

U.S. Generous in Support of S. Viets

By Jack Anderson
with Les Whitten

There have been bitter recriminations in Saigon and Washington that the United States is to blame for South Vietnam's military setbacks. It sounds, indeed, as if the great debate is beginning over who "lost" Vietnam.

At the Pentagon, a general complained to us that "we had the war won" until President Nixon started bringing home the American troops.

Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger suggested that South Vietnam would be fighting better "if we had been less niggardly with our aid."

And South Vietnam's Ambassador Tran Kim Phuong went on U.S. television to proclaim that it is safer to be an ally of the Communists than of the Americans.

Before the rhetoric gets out of hand, let's examine the available facts. The latest estimates, compiled by the Central Intelligence Agency, State Department and Pentagon, show that the United States spent 15 times more during the past nine years to support Saigon than the Soviet Union and Communist China spent to help Hanoi.

In total military support alone, the United States outspent the Communists by 34 times.

But the most dramatic measure was in blood, not cash. Not a single Soviet or Chinese soldier, so far as we could learn, fought in the field for the North Vietnamese. But 56,226 Americans died and 153,654 Americans were wounded fighting for the South Vietnamese.

The statistics, compiled by the

Indochina Resource Center, offer these additional comparisons:

- Since 1966, the Soviets and Chinese have shipped \$5.3 billion in economic aid to Hanoi. This is slightly more than the \$4.9 billion that the United States gave Saigon. But Communist military assistance to North Vietnam amounted to a paltry \$3.95 billion compared to the staggering \$135.4 billion in military support that the United States gave to South Vietnam.

- The grand totals, therefore, set Communist aid at \$9.3 billion, United States assistance at \$140.3 billion. The U.S. figures, incidentally, are the most conservative possible estimates. President Ford himself has put U.S. aid to South Vietnam at \$150 billion.

- Of all the foreign money pumped into both Vietnams in the past nine years, 93.8 per cent came out of the pockets of the American taxpayers.

- Since the Paris peace accords were signed in January, 1973, the United States has spent \$6.6 billion to keep the war going. Russia and China have contributed only \$2.7 billion to the Communist side during the same period.

- Since 1945, the United States has donated \$128.5 billion to 131 nations and territories. Of this total, a generous \$22.5 billion, or 17.5 per cent, went to South Vietnam. This was far more than any other nation received.

In sum, the American people have supported South Vietnam far more generously than the Communists have supported North Vietnam.

Footnote: Although we have quoted the CIA estimates accu-

ately, a CIA memo adds this caveat: Communist aid "is not equivalent to—and hence not comparable with—U.S. appropriations for military and economic aid to South Vietnam." One reason, said the CIA, was because its information "is very spotty."

Censored transcripts—In the expletives deleting tradition of the Nixon crowd, Mary Brooks, the queen bee of the U.S. Mint, has censored her testimony before the House Appropriations Committee.

"I wish you could do something about civil service," she snapped, "so we can get rid of the drones on our payroll. We are hamstrung. This government is awful."

Drawing on her background as an Idaho rancher, she told the members of Congress bluntly that she "wouldn't put up from shepherders" with what she has to accept from government workers.

Rep. Edward J. Patten (D-N.J.) suggested that she "send them out to the ranch," presumably for some Western-style indoctrination.

Retorted Mrs. Brooks tartly: "I wish I had something like the salt mines in Poland or some place like that."

But the erstwhile ranchwoman had second thoughts before the transcript went to the printers. She quietly deleted her salty language to give her

remarks a more cautious, bureaucratic tone.

Gone from the censored version are the "drones" of the Mint. She is recorded only as making the innocuous statement: "I wish you could do something about civil service rules, so we can get rid of some of the ineffectives in government."

In the sanitized version, the government is no longer "awful," and she no longer wants to exile anyone to the Polish salt mines. She merely states rather lamely: "Civil service rules do make it difficult at times."

Footnote: Mrs. Brooks acknowledged that the uncensored transcript quoted her correctly. "Those remarks were offhand and casual, and I didn't mean anything by it," she said. "Really, I didn't. I didn't have anyone in mind when I said it."

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