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~~TOP SECRET - NODIS~~



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 6, 1968

Dear Walt:

Herewith a memorandum which I sent to the Secretary and Under Secretary and which deals with a topic which, I know, interests you.

With warm regards,

As ever yours,

Henry Cabot Lodge

Enclosure

The Honorable Walt W. Rostow  
Special Assistant to the President  
The White House

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter [2-79]

By ing, NARS, Date 7-25-79

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Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979  
By isg, NARS, Date 7-25-79

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March 6, 1968

TO: The Secretary  
U - Mr. Katzenbach

FROM: H. C. Lodge

SUBJECT: Bargaining with the GVN

Alternative A - Using a decision in favor of sending more U.S. troops as a bargaining counter.

(I do not here deal with the merits of the question of sending more U.S. troops to Viet-Nam, which I have discussed in another paper.)

A decision in favor of sending more U.S. troops creates a rare opportunity to do some bargaining with the GVN. I use the word "rare" because, usually, the GVN believes that we absolutely must continue to provide economic and military aid in the prevailing quantities. But, at present, there is some doubt as to whether we will or will not send more troops and the GVN thus does not think that we are "hooked." It is a time for some good hard trading. Recalling my experience with Diem in 1963, and assuming a decision to

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send U.S. troops, I recommend that the Ambassador be instructed to tell the GVN that we are prepared to provide more troops if the Vietnamese do certain things and if they undertake to get them done by a certain time, as follows:

1. The ARVN must be imbued with an offensive spirit, eager to make contact with the enemy. To this end, a strong argument can be made that the nature of the advisory relationship must change. I understand that in Korea the United States had a veto power over the appointment of commanding officers. Perhaps we should stipulate something like this.

2. A general mobilization of manpower.

3. Corruption, the most important aspect of which is looting by the soldiers of the ARVN. Looting by soldiers has a long background in Asia and is attributable to the fact that Asian armies have often been raised on the basis of being poorly-paid mercenaries, most of whose pay came from looting. There is no doubt that if they were properly paid and fed, looting could be very much reduced--if not stopped altogether. Proper behavior by the army has an incalculably constructive political effect. It is what

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brought Magsaysay to the top in the Philippines. Mao Tse Tung's rise to power is often attributed to the fact that the soldiers did not loot, did not rape and did not defecate all over the place.

4. We must require their cooperation in the work of intensifying community organization and building solid local political institutions under whose aegis effective police-type work can be done--population control.

5. While security is being restored, we should stimulate the creation of non-governmental organizations which will practice self-help for developing the natural resources of Viet-Nam. Some of these could be sponsored by non-governmental U.S. organizations which would provide more effective help than USAID. For example, the Tenant Farmers Union and the Plantation Workers Union should be actively stimulated to carry out such programs as farm credit and rice milling; and the fishermen should be stimulated to carry out programs of marketing. This is one thing which can be done in Viet-Nam which has a good prospect of developing a real momentum of its own. It could produce a major political effect leading to the dynamic political leadership which Viet-Nam so urgently needs.

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Alternative B - If the decision is made not to send more troops, we should consider bargaining with the GVN by the use of other bargaining counters.

These must exist among the immense list of goods and services which we are providing and the withholding of which would undoubtedly have a stimulating effect. If it is decided to do this, I can provide some guidance on procedure, based on my experience with Diem.

Copy To: Mr. Walt W. Rostow  
Mr. Phil Habib

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS~~



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 6, 1968

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS~~

Dear Walt:

Enclosed is a letter and attachment for the President.

With warm regards,

As ever yours,

Henry Cabot Lodge

The Honorable Walt W. Rostow  
Special Assistant to the President  
The White House

Enclosure

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DECLASSIFIED  
Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By inf, NARS, Date 7-25-79



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 6, 1968

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS~~

Dear Mr. President:

The enclosed paper seems to have aroused some interest here. I, therefore, take the liberty of sending it to you, believing it may be worth a few minutes of your time.

Respectfully yours,

Henry Cabot Lodge

The President of the United States  
The White House

Enclosure

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By inf, NARS, Date 7-25-79

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 5, 1968

~~TOP SECRET - NODIS~~

To: The Secretary  
From: H. C. Lodge *H.C. Lodge*  
Subject: Herewith what I tried to convey to you on Sunday.

American public opinion can stand a long drawn out military campaign with few casualties or a relatively short campaign with high casualties (such as World War II which from the American standpoint began with heavy combat operations in December 1942 and ended in April 1945, i. e., two and one-half years). But American public opinion cannot stand a long drawn out war with high casualties. As far as the overwhelming mass of public opinion is concerned, the big thing is U. S. casualties. If they go down, none of the other things matter very much. And Vietnamese civilian casualties would go down too.

It would be most imprudent to expect quick results in Viet-Nam. The central purpose, after all, is to build a nation and this involves psychological changes which usually come gradually. As realists we should assume a protracted effort -- hopefully with low casualties. If things should go quicker than we expect, so much the better.

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Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By *ing*, NARS, Date 7-25-79

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"Search and Destroy"

The policy of the U. S. military in Viet-Nam has consistently -- and rightly -- been to conduct what is called "offensive operations." But these are defined as "search and destroy" -- and this raises serious questions.

Such a definition clearly implies a belief that an exclusively military victory is conceivable and that if we just get out and destroy enough Viet Cong the war will come to an end. This is the so-called "war of attrition."

Such a war was sound doctrine in World War II, but it is not realistic in the Viet-Nam war. It is not possible to win the war by killing the enemy by military means on the ground in South Viet-Nam. The hard core terrorist guerrilla certainly cannot be reached that way. He will only be reached when the people give enough information about the terrorists so that they can be rooted out by police-type methods. This is what is meant by "pacification" which, in turn, is the first step in "nation-building." And the North Vietnamese soldier can be better reached by bombing North Viet-Nam and by being apprehended when he reaches his so-called "safe haven" in South Viet-Nam.

The following questions, therefore, arise:

a) has there not been unnecessary killing of people on our side because of the policy of "search and destroy," in particular



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by the devastating effect of our artillery and airpower on Vietnamese civilians and buildings?

b) has not this tactic failed to do the job?

c) has it not also created an undue number of refugees?

d) has it not made heavy demands on precious intellectual and physical energies which might otherwise have been aimed at nation-building, which is the most promising way to achieve a durable result?

Might we not, therefore, do much better if we defined the phrase "offensive operations" as meaning "split up the enemy and keep him off balance"? In accordance with this definition the U. S. military would be playing its own utterly indispensable part: acting as a shield behind which the Vietnamese nation-building and pacification operations can take place.

Someone who enjoys the President's confidence and has a good grounding in military and political matters, but who is not in the regular military hierarchy, should see whether a policy of "split up and keep off balance" would not result in fewer U. S. casualties, fewer refugees and at the same time actually expedite the pacification program, by releasing energies now inevitably absorbed by the great demands of the present policy of "seek out and destroy."

The question of how we use our armed forces is a matter of the greatest political importance, even though its execution is

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military. It should be viewed from the viewpoint of the highest possible overall civilian strategy.

More Troops?

More troops, therefore, should, in accordance with this reasoning, be sent in numbers sufficient only to enable us to keep faith with our troops in exposed positions, as in the northern end of South Viet-Nam -- and not to continue the past emphasis on "search and destroy."

The new emphasis should be on the creation of durable local political institutions under which police-type programs -- for "territorial security" -- can operate. Such an emphasis would be on protection of heavily populated areas, which would, of course, require operations outside of these areas. It would deny safe haven to the infiltrators from the North. It should organize South Vietnamese society as efficiently as North Vietnamese society is organized. There should thus be intensive and repeated scourings -- i.e., "comb-outs" -- precinct by precinct, block by block, house by house, and farm by farm. It should be as hard to move from one precinct to another or from one village to another in South Viet-Nam as it is today in North Viet-Nam. All this should mean fewer U. S. casualties and fewer Vietnamese refugees. And it should hasten the end of the war.

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Our present practice of having virtually everything available to the press is also a loser. The enemy would never do such a thing. We should institute censorship just as we did in World War II and on the very simple grounds that we are risking American lives if we don't.

#### A New Turn

Thus it would be clear that we are not going to abandon Viet-Nam; but that we are going to run the war with a somewhat different emphasis in the light of our experience at the time of the Tet raids, which has created a new situation.

There were those who, in the late forties and early fifties, believed that the so-called "cold war" with the Soviet Union must come to a head. Some were making plans accordingly -- to "end the cold war by winning it." Then General Eisenhower explained to the American people that we must learn to live with the cold war. Everyone now sees that this was good advice.

We can learn to live with this Vietnamese situation and, if we do not watch the clock, we will find that time will be working for us. We have had soldiers in Germany and in Korea since 1945. Similarly, we can have soldiers in Viet-Nam providing protection

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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March 6, 1968

The Enemy Offensive

1. We knew from about September 1967 that the enemy planned a massive winter/spring offensive. That is why the President accelerated the delivery to Vietnam of 102 of the 106 Maneuver Battalions promised Westmoreland by June 68, by Christmas 1967.

That is why I warned the Australian Cabinet and other of our fighting allies at Canberra that we must expect "kamikaze tactics" this winter.

2. We now know from many sources that the enemy judged that he was losing the war as it was being conducted in 1967. For example, here is the summary of an interrogation of a North Vietnamese Captain captured on Feb. 5 in Danang: "The source stated that the strategy of occupying and defending the rural areas of South Vietnam, as proposed by General Thanh, was not successful and was believed by General Giap to be in error. Giap therefore decided that before peace talks could be held it would be necessary to achieve a military advantage over the Allies."

3. As Tet approached, Gen. Westmoreland sensed that a big blow was coming at Tet. He agreed, in the first place, only to a 36-hour Tet, as opposed to the seven days the VC had announced. On Feb. 24, he asked for our permission to cancel Tet completely and to continue bombing in the southern part of North Vietnam during Tet. He also brought his divisions close to Saigon sensing an attack there. The tactical surprise of the enemy in striking the cities was due to two factors: the fact that Tet had never been violated in all the many years of war in Vietnam by either side; he kept secrecy by giving his operational instructions only a few days before the attack -- thereby losing considerable efficiency in the attack itself.

4. It is now estimated that the attack was undertaken by about 65,000 VC and North Vietnamese forces, plus about 17,000 guerrillas, supply troops, etc. Thus, about 84,000 of the enemy's total forces of all kinds -- totaling about 240,000 -- went into the battle. In the period between November and Tet, the enemy brought two additional North Vietnamese divisions into North Vietnam.

South

5. Here is Ellsworth Bunker's summary which came to me on Feb. 29 looking back over the first month:



(1) ~~It is evident that the enemy made a heavy commitment of his forces to the Tet offensive;~~ some 62,000 plus guerrilla and other elements in supporting roles; that more than half of the forces committed have been destroyed and more than 10,000 weapons captured, a figure which tends to substantiate the reported personnel losses. These heavy losses would appear to have a number of consequences: many enemy units are expected to be ineffective for a considerable period; a heavy replacement flow will be required from North Vietnam which is likely to result in a significant increase in the proportion of North Vietnamese Army troops in South Vietnam; and there is a possibility that he may be forced to reassess his strategy, for example the all-out offensive versus the "conservation of forces" policy, the attack on urban areas versus his "frontier" strategy, or the desirability of going into a primarily guerrilla war posture.

(2) ~~This reassessment of strategy by the enemy may be influenced by the psychological effect on him of the heavy losses and defeats he has suffered.~~ He mounted an intense propaganda effort prior to the attacks, thoroughly indoctrinated his troops with the idea that the winter-spring campaign would be the decisive and concluding period of the war, that a coalition government would be formed, and their hardships would cease. ~~Now enemy propaganda is talking about a long war, and there are no further references to "victory this spring".~~ It would seem logical that this pre-Tet psychological buildup would be followed by a letdown as the enemy troops come to realize that they have not won the final victory, but on the contrary have taken very heavy losses only to be thrown out of all the cities they attempted to seize. Probably the letdown will be most rapid and severe among Viet Cong provincial and regional forces, guerrillas, and infrastructure. ~~If this should take place, it may well result in an upturn in Chieu Hoi rates.~~

3. ~~It is clear also that the enemy made a major miscalculation in believing that the people would rise to support his forces.~~ A recently captured document makes this even clearer than before. A Central Office for South Vietnam order dated February 1, a critique of the first phase of the Tet offensive, points to the lack of popular uprising and Army of the Republic of Vietnam defections as key failures. But, as I have noted before, failure of the masses to actively support the enemy does not necessarily mean there is solid popular support for this government; and among many elements of the population, there is widespread apprehension and fear of further attacks by the enemy. Nevertheless, opinion has hardened against the enemy, and Vietnamese Government efforts to assist the victims of the fighting have probably improved the government's image in certain quarters. In some areas, popular indignation against the enemy is running very high. The post-attack feeling of national unity and willingness to cooperate with the authorities remains strong, granted there is still a considerable distance to go to create a solid, enduring climate of opinion which can be described as strong, positive support for the government as against the present essentially anti-Viet Cong feeling! Nevertheless, these are positive elements in the present military picture.



6. It is also clear the enemy had a fallback plan if the attack on the cities failed, because he was talking not about a Tet offensive, but a winter/spring offensive which will run probably through April.

7. Here is what one captive said:

"If Phase I failed, Viet Cong troops during Phase 2 would besiege the cities and, at the same time, lure U. S. troops into the Khe Sanh area. Phase 3, which was expected to coincide with the establishment of a coalition government, would involve a decisive battle in the Kontum-Pleiku or Saigon area. In support of this new strategy, the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong planned to increase activities in southern Laos to permit the infiltration into South Vietnam of most Regular North Vietnamese Army units. The latter would try to avoid pitched battles with U. S. troops and, instead, to confine them in their bases."

8. The situation has, in fact, evolved much in the way that the prisoner of February 5 stated:

- There has been mortaring but no new major attack on the cities;
- The enemy is picking up recruits in the open parts of the countryside but not using his resources to consolidate the countryside;
- The enemy is trying to pin our forces in the cities of the Delta and Saigon; he poses a threat to Kontum-Pleiku in the Western Highlands; he has 20,000 men under very heavy bombardment outside Khe Sanh; and right now he is assembling major forces for a second attack on Hue. *He is using mainly North Vietnamese forces to do this, not committed to the attack on the cities.*

Meanwhile, the ARVIN has been replenishing its troops; the revolutionary development cadres are moving back to the villages; General Westmoreland indicates that he plans to move out on the offensive, in a report I wish to read to you.

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INDAY

FROM WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM  
TO THE PRESIDENT  
CITE CAPE20644

DECLASSIFIED  
OSD letter JUN 26 1979

Authority

By isg, NARS, Date 10-19-79

~~TOP SECRET~~

FOLLOWING IS GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S REPORT ON OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM:

ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NO HIGHLY PUBLICIZED MAJOR OPERATIONS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE NVA, THERE HAS BEEN A GENERAL RESUMPTION OF AGGRESSIVE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

YESTERDAY, GEN VIEW AND I VISITED GEN THANG, THE NEW IV CORPS COMMANDER, AT CAN THO. GENs ECKHARDT, WEYAND AND EWELL WERE PRESENT. THIS WAS THE INITIAL MEETING ON OUR FORTHCOMING OFFENSIVE. MY PHILOSOPHY WAS EXPRESSED AS FOLLOWS:

DURING THE PAST THIRTY DAYS THE ENEMY TRIED TO EFFECT A COUP. HIS PLANS WERE BASED ON THE TWO ASSUMPTIONS THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD RISE UP AND JOIN HIS FORCES AND THAT THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE RVNAF WAS LOW. THE RECORD OF THE PAST THIRTY DAYS HAS PROVED THAT THE PEOPLE ARE SOUND, THEY WILL FIGHT FOR THEIR FREEDOM. THE ARMED FORCES HAVE PROVED THAT THEY DO HAVE FIGHTING SPIRIT. THERE WERE NO TRAITORS; NEARLY ALL UNITS FOUGHT WELL. THE ENEMY WAS MISLED BY HIS OWN PROPAGANDA.

THE QUESTION IS OFTEN HEARD, "WHEN ARE THE VC GOING TO ATTACK AGAIN?" THIS TYPE OF THINKING IS UNACCEPTABLE. THE VC ARE TIRED, THEY HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES, THEY ARE STAYING IN THEIR POSITIONS ATTEMPTING TO POSE AS A THREAT, BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, HOPING THAT WE WILL REMAIN DEFENSIVELY ORIENTED AROUND THE CITIES AND NOT ATTACK THEM.

WE MUST STOP THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT VC ATTACK AND START THINKING, ALL OF US, OF CONTINUING TO CARRY THE ATTACK TO THE ENEMY. WE ARE FULLY CAPABLE OF DOING IT. IT IS TRUE THAT OUR FORCES HAVE BEEN OPERATING AT A FAST PACE FOR THIRTY DAYS AND WE HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES. SOME MAY BE TIRED. HOWEVER, THE MAIN THING NOW IS OUR STATE OF MIND. IT WILL BE THE SIDE THAT PERSEVERES AND CARRIES THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY THAT WINS. AND WE ARE GOING TO DO IT.

THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WE ARE MOVING TO A GENERAL OFFENSIVE.

IN IV CORPS GEN THANG HAS JUST TAKEN COMMAND AND HE IS WORKING ON PLANS TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE, COMMENCING ON 6 OR 7 MARCH. IT WILL INVOLVE A MAJOR PORTION OF THE 7TH ARVN DIVISION AND ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF THE 9TH U.S. DIVISION UNDER GEN EWELL. GEN WEYAND WILL PROVIDE HELD SUPPORT, AN AIR CAVALRY TROOP AND ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE OPERATION WILL BE TO DEFEAT THE FOUR MAIN FORCE BATTALIONS IN DINH TUONG, RESTORE THE SECURITY AROUND MY THO, SECURE AND REPAVE HIGHWAY 4, REESTABLISH - AND RELOCATE AS NECESSARY - THE REGIONAL FORCES/POPULAR FORCES OUTPOSTS, AND FURTHER THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. THIS OPERATION WILL BE THE FIRST EVENT OF A MAJOR CORPS WIDE OFFENSIVE WHICH GEN THANG WILL INITIATE. IT WILL HAVE ONE NAME (VIETNAMESE) AND WILL BE PROPERLY PUBLICIZED SO AS TO MAKE THE BROADEST POSSIBLE IMPACT.

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IN III CORPS, A SIMILAR PLAN IS BEING WORKED OUT BY GENS WEYAND AND KHANG. IT WILL EMBRACE THE FIVE PROVINCES AROUND SAIGON - AND WILL BE A ONE NAMED JOINT U.S./VN OPERATION. IT WILL ALSO BE ONE OF THE LARGEST EVER CONDUCTED IN III CORPS AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE ENEMY IS DEFEATED OR DRIVEN OUT OF THE AREA. IT WILL COMMENCE NEARLY SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE IV CORPS OFFENSIVE AND WILL BE PROPERLY REPORTED SO AS TO HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT.

AT THE SAME TIME, IN NORTHERN I CORPS, WE WILL MOVE INTO HIGH GEAR IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. WITH OVER 20 PERCENT OF ALL U.S./ARVN MANEUVER BATTALIONS IN THIS AREA, AND WITH THE LOGISTIC SITUATION IMPROVING DAILY, WE ARE IN AN EXCELLENT POSTURE AS TO COMMENCE A BROAD OFFENSIVE.

THE OPERATIONS IN I & III CORPS WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE MAXIMUM USE OF TACTICAL AIR AND B-52 STRIKES. FOR THE TIME BEING, I MUST KEEP PRIORITY OF AIR AT KHE SANH BUT I AM PREPARED TO MAKE MASSIVE SHIFTS, PARTICULARLY OF B-52S, TO ASHAU VALLEY OR TO III CORPS, WHEN THE WEATHER PERMITS TACTICAL AIR TO PROVIDE VISUAL ATTACK SUPPORT FOR KHE SANH.

IN II CORPS, WE ARE NOT PLANNING ON ONE MAJOR OFFENSIVE. HOWEVER, THE ROKS ARE ON THE MOVE ALONG THE COAST IN A MULTI-BATTALION OPERATION. GEN PEERS IS PREPARED TO WAGE A MAJOR BATTLE AGAINST THE ENEMY FORCES IN KONTUM OR DARLAC PROVINCES. HIS SPIRIT IS AGGRESSIVE AND HE HAS THE EXACT FRAME OF MIND REQUIRED TO CONDUCT THE ECONOMY OF FORCE OPERATIONS WHICH HIS SITUATION REQUIRES. PEERS HAS A NEW COUNTER PART, MAJ GEN LU LAN, WHO AT THE OUTSET HAS DISPLAYED AN AGGRESSIVE SPIRIT.

ON MONDAY GEN VIEN AND I ARE MEETING WITH GENS WEYAND AND KHANG AND THEIR DIVISION COMMANDERS TO DISCUSS THEIR PLANS FOR THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS OFFENSIVE STRATEGY.

TOMORROW AFTERNOON VIEN HAS INVITED AT MY SUGGESTION THE FREE WORLD COMMANDERS TO HIS HEADQUARTERS TO GIVE THEM THE BENEFIT OF HIS OFFENSIVE ATTITUDE. SINCE IT IS NOT WITHIN VIEN'S CHARACTER TO USE FORCEFUL LANGUAGE I WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY EMPHASIS IN A FOLLOW-UP.

TODAY I WILL VISIT GENS ABRAMS, CUSHMAN AND ROSSON TO REVIEW THEIR PLANS.

~~I HOPE THAT THE IMPACT OF THESE SIMULTANEOUS MAJOR OPERATIONS WILL CONVINCE THE PEOPLE IN SVN AND WASHINGTON THAT WE ARE NOT WAITING FOR EITHER THE VC TO RESUME THE INITIATIVE, OR FOR SOMEONE TO HELP US. THE TIME IS RIPE TO MOVE OUT AND WE WILL DO SO.~~

~~WE WILL EMPHASIZE THE OFFENSIVE NATURE OF CURRENT OPERATIONS IN FUTURE REPORTS, WITHOUT DISTORTING THE PERSPECTIVE.~~

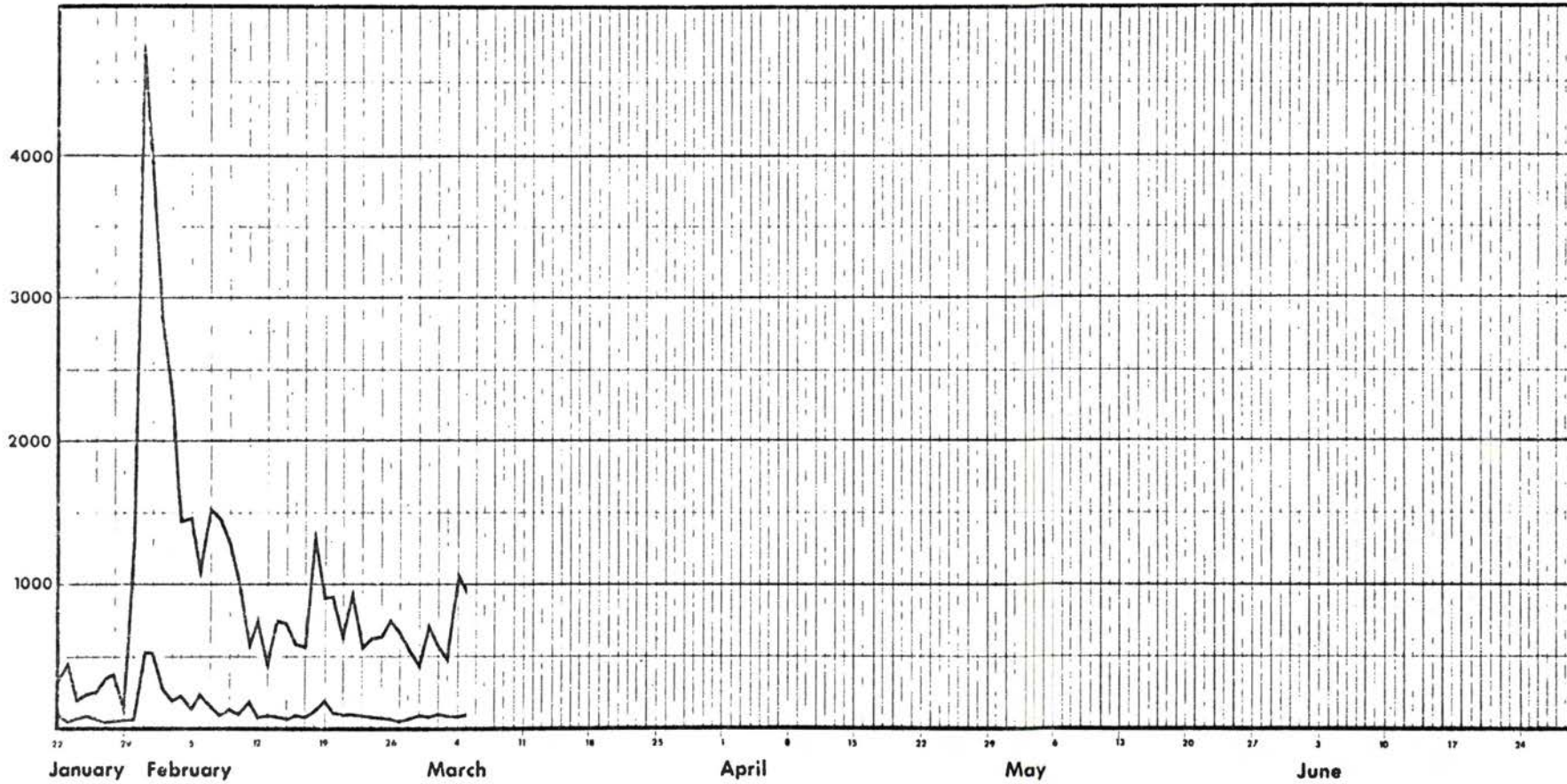
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# South Vietnam: Daily Casualties

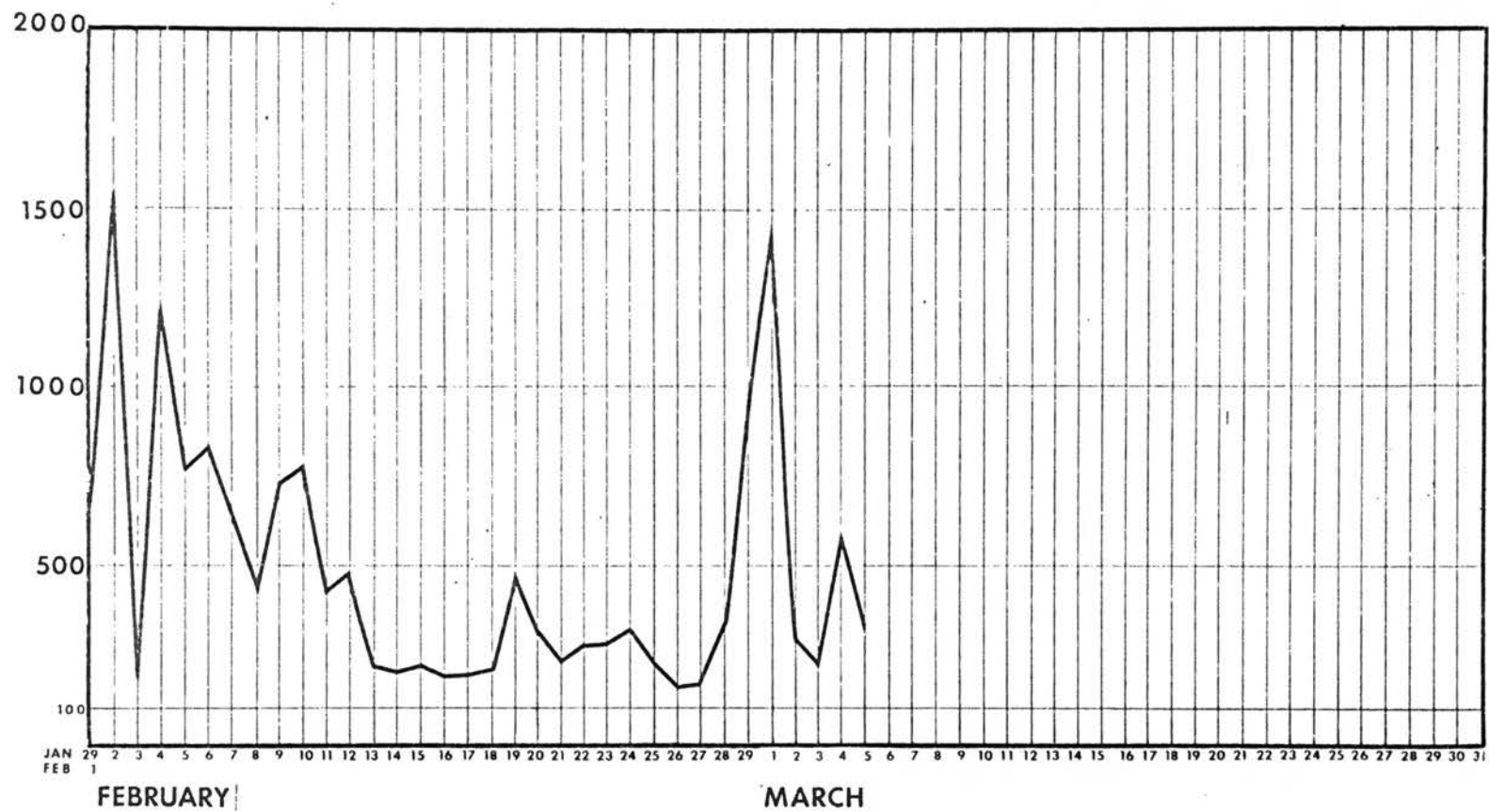
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US  
GVN  
Enemy



# South Vietnam : Index of Enemy Weapons Losses Since Tet

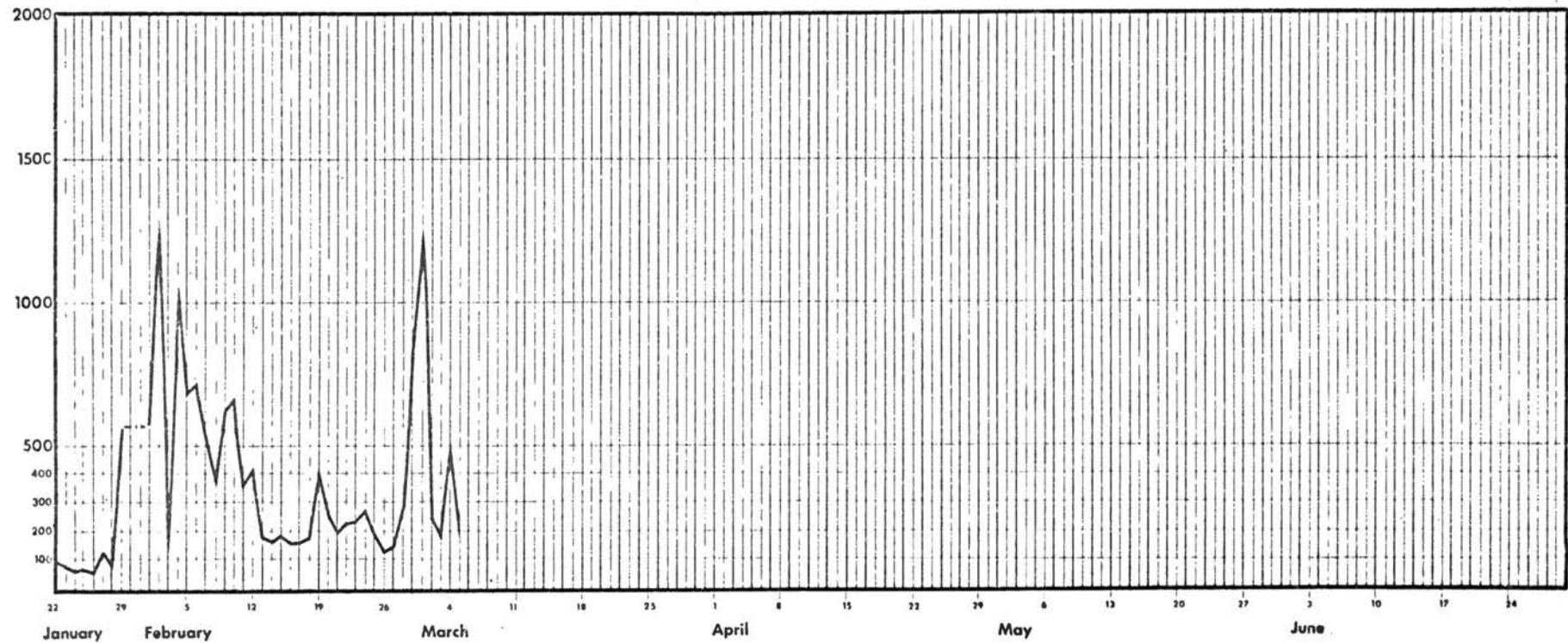
(Daily Average for 1967 Equals 100)





# South Vietnam : Enemy Weapons Losses

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DAILY TOTALS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE FOUR DAY PERIODS JANUARY 29 THRU OF JUNE 11 DAILY. THE TOTAL FOR THE PERIODS 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

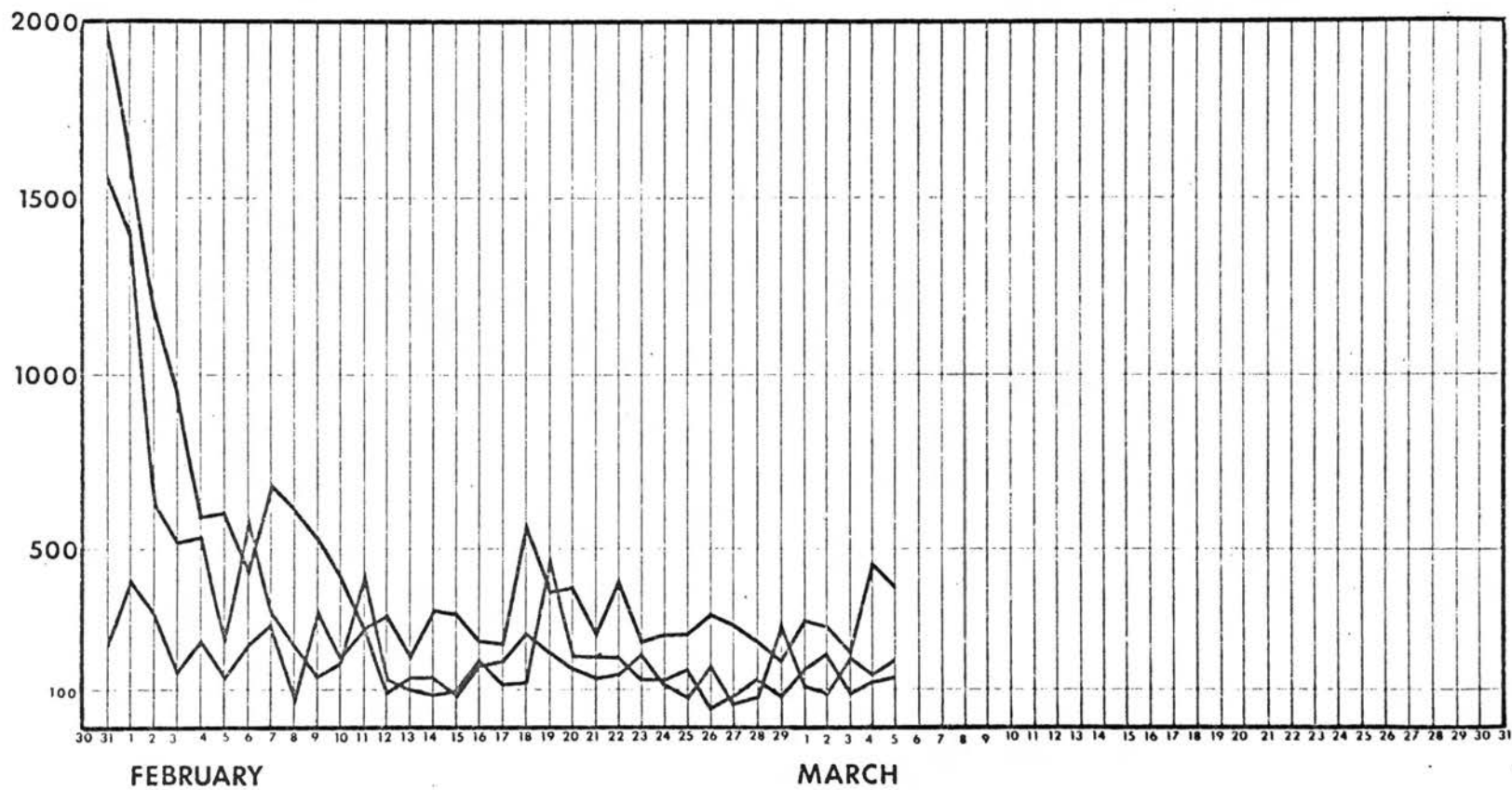


Daily Average for 1967 was 85

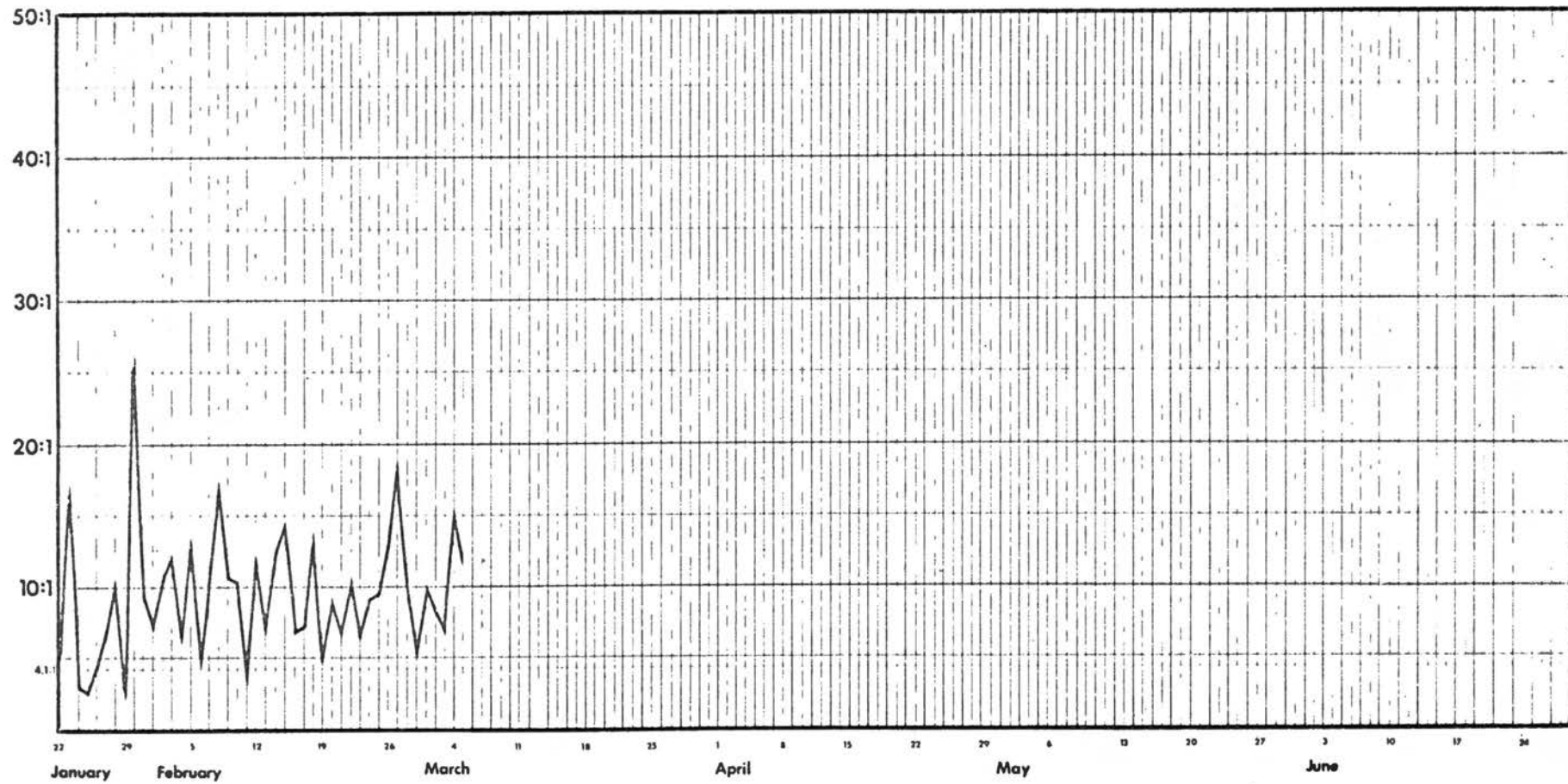
# South Vietnam : Index of Casualties since Tet

(Daily Average for 1967 Equals 100)

US — 100 Equals 26  
GVN — 100 Equals 31  
ENEMY — 100 Equals 231



## South Vietnam: Ratio of Enemy Killed to Friendly Killed



Ratio in 1967 was 4.1:1

5

9. In short, we are in the midst of one of the major battles of modern times. It probably has at least two months to run. After the big wave of attack on the cities had failed, the enemy has continued to lose, as these charts show (attached), 3 to 4 times as many weapons each day and 3 to 4 times the number killed in action as compared with the average level for 1967. Our losses and the Vietnamese have not risen proportionally. As opposed to the average of about 4 to 1 for 1967, enemy losses are running thus far about 10 to 1 throughout the period of the winter-spring offensive.

We have done and shall do all we can to help our men through this critical battle. But, as you can see, they are in good heart.

The enemy has said that he intends to make 1968 the year of decision. We must meet him on those terms.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-6-78, NSC 8-14-80

By JK (ing), NARS, Date 8-29-80

ACTION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, March 7, 1968  
3:45 p.m.

Mr. President:

Clark Clifford and Bus Wheeler are against your sending a message to Gen. Westmoreland at this time along the lines of the draft which I forwarded to them.

There are two major reasons:

-- Clark believes very strongly that we should not now take an optimistic view of the war, but let the facts speak for themselves and hope that in 4 or 5 months things will obviously be better.

-- He also believes we should not influence Westy in what tactical course of action he should pursue: perhaps pursuing the enemy all out is right; perhaps not. He does not believe the President should get into this.

Quite aside from the message -- and addressed more specifically to the report of the backgrounder in Vietnam yesterday -- Clark would like to speak with you about our general public stance towards the war, in Presidential and other public statements. He would like to urge great caution about optimism.

Hold message ☒

Arrange appointment  
for Clifford

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~



23a

1007 11:45 AM / 07  
2C

~~SECRET EYES ONLY URGENT~~

March 7, 1968

Send LDX to Secretary Clifford and General Wheeler from Walt Rostow

The President would like to dispatch this cable, via back channels, to General Westmoreland. Do you approve? Do you wish to suggest changes?

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSO 10-6-78, NSC 8-14-80

By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

SANITIZED COPY

SANITIZED

238

~~SECRET~~

OSD 10/6/78, NSC, 8/14/80  
8/20/80  
8-29-80

Draft [ ] message from the President for General Westmoreland,  
Literally eyes only

[ As you know, we are considering most seriously the suggestions  
Gen. Wheeler brought back from his trip to Vietnam. ]

In the meanwhile, I wish to tell you how much comfort and inspiration  
your message to General Wheeler of March 4 brought to me.

I was raised by Mr. Rayburn to believe that West Point produced  
better professional military officers than the halls of the Congress. [ My  
feeling at this distance is that the enemy has been hurt by the first five  
weeks of his winter-spring offensive more than our side. ] [ Like all great  
battles, this may be close. ] But my instinct tells me you are right: every  
South Vietnamese, U.S. and allied unit -- every cook and bottle washer --  
ought to be inspired in the days ahead with an offensive spirit. Within  
the limits of what you regard as prudent, I believe it is now time for our  
side to go all out. In any case, as you enter this crucial counteroffensive,  
you should know you have my confidence and my prayers.

~~SECRET~~

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LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBR

*The Joint - Russia 915*

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979

By isb, NARS, Date 7-25-79

3E

24

GL

S

~~TOP SECRET/NOBIS~~

March 8, 1968

Note to Mr. Helms:

The attached letter deliberately omits any change in the ground rules of our actions toward Laos and Cambodia, as well as any possibility of any major ground action against North Viet-Nam. This at least simplifies the problem for the moment.

We have given extensive thought to whether this should be loaded wholly onto CIA for the time being. Paul Warnke and I would both be troubled by the complications and tendency to bureaucratic views involved in bringing DIA in, and the corollary would appear to be at least formal exclusion of INR at this stage. Nonetheless, I would hope that Tom's expert people could consult quietly with your staff, so that their in-puts could be taken into account.

At this stage, none of us knows what the timing of decision-making will be. I think this again argues for a CIA-only paper at the outset, to be completed perhaps by next Wednesday night. When we look at that, and in light of all other factors as they have been developed, we could decide that it should become a full inter-agency paper.

We all know full well what a load this one may be, but I think we equally agree that this is a major decision--and all of us felt that the materials so far submitted to the President had this conspicuous gap in them.

William P. Bundy

EA:WFBundy:mk

~~TOP SECRET/NOBIS~~

R



DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979

By ing, NARS, Date 7-25-79

24a

~~TOP SECRET~~

March 8, 1968

Dear Dick:

In consultation with the Secretary and Walt Rostov, we feel the need for a careful analysis by ONE and/or the Carver shop of current Communist strategy and the reactions in Hanoi, the Soviet Union, and Communist China to our own possible next moves. We are of course aware of your recent paper on future Communist strategy, as well as the various memoranda of 1 March (Questions Concerning the Situation in Vietnam), 29 February (Communist Alternatives in Vietnam), and 26 February (The Outlook in Vietnam). Elements in each of these papers are of course relevant to a single paper such as now proposed.

I would think that such a paper might open with a brief assessment of Hanoi's strategy and possible current view of the situation, including how they might proceed in the next six months and what their hopes and expectations might be.

It should then go on to assess their reactions, and those of the Soviets and Communist Chinese, to a broad range of action possibilities on our side at present. These possibilities might be defined as follows:

A. An early announcement of reinforcements on the order of 25,000 men, coupled with reserve calls and other measures adequate to make another 75,000 men available for deployment by the end of the year if required and later decided. The bombing would be stepped up as the weather improved, and would include some new targets, but would not include the mining of Haiphong or major urban attacks in Hanoi and Haiphong.

The Honorable

Richard Helms

Director of Central Intelligence



~~TOP SECRET~~

2

B. A similar announcement of immediate reinforcement action, coupled with greater actions than in A to raise our total force strength, making possible additional reinforcements of roughly 175,000 men before the end of 1968. Bombing program as in A.

C. Option A plus mining of Haiphong and/or significantly intensified bombing of urban targets in Hanoi and Haiphong areas.

D. Option B plus an intensified bombing program and/or mining of Haiphong.

Obviously, these are a rough cut, and the paper might choose to separate out the question of reaction to intensified urban bombing and/or the mining of Haiphong, if you consider that these would have a particular effect on Soviet reactions especially.

Major questions, on which there has been some disagreement, include the degree to which North Vietnam could reinforce in the South in response to reinforcement plans on our side, and of course the capabilities question having to do with whether the mining of Haiphong would seriously impede the flow of supplies to the South or otherwise affect North Vietnamese capabilities to a major degree and/or over a significant period. If the analysis on Haiphong indicates greater reliance on the Chinese routes, then obviously the question of impact of this on Sino-Soviet relations becomes crucial.

Moreover, it would be helpful to have your best judgment on the Soviet posture generally at the present time. Many of us are worried that they may in fact have moved to a harder line generally and be not merely unable, but perhaps even unwilling, to exert influence at any time toward a slowing down by Hanoi, much less any real move toward peace.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

3

This gives you a large waterfront, but the questions are important and do not seem to us to be adequately covered in a single paper, as we now seem to require. You have Ambassador Thompson's cable and a staff job from INR already in the various papers distributed last weekend. Needless to say, the whole exercise should be done on the tightest need-to-know basis. We do not envisage bringing in the other agencies at this stage, but I am keeping Tom Hughes informed, and may ask his separate judgment on some points.

Sincerely,

William P. Bundy

~~TOP SECRET~~

25

INFORMATION

(18)  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

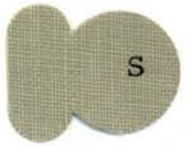
Saturday, March 9, 1968 -- 1:15 p.m.

Mr. President:

With respect to enemy forces around  
Khe Sanh, the attached explains:

- intelligence community is now carrying 14,000 as the enemy threat in the area;
- they agree there have been some recent reductions;
- they will be completing by about Wednesday of next week a study of the whole of I Corps -- the results of which I shall report to you.

W. A. Rostow



2A

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, March 9, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

Regarding our feeling this morning that the enemy order of battle around Khe Sanh may have fallen to 6-8,000, ~~I have checked with the Intelligence Community and find they are carrying about 14,000~~

This assessment of the Intelligence people comes about from an ~~upgrading of unit identification from what we were holding and recent OB data from MACV.~~ They are working very hard to check and verify this information and to study the recent movements in the area and will be ~~giving us a current estimate covering the whole of First Corps by Wednesday of next week.~~

In the meantime, ~~we all agree that the majority of one regiment (1600 men) has moved from Khe Sanh to the Hue area and the added threat from three regiments to the northwest of Khe Sanh has been changed with their movement.~~ the headquarters of the 320 and two regiments moved to the east, and then, for some unexplained reason, north to the DMZ, and the 90th regiment moved to Hue.

  
Arthur McCafferty



INFORMATION

Saturday, March 9, 1968  
4:00 p.m.

Mr. President:

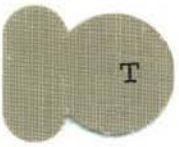
Herewith a rather useful  
State summary of alternative Vietnam  
policies.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

24<sup>th</sup>  
filed at 7:00 p.m.

24





DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4078

March 7, 1968

*Cy L. Jordan*

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WALT W. ROSTOW  
THE WHITE HOUSE

*←*

Subject: Alternative Viet-Nam Policies by Key  
US Public Figures and Organizations

The attached material was developed as a result of a request by the President to the Secretary at last week's Tuesday lunch. We have added the "GOP Proposal" submitted last July by Congressman Bradford Morse and the Bingham group proposal of March 4. For obvious reasons we dropped Governor Romney from the list.

We have tried to exclude purely critical material and include only affirmative suggestions for changes of existing practice or policy. We have limited the material to the most recent statements available.

*BHR*

Benjamin H. Read  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure:

As Stated

ALTERNATIVE VN POLICIES BY KEY US PUBLIC FIGURES AND  
ORGANIZATIONS

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18 Democratic Members of the House (Congressman Bingham )	31-32

SENATOR J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

GVN-NLF Negotiations

"The South Vietnamese government should seek peace negotiations with the National Liberation Front."

Negotiate for a cease-fire

"At the same time as the Saigon government makes direct overtures to the National Liberation Front the United States and South Vietnam together should propose negotiations for a cease-fire among military representatives of four separate negotiating parties: the United States and South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front."

Stop bombing, reduce scale of military operations

"The United States should terminate its bombing of North Vietnam, add no additional forces in South Vietnam, and reduce the scale of military operations to the maximum extent consistent with the security of American forces while peace initiatives are under way."

Eventual withdrawal of U.S. forces

"The United States should pledge the eventual removal of American military forces from Vietnam."

Negotiate for self-determination in South Viet-Nam

"Negotiations among the four principal belligerents--the United States and South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front--should be directed toward a cease-fire and plans for self-determination in South Vietnam."

International conference after cease-fire

"After the principal belligerents have agreed on a cease-fire and plans for self-determination in South Vietnam, an international conference of all interested states should be convened to guarantee the arrangements made by the belligerents and to plan a future referendum on the reunification of North Vietnam and South Vietnam."



Neutralization of area

"In addition to guaranteeing arrangements for self-determination in South Vietnam and planning a referendum on the reunification of North and South Vietnam, the international conference should neutralize South Vietnam and undertake to negotiate a multilateral agreement for the general neutralization of Southeast Asia."

Enclaves as last resort

"If for any reason an agreement ending the Vietnamese war cannot be reached, the United States should consolidate its forces in highly fortified defensible areas in South Vietnam and keep them there indefinitely."

(Eight-point program as outlined  
in The Abuse of Power, 1966)

SENATOR MARK O. HATFIELDNegotiate Directly with NLF

On September 22, 1967, Senator Hatfield said the U.S. should negotiate directly with the National Liberation Front in an effort to end the war. He said that the Communist-dominated Front was "from the beginning our chief enemy in Viet-nam...Therefore to negotiate with the representatives of your enemy seems only logical, if you really want peace."

"De-Americanize" the War

While not advocating a U.S. withdrawal from Viet-Nam, Hatfield has urged (April 10, 1967) that the U.S. should tell the South Vietnamese:

"We'll help train, we'll help equip, we'll help supply, but on a careful, scheduled basis you begin to substitute your manpower for our manpower and we'll thereby de-Americanize a military action."

Seek Congressional Participation Prior to Expanding Ground War

On February 28 Senator Hatfield submitted Senate Concurrent Resolution 63 declaring it to be the sense of Congress that the President should seek congressional participation before extending the ground war beyond South Viet-Nam. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

## SENATOR JAVITS

Defend Enclaves

On Feb 13, 1966, Sen. Javits proposed that the United States adopt a military policy of defending important enclaves "containing 70 to 80% of the population" of South Vietnam (including the Mekong Delta, Saigon, and coastal sections). (NYT, Feb 14, 1966)

Recognize NLF as a Party to Negotiations

On Feb 13, 1966, he called for the US to recognize the NLF as a party to any peace negotiations that might be held. (NYT, Feb 14, 1966)

Submit Issue to UN

On October 26, 1967, while placing into the Congressional Record the Policy Statement and List of Members of the Citizens Committee for Peace with Freedom in Viet-Nam (the Douglas Committee), he said: I hope we will submit this issue to the UN.

Stimulate International Diplomatic Action

In debate on the floor on October 12, 1967, he said: "....the way in which a settlement might be attained is by international diplomatic action. In my judgment, a realistic appraisal of the dynamics required for achieving a settlement by these means gives no cause for optimism at this time.

Despite extensive international concern over the potential dangers to world peace inherent in the Vietnam conflict, diplomacy thus far has not been able to get negotiations started, nor to suggest the outlines of a compromise settlement upon which the two sides might agree. The United States is willing to negotiate. We have even made some adjustments in our position to accommodate international concerns.

But Hanoi remains adamantly opposed to negotiations on any basis other than what would be an implicit prior acceptance of Hanoi's terms for a settlement -- U.S. withdrawal and South Vietnamese capitulation."

Cease Bombing When Appropriate

On October 26, 1967, he said "I hope we will implement an unconditioned cessation of bombing when there is a proper diplomatic framework for it...which will bring about peace negotiations."

Require the Vietnamese to Help Themselves

On October 26, 1967, he said "Beyond everything else, and beyond the fact that we must condition our continuing in Vietnam on what the Vietnamese do for themselves, we must not take over this war and make it our war as if Vietnam were a colony."

Limit Our Commitment

On October 12, 1967, he said: "We have demonstrated our good faith that we would fight for an ally which was remotely willing to fight for itself. Now the question is: Shall the commitment be unlimited?"

Gain Control of Our Policy

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...we need also a fundamental policy which is in our power to shape and which gives us the full range of options to which we, as the major power engaged in the war are entitled."

Avoid a Declaration of War

On October 26, 1967, he said: "I thoroughly disagree with any suggestion of a declaration of war. I hope we do not do it. It would guarantee an escalation of the situation to a realm far beyond where it is -- or is otherwise likely to go."

Renew President's Mandate

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...this policy must, in my judgement, be supported by a new resolution of the Congress to supersede the now obsolete Gulf of Tonkin Resolution...I would renew the President's mandate, so that he would be acting with authority...I assume that the grant of authority would not be quite as broad and unlimited as that which we gave in 1964, but would, nonetheless, be adequate to maintain operations. I think we owe this to the President."



Define Our Objectives

On October 12, 1967, he said: "A definitive resolution of this character, delimiting policy, would be extremely important to the whole world, to define our objective for the world, in answer to the question: Why are we there?"

Do Not Disengage

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...disengagement and withdrawal...we cannot and should not contemplate now."

Continue Useful Bombing

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...in my judgement, we should continue for the present those aspects of the bombing program which are clearly contributory to the safety and success of our combat forces in South Vietnam -- which means the access routes to South Vietnam."

Avoid Excessive Bombing

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...it seems to me that there is a dangerously high element of distorted reasoning in the arguments of the military proponents of an accelerated bombing program...I question whether it is really germane to the guerilla war in the south that our planes be able to roam at will and bomb with impunity over the length and breadth of North Vietnam."

WIN - Demonstrate Political, Economic, and Social as well as Military Progress

On October 12, 1967, he suggested one way to achieve a settlement in Vietnam was "to demonstrate to the Communists on the ground in South Vietnam that the tide of the struggle has shifted decisively against them. This requires demonstrable progress in the political social, as well as in the military field. We have been trying to do this since 1954... By all indications, Hanoi and the Vietcong remain convinced that they will win the struggle in Vietnam -- and win on their own terms. Until the enemy is shaken from this conviction... it is wishful thinking to expect that the Communists will agree to a settlement which meets our minimum objectives."

An Option Out

On October 12, 1967, he said: "...we must find a way to restore to ourselves the option which no general and no country could do without -- a way to get out."

Avoid An Elected Communist Government

Also on October 12, 1967, he said: "Secretary Rusk has repeatedly said that the United States would accept the results if the Communists won control of South Vietnam through free elections... I shall fight with all of the energy I have against any Communist success, including electoral success... Is there any reason to assume that an elected Communist government in South Vietnam would be less of a threat to its neighbors and to our security interests than a Communist government which gained power by other means? I think an elected Communist government would be just as dangerous to our interest and their neighbors..."

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDYAdopt a more defensive military posture

"We should begin immediately to moderate significantly our military activities in South Vietnam to levels more tolerable to all and more commensurate with our limited aims. Our overriding goal as should be to maximize the safety and security of the Vietnamese people and our own soldiers, rather than to search out the enemy in his territory and on his terms....The adoption of more defensive military posture, one designed to protect and hold areas of heavy population rather than to seek out the enemy, has, I found, some support among our military leaders in Vietnam.

Greater use of influence over GVN

"For too long we have tolerated not only government corruption but government indifference to the people. We have refused to confront Saigon with the same determined fury we have unleashed on Hanoi. But they too must face the hard demands of war -- and those demands should be placed before them by U.S. in clear and concrete terms.

"I would urge a confrontation between our Government and the Government of South Vietnam on the entire question of corruption, inefficiency, waste of American resources, and the future of "The other war." They should be told in terms that will leave no doubt that if they find it impossible to attract the people of Vietnam to their own constitutional government, the American people will rightfully demand serious alterations in the nature of the United States' involvement.

"We can have an enormous influence over the Government of South Vietnam if only we choose to use it. They know that if we were not there they would collapse. We came to their aid because their people were in danger of a Communist takeover. But today many of their officials believe that, because of our fear of China and of our deep concern about Communist advances in Southeast Asia, we are tied to Vietnam irrevocably. As a result, I believe they feel they can act as they wish towards the war and towards their own people, confident we will fill the gaps they will leave.

"They must be disabused of the belief that American men and American money are a fixture in Vietnam." (From address before World Affairs Council, Boston, January 25, 1968)

SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Senator Kennedy's affirmative suggestions about the war in Viet-Nam can be abstracted from his article in Look (November 28, 1967).

"There are three possible routes before us: the pursuit of military victory, a negotiated settlement, or withdrawal."

1. "Withdrawal is now impossible. American intervention has created its own reality."
  - a. "If the domino theory is an unsatisfactory metaphor, still it contains a grain of truth. A great power does not cease to be that because it suffers a defeat peripheral to its central interests." With a "defeat or precipitous withdrawal... we would not suddenly collapse; Communist fleets would not appear in the harbor of Honolulu and San Francisco Bay. But there would be serious effects: increased Communist influence--at least--especially in Southeast Asia itself."
  - b. "Beyond Asia, in other nations that have ordered their security in relation to American commitments, a sudden unilateral withdrawal would raise doubts about the reliability of the United States."
2. "We are now steadily widening the war in order, we are told, to increase the costs to Hanoi. Yet let us not omit our own costs from the war's account."
  - a. "The mounting devastation of South Viet-Nam is more and more eroding the fabric of that society, making its ultimate reconstruction more remote and difficult. Yet lasting peace depends upon the strength of the nation we leave behind."
  - b. "The war has also made far more difficult the hopeful pursuit of fresh understanding and diminishing tension between the two great nuclear powers: the United States and the Soviet Union."
  - c. "The war has estranged and alienated us from our closest friends in the Western Alliance."



d. "...the longer the conflict goes on, the more likely we are to 'prove' that we will not oppose /wars of national liberation/ in the future. Certainly the sight of the world's most powerful nation so frustrated by one of the weakest nations, must hearten believers in revolutionary war and the efficacy of Communist tactics."

3. "The third alternative is a negotiated settlement -- as we have known for more than two years, the only satisfactory solution to the war. This course is our stated Government policy. This is the course that I favor. Only negotiations could allow us to end the fighting without precipitate withdrawal, to avoid the progressive destruction and weakening of South Viet-Nam, and end the drain on our own energies and resources, without great damage to our position in Asia and the world.

"The alternatives to negotiation are so unacceptable that I continue to believe the effort should and must be made. Ultimately, no other solution is possible. Despite the killing and the destruction, we are in no better position now than we were a year ago -- and we will not be in any better position a year from now. I continue to believe that we should go to negotiations in an effort to reach a peaceful and honorable settlement. Perhaps we cannot: but we shall never know until we try.

a. "A negotiated settlement must be less than a victory for either side. Both sides must come to any discussion with at least one basic condition, one point they will not yield. For us, it must be that we will not abandon South Vietnam to forcible take-over by a minority. For our adversaries, it must be that they will not accept a settlement that leaves in the South a hostile government, dedicated to the final physical destruction of all Communist elements, refusing any economic cooperation with the North, dependent upon the continued presence of American military power.

"For either side to yield its minimum conditions would be in fact to surrender. If we intend to

deny these conditions to our adversaries, then we must defeat them completely. This we should clearly understand -- and understand as well the full costs of this course, costs out of all proportion to any benefits we might attain. For wise policy is a setting of priorities -- differentiating between that which is merely important and that which is truly essential. And it would be both callous and self-indulgent for those of us who sit comfortably at home to form policy without full, conscious knowledge of the cost to others, young men and women and children, whose lives turn on the abstractions of our discussion."

- b. "One argument has been that the United States could not be absolutely certain that Hanoi and Moscow would negotiate if the bombing were stopped. Hanoi's statements, it has been said, conflict with one another, and some could be read as calling for a guarantee that the bombing would be permanently halted even before negotiations began. Examination of the public statements of Hanoi and Moscow in January and after, however, clearly indicates a major shift away from the North Vietnamese bargaining position since 1966, showing a firm intention to come to the conference table once the bombing of North Vietnam was suspended. In any case, the varying interpretations of the Communist statements need not have been serious obstacles to agreement."
- c. Bombing cessation: further argument "has been that the bombing is necessary to secure our objectives in the South. We began the bombing, as President Johnson told us at Johns Hopkins, for three purposes: 'to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Vietnam...to convince the leaders of North Vietnam...[that] we will not be defeated,' and to reduce the flow of men and supplies from the North. But the first two purposes have already been fulfilled by the huge resources and American lives committed to South Vietnam since the bombing began. As to the third purpose, 'to slow down aggression,' the Secretary of Defense testified in early 1967 that although the bombing of North Vietnam has other values that he supports, 'I don't believe the bombing up to the present has significantly reduced, nor any bombing that I

would contemplate in the future would significantly reduce, the actual flow of men and materials to the South.'

- d. "Stopping the bombing, however, is not peace. Rather, it would be only one part of a coordinated plan for negotiations and settlement. The next step in such a plan would be to ensure that negotiations would not be used as a device for either side to change the military balance.... Immediately after a halt in the bombing, and with or without specific agreement from the North Vietnamese, international teams under the United Nations or a strengthened International Control Commission, or even some other international group established especially for this purpose, should be asked to provide detached and objective information to the world about any large buildup of troops or supplies by either side during the peace talks. Then if the failure of negotiations, coupled with the actions of our adversary, made it necessary for us to re-examine our position, we would act with far clearer international understanding of our motives and necessities."
- e. "...once at the conference table, our problem would in a sense be more difficult. Negotiations are not the end of the road but only a bridge to the future of South Viet-Nam....A military victory is not in sight for anyone. Any settlement must therefore be a compromise that, however imperfect, would protect the self-determination of the Vietnamese people."
- "The first step would be for the South Vietnamese Government, as well as other political elements not represented in it, to begin its own discussions with the NLF. If the people of South Viet-nam are to settle their own future, they must at least begin to talk to each other."
  - "I have always felt that the United States must also be ready to talk directly to all parties, -- not only with Hanoi but directly with the NLF in the South."



- "A lasting settlement of the war requires that free elections open to all would ultimately be held and that those who won them would take office. Confidence will depend on the structure of government between the end of hostilities and elections -- perhaps a prolonged period. The Communists would fear a take-over by the military, just as we might fear a Communist coup. Thus, during the interim period between the end of hostilities and elections, it will be necessary to establish a ruling structure in which both sides have confidence."

More recently, the Senator -- in a less thoughtful presentation -- suggested there are many illusions which must be discarded in light of the Tet offensive. Speaking in Chicago on February 8:

"These are some of the illusions which must be discarded if the events of last week are to prove not simply a tragedy, but a lesson: a lesson which carries with it some basic truths.

"First, that a total military victory is not within sight or around the corner; that, in fact, it is probably beyond our grasp; and that the effort to win such a victory will only result in the further slaughter of thousands of innocent and helpless people -- a slaughter which will forever rest on our national conscience.

"Second, that the pursuit of such a victory is not necessary to our national interest and is even damaging that interest.

"Third, that the progress we have claimed toward increasing our control over the country and the security of the population is largely illusory.

"Fourth, that the central battle in this war cannot be measured by body counts or bomb damage, but by the extent to which the people of South Vietnam act on a sense of common purpose and hope with those that govern them.

"Fifth, that the current regime in Saigon is unwilling or incapable of being an effective ally in the war against the Communists.

"Sixth, that a political compromise is not just the best path to peace, but the only path, and we must show as much willingness to risk some of our prestige for peace as to risk the lives of young men in war.

"Seventh that the escalation policy in Viet-Nam, far



from strengthening and consolidating international resistance to aggression, is injuring our country through the world, reducing the faith of other peoples in our wisdom and purpose and weakening the world's resolve to stand together for freedom and peace.

"Eighth, that the best way to save our most precious stake in Vietnam -- the lives of our soldiers -- is to stop the enlargement of the war, and that the best way to end casualties is to end the war.

"Ninth, that our nation must be told the truth about this war, in all its terrible reality, both because it is right -- and because only in this way can any administration rally the public confidence and unity for the shadowed days which lie ahead."

SENATOR MORSERequire the UN To Take Action

In extended discussion on May 15, 1967 following Senator Mansfield's presentation in the Senate, Senator Morse stressed time and again his conviction the United Nations should be made to act on Viet-Nam:

"...my consistent plans for the last 3 or more years that the administration should insist that the United Nations should take jurisdiction over the threat to the peace of the world which has developed in South-east Asia."

\* \* \* \* \*

"There are some spokesmen for the administration who frequently say, or have said in the past that we have filed a resolution. Filing a resolution does not fulfill our commitment as a signatory to the charter. We filed a resolution but it was not in a form that required Security Council action. It was not in a form that required any action either by way of approval or veto by the Security Council. In effect it was an invitation on the part of the United States to have the Southeast Asian war discussed by the Security Council.

"We should have filed a resolution calling upon the Security Council to take jurisdiction over the war. Then we should have insisted upon our right to have the resolution considered by the Security Council. Please note my use of the word 'right'. We have a right to have the Security Council vote for or veto our request that the United Nations enforce a peace in Vietnam."

Seek International Negotiation

He also supports other international negotiation:

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"The only hope for real peace in Vietnam is to have other nations take over the negotiating. The United States would be a party to it, but would not be in control. That is why I believe that if we would try to have the Security Council of the United Nations -- I hope in conjunction with an expanded Geneva Conference -- take over the settlement of the war in Vietnam, a settlement might be reached that both sides in the war could live with.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is not too late to try to reestablish the Geneva Conference and expand its membership. To our everlasting credit, although it took us a long time to come to this point, we now support reconvening the Geneva Conference."

SENATOR CHARLES H. PERCYAll-Asian Conference

In an address at the California Institute of Technology on May 2, 1967, Senator Percy said that an All-Asian Peace Conference was "the only hope for a negotiated settlement." But, he added, he could not foresee the North Vietnamese agreeing to negotiate directly with the U.S.

Limit Bombing

On NBC-TV on January 7, 1968, Percy said he did not favor a halt in the bombing, but that it should be limited as a bargaining tool.

"I don't see why we should not bomb and concentrate heavily our bombing on infiltration and supply routes. There is no reason why we should let war materials go through to kill American boys and the Vietnamese. But I do feel that there are certain things we can do. For instance, if the present feelers for negotiations are sincere, we should test them. We could, for instance -- the President could declare that we will not bomb population centers now and then wait to see whether they give any significant response to that. If they do not, then we can take another step of de-escalation, but we have to test their sincerity before we give up very much."

The Senator was asked whether he felt the Administration's reaction to the Trinh statement was "sufficient in the eyes of the world to suggest that we really do want to stop the war and that we are not seeking a total military victory there." The Senator replied: "I think they have to be realistic, but I think we should now offer some symbol and this is why I suggest the President declare as an evidence of our good faith, we will stop bombing population centers."

Participation of Viet Cong in Negotiations

"I have long felt that it has been unrealistic for Saigon -- and therefore ourselves -- to propose negotiations with Hanoi without inviting the Viet Cong to fully participate, if we truly hope to see negotiations come about in the foreseeable future."

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GENERAL JAMES M. GAVINEnclave theory

"I believe that the enclave strategy is even more valid today than it was in 1965. Combined with a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam, it would constitute a vital first step in our de-escalation of the war.

"I reasoned that a primary tactical problem, once a war occurs, is to keep it limited. This is particularly true of a war in which we should not have become involved, and in which U.S. interests are, at best, marginal. Therefore I sought a way to halt the buildup, hold what we had, and open negotiations for peace.

"By the fall of 1965 the United States had built up enclaves--vast logistical facilities at Camranh Bay, Danang, Saigon and other places. If we concentrated in these centers, we could immediately stop the ever-increasing inflow of U.S. troops and probably reduce the number of men involved. At the same time, we could encourage the development of democracy in the large areas dominated by these enclaves, and could help the South Vietnamese bring their own troops to a high standard of combat performance.

"While doing this, we could search for a diplomatic solution of the war, using our hold on the big enclaves as a decisive counter in the bargaining."

Neutralization (Tito analogy)

"A Vietnamese solution, based on a "free, neutral and independent" nation--on the pattern of Laos--should be acceptable in Vietnam. Such a government, without ties to China, the Soviet Union or the West, would be in the best interests of Vietnamese and Americans. I do not believe that Ho Chi Minh ever wanted to be a puppet or satellite of China, or Russia. The information we have indicates he is a patriot, an intense nationalist, albeit a Communist--a Tito."

Special Presidential appointee

"The President should appoint, with the advice of the Senate, a special cabinet-level official of great stature to negotiate with the NLF and Hanoi. The sole responsibility of this official should be termination of the war. He should be served by his own staff, free

from bureaucratic interference and the burden of past positions. With a reasoned military strategy and the full energies of our Government devoted to diplomacy, I am convinced that the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese will negotiate."

Bombing cessation

"All bombing of North Vietnam should be stopped, not just because the Communists want it stopped, but because strategic bombing of the North is counter-productive. In a bombing termination, strategy and morality coincide. It should be undertaken immediately."  
(From the Saturday Evening Post, February 4, 1968)

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In a major statement of policy on February 21, 1968, the National Council of Churches set forth several "imperatives", two of which related to Viet-Nam:

- Stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam as a prelude to seeking a negotiated peace.
- Avoid provocative military actions against mainland China in the knowledge that it has legitimate interest in Asia.

In an earlier Resolution (September 15, 1967), the Council stressed three points:

- GVN should take peace initiatives directly with NLF.
- Stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam.
- Request the U.N. (or other international body) to take up the question of Viet-Nam.

From the Resolution:

"We believe...that the following steps should be taken:

- (a) "We ask that the U.S. make clear to the newly elected government in Saigon the necessity of large-scale, convincing efforts to establish social justice in South Viet-Nam, and the necessity of prompt efforts to secure a just peaceful settlement with the National Liberation Front. It is essential, in our view, that the U.S. declare that the Government of Viet-Nam should take its initiatives and make its own decisions to secure an early, peaceful settlement of the future of Viet-Nam. We urge that the U.S. pledge its support of all such efforts. In the absence of such efforts, we urge the U.S. Government to re-examine its commitments in Viet-Nam.

- (b) "As the General Assembly of the U.N. is about to convene, we ask that there be a shift in U.S. policy at two points. The first is to stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam for an unspecified period of time. The second is, simultaneously with the first, to request the U.N. (preferably the General Assembly) or other international agency to take up the question: What steps should be taken and procedures adopted to secure a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam? The newly introduced Senate resolution concerning reference of the Viet-Nam issue to the U.N. deserves popular support."



RUCE PUBLICATIONSTIMERecognize Viet Cong/NLF

Time assumes the war will end through negotiations and compromise give-and-take. To this end the U.S. must be prepared to deal with the Viet-Cong/NLF realistically.

- (a) Time thinks the VC "might be recognized as a political party, and it is not entirely out of the question that they might be permitted to administer the hamlets that they now control, which, by the government's probably optimistic estimate, contain only 17% of the population. In return for this, notes Time, the VC would have to lay down their arms and the North Vietnamese troops would have to leave the country. To guarantee this, U.S. presence would be required "for at least several years."
- (b) Time thinks the U.S. should "encourage appeals to the regional patriotism of the VC" with the aim of getting them "to negotiate a separate peace." It is Time's view that the VC fear being swallowed up by North Viet-Nam and for this reason place less emphasis on reunification than do the North Vietnamese. Thus the issue of reunification is "becoming less emotional and more negotiable than before."

Accept a Compromise

"By keeping up the military pressure during the negotiations, the U.S. could probably help speed them. Together with its allies, the U.S. might reasonably negotiate for a series of compromises: a cease-fire policed by a greatly expanded International Control Commission; a withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops in return for the recognition of the Viet Cong as a political party; the guarantee of South Viet Nam as an independent country for five or more years, during which time the U.S. would be permitted to keep troops in the country -- much fewer than at present, but still a substantial force."

(Abstracted from "What Negotiations in Viet-Nam Might Mean," December 22, 1967)

LIFEBombing Pause or Limitation

Life advocates a limiting of the bombing of North Vietnam to the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and the southern provinces of North Vietnam with "no publicly announced 'conditions' that carry the whiff of an ultimatum." But this should not be a commitment to stop the bombing indefinitely. In taking this diplomatic and political initiative, the U.S. administration would have clearly in mind the kind of North Vietnamese response we would consider constructive, and how long we were willing to wait for it."

Life advocates this limitation for two reasons:

"There is a remote possibility that a pause now could be the first step toward an acceptable diplomatic settlement of the war.

There is a strong probability that a bombing pause would improve the posture of the U.S. in Vietnam, in the eyes of many other nations and indeed of many Americans, and thus ultimately improve our chances of achieving our purposes in Vietnam." (From "The Case for Bombing Pause Number 7," October 20, 1967)

Life advocates "a change in our bombing pattern, to reduce attacks on North Viet-Nam and to concentrate on targets nearer the fighting front."

Further, "above all, calling off bombing in the northern area would carry an important political message for Hanoi, for the Russians, for the U.N. and other interested critics. We would remind them of what we really object to: not North Vietnam's existence as a country but its aggression against the South." (From "Re-examining the Conduct of the War", January 5, 1968)

Greater Reliance on ARVN

Life urges:

"A greater emphasis than is now evident on the build-up, retraining, and rearming of South Vietnamese forces -- the popular and regional militia as well as the ARVN." (From "Re-examining the Conduct of the War", ibid)

Bring Viet Cong into Political Life of South

Life continues to elaborate on its "southern strategy", involving gradual deescalation of the war in North Vietnam and intensifying "the attack on the VC guerrillas in the South and their 'shadow government'." But "a southern strategy that aims at a decent peace, and a viable South Vietnam, must also find ways to neutralize and absorb the bulk of the VC as individuals and in groups. It must show them some advantage in stacking their arms and taking their chances on a share in the South's political future." As a possible solution Life suggests:

"The wise way to admit the Vietcong into political life is not by coalition from above but from below, hamlet by hamlet. There could well be negotiations for cease-fires at zone or regimental levels between Saigon's representatives and those of the NLF; ..... But the general result should be to give Saigon's police and other representatives access to areas they cannot now enter, and to give the VC activists an honest political future with the right to vote, hold local office and run for parliament." (From "How the Fighting Might End, January 12, 1968)

Greater Emphasis on Non-Military War

Life thinks U.S. strategy has placed too much emphasis on the military to the detriment of the political and social. The U.S. has proved it can beat the enemy's main-force units; it is now time to place greater emphasis on clear-and hold operations with U.S. forces taking "a larger share in the ARVN's assignment to hunt local guerrillas and provide the shield for village security." Search-and-destroy missions should only receive secondary priority.

Life advocates:

"A switch of emphasis from the hunting and grinding down of enemy big-force units to the uprooting of the VC guerrillas and infrastructure inside South Vietnam. (From "Re-examining the Conduct of the War, ibid.)

Newsweek doesn't have an editorial page but until recently it did have a critical Vietnam correspondent in the person of Everett G. Martin, -- Saigon's Bureau Chief. The following is from a Martin article appearing in Newsweek September 25, 1967, called "Vietnam: Last Chance?"

Martin contends the U.S. hasn't made much progress in Vietnam because of Vietnamese obstructionism and advocates along with less emphasis on bombing North Vietnam and stemming infiltration "a radical change in the relationship of the U.S. with the Saigon leadership." The U.S. ought to apply much greater pressure on the GVN and forget about the delicacies of preserving South Vietnamese sovereignty. This pressure ought to result in full mobilization, an integration of ARVN with U.S. forces and creation of a joint command, the diversion of ARVN strength to "rooting out the guerrilla infrastructure, and the U.S. right "to insist on the removal of incompetent or corrupt Vietnamese officials and to review any new appointments."



Vietnam Reassessment

In its most recent editorial on Vietnam, March 4, 1968, the New York Times followed its usual practice and reporting what is believed to be the three alternatives now being considered by the Administration -- "employing 'whatever power resources are necessary to prevail,'" "patching up present strategy," and "a third possible strategy...currently represented by the Pentagon's 'anti-Khe Sanh school'" -- seemed to throw its support to the last of these:

"A pull back from the borders would permit more American military protection of the country's populated areas. There would be less emphasis on search-and-destroy missions and more on clear-and-hold operations designed to speed pacification.

"This strategy, some military planners believe, would cut the recent United States casualty rate in half yet permit more progress in pacification, an objective that has far more to do with success in Vietnam than casualties inflicted on Communist troops.

"One drawback in this strategy, its advocates say, is that it probably would rule out a "clear-cut military victory." But has such a "victory" ever been in the cards? Has not the central confusion in Washington's thinking about Vietnam been precisely the assumption, at every sign of progress, that a military victory could be achieved and might even be in the offing.

"The true allied capability -- one that has existed from the beginning of American intervention -- is that of denying victory to the Communists. Stalemate is the military reality in Vietnam. And stalemate requires ultimate acceptance of political compromise, since there is no other realistic alternative for either side.

"What the Administration needs to do first in its current review is to clarify its own political ends. The question of reinforcements, whether in small or large numbers, will look totally different if their purpose is to help achieve a settlement rather than to pursue the will-o-the-wisp of victory."

Two days earlier, on March 2, in an editorial entitled "New Look at Vietnam Needed," the New York Times similarly avoided substantive suggestions of its own and came up with the following:

With regard to sending more troops: "...at every stage of the Vietnam conflict the enemy's capability has been underestimated...every upward spin on the escalation spiral has simply restored the military stalemate at a higher level of forces, firepower, and casualties. The Communists have covered every American bet. Won't they do so again?"

With regard to a continuance of present approaches:

"More of the same' in terms of method is unlikely to bring anything other in results than more of the same. But there can be no change in strategy unless there is a change in the assessment of the problem.

"Secretary Rusk rejects Senator Fulbright's proposal for a full-scale Congressional investigation of Vietnam before further escalation. But the Administration owes it to itself as well as the country to bring fresh minds to bear upon the problem.

"The time clearly has come for the President to appoint a prestigious task force of distinguished citizens, men relatively free from involvement in recent Vietnam debates, to assess the facts and help him redesign the country's answer to its Vietnam dilemma. He need not even reach outside the circle of present and recent public servants to find a man of character to head such a survey. Men like John McCloy, Douglas Dillon, Gen. Lauris Norstad, Averell Harriman or David Bruce come to mind; but there are many others whose tested judgment would both aid the Administration and be accepted by the country as impartial, balanced and wise. The man-made disaster in Vietnam cries out for new and independent evaluation."

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REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMEN

(Congressmen F. Bradford Morse, R-Mass; John R. Dellenback, R-Ore; Marvin L. Esch, R-Mich; Frank J. Horton, R-NY; Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., R-Md; Charles A. Mosher, R-Ohio; Richard S. Schweiker, R-Pa; and Robert T. Stafford, R-Vt)

On July 10, 1967, the above group of Republican Congressmen issued a "Proposal for Staged De-Escalation in Vietnam."

The proposal discussed the Nature of Limited War setting forth these "truths":

"First, a limited war with limited objectives cannot be ended and cannot remain limited if one side insists on the unconditional surrender of the other."

"Second, the end of a limited war requires that the combatants that meet at the peace table appear to be equals."

"Third, negotiations to end a limited war are unlikely without an advanced degree of mutual confidence in the word of the combatants."

"Fourth, it is not possible for one side to fight a limited war and the other a total war."

In the context of these "truths", the proposal said:

Communist Options

"Among the options still available for Communist escalation in the Vietnamese conflict are: the use of terrorist bombings against Saigon and the civilian populations of other South Vietnamese cities; the infiltration in massive numbers of the very large North Vietnamese standing Army; the use of Communist volunteers in massive numbers from other Communist countries; the opening of a second diversionary military action in Korea to sap Western strength; etc."

Unlimited Land War in Asia not in US Interest

"...it is not in the United States' interest to become engaged in an unlimited land war on the Asian continent. Escalation which would change the psycholo-

gical atmosphere of the Vietnam war from emphasis on restraint to emphasis on power would be likely to result in such an unlimited land war."

#### Sudden Bombing Halt Not Useful

"...a sudden and complete halt to the bombing... would also be unlikely to achieve the desired results /bringing the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table/"

#### What Kind of Policy Qualifies?

"Significant military escalation, sudden and complete cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam, and a rigid devotion to the status quo all fail to meet the limited war criteria of a promising policy to bring about honorable negotiations to end the war in Vietnam."

"To qualify such a policy must meet the following criteria:

It must not risk expansion of the limited war to total war.

It must not risk significant erosion of the current military advantage of the United States in Vietnam.

It must induce a growing atmosphere of mutual confidence.

It must permit each side to claim the initiative.

It must not require either side 'to lose face.'

It must be susceptible to presentation, verification, and implementation through the private channels of diplomacy."

#### Staged De-escalation

"Such a potential policy does exist..."staged de-escalation."

"In five...successive steps the United States would gradually cease bombing of North Vietnam. Each step after the first would be dependent upon a similar de-escalation by Hanoi. If no such step were taken in the first 60 days, the plan would end."



"...will it work? No one can answer that. All that can be said for it is that it seems to offer more promise than the stand-pat policy of the Administration or the alternatives suggested by either set of its major critics."

"...the best chance for peace lies not in giant power or in giant concessions. It lies in small steps, taken quietly - steps that make the position of each side credible to the other. This is now the task of responsible diplomacy in Vietnam."

JOINT STATEMENT  
of Eighteen Members of the House of  
Representatives

(Congressmen Jonathan B. Bingham, D-NY; John A. Blatnik, D-Minn; Edward P. Boland, D-Mass; Leonard Farbstein, D-NY; Donald M. Fraser, D-Minn; Floyd V. Hicks, D-Wash; Andrew Jacobs, Jr., D-Ind; Joseph E. Karth, D-Minn; Robert W. Kastenmeier, D-Wisc; Robert L. Leggett, D-Cal; John E. Moss, D-Cal; Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., D-Mass; Richard L. Ottinger, D-NY; Thomas M. Rees, D-Cal; Henry S. Reuss, D-Wisc; James H. Scheuer, D-NY; Herbert Tenzer, D-NY; and Sidney R. Yates, D-Ill)

Deeply Disturbed, Convinced Conflict Cannot Be Ended by Military Means - But Opposed to Unilateral Withdrawal or Any Action Inconsistent With US National Interests

"The undersigned are deeply disturbed...convinced that the conflict cannot be ended in the near future by military means. At the same time, we oppose unilateral withdrawal or any action inconsistent with U.S. national interests."

Agreed More Imaginative and Intensive Efforts Toward Negotiation Should be Made Now

"...the passage of time, with steadily mounting casualties on both sides, will only make less likely a solution by negotiated settlement."

Our Objective is Self Determination for the South Vietnamese, But What Kind of Honorable and Just Settlement Would We Accept?

"We believe a long step forward would be taken if the US were to.../make/ explicit the kind of honorable and just settlement we would accept consistent with our aims."

"In Our View These Basic Principles For a Peaceful Settlement in Vietnam Would Include the Following:"

- 1) "...free and fair elections in which all parties would be free to participate."
- 2) "For a period preceding...elections, a general cease-fire, supervised by an appropriate international body,

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banning military operations and terrorist acts...  
mutually acceptable interim governmental arrangements  
(in areas previously controlled by both Saigon and the VC)"

3) "Overall supervision of...elections...by a mutually acceptable body...of an international character..." or "...a Vietnamese Joint Commission or a combination of the two." "...elections...free from any external interference or internal terrorism."

4) "...to comply with the foregoing, the 1967 Constitution would have to be modified, or perhaps replaced, pursuant to agreed procedures."

5) After elections, "all foreign troops would be gradually withdrawn from South Vietnam on a mutually agreed and phased basis which would assure no possible advantage to one side over the other."

6) "International guarantees and arrangements should be provided to assure that the results of the elections not be overturned by renewed outside interference or by a coup of the right or the left."

7) "...future relations between North and South Vietnam, including the possibility of reunification, would be left for future discussion and negotiation, primarily between... North Vietnam and the new government of South Vietnam."

Mutually Acceptable Interim Governmental Arrangements Pose Most Difficult Problem

"One approach to the problem might be through a form of international trusteeship, comparable to the United Nations administration of West New Guinea...after the Dutch and before the Indonesians.

"Another Exceedingly Difficult Problem would be to Devise the Nature of the International Guarantees to Prevent Frustration of the Will of the Electorate by Violence"

"But these are all matters that could be worked out at the negotiating table, if the parties concerned ... had agreed on the basic principles we have set forth."

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

24  
INFORMATION  
27

35  
~~SECRET~~

Monday, March 11, 1968 -- 9:50 a.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

As instructed, I have spoken with General Wheeler as well as Clark Clifford.

The questions were put to General Westmoreland. There is as yet no reply. The reply may come in today. General Wheeler says that he hopes there will be a little time to "scrub down" Westmoreland's recommendations before they come to you.

Therefore, he is inclined to think that it would be better to make the critical decision tomorrow rather than today; but he and Clifford will be in touch with me later.

As for the other items, we shall have reports:

- Thai equipment, training, and troop dispatch;
- Korean equipment;
- Equipment for 65,000 extra Vietnamese;
- Closing dates of four battalions;
- Additional air squadrons (part of previous package, but no final decision made).

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSD 10-6-78, NSC 8-14-80  
By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

W. W. Rostow

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28

INFORMATION

15 THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

Monday, March 11, 1968 -- 11:35 am

Mr. President:

Dec 2  
1153a

Herewith a report on post-Tet morale.

In general:

- people are shaken;
- they fear further attacks;
- they are not pro-Viet Cong;
- the outcome (see last para., p. 5) depends on the reestablishment of security and allied initiative.

W. W. Rostow

Saigon 21585

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSD 10-6-78; NSC 8-14-80

By JK (ip), NARS, Date 8-29-80



6  
20  
DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979

~~SECRET~~

By isf, NARS, Date 7-25-79

28a  
Saturday, March 9, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM SAIGON (21585)

SUBJECT: Provincial Popular Attitudes on Tet Attacks and Aftermath

The Political Section and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office have prepared an assessment of provincial popular attitudes, as of early March, based upon all material available to the Mission. Reasonably comprehensive information is available on attitudes in urban areas, but there is only fragmentary data on the situation in rural areas. The next HES study will not be available until some time after March 20. The following is a shorter and updated version of a longer assessment of the same subject, which will be transmitted by pouch.

The Tet offensive was a direct attack on the morale and confidence of the people of South Vietnam. Although far from achieving the success for which the enemy hoped, there is no question that it did have significant impact on the countryside as a whole, producing considerable fear of the power the Communists can bring to bear. This impact is likely to be felt for months. What may have been a minimum enemy objective of achieving and consolidating control in the countryside may have been achieved temporarily in many areas in the wake of the assaults on provincial and district towns. Communist armed and unarmed propaganda and food -- collecting teams are reportedly active in much of the countryside. Viet Cong control and influence in many villages and hamlets appears to be adequate to permit fairly large-scale recruiting and intensive propagandizing.

The psychological impact was not all to the advantage of the enemy, however. The excellent overall military performance of ARVN (unfortunately offset in some localities by extensive looting) has on balance produced a new sense of pride and confidence in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. There is a degree of satisfaction in the population that their armed forces and the civilian administration, through their own efforts and backed by a heavy U.S. commitment, were able to throw back the heavy Communist assaults. The enemy was unable to mobilize the people for a general uprising, as he anticipated, though small groups here and there were mobilized for specific purposes, most notably in Hue.

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-2-

How long the impact of these various reactions to the offensive will last depends to a great extent on events in the months ahead. The people in the cities as well as in rural areas are apprehensive about the ability of the Government of Vietnam and its allies to provide security, an apprehension which will be allayed only with re-establishment of security in the countryside and reacquisition of the military initiative by the Government of Vietnam and free world military forces.

A probable and quite natural outgrowth of these apprehensions will be an even greater reluctance on the part of individual Vietnamese to commit themselves explicitly to the Government of Vietnam. This tendency may slow nation-building and pacification programs and require more effort and time to stimulate the average citizen to action or commitment.

There has been surprising credence paid to the rumors of Viet Cong/U.S. collusion to force a coalition government on the Government of Vietnam. The fact that this rumor has been heard in all parts of the country suggests that this is a psychological vulnerability which Viet Cong propaganda is exploiting with success. Public statements by the Ambassador and repeated efforts by members of the Mission to lay this allegation to rest have had only limited success, although in areas where U.S. forces have been heavily engaged and where U.S. casualties have been seen, the rumor has died away quickly.

Attitudes by Corps area follow:

A. I Corps -- Attitudes in I Corps are dominated by the fact that the five provinces in the area are closest to the 17th parallel and are thus closest to the danger of being overrun by the North Vietnamese Army in the event of a Korean-style assault. Morale in I Corps has been fragile for the best part of a year, as a consequence of heavy Communist attacks on the Con Thien and Gio Linh positions, as well as the heavy buildup around Khe Sanh. Communist attack and occupation of parts of Hue for three weeks contributed to further loss of morale in the area as a whole. Recent events have given new life to the rumor, first heard in the spring of 1967, that the U.S. would pressure the Government of Vietnam to abandon the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien to the Communists either to obtain peace or simply to improve the military situation. Communist assaults on Quang Tri, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Quang Tin province capitals were quickly contained and thrown back, with heavy enemy losses, but fear of renewed Communist assaults is still widespread among the population. Viet Cong/ North Vietnamese Army forces largely control western (mountainous) portions

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of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, and Viet Cong propaganda cadre are active in lowland villages and hamlets. There was some response to the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army attacks by oppositionist elements in Hue, who appear to have joined the Communist Emergency Administration of Thua Thien-Hue, but the population as a whole did not respond to the Viet Cong, despite a prolonged enemy presence in the city.

B. II Corps -- Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army attacks on province and district capitals were generally thrown back in a few days, although in a subsequent attack on Phan Thiet (Binh Thuan province) February 18, the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army were able to hold part of the town for two days before being driven out. In the provinces where there was strong military and civilian leadership (e. g. , Khanh Khoa and Kontum), morale has remained generally good, even though Kontum was the site of major fighting and is still menaced by the presence of Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces nearby. Morale elsewhere in II Corps is spotty and has been affected adversely in Phan Thiet and Tuy Hoa by looting by ARVN troops. Fighting lasted two weeks in Dalat largely because of a lack of combat troops and a confused command picture, both of which depressed civilian morale. On the whole, simultaneous Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army attacks on nine of the 12 II Corps province capitals resulted in considerably increased fear of, though not allegiance to, the Viet Cong in the region. Here, as elsewhere, there was little evidence of popular response to the Communist call for a general uprising, though in Ban Me Thout, for example, the Viet Cong were able to mobilize about two hundred Montagnard to march on the city with the invitation to join in looting it after its anticipated capture by the Viet Cong.

Viet Cong propaganda activity in II Corps villages and hamlets appears to be considerable, although effects are not yet noticeable. Government of Vietnam military and civilian presence is slowly making itself felt once again outside the province and district capitals to which it had largely been withdrawn during and immediately after the attacks.

C. III Corps -- Overriding concern in most of III Corps is apprehension concerning security. Tet attacks on province and district capitals were not on as large a scale as elsewhere, presumably because some Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army strength was diverted from III Corps for attacks on Saigon. Some villages and hamlets in the area were largely unaffected and untouched by events of the past month, and morale there is unchanged. Renewed apprehensions have resulted from the fact that seven of 11 province capitals have been hit by mortars and rockets since the main



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thrust of the Tet offensive died away. Major Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army units are reportedly operating in the provinces surrounding Saigon, which has had a predictably depressing effect on morale in the areas involved. Such enemy strength also means more Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army presence in populated rural areas of Gia Dinh, Binh Duong, Bien Hoa, Hau Nghia, and Long An provinces than has been the case for well over a year. While information on conditions in rural areas is sparse, indications of heavy propaganda and recruitment activity are widely reported. Impact on the people is hard to document, but in absence of effective Government of Vietnam counteraction, we must assume people will adjust to improved Viet Cong power positions and will see no alternative to providing food and recruits to the Viet Cong when demanded. Overt Viet Cong hamlet administrations reported by the district chief to have been established in five remote areas of Binh Long province, although it does not appear that the Communists have been able to expand their control to this extent in other rural areas of III Corps. No signs of popular enthusiasm for Viet Cong in III Corps, and most members of Viet Cong Hamlet Councils in Binh Long appear to have been appointed to positions by Viet Cong hard core but did not volunteer for these jobs.

In several areas of III Corps the Communist propaganda cadre appear to be spreading the jingle, "Blood will flow in May, there will be peace in June." This may indicate an effort to provide the excuse of one more big effort and then peace will come, when the Viet Cong make heavy demands for food and recruits, as they now are reportedly doing. We have no reports on popular reactions to these heavy demands, but cannot believe this will make the Viet Cong more popular.

In the strongly anti-Communist northern Catholic refugee villages near Vien Hoa city, people have formed self-defense organizations and are strongly committed to the Government of Vietnam. The Catholics here have recognized and accepted the necessity for damaging or destroying their homes in order to route the Viet Cong. There have been some encouraging indications of Cao Dai cooperation with the Government of Vietnam in Tay Ninh in driving Viet Cong out of villages and towns and in connection with recovery operations.

D. IV Corps -- The public attitudes in IV Corps are a special case, for they are conditioned by perhaps the most prolonged exposure to more or less continuous Communist activity for the past 20 years. When the Communist insurgency was reactivated in 1959, it moved out of Communist base areas in the U Minh area of Ca Mau Peninsula and the Plaine Des Joncs, near the

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-5-

Cambodian border, where the Communists have been in virtually full control since 1945. Government of Vietnam administrations in An Xuyen, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, and parts of Kien Giang have largely been shells for years, while Viet Cong activity in Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Chuong Thien, and Vinh Binh has been on a formidable scale since 1960.

The Viet Cong assaults and the destruction and looting by ARVN that accompanied and followed them had a negative effect on civilian morale and attitudes. Fear of renewed assaults continues to affect popular attitudes towards the Government of Vietnam. There was and is popular resentment that the Viet Cong violated the Tet holidays, but Communist forces remain poised to strike many province and district capitals from positions located, in many cases, only a few kilometers from the centers of the towns. Our impression is that resentment against the Communists is not nearly as strong as prevailing fear of them and of what they may do in the next round of assaults. Behind the shield of Communist forces around the towns the Communist political cadre are reportedly actively working over the population in the rural areas, with indications of active recruitment of additional Viet Cong replacements and whole new units being formed or upgraded from local to main force level. The people may not like the Communists, but what sparse indications we have suggest they are responding to the reality of Communist power in many areas.

Nevertheless, in IV Corps, as elsewhere in the country, there is no enthusiasm for the Viet Cong and no general belief in Communist victory. The Tet offensive has been a heavy blow to popular morale, but there has been considerable recovery since then, and there is a feeling of achievement in many areas that a major Communist assault has been thrown back.

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29

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

Monday, March 11, 1968  
6:05 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

You will wish to read this before this evening's session: Bunker's evaluation of troops and other aspects of our suggested program.

*W. W. Rostow*

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachment







# Department of State

TELEGRAM

29a

OO RUENG  
DE RUMJIR 21733/1 071122Z  
ZNY TTTT  
O 111142Z MAR 68 ZFF-!  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8371  
STATE GRNC  
BT

~~TOP SECRET~~

CONTROL: 2586Q

RECD: MARCH 11, 1967

10:48 A.M.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter [2-79]

By isp, NARS, Date 7-25-79

~~TOP SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 21733

NODIS

REF: STATE 124584

1. I AGREE THAT THE QUESTION OF ADDITIONAL US TROOPS FOR VIETNAM RAISES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS REGARDING OUR POLICY HERE. AS THE PAPER CONTAINED IN REFTEL INDICATES, THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF AN INCREASE ON THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE INVOLVE DIFFICULT JUDGMENTS AFFECTING BOTH OUR LONG-RANGE AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES HERE.

2. ~~THE~~ ~~OFFICIAL~~ ELEMENT IN JUDGING THE EFFECTS OF AN INCREASE ~~IN US FORCES~~ IS OBVIOUSLY THE SIZE OF THAT INCREASE. ~~GENERAL~~ WESTMORELAND, BASED ON HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THE MILITARY SERVICES TO DEPLOY TRAINED UNITS, HAS RECOMMENDED THAT THE FIRST INCREMENT SHOULD AMOUNT TO AN ADDITIONAL

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 21733/1 ~~TOP SECRET~~

SEVEN COMBAT MANEUVER BATTALIONS PLUS AN MP BATTALION. THESE FORCES ARE NEEDED TO PARTIALLY OFFSET TROOPS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISPATCHED TO NORTHERN I CORPS. IF PRES THIEU'S ANALYSIS OF ENEMY STRATEGY AND CAPABILITY IS CORRECT, NVN/C FORCES CAN BE EXPECTED TO MOUNT ANOTHER MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN THE LATE SPRING OR SUMMER. THIS OFFENSIVE MUST BE DECISIVELY DEFEATED. EVEN THOUGH VIETNAMESE FORCES WILL BE BUILDING UP DURING THE TIME BETWEEN NOW AND SUMMER, WE CAN NOT EXPECT THEM TO BE FULLY TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND IN PLACE BEFORE THIS PHASE OCCURS. I WOULD THEREFORE FAVOR EARLIEST DEPLOYMENT OF THE FIRST INCREMENT RECOMMENDED BY GENERAL WESTMORELAND. THE QUESTION OF THE DISPATCH OF FORCES BEYOND THIS INCREMENT SHOULD BE REEXAMINED AT A LATER DATE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SITUATION DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. THE COMMENTS THAT FOLLOW RELATE TO THE GENERAL PROBLEMS I FORESEE RESULTING FROM ADDITIONAL US FORCES, ALTHOUGH I BELIEVE THESE PROBLEMS WILL BE MANAGEABLE IF THE INCREASES IS LIMITED TO THE NUMBERS PROPOSED UNDER GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S RECOMMENDATION. FOR A FIRST INCREMENT, I AM NOT ATTEMPTING TO ADDRESS IN THIS

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 21733, MARCH 11

~~TOP SECRET~~  
MESSAGE THE EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL  
US FORCES IN TERMS OF MEASURES REQUIRED IN THE US TO BACK UP  
THIS ACTION AND TO GIVE US THE REQUIRED RESERVE FORCES,  
SINCE THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH HAVE TO BE DETERMINED IN  
WASHINGTON.

3. I AGREE THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL US TROOPS WOULD  
PROBABLY STRENGTHEN THE GVN'S WILL AT A CRITICAL TIME AND WOULD  
BE A FURTHER AFFIRMATION OF OUR COMMITMENT AND OF OUR ABILITY  
TO MEET IT. THE COUNTERVAILING FACTOR THAT IT COULD  
TEND TO FURTHER AMERICANIZE THE WAR AND TO GIVE THE VIET CON  
AN ESCAPE ROUTE FROM THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS AN IMPORTANT  
CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, THE RECENT ATTACKS HAVE GIVEN THE VIET  
COMMUNIST ELEMENTS HERE BOTH A SHOCK AND A SHORT IN THE  
AS REFTEL INDICATES. THE QUESTION NOW IS HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF THIS WITHOUT IMPOSING IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS ON THE GOVERNMENT  
WHICH WILL TEND TO MAKE IT THROW UP ITS HANDS AND SLIP  
AWAY FROM ITS RESPONSIBILITY, LEAVING US TO CARRY THE MAIN  
BURDEN. I THINK THE ANSWER TO THIS WILL TURN BOTH ON THE SIZE  
AND DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL US FORCES AND ON THE AVAILABILITY  
OF EQUIPMENT AND OTHER SUPPORT NEEDED TO ALLOW THE GVN TO

PAGE 2 RUMKAR 217333 ~~TOP SECRET~~  
INCREASE ITS MILITARY EFFORT PROMPTLY. IN OTHER WORDS, WE NEED  
TO MAINTAIN A CAREFUL BALANCE BETWEEN MODERNIZATION OF RVNAF  
AND THE BUILD-UP OF OUR OWN FORCES. ONE OF THE CLEAR LESSONS  
OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAS BEEN THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE GIVEN  
ALL OUR SUPPORT IN TERMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES  
FOR THE NVA/VC AND THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OUTGUN THOSE RVNAF  
FORCES WHICH ARE STILL EQUIPPED WITH OUR OLDER WEAPONS. OUR  
MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR RVNAF IS JUST BEGINNING TO MAKE  
PROGRESS. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LET THIS PROGRAM SLIP AND  
MUST EXAMINE EACH MAJOR ITEM CAREFULLY TO INSURE THAT RVNAF  
GETS A FAIR SHARE AND THAT THE MOMENTUM AND CONFIDENCE INSPIRED  
BY ISSUE OF THE NEW ITEMS IS NOT LOST. THE NUMBER OF  
ADDITIONAL US TROOPS CONTEMPLATED FOR DEPLOYMENT SHOULD NOT  
HAVE ANY APPRECIABLE EFFECT UPON THE MODERNIZATION AND  
IMPROVEMENT OF RVNAF. IN FACT, THESE TWO MATTERS SHOULD GO  
HAND IN HAND TO INCREASE THE MOMENTUM OF THE OVERALL BUILD-  
UP OF STRENGTH AND CAPABILITY IN COUNTRY TO PROGRESSIVELY  
DESTROY THE ENEMY. I CONSIDER IT MOST URGENT THAT WE GET THE  
WEAPONS RVNAF NEEDS OVER HERE AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE  
IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THE GVN'S PRESENT

~~TOP SECRET~~

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-3- SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 21733, MARCH 11

~~PAGE 3 NUMBER 21733/1 TOP SECRET~~

~~MOBILIZATION PLANS.~~ I VIEW THIS MATTER AS BOTH A SHORT AND LONG TERM OBJECTIVE, WHILE IN CONTRAST THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL US FORCES IS A NECCARY BUT A SHORT TERM GOAL.

4. I AM CONCERNED ABOUT SIZEABLE ADDITIONAL US FORCES BE THE CAUSE OF THE EFFECTS OF OUR OVERWHELMING PRESENCE HERE AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT OF OUR TYPE OF WARFARE WILL NULLIFY SOME OF OUR BASIC PURPOSES. MY INTUITION TELL ME THAT WE WILL INCREASINGLY COME TO PLAY THE ROLE OF A COLONIAL POWER, WHETHER INTENTIONALLY OR NOT. FOR THIS REASON, I THINK WE MUST MAINTAIN A VERY CAREFUL BALANCE BETWEEN WHAT WE UNDERTAKE TO DO OURSELVES AND WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE THROUGH PRESSURE ON THE GVN, ALWAYS BEARING IN MIND WHAT THE GVN IS CAPABLE OF IN TERMS OF ITS OWN HUMAN AND SOCIAL SOURCES. HOWEVER, BRINGING IN THE ADDITIONAL US FORCES PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED SHOULD NOT ADD SERIOUSLY TO THE PROBLEM OF AN OVERWHELMING US PRESENCE AT THIS TIME, SINCE THESE FORCES WILL BE DEPLOYED IN THE HINTERLANDS FIGHTING VC AND NVA UNITS, WHERE DESTRUCTION AND VISIBILITY SHOULD BE MINIMAL. ADDITIONAL

~~PAGE 6 NUMBER 21733/1 TOP SECRET~~

FORCES WHEN ADDED TO THE PROPOSED RNVAF BUILD-UP, SHOULD PERMIT US TO REGAIN OUR MOMENTUM AND ACCELERATE IT BEYOND THAT OF 1967. THE FOREGOING GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UNDERLIE SOME OF THE SPECIFIC COMMENTS WHICH FOLLOW IN THE NUMBERED PARAGRAPHS OF THE PAPER QUOTED IN REFTEL.

5. I AGREE WITH THE FACT THAT THE GVN HAS THE CAPACITY TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL CLIMATE, AND THUS ITS IMAGE IN THE US, BUT THE DEFINITION OF THIS CAPACITY MUST BE A REAL-IMAGE ONE. THEREFORE, THE RANGE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS TO BE REQUIRED OF THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE KEYED TO A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WHAT THEY CAN DO, RATHER THAN AN IDEAL RELATED PRIMARILY TO WHAT WE OR AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD LIKE TO SEE. NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE ACHIEVE HERE, THE AMERICAN PRESS AND PROBABLY CERTAIN OF OUR OWN CONGRESS WILL NEVER REGARD IT AS SUFFICIENT, GIVEN THEIR TENDENCY SOMETIMES TO DEMAND STANDARDS OF PREFECTION WHICH EVEN WE HAVE NOT ATTAINED. ~~IT IS CONFIDENT THAT WE AND THE GVN CAN DO WHAT IS NECESSARY, BUT IN DECIDING WHAT THIS IS, WE MUST TAKE SUFFICIENTLY INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THIS IS AN UNDER-DEVELOPED ASIAN NATION TORN BY DECADES OF WAR AND WITH LIMITED HUMAN RESOURCES, ENDEAVORING TO FUNCTION UNDER A NEW AND UNACCUSTOMED FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN WHICH IT HAS HAD LITTLE PRACTICE AND LESS TRADITION.~~

BUNKER

~~TOP SECRET~~





# Department of State

## TELEGRAM

#5  
W 10

~~TOP SECRET~~

CONTROL: 2565Q

RECD: MARCH 11, 1968

8:50 A.M.

OO RUEHC  
DE RUMJIR 21733/2 0711310  
ZNY TTTT  
O 111142Z MAR 68 ZFF-1  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8372  
STATE GRNC  
BT

~~TOP SECRET~~ SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 21733

NODIS

6. RE PARA 5 I AGREE THAT A HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO SAIGON CAN PLAY A HELPFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLE IN THIS SITUATION AND SEC CLIFFORD WOULD BE THE IDEAL PERSON TO HEAD IT. I WOULD BE INCLINED, HOWEVER, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE MISSION COME AT A SOMEWHAT LATER DATE, PERHAPS IN APRIL, TO EVALUATE WHAT IS BEING DONE AND TO GIVE AN ADDED PUSH TO OUR EFFORT, I COULD THEN CONTINUE WITH THE TASK OF LAYING BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT WHAT WE EXPECT OF IT AND OF GETTING THIS EFFORT UNDER WAY. I SHOULD NOTE AT THIS POINT THAT MOST OF THE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS LISTED ARE ONES ON WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN PUSHING THE GOVERNMENT AND ON WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO TAKE ENCOURAGING ACTION. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THEY CANNOT DO MORE, BUT MERELY UNDERLINES THE FACT THAT WE IN THE MISSION, AS WELL AS THE GVN, ARE BASICALLY ON THE SAME WAVE-LENGTH WITH WASHINGTON IN TERMS OF OUR OBJECTIVES, AND OF THE TIME-FRAME WITHIN WHICH WE ARE WORKING.

~~PAGE 2 RUMJIR 21733/2 TOP SECRET~~

7. RE PARA 6 - MOBILIZATION, I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED ON PRES THIEU'S DECISION TO ACCELERATE THE MOBILIZATION PROCESS AND HIS DESIRE TO PROVIDE BETWEEN 100,000 AND 125,000 ADDITIONAL MEN FOR THE ARMED FORCES DURING THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. IN THIS REGARD PRES THIEU ENVISAGES THE EXTENSIVE USE OF UNITS ON FAIRFAX TYPE OPERATIONS TO PROTECT THE CITIES, THEIR ENVIRONS, AND THE LOCS. WE ARE WORKING WITH THE GVN TO MAINTAIN KEY CIVILIANS IN THEIR GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS WHERE THEY CANNOT BE SPARED OR REPLACED. GEN WESTMORELAND INFORMS ME THAT FY 68 PROGRAM FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES INVOLVES AN INCREASE OF 64,000 MEN. ONLY APPROXIMATELY 25,000 OF THIS FORCE INCREASE HAS BEEN REALIZED. THE CURRENT APPROVED PROGRAM IS THEREFORE SHORT APPROXIMATELY 40,000 MEN FOR WHICH EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED. IN

~~TOP SECRET~~

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-2- SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 21733, MARCH 11

ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PROGRAM, THESE 40,000 MEN WERE TO BE USED TO FILL EXISTING UNITS AND TO ACTIVATE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR ELEMENTS: APPROXIMATELY 80 RF COMPANIES AND 250 PF PLATOONS, 1 ARTILLERY BATTALION, 1 ENGINEER BATTALION, 1 SEPERATE INFANTRY REGIMENT, AND 2 INFANTRY BATTALIONS TO FLESH

~~PAGE 3 RUMJIN 21733/2 TOP SECRET~~

OUT EXISTING REGIMENTS. IF ADDITIONAL MEN ARE MOBILIZED, RF/PF UNITS COULD BE ORGANIZED AND EQUIPPED WITH WW II-TYPE WEAPONS AVAILABLE BY VIRTURE OF RECEIPT OF MORE MODERN WEAPONS BY ARVN. GEN WESTMORELAND'S PROPOSED FY 69 PROGRAM INVOLVES AN INCREASE OF 93,000. A FORMAL REQUEST FOR APPROVAL HAS BEEN SUBMITTED THROUGH HIS CHANNEL. THEREFORE IT IS GEN WESTMORELAND'S OPINION THAT THE NUMBER OF MEN THIEU PLANS TO MOBILIZE CAN BE CONSCRIPTED, TRAINED AND EQUIPPED. ASSUMING THAT 125,000 MEN ARE MOBILIZED DURING THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, THIS WILL RESULT IN A NET INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY 60,000 MEN IN RVNAF OVER CURRENT STRENGTH IN CONSIDERATION OF ESTIMATED LOSSES OF APPROXIMATELY 10,000 PER MONTH THROUGH CASUALTIES AND DESECTIONS. THERE WILL BE SHORTAGES OF SOME EQUIPMENT UNTIL FY 68 PROGRAMMED QUANTITIES ARE DELIVERED AND UNTIL FY 69 ITEMS ARE PROGRAMMED AND AVAILABLE FROM PRODUCTION. INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS WILL AGAIN BE OF THE WW II TYPE AND VEHICLE SHORTAGES WILL HAVE SOME EFFECT ON MOBILITY. HOWEVER, THESE PROBLEMS ARE BELIEVED TO BE MANAGEABLE. THE MAJOR PROBLEM IS ONE OF LEADERSHIP, WHERE IT IS ESTIMATED THAT OFFICER AND NCO

~~PAGE 4 RUMJIN 21733/2 TOP SECRET~~

REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DIFFICULT TO FILL. WE FEEL THAT WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THIEU AND THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF TO PROCEED SOONEST WITH THEIR MOBILIZATION, NOT ONLY TO FORM ADDITIONAL UNITS THAT ARE SORELY NEEDED AND TO FILL UP THEIR RANKS, BUT TO DENY THIS MANPOWER TO THE VIET CONG, WHO ARE, THEMSELVES, IN DESPERATE NEED OF MANPOWER.

8. RE PARA 7 - THIEN KY RELATIONSHIP, THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF MY MAIN PREOCCUPATIONS SINCE MY ARRIVAL ALMOST A YEAR AGO. THIS RELATIONSHIP CONTINUES TO HAVE ITS PEAKS AND VALLEYS, AND IT IS NOW IN ONE OF ITS VALLEYS. BUT I SHALL CONTINUE TO DEVOTE MY FULLEST ENERGIES TO MAINTAINING IT AND TO ENCOURAGING A GREATER UNITY OF LEADERSHIP ON ALL SIDES. THE OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN PARAS 7 AND 8 ARE THOSE WHICH HAVE GUIDED ME IN THE PAST AND I WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THEM VIGOROUSLY.

9. RE PARA 9 AND 10 - GETTING THE GVN BACK INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE, THIS IS A POINT ON WHICH GEN WESTMORELAND AND I

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

-3- SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 21733, MARCH 11

HAVE BEEN PRESSING THE TOP LEADERSHIP CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS AND AS I HAVE REPORTED, THIEU AND KY ARE FULLY IN ACCORD WITH IT. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN CIRCLES IN THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHO HAVE BEEN TOO CONSERVATIVE AND

~~PAGE 5 RNMJIR 21733/2 TOP SECRET~~

RELUCTANT TO MOVE OUT INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE, WE BELIEVE THAT SOME SUCCESS HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED, AND IN MOST AREAS THIS EFFORT IS ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS VIGOROUSLY IN THIS DIRECTION AND TO FURNISH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE WITHOUT FEAR. WESTMORELAND AND I AGREE REGARDING THE VITAL ROLE OF THE PROVINCE CHIEFS AND THEIR STAFF AND THE SENSE OF MISSION OF THE ARVN UNITS AND WE INTEND TO PURSUE THE EVALUATION PROCESS AT ALL LEVELS.

BUNKER

BT

~~TOP SECRET~~



# Department of State

## TELEGRAM

#5

~~TOP SECRET~~

CONTROL: 2630Q

RECD: MARCH 11, 1968

1:56 A.M.

OO RUEHC  
DE RUMJIR 21733/3 0711333  
ZNY TTTT  
Q 111142Z MAR 78 ZFF-1  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8373  
STATE GRNC  
BT

~~TOP SECRET~~ SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 21733

NODIS

10. RE PARA 11 - ~~DRIVE ON THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE, I AGREE~~  
~~THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH~~  
~~MUST BE EXPLOITED PROMPTLY AND VIGOROUSLY AND WE ARE ALREADY~~  
~~ENGAGED WITH THE GVN IN THIS PROCESS. IT WILL BE PUSHED WITH~~  
~~EVEN GREATER VIGOR.~~

11 RE PARA 12 - ~~GOVERNMENT REFORM AND ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN,~~  
~~PRES. THIEU, AS YOU RECOGNIZE, ALREADY MOVING IN THE~~  
~~DESIRABLE DIRECTIONS AND WE WILL KEEP UP THE PRESSURES ON HIM~~  
~~TO ACCELERATE THE REFORM AND TO ASSURE THAT IT ACHIEVES THE~~  
~~DESIRED PURPOSES. I AGREE THAT INCOMPETENT MILITARY COMMANDERS,~~  
~~PROVINCE CHIEFS AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS MUST BE REMOVED AND~~  
~~THAT WE SHOULD MAKE OUR OWN VIEWS ON SUCH PERSONS KNOWN.~~  
~~THE WAY IN WHICH THIS IS DONE, HOWEVER, IS SOMETHING ON~~  
~~WHICH THE JUDGMENT SHOULD BE LEFT TO THOSE OF US HERE ON THE~~  
~~SPOT. WE UNDERSTAND THE OBJECTIVE AND AGREE WITH IT. THE~~

~~RECEIVED RUMJIR 21733/3 0711333~~  
ONLY POINT I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AT THIS STAGE IS TO EMPHASIZE  
THAT THESE CHANGES INVOLVE VERY COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS  
AMONG THE LEADERS HERE, ESPECIALLY IN THE MILITARY, AND  
THAT WE MUST NOT ALLOW OUR EAGERNESS FOR CHANGE TO COMPROMISE  
THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF MAINTAINING UNITY OF LEADERSHIP.  
I RECOGNIZE THAT THIEU IS OVERLY CAUTIOUS AND RELUCTANT TO  
MOVE IN SUCH MATTERS, AND I WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS HIM AS  
NEEDED, BUT WE MUST ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THE DEFINITION OF WHAT  
IS POSSIBLE MUST BE IN THE LAST ANALYSIS REMAIN HIS, SINCE HE  
IS THE PRESIDENT..

12. RE PARA 13 - ~~THE UNITED FRONT I AGREE THAT IN ORDER TO~~  
~~TAKE FULL EST ADVANTAGE OF THE NATIONALIST SPIRIT OF REPERATION,~~  
~~WE MUST PREVENT PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND DIFFERENCES FROM~~  
~~UNDERMINING THIS EFFORT. THE THIEU/KY RELATIONSHIP, THE~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2- SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 21733, MARCH 11

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, AND THE INTER-PLAY OF POLITICAL GROUPS AND LEADERS ALL BEAR ON THIS PICTURE. ONE CAUTIONING NOTE WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO SOUND HERE IS THAT WHEN WE CHOOSE TO STIMULATE VIETNAMESE INITIATIVES FOR NATIONAL UNITY, THEY SHOULD BE RELATED TO THE ACTUAL POLITICAL SITUATION HERE AND SHOULD HAVE

~~PAGE 21733/3 TOP SECRET~~

LASTING MEANING IN ASIAN TERMS, NOT JUST AMERICAN IDEAS OF WHAT WE THINK THEY SHOULD DEVELOP. THE SKEPTICISM WITH WHICH WE THINK THEY SHOULD DEVELOP. THE SKEPTICISM WITH WHICH THE NATIONAL SALVATION FRONT IS VIEWED BY MANY VIETNAMESE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE INTROSPECTIVE VIETNAMESE OFTEN FINDS A HIDDEN MEANING AND PURPOSE IN WHAT TO US SEEMS LOGICAL AND REASONABLE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR MEANINGFUL EFFORTS TO UNITY THE NATIONALIST ELEMENTS HERE AND TO CREATE THE BASIS FOR LONGER-TERM POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

13. RE PARA 14 -16, WE WILL BE FORMULATING FURTHER PROPOSALS ON ECONOMIC MEASURES ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED IN THESE PARAGRAPHS.

14. I BELIEVE THAT THE FACTORS DISCUSSED IN PARAS 17 - 19 - US ACTIONS AND LEVERAGE, HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADDRESS AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS MESSAGE. I WOULD MERELY REITERATE MY GENERAL FEELING THAT THE EMPHASIS SHOULD REMAIN ON ENERGETIC AND MODERNIZING RVNAF AND THAT US FORCE INCREASES SHOULD BE LIMITED TO WHAT WE CONSIDER ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN THEM OFFENSIVE AND TO OVERCOME CERTAIN GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES WHICH THE ENEMY HAS, WITHOUT UNDULY WIDENING THE WAR OR OVER-AMERICANIZING IT. I KNOW THAT THIS DEFINITION REQUIRES CAREFUL SPELLING OUT BUT I WOULD HOPE THAT THIS COULD BE OUR BASIC GUIDELINE IN DOING SO.  
BUNKER

~~TOP SECRET~~

76 807  
BRIEFING NOTE, 111600 Mar 68  
1511  
at 1600-30  
11 Mar

MACV recently submitted a report summarizing the impact of B-52 strikes against the enemy in the Khe Sanh area.

In general, it stated that B-52 bombing has hurt the enemy and diverted much of his efforts to evasion and defensive tactics, although by no means destroying him. Specific mention was made of heavy losses in terms of troop strength, morale and ordnance as well as other supplies. It was also stated that the bombing probably delayed an assault on Khe Sanh planned in conjunction with the Tet offensive, thus denying the enemy what would otherwise have been a major addition to the psychological victory he sought.

Evidence furnished in MACV's discussion quite well supports the assessment, particularly in regard to secondary explosions. Of the 881 B-52 sorties flown through mid-February, 656 secondary explosions were noted. Tactical air added many more. DIA has no evidence which would tend to be in direct conflict with MACV's position, but we can't actually say that Khe Sanh was intended for major attack as part of the Tet offensive. While the enemy has the force capability to attempt a major assault against Khe Sanh at any time, his exact timing is still unknown.

Material losses to the enemy in the area while noteworthy, may also be local in nature, as it is not known to what extent he has stockpiled; in other words, it may now be a matter of drawing from cache "b," "c," or "d," in lieu of "a."



There appears to be no shortage of artillery rounds.

In summary, MACV's facts and methodologies provide a good base for assessing effects of B-52 strikes in the Khe Sanh area, but DIA is not able to categorically establish the direct impact on the enemy's previous attack intentions against Khe Sanh or the result, if measurable, of ordnance losses due to these strikes. If he in fact was deployed to the depth indicated in the Khe Sanh areas which were struck, the enemy no doubt suffered significant losses in respect to personnel casualties, materiel and command/control. But we don't know the effect of these losses on his overall plans.



~~SECRET~~

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

CM-3107-68  
11 March 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WALT W. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: Deployment of Program 5 Infantry Battalions (C)

The following information concerning departure and closure dates for the four Program 5 infantry battalions is submitted in response to your query this morning.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Station</u>	<u>Scheduled Departure</u>	<u>Scheduled Closure RVN</u>
5/12 Inf Bn (199th BDE)	Lewis	1 Apr 68	6 Apr 68
6/31 Inf Bn (196th BDE)	Lewis	1 Apr 68	6 Apr 68
5/46 Inf Bn (198th BDE)	Hood	24 Mar 68	29 Mar 68
4/21 Inf Bn (11th BDE)	Hawaii	11 Apr 68	15 Apr 68

*Earle G. Wheeler*

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority JCS 9-21-78 letter  
By ip, NARS, Date 3-19-79

Copy to:  
Secretary of Defense

~~SECRET~~

GROUP - 3  
Downgraded at 12 year  
intervals; not  
automatically declassified

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By ing, NARS, Date 7-25-79

2H 5/5 9670  
33  
Rostow  
March 12, 1968

MEMORANDUM TO: S - The Secretary  
THROUGH: S/S  
FROM: M - Eugene V. Rostow  
SUBJECT: Thoughts about Viet-Nam

A weekend away has brought forth these reflections on our problem in Viet-Nam.

Manifestly, we are in a political and psychological crisis of some magnitude, perhaps in a military crisis as well. And thus far our diplomatic efforts have failed to produce peace.

1. Diplomatically, I recommend that we press the Soviets hard along the line you opened up a year ago in January. I suggest that you follow up my recent talk with Dobrynin. (I attach a copy of the Memorandum of Conversation for convenience.) We could let the Soviets feel the weight of the German and Korean analogy you stressed in your remarks before the Foreign Relations Committee.

There is another line of argument to which they might be sensitive: any weakening of the American guarantee would imperil NPT, to which we and they have just given a new impetus at Geneva. Would Japan be willing to sign if our position in Viet-Nam becomes worse? The political premise of NPT is stability in the relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. If NPT is to become a positive force in world affairs, the U.S.S.R. should act constructively with regard to South East Asia (and the Middle East). It makes no sense to consolidate our joint political influence as nuclear super powers unless we act together to liquidate adventures that show signs of getting out of hand. NPT can't be an unlimited license for non-nuclear trouble.

The Soviet Union finally moved to get negotiations started with respect to Korea. The time has come to do so again, first

~~SECRET~~



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-2-

with Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia, then Korea and the Middle East.

You could start - or if you prefer, I could do so with less exposure and commitment - by asking Dobrynin if he has received instructions on the procedure I mentioned to him, about private talks analogous to the Kennan-Malik conversations in 1951. After all, we should be talking seriously about the implication of events in China, not allowing ultra-extremists and Left deviationists to drag us into risks we don't want.

It could be indicated that the attitude of the Soviet Union would be taken into account in the President's military decisions with regard to Viet-Nam.

2. Psychologically, I suggest that it might do some good to broaden the circle of the President's consultations. I recently talked with Jack McCloy, who is solid as a rock, full of fire, and, after all, not without experience in forming sensible civilian opinions about military plans. Could he help, substantively and psychologically, as part of the White House team? He is the closest approximation I know to Henry Stimson. Tom Gates is another man to consider. So is Dean Acheson, perhaps Benno Schmidt, the able head of J. H. Whitney & Co. In the Senate, Jackson and Muskie.

3. I have no opinions on the military situation. A fresh look by those who have not been involved, and have no vested interests in present plans, may do some good. I recall the profound impact Ridgeway's appointment had at a particularly grim time in Korea. All my instincts are to go forward. A Gettysburg and a Vicksburg could change the atmosphere, at home and in the field. How do we achieve them?

I have no candidates for the Ridgeway role. But there must be a brilliant and electrifying fellow somewhere in the system, capable of restoring confidence. We need not only brains and nerve but a little drama (pearl-handled pistols, twin hand-grenades, a beret, a corn cob pipe) to revive flagging spirits.

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

-3-

Clearly, the urgent job is to get ARUN and Allied forces back into the countryside before it is too late, and to arrange a change in the Saigon Government that could overcome the sense of weak leadership which runs through all the cables I read.

Attachment:

Dobrynin Memocon: Viet-Nam.

~~SECRET~~

34

2/

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

fr Tuesday, March 12, 1968  
6:05 p.m.

BB

Mr. President:

Herewith Bus Wheeler's  
detailed response to the two recent  
memoranda of Amb. Lodge:

- on urban police operations;
- on search and destroy  
operations and U.S. military  
strategy in general.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 10-6-78; NSC 8-14-80

By JK (ing), NARS, Date 8-29-80

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~  
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

DECLASSIFIED

Authority JCS 9-21-78 letter  
By ip, NARS, Date 3-19-79

11 March 1968  
CM-3102-68

*file date*

*34a*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Ambassador Lodge's Memorandum

1. Ambassador Lodge in his memorandum dated 5 March 1968, addresses himself to two major problems and then touches on a number of related matters. The first of these has to do with the level of military forces in Vietnam and their employment. The second has to do with the importance of strengthening the police structure within the cities and towns in order to comb out the Communist organization, so that local political institutions and agencies can operate.

2. Taking this last point first, I am in complete agreement with the Ambassador's very perceptive analysis. In fact, now that the enemy is involved in large-scale infiltration of the cities and towns, the effectiveness of police and security forces has become as important as any other measure. If the towns are lost from within, this would be just as fateful as if they were seized from without. I do have the impression that Ambassador Bunker and the entire mission in Vietnam also agree on the importance of this matter. Current plans to expand the police are consistent with this view and the very elaborate organization under Ambassador Komer, including the special organization for the attack on the infrastructure, are all moving in this direction with all of the imagination and energy at their disposal.

3. With respect to the level of forces and their employment, I believe that there is a widespread misunderstanding about the purpose and the nature of the so-called "search and destroy operations" conducted by U.S. forces in Vietnam. It may be that the term itself is misleading. I define "search and destroy" as offensive operations designed to destroy enemy units, bases and supplies.

4. General Westmoreland has been pursuing three military objectives in South Vietnam, which require that he find and destroy enemy forces:

a. Destroy, neutralize or eject the North Vietnamese Army;

Copy 1 of 7 copies each  
of        pages series       

~~TOP SECRET~~





the city of Hue - and it is better to fight the 1st NVA Division at Dak To, for example than in Kontum City or Pleiku.

e. In order to defend the population, it is necessary to patrol in strength in the interior to find large formations and then to strike at them with strength. It is exactly operations of this type which best succeed in keeping the enemy "split up and off balance" so that he can attack less frequently and less effectively against the primary population targets in South Vietnam. These are the operations which now fall into the reporting category of "search and destroy".

6. Concerning two other points made by Ambassador Lodge:

a. I can find no basis for correlating the length of wars with casualty rates and degree of public support. In this connection, you will find the enclosed statistical comparison (Tab A) of interest.

b. When Ambassador Lodge speaks of censorship, he has put his finger on a problem which has been plaguing General Westmoreland. It seems perfectly clear that we are channeling to the enemy, through the press, information which is extremely helpful to him. This is a real handicap to the Allied forces in Vietnam and certainly one which complicates the successful prosecution of operations.

7. Ambassador Lodge expresses thoughts about the requirement for additional forces beyond those "to enable us to keep faith with the troops in exposed positions". Our forces in Vietnam today, as during the past three years, have been employed primarily to hold off the main forces of the enemy - increasingly North Vietnamese - so that the very process described by the Ambassador could go forward behind their protective screen. By reinforcing from North Vietnam with well over three divisions in two months, General Giap has simply rendered our shield less effective. If I understand General Westmoreland's basic requirement for additional forces, it is simply to prevent the relative balance of force from going badly against him. If the balance of force improves in favor of the enemy, as it has in recent months, the enemy

1

automatically increases his ability to mount attacks, or to threaten attacks, in an increasing number of places. In his current offensive, he has posed threats in precisely those areas which Ambassador Lodge correctly identifies as being the most critical - the cities, the towns and the concentrations of heavy population.

8. With respect to over-all strategy in Vietnam, I would make this observation. We are now engaged in the most crucial phase of the war. The events of the next three or four months could fundamentally alter the nature of this war. In my view, it is not timely to consider fundamental changes in strategy when we are fully committed in what could be the decisive battles of the war.

*Earle G. Wheeler*

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

War	Period	Length in Months	Battle Deaths	Deaths/Month
I	Apr 1917 - Nov 1918	19	53,000	2,800
II	Dec 1941 - Sep 1945	45	292,000	6,400
Korea	Jun 1950 - Jul 1953	36	34,000	950
Vietnam	Jul 1964 - Mar 1967	32	19,000	600
	(1961 to date)	86	19,200	220)

- World War II was the longest war we have fought in this century and entailed the highest number of battle deaths per month. Yet I believe that it was fully supported by the American public.

- The Korean War never approached the length of World War II. The number of our battle deaths per month in Korea was less than one-sixth of World War II and substantially lower than World War I. But Korea was certainly not a popular war.

- The war in Vietnam (measured from the introduction of U.S. ground combat units) has been shorter than the Korean War and the death rate has been less than two-thirds.

REVISED

TAB A

War	Period	Length in Months	Battle Deaths	Deaths/Month
I	Apr 1917 - Nov 1918	19	53,000	2,800
II	Dec 1941 - Sep 1945	45	292,000	6,400
Korea	Jun 1950 - Jul 1953	36	34,000	2,000
Vietnam	Jul 1964 - Mar 1967	32	19,000	600
	(1961 to date)	86	19,200	220

- World War II was the longest war we have fought in this century and entailed the highest number of battle deaths per month. Yet I believe that it was fully supported by the American public.

- The Korean War never approached the length of World War II. The number of our battle deaths per month in Korea was less than one-third of World War II and substantially lower than World War I. But Korea was certainly not a popular war.

- The war in Vietnam (measured from the introduction of U.S. ground combat units) has been shorter than the Korean War and the death rate has been less than one-third.

TAB A





~~SECRET~~

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

13 MAR 1968

27  
Authority DECLASSIFIED  
OSD letter JUN 26 1979  
By isp, NARS, Date 10-19-79

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Actions to Enhance Logistic Support of  
Vietnam Operations

In accordance with your instructions, we have developed detailed plans for augmented production of selected critical items summarized below. All preparatory steps leading to this augmentation are now in process, pending the outcome of consultations with Mahon, Russell and Rivers regarding an FY 1968 Supplemental, or the establishment of over programming procedures for financing these items.

Helicopters

On 12 March I approved plans for the procurement of 1,075 additional helicopters for delivery between now and December 1969. The additional FY 1968 funding is \$554.5 million.

Since the T-53 engine is the pacing item for the UH-1 series helicopter (the helicopter required in the greatest quantity), I have directed a production expansion from 200 to 300 engines per month, and authorized the Army (1) to procure immediately the long lead time items needed to support this expansion, and (2) to contract with AVCO to establish the necessary facilities at their existing plant in Charleston, South Carolina.

M-16A1 Rifle

On 6 March 1968 I approved Secretary Resor's plans to acquire an additional 269,429 rifles by December 1969. Three actions are involved, costing \$52.1 million: (1) place Colt Industries on three shifts, seven days per week; (2) accelerate competitive award

DO NOT GRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.  
DOD DIR 5200.10

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Sec Def Cont Nr. X-1683

CC

~~SECRET~~

of a contract to a second producer; and (3) select, on a sole source basis, a third producer. Negotiations to consummate these three actions are in process and will be finalized as soon as source of funds has been determined.

Munitions

On 7 March 1968 I approved actions to augment the procurement of air and ground munitions at a cost of \$635.3 million. These actions will (1) establish five additional TNT production lines, (2) sustain 1800 B-52 sorties per month, (3) support the increased usage by ARVN forces of 105mm high explosive rounds, and (4) fully support the Program 5 deployments, including the recent 10,500-man augmentation. All possible preparatory steps are being taken, including selection of a production site for the additional TNT facilities, short of fund obligations.

*Paul H. Higa*

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM

2A  
36  
INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, March 13, 1968 -- 4:50 p.m.

Mr. President:

I owe you and Doug Cater an apology.

Last week he asked me to arrange for Gen. Wheeler to brief the Cabinet on Khe Sanh.

I did so -- but forgot.

When he asked me yesterday, I told him I had failed to ask Wheeler.

But Wheeler turned up.

Walt Rostow

cc: Douglass Cater

DD

37

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INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET COMINT~~

(8) (js) Wednesday, March 13, 1968  
5:30 p.m.

Mr. President: *Peris*

This CIA appraisal, requested by us, predicts the large North Vietnamese forces in I Corps will seek a clear cut victory against ours in the weeks and months ahead in something like conventional warfare.

This is what Westy has assumed and is tolerably well prepared for.

DECLASSIFIED

*West* Rostow

Authority OSD 10-6-78, CIA 6-5-79, NSC 8-14-80

By: JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80

~~TOP SECRET~~



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
13 March 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Continuing Communist Military  
Threat in Northern South Vietnam

Summary

Some significant redeployments of enemy units in South Vietnam's northern provinces have been noted during the past two weeks. These include the shift of major elements of the North Vietnamese 320th Division from the central Demilitarized Zone into the coastal lowlands of Quang Tri Province and the southward movement of additional forces from the 324B Division to join a heavy enemy build-up near Hue.

Although the movement of the 320th Division reduces the possibility that it will be used directly against Khe Sanh, the situation at that base remains essentially unchanged. A large concentration of enemy troops--perhaps as many as 20,000 men--still threatens Khe Sanh.

Available evidence indicates that the enemy build-up near Hue may approach the size of the enemy force around Khe Sanh. In addition, the Communists have continued extensive roadbuilding and logistics efforts in western Thua Thien Province and introduced tanks and apparently artillery into staging areas southwest of Hue.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

SANITIZED

Authority NLS-CBS 2

By is, NARS, Date 9-18-84

No Foreign Dissem

~~TOP SECRET~~

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

No Foreign Dissem

All indications point to an enemy desire to take on allied forces in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces in what would amount to conventional warfare in the coming weeks and months. The Communists appear to be aiming for a major victory in the northern provinces, presumably to strengthen their hand either for carrying on the war or for any possible negotiations.

-2-

No Foreign Dissem

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

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The Khe Sanh Situation

1. The most significant redeployments of enemy forces in northernmost South Vietnam during the past two weeks involves the shift of major elements of the North Vietnamese 320th Division from the central Demilitarized Zone into the coastal lowlands of Quang Tri Province and the southward movement of additional forces from the 324B Division to join a heavy enemy build-up near Hue.

2. Although the movement of the 320th Division reduces the possibility that it will be used directly against Khe Sanh or in a blocking role against nearby allied reinforcements, the situation at that base remains essentially unchanged. A large concentration of enemy forces--perhaps as many as 20,000 men--still threatens the Khe Sanh base. These forces consist of an estimated 10,000 troops in the newly infiltrated 304th Division--organized in three infantry and one artillery regiment--and at least 6,000 infantry troops in the 325th Division. In addition, other artillery, armor, and logistics units are believed to be in the area.

3. Two battalions of the 325th Division's 29th Regiment have redeployed from the Khe Sanh area to Hue, but [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] additional North Vietnamese artillery units have recently moved down into positions west of the base, probably more than compensating for the departure of these infantry battalions.

4. The extensive network of fortifications and trenches under construction in the immediate vicinity of Khe Sanh and the daily mortar, artillery, and rocket barrages against the base attest to the enemy's continuing commitment around the target. In Laotian territory just west of Khe Sanh, tanks, self-propelled guns, and armored personnel carriers have been sighted which could provide the North Vietnamese with an unprecedented assault force. In addition, aerial photography indicates that the Communists are continuing to make extensive use of

~~TOP SECRET~~

No Foreign Dissem

the newly constructed feeder roads west of Khe Sanh to build up stocks of ammunition and other supplies for a prolonged siege. During the past few weeks heavy incoming fire at the base airstrip has destroyed several aircraft and forced the allies to curtail sharply the number of resupply planes landing at the base in favor of parachute drops.

5. [REDACTED]

An enemy foothold on Hill 575 would not only increase the threat to allied aircraft landing at the main Khe Sanh airstrip but would also present a hazard to helicopters on supply missions to US Marine outposts northwest of the main base. The Communists can be expected to attempt to isolate those hilltop positions. It is not unlikely that the first major ground attacks against the Khe Sanh complex will come against one of these positions, and costly fighting could develop as the allies counter-attack.

320th Division Moves East

6. [REDACTED]

7. [REDACTED]

No Foreign Dissem

~~TOP SECRET~~

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~~TOP SECRET~~

No Foreign Dissem

8. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The 320th thus appears to have filled the vacuum created in this sector by the southward movement of the 324B Division.

9. For the present the 320th is engaged in harassing the major US Marine headquarters and supply center at Dong Ha and at the same time keeping open enemy supply and infiltration routes along the coast from the DMZ southward towards Hue. The former activity could be particularly troublesome as Dong Ha is a vital link in the main US supply route which runs from the Cua Viet River along Route 1 to Gio Linh, Con Thien, and other allied strongpoints on the border. [REDACTED]

10. The 320th Division is also in a position to perform a number of other missions. It could attempt to cut Route 1 and attack the allied barrier system near the DMZ from the south. Such a move would possibly be coordinated with attacks by new enemy units across the Ben Hai River. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There also have been reports of armor and new artillery units north of Con Thien.

11. Elements of the 320th are also capable of maintaining some pressure against the major US artillery fire support base at Camp Carroll and against Route 9, the only ground access route to western Quang Tri Province and Khe Sanh. In addition, elements of the division could participate in an attack on one or more of the population centers in the area such as Cam Lo or Quang Tri city.

No Foreign Dissem

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12. During the past few days two concentrations of enemy units were located [REDACTED] southwest of Quang Tri City in patterns similar to those noted prior to the abortive attack on the city in November 1967. The identity of the units could not be determined, but the possibility exists that they represented the 320th Division's 64th Regiment.

13. Other forces which could be committed in attacks against this provincial capital at any time are the North Vietnamese 5th and 9th Regiments--subordinates of the Communists' Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region--and possibly elements of the 803rd and 812th Regiments of the 324B Division. The recent activities of the latter units, however, indicate that they have turned their attention toward Hue.

#### Build-up Around Hue

14. Since the beginning of March, analysis [REDACTED] reports from other sources has revealed the presence of elements of seven regimental-size enemy units within ten miles of Hue. The build-up in the number of units may approach the size of the enemy force around Khe Sanh.

15. Two of the units are the 90th and 803rd Regiments of the 324B Division which moved down from the northeastern Quang Tri-DMZ area. On 5 March the headquarters of the 803rd Regiment was located [REDACTED] on the northern outskirts of Hue.

[REDACTED] The 324B Division's 812th Regiment is deployed south of Quang Tri city along Route 1. Like the 320th Division farther north, the 812th Regiment is in position both to harass vital allied movements and defend the enemy's coastal infiltration corridor.

16. As noted above, two battalions of the 29th Regiment, 325th Division, have also been identified near Hue. Prisoners indicate that these

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

No Foreign Dissem

battalions reinforced the 6th Regiment and took part in the heavy fighting in the Hue Citadel in February. The third battalion of the 29th remains northwest of Khe Sanh along Route 9.

17. The other enemy units near Hue are the 4th and 6th Regiments and the Hue Municipal Unit--all subordinate to the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region--and a new regimental-size force which reportedly infiltrated from North Vietnam late last year. The latter unit has been tentatively identified as the "24th Regiment."

18. Communist intentions in the build-up are not clear. Possibly they plan renewed large-scale attacks on the city. It is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that they hope to invest the Hue area in much the same manner that enemy main force units are now entrenched around Saigon. The two cities are politically and psychologically the most important objectives in South Vietnam. Harassment operations in the Hue area, moreover, would tend to tie down the allies more effectively than any other single action the enemy might mount in the northern provinces.

19. At the present time, [REDACTED] the Communists are resupplying and regrouping in preparation for a resumption of offensive activity. [REDACTED] B-52 strikes on a major "staging area" ten miles southwest of the city may have temporarily interrupted this activity.

#### Enemy Logistics Effort West of Hue

20. Meanwhile, there are continuing indications of an enemy effort to open a major supply route from the Laotian infiltration network across Thua Thien Province toward Hue. Analysis of aerial photography taken on 28 and 29 February revealed that construction of the road from the A Shau Valley to Ta Luong in central Thua Thien had been completed and the route could carry heavy trucks. [REDACTED]

No Foreign Dissem

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

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the "American-built road" from Ta Luong to Hue was passable and that road improvements along this final segment were to be completed by the end of February.

21. Heavy allied airstrikes are being launched against this route, but all indications are that the Communists have succeeded in moving significant amounts of weapons, ammunition, and other supplies to the vicinity of Hue. Aerial photography in late February [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the North Vietnamese have moved tanks over this route. At least two tanks were detected on the road near the known Communist assembly and staging area located some ten miles southwest of Hue.

22. Between 7 and 9 March allied guerrilla teams and aerial observers spotted over 30 trucks on the road. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the following supplies reached a point 15 miles from Hue during the last week in February: nearly 4,000 rounds of 82-mm. mortar, 75-mm. artillery, and B-40 rocket launcher ammunition, 84 cases of medical supplies, and nearly 20 tons of rice and other food.

#### Prospects

23. The recent moves and activities indicate strongly that the Communists hope to take on allied forces in two northern provinces of South Vietnam in the coming weeks and months in what would amount to conventional warfare. The introduction of tanks, artillery, and other new heavy weapons; the deployment of new troops into the coastal lowlands; and extensive enemy roadbuilding and logistics efforts suggest that the enemy is trying to get into a position which will permit him to conduct sustained offensive operations.

24. Major elements of two regular North Vietnamese divisions continue to threaten Khe Sanh and a massive assault on the base could come at any time. It is also possible that the enemy will attempt a long siege effort against Khe Sanh, relying



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No Foreign Dissem

on limited ground probes and heavy mortar, artillery, and rocket attacks to reduce the base gradually.

25. The enemy's timetable for Khe Sanh has probably been set back somewhat by heavy allied air and artillery strikes. There is considerable evidence, however, that the enemy in this sector has been deliberately conserving his forces and building up logistics backing for a sustained campaign, in all likelihood to be coordinated with other strong initiatives against allied bases and urban centers along the northern coast.

26. The "liberation" of Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, or their incorporation into North Vietnam, appears to have been a Communist objective since the time of the Geneva Conference. Thua Thien is the only province where the Communists have announced the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government. A successful enemy effort to seize a key base or city--such as Khe Sanh or Hue--could go a long way toward creating the position of strength which the Communists have always regarded as a prerequisite to entering negotiations.

27. The enemy also probably expects that the build-up in the north will divert additional allied forces from areas farther south, particularly the area surrounding Saigon. New large-scale enemy initiatives can almost certainly be expected against Saigon and other urban areas in the country.

28. At the very least, it would appear that the enemy hopes to develop the military situation in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces to the point where pacification efforts will be impossible and allied forces will be kept on the defensive.

MEMORANDUM

5  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

2A  
38  
Thursday  
March 14, 1968  
11:10 a.m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Douglass Cater

In his Cabinet briefing yesterday, General Wheeler did not attempt to answer one question which has been asked repeatedly even by supporters of our effort in Vietnam: What is the reason for relying on a static defense at Khe Sanh? Since the question is going to be raised more and more regularly in the days ahead, I think it would be useful if the General could formulate a response which can be used publicly.

WAC  
EXPLAIN to LHM  
done 3/23/68  
(W)

39

GG

(39)  
INFORMATION  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

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

Mr. President:

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

Walt  
Call me  
Walt Rostow

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 3-31-80 letter  
By inf, NARS, Date 7-22-80

39a

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 14, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Summary of Dean Acheson's Proposal.

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

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

3. This study should consist of:

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

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

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

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

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Authority NSC 3-31-80 letter  
By inf, NARS, Date 7-22-80

 W. Rostow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



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INFORMATION

ES  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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

~~TOP SECRET~~

Mr. President:

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

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

W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachments

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 3-31-80 letter  
By rip, NARS, Date 7-22-80

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classification

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON PRIORITY

Info

STATE

DECLASSIFIED

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Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By ing, NARS, Date 7-25-79

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

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

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

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

Such a debate will focus sharp and critical attention on

Drafted by:

S:DRusk:ml

Tel. Ext.

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

The Secretary

Clearances:

EA - Mr. Habib *HB*  
S/S - Mr. Read *JR*

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Page 2 of telegram to Amembassy SAIGON

~~TOP SECRET~~  
*Classification*

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

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

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

RUSK





Department of State

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TELEGRAM  
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1968 MAR 14, 7:53AM

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Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979  
By inf, NARS, Date 7-25-79

NODIS

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BUNKER

REF : STATE 124637

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

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

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~

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

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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~~TOP SECRET~~

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

PAGE 5 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~

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

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

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

PAGE 6 RUMJIR 22096 ~~TOP SECRET~~

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

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

BUNKER

~~TOP SECRET~~

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

Friday, March 15, 1968  
4:20 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Westy discloses how he plans  
to go on the offensive in I Corps.

If this plan goes well and the siege  
mentality is lifted around Saigon, the  
whole mood of the country about Vietnam  
could be quite different in two months.

*W. Westy* Rostow

~~TOP SECRET EYES ONLY~~ attachment

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSD 10-6-78; NSC 8-14-80

By JK (isp), NARS, Date 8-29-80



41a

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD letter JUN 26 1979

By isg, NARS, Date 10-19-79

2A

~~TOP SECRET~~

Copy of MAC 03572 EYES ONLY March 15, 1968

Subject: I Corps Operations

1. I have reviewed Gen. Cushman's plans for the next six-eight weeks in Northern I Corps. Priority will be given to destroying enemy forces in coastal areas of Thua Thien and Quang Tri; blocking enemy use of Route 547 and interdicting his line of communication in the A Shau valley; and mounting offensive operations against enemy forces in Khe Sanh area; to include opening of Route 9. The latter is planned to commence about 1 April.

2. As a result of above priorities, with extreme demands on logistic and helicopter support, Gen. Cushman does not plan to execute the assault and occupation of A Shau valley and raids into the associated base areas 607 and 611, as had been planned and approved for approximately 1 April. In lieu of assault operations into the A Shau valley, extensive reconnaissance operations by U. S. and Vietnamese special forces, and organic assets will continue along Route 547 to the valley. The reconnaissance will be backed up by at least one brigade of the 101st Airborne, operating out of Cumberland fire base. Targets in the valley will be developed for air and artillery attack. Raids of short duration by air mobile forces may be conducted to harass and destroy enemy logistical installations.

3. In conjunction with operations beginning in early April along Highway 9 and on the Khe Sanh plateau, we will submit contingency plans employing up to brigade size forces (US/ARVN) in operations against enemy bases in Laos. These plans will be focused on known enemy installations and/or forces which we cannot reduce by B-52 strikes, tactical air and other measures short of incursions by ground forces. Plans will be in consonance with Southeast Asia Coordination Conference discussions and coordinated with American Embassy, Laos. I will keep you apprised of our plans and requirements as they evolve.

~~TOP SECRET EYES ONLY~~



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THE PRESIDENT  
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THE PRESIDENT

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

MARCH 16, 1968

FOR THE PRESIDENT

SO THAT YOU CAN STARE AT IT, I HAVE TRANSLATED THE ACHESON IDEA INTO THE FOLLOWING DRAFT DIRECTIVE FOR THE TEAM LEADER.

A KEY QUESTION IS: WHO SHOULD HEAD THE GROUP?

PERHAPS THE BEST CHOICE WOULD BE CY VANCE. BUT HIS BEING ABOUT WASHINGTON WOULD LEAD TO LEAKS. HIS QUALITY IS SUCH THAT IT MIGHT WELL WORTH TAKING THAT RISK OR EVEN LETTING IT BE KNOWN THAT HE IS DOING A VIETNAM REVIEW JOB.

OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES: MAX TAYLOR, DEAN ACHESON.

DRAFT INSTRUCTION

I WISH YOU TO DIRECT A STUDY WHICH WILL LOOK BACK TO THE PAST AND FORWARD TO THE FUTURE WITH RESPECT TO OUR VIETNAM POLICY. THE STUDY SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY MAY 15, 1968.

THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS WHICH I SHOULD LIKE ANSWERED FROM ALL THE DATA WE NOW HAVE AVAILABLE AND CAN PROMPTLY GENERATE:

1. WHAT PROGRESS DID WE MAKE -- AND FAIL TO MAKE -- IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN MID-1965 AND TET 1968?
2. WHAT ELEMENTS OF FEAR AND HOPE, WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH, LED HANOI TO MOUNT THE WINNER-~~WINNER~~ SPRING OFFENSIVE?
3. WHERE DOES HANOI STAND WITH RESPECT TO ITS OBJECTIVES, AS OF THE TIME THIS STUDY IS COMPLETED? WHAT ARE ITS OPTIONS AS YOU THINK HANOI SEES THEM? TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THEY DEPENDENT ON WHAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE ABLE TO BELIEVE HANOI WILL CHOOSE?
4. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND ITS ARMED FORCES WITH RESPECT TO: UNITY; EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ENERGY; SCALE; MODERNIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS IN COMBAT DURING THE BALANCE OF CALENDAR YEAR 1968? 1969?
5. WHAT INCREMENTS OF MILITARY FORCE CAN WE EXPECT -- OR, LOGISTICALLY, INDUCE -- FROM OUR PRESENT FIGHTING ALLIES? COULD CIRCLE BE WIDENED?

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC Ltr. 1/5/82 N. NLJ 81-95

By LW, NARS, Date 2/17/82

JJ

6. WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR INHIBITING OR BLOCKING THE FLOW OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES TO THE SOUTH IN THE LIGHT OF OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BOMBING NORTH VIETNAM; WITH THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE SO-CALLED BARRIER; AND WITH THE USE OF AIR AND GROUND FORCES AGAINST NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES?

7. WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES? WHAT REGULAR RESERVES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DISPATCH TO THE SOUTH? WHAT IS THEIR DEMONSTRATED AND POTENTIAL CAPACITY TO PROVIDE REPLACEMENTS IN BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY?

8. WHAT IS THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CONTROL OVER THE POPULATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS? WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE BALANCE OF 1968? 1969?

9. IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR ANALYSIS AND JUDGMENT, CAN WE ENVISAGE AS REALISTIC A POLICY OF GRADUAL REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES IN VIETNAM: IN THE BALANCE OF 1968; 1969; 1970?

10. AT WHAT MOMENT -- IF ANY -- COULD YOU ENVISAGE AS POTENTIALLY EFFECTIVE A U.S. OR GVN NEGOTIATING INITIATIVE? WHAT SHOULD BE THE CHARACTER OF THAT INITIATIVE?

YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO POSE AND ANSWER OTHER QUESTIONS YOU JUDGE RELEVANT TO PAST OR FUTURE POLICY IN VIETNAM.

IN DEVELOPING YOUR REPORT, YOU SHOULD ASSEMBLE A TEAM OF THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND ABLE VIETNAM EXPERTS IN THE GOVERNMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, GEORGE CARVER, WILLIAM DE PUY, PHILIP HABIB, WILLIAM JORDEN, ROY WEHRLE. (A DOD REPRESENTATIVE IS NEEDED. THE OBVIOUS CHOICE IS RICHARD STEADMAN. HE FEELS STRONGLY THAT VIETNAM IS HOPELESS. BUT, MORE IMPORTANT, I CANNOT RECOMMEND HIM UNTIL IT IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THAT HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES LEAK.) THEY SHOULD, IF NECESSARY, WORK VIRTUALLY FULL-TIME ON THE PROJECT.

YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE, OF COURSE, TO CONSULT WITH OTHER OFFICIALS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND, ON A DISCREET BASIS, WITH OUTSIDE EXPERTS AS WELL.

DTG 161700Z MAR 68

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# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

~~TOP SECRET~~  
Classification

131732

43a

FOR OC/T USE ONLY

16 MAR 68 22

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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON PRIORITY

Info:

STATE 131732

NODIS

~~NO EXTERNAL DISTRIBUTION~~

NO DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE DEPARTMENT

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter [2-79]

By ing, NARS, Date 7-25-79

1. In connection with our possible decisions as foreshadowed in State 131330, we have a number of staff proposals concerning our negotiating posture as we announce our ~~dis~~ actions. One would be simply to reiterate the San Antonio formula and take the same line that we have done in recent statements. However, two other possibilities have been raised on which we need your judgment as to the South Vietnamese reaction.

2. The first of these would be to treat the various Hanoi statements reported to us in recent weeks as indicating that Hanoi at least clearly understands our "no advantage" assumption, and hence to go ahead with stopping the bombing in the near future. We would of course need to consult with the GVN before taking such action, but now need your judgment as to the GVN reaction and the broad effect in South Vietnam of carrying out such a

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Drafted by:

EA: WPBundy:bmm 3/16/68

Tel. Ext.

4235

Telegraphic transmission and  
classification approved by:

The Secretary

Clearances:

S/S- Mr. O'Donohue

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classification



~~TOP SECRET~~  
Classification

proposal. We would of course insist on prompt talks and on observance of the "no advantage" assumption if we did in fact stop.

3. The second proposal that has been put forward at staff level is more modest. Its essence would be for us to restrict our bombing actions against North Vietnam <sup>roughly</sup> ~~roughly~~ to the area south of Vinh, accompanying this by the simplest and most open-ended announcement possible, along the following lines: QTE After consultation with our allies, the President has directed that US bombing attacks on North Vietnam be limited to those areas which are integrally related to the battle-field. No reasonable person could expect us to fail to provide maximum support to our men in combat. Whether this step can be a step toward peace is for Hanoi to determine. We shall watch the situation carefully UNQTE.

4. The timing of such an action/announcement could be prior to, concurrent with, or after the presentation of force increase proposals to the Congress. Among the considerations that we have in mind are the following tentative judgments:

a. For the next month or so the weather in the Hanoi-Haiphong area would mean that the proposal would not make a major difference from a military point of view.

Full  
b. ~~Full~~ bombing would be resumed if there were a major

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attack on Khe Sanh or a second round of attacks on the cities.

c. We would not send Ambassadors rushing all over the world to convert the bombing action into negotiations but would simply sit back and wait for Hanoi to respond.

d. It would shift away from theological debates about words and put the ~~x~~ problem on the de facto level of action. If Hanoi took no corresponding military action, the bombing would be resumed.

e. It would be very important for us not to embroider the statement with all sorts of "conditions" or "assumptions." Just take the action and see whether anybody is able to make anything out of it.

f. The "areas which are integrally related to the battlefield" would presumably be as far north as Xáx Vinh. Bombing below that area should be intensive and without wraps.

5. As I said at the outset, there would obviously be other elements in any final judgment, notably whether the effect on the Congress and the American public would be on balance favorable, and so on. We would also need the most thoughtful assessment of how

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Classification

Hanoi would respond; it would be our best judgment that they would not repeat not take any real step toward peace, but it is conceivable that they might hold their hand at Khe Sanh and against the cities for some time, and this would require at some point a military judgment whether this situation would be to our <sup>net</sup> ~~xxx~~ advantage.

6. What we most need from you, though, apart from any general thoughts you may have, is whether such a proposal could be sold to Thieu (in conjunction with disclosure of plans for at least limited US force increases and also proposals for improving ARVN equipment), and whether the initiation of this action might -- even if Thieu had agreed -- have serious disturbing effects on South Vietnamese will and morale. We are of course well aware through your reporting of the deep rejection of any new negotiating approach ~~xxx~~ or peace initiative at the present time, and the equally deep sensitivity to any implication that the US may be dealing separately. The question is whether this action would arouse these emotions and to what degree. We would also like your thoughts on what sort of timing it might take to obtain GVN concurrence if you think it wise to seek this.

your

7. May we have/judgment on the South Vietnamese aspects

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classification



8. I want to emphasize that the foregoing are among alternatives being considered at the staff level only. They have not repeat not been presented to higher ~~highest~~ authority for consideration. You may be sure that you will not be ~~confronted with any sudden~~ ~~XX~~ confronted with any sudden decisions and that you will be afforded full opportunity for consultations.

RUSK



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Cy of all...  
sent to...  
S/P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
POLICY PLANNING COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON

March 18, 1968

Walt -

Ralph Clough and I have spent the last two weeks trying to think through our view on Vietnam. Our conclusions are set down in the attached, which we sent the Secretary. It represents, of course, no one's views but those of S/P.

The management had no objection to my sending it to you.

<sup>no</sup>  
Henry Owen

2 copies attached

Mr. Rostow

KK

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~~SECRET~~

Authority STATE letter [2-79]  
By isp, NARS, Date 7-25-79

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Decision in Vietnam

1. The Critical Variable: US Public Opinion. The outcome of the war could well be determined by the evolution of opinion in this country during the balance of 1968. Present trends in domestic opinion, if continued over the next nine months, could make it very difficult for whoever holds office in 1969 to continue the war.

The course of domestic opinion, in turn is likely to hinge on what happens in Vietnam. Only a more evident prospect of success there is likely to reverse present trends in the US.

The analogy to the summer of 1864 is familiar: Then sinking Northern hopes of victory combined with rising peace sentiment to make it seem likely that Lincoln's opponent would win the election on terms which, in Lincoln's words, "would make it impossible for him to save it (the Union) afterwards". But the fall of Atlanta in September enhanced Northern confidence in victory and overnight the war ceased to be an election issue, as McClellan repudiated the peace platform on which he had been nominated.

2. Our Short Term Objective. There are many differences between now and 1864, but a key one is this: No military success is likely to take place soon in Vietnam which would be even remotely comparable to the fall of Atlanta in its effect on US public opinion. The only event that could have a similar effect in the US would be the opening of peace negotiations.

But the mere initiation of negotiations would not be enough. Unless negotiations were preceded and accompanied by military and political progress in South Vietnam, Hanoi would not likely undertake serious bargaining and Saigon would be demoralized by the mere fact of negotiations.

It should be our objective to get such favorable trends in Vietnam underway by late summer, and then to move to negotiations.

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The most important favorable trend would be improvement in the ARVN and GVN. CIA and INR believe that such improvement would weigh more heavily with Hanoi than any other single factor. It is to hastening this improvement that main emphasis should go in the period ahead. The actions needed to this end are for experts to fix, but some possible steps are cited below.

### 3. Improving ARVN

(a) Priority. The US Government, like any large organization, can only give a few subjects top priority. Improvement of ARVN (and of Regional and Popular Forces) should be given that priority - even if this means lower priority for some other aspects of our war effort.

(b) Arms. One tangible result might be sending more of the latest US arms and equipment to South Vietnamese forces. Recent reports suggest that many units on the other side are now better armed than SVN forces. If US production is limited, it may be more important to send the latest arms to Vietnamese forces than to provide them to US forces elsewhere (as President Roosevelt over-rode needs of the US armed services, in 1939-41, in order to give priority to allied needs).

(c) Appointment. The best way to assure that a subject gets high priority in the US Government is sometimes to create a bureaucratic vested interest in assuring that priority. Nothing would be more popular with the US public than appointing a high-level official whose main job was to coordinate Washington efforts in support of steps to improve South Vietnamese armed forces and to ensure that these steps got top priority in the US Government.

(d) Speech. Paradoxically, American Presidents sometimes communicate more effectively with the vast civil and military bureaucracy over which they preside by public speeches than otherwise. A Presidential speech on Vietnam, announcing the appointment suggested above and signalling our intent to place increasing emphasis on improving South Vietnamese forces in the present phase of the war, would be a clear signal to all concerned in the US Government

as to how they should spend their time. And it would be greeted with enthusiasm by the public - doves and hawks alike.

#### 4. Improving GVN.

(a) Saigon. Current efforts to mobilize a wider range of non-Communist opinion in South Vietnam are an important part of the strategy posited in this paper.

(b) Appeal to VC. When the military situation in South Vietnam improves, a high level appeal by Saigon to elements in the VC to cut their ties to the north and try to work out a southern settlement might have an unsettling effect on the VC - particularly if it were coupled with a clear willingness to allow responding local VC leaders and cadres to remain in place and in local positions of authority, i.e., to "defect in place".

(c) Shift to Accommodation in Countryside. Along with this might go increased emphasis, as proposed by Professor Huntington, on strengthening ethnic, religious, and other organized groups in the countryside. This could mean delegating more responsibility, and providing more arms and resources, to such groups - instead of trying to run everything from Saigon.

5. Negotiations. After these courses of action had achieved some success, hopefully by late summer, would be the time to try to move to negotiations.

To persuade Hanoi to observe the San Antonio formula, it might be made clear to Hanoi that the alternative could be unpalatable forms of US escalation. Military planning or preparations to this end might then be undertaken, in ways that would be evident to Hanoi.

Once negotiations had begun, it would be desirable to reduce the scale of US casualties to a more politically tolerable level. This would make it easier for the US to wait out the Communists in what might well prove a prolonged period of simultaneous fighting and talking. This could mean curtailing some of the more distant US search and destroy operations, and withdrawing from some of the



more exposed US military positions. The fact of negotiations would provide an evident occasion for this shift of strategy - assuming that it makes sense on military grounds.

At the same time we might be prepared from time to time to intimate to the other side that the threat of escalation remained close at hand, if the negotiations seemed to spin out indefinitely.

6. US Troops. What the strategy outlined above means for specific US troop levels in Vietnam is a matter for expert judgment, but it clearly suggests these criteria:

(a) Enough additional US troops should be sent to Vietnam to meet current needs, while the ARVN and GVN improvements suggested above can be sought, and can take effect.

(b) Not so much additional US force should be sent as to (i) detract from placing the main priority on ARVN improvement; (ii) compel the US to adopt now escalation which we would want to hold in reserve as a threat, (iii) create such US public impatience and pressure to end the fighting and bring the boys home as would make it impossible for us to match Communist obduracy in possibly prolonged negotiations.

7. Conclusion. It may well be that, even if more favorable trends can be brought about in South Vietnam, Hanoi will use negotiations only as a tactic, without so changing its terms as to permit a settlement.

Even so, the strategy outlined above has merit.

For we will be better able to restore US support for the war if negotiations are begun, and better able to continue the war on whatever scale is needed if they have been tried and failed.

But the pre-condition to negotiations, as to any hope of success, is improvement in the ARVN and GVN. And it is to this end that we should now direct our main efforts - setting for ourselves the goal of producing a sufficient improvement to make negotiations feasible and useful later this year.

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Query: Would initiation of negotiations during the election make it difficult to conduct negotiations sensibly, in view of the conflicting domestic pressures which an election might intensify?

Answer: Given negotiations' likely slow pace, it is improbable that, if they start in late summer, they will come to the crunch so soon in the succeeding months as to pose this problem.

~~SECRET~~