

ARCHIVES PROCESSING NOTE

You will find two versions of the document withdrawal sheets in this file. The original document withdrawal sheets were completed in the 1970s and early 1980s. Since that time, many of the documents have been declassified. In an effort to make the withdrawal sheets easier to use, we have updated the withdrawal sheets, listing only the documents that are still closed. Use these updated withdrawal sheets to request Mandatory Declassification Review of closed security classified documents.

The original withdrawal sheets are in a mylar sleeve in the front of the folder. We have retained them in the file so that you can see the status of the documents when the folder was opened and the history of their declassification. Please replace the sheets in the mylar sleeve when you have finished examining them.

April 11, 2014

LBJ LIBRARY DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Page 1 of 1

<u>Doc #</u>	<u>DocType</u>	<u>Doc Info</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Restriction</u>
59b	memo	Intelligence memo - Sanitized per RAC, 6/04	TS	13	7/20/65	A

Collection Title National Security File, NSC Histories

Folder Title "Deployment of Major U.S. Forces to Vietnam, July 1965, Volume 6"

Box Number 43

Restriction Codes

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4/11/2014

Initials

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

10/7

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#36a cable	TO OSD FOR CONSULTATION WH top secret <i>agen 2-4-80 ip</i> to president from McG. Bundy <i>2 p</i>	07/04/65	A

FILE LOCATION

National Security File, NSC History
Deployment of Major U.S. Forces to Vietnam, July 1965, vol. 6

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
	<i>Decisions per 715c 6-18-80</i> TO STATE DEPT FOR CONSULTATION		
#4a memo	WH secret <i>Exempt</i> 10-25-91 11-1-94-377 to president from McG. Bundy	06/28/65	A
#14a memo	WH conf <i>agen 7-18-80 ip</i> to president from McG. Bundy	06/30/65	A
#13a memo	WH top secret to SecDef from McG. Bundy	06/30/65	A
#16a memo	WH top secret <i>Exempt</i> to Bundy from Cooper	06/30/65	A
#21a memo	WH secret <i>agen 7-18-80 ip</i> to president from McG. B	06/30/65	A
#32a memo	WH top secret to president from McG. B	07/01/65	A
#39a memo	WH secret to president from McG. B	07/08/65	A

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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#48a memo	WH CIA secret (gp 1) <i>open 5-18-81</i> to MeG. Bundy from Sherman Kent 1 p	07/15/65	A
#48b report	CIA secret (gp 1) <i>sanitized 9-18-81</i> Special Memorandum No. 18-65 <i>open 3/10/03</i> 7 p <i>per NIS/RAC 00-393</i>	07/13/65	A
#59b memo	CIA top secret (gp 1) <i>sanitized 9-18-81</i> TS185875-d 13 p <i>now released, 4/04</i>	07/20/65	A

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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#1a cable	OSD top secret (gp 3) <i>Confidential</i> Meeting with ACM Scherger <i>open 7/2/02</i> <i>OSD 10-25-78 letter</i> <i>NJ 01-266</i>	undated	A
#5b memo	OSD top secret to president from McNamara <i>open 6-5-79</i>	06/28/65	A
#8a letter	OSD top secret to McG. Bundy from [McNamara] <i>open 6-5-79</i>	06/29/65	A
#13b memo	OSD top secret to president from McNamara <i>annotated 10-24-79</i> <i>open 4-29-87</i>	06/26/65	A
#15a memo	OSD top secret Comments on SECDEF memorandum <i>open 10-24-79</i>	06/30/65	A
#38b cable	OSD top secret 5319 to Saigon <i>open 6-5-79</i>	07/07/65	A
#40a cable	OSD secret (gp 1) 5570 to Saigon <i>open 6-5-79</i>	07/09/65	A
#46b report	OSD top secret Analysis and Options for So. Vietnam <i>open 10-24-79</i>	07/13/65	A
#55c report	OSD top secret battalion plan <i>open 6-5-79</i>	07/19/65	A
#56a memo	OSD top secret to president from McNamara <i>open 10-24-79</i>	07/20/65	A
#58 memo	OSD top secret to president from Lodge <i>open 10-24-79</i>	07/20/65	A
#60a memo	OSD top secret to McNamara from Cooper <i>open 6-5-79</i>	07/20/65	A
#61a memo	OSD secret to Cooper from Jorgensen <i>open 6-5-79</i>	07/20/65	A

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#6a memo	State top secret <i>open 1-29-80 ing</i> to Bundy from Read 1 p (duplicates #365 in NSF, CF, Vietnam, Vol. 35)	06/29/65	A
#6b memo w/report	State top secret <i>open 1-29-80 ing</i> to secState, SecDef, Bundy, McNaughton, Unger from Geo. Ball 9 p (duplicates #365a in NSF, CF, Vietnam, Vol. 35)	06/28/65	A
#7a cable	state] top secret <i>open 6-28-79 ing</i> Saigon 4422 from Taylor to SecState 2 p	06/28/65	A
#9a memo w/report	state top secret <i>open 1-29-80 ing</i> to SecState, SecDef, McG. Bundy, Wm. Bundy, McNaughton and Unger from Ball 20 p (duplicates #349 and 349a in NSF, CF, Vietnam, Vol. 35)	06/29/65	A
#11a cable	state top secret (gp 3) <i>open 6-28-79 ing</i> 3079 to Saigon 2 p	06/29/65	A
#12a memo w/report	state top secret 35 p to Rusk, McNamara, Ball, Thompson, Bundy & Unger <i>open 1-26-96</i> from Wm. Bundy <i>NLS 95-206</i> (duplicates #350 and 350a in NSF, CF, Vietnam, Vol. 35)	06/30/65	A
#18a cable	state top secret <i>open 6-28-79 ing</i> 4438 from Saigon 1 p	06/30/65	A
#19a cable	state top secret " 4439 from Saigon 2 p	06/30/65	A
#20a cable	state top secret " 2158 from Bangkok 6 p	06/30/65	A
#23a cable	state top secret (gp 3) " 3092 to Saigon 1 p	06/30/65	A
#24a report	state top secret " Vietnam 4 p	07/01/65	A
#25a cable	state top secret (gp 3) " Deptel 3092 1 p	06/30/65	A
#26a cable	state top secret " Flash 8 from Saigon 1 p	07/01/65	A
#28a cable	state top secret (gp 3) " Flash 3 to Saigon 1 p	07/01/65	A

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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#30a cable	state top secret (gp 3) 17 to Saigon 2 p	07/01/65	A
#31a cable	state top secret 14 to from Saigon 2 p	07/01/65	A
#33a cable	state top secret 16 from Saigon 1 p	07/02/65	A
#35a cable	state top secret 37 to Saigon 2 p	07/02/65	A
#37a cable	state top secret (gp 3) 51 to Saigon 2 p	07/05/65	A
#54a cable	state top secret (gp 2) 103 to Bangkok 3 p	07/19/65	A
#47a memo	state top secret (gp 1) to Director of Central Intelligence from Rusk 2 p	07/15/65	A

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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#10a cable	<i>Decisions open State 11-7-78 & 4-27-79</i> state secret (gp 3) <i>open 8-5-80 if</i> 3078 to Saigon 1 p	06/29/65	A
#17a cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> 4434 from Saigon 2 p	06/30/65	A
#22a cable	state secret (gp 3) <i>open 5-17-79</i> 3091 to Saigon 2 p	06/30/65	A
#27a cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> Nine from Saigon 3 p	07/01/65	A
#43a cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> 108 from Saigon 27p	07/11/65	A
#44b cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> 130 from Saigon 1 p	07/13/65	A
#45a cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> 136 from Saigon 2 p	07/13/65	A
#49a cable	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> 160 from Saigon 1 p	07/15/65	A
#50a report	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> Checklist of Actions 4 p	07/17/65	A
#52a report	state secret <i>open 5-17-79</i> Draft Scenario 3 p	07/17/65	A
#55b cable	state secret <i>open 1-27-81 if</i> texttoof 182 from Saigon 2 p	07/18/65	A

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1

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~~TOP SECRET~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
MESSAGE CENTER

1a
28646

D447/26 JUNE/JCS238/R1

//////////~~TOP SECRET~~ MSG FOLLOWS//////////

CPHR356VV KAG415

PP RUEKDA

DE RUHKA 3699 26/0225Z

P 260320Z

FM CINCPAC

TO RUEKDA/JCS

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE

RUMJIR/AMEMB SAIGON

RUMJAG/AMEMB CANBERRA

RUMSMU/COMUSMACV

BT

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEETING WITH ACM SCHERGER (U)

1. I MET WITH ACM SCHERGER OF AUSTRALIA WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH HONOLULU ENROUTE TO WASHINGTON FOR ANZUS MEETING.
2. SCHERGER ASKED IF I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE A NEED FOR MORE AUSTRALIAN TROOPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. HE SAID IF THERE WAS A NEED, THEY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, SINCE IT WOULD REQUIRE INCREOSING SIZE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY. THEY WERE APPARENTLY IN THE FORMULATIVE STAGE OF THEIR BUDGET CYCLE. HE SAID THAT IF THE AUSTRALIAN TROOP STRENGTH IN SOUTH VIETNAM WAS TO BE INCREISED, THE INITIATIVE FOR SUCH A STEP WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE UNITED STATES AND SUGGESTED THAT THE ANZUS MEETING MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME. HE REITERATED THE POINT ABOUT US INITIATIVE LATER IN THE CONVERSATION. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE AUSTRALIANS WOULD RESPOND TO A REQUEST FOR MORE TROOPS BUT THAT THE INCREASE IN STRENGTH WOULD TAKE SOME TIME AND WOULD BE A DIFFICULT DECISION.
3. I TOLD HIM THAT THERE CERTAINLY WAS A NEED FOR MORE TROOPS IN

SOUTH VIETNAM. HOWEVER, I RECOGNIZED THE DIFFICULTIES THE AUSTRELIANS WOULD HAVE IN AUGMENTING THEIR CONTINGENT.

4. RECOMMEND CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT AT ANZUS MEETING. GP-3

BT

ACT...J5-7(1-7)

INFO: CJCS-1(8) DJS-3(9-11) SJCS-3(12-14) J3-8(15-22) SACSA-5

(23-27) NMCC-1(28) SAMAA-1(29) SECDEF-5(30-34) ASD/ISA-9(35-43)

ASD/PA-1(44) DIA-4(45-48) WHITE HOUSE-3(49-51) CSA-2(52-53)

CNO-2(54-55) CSAF-2(56-57) CMC-5(58-62) FILE-1(63)WS/KD

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGE

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: DOD Directive 5200.30
By *JC*, NARA, Date *7-23-01*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLI 01-266
By *JF* NARA, Date *6/27/02*

51

2

342

DRAFT STATEMENT BY STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN CONCERNING BENNETT
EXECUTION AND MY CANH RESTAURANT BOMBING.

The regime in Hanoi and their puppet Liberation Front in South Viet-Nam have ~~not only~~ acknowledged their responsibility for the execution of Sgt. Bennett and for the bombing of the My Canh Restaurant in Saigon, in which 44 persons, Vietnamese, American, French, Swiss, Filipino were killed and many more persons injured, ~~but~~ they have compounded their brutal conduct by publicly bragging about their action and making threats to carry out even more outrageous acts. We in America and people around the world cannot help but be appalled and revolted by this show of wanton inhumanity. These Communist threats to intimidate, of course, will not succeed, ~~and~~ Our determination to help the embattled people of South Viet-Nam to avoid their falling under a regime which is capable of such brutality will only be strengthened. We and the South Vietnamese know that there is a long road ahead and that in dealing with such an enemy we must expect a brand of behavior which would be unthinkable for a civilized people, but this would not deter us from our task.

Hanoi's recent statements have surely also made it clear to anyone who may have had any doubt that it is the power directing the policies and actions of the VC, its instrument in South Viet-Nam, and must bear full responsibility for these acts.

3

343

June 27, 1965

3a
orig +
tabs via
Gowdy
6/28

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Reply to Senator Mansfield

I have finally done a memorandum (Tab A) to Senator Mansfield covering his three memoranda of June 5, 9, and 14 (Tab B). I have drafted this for my own signature, but it now occurs to me that it may be better to redraft it as an unsigned memorandum with a covering note from you. If you want to do it that way, I enclose a possible covering note (Tab C).

McG. B.

Send it direct _____

Redraft it as a memorandum to go
with my covering note _____

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM TO: Senator Mike Mansfield

I have been very slow in carrying out an instruction from the President to respond to your memoranda of June 5 and June 9. He has now passed me in addition your memorandum of June 14. I hope you will forgive me if I comment on all three at once.

Your memorandum of June 5 deals primarily with the bombing of North Vietnam. Since the President has authorized no air attack in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, I think it is inappropriate for me to comment on the array of arguments which you set forth against such action. Let me say only that in the case of any possible actions in the Hanoi-Haiphong area it would be important to distinguish clearly between limited attacks upon military targets and saturation bombing of large areas. Your memorandum is not explicit as to whether its arguments apply to any air action of any sort in this area, or only to relatively sweeping attack on the area as a whole.

The remaining parts of your memorandum of June 5 deal mainly with General Eisenhower's views, the results of air action against North Vietnam to date, and the importance of action in South Vietnam. Let me comment briefly on each of these three points:

(1) General Eisenhower's position in Korea included a clear warning that if there were no armistice agreement, the war would be very substantially enlarged. His position on the current contest in Vietnam, as I understand it, is one of firm support and approval for the actions the Administration has taken, specifically including the air operations against North Vietnam and the ground force build-up.

(2) The air operations in North Vietnam since February have accomplished what they were designed to accomplish. They have substantially increased the difficulty of infiltration from north to south. They have given encouragement to South Vietnamese forces at a critical time and they have had a converse effect on the Viet Cong. It was not our expectation that these air operations would bring the Communists running to the conference table, nor that they would bring an early end to what is a demanding and continuing contest. Moreover, the reactions of all three Communist capitals have been consistent with our expectations. In particular, the reactions of Moscow and Peking on the ground have been very modest, as the intelligence community predicted.

(3) It remains true, as your memorandum says, that the center of the contest is in South Vietnam. It is what happens there that will determine the result. It is their hopes in South Vietnam, and not resentment of our air operations in North Vietnam, that make the Asian Communists unwilling to move to the conference table. So the Administration certainly agrees with you that we have to make the necessary military effort to hold the situation in the south. We also agree that it is important to make maximum efforts to get this matter to a conference table as soon as possible.

II.

I turn now to your memorandum of June 9. I do not believe that we are in a position to make a clear choice among the three alternatives stated in your memorandum, and still less do I think it clear just what level of force would be necessary to meet each objective. Indeed, flat predictions of this sort have brought trouble both to the Administration and to other observers in recent years. Our general object is clear -- it is precisely to be strong enough to get a peaceful settlement which will be based on self-determination on the part of the South Vietnamese people. Your memorandum suggests that you may think the South Vietnamese would freely make a pro-Communist decision. Our judgment in the Administration is the opposite, and of course one great difficulty in negotiating with Communists is their lack of interest in the principle of "reasonable choice." What they want is Communist control.

While we would resist choosing among the particular alternatives you set forth, we agree with your view that in each decision on the size of the American commitment in Vietnam we have to ask ourselves what we are trying to accomplish and whether the proposed level of effort is reasonably related to that purpose. We also have to ask ourselves what the relation is between our efforts and those of the Vietnamese. Our judgment is that the estimate which you make of the Vietnamese military and political situation in the opening part of your memorandum of June 9 is unduly pessimistic, but we can certainly agree on the underlying proposition that what we do in Vietnam has to be done in support of a continuing effort by the Vietnamese themselves. Secretary Rusk made this point very plain in his address of June 23.

The question of the identity of Ambassador Taylor's successor and the question of the usefulness of a further Congressional Resolution are matters on which I do not feel qualified to comment, so I pass on to your last memorandum.

III.

Your memorandum of June 14 makes important suggestions on our diplomatic position. We share your view that we should throw out signs and signals of our own, and a number of such signs and signals have been thrown out both in Secretary Rusk's speech of June 23 and in diplomatic communications. While there are some differences between these signs and signals and those which you recommend, I think the differences are marginal compared to the similarities, and I do not think it is weakness of our signals that currently stands in the way of negotiations.

Let me now comment on each of the five points in the memorandum:

(1) As you note, the Administration shares your judgment on the Cambodian problem.

(2) A cease-fire is something which everyone favors on his own terms but which will be very difficult to define and enforce. Our way of calling for a cease-fire is to urge an end of "aggression and subversion," and the Communist way is to urge that we end our bombing and leave Vietnam. My own expectation is that we will need a conference in order to get clear terms for a cease-fire, simply because we are dealing with so many different kinds of military and paramilitary activity. This was the experience in the case of Vietnam in 1954 and Korea in 1951-53.

(3) Your position on the ultimate political solution is very close to that which Secretary Rusk stated on June 23.

(4) The general principle of amnesty is one which we agree with. The ways and means of stating this principle depend in part on what the Vietnamese Government itself says and does. I think progress can and will be made on this one.

(5) This principle of withdrawal when agreements are reached and enforced again is one which was supported in Secretary Rusk's speech of June 23.

In sum, I do not think there is any decisive difference between your five points and the points in the Secretary of State's speech. It is already very clear indeed that we are in favor of any initiative which will lead to a conference. In particular we have already supported one unsuccessful British effort to get the Co-Chairmen to reconvene the Geneva Conference.

As I see it, the one substantial difference between us is on whether a detailed proposal for a cease-fire before a conference is practicable. But I can assure you that this subject is under constant study in the Administration, and that there is no doctrinaire rigidity in our approach to it.

Let me close by assuring you that my delay in responding to the President's request for comment is no measure of my interest -- and still less of his -- in your memorandum. The President greatly values your counsel on this hard problem, and my delinquency reflects only my own heavy involvement in other pressing business.

McGeorge Bundy

MIKE MANSFIELD
MONTANA

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C.

June 22, 1965

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing for your consideration some suggestions on the Vietnamese situation which I was prepared to offer a week ago if you had raised any questions about the two memoranda (dated June 5 and June 9) which I sent to you through Bill Moyer. In view of our conversation at the Leadership Breakfast this morning, I am therefore taking the liberty of sending you these suggestions on my own initiative with the hope that they may be useful in facing up to the impasse which confronts this country at this time in Viet Nam.

With best personal wishes, I am

Respectfully,

Mike Mansfield

Enclosure

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C.

June 14, 1965

TO : The President
FROM : Mike Mansfield
SUBJECT: Suggestions on the Vietnamese Situation.

If we are going to make a maximum effort to get this business to the conference table as quickly as possible, I think we should throw out some clear signs and signals of our own instead of waiting for the other side. These signs and signals might be considered:

1. That we favor a non-involved Cambodia and will consider, in a reconvened Geneva Conference, participating in international guarantees of its frontiers. (I note this was done on June 5. It should be reiterated and stressed.)
2. That we are for a cease-fire and stand-fast throughout all Viet Nam, north and south as a concomitant to the convening of a peace conference on Viet Nam.
3. That we do not foreclose any ultimate political solution, whether independence, confederation or unification in Viet Nam--north and south--provided the conditions for a free choice by the Vietnamese people can be established under international auspices and, further, that we welcome the participation of any and all nations in the effort to establish the conditions of a free choice.
4. That we insist, as a part of any settlement that the lives of all South Vietnamese on all sides of the conflict shall be covered by amnesty guarantees which are sustained by the presence of international peace forces, of which U. S. forces would be a part, as long as necessary.
5. That we will be prepared, in due course, as international and intra-Vietnamese agreements can be devised and carried into effect, to withdraw our forces as part of a general withdrawal of all foreign forces, north and south, from Viet Nam.

If it is once made clear that we stand on a policy something along the above lines and that that is what the phrase "unconditional discussions" means, it would be in order, I think, for you to call on the co-chairmen to re-convene the Geneva Conference with a view to negotiating it into agreement in detail. If the response is encouraging, you might consider, too, the possibility of calling for a Heads of States meeting to open such a conference and, then, turning over the actual negotiations to the Foreign Secretaries.

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C.

June 5, 1965

(2)
1/16/69

MEMORANDUM:

TO: The President
FROM: Mike Mansfield
SUBJECT: Viet Nam

Pursuant to Thursday's Leadership meeting, I want to stress my support for your resistance to pressures for an irreversible extension of the war in Asia. That is what the bombing of Hanoi-Haiphong could well amount to. I say that because the bombing would be more than just another military measure. It would also be a political act of the first magnitude.

In keeping the lid on these pressures you are on sound historic and realistic grounds in terms of the vital interests of the United States. The word "vital" is used most advisedly because the following is what I believe would result from the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong:

1. The bombing is likely to have no significant value to us in the military situation because the Communists in Hanoi and Peking have long expected it and have undoubtedly made their plans accordingly.
2. The bombing is likely to forestall indefinitely any prospects of discussions with the other side, unconditional or otherwise.
3. The bombing is likely to provide another world-wide impetus to nations to disassociate themselves from the American position and, in Asia, this separation could begin to extend to Japan.
4. The bombing is likely to insure the irreversibility of the Chinese involvement and will act to seal Chinese domination over North Viet Nam.
5. The bombing is likely to freeze Russia into the role, at least, of principal outside supplier of military equipment for North Viet Nam and China.

6. The bombing is likely to bring about an enlargement and acceleration of the ground war in South Viet Nam and, hence, it will compel the rapid injection of more American forces on the ground, even to hold the situation in that region.

7. The bombing is likely to insure that the war eventually will have to be carried, in the search for decision, into North Viet Nam, into other parts of Southeast Asia, and probably into China itself. And who is going to carry the main burden of this extension, if not United States ground forces? Secretary McNamara spoke of 300,000 Americans to deal with Giap's forces if they came south. That is but a beginning. If the expansion goes on to include combat with Chinese forces all over Southeast Asia, we had better start thinking in terms of millions.

These consequences of a bombing of Hanoi-Haiphong would do violence to the vital interests of the United States. For, at the end of the line, even if there is something which could be called a victory, we would be faced with a cost of an occupation and reconstruction in Asia which would dwarf anything which has yet been seen.

Getting in deep on the Asian mainland is a course which has been rejected repeatedly throughout our history and most emphatically by Dwight D. Eisenhower at the other extremity of Asia. As President, the choice was his to make in Korea. He could have pushed the air-war in the search for a clear-cut decision. He chose, instead, to negotiate a cease-fire in Korea, rather than to proceed to deepen the involvement by bombing beyond the Yalu. On the basis of that cease-fire in Korea, we held what was, in fact, already held on the ground and yielded to them what they already held on the ground.

It is clear that our side does not have much on the ground, even in South Viet Nam. But if we are determined to hold that entire region on our terms, it is going to have to be in South Viet Nam and not in the air over North Viet Nam that the ground has to be won. Indeed, the bombing of the North, after the initial sallies, appears to have made the military task in the South more difficult and costly. Certainly, it is related to the rapid expansion of our own ground forces in the South. And it would be my judgment that if we bomb Hanoi-Haiphong it will serve to raise the ante to us on the ground in South Viet Nam once again.

I think it is about time you got an accounting from those who have pressured you in the past to embark on this course and continue to pressure you to stay on it. It is time to ask, not only what immediate advantages it has in a narrow military sense, but where does it lead in the end: What was promised by the initial extension of the war in the air over the North? And what, in fact, has it produced to date?

As I see it, and you know it is a view which I have long held, there are no significant American interests which dictate an essentially massive, unilateral American military effort to control the flow of events in View Nam or even on the Southeast Asian mainland as a whole. There is, on the contrary, only a general interest, shared with many other outsiders, in the stability, peace and progress of the region. That is not the kind of interest which we can serve by overwhelming the region with either our military strength or our substance. It is the kind of interest which requires us to do a share, along with the other outsiders whose tangible, political and economic and commercial stake in the region is in some cases much larger than our own. It is the kind of interest which, it would seem to me, calls for the minimum military effort which is necessary to hold the situation in the South from falling apart altogether and a maximum initiative on our part to get this whole sorry business to a conference table as soon as possible.

3
Wednesday, June 9, 1965
5:35 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

FYI

Bill Moyers

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C.

(2)
10/19

June 9, 1965

To: The President
From: Mike Mansfield
Subject: Viet Nam

Pursuant to our telephone conversation last night, here are some additional thoughts.

The formal delegation of authority to Westmoreland to commit American combat troops comes at a time when the last semblance of constituted government (the Quat group) in Saigon is disappearing. As I understand it, Westmoreland will respond to requests from the Vietnamese military not the Vietnamese government. This underscores the fact that there is not a government to speak of in Saigon. In short we are now at the point where we are no longer dealing with anyone who represents anybody in a political sense. We are simply acting to prevent a collapse of the Vietnamese military forces which we pay for and supply in any event and who presumably are going in the same direction we are going. That reality is not going to be lost on any government--friend or foe--anywhere in the world.

It raises again the question, and it is a crucial one: In what direction are we going in Viet Nam? We can talk of negotiations, conferences and peace. We can talk of the independence and welfare of the people of South Viet Nam. We can talk of unconditional discussions. But the question is going to be asked increasingly: What do we mean when we say we are going to stay in South Viet Nam and for what specific United States or Vietnamese ends are we going to stay there? The question will be asked increasingly at home no less than abroad.

And it is the crucial question because the answer to it should control the extent and nature of our military involvement in Viet Nam. As I see it, at this point, we can mean one of three things when we say we are going to stay in South Viet Nam. I am no military expert but, on the basis of our past experience elsewhere and developments in Viet Nam since the first of the year, it seems to me that the military costs of each of these three alternatives would look something like this:

The world-wide reaction to something along the above lines, I would estimate, would be immensely favorable regardless of whether or not it leads to negotiations and it might just be decisive in bringing the Vietnamese problem to the conference table.

Wednesday, June 9, 1965
5:35 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

FYI

Bill Moyers

The President
Regarding Viet Nam
June 9, 1965
Page Two

1. Do we mean that we are going to stay in Viet Nam until we or our Vietnamese military allies prevail everywhere south of the 17th parallel down to the smallest hamlet? If that is what we mean, we are talking in terms of years or decades, and upwards of a million American soldiers on the ground in South Viet Nam, assuming that the Chinese do not become involved with men.

2. Or are we talking about holding the military situation about where it is now? So far as I can judge, from second hand reports, this would mean that our side must retain the provincial capitols, the larger towns in the interior, Saigon, and the coastal cities and we must be able to maintain at least tenuous lines of communication on the ground in between. If that is what we are talking about when we say we are going to stay in Viet Nam, then the 300,000 McNamara estimate is probably too low but something in the range of 500,000 might do it, at least if Giap's army does not move in full and open force across the 17th parallel.

3. Or are we talking about staying in Viet Nam in order to hold a bargaining position for negotiations which might be expected to permit some reasonable choice--self-determination--on the part of the South Vietnamese people as to their political future, some protection for Vietnamese who have been on our side and some prospect of a bonafide peace based on eventual withdrawal of all foreign forces. If that is what we are talking about, then it would appear to me that instead of committing United States combat forces to the difficult-to-defend Vietnamese outpost cities and towns scattered in the interior, we ought to be drawing the Vietnamese garrisons in those towns into the coastal bases and into Saigon where they would add to our strength, rather than the reverse. And at the same time, we should stop waiting for signals but rather launch a powerful diplomatic peace-offensive to try to get to a conference table. Unless the situation is already totally hopeless, this kind of holding of South Viet Nam may be feasible--at least for a year or so with something on the order of 100,000 or less United States combat forces on the ground backed by powerful naval and air units.

Moreover, if a sustained peace offensive, simultaneously, succeeds in bringing about a conference during the next six months, new elements will inevitably be introduced into the situation and it is conceivable that they could begin to point the way to a resolution of the problem.

The President
Regarding Viet Nam
June 9, 1965
Page Three

The absence of a decision as to which of the above approaches really serves our national interests, seems to me to be the crux of the difficulty which has confronted us all along. I think you know my personal view as to which course is preferable in the national interest. But as things are now going, it is apparent that you are being advised to continue to take at least the second course. The rate of commitment is accelerating and it is quite likely that it will lead rapidly to pressure to follow the first course, if not to go beyond it to all-out war with China. That may not be the way it looks now but a course once set in motion, as you know, often develops its own momentum and rationale whatever the initial intentions.

As for the question of Taylor's replacement, as I told you, Lodge's name may set off an immediate and hostile debate of the whole situation in the Senate. You have got U. Alexis Johnson out there already. He has played a major role and has had a major responsibility in this situation for years. It would seem to me that if we are going to continue on the course of getting in deeper he is the logical man to continue with it.

With respect to another Congressional resolution on the situation, I cannot see the value of it at this point whether it originates here or with you. The Senate cannot direct you in the conduct of foreign relations even if it wanted to and I think you know that there is no substantial group in the Senate which is going to take the initiative in urging you to put more American ground forces into South Viet Nam. I think you know too, that what has been done to date in the way of resolutions, however one-sided the votes, has been done with grave doubts and much trepidation on the part of many Senators. It has been done largely on faith, out of loyalty to you and on the basis of the general view that when the President has the responsibility and when he requests legislative support in a crisis, he should have it.

But if you make another request, at this time, in connection specifically with the use of ground forces, I am concerned at the possible reaction. It is not nearly as predictable as in the past when the requests have been for support of policy in general terms or for funds. A request at this time could set off a wave of criticism and of demands for inquiries which, in the end, even though a resolution were overwhelmingly approved, would not in any way strengthen your hand, render your task easier or make your burden of responsibility lighter.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Monday
June 28, 1965
6:40 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The following message from Embassy London
is worth repeating:

"Extremely good British source has told us in
great confidence that the reason Prime Minister
Wilson decided not to recruit Ayub for Common-
wealth Minister Vietnam mission was that, after
talking to Ayub, he felt that Ayub was so 'enamored
of the Chinese' that it would be too difficult to try
to work with him in the project."

McG. B.

McG. B.

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Authority NLS 96-300

By gml/ics, NARA, Date 2-20-98

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, June 28, 1965
6:30 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Last week you asked me to check the possibility of redeploying B-52s to Okinawa. Here is Bob McNamara's answer. He recommends strongly against it, primarily in the light of the fact that we are now aiming at a larger deployment of 80 B-52s overall. No such movement can be handled at Okinawa, and a split force is considered cumbersome and inefficient.

McG. B.

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON RECEIVED
McGEORGE BUNDY'S OFFICE

28 June 1965

1965 JUN 28 PM 5 57

5-8

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Deployment of B-52s in the Western Pacific

As an alternative to continuing B-52 operations from Guam, I have examined the possibility of redeploying to Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, the thirty B-52s now on Guam, as well as an additional fifty B-52s we plan to send to Guam in the future.

In examining the Kadena alternative, the following facts are pertinent:

1. Thirty B-52s can be deployed to Kadena at the expense of some overcrowding of base facilities.
2. Because of the size of the B-52 and its requirement for wide taxi ways, a maximum of forty-five B-52s could be accommodated at Kadena. Larger deployments would require additional pavement construction.
3. A deployment of greater than thirty B-52s would necessitate movement of some aircraft currently on the base to other locations in the Western Pacific, creating basing problems at these already overcrowded facilities.
4. Basing B-52s at Kadena would generate significant logistic problems in terms of fuel, conventional weapons, supplementing of base personnel complements, and nuclear weapon movements. These are not insurmountable problems, but our current effort in Southeast Asia would be degraded for a period.
5. An eighty B-52 deployment to the Western Pacific would require the basing of thirty-five aircraft at some location other than Kadena -- presumably Guam. Some complication of air operations would result, particularly with respect to tanker basing in support of the Guam operation.

In view of the above, I recommend against basing B-52s at Kadena at this time. Any additional deployments of B-52s to the Western Pacific should be to Guam, with increased tanker support at Kadena.

DECLASSIFIED
OSD letter OCT 25 1978
Authority
By if, NARS, Date 6-5-79

Robert S. McNamara
Robert S. McNamara

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
RECEIVED
McGEORGE 28NDYIS 65ICE

TO: Mr. McGeorge Bundy
The White House

FROM: Benjamin H. Read *for BHR*
Executive Secretary

For your information.

Attachment:

Memorandum from Under
Secretary Ball, dated
6/28/65, copy # 3.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority State 7-5-78
By ip, NARS, Date 1-29-80

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June 28, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. William Bundy
Mr. John McNaughton
Mr. Leonard Unger

I am enclosing a summary of a memorandum proposing a plan for cutting our losses in South Viet-Nam.

I had hoped to finish the whole memorandum tonight; however, I expect to have it in your hands before our meeting at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

George W. Ball

Attachment.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority State 7-5-78 letter
By is, NARS, Date 1-29-80

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CUTTING OUR LOSSES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

Summary

This paper, written on the premise that we are losing the war in Viet-Nam, advances and supports the following propositions:

1. We cannot achieve our political objectives by expanding the bombing of North Viet-Nam. On the contrary, extending the geographical scope of our bombing will pose grave dangers of involving both Red China and the Soviet Union while isolating the United States from its friends and allies.
2. There is no assurance that we can achieve our objectives by substantially expanding American forces in South Viet-Nam and committing them to direct combat. On the contrary, we would run grave risks of bogging down an indeterminate number of American troops in a protracted and bloody conflict of uncertain outcome. This risk is so great, in fact, that those who advocate this course must sustain the burden of proof that commitment of American forces to combat will assure our objectives at an acceptable cost.
3. Combining expanded air attacks in the North with increased troop commitments in the South will not achieve the desired objective. The whole is not greater than the sum of its parts.
4. Since the measures discussed in paragraphs 1 and 2 above offer no assurance that we can win the war by substantially greater US commitments, we should undertake either to extricate ourselves or to reduce our defense perimeters in South Viet-Nam to accord with the capabilities of a limited US deployment.

5. This

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-2-

5. This is our last clear chance to make this decision. If we go forward with Phase III combat, even at the present level of troop deployment, a substantial number of Americans will be killed. This will make it much harder and more costly to extricate ourselves or reduce our commitments. We should, therefore, revise current orders to return to Phase II and we should maintain our present levels of deployment while we seek to get out of the quagmire and cut our losses.

6. By pursuing a systematic and careful plan for cutting our losses we should be able to create the conditions under which we can get out of a dangerous situation without excessive loss of American prestige and influence.

How

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How to Think About the Problem

To determine a proper course of action we must balance the risks and costs of a war fought by United States forces against the risks and costs of a carefully organized tactical withdrawal of the United States from South Viet-Nam or a systematic reduction of our territorial commitment to accord with the capabilities of a limited US deployment.

Obviously, if a curtailment of our commitment in South Viet-Nam would place the United States in imminent peril, we would be justified in taking long chances in pouring troops and equipment into that beleaguered country and in running large risks of escalation.

On the other hand, if we could accomplish such curtailment in a manner that would minimize the costs and dangers to the United States, the indicated formula would be quite different.

The ultimate decision, therefore, involves a hard-nosed judgment as to the relative costs and dangers to America--both short-term and long-term--of these two courses of action.

Plan for Cutting Our Losses

Against the background of these propositions, we propose a plan that should either create the conditions for a systematic US extrication or--less likely--establish a sound basis for our continued involvement at present levels of commitment.

This plan consists of the following elements:

Step 1

The President should make the firm decision that he will not commit United States land forces to combat in South Viet-Nam.

Step 2

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Step 2

We should use every occasion to re-emphasize what has been clear ever since the first Eisenhower letter but has not been recently stated--that our assistance is being provided on two explicit conditions:

- (a) that there is a government genuinely representing the people of South Viet-Nam which continues to ask for our support; and
- (b) that such government maintains an adequate standard of performance, both in the conduct of the war and the making of necessary political, economic and social reforms.

Step 3

1. Since Americans are dying in South Viet-Nam, the United States has both the right and duty to demand of Saigon that it fashion a stable Government of National Union. We should, therefore, make the following demarche not only on General Ky but on the leaders of all principal groups in Saigon--the Catholics, the Buddhists, the Cao Dai, the military, the Dai Viet:

- (a) unless, within a month's time, those leaders are able to put together a Government of National Union under civilian leadership, the United States will have to reconsider the extent of its commitment until such a Government is formed;
- (b) a Government of National Union must have authentic representation of all key ethnic, religious, and regional groups with a commitment to national elections as soon as hostilities cease;

(c) such a

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- (c) such a Government must announce and begin to implement a broad program of political, social and economic reforms, including a cancellation of all peasant debts, land reform, seed and fertilizer programs, etc.
- (d) the Government must announce the essentials of the Acheson Plan--including a major amnesty effort--in order to attract and protect defectors from the Viet Cong so as to provide a sound intelligence base for our military operations and a transition to a post-hostility reconstruction of South Viet-Nam as a national entity.

The ability of the Saigon Government to accomplish these objectives is not dependent on the course of the war. If there is to be genuine unity, it can come about regardless of whether the ARVN is winning or merely holding its own during the rainy season. In fact, the worse the war, the greater the crisis that should instill a willingness to abandon internecine strife and unite against the common enemy. If no such willingness prevails in Saigon, we cannot take over the war ourselves.

Step 4

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Step 4

If the leaders of the various factions in Saigon prove unwilling or unable to put aside petty factional jealousies and comply with the US demarche we must be prepared to follow through. We must be prepared to advise the Ky Government--or whatever government may then be in power--that we cannot maintain even the present level of our assistance.

It is more than likely that a notice of this kind from the United States Government would have the effect of either

(a) inducing the Ky Government to adopt an extreme nationalist position and announce it would go it alone without United States help; or

(b) bring about the fall of the Ky Government in favor of a government prepared to try to find a political solution with the Viet Cong.

In either event, we would not expect that American forces would leave quickly. Rather we would expect a protracted discussion between US representatives and representatives of the various Vietnamese factions.

Should Ky or his successor demand the immediate removal of US forces from South Viet-Nam, he would almost certainly be ousted by more moderate elements. Even if those elements were neutralist, they would still tend to regard our presence for a period of time as essential to prolonged bargaining with the Viet Cong and Hanoi. Our willingness to cooperate in this negotiating phase could permit us to remain in South Viet-Nam for a considerable period and thus avoid any public appearance of a precipitate and undignified withdrawal.

We could use this interval profitably to establish the justice and wisdom of our position with our friends

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and allies. We could also undertake the necessary diplomatic and economic actions in Thailand and Laos designed to offset so far as possible the immediate shock of the developments in South Viet-Nam.

Defensive and Affirmative Actions

In our anxiety to build up support for the struggle in South Viet-Nam, we have tended to exaggerate the consequences for US power and prestige of a tactical withdrawal from South Viet-Nam. Admittedly, such a withdrawal would create short-term problems, especially in Thailand, but by taking prompt and effective defensive and affirmative measures we should be able to avoid any serious long-term consequences. By and large, the world knows that the government in Saigon is a joke, and if our withdrawal resulted from an effort to face this problem squarely, friendly nations would not interpret it as a US failure to keep its commitments. More likely most nations would consider that we had more than kept our commitments to Viet-Nam--and that our decision to force the issue of stability was a mark of prudence and maturity.

The following memorandum contains a discussion of some of the measures which should be taken to avoid damage to our position in specific countries and areas.

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-8-

Hanoi

The position taken in this memorandum does not suggest that the United States should abdicate leadership in the cold war. But any prudent military commander carefully selects the terrain on which to stand and fight, and no great captain has ever been blamed for a successful tactical withdrawal.

From our point of view, the terrain in South Viet-Nam could not be worse. Jungles and rice paddies are not designed for modern arms and, from a military point of view, this is clearly what General de Gaulle described to me as a "rotten country".

Politically, South Viet-Nam is a lost cause. The country is bled white from twenty years of war and the people are sick of it. The Viet Cong--as is shown by the Rand Corporation Motivation and Morale Study--are deeply committed.

Hanoi has a Government and a purpose and a discipline. The "government" in Saigon is a travesty. In a very real sense, South Viet-Nam is a country with an army and no government.

In my view, a deep commitment of United States forces in a land war in South Viet-Nam would be a catastrophic error. If ever there was an occasion for a tactical withdrawal, this is it.

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Authority STATE letter MAR 7 1979

By if, NARS, Date 6-28-79

(copy of SAIGON 4422, June 28, 1965) (from Taylor to SecState)

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When I called on General Ky the afternoon of June 28 to take up several minor matters, I found him with General Thieu, Chieu and Co, the latter having just reported to Saigon as new Minister of Defense. They were all sober-faced and depressed, probably in the wake of discussion by Co of the military situation in II Corps.

Ky went straight to his principal point -- the need for additional US ground combat forces. He is sensing for the first time the difficulty which we have anticipated for some time of fielding sufficient combat-ready South Vietnamese units to cope with growing numbers of Viet Cong units during the next few months. He is impressed with the need for injection of additional US (or other third country) forces to tide over monsoon offensive period, and to take off Viet Cong pressure while mobilization measures are being taken and--to use his expression-- "while rear is being cleaned up." By this latter term, he appears to mean actions needed to stimulate pacification, to energize public opinion, and to establish better security measures against Viet Cong terrorists. (With regard to the latter, he indulged in some reflections on need for reprisal executions of Viet Cong prisoners in retaliation for atrocities like the My Canh bombing.)

I told him that on US side we have long been conscious of growing shortage of trained military manpower. We had justified to our Government the introduction of US combat forces as a means to assist in alleviation of shortage. I reminded him of our announced intention to bring in six additional battalions which, I thought, represented our maximum effort between now and August. What we might consider doing thereafter would depend upon the requirements of the situation as we might evaluate them. It appeared timely to me for General Co and General Westmoreland to undertake a comprehensive review of military manpower requirements between now and the end of the calendar year, to establish goals for period in terms of year-end position to be sought and of means, particularly of personnel, required to reach it. In general terms, it seemed to me that our objective for period should be to hold population and territory presently under government control, to blunt and bloody Viet Cong monsoon offensive, and to make preparations for passage to offensive in early 1966.

The Generals agreed to this thumbnail estimate of the situation and agreed that Co and Westmoreland should undertake the analysis required.

General Ky mentioned that the press had questioned him with regard to command relationships in joint US/South Vietnam ground operations. He had answered to the effect that we have been accustomed to operating on basis of combat support with US helicopters and aviation, and see no

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-2-

particular reason for drastic change. In any specific tactical situation, command would be worked out in accordance with good sense and sound military principles. He is obviously most anxious to play down issue, recognizing it is sensitive to both parties.

I took advantage of discussion of US ground forces to obtain his concurrence for landing of one marine company at Qui Nhon to add to US defense strength in this area, pending arrival of US brigade next month. This approach was made at General Westmoreland's request.

With regard to current issues facing his government, Ky said that he had just had a satisfactory meeting with newspaper publishers whom he had threatened with closing on July 1. They have agreed to attempt to reduce their number to 20 by consolidations to be worked out among themselves. Those who cooperate will be allowed to continue to publish, but recalcitrants will be put out of business. Ky has also given them pep talk on the subject of loyalty to government and its policies. Ky does not propose to apply censorship, but those who do not show "self-control" can expect trouble from him.

From subject of press, we passed to that of better communications between government and people. Ky says he is aware of inefficiency of government radio operations, and agrees to make new efforts to improve them. I told him that we on our side were prepared to talk television if his people can show improvement in radio field. I mentioned that Barry Zorthian is our contact point for TV discussions.

Since Chieu Hoi program is form of communication, I took the occasion to plug for better attention to this activity. Ky indicated that it is being temporarily run out of the Ministry for Psychological Warfare but eventually will be absorbed into the Secretariat for Rural Reconstruction.

With regard to visit to Seventh Fleet carrier, Ky indicated he would like to make the trip on Thursday, July 1, following trip to Hue-Danang on Wednesday. Because of involvements with Eugene Black visit on that date, I have arranged for General Westmoreland to accompany him to carrier and thereafter bring him back to Saigon in time to meet with Mr. Black and his party.

TAYLOR

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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McGEORGE BUNDY'S OFFICE

1965 JUN 29 AM 11 43
Reply Refer To:
I-35773/65

Honorable McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED
OSD letter OCT 25 1978
Authority
By id, NARS, Date 6-5-79

Dear Mac:

This is in response to your 18 June memorandum to me on the question of light planes and helicopters for South Viet Nam.

Since 1 March 1965, the number of light planes in South Viet Nam has increased from 228 to 327 or by 44%. Helicopters have gone from 383 to 539 for an increase of 41%. With the arrival of forces now on the way to South Viet Nam, scheduled for July, light planes will increase to 444 for a 95% increase since March, and the number of helicopters will reach 553 for an increase of 44% since March. The above includes RVNAF as well as U. S. assets.

If the Air Mobile Division and the remainder of the III MAF are deployed, light planes would be slightly increased and helicopters would increase by more than 400.

With the currently programmed light plane increase US/Allied forces should be able to reconnoiter all areas of interest daily. The concept for use of these reconnaissance aircraft calls for each pilot to be assigned a specific area which he will soon know intimately. He can quickly report intelligence, and should be able to detect changes or abnormal activity and call for necessary air strikes or other action in his area. As more light planes arrive through July and the systematic coverage program goes into effect, experience will indicate whether more light planes will be required.

COMUSMACV reports that the effectiveness of ARVN and US Forces continues to be heavily dependent upon additional helicopter units, and indicates

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that the demand for helicopters may increase even beyond projected levels. MACV is currently assessing the need for more helicopters in connection with U. S. land units now deployed.

Sincerely,

Bob

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Page 2 of 2 Pages

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McGEORGE BUNDY'S OFFICE

1965 JUN 29 PM 1 14

June 29, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
✓ Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. William Bundy
Mr. John McLaughlin
Mr. Leonard Unger

Herewith the memorandum, the summary of
which I sent you last night.

George W. Ball.

Attachment.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 7-5-78 letter

By if, NARS, Date 1-29-80

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PART ONE

I.

We Cannot Achieve our Political Objectives by
Expanding the Bombing of North Viet-Nam.

A. The enemy will not be scared into quitting.

North Viet-Nam is a police state with a population inured to hardship and accustomed to discipline--a population that has been indoctrinated over more than a decade to hate the white foreigner and for over six months to endure our bombing. Our continued and stepped-up bombing is more likely to intensify that hate than to impair the will of the people.

We have bombed North Viet-Nam systematically for more than two months, after initial attacks last August and in early February. Yet there is no convincing evidence that Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues have the slightest interest in meeting our terms. Their response to our "pause" was harsh and uncompromising. Letters intercepted in Thailand show the populace of North Viet-Nam to be weary, frightened, but resolute. Foreign visitors are impressed with the systematic preparations for air raids in the Hanoi-Haiphong area and the stoic calm that prevails.

If there is no evidence that the North Vietnamese people are ready to quit, there is even less reason to believe that they would be permitted to do so by the Hanoi regime itself--which has conspired to get control of a united Viet-Nam for twenty years. The regime has weighed the consequences of our threatened attacks for almost one year and is apparently ready to accept the

likely

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likely costs. Chinese and Russian supplies of MIGs and advanced anti-aircraft equipment have no doubt strengthened this resolve. So long as victory in the South appears possible, Hanoi's determination can probably be broken only by the total devastation of North Viet-Nam and its occupation by US forces--and this is not in the cards.

B. Tactical effect of bombing

Not is it reasonable to believe that bombing can significantly diminish the logistical capacities of the Viet Cong. The difficulties inherent in bringing air power to bear against an enemy like the Viet Cong were amply demonstrated by the French experience in 1950-54. Our air attacks to date have no doubt complicated life for the Viet Cong but, given the availability of Chinese help and almost unlimited coolie labor, they have probably not had a material effect on Viet Cong fighting capabilities.

Even against no air opposition, we have inflicted only limited damage by means of our air strikes:

	<u>Strikes</u>	<u>Total % Reduct. National Cap.</u>
Barracks	1,014	2.0
Supply depots	259	2.2
<u>Ammo Depot</u>	517	<u>17.4</u>
<u>Radar Sites</u>	223	<u>23.0</u>
<u>POL Storage</u>	50	<u>13.1</u>
<u>Power Plants</u>	34	<u>9.0</u>

We could, of course, inflict substantial damage on the civilian economy of North Viet-Nam, and we could disrupt the lines of communication between North Viet-Nam and China. But such attacks would be far more likely to

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precipitate reactions by China and Russia than to diminish the fighting power of the Viet Cong in South Viet-Nam. Moreover, such attacks would greatly aggravate our already difficult relations with our friends and allies and would make it harder--rather than easier--for the Communists to accept a political solution.

II.

There is no assurance that the war in South Viet-Nam can be won by a substantial expansion of American forces.

The one hope of bringing about a political solution that would achieve American objectives is to persuade the Viet Cong that they are losing the war in the South. No one has yet shown that American troops can win a jungle war against an invisible enemy--given the extent of the Viet Cong infection and the consequent lack of local civilian cooperation in the provision of intelligence.

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Without a clear demonstration that American ground forces will be able

- (a) to locate and make contact with the enemy; and
- (b) to fight effectively under the guerilla conditions of South Viet-Nam;

we would be highly imprudent to commit substantially increased American forces to a ground war.

General Matthew Ridgway assessed the situation in 1954 when the Eisenhower Administration was considering the possibility of intervening to help the French beleaguered at Dienbienphu. In order to find the facts, General Ridgway wrote in his memoirs:

"...I sent out to Indo-China an Army team of experts in every field: engineers, signal and communications specialists, medical officers, and experienced combat leaders who knew how to evaluate terrain in terms of battle tactics."

He concluded:

"The land was a land of rice paddy and jungle--particularly adapted to the guerrilla-type warfare at which the Chinese soldier is a master. This meant that every little detachment, every individual, that tried to move about that country, would have to be protected by riflemen. Every telephone lineman, road repair party every ambulance and every rear-area aid station would have to be under armed guard or they would be shot at around the clock."

"We could have fought in Indo-China. We could have won, if we had been willing to pay the tremendous cost in men and money that such intervention would have required--a cost that
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in my opinion would have eventually been as great as, or greater than, that we paid in Korea."

To this the General adds:

"As I have pointed out earlier in this narrative, when the day comes for me to face my Maker and account for my actions, the thing I would be most humbly proud of was the fact that I fought against, and perhaps contributed to preventing, the carrying out of some hare-brained tactical schemes which would have cost the lives of thousands of men. To that list of tragic accidents that fortunately never happened I would add the Indo-China intervention."

The Unproven Assumption of the "Third Phase."

Implicit in arguments for greatly augmented United States combat forces in South Viet-Nam is the assumption that the Viet Cong have entered--or are about to enter--their so-called "third phase" of warfare, having progressed from relatively small-scale hit-and-run operations to large unit, fixed position conventional warfare. Yet we have no basis for assuming that the Viet Cong will fight a war on our terms when they can continue to fight the kind of war they fought so well against both the French and the GVN.

The tactics of the Viet Cong were described in the Rand Report of 1959, Doctrine and Tactics of Revolutionary Warfare: The Viet Minh in Indochina--

"Mobility--in offensive as well as defensive action--was the key to all operations, from the small actions of the guerrillas to the larger campaigns of the regular forces. As mentioned

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earlier, the regular forces were rarely permitted to accept battle in unfavorable situations, and were supposed to slip away when in danger of attack from superior French forces. These tactics were essentially like those of guerrillas, who strike and run and avoid battles at almost any cost. But unlike the guerrillas, who hit in order to cause confusion, destroy certain property, and keep the enemy off balance, the regular forces struck to annihilate." (pages 107-108)

* * *

"The viet units moved to and from the battlefields by infiltration, which they practiced with great skill, thereby escaping air and ground detection and avoiding the danger of providing a target for air attack. They often infiltrated right through the French units so as to create greater surprise by attacking the enemy from both sides. The French have estimated that the Viets could infiltrate several individuals through a zone with a 1,200 meter perimeter, several platoons if the perimeter was 2,000 meters, and several companies where it was 4,000 meters long. If the perimeter was still longer, they might succeed in infiltrating a battalion and even a regiment. The Hanoi Delta perimeter, for example, with its posts about one kilometer apart, had virtually no protection against Viet Minh infiltration on a grand scale." (pages 109-110)

The captain who devised and directed those tactics is the same General Giap who leads the Viet Cong today. He is a remarkably astute man of iron will, and we can scarcely expect him to accommodate us by adopting our

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preferred method of combat, regardless of how many troops we send. There is every reason to suppose that the Viet Cong will avoid providing good targets for our massive bombing and superior firepower. They will concentrate their attacks on isolated units, with an occasional attempt to lure us into relieving besieged points in the hope of trapping our forces piecemeal. Once a local battle begins to turn, they will disperse and fade into the surrounding jungles, hills, and swamps, returning to the attack at another time of their choosing. Victory for them is not the retention of territory. Rather it is the imposition of losses on ARVN and US forces and the destruction of GVN political prestige and authority.

Let us remember the words of Mao-Tse-Tung:

"If the enemy attacks, I disappear; if he defends, I harass; and if he retreats, I attack."

III.

Combining expanded air attacks in the North with increased US troop commitments in the South will not achieve the desired objective.

The limitations and disadvantages of an expanded air attack are discussed under the first proposition above. The unproved potential of increased American forces is discussed under the second. I see no reason for assuming that in this case the whole is any greater than the sum of its parts.

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The key question for the Viet Cong has been--and remains--are they winning in the South? And I have seen nothing to persuade me that their final judgment will ever be substantially affected by air strikes in the North.

The relation between the first and second propositions does, however, raise a question that should cause concern. If we do expand the deployment of United States forces in South Viet-Nam and find that this does not do the trick, we shall be under enormous pressures to extend the territorial scope of the bombing offensive and widen the war. This will come about not because it has been shown that this tactic will achieve the desired objective, but because--after substantial United States casualties--the United States public will be unwilling to accept withdrawal. Under such circumstances, we could expect insistent demands for increased bombing as a reflex to a deep sense of national frustration.

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IV

Since Greater US Commitments Offer No Assurance
That We Can Achieve Our Objectives, We Should
Undertake to Cut Our Losses

Let us suppose that we commit 500,000 men to South Viet-Nam and blow to bits the economy of North Viet-Nam, and let us consider the consequences on alternative assumptions--(a) that we lose, and (b) that we win.

(a) Assumption I--that we fight a protracted war but do not win.

If after a protracted struggle we conclude that we cannot achieve the necessary solution (but succeed meanwhile in resisting the temptation to escalate the war by substantially involving the Soviet Union and Red China), we will still have to face the problem of getting out--which by then will have become highly complex. To admit defeat--or even to accept a qualified success--would, at this point, be far more costly in prestige and world support than a withdrawal carefully executed at a time when our commitment was still limited. We would have wasted lives and resources in a futile effort and would have taken dangerous steps down the road to escalation that would have tended to isolate our friends and allies.

Furthermore, the elements working against US freedom of action would generate pressures and momentum of their own, depriving US policy of its lingering ability to extricate itself.

The more the situation deteriorated, the greater claim would Saigon have not only on further US involvement, but also on less US control. As prisoners of a deteriorating situation, our chances would grow less and less of protecting ourselves from backing losers.

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Not only the solemn commitments of three American Presidents, but the whole stream of statements by American leaders interpreting and elaborating on them, would be employed by all interested parties to inhibit flexibility for US policy. Meanwhile the deteriorating situation would bolster the leverage of the Communist appeal with third country audiences who are nervous about World War III.

All of these leverages--of the GVN, of our prior public statements, of events themselves, and of Communist policy, would have increased with the introduction of each extra GI. We would have lost for us a prime objective of policy--to preserve at all times freedom to reassess and alter course.

(b) Assumption II--that we achieve our objective after protracted fighting.

Even if we should succeed in forcing Hanoi to cease its activities after protracted fighting, we might well win only a Pyrrhic victory. The fanaticism of the Viet Cong makes it almost certain that the insurgents would go underground rather than give up. And if Hanoi should agree to hold back the Viet Cong it would only be for a period of time while it continued its efforts of subversion through different means.

Under such circumstances, we would be unable to withdraw all of our forces. Quite likely we would have to maintain even more than the two divisions we now maintain in Korea--with little hope of achieving in South Viet-Nam even the degree of stability attained in Korea, in view of the extensive Viet Cong underground with its pervasive terror and "shadow government." For the Viet Cong--however much it is supplied from the North--is still predominantly indigenous in composition. Its intimate ties to local villagers secure it against all but the most systematic police measures. To adopt such measures would require an authoritarian regime abhorrent to our principles and conducive to further popular revolt on which the Viet Cong could feed.

PART TWO

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PART TWO

I.

Plan for Cutting our Losses

The precise steps outlined in the summary need not be repeated here.

In essence what we should seek to achieve is a posture vis-a-vis the various leaders in Saigon that will appear to the world as reasonable and lacking any suggestion of arbitrariness. What I have proposed is that we make it a condition of continued assistance that the various elements in Saigon put aside their petty differences and organize themselves to fight the war.

The only argument against the reasonableness of this proposition is that we have not insisted on such performance in the past. This is not persuasive. From the point of view of legitimacy, effective representation of the major elements of opinion and social and economic progressiveness, the present government seems even worse than its predecessors.

II.

The Task of Re-education

It should by now be apparent that we have to a large extent created our own predicament. In our determination

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to rally support, we have tended to give the South Vietnamese struggle an exaggerated and symbolic significance. (Mea culpa, since I personally participated in this effort.)

The problem for us now--if we determine not to broaden and deepen our commitments--is to re-educate the American people and our friends and allies that

- (a) The phasing out of American power in South Viet-Nam should not be regarded as a major defeat--either military or political--but a tactical redeployment to more favorable terrain in the over-all Cold War struggle;
- (b) The loss of South Viet-Nam does not mean the loss of all of Southeast Asia to the Communist power. Admittedly, Thailand is a special problem that will be dealt with later in this memorandum;
- (c) We have more than met our commitments to the South Vietnamese people. We have poured men and equipment into the area, have run risks and taken casualties, and have been prepared to continue the struggle provided the South Vietnamese leaders met even the most rudimentary standards of political performance;
- (d) The Viet Cong--while supported and guided from the North--is largely an indigenous movement. Although we have emphasized its Cold War aspects, the conflict in South Viet-Nam is essentially a civil war within that country. ✓

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- (e) Our commitment to the South Vietnamese people is of a wholly different order from our major commitments elsewhere--to Berlin, to NATO, to South Korea, etc. We ourselves have insisted that curtailment of our activities in South Viet-Nam would cast doubt on our fidelity to other commitments. Now we must begin a process of differentiation founded on fact and law.

We have never had a treaty commitment obligating us to the South Vietnamese people or to a South Vietnamese Government. Our only treaty commitment in that area is to our SEATO partners, and they have--without exception--viewed the situation in South Viet-Nam as not calling the treaty into play.

To be sure, we did make a promise to the South Vietnamese people. But that promise was conditioned on their own performance and they have not performed.

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III

Probable Reactions to the Cutting of Our Losses in South Viet-Nam

Three aspects of this question 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, an ally that would prefer wisdom to valor in an area remote from its own interests where

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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. As I have described it the compromise settlement would fuzz up the extent to which the result fell short of ultimate US objectives. Rather than the Dien Bien Phu-Geneva, 1954 model, events would more closely resemble those of Laos, 1962. Or they could be made to appear indigenous in origin by highlighting purely Vietnamese aspects-- negotiations among Hanoi, NLF, and Saigon groupings which result in a non-Communist government and the withdrawal of US forces.

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

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Hanoi's resistance as determined and justified, and question our judgment as to the dangers of an eventual war with Communist China.

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) the South Vietnamese will to resist foundered on instability in Saigon; (2) the war resulted from the artificial divisions of 1954 and Diem's ineptitude thereafter, and therefore, is not comparable to the Korean precedent as an example of invasion and aggression; (3) US support was given in full measure, as shown by our casualties, our expenditures, and our risk-taking; (4) the contribution of further US effort could not be justified in view of SVN instability and the risks of war with China and with Russia; and (5) 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. They would see the curtailment of US influence in South Viet-Nam as bringing the Chinese threat closer to their borders even if Peking were not openly involved.

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--even under circumstances where the Saigon government made the first moves toward a compromise settlement--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 Mekong 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 curtailment of our exertions 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 reduction of our interest 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 development 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 the curtailment of US effort 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

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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 extrication. 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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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT
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Origin
SS
Info

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3078

INFO: CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

EXDIS,

Joint State-Defense Message.

Jun 29 7 58 PM '65

Ref CINCPAC ~~260327Z~~ 260327Z.

subject to GVN clearance.

1. Request contained para two ref approved/ It is understood that SLF (approximately 2000 personnel) is off Qui Nhon at this time. Please advise CINCPAC urgently if concurrence obtained for landing of "one Marine company", as reported your 4422, covers this whole unit. If so CINCPAC is authorized to land SLF or elements thereof in Qui Nhon area if and ~~when~~ when requested by COMUSMACV.

2. If additional clearance required, please see Ky or Thieu urgently and advise.

3. Believe you should make announcement of landing once it takes place. Please advise timing and text. Public statements concerning deployments are governed by policy established in DEF8876DTG102123 April 1965.

GP-3.

End.

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RUSK

Authority State 11-7-78, OSD 8-16-79

By inf, NARS, Date 8-6-80

Drafted by:

FE:WPBundy:mk 6/29/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

FE - William P. Bundy

Clearance:

DoD/ISA - Mr. McNaughton

S/S - Mr. Rattray

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JUN 29 8 08 PM '65

EXTDS

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STATE letter MAR 7 1979

Authority

By if, NARS, Date 6-28-79

REF: A MACV 070335Z
B CINCPAC 072325Z

1. Highest levels today approved early deployment to Da Nang
of two US Marine BLT's.
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~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ It is understood that BLT's can close SVN in
3 - 4 days.
2. We will need your clearance with GVN of this additional
deployment but wish to consider how it can best be used in context Co-
Westmoreland review of military manpower requirements and particularly
to stimulate urgent GVN concentration on its manpower requirements and
goals. This further demonstration US determination might also be used

Drafted by:

FE: WPBundy/bmm 6/29/65

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

William P. Bundy

Clearances:

DoD/ISA - Mr. McNaughton

S/S - Mr. Rattray

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for general emphasis on necessity constructive unified government with maximum energy but minimum repression. These are of course highly general suggestions, and we request your advice as to just how it might be put to maximum advantage.

3. We will have to consider further question of press handling this significant increase in combat deployments. The best usual procedure has been joint US/GVN announcement in Saigon but since deployment does not fall within McNamara press statement two weeks ago we will have to refine and clarify here. Request your comment.

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END

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June 30, 1965

MEMORANDUM

The attached completes Mr. William Bundy's draft entitled: "Holding on in South Vietnam." the first eight pages of which were given to you at the meeting yesterday. The eighth page given to you yesterday can be destroyed and replaced by the present draft.

W. P. B.
William P. Bundy

Distribution:

Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Mr. Bell
Ambassador Thompson
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Ambassador Unger

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 95-206

By W. P. B., NARA, Date 1-9-96

FE: W. P. Bundy/bmm 6/30/65

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HOLDING ON IN SOUTH VIETNAM

This memorandum examines a course of action roughly similar to (2) on the first page of the McNamara memorandum -- moving to ground deployment levels of 75 - 85,000 in the fairly near future, employing these forces on a fairly strict interpretation of the reserve-reaction concept, increasing the pressures on the DRV through selected air strikes in the categories included in the McNamara memorandum ^{and} ~~and~~ avoiding Hanoi. In essence, this would be a policy to test how the situation develops in the summer while avoiding the extremes of ultimatum/withdrawal (Ball memorandum) or the far greater early ground deployments and extensive actions against the DRV proposed in the McNamara memorandum.

The argument for "holding on" -- the middle way -- starts with the rejection of the other two possibilities for the following reasons:

a. Ultimatum-withdrawal would be an abandonment of the South Vietnamese at a time when the fight is not, and certainly does not appear to the world and to Asian countries to be, going all that badly. Such an abandonment would leave us almost no leverage as to South Vietnam, and would create an immediate and maximum shock wave for Thailand and the rest of Asia. The rationale that it was all the fault of the South Vietnamese, in these circumstances, where we ourselves had pulled the plug, would have almost no offsetting effect. The American public would not understand such

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By ing, NARA, Date 1-9-96

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a quick reversal of our position, and the political effects at home would be most serious. There might also be serious adverse effects on our whole leadership position. In short, while there may come a time when the South Vietnamese really have shown they have abandoned the struggle, that time is by no means here now.

b. Major further deployments and pressures on the DRV.

There is a case for increased pressures on the DRV, including selected bombings in the Hanoi area, at the proper time -- when Hanoi is beginning to find the going hard in the South. But, again, that time is not yet. As long as Hanoi thinks it is winning in the South, such pressures will not affect their determination, or in any significant way, their capacity. They will lose us a lot of support in the world, including such important elements as the backing of the British Government. These are risks we may have to take at some point, but not when the gains are just not there.

As for major additional ground deployments, the first argument is simply whether they would be militarily effective. As the Ball papers point out, Hanoi is by no means committed to a really conventional type of war, and they could easily go on making significant gains while giving us precious few opportunities to hit them. We just do not know at this point how effective our forces will be in the reserve role.

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More basically, none of us can now judge the extent to which major US combat forces would cause the Vietnamese Government and army to think we were going to do the job for them. Nor can we judge the extent to which the people in the countryside, who have been exposed constantly to VC propaganda that the fight is against the Americans as successors to the French, would start really to buy this line when they saw US forces engaged in the countryside, and hence flock to the VC banner.

The crucial question of these possible adverse effects is not one on which we can rely on the South Vietnamese Government for judgment. Thieu and Ky are committed men, and also politically inexperienced; whereas we might ~~have~~ have got something useful out of Quat on this issue, we simply cannot expect that Thieu and Ky will have a judgment that really takes into account the total position, much less our own US position. They might be only too happy to see us take over the war, especially if their own view is as gloomy as Thieu's comments about the countryside being 50% controlled or influenced by the VC would suggest.

In short, we have to make our own judgment based on the present reading of popular feeling in South Vietnam, and based above all on the French experience. From these factors, I would judge that there is a point of sharply diminishing returns and adverse consequences that may lie somewhere between 70,000 and 100,000 US forces in total, and a

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fairly limited number of combat battalions who actually get into the countryside to fight in case of need.

Obviously, this is only a general judgment, and subject to revision in the light of experience. If the Saigon Government and its army perform better, US forces fighting alongside a strong Vietnamese army might have little if any of these adverse effects. But until we have tested the water much further than at present, the odds favor a considerably more negative view of the actual effectiveness, over any extended period, of major added US forces.

In short, whatever we think the chances are now of making the effort in the South really costly to Hanoi, the present deployment of major added US forces gives no real promise of helping the chances for this kind of success. If the South Vietnamese Government and army perform well, the role and need of US forces will become clear, and the political liabilities may be less than we now anticipate in the future. If the South Vietnamese Government and army encounter a series of reverses in the next two months, the odds will rise that our own intervention would appear to be turning the conflict into a white man's war, with the US in the shoes of the French. In the first case, we can afford to wait, at least in degree. In the second case, the added chances of success seem very small.

There is one further factor relating to the consequences of defeat if we have made major US deployments and have still been unable to turn the tide

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largely because the South Vietnamese army ceases to perform well and the people turn against us. This would not be much worse than other forms of defeat in some Asian quarters, but it would be substantially worse in its impact on Japan, on Korea if Korea had likewise become involved on a major scale, and on our major allies in Europe. It would also appear a significantly worse outcome on the American people.

* * *C *

"THE MIDDLE WAY" COURSE OF ACTION

1. We should have enough ~~current~~ ground combat forces to give the reserve-reaction concept a fair test but at the same time not to exceed significantly whatever the present Plimsoll Line may be.

This would appear to mean carrying through present decisions up to about 75,000 total, and possibly the early additional Marine deployments of an additional 8,000 - 10,000. We would then hold the Air Mobile Division for decision during the summer, realizing that it would take roughly four weeks to /deploy after decision. If there are smaller readily deployable forces available, we might alert these for use in smaller increments.

2. Our air actions against the South should be carried on at a maximum effective rate.

This could include substantial use of B-52's against VC havens (para 5, page 4 of the McNamara memorandum) recognizing that we look silly and arouse criticism if these do not show significant results.

3. Against North Vietnam, our air actions could pick up remaining targets outside the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

This would save the Hanoi-Haiphong targets for possible later strikes, and would also avoid the airfields and SAM sites unless they were used for action against us in a militarily significant way.

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4. We should consider carefully mining the DRV harbors and cutting the rail and highway bridges from China to Hanoi, but this needs further study.

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4. We should consider carefully mining the DRV harbors and cutting the rail and highway bridges from China to Hanoi, but this needs further study.

This action would obviously bring significantly greater pressure to bear on Hanoi, and we believe the international reaction would be slightly adverse but bearable. However, it raises a question of timing and also one possible substantial drawback. As to timing, we believe that in present circumstances the action would not affect Hanoi's ^{contributor} determination, whereas it might be a significant ~~contribution~~ to that end if the action were taken at a time when Hanoi had begun to feel the pinch in the South more acutely than at present. The second objection is that the cutting off of Hanoi's sea outlets will make it much more difficult for the Soviets to maintain an input into Hanoi, and would tend generally to throw Hanoi into the arms of the Communist Chinese. If undertaken literally at once, the action might have some effect against what may well be the imminent arrival of the actual SAM missiles by sea. However, in the longer run the effect would have to be weighed in a broad policy context. The North Vietnamese and Chinese would undoubtedly find cumbersome and circuitous methods of supplying the essential POL and other materiel that now comes by sea, and in the process Hanoi could well become indebted in a new and major sense to Peiping. Above all,

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the fact that the Soviets would have to send all kinds of materiel, economic or military, overland through Communist China would raise the problem of Moscow also becoming much further in Peiping's debt. On balance, except possibly as an immediate measure to forestall the arrival of the SAM's (subject to intelligence check on the vessels now in transit), the mining of Haiphong appears in the broader political context to be unwise.

On the other hand, the same political arguments might mean that the cutting of the rail lines from Hanoi to ~~XXXXXX~~ China would both make things a lot more difficult for Hanoi and tend slightly to cut down the Communist Chinese role in Hanoi. We need somewhat more analysis from the intelligence community of just what this would do and how the items that now come by rail and road would be replaced.

5. We need to take a hard look at substantial ground force spoiling operations in the Laos Panhandle, probably roughly astride Route 9.

Our actions against the North and against the infiltration routes in Laos have probably had little effect on North Vietnam's capacity to introduce personnel into the South. Armed men can readily use the extensive trail complex, even though it takes them more time than ^{if} they were able to use trucks along the roads extensively.

However, the combination of our sea patrols and our air action against Laos and North Vietnam must be having some significant effect

on North Vietnamese capacity to bring down weapons and, above all, ammunition. This may even now be playing a part in the fact that the extensive VC and regular North Vietnamese units in the neutral areas have not gone into action and have generally avoided any extended engagements. Nonetheless, the recent evidence from Laos (General Ma's report to Sullivan) indicates that there are extensive jungle-covered single roads that are still in use. There seems to be no ready way to cut these by air; yet, if they were at least harassed, the effect on the South Vietnam battle might be very great.

This raises the question whether we would not have much to gain by a ground operation launched from Laos astride Route 9. Hitherto, we have examined this in terms of a real total barrier to infiltration. The military estimate is that the forces required for such a barrier would include several divisions, which seems an excessive commitment in many ways.

On the other hand, even a division force operating in this area might substantially impede the supply operation to the South. It would involve a change in our political posture in Laos, and certainly close consultation and possibly joint operation with the Thai. But it could do a great deal, and it would have some international appeal in that the North Vietnamese violations of Laos territory are a ~~gross~~ clear breach of the 1962 accords and pretty well recognized as ~~such~~ such.

Moreover, such a ground operation would net us in more closely

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with the Thai, and might help to strengthen the Thai posture against whatever comes.

On the other hand, if we had the effect we hope for, we must expect that North Vietnam would hit hard at the force in Laos, and that the result might well be extended ground engagements there. Even though the initial force requirement for a spoiling operation might be only, say, a division, we would probably find this requirement rising over time.

Moreover, the extension of the South Vietnamese war to Laos raises a question whether the North Vietnamese would take this as the excuse, or occasion, to put much more North Vietnamese strength into other parts of Laos. We doubt if they would attack Laos forces frontally, but they would almost certainly consolidate their hold in other areas. However, much of this is already really the fact, and it would be very likely in any event if the situation in South Vietnam goes badly.

On balance, this kind of operation, at least on a spoiling basis, seems worth-while, and needs further study.

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POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION

A. We believe that there is a fair chance, still, that the Viet Cong tide could be stemmed by this course of action and that over a period of 4 - 6 months we might confront Hanoi with a situation of military stalemate, where the costs of the effort would cause some decline in Viet Cong morale and lead Hanoi itself to consider political settlements that would still be very risky but that would involve at least delay in any Communist takeover of South Vietnam, and some real chance that a new type of non-Communist South Vietnam would emerge.

B. There is the possibility that neither Saigon nor Hanoi would weaken, and that we would be carrying on an inconclusive fight for a period of many months or even far longer.

C. The chances are greater that the Viet Cong tide would not be stemmed, that Hanoi would not come to terms, and that at some time--on the order of 2-4 months--Saigon would in effect throw in the sponge and make a deal with the Liberation Front, and Hanoi.

* * * * *

We examine next the implications of each of these possible lines of development, what we might do in each case, and the implications of the outcome for our position in the Far East and in the world.

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A.

This favorable turn of events would still require a carefully developed political plan that would present Hanoi with what it would regard as an acceptable alternative to continuing the war and that would at the same time offer a good chance of bringing about a non-Communist South Vietnam with a real chance to hold on for some time. Such a political plan should also be designed to appeal to the large number of individuals in the Viet Cong who have strong southern regional sentiments and can be lured away from the present high degree of Communist control of the Viet Cong.

The essentials of such a political plan have been developed by a State Department working group in the last two months. The plan calls for the Vietnamese government taking the lead in laying out a major program to extend government administration, with reform measures, with progressive local elections, and with an amnesty to members of the Viet Cong who do not resist the extension of government authority, province-by-province. This would be a unilateral GVN program, not involving any necessary negotiation with the Liberation Front or Hanoi, but appealing to the members of the Viet Cong as South Vietnamese. It would be self-operating and self-enforcing, without the introduction of

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international machinery, which we believe would muddy the situation, be taken advantage of by the Liberation Front, and make the risks of Communist domination through political means much greater.

Such a political program would fall short of our present objectives of getting Hanoi formally to desist from all aid to the South. It would not call for the turning in of Viet Cong arms as an absolute condition, although much might be accomplished by the appeal of the program itself. It would leave the Hanoi-dominated political apparatus in existence on a covert basis, and thus a major long-term problem for South Vietnam to handle. We believe that these concessions are essential if Viet Cong members are to be attracted into the program and if Hanoi itself is to accept it in practice and not continue the fight to the finish.

It should be emphasized that such a program would have to be timed very carefully. It must come when the government is really or at least if the situation leveled out somewhat, starting to make progress, so that the offering of the program does not appear a sign of weakness. But it must come just as soon as the trend has been established, so that Hanoi is deflected from massive reinforcements on its own side.

In short, such a program would have tremendous problems. But it appears to us the only avenue which offers real promise of obtaining an ultimate non-Communist South Vietnam, without Hanoi feeling that it must go all out in a military context.

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B.

An inconclusive struggle would of course have its own serious problems, including the continuation and probable increase of American casualties. We would have to reappraise from time to time whether additional ground forces could be useful, and we would have to exercise considerable resourcefulness to maintain pressure through air strikes against the depleted target system of the DRV. Undoubtedly there would be some pressures to hit Hanoi, but we believe that the international reaction to us would remain adverse and the effect on Hanoi would remain slight, so that we would not look to a change of policy in this regard. There would also be the continuing problem of dealing with negotiating initiatives and making it clear that, as we would suppose would be the case, Hanoi continued to resist negotiations.

Internally, the GVN should certainly be pressed to take the maximum possible internal measures along the lines of the reform and amnesty plan in any case. By hypothesis, they would at least be holding their own, and these measures, plus a basic improvement in GVN performance, could make a major difference in winning over the population over time.

In such a circumstance, we would not anticipate any really businesslike US negotiating initiative with any expectation of success.

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C.

A continued adverse trend would leave us with the problem of seeking the least harmful way of cutting our losses, particularly in terms of holding the rest of Asia and of our basic credit and standing in the world.

The option to which the French and others are looking is that the US would take a major negotiating initiative and offer concessions, either directly with Hanoi or through the convening of a conference.

Such an initiative would have serious disadvantages. Under the assumed trend, the South Vietnamese Government and people would conclude that we were conceding defeat and simply, as the French did in 1954, seeking to put the best face on it. Their morale and effort would almost certainly decline, whether or not there was some sort of "cease fire," and the outcome/a Communist coalition government, soon to be dominated by the Communists, might come rapidly.

Above all, the picture to the world and to the South Vietnamese would be that it was we who threw in the sponge and negotiated a defeat.

The second possibility might be to go on resisting negotiations on Communist terms, with the virtual certain result that Saigon itself would make its own deal with the Liberation Front and Hanoi. We already know that there are contacts to this end, even though they have

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not been supported by the Quat Government or, we believe, by the present Ky Government. Undoubtedly, there are a large number of leaders in the Quat and Ky Governments, and some significant groups in the population, notably the Catholics, who see no future, and indeed probable death or imprisonment, for themselves under a Communist South Vietnam. On the other hand, the Buddhist leaders and undoubtedly a great many others would prefer to try to survive somehow, to the alternative of a really major ground war in South Vietnam. It is these elements, including perhaps notably the Cao Dai sect as well as the Buddhists, who would reach out to make a deal.

Such a deal, if actually reached, could mean an immediate request for US withdrawal, and a situation in which our over-all negotiating leverage was sharply reduced. Hence, just sitting on the sidelines and letting nature take its course also has serious disadvantages.

There is, however, a third possibility. While it is not in our interest to make the first major move if we can help it, we have to reckon that the only way of bringing about some kind of tenable ~~sit~~ situation in the rest of Southeast Asia may well lie through a major conference in which the great powers join in setting up the ground rules for the whole of the area. If we could sharpen our intelligence to the point where he had a pretty clear idea that Saigon was dealing with

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the NLF or about to cave in, we would lose little in Saigon by making a move to such a conference, and we might have much to gain in the long run, before our assets were wholly gone in South Vietnam.

We need to think through carefully just what we mean by a Southeast Asia Conference. The following are some of the considerations:

- a. Scope. The conference should cover at least the whole of mainland Southeast Asia, including Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia, as well as Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- b. Membership. In addition to the nations of the area itself, we should seek to bring in Japan, India, Australia, and New Zealand. Indonesia might even be accepted, balanced to some extent against the Philippines. The other members should include the US, the USSR, the UK, France, and inevitably Communist China. Such presently involved Geneva Conference nations as Canada and Poland could, however, be excluded. Such a conference would be somewhat unwieldy, but it is hard to see how it could usefully be cut down, and the balance of membership from this list is really not too bad numerically.
- c. Key attitudes. In view of the enlarged scope of the conference, we could not and should not turn to the Geneva

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machinery and to the UK and USSR as the Geneva Co-Chairmen.

Rather, we should probably work initially with the Soviets, the UK, India, and perhaps Japan, consulting Thailand and others closely. In many ways, the key to the situation could well lie in the Soviet attitude; we assume that if the Soviets saw us prepared to accept some deal that would in fact result in a Communist Vietnam, they would be prepared to join in the effort to establish a framework that would resist the expansion of Communist China into Southeast Asia. At this point, the Soviets in turn should have major leverage with Hanoi, and we would hope to create a situation in which Communist China would be virtually compelled to attend a conference favored by so many others.

d. US Objectives. Basically, we must recognize that, in the assumed circumstances, we would have little hope of maintaining a non-Communist SVN and would be largely playing for time in the Vietnam context. For South Vietnam, we might leave the internal structure to be worked out by separate internal negotiations between Saigon and the Liberation Front (as was done

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in Laos) but we might also make use of the theme of early elections and self-determination, if only to gain time. As to the Vietnam unification issue, we could revert to the standing principle that popular sentiment in the two halves of Vietnam should be determined by free elections in some stated period-- as long as possible--even though we would know that such a determination was most unlikely to be truly free in practice. We would be making use of the 1954 provisions to the maximum extent possible.

As to Laos, we would be insisting on reaffirmation of the 1962 Accords and compliance with them, including North Vietnamese withdrawal. This would take some doing, but should certainly be our position.

For Cambodia and Burma, we could get an international affirmation of their neutrality and territorial integrity in accordance with their own policies.

Thailand would be very difficult. It is very hard to visualize Peiping accepting, or other key nations fully supporting, Thailand's alliance status and close military ties with the US. We would have to work hard to get a situation in which Thailand was at least free to receive military assistance

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from outside, and also a limited US military presence for MAAG purposes. However, it seems very doubtful that we could avoid a provision that barred Thai adherence to any alliance as such.

Malaysia would be an almost equally difficult problem.

We might try to keep Malaysia out of the scope of the conference, but it is hard to see how we could accomplish this. Equally, it may be very difficult to preserve Malaysia's alliances, although here too we should be striving for freedom to receive military assistance and for a limited external military presence. If Indonesia's confrontation continued, some provision would have to be made for the Commonwealth forces required for the defense of Malaysia.

Over all we would be seeking to deter Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese further action by guarantees, participated in by the great powers, for the territorial integrity and status of the various nations covered by the conference.

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There would be tremendous problems in such a conference, not least the problem of persuading the American public of the wisdom of a wholly new line of policy toward Southeast Asia. On the surface, the proposed conference resembles de Gaulle's original neutralization proposal, with the important difference that the subsequent course of events has brought the Soviets somewhat back into the Southeast Asian picture -- and of course with the vital difference that to have accepted the de Gaulle proposals at the time they were made would have been to accept prematurely the loss of South Vietnam.

In essence, the idea of a genuinely neutral Southeast Asia would be an attempt to enlist the great powers, including the Soviet Union, and also to play upon Vietnamese neutralism so that Vietnam itself, even under Communist rule, became a part of the structure resisting Chinese Communist expansion.

It is important to note that this kind of Southeast Asia fits perfectly with the idea of a broad development program for the area. Discussion of this project could well take place to some extent within the conference itself, but more likely on a parallel basis in close association with the conference. The parallel basis would be particularly appropriate because of the necessary and heavy involvement of the UN

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in the development program. However, the development aspect could certainly go hand in hand with the work of the conference, lending additional economic substance to the proposals for a basic regional political structure.

PROBLEMS IN THE REST OF ASIA, AND INTERIM ACTIONS
WE SHOULD BE TAKING NOW

The increasing possibility of a bad outcome in South Vietnam requires that we take another look at the effects of Communist takeover in South Vietnam on the rest of Asia. The proposal for a conference takes account of these consequences if and when it becomes clear that South Vietnam is indeed lost. But it is high time also that we drew back to see what the crucial areas might be in the rest of Asia, and to consider what we should be doing to shore up the pressure points.

Plainly, the first key pressure point is Thailand. There is much superficial plausibility to the thesis that the loss of Vietnam, however cushioned and delayed, would cause Thailand in particular to lose all confidence in the American commitment to its support. Moreover, we can be virtually certain that Communist China, with Vietnamese support, would be intensifying its present small-scale subversive effort in Thailand and would be preparing to move in on Thailand as rapidly as the subversive method permitted.

Yet, again, the question of timing and pace is all important. After Dien Bien Phu in 1954, there was a Washington slogan, in many circles, that "the Tonkin delta was the key to Southeast Asia" -- in other words that the rest of the area could not possibly then be held. Unquestionably, major elements in the present assumed situation would differ: (1) 1954

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was seen as a French defeat, and US power had not yet been fully used or even significantly interposed; (2) the Communists themselves undoubtedly thought that the 1956 elections would give them all of Vietnam and that they could afford to take their time. In the present circumstances, the defeat would be an American defeat (even though we had not committed our full power), and the Communists would see us already established in Thailand, with every incentive to turn on the pressure as high as they could.

Nonetheless, we still do not believe that the Communists at this stage would engage in overt military pressures on Thailand. Even though the US had not gone all out in defense of Vietnam, the Communist side would have some concern that we might react sharply to anything in the nature of an overt military threat or attack on Thailand. They would count on the American defeat and the picture of Communism as an irresistible force in Southeast Asia to bring Thailand to an accommodation with Communism, but they would believe that tactically this could be better accomplished by sticking to the subversive line for some time and hoping to create in Thailand what could plausibly be described as a "civil war" in which we would be inhibited from intervening.

The major question thus becomes how the Thai would stand up to such Communist tactics. On the one hand, the Thai have been an independent nation for a long period and have developed increasing national pride; moreover, they have already developed considerable

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assets to meet a subversive campaign, and with a judicious increase in our aid in the meantime (discussed below), their capacity could be further increased.

On the other hand, the Thai have a long tradition of accommodation been to the prevailing power. They have/a tributary state to China in past history, and many of them suppose that they could somehow survive in that status in the future, and that this is all Communist China would seek. Moreover, the Thai view of the Vietnam war has been seriously in error in fundamental respects. They believe that American power can do anything, both militarily and in terms of shoring up a Saigon government. They now assume, on all reports, that we really could take over in Saigon and win the war if we felt we had to. If we fail, even under circumstances where the Saigon government made the first move to a defeat, the Thai will see it as a failure of US will. It is ironic, but true, that the Thai simply do not understand our difficulties in Vietnam, and are extraordinarily ignorant of the basic military and political problems we have faced there, and this ignorance extends even to our staunch friends such as Thanat.

In short, the picture that the loss of South Vietnam was really the fault of the South Vietnamese is one that, at present, would find few takers in Bangkok. Nor would the Thai be easily persuaded that their

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situation, if they came under attack, would be much more like Korea, both to the US and to the world, and that we could afford to be a lot tougher in their defense and would also probably be able to get a lot more third country and generalized world support in defending them.

Thus, it must be admitted that the odds are not good that there would be a basic will to resist in Bangkok.

However, again, timing comes into play. We have already strengthened our bonds with the Thai Government, have entered into military planning directly with them, have major military forces there, and have done a great deal to help them meet insurgency, with recent indications that they really are taking their problem very seriously and are prepared to step up their own effort. If we can keep them moving in this direction, and if we can go still further -- for example through increasing our MAP in return for selected Thai force increases and organizational improvements -- we might be able to change current Thai attitudes to some degree before they came to their "moment of truth."

At any rate, the relatively small costs of making this effort and its important relationship to our continued standing in ~~other~~ other areas of Asia such as Korea make it essential that we do our utmost both to strengthen Thailand and to bring about a gradual change in their attitude so that they would be more likely to stand up when the day came.

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We cannot, even on the worst assumptions in Vietnam, let Thailand go by default.

In short, developments in Thailand are absolutely crucial if Vietnam is taken over, and we must make every possible effort, starting now, to get Thailand to stand firm. Whether this should involve the early introduction of US ground forces into Thailand is a complex question of Thai psychology, on which we need field judgment. Deployment of a brigade to northeast Thailand, keyed to a possible Laos threat, might have a psychologically reassuring and strengthening effect; on the other hand, it might lead the Thai to think we were preparing to make Thailand a battleground, and thus stimulate neutralist sentiment. Perhaps the most crucial question is how the Thai are able to deal with the subversive threat to the northeast in the period before the assumed Vietnam defeat.

* * * * *

As for the rest of the Far East, the other serious worry point would be Korea. Although we believe the Korean leaders have a more sophisticated appreciation than the Thai of the problems we have faced in Vietnam, the picture of a major US defeat would be bound to increase their concern for their own security and would bring to the surface currently latent and limited sentiment to work out some deal with North Korea, even at the risk of Communist control. This is one reason we have been working so hard to bring about a Korea-Japan settlement, so that Korea

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is tied to the free nations of the area as well as to the US, but above all so that it gets the economic boost from Japanese help.

Above all, Korea will be concerned that its military forces be brought to greater effectiveness, and will undoubtedly want, and this probably in the near future, greater MAP and the assurance that US force levels will be maintained. Both these demands have already been raised by the Koreans in connection with the dispatch of additional Korean to forces ~~xx~~ Vietnam, and the demand would become very strong indeed if Vietnam went badly. In the face of the "shock wave" effect, we must again be prepared to meet Korean desires to a very great extent, even though we ourselves might not believe that there was much, if any, additional military threat to Korea or likelihood of Chinese Communist attack.

Furthermore, there is an immediate current question of how much we should press the Koreans to contribute the additional division to South Vietnam. Park has blown hot and cold on this, and we suspect that his delay in seeking Assembly authorization means that he is frightened of the effect on his people of getting involved further in a difficult and possibly losing situation. If the additional division were sent, and the war in Vietnam goes badly (by hypothesis), the involvement of major Korean forces could easily mean that the effect on Korea would be much more serious than if such forces had not been sent.

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On the other hand, we have always thought that additional Korean forces were helpful in showing that Asian nations were involved in the Vietnamese cause. Yet all reports indicate that the Vietnamese, including the military leaders, really do not affirmatively want Korean forces, and even regard such forces as an affront to their pride; almost certainly, they have regarded this as a US project and have gone along with it as part of getting along with us.

Thus, if the situation over the next six weeks should turn downward, we need to weigh very heavily whether to press the Koreans to get involved to the extent of the division. We must remember that, crucial as Vietnam may be, Korea is a still bigger stake in our whole Far East picture. If it is disrupted and thrown into confusion by both defeat in Vietnam and major Korean involvement in it, the chances of serious consequences in Korea might be much greater. And, if Korea ever did go sour, the effects on Japan would be incalculable.

* * * *

The third key nation in the rest of Asia is undoubtedly Japan.

Philippines

Both the Nationalist Chinese and the ~~JAPANESE~~ would need some reassurance if things went badly in South Vietnam, but we believe they would not be deeply shaken and that we would still have the essential elements for them to remain resistant to Communism and able to stand on their own feet with our help.

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Japan is a much more complex case. If its confidence in the basic wisdom of American policy can be retained, Japan may now be in the mood to take an increasingly active and constructive part in Asia. If, on the other hand, the Japanese think that we have basically misjudged and mishandled the whole Vietnam situation, they may turn sharply in the direction of neutralism and even of accommodation and really extensive relationships with Communist China. Such action would not only drastically weaken Japan's ties with the US and with the West, but would render the situation, particularly in Korea, extremely precarious.

For present purposes, this means that we must give Japanese attitudes particular weight in our choice of actions in South Vietnam. It is Ambassador Reischauer's judgment that the Japanese would be highly sensitive -- partly on Asian racial grounds -- to any bombing of Hanoi (and presumably Haiphong); he concludes that such bombing would "have very damaging effects on the US/Japan relationship." As to the question of the extent of US ground forces in South Vietnam, Ambassador Reischauer believes that, from the standpoint of Japanese reaction,

" . . . we could further increase them (even on a massive scale) without too much further deterioration in public attitudes toward us. However, if this were to lead to a slackening of the South Vietnamese effort and a growing hostility on the part of the local population toward us, this would have catastrophic repercussions here [in Japan]. This is exactly what the Japanese fear may already be the situation, and if their fears were borne out in

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reality, there would be greatly increased public condemnation of our position. Even the government and our other supporters here would feel that we had indeed got bogged down in a hopeless war against 'nationalism' in Asia. Under such circumstances it would be difficult for the government to resist demands that Japan cut itself loose as far as possible from the sinking ship of American policy in Asia. "

We believe that these Japanese reactions should be given special weight, and they account in part for the choice of the "middle way" and the rejection, at least for the time being, of major additional ground force commitments or a bombing program of the North extended (in whatever fashion) to Hanoi and Haiphong. Obviously, if these measures in fact succeeded in a fairly short time in bringing Hanoi to terms, Japanese attitudes would swing back, and success would restore all the damage. But, as argued earlier, this is a most uncertain outcome against the present background.

Apart from the question of Japanese attitudes toward our actions in Vietnam, we need to weigh what we could do in the immediate future to strengthen our ties with Japan and to ~~ix~~ enlist her in a future security and economic development program for Southeast Asia and for the whole of Asia. We have started to talk in these terms to the Japanese for roughly a year, and we have made a particular effort to enlist ^{the} Japanese in the development program for Southeast Asia. We may well need in the next two months a further serious high-level consultation with the Japanese on the whole situation -- seeking to strengthen the government's present support

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of our South Vietnam policy but above all looking into the future together.

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CONCLUSION

Despite its obvious difficulties, and the uncertainty of success in South Vietnam under this or any other program, this "middle way" program seems to us to avoid the clear pitfalls of either of the major alternatives. It may not give us quite as much chance of a successful outcome as the major military actions proposed in the McNamara memorandum, but it avoids to a major extent the very serious risks involved in this program in any case, and the far more disastrous outcome that ^{the} would eventuate if we acted along the lines of McNamara memorandum and still lost in South Vietnam.

Above all, we must think of our South Vietnamese effort as giving ^{we can} us the best chance ~~to~~ reasonably have of bringing Hanoi to terms, but also as an essential effort to sustain the credibility of US action in Asia and worldwide -- and, right alongside this, an effort to play for time and to give us the chance to line up a different kind of non-Communist structure in Southeast Asia if the worst should happen in South Vietnam.

Finally, an essential point in this memorandum is that we must start now to consider South Vietnam, our action ~~and~~ and the possible outcome, in the wider context of preserving the free countries of Asia and the US position in Asia. This dictates immediate attention to Thailand, possibly some change in our view of Korea, and a particular focus on our relations with Japan.

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June 30, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

This memorandum is designed to raise questions and not to answer them, and I am afraid it may sound unhelpful.

The draft memorandum to the President of June 26 seems to me to have grave limitations.

1. It proposes a doubling of our presently planned strength in South Vietnam, a tripling of air effort in the north, and a new and very important program of naval quarantine. It proposes this new land commitment at a time when our troops are entirely untested in the kind of warfare projected. It proposes greatly extended air action when the value of the air action we have taken is sharply disputed. It proposes naval quarantine by mining at a time when nearly everyone agrees the real question is not in Hanoi, but in South Vietnam. My first reaction is that this program is rash to the point of folly.
2. The memorandum itself points out that the test of the success of any program in the near future will be in South Vietnam. I agree with this view. But I think it far from clear that these drastic changes will have commensurate significance in this decisive field. In particular, I see no reason to suppose that the Viet Cong will accommodate us by fighting the kind of war we desire. Fragmentary evidence so far suggests that they intend to avoid direct contact with major US forces and concentrate their efforts against the Vietnamese Army. I think the odds are that if we put in 40-50 battalions with the missions here proposed, we shall find them only lightly engaged and ineffective in hot pursuit.
3. The paper does not discuss the question of agreements with the Vietnamese Government before we move to a 200 thousand-man level. The apparent basis for doing this is simply the increasing weakness of Vietnamese forces. But this is a slippery slope toward total US responsibility and corresponding fecklessness on the Vietnamese side.

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Authority NSC 6-18-80 letter

By JK (ip), NARS, Date 7-17-80

4. The paper also omits examination of the upper limit of US liability. If we need 200 thousand men now for these quite limited missions, may we not need 400 thousand later? Is this a rational course of action? Is there any real prospect that US regular forces can conduct the anti-guerrilla operations which would probably remain the central problem in South Vietnam?

5. The suggestion of a naval quarantine is particularly drastic and highly important. I think it should be separated from the rest of the paper. A blockade by mining would have both greater risks and much greater impact. It needs a kind of study it has not had (as far as I know) before it is seriously proposed.

6. This paper omits certain additional possibilities that should be considered before a specific program of pressure is adopted:

(1) It is within our power to give much more drastic warnings to Hanoi than any we have yet given. If General Eisenhower is right in his belief that it was the prospect of nuclear attack which brought an armistice in Korea, we should at least consider what realistic threat of larger action is available to us for communication to Hanoi. A full interdiction of supplies to North Vietnam by air and sea is a possible candidate for such an ultimatum. These are weapons which may be more useful to us if we do not have to use them.

(2) The paper passes by the possibility that stronger interdiction of north-south traffic might be possible by combining land, sea, and air action. I am not persuaded by what I have heard in casual comments of the impossibility of tightening these pressures by combined action. Is there no prospect that special forces could hold critical strong points in Laos along the Ho Chi Minh Trail? Is it impossible to tighten controls along the DMZ? Have we really done all we can in naval patrol?

7. The timing of an expanded effort needs examination. It is not at all clear that we should make these kinds of decisions early in July with the very fragmentary evidence available to us now on a number of critical points: the tactics of the VC, the prospects of the Ky Government, and the effectiveness of US forces in these new roles.

8. Any expanded program needs to have a clear sense of its own internal momentum. The paper does not face this problem. If US casualties go up sharply, what further actions do we propose to take or not to take? More broadly still, what is the real object of the exercise? If it is to get to the conference table, what results do we seek there? Still more brutally, do we want to invest 200 thousand men to cover an eventual retreat? Can we not do that just as well where we are?

McGeorge Bundy

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6/26/65
(Revised 7/1/65)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Program of expanded military and political moves with respect to Vietnam

Introduction. Our objective is to create conditions for a favorable settlement by demonstrating to the VC/DRV that the odds are against their winning. Under present conditions, however, the chances of achieving this objective are small -- and the VC are winning now -- largely because the ratio of guerrilla to anti-guerrilla forces is unfavorable to the government. With this in mind, we must choose among three courses of action with respect to South Vietnam: (1) Cut our losses and withdraw under the best conditions that can be arranged; (2) continue at about the present level, with US forces limited to, say, 75,000, holding on and playing for the breaks while recognizing that our position will probably grow weaker; or (3) expand substantially the US military pressure against the Viet Cong in the South and the North Vietnamese in the North and at the same time launch a vigorous effort on the political side to get negotiations started. An outline of the third of these approaches follows.

I. Expanded military moves. The following military moves should be taken together with the political initiatives in Part II below.

A. Inside South Vietnam. Increase US/GVN military strength in SVN enough to prove to the VC that they cannot win and thus to turn the tide of the war.

1. Increase combined US/GVN ground strength to the level required effectively to counter the current and likely VC ground strength.* On the assumption that GVN strength holds its own, a decision should be made now to bring the US/3d-country deployments to 44 battalions within the next few months. Their mission would include hounding, harassing and hurting the VC should they elect not to stand and fight. General Westmoreland says that infusion of such forces with such missions on the schedule proposed "should re-establish the military balance by the end of December." He continues that "it will not per se cause the enemy to back off."** General Westmoreland's recommendations are shown below:

* Discuss with Ky his view of the military outlook, his plan for improving the situation and his appraisal of the extent to which an increase in US presence along these lines (a) would arrest the deterioration and/or (b) would have a net counter-productive "French colonial" effect. If he suggests the latter, ask how he can offset the VC strength advantage without using additional US forces.

** Westmoreland reports that he "cannot now state what additional forces may be required in 1966 to gain and maintain the military initiative." He says that "instinctively, we believe that there may be substantial US force requirements." He has a study under way, with a fairly solid estimate due soon.

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Authority OSD 11-1-78, NSC 4-18-80, CIA 11-15-79
By OCB, NARA, Date 4-29-87

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MACV RECOMMENDED FOR 1965

(III MAF	9 bn (2 due 7/5)	<i>Aug. 1.</i>
(173d Abn Bde	2 bn	
(1st Inf Div	9 bn (3 due 7/15; 6 could arrive 9/1)	
(101st Abn Div	3 bn (due 7/28)	
(Air Mob Div	8 bn (due 9/1)	<i>2 weeks to announcement.</i>
(I MAF	<u>3 bn</u> (1 due 7/1; 2 could arrive in 12 days)	
Total US	34 bn (175,000)	
(A/NZ	1 bn	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ROK (or US?)	<u>9 bn</u> (could arrive approx. 10/15)	
TOTAL	44 bn	

2. Deploy 13 additional US helicopter companies and 5 additional Chinook platoons to increase effectiveness of US/GVN forces.

3. Deploy additional US artillery batteries and engineers to reinforce ARVN divisions and corps.

4. Carry out 800 B-52 sorties a month in strikes against VC havens (followed promptly by entry of ground-forces into the struck areas).

B. Against North Vietnam.* While avoiding striking population and industrial targets not closely related to the DRV's supply of war material to the VC, we should announce to Hanoi and carry out actions to destroy such supplies and to interdict their flow into and out of North Vietnam.

1. Quarantine the movement of war supplies into North Vietnam -- by sea, rail and road.

a. Mine the DRV harbors. Seaborne traffic accounts for 80% of the DRV foreign trade, including practically all POL, the single import most vital to the DRV (the DRV armed forces consume 40% of the POL and transportation most of the remainder). Sixty per cent of the bottoms are Free World under charter mainly to China, but almost all POL is carried by Communist tankers. Practically all of the seaborne traffic moves through four ports. Mining of those ports could be launched on 72 hours notice, and delayed fusing (three days) could be employed to permit ships time to exit after the fields were laid. A full mining effort to plant all fields would require 97 sorties; the fields could be sustained with 38

* Because of the short lead-times involved in all of these actions, no decision with respect to them is needed now. Actions to quarantine the ports or to intensify the strike program against the North can on short notice be made a part of an increasing-pressure program.

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sorties per month.

b. Destroy rail and highway bridges leading from China to Hanoi. There are 15 highway, 5 railroad and 8 railroad/highway bridges north and east of Hanoi. The railroads now carry between 1600 and 1900 short tons per day. Roads to Hanoi from China can support considerable truck traffic. It would take approximately 1000 sorties to carry out strikes on the 28 bridges, with 85% probability of dropping one span in each case.

c. Conduct intensive armed reconnaissance of the LOCs from China.

2. Destroy the war-making supplies and facilities of North Vietnam wherever they may be located. There are 56 unstruck targets in this category -- 1 explosive plant, 1 airfield, 5 supply and ordnance depots, 7 ammunition depots, 9 POL storage, 12 military barracks/headquarters, 2 communications facilities, 6 naval base/port facilities, and 13 power plants. Approximately 1650 strike sorties would be required to attack all of these targets. About half of them would be suitable for B-52 attack. Only three are likely to lead to more than 100 civilian casualties under daylight alert conditions.

3. Interdict movement of war supplies within and out of North Vietnam by an expanded strike and armed reconnaissance program against LOCs west and south of Hanoi.

a. Expand strike program against bridges, ferries, railroads and roads. Other than 6 locks-and-dams targets, only 4 bridges and 4 railroad shops and yards remain unstruck in this category. These eight targets would require approximately 266 sorties. Two of them -- both railroad yards in Hanoi -- would probably result in more than 100 civilian casualties. Three of them -- the two Hanoi railroad yards and the Yen Vien railroad yard -- would be suitable for B-52 strike.

b. Expand armed reconnaissance against LOCs. These LOCs south and west of Hanoi, together with the LOCs north and east of Hanoi referred to in para 1c above, should be struck by 1000 sorties a week. This would increase the total strike-plus-armed recce sorties against North Vietnam from 1800 to 5000 a month. (Efforts should be continued in Laos to interdict the "trail" there, and at sea preventing infiltration by water.)

4. Be prepared to destroy airfields and SAM sites as necessary to accomplish the objectives of sub-paras 1-3 above.

C. In the United States. Even if US deployments to Vietnam are no more than 100,000 men, we should:

1. Call up selected reserve forces (approximately 100,000 men).
2. Extend tours of duty in all Services.

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II. Expanded political moves. Together with the above military moves, we should take the following political initiatives in order (a) to open a dialogue with Hanoi, Peking, and the VC looking toward a settlement in Vietnam, (b) to keep the Soviet Union from deepening its military involvement and support of North Vietnam until the time when settlement can be achieved, and (c) to cement the support for US policy by the US public, allies and friends, and to keep international opposition at a manageable level. While our approaches may be rebuffed until the tide begins to turn, they nevertheless should be made.

A. Political Initiatives.

1. Moscow. Place a high level US representative in contact with Moscow to discuss frankly and fully with Soviet leaders our intentions and our desire to find common ground to work with them rather than come into conflict. We would reiterate that US objectives are limited but at the same time we have a firm determination to achieve them. We would stress the dangers we see to both of us in Chinese expansion, and we would recognize the Soviet need to follow a course which does not destroy its leadership in the Communist world. We would press the Soviets to avoid any deeper involvement. We would emphasize that continuation of the military phase can only be harmful to the Communist cause and urge the Soviets to step in (perhaps with British Co-Chairman) to move the situation away from war and toward a peaceful settlement.

2. United Nations. As a prelude to expansion of the military effort, we should consider once more putting before the UN the Vietnam question for discussion with the Chicoms and North Vietnamese present. They will almost surely refuse to attend and will provide us with a better position for expanding military action; but if they accept we will have the prospect of negotiations without having stopped our bombing.

3. Other international forums. In all international forums and contacts, public and private, continue to demonstrate to the world who is responsible for the trouble in Vietnam and persuade them that our course of supporting the South, including bombings, must be accepted and if possible supported. Whenever we can provide further demonstrations of Communist intransigence and refusal to treat reasonably on this question, this will strengthen our case.

4. Geneva Conference. US should propose a Geneva Conference of all world powers (including France) with the subject, "Peace in Southeast Asia."

5. NLF and DRV. GVN -- and US after consultation with the GVN -- should initiate contacts with the Liberation Front and North Vietnam, making clear a readiness to discuss ways and means of achieving settlement in Vietnam.

6. Chicoms. If there is any sign of Chinese willingness to begin discussions, US should contact the Chinese to set forth US position including our limited objective and the dangers to China of continuation of the war, and should press the Chinese to bring the aggression against the South to an end.

7. UK, Canada, India, France, U Thant. Consult individually with the British, Canadians, U Thant, Indians, French and possibly other neutrals to enlist them in taking peace initiatives bilaterally, multilaterally or through inter-

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national organizations however best calculated to bring about the participation of Communist Governments.

8. Other initiatives. In connection with paras 1-7 above, US and GVN would make it clear they stand ready to take any reasonable action which does not endanger their military posture which might improve the chances of success of any peace initiatives. This could include a bombing "pause." It could include an explicit restatement of US intention of withdrawing from South Vietnam at the appropriate time, a South Vietnamese announcement of responsible treatment of NLF-VC personnel who remain in the South, emphasis on implementation of President's April 7 offer for economic development in South East Asia, etc.

B. Initiatives inside South Vietnam. Take steps to induce VC defections and to increase support for the Ky government -- among other steps, these:

1. Economic program. Sharply expand program of economic aid in South Vietnam -- including a major construction program, junk building, increased rice and pig output, improved distribution and marketing procedures.

2. Chu Hoi program. Improve and expand Chu Hoi program -- with a good man in charge on the US side, and bounties, amnesties, work and educational opportunities, and other inducements.

III. Evaluation of the above program.

A. Domestic US reaction. Even though casualties will increase and the war will continue for some time, the United States public will support this course of action because it is a combined military-political program designed and likely to bring about a favorable solution to the Vietnam problem.

B. Communist reaction to the expanded programs.

1. Soviet. The Soviets can be expected to continue to contribute materiel and advisors to the North Vietnamese. Increased US bombing of Vietnam, including targets in Hanoi and Haiphong, SAM sites and airfields, and mining of North Vietnamese harbors, might oblige the Soviet Union to enter the contest more actively with volunteers and aircraft. This might result in minor encounters between US and Soviet personnel.

2. China. So long as no US or GVN troops invade North Vietnam and so long as no US or GVN aircraft attack Chinese territory, the Chinese probably will not send regular ground forces or aircraft into the war. However, the possibility of a more active Soviet involvement in North Vietnam might precipitate a Chinese introduction of land forces, probably dubbed volunteers, to preclude the Soviets' taking a pre-eminent position in North Vietnam.

3. North Vietnam. North Vietnam will not move towards the negotiating table until the tide begins to turn in the south. When that happens, they may seek to counter it by sending large numbers of men into South Vietnam.

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4. Viet Cong. The VC, especially if they continue to take high losses, can be expected to depend increasingly upon the PAVN forces as the war moves into a more conventional phase; but they may find ways of continuing almost indefinitely their present intensive military, guerrilla and terror activities, particularly if reinforced with some regular PAVN units. A key question on the military side is whether POL, ammunition and cadres can be cut off and if they are cut off whether this really renders the Viet Cong impotent. A key question on the political side is whether any arrangement acceptable to us would be acceptable to the VC.

C. Estimate of success.

1. Militarily. The success of the above program from a military point of view turns on whether the increased effort stems the tide in the South; that in turn depends on two things -- on whether the South Vietnamese hold their own in terms of numbers and fighting spirit, and on whether the US forces can be effective in a quick-reaction reserve role, a role in which they have not been tested. The number of US troops is too small to make a significant difference in the traditional 10-1 government-guerrilla formula, but it is not too small to make a significant difference in the kind of war which seems to be evolving in Vietnam -- a "Third Stage" or conventional war in which it is easier to identify, locate and attack the enemy. (South Vietnam has 141 battalions as compared with an estimated equivalent number of VC battalions. The 44 US/3d country battalions mentioned above are the equivalent of 100 South Vietnamese battalions.)

2. Politically. It is frequently alleged that such a large expansion of US military personnel, their expanded military role (which would put them in close contact and offer some degree of control over South Vietnamese citizens), and the inevitable expansion of US voice in the operation of the GVN economy and facilities, command and government services will be unpopular; it is said that they could lead to the rejection of the government which supported this American presence, to an irresistible pressure for expulsion of the Americans, and to the greatly increased saleability of Communist propaganda. Whether these allegations are true, we do not know.

The political initiatives are likely to be successful in the early stages only to demonstrate US good faith; they will pay off toward an actual settlement only after the tide begins to turn (unless we lower our sights substantially). The tide almost certainly cannot begin to turn in less than a few months, and may not for a year or more; the war is one of attrition and will be a long one. Since troops once committed as a practical matter cannot be removed, since US casualties will rise, since we should take call-up actions to support the additional forces in Vietnam, the test of endurance may be as much in the United States as in Vietnam.

3. Generally (CIA estimate). Over the longer term we doubt if the Communists are likely to change their basic strategy in Vietnam (i.e., aggressive and steadily mounting insurgency) unless and until two conditions prevail: (1) they are forced to accept a situation in the war in the South which offers them no prospect of an early victory and no grounds for hope that they can simply outlast the US and (2) North Vietnam itself is under continuing and increasingly damaging punitive

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attack. So long as the Communists think they scent the possibility of an early victory (which is probably now the case), we believe that they will persevere and accept extremely severe damage to the North. Conversely, if North Vietnam itself is not hurting, Hanoi's doctrinaire leaders will probably be ready to carry on the Southern struggle almost indefinitely. If, however, both of the conditions outlined above should be brought to pass, we believe Hanoi probably would, at least for a period of time, alter its basic strategy and course of action in South Vietnam.

Hanoi might do so in several ways. Going for a conference as a political way of gaining a respite from attack would be one. Alternatively it might reduce the level of insurgent activity in the hopes that this would force the US to stop its punishment of the North but not prevent the US and GVN from remaining subject to wearying harassment in the South. Or, Hanoi might order the VC to suspend operations in the hopes that in a period of temporary tranquility, domestic and international opinion would force the US to disengage without destroying the VC apparatus or the roots of VC strength. Finally, Hanoi might decide that the US/GVN will to fight could still be broken and the tide of war turned back again in favor of the VC by launching a massive PAVN assault on the South. This is a less likely option in the circumstances we have posited, but still a contingency for which the US must be prepared.

Robert S. McNamara

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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June 30, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: France in Vietnam, 1954, and the U.S. in Vietnam, 1965
-- A Useful Analogy?

It has been suggested in some quarters that the United States today finds itself in a position in Vietnam similar to that of the French in 1954. One implication is that we must expect an outcome to our present policy similar to that which befell the French in their defeat and withdrawal of that year.

The actual content and applicability of this analogy are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

1. Vietnam in 1954

A. The Political Scene

The central fact of French involvement in Vietnam was the persistent seven-year effort to re-establish French colonial rule. French forces were pitted against a Communist-led revolution for national independence; at no point did France offer Vietnam the alternative of non-Communist independence.

The former Emperor Bao Dai served as the political facade for France's effort to maintain control through a Mandarin elite. Saigon cabinets came and went, while vested interests among Vietnamese and Frenchmen jockeyed for power; but little progress was made toward forming a government capable of rallying Vietnamese nationalist allegiance.

B. The Military Scene

By early 1953, Viet Minh forces comprised seven regular infantry divisions, with independent regiments equal in strength to two additional divisions -- a total of nine divisions. In numbers, the Viet Minh had about 125,000 regulars, 75,000 full-time regional and provincial troops, and 150,000 part-time guerrillas -- a total of 350,000 men.

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Authority NSC 6-18-80 letter
By JK (ig), NARS, Date 7-17-80

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To combat these forces, the French had committed 175,000 regulars (54,000 of whom were native Frenchmen, the rest Legionnaires, Africans, etc.) and 55,000 auxiliaries, plus a naval contingent of 5,000, an Air Force contingent of 10,000 and 225,000 local forces of the three Indo-China states -- a total of 470,000 men.

By 1952, eight percent of France's national budget was annually allocated to the Indochina war; in 1952-53 nearly 6,000 French and Legionnaire troops were killed, as well as 7,730 of their Vietnamese allies.

These impressive statistics imply heavy conventional engagements. In early 1950 the Viet Minh had shifted from guerrilla to conventional warfare, and for the next four years large-scale assaults -- ranging upward to 14-battalion strikes -- were not uncommon. In 1952 a three-division assault in one province forced the withdrawal of over 20,000 French troops.

By 1953 the French were generally engaged in a holding action; the brunt of their forces were tied to defensive duties, and the prospects for a military victory were nil. They had largely retreated to the Red River Delta in the North, some key towns in the Center, and the region around Saigon in the South. Only the equivalent of three divisions were actually available for offensive operations.

By 1954 the war's unpopularity at home had brought mounting pressure for negotiation. The Geneva Conference was already under way by the time of France's spectacular tactical defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954.

2. Vietnam in 1965

A. The Political Scene

The two central facts of the South Vietnam situation today are the Viet Cong/Viet Minh struggle for control and the process of non-Communist social and political revolution. U.S. forces are present in rapidly growing numbers to help resist the Communists at the request of successive Saigon governments.

Since Diem's fall, power in the urban South has been passing from the predominantly Catholic and French-educated elite to a more "Vietnamese",

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militantly nationalistic and potentially xenophobic group of which the political bonzes, students, and certain young generals are prime examples. While the Communists are seeking to exploit this revolutionary ferment, it remains something quite apart from the Viet Cong insurgency. Those who aspire to lead the revolution claim that unless it is successful, the Viet Cong insurgency cannot be defeated.

This shift in the alignment of fundamental forces is responsible for much of the political turbulence of the urban scene. It is a process that involves the striking of new power balances in the midst of a war and in the absence of parliamentary traditions or institutions for the channeling of political conflict. Despite their deep antagonisms, neither the Buddhists nor Catholics have acquired political dominance, with the result that each can check but not cancel the power of the other. The same is true of the myriad of other political factions pressing their own interests.

While frequent changes in governments have had a debilitating effect on political and administrative stability, as well as on government efforts to create a national consciousness for support of the war effort, there remains an impressive resiliency among the Vietnamese people and their traditional way of life which is little affected by the cabinet changes in Saigon.

Nevertheless, the most significant element of stability and strength, insofar as the struggle against Communist insurgency is concerned, remains the external factor of U.S. military, economic and political support. Without it, the country would quickly succumb to Communist domination.

. B. The Military Scene

The Viet Cong probably controls somewhat more than 3 million Vietnamese in half the total rural area of the country. The GVN continues to control rural areas inhabited by an estimated 4.4 million. The remaining rural inhabitants, some 5.4 million, are subject to various stages of governmental pacification, or else not controlled by either side.

Viet Cong regulars, now estimated at 64,600, are full-time, professional soldiers organized in identified units of up to regimental

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strength. They are for the most part well trained and equipped. The regulars are distinct from an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 irregular Viet Cong who operate as guerrillas and self-defense militia troops. Another 30,000 armed political personnel staff the Viet Cong's party and administrative apparatus. The military activist figure may therefore be as high as 194,000.

The Viet Cong regular force has the capability of mounting large-scale actions well above present levels of activity. Such actions could theoretically involve as many as nine simultaneous attacks in regimental strength; even a series of coordinated, widespread attacks of lesser magnitude could seriously tax South Vietnamese ability to respond with the limited general reserve battalions available.

But the Viet Cong regular battalions vary widely in their combat effectiveness. Some are battle-tested veterans, while others are known to include relatively poorly trained young recruits or recently infiltrated North Vietnamese draftees with minimal training and little or no combat experience.

It is not clear whether the Viet Cong will sustain their currently stepped-up pace, whether present activity is the forerunner of a major offensive, or whether Viet Cong plans have been set back by increased U.S. air activity and troop support. The concentration of Viet Cong forces in northern South Vietnam suggests Kontum, Pleiku or other GVN interior strongholds as their likely targets for a major victory, possibly accompanied by an attempt to drive to the coast from their own inland strongholds, thereby cutting South Vietnam in two.

Arrayed against the Viet Cong is the South Vietnamese Army, numbering approximately 220,000 out of the total armed forces of roughly 250,000 men.

The ARVN is capable of maintaining internal security in the major population centers, in some outlying areas, and along selected lines of communications. While its combat capabilities are affected by frequent command changes at top echelons, insufficient numbers of aggressive leaders and poor but improving logistics, the ARVN is well supplied with U.S. arms and equipment and has become gradually more effective in guerrilla operations. The ARVN, with continuing U.S. military

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support, has the capacity to prevent a Viet Cong military victory.

In alliance with the ARVN are the U.S. forces in Vietnam which now approach 70,000 -- a combined US/GVN total of 320,000.

Remaining in the background throughout the present conflict is the seasoned regular army of North Vietnam, numbering over 300,000 men.

3. France in 1954

Two key aspects of France's relation to the Indochina war in 1954 were the war's acute unpopularity and French political instability.

France was never united or consistent in her prosecution of the war in Indochina. The war was not popular in France itself, was actively opposed by many on the left, and was cynically used by others for domestic political ends.

The Viet Minh paid careful attention to, drew considerable comfort and encouragement from, not infrequently made good use of these French domestic political factors. (Ho Chi Minh's political and negotiating tactics during the 1945-46 period, in fact, were heavily influenced by his belief that the Communists would soon come to power in France.)

For a long time, Paris tried to pretend that the war was not a war but a "police action." Not until July 1952 was the legal status of "veteran" given to Frenchmen who had served in Indochina, and the National Assembly never did permit conscripts to be posted to the Indochina theater.

The ambiguous legal status of the conflict enabled French Communists to carry their opposition to the point of sabotage without incurring the legal charge of treason. Successive French governments had to contend with concerted and organized domestic opposition; resolutions favoring negotiation and early withdrawal were frequently proposed and occasionally passed by non-Communist parties. Leak and counter leak was an accepted domestic political tactic, and, as a result, even highly classified reports or orders pertaining to the war were often published verbatim in the pages of political journals.

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Pressures for negotiation and settlement mounted steadily in 1953, with a number of prominent politicians -- especially Pierre Mendes-France -- pushing such themes with vigor. The January 1954 Berlin conference gave new impetus to this pressure, and by February 18 it was decided that a conference should be held in Geneva in April to consider both Korea and Indochina.

Dien Bien Phu fell on the day before the opening of the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference. Had Paris had the will to continue the fight, replacements for that battle's losses could have been sent from France, and the Indochina war might have continued for months if not years.

Paris lacked the will, however, and the defeat at Dien Bien Phu made the French Government anxious to disengage as soon as possible. The fall of the Laniel cabinet on June 12 and the advent of Mendes-France as Premier on June 18 hastened the conclusion of a settlement.

4. The United States in 1965

The central themes of U.S. opinion regarding Vietnam appear to be considerable concern (over U.S. casualties, U.S. involvement, Saigon's political instability, the risks of general war, the use of air strikes and napalm, etc.) but general support for the Administration.

In general, the public appears unenthusiastic but reconciled to our role in this conflict. While there is widespread questioning and uneasiness about the way in which we may be playing that role, the public as a whole seems to realize that the role must be played. Furthermore, open skepticism as to our tactics subsides at times of sharp crisis in the situation.

The most articulate critics of our present policy in Vietnam have been elements within the academic community and church organizations. Although usually a minority within their own groups, they have stimulated extensive worry and inquiry in the nation as a whole. With the end of the academic year, this protest movement has temporarily subsided.

Meanwhile, the Government's negotiatory posture since April 7th, and the apparent intransigence of the Communists, has made it more difficult to advocate persuasive alternatives to Washington's current

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track. Criticism continues to be focused on the air strikes, however, and on the U.S. Government's apparent refusal to consider negotiations with the NLF.

The latest Harris Poll (June 28) shows that 62% of the public expresses overall approval of the President's handling of the Vietnam crisis. Well over 70% of the people believe that Southeast Asia will go Communist if we do not stand firm in Vietnam, and they approve the President's call for unconditional negotiations. Twenty-three percent are not sure about bombings in the North or the sending of more troops during the monsoon season. However, of those with an opinion, almost 80 percent approve of the bombing and over 60 percent believe we should send more troops. Skepticism as to the future of the conflict and our right to be involved in it are expressed by the fact that 35 percent of the people believe that China has the right to ask us out of an area so close to her borders and 32 percent believe we might get involved in a land war we can't win.

The latest Gallup Poll (June 9) showed that the percentage of people who believed that we should continue our present course of action climbed from 13 to 20 percent in the last month. Those who believe that we should increase military action dropped from 23 to 21 percent and those who believed we should stop military action stayed virtually the same with only a one point rise to 26 percent. The number of those expressing no opinion dropped from 35 to 28 percent.

With some exceptions, most editorialists and columnists support the President in his determination to keep Vietnam independent. This support for the broad objective is tempered by a noticeable strain of criticism over a "lack of frankness" on the part of the Administration in discussing the depth of our commitment. Such criticism was most discernible after the seeming contradiction between the Department of State and the White House over the combat role of U.S. troops and after the Government's handling of the B-52 affair.

Those who oppose the Government in the press also seem to be presently concentrating on the demand that the U.S. negotiate directly with the Viet Cong and, to a lesser extent, that the bombings should be stopped again. In general, however, most newspapers appear convinced

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that the Administration is sincere in its desire to settle the conflict by negotiations and that the intransigence is on the Communists' side.

The most vocal current comment on the Vietnam situation is coming from the Congress. Senators Morse and Gruening remain convinced that we must pull out. There is another group, somewhat larger, which could be termed "reluctant realists" whose viscera says get out but whose heads tell them the present policy is unavoidable. Senators Mansfield, Church and Fulbright seem to fall in this category. Once again, the problem is one of offering a plausible alternative that would assure the existence of a non-Communist South Vietnam.

The most recent Congressional development is the attack spear-headed by Representative Melvin Laird who states that unless we go for total victory we shouldn't commit U.S. ground troops. He threatens withdrawal of Republican support in the House. It is too early to judge the appeal of this maneuver.

Despite obvious Congressional disquiet, Congressional support has been demonstrated in the 512 - 2 vote last August on the Southeast Asia Resolution and in the votes approving the President's request for a supplemental Vietnam appropriation (408-7 and 88 - 3).

5. Conclusion

It would seem clear from the foregoing analysis that despite superficial similarities, the situation faced by France in Vietnam in 1954 is not fundamentally analagous to that faced by the U.S. in Vietnam in 1965.

France in 1954 was a colonial power seeking to reimpose its overseas rule, out of tune with Vietnamese nationalism, deeply divided in terms of French domestic opinion, politically unstable at home, the victim of seven years of warfare -- the last four of them marked by military engagements on a scale far greater than anything yet encountered by the U.S. and the GVN.

The U.S. in 1965 is responding to the call of a people under Communist assault, a people undergoing a non-Communist national revolution;

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neither our power nor that of our adversaries has been fully engaged as yet. At home we remain politically strong and, in general, politically united. Options, both military and political, remain to us that were no longer available to the French.

McGeorge Bundy

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DECLASSIFIED

30 June 1965

MEMORANDUM Authority OSD 10-25-78, State 7-10-79
By isg, NARS, Date 10-24-79SUBJECT: Comments on the Secretary of Defense's 26 June 1965
Memorandum, "Program of Expanded Military and
Political Moves with Respect to Vietnam"(Comments are keyed to the numbered sections in the
subject memorandum)

1. We are in general accord with the main thesis of the basic paper that something like his "Course 3" is necessary if US objectives in Indochina are to be achieved or, indeed, if the US and its South Vietnamese allies are to avoid the real risk of a major political-military defeat in the next several months. We have reservations about some of the assumptions on which the argument of the memorandum seems to be based, as well as about certain specific actions advocated therein.

2. (Introduction) US objective as stated in the first sentence of the basic paper introduction is very limited -- "to force the DRV to the conference table." On its face, this seems to fall far short of US objectives since the holding of a conference itself gives no indication of the settlement that might come out of the conference. We wonder whether it was intended actually to narrow previously stated US objectives, or whether the formulation is simply a foreshortened statement. It is our understanding that US policy in Vietnam has had the three-fold end of (1) inducing, or forcing, the DRV to reduce the level of Hanoi-instigated, supported and directed insurgency in South Vietnam (this will require a combination of suasion, punitive pressure on North Vietnam itself and inflicting defeats on its insurgent forces in the field in the South) and, (2) building up the political and military strength of a non-Communist government in South Vietnam so that, (3) the US can eventually curtail its extraordinary commitment to and involvement in Vietnamese affairs but, when it withdraws, can leave behind a regime capable of coping with the level of politico-military pressures and problems likely to be prevailing at that time. At some point a conference may be a useful step in this process, but it is not an end, in itself, and probably negotiations when and if they take place will only ratify an equilibrium established by military and political power.

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We agree the VC may now be winning. They clearly believe they are. We doubt if it will be possible to demonstrate "to the DRV/VC that the odds are against their winning" unless and until they are in fact losing -- which, as the memorandum rightly notes, is not now the case. We cannot realistically hope "to prove to the VC that they cannot win in SVN and therefore to turn the tide of the war" except by actually beginning to turn the tide against the VC. Obviously we cannot do this if US/GVN forces sustain a series of shattering setbacks during the next few weeks. To have any hope of turning the tide we must, at a minimum avoid defeat and, under present conditions, some actions along the lines recommended in the memorandum are patently essential if defeat is to be avoided. If we succeed in not losing the war during this monsoon season (through October, say), what we will have won is a chance to settle down to a protracted struggle to contain Communist pressures from the North and help build a stable, viable independent South Vietnam.

3. (I-A) It appears obviously essential to provide a breathing spell in South Vietnam while the government of South Vietnam and its armed forces can prepare themselves to once again apply the political and military counter-insurgency measures necessary to put the VC on the defensive. It follows, therefore, that the augmentation and deployment of US forces in South Vietnam must be adequate beyond question to prevent an ARVN collapse this year.

The total in-country military effect of this added US force commitment would of course depend largely on the effective use of the 49 ARVN battalions freed for other duties as well as on the use of the additional US and other foreign battalions. If foreign troops are given extensive pacification duties in heavily populated areas, the military results will probably be negligible and the political results adverse. If these troops are used to provide basic strategic defense (hence reassurance against total defeat), to assault fixed and certain concentrations of Communist regulars, and to bail out Vietnamese troops in difficulty the results should be good. The more directly and effectively US forces can be used in combat against major concentrations and base areas of the Viet Cong, the sooner can it be demonstrated that VC/DRV efforts to win a decisive victory this year are fruitless. It should not be expected, however, that the Viet Cong will necessarily stand and fight

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against superior forces. Rather they may drop backward a step to smaller-scale harassment and hit-and-run raids in which they do not encounter superior US combat units. Not until they themselves are being hounded, harassed and hurt in many areas without prospect of relief will there be a likelihood of the VC/DRV seeking a respite via the conference table or by any other device.

We would not normally presume to comment on the exact level and composition of forces required but we are inclined to side with MACV's views on the undesirability of tying too many US forces to the static defense of base installations. The added forces proposed would be of obvious value in giving the thinly stretched ARVN a strategic reserve it does not now have, screening the DMZ, and generally boosting Vietnamese morale, capabilities, effectiveness and fighting spirits. The net effect of the proposed B-52 sorties could, in our opinion, have a significant influence if promptly and thoroughly followed up on the ground in the areas attacked.

4. (I-B) The proposed expansion of aerial attacks on North Vietnam is probably broader than necessary, in view of our conviction that the issue must ultimately be settled in the South, and in view of some of the risks involved. The economic effects of mining the approaches to northern ports, in particular, are not in our view sufficient and in any case not likely to be quickly enough felt to warrant the awkward international political complications such action would entail. There is a better argument for choosing targets whose destruction would immediately put domestic political pressure on the Hanoi regime, e.g., dock facilities and harbor dredges, power plants and industrial targets, as well as do economic damage to Hanoi's military effort. Destroying the Haiphong harbor dredges alone would, in a short time, have a constricting effect on operation of the port, and in about six months make it virtually unusable because of silting. Moreover, if we increase the pressure on NVN as visualized, one of the quickest ways to signal our serious intent as well as protect our attacking forces would be to destroy the SAM sites and major airfields. While a major Chinese and/or Soviet response cannot be totally ruled out, the risk will not necessarily be increased by pressing our limited-objective attacks on NVN.

5. (II-A) While we approve of political gestures indicating our willingness to make a reasonable settlement in Vietnam, most of the initiatives mentioned have been tried to no avail. A serious, official high-level approach to the Soviets would almost certainly be rebuffed since it would expose them to

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such severe Chinese Communist criticism. This kind of approach could not be successful until we have demonstrated we can stop and turn back the VC/DRV attack and are able to face down Chinese Communist threats. Whenever this has been done and the Communist side has had enough in Vietnam, it will find a variety of doors open to a conference room and the Soviets may then assist them to pass through. We stand to gain by keeping the doors open, as we have, but not by over-stressing our anxiety to confer.

6. (II-B) The need for this type of initiative within South Vietnam is well established. The two proposals suggested are good starters but of themselves hardly scratch the surface. We feel far more attention must be devoted to the kind of civil and political programs which will be required not only to bring the insurgency under permanent control (even assuming military success), but also to permit South Vietnam to stand successfully against the Communists in the event that a negotiated settlement could be reached and the bulk of US forces withdrawn. It is certain that, in the wake of any such settlement, the Communists would continue their efforts against the Saigon government, either by political means or through outright violation of agreements. There is little point in spending US lives and treasure to obtain a conference or settlement which, in the absence of a viable non-Communist state, must lead either to US re-intervention or a subsequent Communist takeover.

7. (III) Over the longer term we doubt if the Communists are likely to change their basic strategy in Vietnam (i.e., aggressive and steadily mounting insurgency) unless and until two conditions prevail: (1) they are forced to accept a situation in the war in the South which offers them no prospect of an early victory and no grounds for hope that they can simply outlast the US and (2) North Vietnam itself is under continuing and increasingly damaging punitive attack. So long as the Communists think they scent the possibility of an early victory (which is probably now the case), we believe that they will persevere and accept extremely severe damage to the North. Conversely, if North Vietnam itself is not hurting, Hanoi's doctrinaire leaders will probably be ready to carry on the Southern struggle almost indefinitely. If, however, both of the conditions outlined above should be brought to pass, we believe Hanoi probably would, at least for a period of time, alter its basic strategy and course of action in South Vietnam.

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It might do so in several ways. Going for a conference as a political way of gaining a respite from attack would be one. Alternatively Hanoi might reduce the level of insurgent activity in the hopes that this would force the US to stop its punishment of the North but not prevent the US and GVN from remaining subject to wearying harassment in the South. Or, Hanoi might order the VC to suspend operations in the hopes that in a period of temporary tranquillity, domestic and international opinion would force the US to disengage without destroying the VC apparatus or the roots of VC strength. Finally, Hanoi might decide that the US/GVN will to fight could still be broken and the tide of war turned back again in favor of the VC by launching a massive PAVN assault on the South. This is a less likely option in the circumstances we have posited, but still a contingency for which the US must be prepared.

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June 30, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BUNDY

SUBJECT: Comments on Ball Paper

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines
By gwlrg, NARA, Date 3-2-98

Part One is a pessimistic and, God help us, perhaps realistic account of what we confront in Vietnam. A more ebullient artist might have cast the situation in somewhat less sombre tones, but there is not much point here in determining how dark a grey or how deep a black to use. Let us start with the picture that now hangs above Part Two.

As far as Part Two is concerned, I must confess some bewilderment, in part because of the schizophrenic approach taken in "I" page 11. Here, it is suggested that our continued assistance to the GVN be made conditional on certain standards of performance on the part of the new government. But if we accept the lugubrious account of our situation in Part One, our approach should be to get out ("cut our losses") as quickly and graciously as possible. Suppose the GVN does pull up its socks, should we, in fact, continue (and if necessary increase) our assistance in the light of Part One? Or suppose it promises to as best it can, what do we do? Or are we asking what in fact is impossible in order to set the stage for a withdrawal? Since everything that follows in Part Two assumes a withdrawal, I suspect it is this last (rather unsavory) course that the paper consciously or subconsciously is advocating.

Another and more basic problem with Part Two is that the steps advanced (in the Summary) are basically designed to get the Communists on a negotiating track, but the essence of pp. 12-19 of the paper implies that we have pulled out prior to or without negotiations (which I don't think anyone has seriously considered). Or, perhaps, there is an underlying assumption that any negotiations will inevitably result in an immediate de facto takeover of South Vietnam by the Communists (which I don't think is necessarily the case, but which argues for some hard thinking on just what we would try to achieve at a conference table).

But it is easy to cavil. It is time for more constructive noises.

Let us accept the concept that the situation is grave, the local prospects dubious, the overall outlook dangerous (Part One). Let us accept the fundamental requirement to "Cut our Losses" (the proposition of Part Two). Where do we go from here?

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Our Military Tactics over the Summer

If we decide that we follow this track, we should adapt our bombing attacks on the North and our ground force commitment accordingly. This means that we not (and I recognize all the pressures to the contrary) break out of our present bombing pattern. To be sure our attacks have far from crippled the DRV. On the other hand, it has made life real and earnest. In a situation where resources were solely strained to begin with, knocking out almost 20 percent of their POL storage and almost 10 percent of their power plants (see page 2 of the basic paper) is significant -- especially since we have been able to do it without taking on greatly increased risks. The problems created by the mobilization and distortion of an already-strained economy to cope with actual and anticipated damage is also worth noting.

On the ground in South Vietnam we face a tough summer, but if we can come out of it in the fall with a situation in which the VC is not much better off than it was in May, we may be over the hump. Can this fairly limited objective be accomplished with the forces already in South Vietnam? I wouldn't presume to say. I have a queasy feeling, however, that the force levels contemplated in some quarters assume either that the ARVN will cave in (in which case we've had it, whatever we do) or that more ambitious military objectives can be attained (which, with all deference, I doubt).

/But, if we are going to increase our commitment to more than 100 thousand I would seriously suggest a new and serious look at sealing the 17th parallel. When this was first broached, many of the objections stemmed from the extent of the manpower involved. However, if we are going to commit the manpower anyway, perhaps a strategy more closely geared to our interdiction attacks on the North would make more sense militarily, would be better understood here at home and would give us a better negotiating stance./

Our Negotiating Stance

I have already given you a proposal for pressing forward in the immediate future. Aside from the matter of timing, it differs from the Ball approach in its suggestion that we take the initiative in discussions with the DRV (the Ball paper leaves this to the GVN, although it contemplates talks at some point between the US and the ChiComs). My concept of the scenario,

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in either the short or longer run would be to work out some kind of deal with Hanoi (cutting Moscow in as desirable), keep the Chinese out of it, and have the GVN work out a modus vivendi with a disarmed VC.

Our Approach to the GVN

The political raw material in South Vietnam is maddeningly, frustratingly inadequate for reasons familiar to all of us. Neither threats nor coaxing will fundamentally improve it -- we have had plenty of experience to prove this out. Granted that the new government has many worrisome aspects; it also has a few redeeming qualities. It has a revolutionary elan and has advanced a revolutionary program. Ky is something of a nut, but so in their own ways are Sukarno and Sihanouk and Nkrumah and Nasser. A revolutionary program and a flamboyant personality may be just what the situation requires. But if this is the medicine, we've got to help administer it and this might involve some substantial changes in our Mission (see Walt Rostow's memo and my own on this subject).

What does this have to do with cutting our losses? A great deal. If we are going to get out (hopefully through some kind of negotiated deal) we must leave behind a strong, forward-looking, non-Communist program and a pro-American (or at least not an alienated) group of key leaders. More important in the short run, is the need to establish a degree of confidence and communication with the Ky Government (or any that may follow), so that we can proceed to negotiations or fight to the death in partnership with the GVN. For, like it or not, we cannot do either without them.

Adapting to our Withdrawal

I think the problems of retreading domestic and foreign opinion to our withdrawal from Vietnam is somewhat overdrawn in the Ball paper. This assumes, of course, that we pull out as part of a negotiated arrangement and not because the GVN fell short of our standards of performance.

Perhaps more important than the problems raised here is the challenge posed by a post-settlement Vietnam. There will be a great temptation (and I will be high on the list of the tempted) to wash our hands of the problem. But good men and true should concentrate on how a peaceful South Vietnam can also be a non-Communist one.

Chester L. Cooper

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