

# Brass Play Games with GI Lives

Fifth Estate Collective

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from Special and AP Dispatches

WASHINGTON—Gen. David M. Shoup, former commandant of the Marine corps, charges that an ambitious elite of high ranking officers, preferring war to peace, is turning the United States into “a militaristic and aggressive nation.”

Writing in the April issue of the magazine Atlantic, Shoup says that the search for promotion, interservice rivalry and an eagerness to test military doctrines lies behind the deep American involvement in Vietnam and the heavy invasion of the Dominican Republic.

Shoup, a frequent critic of the U.S. role in Vietnam, contends military brass encouraged the Johnson administration to widen the war in 1964 and wanted to test new equipment and young troops and to put hypothetical problems to work in the battlefield.

He calls the bombing of Vietnam, “one of the most wasteful and expensive hoaxes ever to be put over on the American people.”

Apart from supporting ground troops, the bombing has served no purpose, he says.

Much of the reporting on air actions he terms “misleading...propaganda” disseminated by the rival Navy and Air Force.

The general sees little difference on the ground. There, he says, the Army and Marines were chafing to test new equipment and tactics and engaged in a “race to build forces” that did “not slow down until both became overextended, overcommitted, and depleted at home.”

The 20,000 soldiers and marines landed in the Dominican Republic in 1965 were a waste, Shoup says.

The two services there embarked “on an impressive race to test (their) respective mobility,” he says, and “only a fraction of the force deployed was needed or justified.”

The general retired from the Joint Chiefs of Staff just before the events he described in his article.

Shoup, who won the Medal of Honor at Tarawa in World War II and retired in 1963, has criticized his peers before. But the indictment has never been so relentless and severe as in his new six-page article.

Indeed, military observers cannot recall a modern parallel involving so high ranking an officer.

In Shoup's view, the warlike propensities of high officers is a natural product of their training, selection and code.

They are taught to obey, not to question and they rise by “conforming to the expected patterns and pleasing the senior officers,” he writes.

“Civilians can scarcely understand or even believe that many ambitious military professionals truly yearn for wars and the opportunities for glory and distinction afforded only in combat,” he writes. “A career of peacetime duty is a dull and frustrating prospect for the normal regular officer to contemplate.”

Since the end of World War II, the general says, these officers have gained a new respect. “The voice and views of the professional military people became increasingly prominent.”

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