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# U.S. Plan For Civilian Advisers

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**American officials here are secretly planning a major postwar presence of civilians in Vietnam, with many of them performing jobs formerly held by military men.**

Operating mostly under Defense Department contracts, 10,000 American civilian advisers and technicians will stay on in South Vietnam after a cease-fire, well-informed sources said.

The civilians will do everything from running the South Vietnamese military's personnel and logistics computers, to teaching the Vietnamese Air Force how to fly and maintain newly provided planes, to repairing the complex military communications network left behind by the U.S. Army.

About half the civilian workers are already in Vietnam, with others beginning to arrive almost daily at Saigon's Tan Son Hut airport under confidential contracts signed during the last few weeks.

### CLAIM

Senior American officials insisted that such a continued American presence in the post-cessation period "violates neither the letter nor the spirit of the peace settlement," as one diplomat put it yesterday. But the officials, both civilian and military, have repeatedly refused to provide any details about postwar American planning.

"It might upset the Paris negotiations," a spokesman for the U.S. military command explained, "and it's just not in the national interest to have these things

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known."

A few Americans and some foreign diplomats here have expressed doubts about the wisdom of such a postwar policy.

"It's like 1961 or 1965 all over again," remarked a Western official who has served several tours of duty in Indochina. "The Americans are full of optimism again, and once more they are proceeding as if the Vietnamese aren't even around. They're just bringing in Americans to do the job," he added.

Until the events of the last month, the number of civilian contractor employees had actually been in decline, falling from a high of more than 10,000 American workers in 1970 to the present 5000.

Many of the remaining 125 U.S. firms that had held Defense Department contracts up through last month were scheduled to be gradually phased out, knowledgeable sources said. The contracts up till then were worth just under \$100 million.

While officials have refused to divulge anything about the new contracts, two

companies that are reported to have received them are Lear Siegler and NHA. Lear Siegler is said to have been given at least 300 new jobs servicing the 120 F-105 fighters that the Air Force rushed to South Vietnam earlier this month, and NHA is reported to have been awarded more than 200 other aircraft maintenance jobs for the South Vietnamese Air Force.

Both companies have been advertising in the English-language newspaper, the Saigon Post, for new workers during the past two weeks, but spokesmen for the companies said they were not free to comment on their newly awarded contracts.

"The Defense Department won't let us talk about our work," said a man who described himself as the manager at Lear Siegler.

### CONTRACTS

According to some critical U.S. officials, the contractors have been given so-called cost-plus contracts, which fix the companies' profit as a percentage of the total cost, and thus the higher the cost, the higher the profit. Such contracts, the opposite of the usual low-bid contract, tend to lead contractors to bring in excess personnel, since the more workers they have, the higher the cost and the higher the profit, the officials said.

One problem that apparently has not been resolved is who will control the civilian contractors after the U.S. Military Command, Vietnam, pulls out after a cease-fire. Heretofore, the Army Procurement Agency, under MACV, has been in charge of the contractors.

Embassy officials are known to think that the embassy should exercise control, as the ranking civilian

authority, but the indications are that the Defense Department will try to keep control.

Last week, for example, a civilian dispatched by the Pentagon, Wilfred Curley, arrived in Saigon to take over the Army Procurement Agency from its military commander. Curley will reportedly convert it into a putative civilian organization.

### REFUSALS

The military command turned down all requests for an interview with Curley, on the grounds that he was too busy "working out new contracts."

In addition to the civilian contractors, 1000 members of the U.S. Agency for International Development and perhaps several hundred military attaches will be left in Vietnam after the peace accord is signed, knowledgeable sources reported.

AID has 997 U.S. employees in Vietnam today, down from a high of 2700 four years ago.

The quasimilitary agency in charge of the pacification program, Civil Operations and Rural Development Support, will have to be phased out in its present form, since a majority of its 1500 members are Army personnel. But CORDS officials say they will probably preserve province advisory teams minus their army members.

#### PX

The commissary, with its American food and liquor, will be kept open by turning it over to a civilian contractor, officials said. But the PX, long the chief supplier of Vietnam's flourishing black market, may have to go.

According to some officials, MACV will turn over its giant headquarter — nicknamed Pentagon East — to the new International Control Commission, which is supposed to be composed of Canada, Indonesia, Poland and Hungary.

However, a member of Canada's small 19-man ICC delegation here said he had not been informed by either the Vietnamese or the Americans on future plans for the ICC.

The Canadians are known to be skeptical that a revived ICC will be able to function effectively, particularly since North Vietnam has never allowed on-site inspections of suspected violations on its territory.

"I've become very cynical that a control commission can ever operate here," one Canadian delegate said.