

Thieu Using U.S. Surveys in Vote Campaign

By GLORIA EMERSON

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 1—National surveys of Vietnamese public opinion, which are prepared and analyzed by the United States mission here, are being used to assist President Nguyen Van Thieu in his re-election campaign this year.

The monthly surveys, known as the Pacification Attitude Analysis System, are taken in all the nation's 44 provinces by trained Vietnamese research teams. The purpose is to measure trends in rural opinion and the reaction of Vietnamese to specific events.

Special questions in the surveys are now being asked to enable President Thieu to measure more clearly his own appeal with Vietnamese voters, the popularity of his political rivals, and what issues most concern the Vietnamese.

The answers to these questions are made available to the Vietnamese Government.

Some Object Bitterly

Some Americans working in the pacification program bitterly object to the surveys, which are, in their opinion, "meddling" in Vietnamese elections.

A spokesman for the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS), which supervises the surveys and is responsible for the Pacification and Development program in South Vietnam, said in a statement that the questions "were not requested by President Thieu or the Government of South Vietnam."

"On some occasions, the Government of South Vietnam has suggested subjects in which they would be interested," the statement said.

"The three questions cited were developed by the MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam] CORDS staff. They were included to give a preliminary indication of public attitudes on an important upcoming event which could have an impact on the Pacification and Development program, for the information of MACV-CORDS and the United States mission."



Associated Press

Nguyen Van Thieu

Three of the 22 questions in it are as follows:

¶Which three of these people are most likely to run for election next September?

¶What kind of man should be elected next September?

¶What issue will you consider most important in deciding who to vote for in the next election."

Vietnamese who were asked the first question chose from a list of names. They were President Thieu, Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, Duong Van Minh, the general who is now regarded as Mr. Thieu's foremost political rival, and an opposition senator, Vu Van Mau. Others were Tran Van Huong, a former Premier in Mr. Thieu's Government and a former mayor of Saigon, and Ha Thuc Ky, a political leader in central Vietnam.

Choice of Answers Given

A choice of answers was also given with the other two questions, but Vietnamese could also reply that they did not know or did not want to respond.

It is not known how many Vietnamese answered the special questions, nor what the results were. They are classified "secret" at the Civil Operations agency headquarters here.

Although some dissidents in the agency believe that President Thieu asked its head, Ambassador William Colby, to use special questions in these surveys to help the Thieu campaign for re-election, there is no proof of it.

One pacification worker said that he had been told by an important member of the pacification studies group that Ambassador Colby, on seeing the results of the November survey, marked them with a red pencil "not for dissemination." This means the results are not to be made available to Americans

Nevertheless, a 26-year-old pacification worker who asked that his name be withheld, said, "some of the special questions in these surveys are designed to insure the re-election of President Thieu."

"I really object—very strongly—to this kind of direct political interference by the American Embassy in the upcoming elections here, especially in light of all the American claims to the contrary," he added.

As an example of this "American interference," the American produced an English translation of Part A of the November 1970 questionnaire.

working for the agency in South Vietnam.

The results, however, of the surveys are made known to the Government of South Vietnam, according to the agency's statement.

Copies of the surveys, or questionnaires, in English are marked "For official use only." questionnaires, in English are marked "For official use only."

The introduction to an October, 1970, survey states that the three-man Vietnamese research teams are "guided by a field-tested questionnaire covering three principal areas of interest: Security, political awareness and interest, and economic development."

American Resigns

The resentment of one American working in a delta province as a political officer and adviser to a Civil Operations development program led him to resign his job last year on the grounds that surveys were being conducted to strengthen President Thieu politically.

Richard Winslow, who left Vietnam early in December, wrote in a letter from the United States to a friend in Vietnam:

"I had always said I'd stay in Vietnam with CORDS for my own education as long as I wasn't required, as part of my CORDS duties, to do anything directly harmful to any Vietnamese."

Mr. Winslow wrote that he was informed by two Americans heading the agency's "pacification studies group" at a luncheon last November in Saigon that "Thieu asked Colby to send out the teams to make a study of the people's feelings toward the 1971 Presidential election so that Thieu would know where his strong points were and where he'd have to arrange something [like quickly appointing new officials] which would make sure that he'd come out ahead in a given area."

Mr. Winslow wrote in his letter, dated Dec. 24, 1970:

"I asked, 'You mean, the U.S. has decided to use its resources to assure Thieu's re-election?' The answer was 'Yes, it has been decided at the very highest levels that Thieu's re-election is essential to the national interest of the U.S.'"

He also described in the letter how he protested to the two other Americans.

"I said, 'Boy, my anti-Thieu friends who were hoping for

an honest electoral victory next year would sure be angry if they knew about this!'" Mr. Winslow wrote.

The reply of one of the men was curt.

"He answered, 'Well, for Christ's sake, don't tell them!'" Mr. Winslow continued.

Mr. Winslow also wrote that he felt concerned because as a political reporter for the Civil Operations Agency he was not sure whether the information he gathered was being used by the Saigon Government for its own political advantage. He gave permission for his letter to be quoted by The New York Times. Mr. Winslow provided no other information.

The names of the two officials at the luncheon are withheld since one is unavailable for comment and the other has left Saigon.

Two Kinds of Surveys

Two kinds of surveys are being conducted by the agency in Vietnam. The first type is a survey for a single province only, made up of those questions decided on by American military or civilian advisers in that province. Generally, the province survey, although carried out by a Vietnamese province research team, is not done with the knowledge of Vietnamese officials, according to informed sources.

The second type is the Pacification Attitude Analysis System (PAAS) survey, taken nationally every month. Its questions and answers are handled by American officials in Saigon. The Vietnamese questioned are adults between the ages of 18 and 55, who are not civil authorities or members of regular military forces. The results of these survey are given to the Saigon Government.

"President Thieu cares very much about PAAS—that's the only survey he cares about," an agency employe said in Saigon recently.

In the Delta, an American official working in the Pacification studies branch of the agency said he was not surprised at all if special questions in the surveys were to help President Thieu.

"The Americans want to get out of here—if Thieu stays in office, it will make it that much easier for us to quit with honor," he said. "I don't see how Thieu can lose the election and, of course, we want him to win."