

Saigon Gives Gloomy Report To McNamara

U. S. Defense Chief Sees Junta After American Advisers

SAIGON, Viet Nam, Dec. 20

(AP).—United States Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara met South Viet Nam's ruling military junta today bearing a depressing report on progress of the war against the Communist Viet Cong.

Mr. McNamara and top American officials in Viet Nam had an afternoon-long conference with the full junta, including Chief of State Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh and Premier Nguyen Ngoc Tho.

It was Mr. McNamara's concluding meeting of a 36-hour visit which ends with his departure for Hawaii tonight.

Mr. McNamara reportedly got a hard appraisal of a deteriorating situation from American advisers in three key provinces this morning.

Their provinces, currently the worst hit in Viet Nam, are Long An, on Saigon's southern fringes; Kien Hoa, in the Mekong Delta, and Binh Duong, at the edge of "D" zone north of Saigon.

Peppered With Questions

Mr. McNamara peppered the advisers with questions for three hours, taking copious notes.

"He got all the right poop," one American source said.

Although Mr. McNamara after a visit three months ago said he believed the Viet Nameese could handle the Communists without the present massive United States help, United States officials here now say the junta is spending too much time on politics at the expense of the war.

"If things don't get moving in 90 days we are lost," said one American official.

American sources said also that senior Americans here sounded out Mr. McNamara on the possibility of greater cooperation with the military junta.

McCone Attends Discussions

John A. McCone, Central Intelligence Agency director, and John A. McCona, head of the staff of Mr. McNamara's discussions. Mr. McCone is believed to be reorganizing his forces here following the recall of Washington of his chief operative, John H. Richardson.

Mr. Richardson's replacement, Pierre da Silva, who has been working in Hong Kong, came to Saigon with Mr. McCone. He is expected to take over his post early next year.

Mr. Richardson reportedly was recalled at the insistence of United States Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

Mr. Lodge was sent to South Viet Nam by the late President Kennedy after the administration decided to take a tougher line with President Ngo Dinh Diem's regime following its crackdown on Buddhists.

As head of the 200 or so CIA agents in South Viet Nam, Mr. Richardson worked closely with the regime, particularly the President's aggressive brother and chief adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu.

A conflict over tactics between Mr. Lodge and Mr. Richardson was believed at least partly responsible for Mr. Richardson's recall.

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