. Now there were warnings that a ground war in the South might prove fruitless. The warnings came not only from Under Secretary of State George W. Ball, long known as a dissenter on Vietnam, but also from John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, who felt the actions planned were not strong enough.

On April 2 Mr. McCone circulated a memorandum within the National Security Council asserting that unless the United States was willing to bomb the North "with minimum restraint" to break Hanoi's will, it was unwise to commit ground troops to battle.

"In effect," he said, "we will find ourselves mired down in combat in the jungle in a military effort that we cannot win and from which we will have extreme difficulty extracting ourselves." [See text, McCone memorandum, April 2, 1965.]

It is not clear from the documentary record whether President Johnson read this particular memorandum, but the Pentagon study says Mr. McCone ex-

pressed these same views in a personal memorandum to the President on April 28.

In a separate intelligence estimate for the President on May 6, Vice Adm. William F. Raborn Jr., Mr. McCone's successor, indicated agreement with Mr. McCone.

Mr. Ball's dissent came from the opposite side. He believed that neither bombing the North nor fighting the guerrillas in the South nor any combination of the two offered a solution and said so in a memorandum circulated on June 28, the study reports.

"Convinced that the U.S. was pouring its resources down the drain in the wrong place," the account goes on, Mr. Ball proposed that the United States "cut its losses" and withdraw from South Vietnam.

"Ball was cold-blooded in his analysis," the study continues, describing the memorandum. "He recognized that the U.S. would not be able to avoid losing face before its Asian allies if it staged some form of conference leading to withdrawal of U.S. forces. The losses would be of short-term duration, however, and the U.S. could emerge from this period of travail as a 'wiser and more mature nation.'"

Ball Offers 'a Compromise'

On July 1, the analyst says, Mr. Ball reiterated his proposal for withdrawal in a memorandum to the President entitled "A Compromise Solution for South Vietnam." [See text, Ball memorandum, July 1, 1965.]

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