

# NIOS II Assembly

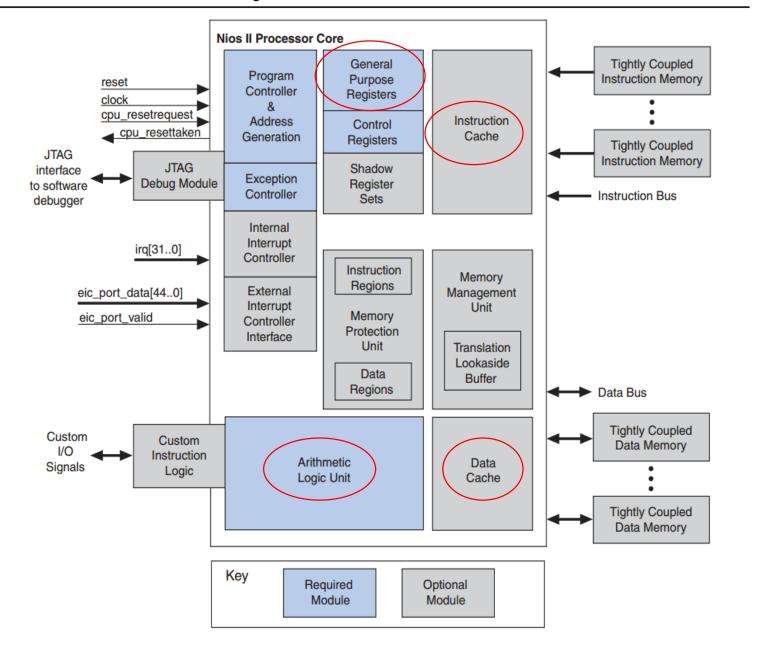


## What is Assembly?

- Assembly is a low level coding language specific to your processor's architecture
- You manipulate data located in registers using very basic instructions
- Any lower level would involve coding in 1s and 0s
- Programs written in high level languages like Java, C++, etc goes through a compiler that turns it into assembly
- That assembly then goes through an assembler and linker to the machine language (1s and 0s) for your specific platform

Figure 2-1. Nios II Processor Core Block Diagram

NIOS II Processor Architecture



### NIOS II Instruction Set

- Similar to assembly for most other architectures
- Conforms to GNU Assembler
- Refer to Altera documentation for full details
  - http://www.altera.com/literature/hb/nios2/n2cpu nii51017.pdf
  - http://www.altera.com/literature/hb/nios2/n2cpu\_nii5v1.pdf
- Useful introductions & the examples can be found:
  - ftp://ftp.altera.com/up/pub/Tutorials/DE2/Computer Organization/ n/tut nios2 introduction.pdf

## Registers

- NIOS II has 32 general purpose registers (gpr)
- You will use these for most of your assembly code
- Refer to documentation for usage:

http://www.altera.com/literature/hb/nios2/n2cpu\_nii5v 1.pdf

Table 3–5. The Nios II General-Purpose Registers

Register	Name	Function	Register	Name	Function
r0	zero	0x00000000	r16		Callee-saved register
r1	at	Assembler temporary	r17		Callee-saved register
r2		Return value	r18		Callee-saved register
r3		Return value	r19		Callee-saved register
r4		Register arguments	r20		Callee-saved register
r5		Register arguments	r21		Callee-saved register
r6		Register arguments	r22		Callee-saved register
r7		Register arguments	r23		Callee-saved register
r8		Caller-saved register	r24	et	Exception temporary
r9		Caller-saved register	r25	bt	Breakpoint temporary (1)
r10		Caller-saved register	r26	gp	Global pointer
r11		Caller-saved register	r27	sp	Stack pointer
r12		Caller-saved register	r28	fp	Frame pointer
r13		Caller-saved register	r29	ea	Exception return address
r14		Caller-saved register	r30	ba	Breakpoint return address (2)
r15		Caller-saved register	r31	ra	Return address

#### Notes:

- (1) r25 is used exclusively by the JTAG debug module. It is used as the breakpoint temporary (bt) register in the normal register set. In shadow register sets, r25 is reserved.
- (2) r30 is used as the breakpoint return address (ba) in the normal register set, and as the shadow register set status (sstatus) in each shadow register set. For details about sstatus, refer to The Status Register section.

## Arithmetic Logic Unit

- Responsible for arithmetic operations on CPU
- Includes arithmetic and logical operations (ALU), relational comparisons, and bit manipulations

Table 2–1. Operations Supported by the Nios II ALU

Category	Details
Arithmetic	The ALU supports addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division on signed and unsigned operands.
Relational	The ALU supports the equal, not-equal, greater-than-or-equal, and less-than relational operations (==, != >=, <) on signed and unsigned operands.
Logical	The ALU supports AND, OR, NOR, and XOR logical operations.
Shift and Rotate	The ALU supports shift and rotate operations, and can shift/rotate data by 0 to 31 bit positions per instruction. The ALU supports arithmetic shift right and logical shift right/left. The ALU supports rotate left/right.

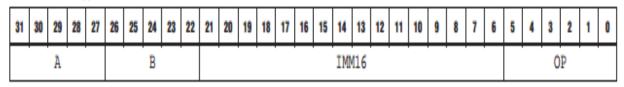
## Assembler Directives

- global symbol becomes visible outside assembled object file
- .include includes supporting files to source
- .text code (program) placed in text section of memory
- .data data that is placed in data section of memory
- .word 32bit expressions separated by commas
- .hword 16bit expressions separated by commas
- .ascii string of ASCII characters; can be comma separated strings
- .asciz same as .ascii with a zero byte termination at each string end
- .skip essentially allocates a set of memory for a variable
- .end end of the source code file

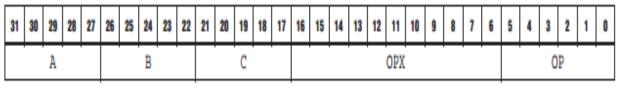
## Instruction Word Format

- 3 Types of instruction formats
  - I type, R type, J type
- 5 bit register fields (A, B, C)
- 6 bit opcode field (OP)
- 16 bit immediate data field (IMM16)
  - Meaning a 16 bit value, not register address

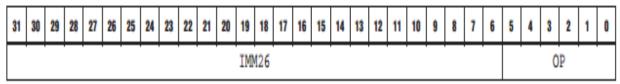
#### Table 8-1. I-Type Instruction Format



#### Table 8-2. R-Type Instruction Format



#### Table 8–3. J-Type Instruction Format



# NIOS II Assembly Programming

## Format of Syntax (e.g. R type)

Label: Opcode Operand, Operand #Comments

### **Example**

```
loop: # Label "loop"

Idh r6, 100(r5) # Load 16bit data at address in r5 + 100 bytes into r6

Idh r7, 104(r5) # Load 16bit data at address in r5 + 104 bytes into r7

add r8, r7, r6 # Add values in r6 and r7 into r8

br loop # Branch back to label called "loop"
```

### Fields

#### Label

• A symbolic address with a location in the program. A label is optional but is useful if you wish to jump to a specific location within the program's execution such as in loops or if statements

#### Opcode

The instruction, macro, etc.

### Operand(s)

• Can be constants (IMM16) or registers, etc

#### Comments

 Useful to comment on your code but this is optional. Comment should come after a "#" or ";" to indicate the end of the assembly instruction word

# Multiply (mul)

#### Example:

```
mul r6, r7, r8
```

If r7 = 10 and r8 = 10, then r6 would get 100.

mul multiply

Operation:  $rC \leftarrow (rA \times rB)_{31..0}$ 

Assembler Syntax: mul rC, rA, rB

Example: mul r6, r7, r8

Description: Multiplies rA times rB and stores the 32 low-order bits of the product to rC. The result is the

same whether the operands are treated as signed or unsigned integers.

Nios II processors that do not implement the mul instruction cause an unimplemented

instruction exception.

Usage: Carry Detection (unsigned operands):

Before or after the multiply operation, the carry out of the MSB of rC can be detected using the

following instruction sequence:

## Carry Detection (unsigned operands)

- mul rC, rA, rB
- mulxuu rD, rA, rB # rD is nonzero if carry occurred
- cmpne rD, rD, rO # rD is 1 if carry occurred, 0 if not

• The mulxuu instruction writes a nonzero value into rD if the multiplication of unsigned numbers generates a carry (unsigned overflow). If a 0/1 carry detection result is desired, follow the mulxuu with the cmpne instruction.

## Add (add)

## Example:

```
add r6, r7, r8
```

If r7 = 10 and r8 = 10, then r6 would get 20

add

Operation: rC ← rA + rB

Assembler Syntax: add rC, rA, rB

Example: add r6, r7, r8

Description: Calculates the sum of rA and rB. Stores the result in rC. Used for both signed and unsigned

addition.

Usage: Carry Detection (unsigned operands):

Following an add operation, a carry out of the MSB can be detected by checking whether the unsigned sum is less than one of the unsigned operands. The carry bit can be written to a register, or a conditional branch can be taken based on the carry condition. The following code

shows both cases:

## Add Immediate (addi)

## Example:

```
Addi rB, rA, -100
```

If rA = 103, then rB = rA - 100 = 3

addi add immediate

Operation:  $rB \leftarrow rA + \sigma (IMM16)$ 

Assembler Syntax: addi rB, rA, IMM16

Example: addi r6, r7, -100

Description: Sign-extends the 16-bit immediate value and adds it to the value of rA. Stores the sum in rB.

Usage: Carry Detection (unsigned operands):

Following an addi operation, a carry out of the MSB can be detected by checking whether the unsigned sum is less than one of the unsigned operands. The carry bit can be written to a register, or a conditional branch can be taken based on the carry condition. The following code

shows both cases:

## Branching and Jumping

Example (different conditions, e.g., greater than, bgt or bgtu):

```
bgt r6, r7, top_of_loop
```

If r6 = 10 and r7 = 0, then the program jumps to the instruction labeled by "top\_of\_loop:"

#### bgt branch if greater than signed

Operation: if ((signed) rA > (signed) rB)

then PC ← label

else PC  $\leftarrow$  PC + 4

Assembler Syntax: bgt rA, rB, label

Example: bgt r6, r7, top of loop

Description: If (signed) rA > (signed) rB, then bgt transfers program control to the instruction at label.

Pseudo-instruction: bgt is implemented with the blt instruction by swapping the register operands.

# Conditional Branching (Jumping)

Instruction	Description
bge bgeu	These instructions provide relative branches that compare two register values and branch if the expression is true. Refer to the "Comparison Instructions"
bgt	section of this chapter for a description of the relational operations
bgtu	implemented.
ble	And and an annual section of the sec
bleu	
blt	
bltu	
beq	
bne	

# Unconditional Jumping

Table 3-47: Unconditional Jump and Call Instructions

nstruction	Description			
call	This instruction calls a subroutine using an immediate value as the subroutine's absoluted address, and stores the return address in register ra.			
callr	This instruction calls a subroutine at the absolute address contained in a register, and stores the return address in register ra. This instruction serves the roll of dereferencing a C function pointer.			
ret	The ret instruction is used to return from subroutines called by call or callr. ret loads and executes the instruction specified by the address in register ra.			
jmp	The jmp instruction jumps to an absolute address contained in a register. jmp is used to implement switch statements of the C programming language.			
jmpi	The jmpi instruction jumps to an absolute address using an immediate value to determine the absolute address.			
br	This instruction branches relative to the current instruction. A signed immediate value gives the offset of the next instruction to execute.			

## Load Instructions

- Used to move data from memory & I/O to GPR
  - Idb Load Byte (8 bit)
  - Idbu Load Byte Unsigned (8 bit)
  - Idh Load Halfword (16 bit)
  - Idhu Load Halfword Unsigned (16 bit)
  - Idw Load Word (32 bit)
- This processor is byte addressable so data in the memory can be "indirectly" accessed via the appropriate address (pre-loaded in the registers)
- Example: 0xF230.N. Hwang University of Washington Electrical Engineering

## Load Word (Idw)

#### Example:

#### ldw r6, 100(r5)

Adds 100 bytes to r5 (moves pointer down 25 words, i.e., 100 bytes) Loads the 32bit value at that location to r6

#### ldw / Idwio

#### load 32-bit word from memory or I/O peripheral

Operation:  $rB \leftarrow Mem32[rA + \sigma (IMM14)]$ Assembler Syntax: ldw rB,  $byte_offset(rA)$ 

ldwio rB, byte\_offset(rA)

Example: 1dw r6, 100(r5)

Description: Computes the effective byte address specified by the sum of rA and the instruction's signed

16-bit immediate value. Loads register rB with the memory word located at the effective byte address. The effective byte address must be word aligned. If the byte address is not a multiple

of 4, the operation is undefined.

Usage: In processors with a data cache, this instruction may retrieve the desired data from the cache

instead of from memory. Use the ldwio instruction for peripheral I/O. In processors with a data cache, ldwio bypasses the cache and memory. Use the ldwio instruction for peripheral I/O. In processors with a data cache, ldwio bypasses the cache and is guaranteed to generate an

Avalon-MM data transfer. In processors without a data cache, 1dwio acts like 1dw.

For more information on data cache, refer to the Cache and Tightly Coupled Memory chapter of

the Nios II Software Developer's Handbook.

## Store Word (stw)

#### Example:

#### stw r6, 100(r5)

If r5 = the address to an array, r6 would get the 25<sup>th</sup> element of that array 100 is the number of bytes, there are 4 bytes (32bits) per word

#### stw / stwio

#### store word to memory or I/O peripheral

Operation: Mem32[rA + σ (IMM16)] ← rB
Assembler Syntax: stw rB, byte\_offset (rA)

stwio rB, byte\_offset(rA)

Example: stw r6, 100 (r5)

Description: Computes the effective byte address specified by the sum of rA and the instruction's signed

16-bit immediate value. Stores rB to the memory location specified by the effective byte

address. The effective byte address must be word aligned. If the byte address is not a multiple

of 4, the operation is undefined.

Usage: In processors with a data cache, this instruction may not generate an Avalon-MM data transfer

immediately. Use the stwio instruction for peripheral I/O. In processors with a data cache, stwio bypasses the cache and is guaranteed to generate an Avalon-MM bus cycle. In

processors without a data cache, stwio acts like stw.

# Move Immediate Address (movia)

## Example:

#### movia r6, function\_address

A pseudo-instruction that combines two others (include nios\_macros.s)

If the address of function\_address is 0x3000, then r6 = 0x3000

#### movia move immediate address into word

Operation: rB ← label

Assembler Syntax: movia rB, label

Example: movia r6, function\_address

Description: Writes the address of label to rB.

Pseudo-instruction: movia is implemented as:

orhi rB, r0, %hiadj(label)

addi rB, rB, %lo(label)

# Implementation of Sum of Products (SoP)

- It has been shown that SoP or Multiply Accumulate (MAC) is the key element for most DSP algorithms
- Let's go over some basic instructions and write assembly code to implement a sum of products
- Full assembly instruction set can be found in reference manual

$$Y = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} a_n * x_n$$

$$Y = a_0 * x_0 + a_1 * x_1 + \dots + a_{N-1} x_{N-1}$$

- Two basic operations:
  - 1. Multiplication
  - 2. Addition
- Two basic assembly instructions

## SoP Code

- Code from the NIOS II tutorial
- Implements dot product

$$Y = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} a_n * b_n$$

$$Y = a_0 * b_0 + a_1 * b_1 + \dots + a_{N-1}b_{N-1}$$

 Essentially Sum of Products (SoP)

```
.include "nios macros.s"
.global start
start:
        movia r2, AVECTOR
                                           /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
                                           /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
        movia r3, BVECTOR
                                           ← Only assign the address of variable N
        movia r4, N
                                           /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
        ldw
               r4, 0(r4)
                                           /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
        add
                r5, r0, r0
                                           /* Load the next element of vector A */
LOOP: ldw
                r6, 0(r2)
                                           /* Load the next element of vector B */
        ldw
               r7, 0(r3)
               r8, r6, r7
                                           /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
        mul
                                           /* Add to the sum */
        add
               r5, r5, r8
               r2, r2, 4
                                           /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
         addi
                                           /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
               r3, r3, 4
        addi
                                           /* Decrement the counter */
         subi
               r4, r4, 1
                r4, r0, LOOP
                                           /* Loop again if not finished */
         bgt
                r5, DOT PRODUCT(r0)
                                           /* Store the result in memory */
STOP: br
                STOP
N:
                                           /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
       5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                           /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
.word 2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
                                           /* Specify the elements of vector B */
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

## Start

- Includes macros used by NIOS II to implement the pseudo-instruction "movia"
- \_start is the default to indicate the start of the application program

```
.include "nios_macros.s"
.global _start
start:
                                            /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
        movia r2, AVECTOR
                                            /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
         movia r3, BVECTOR
        movia r4, N
                r4, 0(r4)
                                            /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
                r5, r0, r0
                                            /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
                                            /* Load the next element of vector A */
LOOP: ldw
                r6, 0(r2)
                                            /* Load the next element of vector B */
                r7, 0(r3)
                r8, r6, r7
                                            /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
        mul
         add
                r5, r5, r8
                                            /* Add to the sum */
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
                r2, r2, 4
        addi
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
                r3, r3, 4
         addi
                                            /* Decrement the counter */
                r4, r4, 1
         subi
                                            /* Loop again if not finished */
                r4, r0, LOOP
         bgt
                                            /* Store the result in memory */
                r5, DOT PRODUCT(r0)
STOP:
                STOP
N:
                                            /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
.word 5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
.word 2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector B */
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

## Data

- Number of Samples, N = 6
- Size of DOT\_PRODUCT = 32bits (\_skip 4)

n	a <sub>n</sub>	b <sub>n</sub>
0	5	2
1	3	14
2	-6	-3
3	19	2
4	8	-5
5	12	36

```
.include "nios_macros.s"
.global start
start:
                                           /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
        movia r2, AVECTOR
        movia r3, BVECTOR
                                           /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
        movia r4, N
               r4, 0(r4)
                                           /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
                                           /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
                r5, r0, r0
                                           /* Load the next element of vector A */
LOOP:
               r6, 0(r2)
        ldw
                                           /* Load the next element of vector B */
               r7, 0(r3)
               r8, r6, r7
                                           /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
        mul
                r5, r5, r8
                                           /* Add to the sum */
                                           /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
               r2, r2, 4
                                           /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
               r3, r3, 4
                                           /* Decrement the counter */
               r4, r4, 1
        subi
                r4, r0, LOOP
                                           /* Loop again if not finished */
        bgt
                                           /* Store the result in memory */
                r5, DOT_PRODUCT(r0)
STOP:
                STOP
N:
                                           /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
.word 5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                           /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
.word 2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
                                           /* Specify the elements of vector B */
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

## Setup

- Puts addresses that point to the sample data  $(a_n \text{ and } b_n)$  into registers r2 and r3
- Puts size of sample, N into r4
- Sets accumulator r5 to 0 (r0 is zero)

```
.include "nios macros.s"
.global
        start
start:
        movia r2, AVECTOR
                                            /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
        movia r3, BVECTOR
                                            /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
        movia r4, N
                                            /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
               r4, 0(r4)
                                            /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
        add
                r5, r0, r0
LOOP:
        ldw
                                            /* Load the next element of vector A */
                r6, 0(r2)
                                            /* Load the next element of vector B */
        ldw
               r7, 0(r3)
                r8, r6, r7
                                            /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
                                            /* Add to the sum */
                r5, r5, r8
        add
               r2, r2, 4
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
                r3, r3, 4
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
                                            /* Decrement the counter */
        subi
               r4, r4, 1
                r4, r0, LOOP
                                            /* Loop again if not finished */
        bgt
                r5, DOT PRODUCT(r0)
                                            /* Store the result in memory */
STOP:
                STOP
        br
N:
                                            /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
        5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector B */
       2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

## Loop

- Loads elements of vectors into registers r6 and r7
- Multiplies r6 (a) and r7 (x) and puts product into r8
- Update SoP by adding the product to r5
- Updates r2 and r3 pointers by adding 4 bytes to pointer (32 bit word)
- Decrements the counter N by 1

```
.include "nios macros.s"
        start
start:
                                            /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
         movia r2, AVECTOR
                                            /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
         movia r3, BVECTOR
         movia r4, N
                                            /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
                r4, 0(r4)
                                            /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
         add
                r5, r0, r0
LOOP: ldw
                                            /* Load the next element of vector A */
                r6, 0(r2)
                                            /* Load the next element of vector B */
         ldw
                r7, 0(r3)
                r8, r6, r7
                                            /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
                                            /* Add to the sum */
         add
                r5, r5, r8
                r2, r2, 4
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
         addi
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
         addi
                r3, r3, 4
                                            /* Decrement the counter */
                r4, r4, 1
         subi
                r4, r0, LOOP
                                            /* Loop again if not finished */
         bgt
                                            /* Store the result in memory */
                r5, DOT PRODUCT(r0)
STOP: br
                STOP
N:
                                            /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
.word 5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
.word 2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector B */
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

## Store Data

- Compares r4 and r0
- If r4 > r0, then branch to label "LOOP"
- When the counter r4
   decrements to 0, then the
   program won't branch
   anymore
- Store the result in r5 into the memory allocated to DOT\_PRODUCT at that address location + zero
- End application

```
.include "nios macros.s"
.global start
start:
        movia r2, AVECTOR
                                            /* Register r2 is a pointer to vector A */
                                            /* Register r3 is a pointer to vector B */
        movia r3, BVECTOR
        movia r4, N
                                            /* Register r4 is used as the counter for loop iterations */
                r4, 0(r4)
                r5, r0, r0
                                            /* Register r5 is used to accumulate the product */
LOOP: ldw
                                            /* Load the next element of vector A */
                r6, 0(r2)
                r7, 0(r3)
                                            /* Load the next element of vector B */
        ldw
                r8, r6, r7
                                            /* Compute the product of next pair of elements */
        mul
                                            /* Add to the sum */
                r5, r5, r8
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector A */
                r2, r2, 4
        addi
                                            /* Increment the pointer to vector B */
                r3, r3, 4
        addi
                r4, r4, 1
                                            /* Decrement the counter */
         subi
                r4, r0, LOOP
                                            /* Loop again if not finished */
        bgt
                                            /* Store the result in memory */
                r5, DOT PRODUCT(r0)
STOP:
                STOP
N:
                                            /* Specify the number of elements */
.word
AVECTOR:
.word 5, 3, -6, 19, 8, 12
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector A */
BVECTOR:
        2, 14, -3, 2, -5, 36
                                            /* Specify the elements of vector B */
DOT PRODUCT:
.skip
```

Figure 6. A program that computes the dot product of two vectors.

# Calling Assembly Function in C program

- Write your assembly code in a .s file
- Use the ".global" directive at the top to allow this function to be accessed globally by your C program
- The label, sop: in this case, is the name of the function

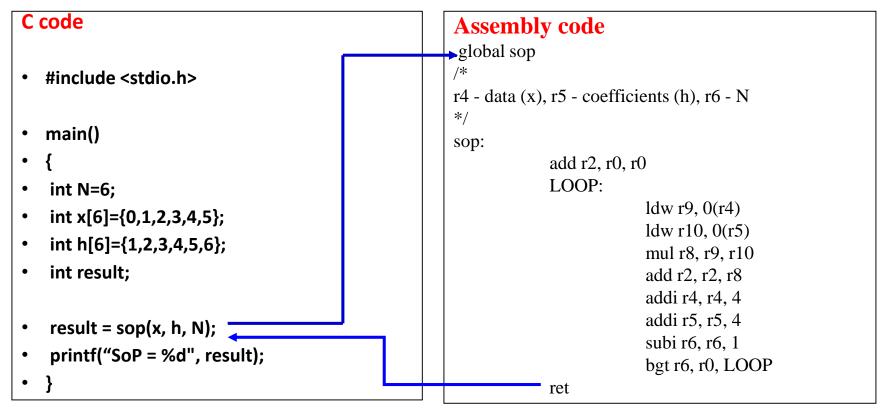
```
.global sop
r4 - data (x)
r5 - coefficients (h)
r6 - N
sop:
                add r2, r0, r0
                LOOP:
                               Idw r9, 0(r4)
                               ldw r10, 0(r5)
                                mul r8, r9, r10
                               add r2, r2, r8
                                addi r4, r4, 4
                                addi r5, r5, 4
                               subi r6, r6, 1
                                bgt r6, r0, LOOP
                ret
```

# Calling Assembly Function in C program

- Check the user guide to see the registers used for arguments and returns
- For this, r4, r5, r6 are the arguments
- r2 is the return value
- So in your C function you would call:
- int result = sop(x, h, N);

```
.global sop
r4 - data (x)
r5 - coefficients (h)
r6 - N
sop:
            add r2, r0, r0
            LOOP:
                         Idw r9, 0(r4)
                         Idw r10, 0(r5)
                         mul r8, r9, r10
                         add r2, r2, r8
                         addi r4, r4, 4
                         addi r5, r5, 4
                         subi r6, r6, 1
                         bgt r6, r0, LOOP
            ret
```

## Calling Assembly Function in C program



#### Inputs

- One input: always using r4
- Many inputs: using these register in order r4,r5,r6... (or use r4 as the pointer to memory)

#### **Outputs**

- One output: always using r2
- Many outputs: use r2 as the pointer to memory