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forces. The primary US-directed effort has been the training of a Vietnamese instructor corps and the development of training programs throughout the Vietnamese army. US personnel are detailed to VNA training centers, to units at division level, and to major territorial commands to supervise progress and implementation of the training program. The US military group in South Vietnam has been held to its pre-Geneva size despite the near complete withdrawal of the French mission, which totaled about 2,500 personnel prior to the Armistice. However, a 350-man US Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (TERM) is being established in South Vietnam.

49. South Vietnam's embryonic air force (VNAF) has grown only slightly during the past year. Its current strength of 3,336 includes 103 trained officer and enlisted pilots and 100 pilot trainees. VNAF aircraft inventory is 143 planes, mostly trainer/liaison and transport types. Although the air force is receiving F8F piston fighter-type planes, it is unable to maintain even limited flight operations because of a lack of qualified maintenance personnel. The VNAF has a limited capability to provide air support to ground troops, artillery observation, air evacuation, liaison, and air lift for paratroop operations. No significant increase in VNAF capabilities appears likely during the next two to three years.

50. South Vietnam's navy is under operational control of the Chief of Staff of the VNA and under the administrative command of a senior naval officer. Personnel strength is 142 officers and 1,755 men, with a Marine Corps of 44 officers and 1,775 men. The forces afloat, which have been augmented over the past year by additions from the withdrawing French forces, include 3 submarine chasers (PC), 3 coastal minesweepers (MSC (O)), 14 amphibious vessels (2 LSM, 2 LSSL, 5 LSIL, 5 LCU), and 170 smaller amphibious and patrol craft. The Vietnamese navy has limited effectiveness, but it is capable of undertaking river patrol and minor coastal and amphibious operations. Capabilities should improve substantially in the near future be-

cause of continued US aid and intensive training programs which include technical training in the US and France.

51. We believe South Vietnam's military and security forces are capable of maintaining the government in power against any potential armed opposition now located south of the 17th parallel. In the event of large scale, concerted guerrilla warfare supported by infiltration of men and supplies from the north, relatively large areas of rural Vietnam probably would be lost to government control. In the event of full scale invasion, the Vietnamese forces at present probably could not delay for more than 60 days a Vietnamese Communist advance to the Ban Me Thout-Nha Trang line. If the trend toward improved internal security and increased effectiveness of the Civil Guard continues, it will be possible to step up training and reorganization of the VNA, thereby improving its capabilities during the period of this estimate. However, by mid-1957 Vietnamese forces will still be incapable of delaying for more than 90 days an advance by DRV forces beyond the Ban Me Thout-Nha Trang line.

#### Internal Security

52. The internal security situation in South Vietnam has improved substantially during the past year. The sects are no longer a major security problem for the GVN. Most of the important non-Communist sect leaders of a year ago have either fled the country, been killed or captured, lost control of their forces, or rallied to the government. Remaining sect armed bands are scattered and disorganized and probably total no more than 2,000. Although various bandit groups will probably continue to cause local disturbances, it is likely that organized non-Communist resistance will virtually disappear during the period of this estimate.

53. With the sect problem basically under control, the Communist underground represents the only serious threat to internal security in South Vietnam. Reports on Communist armed strength in the south over the past year have ranged from 5,000 to 10,000. Our best estimate of current strength is 8,000 to

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