

*Pres. file*31Friday, March 15, 1968
3:25 p. m.~~TOP SECRET~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith the proposals for the 5 P. M. meeting. I have ascertained from Paul Nitze that:

-- this is a consensus agreed upon completely within the Pentagon; that is, all the members of the JCS and the service Secretaries, as well as Clifford and Nitze;

-- the Strategic Reserve call-up (para. 3) would be announced at the same time as the call-up to support the thirty thousand deployment, but it would take place later: beginning approximately April 15;

-- the cost of this package would be for FY 1968 \$2 billion extra. To this must be added the \$3.4 billion extra to which we are already committed by actions taken. The extra cost for FY 1969 is "much less" than the \$10 billion we had earlier envisaged. Nitze will have an approximate calculation in time for the 5 P. M. meeting.

I will organize some questions for you promptly, but I wanted you to have this right away.

W J Rostow

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NEJ 95-208
By sig, NARA, Date 7-1-96

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31a

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: SEA Deployments, the Strategic Reserve, and Related Actions (U)

1. What should be the composition of the forces totalling 30,000 men to be sent to General Westmoreland?

We have agreed on a package including 24,200 Army, 4,025 Air Force, and 1,775 Navy personnel. We have also agreed we should bring back the 27th Regimental Landing Team and support units, totalling 7,363 Marines in July, and replace them with Army. This would bring the approved South Vietnam deployment to 565,500 U.S. military personnel, including the 10,500 deployed in February. These deployments can be sustained with current personnel policies, without new legislation. For details see Tab A.

2. What callup of reserves do we recommend to support that deployment?

We recommend a callup of 36,621 Reserve and National Guard personnel, including 31,600 Army, 3,497 Air Force, and 1,524 Navy. This is within the scope of existing law. For details see Tab B.

3. What additional callup of reserves do we recommend to reconstitute the strategic reserve?

We recommend a follow-on callup of 48,393 Reserve and National Guard personnel: 45,300 Army to bring our active strategic reserve to 7 divisions (5-1/3 Army, 1-2/3 Marines); and 3,093 Air Force. For details see Tab C.

Alternative Executive Orders to implement this are at Tab D.

Charles L. Sigmond

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Authority OSD Itr 7/25/79
By gldch NARA, Date 4/15/96

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A
31b

Tab A: Proposed Deployments to Vietnam

	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Deployment Date</u>
A. U.S. Army		
Infantry Bde (3 Inf Bns)	4500	15-30 June
Mech Bde (1 Inf Bn, 1 Inf Bn (Mech), 1 Tk Bn)	5041	12 July
Avn Co, Sep Bde	238	15 July
Armd Cav Sqdn	1030	15-30 June
MP Bn	955	15-30 June
Cbt Svc Spt	3316	
Cbt and Cbt Svc Spt	<u>9120</u>	
Subtotal	24,200	
B. 7th AF		
4 TFS	2164	15 April
FAC/TACP	191	1 June
Airlift	741	1 June
Support	<u>929</u>	
Subtotal	4025	
C. USN		
Naval Support Activity, DaNang	1775	
D. Total MACV	30,000	

Moreover, we propose to substitute an Army infantry brigade and support personnel for the Marine Corps 27th Regimental Landing Team and support personnel that deployed on short notice in February. This substitution involving 7,363 personnel, will take place in the first half of July. We want to do this to bring the relationship between deployed and CONUS Marine forces back into a sustainable balance.

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By gldch NARA. Date 4/15/96

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Tab B: 15 March Reserve Recall

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Authority OSD/tr 7125/79
By gldch NARA. Date 4/15/96

ARMY

2 Infantry Bdes	9,000	
1 Mech Bde	5,000	
1 Avn Co, Sep Bde	230	
1 Armd Cav Sqd	1,030	
1 MP Bn	960	
Cmbt and Cmbt Svc Spt	15,380	
	<u>31,600</u>	a/

AIR FORCE

2 F-86, 1 F-100 Tac Ftr Grps	2,333	
1 Aero Med Airlift Grp	760	
4 Aero Evac/Med Svc Sq	404	
	<u>3,497</u>	b/

NAVY

2 NMCB	<u>1,524</u>	
	36,621	

a/ If we were to decide now that the brigade of the 82nd airborne and the infantry brigade replacing the 27th RLT in the 10,500 emergency reinforcement package were to be considered permanent, instead of on loan to MACV, and that the Program #6 ceiling would be raised for this purpose, the Army would recommend that we now call and plan to deploy an additional 13,437 support personnel for these units.

b/ If we are not sure of a follow-on call-up, the Air Force believes a call-up of the Air Force units listed in Tab C is required now.

March 15, 1968

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Tab C

FOLLOW-ON
RESERVE CALL

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD ltr 7/25/79
By gldch, NARA, Date 4/15/96

Army

1 Infantry Bde	3,700
1 Infantry Bde & Spt	9,600
1 Division & Spt	<u>32,000^{a/}</u>
	45,300

Air Force

1 Aero Evac Sqd	75
2 Aerial Post Sqdns	186
1 Postal Grp	111
1 C-119 Tactical Airlift Grp	665
3 F-84 Tac Ftr Grps	<u>2,056^{b/}</u>
	3,093 ^{b/} c/

TOTAL

48,393

a/ To obtain a rapid increase in readiness, a reserve division will be called, the 6th Infantry Division will not be organized, and the assets presently designated for the 6th Division will be used to speed the readiness of the activated reserve division.

b/ The Chief of Staff Air Force believes these units are required to support the 30,000 deployment to MACV, but callup can be delayed to 15 May 68. If we are not sure of a 15 May callup, he believes these units should be called now.

c/ Additional USAF Reserve units required to support the reconstitution of active strategic reserves will be placed in COMBAT BEEF status so as to attain combat readiness, but will not be recalled to active duty unless additional ground forces are deployed.

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EXECUTIVE ORDER

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO ORDER UNITS
OF THE READY RESERVE OF THE ARMED FORCES TO
ACTIVE DUTY

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and as President of the United States, I hereby authorize the Secretary of Defense to order units of the Ready Reserve of the armed forces to active duty for not more than 24 months under paragraph (e) of Department of Defense Appropriation Act, 1967 (80 Stat. 981).

However, the total number of members of the Ready Reserve who may be ordered to active duty with their units hereunder may not exceed ~~60,000~~.

THE WHITE HOUSE,

31f

EXECUTIVE ORDER

**AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO ORDER UNITS
OF THE READY RESERVE OF THE ARMED FORCES TO
ACTIVE DUTY**

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and as President of the United States, I hereby authorize the Secretary of Defense to order units of the Ready Reserve of the armed forces to active duty for not more than 24 months under paragraph (e) of Department of Defense Appropriation Act, 1967 (80 Stat. 981).

THE WHITE HOUSE,

INFORMATION

32

Friday, March 15, 1968 -- 12:55 p. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith a letter from a good, steady academic.

At some time you may wish to talk thoughtfully about the difficulties of a democracy in conducting a war of limited objectives and recall both Mr. Truman's experience and the pride we have a right to feel in retrospect at the outcome in Korea which both stabilized security in the northern Pacific area and gave the South Koreans a chance to show what they could do in building a vital, modern, democratic system.

Pres. file

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
BOULDER, COLORADO 80304

32a

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

March 14, 1968

Dr. Walt W. Rostow
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Walt,

In these trying times for you, for the President, and for Secretary Rusk you must have moments when you feel low, when your faith in man's capacity to learn from history is shaken. I want you to know that there are many of us silent citizens, who admire the steadfastness, restraint, and firmness of men like you and your determination to put freedom above peace.

I watched Secretary Rusk's splendid performance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Then yesterday I watched Walter Cronkite wasting 15 minutes of news time on an "interview" with Bobby and was infuriated. It was incredible. There is little doubt that Bobby will become a new Henry Wallace.

May I suggest that President Johnson start referring to his difficulties within the Democratic Party as being almost the same which President Truman experienced. One of my graduate students wrote a Ph.D. thesis on the Truman Doctrine. I was struck by the extraordinary similarities between the accusations which various Senators (both Democrats and Republicans) directed against President Truman and the present accusations directed against President Johnson.

Recently I used this above-mentioned analogy in several debates and found it to be exceedingly effective. Such an analogy not only helps the American people to see our present problems in a proper historical perspective but should help Ho & Co. not to overestimate the significance of democratic dissent.

Please forgive me for offering this unsolicited advice but I am disturbed by the excesses of internal political partisanship. Their price could be too great for us all.

With best wishes,

Cordially yours,

Ed.

Edward J. Rozek
Professor

H.
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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

P file
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Friday, March 15, 1968

1:15

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Bunker-Thieu Talk on March 15 (Saigon #22205)

For 75 minutes Bunker met with Thieu. Discussion concentrated on the Thieu-Ky relationship and also covered the following:

- Civil Reform
- Functions of the New Government Delegates
- Reconstruction of Hue
- Developing Don's Front
- Mobilization Potential
- Enemy Intentions
- Capital Military Region Reorganization
- Fulbright Hearings

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-255
By jis, NARA Date 9-11-97

Thieu-Ky Relationship -- Bunker expressed concern at the problems involved in using effectively Ky's talents. Bunker attributed much of the present rupture in the relationship to members of both entourages. Bunker urged eliminating the troublemakers and working toward establishing relationships with specific duties, publicly announced, to be Ky's responsibility.

Bunker urged Thieu to have a frank talk -- where both would lay all their cards on the table and work out a modus operandi.

Thieu said he had tried to be understanding and cooperative, but Ky had been difficult. Thieu mentioned that he had assigned the Recovery Committee responsibility to Ky, but Ky had surprised him by turning this responsibility back to the President and announcing it at the end of a television speech without telling Thieu in advance.

Bunker told Thieu of his frank talk with Ky and said he thought Ky would do whatever Thieu wanted. Bunker said Ky wished to handle the anti-corruption campaign. Thieu was unsure about entrusting this to Ky because of the many corrupt people around Ky. Bunker suggested Thieu put Ky in charge of the program for organizing civil defense.

Bunker told Thieu that because he was President only he could solve this problem and the initiative would have to come from him. Bunker reiterated his suggestion that Thieu have a frank talk with Ky and do something about the troublemakers.

Civil Reform -- Bunker was glad about Thieu's recent changes of province chiefs. Thieu plans to select personally 4 or 5 more. Thieu wants to clean

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up the Civil Service and make it more efficient. Thieu noted the Joint Aid/GVN Committee worked on this for two years and had produced only paper. Thieu plans to chair a Council to get results.

Functions of New Government Delegates -- Thieu explained Corps Commanders would retain their powers until April 15 to allow time for proper instructions to be issued for the delegates. There would be:

-- One delegate each in I Corps and III Corps.

-- Two each in II Corps and IV Corps.

Province chiefs would not have a direct relation to Division Commanders. Corps Commanders would be responsible for ARVN/RF/PF and would cooperate with Free World Forces and also coordinate subordinate divisions and area RD programs.

Reconstruction of Hue -- Thieu was particularly anxious to expedite movement of reconstruction material from Danang to Hue. Each family would be allocated 20 pieces of roofing and 10,000 piasters.

Developing Don's Front -- Thieu said Tran Van Don reported on Sunday's Congress. Thieu wants to get the Front organized in provinces and not limit its influence to Saigon. Thieu encouraged Don to develop political cadre.

Bunker asked whether Tran Van An's work was going ahead. Thieu supposed so and remarked he (Thieu) had no Front organized by or for himself. Thieu confirmed An would be his new Information Minister.

Mobilization Potential -- Thieu said the Vietnamese people are now psychologically prepared to do the necessary and will accept mobilization. Thieu believes in raising an additional 125,000 men. Thieu views three priorities:

-- Need for more troops.

-- Use Vietnamese manpower to the maximum, limited only by equipment availability.

-- If the US keeps its present force ceiling, then the Vietnamese should make up the manpower deficiency.

Enemy Intentions -- Thieu thinks that after their second offensive the enemy will indicate a willingness to go back to the 1954 Geneva Agreements. He then sees a difficult problem because the enemy has a highly-disciplined

political cadre, whereas we have nothing comparable at present. Thieu said perhaps Don and others establishing Fronts can make progress in this area.

Capital Military Region Reorganization -- Thieu wants to discuss with General Westmoreland the need for a capable GVN 2 or 3 star general in charge of all aspects of the Capital Military Region, coordinating regular military functions, intelligence and security.

Fulbright Hearings -- Bunker told Thieu not to conclude from press accounts about the hearings and Secretary Rusk's testimony, that there was any change in our position or negotiations. Bunker added that our two Governments remained together. Thieu appreciated that information and said he had been following the matter closely.

W. W. Rostow

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By *is*, NARA Date 4-8-97

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1. I HAD A MEETING FOR ABOUT ONE AND A QUARTER HOURS WITH THIEU TO GO OVER THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH HIM AND SPECIFICALLY TO DISCUSS KY'S ROLE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

2. I TOLD THIEU THAT I WAS GLAD TO SEE THE CHANGES WHICH HE HAD MADE IN PROVINCE CHIEFS. THIEU SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO MAKE FOUR OR FIVE OTHER CHANGES EVEN BEFORE THE TRAINING SCHOOL WAS FINISHED; THERE WERE FIVE ADDITIONAL IN THE "BAD" CATEGORY, INCLUDING GIA DINH AND BIEN HOA, WHICH HE INTENDED TO ACT ON. AFTER THE TRAINING COURSE ENDS THE BEGINNING OF APRIL HE PLANS TO MAKE FURTHER CHANGES. THIEU SAID HE WAS PERSONALLY SELECTING THE NEW PROVINCE CHIEFS AND IN-

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TENDED TO GET THE BEST ONES TO BE FOUND. THIEU ADDED THAT HE ALSO INTENDS TO CLEAN UP THE CIVIL SERVICE AND TRAIN THE REMAINING PERSONNEL TO CARRY OUT EFFICIENTLY THE NEW PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE REORGANIZATION. HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A JOINT USAID/GVN COMMITTEE WORKING FOR SOME TWO YEARS ON ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION, WITH NGUYEN VAN BONG AS CHAIRMAN ON THE GVN SIDE. HE SAID THEY HAD TURNED OUT STACKS OF PAPER BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO PRACTICAL RESULTS SINCE BONG HAD NO AUTHORITY AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS ONLY PILED UP ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESK. HE SAID HE

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WANTED TO GIVE BONG SOME ACTUAL POWER AND PLANNED TO CONTINUE THE COMMITTEE BUT AT THE SAME TIME TO SET UP A GVN COUNCIL, WHICH HE WOULD CHAIR HIMSELF, WITH BONG AS DEPUTY TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM OF THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION AND TO FOLLOW UP TO SEE THAT THE REFORMS ARE CARRIED OUT.

3. I ASKED THIEU ABOUT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT DELEGATES AND HOW THEIR INSPECTION ROLE WOULD BE WORKED OUT. THIEU REPLIED THAT THE CORPS COMMANDERS WOULD RETAIN THEIR POWERS IN THIS FIELD UNTIL APRIL 15 IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROPER INSTRUCTIONS TO BE ISSUED REGARDING THE NEW SYS-

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TEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT DELEGATES. THE LATTER WOULD THEN BE APPOINTED AS HE HAD DESCRIBED EARLIER (SAIGON 21734) WITH ONE EACH IN I CORPS AND III CORPS, AND TWO EACH IN II AND IV CORPS. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THIEU SAID THAT THE PROVINCE CHIEFS WOULD NOT HAVE A DIRECT RELATION TO DIVISION COMMANDERS. CORPS COMMANDERS WOULD HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARVN/RF/PF AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH FREE WORLD FORCES COMMANDERS. THEY WOULD ALSO COORDINATE THE DIVISIONS UNDER THEM AND HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR APPROPRIATE RD PROGRAMS WITHIN THEIR AREA. DIVISION COMMANDERS WOULD HAVE PART OF THEIR UNITS ATTACHED TO PROVINCE CHIEFS FOR SUPPORT OF RD AND THE REST WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR NORMAL MOBILE OPERATIONS.

4. I TOLD THIEU THAT GENERAL FORSYTHE HAD GIVEN ME AN ACCOUNT OF HIS TRIP TO HUE. I UNDERSTOOD HE HAD MOVED AHEAD WITH A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO EXPEDITE RECONSTRUCTION THERE. THIEU CONFIRMED THIS AND SAID THAT HE WAS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO ASSURE THAT CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS WERE MOVED EXPEDITIOUSLY FROM DANANG TO HUE. HE ADDED THAT THE ALLOCATION TO EACH FAMILY WOULD BE 20 PEICES OF ROOFING AND 10,000 PIASERS (RATHER THAN 20,000 AS REPORTED EARLIER).

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5. I ASKED THIEU HOW HE THOUGHT TRAN VAN DONG'S FRONT WAS DEVELOPING. THIEU SAID THAT DON HAD CALLED ON HIM TO REPORT

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ON THE RESULTS OF THE CONGRESS LAST SUNDAY. THIEU TOLD HIM THAT THE PROBLEM NOW WAS TO GET OUT INTO THE PROVINCES. IT WAS ON THING TO ORGANIZE SUCH A FRONT IN SAIGON AND THIS WAS NOT PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT BUT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS TO INVOLVE GOOD CADRE IN THE PROVINCES SO THAT THE FRONT WOULD HAVE SOME EFFECT AND INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE; OTHERWISE ITS INFLUENCE WOULD BE LIMITED TO SAIGON. THIEU SAID THAT HE HAD ENCOURAGED DON TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO ATTRACT POLITICAL GROUPS AND CADRE TO SUPPORT HIS FRONT, AND ADDED THAT HE WOULD GIVE THEM SUPPORT AS WELL IF THIS SUCCEEDED. I ASKED THIEU WHETHER TRAN VAN AN WAS GOING AHEAD WITH HIS ORGANIZATION. THIEU SAID HE SUPPOSED SO AND REMARDED THAT HE HAD NO FRONT ORGANIZED BY OR FOR HIMSELF. HE CONFIRMED THE EARLIER INDICATION WE HAD RECEIVED THAT AN WOULD BE NAMED AS THE NEW INFORMATION MINISTER WITH LINK AS HIS VICE MINISTER. THIEU HOPED THAT THIS WOULD STRENGTHEN THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, WITH WHICH, HE MADE CLEAR, HE IS NOT NOW SATISFIED.

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6. THIEU THEN TALKED ABOUT HIS MOBILIZATION PLANS AND GENERAL PROSPECTS. HE SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ARE NOW PSYCHOLOGICALLY PREPARED TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY, AND THEY WILL ACCEPT MOBILIZATION. HE BELIEVED THERE WAS ENOUGH MANPOWER TO RAISE 125,000 ADDITIONAL MEN. THIEU SAID HE HAD ASKED GENERAL VIEN AND MINISTER VY TO REPORT PROMPTLY TO HIM THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THE TROOPS WILL BE RAISED, WHAT UNITS THEY WOULD PLAN, AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED. IN HIS VIEW THERE WERE THREE IMPORTANT THINGS: 1) THE NEED FOR MORE TROOPS; 2) TO USE VIETNAMESE MANPOWER TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE, LIMITED ONLY BY THE AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT; 3) IF THE U.S. KEEPS ITS PRESENT CEILING ON FORCES, THE VIETNAMESE SHOULD MAKE UP THE MANPOWER DEFICIENCY. HE ADDED THAT THE VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES SHOULD SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS AND MAKE THE MAXIMUM USE OF THEIR OWN RESOURCES.

7. I SAID THAT I APPRECIATED HIS VIEWPOINT ON THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION AND AGREED THAT ALL THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE, HUMAN AND MATERIAL, SHOULD BE FULLY EMPLOYED. I USED THIS OPENING TO SAY THAT I THOUGHT THERE WAS A REAL NEED TO MAKE USE OF

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THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TALENTS AND ABILITIES. I SAID I WAS GREATLY

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CONCERNED BY THIS PROBLEM AND BY THE CONTINUING EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THE PRESIDENT'S AND VICE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL RELATIONS BY MEMBERS OF BOTH THEIR ENTOURAGES. I ADDED THAT THIS SITUATION HAS REACHED A STATE WHERE IT CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED, THAT IT HAD AGAIN BECOME THE OBJECT OF MUCH WIDESPREAD COMMENT AND WAS DAMAGING TO THE IMAGE OF THE SVN BOTH HERE AND ABROAD. AGREEMENT SHOULD BE REACHED TO ELIMINATE THE WORST TROUBLEMAKERS AND TO ESTABLISH ADMINISTRATIVE AND OFFICE RELATIONS WHICH WILL AVOID THESE DIFFICULTIES IN THE FUTURE. I THOUGHT THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE COURSE WAS FULL AND HONEST COOPERATION BETWEEN HIM AND THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THAT ONCE THIS WAS ACHIEVED IT WAS VITAL THAT GVN MILITARY LEADERS ALSO UNDERSTAND THIS FACT AND WORK TO AVOID DIVISION IN MILITARY RANKS. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT WHAT WAS NECESSARY WAS FOR THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT TO HAVE A FRANK TALK, TO LAY ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE AND TO WORK OUT A MODUS OPERANDI. THERE SHOULD BE A FRANK DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEMS AND IRRITANTS AND THE MEANS TO OVERCOME THEM. AS A RESULT OF SUCH TALKS I ENVISAGED THAT SPECIAL DUTIES MIGHT BE ASSIGNED TO THE VICE PRESIDENT AND HIS SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED. I CONCLUDED THAT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD ALSO BE CREATED WHICH WOULD FACILITATE CLOSE DAILY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THEM.

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EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

8. THIEU SAID HE HAD TRIED TO WORK WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, AND AS HE HAD TOLD ME EARLIER, HE HAD TRIED TO BE UNDERSTANDING AND KIND. HOWEVER, SITUATIONS AROSE AT TIMES WHICH HE FOUND VERY DIFFICULT. HE NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER LOC, WHO HAD BEEN A KY MAN, WAS NOW BEING SUBJECTED TO CRITICISM BY KY BECAUSE HE HAD PROVED TO BE INDEPENDENT AND WAS NOT BENDING TO THE PRESSURES OF KY AND HIS FOLLOWERS; THIS HAD PARTICULARLY IRRITATED THE LATTER. THIEU REMARKED THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED KY'S DESIRE FOR LOC, WHO WAS NOT THE BEST MAN HE COULD HAVE CHOSEN, BUT WHO WAS HONEST AND INTELLIGENT AND TRYING TO DO HIS BEST; OBVIOUSLY KY HAD THOUGHT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL HIM. THIEU

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ALSO CITED THE MATTER OF THE RECOVERY COMMITTEE. HE HAD ASSIGNED THE VICE PRESIDENT THIS RESPONSIBILITY BUT KY HAD ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF A TV SPEECH THAT HE WAS TURNING BACK THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PRESIDENT WITHOUT INFORMING THIEU BEFOREHAND. THIS HAD CAUSED CONSIDERABLE COMMENT AND SURPRISE THAT SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE VICE PRESIDENT AND NOT THE PRESIDENT.

9. I TOLD THIEU THAT AS A RESULT OF MY CONCERN ON THIS MATTER I HAD HAD A FRANK TALK WITH KY. I THOUGHT KY WISHED TO BE HELPFUL AND WOULD DO WHATEVER THE PRESIDENT WANTED. THIEU

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SAID THAT KY HAD EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO HANDLE THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN, BUT HE (THIEU) WAS NOT REALLY SURE HE COULD ENTRUST THIS TO KY SINCE HE WAS SURROUNDED BY CORRUPT PEOPLE. HE CITED AS EXAMPLES THE PROVINCE CHIEFS OF BIEN HOA AND GIA DINH AND SAID HE PLANNED TO REMOVE THEM. HE ALSO REFERRED TO MAI DEN AND OTHER LOAN MEN WHOM HE WILL REMOVE IN THE FUTURE. I SUGGESTED THAT THIEU MIGHT WANT TO PUT KY IN CHARGE OF THE PROGRAM FOR ORGANIZATION OF CIVIL DEFENSE. I ALSO NOTED THAT KY WOULD PRESUMABLY BE OCCUPIED WITH THE COUNCILS PROVIDED

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IN THE CONSTITUTION. THIEU SAID HE WOULD UNDERTAKE THESE LATTER DUTIES AS SOON AS THE ASSEMBLY HAS ESTABLISHED THE COUNCILS AND DEFINED THEIR ACTIVITIES.

10. I THEN TOLD THIEU FRANKLY THAT SINCE HE WAS THE PRESIDENT ONLY HE COULD ACT TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM AND THE INITIATIVE WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM HIM. I URGED HIM AGAIN TO HAVE A FRANK TALK WITH KY AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE TROUBLE-MAKERS ON BOTH SIDES. I MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY NGUYEN VAN HUONG, OBSERVING THAT HE SEEMED TO HAVE A VERY NEGATIVE APPROACH TO MOST THINGS AND ESPECIALLY TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF KY'S ENTOURAGE. I ALSO MENTIONED NHON, ONE OF KY'S YOUNG ACTIVITISTS WHO SEEMED TO BE CREATING CONSTANT PROBLEMS. I REITERATED THAT KY HAD EXPRESSED A WISH TO TALK FRANKLY WITH HIM AND SAID THAT HE SHOULD DO THIS. THIEU AGREED THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW THE SUGGESTIONS I HAD MADE.

11. AT THE END OF THIS DISCUSSION THIEU CAME BACK TO THE QUESTION OF RVNAF REORGANIZATION AND SAID HE WISHED TO MOVE AHEAD ON IT. HE SAID HE WANTED TO TALK TO GENERAL WESTMORELAND ABOUT THE CAPITAL MILITARY REGION AND THE NEED TO HAVE A CAPABLE TWO OR THREE STAR GENERAL OFFICER IN CHARGE TO COORDINATE ALL ASPECTS OF IT, INCLUDING MILITARY FUNCTION, INTELLIGENCE, AND SECURITY FOR THE AREA.

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THIEU SAID THAT GEN. KHANG WAS TOO BUSY TO HANDLE ALL OF THIS AND THAT THE COLONEL WHO WAS KHANG'S DEPUTY WAS NOT ADEQUATE. THIEU THEN REITERATED THAT HE WISHES TO MOVE AHEAD ON ALL THE

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FRONTS THAT HE HAD MENTIONED AND ADDED THE HE PLANNED HIMSELF TO HEAD THE NATIONAL POST-WAR PLANNING COUNCIL, CREATED JOINTLY WITH THE LILIENTHAL GROUP.

12. WE RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF ENEMY INTENTIONS AND THIEU SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT FOLLOWING THEIR SECOND OFFENSIVE THE ENEMY MAY INDICATE A WILLINGNESS TO GO BACK TO THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENTS. HE SAID WW WOULD THEN HAVE A VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM, AS THE OTHER SIDE HAS A HIGHLY DISCIPLINED POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND CADRE WHEREAS WE HAVE NOTHING COMPARABLE AT PRESENT. HE ADDED THAT PERHAPS DON AND THE OTHER GROUPS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH FRONTS OR POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS CAN NOW MAKE SOME PROGRESS ON THIS IMPORTANT PROBLEM.

13. I TOLD THIEU ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND SAID THAT HE SHOULD

~~PAGE 5 RUM TH 22205 02 OF 02 151238Z~~

NOT CONCLUDE FROM PRESS ACCOUNTS THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY CHANGE IN OUR POSITION OR NEGOTIATIONS. I ADDED THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS REMAIN TOGETHER ON THIS. THIEU SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THIS INFORMATION AS HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE MATTER CLOSELY.

GP-3.

BUNKER

~~SECRET~~

~~EXDIS~~

Pres. file
34

Friday, March 15, 1968
11:45 a. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Ambassador Ed Ritchie came in this morning to leave a copy of this thank-you note from Prime Minister Pearson.

On a purely personal basis, without instruction or even recommendation from himself personally, he raised the following possibility. He wanted it firmly understood that what follows was merely a thought which might interest you, but had no weight or pressure behind it.

The Liberal Party convention ends on April 6. A new leader will be chosen. Pearson will stay on as Prime Minister probably until the end of April.

Sometime after April 6, but before the end of the month, he will come down to New York to take his leave of U Thant.

The question is: in the course of such a visit, would you like to have a farewell talk with Pearson? Ritchie suggested that the following might be subjects on which such a farewell discussion could usefully focus:

- his successor: Pearson's evaluation of the man, who may not be someone well known to us;
- the situation inside Canada as Pearson sees it, including not only the French Canadian problem, but the policy and operations of the French government in Canada;
- the Canadian economic situation at that time; trade policy; etc.
- where we then stand in Vietnam.

Ritchie emphasized he was not going to raise this matter at State. He himself was not sure that it would be useful. He merely did not wish an opportunity for a farewell to be missed by absentmindedness, if you should, for whatever reason, think it helpful.

W. W. Rostow

Attachment

cc Frief

34a

C
O
P
Y

Ottawa, Canada,
March 12, 1968.

My dear President,

I wanted to let you know how pleased I am with the arrangements concluded between Secretary Fowler and our Minister of Finance, Mr. Sharp, on March 7 and which you approved as President. I am convinced that the exemption for Canada from your Balance-of-Payments programme, combined with the new measures we shall be taking, make good sense in terms of the close relationship between our two economies and will be of benefit to both countries. It has been a fine example of constructive cooperation between friends to their mutual benefit.

I understand that Mr. Sharp had an opportunity on March 1 of discussing with Secretary Fowler the development of your thinking on the border tax problem. As you know, we would be glad to join with you and others in an international discussion of the issues involved and we have prepared some suggestions for an initiative on this subject. I hope that we shall be able to pursue these ideas and together contribute to a resolution of the serious difficulties which have arisen.

Yours sincerely,

L. B. Pearson

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

~~DECLASSIFIED~~
~~E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6~~
~~NLJ 96-255~~
~~By ics, NARA Date 9-11-97~~

~~DECLASSIFIED~~
~~Authority NLJ 96-84 (211)~~
~~By jc/ics, NARA, Date 12-18-09~~

Friday, March 15, 1968
11:25 a. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

You may be interested in this report on the telegrams received at the Department of State in the wake of Secretary Rusk's appearance.

W. W. Rostow

Attachment



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

976
15 7-13 a
March 14, 1968

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S SWR

FROM: P - Dixon Donnelley DD

SUBJECT: Public Reaction to Your Senate Committee Appearance -
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

Of 909 telegrams received from the public so far concerning your appearance before the Fulbright Committee, 814 were pro and 95 con -- nearly 9 to 1 in favor.

The congratulatory telegrams were remarkable for their unstinted admiration and support, in contrast to the rather sterile language of the critical messages. The former made frequent use of words such as, "magnificent", "courage", "devotion", "superb", "statesmanship" and others.

The senders included Republicans, churchmen, parents of servicemen in Viet-Nam, and servicemen bound for the combat zone.

Excerpts from particularly interesting wires:

"Never in my life have I seen or heard a more gallant defense of my country's best interests and those of my children and grandchildren."

"Brave men are not always found on the battlefield."

"You are a giant statesman and gentleman. Thank God for your leadership and sound judgment."

"I wish I could buy you a martini tonight, just a personal moment of peace and confidence from one grateful American to a great American."

"I thought you were great today. You are the finest fielder I've seen since Charley Gehringer."

"Sincere, grateful appreciation for your dedication and an exceptionally brilliant, capable leadership."

"You made a magnificent stand for duty, honor and principle."

"We consider you greatest American of past decade."

"Dear Mr. Secretary, what a beautiful stand-up, wonderful one you are."

"Your finest hour on television."

"The world is filled with the narrow-minded, and the man with vision is always suspect."

"No American has had a finer hour."

11:30 mtg Pres. Lile
Editors & Publishers
sic

Friday, March 15, 1968 - 10:15 a.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I see you will be meeting with publishers and editors this morning. I volunteer herewith a few themes.

1. We are at a most important moment in postwar history. Both the Communist world and the non-Communist world are in considerable disarray. The outcome -- whether in Vietnam or in the gold crisis -- depends on how free men behave in the days and weeks ahead.

2. In the Communist world, mainland China is in a grinding internal crisis just short of civil war. The issue is whether extremists or moderates win. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe -- especially Poland and Czechoslovakia -- strong liberal forces are asserting themselves, which could have a profound effect on future possibilities for peace in Europe and the world. In Vietnam itself we may be half way through what the enemy calls his winter-spring offensive. The South Vietnamese have weathered pretty well the shock of the attack on the cities. There are almost certainly very heavy battles to be fought in the next two months. With unity and vigor in the South Vietnamese government and rapid new recruitment for the South Vietnamese army -- which has begun -- the picture could look quite different by the end of May than it does right now. Our own forces are in excellent shape. But this is a battle to be fought. We have half a million Americans to back, as fully as we can, in the days ahead. That is our first duty.

3. Just at this time the world monetary system has come under heavy pressure, initially because of the weakness of the British pound and its devaluation last fall. But behind this are two other factors:

-- The inadequate supplies of gold as a basis for the international monetary system;

-- The weakness of the U.S. balance of payments which affects the world monetary system because we are the only remaining world currency.

4. If we lose our heads at this critical moment and listen to extremists, we might destroy the basis for the resistance to aggression in Southeast Asia; open the way to a new phase of Communist expansion; defeat the Communist moderates and liberals; and bring us all much closer to a third world war. If the free nations of the world fail to cooperate intensively and if the Congress fails to vote a tax increase, we could set in motion a financial and trade crisis which would undo much that we have achieved in these fields in the past twenty years and endanger the prosperity and security of the Western world.

5. In my judgment, there is no reason to despair in Vietnam and there is no reason to despair about finding an answer to the world monetary situation.

In Vietnam, Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland -- and the Vietnamese, also -- are doing what must be done to come through the winter-spring offensive of the enemy.

Over this week end in the Federal Reserve Board building in Washington, the Central Bankers of the key countries will be working with each other and with the IMF to move us towards a cooperative solution to the gold crisis.

6. What we badly need is that the publishers and editors play their part in explaining in good balance to our people the critical issues we face, so that our democratic system can find the right answers.

W. W. Rostow

cc: Mr. Christian

clerical
27

Friday, March 15, 1968
9:45 a. m.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Mr. President:

You will wish to read, I believe, this thoughtful exchange between Sect. Rusk and Amb. Bunker.

In guiding Harry McPherson, I emphasized that we should put the South Vietnamese -- their recruiting and modernization of equipment -- front and center. Ellsworth clearly leans that way.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachments

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By kg; NARA, Date 3-27-92

INFORMATION

Pres. file

38

Friday, March 15, 1968
9:45 a. m.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Mr. President:

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In guiding Harry McPherson, I emphasized that we should put the South Vietnamese -- their recruiting and modernization of equipment -- front and center. Ellsworth clearly leans that way.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachments

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By lg, NARA, Date 3-27-92

TELETYPE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CLASSIFICATION
GRADE TO

~~TOP SECRET~~
Classification

1 2 4 5 7
5/12/68 10 04E
101101/101101

Origin
Info

ACTION: Ambassador SAIGON PRIORITY

STATE

NODIS

LITERALLY-EYES ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

You have already received a staff paper dealing with points US might pursue to increase effectiveness GVN performance. I would much appreciate your urgent comments on the paper.

As you know the President has under immediate consideration a request from General Westmoreland for a major addition to US forces in Viet-Nam between now and the end of the year. To meet this request will require a heavy call up of reserves and a substantial increase in draft calls. Some action on reserves and draft calls will be needed in any event to strengthen our strategic reserve and the manpower base for Viet-Nam.

Such actions would have very far-reaching effects on the total budget and on other most urgent national needs. The resulting debate will test the will of our people to the utmost.

Such a debate will focus sharp and critical attention on

Booked by S:DRusk:ml	Tel. No.	Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by The Secretary
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EA - Mr. Habib
S/S - Mr. Read

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Bu [2/79]
By copy, NARA, Date 4-19-82

Page 2 of telegram to Amembassy SAIGON

~~TOP SECRET~~
Classification

the performance of the South Vietnamese both on the military and the civilian side. I know you are tired of hearing this same old refrain but the question now assumes special urgency. There is considerable public skepticism back here about what we have said in past months and years about South Vietnamese performance. There is also severe criticism in some quarters that we have "Americanized" the war.

I would also appreciate your comments on the effect upon South Vietnamese effort of a substantial increase in American forces, what problems such additional forces might create in Viet-Nam and whether additional deployments from here can be used for effective leverage to increase significantly South Vietnamese performance.

I much appreciate your cool courage in these troubled times. END

RUSK



Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~TOP SECRET~~

6 381

OO RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 22096 0741215
ZNY TTTT ZZH
O 141120Z MAR 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8643
STATE GRNC
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CN: 3502Q

1968 MAR 14, 7:53AM

WH

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State br 4/25/79

By isply, NARA, Date 4/1/92

~~TOP SECRET~~ SAIGON 22096

NODIS

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BUNKER

REF : STATE 124637

1. I HAVE SENT A REPLY (SAIGON 21733) COMMENTING ON THE STAFF PAPER DEALING WITH MEASURES WE MIGHT TAKE TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GVN PERFORMANCE. I DO NOT KNOW THAT I HAVE VERY MUCH TO ADD TO THE COMMENTS CONTAINED IN THAT MESSAGE, BUT I MIGHT MAKE A FEW ADDITIONAL POINTS.

2. I THINK WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT THE ENEMY, IN SPITE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS RECENT LOSSES, HAS A POTENTIAL CAPABILITY TO MOUNT FURTHER HEAVY ATTACKS OVER A WIDESPREAD AREA. HE ALSO HAS OPTIONS OPEN TO HIM. AND IN GIAP, HE IS OBVIOUSLY LED BY A RESOURCEFUL AND SKILLFUL INDIVIDUAL, POSSESSED OF HIGH INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY; AND WHO CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE THESE ATTAINMENTS TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT. WE MUST, THEREFORE, TRY TO ESTIMATE WHAT THE MAJOR THEMES OF THESE OPTIONS

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~
ARE, BUT ALSO WHAT VARIATIONS ON THE THEMES HE MAY EMPLOY. HE MAY, FOR EXAMPLE, ELECT, AS THIEU BELIEVES HE WILL, TO GO ALL OUT DURING THIS SUMMER IN A THREE-PRONGED OFFENSIVE PUTTING HEAVY PRESSURE ON US IN I CORPS AND THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, ATTEMPTING TO HARASS AND INFILTRATE THE CITIES, AND TO SECURE AND HOLD AS MUCH REAL ESTATE AS POSSIBLE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF GETTING TO NEGOTIATIONS IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE POSTURE. HE MAY ON THE OTHER HAND CALCULATE THAT THE RISKS IN THIS COURSE ARE TOO GREAT AND DECIDE TO SWITCH TO A PROLONGED WAR, HOPING TO WEAR DOWN OUR PATIENCE. IN THIS HE MIGHT HAVE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE CHINESE WHO MIGHT OFFER TO INCREASE MATERIALLY THE SUPPLY OF "VOLUNTEERS" TO REPLACE NORTH VIETNAMESE MANPOWER FOR MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICAL FUNCTIONS. HE MAY EMPLOY VARIATIONS OR COMBINATIONS OF THESE TWO THEMES. ~~MY POINT IS THAT WE TOGETHER WITH THE VIETNAMESE AND WITH OUR FREE~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- SAIGON 22096 MAR 14

~~WORLD ALLIES MUST HAVE BOTH THE PATIENCE AND THE RESOURCES TO COPE WITH WHATEVER STRATEGY OR TACTICS THE ENEMY MAY PURSUE.~~

3. SINCE THE ENEMY'S ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE IS POLITICAL, I.E., A TAKEOVER POLITICALLY OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, ~~IT SEEMS TO ME IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD HAVE RECOURSE NOT ONLY TO OUR BEST MILITARY STRATEGISTS, BUT ALSO THOSE MOST EXPERIENCED AND~~

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~
~~KNOWLEDGEABLE IN VIETNAMESE POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORY AND THINKING TO ANALYZE IN DEPTH THE PROBLEMS WE ARE LIKELY TO CONFRONT.~~

4. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ENEMY LAUNCHES ANOTHER MAJOR OFFENSIVE WITHIN THE PRESENT FRAMEWORK OF HIS RESOURCES, ~~I CONSIDER THAT WITH THE MODEST INCREASES WHICH GENERAL WESTMORELAND HAS ASKED FOR INITIALLY AND WITH THE SPEEDING UP OF VIETNAMESE MOBILIZATION, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DENY THE ENEMY HIS MAJOR MILITARY OBJECTIVES AS DECISIVELY AS WE HAVE IN THE TET OFFENSIVE. LET US SUPPOSE, HOWEVER, THAT HE MAY HAVE SOME SUBSTANTIAL ISOLATED SUCCESS WHICH, THOUGH FROM OUR VIEWPOINT NOT DECISIVE, HE PROCLAIMED AS SUCH AND ANNOUNCED HIS WILLINGNESS TO GO TO NEGOTIATIONS. WHAT WOULD OUR POSITION BE THEN?~~

5. ~~OR IF HE SHOULD TURN TO A PROLONGED WAR, ARE WE GOING TO PERMIT HIM TO USE THE SANCTUARIES OF LAOS AND CAMBODIA AS HE IS DOING NOW WITHOUT TAKING MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO CHOK OFF THIS INFILTRATION? ARE WE GOING TO CONTINUE TO PERMIT SOME OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE 1962 AGREEMENTS TO CONTINUE TO IGNORE THESE AGREEMENTS AND ENGAGE IN WHAT BILL SULLIVAN HAS REFERRED TO AS BLACKMAIL IN LAOS. AT THE SAME TIME SUPPLYING THE ENEMY WITH THE MOST SOPHISTICATED~~

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~
~~WEAPONS; OR CAN WE TAKE THE RISK OF MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHICH WOULD IN MY VIEW MAKE THE PROBLEM IN SOUTH VIET-NAM INFINITELY MORE MANAGEABLE? THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS TO WHICH I THINK WE SHOULD ADDRESS OURSELVES WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE CARRYING ON STUDIES OF WHAT WOULD BE FOR US SATISFACTORY TERMS OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.~~

6. ~~I CAN UNDERSTAND THE FAR REACHING EFFECTS ON THE BUDGET AND ON OTHER URGENT NATIONAL NEEDS THAT THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL TROOPS WILL ENTAIL, AND THAT THIS WILL TEST THE WILL OF OUR PEOPLE TO STAY THE COURSE. I REALIZE ALSO THAT THE DEBATE WILL FOCUS CRITICAL ATTENTION ON THE PERFORMANCE, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, AND THAT, DUE IN PART TO MUCH SUBJECTIVE AND OFTEN INACCURATE AND INCOMPLETE REPORTING ON THE PART OF OUR PRESS HERE, THIS WILL BE AN~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

EXTREMELY DIFFICULT PROBLEM TO HANDLE. NEVERTHELESS, I THINK THAT THE ESSENTIAL THING IS TO BE SUFFICIENTLY EQUIPPED AND FLEXIBLE OURSELVES, TO BACK UP THE VIETNAMESE CAPABILITIES AND OFFSET WEAKNESSES WHERE THEY EXIST IN ORDER TO DENY THE ENEMY THE MILITARY ADVANTAGE AND CONTROL HE SEEKS. WHAT WESTMORELAND IS ASKING FOR IN THE NEAR TERM ESSENTIALLY COMES TO 7 MORE COMBAT BATTALIONS AND ONE MP BATTALION, WHICH HE FEELS WILL GIVE HIM THE ADDED MANEUVERABILITY

PAGE 5 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~

HE NEEDS. IF A WAY CAN BE FOUND TO DO THIS, I BELIEVE WE MUST ACCEPT HIS JUDGMENT THAT IT IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT THAT WE DO SO. AT THE SAME TIME, I THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE SHOULD SO EQUIP THE VIETNAMESE FORCES THAT THEY ARE NOT OUTGUNNED BY THE ENEMY. IT IS HARDLY REASONABLE TO EXPECT SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AND MORALE IN FORCES WHICH GO INTO BATTLE KNOWING THEY ARE OUTGUNNED; BUT THE VIETNAMESE ARE GOING AHEAD WITH THEIR MOBILIZATION AND SHOWING A DETERMINATION TO DO THEIR SHARE OF THE JOB. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS FACT, PLUS THE EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE THEY TURNED IN IN THE TET OFFENSIVE, SHOULD HELP TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE SOMEWHAT.

7. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE ADDITION OF THESE RELATIVELY MODEST FORCES, IN ITSELF, NEED HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFORT PROVIDED, AS I SAID IN SAIGON 21733, THE EQUIPMENT AND OTHER SUPPORT NEEDED TO ALLOW THE GVN TO INCREASE ITS MILITARY EFFORT IS SUPPLIED PROMPTLY. I HAVE COMMENTED ON THIS IN GREATER DETAIL IN THE PRIOR MESSAGE.

8. I ALSO BELIEVE OUR ADDITIONAL INPUTS CAN BE REGULATED IN A WAY TO IMPROVE GVN PERFORMANCE, ALTHOUGH EXERCISE OF SUCH LEVERAGE HAS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LIMITATIONS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES WITH WHICH WE HAVE TO WORK, THE FRAGMENTED NATURE OF VIETNAMESE SOCIETY, WHICH NO "FRONT", NO MATTER

PAGE 6 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~

HOW PLAUSIBLE OR COMFORTING TO US, CAN QUICKLY OVERCOME, AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE HAVING TO GET USED TO A GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM WITH WHICH THEY HAVE HAD LITTLE EXPERIENCE.

9. I REALIZE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH WHICH YOU ARE FACED AND WISH I COULD BE MORE HELPFUL, BUT THESE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS I FELT MIGHT BE WORTH YOUR CONSIDERATION.

BUNKER

~~TOP SECRET~~

INFORMATION

39

Friday, March 15, 1968 -- 9:30 a.m.

Mr. President:

Pres file

Bill Martin reports as follows:

-- All the Central Bankers are now aboard and will be here for the meeting tomorrow morning.

-- The Swiss bankers report that the gold demand that we would have faced today would have run into literally billions of dollars. There was a worldwide movement away from all currencies. He believes, therefore, that you made the correct decision yesterday.

-- The Paris free market price for gold is running about \$44.00 per ounce -- somewhat less than Bill Martin thought it would move to initially: the turn over in the Paris market was about 20% lower than it was yesterday.

-- Martin believes we here should keep out of the question of whether or not the stock exchanges close. He believes that if the managers of the New York Stock Exchange remain cool and "don't run around in circles," we can weather the day. We shall be monitoring the exchanges.

W. W. Rostow

W. W. Rostow:rlh

ACTION

Pres file

~~SECRET~~

Friday, March 15, 1968 -- 9:30 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith drafts that we wish to dispatch by cable, as soon as possible, to Chancellor Kiesinger and Prime Minister Moro.

W. W. Rostow

Approved _____

Approved as amended _____

Disapproved _____

Call me _____

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By 18, NARA, Date 3-27-92

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

(3/15/68)

40a

~~SECRET~~

Dear Chancellor Kiesinger:

By now you will know that the Bank of England has acted to close the London gold market and that the governors of the central banks, active in the Gold Pool, have been invited to meet in Washington this week end.

It is plain that we have at hand the means to overcome the dangers caused by the disorder in the gold market. The speculators are banking on an increase in the official price of gold. They are wrong.

We can act together through the central banks to contain the speculative movements of funds that will almost surely occur in the next few weeks. Above all, we can act promptly to ratify and implement a plan for Special Drawing Rights as a means of replacing the reserves destroyed by speculation since the devaluation, and of meeting our needs for growth in reserves.

But it remains true that these financial disorders -- if not promptly and firmly overcome -- can profoundly damage the political relations between Europe and America and set in motion forces like those which disintegrated the Western world between 1929 and 1933. That is why the meeting in Washington this week end -- and the cooperation it must organize -- is of extraordinary importance to us both.

I hope that we can remain in close touch as our bankers and ministers work to devise means to overcome these dangers.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 775C ltr 8-17-78
By deH/eg, NARA, Date 4-6-92

~~SECRET~~

Dear Prime Minister More:

By now you will know that the Bank of England has acted to close the London gold market and that the governors of the central banks, active in the Gold Pool, have been invited to meet in Washington this weekend.

It is plain that we have at hand the means to overcome the dangers caused by the disorder in the gold market. The speculators are banking on an increase in the official price of gold. They are wrong.

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 68 8-17-78

By dek/ps, NARA, Date 4-6-92

~~SECRET~~

INFORMATION

41

~~SECRET~~

Pres file

Friday, March 15, 1968 - 9:15 am

Mr. President:

At Khe Sanh-DMZ:

- weather and weather outlook good;
- 85 rounds incoming;
- 1499 rounds outgoing;
- 319 sorties plus 48 B-52's;
- 206 tons delivered.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Gold Pass, Feb. 24, 1983
By 29, NARA, Date 4-14-92

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1988
By 18, NARA, Date 4-14-92

~~SECRET~~

Friday, March 15, 1968, 8:20 AM

TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

This is report number forty on the situation in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area for the 24-hour period of March 14, 1968.

Early morning fog burned off and Khe Sanh weather remained clear with 2000 feet and broken ceilings plus ten miles visibility throughout the day. During the period, Khe Sanh received 85 rounds of mixed artillery, rocket and mortar fire resulting in two killed and 20 wounded (nine evacuated). The airstrip was closed briefly at 11:30 AM because of incoming enemy fire. It was reopened, with ground control nonoperational, shortly after noon. In artillery fire support, Khe Sanh expended 1,499 rounds in 141 missions (26 observed). No COFRAM ammunition was fired. There was no change in Marine dispositions or the enemy situation at Khe Sanh.

Elsewhere along the DMZ, 3rd Marine Division units received 128 rounds of incoming fire. Enemy indirect-fire and light ground contact resulted in nine Marines killed and 33 wounded (13 evacuated). Enemy losses were 67 killed, and two individual weapons captured.

The most significant action in northern I Corps occurred at Quang Tri City. The airfield was struck by enemy mortars and rockets damaging ten helicopters.

Three hundred and nineteen tactical air sorties were flown during the period. Of these, the Air Force flew 102, the Navy 91, and the Marines flew 126. Bomb damage assessment revealed 13 road cuts, 41 enemy killed by air, six secondary fires, four secondary explosions, one bunker and five military structures destroyed. Eight ARC LIGHT strikes (48 sorties) were scheduled, five against emergency targets 1200 to 2200 meters from friendly forces. Four aircraft were diverted to secondary targets due to beacon malfunction. Bomb damage assessment included 32 secondary explosions.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
AF Guide, SEA Records, 4/1/88
By lg, NARA, Date 4-14-92

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988
By lg, NARA, Date 4-14-92

Aerial resupply for the fourteenth amounted to 206.5 short tons. In addition, 117 passengers (replacements) were landed. In all, 46 sorties were flown. Fixed wing aircraft conducted fourteen air drops. Marine helicopters flew the remaining 32 sorties delivering passengers and cargo.

Three hundred and four tactical air sorties are scheduled for the next 24 hour period. The Marines will have 16 aircraft on call for sorties as required. The Air Force will have 120 alert sorties on call. Six ARC LIGHT strikes (36 sorties) are scheduled.

Weather forecast for the next 24-hour period shows generally favorable conditions with 1000-2000 feet ceilings and 3 - 5 mile visibility in fog before noon. Conditions will improve in the afternoon, but deteriorate by midnight. Fog and low ceilings are expected in the early morning hours of the sixteenth.

42

ACTION
~~INFORMATION~~

~~SECRET~~

Pres file

Thursday, March 14, 1968
7:55 p. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Sec. Rusk's proposals on the Pueblo as we approach a dead end.

One thought: mine Haiphong and regard our Pueblo men as prisoners of the Vietnam war.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-255
By ris, NARA Date 9-11-97

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-254
By is, NARA Date 4-8-97

4/2

March 14, 1968

~~SECRET/NOBIS~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: USS Pueblo

After eleven closed meetings we have made little progress at Panmunjom. As conditions for the release of the crew (they have made clear they will not return the ship), the North Koreans demand:

- an admission by us of hostile acts and intrusion into their claimed territorial waters;
- "a proper apology";
- a guarantee against future similar incidents.

We know -- and can prove -- that at least some of the documents which they have given us are falsified. I firmly believe that we should not admit incursions which we are reasonably certain did not occur.

We have said that after release of the crew to our custody or that of a neutral power we would investigate thoroughly, and express regrets if any intrusion had in fact occurred. We have suggested that this investigation could be made by an impartial body. The North Koreans have responded that their "evidence" is conclusive and that an inquiry is unjustified. They have also said that if we persist in our attitude it will show "no concern for the crew", and require them to take "other steps" against these men -- presumably trial and/or punishment.

Pak has just advised the NNSC that U.S. proposals so far have been unsatisfactory (e.g., have not included an apology or offer of compensation) and that he does not propose to call or attend another meeting until he knows that we have some "constructive" proposals to make.

This, then, is where we now stand. Our next step is to see that the twelfth meeting is held fairly soon and to prepare instructions for it. At this point, I think it best that we pass the buck back to the North Koreans.

~~SECRET/NOBIS~~

Thus, if you approve, we plan to instruct Admiral Smith to:

Send word to Pak through NNSC that we expect him to call the twelfth meeting soon and that we would have something to say which would be of interest to him.

At the meeting Admiral Smith would:

1. Say that we have a precise and constructive proposal, to wit:

That at the time of the release of the crew we would

- acknowledge the intelligence gathering mission of the Pueblo;
- assure North Korea that we would continue to instruct U.S. ships to remain more than 12 miles from the North Korean coast;
- express regret for any violations of the Pueblo's orders which may have resulted in the ship's coming closer than 12 miles from North Korea. (This is slightly further than we have yet gone on regrets -- and as far as I think we should go.)

2. Point out that Pak has not made equally precise proposals.

3. Remind Pak that, while we are concerned about the crew, our primary concern is with the heightening of tensions in the area caused by their provocative and illegal acts.

(A draft instruction to Admiral Smith is at Tab A.)

Recommendation: That you approve the instruction at Tab A.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Speak to me _____

Concurrently, we plan to let the Russians know -- perhaps through a reliable correspondent here -- that continuing to hold the crew is not necessarily helpful to the North Koreans. For example, seizure of the Pueblo has made certain an additional \$100 million in military aid to the South Koreans. It also will make it easier for the Administration to call up substantial reserves if this becomes necessary, and could always be an additional support for Administration calls for greater effort in Korea or Viet-Nam. We would expect that the Russians would pass this on to North Korea. (Chip Bohlen has looked at this idea and thinks it a good one.)

Recommendation: That you authorize us to have a reliable newsman talk to the Russian Embassy along the above lines.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Speak to me _____

Once we have gone through the next meeting -- which will probably produce no real forward movement -- we will be hard against the decision on where to go next. We shall probably have two main choices:

1. Stonewall. Admiral Smith could defer calling another meeting and confine himself to informing Pak that he is prepared to meet again if Pak has something new and constructive to say.
2. Apology. Smith could call the next meeting and either:
 - ask Pak for precise language for an apology which would lead to the release of the crew, or;
 - table a specific draft of the receipt which Smith would be willing to sign at the time the men are released.

We must face the fact that it is unlikely that any course will lead to a quick return of the crew. If we stonewall now, there is perhaps a small chance that the North Koreans will advance some proposal that will get things moving again. But

this is very unlikely. It is far more probable that they will continue along their present course, making propaganda points where they can. They may even decide -- as a pressure tactic -- to bring the crew to trial.

If we ask them to let us know what they want from us in way of an apology, they probably will refuse to give us anything. If they do come up with suggested language, it will almost certainly be something we can't possibly live with.

If we give them suggested wording for a receipt they will reject it, and we will be faced with a long series of meetings in which we will argue over language -- to the benefit of the North Koreans.

In my view, we should stonewall for a bit longer to see if the North Koreans move at all in our direction. But, if things drag on too long without result or without "further steps" by the North Koreans vis-a-vis the crew, I believe we should be prepared to break off the talks and publish the record. This will improve our public image here and abroad at the expense of North Korea's. It would make it virtually impossible to get the crew back in the foreseeable future.

In preparation for such a contingency, we are working on a White Paper which will give the full story of North Korean provocation, U.S. restraint, fairness and moderation at Panmun-jom, and demonstrate the falsity of the North Korean "evidence". This should certainly be published in case the crew were put on trial, or if we or the North Koreans break off talks. (It could also be published immediately after the release of the crew, assuming we decide to go the conditional apology route and it is successful.)

We are all convinced that minor military actions or shows of force would have no constructive effect. Some really massive effort -- such as an attempt to eliminate the North Korean Air Force -- involves obvious costs and risks. We do not recommend it.

Dean Rusk

DRAFT TELEGRAM

~~SECRET~~

426

TO: Amembassy SEOUL

NODIS/CACTUS

REF: Seoul 4902

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-254
By is, NARA Date 4-8-97

1. Subject to possible modification after receiving your comments, we believe Admiral Smith should take following steps before and at 12th closed meeting.

2. At dinner March 17, Admiral Smith should ask Swiss and Swedes to ask Czech and Pole to tell General Pak that:

A. At close of last meeting on March 9 Pak agreed that he would set the time of our next meeting. Smith expects him to do so soon and hopes that he will come to that meeting prepared to respond positively to the proposals of the U.S. side.

B. Smith will also have certain things to say at the next meeting which should be of interest to Pak.

C. We suggest that message along above lines be given to Swiss and Swedes in writing.

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

3. At 12th meeting, Smith should invite Pak to speak first on ground that it is his turn to do so. If Pak does speak first, we anticipate his taking hard line similar to March 10 Pyongyang broadcast of Nodong Shinmun article.

4. In this event, Smith should respond with the following statement:

A. At our previous meeting I expressed the hope that the North Korean authorities would devote further and more serious attention to the reasonable proposals which I set forth at our ninth meeting. I am sorry to learn from the statement that you have just delivered that my hopes have not been realized. (If Smith finds it necessary to speak first, this para should of course be skipped and held for possible use after Pak does speak.)

B. On March 10, Radio Pyongyang broadcast a Nodong Shinmun article which violates our understanding concerning the confidential nature of these talks. I can only remind you that our obligations in this regard are reciprocal. You must also understand that resort to public propaganda statements cannot but undercut the usefulness of these private talks.

C. The March 10 broadcast contains an unfortunate and unwarranted

effort to blackmail the United States Government by threatening measures against the Pueblo's crew. As I told you at our last meeting, any trial of the crew, punishment or threat of punishment, can only aggravate an already serious situation. I must also inform you that your side's crude effort at blackmail rests on a misapprehension concerning the motivations of the United States Government. We are of course concerned about the men whom you continue to detain illegally. Our major concern, however, is with the dangerous level of tension in this area which you have created by your illegal and aggressive actions. It is important that you understand this.

D. For our part, the United States still hopes to arrive at a fair and peaceful solution of the problem before us. At prior meetings, I have explained our attitude to you at some length and have made a number of suggestions for settling the problem before us. You have not yet made any equally precise or concrete proposals, nor have the general statements of your position which you have made in these meetings brought us any closer to a practical and mutually acceptable solution to our problem.

E. I am nevertheless prepared to make a further specific proposal which should provide a basis for settling this matter. My proposal is that at the time of the release of the officers and men of the Pueblo, we are prepared to:

1. Acknowledge that the Pueblo was on an intelligence-gathering mission when the ship was seized by North Korean armed forces.

2. Provide assurance that ships of the United States Navy will continue to be ordered to remain more than 12 nautical miles from North Korea.

3. Express regret for any violation of orders by the USS Pueblo which may have resulted in the ship's approaching closer than 12 nautical miles to North Korea.

F. I request you to give this proposal the most serious consideration and advise us of your acceptance.

5. Smith should not volunteer statement that he will set time of next meeting. If Pak asks Smith whether he will do so, Smith should simply acknowledge that it is his turn to call next meeting.

6. Instruction to execute actions proposed above will be deferred until we have your comments both on these proposals and on general situation as promised in last para reftel.

KTF:JAYager/WGBrown:lm 3/14/68

43

INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
7:50 p. m.

Mr. President:

Here is how I summarized Dean
Acheson's proposal, after his exposition
at lunch today.

Pres file

W. W. Rostow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WWRostow:rlm

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By lg, NARA, Date 3/31/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 14, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Summary of Dean Acheson's Proposal.

1. We should make available such forces as we can muster and are needed in the next emergency months.

2. We should immediately set about a study in which the brightest and ablest civilians and military in the Government take part.

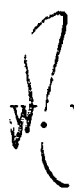
3. This study should consist of:

-- An examination of what has happened over the last year in Vietnam, including, of course, the Tet offensive and its aftermath. This should be a careful, factual effort.

-- We should then examine, looking ahead over the future, what we can expect from the government of Vietnam and its military forces in undertaking its share of the allied studies: staying together; improving its quality and energy of government; improving its military importance.

-- We should then analyze how we can deal with North Vietnam and its military forces. We should look backward at what we have done, our successes and failures. What could we do?

-- On the basis of an assessment of the past, the GVN possibilities and the possibilities of coping with the North Vietnamese, we should then launch ourselves on a path looking towards progressive disengagement over whatever period of time we judge appropriate.


W. W. Rostow

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NSC 663-3180
By isp/ly, NARA, Date 4/1/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
7:00 p. m.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith a gold sitrep:

- the discount rate has been raised;
- the Bank of England will declare a bank holiday tomorrow and close the gold market;
- the heads of the British and Netherlands Central Banks have agreed to come;
- Martin feels that the Italian, Belgian, German, and Swiss will come when he is able to get them on the phone.

W. W. Rostow

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-255
By is, NARA Date 9-11-97

INFORMATION

Pres. file

45

Thursday, March 14, 1968
6:10 p. m.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

We may have the Canadians noting some fall-out from BUGGY I (see attached).

The level would be 10-15 times less than the Soviet cloud which drifted across Japan and was detected.

We plan to await a Canadian response -- if any -- and play it cool.

W W. Rostow

Attachment

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-182
By CB, NARA Date 10-18-99

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

45a

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 14, 1968 -- 1:30 pm

NOTE FOR MR. ROSTOW

Walt--

I have just been informed by the AEC that the winds have changed and it is now predicted that the low-level cloud from BUGGY I will cross into Canada at the west end of Lake Superior at 4:00 pm this afternoon and that the high-level cloud will cross into Canada at the east end of Lake Superior around midnight tonight.

The activities of the low-level cloud are estimated to be about 20 picocuries per cubic meter and the high-level cloud about 10 picocuries per meter. These levels should be divided by a factor of 5 or more for ground-level samples. Although these are relatively low levels of activities, ~~they will be easily detected if the cloud passes over a ground filtering station.~~

Spurgeon
Spurgeon Keeny

cc: CEJohnson

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-182
By ct, NARA Date 10-18-99

INFORMATION

47

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
5:15 p. m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

I have marked key passages in Bunker's weekly which shows some forward motion as well as continuing problems.

W. W. Rostow

Salgon 22088

~~SECRET~~

WWRestow:rin

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By *AG*, NARA, Date 3/31/92

47ai

Thursday, March 14, 1968

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM BUNKER (Saigon 22088)

Herewith my forty-third weekly message:

A. General

In my last two messages, I reported on our preliminary readings on the effect of the Tet attacks on the situation countrywide, and their meaning in terms of enemy strategy. It is clear that we must push ahead not only with the recovery program to get things back to the pre-Tet normal situation, but also move ahead as rapidly as possible toward achievement of our longer range priority objectives, i. e., mobilization, reorganization of the armed forces and civil administration, pacification, the attack on corruption, and economic measures. These latter will first have to be concerned with a restoration of the badly damaged economy, and in restoring confidence in the business and farming communities before any real advances can be envisaged. Taxes will have to be increased to close the inflationary gap and a vigilant watch kept on the upward pressure on prices. In surveying the situation this week, I can report progress on both the recovery effort and on some of our longer range objectives. At the same time, there are areas where we face continuing difficulties.

Progress is evident in the following areas:

1. President Thieu is continuing to take an increasingly active and decisive role in the government, providing more effective and more visible leadership than at any time in the past. Because of his temperament, he does not give the picture of the dynamic, charismatic leader that we might think of as ideal. But he has shown increasingly a desire to take hold of the reins and I think he is doing better in both American and Vietnamese eyes. He has continued to chair meetings of the Central Recovery Committee where he has made quick, sound decisions, pushed his ministers to rapid action, and in general imparted more of a sense of urgency and confidence in the Vietnamese bureaucracy. He has moved to speed up mobilization, has taken steps on administrative reform, outlined his tax proposals, and enforces austerity measures, including the closing of bars and nightclubs, and imposed a ban on luxury building.

2. In pushing the relief and reconstruction effort, Thieu made a second personal inspection in Hue March 9, where he gave further impetus to the relief effort by making on-the-spot decisions and a display of interest and concern. While in Hue, he made a point of contacting ordinary people and touring the entire city to see and hear their problems first hand. General Forsythe, who accompanied Thieu, tells

SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State letter 11/7/78
By ep/rs, NARA, Date 4/2/92

me that the gratitude and warmth of the people toward him was obvious. Remembering the attitude of the Hue population toward the central government in the "struggle" and even in the recent past, this response to Thieu is doubly significant. On March 11, Thieu also made a brief radio and TV appearance, as I have been urging him to do, in which he launched the official campaign for voluntary contributions to a national fund for the Tet victims.

3. The relief and reconstruction effort is continuing to move forward with good results. Universities and some other schools have reopened, relief convoys are moving to Hue and the Delta, distribution of relief supplies continues, and reconstruction is underway. Some 81 million piasters have been hand carried in cash to the provinces to speed the relief effort. In Saigon, the curfew has been cut by two hours, resulting in improved morale, and the port is functioning much better, the discharge rate now having reached 8,000 tons per day. Prices continue to move downward. Nationwide, the number of refugees now stands at about 500,000 and will probably continue to decline as people whose homes have not been destroyed move back as security is established. Other statistics, though not final, also testify to the magnitude of the problem. The number of houses destroyed is now estimated at 74,000 and civilian casualties at 9,100 killed and 21,200 wounded.

4. The movement back into the countryside has begun, at least 321 of the 555 Revolutionary Development teams are in the hamlets; 93 out of 109 Truong Son (Montagnard) teams are also in place. The President has also issued instructions that all Revolutionary Development cadre would be sent back to normal Revolutionary Development duties effective immediately, and that they therefore would no longer be supervising refugee camps, manning command posts, guarding cities and towns as they have been doing in some instances. Both General Cao Van Vien and Revolutionary Development Minister Tri have been making personal inspections, urging on rural officials an aggressive return to the pacification effort. The Revolutionary Development ministry also has 12 teams in the countryside to develop the necessary program changes to adapt Revolutionary Development plans to the present situation.

5. On the military side, an encouraging development was the fact that both volunteer enlistments and draftees jumped dramatically in February. There were 10,084 volunteers in February compared with 6,059 in January and 3,924 in February of last year. Over 10,600 draftees also reported for induction in February, as compared with 3,766 in January and 4,006 in February of last year. It is worth noting that despite personnel losses in the recent heavy fighting, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces unit strength is generally satisfactory and Government of Vietnam forces are maintaining a high level of combat effectiveness. Of the 155 Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces maneuver battalions, 98 were combat effective as of February 19, but this had jumped to 118 by March 1. Average countrywide present-for-duty-strength of Regional Force companies is 99 (full strength, 123) and for Popular Force platoons is 29 (full strength, 35).

6. A civil defense directorate was established in the Ministry of Interior March 7. The organization of local units is going forward throughout the country, and at latest reading there were nearly 19,000 volunteers in 20 provinces.

7. The Prime Minister has signed a decree on the organization and functions of the new directorate general of the civil service which should provide a sound institutional base from which to launch an effective reform program within the civil service.

8. Tran Van Don successfully held his national congress to form a broad, nationwide anti-Communist front on March 10. While there were some conspicuous absences among the invited notables, attendance was impressive in terms of the wide span of political elements represented. Also noteworthy on the political scene this week was the passage by the Lower House of the national budget, with no significant changes from the administration draft. The budget now goes to the Senate.

Among the difficulties still confronting us are the following:

1. Perhaps the most negative development this week has been an obvious tendency on the part of some Vietnamese leaders to return to politics as usual. While the success of the Tran Van Don congress testifies to the continuing strength of the feeling of national unity which emerged from the Tet offensive, there have also been disturbing signs that characteristic Vietnamese factionalism is again emerging. Most troublesome in this category have been reports of intention by Ky, particularly spread by his supporters, to force a change in the power structure which would give Ky more authority. Some reports even went so far as to suggest a forcible change in government leadership might be in the offing. I took up this matter specifically with Ky yesterday morning and will report on it in more detail in the political section.

2. Related to the Thieu/Ky problem is the continued activity by Tran Van An and Nguyen Van Huong to form political organizations which are generally viewed to be in competition with Don's front.

3. Another matter is the effort by some Lower House Deputies to place on the House agenda a motion of no confidence in the government, although at last report it appears that this may not materialize.

4. The enemy continues to pose a formidable military threat in several areas. He is apparently having considerable success in recruiting to make up for losses as well as continuing to reinforce his shattered units by infiltration. The situation seems to be most serious in the Delta. Ky told me this morning that General Thang had reported to him last Saturday that 367 outposts had either been overrun or their complements withdrawn to defend the towns and that some 2,000 men, with as many weapons, are unaccounted for; whether they were killed or deserted is not known. There are reports that Viet Cong recruitment starts at age 14 for guerrilla forces and even as low as age 10 for hamlet defense units. Harassment by mortar and rocket fire, sometimes accompanied by ground assaults or the planting of rumors

of pending offensives, have created fear and uncertainty among some urban dwellers as well as a lack of confidence in the ability of the Government of Vietnam to provide security. But with the U. S. and Army of the Republic of Vietnam troops beginning to go over to the offensive, the initiative appears to be shifting to the allies. Communist documents have emphasized the need for "continuous and fierce attacks" to prevent the allies from going on the offensive. The enemy's fears may be justified, for last week a majority of the ground contacts were allied-initiated, with the enemy generally attempting to disperse into small units to avoid combat. The low level of enemy activity and the unusual risk in attempting to bring in supplies by sea suggests that he is having logistic difficulties, or that he is trying to conserve his strength for another big effort. The First Corps is an exception to this general statement where the enemy seems to be preparing for large scale conventional warfare.

5. Labor union leader Vo Van Tai, along with Tri Quang and several other prominent oppositionists, remains in jail. This seems to have had relatively little impact on Vietnamese opinion, but it continues to hurt the Government image abroad. The fact of Vo Van Tai's detention seems to be the only element which has had a disquieting effect on the two-man AFL-CIO delegation, headed by Irving Brown, which is here discussing relief and longer range cooperation with the labor union. I expect to have a full report from them today on the results of their meetings here which Brown told me yesterday had been otherwise very satisfactory. We shall be reporting on this separately.

B. Situation in the Countryside

Administrative reforms. I reported last week the removal of two Corps Commanders and the decision to make province chiefs directly responsible to the central government. The full effects of these two important decisions are not yet clear. In the Fourth Corps, General Thang is predictably making an initial impression by his drive and color. He has reportedly eliminated noontime siestas and has a seven-point program which he launched at a meeting with the Fourth Corps Province Chiefs March 9. While less dynamic than Thang, the Second Corps Commander, Lu Lan, is expected to be a considerable improvement over his predecessor because of his intelligence and his willingness to listen to American advice; General Westmoreland reports that he was greatly pleased with the meeting which he and General Vien had with General Lan recently.

Thieu is now moving on the replacement of province chiefs who have not performed satisfactorily. The appointment of eight new province chiefs was announced this week, of which six replaced men who are being removed for inefficiency. President Thieu has divided all of the province chiefs into three categories: (a) "bad-urgent" -- about seven men who must be relieved no later than March 20 (This leaves one to go); (b) "bad-not urgent" -- These will be replaced when the course for province chiefs is completed on or about April 1; and (c) "good-need refresher training" -- these are men who will be included in future courses for province chiefs. Thieu

implied that the last category are basically good men who need to be updated on government policies and indoctrinated very carefully on the anti-corruption and administrative efficiency concepts of the President. In discussing the removal of the province chiefs, Thieu said he has our list of 13 men who should be relieved and that he is using it.

Thieu is also having instructions prepared to implement his plan to appoint civilians as government delegates in the corps areas. The instructions will define the functions of the corps commanders, the government delegates, and the province chiefs, and the relationship of each to the central government. Six administrative regions will be established, each headed by a civilian delegate who will be appointed by the President. The delegate will assume the administrative functions which were formally delegated to the corps commander, leaving the latter with authority in the military sector only. The delegate will act as an inspector over all civil administration activities in his region. While he will not have authority over the province chief in the chain of command, he will see all correspondence between the province chief and the central government and, therefore, be in a position to advise and influence both. On administrative matters, the delegate will report to the Ministry of Interior or other appropriate Ministries, but will report directly to the President on political matters.

Popular attitudes in the provinces. It is difficult to generalize about public opinion in most situations in this country, and that is particularly true at the present time. People are still unsettled by recent events, and their attitudes are still changing. Many remain very ill informed, Purely local events influence them heavily in many cases. Some are more subject to enemy propaganda than others. Still, I think we can make some meaningful statements about the state of popular attitudes in the provinces at this time.

The Tet attacks certainly inspired fear of the Communists among the provincial population, though there is no evidence of any increased positive support for the enemy. The fear has probably been reinforced by what now appears to be fairly intense Communist activity in the countryside since the Tet attacks. Propaganda and food collecting teams are reportedly active in many areas. Viet Cong control or influence in many villages and hamlets is evidently adequate to permit fairly large-scale recruiting and intensive propagandizing.

At the same time, the provincial population has noted that the Communists were thrown back with heavy losses, that the Government did not dissolve, and that there was no general uprising. There is some pride in the fact that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam fought well, although this feeling is marred by Army of the Republic of Vietnam looting in a number of areas. Those who are connected either directly or by family ties with the army or the civil administration -- and this is a significant number of people -- are relieved to find that the enemy offensive failed to undermine the Government or the Vietnamese military establishment.

It is also worth noting that the stories of U. S. collusion with the Viet Cong still are credited to a considerable degree, especially in the First Corps. In areas where U. S. forces have been heavily engaged and where the local population has seen U. S. casualties, the collusion stories tend to die quickly.

In the First Corps the population is keenly aware of their close proximity to North Vietnam. Communist forces are known to be present in strength in nearby areas, and there is considerable fear of renewed Communist attacks. While the presence of U. S. forces is reassuring, the recent attacks, particularly the long struggle for Hue, have tended to revive the rumor that the U. S. will abandon the two northernmost provinces to the enemy. There has been a general lull in both Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army activity in the First Corps since the beginning of the month, but enemy propaganda operations have certainly continued during the lull. We have reports of hamlet meetings and leaflets; some of the leaflets are signed by the "National Peace and Democratic Union", the Communist front which was launched during the immediate aftermath of the Tet offensive.

One sign of heavy pressure on the local population in the First Corps is the report that the enemy is using women in military units in Quang Tin Province. Four women were killed in action in Tam Ky District and two in Thang Binh District in recent engagements there.

In the Second Corps we have reports which suggest there is now significant fear of renewed attacks. In areas which were hit hard there is a widespread feeling that the enemy has made a great leap forward, particularly in their ability to control the economy of the region. In those areas which were not attacked, the people remain basically oriented toward the Government of Vietnam, but their confidence in the Government's ability to protect them has been eroded. Most recent reports indicate that in almost every province in the Second Corps, the enemy has become extremely active in propaganda activities, food collection, and recruitment. There are also numerous reports that the enemy is making a major effort to build up his political organization in the villages and hamlets.

In the Third Corps the attacks on province and district capitals were not on as large a scale as elsewhere, possibly because Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army strength was diverted for the attack on Saigon. Since the Tet attacks, however, a number of province capitals have been hit by rocket and mortar fire, and major Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army units are reportedly operating in the provinces surrounding Saigon. This has had some effect on the population's attitude, with many fearing that the Viet Cong will step up their attacks. Local guerrilla forces are active in recruiting, and we have reports of heavy propaganda activities in a number of areas. One line which the Communist are pushing is summed up in the jingle "blood will flow in May, there will be peace in June." This jingle may be part of an effort to justify heavy demands for food and recruits.

Throughout the Fourth Corps, the enemy continues to harass urban population centers and cut lines of communication while at the same time tightening its grip

on the rural areas. Popular resentment against the Viet Cong for exploiting the Tet holidays exists, but it is believed to be much weaker than the prevailing fear of Communist power. The enemy is active in recruitment here as in other areas. We have some reports that indicate a decline of morale in My Tho, with a consequent decline in allegiance to the Government of Vietnam.

C. Political

The fronts, As I have mentioned, Tran Van Don launched his front Sunday with a national convention that drew 2,000 delegates, many of them from the provinces. There was a widespread of political groups at the convention, and Don can claim with some justice that his front now has a broad, nationwide mandate. The meeting was not carried off without some friction however; in fact, the convention was unable to select a high steering committee, and finally entrusted that task to the central executive committee instead. Also, noticeably absent from the convention were Tran Van Huong, Phan Khac Suu, Ha Thuc Ky, and Thich Thien Minh. (It was announced that Huong and Suu were both ill, but had agreed to serve on the high steering committee if invited. Thien Minh reportedly agreed to attend if Tri Quang could be transferred from jail to a clinic where the police could "guard" him as they did for a time following the struggle. This arrangement evidently fell through, as Thien Minh did not appear and Tri Quang is still in jail.)

Don now intends to go ahead with his organizational effort in the provinces. He wants the front to engage in civil defense and relief programs as well as to serve to rally sentiment against the Viet Cong. His success in these efforts will depend in part on how long the present national feelings of unity against the enemy last, in part on how the government -- and the factions within it -- reacts to his future activities.

Don's task is also complicated by the continued efforts of Tran Van An and Nguyen Van Huong to form their own political organizations. While An claims not to be in competition with Don, most Vietnamese do not believe him. Huong is plainly opposed to Don's efforts. Both Huong and An claim to have Thieu's blessing. A front in process of formation in Danang also apparently plans to function independently.

Thieu/Ky relationship. I referred to this matter in last week's message, observing that it had its peaks and valleys. I had a long, and I think, constructive and useful talk with Ky yesterday morning and put this whole problem to him fully and frankly pointing out to him, among other things, the complete unacceptability of any move to force any change in government leadership through unconstitutional methods. He agreed that any such move, to use his own words, would be "disastrous". He indicated that he was ready and willing to receive instructions from Thieu and to act on them. I found him in a considerably more constructive frame of mind than in my last talk with him. I plan to see Thieu today to discuss this relationship further and to do my best to get it channeled in the right direction.

Much of the maneuvering and pressure with which this relationship has been afflicted has come from the people around Ky. However, it is also clear that he is aware of what is happening and has been doing little or nothing to stop it. I am inclined to believe his motive in this is to try to pressure Thieu -- and us -- to give him more power and responsibility in the present government. If this is true, it should be possible to find a formula which will be at least acceptable to both Thieu and Ky, and also to us, and I intend to pursue this objective vigorously with them both.

D. Economic

Prices in Saigon have resumed the generally downward trend underway since the early part of the crisis period. The U. S. AID Retail Index fell 6 percent during the week ended March 11, with food prices alone down 8 percent. The drop in food prices was especially marked in vegetables, reflecting improved traffic conditions on the main routes into Saigon, but also the smoother functioning of the new systems whereby wholesalers must take deliveries of produce outside of the city. With last week's drop in prices, the U. S. AID Retail Index now stands only 2-1/2 percent above its level of January 27, date of the last pre-Tet calculation. Food prices alone are up 5-1/2 percent and non-food prices down 5 percent. This is a rather remarkable performance in view of all that has happened.

On Monday, March 11, a supplementary PL 480 agreement to provide 100,000 additional tons of rice to Vietnam was signed. At the same time, the two governments agreed, in a negotiating minute appended to the PL 480 agreement, that Vietnam would seek to purchase rice commercially in the United States, using its own foreign exchange, to cover the gap between the amounts that can be provided under PL 480 and the nation's total rice requirement. This residual amount was earlier estimated to be 40,000 tons. The disruption caused by the Tet offensive may well have substantially increased the amount required. Government of Vietnam commercial purchases of rice in the United States could contribute notably to increasing the total volume of American-origin imports to Vietnam.

ACTION

49

Thursday, March 14, 1968 -- 3:45 PM

Mr. President:

Attached, for your approval, is a proposed condolence message to Congolese President Mobutu. An earthquake has wiped out an entire village of more than 200 people in the eastern Congo. Mobutu has declared a day of national mourning.

Pres file

I recommend you approve the message.

W. W. Rostow

Approve message _____

Disapprove _____

Call me _____

EKH&R~~EM~~/vmr

483

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT MOBUTU OF
THE CONGO

Dear Mr. President:

I was very distressed to learn of the tragedy at Kaziba. My heart goes out to the families of the victims and to you and the Congolese people. I know that the courage and fortitude that Kaziba symbolized will live on in the hearts of your countrymen.

With deepest personal sympathy.

Sincerely,

INFORMATION

49

Pres file

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
3:05 p. m.

Mr. President:

You will find interesting this
Russian official's reason for expecting
Vietnam negotiations this summer.

W. W. Rostow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Letter to Mr. Rostow , March 13, 1968,
from Thomas W. Wolfe, The RAND Corp.
WL-259, enclosing memorandum on a
luncheon conversation with Mr. Boris Sedov of
the Soviet Embassy.

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 76-86-144
By sp/ly, NARA, Date 3/3/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

49a

The **RAND** *Corporation*

1000 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N. W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

March 13, 1968

WL-259

Mr. W. W. Rostow
Special Assistant for Foreign Policy
Executive Office of the President
Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Walt:

The attached memorandum on a luncheon conversation of 12 March 1968 with Mr. Boris Sedov of the Soviet Embassy is forwarded as a matter of possible interest. This was my first conversation with Sedov, who apparently had picked me up from Gely Skritsky, with whom I had a number of conversations before his Embassy tour ended last year.

Sincerely,

Tom W.

Thomas W. Wolfe

TWW/bl

Encl.

Memorandum of Conversation with
Mr. Boris Sedov of the Soviet
Embassy, March 12, 1968 (U),
CONFIDENTIAL

NOTICE:

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U. S. Code, Sections 793, and 794, its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IF ENCLOSURES ARE WITHDRAWN OR NOT ATTACHED THE CLASSIFICATION OF THIS CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE CANCELLED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

49b

Thomas W. Wolfe
The RAND Corporation
1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. BORIS SEDOV
OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY, 12 March 1968(U)

(C) Mr. Boris Sedov, a 2nd Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, invited me to lunch with him on 12 March 1968. This was my first invitation from a Soviet Embassy functionary since Gely Skritsky left Washington late last year. Apparently, I have been passed along to Sedov. The conversation proved to be less interesting than some of those with Skritsky, who took a more wide-ranging approach than Sedov. The three principal themes on which Sedov touched were Vietnam, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and a European settlement.

(U) On Vietnam, Sedov said he thought it likely that there would be negotiations toward the end of the coming summer. The reason he gave was that negotiations are the "trump card" with which President Johnson hopes to get reelected. The President could be expected to play this card unless the war escalates greatly in the interim, which would no doubt happen if the U.S. should send 200,000 more troops. I observed that it takes two to negotiate; what reason had Sedov to believe that Hanoi would be willing to take President Johnson off the electoral hook, unless of course the President were to cave in on terms so disadvantageous that to do so would be politically as damaging as no negotiations at all? Sedov said he thought the answer would depend on who Johnson's opponent might be. Any likely opponent, such as Nixon or Rockefeller, would be an unknown quantity to Hanoi, which would therefore probably prefer to open negotiations with Johnson.

(U) On the NPT, Sedov said he considered it a very important agreement and a significant step in U.S.-Soviet relations, which demonstrates that the two powers recognize certain interests in common, such as containment of Germany and of any future German nuclear aspirations. Sedov remarked that, judging from recent

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Authority neg 86-144
By isp/ly, NARA, Date 4/3/92

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

statements by Kiesinger, the Germans have got the message and are no longer counting on the U.S. to advance their interests against the Soviet Union. Sedov then volunteered the somewhat surprising statement that, now that the MLF project is a dead duck, he feels in retrospect that the U.S. would not have allowed it to become a vehicle for German access to nuclear weapons.

(U) On Europe, Sedov said the situation there doesn't get much attention these days because of distractions like Vietnam and the Pueblo incident, but that basically Europe is still far more important for U.S.-Soviet relations than events in Asia. Conditions in both alliances have altered greatly in recent years (you have France, he said, and we, as you know, are having our difficulties with Rumania and Czechoslovakia). In view of all this, he said, the time is ripe to try for a settlement in Europe, but this is not likely to be possible while the Vietnam war continues.

(U) In addition to the above, the conversation brought out the incidental information that Sedov is writing a book (as his time permits) on management practices in U.S. industry, which he plans to submit for his dissertation for the degree of Kandidat (equivalent to Ph.D.) in economics when he returns to Moscow. Upon being told that I was writing a book on Soviet foreign policy, Sedov said that I should go to Moscow to do some research on it, adding that he was sure he could arrange for an invitation to me from the USSR Academy of Sciences. I told him I would think it over, but in view of what had happened to a friend of mine, Professor Fred Barghoorn, I had my doubts. Sedov protested that the Soviet Union was a different place today, and that my doubts were groundless.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INFORMATION

50

Pres file

~~TOP SECRET~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
2:50 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Wilson weighs in on the gold crisis and asks that we stand together.

Your advisers are working on it in the Situation Room.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NIJ 93-291
By pw, NARA, Date 7-14-94

~~TOP SECRET~~

NODIS

50a

RECEIVED
WHCA

1968 MAR 14 19 38

~~TOP SECRET~~

I HAVE JUST HEARD THE IMPORT OF THE TALKS BETWEEN THE HEADS OF OUR TWO CENTRAL BANKS UP TO THE POINT WHEN MARTIN WAS SEEING YOU. I FULLY RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR YOU TO TAKE URGENT ACTION ALMOST CERTAINLY TONIGHT, NOT ONLY IN YOUR INTERESTS BUT IN OURS AND INDEED OF THE WORLD. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE ACTION TAKEN MUST BE ONE WHICH HOLDS OUR TWO NATIONS TOGETHER.

WE MUST BOTH REALISE THAT WE MAY TONIGHT HAVE REACHED THE SITUATION YOU FORESAW WHEN YOU SHOWED ME, IN THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, THE SHORT DOCUMENT YOU HAD RECEIVED, ENVISAGING A REMORSELESS DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS WHICH COULD LAST US BACK IN 1931. AT THAT TIME YOU THOUGHT IT MIGHT COME THROUGH THE WEAKNESS OF STERLING, IN FACT IT HAS COME THROUGH THE SCRAMBLE FOR GOLD. OF THE VARIOUS CHOICES BEFORE YOU, THERE MAY BE ONE OR TWO ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES WHICH COULD TEMPORARILY RELIEVE YOUR SITUATION, BUT AT THE ALMOST CERTAIN COST OF CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE TO THE POUND. IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN, THE DOLLAR WOULD BE AT RISK. THE DECISION THEREFORE IS VITAL TO US BOTH.

IF IN THE INTERESTS OF URGENCY AND SPEED YOU TAKE A DECISION WHICH PUTS US AT IMMEDIATE RISK IT IS VITAL THAT WE ARE COVERED BY YOU DURING THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. OTHERWISE BOTH CURRENCIES WILL GO.

ALTERNATIVELY WE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT OURSELVES WHICH COULD ONLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF DUMPING THE WHOLE SPECULATIVE BURDEN BACK ON THE DOLLAR. I HOPE WE CAN KEEP CLOSE TOGETHER TONIGHT.

pound

~~TOP SECRET~~

NODIS

MESSAGE ENDS

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.4
By: jw NARA, Date 12-18-09

INFORMATION

51

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968
1:00 p.m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith the first mildly hopeful report from the Delta.

This is the local CIA man who has been brutally candid and pessimistic up till today.

W. W. Rostow

TDCS-314/04473-68 (advance)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-259
By isa, NARA Date 10-31-97

WWRostow:rla

AFSSO USAF
CNO
DIA/ISIC
JCS
NIC
DIRNSA COMMAND CENTER
STATE (RCI)
CIA-OCI
ZEM

51a

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
REF 96-261
By eb NARA Date 6-30-99

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CITE TDCS-314/04473-68 (ADVANCE)

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 13-14 MARCH 1968

SUBJECT SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES OF IV CORPS AS OF 1300 HOURS ON 14 MARCH 1968

ACQ VIETNAM, CAN THO (14 MARCH 1968) FIELD NO. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

SOURCE THIS IS A VIETNAM SITUATION REPORT PREPARED AS OF 1300 HOURS ON 14 MARCH 1968.

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

1. THE OVERALL SITUATION IN IV CORPS CONTINUES BASICALLY UNCHANGED, BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) IN THE DELTA, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF GENERAL THAN, IS MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE. TODAY THE GVN AND OTHER FRIENDLY FORCES ARE CONDUCTING 60 OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE VIET CONG (VC), 41 OF WHICH ARE BEING RUN OUT OF THE DISTRICTS. THIS VIGOROUS MILITARY ACTION ON THE PART OF THE GVN SHOULD, IF IT IS CONTINUED, HELP TO ENHANCE THE GVN PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WHILE OFFSETTING VC PROPAGANDA CLAIMS CONCERNING THEIR TET OFFENSIVE VICTORIES.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GO CONG PROVINCE, A CORDON AND SEARCH OPERATION WAS CONDUCTED ON 13 MARCH, USING POLICE FIELD FORCES AND TWO PLATOONS OF THE PROVINCIAL RECONNAISSANCE UNIT (PRU). IT PROVED TO BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AS 57 VC WERE CAPTURED, 11 VC WERE BELIEVED WOUNDED, AND 17 VC WERE KILLED BY BODY COUNT. ALSO, 20 POUNDS OF DOCUMENTS WERE SEIZED. THREE OF THE VC KILLED WERE IDENTIFIED AS DISTRICT LEVEL CADRES. THE PRISONERS RANGED FROM AMMO BEARERS TO DISTRICT LEVEL CADRES (ONE DISTRICT LEVEL CADRE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND ANOTHER SUSPECTED DISTRICT LEVEL CADRE IS STILL UNDERGOING INTERROGATION.) TWO OF THE VC DEAD WERE WEARING NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) UNIFORMS, HOWEVER IT IS FELT THAT DESPITE THE UNIFORMS THEY WERE PROBABLY LOCAL PERSONNEL.

3. IN LINE WITH THE ABOVE, A NUMBER OF UNVERIFIED REPORTS ARE BEING RECEIVED OF NVA UNIT SIGHTINGS IN THE DELTA AND A GREAT DEAL OF VC PROPAGANDA IS STATING THAT THE VC ARE WAITING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF NVA UNITS BEFORE BEGINNING THE NEXT PHASE IN THE OFFENSIVE. TO DATE NO HARD INDICATIONS HAVE BEEN NOTED TO SUGGEST THAT THIS IS ANYTHING MORE THAN TERRORIST PROPAGANDA AIMED AT THE POPULACE AND MAYBE A MORALE BOOSTER FOR VC TROOPS.

4. HIGHWAY TRAVEL IS BECOMING MORE APPARENT THROUGHOUT THE CORPS AREA EVEN THOUGH THE VC ARE ACTIVELY TRYING TO KEEP THE ROADS INTERDICTED AND THREATENING REPRISALS AGAINST THOSE WHO TRAVEL ON THEM. CONVOY MOVEMENT IS STILL PREVALENT ALTHOUGH SOME INDIVIDUAL TRUCK AND BUS TRAFFIC IS BEGINNING TO OPERATE.

5. FIELD DISSEM: STATE, USMACV, 7TH AF, CINCPAC, ARPAC, PACAF, PACFLT, (ALSO SENT SAIGON).

1.5(e)
3.4(b)(1)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INFORMATION

53

~~SECRET~~-SENSITIVE

Thursday, March 14, 1968
9:55 a. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith an inconclusive but
reasonably amiable talk on Vietnam
between Harriman and Dobrynin.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:rla

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 3/31/92

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 96-254

~~SECRET/NODIS~~ By is, NARA Date 4-8-97

53a

Sunday, March 10, 1968

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR
W. Averell Harriman, Ambassador at Large

Ways

Dobrynin lunched with me at N Street at 1.00 o'clock and stayed until 4.30. The conversation covered a wide range of subjects, but was largely on Vietnam.

I asked him whether the Soviet Union wished to see the war stopped in Vietnam, or whether they thought their interests were served by having us continue in this conflict. He was categorical in his statement that his Government wanted to see it stopped, believed that it prevented our making progress on bilateral matters in more important areas, such as nuclear controls, etc. Their support of North Vietnam cost them a lot of money which was diverted from other priority programs. They feared that the war might escalate into a confrontation with them, which would be most grave. He admitted he had interference with their shipping in mind. However, he stated that the Soviet Union would continue to support North Vietnam as long as the fighting continued.

He was noncommittal in answering my question as to who had the most influence in Hanoi -- whether Peking or Moscow -- maintaining that Hanoi wanted to run its own affairs.

In discussing the President's Johns Hopkins speech, he said that Hanoi would never accept aid from the United States. Reconstruction would have to come largely from the Soviet Union as China wouldn't have the needed products. Therefore, the more we destroyed North Vietnam,

the greater

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

the greater would be the burden on the Soviet Union for reconstruction. He was noncommittal when I suggested we might work together on reconstruction and development of Southeast Asia as a whole, but did not take issue with my statement that we were working in a parallel line, attempting to strengthen the sub-continent against possible advances of Red China in that area.

He emphasized the importance the Soviet Union placed on the program of the NLF as announced in early September. He said the British Ambassador whom he had talked to in Moscow hadn't even read it.

This led to a long discussion of the NLF program and our 14 Points. I pointed out that certain of their proposals overlapped ours, such as the development of a neutral South Vietnam on the basis of free elections, independent of the North, leaving the question of unification for negotiations between the two, when and if mutually agreeable to their people. In reply to his specific question, why haven't we publicly responded to their program, I pointed out that we had indicated we were quite ready to discuss it as well as Hanoi's 4 Points, but expected the other side to talk about ours as well. I explained the differences which might arise with the specific action that would follow even if an agreement seemed to exist on broad terms. I referred to the misunderstandings that we had had with Stalin after Yalta with regard to "free and unfettered elections" in Poland and Eastern Europe. I mentioned Khrushchev's statement to me that we could never agree on what was in fact a free election. Important questions were who was going to hold the election, who would supervise it, how the campaign for candidates would be conducted. Obviously, we would never oppose free elections if interpreted and carried out in accordance with our own concepts. Furthermore, I stated Hanoi had never told us what they thought of our 14 Points.

I said

I said that we agreed in principle on the idea of all foreign troops being withdrawn and for us that meant North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam. However, they had never lived up for one day to their agreement on Laos. What guarantee could we have that Hanoi would keep any agreement in the future.

I asked why wouldn't it be possible for the Soviet Union to arrange for some quiet talks between Hanoi and ourselves attempting to clarify these interpretations. He replied that was up to Hanoi. I pressed him on the responsibility that the Soviet Union had as Co-Chairman along with the British to take affirmative action. While dodging Soviet responsibility, he indicated that the British didn't have much influence.

This led to a discussion of which channel the Soviets thought would be best in carrying on contacts with Hanoi. I specifically mentioned Italy, Romania, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, France. He indicated that it didn't make much difference as far as the Soviet Union was concerned because Hanoi kept them fully informed.

He said that the Soviet Government had learned both from Hanoi and the Romanians about our discussions with the Romanians. He spoke of having seen the seven-point memorandum that Macovescu carried to Hanoi. I told him this was not a seven-point memorandum, and he corrected himself, saying it had seven paragraphs. Dobrynin wondered why in his last talk with the Secretary he hadn't been told about this seven-paragraph paper which we gave Macovescu a day or two later. I explained that we hadn't reached an agreement on it, that the President was in Texas, etc. He said the Romanians had informed them first and later Hanoi. I explained that it was not only what was in this statement but it was also the explanations and interpretations that gave importance to Macovescu's trip.

I told him that we had no particular reason for preferring the Romanian channel except that Maurer had taken the initiative to go to Hanoi and then had reported to us fully. I explained that when I went to Bucharest

at the

at the end of November he had given me the most complete detail of every aspect of his conversations in Hanoi. When I left Bucharest I had no idea what if any further action the Romanians would take, although I had indicated an interest in further explorations. They sent Macovescu to Hanoi and then to Washington. We were again impressed by the meticulous, detailed and, we felt, accurate reporting, containing both good and bad news. In addition, the Romanians had not leaked publicly, and appeared to have only one objective -- the beginning of negotiations. I commented to Dobrynin that we were not unfamiliar with the differences between Bucharest and Moscow, and we wanted to avoid any implication that our using the Romanians for messages to Hanoi had any political connotation. I underlined that we had asked Macovescu specifically to report fully to Moscow on his conversations with us in Washington. I stated that as far as we were concerned, the Soviet Union was the important factor and we did not wish to do anything which Moscow felt was non-productive in achieving the objective of a peaceful settlement.

He didn't rise to the bait when I suggested that the Soviet Government would be the best means of communication with Hanoi if his Government would only agree to do it. On the other hand, he avoided indicating any preference on the part of his Government as to the various governments I had mentioned. He appeared to be quite frank in describing the national characteristics of these different governments but did not commit his Government. I asked him whether the Soviet Government wouldn't do something itself or advise us as to what we might do to encourage talks. I commented that Prime Minister Wilson had indicated the gap between Hanoi and Washington was narrow on starting talks, and if Hanoi had really wanted to start talks they could well have given some indication that they understood what we meant by our assumption of "no military advantage". I added, however, that the gap in starting talks was perhaps narrow, whereas the differences on a settlement might be great.

He asked

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

- 5 -

He asked me why we didn't take a chance, stop the bombing, and see what happened. I explained the serious psychological effects in this country of talks breaking down and a resumption of the bombing. I then asked him whether he thought it would help the Soviet Union if we should stop the bombing of North Vietnam except for the southern part north of the DMZ. He said, "You mean this would be in place of the assumption of 'no advantage'?" I said, "Well, it might be interpreted as that." He showed some interest but did not give any definite reply.

I told Dobrynin that I didn't think the Soviets were very forthcoming with us. They were free in their condemnations, and yet unwilling to make any move or take any responsibility. I asked why our two Governments couldn't have franker talks, in more depth. He spoke warmly of Ambassador Thompson, and said that he looked forward now to getting to know Chip Bohlen well.

We had a rather lengthy discussion on the timing of starting feelers for negotiations again. He told me that members of the Diplomatic Corps had indicated to him they thought August was about the right time. I said I thought that was too late; May might be a good month. By that time, the dust might have settled in Saigon. The Saigon Government would be in a firmer position, and Hanoi would have by that time realized that they had failed to achieve their objectives in the Tet attack. It would be a period of more realism than the present. He asked what I had in mind about renewing feelers. I passed it back to him, and asked whether it wouldn't be a good idea to have frank talks on the subject between our two Governments. I said that could be done through our Ambassadors or someone, possibly myself, might go to Moscow. He indicated that he thought there was some value in talks in Moscow. He commented we would then learn that there was no difference between the attitude of Brezhnev and Kosygin, which seemed to be in the minds of some Americans.

In conclusion,

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

- 6 -

In conclusion, he asked whether I wanted him to underline anything special in his reporting of our talk to Moscow. I replied whatever he wished to, but I said that it would be particularly important for his Government to realize that we had thought that after the frank talks between the President and Kosygin at Glassboro there would be some initiative on the part of the Soviet Government. We took seriously the Soviet responsibility as Co-Chairman and if his Government really wanted to end the war, they ought to do something about it, at least to discuss with us specifically what might be useful moves. I added a footnote that their public and even private abusive language on U.S. behavior in Vietnam was non-productive.

COMMENT: Dobrynin is the most civilized Bolshevik with whom I have dealt, but I wonder how much he reports. He evidently took the discussion seriously and undoubtedly will pass some of it on.

- - - -

Additional notes:

--In talking about China, he said that his Government didn't consider China was a serious military menace. It would not have great military capability for a long time.

--At one point we talked about Stalin and the role he played during the war. He said that Stalin had complete direction of the war and control of military decisions. (This confirmed my judgment).

WAH:hbs

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

54

INFORMATION

Profile

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, March 14, 1968 -- 9:50 a.m.

Mr. President:

Khe Sanh-DMZ:

- weather marginal;
- 205 incoming rounds;
- 1935 outgoing;
- 371 tactical sorties plus 36 B-52's;
- further evidence the ARVN 2d Regiment did well fighting near DMZ: 305 enemy versus 45 ARVN killed in action.
- 201 tons delivered.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

WWRostow:ria

DECLASSIFIED E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3(b) White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1988 By <u>ry</u> , NARA, Date <u>4-14-92</u>	DECLASSIFIED E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3 DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1988 By <u>ry</u> , NARA, Date <u>4-14-92</u>
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SECRET

54-

Thursday, March 14, 1968, 9:23 AM

TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

This is report number thirty-nine on the situation in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area for the 24-hour period of March 13, 1968.

Khe Sanh weather on March 13 remained marginal. Early morning ceiling was 600 feet with four miles visibility and fog. Ceiling improved to 800 feet during the day with other factors remaining unchanged.

During the period, Khe Sanh received 160 rounds of mortar, 35 rounds of artillery and 10 rounds of rocket for a total of 205 rounds. The incoming fire resulted in two killed and 16 wounded. In counter-action, artillery in support of Khe Sanh fired 77 missions in which a total of 1935 rounds of artillery were expended. The majority of the missions were unobserved. Twenty-four rounds of 105mm and two rounds of 155mm COFRAM were fired in two missions against enemy targets north of the DMZ. Five-hundred Breu refugees were helilifted from the Khe Sanh area to Quang Tri during the day. Their destination will be Cam Lo.

There was no change in Marine deployment or the enemy situation at Khe Sanh. Along the remainder of the DMZ, enemy contact was light, except northeast of Dong Ha where two companies from the 4th Marines made contact with an unknown size force in the late afternoon. The action continued until last light and resulted in one Marine killed and 33 wounded (25 evacuated). The enemy lost 30 killed in the action. Further information on the 2nd ARVN Regiment action that was mentioned in yesterday's report, revealed that the ARVN forces continued a sweep of the battle area southeast of Gio Linh and discovered an additional 111 enemy bodies presumed to have been killed by artillery and air. In addition, four individual and 12 crew-served weapons were captured. This brings the total casualties for the ARVN contact to 45 ARVN killed, 127 wounded. In this fight there now have been 305 enemy killed, 11 detained, 54 individual and 19 crew-served weapons captured.

A total of 371 tactical air sorties were flown in support of Khe Sanh; One hundred and twenty-four by Marine aircraft, 95 by Navy and 152 by Air Force. Bomb damage assessment included 23 road cuts, four trucks destroyed, 250 meters of trench destroyed, one bridge destroyed, seven structures and three bunkers destroyed, 18 secondary explosions, 38 secondary fires, and nine enemy killed by air. Six ARC LIGHT strikes (36 sorties) were scheduled, one

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
AF Guide, SEA Records, 4/1/88
By ry NARA, Date 4-14-92

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1988
By ry NARA, Date 4-14-92

as an emergency target within 1100 meters of friendly forces. Bomb damage assessment from two strikes flown in the preceding period recorded a total of 37 secondary explosions.

Two hundred and one short tons of supplies were airlifted to Khe Sanh on the thirteenth. No passengers were landed. Seventeen resupply sorties were flown.

A total of 304 tactical air sorties are scheduled for the next 24-hour period. The Air Force will continue to have 120 alert sorties on call, the Marines 16 aircraft for sorties as required. Eight ARC LIGHT strikes (48 sorties) are scheduled.

The forecast for the next period is for improving conditions with four miles visibility and 1500 foot ceiling by 1:00 PM. Conditions should remain good until fog and low clouds begin to lower ceilings after 8:00 PM. By 2:00 AM on the 15th, conditions will again be marginal.

~~SECRET~~



THE JOINT STAFF

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

546

14 March 1968
0600 EST

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

Subject: Supply Status at Khe Sanh as of 8:00 PM EST
13 Mar (9:00 AM 14 Mar, SVN time)

1. The Khe Sanh Dump and Ammunition Supply Point (ASP)
status as of the above time is as follows:

	<u>DAYS SUPPLY ON HAND</u>	<u>PREVIOUS STATUS 8:00 PM 12 Mar EST (9:00 AM 13 Mar SVN)</u>
<u>CLASS I (Rations)</u>		
Meal, Combat, Individual	19	18 days
B Rations	9	9 days
<u>CLASS III (Fuel)</u>		
Aviation Gas (AVGAS)	3	3 days
JP-4 Fuel (Jet Fuel)	10.6	10.6 days
Motor Gasoline (MOGAS)	9.8	9.8 days
Diesel	4.2	4.2 days
<u>CLASS V (Ammunition)</u>		
a. High explosive		
60-mm mortar	46	47 days
81-mm mortar	21	20 days
90-mm (Tank)	108	108 days
4.2" mortar	35	37 days
105-mm howitzer	29	29 days
155-mm howitzer	17	17 days
b. Antitank		
		<u>ROUNDS ON HAND</u>
90-mm AP-T		329
90-mm HEAT		1,202
66-mm rocket (LAW)		3,335
Antitank mines (M-15)		429
Antitank mines (M-19)		668
Antitank mines (M-21)		0
106-mm HEAT		812
106-mm recoilless rifle (HEP-T)		2,210
3.5" rocket		2,222

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12355, Sec. 3.3
DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988
By NARA. Date 4-14-92

SECRET

DAYS SUPPLY
ON HAND

PREVIOUS STATUS
8:00 PM 12 Mar EST
(9:00 AM 13 Mar SVN)

c. Antipersonnel

ROUNDS ON HAND

106-mm BEEHIVE

1,307

CLASS V (COFRAM)

105-mm howitzer	5	5 days
155-mm howitzer	5	5 days
40-mm grenade launcher	5	5 days
Hand grenades	10	10 days

2. On 13 March, Khe Sanh was resupplied with 201 tons as follows:

CLASS I	32 tons
CLASS II	3 tons
CLASS III	31 tons
CLASS IV	21 tons
CLASS V	114 tons



JAMES A. SHANNON
Brigadier General, USAF
Deputy Director for
Operations (NMCC)

Distribution

SECDEF
DEPSECDEF
CJCS (3)
DJS (3)
J-30
J-31
J-32
J-33
J-4
AWR
MCCC
AFCP
NFP
DDO
ADDO
CCOC
PAC DIV
PAC DESK

SECRET

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 14, 1968

55
sent to Pres
3/19/68
Pres file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Summary of Dean Acheson's Proposal.

1. We should make available such forces as we can muster and are needed in the next emergency months.

2. We should immediately set about a study in which the brightest and ablest civilians and military in the Government take part.


3. This study should consist of:

-- An examination of what has happened over the last year in Vietnam, including, of course, the Tet offensive and its aftermath. This should be a careful, factual effort.

-- We should then examine, looking ahead over the future, what we can expect from the government of Vietnam and its military forces in undertaking its share of the allied ~~burden~~^{burden} staying together; improving ~~the~~ ^{the} quality and energy of government; improving its military ~~capabilities~~ ^{capabilities}.

-- We should then analyze how we can deal with North Vietnam and its military forces. We should look backward at what we have done, our successes and failures. What could we do?

-- On the basis of an assessment of the past, the GVN possibilities and the possibilities of coping with the North Vietnamese, we should then launch ourselves on a path looking towards progressive disengagement over whatever period of time we judge appropriate.

 W. W. Rostow

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 65 3-3180

By sp/ly, NARA, Date 4-29-2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SSa

~~TOP SECRET~~

3/16/68

CAP80675

FROM WALT ROSTOW
FOR THE PRESIDENT

So that you can stare at it, I have translated the Acheson idea into the following draft directive for the team leader.

A key question is: Who should head the group?

Perhaps the best choice would be Cy Vance. But his being about Washington would lead to leaks. His quality is such that it might well be worth taking that risk or even letting it be known that he is doing a Vietnam review job.

Other possible candidates: Max Taylor, Dean Acheson.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority TSC Ltr 1/5/82, CWJ8195

By LW/ag, NARA, Date 4/1/92

Top secret

Draft instruction

~~13/16/68~~

I wish you to direct a study which will look back to the past and forward to the future with respect to our Vietnam policy. The study should be completed by ^{May 15,} ~~June~~ 1968.

These are the questions which I should like answered from all the data we now have available and can promptly generate:

1. What progress did we make -- and fail to make -- in the period between mid-1965 and Tet 1968?
2. What elements of fear and hope, weakness and strength, led Hanoi to mount the winter-spring offensive?
3. Where does Hanoi stand with respect to its objectives, as of the time this study is completed? What are its options as you think Hanoi sees them? To what extent are they dependent on what the United States says and does in the time ahead? Which option do you believe Hanoi will choose?
4. What can we expect from the Government of Vietnam and its armed forces with respect to: unity; executive and administrative energy; scale, modernization and effectiveness in combat during the balance of calendar year 1968? 1969?
5. What increments of military force can we expect -- or, realistically, induce -- from our present fighting allies? Could that circle be widened?
6. What are the prospects for inhibiting or blocking the flow of North Vietnamese forces to the South in the light of our experience with bombing North Vietnam; with the technology of the so-called barrier; and with the use of air and ground forces against North Vietnamese forces?

DECLASSIFIED

Authority nsc 6815/82 LNW 781-95

By GW/ry, NARA, Date 4/1/92

~~Top Secret~~

-2-

7. What is the state of the North Vietnamese armed forces? What regular reserves are available for dispatch to the South? What is their demonstrated and potential capacity to provide replacements in both quantity and quality?

8. What is the present state of the control over the population of South Vietnam, particularly in rural areas? What are the prospects for the balance of 1968? 1969?

9. In the light of your analysis and judgment, can we envisage as realistic a policy of gradual reduction of U. S. forces in Vietnam: in the balance of 1968; 1969; 1970?

10. At what moment -- if any -- could you envisage as potentially effective a U. S. or GVN negotiating initiative? What should be the character of that initiative?

You should feel free to pose and answer other questions you judge relevant to past or future policy in Vietnam.

In developing your report, you should assemble a team of the most knowledgeable and able Vietnam experts in the government; for example, George Carver, William De Puy, Philip Habib, William Jorden, Roy Wehrle. (A DOD representative is needed. The obvious choice is ~~William~~ Richard Steadman. He feels strongly that Vietnam is hopeless. But, more important, I cannot recommend him until it is firmly established that he was not involved in the New York Times leak] They should, if necessary, work virtually full-time on the project.

~~Top Secret~~

-3-

You should feel free, of course, to consult with other officials in the government and, on a discreet basis, with outside experts as well.

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INFORMATION

SENSITIVE

Tuesday, March 19, 1968 -- 10:45 a.m.

Mr. President:

I cannot vouch myself for any of these men having leaked materials from the Pentagon, but those most suspect, because of the strength of their views, are Mordon Halperin, Richard Steadman, and Paul Warnke.

I repeat, these are suspicions, not facts.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rlh

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ACTION

Thursday
March 14, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Pres file

SUBJECT: President of Singapore is ill

On a pleasure trip to Australia the President of Singapore was stricken with a heart condition plus other complications. He is hospitalized in Melbourne. I think a personal message from you would be appreciated and recommend you approve the following:

"His Excellency Yusof bin Ishak, President of the Republic of Singapore, Royal Melbourne Hospital. Dear President Yusof: I am very sorry to learn of your unfortunate illness. Please accept my best wishes for a speedy and full recovery. Sincerely, Lyndon B. Johnson."

W. W. Rostow

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

MWright:wpt