

23

11

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

*The President*

*#2 24*

~~SECRET~~

Action CONTROL : 20743  
REC'D : JAN 27, 9:31 AM

Info FROM : SAIGON  
ACTION : SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 2322  
DATE : JAN 27, 9:00 AM

~~SECRET~~

FOR THE PRESIDENT

N O D I S

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Letter 10-11-78

By *if*, NARS, Date 3-23-79

I AM AFRAID THAT WE HAVE OVERWHELMED WASHINGTON IN THE LAST 24 HOURS IN REPORTING THE ACTION OF THE ARMED FORCES COUNCIL IN WITHDRAWING CONFIDENCE IN THE SUU-HUONG GOVERNMENT AND IN CHARGING GENERAL KHANH WITH RESPONSIBILITY "FOR SOLVING THE PRESENT POLITICAL CRISIS."

WHILE IT IS STILL TOO SOON TO EVALUATE WITH CONFIDENCE THE GAINS AND LOSSES OF THIS LATEST "COUP DE FORCE", MY COLLEAGUES OF THE U.S. MISSION COUNCIL AGREE WITH ME IN BELIEVING THAT SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS ARE VALID EVEN AT THIS TIME. FOR ONE THING, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE OVERTHROW OF PRIME MINISTER HUONG HAS BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN KHANH AND THE BUDDHIST INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP. IT IS NOT CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT THAT OTHER SENIOR GENERALS SUPPORTED KHANH WITH ANY REAL CONVICTION IN THIS ACTION ALTHOUGH HE SEEMS TO HAVE GOT A LARGE MAJORITY VOTE AT THE CONCLUSION OF A LONG POLICY DEBATE LAST NIGHT. ANOTHER CONCLUSION IS THAT THE OVER-THROW OF HUONG IS CLEARLY A VICTORY FOR THE BUDDHIST INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP AND PLACES IT IN A POSITION OF DOMINANT POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY. KHANH NO DOUBT HOPES TO SHARE THIS POSITION WITH THE BUDDHISTS AND USE THEM TO HIS ADVANTAGE. BASED UPON OUR PAST EXPERIENCE, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE THE BUDDHISTS WHO WILL USE KHANH.

THE MOST SINISTER ASPECT OF THIS AFFAIR IS THE OBVIOUS DANGER THAT THE BUDDHIST VICTORY MAY BE AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD THE COUNTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT. THE INSTITUTE-KHANH COMBINATION IS A UNION--ALBEIT PERHAPS A TEMPORARY ONE--OF TWO ELEMENTS ADVERSE TO U.S. INTERESTS.

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~~SECRET~~ NODIS

-2- 2322 FROM SAIGON CONTROL 20743 JAN 27, 9 AM

WHILE REASONABLY SURE OF THE VALIDITY OF THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS, WE CANNOT BE SURE WHERE WE ARE UNTIL THE ANNOUNCED PROCEDURE FOR FORMING THE GOVERNMENT IS CARRIED OUT. HISTORICALLY, THIS PROCEDURE SETS BACK THE CLOCK TO LAST AUGUST WHEN THE MILITARY, UNDER BUDDHIST PRESSURE, TURNED THE POWER OVER TO THE CIVILIANS. THE SAME INSTITUTIONS AND PROCEDURES ARE BEING RECONSTITUTED TO START MOVING ONCE MORE DOWN THE ROAD TOWARD ELECTIONS IN LATE MARCH FOR A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER WE EVER REACH THAT DESTINATION OR WHETHER WE ARE ON A TREADMILL.

UNTIL WE SEE MORE CLEARLY THE FORM OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO EMERGE, I AM OF THE OPINION THAT WE NOT COMMIT OURSELVES PUBLICLY WITH REGARD TO THE ACTION OF THE ARMED FORCES COUNCIL. I HAVE RECOMMENDED ELSEWHERE THAT WE SHOULD RESTRICT OURSELVES FOR THE TIME BEING TO A SIMPLE STATEMENT THAT IT IS PREMATURE FOR US TO COMMENT ON THESE EVENTS UNTIL WE SEE MORE CLEARLY THEIR IMPLICATION.

I KNOW THAT THE QUESTION OF THE EVACUATION OF OUR DEPENDENTS IS CONSTANTLY ON YOUR MIND AS IT IS ON MINE. WE HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH CONCERNED DURING THE LAST THREE DAYS FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR DEPENDENTS--INDEED OF ALL AMERICANS--IN HUE AREA. WHILE THAT DANGER APPEARS TO HAVE SUBSIDED, THESE EVENTS IN THE NORTH HAVE BEEN A REMINDER OF THE EASE WITH WHICH ANTI-AMERICAN EMOTIONS CAN BE WHIPPED UP. AT THE MEETING OF THE U.S. MISSION COUNCIL TODAY, I FOUND FOR THE FIRST TIME ALL MEMBERS IN AGREEMENT AS TO THE NEED TO EVACUATE DEPENDENTS ALTHOUGH NONE OF US YET HAS A REALLY SATISFACTORY FORMULA TO OVERCOME THE VERY DANGEROUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN INITIATING THIS ACTION. I BELIEVE THAT THIS LATEST CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT OFFERS US A POSSIBILITY TO LINK EVACUATION OF DEPENDENTS WITH OUR ACCEPTANCE OF A NEW REGIME. I WILL FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON THIS SCORE AS SOON AS THE GOVERNMENTAL SITUATION CLARIFIES.

CFN 24 SUU-HUONG KHANH U.S. HUONG KHANH NOT KHANH HUONG  
KHANH NO KHANH HANOI KHANH U.S. NOT HUE U.S.

TAYLOR

~~SECRET~~

25

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13279

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO~~SECRET~~

2

26

Origin ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON 1548 IMMEDIATE

Jan 27 6 45 PM '65

Info

NODIS

LOR

DECLASSIFIED

Embtel 2322

Authority State Letter 10-11-78

By ip, NARS, Date 3-2

Your evaluation of situation most helpful.

Meeting highest levels today ~~xxx~~ concurred we should proceed immediately with evacuation on best possible basis. Such action would definitely be envisaged as clearing decks for further decisions.

We see two major problems on which we need your recommendations. One is timing and pace. Aim should be fastest possible schedule while avoiding ~~xxxxxxxx~~ appearance precipitate retreat in fear of anti-American demonstrations or actions by SVN population generally. We here inclined suggest commencement within next <sup>ten</sup> ~~fourteen~~ days and completion in about week or ten days thereafter.

As to rationale, believe this could now be linked to acceptance new regime only if Khanh and others make convincing statements determination continue forcefully with whole effort. Press here already starting play Khanh-Buddhist link and possible trend toward negotiation.

Drafted by:

FE: WPBundy/bmm 1/27/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

The Secretary

White House - McGeorge Bundy  
DoD - Secretary McNamara

S/S - Mr. Read

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Page 2 of telegram to Saigon~~SECRET~~ - LOR

We would need most ~~force~~ forceful possible statements from Khanh and new PM offset this in any degree. Other elements previously stated rationale still appear valid but we would need maximum possible backgrounding against interpretation evacuation due to anti-American demonstrations.

Believe actions being covered ~~xxx~~ septels will contribute to general impression forceful action and should be used to maximum with Khanh and Vien in that sense. Now seems to us crucial you discuss problem frankly with Khanh as real power source. Whether or not you can do that at once, please give us ~~xxx~~ your thoughts and recommendations on points above soonest.

GP-1.

END

RUSK

~~SECRET~~ - LOR

~~SECRET~~  
DRAFT TELEGRAM

DRAFT  
FE:WPBundy:mk  
1/27/65

26a

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE

NODIS -- LOR.

DECLASSIFIED

Embtel 2322.

Authority State Letter 10-11-78

By ig, NARS, Date 3-23-79

Your evaluation of situation most helpful.

Meeting highest levels today concurred we should proceed immediately with evacuation on best possible basis. Such action would definitely be envisaged as clearing decks for further decisions.

We see two major problems on which we need your recommendations. One is timing and pace. Aim should be fastest possible schedule while avoiding appearance precipitate retreat in fear of anti-American demonstrations or actions by SVN population generally. We here inclined to suggest commencement within next ~~ten~~ <sup>four to five</sup> days and completion in about week or ten days thereafter.

As to rationale, believe this could now be linked to acceptance new regime only if Khanh and others make convincing statements determination to continue forcefully with whole effort. Press here already starting to play Khanh-Buddhist link and possible trend toward negotiation. We would need most forceful possible statements from Khanh and new PM to offset this in any degree. Other elements previously stated rationale still appear valid but we would need

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET -- LOR~~

-2-

maximum possible backgrounding against interpretation evacuation due to anti-American demonstrations.

Believe actions being covered septels will contribute to general impression forceful action and should be used to maximum with Khanh and Vien in that sense. Now seems to us crucial you discuss problem frankly with Khanh as real power source. Whether or not you can do that at once, please give us your thoughts and recommendations on points above soonest.

GP-1.

End.

~~SECRET -- LOR~~

27

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13290

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO~~TOP SECRET~~

/ 28

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON

IMMEDIATE 1549

JAN 27 9 46 PM '65

Info

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM PRESIDENT

DECLASSIFIED

NODIS

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter

LOR

By inf, NARS, Date 9-2-80

1. Thank you for your very prompt and clearheaded account of the events of the last 24 hours. We are inclined to share your judgment of the immediate meaning of these events, and I have complete confidence in your judgment on the spot as you deal with this new situation.

2. I am delighted to know that the mission is now unanimous in favor of the evacuation of dependents, and by separate messages we are asking for your fastest recommendations on the ways and means of putting this decision into effect with minimum damage to morale, and a maximum signal of our own continuing determination. In this connection I want you to know that once we get the dependents out of there, I am determined to make it clear to all the world that the U.S. will

Drafted by:

Telegraphic transmission and

Text received from White House/

Classification approved by:

McGeorge Bundy

Clearances:

1/27/65

S/S - Mr. Read

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~~TOP SECRET~~

spare no effort and no sacrifice in doing its full part to turn back the Communists in Vietnam.

3. As we look beyond the removal of dependents to specific courses of action in the coming months, I am most eager to have the closest possible sense of your own thinking and of the situation/~~THE~~ <sup>on the</sup> spot. For this purpose I am inclined now to take you up on your earlier suggestion that McGeorge Bundy come to Saigon, and if you concur, he would plan to leave on Sunday, arriving Tuesday morning, February 2. He would plan to stay for three days, mainly for conversations with you and your colleagues, but also for the purpose of conveying personal word of my own determination and of my own thinking to Vietnamese leaders of your selection.

4. It appears from your reports that, for better or worse, we may be increasingly dependent upon ~~the~~ unreliable and unpredictable Buddhist leaders. It occurs to me that there is one man who has some unexpended personal capital with the Buddhists, and that man is Cabot Lodge. Unless you would find it objectionable, I am thinking of asking him to come in Bundy's plane for a visit which might later be extended to other points like Hong Kong and Manila. I would think it desirable for him to talk frankly and at length with Buddhist leaders

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

as well as others with whom he has personal connections, always under your direction.

5. My own preference would be for a visit from you to Washington, but I feel that such a trip at this time would lead to further troublesome speculation and would also involve your absence during an important period of readjustment.

6. I count on you to give me your completely candid comments on this message. I know the subtle but important differences that do exist between the U.S. and Vietnamese views of things.

CP-1

E N D

RUSK

~~TOP SECRET~~



28a

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

January 27, 1965

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Draft message to Max Taylor

1. I attach a draft message from you to Taylor on the subject of my expedition to Saigon. I have suggested a Sunday departure to allow a few days for shakedown there and a couple for preparation here, but I can leave sooner if you wish.

2. I have also suggested that Lodge come in the same plane. I do not think we can get away with a notion that he simply happens to be in Saigon at the same moment that I am, and I think it is simpler if he simply comes at Max Taylor's invitation in the same plane. Moreover, the quick departure which I suggest hardly gives time to get him out to the area in any other way and, as I say, I am sure that there is no point trying to camouflage his presence.

3. I have spoken tentatively to Lodge and he says that he will be delighted to do anything you want. He of course wants to do only what is fully acceptable to Max Taylor and says that we could be assured that he would go out of his way with everyone to reinforce Max's authority. Will you give me a ring at your convenience on this? We ought to get the message out the way you want it by 6 o'clock this evening so that Max will have it promptly in the morning.

4. This is as good a moment as any to say how much Bob and I valued your comments this morning in response to our memo, and how proud I am that you are willing to entrust this particular mission to me.

McG. B.

McG. B.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter  
By inf, NARS, Date 9-2-80

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter

~~TOP SECRET~~

By inf, NARS, Date 9-2-80

1/27/65

286

TO: Saigon for the Ambassador

FROM: The President

NODIS - LOR For delivery at the opening of business Thursday, Jan. 28

1. Thank you for your very prompt and clearheaded account of the events of the last 24 hours. We are inclined to share your judgment of the immediate meaning of these events, and I have complete confidence in your judgment on the spot as you deal with this new situation.
2. I am delighted to know that the mission is now unanimous in favor of the evacuation of dependents, and by separate messages we are asking for your fastest recommendations on the ways and means of putting this decision into effect with minimum damage to morale, and a maximum signal of our own continuing determination. In this connection I want you to know that once we get the dependents out of there, I am determined to make it clear to all the world that the U. S. will spare no effort and no sacrifice in doing its full part to turn back the Communists in Vietnam.
3. As we look beyond the removal of dependents to specific courses of action in the coming months, I am most eager to have the closest possible sense of your own thinking and of the situation on the spot. For this purpose I am inclined now to take you up on your earlier suggestion that McGeorge Bundy come to Saigon, and if you concur, he would plan to

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS - LOR~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

-2-

1/27/65

leave on Sunday, arriving Tuesday morning, February 2. He would plan to stay for three days, mainly for conversations with you and your colleagues, but also for the purpose of conveying personal word of my own determination and of my own thinking to Vietnamese leaders of your selection.

4. It appears from your reports that, for better or worse, we are increasingly dependent upon unreliable and unpredictable Buddhists. It occurs to me that the one man who has unexpended personal capital with the Buddhists is Cabot Lodge, and I wonder what you would think of having him come in Bundy's plane as an informal associate in the discussion, with the unannounced purpose of talking frankly and at length to Buddhist leaders as well as others to whom he has personal connections. I would not wish to do this unless it is not merely acceptable but helpful in your own personal judgment, and I would expect that this whole visit would be announced as a response to your suggestions, not a Washington initiative. I am absolutely determined to sustain with everyone your position as my top man in Saigon.

5. Indeed, my own preference would be for a visit from you to Washington, but I feel that such a trip at this time would lead to further troublesome speculation and would also involve your absence during an important period of readjustment.

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS - LOR~~

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1/27/65

6. I count on you to give me your completely candid comments on this message. I know the subtle but important differences that do exist between the Washington and Saigon view of things, and I do not want to send either Bundy or Lodge at this time if it would do more harm than good.

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# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classification

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy Saigon IMMEDIATE 1559

JAN 28 8 31 PM '65

Info:

FOR GENERAL TAYLOR FROM McGEORGE BUNDY

NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter

LOR

By inf, NARS, Date 9-2-80

1. The President sends thanks for your 2334 and so do I. I look forward very much to visiting you. President sees force of your argument that my visit should not come when there is no government to talk with. On the other hand, it looks to us as if General Khanh for better or for worse is the principal present power. We see no early prospect of solid and stable administration, no matter what happens in the next few days. In order to get on with our own thinking about next steps, it does seem important for me to come quickly, although delay of a day or two beyond proposed arrival February 2 is manageable if you think it wise. As for Cabot Lodge, we are inclined to accept your judgment.

2. It remains clear to us that however ~~irresponsible~~ irresponsible they may be, Buddhist leaders as well as Khanh himself

Text received from White House 1/28/65

The Acting Secretary

DOD - Secretary McNamara  
(in sub.)

FE - Mr. Unger (in draft)

S/S - Mr. Tueller

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Classification

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FORM 33-022

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*Classification*

are essential elements in our problem, and we now wonder whether there are any Americans of lower visibility that might be worth bringing along or even sending ahead for the purpose of quiet and informal soundings with them or with generals. We may have further suggestions on this and would value any you may have.

3. We do not have to decide departure time until 24 hours ahead, but would like your advice daily until decision made.

4. On the evacuation of dependents, the President's view is that it is not the timing of the decision but the decision itself that is important to him. He wants his people here and in Saigon to work out together the best way of clearing the decks, and is quite willing to have final decision on timing and method await my ~~xxxxxx~~ visit and talks with you.

5. A lot will turn on your first talk with Khanh. We think you should certainly seek from him a firm statement of determination to carry on with the war, and if, as we would expect, he takes this position, we think you should certainly respond that US is equally determined to go on supporting Vietnamese government and people. You could then make use of plan for DESOTO patrol next week as indication of our position. Object of meeting should be to establish firmness of

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both sides and create atmosphere that would begin to bury past problems and get us into position to talk hard with him on all subjects including evacuation when I come or earlier if you think wise. So far we have been holding off on public statement ~~on~~ our continued support, but we think we should make this just as soon as ~~GHK~~ Khanh has made right noise to you. If trend of talk is in this direction, you are authorized join with Khanh in joint statement at time of call if you desire.

6. My own current thought is that my party would include men like ~~McNamara~~ McNaughton, Gaud, Cooper, Colby, and Unger or Corcoran from Department. Central purpose of meeting would still be for me to have a conference with you and others as you think wise, but unless you object we would like to use the trip also for exchanges with country team members too. Statement on purpose of trip would be framed as you suggest.

7. Bob McNamara is lending us a plane. Let us know what we can bring you.

END.

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Authority 75C 7-25-80 letter  
By if NARS, Date 9-2-80

30a

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DRAFT  
FE:WPBundy:mik  
1/28/65

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE

For Ambassador Taylor from President.

NODIS -- LOR.

Thank you for your 2334, which raises important points.

As to Bundy visit, I agree that we should wait until shape of new government more clear, but hope this can be in next few days. Appointment of Oanh does not clarify situation much, and perhaps test will be whether Khanh now appoints new civil-military council ~~then~~ rapidly and explains its role. On the other hand, he may now delay on this and situation may simply rock along with Khanh clearly in de facto control and Oanh acting as his man. Khanh's placing AFC at top of his diagram clearly points to his being top man in any case and general interpretations will be increasingly in this direction both here and in Saigon. Therefore, situation may be as clear by Saturday as it is likely to be for some time.

We are of course holding off on any announcement but would still hope to make this Friday or Saturday and have Bundy leave Sunday.

As to Lodge, I certainly agree about not treating with the Buddhists at this moment. We would play down any such interpretation here, and had in mind that any contact he made in Saigon would be so mixed with contacts such as Archbishop, third country diplomats, and

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-2-

and other old friends that it would not be conspicuous. Indeed his contacts with Buddhists could be limited to regular hierarchy and avoid Tri Quang and Tam Chau direct contacts if you thought wise. Or perhaps your normal contacts with the latter could be used to create a situation in which they took the initiative and he was in position of consenting to receive them at their request.

With such safeguards Lodge's being in party would serve to show strong bi-partisan support for US determination to carry on, and would tend to offset anti-Americanism at least in lower level Buddhists and elsewhere. On other hand, I repeat that I do not want to do anything that would appear in Vietnamese eyes to dilute your own position. Because of problems raised by Senator Aiken and some other comment, I have today again made clear my full confidence in you, and it should be clear by the weekend that any alleged problems between Khanh and you have nothing to do with your attitude or ours as a government.

Finally, as to evacuation, we would still like your thinking on this, but I would not want to go ahead until you have had a chance to talk to Khanh and Oanh as you had previously done with Huong and Vien. Furthermore, I do not think this topic is wise to raise at your first meeting with Khanh or perhaps until situation has clarified a little more.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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15013

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO~~TOP SECRET~~

31a

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy  
~~XXXXXXXX~~ SAIGON IMMEDIATE 1556

JAN 29 6 42 PM '65

Info

NODIS - LOR

Ref: A. Saigon's 2341; B. JCS 044213 DTG 272333Z  
Jan; C. JCS 004244 DTG 262020Z Jan.

Reftels B and C cover actions which will contribute to general impression forceful action. In addition Barrel Roll and 34A ops continue and would expect that deployment additional forces, conditional on your judgment that it is necessary for this purpose, such as Hawk battalion or other forces discussed in Saigon's 2252 and Deptel 1535 will <sup>also</sup> give credence to US determination.

Agree (your 2347) with your disposition hold off informing Khanh of De Soto until suitable moment in connection with dependents evacuation; this could also apply to ref B. Unless you see objection we would plan conduct Desoto Patrol Feb 3 as indicated reftel C, in which event you could inform Khanh after the fact if you had not <sup>found it suitable to inform</sup> ~~assured~~ him earlier.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter JAN 29 1979

End

By if, NARS, Date 1-29-80

BALL

Drafted by:

FE:Unger:whh

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

Leonard Unger

Clearances:

Accreditation: 1/29  
White House - Mr. Cooper  
DOD - Mr. McNaughton

S/S

- Miss Moor

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W/D 15166

# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

~~TOP SECRET~~  
Classification

33

FOR OC/T USE ONLY

JAN 30 7 41 PM '65

Origin ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON 1570 IMMEDIATE

Info: FOR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR FROM McGEORGE BUNDY

NODIS  
LOR  
DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NSC 17r 11/10/76  
By ME, NARS, Date 4/24/78

1. Thanks for your 2348 confirming plans for visit. This message deals with preliminary thoughts for our talks.

2. I hope we can avoid extended organized briefings. I do not learn well that way, and in any case the point of this visit is to get a chance to exchange thoughts with you on hard fundamental future problems. The more time we can spend in very small groups on these central problems the better.

3. Nevertheless I think we need to compare our pictures of the existing situation and especially of two basic elements of it. First, how is the struggle against the Viet Cong going?  
(1)  
In this we need to look/at Viet Cong capabilities now and in  
(2)  
the future,/at present and future prospects for our pacification  
(3) : state efforts, and/at/LEMI of Vietnamese morale, civil and military.  
Washington is assuming that the course of this contest has been

OK/2

Text received from White House/vah Telegraphic transmission and White House McGeorge Bundy

Clearance 1/30/65

S/S - Miss McNaughton FE McNaughton  
DOD/ISA - Mr. McNaughton

FE - Under

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Classification

FORM DS-322

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generally unfavorable for more than a year and that in the absence of major changes it is likely to get worse. If in your view this assumption is wrong, we need to work hard on <sup>this</sup> specific question.

4. The other central aspect of current situation is the present and future prospect for "stable government." Present directives make such a government an essential prerequisite for important additional U.S. major action, but we now wonder whether this requirement is either realistic or necessary. If not, then we need to consider what actions are possible both within SVN and against the North while GVN lacks desired stability. We also need to consider what positive or negative effect additional U.S. action may have on this problem. Sample questions are, whether Phase II actions could be used to strengthen GVN and whether U.S. could organize its own efforts at all levels within SVN detached ~~from political problems of central government.~~

5. These questions lead away from estimate of present situation to discussion of U.S. courses of action, and in this area we see particular importance in the following:

(1) Review of our existing efforts within SVN. One recurrent question here is that of size and shape of U.S. <sup>presence,</sup> ~~presence~~ both military and civilian. We sense possible differences of judgment on wisdom of

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more Americans in different fields.

(2) Review of planning for reprisals and discussion of relation of reprisal planning to Phase II.

(3) Possible value in SVN of stronger and clearer U.S. policy statements.

(4) Shape of U.S. negotiating posture, going forward from analysis in your 2235.

6. In addition to these broad aspects of present situation and U.S. policy, we see urgent need to discuss immediate problems, of which the most important are:

(1) The ways and means of evacuation of dependents, to include both timing and means of preventing misunderstanding.

(2) The third country programs.

(3) Contingency planning against unpleasant political or military developments in the near future.

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Classification

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17



INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

W/d 2 <sup>35</sup>

~~SECRET~~

Action

CONTROL : 213  
RECEIVED : FEBRUARY 1, 6:40 AM  
FROM : SAIGON  
ACTION : SECSTATE 2365, IMMEDIATE  
DATE : FEBRUARY 1, 6 PM

Info

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

FOR MCGEORGE BUNDY

Authority State Letter 10-11-78

By ib, NARS, Date 3-23-79

NODIS - LOR

THIS CABLE PROPOSES AN OUTLINE PLAN FOR THREE DAYS OF HARD WORK HERE. I BELIEVE ALL YOUR DISCUSSION TOPICS ARE INCLUDED AND WE HAVE ADDED A LIMITED NUMBER OF OUR OWN. I HAVE INDICATED WHO I FEEL SHOULD BE PRESENT ON OUR SIDE LEAVING IT, OF COURSE, TO YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR REPRESENTATION. FOR EACH TOPIC, I SHALL HAVE A SPOKESMAN TO CONDUCT THE DISCUSSION AS A DIALOGUE RATHER THAN AS A BRIEFING.

I AM SURE THAT THE TIME SCHEDULE WILL HAVE TO BE ALTERED AS WE GO ALONG, PARTICULARLY AS IT AFFECTS MEETINGS WITH THE VIETNAMESE. IN OUR PRESENT UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW THE GOVERNMENT WILL TURN OUT, WE CANNOT BE SURE WHOM TO LINE UP FOR YOUR MEETINGS.

// DISCUSSION TOPIC I. PROGRESS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST VIET CONG.

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, KILLEN, DESILVA, MILLER ZORTHIAN

- A. VC CAPABILITIES, NOW AND FUTURE
- B. GVN CAPABILITIES, NOW AND FUTURE
- C. VN MORALE, CIVIL AND MILITARY
- D. EXISTING U.S./GVN EFFORTS
  - (1) MILITARY
  - (2) NON-MILITARY (TO INCLUDE STEPS FOR STRENGTHENING COUNTER-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES AMONG RURAL POPULATION)
- E. SIZE AND SHAPE OF U.S. PRESENCE
- F. VALUE OF STRONGER, CLEAR U.S. POLICY STATEMENTS

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-2- 2365 February 1, 6 PM

|| RAPPORTEUR - MILLER

|| DISCUSSION TOPIC II. STABILITY OF GOVERNMENT

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, KILLEN, MANFULL

- A. PROSPECTS
- B. BUDDHIST PROBLEM
- C. POSSIBLE DETACHMENT OF U.S. EFFORTS FROM POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
- D. POSSIBLE U.S. ACTIONS IF INSTABILITY CONTINUES

RAPPORTEUR - MANFULL

|| DISCUSSION TOPIC III. EXTENSION OF WAR BEYOND SVN.

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, ADAMS

- A. REPRISAL PLANNING AND RELATION TO PHASE II
- B. EFFECTIVENESS OF ATTACK OF INFILTRATION TRAGETS IN LAOS
- C. DESOTO PATROLS AND 34-A COVERT AIR ATTACKS
- D. A TRANSITION PHASE PRIOR TO PHASE II INVOLVING SHALLOW AIR PENETRATIO OF DRV
- E. WAYS AND MEANS FOR INITIATING PHASE II
- F. NECESSARY PRELIMINARIES TO PHASE II
  - POLITICAL
  - MILITARY

RAPPORTEUR - MAJOR GENERAL ADAMS, J-5

DISCUSSION TOPIC IV. OTHER POSSIBLE NEW COURSES OF ACTION

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, KILLEN, MILLER

- A. REFUSE TO SUPPORT A KHANH-CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT. INSIST ON THE BEST POSSIBLE LINE-UP.
- B. RECOGNIZE AND ADAPT U.S. AID TO DUALITY IN GOVERNMENT, DEALING DIRECTLY WITH ARMED FORCES ON PACIFICATION MATTERS.
- C. REDUCE ADVISORY EFFORT TO POLICY GUIDANCE. DISENGAGE AND LET GVN STAND ALONE

RAPPORTEUR - MILLER

DISCUSSION TOPIC V. EVACUATION OF DEPENDENTS

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, HERFURT

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-3- 2365 February 1, 6 PM

*Sent out*  
RAPPORTEUR -HERFURT

< DISCUSSION TOPIC VI. THIRD COUNTRY PROGRAMS

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, KILLEN, FLOTT

RAPPORTEUR - FLOTT

*Summary*  
DISCUSSION TOPIC VII. SHAPE OF U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITION

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON

DISCUSSION TOPIC VIII. CONTINGENCY PLANNING AGAINST UNPLEASANT  
POLITICAL OR MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS.

PRESENT: TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WESTMORELAND, MANFULL

- || A. INTRODUCTION OF A NEUTRALIST GOVERNMENT
- || B. ANARCHIC SITUATION RESULTING FROM PROGRESSIVE EROSION OF  
AUTHORITY AND MORALE.
- | C. MAJOR INCREASE OF COMMUNIST EFFORT IN SVN TO INCLUDE USE  
OF UNITS OF PAVN.
- | D. A MAJOR COMMUNIST INITIATIVE FOR A NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE  
A "NEGOTIATED SOLUTION".
- | E. A COUP MOUNTED BY CATHOLICS AND YOUNG COMBAT OFFICERS  
SHOULD IT APPEAR THAT KHANH IS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN POWER OR  
INSTALL AN ADMINISTRATION FULLY RESPONSIVE TO THE BUDDHISTS.

RAPPORTEUR - MANFULL

TIME SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

- 1. MEETING WITH TAYLOR AND JOHNSON AT AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE
- 2. MEETING WITH U.S. MISSION COUNCIL  
DISCUSSION TOPIC I.
- Evaluation* 3. DISCUSSION TOPIC II.
- 4. LUNCHEON AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE  
DISCUSSION TOPIC V.
- 5. VISIT MACV. DISCUSSION TOPIC III.
- 6. WORKING RECEPTION AT TAYLOR'S RESIDENCE  
U.S. MISSION  
DIPLOMATIC CORPS

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-4- 2365 February 1, 6 PM

FRIDAY

1. DISCUSSION TOPIC IV AND VIII.
2. CALLS ON SUU, OANH, KHANH, VIEN AT INTERVALS DURING DAY
3. LUNCHEON AT AMBASSADOR JOHNSON'S RESIDENCE. DISCUSSION TOPIC VI.
4. DISCUSSION TOPIC VII WITH JOHNSON
5. WORKING RECEPTION BY GENERAL WESTMORELAND  
U.S. MISSION  
SELECTED VIETNAMESE MILITARY LEADERS

SATURDAY

1. MEETINGS WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS.
2. WORKING RECEPTION BY AMBASSADOR JOHNSON  
U.S. MISSION  
VIETNAMESE POLITICAL LEADERS  
PROPOSED BILLETING FOR PRINCIPALS OF YOUR PARTY FOLLOW:  
BUNDY WITH TAYLOR  
UNGER WITH JOHNSON  
MCNAUGHTON WITH WESTMORELAND  
COOPER WITH DESILVA

WILL YOUR COLLEAGUES STAY ON YOUR SCHEDULE OR DO THEY WISH ANYTHING SPECIAL PREPARED? IF YOU COULD ADD A FOURTH DAY, WE COULD GET YOU INTO THE FIELD AND GIVE YOU SOME FEEL OF THE WORK IN THE PROVINCES. I DO NOT SEE HOW WE COULD SQUEEZE A FIELD TRIP INTO A THREE-DAY PROGRAM. TENNIS, GOLF AND SWIMMING WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE GAPS IN THE WORKING SCHEDULE.

PLEASE REACT IF THE FOREGOING SCHEDULE IS NOT TO YOUR SATISFACTION.

CFN I. A. VC B. GVN C. VN D. US/GVN (1) (2) E. F. II. A. B. C. D. III. SVN A. II B. C. 34-A D. II E. II F. II J-5 IV A.B. C. V. VI. VII. VIII. A. B. C. SVN PAVN D. E. COUP 1. 2. I 3. II 4. V 5. MACV III 6. I. IV VIII 2. 3. 4. VII 5. 1. 2.

TAYLOR

DDC/AD

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# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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W/H Bundy  
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Info

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EXCLUSIVE FOR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR FROM MCGEORGE BUNDY.

Your 2365 reviewed by President with visiting team. We recognize the hazards in striving for too much precision in the agenda and in over-organizing the visit. Thus, the following comments are suggestive and illustrative of our interests rather than hard and fast requirements.

In general, I am primarily interested in coming away with a sense of what kind of pressures you and your senior subordinates feel can be effectively applied to the VC and Hanoi. In this connection, I want to get your views without any constraints you may feel are imposed by existing policy or moods anywhere. For this reason, I am anxious that our discussions will be informal, uninhibited and as leisurely as we can realistically make them.

Specifically, with respect to Topic I, I wonder whether we can postpone "E" and "F" until we talk about Topic III. It may ~~even~~ well be, in fact, that we will want to save a definitive discussion of our future military and political policy and posture until we have disposed of most, if not all, of the other topics.

Drafted by:

Text from White House 2/1/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE - William P. Bundy

Clearances:

White House - Mr. Bundy

S/S - Miss *[Signature]* Moor

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Authority NLS 85-77

By *[Signature]*, NARS, Date 9-9-85

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Re Topic II, while the subject and the sub-topics all seem worthwhile, I hope that the discussion will be focussed on what to me seems a basic question: Do we in fact need a stable government in order to proceed aggressively and effectively with pacification? Or to put it another way, how can we step up our pacification effort/<sup>on</sup> the assumption that there will not be a stable government?

Re Topic III, I would like to pose for inclusion here the pre-emptive positioning of US and SEATO-member forces along the DMZ or elsewhere as appropriate as part of a Phase II action. (The Australians have expressed keen interest in this and we would like to get your views.) I am especially interested in your views re "III-F Political" and hope that we will leave ample time to discuss this.

As far as Topic IV is concerned, I wonder whether it is necessary to discuss this as a separate item. If a Khanh-controlled government has some staying power and is reasonably effective, I think we're probably stuck with it. If it does not, we run into some of the nasties in your Topic VIII and can face up to the problems at that point.

The President has expressed particular interest in Topic V (Evacuation) and in your 2369 on this subject. The President will come to a definite decision of this question upon our return.

Re Topic VI, I think that one or two of my colleagues can deal with many of the aspects and problems of third country aid prior to our discussion and consequently we probably will be able to dispose of the subject in very short order. In essence,

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*Classification*

I want to acquire a feel as to whether, all things considered, the overall benefits are worth the local costs, and whether and how much we should continue to solicit more help.

Re Topic VIII, two nitpicks: I wonder if we should put much effort in "D"; rather, I think we should give a bit of thought to the contingency of a fast deterioration involving a US withdrawal and/or a GVN-DRV negotiated settlement.

Aside from the specific points for discussion, a few other matters are worth noting:

(1) Included in our party will be General Goodpaster who is coming at the express wish of the President to ensure full military liaison on forward planning for any wider action.

(2) I am a bit worried about the three "receptions." Can we eliminate the one for the Diplomatic Corps? I do want to meet the GVN politicians and generals, however.

(3) I plan to take your advice and stay one extra day for the purpose of getting out into the country. I assume that Sunday will be the best day for this.

(4) I will make a bland arrival statement and have a press backgrounder on departure. (We will prepare and forward arrival statement here based on your suggestions.) Beyond this, we plan to keep our press contacts at minimum Zorthian permits. Announcement of the visit will be made by WH this afternoon.

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(5) Please discourage GVN from arranging "spontaneous" arrival and departure demonstrations.

(6) We have postponed De Soto operation until after Tet. It is now scheduled for 7 February.

(7) I have not worked out a definite order of march for my colleagues. We will have a better idea upon our arrival, but in any case will play it fairly loose. We may find it worthwhile for some of my group to have separate discussions with other members of the Mission.

GP-1.

End.

~~TOP SECRET~~

*Classification*

YOUR 2365 Reviewed by Visiting Team <sup>39a</sup>  
We recognize ~~the~~ hazards  
and by President. ~~the~~ recognize the

~~difficulties we have~~ in trying to

~~be too precise~~ striving for too much

(in the agenda and in)  
precision, and over-organizing ~~and~~ the

visit, ~~There are suggestions~~

Thus, the following comments are suggestive  
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you are and your senior

subordinates ~~that~~ feel can be effectively  
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this connection, I am ~~am~~ anxious to get

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By mg, NARS, Date 9-9-85

Your views without the constraints ~~and~~  
~~and~~ imposed by  
~~imposed~~ your way feel, existing policy

or moods in working time. ~~I hope, then,~~

For this reason, I am anxious

that our discussions will be informal,

uninhibited and as ~~for time~~ the

leisurely

~~as we can~~ as we can realistically

make them.

Specifically, with respect to Topic I,

I wonder whether we can ~~postpone~~ ~~save it~~

~~save it~~ "E" and "F" until

we talk about Topic III. It may

well be, in fact, that we will want

to save ~~it~~ <sup>definitive</sup> a discussion of our

future military and political policy and posture until we have disposed of most, if not all of the other topics.

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not be a stable government?

~~Dep~~ Re Topic III, I would like to pose for inclusion here (perhaps as part of III A, the pre-emptive positioning of US forces along the DMZ or elsewhere is appropriate. (The Australians have expressed keen interest in this and we would like to get your views.) I am especially interested in your views re "III F. Political" and hope that we will leave ample time to discuss this.



~~As~~ As far as Topic IV is  
concerned, I wonder whether it is  
necessary to discuss this as a  
separate ~~on~~ item. ~~Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100~~  
~~See subcommittee on~~  
~~On the subject of~~ <sup>It</sup> 2 Khan  
<sub>N</sub>  
controlled government has some staying  
power and is reasonably effective,  
I think we're probably stuck with  
it. If it does not, we run into  
some of the nasties in your Topic  
and can face up to the problem  
~~then~~ at that point

10

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in <sup>Topic</sup> ~~Item~~ V (Evacuation) and in your  
— on this subject. ~~We have not~~  
~~that we will not reach a definite~~  
~~decision on this question.~~ The president

will come to a definite decision on  
this question upon our return.

Re Topic VI, I think that  
~~Uncle and Good pastor (see below)~~ one or  
two of my colleagues can deal with  
many of the aspects <sup>and problems</sup> ~~of the~~ Third  
Country ~~problem~~ Aid prior to our  
discussion and consequently, we probably  
will be able to dispose of the  
subject in very short order. In  
essence, ~~what~~ I want ~~to~~ to give a  
feel as to whether, all things considered,  
<sup>overall</sup> the benefits are worth the local costs,  
and whether we should continue to  
solicit more help or quit while we are  
still ahead.

Re Topic VII, I doubt that we  
need to deal with this as a  
separate item, if indeed we ~~must~~  
need to treat it at all. Our basic  
objective will be to see how we can  
increase the ~~effectiveness~~ ~~and~~ power and  
effectiveness of the US effort in the area.  
This may turn out to be ~~at issue~~  
relevant to a possible negotiating posture,  
but, for the moment at least we want  
to concentrate on a "high posture."

Re Topic VIII, two nitpicks: I  
wonder if we should put much effort in on  
"D"; rather I think we should give a  
bit of thought to the contingency  
of a fast deterioration ~~which would~~  
~~require~~ involving a US withdrawal and/or  
a GVN-DRV negotiated settlement.

There ~~are~~ a few other <sup>matters</sup>  
~~which~~ would like to raise

Aside from the ~~Specific~~ Specific points for discussion, a few other matters are worth noting:

1) Included in our party will be General Goodpaster who is going at the express wish of the President.

2) ~~I~~ I am a bit worried about the three "receptions." Can we eliminate the one for the diplomatic corps? I do want to meet the army politicians and Generals, however. ~~But~~

3) I plan to take your advice and stay one extra day for the purpose of getting out into the country. ~~I think~~  
I assume that Sunday will be the best day for this.

4) I will make a brief arrival statement and have a press background on departure. ~~By~~ (we will suppose the arrival statement are based on your suggestions). Beyond this, we intend to keep the ~~pressing matter at a bare level~~.

our press contacts at a ~~very low level~~ minimum. <sup>this extra</sup> Announcement of the visit will be made by WH

7 INSERT → 5) We have postponed De Soto graduation until after Tet. It is now scheduled for 6 Feb (?).

INVERT

4) Please ~~do not~~ ~~dismiss~~  
discharge GVN from organizing =  
"spontaneous" arrival and departure  
demonstrations. ~~at least to the~~  
~~extent they can control~~ ~~I am~~  
~~relying on the friendly~~ ~~at least to~~  
~~the extent of marshalling~~ ~~their~~

6) I have not worked out a definite  
order of march for my colleagues. We will  
have a ~~rough~~ better idea ~~when~~ ~~at our~~  
~~upon~~ our arrival, but in any case will  
play it ~~quite~~ fairly loose. ~~Some of my~~  
~~group~~ <sup>we</sup> may find it worthwhile for some of  
my groups to have separate discussions with  
other members of the mission.

7) ~~We~~ will forward our specific  
~~plans~~



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Top Secret

February 4, 1965

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Director McCone sent a summary of your discussion with him yesterday to McGeorge Bundy. Bundy replied this morning as follows:

"We have pressed throughout the day to see whether any member of country team believes that we can prevent continued deterioration in the absence of a "reasonable effective and stable government." The country team appears to share the President's judgement that such a government is necessary on all counts. Getting it is something else again.

In particular, I think you should tell the President that a day of inquiry reveals no present prospect of a government acceptable to us which would also be acceptable to the leaders of the Buddhist institute. The current situation among non-communists forces gives all the appearances of a civil war within a civil war.

In this situation, the construction of a Government of national unity may well require sharp confrontation with Buddhists before, during, or after the construction job."

Bromley Smith

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Authority FRUS, Vol. II, #64 + WH Guidelines  
By 18, NARA, Date 4-4-74



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41 ✓

A GRADUATED REPRISAL PROGRAM TO STOP

DRV INTERVENTION IN SVN

A Suggested Scenario

CONCEPT: The general concept of the graduated reprisal program is that through a measured, controlled sequence of reprisals against the DRV, sufficient pressure can be brought to bear on the DRV to persuade it to stop its intervention in SVN. At the same time the program would help to create a climate in SVN conducive to a more effective government, greater popular support for the GVN, more rapid elimination of the VC, and the restoration of normal law and order in the countryside.

SEQUENCE: The following suggests a sequence of events without attempting to establish precise time intervals.

- Up down
1. Presidential approval and preparation of supporting rationale.
  2. In the meantime continue J-4 operations (except any J-4 air strikes in DRV) and TC/IR operations in the Laos corridor. Progressively criss up the Laos road network used for infiltration as a logical extension of Barrel Roll.
  3. Definitive discussions with GVN to inform GVN of graduated reprisal program, obtain firm arrangements for any joint actions, and to reach agreement on the framework of demands to be made on the DRV as well as on general negotiating procedures (Paragraph 10 below).
  4. Initiate discussions with Thai, RUC and other selected friendly governments.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6  
NLJ 01-147  
By Sj NARA, Date 9-24-01

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5. Quietly initiate necessary preparatory military moves that have thus far not been taken. (Preparatory military moves should have included or include stationing of East battalion and F-105's at Danang and Saigon, a HEB effort off Danang and the alerting of the 173rd ABN).

6. Initiate reprisal action against a target in the DRV with the first VC outrage in SVN which will creditably support the justice of US action and publicly announce US/USN reprisal policy.

7. Convey clearly through appropriate intermediaries or other means to Peking, Moscow, and Hanoi limited nature of our objectives and intentions but at the same time our determination to achieve our objectives.

8. Continue reprisal actions against DRV targets at times and places of our own choosing linking them only in general terms to the level of VC outrages in SVN, not necessarily in each case to specific VC acts.

9. Throughout the foregoing:

(a) limit US/USN publicity to the bare minimum necessary to balance Communist output. Confine US/USN reprisal actions only when necessary and then as being in accordance with established policy of reprisals.

(b) continue to convey to Peking and Moscow through appropriate means limited nature of our objectives etc. (paragraph 7 above)

10. In light of developments, disclose to selected allies, and possibly USSR, US/USN terms for cessation of attacks as follows: (It will be important to assure that one of these channels undertakes accurately and fully to communicate

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(these terms to Hanoi and Peking and Moscow).

**A. Demands:**

1. DRV return to strict observance of 1954 Accords with respect SVN and the 1962 agreement with respect to Laos -- that is, stop infiltration and bring about a cessation of VC armed insurgency. (With respect to Laos strictly observe the 1962 Accords with respect to Laos, including the withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces and personnel from Laos and recognize that the freedom of movement granted the ICC in Laos under those accords is not subject to veto or interference by any of the parties in Laos.)

**B. In return:**

1. U. S. will return to 1954 Accords with respect to military personnel in GVN and GVN would be willing to enter into trade talks looking toward normalization of economic relations between DRV and GVN.
2. Subject to faithful compliance by DRV with 1954 Accords, U.S. and GVN would give assurances that they would not use force or support the use of force by any other party to upset the Accords with respect to the DRV.
3. Within the framework of the 1954 Accords, the GVN would permit VC desiring to do so to return to the DRV without their arms or would grant amnesty to those peacefully laying down their arms and desiring to remain in SVN.

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6. If and when Hanoi indicates its acceptance of foregoing conditions, careful consideration must be given to immediate subsequent procedures which will avoid dangers of: (a) becoming involved in a cease fire vis-a-vis the DRV and/or the VC accompanied by string-out negotiations; (b) making conditions so stringent as to be unworkable from practical point of view. Probably best procedure would be to have the GVN and DRV meet in the DMZ at the military level under ICC auspices with US observers to reach agreement on mechanics of carrying out understanding while action against the VC and DRV continues, at least in principle. RMC would have to be associated with these negotiations at some point.

11. US/GVN reprisals to continue throughout the negotiating in order to prevent DRV stalling and achieving a de facto cease fire and in order to establish that the V. C. have not merely gone underground.

TOL:MMH:full:ek 2/6/65.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 7, 1965

43

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Following meetings with the National Security Council, I have directed the orderly withdrawal of American dependents from South Vietnam.

It has become clear that Hanoi has undertaken a more aggressive course of action against both South Vietnamese and American installations, and against Americans who are in South Vietnam assisting the people of that country to defend their freedom. We have no choice now but to clear the decks and make absolutely clear our continued determination to back South Vietnam in its fight to maintain its independence.

In addition to this action, I have ordered the deployment to South Vietnam of a HAWK air defense battalion. Other reinforcements, in units and individuals may follow.

# # #

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~~TOP SECRET~~

February 7, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Re: The Situation in Vietnam

This memorandum attempts to describe the situation, the stakes and the measures which I think should now be taken.

I. Summary Conclusions

The situation in Vietnam is deteriorating, and without new U. S. action defeat appears inevitable -- probably not in a matter of weeks or perhaps even months, but within the next year or so. There is still time to turn it around, but not much.

The stakes in Vietnam are extremely high. The American investment is very large, and American responsibility is a fact of life which is palpable in the atmosphere of Asia, and even elsewhere. The international prestige of the United States, and a substantial part of our influence, are directly at risk in Vietnam. There is no way of unloading the burden on the Vietnamese themselves, and there is no way of negotiating ourselves out of Vietnam which offers any serious promise at present. It is possible that at some future time a neutral non-Communist force may emerge, perhaps under Buddhist leadership, but no such force currently exists, and any negotiated U. S. withdrawal today would mean surrender on the installment plan.

The policy of graduated and continuing reprisal outlined in Annex A is the most promising course available, in my judgment. That judgment is shared by all who accompanied me from Washington, and I think by all members of the country team.

The events of the last twenty-four hours have produced a practicable point of departure for this policy of reprisal, and for the removal of U. S. dependents. They may also have catalyzed the formation of a new Vietnamese government. If so, the situation may be at a turning point.

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Authority NSC 1/r 11/10/76  
By MIT NADA Date 4/24/78

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- 2 -

There is much that can and should be done to support and to supplement our present effort, while adding sustained reprisals. But I want to stress one important general conclusion which again is shared by all members of my party: the U. S. mission is composed of outstanding men, and U. S. policy within Vietnam is mainly right and well directed. None of the special solutions or criticisms put forward with zeal by individual reformers in government or in the press is of major importance, and many of them are flatly wrong. No man is perfect, and not every tactical step of recent months has been perfectly chosen, but when you described the Americans in Vietnam as your first team, you were right.

## II. The General Situation

For the last year -- and perhaps for longer -- the overall situation in Vietnam has been deteriorating. The Communists have been gaining and the anti-Communist forces have been losing. As a result there is now great uncertainty among Vietnamese as well as Americans as to whether Communist victory can be prevented. There is nervousness about the determination of the U. S. Government. There is recrimination and fear among Vietnamese political leaders. There is an appearance of wariness among some military leaders. There is a worrisome lassitude among the Vietnamese generally. There is a distressing absence of positive commitment to any serious social or political purpose. Outside observers are ready to write the patient off. All of this tends to bring latent anti-Americanism dangerously near to the surface.

To be an American in Saigon today is to have a gnawing feeling that time is against us. Junior officers in all services are able, zealous and effective within the limits of their means. Their morale is sustained by the fact that they know that they are doing their jobs well and that they will not have to accept the responsibility for defeat. But near the top, where responsibility is heavy and accountability real, one can sense the inner doubts of men whose outward behavior remains determined.

The situation is not all black. The overall military effectiveness of the Vietnamese armed forces in open combat continues to grow. The month of January was one of outstanding and genuine success in offensive military action, showing the highest gross count of Viet Cong dead of any month of the war, and a very high ratio also of enemy to friendly losses. We

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believe that General Westmoreland is right (and General Alsop wrong) when he says that the Viet Cong do not now plan to expose themselves to large-scale military engagements in which their losses on the average would be high and their gains low. (The operation at Binh Gia is analyzed as a special case, representing the taking of a friendly Catholic village as bait rather than a decision to force pitched battle -- more such cases are expected and the particular military problem posed is difficult.)

Moreover, the Vietnamese people, although war weary, are also remarkably tough and resilient, and they do not find the prospect of Communist domination attractive. Their readiness to quit is much lower than the discouraging events of recent months might lead one to expect. It is probable that most Vietnamese think American withdrawal is more likely than an early switch to neutralism or surrender by major elements within Vietnam.

Nevertheless the social and political fabric is stretched thin, and extremely unpleasant surprises are increasingly possible -- both political and military.

And it remains a stubborn fact that the percentage of the countryside which is dominated or threatened by the Viet Cong continues to grow. Even in areas which are "cleared," the follow-on pacification is stalled because of widespread belief that the Viet Cong are going to win in the long run. The areas which can be regarded as truly cleared and pacified and safe are few and shrinking. (An important exception to this is the area of Saigon and its immediate surroundings. The Hop Tac program of pacification in this area has not been an unqualified success, but it has not been a failure, and it has certainly prevented any strangling siege of Saigon. We did not have a chance to form an independent judgment on Hop Tac, but we did conclude that whatever its precise measure of success, it is of great importance that this operation be pursued with full vigor. That is the current policy of the mission.)

### III. The Political Situation

Next only to the overall state of the struggle against the Viet Cong, the shape and structure of the government is the most important element of the Saigon situation. We made it our particular business to examine the question whether and to what degree a stable government is a necessity for the successful prosecution of our policy in Vietnam. We reached a mixed conclusion.

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For immediate purposes -- and especially for the initiation of reprisal policy, we believe that the government need be no stronger than it is today with General Khanh as the focus of raw power while a weak caretaker government goes through the motions. Such a government can execute military decisions and it can give formal political support to joint US/GVN policy. That is about all it can do.

In the longer run, it is necessary that a government be established which will in one way or another be able to maintain its political authority against all challenges over a longer time than the governments of the last year and a half.

The composition and direction of such a government is a most difficult problem, and we do not wholly agree with the mission in our estimate of its nature.

The mood of the mission with respect to the prospect of obtaining such a government is one of pessimism and frustration. This is only natural in terms of the events of the past many weeks. Two dominant themes predominate: a government headed by Khanh will be difficult if not impossible to deal with and, in any case, would be short lived; the Buddhists (or, more specifically, the few politically activist Bonzes) must be confronted and faced down (by military means if necessary) lest they maintain their power to unseat any government that does not bow to their every demand. We tend to differ with the mission on both counts.

Specifically, we believe that General Khanh, with all his faults, is by long odds the outstanding military man currently in sight -- and the most impressive personality generally. We do not share the conclusion of Ambassador Taylor that he must somehow be removed from the military and political scene.

There are strong reasons for the Ambassador's total lack of confidence in Khanh. At least twice Khanh has acted in ways that directly spoiled Ambassador Taylor's high hopes for December. When he abolished the High National Council he undercut the prospect of the stable government needed for Phase II action against the North. In January he overthrew Huong just when the latter, in the Embassy's view, was about to succeed in putting the bonzes in their place.

Khanh is not an easy man to deal with. It is clear that he takes a highly tactical view of truth, although General Westmoreland asserts that Khanh has never deceived him. He is intensely ambitious and intent above all else on maintaining and advancing his own power. He gravely lacks the

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confidence of many of his colleagues -- military and civilian -- and he seems not to be personally popular with the public. He is correctly assessed as tricky. He remains able, energetic, perceptive and resilient, and in our judgment he will pursue the fight against the Communists as long as he can count on U. S. help. (If he should conclude that the U. S. was violently against him personally, he might well seek a way to power by some anti-American path, a path which would lead to disaster for both Vietnam and the United States.)

But our principal reason for opposing any sharp break with Khanh is that we see no one else in sight with anything like his ability to combine military authority with some sense of politics.

We also differ from the Embassy in our estimate of the Buddhist leaders. The dominant Embassy view is that "the Buddhists" are really just a handful of irresponsible and designing clerics and that they must be curbed by firmness. We agree that they may well have to be limited at some point, especially in their use of mobs, but we also think they must be offered some accommodation.

We feel that the operative concept should be incorporated into the affairs of government rather than confrontation. This is easier said than done, because the Buddhists have many of the bad habits of men who have prospered by irresponsible opposition. Still there are signs that both Buddhist laymen and monks are now taking a more positive stance. We feel that the mission might do more in attempting to direct or channel the Buddhists into a more useful and positive role -- and active rather than a passive approach. The Buddhists now play a key role in the balance of political forces, so that something more than "confrontation" must be achieved if there is to be any active government at all.

Having registered these two immediate and important differences of emphasis, we should add that in our judgment the mission has acted at about the right level of general involvement in the problem of Vietnamese government-making. American advice is sought by all elements, and all try to bend it to their own ends. The mission attempts to keep before all elements the importance of stable government, and it quietly presses the value of those who are known to be good, solid, able ministerial timber.

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In a situation in which confidence is low and uncertainty great, strongly ambitious forces like Khanh and the Buddhists might react very vigorously against an overt American attempt to form or actively support a government against their liking. Anti-Americanism is a theme that is potentially explosive, and therefore tempting to those who feel that we are blocking their ambitions. This is one lesson, to us, of the outburst in Hue last month.

On the other hand, no power whose stake is as great and whose presence as clear as those of the United States in Vietnam can afford to stand aside entirely, and such a passive posture would not be understood or approved by the Vietnamese themselves.

It is important, therefore, that the mission maintain a constant and active concern with the politics of government-making. This it is doing. While it is very difficult to second-guess this effort, we do recommend a telegram of guidance which might take into account the marginal differences from mission thinking which are suggested above. In the light of further discussion, a message of this sort will be drafted for consideration.

#### IV. Strengthening the Pacification Program

If we suppose that new hopes are raised -- at least temporarily -- by a reprisal program, and if we suppose further that a government somewhat better than the bare minimum is established, the most urgent order of business will then be the improvement and broadening of the pacification program, especially in its non-military elements.

The mission fully concurs in the importance of this effort. We believe, however, that consideration should be given to important modifications in its organization for this purpose. In particular we believe that there should be intensive effort to strengthen our program at the margin between military advice and economic development -- in the area which implies civil government for the soldiers and police action for the aid mission. These efforts, important as they are understood to be, are somehow at the edge of vision for both parties. General Westmoreland and his people inevitably think first of military programs, though they have been imaginative and understanding about the importance of other aspects. Mr. Killen and the USOM people are centrally concerned with problems of aid and of economic improvement, although they talk with conviction and energy about their increasing police effort. It remains a fact that its own

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organization for helping to provide real security for an area which has been "cleared" in crude military terms is unfinished business for the U. S. mission. What is true of our side is doubly true of the Vietnamese.

We do not offer a definite solution to this problem. We are inclined to suggest, however, that one important and unemployed asset is the Special Forces of the Defense Department. Because of the predominant role of the U. S. military, and because of the generous spirit and broad mind of General Westmoreland himself, we are inclined to believe that the easiest growing edge for this work may be through the use of some of these versatile and flexible units.

We would think it important, however, that an effort of this kind be coordinated at a high level between the Defense Department and AID, and we believe that a joint mission which would include either Director Bell or Mr. Gaud from AID is urgently needed for the purpose of building this missing link into our program.

#### V. A Sense of Positive Hope

Vietnamese talk is full of the need for "revolution." Vietnamese practice is empty of action to match the talk -- so much so that the word "revolution" sometimes seems to have no real meaning. Yet in fact there is plainly a deep and strong yearning among the young and the unprivileged for a new and better social order. This is what the Buddhist leaders are groping toward; this is what the students and young Turk generals are seeking. This yearning does not find an adequate response in American policy as Vietnamese see it. This is one cause of latent anti-American feeling. We only perceived this problem toward the end of our visit. We think it needs urgent further attention. We make no present recommendations. We do believe that over the long pull our military and political firmness must be matched by our political and economic support for the hopes that are embodied to Vietnamese in the word "revolution."

#### VI. The Basic U. S. Commitment

The prospect in Vietnam is grim. The energy and persistence of the Viet Cong are astonishing. They can appear anywhere -- and at almost any time. They have accepted extraordinary losses and they come back for

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for more. They show skill in their sneak attacks and ferocity when cornered. Yet the weary country does not want them to win.

There are a host of things the Vietnamese need to do better and areas in which we need to help them. The place where we can help most is in the clarity and firmness of our own commitment to what is in fact as well as in rhetoric a common cause. There is one grave weakness in our posture in Vietnam which is within our own power to fix -- and that is a widespread belief that we do not have the will and force and patience and determination to take the necessary action and stay the course.

This is the overriding reason for our present recommendation of a policy of sustained reprisal. Once such a policy is put in force, we shall be able to speak in Vietnam on many topics and in many ways, with growing force and effectiveness.

One final word. At its very best the struggle in Vietnam will be long. It seems to us important that this fundamental fact be made clear and our understanding of it be made clear to our own people and to the people of Vietnam. Too often in the past we have conveyed the impression that we expect an early solution when those who live with this war know that no early solution is possible. It is our own belief that the people of the United States have the necessary will to accept and to execute a policy that rests upon the reality that there is no short cut to success in South Vietnam.

McG. B.

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## ANNEX A

### A POLICY OF SUSTAINED REPRISAL

#### I. Introductory

We believe that the best available way of increasing our chance of success in Vietnam is the development and execution of a policy of sustained reprisal against North Vietnam -- a policy in which air and naval action against the North is justified by and related to the whole Viet Cong campaign of violence and terror in the South.

While we believe that the risks of such a policy are acceptable, we emphasize that its costs are real. It implies significant U.S. air losses even if no full air war is joined, and it seems likely that it would eventually require an extensive and costly effort against the whole air defense system of North Vietnam. U.S. casualties would be higher -- and more visible to American feelings -- than those sustained in the struggle in South Vietnam.

Yet measured against the costs of defeat in Vietnam, this program seems cheap. And even if it fails to turn the tide -- as it may -- the value of the effort seems to us to exceed its cost.

#### II. Outline of the Policy

1. In partnership with the Government of Vietnam, we should develop and exercise the option to retaliate against any VC act of violence to persons or property.

2. In practice, we may wish at the outset to relate our reprisals to those acts of relatively high visibility such as the Pleiku incident. Later, we might retaliate against the assassination of a province chief, but not necessarily the murder of a hamlet official; we might retaliate against a grenade thrown into a crowded cafe in Saigon, but not necessarily to a shot fired into a small shop in the countryside.

3. Once a program of reprisals is clearly underway, it should not be necessary to connect each specific act against North Vietnam to a particular outrage in the South. It should be possible, for example, to publish weekly lists of outrages in the South and to have it clearly understood that these outrages are the cause of such action against the North as may be occurring in the current period. Such a more generalized pattern of reprisal would remove much of the difficulty involved in finding precisely matching targets in response to specific atrocities. Even in such a more general pattern, however, it would be important to insure that the general level of reprisal action remained in close correspondence with the level of outrages in the South. We must keep it clear at every stage both to Hanoi and to the world,

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that our reprisals will be reduced or stopped when outrages in the South are reduced or stopped -- and that we are not attempting to destroy or conquer North Vietnam.

4. In the early stages of such a course, we should take the appropriate occasion to make clear our firm intent to undertake reprisals on any further acts, major or minor, that appear to us and the SVN as indicating Hanoi's support. We would announce that our two governments have been patient and forbearing in the hope that Hanoi would come to its senses without the necessity of our having to take further action; but the outrages continue and now we must react against those who are responsible; we will not provoke; we will not use our force indiscriminately; but we can no longer sit by in the face of repeated acts of terror and violence for which the DRV is responsible.

5. Having once made this announcement, we should execute our reprisal policy with as low a level of public noise as possible. It is to our interest that our acts should be seen -- but we do not wish to boast about them in ways that make it hard for Hanoi to shift its ground. We should instead direct maximum attention to the continuing acts of violence which are the cause of our continuing reprisals.

6. This reprisal policy should begin at a low level. Its level of force and pressure should be increased only gradually -- and as indicated above it should be decreased if VC terror visibly decreases. The object would not be to "win" an air war against Hanoi, but rather to influence the course of the struggle in the South.

7. At the same time it should be recognized that in order to maintain the power of reprisal without risk of excessive loss, an "air war" may in fact be necessary. We should therefore be ready to develop a separate justification for energetic flak suppression and if necessary for the destruction of Communist air power. The essence of such an explanation should be that these actions are intended solely to insure the effectiveness of a policy of reprisal, and in no sense represent any intent to wage offensive war against the North. These distinctions should not be difficult to develop.

8. It remains quite possible, however, that this reprisal policy would get us quickly into the level of military activity contemplated in the so-called Phase II of our December planning. It may even get us beyond this level with both Hanoi and Peking, if there is Communist counter-action. We and the SVN should also be prepared for a spurt of VC terrorism, especially in urban areas, that would dwarf anything yet experienced. These are the risks of any action. They should be carefully reviewed -- but we believe them to be acceptable.

9. We are convinced that the political values of reprisal require a continuous operation. Episodic responses geared on a one-for-one basis to "spectacular" outrages would lack the persuasive force of sustained pressure. More important still, they would leave it open to the Communists



to avoid reprisals entirely by giving up only a small element of their own program. The Gulf of Tonkin affair produced a sharp upturn in morale in South Vietnam. When it remained an isolated episode, however, there was a severe relapse. It is the great merit of the proposed scheme that to stop it the Communists would have to stop enough of their activity in the South to permit the probable success of a determined pacification effort.

### III. Expected Effect of Sustained Reprisal Policy

1. We emphasize that our primary target in advocating a reprisal policy is the improvement of the situation in South Vietnam. Action against the North is usually urged as a means of affecting the will of Hanoi to direct and support the VC. We consider this an important but longer-range purpose. The immediate and critical targets are in the South -- in the minds of the South Vietnamese and in the minds of the Viet Cong cadres.

2. Predictions of the effect of any given course of action upon the states of mind of people are difficult. It seems very clear that if the United States and the Government of Vietnam join in a policy of reprisal, there will be a sharp immediate increase in optimism in the South, among nearly all articulate groups. The Mission believes -- and our own conversations confirm -- that in all sectors of Vietnamese opinion there is a strong belief that the United States could do much more if it would, and that they are suspicious of our failure to use more of our obviously enormous power. At least in the short run, the reaction to reprisal policy would be very favorable.

3. This favorable reaction should offer opportunity for increased American influence in pressing for a more effective government -- at least in the short run. Joint reprisals would imply military planning in which the American role would necessarily be controlling, and this new relation should add to our bargaining power in other military efforts -- and conceivably on a wider plane as well if a more stable government is formed. We have the whip hand in reprisals as we do not in other fields.

4. The Vietnamese increase in hope could well increase the readiness of Vietnamese factions themselves to join together in forming a more effective government.

5. We think it plausible that effective and sustained reprisals, even in a low key, would have a substantial depressing effect upon the morale of Viet Cong cadres in South Vietnam. This is the strong opinion of CIA Saigon. It is based upon reliable reports of the initial Viet Cong reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin episode, and also upon the solid general assessment that the determination of Hanoi and the apparent timidity of the mighty United States are both major items in Viet Cong confidence.

6. The long-run effect of reprisals in the South is far less clear. It may be that like other stimulants, the value of this one would decline over time. Indeed the risk of this result is large enough so that we our-

selves believe that a very major effort all along the line should be made in South Vietnam to take full advantage of the immediate stimulus of reprisal policy in its early stages. Our object should be to use this new policy to effect a visible upward turn in pacification, in governmental effectiveness, in operations against the Viet Cong, and in the whole U.S./GVN relationship. It is changes in these areas that can have enduring long-term effects.

7. While emphasizing the importance of reprisals in the South, we do not exclude the impact on Hanoi. We believe, indeed, that it is of great importance that the level of reprisal be adjusted rapidly and visibly to both upward and downward shifts in the level of Viet Cong offenses. We want to keep before Hanoi the carrot of our desisting as well as the stick of continued pressure. We also need to conduct the application of the force so that there is always a prospect of worse to come.

8. We cannot assert that a policy of sustained reprisal will succeed in changing the course of the contest in Vietnam. It may fail, and we cannot estimate the odds of success with any accuracy -- they may be somewhere between 25% and 75%. What we can say is that even if it fails, the policy will be worth it. At a minimum it will damp down the charge that we did not do all that we could have done, and this charge will be important in many countries, including our own. Beyond that, a reprisal policy -- to the extent that it demonstrates U.S. willingness to employ this new norm in counter-insurgency -- will set a higher price for the future upon all adventures of guerrilla warfare, and it should therefore somewhat increase our ability to deter such adventures. We must recognize, however, that that ability will be gravely weakened if there is failure for any reason in Vietnam.

#### IV. Present Action Recommendations

1. This general recommendation was developed in intensive discussions in the days just before the attacks on Pleiku. These attacks and our reaction to them have created an ideal opportunity for the prompt development and execution of sustained reprisals. Conversely, if no such policy is now developed, we face the grave danger that Pleiku, like the Gulf of Tonkin, may be a short-run stimulant and a long-term depressant. We therefore recommend that the necessary preparations be made for continuing reprisals. The major necessary steps to be taken appear to us to be the following:

- (1) We should complete the evacuation of dependents.
- (2) We should quietly start the necessary westward deployments of back-up contingency forces.
- (3) We should develop and refine a running catalogue of Viet Cong offenses which can be published regularly and related clearly to our own reprisals. Such a catalogue should perhaps build on the foundation of an Initial White Paper.

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(4) We should initiate joint planning with the GVN on both the civil and military level. Specifically, we should give a clear and strong signal to those now forming a government that we will be ready for this policy when they are.

(5) We should develop the necessary public and diplomatic statements to accompany the initiation and continuation of this program.

(6) We should insure that a reprisal program is matched by renewed public commitment to our family of programs in the South, so that the central importance of the southern struggle may never be neglected.

(7) We should plan quiet diplomatic communication of the precise meaning of what we are and are not doing, to Hanoi, to Peking and to Moscow.

(8) We should be prepared to defend and to justify this new policy by concentrating attention in every forum upon its cause -- the aggression in the South.

(9) We should accept discussion on these terms in any forum, but we should not now accept the idea of negotiations of any sort except on the basis of a stand down of Viet Cong violence. A program of sustained reprisal, with its direct link to Hanoi's continuing aggressive actions in the South, will not involve us in nearly the level of international recrimination which would be precipitated by a go-north program which was not so connected. For this reason the international pressures for negotiation should be quite manageable.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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Action

Info

CONTROL: 5685  
RECD: FEBRUARY 7 1965, 3:13 A.M.  
FROM: SAIGON  
  
ACTION: SECSTATE 2420 PRIORITY  
DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 1 P.M.

~~TOP SECRET~~

TO MC NAMARA AND VANCE FROM MC NAUGHTON

ASSURE PERSONAL DELIVERY PRIOR TO 0800 NSC MEETING

NO DISTRIBUTION

EYES ONLY

1. FOLLOWING ARE THE POINTS I WANTED TO MAKE ON TELEPHONE BUT COULD NOT BECAUSE NO SECURE LINE AVAILABLE. THEY RELATE TO THEORY OF A GRADUATED REPRISAL PROGRAM WHICH WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH HERE BY BUNDY GROUP WITH TAYLOR, JOHNSON AND WESTMORELAND. THIS MESSAGE IS NOT INTENDED AS OFFICIAL

TRANSMISSION OF ANY CONSENSUS, BUT IS INTENDED TO FLAG A FEW POINTS WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTERIZATION, BY STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS, OF THE REPRISAL ACTION NOW IN PROCESS, AND OF OUR FUTURE INTENTIONS.

2. THE CONCEPT WOULD BE THAT OF A GRADUATED REPRISAL PROGRAM WHICH, THROUGH A MEASURED, CONTROLLED SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS AGAINST THE DRV, BROUGHT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE DRV TO PERSUADE IT TO STOP ITS INTERVENTION IN THE SOUTH. A ANALYSIS, RATIONALE AND ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO FOR THIS PROGRAM HAD BEEN PUT IN DRAFT HERE YESTERDAY, BEFORE THE PLEIKU INCIDENT.

3. OUR THOUGHT NOW

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Authority State 7/9/76, OSD 8/18/76

By MDE, NARS, Date 4/21/78



~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- 2420, FEBRUARY 7, 5 P.M., FROM SAIGON

3. OUR THOUGHT NOW IS THAT THE FIRST ACTION (TODAY'S) WOULD BE A CLEAR CUT REPRISAL FOR A SPECIFIC ATROCITY, BUT THAT HEREAFTER REPRISAL ACTIONS WOULD BECOME LESS AND LESS RELATED TO SPECIFIC VC SPECTACULARS AND MORE AND MORE RELATED TO A CATALOGUE OF VC OUTRAGES IN SVN SAY IN A PRIOR SEVERAL-DAY PERIOD OF TIME. PRESUMABLY OUTRAGES SUCH AS ASSASSINATIONS, RAILROAD DESTRUCTION, AND SO ON WOULD, AS THE REPRISAL PROGRAM PROGRESS, NO LONGER BE PRIVILEGED VC ACTS. THEY WOULD BE SCOOPED UP IN THE GENERAL STATEMENT OF PROVOCATIONS WHICH JUSTIFIED THE THEN-CURRENT MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE DRV. ALL ALONG, CARE WOULD BE TAKEN TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO REPEAT NO OBJECTIVE TO DESTROY OR CONQUER THE DRV.
4. FOR THE PLAN TO WORK BEST, THE GVN SHOULD PARTICIPATE PROMINENTLY IN THE REPRISALS AND IN THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS. THERE IS A FEELING THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN EACH CASE SHOULD BE MADE HERE IN SAIGON.
5. NOT MUCH OF A GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED FOR THE GVN TO PLAY ITS ROLE. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, INEFFECTUAL AS IT IS, IS ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A PROGRAM OF GRADUATED REPRISALS. IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO CARRY OUT THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, BUT THAT IS ANOTHER QUESTION.
6. THE REPRISAL PROGRAM THUS GIVES SOMETHING LIKE A PHASE II, BUT PROVIDES A MUCH BETTER INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNAL-US POSTURE. IT ALSO REDUCES PRESSURE FOR NEGOTIATIONS. FEELING IS THAT US SHOULD BE VERY MUCH IN BACKGROUND WHEN AND IF NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN TO MAKE SENSE -- THAT, IF THERE IS AN ADEQUATE GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM AT THAT TIME, ANY TALKS SHOULD BE BETWEEN GVN AND DRV, PROBABLY AT A MILITARY LEVEL.
7. RELATED TO ALL THIS IS THE JUDGMENT THAT THE FABRIC OF SVN IS PULLING APART, THAT THINGS ARE GOING BADLY IN THE FIELD AS WELL AS IN SAIGON, AND JUST ABOUT ONLY QUESTION IS HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE FOR THE SITUATION TO DISINTEGRATE. THE JUDGMENT IS THAT A REGULAR PROGRAM WILL PROBABLY DAMPEN VC ACTIVITIES IN DUE COURSE AND WILL PROBABLY INSPIRE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORTS. THE BELIEF IS WIDESPREAD AMONG THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE THAT THE US IS ON THE VERGE OF BUGGING OUT.
8. RELEVANCE OF ALL

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~~TOP SECRET~~

-3- 2420, FEBRUARY 7, 5 P.M., FROM SAIGON

8. RELEVANCE OF ALL OF THE ABOVE IS THAT STATEMENTS MADE SUNDAY AND MONDAY WILL DIFFER DEPENDING ON WHETHER PLEIKU REPRISAL IS THOUGHT OF AS A SINGLE-SHOT AFFAIR LIKE GULF OF TONKIN OR WHETHER IT IS THROUGH OF AS THE START OF REPRISAL-ORIENTED SQUEEZE. BUNDY, WHO HAS NOT SEEN THIS MESSAGE, THOUGHT YOU WOULD WANT TO HAVE THIS INFORMAL THINKING IN HAND SUNDAY, SINCE WE ARE NOT DUE TO ARRIVE ANDREWS UNTIL LATE SUNDAY NIGHT. HE WILL REPORT HIS VIEWS ON ARRIVAL. YOU CAN EXPECT A MESSAGE FROM TAYLOR ON THIS SUBJECT LATER.

TAYLOR

~~TOP SECRET~~

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03882

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO~~SECRET~~

49

5  
Origin  
SS  
Info

ACTION: CIRCULAR 1440

Feb 7 7 23 AM '65

EXDIS

Due to weather, only one of four installations mentioned first sentence reftel was hit. This strike was by U.S. aircraft only.

You may now proceed with carrying out Circular 1438 instructions but do not mention number of missions or fact that any missions called off. Also do not mention any GVN participation. First para Circular 1438 now reads: "In reprisal for VC attacks on South Vietnam air bases and US barracks, air strikes <sup>have</sup> ~~had~~ been ordered against ~~the~~ infiltration -related military installations in <sup>southern</sup> ~~northern~~ part of NVN." Saigon will ~~release~~ make joint announcement at 0630 EST.

END

Send to:	Amembassy	SAIGON	FLASH
	"	WELLINGTON	FLASH
	"	LONDON	FLASH
	"	CANBERRA	FLASH
	"	PARIS	FLASH
	"	MOSCOW	FLASH
	"	OTTAWA	FLASH
	"	NEW DELHI	FLASH
	"	MANILA	FLASH

Drafted by:

FE:Marshall Green:mlc

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE:Marshall Green

Clearances:

2/7/65

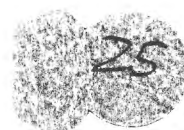
S/S-C:RGMays:pgm

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

NSC 14 12/5/75  
NARS, Date 4/21/78~~SECRET~~REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS  
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"FBI  
S-63

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# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

0300

51

44-42

Diplomatic

Origin

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USIA

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AID

ACTION: CIRCULAR - All/Posts - Except as indicated below  
1442 IMMEDIATE

FEB 7 10 12 AM '65

INFO: CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

Immediate preceding Cirtel carries text of White House announcement, just released, which, unless you perceive objection, you should bring soonest to attention highest available officials. Say that we hoped to inform them earlier of our actions and background of measures taken but that operational urgencies made this impossible.

The following are basic points which you should, as appropriate, stress in discussion of message:

- Attacks along with other intelligence indicated clear Hanoi interest to step up attacks on South Vietnamese and U. S. installations.
- Attacks related directly to continuing and lately increased infiltration from North Viet-Nam.
- For these reasons GVN requested and we agreed to attack certain military targets directly associated with infiltration.
- Stress that we seek no wider war but that this lies with the North Vietnamese aggressors.

Erased by:

FE:MGGreen:mk 2/7/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE - Marshall Green

Clearances:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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FORM DS-322  
8-63

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

State 12 9/30/75

By

WFE, NARS, Date 4/21/78

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

e. Note that announcement refers solely to North Vietnamese throughout.

Addressees should report reactions soonest.

BALL

~~NOTES/REMARKS~~  
NOT SENT TO:

Amembassy	SAIGON
"	LONDON
"	CANBERRA
"	PARIS
"	MOSCOW
"	OTTAWA
"	NEW DELHI
"	MANILA
"	WELLINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~SECRET~~

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03874

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO~~SECRET~~

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Origin  
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Info

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON

FLASH 1634

FEB 7 12 22 AM '65

INFO: Amembassy LONDON  
 Amembassy CANBERRA  
 Amembassy PARIS  
 Amembassy MOSCOW  
 Amembassy OTTAWA  
 Amembassy NEW DELHI  
 Amembassy MANILA  
 Amembassy WELLINGTON

IMMEDIATE 4892  
 IMMEDIATE 596  
 IMMEDIATE 4109  
 IMMEDIATE 2136  
 IMMEDIATE 854  
 IMMEDIATE 1601  
 IMMEDIATE 1212  
 IMMEDIATE 588

500

EKDIS

REF: Circular 1438

Following is draft text of Presidential announcement on which Embassy Saigon's comments requested Flash. Addressee posts may find text helpful as background in connection with carrying out refit instructions. Text as delivered will be sent unclassified Flash:

VERBATIM TEXT:

At \_\_\_\_\_ Saigon time (Eastern Standard time), on February 7th, elements of the U.S. and Vietnam Air Force attacked four barracks and staging areas in the southern area of North Viet-Nam which intelligence has shown to be actively used by Hanoi for the training and infiltration of Viet Cong personnel

Drafted by:

FE:MGreen/vah 2/6/65

Clearance:

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by: FE - Marshall Green

S/S - Mr. Hilliker

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FORM 8-63 DS-322

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 14 12/5/75  
 By NIE, NARS, Date 4/21/78

~~SECRET~~

into South Viet-Nam.

Results of the attack and further operational details will be announced as soon as they are reported from the field.

Like the action taken at the time of the North Vietnamese attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin last August, today's action by the United States and South Vietnamese Government<sup>3</sup> was in response to provocations ordered and directed by the Hanoi regime.

Commencing at 2:00 a.m. yesterday morning, two South Vietnamese Air Fields, two U.S. barracks areas, several villages and one town in South Viet-Nam were subjected to deliberate, surprise attacks. Substantial casualties resulted.

Our intelligence has indicated, and this action confirms, that Hanoi has ordered a more aggressive course of action against both South Vietnamese and American installations.

Moreover, these attacks were only made possible by the continuing infiltration of personnel and <sup>equipment</sup> ~~equipment~~ from North Viet-Nam. This infiltration markedly increased during 1964 and continues to increase.

To meet these attacks the Government of South Viet-Nam requested that the U.S. join with it in an appropriate reprisal action to be taken at once. The President's approval of this request from the

~~SECRET~~



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South Vietnamese Government was given after the action was discussed with and recommended by the National Security Council last night and after Congressional leaders had been informed.

Today's joint response was carefully limited to military staging areas which are supplying men and arms for attacks in South Viet-Nam.

As the U.S. Government has frequently stated, we seek no wider war. Whether or not this course can be maintained lies with the North Vietnamese aggressors. The key to the situation remains the cessation of infiltration from North Viet-Nam and the clear indication by the Hanoi regime that it is prepared to cease aggression against its neighbors. END VERBATIM TEXT.

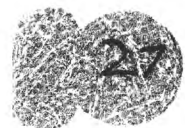
E N D

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BALL

~~SECRET~~

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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6-5

~~SECRET~~

Action

SS

Info

\*\*\*\*\*ZZ RUEHCR RUEHJS RUEHEXG  
DE RUMJIR 251A 07/0&45Z  
Z 070430Z ZEA  
FM AMEMBASSY (SAIGON)  
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC  
INFO RUEHJS/DOD WASHDC  
RUEHEX/WHITE HOUSE  
RUEHLG/CIA  
RUHPA/CINCPAC  
RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
STATE GRNC  
BT

CONTROL: 5637

REC'D: FEBRUARY 7, 1965  
12:27 A.M.FLASH

036

~~SECRET~~ ACTION FLASH DEPT (2417) INFO FLASH DOD 418 WHITE  
HOUSE 337 CIA 328 CINCPAC 1430 BANGKOK 441 VIENTIANE 362 FROM  
SAIGON FEB 7, 12 NOON

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

ACTION ON AUTHORITY RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE FROM WASHINGTON ALEX  
JOHNSON AND I CALLED ON ACTING PRIN OANH AT HIS RESIDENCE AT  
ABOUT 10:15 AM. I EXPLAINED THAT MY GOVT HAD DIRECTED US TO TAKE  
UP WITH HIM AS HEAD OF GOVT OF VN A MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.  
I THEN DESCRIBED THE DISCUSSIONS OF POSSIBLE GVN/US REPRISALS  
AGAINST DRV TARGETS WHICH WE HAD HAD WITH SELECTED REPS OF THE  
HUONG GOVT ON DEC 7 AND JANUARY 25, INCLUDING MENTION OF THE  
CFN 2417 418 337 328 1430 441 362 7 12 10:15 AM VN GVN/US DRV  
7 25

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 251A ~~SECRET~~

AGREEMENTS REACHED AT THE LATTER MEETING. OANH INDICATED THAT HE  
HAD SOME KNOWLEDGE OF THESE CONTACTS.

I THEN DESCRIBED THE TWO VC ATTACKS IN THE EARLY HOURS OF 7  
FEBRUARY AT PLEIKU AND TUY HOA AND SAID THAT MY GOVT, WITH THE  
CONCURRENCE OF GVN, WAS PREPARED TO TAKE AIR REPRISAL ACTION  
AGAINST FOUR SELECTED TARGETS IN SOUTH DRV, IN WHICH CASE ONE OF  
THE FOUR WOULD BE STRUCK BY VNAF. I TOLD HIM THAT KHANH HAD BEEN  
CONTACTED BY WESTMORELAND AND FAVORED SUCH ACTION.

OANH, WHO WAS AWARE OF THE VC ATTACKS, READILY CONCURRED IN  
NAME OF GVN. HE UNDERTOOK TO MAKE NECESSARY CONTACT WITH CHIEF  
OF STATE SUU.

DECLASSIFIED

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PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

Authority State 16 9/30/75  
By NIE, NARS, Date 4/21/78

~~SECRET~~

-2- 2417, FEBRUARY 7, NOON, FROM SAIGON

WE THEN MADE THE POINT THAT IN OUR JUDGMENT THIS REPRISAL ACTION WAS SIGNIFICANT NEW STEP WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND WITH A VISIBLE CLEARING OF THE BOARDS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION. OUR GOVT WOULD SOON BE TAKING ACTIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE SUCH AS INTRODUCING HAWK MISSILES AT DANANG AND POSSIBLY INITIATING THE EVACUATION OF DEPENDENTS. WE HOPED THAT THE GVN WOULD BE THINKING OF WAYS TO EXPLOIT THESE REPRISALS TO MAXIMUM EFFECT, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THAT A NEW AND ENCOURAGING ELEMENT HAD BEEN ADDED TO THE WAR.  
CFN VC 7 PLEIKU TUY HOA GVN DRV VNAF KHANH WA HAD BEEN VC GVN SUU DANANG GVN

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 251A ~~SECRET~~

OANH AGREED THAT ONCE THE REPRISALS HAD BEEN MADE THERE WAS MUCH ADDITIONAL JOINT PLANNING AND ACTION FOR THE FUTURE TO BE DONE.

WE THEN DISCUSSED THE DRAFT PRESS RELEASE FOR USE AFTER THE AIR STRIKES WHICH HAD BEEN TELEPHONED TO WASHINGTON BUT FOR WHICH WE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED APPROVAL. OANH HAD NO TROUBLE WITH THE LANGUAGE EXCEPT ON ONE POINT. HE WANTED TO FIND SOME WAY TO SAY THAT KHANH CONCURRED WITHOUT ACTUALLY MENTIONING HIM BY NAME. HE COULD NOT FIND AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA AND AGREED WITH OUR TEXT.

IN LEAVING, I MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF A VC MILITARY OR TERRORIST REACTION AND SUGGESTED THAT APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS BE TAKEN.  
TAYLOR.

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 12:27 A.M., FEBRUARY 7.

*HANDLED LIMDIS Per SS/O.*

~~SECRET~~

56

28



# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

UNCLASSIFIED

03898

57

6-81

Origin

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Info:

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NSC

INR

OPR

ACTION: CIRCULAR 1443

IMMEDIATE

FEB 7 2 01 PM '65

Presidential

Following is text of ~~SECRET~~ announcement: XX

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ shortly after noon today:

QTX Following meetings with the National Security Council,

I have directed the orderly withdrawal of American dependents from South Viet Nam.

It has become clear that Hanoi has undertaken a more aggressive course of action against both South Vietnamese and American installations, and against Americans who are in South Viet Nam assisting the people of that country to defend their freedom. We have no choice now but to clear the decks and make absolutely clear our continued determination to back South Viet Nam in its fight to maintain its independence.

In addition to this action, I have ordered the deployment to South Viet Nam of a Hawk Air Defense Battalion.

Other reinforcements, in units and individuals may follow. URGENT.  
GP-

End

ALL

Drafted by:

FE:HLBrecken:jd 2/7/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE/IN:ELDoncoran

Clearances:

S/S - 0

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JOINT MESSAGEFORM				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <del>SECRET</del> NO FORN DISSEM FORM		59	
SPACE BELOW RESERVED FOR COMMUNICATION CENTER							
DISTR: SECDEF-5 ISA-9 PA-1 CSA-2 DJS-3 SJCS-1 J3-6 J5-2 SACSA-5 DIA-24 NMCC-2 WHITE HOUSE-3 FILE-1 (64) JMT/GR							
PRECEDENCE		TYPE MSG (Check)		ACCOUNTING SYMBOL		ORIG. OR REFERS TO	
ACTION Immediate		BOOK		MULTI		CLASSIFICATION OF REFERENCE	
INFO Immediate		X		SINGLE			
FROM: OSD/ISA						SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS  Coordination  State: Mr. Jorden (informed) DIA: Col. Steinhäuser (informed) JCS: Col. Brownfield (informed)  ZFF-3  DATE 8 MONTH 2 YEAR 1965	
TO: COMUSMACV							
INFO: CINCPAC STATE AND WHITE HOUSE AMERICAN EMBASSY SAIGON <del>SECRET</del> NO FORN ASD/ISA(RA) DEF 004842 FOR GENERAL WESTMORELAND FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY McNAUGHTON							
SUBJECT: Recent Physical Evidence of North Vietnam Involvement in the Viet Cong Insurgency							
REFERENCE: a. Viet Cong Logistical System dated 12 Dec 64 b. Study of US Factory Marking Team's Visit to South Vietnam 27 Jan to 28 Feb 1964 c. MACJ2 letter subject Captured Viet Cong Documents, forwarding of (U) d. MACV Infiltration Study dated 31 Oct 64.  SecDef needs to know ASAP what xxx recently-captured physical evidence you have that can be brought to Washington for public presentation. Purpose is to serve as part of hard-hitting and convincing demonstration establishing history of DRV involvement and direction of VC, with emphasis on recent period. Physical							
SYMBOL <i>Alvin Friedman</i>				SIGNATURE <i>Alvin Friedman</i>			
TYPED NAME AND TITLE (Signature, if required) Alvin Friedman, DepAsst. SecDef/ISA(RA)				TYPED (or stamped) NAME AND TITLE Alvin Friedman, DASD/ISA(RA) DECLASSIFIED			
PHONE 78101		PAGE NR. 1		NR. OF PAGES 2		Authority <i>DOD 14 9/12/75</i> <i>MIE</i> DTG: 090045Z FEB 65	
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <del>SECRET</del> NO FORN DISSEM				DATE <i>4/24/78</i>			

DD FORM 173

REPLACES DD FORM 173, 1 OCT 49, WHICH WILL BE USED UNTIL EXHAUSTED

## JOINT MESSAGEFORM-CONTINUATION SHEET

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET~~ NO ~~FORM~~ FORM

FROM:

OSD/ISA

material intended, if ~~maxx~~ feasible, for use in possible national press or TV briefing. Specifically interest is in weapons, ammunition, communications, equipment and other supplies (e.g., medical, camp equipment) that can be clearly identified as originating in, or can be established as having been available in, North Vietnam. You may have other ideas on what kinds of physical material would be suitable. We will give all necessary support in providing transportation for movement of the material to Washington. Please give us status report by 1300Z 10 February with preliminary inventory of available equipment you consider appropriate and your recommendation for transporting to ~~maxx~~ Washington. Material should be plainly marked or accompanied by experienced individual who can discuss its origin with authority, as well as circumstances in which equipment was captured.

This request being made with knowledge that quantities of suitable equipment may already be available in CONUS and we will be pursuing this matter here as well. Referenced documents are available here and will be considered also.

GP-1

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SYMBOL

OSD

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET~~ NO FORM

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DD FORM 173-1

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BACKGROUND BRIEFING

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH GEORGE REEDY AND MC GEORGE BUNDY

FEBRUARY 8, 1965

12:05 P.M. EST

MONDAY

MR. REEDY: Mr. Bundy saw the President briefly last night at about 11 o'clock. At that point there were no substantive conversations, he merely left with the President a few written notes, a few papers for night reading.

This morning at 8:30 a series of meetings started with Mr. Bundy, the people that have been with him to Viet Nam, with some appropriate officials of other agencies, and at 9:30 this group met with the President and at 10:30 Mr. Bundy reported to the National Security Council. Present at the National Security Council were the Congressional leaders Senator Dirksen, Senator Mansfield, Speaker MacCormack and Representative Ford.

Q. Those were the only ones?

MR. REEDY: Yes.

Q. Is the Vice President back?

MR. REEDY: No, he is not back yet. The major purpose of the meeting was to hear Mr. Bundy's oral report. I asked that Mr. Bundy come in here and talk to you about his trip. The President has told him to make available to you all of the information and news that he possibly can. Therefore, at this point I propose to turn this briefing over to Mr. Bundy.

Q. George, will Mr. Bundy also be available outside?

MR. REEDY: Yes.

Q. Will you give us maybe five minutes to set up?

MR. REEDY: Yes.

Q. George, before Mr. Bundy begins did this meeting also involve a discussion of the second attack in North Viet Nam.

MR. REEDY: There were reports.

Q. You have no comment on it?

MR. REEDY: No, on any of the operational details I refer you to the Defense Department.

Q. Does this second air strike indicate that a series is in process? Is this the last one? I am not seeking classified information but I wonder —

MR. REEDY: I would not have any comment on that matter, Ralph. I said on the operational details the Defense Department will be responding.

Q. You are confirming there was a second strike?

MR. REEDY: Yes, there was a second strike. I am referring you to the Department of Defense for operational details.

MORE

MR. BUNDY: Ladies and gentlemen, I think it may save time if I begin with a brief account of our mission.

We left here last Tuesday, flew the most direct route and arrived in Saigon on Thursday morning Saigon time. That was the last day of the Viet Nameese New Year and so we spent that day not in communication and discussions with the Viet Nameese but in discussions and reviews of the situation and of the problems confronting us with the U.S. Mission, with Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador Johnson, General Westmoreland, Mr. Killen, Zorthian and others in the team. That was as it turned out and very good way of going about our business because it allowed us to get a very clear sense of the situation as it is understood by the U.S. Team before we entered into a highly intensive round of conversations and discussions with as many sectors of the VietNameese opinion as we could reach.

I might say to you that the composition of our group was that we had with us Mr. John McNaughton in the Department of Defense, Assistant Secretary ISA; Mr. Unger of Department of State who is head of the VietNameese working group, Deputy to my brother over there. We had General Goodpastor who is the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who is extraordinarily valuable since it turned out one of our functions was to review a military operation on the last day and look at the situation in Pleiku, and Mr. Chester Cooper of our own White House NSC staff.

We spent Thursday in this kind of intensive discussion of the situation; on Friday we had a series of meetings with VietNameese leaders, with the President, with the head of State, Mr. Suu, the Acting Prime Minister Mr. Oanh; the head of the armed forces, General Khanh and with other military officers and with other civilian leaders.

We also had continuing discussions with Mission officers and then on Saturday, I spent the morning receiving and talking with leaders of the different religious groups which are important in Viet Nam, the Catholics, Buddhists, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai groups, four religious groups which are important; and we continued again in the afternoon and pretty much concluded our discussions with the Mission leadership and then General Taylor gave a reception on Saturday evening which we had thought would be the conclusion of our immediate review discussions in which most of the political leaders of Viet Nam of different groups and tendencies were present.

We also found occasion in informal meetings to meet with younger members in the area, this was something which Ambassador Taylor and Ambassador Johnson wanted particularly to have us do, both on the military and on the civilian side with the particular objective of getting a feel not only for the situation in Saigon but for the situation in the field where we do now have increasingly effective and I may say very impressive younger people of all services and agencies working on the situation outside Saigon.

We were to have spent Sunday on a series of field expeditions in the neighborhood of Saigon examining various aspects of the fortification program but Sunday morning began for us as Sunday noon began here with the news of the attacks centering on Pleiku but not limited to Pleiku and we joined in the process of making sure that the views and opinions and attitudes of the country team were adequately and clearly reported to Washington while the President and the NSC were viewing the situation and making their immediate decisions. At the same time I decided it would be more useful for us to get back here as rapidly as possible. We rescheduled the aircraft as early as it could be managed to bring it in from Clark Field. We cancelled the planned stop-over in Honolulu, came home the straight route. There was, however, time available before that return could be organized for General Goodpastor and for me to go with General Westmoreland to look at the airfield at Pleiku and fly over the compound nearby and then to visit the field hospital halfway back toward Saigon and then we took off Sunday afternoon, Saigon time. We were able

to get here last night at about 10 o'clock at the airfield and I reported in to the West Basement and the rest of my activities are as described by Mr. Reedy.

The situation in Saigon and in the field is one which has so many aspects to it that I hesitate to characterize it in a simple summary. It is clear that there is a contest of force and of violence and of morale and of will and of purpose that a suitable and continuous determined attack has been mounted over a period of years by Communist forces with external direction, support and encouragement and control. In large measure that this effort has put great strains upon the local society. It is equally clear that there is no will, no desire on the part of the people of South Viet Nam to see themselves subjected to this kind of, not only of this aggression but to the kind of regime which is its purpose.

South Vietnam is crowded with people who are refugees from the north and who know what Communist despotism is like. It is very clear to us that the overall effort of the Americans in the field is an impressive one that we are represented by outstanding Americans from the top on down, that they work in close cooperation with each other, that the morale of the American forces, whether in or out of uniform, is high. The response and reaction of the forces whom we visited at the Pleiku airfield was outstanding, they had already in companionship with VietNameese forces launched rapid reactions which have had, I believe, some result. They were determined to continue. There is no spirit among Americans in South Vietnam of flagging or wearing, there is rather a clear cut understanding of the importance of our mission there and a determination to get forward with it.

I might say that an understanding of the importance of American assistances and expressions of the deepest kind of appreciation for that assistance were a part of every conversation which I had with every Viet Nameese leader or spokesman of whatever sector or tendency and there is no doubt in anyone's mind there that the principal enemy whatever may be their differences of immediate political differences or their differences of religious affiliation, that the fundamental enemy is the Communist Viet Cong and its supporters and directors from outside.

I think that may be enough by way of summary of the situation. I might say that just in passing that there were reports of some how there had been difficulties or failures of communication between our group and the Viet Nameese leaders of different tendencies. This is not true. It is true that we had to shift the times, once at my convenience and once at the convenience of one of my visitors for the meetings but I had long and extremely useful conversations with all of the people with whom it was possible to have meetings and who were in fact present in Saigon and without exception, both the atmosphere and the contents of those meetings were helpful and included on both sides an understanding and appreciation of the position of the other.

I think that perhaps is as much as I can say by way of an opening statement. The events which have occurred let me say, the events which have occurred at Pleiku and the U.S. responses were obviously matters which took over the work of our own group and took over the attention of the U.S. Government and of the Government of Viet Nam from Sunday morning Saigon time forward, but you have already had from Secretary MacNamara and Secretary Ball a full account of these operations and the reasons for them and there is nothing that I think would be helpful really for me to add at this stage.

Q. Mr. Bundy, were these all captured American weapons that were used against the U.S. at Pleiku?

MR. BUNDY: No, we believe not. I would refer you to the Department of Defense for an analysis of the precise weapons situation as we now reconstruct it in that area but I think that is not the case.



Q. Does that include the 81 MM mortars? Are they not American made?

MR. BUNDY: I believe not but I refer you to the Department of Defense.

Q. How long have we been keeping three aircraft carriers off the coast?

MR. BUNDY: I don't want to discuss the deployment of the 7th Fleet.

Q. Can you tell us whether or not American planes participated in the second raid?

MR. BUNDY: I think I would like to have the operations details of that discussed by the Department of Defense rather than cross wires with them.

Q. You say you think not that the 81 MM mortars are American made?

MR. BUNDY: There are 81 MM mortars of American manufacture but also we found in possession of North Viet Nameese of Chinese manufacture but this is a point to be pursued by the Department of Defense.

Q. Could you tell us, in the President's statement yesterday, he was clearing the decks and being prepared for further responses to Red aggression, does that mean we are now going on in to meet any major attacks by the Communists by retaliatory strikes?

MR. BUNDY: I am not prepared to discuss our future policy or actions today. Let me put this on BACKGROUND so I can be a little more comprehensive about it.

\*\*\*\*\*

While I understand your interest in particular weapons and the particular connection between a particular event and the Communists or North Vietnamese, it seems to me I can tell you this extremely clearly that no one in South Vietnam, whatever his political convictions, whatever his nationality is in the smallest doubt as to where the primary impetus, impulse, power and direction for the efforts of the Communists in the south is coming from. Everyone there knows and it is known with a depth that forbids doubts or discussion really that this is coming in the last analysis from Hanoi. What degree of connection there may be from Hanoi to Peiking is another matter on which there is discussions. But there is no doubt there on this point in any quarter and there is evidence of all kinds to sustain this conviction, evidence in terms of what prisoners taken, their origins, evidence in terms of captured instructions, evidence in terms of the origin of weapons, and other evidence more classified which I am not at liberty to discuss.

So I do not think that the issue -- this operation could have been mounted quite conceivably with captured weapons. It does not appear as I say -- you should check with the Department of Defense that this is in fact the case but is not the decisive point. The decisive point is that the whole operation of the Viet Cong by the explicit declaration and admission of the North Vietnamese authorities themselves has taken place with their encouragement that repeatedly episodes of this kind have been boasted of by Hanoi radio which leaves no doubt to their own view they have a share in the responsibility and therefore my own feeling as I say, I quite understand your concern with the particular evidence of a particular case is the over-riding question of responsibility should be measured in the light of the whole set of evidence and behavior of a five year period.

Q. Many people have been asking why the American garrison suffered about 60% casualties and we heard of no Viet Cong or South VietNameese?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think that figure is right. You should check with the Department of Defense. I think that is a wrong estimate of percentage.

Q. Let me rephrase it. Over a hundred Americans suffered casualties in the attack and we haven't heard of any Viet Cong --

MR. BUNDY: I would refer your question to the Defense Department whether your VietNames figures are correct, and Secretary McNamara's conference yesterday as to the character of this kind of war and if I may go on BACKGROUND, and not as White H use Background, but simply for your guidance, the situation here is not analogous to the one which many of us in our brief military careers are familiar which you are fighting organized forces. You take an clear an area and then with the exception of the occasional sniper or mounted organized operation behind your front you can secure an area. This is an area in which you have a population of 14 million. We have forces numbered in the small tens of thousands, 20 odd thousand. The Viet Nameese have forces in hundreds of thousands, but the country is open in many areas, lightly inhabited in the area around Pleiku and there is movement up and down the jungle and mountains and open country and in and out of the towns of these guerrilla forces and it is simply a fact it remains a capability of the Communists to come with very small units in darkness within close range of most parts of South Vietnam. We do not have U.S. forces in the area which could mount a perimeter defense far enough out to eliminate the possibility of mortar attack and as long as we are engaged in this contest we will have to expect there will be a capability among the Communists for this kind of hit and run operation with small forces operating at night.

I might add that I think there has been some misunderstanding, still entirely on BACKGROUND, and not White House Background, as to the role of the local defense forces supplied by the Viet Nameese. I have seen in some dispatch I think, a picture that only half of them were on duty. This is no more than to say there were a given number assigned to this function, routine and regular and U.S. approved means of using them was they should be on one night and off the other. It is not a matter of there having been a 50% appearance of those supposed to be on the job at a given time.

I may add the local commander at Pleiku gave us to clearly understand in his judgment the readiness to react and response of the Vietnamese forces had been good. It was very clear to us the read iness to respond of the American forces had been excellent and I think it is while the quality of the forces of South Vietnam varies from unit to unit and commander to commander and experience to experience, I do not think we should jump to the conclusion there was some terrible failur because the fact is in this kind of war this kind of episode can be expected.

I'd like to say, still on non-White House BACKGROUND, it is worth bearing in mind as one thinks of the expertise of South Viet forces, the month of January has probably been the most successful of the entire war. With the largest number considerably of counted Viet Cong dead of any month of the war and a very high ratio of counted Viet Cong dead to our own South VietNameese losses and losses among American advisers. Let me say one more thing on that point that as we understand it there were eight engagements classified as major in the month of January, nearly all initiated on the South Vietnamese side and eight victories.

That is all BACKGROUND. You can get all that in more accurate detail from the Defense Department. I don't like to poach too energetically on their territory.



Q. What is the reaction from the Soviets since our raid yesterday?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think I ought to comment on that problem which is obviously one of great interest. It seems to me again, to keep it in State Department channels —

Q. You indicated there is considerable doubt in your mind at least as to the connection of Peking and Hanoi —

MR. BUNDY: No, I was talking about other peoples minds.

Q. Did you have any contact with the Buddhist political leaders/

MR. BUNDY: Yes, I did.

Q. Did you find that they shared the view of other Viet Nameese about the Viet Cong?

MR. BUNDY: No question, no question, that the Buddhist leaders like other leaders believe that the Communists represent the gravest kind of danger to the freedom and future of South Viet Nam.

Q. Did they make any distinction at all between Communists and Viet Cong?

MR. BUNDY: No, I think every one believes the Viet Cong are Communists.

Q. Sir, could you tell us why there is such a reluctance on the part of the people to notify the American forces of the infiltration, these raids we were led to understand the natives knew the Viet Cong were in the area but didn't notify the Americans?

MR. BUNDY: I don't know who led you to understand what and I don't mean to question what you have heard, but let me put it on BACKGROUND again and say there is a very high element of fear in these matters, that there is a great difficulty -- I am not now referring specifically to the Pleiku episode because I don't have reporting that would allow me to comment specifically on that at this time, having been in the air I may have missed something others may know, but people who feel they are not going to be properly and effectively and genuinely protected become reticent about passing information when they may be punished for passing that information. That is the shape of the problem in a guerrilla situation.

Q. Could you tell us something about your conversation with General Khanh and specifically did you talk to him about getting along better with Ambassador Taylor?

MR. BUNDY: I talked with General Khanh at considerable length. We had a very interesting and comprehensive conversation. He went out of his way to make it clear to me that he has great respect for General Taylor and let me say on BACKGROUND, that he had added, that any differences they may have had in the past were differences between soldiers.

I think it is clear, I might add further, that it is very plain that the common response — this is still on BACKGROUND — the common response to the Pleiku attack has had the effect of pulling still more closely together in a joint action the authorities of Viet Nam and those of the United States.

Q. What is your assessment of the new government there?

MR. BUNDY: I think the fact is they are still in training; of formation of the new government and that is a very important effort, one to which everyone I spoke with --everyone I spoke with emphasized the importance of getting ahead with framing a government which would have as wide support as possible. This is the thing which is taking much of the attention, political and also in a measure of military leaders in Saigon or was while we were there. They believe that it is very important to get on with that job. We of course think they are right in that belief and I think that is all I can say on that.

Q. As you say in guerrilla war you have to expect the enemy will have the capability to make night attacks and the Viet Cong can expect to do the same in the next few months, but are we going to continue to hit the north?

MR. BUNDY: I think I have already said I am prepared to discuss what I did and what I observed but am not engaged in discussing the future.

Q. Mr. Bundy, did you bring back some recommendations for improving the operations?

MR. BUNDY: I have reported the things we saw and the things we discussed with the President.

Q. Since the attack that we carried out was described as not exactly tit for tat, I think there has been some question in the minds of some people since we were able to reply so swiftly that perhaps this attack had either been arranged or was underway before the attack against Pleiku, and others?

MR. BUNDY: I am sure that is not the case. That our action had the relations which has already been publicly described and having been present in the process of communicating reports of the action at Pleiku to Washington, recommendations of the country team in which I may say all of us who were out from Washington joined, and had a direct part in the communication back and forth I can tell you categorically that actions taken by the United States were taken after the Pleiku incident and as an appropriate action after that incident, were not in plan on the way before.

Q. What about the presence or deployment of U.S. aircraft carriers?

MR. BUNDY: Let me make one correction for Mr. Scali -- we were not in any sense on the way, but contingency planning is a different matter.

Q. If as you say there is unanimity among the military and religious elements that the Communists are the basic enemy, why isn't there more unanimity on the stable government to meet this threat?

MR. BUNDY: There is unanimity but there are different forces, each of which has its own view as to the desirable shape of such a stable government. I don't want to go into the details. I don't think it is appropriate for an American to go into details of the internal political situation there, although the representatives of the different groups were very open and, I thought, very generous in their readiness and eagerness to discuss their views and the sense of the situation with us. But if I may offer you an analogy, and perhaps I had better put this on BACKGROUND too:

\* \* \* \* \*

We have had a civil war in our past, and during our civil war there were political differences actually on both sides, but one thinks perhaps specifically of the very great differences on what should be done and how and who should do it which existed in the North. We had a society which had a hundred years of experience in constitutional government in which the procedures by which a man was elected to be head of that government and authority confided to that man were clear and established, not only of our traditions of our hundred years but many years of our preceding traditions. Here is a country in which you have an old civilization which has many component parts, which has a very young experience of self-government. Indeed, one could say in light of the very personal character of the Government of President Diem that the experience of organizing divergent forces into a single government goes back less than a year and a half. Therefore I do not think we should be surprised at the fact there are differences among the Vietnamese, all of them anti-Communist, as to the way in which they should organize their own political affairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Q. You have made abundantly clear that the principle point to be remembered is that all this is being directed from Hanoi, also all of our strikes on North Vietnam have been retaliatory. In view of the principle point you emphasized, what are the objections to American policy taking a turn of sending infiltrators to destroy the economy of North Vietnam, blowing up bridges?

MR. BUNDY: It appears you are taking me into a question of what we might or might not be justified in doing in the future, and I am not prepared to discuss that today.

Q. Can we just discuss the future in South Vietnam itself and not over the parallel? Does what happened with two retaliatory strikes now indicate a loss of faith or belief that we can beat the guerrillas in South Vietnam with counter-insurgency actions?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think I want to take the question quite the way you put it. Let me make this comment, however. While obviously it is our decision that it is important and right and necessary to take the kind of action taken in this case against the kind of action taken against us in this specific instance, it is also our judgment that the primary area of contest is in South Vietnam. That has been our view. That continues to be our view. That, incidentally, appears to be the view again, the general view of the Vietnamese with whom I talked. This is not to say there is not great importance, as I have emphasized, in the external control and direction of the actions of these people outside South Vietnam. Nevertheless, the task of contesting against the guerrillas, of pacification and of establishing a society in which there will not be the kind of fear which prevents warning and in which there will be a kind of hope and



confidence that allows that society to go on in its own independence and progress toward an increasing measure of things all peoples want, all of this, the center of all of this is in South Vietnam. I realize that is an oblique answer to your question.

Q. Can you give us the reason, assuming yesterday's attack was a successful one, why we mounted another one today?

MR. BUNDY: Let me say again I think the discussion of specific military operations is a matter which ought to be discussed with the Pentagon. There is obviously a relation between anything that may have occurred today and weather prevented some things that happened yesterday. That is on BACKGROUND.

Q. There was a rumor in Washington that the United States Government is planning the bombardment of North Vietnam before retaliatory action, and your mission is connected to these plans - -

MR. BUNDY: Those reports are unjustified.

Q. On the basis of what you told us about what you saw and heard over there, is it accurate for us to say you were mildly encouraged as a result of your visit?

MR. BUNDY: I don't really like the attachment of adjectives to reporting missions, no.

Q. Speaking with religious leaders, did you speak to all religious leaders?

MR. BUNDY: I spoke to representatives of all the main religious groups but not all the religious leaders in South Vietnam.

Q. Among the Buddhists did you speak to Tri Quang?

MR. BUNDY: I spoke to his chief of staff. Let me put this OFF THE RECORD for your guidance. I spoke to Thich Thien Minh, who is used for the purpose of diplomatic communications, if you want to put it that way. I have a feeling, again OFF THE RECORD if Tri Quang had been in Saigon I would have seen him. I am very much impressed, still OFF THE RECORD by the way which the embassies, through a very young political officer who is fluent in Vietnamese and became familiar with the Buddhists leaders, especially when Tri Quang was a refugee in our embassy.

Q. Do you think South Vietnam is going to be able to establish a stable government?

MR. BUNDY: I think you are taking me to the future again. It is the objective very clearly.

Q. How can you discuss the whole situation without considering the future?

MR. BUNDY: Obviously we do consider the future. My discussion this morning is limited to my mission and my report and not of the future. I will say that I believe it is quite possible to establish a stable government. That is the objective, people are working on it, and that naturally we believe very much it is important, and so do they, to make progress in that area. I just don't think it is appropriate for me to get into adjectival or other discussions that haven't yet happened.

Q. Since you have come back what is your feeling? Is military reform needed?

MR. BUNDY: I would prefer to refer you to the Pentagon on straight military estimating.

Q. But this is a diplomatic question.

MR. BUNDY: I think I have described the quality of the forces and mentioned the very important successes which were achieved in organized military efforts in the month of January.

Q. What you have just told us, Mr. Bundy, reflects what you were saying at the NSC Meeting?

MR. BUNDY: For BACKGROUND. I don't wish to say I speak to you gentlemen in precisely the terms, but I am trying to give you, as I tried to give them within the different rules, that due to some measure apply, as clear an account of what I saw and what I came back with.

Q. Is the tone the same?

MR. BUNDY: I think the tone is the same. I am not aware of being more offensive in the last hour.

Q. Do you think the raid could have been timed to coincide with your visit or Kosygin's visit?

MR. BUNDY: Let me go on BACKGROUND HERE:

\* \* \* \* \*

(It was said before the end of the New Year that at the end of the New Year there would be proof of resumed action, there would be additional actions. It is certainly a possibility that the operation may have been calculated for its relation to the visit of Chairman Kosygin. I have not had any intelligence estimator flatter my ego by telling me I am the cause of the episode.

\* \* \* \* \*

Q. You meant Premier Kosygin?

MR. BUNDY: You can call it both ways if you look at protocol.

Q. On the question of military reforms, the question Mr. Moore raised respecting your unwillingness to discuss it in detail with us and with reference to the Pentagon, but in terms of your mission to report to the President, did your group bring back recommendations for any changes in the military procedure?

MR. BUNDY: I think I have carefully described our actions as the people who brought back a report to the President, Mr. Bailey.

Q. In your report to the President, sir, did you have anything to say about what the events of the last three days might mean in terms of ending this war sometime through negotiations?

MR. BUNDY: No.

Q. Did you discuss with General Hhanh the visit of the Soviet leader, and if you did, what conclusion was made about the purpose or objective of this visit?

MR. BUNDY: I think you are taking me into a level of detail with respect to a specific conference I would rather not get into. More generally, clearly there was an awareness in Saigon of the visit of Kosygin and was discussion of that visit.



Q. The fact we have got that missile group in, does that mean the United States militarily is now on a different footing in South Vietnam than before?

MR. BUNDY: I think it is clear there is the difference, which is the difference which comes when you have your women and children out and you have additional air defense forces in. I am sorry not to answer what I found to be very important questions, but I think you will understand that there is a difference between what I can do in trying to report what we saw and what we did and in going into the question of what may happen.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter

By 4-8 Date 9-2-80

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Origin ACTION: AmEmbassy SAIGON 1653 IMMEDIATE

FEB 8 1965

Info FOR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR FROM THE PRESIDENT

MODES LOR

1. Mac Bundy has given me a full report of his discussions with you and of the outstanding work which you and all your team are doing.

2. In our discussions in December we agreed upon the importance of undertaking appropriate action against North Vietnam. We then felt it important to establish as strong a government as possible, and you have been doing your level best to that end. It also seemed to me essential to get women and children out of the area, and now we have taken that decision. I am now prepared to go forward with the best government we can get, and accordingly I wish you to know that I have today decided that we will carry out our December plan for continuing action against North Vietnam with modifications up and down in tempo and scale in the light of your recommendations as Bundy reports them, and our own continuing review of the ~~situation~~ situation.

3. It is most important that this decision not be publicized until we have determined precise opening moves, and until Kossygin is safely

2/8/65

House: McG Bundy/ummm

White House: McGeorge Bundy

M. B. Bundy

S/S - Mr. Hoffacker

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out of Hanoi. Moreover, we wish to make our own plans after assessing Soviet reaction to recent events which should be more clear by time Kosygin leaves.

4. Evacuation of dependents should proceed as you determine. I hope you can meet the 7-10 days suggested in your last message.

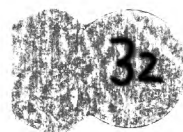
5. I am impressed by argument that the building of a minimum government will benefit by some private assurances from us to the highest levels that we do now intend to take continuing action. Therefore, you are authorized to convey this in general terms to key leaders and political figures as you see fit. At the same time you should say that we want to work with a unified and going government, and that the sooner they can work out such a government, the better we can plan and execute the continuing actions we have in mind.

6. This brings my warmest good wishes to you and Mrs. Taylor, and my renewed thanks for all that you are doing for your country.

GP-1.

END

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 9, 1965

DECLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letter

By inf, NARS, Date 9-2-80

SUBJECT: Vietnam - Telegrams from the Public

1. As of this morning, the White House had received about 1,500 telegrams concerning our action in Vietnam. White House tabulators regard the flow as medium to heavy. It is more than we had during the Panama crisis (800), about the same as we received during the Tonkin incident (1,650), and much less than we received during the Cuban crisis (12,700 in seven days).
2. So far as we can tell, the vast majority of the telegrams seem to be coming from private individuals rather than groups, and are running almost 12 to 1 against the Government's retaliatory action. It is pertinent to note that this is sharply different from the Gulf of Tonkin incident which produced a ratio of less than 2 to 1 against the Government's action. It is also interesting to note that, during the Panama crisis in January 1964, the cables ran roughly 14 to 1 in favor of a firm U.S. position.
3. A sample of 300 of the con telegrams produced the following rather interesting factors. First, the sources of a large proportion of the telegrams seemed geographically concentrated. The New York City area and California each produced about 34% of the telegrams; New England and the Middle Atlantic states (not including the New York City area) produced roughly 14% while the rest of the country produced about 18%. Second, women seemed to be most active in sending telegrams. Husband/wife teams accounted for about 39% of the telegrams, women for roughly 38%, and men for about 23%. Third, while they overlapped considerably, the most frequently mentioned substantive issues, in order of frequency, were (a) that we should negotiate, (b) that we are trigger happy and there will be escalation, (c) that we are aggressors and/or immoral, and (d) that we should withdraw.
4. While it seems somewhat dangerous to look for too much meaning in such a group of telegrams, they do point to certain tentative conclusions: First, the comparison with the Tonkin figures indicates that the propensity of the American people to punch the Communists in the nose over Vietnam seems considerably less than it was six months ago. Second, the comparison with

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The President

-2-

February 9, 1965

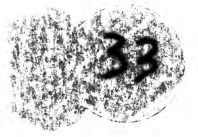
the Panama figures (i. e., 14 to 1 in favor of a firm U.S. stand) are probably also instructive. In part, they may mean that Americans are more willing to stand firm when the issue is geographically closer to home. In part, they may also mean that Americans are more willing to stand firm as long as there is no relatively large-scale shooting involved. Third, the statistics, in general, indicate that we have an education problem that bears close watching and more work.

5. Attached for flavor is a random sample of ten con cables.

McGeorge Bundy

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NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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10 February 1965

Authority OSD letter JUN 19 1978

MEMORANDUM

By isp, NARS, Date 6-26-79

SUBJECT: Delivery of Surface-to-Air Missile Equipment to North Vietnam

1. Should the Soviet Union decide to supply surface-to-air missiles (SAM's) to North Vietnam, the missile launch sites would almost certainly have to be manned by Soviet troops since no North Vietnamese are believed to be trained in SAM operations. The most likely areas to be defended by Soviet-manned SAM sites are the Hanoi-Phuc Yen civil-military complex, Haiphong port and naval base, and/or the Laos supply route terminal at Vinh. The former two locations seem the most likely.

2. Hanoi and Haiphong could be defended by two SAM regiments with a total of eight launch sites--six providing coverage of Hanoi and the nearby Phuc Yen jet airfield, and two providing coverage of the Haiphong port and naval installations. About 1,500 Soviet military personnel would be required to man the eight launch sites and two support areas required for such a deployment.

3. Since an inordinately large number of transport aircraft (at least 80 AN-12's) would be required to complete the deployment of the requisite number of men and equipment from the USSR and, since some of the equipment is believed to be too large for delivery by this means, sea transport is considered the most likely means of shipment. Two Soviet cargo ships and one passenger ship could complete the delivery. Once the decision was made, the movement from the USSR to North Vietnam could probably be made in one month. (One week would be required for mobilization and movement of the two SAM regiments from their stations in the USSR to the port staging areas, and three weeks for transit from the Black Sea to North Vietnam. Shipment could be made from Vladivostok in which case shipping time would be about ten days, but considerable time would be lost either in moving equipment over land by rail or in breaking down presently deployed sites. Delivery could also be made by rail through Communist China in which case delivery time could be cut in half.)

4. Initial limited operational capability could be achieved at individual sites in less than a week after arrival of men and equipment. However, integration of the whole system would require several weeks. We would almost certainly detect military shipments from the Black Sea to North Vietnam as soon as the ships transited the Bosphorus; we might not be able to identify the cargo, however, until the ships were unloaded at their destinations and the equipment photographed by our reconnaissance aircraft. The latter would also be true in the case of shipment by rail.

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U.S. COSTS AND CASUALTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM

U.S. MILITARY COSTS  
(In Millions)

	<u>1950-63</u>	<u>1961-65</u>
MAP	969	987.7
Direct U.S.-Support (Service Costs)	Unavailable	401.4
Total	<u>969</u>	<u>1389.1</u>
Grand Total 1950-65	<u>2358.1</u>	

U.S. CASUALTIES RESULTING FROM HOSTILE ACTION

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>
1961	1	1
1962	31	74
1963	73	411
1964	141	1038
Total	<u>346</u>	<u>1524</u>

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Authority OSD letter JUN 19 1978  
By isg, NARS, Date 6-26-79

FER/ISA  
10 Feb 65

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

71a

20679

F711/10/JCS037  
PHP923V PAF945  
PP RUEKDA  
DE RUHKA 1117 10/0050Z  
P 100056Z  
FM CINCPAC  
TO RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
INFO RUHLKM/CINCPACAF  
RUHPB/CINCPACFLT  
RUEKDA/JCS  
BT

CALL 53337  
FOR NMCC/MC  
SERVICE

210 0749Z

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NVN TARGETS SOUTH OF 18 PARALLEL (S)

A. COMUSMACV MAC J5 3404 DTG 050305Z PASEP

B. JCS 004850 DTGH090231Z NOTAL

1. REF A CONTAINED YOUR RECOMMENDATION OF ADDITIONAL NVN TARGETS SOUTH 18TH PARALLEL FOR REPRISAL ATTACK. BY REF B, JCS REQUESTED TARGET IDENTIFICATION OF TARGETS SOUTH 19TH PARALLEL AND ESTIMATE SORTIE REQUIREMENT.

2. TARGETS LISTED IN PARA (3), REF A INCLUDED INSTALLATIONS WITHOUT [REDACTED]. REQUEST THAT YOU PREPARE AND SUBMIT ASAP NEW PROPOSED LIST OF TARGETS SOUTH 19TH PARALLEL TO BE SELECTED FROM THE DIA PRODUCED AUTOMATED INTELLIGENCE FILE (AIF). AS AN EXAMPLE THE DIA AIF DTD 11 NOV 64 CONTAINED IN CINCPAC CPFL-NVN INCLUDED, INTERALIA, 49 BARRACKS AND 17 STORAGE/AMMO DEPOTS OF VARIOUS SIZES IN ADDITION TO 29 BRIDGES AND 10 FERRIES SOUTH OF THE 19TH PARALLEL.

3. IF YOU WISH TO NOMINATE ANY TARGETS NOT INCLUDED IN AIF REQUEST THAT YOU IDENTIFY BY PHOTO RECCE MISSIONS AND FRAME NBR. UPON RECEIPT OF THIS DATA, WE MAY INCLUDE TARGET IN MONTHLY UPDATE

OF CPFL-NVN AND OBTAIN VALIDATION AND [REDACTED]

4. IN ADDITION, REQUEST YOU PREPARE ESTIMATE OF STRIKE, CAP AND FLAK SORTIES REQUIRED FOR EACH TARGET SELECTED AND SUBMIT BY SEPARATE MESSAGE WHEN COMPLETED. GP 1.

BT

INFO: CJCS-1(1) DJS-3(2-4) SJCS-1(5) J3-6(6-11) SACSA-4(12-15) NMCC-2  
(16-17) SECDEF-5(18-22) ISA-5(23-27) WHITE HOUSE-3(28-30) STATE-1  
(31) CSA-2(32-33) CSAF-2(34-35) CNO-3(36-37) CMC-2(38-39) FILE-1(4  
(1-40) FJC/L

REF A IS 20187

SANITIZED  
Authority NLT 002-013-2.2  
By 47 NARA Date 4-11-14

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

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CALL 53337  
FOR NMCC/MC  
SERVICE

210 0943Z

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C-415/10/JCS 263/R-12  
PHP993

VV MSH416  
OO RUEKDA  
DE RUMSMA 1118B 10/0630Z  
O 100620Z  
FM COMUSMACV  
TO RUHKA/CINCPAC  
INFO RUEKDA/JCS  
BT

~~TOP SECRET~~ LIMDIS MAC J-31 4109  
STEPUP OF MILITARY PRESURES AGAINST DRV (S)

- A. CINCPAC 071035Z
- B. JCS 004213 DTG 272333Z JAN 65
- C. MACV 290233Z JAN 65

1. FROM FIRST INDICATIONS, I BELIEVE THAT REACTION OF BOTH GVN AND DRV TO THE RETALIATORY STRIKES OF 7 AND 8 FEB GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO CINCPAC'S VIEW THAT A STEPUP IN MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST DRV WILL BOLSTER BOTH THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION IN RVN.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE FIVE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OF REF A, I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

INFO...CJCS-2(1-2) DJS-3(3-5) SJS-1(6) J3-6(7-12) JRC-2(13-14)

NMCC-2(15-16) DIA-2(17-18) SACSA-1(19) SECDEF-5(20-24)

ISA-5(25-29) CSA-2(30-31) CSAF-2(32-33) CNO-2(34-35)

CMC-2(36-37) WHITE HOUSE-3(38-40) PA-1(41) FILE-1 (42)  
JRT/REB

ADV CYS TO...OSD, NMCC

PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

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Authority DOD 1/29/76  
By MIE, NARS, Date 4/24/78

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

A. PROPOSAL 1. AGREE. USE OF U.S. JET ACFT IN RVN HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED ON CONTINGENCY BASIS AND IN APPROPRIATE INSTANCES I INTEND TO USE THAT AUTHORITY.

B. PROPOSAL 2. CONCUR.

C. PROPOSAL 3. CONCUR.

D. PROPOSAL 4. AGREE. HOWEVER THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHOKE POINTS AS RECOMMENDED BY REF C. AS FOR THE OPTIMUM PROGRAM, IT WILL ACHIEVE FULL EFFECTIVENESS UPON RECEIPT OF AUTHORITY FOR ARMED RECONNAISSANCE AS NEEDED AND STRIKES AS REQUIRED. SHORT OF THAT I STRONGLY RECOMMEND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHOKE POINTS AND THEN, AS SOON AS WE CAN ARRANGE THE DETAILS, PROVISION OF DIRECT SUPPORT OF RLG OPERATIONS WITH U.S. ACFT.

E. PROPOSAL 5. AGREE. THE FIRST THING THAT SHOULD MOVE OVER THE BORDER SHOULD BE CHOKE POINTS, ESTABLISHED IN THE MOST FAVORABLE AREAS. FURTHER EXPANSION SHOULD CONCENTRATE, AT LEAST INITIALLY, ON INFILTRATION ASSOCIATED TARGETS.  
3. ABOVE ACTIONS AGAINST DRV SHOULD BE EXECUTED AS PART OF

OVERALL PROGRAM CALCULATED TO PERSUADE DRV TO CEASE SUPPORT OF INSURGENCY IN RVN. THIS PROGRAM SHOULD ORCHESTRATE THE EFFORTS OF BARREL ROLL, YANKEE TEAM, OPLAN 34, FLAMING DART (INCLUDING VNAF PARTICIPATION) AND DESOTO PATROL. IT SHOULD INCLUDE PROVISION FOR SYSTEMATIC REPRISAL FOR VC ATROCITIES AND OUTRAGES. MACV IS PREPARING SUCH A PROGRAM IN COORDINATION WITH AMEMB SAIGON.

GP-3

BT

REF (A) IS JCS IN 17177  
REF (C) NOT IDENTIFIED

FJC

PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES

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74b  
TOP SECRET

February 7, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Re: The Situation in Vietnam

This memorandum attempts to describe the situation, the stakes and the measures which I think should now be taken.

I. Summary Conclusions

The situation in Vietnam is deteriorating, and without new U. S. action defeat appears inevitable -- probably not in a matter of weeks or perhaps even months, but within the next year or so. There is still time to turn it around, but not much.

The stakes in Vietnam are extremely high. The American investment is very large, and American responsibility is a fact of life which is palpable in the atmosphere of Asia, and even elsewhere. The international prestige of the United States, and a substantial part of our influence, are directly at risk in Vietnam. There is no way of unloading the burden on the Vietnamese themselves, and there is no way of negotiating ourselves out of Vietnam which offers any serious promise at present. It is possible that at some future time a neutral non-Communist force may emerge, perhaps under Buddhist leadership, but no such force currently exists, and any negotiated U. S. withdrawal today would mean surrender on the installment plan.

The policy of graduated and continuing reprisal outlined in Annex A is the most promising course available, in my judgment. That judgment is shared by all who accompanied me from Washington, and I think by all members of the country team.

The events of the last twenty-four hours have produced a practicable point of departure for this policy of reprisal, and for the removal of U. S. dependents. They may also have catalyzed the formation of a new Vietnamese government. If so, the situation may be at a turning point.

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NSC 10-10-76	
By DCH/pen MIE	NARS, Date 5-15-86

Deployment 7/65 Feb 22

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There is much that can and should be done to support and to supplement our present effort, while adding sustained reprisals. But I want to stress one important general conclusion which again is shared by all members of my party: the U. S. mission is composed of outstanding men, and U. S. policy within Vietnam is mainly right and well directed. None of the special solutions or criticisms put forward with zeal by individual reformers in government or in the press is of major importance, and many of them are flatly wrong. No man is perfect, and not every tactical step of recent months has been perfectly chosen, but when you described the Americans in Vietnam as your first team, you were right.

## II. The General Situation

For the last year -- and perhaps for longer -- the overall situation in Vietnam has been deteriorating. The Communists have been gaining and the anti-Communist forces have been losing. As a result there is now great uncertainty among Vietnamese as well as Americans as to whether Communist victory can be prevented. There is nervousness about the determination of the U. S. Government. There is recrimination and fear among Vietnamese political leaders. There is an appearance of wariness among some military leaders. There is a worrisome lassitude among the Vietnamese generally. There is a distressing absence of positive commitment to any serious social or political purpose. Outside observers are ready to write the patient off. All of this tends to bring latent anti-Americanism dangerously near to the surface.

To be an American in Saigon today is to have a gnawing feeling that time is against us. Junior officers in all services are able, zealous and effective within the limits of their means. Their morale is sustained by the fact that they know that they are doing their jobs well and that they will not have to accept the responsibility for defeat. But near the top, where responsibility is heavy and accountability real, one can sense the inner doubts of men whose outward behavior remains determined.

The situation is not all black. The overall military effectiveness of the Vietnamese armed forces in open combat continues to grow. The month of January was one of outstanding and genuine success in offensive military action, showing the highest gross count of Viet Cong dead of any month of the war, and a very high ratio also of enemy to friendly losses. We

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believe that General Westmoreland is right (and General Alsop wrong) when he says that the Viet Cong do not now plan to expose themselves to large-scale military engagements in which their losses on the average would be high and their gains low. (The operation at Binh Gia is analyzed as a special case, representing the taking of a friendly Catholic village as bait rather than a decision to force pitched battle -- more such cases are expected and the particular military problem posed is difficult.) (7)

Moreover, the Vietnamese people, although war weary, are also remarkably tough and resilient, and they do not find the prospect of Communist domination attractive. Their readiness to quit is much lower than the discouraging events of recent months might lead one to expect. It is probable that most Vietnamese think American withdrawal is more likely than an early switch to neutralism or surrender by major elements within Vietnam.

Nevertheless the social and political fabric is stretched thin, and extremely unpleasant surprises are increasingly possible -- both political and military.

And it remains a stubborn fact that the percentage of the countryside which is dominated or threatened by the Viet Cong continues to grow. Even in areas which are "cleared," the follow-on pacification is stalled because of widespread belief that the Viet Cong are going to win in the long run. The areas which can be regarded as truly cleared and pacified and safe are few and shrinking. (An important exception to this is the area of Saigon and its immediate surroundings. The Hop Tac program of pacification in this area has not been an unqualified success, but it has not been a failure, and it has certainly prevented any strangling siege of Saigon. We did not have a chance to form an independent judgment on Hop Tac, but we did conclude that whatever its precise measure of success, it is of great importance that this operation be pursued with full vigor. That is the current policy of the mission.)

### III. The Political Situation

Next only to the overall state of the struggle against the Viet Cong, the shape and structure of the government is the most important element of the Saigon situation. We made it our particular business to examine the question whether and to what degree a stable government is a necessity for the successful prosecution of our policy in Vietnam. We reached a mixed conclusion.

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For immediate purposes -- and especially for the initiation of reprisal policy, we believe that the government need be no stronger than it is today with General Khanh as the focus of raw power while a weak caretaker government goes through the motions. Such a government can execute military decisions and it can give formal political support to joint US/GVN policy. That is about all it can do.

In the longer run, it is necessary that a government be established which will in one way or another be able to maintain its political authority against all challenges over a longer time than the governments of the last year and a half.

The composition and direction of such a government is a most difficult problem, and we do not wholly agree with the mission in our estimate of its nature.

The mood of the mission with respect to the prospect of obtaining such a government is one of pessimism and frustration. This is only natural in terms of the events of the past many weeks. Two dominant themes predominate: a government headed by Khanh will be difficult if not impossible to deal with and, in any case, would be short lived; the Buddhists (or, more specifically, the few politically activist Bonzes) must be confronted and faced down (by military means if necessary) lest they maintain their power to unseat any government that does not bow to their every demand. We tend to differ with the mission on both counts.

Specifically, we believe that General Khanh, with all his faults, is by long odds the outstanding military man currently in sight -- and the most impressive personality generally. We do not share the conclusion of Ambassador Taylor that he must somehow be removed from the military and political scene.

There are strong reasons for the Ambassador's total lack of confidence in Khanh. At least twice Khanh has acted in ways that directly spoiled Ambassador Taylor's high hopes for December. When he abolished the High National Council he undercut the prospect of the stable government needed for Phase II action against the North. In January he overthrew Huong just when the latter, in the Embassy's view, was about to succeed in putting the bonzes in their place.

Khanh is not an easy man to deal with. It is clear that he takes a highly tactical view of truth, although General Westmoreland asserts that Khanh has never deceived him. He is intensely ambitious and intent above all else on maintaining and advancing his own power. He gravely lacks the

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confidence of many of his colleagues -- military and civilian -- and he seems no to be personally popular with the public. He is correctly assessed as tricky. He remains able, energetic, perceptive and resilient, and in our judgment he will pursue the fight against the Communists as long as he can count on U. S. help. (If he should conclude that the U. S. was violently against him personally, he might well seek a way to power by some anti-American path, a path which would lead to disaster for both Vietnam and the United States.)

But our principal reason for opposing any sharp break with Khanh is that we see no one else in sight with anything like his ability to combine military authority with some sense of politics.

We also differ from the Embassy in our estimate of the Buddhist leaders. The dominant Embassy view is that "the Buddhists" are really just a handful of irresponsible and designing clerics and that they must be curbed by firmness. We agree that they may well have to be limited at some point, especially in their use of mobs, but we also think they must be offered some accommodation.

We feel that the operative concept should be incorporated into the affairs of government rather than confrontation. This is easier said than done, because the Buddhists have many of the bad habits of men who have prospered by irresponsible opposition. Still there are signs that both Buddhist laymen and bonzes are now taking a more positive stance. We feel that the mission might do more in attempting to direct or channel the Buddhists into a more useful and positive role -- and active rather than a passive approach. The Buddhists now play a key role in the balance of political forces, so that something more than "confrontation" must be achieved if there is to be any active government at all.

Having registered these two immediate and important differences of emphasis, we should add that in our judgment the mission has acted at about the right level of general involvement in the problem of Vietnamese government-making. American advice is sought by all elements, and all try to bend it to their own ends. The mission attempts to keep before all elements the importance of stable government, and it quietly presses the value of those who are known to be good, solid, able ministerial timber.

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- 6 -

In a situation in which confidence is low and uncertainty great, strongly ambitious forces like Khanh and the Buddhists might react very vigorously against an overt American attempt to form or actively support a government against their liking. Anti-Americanism is a theme that is potentially explosive, and therefore tempting to those who feel that we are blocking their ambitions. This is one lesson, to us, of the outburst in Hue last month.

On the other hand, no power whose stake is as great and whose presence as clear as those of the United States in Vietnam can afford to stand aside entirely, and such a passive posture would not be understood or approved by the Vietnamese themselves.

It is important, therefore, that the mission maintain a constant and active concern with the politics of government-making. This it is doing. While it is very difficult to second-guess this effort, we do recommend a telegram of guidance which might take into account the marginal differences from mission thinking which are suggested above. In the light of further discussion, a message of this sort will be drafted for consideration.

#### IV. Strengthening the Pacification Program

If we suppose that new hopes are raised -- at least temporarily -- by a reprisal program, and if we suppose further that a government somewhat better than the bare minimum is established, the most urgent order of business will then be the improvement and broadening of the pacification program, especially in its non-military elements.

The mission fully concurs in the importance of this effort. We believe, however, that consideration should be given to important modifications in its organization for this purpose. In particular we believe that there should be intensive effort to strengthen our program at the margin between military advice and economic development -- in the area which implies civil government for the soldiers and police action for the aid mission. These efforts, important as they are understood to be, are somehow at the edge of vision for both parties. General Westmoreland and his people inevitably think first of military programs, though they have been imaginative and understanding about the importance of other aspects. Mr. Killen and the USOM people are centrally concerned with problems of aid and of economic improvement, although they talk with conviction and energy about their increasing police effort. It remains a fact that its own

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organization for helping to provide real security for an area which has been "cleared" in crude military terms is unfinished business for the U. S. mission. What is true of our side is doubly true of the Vietnamese.

We do not offer a definite solution to this problem. We are inclined to suggest, however, that one important and unemployed asset is the Special Forces of the Defense Department. Because of the predominant role of the U. S. military, and because of the generous spirit and broad mind of General Westmoreland himself, we are inclined to believe that the easiest growing edge for this work may be through the use of some of these versatile and flexible units.

We would think it important, however, that an effort of this kind be coordinated at a high level between the Defense Department and AID, and we believe that a joint mission which would include either Director Bell or Mr. Gaud from AID is urgently needed for the purpose of building this missing link into our program.

#### V. A Sense of Positive Hope

Vietnamese talk in full of the need for "revolution." Vietnamese practice is empty of action to match the talk -- so much so that the word "revolution" sometimes seems to have no real meaning. Yet in fact there is plainly a deep and strong yearning among the young and the unprivileged for a new and better social order. This is what the Buddhist leaders are groping toward; this is what the students and young Turk generals are seeking. This yearning does not find an adequate response in American policy as Vietnamese see it. This is one cause of latent anti-American feeling. We only perceived this problem toward the end of our visit. We think it needs urgent further attention. We make no present recommendations. We do believe that over the long pull our military and political firmness must be matched by our political and economic support for the hopes that are embodied to Vietnamese in the word "revolution."

#### VI. The Basic U. S. Commitment

The prospect in Vietnam is grim. The energy and persistence of the Viet Cong are astonishing. They can appear anywhere -- and at almost any time. They have accepted extraordinary losses and they come back for

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for more. They show skill in their sneak attacks and ferocity when cornered. Yet the weary country does not want them to win.

There are a host of things the Vietnamese need to do better and areas in which we need to help them. The place where we can help most is in the clarity and firmness of our own commitment to what is in fact as well as in rhetoric a common cause. There is one grave weakness in our posture in Vietnam which is within our own power to fix -- and that is a widespread belief that we do not have the will and force and patience and determination to take the necessary action and stay the course.

This is the overriding reason for our present recommendation of a policy of sustained tactical. Once such a policy is put in force, we shall be able to speak in Vietnam on many topics and in many ways, with growing force and effectiveness.

One final word. At its very best the struggle in Vietnam will be long. It seems to us important that this fundamental fact be made clear and our understanding of it be made clear to our own people and to the people of Vietnam. Too often in the past we have conveyed the impression that we expect an early solution when those who live with this war know that no early solution is possible. It is our own belief that the people of the United States have the necessary will to accept and to execute a policy that rests upon the reality that there is no short cut to success in South Vietnam.

McG. B.

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## ANNEX A

### A POLICY OF SUSTAINED REPRISAL

#### I. Introductory

We believe that the best available way of increasing our chance of success in Vietnam is the development and execution of a policy of sustained reprisal against North Vietnam -- a policy in which air and naval action against the North is justified by and related to the whole Viet Cong campaign of violence and terror in the South.

While we believe that the risks of such a policy are acceptable, we emphasize that its costs are real. It implies significant U.S. air losses even if no full air war is joined, and it seems likely that it would eventually require an extensive and costly effort against the whole air defense system of North Vietnam. U.S. casualties would be higher -- and more visible to American feelings -- than those sustained in the struggle in South Vietnam.

Yet measured against the costs of defeat in Vietnam, this program seems cheap. And even if it fails to turn the tide -- as it may -- the value of the effort seems to us to exceed its cost.

#### II. Outline of the Policy

1. In partnership with the Government of Vietnam, we should develop and exercise the option to retaliate against any VC act of violence to persons or property.

2. In practice, we may wish at the outset to relate our reprisals to those acts of relatively high visibility such as the Pleiku incident. Later, we might retaliate against the assassination of a province chief, but not necessarily the murder of a hamlet official; we might retaliate against a grenade thrown into a crowded cafe in Saigon, but not necessarily to a shot fired into a small shop in the countryside.

3. Once a program of reprisals is clearly underway, it should not be necessary to connect each specific act against North Vietnam to a particular outrage in the South. It should be possible, for example, to publish weekly lists of outrages in the South and to have it clearly understood that these outrages are the cause of such action against the North as may be occurring in the current period. Such a more generalized pattern of reprisal would remove much of the difficulty involved in finding precisely matching targets in response to specific atrocities. Even in such a more general pattern, however, it would be important to insure that the general level of reprisal action remained in close correspondence with the level of outrages in the South. We must keep it clear at every stage both to Hanoi and to the world,

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that our reprisals will be reduced or stopped when outrages in the South are reduced or stopped -- and that we are not attempting to destroy or conquer North Vietnam.

4. In the early stages of such a course, we should take the appropriate occasion to make clear our firm intent to undertake reprisals on any further acts, major or minor, that appear to us and the GVN as indicating Hanoi's support. We would announce that our two governments have been patient and forbearing in the hope that Hanoi would come to its senses without the necessity of our having to take further action; but the outrages continue and now we must react against those who are responsible; we will not provoke; we will not use our force indiscriminately; but we can no longer sit by in the face of repeated acts of terror and violence for which the DRV is responsible.

5. Having once made this announcement, we should execute our reprisal policy with as low a level of public noise as possible. It is to our interest that our acts should be seen -- but we do not wish to boast about them in ways that make it hard for Hanoi to shift its ground. We should instead direct maximum attention to the continuing acts of violence which are the cause of our continuing reprisals.

6. This reprisal policy should begin at a low level. Its level of force and pressure should be increased only gradually -- and as indicated above it should be decreased if VC terror visibly decreases. The object would not be to "win" an air war against Hanoi, but rather to influence the course of the struggle in the South.

7. At the same time it should be recognized that in order to maintain the power of reprisal without risk of excessive loss, an "air war" may in fact be necessary. We should therefore be ready to develop a separate justification for energetic flak suppression and if necessary for the destruction of Communist air power. The essence of such an explanation should be that these actions are intended solely to insure the effectiveness of a policy of reprisal, and in no sense represent any intent to wage offensive war against the North. These distinctions should not be difficult to develop.

8. It remains quite possible, however, that this reprisal policy would get us quickly into the level of military activity contemplated in the so-called Phase II of our December planning. It may even get us beyond this level with both Hanoi and Peking, if there is Communist counter-action. We and the GVN should also be prepared for a spurt of VC terrorism, especially in urban areas, that would dwarf anything yet experienced. These are the risks of any action. They should be carefully reviewed -- but we believe them to be acceptable.

9. We are convinced that the political values of reprisal require a continuous operation. Episodic responses geared on a one-for-one basis to "spectacular" outrages would lack the persuasive force of sustained pressure. More important still, they would leave it open to the Communists

to avoid reprisals entirely by giving up only a small element of their own program. The Gulf of Tonkin affair produced a sharp upturn in morale in South Vietnam. When it remained an isolated episode, however, there was a severe relapse. It is the great merit of the proposed scheme that to stop it the Communists would have to stop enough of their activity in the South to permit the probable success of a determined pacification effort.

### III. Expected Effect of Sustained Reprisal Policy

1. We emphasize that our primary target in advocating a reprisal policy is the improvement of the situation in South Vietnam. Action against the North is usually urged as a means of affecting the will of Hanoi to direct and support the VC. We consider this an important but longer-range purpose. The immediate and critical targets are in the South -- in the minds of the South Vietnamese and in the minds of the Viet Cong cadres.

2. Predictions of the effect of any given course of action upon the states of mind of people are difficult. It seems very clear that if the United States and the Government of Vietnam join in a policy of reprisal, there will be a sharp immediate increase in optimism in the South, among nearly all articulate groups. The Mission believes -- and our own conversations confirm -- that in all sectors of Vietnamese opinion there is a strong belief that the United States could do much more if it would, and that they are suspicious of our failure to use more of our obviously enormous power. At least in the short run, the reaction to reprisal policy would be very favorable.

3. This favorable reaction should offer opportunity for increased American influence in pressing for a more effective government -- at least in the short run. Joint reprisals would imply military planning in which the American role would necessarily be controlling, and this new relation should add to our bargaining power in other military efforts -- and conceivably on a wider plane as well if a more stable government is formed. We have the whip hand in reprisals as we do not in other fields.

4. The Vietnamese increase in hope could well increase the readiness of Vietnamese factions themselves to join together in forming a more effective government.

5. We think it plausible that effective and sustained reprisals, even in a low key, would have a substantial depressing effect upon the morale of Viet Cong cadres in South Vietnam. This is the strong opinion of CIA Saigon. It is based upon reliable reports of the initial Viet Cong reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin episode, and also upon the solid general assessment that the determination of Hanoi and the apparent timidity of the mighty United States are both major items in Viet Cong confidence.

6. The long-run effect of reprisals in the South is far less clear. It may be that like other stimulants, the value of this one would decline over time. Indeed the risk of this result is large enough so that we our-



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selves believe that a very major effort all along the line should be made in South Vietnam to take full advantage of the immediate stimulus of reprisal policy in its early stages. Our object should be to use this new policy to effect a visible upward turn in pacification, in governmental effectiveness, in operations against the Viet Cong, and in the whole U.S./GVN relationship. It is changes in these areas that can have enduring long-term effects.

7. While emphasizing the importance of reprisals in the South, we do not exclude the impact on Hanoi. We believe, indeed, that it is of great importance that the level of reprisal be adjusted rapidly and visibly to both upward and downward shifts in the level of Viet Cong offenses. We want to keep before Hanoi the carrot of our desisting as well as the stick of continued pressure. We also need to conduct the application of the force so that there is always a prospect of worse to come.

8. We cannot assert that a policy of sustained reprisal will succeed in changing the course of the contest in Vietnam. It may fail, and we cannot estimate the odds of success with any accuracy -- they may be somewhere between 25% and 75%. What we can say is that even if it fails, the policy will be worth it. At a minimum it will damp down the charge that we did not do all that we could have done, and this charge will be important in many countries, including our own. Beyond that, a reprisal policy -- to the extent that it demonstrates U.S. willingness to employ this new norm in counter-insurgency -- will set a higher price for the future upon all adventures of guerrilla warfare, and it should therefore somewhat increase our ability to deter such adventures. We must recognize, however, that that ability will be gravely weakened if there is failure for any reason in Vietnam.

#### IV. Present Action Recommendations

1. This general recommendation was developed in intensive discussions in the days just before the attacks on Pleiku. These attacks and our reaction to them have created an ideal opportunity for the prompt development and execution of sustained reprisals. Conversely, if no such policy is now developed, we face the grave danger that Pleiku, like the Gulf of Tonkin, may be a short-run stimulant and a long-term depressant. We therefore recommend that the necessary preparations be made for continuing reprisals. The major necessary steps to be taken appear to us to be the following:

- (1) We should complete the evacuation of dependents.
- (2) We should quietly start the necessary westward deployments of back-up contingency forces.
- (3) We should develop and refine a running catalogue of Viet Cong offenses which can be published regularly and related clearly to our own reprisals. Such a catalogue should perhaps build on the foundation of an Initial White Paper.

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(4) We should initiate joint planning with the GVN on both the civil and military level. Specifically, we should give a clear and strong signal to those now forming a government that we will be ready for this policy when they are.

(5) We should develop the necessary public and diplomatic statements to accompany the initiation and continuation of this program.

(6) We should insure that a reprisal program is matched by renewed public commitment to our family of programs in the South, so that the central importance of the southern struggle may never be neglected.

(7) We should plan quiet diplomatic communication of the precise meaning of what we are and are not doing, to Hanoi, to Peking and to Moscow.

(8) We should be prepared to defend and to justify this new policy by concentrating attention in every forum upon its cause -- the aggression in the South.

(9) We should accept discussion on these terms in any forum, but we should not now accept the idea of negotiations of any sort except on the basis of a stand down of Viet Cong violence. A program of sustained reprisal, with its direct link to Hanoi's continuing aggressive actions in the South, will not involve us in nearly the level of international recrimination which would be precipitated by a go-North program which was not so connected. For this reason the international pressures for negotiation should be quite manageable.

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Authority State Letter 10-11-78

By io, NARS, Date 3-23-79~~SECRET~~

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ACTION FLASH SAIGON 1678 INFO FLASH WHITE HOUSE, DOD/ISA,  
CIA, CINCPAC UNN FEB 10, 5 PM

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REF SAIGON'S 2491

DECISION TAKEN PROCEED FORTHWITH WITH REPRISALS PROPOSED  
YOUR REFTEL 2491; OPERATIONAL DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH  
MILITARY CHANNELS. SEPTTEL WILL GIVE YOU OUR THINKING ON QUESTIONS  
PUBLIC PRESENTATION. AS YOU WILL SEE, WE WISH BASE REPRISAL  
NOT ON QUI NHON ALONE BUT ON COMPLEX OF VC TERRORIST AND  
MILITARY ACTIONS.

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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February 11, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BUNDY

Tasks Ahead

In an effort to obtain some intellectual management over the various facets of our new approach to Vietnam, I have listed the tasks that are underway and certain others that I think should be undertaken. There may be additional items in both categories. You may want to raise these at today's five o'clock session. In any case, I will follow up and will keep you advised - and vice-versa.

A. Projects in Train

- ① Speech by the President (McG. Bundy)
- ② A detailed military presentation for TV (McNaughton)
3. A White Paper on VC atrocities and on Hanoi's culpability (Jorden)
- ④ Development of a pattern of additional steps (military and diplomatic) consistent with our objectives and designed to convey the desired message to the Communists and other countries. (B. Bundy, Unger, Cooper, and DOD/JCS types)
5. A study of reactions to program of sustained reprisals on part of Peiping and Moscow and effect of this program on Sino-Soviet conflict (J. Thomson, Cooper and others as required)
6. Washington's views on Saigon's 2235 and 2495 re our objectives and negotiating posture (B. Bundy, Unger, Cooper)
7. An examination of feasibility and desirability of direct or indirect communication with DRV representative in Delhi, Moscow or elsewhere (Bill Bundy)
8. Consideration of an early session between the President and Dobrynin (McG. Bundy, Amb. Thompson)
9. Reply to Shastri's letter to President (State and Cooper)

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.4

By idw/mj NARA, Date 4-1-14

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B. Projects Which Should be Set in Motion

① A fully developed military and political scenario for execution of policy of sustained reprisals.

② A study of how we turn off the reprisal program once we start it.

3. An operational plan for dealing with the Soviets to the end that Moscow's involvement in Vietnam is minimized, a US - USSR confrontation in Vietnam is avoided, and the risk of the expansion of fighting beyond Vietnam is reduced.

4. A clear-cut information program which will provide the American people and others with a satisfactory explanation of our policy, without jeopardizing the military and political objectives we have in mind.

⑤ A procedure for weekly justification of reprisal action.

6. Certain contingency planning studies:

How do we approach a Security Council debate?

How do we respond to strong (French, Indian, UN, Communist?) initiatives for a cease-fire and/or negotiations?

A US-Soviet Summit meeting?

Certain military contingencies (which are probably already under study)?

7. A review of third-country aid policy in light of our experience in soliciting such aid and in view of new situation accompanying sustained reprisal program.

Chester Cooper

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2/11/65  
3:25 PM

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

11 February 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I attach three cables that will interest you. The first is a message from Pope Paul; the second is a report of the German press treatment on your meeting with the German Ambassador Knappstein; the third is a message I sent to Prime Minister Wilson's office last night after your talk with him.

Only the message from Pope Paul requires action and I suggest that we send back through Reinhardt a message of this sort:

"The President understands the concern expressed by His Holiness in his message to the President. The President is sure that His Holiness understands that the root cause of the trouble in Southeast Asia is the persistent and ferocious aggression of Communists directed from North Vietnam. The President wishes His Holiness to be assured that the actions of the US Government are being carefully controlled by the President himself and that all such actions will be measured and temperate and governed by the President's determination to do all in his power to avoid any wider war."

This leaves out the words "prompt and adequate" which we have used with other troubled spirits, but I think in the case of Pope Paul, a slightly different language is justified.

Send this answer                      ✓

Speak to me                     

h.c.B.

McG.B.

*Message to Paul - good  
that we plan.*

*L*

~~SECRET~~ ATTACHMENTS (2)

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February 11, 1965

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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Cables from Max Taylor

I attach two cables from Max Taylor which have been referred to in our discussions but which you will wish to read yourself. They are the basic recommendation for a reprisal program (Tab A), and his weekly report (Tab B), which includes his acknowledgment of our outgoing cable (Tab C) reporting your basic decision of Monday to reaffirm your December plan on the basis of the evacuation of dependents and the best government we can get in Saigon. These documents are the fundamental basis on which we are now making plans for your further review. The only more important document will be your speech, of which I expect to have a first draft by Saturday morning.

McG. B.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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Action

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Rec'd:

FEBRUARY 9, 1965  
4:49 AM

Info

FROM: SAIGON

ACTION: SECSTATE 2445 PRIORITY

INFO: WHITE HOUSE 343 PRIORITY  
DOD 425 PRIORITY  
CINCPAC 1446 PRIORITY  
BANGKOK 448 PRIORITY  
VIENTIANE 366 PRIORITY

DATE: FEBRUARY 9, NOON

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EXDIS

WE APPRECIATE PROMPT DECISIONS FROM WASHINGTON FOR REPRISAL ATTACKS YESTERDAY AND TODAY AGAINST SELECTED MILITARY TARGETS IN THE DRV. I CONSIDER THIS A SIGNIFICANT FORWARD STEP IN DEMONSTRATING US DETERMINATION NOT TO CONTINUE TO SUBMIT TO VC OFFENSES AGAINST US AND VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS WITHOUT A SUITABLE RESPONSE ON OUR PART. THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT OF FEBRUARY 7 EMPHASIZES THAT WE SEEK NO WIDER WAR, IN PINNING THE RESPONSIBILITY ON THE DRV, AND IN CAREFULLY POINTING OUT THAT OUR RESPONSE WAS AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS SUPPORTING DRV AGGRESSION AND NOT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POPULATION. THIS STATEMENT AND OUR ACTIONS YESTERDAY AND TODAY PROVIDE IN MY VIEW A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR EMBARKING ON A GRADUATED REPRISAL PROGRAM TO BRING INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE DRV TO CEASE ITS INTERVENTION IN SVN, AS DISCUSSED HERE AT SOME LENGTH WITH BUNDY AND HIS PARTY.

THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF SUCH A PROGRAM IS THAT THROUGH A MEASURED, CONTROLLED SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS AGAINST THE DRV TAKEN IN REPRISAL FOR DRV INSPIRED ACTIONS IN SVN, SIGNIFICANT PRESSURES CAN BE

/BROUGHT TO BEAR

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Authority *Pres. Vols # 93*By *12*, NARA, Date *4-4-74*

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- 2445, FEBRUARY 9, NOON, FROM SAIGON

BROUGHT TO BEAR ON DRV TO PERSUADE IT TO STOP ITS INTERVENTION IN SVN. THE PROGRAM WOULD BE CARRIED OUT JOINTLY WITH GVN AND WOULD BE DIRECTED SOLELY AGAINST DRV MILITARY TARGETS AND INFILTRATION ROUTES, NOT AGAINST DRV POPULATION. WHILE FEBRUARY 7 AND 8 MILITARY ACTIONS WERE SPECIFICALLY TIED TO VC ATTACKS IN PLEIKU AND TUY HOA, IN THE FUTURE WE COULD LOOK TO A SITUATION IN WHICH US/GVN REPRISALS COULD BE INITIATED BASED ON A GENERAL CATALOG OR PACKAGE OF VC OUTRAGES, NO ONE PARTICULARLY GRAVE ITSELF, NOT NECESSARILY TO A SPECIFIC VC ACT IN EACH CASE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT ANNOUNCE THAT VC ACTS AGAINST SPECIFIC TARGETS (SUCH AS THE RAILROAD IN SVN) WILL RESULT IN RETALIATION AGAINST SIMILAR TARGETS IN THE DRV. OUR GRADUATED REPRISALS WITH THE GENERAL LEVEL OF VC OUTRAGES IN SVN, OR IF WE SO DESIRED PROGRESSIVELY RAISE THE LEVEL OF PRESSURE ON THE DRV.\* THUS, IT WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO THE SO-CALLED PHASE II ESCALATION BUT JUSTIFIED ON BASIS OF RETALIATION.

IN CARRYING OUT SUCH A PROGRAM, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD LIMIT US/GVN PUBLICITY TO THE BARE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO BALANCE COMMUNIST OUTPUT. WE WOULD CONFIRM OUR REPRISAL ACTIONS ONLY WHEN NECESSARY AND THEN AS BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ESTABLISHED POLICY OF REPRISALS.

OUR CURRENT 34A OPERATIONS (EXCEPT ANY 34-A AIR STRIKES IN THE DRV) AND THE YANKEE TEAM/BARREL ROLL OPERATIONS IN THE LAOS CORRIDOR WOULD OF COURSE CONTINUE. ADDITIONALLY, WE WOULD PROGRESSIVELY EXTEND THESE OPERATIONS INTO THE DRV ALONG INFILTRATION ROUTES.

THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF GRADUATED REPRISALS WE WOULD CONVEY CLEARLY THROUGH APPROPRIATE INTERMEDIARIES OR OTHER MEANS TO PEKING, MOSCOW, AND HANOI THE LIMITED NATURE OF OUR OBJECTIVES AND INTENTIONS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME OUR DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES. SIMILARLY, WE WOULD HAVE TO EXPAND OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THAILAND AND INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RLG AND OTHER FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS TO BRING THEM INTO THE PICTURE TO THE EXTENT DESIRED.

/WITH REGARD TO

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

-3- 2445, FEBRUARY 9, NOON, FROM SAIGON

WITH REGARD TO OT THE GVN I WOULD ENVISAGE MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS AT AN EARLY DATE TO DEVELOP FIRM ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOINT (#) GVN ACTIONS AND TO BEGIN A PROCESS OF EDUCATION BY WHICH GVN WOULD BEGIN TO FORMULATE ITS WAR OBJECTIVES AND ULTIMATELY REACH AGREEMENT WITH US ON THE FRAMEWORK OF DEMANDS TO BE MADE ON THE DRV AS WELL AS THE GENERAL NEGOTIATING PROCEDURES. BOTH GENERAL KHANH AND ACTING PRIME MINISTER OANH HAVE STRESSED THE NEED FOR EXPANDED DISCUSSIONS AND OF INTEGRATING THE VIETNAMESE INTO A PROGRAM AGAINST DRV. I FEEL IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT WE DO THIS AND THAT WE MAINTAIN A SENSE OF MOMENTUM IF WE ARE TO CAPITALIZE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS WHICH IF EXPLOITED EARLY COULD LEAD TO A GREATER SENSE OF PURPOSE AND DIRECTION BOTH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY AND AWAKEN NEW HOPE FOR EVENTUAL VICTORY ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO AVOID IN THE PRESENT SITUATION A GENERAL LETDOWN IN MORALE AND SPIRIT WHICH FOLLOWED OUR ACTION IN THE TONKIN GULF.

IF THE GRADUATED REPRISAL PROGRAM SUCCEEDS IN MOUNTING SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON THE DRV TO THE POINT WHERE THE DRV LEADERS HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS AS TO THEIR CHANCES FOR ULTIMATE SUCCESS, WE SHOULD HAVE A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE WE WOULD LIKE TO COME OUT. I BELIEVE RATIONALE OF SIMPLY RETURNING TO OBSERVANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS WITH RESPECT TO SVN AND THE 1962 ACCORDS RE LAOS AS SET FORTH IN EMBTEL 235 (NOTAL) IS STILL VALID. THIS FORMULA HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF SIMPLICITY, OF AVOIDING PITFALLS OF NEW CONFERENCES, AND AVOIDING NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT CESSATION OF DRV DIRECTION AND SUPPORT OF AGGRESSION AGAINST THE SOUTH COULD BE ACHIEVED MORE OR LESS TACITLY IN FIRST INSTANCE AND THEN CONFIRMED THROUGH GVN/DRV NEGOTIATIONS AT THE MILITARY LEVEL. AN ADDED ADVANTAGE IS THAT IT KEEPS US REMOVED FROM DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH DRV. A SEPARATE TELEGRAM FOLLOWS ON HOW US/GVN TERMS FOR CESSATION OF DRV SUPPORT AND DIRECTION OF AGGRESSION IN SVN MIGHT BE STATED.

/IN SUM, I BELIEVE

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

-4- 2445, FEBRUARY 9, NOON. FROM SAIGON

IN SUM, I BELIEVE A PHASE II PROGRAM BASED LARGELY ON GRADUATED REPRISALS OFFERS THE BEST AVAILABLE MEANS OF EXERTING INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE DRV LEADERS TO INDUCE THEM TO CEASE THEIR INTERVENTION IN SVN WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING MORE MANAGEABLE IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION AND WITH OUR FRIENDS. I RECOMMEND THAT WE PROCEED ALONG THIS TRACK.

TAYLOR

LM

\*SENTENCE AS RECEIVED. VERIFICATION REQUESTED.

(#) OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 4:55 AM, FEBRUARY 9

PASSED CIA AT 5:22 AM, FEBRUARY 9

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 7-25-80 letterBy ig, NARS, Date 9-2-80

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE TO WHOM  
IN CHARGE TO

Classification

Origin

ACTION: AmEmbassy SAIGON 1653 IMMEDIATE

Info

FOR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR FROM THE PRESIDENT

NODIS LOR

1. Mac Bundy has given me a full report of his discussions with you and of the outstanding work which you and all your team are doing.

2. In our discussions in December we agreed upon the importance of undertaking appropriate action against North Vietnam. We then felt it important to establish as strong a government as possible, and you have been doing your level best to that end. It also seemed to me essential to get women and children out of the area, and now we have taken that decision. I am now prepared to go forward with the best government we can get, and accordingly I wish you to know that I have today decided that we will carry out our December plan for continuing action against North Vietnam with modifications up and down in tempo and scale in the light of your recommendations as Bundy reports them, and our own continuing review of the ~~extremely~~ situation.

3. It is most important that this decision not be publicized until we have determined precise opening moves, and until Kosygin is safely

Dated by

2/8/65

White House: McG Bundy/bmm

Classified by

Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

W. P. Bundy

White House: McGeorge Bundy

S/S - Mr. Hoffacker

TOP SECRET

Classification

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FORM 8-63 05-322

~~TOP SECRET~~  
Classification

out of Hanoi. Moreover, we wish to make our own plans after assessing Soviet reaction to recent events which should be more clear by time Kosygin leaves.

4. Evacuation of dependents should proceed as you determine. I hope you can meet the 7 - 10 days suggested in your last message.

5. I am impressed by argument that the building of a minimum government will benefit by some private assurances from us to the highest levels that we do now intend to take continuing action. Therefore, you are authorized to convey this in general terms to key leaders and political figures as you see fit. At the same time you should say that we want to work with a unified and going government, and that the sooner they can work out such a government, the better we can plan and execute the continuing actions we have in mind.

6. This brings my warmest *good wishes to you and Mrs. Taylor*, and my renewed thanks for all that you are *doing for your country*.

GP-1.

END



INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State**WH* 002~~TOP SECRET~~

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## Action

CONTROL: 8080  
RECEIVED: FEBRUARY 9, 1965, 9:50 P.M. CORRECTION ISSUED:  
2/10/65, 2:15 A.M.,  
RNL

## Info

FROM: SAIGON - CORRECTED COPY  
ACTION: SECSTATE 2466 IMMEDIATE  
DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 10 A.M.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter JAN 29 1979

By *if*, NARS, Date: 1-29-80

FOR THE PRESIDENT

NODIS - LOR

REF: A. DEPTTEL 1653. B. EMBTEL 2462.

THIS CABLE IS MY WEEKLY REPORT ON THE LOCAL SITUATION AND A  
REPLY TO DEPTTEL 1653.

WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER, WE ARE MOST HAPPY OVER YOUR DECISION  
TO MOVE FORWARD INTO THE SO-CALLED PHASE II OF OUR DECEMBER PLAN.  
OUR EMBTEL 2455 REPORTS OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASSING TO  
PHASE II VIA THE REPRISAL ROUTE, BASED ON OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH  
MAC BUNDY AND HIS GROUP. WE WILL FORWARD SHORTLY SUGGESTIONS OF  
SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAM. SUCH ACTIONS WILL  
BE FOR THE PERIOD FOLLOWING KOSYGIN'S DEPARTURE FROM HANOI AND  
OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SOVIET REACTION TO RECENT EVENTS.

WITH REGARD TO THE AUTHORITY IN PARA 5, REF A, ALEX JOHNSON AND  
I USED IT AFTERNOON FEB 9 IN ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE VIEN TO  
ACCEPT THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP WHICH HAD BEEN OFFERED HIM AND  
WHICH HE HAD DECLINED. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE HIM DIS-  
CREDITED IN A GOVT CONTROLLED FROM THE WINGS BY KHANH AND  
THE BUDDHIST INSTITUTE, WE DO THINK HE SHOULD ACCEPT THE  
RISKS INHERENT IN THE JOB IF HE CAN GET THE ARMED FORCES  
COUNCIL (NOT JUST KHANH) TO GIVE HIM GUARANTEES ON THE CARDINAL  
POINTS MENTIONED IN REF B. WE HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN KHANH'S  
WORD BUT WE DOUBT THAT THE GENERALS AS A BODY WOULD RENEGE ON  
A FORMAL COMMITMENT. AS I SIGN THIS CABLE, WE DO NOT KNOW THE  
OUTCOME OF THE PREMIERSHIP QUESTION.

~~TOP SECRET~~REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS  
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"



~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- 2466, FEBRUARY 10, 10 A.M., FROM SAIGON - CORRECTED COPY

WITH REGARD TO THE MILITARY SITUATION DURING THE LAST WEEK, CELEBRATION OF THE OPENING OF THE LUNAR NEW YEAR LED TO A SHARP DECLINE IN BOTH VIET CONG AND GOVT MILITARY ACTIVITY. THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT ENGAGEMENTS DURING THE HOLIDAY PERIOD AND AS A RESULT PERSONNEL AND WEAPONS LOSSES ON BOTH SIDES WERE DOWN CONSIDERABLY FROM NORMAL LEVELS. AS YOU KNOW, THIS LULL, HOWEVER, WAS BROKEN DRAMATICALLY BY THE VIET CONG ATTACK AGAINST THE US MILITARY COMPOUND AND AIRSTRIP AT PLEIKU DURING THE EARLY MORNING HOURS LAST SUNDAY, CAUSING AMERICAN CASUALTIES OF 8 DEATHS AND 108 WOUNDED AS WELL AS THE DESTRUCTION OF ONE AIRCRAFT AND DAMAGE TO 13 OTHERS. THE PLEIKU INCIDENT, OUR JOINT PROMPT REPRISALS AGAINST SELECTED NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN DEPENDENTS HAVE BROUGHT NEW ELEMENTS INTO THE PICTURE WHICH IT IS PREMATURE TO ASSESS.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THE FOREGOING EVENTS IS LIKELY TO BE GREAT BUT CAN NOT YET BE MEASURED. FORMER PRIME MINISTER HUONG, FEARING FOR HIS LIFE FROM THE BUDDHISTS AND SUSPICIOUS OF BETRAYAL TO THEM BY KHANH, WENT INTO HIDING ON FEB 3 IN THE RESIDENCE OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR, TO THE ANGUISH OF HIS HOST. YESTERDAY, BRIGHTENED BY THE ATTACKS OF FEBRUARY 7 AND 8 ON THE DRV, HE DECIDED TO GO TO VUNG TAU AND ACCEPT THE PROTECTION OF GENERAL KHANH AND THE ARMED FORCES WHOM HE HAD NOT TRUSTED UP TO THEN. I CAN NOT EXPLAIN HIS REASONING BUT THERE IT IS. VIEN STATES THAT HE WOULD NEVER HAVE ENTERTAINED THE THOUGHT OF ACCEPTING THE PREMIERSHIP AFTER HUONG'S DOWNFALL BUT FOR THIS NEW TURN OF EVENTS IN THE NORTH. SOMETHING TONIC HAS BEEN ADDED BUT HOW FAR IT WILL CARRY US REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

IN ANY CASE, THANK YOU FOR RECENT DECISIONS AND FOR LETTING BUNDY AND COMPANY COME OUR WAY. THEY WERE A STIMULANT TO US AND WE HOPE IT WAS RECIPROCAL.

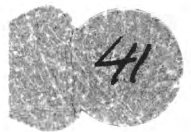
CFN LOR A 1653 B 2462 1653 II 2445 II BUDNY KOSYGIN 5 A  
JOHNSON 9 VIEN NOT KHANH KHANH B KHANH NOT NO PLEIKU 8 108  
13 PLEIKU NOT HUONG KHANH 3 7 8 DRV VUNG TAU KHANH NOT NOT VIEN  
HUONG BUNDY

TAYLOR

RNL/AE

~~TOP SECRET~~

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February 12, 1965

~~SECRET~~

McGB-

SUBJECT: The Soviet Side of Vietnam

This is a [ ] hypothesis based on non-sensitive material, without access or reference to COMINT and NSC discussion data.

(1) Peking and Hanoi. My starting point is Vietnam and the post-Khrushchevian Moscow view on the Soviet role in Southeast Asia.

The Kosygin trip to North Vietnam was a move to re-establish a Soviet position in North Vietnam, a move not unrelated to the continuing Moscow-Peking conflict. Moscow, according to my reading, took a decision to put a rein on the Chinese in this part of the world - and re-establish a Soviet voice in disposing of the spoils in Southeast Asia. Moscow also was not going to abdicate its revolutionary responsibilities -- a factor most important in the context of the Sino-Soviet confrontation, and Moscow's continuing relations with Washington.

For Hanoi, this was not an unwelcome development. For reasons of geography, Hanoi is compelled to accept Chinese dominance -- a dominance that can only be diluted by a Soviet presence. In these circumstances, Hanoi probably welcomed Moscow's renewed interest, for reasons that went beyond possible military and economic assistance.

Peking is a total puzzle. Unfathomable. But to make this hypothesis fit, I assume Kosygin's trip to Hanoi was not something Peking desired. However, if Kosygin was determined to go to Hanoi, Peking would make this venture worth Peking's while.

It is in this context that I see the latest Vietnamese developments

[ ] The Chinese Communists intended to force the Soviets to take a position consistent with and in support of the Chinese stance in Southeast Asia. They had every intention to disrupt, to the extent they could, any understanding between Moscow and Washington. They also decided that if Moscow was going to play a nefarious political game in Southeast Asia, they, the Chinese Communists, would make the Soviets pay a price for it.

**SANITIZED**

~~SECRET~~

Authority: RAC 24795

By: us/8 44-74 (5/98)

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(2) Moscow. If this hypothesis has resemblance to reality, it follows that Moscow had no part or role in the attacks of the last ten days. It had no interest in it and was taken by surprise as much as we. And Kosygin found himself boxed in. Assuming a joint Chinese-Vietnamese decision to take these actions, the Chinese motives would derive from those stated above, while the North Vietnamese, in addition to doing Peking's bidding, probably saw the advantage of getting the Soviets more tightly involved in Southeast Asia. (A repeat of the Soviet action during the Gulf of Tonkin incident was inconceivable while Kosygin was kept in tow in Hanoi.)

Moscow's attitude has been ambivalent and carefully so. While attacking U.S. actions, Moscow has also referred to the importance of its relations with Washington. But with each successive attack Moscow has stepped up its verbal attacks. But this is understandable. The Kremlin cannot be less revolutionary than the other Communists. It must be in the vanguard.

And in this connection, it is interesting to note the differences between Moscow's and Kosygin's pronouncements and the degree to which Moscow modified Kosygin.

In this situation, it would be my guess that our military action or reaction has not been totally unwelcome to Moscow. Moscow's overall position would probably be worse if we did fail to react promptly to the attack and thereby justified Chinese tactics and antics.

(3) Consequences. In playing this hand, it is urgent that we keep North Vietnam, Communist China and the Soviets separate and distinct in our actions, pronouncements, etc., and not mix them inadvertently.

As I read the U.S. statements, I understand -- and I assume Moscow, Peking and Hanoi do, too -- that the U.S. has taken the decision to meet force with force, although the U.S. action need not be precisely related to the size and timing of the North Vietnamese action. In fact, each U.S. measure is stronger than the preceding one, with each subsequent action appearing to creep farther North. Chinese Communist territory, however, will be avoided and military measures will be limited to sea and air actions. There is no thought of a land campaign.

Personally, the military moves make tremendous sense. Indeed, I do not see how we could consider any other course unless we want to have

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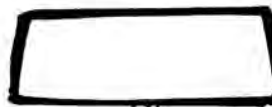
~~SECRET~~

South Vietnam collapse completely and advantage shifted to Peking.

But by the same token, it is essential that in our actions and pronouncements we not only put our moves into a meaningful political context, but that we avoid unnecessarily engaging Peking or Moscow. We need an effective channel of communication and that channel is via Moscow. (I assume we are using this channel already.)

I presume thought is also being given to the tactics for moving this exercise from the air and sea attacks to a discussion forum. Military action alone is inconceivable to me.

The next stages require better knowledge of the Vietnamese situation than I have, and depend on a hard headed assessment of our staying power, Vietnamese stability on both sides of the line, and Moscow and Peking's readiness to play a constructive role. (This presumes enough heat has to be generated to bring this about.) This also depends on how strongly the domino theory is held and whether gradual decommitment, via marathon talks and intricate political arrangements arrived at during a long period (3 to 4 years) is conceivable.



~~SECRET~~