

U.S. Is Leaving Door Open For Slower Troop Pullout

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 (Reuters)—The Defense Department today left open the door for a slowdown—or even a complete stop—in troop withdrawals from South Vietnam in the next two months in face of an enemy build-up of men and supplies before Tet, the Lunar New Year.

A Pentagon spokesman, Jerry Friedheim, today reaffirmed that Gen. Creighton Abrams, the chief of United States forces in Vietnam, has the flexibility to vary the rate of withdrawal.

"Last year there was concern about Tet," Mr. Friedheim said. "That is why we have not tied ourselves to our monthly rate of withdrawals and there is no intent to do so now."

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