

Colby, U.S. Chief of Pacification for Vietnam, Gives Up Duties and Returns Home

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, June 30—William E. Colby, the chief of the American pacification effort in South Vietnam, gave up his duties today and flew home to Washington because of the illness of a daughter.

Announcing the departure of one of the most important American officials in the country, the United States Ambassador, Ellsworth Bunker, said: "We are losing the services of a great public servant."

He added however, that Mr. Colby would be given a new assignment.

In one of the most crucial jobs in South Vietnam — some call it the "worst job in the country"—Mr. Colby has been always on the go, flying about the country to see for himself whether the efforts at security and development were working. In the more than three years he spent here, he traveled by motorcycle through the delta, by jeep in the jungles, by sampan on canals and by helicopter to every province.

Mr. Colby, who was given the personal rank of Ambassador by President Johnson, is the third ranking American official here, behind Mr. Bunker and Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, the military commander. He directs the operation known as Civil Operations and Rural Support, or CORDS, and the key American program for advising the South Vietnamese on virtually all aspects of life in the countryside, from Se-



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QUITS VIETNAM POST:
William B. Colby, chief of American pacification effort, cited daughter's illness as cause for leaving.

curity to economic, social and political measures.

He had been expected to leave about the same time as Mr. Bunker—sometime after the South Vietnamese presidential elections in October. General Abrams may also depart before next spring.

'A Great Loss'

"Colby's departure will be a great loss," one of his aides said today. "He was the most

inspiring officer of the Government in Vietnam. He inspired us to work harder because he himself never quit. He drove himself and never seemed weary.

"There is no one whose presence was more vital to the policy of trying to assist the Vietnamese to pick up the load for themselves."

George D. Jacobson, Ambassador Colby's deputy, has been named acting chief of the pacification program. Mr. Jacobson, a former army colonel, has served as assistant chief of staff for CORDS since December, 1968, when Mr. Colby was promoted from that job to direct the operation.

Soft-spoken and even-tempered, Mr. Colby established a highly-organized system. He received reports daily from his field teams, stressing that he wanted "problem reporting" as well as "progress reporting."

Changing Problems

The problems and the programs changed each year. After the Communist Tet offensive in 1968, the effort focused on restoring Government control and, in effect, reoccupying the country. Later the emphasis shifted to strengthening the territorial forces to free the regular South Vietnamese Army for border protection and other duties.

At the same time, Mr. Colby and the South Vietnamese worked closely in trying to develop an effective program, Phoenix, to root out the enemy's underground political apparatus. This effort, however, has been one of the major disappointments.

"We are holding our own on the Vietcong infrastructure," an

official said today. "But the other side is still better at improving and expanding it than our side is at whittling it down."

Even so, Mr. Colby tells visitors that the pacification efforts have made it harder for the Vietcong to operate. The latest efforts, he says, have been directed toward developing a sense of participation among the South Vietnamese people and convincing them "that they can get a fair shake from Saigon."

Such efforts include elections for local councilors and Government grants for projects decided by the villagers themselves.

"The war cannot be won unless the people participate," Mr. Colby has said.

The programs have worked with varying degrees of success and failure and Mr. Colby has often remarked that he was neither an optimist nor a pessimist about the ultimate outcome.

The 51-year-old ambassador was an Army officer with the Office of Strategic Services in World War II. He practiced law in New York City and then joined the National Labor Relations Board as an attorney.

He went to the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951 and served as "an attaché" in Stockholm and Rome, before coming to Saigon for his first tour from 1959 to 1962, during which he rose to be chief of the Saigon station. He later worked in Washington as head of the Far East Division of the CIA.