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PROCESSING NOTE

In processing this file it was noted that there is an error in the numbering sequence. After Tab #35 the numbering jumps to #45a. There are no documents missing. It was an error in the numbering of the documents.

Irene Loreda, Archives Specialist

May 9, 2014

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

June 18, 1965

CH
45a

MEMORANDUM TO: Secretary of Defense

The President mentioned to me yesterday his desire that we find more dramatic and effective actions in South Vietnam. He also mentioned his desire for a report on the progress of his idea that we need more light planes for operations there. Finally, he asked if we have enough helicopters.

These questions all seem to fall in your bailiwick, so I pass them along direct to you for action.

McGeorge Bundy

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 2/17/77, NSC 4/11/77
By MJE, NARS, Date 4/12/78

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

✓ 46a

40

Action

SS

Info

NNNNW MJA175JIA512

OO RUEHCR

DE RUMJIR 1021A/1 13/1020Z

O R 131010Z ZEA ZFG

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE (4265)

INFO RUHKA/CINCPAC 2494

STATE GRNC

BT

~~TOP SECRET~~ SECTION ONE OF TWO JUNE 13

DEPT PASS DEFENSE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E X D I S

REF: MACV 19113 AND DEPT 2373

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *State 7-5-78 letter*

By *sp*, NARS, Date *1-29-80*

1. IT IS MISSION VIEW THAT MACV IN ITS MSG 19113 ACCURATELY PRESENTED ITS VIEWS OF MILITARY SITUATION AS OF THE DATE OF THE MESSAGE. THERE WAS NO INTENT IN EITHER TO STATE OR TO IMPLY "THAT THERE IS A SERIOUS DANGER OF COMPLETE MILITARY COLLAPSE WITHIN RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME" IT CORRECTLY STATES

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 1021A/1 ~~TOP SECRET~~
VIEWS OF COMUSMACV ON THE MILITARY SITUATION AS OF THE DATE OF THE MESSAGE.

2. THE MILREP PROVIDES A SHORT TERM REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN A SEVEN DAY PERIOD. IT DOES NOT PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE MEDIUM OF LONG TERM SITUATION NOR DOES IT PRETEND TO BE AN ASSESSMENT OF SUCH A PERIOD. THIS TYPE OF ANALYSIS IS CONTAINED IN ESTIMATES AND ASSESSMENTS FORWARDED FROM TIME TO TIME.

3. FOR THE MOST RECENT MISSION COUNCIL ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL SITUATION SEE EMBTEL 4074 NODIS. SINCE THE TRANSMISSION OF THAT MESSAGE CERTAIN UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TRANSPIRED INCLUDING SEVERAL SERIOUS VC ATTACKS. FIVE ARVN BATTALIONS HAVE BECOME TEMPORARILY COMBAT INEFFECTIVE DUE TO LOSSES SUSTAINED IN RECENT ACTIONS. A SIXTH, THE SEVENTH ABN, WAS SEVERELY MAULED AT DONG XOAI. MACV 19113 CONTAINS LATEST INFORMATION CURRENT EFFECTIVENESS AND MORALE ARVN. RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT SOME ARVN TROOPS ARE INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO ENGAGE IN OFFENSIVE COMBAT. AT LEAST TWO SENIOR OFFICERS RECENTLY HAVE SHOWN STRONGLY

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-2- 4265, JUNE 18, (SEC ONE OF TWO) FROM SAIGON

DEFENSIVE ATTITUDES. IN TWO RECENT SERIOUS ENGAGEMENTS MIDDLE LEVEL COMMANDERS HAVE DISPLAYED LITTLE OR NO INITIATIVE IN GOING TO THE RELIEF OF HEAVILY ENGAGED AND OUTNUMBERED ARVN UNITS. IN THE JUNE REPORT ON UNIT COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS SUBMITTED

PAGE THREE RUMJIR 1021A/1 ~~TOP SECRET~~

BY THE SENIOR ADVISORS ON 31 REGIMENTS, 93 BATTALIONS, 20 RANGER BATTALIONS, AND 5 MARINE BATTALIONS, FOUR REGIMENTS AND NINE BATTALIONS WERE RATED INEFFECTIVE. FURTHERMORE, ARVN BATTALIONS ARE GOING INTO BATTLE UNDERSTRENGTH. A RECENT 10 PER CENT RANDOM CHECK OF BATTALIONS INDICATES AVERAGE STRENGTH OF AN OPERATIONAL BATTALION AS 333 RATHER THAN THE AUTHORIZED 714 VERSUS THE VC ACTUAL AVERAGE OF 425. THE ARVN SOLDIER KNOWS THIS AND TENDS TO FEEL THAT HE IS A MEMBER OF A UNIT WHICH WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO FACE UP TO SUPERIOR ODDS. MORALE IS BOUND TO SAG UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. THE VC ARE USING FORCES AS LARGE AS REINFORCED REGIMENTS AND ARE PREPARED TO COMMIT THEM IN ATTACKING GARRISONS OF DISTRICT AND PROVINCE CAPITALS WHERE THE SIZE OF THE DEFENDING FORCES ARE SUCH AS TO LEAD VC LEADERS TO FEEL A VICTORY IS CERTAIN. THUS WE ARE INVOLVED IN THE MOST VIOLENT PHASE OF WARFARE TO DATE. FURTHERMORE, THE DRV COULD REINFORCE THE VC EFFORT BY THE INFILTRATION OF UP TO THREE DIVISIONS OF THE PAVN. POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT AT LEAST ONE DIVISION IS ALREADY IN COUNTRY.

5. IN ANSWER TO SPECIFIC POINTS RAISED IN DEPTTEL, FOLLOWING IS OFFERED:

PAGE FOUR RUMJIR 1021A/1 ~~TOP SECRET~~

A. OUR INFO RE DEPLOYMENT 304TH ALSO TENUOUS BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT ELEMENTS ARE IN LAOS, SOUTHERN DRV, AND IN RVN. THEREARE NO CERTAINTIES ATTACHED TO ANY OF THESE LOCATIONS. IN VIEW OF INDICATIONS MACV FEELS MUST ASSUME 304TH REPRESENTS AT LEAST A POTENTIAL REINFORCEMENT THREAT.

B. DESERTIONS CONTINUE SERIOUS DRAIN ON ARVN. A SLIGHT CHANGE IN RATE, EVEN THOUGH FAVORABLE, DOES NOT MEAN AN END TO PROBLEM. FOLLOWING IS COMPARISON IN TERMS OF NUMBERS:

~~TOP SECRET~~

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-3- 4265, JUNE 18, (SEC ONE OF TWO) FROM SAIGON

	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY (ESTIMATED)
REG	2532	5018	3611	3500
RF	812	1137	1242	1300
PF	3394	5010	5402	5200

C. DURING PERIOD FEBRUARY - MID-MAY THE VC MAIN FORCES AVOIDED BATTLE AND REMAINED QUIESCENT THUS ALLOWING INITIATIVE TO PASS TO ARVN. THIS SITUATION MADE CLEAR IN ESTIMATES AND REPORTS SUBMITTED BY BOTH MISSION AND MACV. NOW VC HAVE COMMITTED MAIN FORCES AND HAVE CAPABILITY INITIATE BATTLE AT TIME AND PLACE OWN CHOOSING. IN ESSENCE THE INITIATIVE RESTS WITH THE VC.

D. THE LATEST MACV FIGURES RE INFILTRATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PAGE FIVE RUMJIR 1321A/1 ~~TOP SECRET~~

	TO DATE	1965
TOTAL REPORTED	43900	5600
TOTAL PROBABLE (INCL. REPORTED)	55650	6350

E. ALL ARVN COMBAT UNITS ARE UNDERSTRENGTH AND THIS FACT HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE PAST BY MACV. IN ORDER TO BRNG UNITS UP TO AN ACCEPTABLE BATTLEFIELD STRENGTH A TEMPORARY HALT IN ACTIVATION OF NEW BATTALIONS HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED TO CINCRVNAF. THE FLOW OF BATTLE REPLACEMENTS HAS NOT YET BEGUN FROM THAT SOURCE.

TAYLOR
BT

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 1:30 PM, 6/18/65.

PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA AT 1:45 PM, 6/18/65.

~~TOP SECRET~~

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

~~TOP SECRET~~

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Action

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Info

VV MJA063JIA465
00 RUEHCR
DE RUMJIR 1021A/2 18/1035Z
O R 131010Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4265
INFO RUHKA/CINCPAC 2494
STATE GRNC
BT

1965 JUN 18 6 7 6 1
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~~TOP SECRET~~ SECTION TWO OF TWO JUNE 18

DEPT PASS DEFENSE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E X D I S

F. THE ACTUAL FIGHTING STRENGTH OF THE AVERAGE RVNAF INFANTRY BATTALION IS ABOUT 350. THE ACTUAL FIGHTING STRENGTH OF THE AVERAGE VIET CONG INFANTRY BATTALION IS ABOUT 400 MEN. VIET CONG BATTALIONS, HOWEVER, RANGE FROM 250 TO OVER 600 MEN. WITH ONE LOCAL BATTALION IN THE DELTA POSSIBLY HAVING 890 MEN.

6. WITH RESPECT TO POINT RASIED CONCERNING FORCE RATIOS, THE

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 1021A/2 ~~TOP SECRET~~
8 JUN MSG FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND TO AMBASSADOR TAYLOR IN WASHINGTON IS QUOTED IN PART FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

QUOTE: SUBJECT: ALLIED VS VC FORCE RATIOS; REF: A. COMUSMACV 070335Z.

1. FORWARDED AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR YOUR CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ARE RATIOS OF ALLIED BATTALIONS VERSUS IN COUNTRY VIET CONG/PAVN BATTALIONS AS REVISED THROUGH CONSIDERATION OF FORCES REQUESTED IN PARA 10A REFERENCE A.

2. FOLLOWING PARAMETERS IN TERMS OF BATTALION EQUIVALENTS APPLY:
A. ONE ARVN BN EQUALS ONE VC/PAVN BN.
B. ONE US ARMY, ROK, OR ANZAC BN EQUALS TWO VC/PAVN BNS.
C. ONE US MARINE BLT EQUALS THREE VC/PAVN BNS.

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-2-4265, June 18, (Section 2 of 2) from: Saigon

3. USING THE FOREGOING PARAMETERS, THE ALLIED (ARVN PLUS US PLUS THIRD COUNTRY) BATTALION EQUIVALENTS SHOWN IN COLUMN A BELOW ARE COMPUTED FOR FORCES ON BOARD PLUS THOSE NOW APPROVED FOR DEPLOYMENT; COLUMN B SHOWS THE SUM OF COLUMN A AND FORCES REQUESTED IN PARA 10A REFERENCE A:

CORPS AREA	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
I	46	52
II	37	59
III	47	47

PAGE THREE RUMJIR 1021A/2 ~~TOP SECRET~~

IV	33	33
TOTAL	163	191

4. RVNAF/ALLIED VS IN COUNTRY VC/PAVN RATIOS ARE COMPUTED UNDER THREE TERMS OF REFERENCE: CONFIRMED VC FORCES; CONFIRMED PLUS PROBABLE VC FORCES; AND CONFIRMED PLUS PROBABLE PLUS POSSIBLE VC FORCES. THE 325TH PAVN DIVISION IN II CORPS AREA NOTED IN PARA 3 REFERENCE A IS LISTED BELOW IN THE "POSSIBLE" CATEGORY. READ IN 4 COLUMNS.

CORPS AREA	CONFIRMED	CONFIRMED PLUS PROBABLE	CONFIRMED PLUS PROBABLE PLUS POSSIBLE
I CORPS:			
NR VC/PAVN BNS	26	34.5	34.5
ALLIED VS VC (COL A PARA 3)	1.8/1	1.3/1	1.3/1
ALLIED VS VC (COL B PARA 3)	2.0/1	1.5/1	1.5/1

II CORPS:			
NR VC/PAVN BNS	25	37.5	48.5
ALLIED VS VC (COL A PARA 3)	1.48/1	.99/1	.76/1

PAGE FOUR RUMJIR 1021A/2 ~~TOP SECRET~~

ALLIED VS VC (COL B PARA 3)	2.36/1	1.57/1	1.22/1
--------------------------------	--------	--------	--------

II CORPS:			
NR VC/PAVN BNS	27	32	32
ALLIED VS VC (COL A PARA 3)	1.74/1	1.47/1	1.47/1
ALLIED VS VC (COL B PARA 3)	1.74/1	1.47/1	1.47/1

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-3-4265, June 18, (Section 2 of 2) from: Saigon

IV CORPS:			
NR VC/PAVN BNS	37	51	51
ALLIED VS VC (COL A			
PARA 3)	.9/1	.65/1	.65/1
ALLIED VS VC (COL B			
PARA 3)	.9/1	.65/1	.65/1
TOTALS:			
NR VC/PAVN BNS	115	155	166
ALLIED VS VC (COL A			
PARA 3)	1.41/1	1.05/1	.98/1
ALLIED VS VC (COL B			
PARA 3)	1.66/1	1.23/1	1.15/1

UNQUOTE.

TAYLOR
BT

Note: Advance copy to S/S-O at 7:39 a.m. 6/18/65
Passed to White House, DOD & CIA at 8:20 a.m. 6/18/65

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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Action DVV MJD889JIA417
CO RUEHCR
SS DE RUMJIR 1005A 18/0445Z
O 180437Z ZEA

1965 JUN 18 AM 12 55

Info FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4261
INFO RUHLHQ/CINCPAC IMMEDIATE 2492
STATE GRNC
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~~SECRET~~ JUNE 18

E X D I S

DEPTEL 2945

PROCEDURE WORKED OUT WITH QUAT FOR TROOP INTRODUCTIONS HAS BEEN THAT I OBTAIN GVN APPROVAL FOR MOVEMENT AND LATER JUST PRIOR TO TIME OF ARRIVAL OF TROOPS GVN HAS ISSUED STATEMENT SAYING THAT, AT ITS INVITATION, CERTAIN US UNITS ARE LANDING FOR CERTAIN PURPOSE. WE HAD EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THIS PROCEDURE FOR QUI NHON BRIGADE WHICH I HAD MENTIONED IN GENERAL TERMS TO QUAT ON 17 MAY (SEE EMDTEL 3788.)

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 1005A ~~SECRET~~
WASHINGTON PRESS STATEMENT OF JUNE 16 UPSETS THIS ARRANGEMENT, GOES BEYOND FACTS IN STATING THAT SIX ADDITIONAL BATTALIONS HAVE BEEN REQUESTED BY GVN, AND EXPOSES US HERE TO QUESTIONS WE STILL CANNOT ANSWER WITH REGARD TO TIME OF ARRIVAL, AREA OF DEPLOYMENT AND MISSION. ALL SAIGON GOVTS HAVE HAD COMMON SENSITIVITY ABOUT UNILATERAL WASHINGTON STATEMENTS BEARING ON VITAL VN ISSUES AND GENERAL KY, IF HE IS TO BE OUR NEW PRIMIN, WILL BE PARTICULARLY TOUCHY ON THIS SCORE. TO OFFSET QUICKLY EFFECTS OF THIS INCIDENT, I WOULD APPRECIATE ASAP INFO NEEDED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS POSED ABOVE. INCIDENTALLY, WHAT IS MANEUVER BATTALION? TERM IS NOT IN MY MILITARY LEXICON.

AS TO FUTURE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEPLOYMENTS, I RECOMMEND REVERSION TO PROCEDURE WHICH WAS IN EFFECT WITH QUAT. IF THIS IS NOT SATISFACTORY, LET US DEVISE BETTER ONE BUT IN ANY CASE ADHERE TO IT.

TAYLOR

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O 6/18/65, 1 A.M.

PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA 6/18/65, 1:15 A.M.

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Authority State 16 12/19/77

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By MTE, NARS, Date 4/12/78

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority STATE letter JAN 29 1979
By ip, NARS, Date 6-27-79

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 18, 1965

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Keeping the Power of Decision
in the South Viet-Nam Crisis

I.

The Need to Keep Control

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote: "Things are in the saddle, and ride mankind."

Your most difficult continuing problem in South Viet-Nam is to prevent "things" from getting into the saddle--or, in other words, to keep control of policy and prevent the momentum of events from taking command.

The best formula for maintaining freedom of decision is (a) to limit our commitments in time and magnitude and (b) to establish specific time schedules for the selection of optional courses of action on the basis of pre-established criteria.

II.

Outline of Specific Proposals

The North Vietnamese are apparently using the monsoon season as a test period to determine whether they can impose enough local defeats to demoralize the South Vietnamese and discourage the United States.

I propose

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-2-

I propose that we also treat the monsoon season as a test period since we do not yet have enough experience with the direct employment of American combat forces to appraise our chances for military success in the South.

But in launching a vigorous effort to halt the Viet Cong offensive during the monsoon period you should at the same time make it clear to your key advisers that, at the conclusion of that period, we will take a serious look at our accumulated experience and decide whatever long-range course of policy or action is indicated.

For the fact is--and we can no longer avoid it--that, in spite of our intentions to the contrary, we are drifting toward a major war--that nobody wants.

I recommend, therefore, the following program:

1. Decide now to authorize an increase of American forces in South Viet-Nam to an aggregate level of 100,000--but no more--additional forces. These should be deployed as rapidly as possible in order to deal with the Viet Cong offensive during the rainy season.

2. Instruct your top advisers--limited in this case, for security reasons, to the Secretaries of State and Defense (and possibly also the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs):

(a) that you are not committing US forces on an open-ended basis to an all-out land war in South Viet-Nam;

(b) that instead you are making a controlled commitment for a trial period of three months;

(c) that on the basis of our experience during that trial period we will then appraise the costs and possibilities of waging a successful land war in South Viet-Nam and chart a clear course of action accordingly;

(d) that, during the test period, in publicly stating American aims and purposes, American spokesmen should

. emphasize

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emphasize our willingness to stay in South Viet-Nam so long as we are wanted (a qualification that has tended to become submerged in recent months); and

(e) that, in carrying out this limited decision, your advisers should--during the three-months period--press the war on the ground in South Viet-Nam as vigorously as possible, while seeking quietly and effectively to avoid those longer-term actions and commitments that would reduce your freedom of decision at the end of the period.

3. Direct your top advisers to prepare the following plans:

(a) A plan for continuing the land war in South Viet-Nam on a stepped-up basis;

(b) A plan for conducting a vigorous diplomatic offensive designed to bring about a political settlement; and

(c) Plans for bringing about a military or political solution--short of the ultimate US objectives--that can be attained without the substantial further commitment of US forces. These last should be regarded as plans for cutting losses and eventually disengaging from an untenable situation.

The reasoning underlying these proposals and the manner in which they might be carried out are elaborated in the balance of this memorandum.

III.

Where We Are Now-- On the Threshold of a New War

In raising our commitment from 50,000 to 100,000 or more men and deploying most of the increment in combat roles

we are

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we are beginning a new war--the United States directly against the Viet Cong.

Perhaps the large-scale introduction of American forces with their concentrated fire power will force Hanoi and the Viet Cong to the decision we are seeking. On the other hand, we may not be able to fight the war successfully enough--even with 500,000 Americans in South Viet-Nam--to achieve this purpose.

Before we commit an endless flow of forces to South Viet-Nam we must have more evidence than we now have that our troops will not bog down in the jungles and rice paddies--while we slowly blow the country to pieces.

A review of the French experience more than a decade ago may be helpful.

The French fought a war in Viet-Nam, and were finally defeated--after seven years of bloody struggle and when they still had 250,000 combat-hardened veterans in the field, supported by an army of 205,000 South Vietnamese.

To be sure, the French were fighting a colonial war while we are fighting to stop aggression. But when we have put enough Americans on the ground in South Viet-Nam to give the appearance of a white man's war, the distinction as to our ultimate purpose will have less and less practical effect.

Nor is our position in Viet-Nam without its historical ambiguities. From 1948-1954 we identified ourselves with the French by providing almost \$4 billions of United States aid to help the French in Indochina wage war against the Viet Minh. As soon as our aid contributions began to mount, Ho Chi Minh denounced American "imperialism".

This campaign of denunciation was continued over the radio and through other propaganda media after the French withdrew and we began to help President Diem.

Today

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-5-

Today no one can say for certain how many Vietnamese are for us or against us. We have trouble collecting intelligence because few Vietnamese are willing to risk their necks to aid the American effort. And our popularity will diminish even further as we are forced to indulge in more and more area bombing, crop burning, etc.

Ever since 1961--the beginning of our deep involvement in South Viet-Nam--we have met successive disappointments. We have tended to underestimate the strength and staying-power of the enemy. We have tended to overestimate the effectiveness of our sophisticated weapons under jungle conditions. We have watched the progressive loss of territory to Viet Cong control. We have been unable to bring about the creation of a stable political base in Saigon.

This is no one's fault. It is in the nature of the struggle.

The French had much the same experience.

They quoted the same kind of statistics that guide our opinions--statistics as to the number of Viet Minh killed, the number of enemy defectors, the rate of enemy desertions, etc. They fully believed that the Vietnamese people were on their side, and their hopes received intermittent shots of adrenalin from a succession of projects for winning the war--the DeLattre de Tassigny Plan, the Salan Plan, the Navarre Plan, etc.

This does not mean that we cannot succeed where the French did not; we have things running for us that the French did not have. But we cannot yet be sure--and that is the reason for the trial period.

For we have not so far seen enough evidence to be sure that the South Vietnamese forces will stand up under the heightening pressure--or, in fact, that the Vietnamese people really have a strong will to fight after twenty years of

struggle.

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-6-

struggle. We cannot be sure how far the cancer has infected the whole body politic of South Viet-Nam and whether we can do more than administer a cobalt treatment to a terminal case.

Yet the more forces we deploy in South Viet-Nam--particularly in combat roles--the harder we shall find it to extricate ourselves without unacceptable costs if the war goes badly.

With large forces committed, the failure to turn the tide will generate pressures to escalate. There will be mounting domestic demands that we expand our air attacks on the North so as to destroy Hanoi and Haiphong. Yet if our air attacks threaten the total destruction of the North Vietnamese economy, Red China can hardly help but react. And our best Soviet experts do not believe that the Soviet Union could stand down in the event that we became involved directly with the Chinese.

IV.

Courses of Action To Be Followed Depending on Results of Test Period

A. Actions if the Fight Goes Well.

If--on a careful appraisal of all the evidence accumulated during the test period--you are satisfied that United States military power can stop and throw back the Viet Cong without unacceptable United States losses, you are then in position to decide on a longer-term aggressive strategy, of which the elements would be:

(a) to commit whatever force is needed to do the job in South Viet-Nam as quickly and cheaply as possible;

(b) to continue our air attacks on North Viet-Nam but avoiding the Hanoi-Haiphong complex and keeping well south of the Chinese border;

(c) to

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-7-

(c) to renew your assurances to the South Vietnamese and the world of our intention to stay the course; and

(d) to initiate the Acheson plan and increase our diplomatic probes through third parties and a judicious use of pauses--while encouraging efforts of friendly countries to bring the North Vietnamese to the conference table.

All of this is, of course, contingent on the continued maintenance of a minimum level of political stability in Saigon.

B. Actions if the Fight Goes Badly.

If the evidence accumulated during the test period provides no reasonable assurance that the United States can conduct a successful land war in South Viet-Nam without a vast protracted effort, you should seek means of limiting the American commitment and finding a political solution at a level below the total achievement of our declared objectives.

There are several ways of achieving this--none fully satisfactory. But a good general picks his own terrain and is prepared to execute tactical redeployments when events require it. Similarly, it is a part of good statesmanship to cut losses when the pursuit of particular courses of action threaten (a) to lead to a costly and indeterminant result; or (b) to produce an escalation of violence that could result in a major war.

The technique of cutting our losses requires intensive study. No one has yet looked at the problem carefully since we have been unwilling to think in those terms. I would suggest, however, that there are several alternative possibilities which should be carefully examined.

(a) Reducing

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-8-

(a) Reducing Our Military Commitment

The first is to devise a plan for limiting the defense perimeter within South Viet-Nam to the cities and major towns--particularly those having access to the sea. This would deny to the Viet Cong the administrative, commercial and industrial heart of the country.

(b) Letting Nature Take Its Course

A second approach is subtly to withdraw moral and political support from the Government in Saigon. In this way the non-Communist and neutralist forces might be encouraged to work out some sort of compromise with the Viet Cong.

Such an operation would require great finesse. However, the Saigon Government is becoming more and more a fiction--in real terms South Viet-Nam has an army but no government.

While putting in train any operation of disengagement we should, of course, simultaneously take steps to strengthen our position in Thailand and to create a diplomatic atmosphere around the world that would minimize the costs of US withdrawal. To do this, we would rely heavily on the qualified nature of our commitment--to help defend the South Vietnamese so long--but only so long--as they wished our help.

(c) Other Possibilities

As a third possibility, we might consider variant means by which there might emerge a South Vietnamese determination to go it alone. One approach might be to encourage our friends to call for elections in South Viet-Nam in order to permit self-determination by a people engaged in civil war. Another might be to let our friends crank up a fourteen-nation conference.

During

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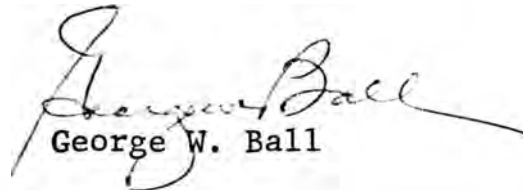
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* * * * *

During the past weeks we have concentrated on seeking a political solution that would fully meet our stated objectives in South Viet-Nam. Such a solution will not be feasible so long as the Viet Cong are winning or believe they are winning. Since we cannot yet be sure that we will be able to beat the Viet Cong without unacceptable costs, we would be prudent to undertake an additional study of the political means to achieve less than a satisfactory solution--or, in other words, a solution involving concessions on our side as well as the Viet Cong.

The above suggestions are of the most preliminary kind. I am sure that other possibilities could be developed.


George W. Ball

~~TOP SECRET~~

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (INTELLIGENCE)

18 JUN 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Bromley Smith;
White House Staff
The White House

SUBJECT : The Sino-Vietnamese Effort to
Limit American Actions in the
Vietnam War (POLO XX)

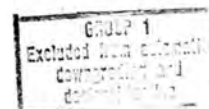
I am sending along the attached intelligence study because I think you will find it of special interest. It concludes that Peiping and Hanoi did not expect the U.S. to strike the North by air. When the U.S. did so, the Chinese encouraged Hanoi to move to primarily conventional warfare in the South and to infiltrate forces on a larger scale; Hanoi was evidently reluctant to go as far as China wished. The Chinese also stated the conditions under which their army would intervene, although not without ambiguity. The Chinese seem to believe that Communist forces can accept larger risks and still pursue the war effectively in the South, i.e., without provoking the U.S. to move ground forces into North Vietnam or to bomb China.

Ray S. Cline

RAY S. CLINE
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

Attachment
RSS No. 0008/65
Copy No. 2-6

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority CIA HR 7/22/77
By MJE, NARS, Date 4/12/78

2829

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

496



9 June 1965

RSS No. 0008/65

Copy No. 1

INTELLIGENCE STUDY

THE SINO-VIETNAMESE EFFORT TO LIMIT
AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE VIETNAM WAR
(POLO XX)

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

~~SANITIZED~~
Authority NLS 98.294
By sep/k NARA Date 4-11-14

GROUP 1
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NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM

THE SINO-VIETNAMESE EFFORT TO LIMIT
AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE VIETNAM WAR

This is a working paper of the DD/I Research Staff. It deals with one aspect of Peiping's relations with Hanoi in the context of the war in Vietnam and is a follow-up to an earlier Staff memorandum (RSS No. 0006/65, 2 April 1965) on differences between Chinese and Vietnamese views on strategy for the prosecution of the war.

58(2) The writer of this paper, has found useful material in the published weekly analysis of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The DDI/RS would welcome comment addressed to the writer

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THE SINO-VIETNAMESE EFFORT TO LIMIT
AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE VIETNAM WAR

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THE SINO-VIETNAMESE EFFORT TO LIMIT
AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Summary

When the Viet Cong was re-activated in 1958-59, neither Peiping nor Hanoi seemed to estimate that the American commitment to Saigon would develop to the point at which territory in the North would be subjected to air strikes. In their discussion of the war in 1960-62, they emphasized that the American effort in the South was "special warfare," i.e., of a very limited character. As American military support of South Vietnam increased, the Chinese became increasingly concerned, and by 1964 they underscored a Sino-Vietnamese community of interest in trying to deter Washington from making air strikes against the North. However, they were at pains to ensure that Washington would not calculate that PLA forces were poised to enter Vietnam or Laos (and, therefore, would not feel impelled to strike by air at the China mainland). The U.S. air strikes on North Vietnam in August 1964 almost certainly took the Chinese and Vietnamese leaders by surprise. By February-March 1965, their failure to prevent strikes against the North forced them to recognize that Mao was wrong in thinking that small wars could be fought with only slight risks to the base areas and to the security of other bloc countries.

Once the concept of sanctuary for the North had been invalidated, the Chinese were apparently stimulated to add a new dimension to their encouragement of Hanoi. That is, in addition to encouraging the North Vietnamese to move the fighting in the South from primarily guerrilla warfare (with occasional big battles of annihilation) to primarily conventional warfare (with many big battles of annihilation), the Chinese apparently began urging the North Vietnamese to infiltrate PAVN forces into the South on a larger scale. Hanoi, evidently reluctant to comply to the extent advocated by Peiping in early 1965, may now be somewhat more willing to do so, in the sense of being willing to infiltrate a few more PAVN units. However, the Chinese seem to be sustaining their pressure for large-scale infiltration or even direct attacks across

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the 17th parallel. The Chinese almost certainly would increase their pressure on Hanoi if American air strikes were to hit targets north of the 20th parallel and were to include more economic installations.

Considerably increased awareness of the threat to the China mainland apparently has impelled the Chinese leaders to state publicly the conditions under which they would use the PLA to intervene. There seem to be two conditions for definite intervention. PLA ground forces will enter the fighting if (a) the United States moves large forces of its own ground troops across the 17th parallel and (b) the North Vietnamese prove unable to handle the matter and request Chinese assistance. Were the United States to strike by air at bases in China but not move its troops on the ground into the North, PLA ground forces might be committed to Vietnam. This last part of the Chinese position contains a large element of ambiguity, particularly on the matter of what constitutes an American "attack" against the mainland. The Chinese have declared "If we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack," but they have been equivocal on the matter of whether air strikes against the mainland would spur them to counterattack with the PLA on the ground, or whether air strikes against the mainland would meet merely with a counter air strike (or air defense action).

The Chinese certainly prefer to prevent such American air strikes against their bases. Their options, however, are limited because of their (Mao's) pugnacity and refusal to concede that the small war will not work in Vietnam. They seem to believe that it will still work--that is, that, accepting a larger risk to the North Vietnamese base area and to China than originally foreseen, Communist forces can still pursue the war effectively in South Vietnam, probably without provoking the U.S. into (a) moving its ground forces into North Vietnam on a large scale, or (b) making air attacks on China. Therefore, the Chinese will not desist from encouraging Hanoi and the Viet Cong from continuing the war. They seem to be willing to risk, if necessary, even the destruction of their bases in South China to sustain the war.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Saturday, June 19, 1965
10:10 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Pros and Cons of a June Pause

The Case for Such a Move

1. It will dramatize the good faith of our quest for a peaceful solution.
2. It will further shift the onus for continued hostilities to Hanoi and Peking, if they fail to respond with action.
3. It may allow the USSR increased leverage in pressing Hanoi towards negotiations, if any such inclination exists within the Soviet leadership. (Very doubtful, on the evidence of May).
4. It will permit a more careful testing of Hanoi's interest in negotiations, if any such inclination exists.
5. It will meet one persistent demand of our domestic critics and waverers.
6. It will ease the mounting domestic pressures on our allies (primarily the British and the Japanese, but also the Australians and Canadians) to stop their support of our Vietnam policy.
7. It will meet some persistent objections of unaligned nations and leaders (primarily the Indians and U Thant).
8. It will somewhat de-fuse the Algerian meeting by strengthening our supporters and putting the heat on our adversaries.

The Case Against Such a Move

1. It may cause deep apprehension on US determination in the already weakened Saigon Government.

2. It may allow Hanoi to catch its breath, repair damaged communications, and increase its assistance to the Viet Cong.

3. It may appear to the Communist side to be an admission of the ineffectiveness of the bombings and an indication of US desperation for "negotiations now."

4. It will arouse strong criticism among domestic hardliners -- particularly among Republicans who are looking for a way to make capital out of any signs of our softness in Vietnam.

5. It might make a return to air-strikes difficult in the context of inevitable international pressure to make the suspension permanent.

If US forces were to get hurt during a pause, we would be giving a dangerous opening for Mel Laird; people just wouldn't understand it.

McG.B.

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT
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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE 2977

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Authority OSD letter 3-2478Refs: ~~(a) Enbtl 4261~~ (a) Enbtl 4261 By isg, NARS, Date 1-29-80
(b) ~~Deptel 2945~~
(c) MAC 2984, OSO245Z
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Reftel (b) gives a gross breakdown of the troops included in the public announcement. Further breakdown follows:

FORCES	APPROXIMATE STRENGTH		REMARKS
	Persons	Bns	
Those in country on 16 June 1965	54,000	9	2 Bns 173rd Bde 7 Bns III MAF
Bde from 1st Div	4,000	3	ETA 15 July 1965
Bde from 101st Div	4,200	3	ETA 28 July 1965
Support forces of various types	9,000	-	Balance of those approved 15 May that are still enroute.
Miscellaneous units & personnel (includes f-100 Sqdn to Clark for further move to SVN)	1,800	-	Units and augmentations recommended by CINCPAC that have been under consideration since 15 May but not including new deployment discussed with Amb Taylor 7-12 June 1965.
TOTAL	75,000	15 Bns (21,000)	

Drafted by:

FE:RMCowherd/mlg 6/19/65

Clearances:

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE - Leonard Unger

P - Mr. Arzac

s/s - DMCoster

OSD/ISA-Adm. Blouin (Jt. Stf-J3 (Gen. Reaves)

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The 16 June public announcement covered only deployments which already had Washington and GVN approval. These with the retention of the 173d Bde would result in an authorized in-country strength of approximately 74,000.

Maneuver battalions refer to type U.S. battalions, in this case Army airborne and infantry, as described by COMUSMACV in reftel (c).

If there are GVN questions concerning identity, missions, deployment times, and location of additional two brigades which in effect is retention of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, you should explain this retention still under study here. If we conclude this desirable, we will give you results that study to convey to GVN at same time we consult with them on whether they ^{agree} ~~consider~~ retention required.

GP-3

End

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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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USIA

PROFILE OF CABINET

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RSR

NGUYEN CAO KY'S "WAR" CABINET IS YOUNG (AVERAGE AGE 40) AND ESSENTIALLY A GOVERNMENT OF HIGHLY-MOTIVATED TECHNICIANS SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE SHOWN HESITATION AT SERVING WITH PAST GOVERNMENTS. IT CONTAINS THREE MEDICAL DOCTORS, THREE ENGINEERS, THREE LAWYERS, ONE MAGISTRATE, ONE ECONOMICS PROFESSOR, A BANK ADMINISTRATOR, AND A LABOR EXPERT. THE MILITARY IS REPRESENTED BY KY HIMSELF, GENERAL CO, AND AN ARMY SURGEON AS SECRETARY FOR YOUTH.

REGIONALLY, CABINET IS ALMOST EQUALLY BALANCED BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH WITH APPARENTLY ONLY ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CENTER. SEVEN MEMBERS ARE HOLDOVERS FROM THE QUAT CABINET: FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JUSTICE, PSYWAR, YOUTH, FINANCE, AGRICULTURE, AND PUBLIC WORKS. TWO OF SEVEN, HOWEVER, HAD ONLY BEEN IN QUAT CABINET FOR TWO WEEKS BEFORE DISSOLUTION THAT GOVERNMENT.

HOLDOVERS:

IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS POST, KY CHOSE TO RETAIN TRAN VAN DO WHO HELD SAME PORTFOLIO IN FIRST DIEM GOVERNMENT AND IN QUAT GOVERNMENT. DO SHOULD FURNISH USEFUL CONTINUITY, EXPERIENCE AND SAGACITY IN THIS IMPORTANT POST.

LU VAN VI, THOUGH SECOND OLDEST IN AGE, HAS DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE ENERGY AS MINJUSTICE UNDER QUAT AND IN HUONG GOVERNMENT. FACT THAT HE IS CATHOLIC AND HOLDOVER MAY HELP GOVERNMENT IN SORTING OUT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CATHOLIC MINORITY. HE IS ALSO "AUTHENTIC" SOUTHERNER AND SHOULD HELP VIS-A-VIS THIS POTENTIALLY DISSIDENT GROUP.

PYSWAR SEC DINH TRINH CHINH SEEMS BRIGHT AND IS WELL-TRAINED (LAW GRADUATE, PRESS TRAINING IN US). IN FEW WEEKS HE HAD AS

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PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

Authority State 12/19/77

By MTE, NARS, Date 4/12/78

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2- 4298, June 20, From Saigon

MININFO WITH QUAT GOVERNMENT, HE DEMONSTRATED COMMENDABLE ENERGY; SINCE MILITARY'S DECISION TO RESUME POWER, CHINH HAS SERVED ON "BRAIN TRUST" THAT DRAFTED CHARTER, PRODUCED KY'S "26 POINT" PROGRAM.

PUBWORKS SEC NGO TRONG ANH HAS SOLID BACKGROUND IN PUBLIC WORKS FIELD, DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO WORK UNDER QUAT GOVERNMENT, IS REPORTED TO BE CLOSE TO PRIMIN KY AS WELL AS PROMINENT INSTITUTE BONZES.

YOUTHSEC NGUYEN TAN HONG HAS SERVED IN MILITARY SINCE 1951, YEAR AFTER RECEIVING MEDICAL DIPLOMA AT HANOI, IS FLIGHT SURGEON WITH US TRAINING. HAS APPARENTLY SERVED EFFECTIVELY AS YOUTH MINISTER WITH QUAT GOVERNMENT.

SECRETARY FOR FINANCE TRAN VAN KIEN HAS GOOD SCHOLASTIC PREPARATION FOR POST, HAS DONE GOOD JOB SINCE TAKING OVER PORTFOLIO WITHIN QUAT GOVERNMENT.

LAN VAN TRI, SEC FOR AGRICULTURE, HAS FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE DEGREE, FAIRLY LONG RECORD OF EXPERIENCE IN FIELD. HE IS BRIGHT, DYNAMIC, HONEST YOUNG TECHNICIAN WHO PROVED HIMSELF IN ESTABLISHING CAI SAN REFUGEE SETTLEMENT.

BIO DATA ON NEW MEMBERS:

TRUONG THNI TON (MINECONOMY AND FINANCE, SECRETARY FOR ECONOMY) - AGRARIAN ENGINEER, BORN NOV. 30, 1925 AT SAIGON, MARRIED, FIVE CHILDREN. EDUCATION: STUDIED IN FRANCE.

CAREER: 1956-1963: TECHNICIAN AT BUDGET DIRECTORATE AND FOREIGN AID

1963-1965: ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR OF BUDGET AND FOREIGN AID

1964-1965: DIRECTOR GENERAL BINH DUONG SUGAR COMPANY

COMMENT: ANOTHER BRIGHT YOUNG TECHNICIAN WITH REPUTATION FOR HONESTY WHO HAS IN PAST HESITATED TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO ANY RECENT CABINET. "DRAFTED" INTO THIS ONE HE HAS INDICATED HIS WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO ITS SUCCESS.

NGUYEN TAT UNG (SEC RURAL AFFAIRS) - BANK ADMINISTRATOR, BORN MAY 17, 1924 AT HANOI, MARRIED, SIX CHILDREN. EDUCATION: HOLDS LAW DEGREE.

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--3-- 4298, June 20 From Saigon

CAREER: 1950-1951: WORKED IN MINISTRY OF YOUTH IN NORTH VIETNAM (CADRE TRAINING PROGRAM).

1953-1954: IN CHARGE OF REGIONAL FORCES IN PACIFICATION DIRECTORATE NORTH VIETNAM

1956-1964: HAS SERVED AS OFFICIAL IN BANQUE FRANCO-CHINOISE.

TRAN MINH TIET (SECINTERIOR) - MAGISTRATE, BORN DEC. 28, 1922 IN HAU NGHIA, MARRIED, 3 CHILDREN. EDUCATION: HOLDS LAW DEGREE AND HAS SERVED AS MAGISTRATE FROM 1950 TO 1965. COMES FROM A WELL-KNOWN SOUTHERN FAMILY, IS CATHOLIC, AND REPORTEDLY A DAI VIET.

PAGE 5 RUMJIR 1125A ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NGUYEN BA KHA (SECHEALTH) - DOCTOR, BORN MAY 24, 1920 AT VIENTIANE, MARRIED, SIX CHILDREN. EDUCATION: DR. KHA INTERNEED AT VARIOUS HOSPITALS IN HANOI AND SERVED ON THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF HANOI. HAS BEEN IN PRIVATE PRACTICE.

NGUYEN XUAN PHONG (SECLABOR) - BORN FEB. 4, 1936, BAC LIEU. EDUCATION: HOLDS DEGREE IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICS FROM UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD (1958).

HAS WORKED IN LABOR RELATIONS FOR THE ESSO COMPANY IN SAIGON AND MOST RECENTLY WITH USOM AS SENIOR VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, WHERE HE IS VERY HIGHLY ESTEEMED.

TRAN NGOC LIENG (SEC SOCIAL ACTION) - BORN APRIL 14, 1923, VINH LONG, MARRIED, THREE CHILDREN. EDUCATION: HOLDS LAW DEGREE. HAS BEEN IN PRIVATE PRACTICE SINCE 1950.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA PRESENTLY UNAVAILABLE ON TRAN NGOC NINH AND TRAN NGOC LIEN. DATA ON THEM WILL BE FORWARDED WHEN AVAILABLE.

TAYLOR
BT

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"I've got to read that memorandum tomorrow.

Take it off and let the letter go, and put
that on my desk tomorrow."

LBJ/vm
9:20 pm
6-21-65

*This can be
filled.
Wm. Water.
7/9*

Reid
Mont 6/21/65
11:45 a.m.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Monday
June 21, 1965
10:00 A. M.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I think Morse's memorandum is tightly argued and complex, and if we answer it point by point at this stage, we will be almost sure to trip over ourselves as we make tactical decisions in the coming months. So it seems to me better to give him the soft answer which is suggested in the attached draft.

And just because his paper is so well argued, I am sending a copy to Harlan Cleveland so that in anything we do we can take account of the possibility of flanking fire from Morse.

McG. B.
McG. B.

SECTION I

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT ON UNITED STATES POLICIES IN VIETNAM

1. United States policies toward Vietnam should encompass at least the following essentials:

(a) They should command widespread support and respect throughout the world and throughout the United States. This is not presently the case.

(b) They must contemplate the cost of "victory" as well as defeat. The cost is already high and we have no sign of victory.

(c) The United States will make a profound error if we do no more than prosecute the war. The longer it continues, the more likely it will escalate, and we cannot escalate it ourselves without China and Russia escalating their participation, too.

It would be a very serious mistake to think the American people would support a stalemated ground war in Vietnam for a period long enough to force the Communists into negotiating. They refused to support that kind of war in Korea. It became a choice between going all out to win, or ending it on almost any terms.

We alone cannot stop the war in Vietnam. But the United Nations could. The United States has more to gain from a U. N.-imposed peace than from a continuation of the fighting, leading we know not where.

It is frequently alleged that the United States has three possible courses of action in Vietnam: to escalate, to get out, or to stalemate the issue until the other side gets tired.

But there is another course of action which is positive in a world framework, even if the short range effects in Vietnam may be difficult, embarrassing, and involve loss of face. This course is for the United States to call on the United Nations to make the Vietnamese war its business. More is involved than suggesting that the Secretary General visit Hanoi and Peking. What is required is a specific application of U. N. procedures.

2. If we have a desire and determination to use the United Nations as prescribed in the Charter, there are many ways in which it can be done. If we desire only to make a gesture to the U. N., there are many ways in which we can make sure our gesture is rejected.

On the record, our unilateral action has served to spread both the war and the degree of Communist control in South Vietnam. It is a real question whether the United Nations could do more poorly than we have done, if it is our objective to keep the peace and to forestall Communism.

3. Because North Vietnam -- a non-member of the U. N. -- said U. N. action was "inappropriate" in no way affects the jurisdiction of the Security Council or the General Assembly over any situation that threatens the peace.

To give a veto to North Vietnam over this matter is a travesty on the power of the United Nations.

Those of us who were here when President Truman rallied the United Nations in 1950 to throw back aggression in Korea remember that even the opposition of the Soviet Union did not stop us. She walked out of the Security Council and in her absence it took up the breach of the peace in Korea. When Russia came back and used her veto on the implementation of the decision to intervene, the issue was taken to the General Assembly, and it acted.

North Korea was not invited to take part in the discussions, and she did not ask to take part; that did not deter the U. N. from acting. Like North Vietnam, North Korea was not a U. N. member.

North Vietnam, mainland China, and South Vietnam are not members of the United Nations. None should be accorded a veto over prospective United Nations action in Southeast Asia, either by declining to take part in its discussions or by opposing what is proposed.

4. We could request the Vietcong to join us, South Vietnam, and possibly North Vietnam in negotiations. The use of acceptable mediators and conciliators could be discussed.

The terms of the Charter provide certain steps to be taken when breaches of the peace occur. The first is Article 33:

"1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

"2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means."

Our offers to negotiate with North Vietnam and with China have not been accepted. However, the Vietcong is a principal party to the dispute in South Vietnam, and until we offer to negotiate with them or undertake with them any of the other means of settlement above, we have not really explored the possibilities of this Article. Moreover, China could be left out of arrangements under this Article since she is not a party to the dispute.

5. Article 34 describes the jurisdiction of the Security Council:

"The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

Obviously, the war in Vietnam qualifies for at least "investigation" by the Security Council.

Article 35 continues:

"1. Any member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation of the nature referred to in Article 34, to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly.

"2. A state which is not a Member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the General Assembly any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purposes of the dispute, the obligations to pacific settlement provided in the present Charter.

"3. The proceedings of the General Assembly in respect of matters brought to its attention under this Article will be subject to the provisions of Articles 11 and 12."

There is a considerable movement afoot among members of the British Labor Party to induce the British Government to act under this Article to put the Vietnam war before the Security Council. Article 99 of the Charter also empowers the Secretary General to bring before the Security Council a dispute he regards as a potential threat to peace. Since members, non-members, and the Secretary General all have the right to do it, the United States would be in the best position if it acts to seek U. N. jurisdiction before someone else does it and, in effect, makes the United States a defendant in the matter.

6. If we fail to get discussions, we should invite the Vietcong, North and South Vietnam to join us in laying the dispute before the Security Council.

Article 37 is a clear statement of American obligation if we fail to settle the Vietnam problem by peaceful means of our own choosing:

"1. Should the parties to a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 fail to settle it by the means indicated in that Article, they shall refer it to the Security Council.

"2. If the Security Council deems that the continuance of the dispute in fact is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security it shall decide whether to take action under Article 36 or to recommend such terms of settlement as it may consider appropriate."

Very likely the Vietcong and North Vietnam will never join us in referring the war to the Security Council. But they are not U. N. members, and we are. They do not claim to stand for the rule of law in the world, and we do. They could not muster anything like the support in the U. N. that we could.

Like North Korea, they probably would not appear at all. But it is their objective to take control of territory they do not now control; and it is our objective to keep them out. A peace-keeping mission of the U. N. could very likely do more to achieve our stated objective than we are doing.

7. Public notice should next be served that we intend to lay the Vietnam war before the Security Council under Articles 35 and 37. Then we should engage in some realistic private talks with the Russians over what kind of U. N. action they would support, making it clear that if we fail to get Security Council action, we will go to the General Assembly.
8. As with many legislative matters, this is one of whether we want "an issue or a bill." If we want a "bill," in the form of U. N. action, we would have to deal with the other powerful U. N. members -- chiefly Russia and France -- to work out a United Nations program which they at least would not veto. After all, the Soviet Union did not veto the Cyprus peace force.

And there is every reason to think Russia is anxious to see the Vietnam war brought under control so she will not continue being forced to come to the support of a sister Communist state. It is worth a great deal to us to find out whether Russia is interested in a U. N. jurisdiction over the war in the form of a peace mission that would stop it, or more interested in her rivalry with China over who does more to aid wars of liberation.

Some say that bringing it up in the U. N. would force Russia to take China's part and drive them closer together. That is an excuse, not a reason. The longer the war continues, the more involved Russia must become simply because of her rivalry with China.

9. If we do find that Russia prefers the war to continue, or if France or Nationalist China poses some insurmountable obstacle, we can still go to the General Assembly. We have done it before, both with Korea and the Congo.
10. There is nothing in such a policy that would be inconsistent with our commitment of support to South Vietnam. Article 51 of the Charter affirms the right of individual or collective self-defense --

"until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

We can help South Vietnam until the U. N. acts to restore peace. Moreover, our 1954 commitment was from an American president to a South Vietnamese president. It is not a treaty; but the American commitment to the U. N. Charter is a treaty.

Our commitment to South Vietnam called for U. S. aid, meaning foreign aid, and we extended it "provided your government is prepared to give assurances as to the standards of performance it would be able to maintain in the event such aid were supplied."

The Government of South Vietnam was unable to fulfill its obligations. Yet we went infinitely beyond our obligation, into co-belligerency. By so doing, we have become involved in a situation that brings us under those provisions of the United Nations Charter to which I have referred.

SECTION II

SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE WHITE HOUSE

POLICY STATEMENT ON VIETNAM

At the risk of being presumptuous, I respectfully submit the following language for the President to consider using in his address in San Francisco.

"I stand here today to rededicate the United States of America to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. I propose to do this not by word, but by deed.

"Today there rages in Indochina an undeclared war. Some call it a civil war. Others call it a war of aggression. Others call it a war of liberation.

"I care not what it is called. It is war. It can spread and destroy all man has built. Men and women and children are dying. Passions are rising, uncontrolled.

"The United States is involved in this war. Let there be no mistake, the United States can win it. We believe great and fundamental issues are involved that may affect the future of mankind and the direction in which he grows. We believe that the independence of all small states is involved in Vietnam.

"But we are ready to be judged by the conscience of mankind as represented in the United Nations.

"I am, therefore, calling on the Security Council of the United Nations (Articles 34, 35 and 37) to vest itself of the situation in Vietnam as a 'dispute or situation. . .likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security..'

"I also take this occasion to state that my government will abide by such decision as may be taken by the Security Council. I go further and say that if the Security Council should not be able to resolve the war in Vietnam, my government will call for a Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and place the situation before that body of world conscience. We will abide by its recommendations.

"Finally, I have ordered the military forces of the United States to suspend all air and naval attacks north of the 17th parallel for a period of one month while the United Nations considers the threat to the peace implicit in the situation in Vietnam."

Dear Wayne:

I want to thank you warmly for your memorandum on the relation between Vietnam and the United Nations. This is a subject of great importance, and yours is a thoughtful memorandum. I have asked that it be given careful study. You can be sure that if, at any time, we think there is a real prospect of progress through the United Nations, we will be the first to move.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Wayne Morse
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

LBJ:McGB:ab

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Authority DSD 10-31-78, State 11-22-78, NSC 10-25-79

By 1-8, NARS, Date 3-27-80

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Bundy

SCENARIO FOR POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF AIR MOBILE DIVISION

A. The Problems

When necessary, the President is prepared to take a decision whether to deploy the Air Mobile Division (8 battalions), together with 5 tactical air squadrons and miscellaneous log and support forces, to Vietnam. On the assumption that the 173d Brigade (2 battalions) is retained in Vietnam and that the brigades of the 101st and 1st Infantry Divisions (6 battalions) are withdrawn from Vietnam, the total number of US battalions in Vietnam would then be 17.

The problems which arise are (1) whether there is any reason for the President to make the decision now, (2) how to explain readying actions prior to decision, (3) how to explain (once the decision is taken and announced) why deployment takes until the end of August, (4) how to handle the likely drop in morale in the brigades of the 101st and 1st Infantry Divisions if they are told that they will be withdrawn soon after arrival, and (5) when to discuss the matter with the GVN, knowing that it will probably leak soon after such discussion.

My answers to the above questions are as follows:

1. The President does not have to make the decision now in order for the deployments to be made in minimum time, provided he authorizes Secretary McNamara to proceed as if the decision had been taken. So far as physical movement of the troops is concerned, this, for practical purposes, would permit the President to make the decision as late as July 21, a week before the first elements of the Air Mobile Division would depart Fort Benning. Other factors -- such as leaks and press speculation -- would dictate, however, that the decision should be made by the President not later than July 10, by which time the orders to screened out "undeployables" and to their replacements plus any leaks that may have taken place would require clarification by the Administration.

2. Early readying actions taken prior to a July 10 decision would be explained on the grounds that the Air Mobile Division is intended to be a quick-reaction force and one which may be needed at any time, in Vietnam or elsewhere. The screening out of "undeployables" -- if this process becomes known early -- is an obvious attribute of such a quick-reaction force. No other pre-deployment events are expected to cause difficulty. With respect to blatant leaks prior to July 10, the answer should be that "No decision has been taken to deploy the Air Mobile Division, but the Division is being prepared for possible use anywhere, including South Vietnam, of any part or all of the Division."

3. Deployment cannot be completed until the end of August because movement of forces of this size normally takes several months. The Air Mobile Division, in closing by the end of August, is being deployed more rapidly than would normally be the case. (The already-approved 2 brigades

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from the 1st Infantry and the 101st Divisions will not close until July 15 and July 28 respectively; the first 3 battalions of the 8 battalion Air Mobile Division could close by August 10, but could not much sooner than that.)

4. Since the question has not been decided whether the two brigades from the 1st Infantry and 101st Divisions should be withdrawn upon deployment of the Air Mobile Division, there should be no suggestion to members of those brigades that they might be withdrawn -- thus avoiding any drop in morale which might result from anticipation of such withdrawal.

5. The matter should not be discussed with the GVN until after the decision is taken and not until very soon before we are willing to have the decision generally known. On the assumption that the decision is made on July 10 and that speculation about the deployment cannot be kept down much beyond that, the GVN should be approached immediately after the decision is taken, probably on July 11, and a joint announcement made soon thereafter.

B. The Scenario

The recommended scenario, taking into account the above discussion, follows:

June 22 -- (a) President authorize Secretary McNamara to proceed as if the following deployments had been approved, instructing Secretary McNamara to raise the issue again for decision on July 10.

NOW APPROVED (including 4000-173d Airborne Bde)

74,115
(excl. 7500⁺ TDY)

<u>Bn</u>	<u>ETA</u>	<u>Sqdns</u>	<u>Acft</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>ETA</u>	<u>Totals</u>
AMDiv +8	QuiNhon	8/20-30				+27,781
101st -3*	QuiNhon					- 4,200
1stInf -2*	QuiNhon					- 4,000
1stInf -1*	CamRanh					
		AFTacFtr +4	72	CamRanh &	9/1	+ 3,500
		MCTacHq +1	18	other strips	9/1	+ 400
Miscellaneous log & support (incl. 2715 for AMDiv						+ 9,600
		SUB-TOTAL				+ 33,081
				TOTAL		107,196
						(excl. 7500 ⁺ TDY)

*NOTE: Withdrawal of the two brigades will be reconsidered in August.

(b) President instruct all Departments to make it clear that no decision has been taken and that all readying steps are to be kept secret.

(c) Decide that 173d Airborne Brigade will remain in place.

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- July 1-10 -- Screening out of "undeployables" becomes apparent. Orders go out to 3400 men in the division and a similar number outside the division.
- July 10 -- President makes decision regarding deployment.
- July 11 -- Ambassador Taylor clears with GVN both the deployment and announcement of deployment of the Air Mobile Division. Ky should be told about the possible withdrawal of the brigades from the 1st Infantry and 101st Divisions despite the fact that he may disclose this information.
- July 12 -- Deployment is announced in Saigon and Washington simultaneously, referring only to Air Mobile Division (not to brigades of 1st Infantry and 101st Divisions) and indicating that US total as a consequence of decision would approximate 110,000. Announcements would not disclose closing dates.
- July 15 -- Relocation leaves must be given to certain members of the Air Mobile Division.
- July 20 -- Railroad cars must be mustered, and the upkeep period of the MSTC aircraft ferry normally would be coming to an end.
- July 24 -- MATS aircraft must be mustered.
- July 28 -- Readiness date for the division.
- Aug 15 -- Reconsideration of withdrawal of the two brigades.
- Aug 20-30 -- Air Mobile Division closes in Vietnam.

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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1965

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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

Subject: United States Commitments
Regarding the Defense of South
Viet-Nam

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Authority State Letter 12-15-78

I. By sp, NARS, Date 3-26-79

The Nature of our Legal Commitment

1. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, when read together with its protocol, provides that in the event of "aggression by means of armed attack" against South Viet-Nam each party will "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."

2. The United States has determined* that there has been such aggression against South Viet-Nam, which has brought this Treaty obligation into operation. Although other SEATO powers are providing assistance to South Viet-Nam, the United States, to the best of our knowledge

* The determination that North Viet-Nam was committing "aggression by armed attack" was explicitly stated in the so-called "White Paper" entitled "Aggression from the North" issued by the Department of State in February 1965.

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knowledge, is the only one that has made this determination. There has been no decision by the SEATO members to act collectively "to meet the common danger" in Viet-Nam.

3. Since South Viet-Nam is not a party to the Southeast Asia Treaty, our obligation under the Treaty does not run directly to South Viet-Nam. Authorities on international law generally agree that only parties (and not "third-party beneficiaries") acquire rights under a treaty. However, since the United States has determined that there has been "aggression" against South Viet-Nam within the meaning of the Treaty, our assistance to the South Vietnamese Government to meet that aggression is in discharge of our treaty obligation.

4. Our provision of military assistance to South Viet-Nam is consistent with the United Nations Charter. Article 51 of the Charter recognizes the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense--although it does not impose an obligation of collective defense on UN Members.

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5. In addition to its treaty responsibilities with respect to South Viet-Nam, the United States has repeatedly promised the Government of South Viet-Nam to assist it in its struggle against aggression. These promises have been embodied in a series of messages and statements, beginning in October 1954 when President Eisenhower promised to aid "the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion and aggression through military means." The implied -- and frequently expressed -- conditions to the provision of United States assistance have been (a) the continuing request of the South Vietnamese Government for such assistance and (b) its will and ability to use that assistance effectively.

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II.

Consequences of Withdrawal

1. The consequences of an abrupt withdrawal of our assistance from South Viet-Nam should be judged not in juridical terms but in terms of its effect on the credibility of our commitments throughout the world. The relevant questions would be:

a. To what extent would such withdrawal impair the confidence of other small nations on the periphery of Communist power that the United States had the will and resources to help them prevent a Communist takeover?

b. To what extent would such withdrawal shake the faith of our partners in other security treaties--whether in Latin America, Europe, the Far East or elsewhere--that we would and could meet our treaty obligations?

c. To what extent would such withdrawal reduce the prestige of the United States and hence diminish its power and effectiveness in its dealings with other governments?

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2. The answers to these questions would not depend on the differences or similarities in the nature of our legal commitments. Our obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, for example, are quite different from our responsibilities for Viet-Nam under SEATO, since we have obligations running directly to each of our NATO partners to take action, including the use of armed force, in the event of an armed attack on any NATO power.

Our obligations to West Berlin are covered not only by Articles 5 and 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty but by our status as an occupying power pursuant to the unconditional surrender of Germany at the end of World War II.

We are obligated directly to the other American republics under the Rio Treaty of 1947 to come to their assistance in the event of armed attack.

3. In the longer term, we must judge a decision to withdraw assistance from South Viet-Nam primarily in terms of its effect on the ability of the United States

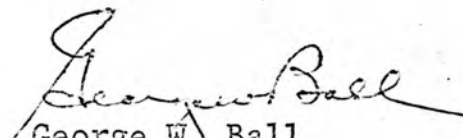
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to maintain its role of world leadership. That role is not an easy one. France could withdraw from Indochina or Algeria without wide-ranging consequences since it was not a great power and other nations did not depend on France for their own security. The United States must, however, always act with the consciousness that if it fails to discharge its role of leadership there is no other free world power capable of taking its place.


George W. Ball

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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June 27, 1965

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: George Ball's paper on US Commitments
Regarding the Defense of South Vietnam

1. The attached paper from George Ball was prepared for your use last Wednesday, but we did not get it to you before your departure Thursday. George asked me to say that he himself does not think the legal arguments about support for Vietnam are decisive. The commitment is primarily political and any decision to enlarge or reduce it will be political.

2. My own further view is that if and when we wish to shift our course and cut our losses in Vietnam we should do so because of a finding that the Vietnamese themselves are not meeting their obligations to themselves or to us. This is the course we started on with Diem, and if we got a wholly ineffective or anti-American government we could do the same thing again. With a "neutralist" government it would be quite possible to move in this direction.

M. B.

McG. B.

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Authority State 11-30-78, NSC 8-10-79
By rip, NARS, Date 10-17-79

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5. Costs of Compromise Solution: The answer involves a judgment as to the costs to the United States of such a compromise settlement in terms of our relations with the countries in the area of South Viet-Nam, the credibility of our commitments and our prestige around the world. In my judgment, if we act before we commit substantial US forces to combat in South Viet-Nam we can, by accepting some short-term costs, avoid what may well be a long-term catastrophe. I believe we have tended greatly to exaggerate the costs involved in a compromise settlement. An appreciation of probable costs is contained in the attached memorandum. (Tab A)

6. With these considerations in mind, I strongly urge the following program:

A. Military Program

(1) Complete all deployments already announced (15 battalions) but decide not to go beyond the total of 72,000 men represented by this figure.

(2) Restrict the combat role of American forces to the June 9 announcement, making it clear to General Westmoreland that this announcement is to be strictly construed.

(3) Continue bombing in the North but avoid the Hanoi-Haiphong area and any targets nearer to the Chinese border than those already struck.

B. Political Program

(1) In any political approaches so far, we have been the prisoners of whatever South Vietnamese Government was momentarily in power. If we are ever to move toward a settlement it will probably

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Authority FRUS, Vol. III, #40
By , NARA, Date 4-11-14

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be because the South Vietnamese Government pulls the rug out from under us and makes its own deal or because we go forward quietly without advance pre-arrangement with Saigon.

(2) So far we have not given the other side a reason to believe that there is any flexibility in our negotiating approach. And the other side has been unwilling to accept what in their terms is complete capitulation.

(3) Now is the time to start some serious diplomatic feelers, looking towards a solution based on some application of the self-determination principle.

(4) I would recommend approaching Hanoi rather than any of the other probable parties (the National Liberation Front, Moscow or Peiping). Hanoi is the only one that has given any signs of interest in discussion. Peiping has been rigidly opposed. Moscow has recommended that we negotiate with Hanoi. The National Liberation Front has been silent.

(5) There are several channels to the North Vietnamese but I think the best one is through their representative in Paris, Mai Van Bo. Initial feelers with Bo should be directed toward a discussion both of the four points we have put forward and the four points put forward by Hanoi as a basis for negotiation. We can accept all but one of Hanoi's four points and hopefully we should be able to agree on some ground rules for serious negotiation--including no pre-conditions.

(6) If the initial feelers lead to further secret exploratory talks we can inject the concept of self-determination that would permit the Viet Cong some hope of achieving some of their political objectives through local elections or some other device.

7. The contact

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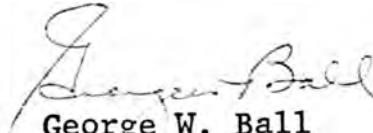
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(7) The contact on our side should be handled through a non-governmental cutout (possibly a reliable newspaperman who can be repudiated.)

(8) If progress can be made at this level the basis can be laid for a multi-national conference. At some point obviously the government of South Vietnam will have to be brought on board but I would postpone this step until after a substantial feeling out of Hanoi.

(9) Before moving to any formal conference we should be prepared to agree that once the conference is started (a) the United States will stand down its bombing of the North, (b) the South Vietnamese will initiate no offensive operations in the South, and (c) the DRV will stop terrorism and other aggressive acts in the South.

(10) Negotiations at the conference should aim at incorporating our understanding with Hanoi in the form of a multi-national agreement guaranteed by the United States, the Soviet Union and possibly other parties, and providing for an international mechanism to supervise its execution.


George W. Ball

Attachment:
As stated.

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PROBABLE REACTIONS TO THE
CUTTING OF OUR LOSSES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

We have tended to exaggerate the losses involved in a compromise settlement in South Viet-Nam. There are three aspects of the problem which should be considered:

First, the local effect of our action on nations in or near Southeast Asia.

Second, the effect of our action on the credibility of our commitments around the world.

Third, the effect on our position of world leadership.

A. Effect on Nations in or Near Southeast Asia

Free Asian reactions to a compromise settlement in South Viet-Nam would be highly parochial, with each country interpreting the event primarily in terms of (a) its own immediate interest, (b) its sense of vulnerability to Communist invasion or insurgency, and (c) its confidence in the integrity of our commitment to its own security based on evidence other than that provided by our actions in SVN.

Within this framework, the following groupings emerge:

1. The Republic of China and Thailand, staunch allies whose preference for extreme U. S. actions, including a risk of war with Communist China, sets them apart from all other Asian nations;

2. The Republic of Korea and the Philippines, equally staunch allies whose support for strong U. S. actions short of a war with Communist China would make post-settlement reassurance a pressing U. S. need;

3. Japan,

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3. Japan, an ally that would prefer wisdom to valor in an area remote from its own interests where escalation could involve its Chinese or Russian neighbors, or both;

4. Laos, a friendly neutral dependent on a strong Thai-US guarantee of support in the face of increased Vietnamese-Pathet Lao pressures;

5. Burma and Cambodia, suspicious neutrals whose fear of antagonizing Communist China would increase their leaning toward Peking in a conviction that the US presence is not long for Southeast Asia; and

6. Indonesia, whose opportunistic marriage of convenience with both Hanoi and Peking would carry it further in its covert aggression against Malaysia, convinced that "foreign imperialism" is a fast fading entity in the region.

Of these varied reactions, the critical importance of Japan and Thailand calls for more detailed examination.

Japan

According to our Embassy, Japanese public opinion is largely unreceptive to our interpretation of the situation in Viet-Nam. Many if not most Japanese consider that the US is endeavoring to prop up a tottering government that lacks adequate indigenous support. Public media stress the civil war aspects of the struggle, portray Hanoi's resistance as determined and justified, and question our judgment as to the dangers of an eventual war with Communist China.

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The government as such supports our strong posture in Viet-Nam but stops short at the idea of a war between the US and China. Governmental leadership can--to a considerable extent--influence the public reaction in Japan. Government cooperation would, therefore, be essential in making the following points to the Japanese people: (1) US support was given in full measure, as shown by our casualties, our expenditures, and our risk-taking; and (2) the US record in Korea shows the credibility of our commitment so far as Japan is concerned.

Thailand

Thai commitments to the struggles in Laos and South Viet-Nam are based upon a careful evaluation of the regional threat to Thailand's security. The Thais are confident that they can contain any threats from Indochina alone. They know, however, that they cannot withstand the massive power of Communist China without foreign assistance.

Unfortunately, the Thai view of the war has seriously erred in fundamental respects. They believe

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American power can do anything, both militarily and in terms of shoring up a Saigon regime. They now assume that we really could take over in Saigon and win the war if we felt we had to. If we should fail to do so the Thais would initially see it as a failure of US will.

Yet time is on our side, provided we employ it effectively. Thailand is an independent nation with a long national history and -- unlike South Viet-Nam -- an acute national consciousness. It has few domestic Communists and none of the instability that plagues its neighbors, Burma and Malaysia. Its one danger area, in the Northeast, is well in hand so far as preventive measures against insurgency are concerned. Securing the Makong Valley will be critical in any long-run solution, whether by the partition of Laos, with Thai-US forces occupying the western half, or by some cover arrangement. Provided we are willing to make the effort, Thailand can be a foundation of rock and not a bed of sand on which to base our political-military commitment to Southeast Asia.

South Korea

As for the rest of the Far East, the only serious point of concern might be South Korea. But if we stop pressing the Koreans for more troops to Viet-Nam (the Vietnamese show no desire for additional Asian forces since it affronts their sense of pride) we may be able to cushion Korean reactions to a compromise in South Viet-Nam by the provision of greater military and economic assistance. In this regard, Japan can play a pivotal role now that it has achieved normal relations with South Korea.

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B. Effect on the Credibility of Our Commitments
Around the World

With the exception of the nations in the Southeast Asian area, a compromise settlement in South Viet-Nam should not have a major impact on the credibility of our commitments around the world. Quite possibly President de Gaulle will make propaganda about perfidious Washington, but even he will be inhibited by his much-heralded disapproval of our activities in South Viet-Nam.

Chancellor Erhard has told us privately that the people of Berlin would be concerned by a compromise settlement in South Viet-Nam. But this was hardly an original thought and I suspect he was telling us what he believed we would like to hear. After all, the confidence of the West Berliners will depend more on what they see on the spot than on news of events half way around the world. They have much to gain by the prevention of a confrontation between East and West elsewhere and by the gradual developments of a spirit of entente that might pave the way for ultimate reunification.

In my observation, the principal anxiety of our NATO allies is that we have become too preoccupied with an area which seems to them an irrelevance and may be tempted to neglect our NATO responsibilities. Moreover, they have a vested interest in an easier relationship between Washington and Moscow.

By and large, therefore, they would be inclined to regard a compromise solution in South Viet-Nam more as new evidence of American maturity and judgment than of American loss of face.

These would be the larger and longer-term reactions of the Europeans. In the short run, of course, we could expect some cat-calls from the sidelines and some vindictive pleasure on the part of Europeans jealous of American

power

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power. But that would, in my view, be a transient phenomenon with which we could live without sustained anguish.

Elsewhere around the world, I would see few unhappy implications for the credibility of our commitments. No doubt the Communists will try to gain propaganda value in Africa, but I cannot seriously believe that the Africans care too much about what happens in Southeast Asia.

Australia and New Zealand are, of course, special cases since they feel lonely in the far reaches of the Pacific. Yet even their concern is far greater with Malaysia than with South Viet-Nam, and the degree of their anxiety would be conditioned largely by expressions of our support for Malaysia.

C. Effect on Our Position of World Leadership

On balance I believe we would more seriously undermine the effectiveness of our world leadership by continuing the war and deepening our involvement than by pursuing a carefully plotted course toward a compromise solution. In spite of the number of powers that have--in response to our pleading--given verbal support from feelings of loyalty and dependence, we cannot ignore the fact that the war is vastly unpopular and that our role in it is perceptibly eroding the respect and confidence with which other nations regard us. We have not persuaded either our friends or allies that our further involvement is essential to the defense of freedom in the Cold War. Moreover, the more men we deploy in the jungles of South Viet-Nam the more we contribute to a growing world anxiety and mistrust.

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July 1, 1965

MEMORANDUM

A "Middle Way" Course of Action in South Vietnam

This memorandum advocates the following military decisions as the basis for US action during the next two months:

- a. Complete the deployment of the balance of the Marine force at Da Nang (early July), and of the additional six battalions from the 1st and 101st Divisions (July 15 and July 28). This would bring combat strength to 18 battalions, and overall US strength to about 85,000.
- b. Revise the current decision on the Air Mobile Division so that this division is alerted and could be sent to South Vietnam three weeks after decision at any time, but not decide now that it will in fact be sent.
- c. Start now to weed out and prepare for deployment as many combat units as possible to meet the possible military need for 44 combat battalions by the end of the year, but defer any decision on deploying these units and on calling up major reserve units. (DOD should supply the time factors and indicate whether and to what extent such deferral would prevent our meeting the possible force needs if we later decided to do so.)
- d. Continue to avoid the urban areas of Hanoi and Haiphong in our bombing of the DRV, being prepared to attack SAM sites and airfields if but only if they are used to inflict militarily significant losses on us. Hitting these cities would not now lead Hanoi to give in but might on the contrary toughen it. It would almost certainly lose us the support of such key governments as the UK and Japan. Above all, it would inevitably intensify the Soviet commitment and probably remove the chance of the Soviets exerting restraint in the fall.

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By if, NARS, Date 6-27-79

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e. Defer decision on mining North Vietnamese harbors and/or cutting the rail and road lines from China to North Vietnam. The harbor operation would tend to throw North Vietnam into the arms of Communist China and diminish Soviet influence. The rail and road operation could be useful added pressure but should be held in reserve; it would have much more effect if it came after a summer stalemate, and it cannot affect DRV capabilities in the short term or perhaps to any major degree.

f. Maximum air action in the South, including B-52's.

This military program would be accompanied by every effort to galvanize the political and economic programs of the Ky Government, in the direction of "maximum revolution and reform, but minimum repression." We would be preparing the way for a really major reform and amnesty program to be launched in the fall if the monsoon offensive is blunted so that such action would not have a note of weakness.

The program also involves the possibility of discreet contacts with Hanoi, and cut-out contacts (not identified with the US) with the Liberation Front. These would not be with any serious negotiating expectations, but to open channels and to soften both up by playing on Hanoi's fear of Peiping and the possible Liberation Front fear of being totally under Hanoi's domination.

* * *

In essence, this is a program to hold on for the next two months, and to test the military effectiveness of US combat forces and the reaction of the Vietnamese army and people to the increasing US role. Basic to the program is that US combat forces would be employed on a fairly strict interpretation of the June 9 White House statement, used in combat as reserves where a battle has been or can be joined and US military advantages are greatest, not in general countryside operations.

The program rejects withdrawal or negotiating concessions in any form, and equally rejects a present decision to raise our force level above about 85,000. The latter appears unwise because:

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a. We have not tested whether our forces can really find and hit the VC. This program gives us enough reserves to give a fair test.

b. We simply do not know, and probably cannot now know, whether raising the US force level and combat involvement to the point where we take over much of the combat load would (1) cause the Vietnamese government and especially the army to let up; (2) create adverse popular reactions to our whole presence, on "white men" and "like the French" grounds. So far things have been all right while we were sticking to secure areas and were not in combat; we just don't know what will happen when we start fighting and are in contact with the people in disputed areas. At some point, we could be playing into VC hands, and negating immediate military results, thus getting into a truly disastrous situation. Again, what we need now is to test; perhaps, these fears will be groundless, but we lose little by waiting, compared to the risks. And these risks are affected by pace and timing; we might be readily accepted if we moved gradually, but arouse the worst fears and adverse reactions if we moved fast.

c. While military effectiveness is the basic reason for holding at about 85,000, we must also reckon the Congressional and public opinion problems of embarking now on what might appear clearly to be an open-ended ground commitment. The present rationale of meeting the monsoon offensive and balancing DRV regulars has put us on a solid and sober footing for 85,000; any major increases would require a much broader base and explanation.

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FE:W. P. Bundy/bmm 7/1/65