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SIGMA I-66

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

JOINT WAR GAMES AGENCY

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

SEPTEMBER 1966

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SIGMA I - 66

12-27 September 1966

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

JOINT WAR GAMES AGENCY
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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

[REDACTED]



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

CM-1890-66

1 November 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF SIGMA I-66

SUBJECT: Final Report

Enclosed is a copy of the Final Report on the
politico-military game, SIGMA I-66.

EARLE G. WHEELER
— Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Enclosure

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SIGMA I-66

FINAL REPORT

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SIGMA I-66

FINAL REPORT

Foreword

This is the Final Report on SIGMA I-66, a senior-level, interagency, politico-military game conducted in the Pentagon during the period 13 to 22 September 1966. The first volume, a Fact Book, was published prior to the game. A second volume, Game Documentation, contained the initial scenarios, team messages and scenario projections. This third volume includes a revised list of game participants, a transcript of the video-film summary of SIGMA I-66, a Game Commentary, a transcript of the Senior-level Critique and extracts from the Action-level Critique.

The object of SIGMA I-66 was to examine some of the major issues, problems and questions associated with de-escalation of the war in Vietnam.

In addition to this report, a classified, documentary-type film summary of SIGMA I-66 is available upon request.

SIGMA I-66

VIDEO TAPE SUMMARY

(Off-stage voice)

The following material is Secret, not for foreign dissemination. SIGMA I-66 is hypothetical, based on an interagency, political-military game conducted in the Pentagon between 13 and 22 September 1966.

(Briefer)

SIGMA opened with Ho Chi Minh privately informing the United States that he was prepared to withdraw immediately, all North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam and adjacent areas and that he had requested the National Liberation Front to cease hostilities. In return, he asked for announcement of a cease-fire including discontinuance of bombing in the North, announcement of withdrawal schedules for US forces from Southeast Asia and guarantees of Free elections.

(BGen James D. Kemp, USAF, Game Director)

Between 1962 and 1966 the conflict in Southeast Asia has been studied in many ways, including five interagency games here in the Pentagon. These all examined ways of forcing the enemy to discontinue aggression.

There are study groups still addressing this problem and the related one of inducing the enemy to negotiate.

SIGMA I-66 differed from its forerunners and current studies by dealing with some of the problems which may be encountered if the Communist side does decide to begin talking and stop shooting.

In our pre-game discussions in Washington, Honolulu, and Vietnam, most of the people interviewed believed the conflict would most likely end with the enemy fading away after he had been thoroughly defeated much as he did in Malaya and Greece. There would be difficulties associated with this situation -- including the abrasive presence of large allied forces. However, basic US military objectives would have been achieved. That kind of ending assumes too much of the problem away.

[REDACTED]

The authors of SIGMA, therefore, were given the task of devising a situation which forced the community to look at some harder questions and the scenario which resulted by the end of the game, although by no means predictive, was disconcertingly plausible.

SIGMA involved six senior and action level teams, each representing one of the following: the United States, the Soviet Union, the Viet Cong, North Vietnam, Red China, and the Government of South Vietnam. Action level players analyzed the scenario situation and prepared for afternoon meetings with their seniors. After briefing by action team captains, guidance provided by the seniors was used as the basis for a move message from the team to Control. It then became Control's job to introduce logical inputs from third countries, fate and other influences and to prepare a scenario projection. Three such moves were followed by final critiques on 27 September.

(Col T. J. McDonald, USA, Chief, Cold War Division)

The initial scenario for SIGMA advanced time one year. The Communists had suffered bloody military setbacks in the South, mounting industrial damage in the North and a typhoon which destroyed half of their rice crop. The Viet Cong morale was low and some North Vietnamese divisions had been badly mauled, however, the North Vietnamese military establishment was intact.

In early 1967, despite constitutional reforms, there was a highly unstable situation in Saigon. It resulted from inflation, inefficiency and corruption.

By his peace overture, Ho intended to turn the American's strength against them, winning by psycho-political means the victory which had been denied him on the battlefield. The Communists wanted a US signature on a military freeze-in-place and early troop withdrawal as a prelude to all-out subversion in South Vietnam. They felt that time was on their side.

In their first deliberation, the US team regarded Ho's offer as a ploy to gain respite. They started exploratory talks, secretly and bilaterally, through Ambassadors at Prague, while continuing offensive operations.

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong teams disagreed as to just how flexible they could afford to be in avoiding military contact in the face of continuing US pressures.

[REDACTED]

The Red Chinese were incensed at Ho's unilateral decision to bargain and determined to obstruct the negotiations.

The Russians were relieved at prospects for negotiations and sought to interpose themselves as "honest brokers."

Saigon, preoccupied with conspiracy, shifted from the newly established constitutional government back to Air Marshal Ky and tight military controls. It was unenthusiastic about negotiations.

Control's first scenario projection advanced game time to 17 September 1967. It confirmed withdrawal of two North Vietnamese divisions from South Vietnam. The tactical differences between the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong teams were reconciled by Control having their forces in South Vietnam seek to avoid military contact, withdraw to sanctuary areas and fade into the population. Control had Ho's emissary at Prague indicate willingness to accept impartial verification of North Vietnamese troop withdrawals. In return, he asked immediate discontinuance of all military activity against North Vietnam. He deferred discussions on other points until formal negotiations could be started.

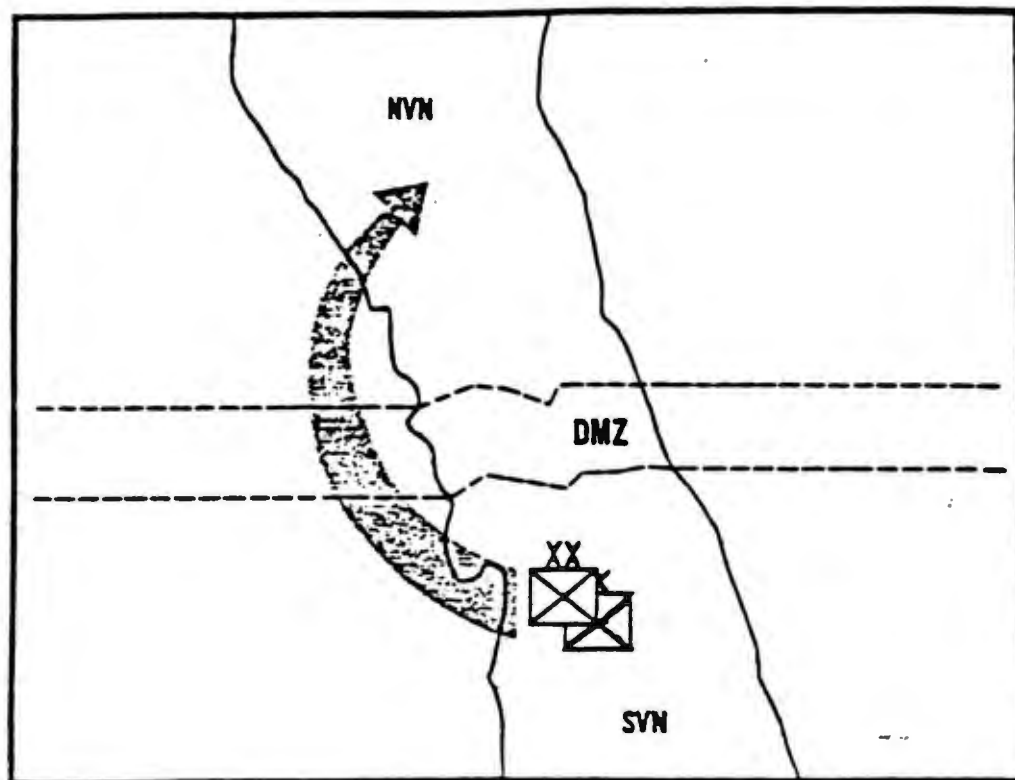
As an administrative aside, Control directed all teams to privately state initial bargaining demands and fall-back positions on key negotiating points. These included pre-conditions, participants, format and scope of talks as well as specifics with respect to formalizing a cease-fire, verification and guarantees, military withdrawal, demobilization and elections.

In the second move, the United States team was extremely leary of being thrust into a negotiating situation without adequate guarantees. They continued the air attacks on the North and were determined to maintain freedom of movement for allied forces throughout South Vietnam. The NVN team sought to polarize world opinion against the apparent continued aggressiveness of the US in the face of Ho's peaceful overture.

Control, at its second meeting, used the bargaining positions of the six teams to de-escalate the action on the premise that Communist avoidance of military contact would allow Free World forces a rather wide range of maneuver without bloodshed.

Figure 1

NVN WITHDRAWAL



Public information media and International Control Commission reports convinced much of the world that the North Vietnamese were in fact withdrawing. United States intelligence confirmed movement of elements of two North Vietnamese divisions but indicated that the enemy was continuing to move supplies into South Vietnam. It appeared to Control that opinion pressures would progressively inhibit United States military action even though United States demands for guarantees were never satisfactorily met. The divergence of team bargaining positions, in Control's judgment, precluded a joint United States/North Vietnamese announcement suspending hostilities. However, Control in its second projection had the United States unilaterally suspend air attacks against North Vietnam on 19 September -- six days after Ho's demarche. In spite of world opinion, the United States continued other offensive military activities.

[REDACTED]

During October, Control depicted the tempo of United States military operations continuing and the Communists seeking to avoid contact.

In November 1967, hostilities de-escalated to 1959 levels. Although United States intelligence held that two North Vietnamese Divisions were training along the Cambodian border, the United States and the Government of Vietnam stepped up the Revolutionary Development Program both in areas long held by the government and in so-called "grey" areas. Pressures on the Congress and the President to bring the boys home were somewhat tempered by candid and effective speeches by administration spokesman reiterating Secretary Rusk's warning that all could still be lost by premature concessions.

On the 3rd of November, the United States unilaterally announced the withdrawal of three US Air Force squadrons from South Vietnam to Clark Air Force Base in what was widely regarded as a concession to critics of continued US/GVN air patrolling over both North and South Vietnam. On 12 November, Control hypothesized simultaneous announcements in Hanoi and Washington that formal negotiations would begin in Rangoon on 25 November. Conferees were to be the United States, South Vietnam, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front, the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic.

During the period preceeding the conference, a number of developments raised serious doubts, on the US side, regarding the desirability of formal negotiations. These included evidence of continued North Vietnamese infiltration of supplies, a Viet Cong ambush of Government of Vietnam administrators, and a fire-fight between a US patrol and Viet Cong defending an arms cache. Further, aerial reconnaissance of the North revealed extensive repairs at major airfields and industrial plants, an increase in surface-to-air missiles, new MIG-21's on fields near Hanoi, and an even larger number of Soviet ships arriving at Haiphong.

Nevertheless, formal negotiations began at Rangoon on schedule. The USSR provided the first chairman. Four sub-committees were formed to consider:

1. Formal agreement covering cessation of hostilities, including the implications of Government of Vietnam internal sovereignty.

[REDACTED]

2. Withdrawal and/or neutralization of troops now in South Vietnam.

3. Elections within South Vietnam.

4. Supervision, enforcement, and guarantees.

The subcommittees were to reach accomodation before presentation at plenary session.

Control finessed the question of National Liberation Front participation at negotiations, in their second projection, by simply including them as participants in the negotiation.

Among the Communist teams, it was generally considered that the National Liberation Front had the status as a principal. On the US/SVN side, the rationale for their presence was somewhat blurred and the US team went on to consider the other points.

(BRIEFER)

As a result of the third team move, Control, on 25 December 1967, depicted progress at Rangoon as hardly discernible and the military incident rate in South Vietnam beginning to rise.

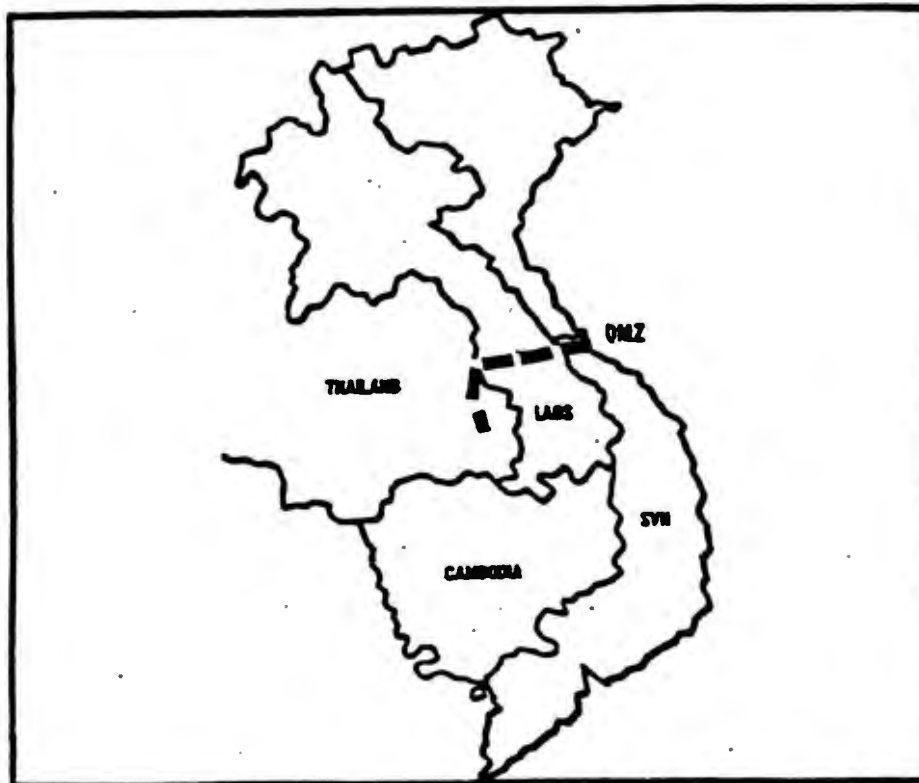
The majority of US/Free World forces began to consolidate in their base areas while South Vietnamese Popular Forces (many of whom were now constabulary) deployed to provide a security platoon in each South Vietnamese village. Regular South Vietnamese forces were shifted to guard the western border and assumed blocking positions south of the demilitarized zone.

The US backed a massive, internationally sponsored development program, not only for South Vietnam but for neighboring Asian countries, as well.

Construction was begun on a lateral route across the northern neck of South Vietnam, through Laos, into Thailand.

Figure 2

PROPOSED ROAD AND RAIL ROUTE



This project was linked to strategic development of all South-east Asia and was, also, expected to provide a barrier to Communist infiltration.

In effect, the struggle was converted from a military conflict to peaceful competition.

Since the United States was keeping up some military pressures in the South, it was widely condemned for perpetuating the war. By Christmas, the Communist side was preparing to walk out of the negotiation unless the Americans accepted a formal freeze-in-place for all military forces. The US side had no intention of making this concession.

During the third move, Control diverted the Viet Cong and South Vietnamese teams to examine grounds for possible collaboration.

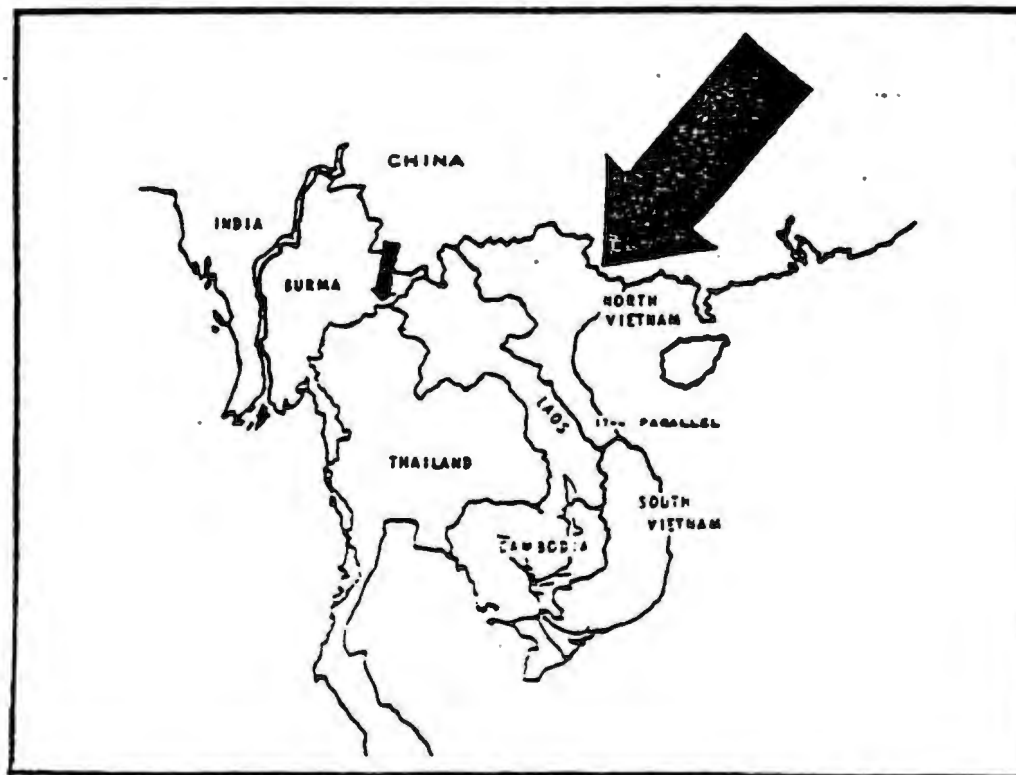
The Viet Cong bargained cynically, behind a moderate facade.

The GVN was willing to recognize the Viet Cong as a political party provided they severed ties with Hanoi and dismantled their military and propaganda apparatus.

Throughout the game, Control sought to moderate a fiercely militant Chinese attitude. When first apprised of Ho's overture, Red China moved five divisions coercively to forward positions along the North Vietnamese border. They resisted Soviet participation in negotiations and assumed the hardest possible line when they did attend. To dilute Soviet influence, they placed an embargo on Soviet aid shipments transiting China. In their final move, Red China vented their frustrations by attempting to entice other Communist delegations to withdraw from negotiations and by deploying thirty-five divisions to staging areas in South China. As they withdrew from the conference they mounted a five-division thrust across Burma to the Thai border.

Figure 3

RED CHINA MOVES



[REDACTED]

It was there that SIGMA I-66 ended on 25 December 1967. Basically, the US had shifted emphasis toward massive economic development. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were concentrating on psychological action. The Soviet Union was working hard to achieve political and diplomatic advances as an arbiter and the Red Chinese were turning toward military action. Nevertheless, the key to final victory, if such a term has a meaning, appeared to focus, more than ever before, on social developments in South Vietnam.

NEGOTIATIONS

A review of team bargaining positions indicates that pre-conditions for discussions or formal negotiations were not considered in detail by the teams because Control had already advanced play into a negotiating situation.

While the US team did not ignore previous real-life commitments of the Administration to "talk any place any time", they were extremely wary of entering formal negotiations. By talking, even secretly, with the North Vietnamese at Prague, they felt they were fulfilling the President's offer for discussions.

On this question of the forum, team positions were split between those favoring a small meeting of only the nations involved and those favoring a return to the aegis of the 1954 Geneva Conference. The US team rejected the Geneva '54 approach since they felt French participation was undesirable and they did not want to discuss either Laos or Cambodia, which were parties to the '54 Accords. The US team wanted a conference of Asian powers, limited if possible to North Vietnam, the US and South Vietnam. They were willing to accept participation by the Koreans, Australians, New Zealand and the Philippines and both the Russians and the Chinese on the Communist side. They never actually agreed to NLF participation except as part of the North Vietnamese delegation.

SUPERVISION

Neither side desired an international supervisory commission. However, as a fall-back position, they all would have accepted some form of reconstituted ICC.

The Soviets favored the ICC to supervise troop withdrawals, whereas Red China demanded formation of an "International Peace Commission."

[REDACTED]

The United States would have accepted a Joint Military Commission, composed of representatives from the combatants, to settle disputes during the withdrawal phase.

There was general agreement that the scope of the conference should be limited initially to a settlement in South Vietnam, leaving more complex problems of the rest of Southeast Asia until later. China alone, demanded that the conference address the problems of all Southeast Asia, with the intention of making the conference cumbersome to the point of being self-defeating. This was, apparently, the US team's reason for avoiding a larger area of focus.

Although both sides agreed in principle to the phased pull-out from South Vietnam of US and North Vietnamese forces, the US team was determined that all North Vietnamese would be out of the country and that local conditions favored a complete US withdrawal before they pulled out the last US troops. The teams paid little attention to specific troop strengths, as hypothesized in the game, or to mechanics of reduction, but the scenario provided approximately 500,000 US and Free World forces in Vietnam, compared to some 78,000 North Vietnamese regulars when the game began in September 1967-- a ratio of approximately seven to one. In withdrawals on a man-for-man basis, the Free World would still have had 422,000 troops in South Vietnam after the last North Vietnamese regular had been withdrawn. On a parity basis 7,000 Free World troops would have to be pulled out for every thousand North Vietnamese regulars.

In SIGMA at the end of 1967 the strength of the GVN regular military forces was 285,000 while VC main forces totaled 62,000 regulars. The GVN had some 318,000 para-military troops and the VC had 120,000. The total strength for all Free World forces in Vietnam was 1,100,000 opposed by some 260,000 Communists.

One of the US team's major concerns was the enemy's capability for hiding his weapons, biding his time, and emerging at a later date to renew the conflict. The US team correctly assumed that the enemy would escalate hostilities rather than see the Revolutionary Development Program succeed.

All the teams felt that their side could win free elections in South Vietnam. The GVN was willing to permit the NLF to function as a regular party. The US would have insisted on a

[REDACTED]

new party and preferred that they only participate as individuals. The US team believed that its New Society Program would defeat the Communists at the polls and felt they could gauge short-term results through the March 1968 elections which were scheduled to elect one-third of the SVN National Assembly. The Communists were planning a Popular Front Party only covertly guided from Hanoi. They, also, believed they could steadily expand their influence.

COMMENTARY

Throughout SIGMA, the US team resisted proposals to reduce military pressures until they had iron clad guarantees that enemy concessions would be implemented. They feared that premature relaxation would reduce Ho's motivation toward meaningful negotiations and provide an opportunity for him to dangerously improve his posture. Furthermore, they interpreted Ho's offer to stop shooting and to begin talking for what it was, a ploy to gain respite.

They believed, also, that curtailment of pressures would raise doubts with respect to US determination and that a military let-up might erode Free World resolve.

The US team felt strongly that maintaining the tempo of offensive operations would put them in a better bargaining position when formal negotiations began. They were determined to extract more in return for suspension of air attacks than Ho's unsupported assertion that his forces were withdrawing.

The US team was aware of the pressures that would exist to force early de-escalation but felt these could be withstood by determined US leadership.

On the North Vietnamese side, instead of providing verification guarantees as the US team desired, the enemy propagandized withdrawal of some North Vietnamese forces and the fact that Communist troops in South Vietnam had stopped offensive action.

At the Critique, participants in SIGMA were clearly divided on the US team's handling of this question. There were those who would maintain the air offensive until North Vietnamese withdrawals were officially verified and who would then keep

[REDACTED]

up search and destroy operations in South Vietnam until a formal peace settlement was achieved. There was a second group that believed that the air attacks on the North either should, or would have to be suspended with the first evidence that Hanoi was really de-escalating and that there would have to be further military de-escalation in South Vietnam if opinion pressures demanded.

It was Control's assessment that opinion pressures would quickly cause the US to suspend the air attacks and inevitably inhibit Free World offensive operations in South Vietnam.

In later discussions, it was apparent that a number of participants felt the US team could have kept up the military pressures longer if it had done more to appear forthcoming and peaceful in intent while exposing the Communist ploy.

Instead of beginning secret discussions with Ho Chi Minh at Prague, it was suggested by some players that the US might have immediately suspended air attacks against the north on the basis that North Vietnamese forces said they were withdrawing -- but impose a public deadline for verification by a mutually acceptable third party.

The US might also, it has been suggested, immediately have announced suspension of troop deployments in Southeast Asia (real or imaginary), the deferral of new military base construction in Southeast Asia, the redeployment of a few tactical units -- (these might be rotatees) -- and the token release of some North Vietnamese prisoners (with photographic coverage of their repatriation). This would have dramatized North Vietnam's heretofore thinly veiled role in an effective way.

The US team, it was felt, might have gone further in the interests of protecting its peace-seeking image by announcing that Allied forces had been ordered not to fire unless fired upon, while continuing essential security patrolling, in South Vietnam.

No agreement for a formal cease-fire was reached during the game. Instead, an uneasy de facto cease-fire was initiated by the Communists as a tactic to tarnish the US image and to force American acceptance of a formal freeze-in-place. This was intended to allow the National Liberation Front to achieve its ends through subversion and terror. While the de facto cease-fire lasted, however, it gave the US team the country-building opportunities of a formal cease-fire while reserving the threat of renewed military action in the event of enemy intransigence.

[REDACTED]

The Communists made progress toward settlement of other questions contingent on US acceptance of a freeze-in-place. Some participants noted, however, that the US had no real need for progress in negotiations as long as its New Society Program was making headway. A freeze-in-place was totally unacceptable to the US and GVN teams since it would allow the VC covert mobility while denying freedom of movement to US/GVN forces.

While a freeze-in-place was unacceptable, some participants noted that advance US plans for such a contingency might have become useful if the talks had continued at Rangoon. These plans might have provided for rapid redeployment of allied units to positions which blocked major access trails into South Vietnam and protected key communications and installations, but they should have provided, also, for rapid response in event hostilities were renewed.

The US team's proposals for a massive New Society Program were well conceived to meet the hopes and aspirations of all sectors of the SVN society but some players considered it doubtful that major progress could occur in the first year. It was suggested that intense preparatory efforts would have been required.

It was also suggested by a senior that the New Society Program should not have been put forward as an American plan, but rather have been recommended by the Asian Bank or another international institution.

Negotiations, as portrayed in SIGMA, were restricted only to settlement of the Vietnamese conflict. It was felt by some that failure to address the broader problems of security for the entire area might have had the effect of merely transferring the problem of Vietnam to another place at another time and, possibly, under conditions less advantageous to the United States.

Although the initial "peace offer" from Ho was passed through General DeGaulle, the United States team decided to talk secretly with the North Vietnamese rather than involving third parties in a more open forum. This probably contributed to Control's adverse assessment of opinion pressures on the United States. The US team might, also, have fared better if there had been a coordinated allied position on verification and guarantees.

Better coordination might have allowed aggressive US search and destroy operations to go on until enemy forces in South

[REDACTED]

Vietnam had not only been pushed back into their sanctuaries but had literally been destroyed. This, of course, is sheer conjecture because at the end of the game the US team appeared tolerant of the VC in their sanctuaries, at least, until pacification and development was well underway. They sincerely thought they could "win the peace" with their economic and social development program despite Viet Cong efforts to subvert the people of South Vietnam.

An important attitude displayed in SIGMA was the willingness of the South Vietnamese team, because of a leftist conspiracy, to throw away all but a facade of the constitutional government so painstakingly created since the September '66 elections. There were, also, comments that this action elicited no adverse reaction from the US team. Some players questioned whether the US could afford to support a military regime that had changed the constitutional character of the government.

Anti-military forces in Saigon were ripe, at the end of the game, for just the kind of manipulation the National Liberation Front was preparing.

It is worth noting, in this connection, that the GVN team, which itself had dealt harshly with the conspirators, felt that moderate elements within their own ranks might welcome the Liberation Front into the South Vietnamese political life as a regular party, provided only that they dismantled their military and propaganda establishment and disarmed.

It was reasoned, on this basis, that the Liberation Front might win some twenty-odd seats in the Assembly and might, therefore, be accorded four or five non-critical cabinet portfolios. It has been noted that there were opportunities at Rangoon which the US team might have exploited to drive a further wedge between Peiping and Moscow if the game had continued.

At game's end, a frustrated Red China had determined to pull out of Rangoon and call for a Rump Conference. It moved thirty-five divisions to the South Chinese border and five divisions through Burma to the Thai border. Initial reaction by a number of players to these Red Chinese moves was to reject them as unrealistic. However, deeper reflection showed that all the actions taken were within Red Chinese capabilities and were not necessarily irrational. If the game had progressed further, plans for blocking or countering these moves could have been of

[REDACTED]

primary importance to the United States, the other non-communist countries of Southeast Asia, the USSR and, possibly, North Vietnam.

This briefing was prepared with the support and assistance of the Display Systems Branch of the National Military Command System Support Center and Headquarters, USAF, Television Center. Film copies and written reports are available upon request to the Joint War Games Agency, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

SIGMA I-66

COMMENTARY

Introduction

The following material was prepared by the Game Staff after the critiques of SIGMA I-66. It is based upon comments of participants during and following the game. Highlights of this commentary have also been included in the script of the video film summary (See TAB: Game Summary).

Reducing Military Pressures

Throughout SIGMA, the US team resisted proposals to reduce military pressures until they had "iron-clad" guarantees that enemy concessions would be implemented. They feared that premature relaxation of military pressures would lessen enemy incentive for meaningful negotiations, provide Ho an opportunity to continue the build-up of weapons and supplies in South Vietnam, rehabilitate battered NVN main force units, restore disrupted communications, upgrade air defense capabilities, and dangerously improve his overall posture. They also realized that, once offensive action was stopped, it would be extremely difficult to begin again without some dramatically hostile move by the enemy.

The US team also believed that curtailment of pressures would be construed by the enemy as an indication of weakness and would raise doubts in Saigon, Seoul and Bangkok as to US determination. A major military let-up also could set psychological reactions in motion which might erode Free World resolve.

The US team felt that maintaining the tempo of offensive operations would put them in a better bargaining position when formal negotiations began. They were fully aware of the foreign and domestic pressures that would be applied to force early de-escalation of military action but believed these could be withstood by determined US leadership. In addition, they were determined to extract more in return for suspending the air attacks than Ho's unsupported assertion that his forces were withdrawing and felt that another pause should be traded only for a fully verified NVN troop withdrawal from South Vietnam.

[REDACTED]

To the SIGMA world on 17 September 1967 it appeared that the Communists had ceased attacking and were seeking to reach a settlement while the United States was continuing the war. Ho had anticipated this kind of US response and was prepared to exploit it to his own psychological advantage. His overture was calculated to advance the Communist cause either way -- whether the Americans halted hostilities or kept up the fighting.

Control, in its second meeting, assessed world opinion pressures as strong enough to force suspension of the bombing even though firm guarantees for verification had not been provided by Hanoi. Critical factors in Control's projection were Communist leaks that the United States was resisting moves toward peace, and confirmation by the world news media that the VC had discontinued offensive operations and North Vietnamese forces were, in fact, withdrawing.

Withdrawal of major North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, as carried out in SIGMA I-66, and a return to the 1959 level of incidents constituted a far more acceptable quid pro quo for halting US air attacks than many participants would have expected. The US team interpreted the NVN withdrawals, however, as indicating great enemy weakness and appeared to think they were dictating to an enemy who was surrendering unconditionally. In spite of the enemy cease-fire, US forces continued aggressive search and destroy operations into October while continuing secret talks.

At the Critique, participants in SIGMA were clearly divided on the US team's handling of this question. There were those who would maintain the air offensive until North Vietnamese withdrawals were officially verified and who would then continue search and destroy operations in South Vietnam until a formal peace settlement was achieved. There was a second group who believed that the air attacks in the North would have to be suspended with the first evidence that Hanoi was really de-escalating and that there would have to be further military de-escalation in South Vietnam if opinion pressures demanded.

It was Control's assessment that domestic and world opinion would soon force relaxation of US military pressures in Vietnam and it was suggested by some participants that an initial attitude by the United States, which appeared to be more forthcoming, might have dispelled much of the adverse world opinion. There were even a few who felt that "world pressures" could have been turned against the Communists.

[REDACTED]

At the Critiques, it was apparent that a number of participants felt the US team could have kept up military pressures longer if they had done more to appear forthcoming and peaceful in intent while exposing the Communist ploy.

One proposal was made that the US might have responded immediately to Ho's private demarche with a public announcement of suspension of air attacks against North Vietnam on the basis that North Vietnamese units were, in fact, withdrawing and imposed a public deadline for verification of Ho's withdrawal by a mutually acceptable third party. It has been suggested that if, instead of continuing aggressive search and destroy operations into VC sanctuaries, the US had announced that its forces would shoot only if fired upon (while continuing patrols), opinion pressures generated by the Communists might have been mitigated. Such a move might have been accompanied with an array of other moves designed to reinforce the image of America seeking a peaceful settlement by announcement of:

1. Immediate release and return of some North Vietnamese prisoners of war (with worldwide press coverage).
2. Immediate suspension of US troop deployments to Vietnam (real or otherwise).
3. Redeployment of a few tactical units (these could be rotated).
4. Suspension of any new military construction projects in South Vietnam.
5. A troop withdrawal formula, based on the current ratio of combat power between US and NVN forces, keyed incrementally to:
 - a. Agreement on verification and inspection procedures.
 - b. Real progress on development of an agenda for, and movement toward, a formal conference.
 - c. Discontinuance of terrorism, sabotage and harassment and unimpeded implementation of the Revolutionary Development Program.

The US might also demand immediate negotiations toward a further exchange of prisoners.

[REDACTED]

The inclusion in the US announcement of a US/GVN negotiating package might have gained wide support if it had offered individual members of the National Liberation Front a role in future elections.

The above US announcement might have been accompanied by a clear caveat that in the event of significant increases in incident levels or other breaches of faith, the US reserved the right to take appropriate military action.

Secret Talks

It was felt by some participants that the US team's decision to reject DeGaulle's good offices and Russian mediation and to deal secretly and bilaterally with North Vietnam through ambassadors at Prague contributed to the unsatisfactory opinion atmosphere which soon developed. The fact that there was no neutral party present added impact to Communist rumor mongering against the Americans.

Although the US team promptly informed the GVN of secret discussions with Hanoi, other allies including those with troops in Vietnam may have heard of them first through Communist leaks. One player remarked that a number of our allies had joined us in Vietnam only after strong American pressure had been applied and at considerable political risk to themselves. The apparently high-handed American action on discussions might have raised fears of an American sellout among these nations and resulted in a number of them either disassociating themselves from a settlement or combining to adopt a harder line than the US.

Cease-Fire

No agreement for a formal cease-fire was reached during the game. Instead, an uneasy de facto cease-fire was initiated by the Communist side as a short-term tactic to help tarnish the US image and force American acceptance of a freeze-in-place thereby permitting the NLF to achieve its ends through subversion and terror. While the de facto cease-fire lasted; however, it gave the US team an opportunity to accelerate implementation of a massive Revolutionary Development Program while reserving the threat of renewed military action as a counter to enemy intransigence.

Some players felt that a formal cease-fire would have resulted in the curtailment of vital US patrolling and reconnaissance activities, constituted an obstacle to eventual US/GVN freedom of movement throughout South Vietnam and made it difficult for a US renewal of any required military action.

[REDACTED]

The Communists made progress toward settlement of other questions contingent on US acceptance of a freeze-in-place but some participants noted that the US had no real need for progress in negotiations as long as the New Society Program was making headway. A freeze-in-place was totally unacceptable to the US and GVN teams since it would allow the VC to merge into the population and enjoy unrestricted mobility while denying US and Free World forces freedom of movement and placing them in an unacceptable tactical position.

While a freeze-in-place appeared unacceptable, some participants noted that preparation of advance plans for such a contingency might have become useful if talks had continued at Rangoon. Plans might have provided for redeployment of US, GVN and Free World forces to positions which not only blocked major access routes into South Vietnam and protected key allied communication routes and installations but also provided for quick redeployment in event hostilities were resumed.

Weakening Enemy Resolve

There were a number of suggestions advanced for attracting individual Viet Cong out of their sanctuaries back to the government side during the de facto cease-fire. These included material incentives, such as payment for the surrender of various type weapons and bonuses to those VC commanders who brought their units in. An offer of general amnesty and safe conduct for any VC who wished to go North was also considered. These US team moves were accompanied by an imaginative, well publicized rehabilitation program.

There was a feeling among game participants that despite all of the actions which the US and GVN took, large numbers of VC and VC sympathizers would continue their destructive efforts throughout South Vietnam. They would be a less potent force if the GVN, with the support of the US and other nations, could really redress the basic conditions such as poverty, low health standards, insecurity, lack of opportunity, social injustice and land inequities which have in the past all combined to swell VC ranks and to alienate much of the population from the Saigon government. The most potent weapon for handling this problem was the US team's concept for a New Society Program and the establishment of an Asian Development Program. If these programs were successful, hard core VC would find it difficult to become a real threat.

[REDACTED]

The statement has often been made that "final victory in Vietnam cannot be won on the battlefield". In line with this philosophy, the US team proposed a massive five-year "National New Society Program" designed to meet the hopes and aspirations of all sectors of South Vietnamese society for a better life and to strengthen the governmental structure at all levels. This \$800 million program encompassed major projects in the fields of public works, business and trade, health, education and agriculture. The plan was designed not only to aid South Vietnam but to benefit neighboring Southeast Asian countries including Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. The program included an East-West railroad/highway across the northern neck of South Vietnam from Dong Ha through Laos to Thailand. This rail and highway artery was designed to improve trade and communications between the countries involved and to block the infiltration of North Vietnamese units.

While an ambitious plan of the type proposed by the US team may prove to be the answer to building a stable South Vietnamese economy and governmental structure and serve to blunt NLF plans for continuing subversion, it appeared doubtful to some participants that major progress as envisaged by the US team could take place within the first year. Not only must the severe shortage of indigenous technicians, teachers, doctors and engineers be overcome but a shortage will exist in the number of Americans possessing the requisite temperaments and skills required to assist in implementing the program. In addition, South Vietnam lacks a corps of trained civil service personnel. It will take a number of years before an effective civil service class can be developed. It was also probable that VC subversive activities could have increased if the program appeared to be succeeding.

The US team proposed that the New Society Program be announced by the GVN after prior review and technical endorsement by an international organization. A plan handled in this manner might actually be handicapped if put forward as an American plan. It was suggested by a senior participant that instead of the United States and the GVN proposing a plan of this type that it be put forward by the Asian Development Bank. In this way the burden of responsibility could be shifted from the United States as was done in the recent devaluation of the currency in South Vietnam.

GVN Governmental Stability

Another important element in SIGMA I-66 was the willingness of the South Vietnamese team, because of a leftist conspiracy,

[REDACTED]

to throw away all but the facade of constitutional government so painstakingly constructed since the September 1966 elections. There were also comments that this action elicited no adverse reactions from the US team. Some players questioned whether the US could afford to support a military regime that had changed the constitutional character of the government. They were concerned that such a move do inestimable harm to both the US and GVN prestige and that it would furnish the North Vietnamese with additional grist for their propaganda mills. The team action was not criticized for implausibility but created a lamentable atmosphere later on for implementing the US team's ambitious development program. Anti-military forces in Saigon were ripe, at the end of the game, for just the kind of manipulation the National Liberation Front was preparing.

It is worth noting that the GVN team, which itself had dealt harshly with conspirators, felt that moderate elements within its ranks might welcome the Liberation Front into South Vietnamese political life as a regular party, provided that they dismantled their military and propaganda establishments and disarmed. It was reasoned on this basis that the National Liberation Front might win twenty some odd seats in the Assembly and could, therefore, be accorded four or five non-critical cabinet portfolios.

While the US team did not recommend allowing the NLF to participate as a Party in South Vietnamese political life some players were concerned over the US team's proposal to allow NLF members to take part in elections as long as they agreed to abide by the law. These players felt that in the face of government instability NLF participation in the forthcoming elections of March 1968 would constitute a grave risk. Control's interpretation that under the new GVN constitution only one-third of the National Assembly would be elected each year might have assisted in preventing the Communists from gaining effective control.

Negotiations

A review of team bargaining positions indicates that pre-conditions for discussions or formal negotiations were not considered in detail by the teams because Control had already advanced play into a negotiating situation.

While the US team did not ignore previous real life commitments of the Administration to "talk any place, any time", they were extremely wary of entering formal negotiations.

[REDACTED]

By talking, even secretly, with the North Vietnamese at Prague, they felt they were fulfilling the President's offer for discussions.

On this question of the forum, team positions were split between those favoring a small meeting of only the nations involved and those favoring a return to the aegis of the 1954 Geneva Conference. The US team rejected the Geneva '54 approach since they felt French participation was undesirable and they did not want to discuss either Laos or Cambodia, which were parties to the '54 Accords. The US team wanted a conference of Asian powers, limited if possible to North Vietnam, the US and South Vietnam. They were willing to accept participation by the Koreans, Australians, New Zealand and the Philippines and both the Russians and the Chinese on the Communist side. They never actually agreed to NLF participation except as part of the North Vietnamese delegation.

Neither side desired an international supervisory commission. However, as a fall-back position, they all would have accepted some form of reconstituted ICC. The Soviets favored using the ICC to supervise troop withdrawals, whereas Red China demanded formation of an "International Peace Commission". The United States would have accepted a Joint Military Commission composed of representatives from the combatants to settle disputes during the withdrawal phase.

There was general agreement that the scope of the conference should be limited initially to a settlement in South Vietnam, leaving more complex problems of the rest of Southeast Asia until later. China alone, demanded that the conference address the problems of all Southeast Asia with the intention of making the conference cumbersome to the point of being self defeating. This was apparently the US team's reason for avoiding a larger area of focus. The major arguments advanced for restricting negotiations to the Vietnam problem were that expanding the conference scope would prolong the negotiations and involve a greater number of participants and agenda items. On the other hand, someone noted that failure to address the broader problems of the entire area might have had the effect of transferring the conflict from Vietnam to another place at another time and possibly under conditions far less advantageous to the United States.

Although both sides agreed in principle to the phased pullout from South Vietnam of US and North Vietnamese forces, the US team was determined that all North Vietnamese would be out of the country and that local conditions favored a complete US withdrawal before they pulled out the last US troops. The teams paid

little attention to specific troop strengths, as hypothesized in the game or to mechanics of reduction, but the scenario provided approximately 500,000 US and Free World forces in Vietnam compared to some 78,000 North Vietnamese regulars when the game began in September '67 -- a ratio of approximately seven to one. In withdrawals on a man-for-man basis, the Free World would still have had 422,000 troops in South Vietnam after the last North Vietnamese regular had been withdrawn. On a parity basis 7,000 Free World troops would have to be pulled out for every thousand North Vietnamese regulars.

In SIGMA at the end of 1967 the strength of the GVN regular military forces was 285,000 while VC main forces totaled 62,000 regulars. The GVN had some 318,000 para-military troops and the VC had 120,000. The total strength for all Free World forces in Vietnam was 1,100,000 opposed by some 260,000 Communists.

One of the US team's major concerns was the enemy's capability for hiding his weapons, biding his time, and emerging at a later date to renew the conflict. The US team correctly assumed that the enemy would escalate hostilities rather than see the Revolutionary Development Program succeed.

All the teams felt that their side could win free elections in South Vietnam. The GVN was willing to permit the NLF to function as a regular party. The US would have insisted on a new party and preferred that former NLF members only participate as individuals. The US team believed that its New Society Program would defeat the Communists at the polls and felt they could gauge short-term results through the March 1968 elections which were scheduled to elect one-third of the SVN National Assembly. The Communists were planning a Popular Front Party only covertly guided from Hanoi. They also believed they could steadily expand their influence.

Role of Red China

As the game progressed, the split between the Soviets and the Chinese widened. Early in the game China did all within her power, including the movement of troops to her borders, to increase Red Chinese and reduce Russian influence over Hanoi and to prevent the Soviets from being invited to Rangoon.

[REDACTED]

The Soviet team viewed Chinese moves as approaching anarchy and constituting a definite threat to the security of the USSR. Many felt that the fear and distrust with which the Soviets viewed the Chinese should not be underrated and that advantage should be taken of the potential of this fear as a lever to secure USSR cooperation. Play of the game suggested that this fear coupled with a US concession -- possibly in Eastern Europe -- could be used to bring about Soviet assistance in influencing Hanoi to cease hostilities and in securing, at least to some degree, Soviet cooperation during any subsequent negotiations.

At game's end a frustrated China had determined to pull out of Rangoon, call for a Rump Conference, move thirty-five divisions to the Chinese Southern border and five divisions through Burma to the Thai border. Initial reaction by a number of players to Chinese moves was to reject them as unrealistic. However, deeper reflection showed that all actions taken were within CPR capabilities and were not necessarily irrational. If the game had progressed further plans for blocking or counter-ing these moves would have been of primary importance to the United States, the other non-communist nations of SEA, the USSR and possibly North Vietnam.

DISCUSSION

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SIGMA I-66

SENIOR DISCUSSIONS

GENERAL KEMP: gentlemen, I'd like here in my opening remarks to point out that you can identify team members by the color on their name plates, specifically, Blue is the US, Green is South Vietnam, Black is the Viet Cong, Brown is North Vietnam, Yellow is China and Red is the Soviet Union. Behind me are the Team Captains of those same teams who have lined up "in the shooting gallery" where you can get to them on short notice.

SIGMA I-66 was the first of our FY 67 program of inter-agency politico-military simulations or games. We don't believe that SIGMA, as such, can qualify as a game in the pure sense of competition between teams. Actually the developments presented by the four Communist and two Free World teams had to be modified by Control in order to take the play in a proper direction and to insure examination of the issues that were the purpose of the game.

The Control team had two tasks: The first was to represent all the nations of the world. The other was being responsible for problems within nations and, of course, seeing that weather, fate and things of that nature were included. Of course, we had to take the actions of the teams -- six teams is quite a number -- and sift them down so that they would mesh in advancing the scenarios. I'd like to say here that Control did not act as a judicious judge and play the game to see who was being proved right. If we had gone strictly by the play we would have gone right back to a hot war in the very first act! We don't want to talk hot war here because we have actually conducted six games involving escalation in Southeast Asia in the last few years. We're here to examine problems of de-escalation. In this line, I'd like to point out that Control, of necessity, had to modify the positions of the various teams.

The Red Chinese team would have been at war and have marched across the border well in the early stages of the game. The US team took a very firm stand on its position and Control had to modify this to get us into a position where we could negotiate. This is not an apology really -- it's an explanation.

We do not attempt, and we hope nobody interprets this as an attempt, to predict the future. There is no intention of, nor any thought, of assuming that any positions taken in the original scenario or the game play would actually happen in real life.

I'd like to remind the players that the discussion in this room is TOP SECRET and the content of the game itself is SECRET - NOFORN. There are TV cameras here and the action today is recorded; however, it is held in strict confidence. No individual is pinned down as having said any one thing. The film itself and the recording is used only for analysis in our agency. I'd like to remind you, also, that the game itself was put together by all the agencies in Washington. Your people made a major contribution to it. The Joint War Games Agency only acted, we hope, as the catalyst and the administrative means of presenting the game. The players are the ones that count in this particular operation.

First, we will go on to highlights given by Colonel McDonald, Chief of the Cold War Division of the Joint Staff, who was the moderator for the Control Group and had the responsibility for the various scenarios as they came out. After he briefly reviews the game we'll ask each of the Action-Level Team Captains to give you approximately a three-minute report -- which I realize is very fast -- covering their original objectives and how well they had met these objectives by the end of the game. Following that, we'll get into the "meat issues" of the game.

I would like to introduce members of the Game Directorate who assisted me: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I regret that Mr. Al Friedman, who has participated throughout the game, had to be in Europe today. We are sorry the other member of the Directorate, [REDACTED] was unable to make any of the sessions and could not be with us today. With that, gentlemen, I'll turn it over to Colonel McDonald who will give you a brief run-down on the game.

CHIEF, COLD WAR DIVISION: Gentlemen, on the table in front of you are several pieces of paper -- one of them is a summary of the game which you may find useful to peruse during the course of the discussions. The second paper is a rough diagram indicating the diplomatic maneuvering that was going on in the first scenario. The third paper is a constructive analysis of the final team positions on the third move. They may be interesting to refer to. Finally, I hope there's an opportunity to discuss some of the negotiating positions that were put forth at Rangoon at the

[REDACTED]

end of the game. They are also, in very brief form, in front of you. I will hit just the highlights of the game and apologize for the fact that it is impossible to take anything as complex as this and reduce it to a form which will satisfy everyone.

There were hundreds of pages of this material written, all of which had to sift through Control, and all of which had to sift back into your messages. This will be a very "boiled-down" view.

The rationale in the initial scenario for Ho's move to de-escalate the war consisted of three fundamental factors. From the viewpoint of Hanoi, the air war between September 1966 and 1967 had continued to escalate -- the United States had intensified pressures on North Vietnam. The ground war in South Vietnam had begun to definitely favor the United States and Free World Forces. The NLF and NVN forces took a serious mauling in search and destroy operations and in an abortive attack that Giap attempted, south of Hue during late summer. Two of his divisions were badly cut up and fell back in confusion, leaving dead and wounded in their effort to get across the border into Laos. In February, an act of God -- a typhoon -- wiped out the rice crop in North Vietnam. So, basically, these were the factors that confronted Ho in the initial scenario.

In South Vietnam, the situation had improved measurably in the political sense. They had moved constitutionally down the road and had an elected President; a rather strong executive, along French lines. In March, elections were conducted and Dr. Dong Van Sung took the reins. However, the problems inherent in the South Vietnamese political structure continued to obtain -- inefficiency, corruption -- the problems of big changes in infrastructure and, worst of all, inflation! Dissidence was rampant. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction in Saigon and a conspiracy was afloat among some of the people in one wing of the new constitutional government.

That was the basic situation as the game opened. Things going well militarily, but not going so well politically and socially in South Vietnam.

The scenario opened with the United States dispatching [REDACTED] to Moscow with a message to Kosygin and Brezhnev, indicating that the United States had very nearly reached the saturation point.

The fact that American air losses were attributable to improved Russian equipment, introduced during the early part of 1967, and the increasing casualties on the ground, had forced the United States to the point where it was important for the Soviets to apply their influence on Hanoi in an effort to bring them to the conference table. It was made rather clear to Mr. Kosygin that the next step would probably be a quarantine of North Vietnam by the United States.

The other item in the initial scenario was a secret demarche by Ho, through the French, to the United States. He had apprised Moscow and Peiping of this -- he had not consulted them. The demarche took the form of an offer to negotiate a cease-fire, stating that Ho himself had already ordered the withdrawal of all his forces in South Vietnam and had ordered the NLF to discontinue offensive operations. In return, he asked the United States to: (1) make a public announcement of the cease-fire, (2) announce its schedule for withdrawal of its forces, and (3) agree to elections in South Vietnam. The offer was rather ambiguously phrased so that it would appear that the NLF would be deeply involved in those negotiations.

It was the 13th of September 1967 when the scenario opened. The United States considered this demarche from Ho, through the French, and went back to DeGaulle and told him they appreciated his good offices but they preferred to deal bilaterally with Hanoi. The Russians were anxious to be the honest broker -- the midwife as it were -- but the United States wasn't too interested in that offer. The United States concentrated on the idea of unilateral discussions. Before making any commitment to Ho on the 13th of September, it was determined that clarification of several of his terms was necessary. For example, what did he mean by cease-fire?

The Ambassadors at Prague, the DRV and the US Ambassadors, got together secretly and conferred between the 13th and the 19th of September. Ho came back with one piece of information. He would agree to verification of his orders to withdraw the NVN forces from South Vietnam but he did not respond fully to the US queries on other aspects of his demarche.

All the teams assumed rather hard positions. In their messages there was grist for Control, however, and the situation was advanced. On the 19th of September, the Control Group had the US, in spite of the fact that they had not received the full assurance that they had wanted from Ho, agree to discontinue air attacks against the North.

They had to do this in the face of rising pressures around the world because there had been leaks in all the capitals to the effect that the other side, the Communist side, had unilaterally stood down and it was the United States that was continuing to apply pressures across the board. This in the face of domestic and foreign pressures. Wilson was coming to Washington to confer with President Johnson. The US did discontinue the air offensives six days after Ho initiated his demarche.

I should have pointed out also that due to the unrest in South Vietnam, it became necessary for the GVN to adjust itself structurally. Ky was brought back from retirement, which he had gracefully accepted after the March elections, and was given emergency powers as Premier after a midnight session of the National Assembly.

On 3 November, the United States unilaterally announced the withdrawal of three US Air Force squadrons from South Vietnam as pressures began to build-up in relation to the withdrawal of North Vietnamese units. Ho had brought foreign newsmen into Hanoi and the press were swarming around taking pictures of returning NVN heroes. Ho was very cleverly attempting to maintain the facade that he did not have regular units in the South, but that these were "volunteers" coming home.

In Prague, the United States was still unable to obtain from Ho a really clear picture of the terms that he wanted to discuss at the formal negotiations but despite this the US was being pressed very hard to begin such negotiations.

On the 12th of November, a simultaneous announcement was made in Hanoi and in Washington that there would be a conference in Rangoon on the 25th. I might point out that Control had taken considerable liberties with the team positions in order to advance the scenario to this point. It was necessary for Control to take a route from these positions which was not the most probable one. Control worked very hard on this problem and came up with at least a plausible array of circumstances that eventuated from the various positions in the six team reports. This may be a point for debate, however.

The conference was to consist of eight nations, four on the Western side, four on the Eastern side. The Western side consisted of the US, GVN, Korea and Australia and New Zealand as a combined team. The Eastern side included North Vietnam, NLF, USSR and the CPR. The NLF presence

[REDACTED]

at the table was waffled sufficiently in the various communiques so that, on one side of the world, it looked very satisfactory to the Communists who felt that the NLF was there in a representative capacity. On the other side of the world the communique was interpreted somewhat differently, perhaps, and they were thought to be there as observers or as an appendage to the North Vietnamese team.

The NLF went along with orders from Hanoi (though there was quite a bit of debate between the two teams that Control had to reconcile), and reduced their pressure by withdrawing their forces into sanctuary areas. The irregular units blended back into the population and the US forces had an increasingly difficult time making contact or confrontations with ground forces in the South. The U.S. continued air reconnaissance over South and North Vietnam.

The four points that were tabled at Rangoon, each given to a separate committee, were: First, the cessation of hostilities. Here the U.S. was holding out for freedom of movement and GVN sovereignty throughout the country -- the other side was holding out for a de facto in-place freeze, which they wanted to legalize later, of course. The second committee addressed the question of withdrawal or neutralization; the third, the subject of elections; the fourth, supervision and guarantees.

The Chairman during the first two weeks was the Soviet Union. The Soviet Team moved out very actively to seek a common position to bring the countries together. The Chairmanship was to rotate. The Australians had it next.

As the conference was meeting, however, it became apparent that many of the actions that had been dwindling in South Vietnam during the past few weeks were again on the upbeat. What had been a 1959 level of incidents a few days before was beginning to go up the scale. There was an intensive fire fight between some air cavalry units in the Iadrang Valley where the VC were evidently defending an important cache of ammunition. A number of administrators had been shot in villages in the grey zones where the VC had been fairly tolerant for the last several weeks.

The conference, which had been on for a few days, had so far been a matter of polemics -- mostly speeches by the DRV and the CPR. It looked as though it was heading into trouble. It was anticipated that the Communists were about to walk out in an endeavor to get the United States to agree to a written formal freeze-in-place before they would allow the conference to continue. That was the situation on 25 December 1967.

UNITED STATES:

Gentlemen, from the point of view of the United States Team, it seemed to us that Uncle Ho was finally crying "Uncle". As pointed out he had suffered serious defeat on the ground, our air attacks were hurting him in the North and he had had a flood, an act of God, which destroyed a large segment of his rice crop. So we approached the question of negotiations from we considered a position of strength.

We looked at the problem as being in two parts. Part 1: arrangements to bring about a cessation of the bombing in the North and part 2: the arrangements for negotiations. As for Part 1, on the suspension of the bombing in the North, we were prepared to suspend as soon as we received adequate assurances, adequate verification of the withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops from the South, and as soon as they agreed to a time for a simultaneous announcement of the suspension of the bombing, both by the United States and the Ho Chi Minh government. As to negotiations, our position was consistent-- we were prepared to negotiate any time -- any place.

Now, to reinforce our estimate of the situation, that we were talking from a position of strength, we considered the position taken by Ho's negotiator when he came to Prague as being a marked concession from the original notes submitted by Ho through French channels. Ho's negotiator backed off in the following important areas: First, Ho was prepared to make his announcement publicly while in his original note he was prepared to issue his orders secretly, (that's for the withdrawal of his troops); secondly, Ho was prepared to accept verification; third, Ho was prepared to drop references to the elections in South Vietnam, fourth, he dropped the requirement for any firm commitments on our part for a withdrawal from Southeast Asia and fifth, he did not press for any commitment on our part to a specific cease-fire, freeze-in-place type operation. So, Ho having come quite a way from the initial note which he had submitted through the French channels, reinforced our belief that we were operating from a very strong position.

Now, our general assessment of the situation, as far as negotiations were concerned, was this: As long as the de facto cessation of hostilities existed, with the GVN authorities and constabularies having free access to all parts of the country, time was on our side and we could take a hard line in negotiations. We were prepared to negotiate! We were prepared to negotiate as long as they

wanted), anywhere they wanted but we weren't prepared to be overeager to give in on any of our points. We felt our world public opinion position was strong. We had ceased bombing and had reiterated in the South the "open arms" amnesty policy. These themes were being heavily emphasized in South Vietnam. We were already on the record, as far as the United States was concerned and I refer to the President's speech in Baltimore, that we were prepared to help North Vietnam recover and reconstruct itself from the aftermath of the war and that we would negotiate. We were not breaking off negotiations because of minor fire fights. We were staying at the conference table. We weren't walking out!

We noted also that our negotiator opponents in Rangoon were badly split on basic issues. We had five objectives. The first objective was to convince the North Vietnamese that it was not in their national interest to continue the war in the South. We felt we had accomplished this. The second objective was to maintain US influence in Southeast Asia. We felt we had accomplished this, in that we were making no major redeployments. As far as our economic assistance and political presence, we were moving forward rather than withdrawing. Third, our objective was to establish a viable non-communist South Vietnamese Government. We are making progress in this regard. There was a de-escalation of the war, the writ of the GVN was respected throughout the land, and the GVN authority was confirmed in the sense that the elections which the GVN constitution had set up were to be held in March of 1968. As long as the elections were being held for 1/3 of the National Assembly we felt confident that this would discredit any effort, on the part of the National Liberation Front, to claim that the representatives in the South were not truly spokesmen of the people. Our fourth objective was to create an environment within which Southeast Asian nations could grow into modern developed societies in peace. As long as there was a de-escalation of the conflict and we were moving ahead with a Southeast Asia development program, we felt we were moving substantially toward the accomplishment of this objective. Our final objective was to contain the Chinese Communists within their borders and, as far as we knew at the game's end, we had accomplished that.

In conclusion, when the game ended, our military posture was essentially this: the United States forces were within their enclaves or their base areas; they were patrolling in their base areas. The GVN regional and popular forces were now constabulary forces and they were deployed out in the villages while GVN regular forces were deployed against the western frontier defending the border. The US had undertaken token air withdrawals but essential air forces were still in place. US commanders had been given orders to prepare for redeployment within Southeast Asia but not to move until they received instructions.

GVN officials were free to move about anywhere in South Vietnam. Our reconstruction posture was very good. We had started work on the East-West road, connecting Thailand to South Vietnam through Laos, and we had deployed most of our resources to accomplish this; working on the assumption that the other side would not dare to re-escalate the conflict. The Southeast Asia "Marshall Plan" was moving ahead and the Mekong River project was going at full steam. Finally, in South Vietnam, a "New Society Program" had been announced, with our support, after review by an international economic authority, and we were moving ahead on that basis. In sum - we felt the situation was much improved over the present.

SOUTH VIETNAM: At the outset of the game, we were faced with an extremely precarious political situation, not only because of internal division, which had become greater, but also because of the threat of a possible faction within our ranks making an approach to Hanoi which could have absolutely toppled the government itself. Our basic objective was a simple one -- survival. We acted merely in a sense of desperation in order to go on the offensive and take the initiative in terms of the economic programs. We wanted to work-up, with the cooperation of the United States, accepted negotiating positions that would guarantee essential elements of sovereignty within the country, for control and administration. With the progression of the game these objectives were to some degree assisted, we felt, by Hanoi's initiative. Like the US, we also felt that Hanoi, by offering to deal bilaterally with the United States, was risking grave damage to morale of the Front.

The Amnesty Program, could have a fair chance of splitting off some of these elements because Hanoi did retract its position that the US must deal directly with the Front and, in fact, undertook to speak on the Front's behalf.

In the opening of negotiations, although the other side offered absolutely no give, the fact that the United States was able to keep pressure up and to initiate economic programs would give us a competitive chance with the other side. The one major misgiving at the conclusion of this game was that the preservation of Viet Cong sanctuary areas would not have been something that we would have tolerated in any interim period. This would have been the subject of grave concern and, furthermore, the Viet Cong effort to capitalize on corruption certainly would have required new tactics on our part.

NORTH VIETNAM: As the scenario began the North Vietnamese side decided that we were going to employ one of Mao's (and I think Lenin's) teachings to take one step back. We felt that the time had come to shift gears and start off on a political campaign rather than continuing the military effort.

Our primary objective, all along, was to reunify Vietnam under our control. To do this, we could not continue on the present course we had set for ourselves. We therefore decided to initiate some kind of action to get the other side to de-escalate so that we could begin our political offensive, drawing on the base of the NLF in the South to try to get US forces out of South Vietnam. In short, we were not very serious about the negotiations. We felt that we could employ this time to rebuild our forces, to build our economy and to try to increase the pressures on the United States to get out of South Vietnam. We've already been somewhat successful in this regard. We are mobilizing all the propaganda vehicles we have to bring pressure on the United States to get out and to reduce its efforts in Vietnam and we feel, in this respect, that time is on our side.

We have an ultimate objective of getting the United States forces out of Vietnam and, also, Southeast Asia. We're quite content with the United States going into its enclaves. We feel that in this way, we can proceed on the political front, continue to breed confusion and disarray in the South and employ all the devices that we have become so expert at to advance our cause. So, on balance, we're not very serious about getting into long negotiations. We'll try to put the onus on the United States. If they get impatient, if they try to get too aggressive and come in after us and our colleagues in the NLF, we feel the onus will be on the United States in the eyes of world opinion for heating up the situation in Vietnam. In short, we are again quite content to lower the noise level, as we call it, and play the game and see how it goes.

We have difficulties it's true. We're not too happy with the NLF in the sense that there are defections, but after all, we've been running the show for some time and if things get out of hand we'll see that the NLF gets in line. We felt when the game ended, that, on balance, things are going pretty well and we wish to keep procrastinating -- keep turning things down so that our forces can regroup, retrain, strengthen our economy and, if we have to go back into it, we'll be in a much stronger position to do so than when the cease-fire occurred -- I might say, not a cease-fire but a de-escalation of the activity.

[REDACTED]

VIET CONG: Like most of the other teams, with the notable exception of the US, we felt in very bad shape when the game began but felt that by game's end we had made a great deal of progress. We're a lot better off now than we were three or four months ago, when things got under way.

The basic trouble, when the game began, was that for the two years preceding this game we'd been operating under a very defective strategy which had been imposed on us by Hanoi; it was not our own idea of how to fight a war in the South. It involved an injection of substantial PAVN forces which have accomplished next to nothing compared with what was done to us by the US forces whose intervention was generated by the introduction of PAVN forces. In effect when this game began, we were bleeding to death as a result of the pressures that the US forces were exerting on us.

Under these circumstances we had an immediate objective and a somewhat longer range objective. Our own objectives, of course, was the same as Hanoi's -- to eventually take over the entire area of Vietnam and unify it under Communist control. For the immediate future, our objective had to be simply that of self-preservation. We were under such pressures that we had to get the thing stepped down and we feel that the way the game was played we have accomplished exactly that. Our longer range objective was that of getting the US forces out of South Vietnam. We feel that a very good beginning has been made on accomplishing that objective. Hanoi has accepted our analysis of this situation. They have adopted the strategy that we advocated and are engaged in negotiations at Rangoon. Our losses on the ground in South Vietnam are now very light. It's true that there are incursions in our areas.

The US forces are not completely passive and we don't have a de jure or an actual, signed, cease-fire but we do have a defacto cease-fire which has cut our losses substantially. In addition, we are not really concerned about the threat posed by the programs that the GVN is now undertaking. We're not afraid of their constabulary; we're not afraid of their revolutionary development teams going out into the countryside and destroying our political bases there; we're not afraid of these 50 battalions being deployed across from Da Nang over to Thailand. We can walk right around them if necessary to communicate and get the low level contacts we need with our friends up North.

We've had our differences with our friends there largely as a result, I think, of poor communication between us. Their explanation for their shifting tactics simply

didn't get through to us but we've gotten our seat as a recognized participant at the table at Rangoon which was one very real objective we wanted. We've gotten a far more important objective which is the de facto cease-fire on the ground in South Vietnam.

We feel, in short, that over the next two years, recognizing that it will take a couple of years to get the US out, we can hold together but they cannot hold together. We will secure the objective through the more effective political structure that we have in the South.

SOVIET UNION: When the Presidium of the CPSU met on 13 September 1967 to consider the latest developments in the Southeast Asian situation, it set for itself seven objectives. It is too early to say that all of our objectives have been met but we believe we are moving in the right direction.

First, a direct confrontation between US and USSR has been avoided. We saw the US at a crossroads, one of which led to an escalation of the war and possible grave risks for the Soviet Union; certainly there were grave risks for North Vietnam. The other road led to negotiation and de-escalation. Washington has taken the latter course which is the one we preferred. Second, we set out to isolate the Chinese Communists. It appears that military action on a large scale -- so large as to provoke the US into a major military response -- is likely to be counter-productive. In such circumstances, political action is more likely in the long run, to be successful. This of course is contrary to the Chinese dogmatists; however, we appear to be on the proper path -- one which will in time isolate the Chinese. We have acted as an intermediary, advisor and protector for the North Vietnamese. We have judged the Hanoi regime to be in danger of suffering a defeat at the hands of the imperialists and threatened by the Chinese. Ho's government has maintained its integrity and independence. We have sought to play the role of "peacemaker" and we have played this part so effectively that our prestige and influence has been greatly enhanced internationally and throughout the Communist movement.

Our fifth objective was to reduce US influence in Southeast Asia. Only American military power stood between Saigon and collapse. The way is opening up for the National Liberation Front, with support from Hanoi and Moscow, to launch a campaign of political actions which in time should bring about unification of the North and the South under the

[REDACTED]

socialist banner. We are in a better position to compete with massive US economic aid to South Vietnam than with US military power.

We hope to force as many US concessions as possible in the negotiations and in this respect the US has been more forthcoming than anticipated. They were more willing to negotiate than expected, especially in view of the military progress they were making at the time.

At the conference table they have agreed to admit the Viet Cong as full participants. Finally, it remains to be seen whether a settlement of the Southeast Asia situation leads to a detente in which other East-West issues will be negotiated.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Gentlemen, the Chinese Team regards SIGMA I-66 as an exercise in asserting and sustaining China's influence in Southeast Asia under circumstances where Chinese political assets in that area were, in theory, deteriorating. Unless the process could be halted or reversed, China's long-range objective of expelling the US and the USSR from the area and installing a genuine Marxist-Leninist Government in South Vietnam could not be realized. To realize that goal we consider it essential to assure that a government sympathetic to our views ruled in Hanoi and that North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front did not collapse militarily or surrender. We believe that the wastage of our political assets required us to commit progressively larger increments of power. We were willing to commit that power. Our judgments involved mainly the degree of power to be committed but our decisions reflected compromises among sharply disagreeing factions in the group, particularly in the case of the final move.

North Vietnam was the principal instrument through which China asserted its influence in support of revolutionary activity in Southeast Asia. Its loss or neutralization would represent a serious handicap to our policies. Le Duan's message to us advising that North Vietnam had already contacted the United States via the French, indicating an interest in discussions, caused us grave concern. It was done without our prior agreement.

We recognize that North Vietnam needed a switch in tactics but North Vietnamese behavior reflected growing unreliability. They had abandoned the preferred tactics in our view, the correct tactics of "people's warfare" and opted mistakenly for "positional warfare" and suffered as a consequence. They hastened to deal behind our backs with

the imperialists. Doubt about Hanoi's determination to reunify Vietnam replaced our initial conviction that they would not weaken in this regard. The degree of North Vietnamese identification with China's long-range goals, therefore, became seriously open to question in our view. We had initially felt that the Front would be firm but its willingness to deal with the Saigon Regime revealed unsuspected weakness and the possibility of a sharp cleavage in the National Liberation Front. The sharp battle that it fought in defense of vital ammunition caches in the Iadrang valley indicated, however, that there were some elements in the National Liberation Front sympathetic to our views.

As the game developed, the Chinese Team concluded that the US, USSR and Hanoi were conspiring to exclude our influence from any political settlement in Vietnam and from Southeast Asia. We considered it essential, therefore, to get into the conference. We also wished to exclude the Soviets from the conference that was taking place at Rangoon. We wished, once the conference got under way, to prevent a negotiated settlement; we wished to insure that the United States would bear the full blame for the failure of the conference to reach a negotiated settlement or the greatest amount of blame possible; we wished to assure that the National Liberation Front's position was not prejudiced, in any way, by whatever settlement might be reached by the conference if we could not prevent it from succeeding.

Throughout, we took it for granted that the United States would not quit Southeast Asia and we accepted the inevitability of war with the United States. We preferred not to allow the United States to have the rest which a negotiated settlement in Vietnam would afford it in order to gather strength to attack us.

At the end of the game we considered that we had achieved some restoration of our influence in Hanoi as demonstrated by our successful admission to the conference at Rangoon -- we credit Hanoi in arranging that. We had gained the opportunity to disrupt the conference but the outcome and our behavior at the conference were still in doubt. Whether we would stay and try to break it up or whether we would eventually walk out had not been decided. We had given an active demonstration of firm adherence to a pure doctrinal line. Our one failure, and an important one, was that Ho Chi Minh misinterpreted our efforts to strengthen him by moving five divisions to his border and offering additional aid. He did not enter into consultations with us after that. He could have utilized these measures as an opportunity to strengthen his positions in his dealings with the United States.

[REDACTED]

DIRECTOR: In listening to the presentation you can see the problems that Control ran into in attempting to sift through the various team moves. Before we open the discussion, I'd like to make one remark to the effect that Control is normally criticized for watering down, in many cases, the moves of the teams. This, of course, has happened in this particular game. The other criticism, usually brought forth, is that the initial scenario is not reasonable. I'd like to say that when we started this game we planned to start from a current time-frame and move directly into de-escalatory moves. This was shot down as we moved across the world. As we moved west, we found that there was much less feeling, particularly at CINCPAC, that de-escalation was likely to take place in the near future. When we got to Saigon there was practically no feeling that the North Vietnamese would be ready to negotiate this fall. In view of this, we projected the time-frame for one year, wrote in the additional defeat suffered by the North Vietnamese and added the loss of their rice crop. We felt we had a reasonable or, at least, possible situation for de-escalation. With regard to the Control moves, I ask the participants to accept our acknowledgement of the blame in those cases where we have preempted the teams. I'd like to stay out of any criticisms of the Control Team's actions. With that, gentlemen, I throw the meeting completely open.

NORTH VIETNAM: I'd like to ask a question of Control.

Toward the end of the game, Hanoi thought that we were going to have control of areas that we held at the time of the de facto cease-fire. I understand from the US Team that they disagree -- they were not going to let Hanoi have control of the various areas which the NLF controlled at the time of the cease-fire. It seems to me there was a real difference of what the facts were at that point. It really never became too clear. Could you clarify that?

CONTROL: The Control Team's problem was reconciling the rather diverging views of Hanoi and the NLF. Hanoi wanted to be completely inflexible. They were quite adamant about keeping up the fire and offering resistance wherever it appeared. The Viet Cong were far more flexible. The United States, as you heard, was assuming a fairly hard line. In order to move this thing towards negotiations, the Control Group, working hopefully within the philosophy of the various teams, worked out the de facto cease-fire. This saw the Viet Cong pulling back to their sanctuaries, which they would fight to defend when pressed, and it saw the gray areas opening up and GVN administrators moving through with quite a high level of tolerance on the part

[REDACTED]

of the Viet Cong. The tactics on their part was "to suck the US in." Gradually, the US levels of patrolling went down and the US began pulling back to its enclaves but still patrolling. There were very few confrontations and this is where the world pressures began to build up on the US. Control did this.

DIRECTOR: I might raise one question here -- the US Team acknowledged that they were meeting strong domestic pressures and international pressures to pull out of Vietnam -- they felt they could weather the storm. As you see at the end of the game, they pulled out only very token forces and there is some feeling, and there was quite a bit of feeling in Control, that perhaps the US Team was degrading the total pressures which were really going to be put on them. For example, was it wise to delay a week before downgrading the bombings of North Vietnam. Does anyone have any comments they'd like to put forth on the international pressures or the domestic pressures in view of the statements that have been made?

UNITED STATES: I'd like to comment on that. I've thought about it this past week. It seems to me, from the standpoint of the United States Team, we have underestimated the pressures that would be on us in this conference. I think we have seriously underestimated the extent of domestic and international pressures by this time next year or, perhaps, later. This is my reflection over this past week. I would think that we're going to be under more domestic and, possibly, international pressure than we might realize.

COMMUNIST CHINA: I should like to ask a question about the US Team's reaction to the Chinese Communist military moves. What effect they felt this might have in one way or another? How they assessed these moves?

DIRECTOR: Would someone on the US Team like to answer that?

UNITED STATES: When the game ended, we were not aware of this major redeployment back toward the borders which I learned about this morning -- this 35 divisions. When our Team broke-up, there had been a buildup of five CHICOM Divisions on the border and then the CPR had withdrawn those five. As far as we were concerned there was a de-escalation, in good faith, on the part of the CHICOMs.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Did the movement of IL-28 bombers to the southern area come to your attention and did it have any affect?

UNITED STATES: Yes sir, this came to our attention and we felt that those could be taken care of by redeployments outside of South Vietnam just by moving some of our SAC power a little further forward but not getting it into the zone of political consideration. We didn't have to move forward and we felt, as long as we did it strategically, we would take care of that additional threat without complicating the political situation.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Was the US Team aware or did they assess any of the movement of the IL-28s as being naval subordinated and presenting any naval threat to the naval forces in the area?

UNITED STATES: No sir, we didn't discuss that. In the script that the US Team received it simply came through as a redeployment of Beagle Squadrons into Southeast China and it did not focus.....

COMMUNIST CHINA: Then they didn't get our move on the naval subordination of the IL-28?

CONTROL: Not clearly, Sir.... and they did not get the move of the 35 Divisions to the border because it occurred in the CPR's last move and they never did know that the CPR had moved 5 Divisions across Burma to the Thai border because that happened in your last move. They read that this morning.

DIRECTOR: You had a point on the de-escalation.

DIRECTORATE: In connection with the US Team's play it seemed to me, at least, that not only were they being very sanguine about the pressures both at home and abroad but they seemed to have ignored many of the commitments that the United States had made prior to the time of play. It was as if Goldberg had never made his speech to the UN and as if the President had never said that he was waiting for some sign from Hanoi that they were ready to de-escalate and here the US was confronted with the removal of two NVN Divisions from South Vietnam. They seemed to be able to take that very much in their stride and still hold on to a very tough position in the negotiations.

UNITED STATES: I'd like to answer that specifically. We received Ho's note on the 13th of September. We immediately replied in the affirmative that we would welcome direct secret negotiations with the DRV at a place and time of convenience to Ho. We couldn't be more responsive. Then the meeting was finally set up on the 16th of September. This all took three

days. That seems like a reasonable amount of time to arrange a secret meeting and to decide on a conference location. At that first meeting, we gave Ho our list of questions but this did not call for the cessation of the bombing of the North. All we wanted to do was to get a commitment as to a time for a joint announcement by both sides and an acceptance, on the part of Ho, of verification of the withdrawal of his troops. As soon as we got those, we were prepared to announce. The announcement was made on the 19th, three days after the secret meeting in Prague. I don't think that anyone can accuse us of being recalcitrant or attempting to delay negotiations.

DIRECTORATE: I can! (laughter).

UNITED STATES: There was only a total of six days from Ho's first note, delivered through its French channels, to the cessation of the bombing of the North. Considering the complications, it seems to me that that is a pretty good score.

VIET CONG: I have certainly enjoyed participating in this exercise, I want to congratulate all of you gentlemen who put it on. Having said that, let me just point out that there are three very important points I don't believe have been discussed, unless they were taken up in sessions that I have not attended. The first is the meaning of a "cease-fire." We bandy this term of cease-fire around Washington without the foggiest idea of what it means in Vietnam. It is highly important to think through what a cease-fire could mean or might mean or should mean. If we really mean what the English word says, everybody stops shooting. That's like the cops giving up shooting in agreement with the robbers. You're turning the countryside back over to the Viet Cong. Having been a guerrilla, I enjoyed that prospect. Number two: You have not explained to me how you're going to get rid of a hundred thousand, roughly, armed Viet Cong left in Vietnam as this thing terminates. What happens to these people? Are we going to agree to de-escalate, moving our troops out as the North Vietnamese forces withdraw and leave behind this infrastructure and the armed forces in being, back in the weeds out there? I would have liked to have heard a discussion on this -- How do you expect to live under those conditions? How can you leave a viable Vietnam, as we pledged to do, under those conditions? Somebody has to dispose of the VC with arms in hand.

The third point is how are you going to avoid a Panmunjom in Rangoon under the conditions that you have left this situation in? The pressure is off. This is going to be just an excellent debating society. If the Chinese and the VC walk out -- they're nuts -- they should stay there indefinitely, leading us on and encouraging the domestic and international pressures. So I will not leave entirely satisfied until you tell me: What a cease-fire is going to mean, how you get rid of the Viet Cong and how are you going to avoid a Panmunjom?

NORTH VIETNAM: I would just like to supplement that because I think this question of the meaning of the cease-fire is absolutely essential to the question I earlier brought up. I think it's not an accident that everybody felt that they had come out ahead. I think somebody was wrong and I think one of the crucial factors that we didn't really fully address was the question of what were the conditions of cease-fire? We in the North were trying to get United States military forces tied up so they could not sweep the countryside.

We felt that if we could get US forces back in their enclaves, we would really have things going for us with the VC. That's not an unrealistic estimate, from Hanoi's point of view, but the United States Team assumed that they were out there sweeping and, thereby, keeping the VC under control. If that really happened, we in Hanoi would start screaming bloody murder and would accuse the United States of breaking the cease-fire. If the recent fire fight was the result of US military forces sweeping activities, I think that the US government would be under real political pressure. I think that, if there had been a cease-fire and news was put on the front page of the New York Times that American troops had attacked a group of VC defending an arms cache, the United States could be accused of breaking a cease-fire. I think it's that kind of issue and the conditions of the cease-fire that constitute the crucial turning point of this affair.

[REDACTED]

DIRECTOR: In regard to the cease-fire, I'd like to ask Colonel McDonald to review the positions as they ended up with the teams.

CONTROL: The fact that the teams were so irreconcilable forced Control to exercise a great deal of finesse. The US Team was utterly determined not to get pinned down into a freeze-in-place. They wanted complete freedom of movement. The other side was just as adamant. They wanted an absolute freeze and really weren't willing to allow things such as the US sweeping operations, to go along very long. They wanted to look forthcoming, at least for the time being, while world pressures worked to force the United States to stop. The cease-fire that Control eventually devised really had the enemy unilaterally withdrawing to its enclaves and only defending, the US patrolling less and less aggressively and becoming more sensitive to the thing that Mr. [REDACTED] only just mentioned -- the fact that the fire fight could be made to look very bad in the newspapers in New York. The Communists didn't know how long they could go on with this sort of thing the way Control played it. If the US development program really caught on, then they were in trouble but the United States was on the horns of a terrible dilemma.

Regarding the question that General [REDACTED] brought up, the teams did address withdrawal of forces from South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese. They did address, in their correspondence at least, the possibility of withdrawing US forces on a logical quid pro quo basis. I notice in the comparison of positions that there was little attention paid to the business of the Viet Cong -- it wasn't ignored, some teams covered it, but it received far less attention than perhaps it deserved.

UNITED STATES: It seems to me that Mr. [REDACTED] has raised here a very important point although, I'll say right at the outset that, I'm on the opposite side of where I think he is on this fence. At least one member of the US Team advocated a cautious approach to action because of the trickily worded demarche, if that's the word, coming from Mr. Ho Chi Minh. The fact is that our question asking for what his idea was of a cease-fire, as mentioned by General [REDACTED], was never answered, and neither were several other crucial questions. Thirdly, he agreed, with almost no struggle or opposition, to the most amazing series of concessions. All of which led us to think that we had better proceed with caution because there was no doubt that the path was booby-trapped. I would say that the outcome of the game and the objectives expressed by certain team leaders, proved that this was exactly the case.

Now I'm afraid that this may be translated into real life some time, and that if we rush forward to accept every intimation of peaceful intent on the part of the other side, we can end up in exactly the situation that we found ourselves in at "Panmunjom the Second" at Rangoon. In other words, we had better be a little more prudent! As a matter of historic interest, somehow or other when we considered the situation at the first and second meetings, the fact that Ambassador Goldberg had made a speech at the UN had not come to our judicial notice -- I don't know why. (LAUGHTER)

UNITED STATES: I'd like to make one more comment. First of all, I would like to express appreciation for being invited into these deliberations -- we have a parochial responsibility of getting up \$1.2 billion a month for this operation. It's a unique opportunity for us to participate. I've been able to participate in only one meeting but as I reviewed that, and I didn't bring it up myself, I thought that we'd missed a very important point.

As I mentioned in our team meeting, we have, with infinite labor, created the Asian Development Bank which now comprises every nation in Asia except Burma and Mongolia. This instrument was created very carefully. Through this instrument the United States can contribute to North Vietnam -- the United States can contribute to North Vietnam via this instrument. I thought at the start of negotiations, as one of our opening gambits, we could have joined with the Soviet Union in establishing a trust fund for the redevelopment of North and South Vietnam. This organization will be in being by this time next year. We have put the best people, this is a fact, the best people we can find -- our US executive and alternate director -- and we have a very competent and very capable Japanese as President. I think this is an opening gambit that we might have missed and that might swing some international pressures to our side if we were to join in the redevelopment, not only of South but North Vietnam, with the Soviet Union. I might add that, in the creation of this bank, we nearly had the Soviet Union on the hook but they resisted -- they wanted to join in the worst way but they just couldn't find themselves putting their names on a capitalistic institution like a bank and so they pulled out at the last minute. However, the Soviets indicated their willingness, if the times were auspicious, to join with us or any other nation in a trust fund to be administered through this bank. I think this is one point that we might have missed that could significantly shift the burden of international and domestic pressures away from the United States in this negotiation problem.

I might also mention that with this bank, in the reconstruction of South Vietnam, we might have it a bit backwards. Instead of us and the Ky government proposing a plan of reconstruction to be sanctioned by the Asian Development Bank or the International Institutions, we'd better keep quiet, ask the International Institutions in, ask them what we should do, ask them to recommend a plan of action which we should then attempt to implement.

In other words, don't let us get sucked into recommending a plan of action with the Ky government. We can shift the burden very profitably to the International Institutions as we did in the devaluation of the currency recently in South Vietnam when the IMF took the lead. The President has intentionally attempted to create this congerie of International Institutions which can be extremely useful in the days ahead and I think that we should make full use of it, and pull back behind them if possible.

USSR: Pursuing a little bit further the point about a cease-fire and the risk of another Panminjom, raised by General _____ and responded to by General _____, it seems that that is clearly something that the US ought to be devoting a lot of attention to for possible future use. I wonder if the US Team might have some ideas on the subject? What offers they would be willing to accept or perhaps would be willing to suggest. Does the Blue Team have anything on this which they would like to cover?

DIRECTOR: Would someone from the US Team like to pick that up before I toss it to General _____?

UNITED STATES: Your question is addressed to our understanding of what you mean by a cease-fire?

USSR: What sort of a cease-fire do you think should be acceptable from the American point of view?

UNITED STATES: Our definition of a cease-fire is as follows: Cessation of hostile acts by both sides as evidenced by a measurable decline of incidence statistics within the GVN and an assurance of the GVN's rights to administer South Vietnam according to its own laws and procedures. No sanctuaries in South Vietnam.

VIET CONG: Did you say it was a cease-fire on that basis?

UNITED STATES: General _____ second point was the thing that concerned me and, I think, many of the US Team the most. What do we do about all of these VC that are still in

[REDACTED]

the country, in their sanctuary areas, keeping in mind that pressures will be such as to get us out of the country, while they are still in a very advantageous position while taking their one step backward. I think that the intransigence of the US Team was caused by an attempt to devise some sort of a posture where we could maintain a position of strength in order to deal with that. It would seem to me that this is the most crucial issue that concerned us.

There was one other point that concerned me. This would really be a criticism, I guess, of our own or maybe the South Vietnamese actions. We assumed, or someone assumed, that we would suddenly become a constabulary and not armed forces. I felt that there was not enough attention given to how we might get ourselves into the posture of maintaining a large number of people under arms to deal with the VC under conditions of a cease-fire, or stand down, that might be imposed on us by an international authority. This problem would seem to require a great deal of thought in advance and a long lead-time for creating a para-military force, under suitable auspices, that would be able to deal with the problem of a military stand-down and a forced withdrawal of our armed forces.

SOUTH VIETNAM: One of the minor points in the scenario that hasn't been commented on is the problem Control posed for the GVN Team. This was the behind-the-scenes deal between two moderate groups, one in the South Vietnamese government and the other within the NLF. When we looked at this problem from the standpoint of the GVN, we concluded that there were not sufficient safeguards against this type of action by a moderate South Vietnamese faction so we moved, in the initial scenario, to put them down and re-establish a much firmer government. We were particularly concerned about whether negotiations by a moderate faction, of the type which appeared in both the first act and the third act, could provide dependable assurances on just the points that General has raised -- what would be done with the VC infrastructure and so on? We concluded that any moderate faction, or any faction representing itself as moderate from the VC side, would probably be designed to deceive us. There is no authentic Southern Vietnamese Nationalist that could be counted on from our point of view or the American point of view. That didn't come up in any of the comments by the Communist teams except inferentially. Was there a discussion of this or was this all a Trojan horse, so to speak, put up to try to fool us? Do they exclude Southern nationalism?

[REDACTED]

VIET CONG: I think that, on the Viet Cong side, there was some discussion of this and some fear on our part that there would be individuals in our ranks who would defect, under these circumstances, if offered sufficient inducement; but anybody who didn't actually defect would remain a disciplined cadre.

COMMUNIST CHINA: The Chinese Team gave some consideration to it. We considered whether it would be to our advantage to have NLF elements in the GVN. This might create greater political dissidence and disruption in Saigon and open possibilities for infiltration and a take-over in that fashion. But, under the perspective of Hanoi's unreliable behavior and concerted efforts to exclude our influence from the area, we considered the risk too great to take. We were not sure of the NLF credentials in that respect.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Really one of the interesting things about this, but perhaps not surprising, was this whole question of de-escalation. The problem had to be set up rather artificially to try and arrive at a situation where de-escalation could develop. Despite that, as you played the game, I gather, and it certainly was obvious to us on the Chinese side, that the tendency was always to escalate and you had to artificially turn it down. It seems to me one of the interesting things would be to study these pressures and moves that led to escalation because, if we are ever going to de-escalate, we ought to understand what are the problems. This might be one of the real values of this particular exercise as you look at it over a long period of time. I think the discussion around the table here today, also, indicates that the pressures to escalate would probably be even greater than those that have shown up in the program as they were explained to me.

COMMUNIST CHINA: I'd like to interject a remark to correct the records. I don't want to leave the impression that the Chinese Team feels that they came out ahead in the exercise. Actually, we did not want a conference. It was arranged behind our backs and, if we had our way, we would have done everything possible to prevent it.

DIRECTORATE: I think the Chinese Team was the only team that recognized that they weren't coming out ahead. It's because of this fact, that each team thought it was winning, that you had these pressures for escalation. I would suggest that perhaps, in a real life situation, not all of the other teams would think that they were winning. This might be the key to really getting a de-escalatory situation.

[REDACTED]

DIRECTORATE: On the other hand, if indeed you go to a conference, each country will naturally feel that the advantage of staying outweighs the disadvantages of pulling out. I think that it was probably quite natural for everybody sitting down at the conference to have calculated that he is either ahead or going to be ahead as a result of the conference. That's the difference between an unconditional surrender and a negotiated settlement. Basically, when you come to this settlement, both sides will somehow feel that they've made a nickel out of it or that they place their bets so that, in the light of a negotiated settlement or in the process of negotiation, the odds favor them getting ahead. This is the intent of the subjective judgment that each side has. A man from Mars might point out that five out of the six of them lost their minds and/or miscalculated. I would think that we won't get them to the table unless each of them feels in his own mind that somehow he is going to come out ahead.

DIRECTORATE: But in this case I think there is a difference between a nation's press position -- the position that he puts forward at the negotiating table -- and his ultimate position which is the one that he is really willing to settle for if forced to. In this particular situation, the ultimate positions, if followed, it seems to me, would have led right back up to a renewal of the conflict.

DIRECTORATE: The ultimate positions are only relative. There is so much pressure on having this conference that, once it is assembled, certain ultimate positions might be forced to be modified simply because of the consequences of breaking off these negotiations.

NORTH VIETNAM: I'd like to take a third position in this debate. At the end of the game, there was less and less patrolling by the US, although the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were trying to extend their control. There wasn't any overt and open violence. At the same time, the United States and GVN were making a massive effort to go out to the villages. I would assume that, under these conditions, both parties might think they had a better chance than at present. I'm not saying that this is true, but this estimate of the situation might be correct. With a massive GVN/US campaign in the villages, the United States might be able to consolidate control over the South. The Viet Cong and Hanoi might similarly think that, with the US Army and the Air Force off their backs, that they were going to do better. The real crucial question seems to me, therefore, to come down to the

[REDACTED]

fact that they may both estimate that they're going to win under these conditions. By definition one of them is wrong. What do we, as a government, think as to the viability of the United States extending their control under these conditions? Is this a hopeless dream or is it a realistic appraisal?

SOUTH VIETNAM: It all depends on how you define the preservation of sanctuaries as bases. As we were last left with it, neither the GVN nor the US was able to send patrols freely into these areas. Under this situation, it seems inevitable, we couldn't really push through. Now if you were able, by some formula, to overcome this situation and the VC were so interested in a peaceful settlement that they were willing to give up their sanctuaries, that would be a different story.

NORTH VIETNAM: Just for the sake of argument, if the VC after three years were still in sanctuaries way up in the hills and had learned through cruel experience that it wasn't profitable to move out of those sanctuaries, I can imagine that, at the end of three years of a cease-fire like this, the situation might look considerable better to us. I'm not saying that is necessarily true but it might be.

DIRECTORATE: One interesting thing here today, in both sessions, has been the emphasis that has been placed on military aspects on questions of cease-fire, sanctuaries and so forth. Interestingly enough, during the last Control panel meeting when we were looking at the piles of papers presented by the teams themselves, we were rather impressed by the emphasis which most teams, with exception of the CHICOMs, were placing on political, economic, and psychological aspects. In fact, I think we gained the impression that quite a few of the countries involved would have been almost willing to have a go at a de-escalated military situation depending on their ability. The US has vast economic and political capabilities. The Communist, on their side, have capabilities of penetration, infiltration, political and propaganda ploys. Today we got no emphasis on this. The discussion was all concerned with military problems.

UNITED STATES: As I sense the US action team's ploy, they felt, and I think we agreed, that it was to our advantage to protract negotiations in order to give us time to help the South Vietnamese pull up their socks enough to gather some strength in the countryside. This might enable them to resist the re-encroachment by the VC after a withdrawal of forces on both sides. Someone else asked whether it was realistic to

[REDACTED]

assume that in 9 to 12 months the job could be done? I personally seriously doubt it, but I think that was the rationale behind our agreeing to go along with the protracted conference. This, however, may have been unrealistic in the international world.

COMMUNIST CHINA: This was one of the Chinese Team's theories and, also, one of the factors that motivated the CPR. I think one of the differences between the analysis of Pan-munjom and the Chinese position, in this game, was the dilemma in which the position of the Soviet Union put the Chinese.

DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, we are committed to a 3:30 p.m. adjournment. I'd like to express the appreciation of the Agency to all of you and to your people who helped out on this game. I feel there are probably many issues that we didn't get to today but these will be included in the final written report. That report will include a summary of the game, transcripts of the critique and any comments that any individual wishes to include in the game record. We'll also complete a video and film summary during October. This will be available to the Agencies for review. [REDACTED]

CHAIRMAN, JCS: Thank you General Kemp. I'd just like to make a couple of quick comments. First, I'm happy that you prefaced your opening remarks by pointing out that these games are not predictive. I say that because listening to the comments here this afternoon and looking at the spread sheets, I'm afraid some cynics might be tempted to re-discover that there are things worse than war. Secondly, I'd like to mention to all of you that we will have other games this year -- one on Thailand, one on Latin America and some broader subjects that are not tied to geographical areas. We will look forward to having all of you participate. I'd like to express our thanks to all of the Agencies who participated in this game and to thank the individuals who gave of their time and of their own knowledge and efforts in making this game a success. We look forward to seeing you again during more of these games.

[REDACTED] I'd like to express for State our very great appreciation for the time and attention that has been given to these subjects with which many of us will be confronted. Regardless of whether we came to any final conclusions, the game exposed important problems which all of us should be thinking about.

ACTION LEVEL
DISCUSSION

SIGMA I-66

ACTION-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS

The following comments are extracts from the transcript of the Action-Level Review of SIGMA I-66:

* * * * *

GAME DIRECTOR: I'd like to remind you that the preparation for this game was a joint community effort -- all of your organizations gave us a great deal of assistance. I would like, also to express my appreciation to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV for the assistance they gave us during our recent trip to Honolulu and Saigon. After a summary of the game play by Colonel McDonald, who heads our Cold War Division and who served as moderator for the Control Group, we'll ask each Team Captain to briefly outline his team's objectives at the start of the game and his opinion as to how well they achieved each of those objectives by games' end. Following that, we will examine some of the key issues and some of the actions taken during the game.

* * * * *

CONTROL: If Control had done exactly what the US Team wanted to do, in terms of Ho's announcement, there could have been no negotiations. Your terms were so far from those of the other side that it simply wasn't feasible. Control was forced, therefore, while staying within the philosophy of both teams, to do some finessing so that the situation could be advanced to a de-escalating phase. The Control Group simply ruled that both countries had made announcements, even though the US Team hadn't received the desired clarification and assurances from Hanoi. Ho had not been responsive to your nine questions, however, Ho's emissary at Prague indicated a willingness to accept impartial verification of North Vietnamese troop withdrawals and the overall situation was de-escalating. The cease-fire was becoming a de facto cessation of hostilities. Although you weren't getting any response to your questions, you made your announcement and you discontinued the air attacks. In this way, Control exercised the "Hand of God" with the material you gave them. I your excellent final move message, you cited a number of items which you would be willing to consider during a negotiating situation. You indicated, however, that you were determined to avoid a "freeze-in-place". You didn't even want to use the term "cease fire". Next, you went through an array of items that you might accept if the quid pro quo were right. These included the principle that initiation of further ground, naval or air incidents would violate the spirit of the conference and constitute a bree

[REDACTED]

of agreement. Further, you suggested a ban on the introduction of additional US units, limitation on the repositioning of units larger than battalion size, and international supervision -- of an ICC type -- to include Soviet representation. Control tried to operate within this broad context, as well as similar statements from the other teams. The projections that saw you through to an actual conference at Rangoon were predicated on the parts of the different messages that seemed to mesh. As the Director has mentioned, Control took the place of real world confusion, breakdowns in communications and everything else.

DIRECTOR: We're running short on time but there's one thing that I think is of interest to everyone. That is the US Team's rationale for feeling that they could withstand national and international pressures while refusing to make any positive movement towards troop withdrawals, cease-fire or other type of concession. I think the Control Group would like to hear your rationale on that subject if you don't mind.

UNITED STATES: As we interpreted the situation, everything was going our way right on through. We didn't encounter anything that posed serious problems to the US. Let me recapitulate. First, in the original message from Ho, passed through the French, he had certain disadvantageous caveats which were, later, completely dropped out by his negotiator in Prague. Specifically, no requirement was stated, by that negotiator, for the US to announce any commitment to withdraw from Southeast Asia -- which was one of his original points. I just cite that as an example. There was, also, a big gain from the standpoint of the US position when you compare Ho's original proposal, submitted through the French, and the demands made by his negotiator at Prague. As a result of that position at Prague, where they had dropped out some of the sticky items from Ho's original proposal that would have given us trouble, we agreed to suspend bombing and to make a public announcement to that effect. We assumed that this agreement was accomplished, in fact, one of the instructions to our negotiator in Prague was to find a mutual time when these two announcements would be made to the world. We felt we were getting a major commitment from the North Vietnamese because they admitted publicly that they had divisions in the South. In addition, they implied publicly that they had some measure of control over the National Liberation Front's level of activities.

DIRECTOR: Well, let's go a little further. Even on the last move the US, in spite of international and domestic pressure, did not indicate that they would even start to move.

[REDACTED]

While this pressure was building up, all of our allies were screaming that the US was not doing anything! As you will recall -- I believe it came out in one of your meetings -- you felt that you just had to ride it through. All through the game you thought you could resist this pressure. I wonder if that was realistic?

DIRECTORATE: After the first US move, the feeling in Control was that the US Team was really on a "sticky wicket", both in terms of US public opinion and world public opinion, and that the DRV had no intention of operating in good faith. There was even some feeling that the US Team wasn't sufficiently skeptical regarding the DRV's statement. But, I must say, the US Team got itself off this "sticky wicket" considerably better than some of us thought it would. Despite this, however, we still had a feeling that it was done, in part, by paying less attention to US and world public opinion than some of us felt that the United States, in reality, might have been able to do in a situation like this. Public opinion might play a more dominating role, from a US standpoint, than the US Team indicated.

DIRECTORATE: I have the feeling that the US Team started history on the day the game started and really paid no particular attention to what had happened in the two years prior to the game. It seemed to me that you started your negotiations by ignoring or at least, overlooking a fair amount of commitments that the United States had already made. We had said that we were going to pull our troops out as soon as we had gotten some assurances that North Vietnam was going to make some sort of a gesture towards peace. We had talked, in the preceding year, about being very forthcoming on many issues providing there were reciprocal actions from the North. It just seems to me that those statements, plus the build up of sentiments, at home and abroad, were something that the US Team very gaily ignored.

UNITED STATES: Our position was that we were prepared to negotiate at any time and we went to the negotiations as soon as we could, however, we sought clarification of some basic points. Without this clarification, we couldn't make any substantial change in our military position.

DIRECTORATE: You're still evading the point! I mean the gesture you made in terms of withdrawal. You may have closed down the PX or done something similar as your gesture but you were still sitting in Vietnam with 500,000 troops and not pulling anything out! This is nice work if you can get it but, I must confess, I don't think you can!

[REDACTED]

UNITED STATES: During the course of the negotiations, there was no real reason to withdraw main force units from the theater itself. We were prepared to relocate certain units and to reintroduce them into South Vietnam or into the air battle over North Vietnam within a very short period of time. We did accede to world pressures by stopping the bombing of North Vietnam.

DIRECTORATE: That's quite true but, I must say we strained awfully hard to give you those six days. I didn't see how you could avoid doing it much earlier than that.

UNITED STATES: We did it as soon as we got an agreement at Prague for a joint announcement, which was what Hanoi had asked for in the first place. They said a joint announcement would be made. As soon as we got that, we suspended the bombing!

DIRECTORATE: Yes, but the US has said, time and time again, that we'd stop bombing within hours after some assurance of a move towards de-escalation on the part of the DRV and we have reason to believe they are taking two divisions out for whatever reason. I just think that you were lucky to get those extra six days!

UNITED STATES: We accept that but we decided rather firmly that we were not going to have another Korean debacle despite world pressures. This is a question of national objectives and of national fortitude. I think that we had to consider this and not just world pressures alone.

DIRECTORATE: To paraphrase former President Truman, we thought the "heat in the kitchen" was going to be hotter than the US Team apparently found it. One of the big, sticky problems confronting the US Team on the eve of negotiations were the commitments made by the US prior to that time. Now, maybe we shouldn't have made these commitments and maybe we shouldn't make any more but the fact of the matter is that we made them and this should be considered.

UNITED STATES: There was no disposition on the part of our Seniors to go any further in the way of concessions. We were ready and willing to negotiate at any time but we were not going to weaken our physical position or our negotiating position by making any moves until we pinned down the quid pro quo relationship of the moves. As a result, the game didn't progress to the point of any specific quid pro quo.

[REDACTED]

CONTROL: Of course, in the game, the Prague discussions were going on all the while so you were, in effect, negotiating. You couldn't be accused of not negotiating, although the negotiations were secret and they were bilateral. But the pressure was building up, as a result of leaks, to get you into the formal Rangoon conference and you held out as long as you could. Here again, Control felt that you had to eventually move to the table even though you hadn't gotten what you thought were responsive answers from Ho. He really didn't tell you much more than that he was pulling some troops out. He convinced most of the world that he really had pulled most of the North Vietnamese units out of South Vietnam.

DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, we're running out of time so I'd like to open the meeting, for a minute, to let anyone bring up any major issues they'd like to discuss.

UNITED STATES: There's one point on the issue of freedom of movement within South Vietnam. At no time did we envision that we would be restricted from going into existing VC sanctuaries. I think that comes out very clearly in our messages.

DIRECTORATE: Control recognized your position on that. We revised it somewhat, as you can tell by the third scenario.

VIET CONG: Would you say that it was realistic for US forces to be taking aggressive, large-scale, offensive actions while formal negotiations were being conducted in Rangoon? We would not estimate so, on the VC side.

DIRECTORATE: That's why we revised it!

VIET CONG: At this juncture, there's one thing that seems to have dropped out of the picture somehow. If I understand correctly, Hanoi stated that they were prepared to negotiate, providing that negotiations were preceded by a cease-fire. This requirement seems to have disappeared since, at the time of the negotiations, some US military activity was still taking place. What happened to that requirement? This was a very gameable situation.

DIRECTOR: As I pointed out, we would have been right back at war if Control had not de-escalated the situation. This was one of the things we had Ho "give in" on, because we did have a de facto cease-fire. He was willing to go to Rangoon without prior negotiations on the cease-fire issue.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Ho's action on the cease-fire issue had the effect of convincing the Chinese team that Ho was a good deal

[REDACTED]

weaker and more ready to throw in the sponge than we had previously assumed. It, also, confirmed our belief that the US was insincere and would never pull out of Vietnam.

DIRECTOR: I think that was probably a good evaluation on the part of the Chinese. As a matter of fact, we discussed the possibility of a game in which North Vietnam would be beaten militarily but, in which, China or Russia wouldn't let Hanoi quit.

NORTH VIETNAM: We were both concerned and interested in the fact that China, having made numerous threats and having moved five divisions down to our northern border, suddenly became as docile as lambs. They not only moved the five divisions back from the border but sat down at the negotiating table with the USSR.

COMMUNIST CHINA: Control moved those five divisions!
(Laughter).

NORTH VIETNAM: We felt we had the Chinese where we wanted them.

DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your excellent summaries this morning . . .

[REDACTED]

SIGMA I-66

SIGMA I-66 was prepared and conducted under the supervision of Colonel Thomas J. McDonald, USA, Chief, Cold War Division, Joint War Games Agency, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with extensive assistance from many personnel of the participating agencies and commands. The Project Officer was Lt Col Robert M. Smith, USA, Head, Concepts and Developments Branch, CWD.

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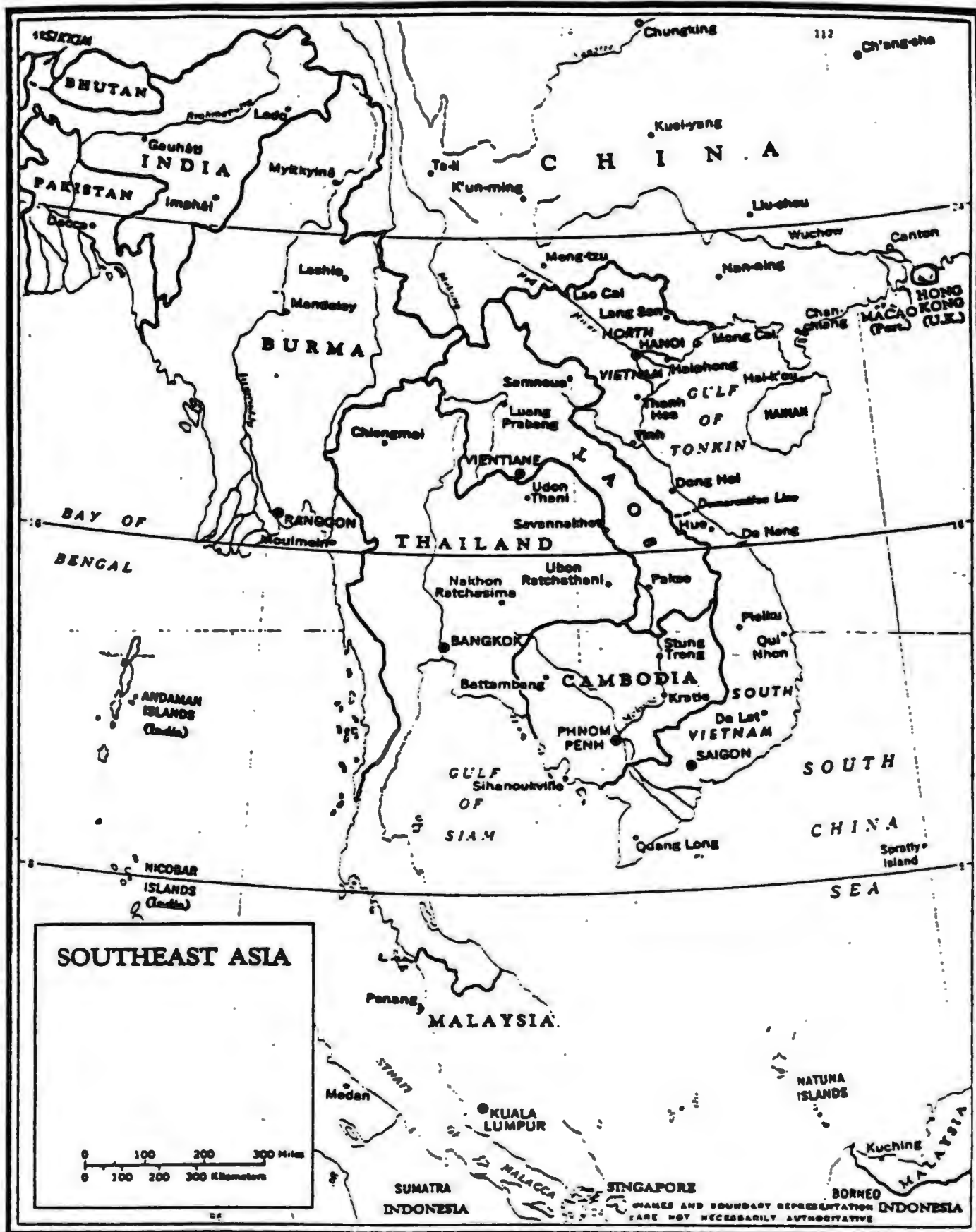
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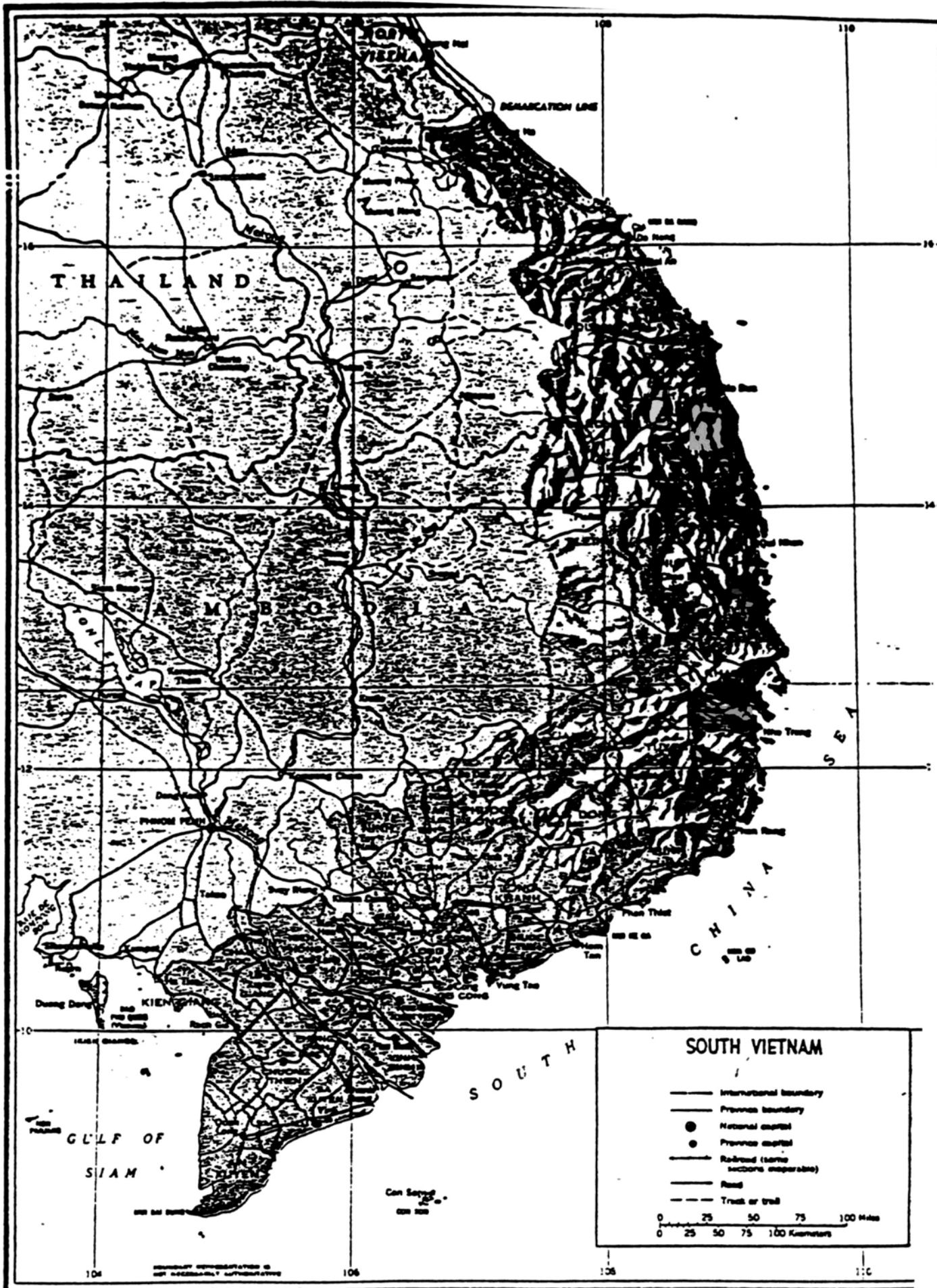
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