

which could be supported by the economy. Vietnam, in contrast, and to some extent Korea, are examples of conflicts in which our uncertainties have included both our own as well as enemy actions.

1. *The Diem Coup in 1963.*—From 1954 through early 1963, the U.S. role in South Vietnam was limited to providing training and military advisory activities. Fewer than 1,000 members of the U.S. armed forces were stationed in South Vietnam during the period 1954–1960. This number rose slightly in 1961, to 1,364. During 1962, an expansion occurred to almost 10,000³ (see Table 1). In early 1963, the situation seemed relatively stable. In February, Secretary McNamara stated, "The drive of the Vietcong supported by the North Vietnamese against the established government in South Vietnam has been blunted . . . There are a number of factors that are favorable, a number of indications that the South Vietnamese are stronger in relation to the Vietcong than they were a year ago."⁴

TABLE 1.—U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam

Date	Number
1954–60 (average)-----	650
Dec. 31, 1960-----	773
Dec. 31, 1961-----	1,364
Dec. 31, 1962-----	9,865
Dec. 31, 1963-----	16,575
June 30, 1964-----	21,000
Dec. 31, 1964-----	¹ 23,300
June 30, 1965-----	¹ 103,000
Dec. 31, 1965-----	184,314
June 30, 1966-----	¹ 322,000
Dec. 31, 1966 (estimated)-----	¹ 455,000

¹ Total of U.S. military personnel in southeast Asia.

Source: U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1967*, Part 1, p. 378; *1968 Budget*, p. 77.

However, later in the year Buddhist agitations against Diem increased markedly. Combined with the continued deterioration of Diem's governmental support, these events culminated in his death and the overthrow of his government in November 1963. There followed a very substantial increase in Vietcong activity and a weakening of the fabric of the South Vietnam society. In commenting on this period, Secretary McNamara stated that, "the political control structure . . . has, in certain cases, practically disappeared following the November 1 coup . . ."⁵

Nevertheless, the position of the Administration remained, in the words of the Secretary of Defense, "This is a Vietnamese war, and in the final analysis it must be fought and won by the Vietnamese."⁶ Several weeks after the coup, the Secretary announced that, upon completion of certain training missions, "small numbers of the U.S. personnel will be able to return by the end of this year." About 1,000 U.S. soldiers were returned to the U.S. during that period.

2. *The Vietcong Initiative in 1964.*—In 1964, the Vietcong stepped up their rate of attack, especially against the rural population. During the year, they killed an estimated 436 hamlet chiefs and other government officials at all echelons and kidnapped an additional 1131.⁷ To put that in perspective on the basis of relative populations, we can multiply the figures by 12 and think of 18,800 mayors, governors, and legislators in the United States being murdered or kidnapped in the space of one year. Also, it was reported that the Vietcong were using weapons of higher calibre than previously noted and that these weapons were being supplied by the North Vietnamese. These included 75 milli-

³ These figures are taken from a tabulation provided by General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and published in U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1967*, Part 1, 1966, p. 378.

⁴ Remarks by Secretary McNamara before a press conference on February 28, 1963, and published in U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Supplemental Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1966*, 1966, pp. 64–65 (hereafter referred to as *Senate Armed Services Hearings*).

⁵ Testimony by Secretary McNamara before the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on March 24, 1964, published in *Senate Armed Services Hearings*, p. 70.

⁶ Testimony by Secretary McNamara before the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives on January 27, 1964, published in *Senate Armed Services Hearings*, p. 67.

⁷ Department of State, *Aggression From the North, The Record of North Viet Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet Nam*, Washington, D.C., February 1965.