

MEETING NOTES

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

January 31, 1968

MEMORANDUM TO SECRETARY RUSK

Herewith a rough working outline of the headings for the Presidential speech about which we talked.

1. The Setting. A widespread, desperate and dangerous Communist effort along the whole front in Asia to divert us from Viet Nam, upset the progress made in Viet Nam, and discourage and split the American people.

2. Elements in Communist thrust:

- the PUEBLO: why we were there; what we propose to do about it.
- mounting attacks across the 38th parallel, including the attack directed against President Park;
- the extension of the war in Laos and Cambodia;
- the VC raids throughout South Viet Nam during Tet; the build-up at Khe Sanh and the DMZ.

3. Peace proposals

-- The San Antonio formula -- as far as any American President can go: rock bottom.

-- a serious intermediary has been trying to find out if the other side is prepared to accept it. I must conclude that they have not. Let us stop talking about a bombing cessation and keep clearly in our minds the bombings in Saigon, Danang, and all over South Viet Nam. When they are ready to talk about peace, they know where to get us. We shall be ready.

4. What are we seeking in Asia?

We seek an end to a double standard:

- where we obey the laws of the sea, and the other side feels free to behave as pirates;
- where we defend the 38th parallel, and the other side feels free to attack;

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Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

By if, NARS, Date 7-23-80

THIS
IS
WWR
NOT
LBJ

B

-- where we keep our ground forces out of North Viet Nam, and they feel free to send them across in defiance of the 1954 parallel;

-- where we honor the Geneva Accords of 1962, and they feel free to violate them and to violate Cambodia as well;

-- where they ask us to stop our bombing for the privilege of talking to them, while continuing to bomb throughout South Viet Nam.

5. We want an Asia in which both sides obey the law, both sides honor international agreements, and the nations in the area turn to their development in cooperation.

6. Actions.

In order to meet the pressures against us, and demonstrate the unity and will of the American people at this critical time, I am asking the Congress to do the following:

-- help protect the dollar by passing a tax bill immediately;

-- lift the gold cover immediately;


-- allocate funds for the Price Stabilization Board and, through voluntary means, make sure wages are properly related to productivity and prices are kept as low as possible;

-- free ^{ing of} up the exchange stabilization fund to defend the dollar;

-- give the President the right to extend tours of duty and call up individuals with special technical qualifications;

-- add an extra \$200 million to our funds for military aid, most of which would go to support Korea.

7. Call for unity and responsibility in the face of this Communist challenge despite an election year.

 W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

33

Lunch Meeting With the President
Saturday, February 3, 1968 -- 1:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Note: I will have a more detailed itemization of Item 1 after my 11:00 o'clock meeting at State, but before the 1:30 p.m. lunch.

1. Diplomatic moves in the days ahead. (Sec. Rusk)
 - Draft letter to Park
 - Draft letter to Kosygin
 - Arbitration options
2. Military actions to induce return of the crew and Pueblo. (Sec Rusk and Sec. McNamara)
 - Air reconnaissance over North Korea.
 - Sailing Banner into area where Pueblo was seized.
 - Seizing a North Korean vessel.
 - Limited blockade of North Korean naval vessels.
3. Moves to strengthen our basic military posture worldwide. (Sec. McNamara)

Note: We reviewed with Paul Nitze and General Johnson a long list of items. Sec. McNamara will report his net judgment at the lunch meeting.

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Authority State 3-13-79; NSC 3-27-80
By ig, NARS, Date 7-23-80

W. W. Rostow
W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-278D

By ip, NARS, Date 7-23-80

TOP SECRET

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Att Gen. of A.D. Contract
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Russian - cities - Helms

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34

Lunch Meeting with the President
Tuesday, February 6, 1968 -- 1:00 p.m.

45-56FOL
65 HCL

AGENDA

1. Korea (Secretaries Rusk and McNamara)

-- Panmunjom and beyond

2. Vietnam (Secretaries Rusk and McNamara)

3. Bombing Targets (Secretary McNamara)

-- narrow circles

4. Jordan Arms (Secretaries Rusk and McNamara)

Consult

Note at Tab A is a briefing paper on the Jordan Arms Package which you will wish to read also as a backdrop for your 11:00 A.M. appointment with Israeli Ambassador Harman.

5. Other

6. Personnel (Secretary Rusk)

Prohibited
away OUT

5+10
5+5

3-1/2

Gia Lam.
Pat Haylong.

West approval
HT PP - specific approval

Time of transport as well
as other targets - mutually elected power
helicopter pool +

W. W. Rostow

5

5

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will check Federal
on Dayton
TOP SECRET

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Tuller
Kerry - power too hard

A-4-40

10 - whips
- arrows

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D

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Authority OSD letter JUL 25 1979

By inf, NARS, Date 10-19-79

35

~~SECRET~~

February 8, 1968

Questions Related to the Military Situation in Viet-Nam.

A

1. What are the problems confronting General Westmoreland if the enemy continues the attacks on the cities and, at the same time, opens up one or more border fronts (e.g., Khe Sanh, DMZ, Darlac-Kontum)?

a. What mobile reserve forces does Westmoreland have to meet these frontier attacks? Can he sustain them concurrently in action? In particular, will he have enough airlift to support and supply all of the actions?

b. With respect to Khe Sanh, what will be the supply problem if the airstrip is kept under artillery and rocket fire?

2. How have the Marines organized Khe Sanh for defense? How many days of supply, particularly ammunition, are in the perimeter? Are these supplies protected from enemy fire?

3. How is weather likely to affect the action along the border? When does it favor us, when the enemy?

4. What is the enemy air capability if he elects to use his IL-28's, MIG's and AN-2's in South Viet-Nam or against U.S. naval targets? Are there any other surprise weapons with which we should be concerned?

5. If we decided to send additional forces to Viet-Nam, what ones are available? How soon could they be deployed and become operational in South Viet-Nam? What would be the effect on our strategic readiness world-wide?

6. In case of an affirmative decision to reinforce, what actions should be taken with regard to extension of tours and terms of service, call-up of reservists, and requests of Congress? Should we reconsider the question of a declaration of war?

7. What would be the domestic and international impact of the foregoing actions?

8. In the light of the foregoing considerations and our estimate of the probable course of events during the next few months, are we satisfied with the military resources presently available in Southeast Asia or should we make a drastic effort to rush additional forces to the area?

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~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Meeting with the President
Friday, February 9, 1968, 10:30 A.M.

Agenda

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80By if, NARS, Date 7-23-801. Viet Nam situation (The President)

Questions at Tab A

You might begin by saying: You thought it a good time for us to take stock of the situation in Viet Nam. In particular, you have had prepared eight questions designed to clarify where we stand. The object is to put ourselves in a position to answer the question: Does Gen. Westmoreland have the forces he needs to deal with the next phase of the battle? You could then go into the questions.

2. Korea (perhaps without all the Joint Chiefs)A. The Vance Mission

- when will he be briefed?
- by whom?
- when can the President see his instructions?

B. Next Steps at Panmunjom (Sect. Rusk)C. What Soviet naval forces are in the area? What is their significance?
(Sect. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler)D. Should we send another message to Kosygin today? (Sects. Rusk & McNamara)
Draft at Tab B - *not included*E. What do we do if the North Koreans stall further?

- arbitration offer?
- what are results of soundings with Alex Johnson and David Bruce on free world maritime cooperation against North Korea?
- other measures?

F. Conclusion: Aside from deciding on the Vance instructions and the Kosygin letter, you may wish to close by asking Sects. Rusk and McNamara to focus planning sharply on what we do if Panmunjom stalls. What is the full range of diplomatic and military options? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? We ought to have this by Monday at the latest.

W. W. Rostow

MEMORANDUM

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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February 9, 1968
3:30 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the President's meeting with the Senior Foreign Policy Advisers in the Cabinet Room on February 9. The meeting began at 10:15 a.m. and ended at 11:01.

Those attending the meeting were:

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Clark Clifford
Harry McPherson
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

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Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80
By ig, NARS, Date 7-23-80

~~TOP SECRET~~

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS

FEBRUARY 9, 1968

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Clark Clifford
Harry McPherson
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 99-159
By is, NARA Date 2-8-07

Walt Rostow: Mr. President, we met this morning in Harry McPherson's office along with Secretary Katzenbach, Clark Clifford, Harry McPherson and I. These are the options which we have developed:

1. Reply to Fulbright by letter now, making the case that an open meeting with the committee now is not in the national interest.
2. Reply to Fulbright by letter now, saying simply that "I have read Secretary Rusk's letter of last December, and agree with it."
3. Telephone Fulbright and tell him "I am not going to order Secretary Rusk to go before the Committee in an open hearing."
4. Telephone Fulbright and invite him, along with his Committee, to the White House for a dinner meeting at which this and other matters will be discussed.
5. Have Secretary Rusk go before the Committee in open session.
6. Have Secretary Rusk offer to present his annual review of foreign policy in open session; this would include, but not be limited to, Vietnam.
7. Have Secretary Rusk offer to appear in executive session first; then to discuss Vietnam or other matters in open session if Committee members still want to.

Secretary Rusk: There should be a key paragraph in a letter to Senator Fulbright. It should say that the Secretary of State expects to appear before the Committee in public session on foreign aid. The Secretary will not appear on diplomatic and military matters in public.

Secretary McNamara: I agree with Dean.

The President: We should deal with this as privately as possible. Attention and recognition is what he wants.

I think we should say that we have received the Senator's letter. This is a matter that the President is willing to go into with you and your Committee and then ask the Committee to the White House and talk about it. I will tell them that we do not want to make an issue on television, that we are willing to give them all the facts, but not make a television show of it.

Secretary Rusk: That is okay with me. I do think there is a problem of having a full meeting of the Committee with the President without my presence. If you get them down here four or five at a time, that is okay.

The President: I would feel better if you were here anyway.

Clark Clifford: The times are too serious and the public too concerned for a public feud between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Secretary of State. I think the people are hopeful that we would be working together at times like these. I think it unwise to write a formal letter turning this down. A public session would be a disservice to the country. We should quieten the whole matter down. The Committee wants either a Roman Holiday with Dean Rusk or a confrontation with the President. There is no Constitutional requirement for the President to respond to this letter. I don't think we should get on the same level with them. I think we should invite them to a dinner. I think Dean Rusk should be there. The basic fallacy of Fulbright's posture would come into view.

There are some wavering men on the Committee. I would have the whole membership of the Committee, not just Democrats.

Secretary Rusk: This is fine. The basic motivation of the Committee is for free television time to air their views on the Secretary of State.

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 3 -

The President: We might precede this with a meeting here of the Appropriations Committee. I do not think we should give any special attention to the Committee who is the most hostile.

Secretary Rusk: I would have a leisurely visit with them. Let them have their say then tell them how you feel.

The President: Fulbright has an obsession on Vietnam. I do not look for much to come from this.

Secretary McNamara: If this Committee is invited to the White House, other Committees should be invited. The House Foreign Affairs Committee certainly should be included.

The President: Well, it looks as if all of you have counseled, advised, consulted and then -- as usual -- placed the monkey on my back again. I will take this matter up with Mansfield and meet with the Committees if he believes this is wise.

I do not like what I am smelling from these cables from Vietnam and my discussions with outside advisers. We know the enemy is likely to hit the cities again. They will likely have another big attack and there undoubtedly will be surprises. I want you to lay out for me what we should do in the minimum time to meet a crisis request from Vietnam if one comes.

Let's assume we have to have more troops. I think we should now tell the allies that we could lose Southeast Asia without their help. The first to tell is Park. Tell him that none of us want defeat. If it takes more men to avoid defeat let's get them. Wilson implied that Prime Minister Gorton of Australia is singing a different tune from Holt. Is that true?

Secretary Rusk: He has said that he would send no more troops, but his speeches are alright. I will check this with Ambassador Waller.

The President: Let's talk to our allies.

If we have to move quickly I want to be ready.

If we have to call up more troops let's make the preparations now so that we do not have to do it in the middle of the night. What do we do first?

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 4 -

Would we send the 82nd Airborne and extend enlistments? I guess if we did that we would have to call more reserves to build up our strategic forces here at home.

Secretary McNamara: I agree that we should look at this situation and prepare for any contingency. I think that we should ask the Joint Chiefs to wipe the floor of all pet projects and do whatever we can to prevent the financial requirements from ruining us in foreign exchange in our domestic economic situation.

Secretary Rusk: There is one type of unit we are not using. This is the armored division. Would it be militarily advisable to deploy an armored unit?

The President: What about our summer situation if we move the 82nd Airborne to Vietnam.

Secretary McNamara: This worries me. This means we would have to call up a National Guard division.

The President: I read Wilbur Mills a couple of intelligence reports last night. It appears that he is getting weak in his stomach. I told him that if we have to send the 82nd Airborne and call up a Marine Division that this could run five to seven billion dollars.

I asked Mills if he could trim that out anywhere. Mills suggested that we let him put back on the taxes that had been taken off some \$24 billion. I told him I would not object to anything he and Joe Fowler wanted to do. He left with the opinion that we should have a tax bill. I don't know whether this would hold up.

I continue to think that somebody has to put this whole matter into perspective. We are letting the other side have the floor and saying nothing.

We have got to get out what General Abrams said about the ARVN. We must come up with some of the answers people are asking without putting any more gasoline on this fire. One thing we have to do is put more support in Korea. I think it is only a matter of hours before General Westmoreland will ask us to move on additional requests. All of you look at every contingency.

~~TOP SECRET~~

General Maxwell Taylor says he has some very deep concerns. We must at least be prepared. Let's hope for the best but expect the worst. I guess that will be that Westmoreland will need more troops. Let's be ready. Is our air support deterring the enemy around Khe Sanh and elsewhere?

Secretary McNamara: Yes, it is deterring them. If they need more air power they will have it.

Secretary Rusk: I understand the tactical situation around Khe Sanh, but I do not see the strategic situation very clearly. Is there some way we can turn this around and take the offensive ourselves.

Secretary McNamara: The answer from the Joint Chiefs will be to try a false offensive or an actual invasion against North Vietnam above the DMZ. They will say we should develop a feint or invade north of the DMZ.

Secretary Rusk: This is more of a political decision than a military one.

Walt Rostow: As near as we can make it out, the reserves now being held back would go in somewhere outside of Khe Sanh. They would from an outside point level pressure on the attacking forces. We may not have the people to take care of unexpected situations around Khe Sanh. How many men are tied down in the cities. What can we do to get more men out there.

Secretary McNamara: We could accelerate the dispatch of four battalions which are due in April.

The President: Harry, (Harry McPherson) get me a talking paper for my discussion with Fulbright about the Rusk appearance. Now let's call in the Joint Chiefs who have been waiting.

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Mon PM

Meet

Meeting With the President
Sunday, February 11, 1968 -- 4:30 p.m.

Bus W.

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Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

AGENDA

By is, NARS, Date 7-23-80

1. Supplementary Instruction to Mr. Vance. (Sec. Rusk) Mid?
Sec. Rusk's draft at Tab A. Speed. Hold V3.
2. Response to Gen. Westmoreland's Indication that Troop Reinforcements Would be Helpful. (Sec. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler) Monday
3. Increasing Supply Levels at Khe Sanh. (Sec. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler)
Data at Tab B. Admiral
4. Draft Instruction for Emissary to Saigon. (The President)

Draft at Tab C.

5. Other Military Problems. (Sec. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler)

- Frog missiles? ☒
- Tanks? ☒
- Enemy aircraft? ☒

Helicopters
Fixed wing A/C

6. What Military Initiatives Can We Undertake? (Sec. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler)

7. Speech.

I shall try to get you before 4:30 an outline of a Presidential speech.

8. Other.

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Sunday, February 11, 1968

42

Following is the text of a cable sent by General Westmoreland this morning.

This is the seventh report on the Khe Sanh area and covers a period of 24-hours ending at midnight last night.

During the reporting period the Khe Sanh combat base and the surrounding area continued to receive sporadic shelling from mortars, rockets and occasional artillery rounds. Between 7:17 February 10 and noon February 10 units had brief exchanges of small arms fire and grenades on the western end of the perimeter and western outposts resulting in three enemy killed. At 7:15 February 10 a trip flare exposed 14 enemy just west of Khe Sanh near the wire. An exchange of fire resulted in one enemy killed. At noon February 10 lights were spotted moving between Hills 861 and 881S, and metallic noises were heard. Lights and noises were fired on with unknown results. Tactical air strike runs during the period resulted in four secondary explosions.

Several enemy encroachments toward friendly positions and increasing enemy pressure was noted during the period. Marines in the area continued to improve their defensive positions with emphasis on anti-tank defense. On February 10, 136 mines were emplaced southwest of the airfield. A review of all 106mm recoilless rifle, 3.5 rocket launchers, light-antitank weapon, and tank positions has been conducted to ensure complete coverage of all likely tank approaches.

Latest information received on the Marine C-130 crash which was reported yesterday reveals that the aircraft is believed to have received 50-caliber machine gun fire on its approach. The aircraft was loaded with POL which caught on fire and burned upon landing resulting in two killed and four wounded in critical condition and three missing. Search continues for the missing. During the period a total of 2,985 rounds of various caliber and types of mortar/artillery was fired in response to enemy efforts in the area.

Marine tactical air flew 64 sorties, and the Navy flew 102 missions for a total of 287 sorties. Aside from the tactical strikes mentioned, there were five additional secondary explosions, 14 secondary fires, 42 enemy killed, two bridges damaged, and 193 military structures destroyed.

Weather continues to hamper visual reconnaissance and strikes. There were no sightings of enemy vehicles.

Thirty-eight B-52 aircraft ran six strikes during the period delivering a total 975 tons of ordnance in the Niagara area.

The airfield at Khe Sanh is back in operation following the C-130 crash of yesterday, and received a total of 53 short tons of supplies. The resupplies

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OSD letter JUL 25 1979

Authority

By inf, NARS, Date 10-19-79

represented four of the five classes, class I, rations, excepted. Unfavorable weather continues to effect air resupply in the northern highlands; however, early sorties were able to land on February 11, without the aid of the ground control facility. Requisitions received from Khe Sanh on the night of February 10 are being scheduled for air delivery or air drop on February 11.

The Khe Sanh dump or ammo supply point status reported as number of days on hand on February 11 is as follows: Class I: Rations, 10 days on hand; Class III: Aviation fuel, 12 days on hand, jet fuel, 4 days on hand; motor fuel, 6 days on hand and diesel fuel, 6 days on hand; Class V: ammunition, 60mm and high explosive, 12 days on hand; 81mm, 17 days on hand; 90mm, 94 days on hand; 4.2 inch shells, 36 days on hand; 105mm, 10 days on hand and 155mm, 25 days on hand. Class V (firecracker). 105 mm, 5 days on hand; 155mm, 5 days on hand; 40mm, 5 days on hand and hand grenades, 10 days on hand. The ammo supply point status of anti-tank ordnance, not including basic loads on position is as follows: 90mm head, 478 rounds; 66mm rocket, 190 rounds; M19 mines, 100 mines and 106mm head, 316 rounds. NOTE: Firecracker ammo is COFRAM.

No COFRAM type ordnance was used during the period.

For the next 24-hour period Marine tactical air plans 44 sorties in support of Khe Sanh, while the Air Force has 76 scheduled and the Navy has 100, for a total of 220 sorties. The Marines will have 16 aircraft on call for additional runs, and the Air Force will have 120 alert sorties on call. Five Arc Light strikes (33 sorties) are scheduled in support of the Khe Sanh area.

The weather for the afternoon of February 10 was marginal and deteriorated to poor after noon EST with zero visibility in fog by 3:00 PM EST, February 10. Weather conditions continued to be poor through the morning of February 11. The forecast for the afternoon of February 11 is for marginal weather conditions. By 8:00 AM EST fog and low clouds will cause poor weather which will last until 10:00 AM EST on the 12th of February. Conditions should improve to marginal with cloud ceilings increasing to 1,200 feet by mid-night February 11.

There is no change in enemy unit identification in the area.

Lao personnel evacuated from Khe Sanh and now located at DaNang for on-shipment to Laos, total 114. Four persons remain to be evacuated on February 11, including the BV-33 battalion commander. Arrangements are underway to transport the Lao personnel to ultimate destination by Lao aircraft.

69/659
A/C
Remarks
C-130's

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Tab C

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Authority STATE letter MAY 7 1979

By inf, NARS, Date 7-18-79

Draft Instruction for Emissary to Saigon

43

You will make an independent assessment of the military and political situation, with special reference to the following.

1. The situation of the ARVN, including the RF and PF.

--- How many of the 50% who were on leave during Tet have returned?

--- What measures are being taken to assemble the rest?

--- With maximum effort, how rapidly could the rest be assembled?

--- What is the situation with respect to the RF and PF?

What efforts are being undertaken to reestablish their links with the central government and to insure that they hold a maximum part of the countryside and engage, along with ARVN forces, in exploiting the possible weakness in certain areas of Viet Cong, guerrilla and provincial main force units?

-- How soon can Hue and Saigon be thoroughly cleaned up?

-- When are the weak corps commanders, divisional commanders, and province chiefs to be removed?

-- What is the earliest possible date when they can get through the new provisions for drafting of 18 and 19 year olds?

-- In the light of the changed situation, does some redeployment of U.S. forces within South Vietnam make sense? For example, movement of some battalions of the 9th Division out of the Delta make sense?

2. In general, you will convey the view from Washington that the enemy is putting us to the maximum military test of which he is now capable. He may have other surprises for us aside from the scale and weight of the attack on the cities. He may be planning to achieve a situation of maximum advantage and then try to force us into a negotiation on his terms. It therefore seems essential to us that every military and political resource inside South Vietnam be pushed to the limit, not merely to survive his attacks but to present to the enemy and the world a picture of:

-- Military initiative with respect to both the cities and the countryside;

~~SECRET~~

-2-

- Political vitality on the part of the government; and
- Maximum political unity between the government and non-Communist political groups.

3. In talking with Thieu and Ky, you should make clear that we wish to see it through at their side. If we are to be permitted to do so by American public opinion, they must move fast to bring their forces back to strength; wherever possible to get the forces ^{not} in under direct pressure into an active role to exploit the weakened position of the enemy; to assure that those who did not perform well in the current crisis are promptly replaced; to exploit the present crisis for a ruthless attack on corruption; to reestablish total security in the cities.

The enemy is obviously involved in a do-or-die offensive. He may confront us soon with a diplomatic offensive. No one can do the job for the Vietnamese that must be done in the days ahead. They must do it for themselves. If the Vietnamese can act with political and military vigor, we can stay together and turn the enemy's urban offensive to our advantage.

~~SECRET~~

Sunday, February 11, 1968

1. Meeting tomorrow, same group; if possible, late afternoon.
2. On agenda: draft wire for possible Vance trip to Saigon: draft Secretaries Rusk and McNamara.
3. Wheeler to clarify troop matter with Westy; Chiefs to present views; whole matter to be reviewed in light of current information.

WWR

~~TOP SECRET~~

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Mr. Rostow: What is the state of strength of the ARVN units?

General Wheeler: I do not have the answers precisely. They have been mauled. As of 11:00 p.m. our time last night, 1,698 ARVN were killed; 6,633 were wounded seriously. This totals about 10,000 ARVN lost.

Mr. Rostow: Has the enemy switched from a slow attrition strategy to a "go for broke" strategy? Would an extension of tours in Vietnam be understood as far as morale is concerned?

General Wheeler: For a temporary period we can sustain an extension of tours without losing morale. For any long period of time, however, you would face a loss of morale. We now have a rule that we will not send a man back without 25 months between tours in Vietnam.

General Johnson: We send men back now with special skills in less than 25 months.

As I see it there are two basic problems. The first is at Khesanh. The second is in the cities. What are they trying to do?

There are two postulates:

1. The enemy believed that the people would rise up. There were no withdrawal plans by the enemy.
2. The enemy suffered erosion over the last few months. They have seen a decoupling of its forces in hamlets and villages. U.S. troops have cleaned out the Viet Cong from many of the villages. So, he has concluded he must go for a psychological victory prior to negotiations.

We are in a critical stage. We expect new attacks will begin on the 10th. There are two essential questions facing us:

1. What strength does the enemy have to renew the attacks with?
2. What strength does the ARVN possess to resist these attacks?

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Authority OSD letter JUL 25 1979
By WJ, NARS, Date 10-19-79

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- 10 -

The President: What is the ARVN strength?

General Wheeler: Approximately 360,000 men now. Total forces about 600,000.

Secretary Rusk: I have been asking for several days if there was a new order of battle. This is the first time that I have heard of this.

The President: Because of their increase of 15,000 troops, is it true that we now need 15 battalions or 45,000 men? What mobile reserve forces does Westmoreland have between now and the time he gets more men?

General Wheeler: He has the bulk of the 1st Cavalry and one brigade of the 101st Airborne. Other than that, all of his forces are dispersed to meet the enemy. We are not getting much mileage out of the Australian or South Korean troops. They must go back to their home country for their orders.

The President: Do you mean that the Australian and Korean commanders have to go back to their capital before they can be deployed?

General Wheeler: Yes sir, they remain under the operational control of their government.

Secretary McNamara: I am under the very clear impression that they have been told by their home governments to do everything possible to hold down their own casualties.

Our losses are running six times the level of Korean losses on a percentage basis.

The President: We ought to try to bring all the allied forces under Westmoreland's command.

General Wheeler: In all fairness, the allies have operated well in areas where they have been located.

The President: Does Westmoreland have enough airpower to support his troops?

General Wheeler: Yes sir, we are moving in 2 more C-130 units.

The President: How is the supply problem at Khesanh? Will artillery and rockets knock this out? Can we rely on roads?

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 11 -

Secretary McNamara: There is no road available up there.

General Wheeler: We moved in 214 tons of supplies yesterday with helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. As long as we use B-52's and tactical air, we will be able to keep our resupply up. They are keeping about 10 to 12 days supplies in storage.

The President: Wouldn't we have one big problem if the airfield at Khesanh was out?

General Wheeler: Yes, we would have to link up by road some way. Of course we can use air drops and helicopters. The air strip will be used from time to time.

The President: If you lost the air strip, would you evacuate Khesanh?

General Wheeler: That depends on the course of the fighting and their ability to resupply.

Secretary Rusk: When does the weather improve?

General Johnson: It is now beginning to improve. I have some concern about the loss of the air strip, because fixed wing aircraft carry so much more than helicopters.

Nobody can give a categorical answer. We think we have a 50-50 chance of sustaining our actions out there.

The men have 12 days of rations and 11 days of ammunition. Almost no cofram has been used.

Being cut off would hurt in the evacuation of wounded, but we can evacuate at night if necessary. This is one of the hazards you have to accept.

The President: How is the weather likely to affect actions along the border?

General Wheeler: The better the weather, the more it favors us.

The President: Have you anticipated air support from any of the communists?

General Wheeler: There is no evidence of any movement except the training flights and the Soviet bombers which were seen at Khesanh.

~~TOP SECRET~~

The President: What is his air capability if he uses it?

General Wheeler: His capability in using air is a nuisance and has propaganda value rather than any great military threat. He has 8 IL 28's.

The President: What use does he have of these?

General Wheeler: I do not know.

The President: How many MIGs does he have?

General Wheeler: We know of 23 MIG 21's. There are other MIG 15's and 17's.

Most of these MIGS are in China.

The President: Keep the MIG's in sight at all times.

General Wheeler: We are doing the best we can. Admiral Sharp is moving a guided missile ship to the Gulf of Tonkin. It carries the Talos Missile. We are also sending in ships with the Terrier Missile.

The President: Get the JCS to work up all the options and let's review them together.

I want you to hope for the best and plan for the worst. Let's consider the extensions, call ups, and use of specialists.

Dean, should we have more than the Tonkin Gulf resolution in going into this? Should we ask for a declaration of war?

Secretary Rusk: Congressional action on individual items would avoid the problems inherent in a generalized declaration. I do not recommend a declaration of war. I will see what items we might ask the Congress to look at.

The President: Where are the problems in the cities?

General Wheeler: In Hue, we have one marine battalion operating on the south side of the river. The ARVN units at Hue have been shot down to 160 men per battalion. In Cholon there are enemy forces being met by 3 Vietnamese. There is one U.S. battalion in the race track area.

The President: What would be the impact internationally to a declaration of war?

Secretary Rusk: It might be a direct challenge to Moscow and Peking in a way we have never challenged them before. There would be very severe international effects.

Secretary Rusk: How can we get as many Vietnamese as possible returned to duty?

General Wheeler: The men are coming back. We do not know what numbers.

Secretary Rusk: I have skeptics of the enemy's ability to hit us again. Some of them have been very badly mauled.

Secretary McNamara: There is no question that they have been hurt, but I believe they have the ability to restrike.

Clark Clifford: There is a very strange contradiction in what we are saying and doing.

On one hand, we are saying that we have known of this build up. We now know the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched this type of effort in the cities. We have publicly told the American people that the communist offensive was: (a) not a victory. (b) produced no uprising among the Vietnamese in support of the enemy, and (c) cost the enemy between 20,000 and 25,000 of his combat troops.

Now our reaction to all of that is to say that the situation is more dangerous today than it was before all of this. We are saying that we need more troops, that we need more ammunition and that we need to call up the reserves.

I think we should give some very serious thought to how we explain saying on one hand the enemy did not take a victory and yet we are in need of many more troops and possibly an emergency call up.

The President: The only explanation I can see is that the enemy has changed its tactics. They are putting all of their stack in now. We have to be prepared for all that we might face.

Our front structure is based on estimates of their front structure. Our

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 14 -

intelligence shows that they have changed and added about 15,000 men. In response to that, we must do likewise. That is the only explanation I see.

General Wheeler: The enemy has changed the pattern of the war. In the past, there have been instances of terrorism, but this is the first time they have mounted coordinated attacks throughout the country.

Secretary Rusk: I have a question. In the past, we have said the problem really was finding the enemy. Now the enemy has come to us. I am sure many will ask why aren't we doing better under these circumstances, now that we know where they are.

The President: Is there anything new on the Pueblo?

General Wheeler: No, except the North Korean Prime Minister says that North Korea is ready for another war.

#

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

By NARS, Date 7-23-80

SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

* Vance - Troops

* Thai

Meeting with the President

Monday, February 12, 1968, 4:30 p.m.

Brigade - VS-ARVN

Combined
Police
Command

* Korean
Australian

Vance - Seoul *

AGENDA

Thurs July 1

Orders now 24 hours fly - 30 days

Gen. Westmoreland's Request for Troops (Sect. McNamara and Gen.

Note: Gen. Taylor's analysis of Westy's cable will be available to you before the meeting.

2. 2 brigades - Call up 30,000
ready 2 months - 7C. RLT -> Call up
- Instructions for Mr. Vance in Saigon (Sects. Rusk and McNamara)

Note: Include instruction on BUTTERCUP, although latest cables indicate this is in quite good shape.

3. A Speech (The President)

Note: As instructed, I have spoken to Sect. Rusk and Mr. Clifford.

4. Other

VN -> momentum
Provide battalions

A: Emergency: 6 battalions

B: Bus - 4

Brigade 82nd

14 Days - Reorg

RLT H 9 + 1 Bruck Paul
2 Lt Jones

Internal shift of people

SECRET

38000
6500

Vance - American
contractors
use Americans

Call-up
Tomorrow

Cy Vance

Airport How to use

33,000
constructions

W. Rostow

More T-12s + 5 Koreans

Paras - 1 wing

10,000

82

5th

1st

2nd

3rd

Cy Vance
5/18/74

57

97-103

H

HP

Vance

Scrub -
Okmawa

Wasty



1. Korea - Australian Command - Seoul
2. Seoul - Korean troops - when - Seoul
3. Thai - July 1
4. Saigon - 18 + 19 yr olds - Confine - Saigon
5. American Contractors: 33,000
Contractors
Down to 4000
6. Command structure
Saigon - Clark Baker - Saigon
7. For consideration: Privates
8. Buttercup - Vance - instructions

Saigon

* Decones
S F P
A S
Stoff

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

48

SECRET

present

Luncheon with the PresidentTuesday, February 13, 1968, 1:00 p.m.AGENDA

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AAC 01849-1-2
By JOL NARA Date 11-2-15

1. Reserve Call-Up and Congressional Action (Sect. McNamara & Gen. Wheeler)

- Which units? *(options provided)*
- Which powers to be requested from Congress? *11m*
- Consequences for budget?
- Public presentation and rationale? *see paper*

A. *Drainable*
B. *Drainable*

2. Instruction to Vance (Sects. Rusk and McNamara)

Text will be available

Vance

3. PUEBLO: Next Steps (Sect. Rusk)

*when 67 * when over secret*

4. The Roumanian (Sect. Rusk)

End of the line.

Mai Van Bo

5. Other

Bombing

6. - 130's - 2 Squad (16) - 9 Feb. 16 at Clark
7. - 66 - Hanoi & Hanoi (*Vlas is radio)
8. - I Corp - censoring
9. - Hanoi - Hanoi
10. - ST guidance
11. - RT 1000

W. Rostow

authorize - Front document

* Did W. Rostow raise anything with R & K
Communist & Bunker - K. R. 1000

99
990
Delaware Valley

9 PM 67
DMZ - W. R. Plank - K
1/30/34
2 Squad
one program
Polymers -
Bulb
Thursday

13
1/12
RT 1000

2/13/68

49

OPTIONAL NEAR-TERM ACTION PROGRAMS

1. Defer additional reinforcements of U.S. forces in South Vietnam until requested by Westmoreland. Defer "call-up" of reserve units to replace the 6 battalions now being deployed until further information is available as to Westmoreland's additional troop requirements, the extent of defections in the ranks of the ARVN, RF/PF and South Vietnamese security forces and the success of the GVN in restoring services, coping with the refugee problem, etc. Defer request for new legislative authority.

2. Call up now a relatively small number of the Ready Reserves, approximately 40,000, recognizing that additional call-ups may be required later. This can be done without additional legislative authority. This call-up could be accompanied by a Presidential speech noting that a further call-up may become necessary depending upon developments in Southeast Asia, but that for the time being no legislative action is being requested on either personnel or financial matters.

3. Call up either a small (40,000) or large (130,000) number of Reserves and concurrently request Congress to authorize additional personnel actions to strengthen the Armed forces. 1/ Defer request for supplemental financial authorizations and appropriations, but indicate these will be required.

4. Call up either a small (40,000) or large (130,000) number of Reserves and concurrently request from Congress both the authority to take the needed personnel actions and the supplemental financial authorizations and appropriations required. 2/

1/ By Joint Resolution of Congress, the following authorities could be granted:

(a) Authorize the extension of all enlistments, appointments, periods of active duty, and other periods of obligated service of Regular and Reserve members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.

(b) Authorize activation of all needed individual Ready Reservists and extend beyond June 30, 1968 the authority to call both units and individuals of the Ready Reserve.

(c) Authorize re-call of retired Reserve personnel.

2/ The possible increase in our effort in Southeast Asia may require, for Fiscal 1968, additional new Obligational Authority of \$1 billion, with additional expenditures of \$500 million, and for Fiscal 1969, additional new Obligational Authority of from \$2 to \$3 billion, with an increase of expenditures amounting to \$2 billion \$500 million.

* Estimated additional = 17,000 per week

50

Tuesday, February 13, 1968
10:35 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith nine questions you may
wish to use at lunch today.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rlh

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL-UP OF RESERVE UNITS
AND INDIVIDUALS

1. Why is it necessary to call up reserve units at this time?
 - a. To be ready for further reinforcement of Viet-Nam?
 - b. To be ready for other contingencies outside Viet-Nam?
 - c. To reassure allies such as NATO to whom we have military commitments?
 - d. To contribute to our overall deterrent posture by adding to our visible strength in being? *etc*
2. How large should the call-up be to satisfy the foregoing requirements? Can the call-up be diminished by such devices as a reduction in our overseas garrisons in Europe or Korea?
3. Why is it necessary to call up individual reservists at this time? Can't it be avoided or postponed? If not, how many must be called? When? From what sources?
4. What will happen to the reserve units and individuals called up? Where will they go? How long will they serve? Are the necessary housing, equipment, and training facilities ready for them?
5. What are the budgetary implications of these actions? *Q. What for?*
6. What must be requested from the Congress? What can be avoided or delayed? *K*
7. What will be the manpower requirements for maintaining these increased forces? What will the effect be on draft calls?
8. What will be the domestic and international reactions to these decisions?
9. How should our decision be explained to the domestic and international public? What should be the timing of our statement?
- 10 Should we communicate Vance & his associates?

February 13, 1968

Mobilization Issues

1. Size of the call-up

How many units of what types are needed? What is the relationship between the strengths of units to be called up and those to be deployed to Vietnam? Are these troops really needed? Are they enough? How will the call-up affect the draft?

2. Specific units

What are the specific units involved?

What is the basis for selecting the specific units for call-up? What should be said about the possibility of calling up additional units?

3. Time factors

How long will the units be needed? How long will the individuals in these units be required to serve? How will the units or individuals within the units be replaced, if necessary, when their tours of service are finished?

4. Congressional requests

What should the President ask from Congress? Renewal of right to call up units beyond 30 June? Authority to extend tours? Authority for selected call-up of individuals?

5. How much will it cost?

6. Rationale

How do we explain the need for this action?

How do we get everybody to tell the same story?

- to provide General Westmoreland with an extra margin of insurance;
 - to preclude the enemy's achievement of any short-term gains which he would use as a basis for a negotiated settlement favorable to him but not warranted by the longer-run strengths or interests of the South Vietnamese;
 - to permit General Westmoreland to achieve previously agreed upon force levels at an earlier date because of the increased tempo of enemy activity. Although the increased pace requires more troops now, in the long run fewer men will probably be needed than if the enemy had chosen to continue to pursue a protracted war of attrition.
 - to provide continuing evidence to the enemy that we shall do what is necessary to cause him to leave his neighbor alone.
-

An Outline Rationale for Partial Mobilization

I. A partial mobilization is needed:

- to provide Gen. Westmoreland the troops he needs;
- to provide a reserve for other possible contingencies;
- to reconstitute our strategic reserve so that the deployment of additional troops to Vietnam does not encourage military adventurism in other areas.

II. The need for additional troops results from:

- a change in the enemy's strategy, which
- has significantly affected the military situation.

III. Until recently, the enemy was counting on a long war of attrition which would eventually wear down the willingness of the South Vietnamese and the U. S. to continue to fight. This has not proven to be a "winning" strategy for him, because:

- he has been losing the war of attrition;
- the GVN has made important political progress;
- there has been a rallying of U. S. public support for continuing the struggle to achieve our objectives;
- the bombing of the North and continued high casualties in the South with no gains to show for them have engendered some war-weariness.

IV. Accordingly, the enemy has shifted into a "go for broke" strategy instead of a protracted war of attrition. Its objectives are:

- to generate a massive popular uprising in the cities;
- to administer a significant defeat to US/GVN/FW forces in the field;
- to destroy the governmental apparatus of South Vietnam from top to bottom;
- to create a new popular front, dominated by the NLF, to replace the GVN;
- to use this new coalition government to bring about the departure of U. S. troops and to turn the country over to the Communists.

V. The enemy has failed to achieve these objectives and he has suffered heavily in the process. On the other hand, his offensives have also been costly to the U. S. and especially the GVN. Furthermore, the battle is not yet over.

VI. In recognition of this new situation, additional troops are desirable:

- to pursue the enemy's defeated units so that they don't have time to recover;
- to exploit enemy weaknesses uncovered as a result of his unsuccessful offensive;

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

VN - No. 6
of units
- HQ.

53

Follow thru

~~SECRET~~

Luncheon with the President

Tuesday, February 20, 1968, 1:00 p.m.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

By if, NARS, Date 7-23-80

AGENDA

1. Viet Nam: Sitrep

- Intelligence evaluation of enemy intentions (Mr. Helms)
- Situation on the ground (Gen. Wheeler)

1A. Bombing

2. Gen. Wheeler's Trip (The President)

- Objectives.
- Query: Should Katzenbach go from State? Or Habib? The question is one of high or low State visibility.
- Time of return (February 20th) 7:45 AM ✓
- Planning that should go forward in preparation for General Wheeler's return and recommendations.

3. PUEBLO. (Sects. Rusk and McNamara)

- Documents: What do they show? Latest meeting with North Koreans (last Monday): a report)
- Diplomatic prospects.
- Next steps.
- Task force on South Korea, as recommended by Vance.

4. Other.

Wheeler bad
several weeks
Systems Rums
Hanoi Port
Sputnik
to 3 1/2
Armed
recog

Alt. available

15 m
Sputnik Run
Hanoi
Port
and see
wires?

Task Force
summary

Thant - done
Goldberg
Bunker

Sisco

*
Gard
OK
for 10 days

Wheeler. Rostow

~~SECRET~~

57

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL-UP OF RESERVE UNITS
AND INDIVIDUALS

1. Why is it necessary to call up reserve units at this time?
 - a. To be ready for further reinforcement of Viet-Nam?
 - b. To be ready for other contingencies outside Viet-Nam?
 - c. To reassure allies such as NATO to whom we have military commitments?
 - d. To contribute to our overall deterrent posture by adding to our visible strength in being?
2. How large should the call-up be to satisfy the foregoing requirements? Can the call-up be diminished by such devices as a reduction in our overseas garrisons in Europe or Korea?
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4. What will happen to the reserve units and individuals called up? Where will they go? How long will they serve? Are the necessary housing, equipment, and training facilities ready for them?
5. What are the budgetary implications of these actions?
6. What must be requested from the Congress? What can be avoided or delayed?
7. What will be the manpower requirements for maintaining these increased forces? What will the effect be on draft calls?
8. What will be the domestic and international reactions to these decisions?
9. How should our decision be explained to the domestic and international public? What should be the timing of our statement?

February 13, 1968

MEMORANDUM

Modernization of ARVN

Needed (unlabeled)

Puehls - NK
THE WHITE HOUSE1. From Nait
2. From OB~~TOP SECRET~~

WASHINGTON

ARVN + they will take more risk
in getting out of cities of US takes new stance

Memorandum for the record as of February 29, 1968

58

1. I believe the Wheeler recommendation should be accepted for ~~these~~ ^{four} reasons:

I in view of the enemy's new strategy of intense engagement,

-- The forces are required in Viet Nam if we are to avoid excessive military and political risk.

-- The further U.S. commitment in Viet Nam ^{that} and the build-up of reserves ^{that} are required to deflate the widespread view we are too thin and pressure or aggression might be successful in the Middle East, elsewhere in Asia, and perhaps, even, in Europe.

-- This is a Presidential election year and a classic period for Communist adventure: we should not go into this period over-extended -- either in Viet Nam or in general.

-- Our two most responsible men in the field have asked for additional forces: Westmoreland and Bunker.

2. Specifically in Viet Nam:

-- The Communists are acting on the assumption that 1968 is the year of decision: we must accept that and make the decision turn the right way.

6-
3.6
2/2 (US)
4/2 (GVN)

-- The Communists are engaging their forces at more than twice the average rate of 1967 -- quite aside from the Tet peak. Westy is, therefore, thin on the ground in terms of his minimum requirements. The pressure may ease in May; but we cannot be sure; and post-May he will need more forces to retrieve losses suffered in the winter-spring offensive and to have bargaining weight should negotiations emerge.

-- These forces are needed in part to give the ARVN both the assurance about the security of the cities and to make possible joint U.S. - ARVN operations in the Delta and elsewhere in the countryside. We could face a disastrous political situation if the enemy consolidated the countryside and then called for negotiations with the majority of the people in his hands.

-- The present situation -- for us and the enemy -- is one of both losses and opportunities, since the Tet offensive began. The outcome (say) two months from now of the whole battle since Tet depends on what happens between now and then. If we send some forces now -- and Westy knows others are on the way -- he will be able to do much more than if he has to work off thin margins.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 95-208

By mg, NARA, Date 7-1-96

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2-

-- Right now the enemy may be introducing an additional two divisions from the North. The intelligence is uncertain, but somewhat firmer than a few days ago.

3. If we accept the Wheeler recommendation we face, of course, many problems.

-- We must develop a precise list of concrete things we want the GVN and ARVN to do, and use maximum leverage to get the South Vietnamese to do them on schedule. (Incidentally, I regard the GVN performance since Tet as B+, in fact remarkable for a developing nation confronting a desperate attack of this kind. We cannot set impossible standards. We can set precise, maximum realistic goals and hold feet to the fire. Perhaps a Guam meeting with Thieu and Ky might be in order -- or even a troop contributors' meeting.) Tab A is a possible list of legitimate U.S. requirements. *on Thieu's work*

-- Since negotiations may be thrust upon us -- and we certainly want them if they promise an honorable peace -- we must face up to what we think and begin consultations with Thieu. We do not intend to sell them down the river; but we cannot postpone peace -- if it is reachable -- until every VC is killed or until in some psychological sense the GVN is "ready."

4. The dispatch of additional forces could be the occasion for a new directive to Westy setting the limits of his mission in terms of concrete U.S. political objectives in SVN and Southeast Asia. *But I am not sure any other strategy is viable (Bonters / Rual / Vietnam.)*

5. There may be strong political forces generated in directions we do not wish to go:

-- Invade Laos, Cambodia, North Viet Nam. We may wish to mount such operations at some time. We should not rule them out. But as I read Westy's situation, he has his hands full for the next months inside South Viet Nam. I see no reason that, if we recover equilibrium in the late spring, the President should be forced to move where he does not believe it wise to go.

Bombing
-- ~~More~~ Haiphong. We may (or may not) wish to hit Haiphong and Hanoi harder; but for coming months the weather is bad; we need our air in ground support; the arguments about not engaging the USSR and making Communist China the primary route for supply are still relevant. If the President makes his decisions now, I do not think he can be realistically forced into a policy which cannot now be executed. Several months from now I believe he will still command the capacity to maintain his freedom of decision.

-- Mining Haiphong. *French Look!*

~~TOP SECRET~~

-- Pull troops out of Europe. This must be met by making our case not merely in terms of Viet Nam but thickening up our total deterrent position. We don't want a Berlin or NATO crisis. But we have a right to demand of NATO Europe -- and Germany in particular -- the fullest possible financial and balance of payments cooperation.

6. Taxes.

From my limited knowledge, Joe Fowler's assessment -- that these moves could break the tax stalemate -- makes sense. But, as he has suggested, the whole enterprise -- Viet Nam forces, global reserves, taxes -- must be put as an Act of National Will, in terms which transcend Viet Nam and, even, Southeast Asia.

7. Public opinion.

I am no expert; but I sense three things:

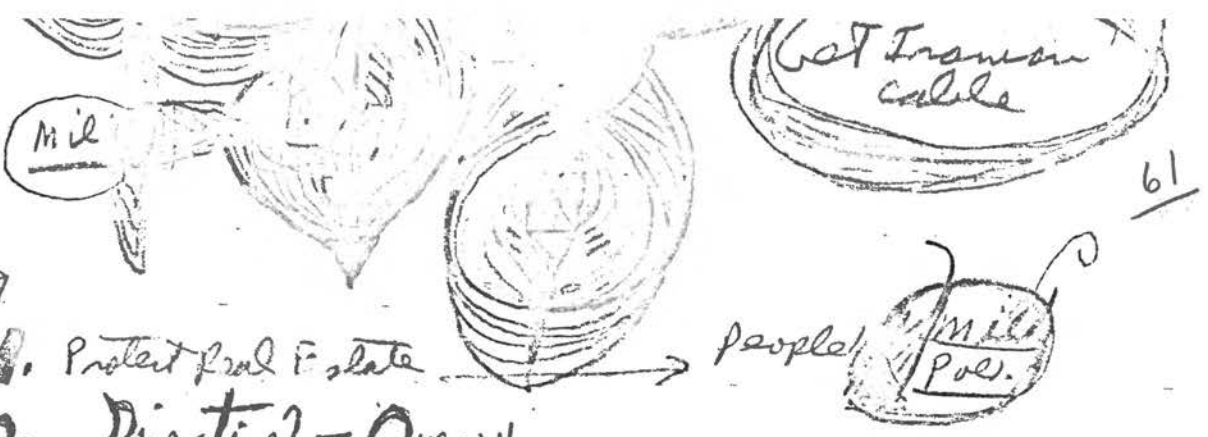
- frustration at our defensive posture, and real fear;
- a hawkish balance in the country;
- a desire to do something about the situation.

important?
"long war"

With appropriate prior consultation with leading citizens -- as well as Congressional leaders -- I believe the package is viable.

W. W. Rostow

Meeting with President
Monday, March 4, 1968
5:30 PM



1. Protect Real Estate
2. Directive - Query.
3. NVN - ST Reserves.
4. Length of Service - up to 8 months selected cases

Vietnam.

Korea?

Berlin?

Missile Crisis?

5. (1) Scepticism (A) NVN / Reserves (11.11.11)
- (B) Mil / Pol Real Estate / People

1. EVN - ARVN Indian
2. Into Southern S.

6. Battle of SE Asia

7. Harder as well softer strategy.

8. Call up reserves → 1st → 2nd & 3rd

341,500

FY 1968

10

3

Deter Aggression

1. Enemy makes it new war

2. Failed map - but operating at 3 times 19.2 rate

How long
Resistance forces

Don't know

Yan B. Lee

3. Vietnam + we must meet it //

Vietnam

we

on + out of VN

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

NARS, Date 7-23-80

Lunch Meeting With the President

Tuesday, March 5, 1968, 1:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Pueblo: Next Moves. (Sec. Rusk)

2. Vietnam. (Sec. Rusk, Sec. Clifford and Gen. Wheeler)

Any follow-on from this afternoon's discussion of Westmoreland's request.

Berlin. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

NPT. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report and question of security assurances.

Senator Hollings' suggestion on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford).

The two Secretaries will be prepared with a recommendation.

Sec. Rusk's March 11 appearance before the Congress on Foreign Aid.

The President may wish to give guidance on how to handle this particular appearance.

7. Personnel. (Sec. Rusk)

Sec. Rusk will wish to talk with you privately about certain personnel problems.

Other.

UNDER DOG

A 3 Sweet

W. Rostow

Did State instruct on HC plots.

MEMORANDUM

DECLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80

WASHINGTON

By 18, NARS, Date 7-23-80~~TOP SECRET~~Luncheon with the President
Tuesday, March 12, 1968, 1:00 P. M.Agenda1. Vietnam: The Senate and Consultation. (Sect. Rusk)

Reflections on hearings.

2. Korean Troops. (Sects. Clifford and Rusk)

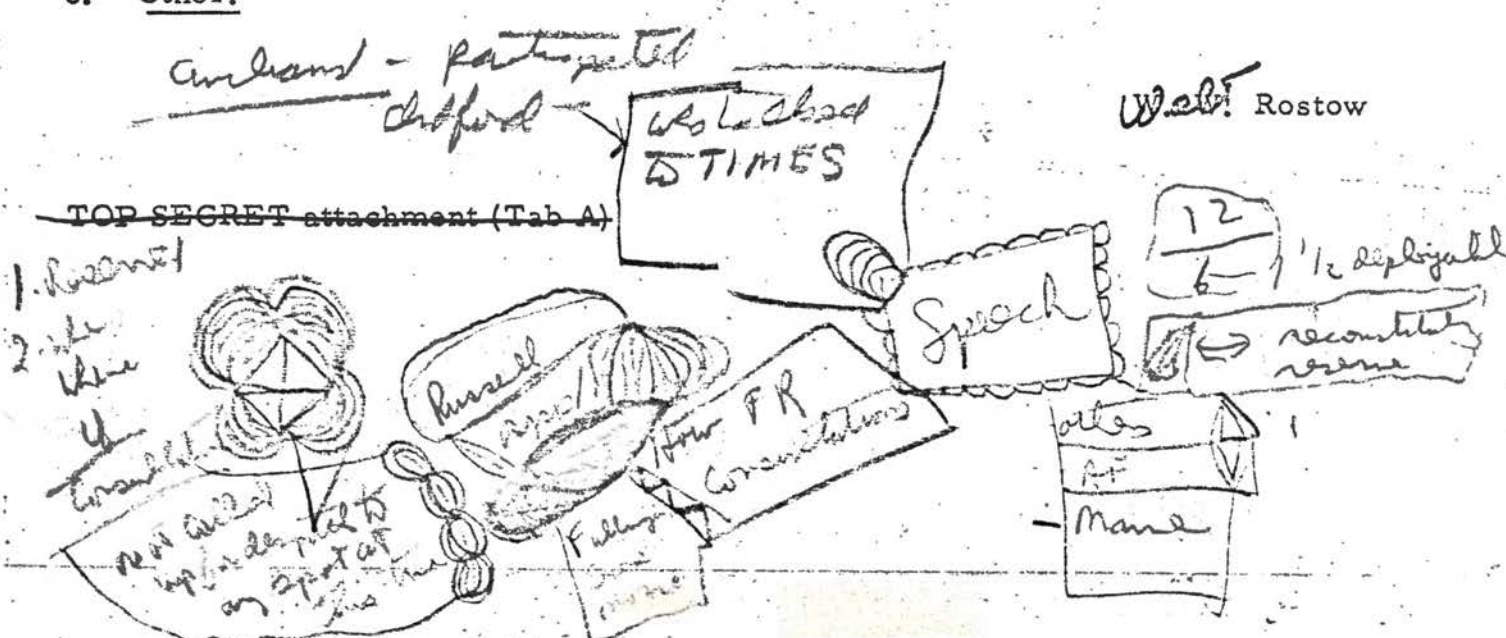
Next moves: light division; costs of "extra two divisions."

3. Vietnamese Troops. (Sects. Clifford and Rusk)

Staff work on support for Thieu's proposition: to provide between 100,000 and 125,000 additional men in six months. How to nail it down? Will there be conflicts between build-up of Vietnamese and U.S. forces? (See Tab A)

4. Pueblo: Next Steps. (Sect. Rusk)5. Time Scenario for Troop Decisions. (The President)

Specific matters you wish presented to you for decision and action.

6. Other.~~TOP SECRET~~ attachment (Tab A)

Meet
DR - tomorrow
63
Tomorrow - next day
Financing

30
14
5
Supplement
\$1.8
Call-up
3
Plat
out ...
2 ...

DECLASSIFIED

63a

TOP SECRET

Authority STATE letter MAY 7 1979

By 128, NARS, Date 7-18-79

TAB A

(para. 7 from Ambassador Bunker's cable of March 11, 1968) *Sig 21733, 3 parts*

Re para 6 - Mobilization - I have already reported on President 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, President Thieu envisages the extensive use of units on Fairfax type operations to protect the cities, their environs, and the lines of communication. We are working with the Government of Vietnam to maintain key civilians in their government functions where they cannot be spared or replaced. General 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 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 Regional Force companies and 250 Popular Force platoons, 1 Artillery Battalion, 1 Engineer Battalion, 1 Separate Infantry Regiment, and 2 Infantry Battalions to flesh out existing regiments. If additional men are mobilized, RF/PF units could be organized and equipped with World War II-type weapons available by virtue of receipt of more modern weapons by ARVN. General 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 General 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 the South Vietnamese Army over current strength in consideration of estimated losses of approximately 10,000 per month through casualties and desertions. 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 World War 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 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.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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

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

However, the total number of members of the Ready Reserve who may be ordered to active duty with their units hereunder may not exceed ~~25,000~~

THE WHITE HOUSE,

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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

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THE WHITE HOUSE,

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DSO 10/18/78; NSC 12/6/78
 By Sp/dch NARA, Date 6/30/95

ACTION

64

~~TOP SECRET~~

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

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: 5:00 p.m. Meeting, March 15, 1968*ump*

1. Ask Sec. Clifford to present his recommendations.
2. Questions, if not answered:
 - What level of draft call-ups go with the proposed package: in 1968; in 1969?
 - What are the budgetary implications of the proposed package: for FY 1968; for FY 1969?
 - What end strength figure for the Armed Forces goes with this package: end FY 1968; end FY 1969?
 - I note this package will bring our strategic reserve up to 7 divisions. How would this compare with the reserves before our commitment of major forces in mid-1965?
 - How thin has this package been pared: is the call-up sufficient to backstop the additional forces?
 - Do I take it that I am receiving from the Secretary of Defense a recommendation in which the JCS concurs?
 - How long can we maintain this posture without changing current personnel policies or calling up more reserves?
 - Has this recommended package been communicated to General Westmoreland?
 - Suppose the enemy commits his forces to a simultaneous offensive against: Saigon; Western Highlands; Khe Sanh; Quang Tri; and Hue. Is Westy in a position to deal with such an all-out offensive by the North Vietnamese regular units? In such an emergency, are there any additional forces that could be quickly generated or deployed?
 - What is your present assessment of enemy intentions over coming weeks?

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2-

3. ARVN

- How is recruiting proceeding?
- Do we have a plan to modernize ARVN equipment rapidly?
- If we give the rebuilding and reequipment of the ARVN top priority, does this package cut across that objective? If so, to what extent?

4. Timing.

(Obviously the timing of this announcement must be related to our situation with respect to the monetary consultations and your confidence that we can cover the extra costs fully by increased taxes and reduced expenditures. In any case, Joe Fowler and Bill Martin should be promptly informed of any decision at which you arrive.)

5. Vietnam General Review.

(You may -- or may not -- wish to discuss how we proceed to examine where we go with Vietnam policy after the winter-spring offensive. My strong recommendation is: have a separate meeting on that subject.)

6. Depending on your feeling and judgment at the end of the session, you may wish to:

- arrange for further Congressional consultation and/or leadership meeting;
- give Secretaries Rusk and Clifford guidance on the themes for your speech.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rlh

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

INFORMATION

WASHINGTON

65

Friday, March 15, 1968

3:25 p.m.

~~TOP SECRET~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

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

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

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

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

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

W W 25 Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~ attachments

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NHJ 95-208
By ing, NARA, Date 7-1-96

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

66

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alternative Executive Orders to implement this are at Tab D.

Charles L. Sigmond

DECLASSIFIED
OSD letter JUL 25 1979

Authority

By inf, NARS, Date 10-19-79

~~TOP SECRET~~

A

~~TOP SECRET~~

Tab A: Proposed Deployments to Vietnam

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

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

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Tab B: 15 March Reserve Recall

ARMY

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

AIR FORCE

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

NAVY

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

- a/ If we were to decide now that the brigade of the 82nd airborne and the infantry brigade replacing the 27th RLT in the 10,500 emergency reinforcement package were to be considered permanent, instead of on loan to MACV, and that the Program #6 ceiling would be raised for this purpose, the Army would recommend that we now call and plan to deploy an additional 13,437 support personnel for these units.
- b/ If we are not sure of a follow-on call-up, the Air Force believes a call-up of the Air Force units listed in Tab C is required now.

March 15, 1968

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Tab C

FOLLOW-ON
RESERVE CALL

Army

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

Air Force

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

TOTAL

48,393

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

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

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

~~TOP SECRET~~

48

Now + Late
SECRET

Reschedule → + Co. Clark C
DR
P.

67

Lunch Meeting With the President
Tuesday, March 19, 1968, 1:00 pm

50,000
43,000 - deployed
30 + 13 - 10, 500
- 48,000 RSV → 50,000
Rusk + Bates

MCS (OK) Jackson - Goalong
Newlands - Goalong

AGENDA

1. Consultations with selected members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees; and Congressman Mahon. (Sec. Clifford)

2. Vietnam: Troops. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford)

Vietnam prospects
-- Korea
-- U.S.

Leadership 6

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: AIC 018-49-1-6
By: JDA VARA Date: 11-2-15

3. Goldberg and Bowles proposals. (Sec. Rusk)

4. Jarring Mission. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

5. Panama. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

6. Rhodesia. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

7. Other: Senior Advisors

List: Ridgway

DR CC

CV

DA
GB
MB
DD
AD
AF
MT
OB
RM
L
DR

SECRET

W. A. Rostow

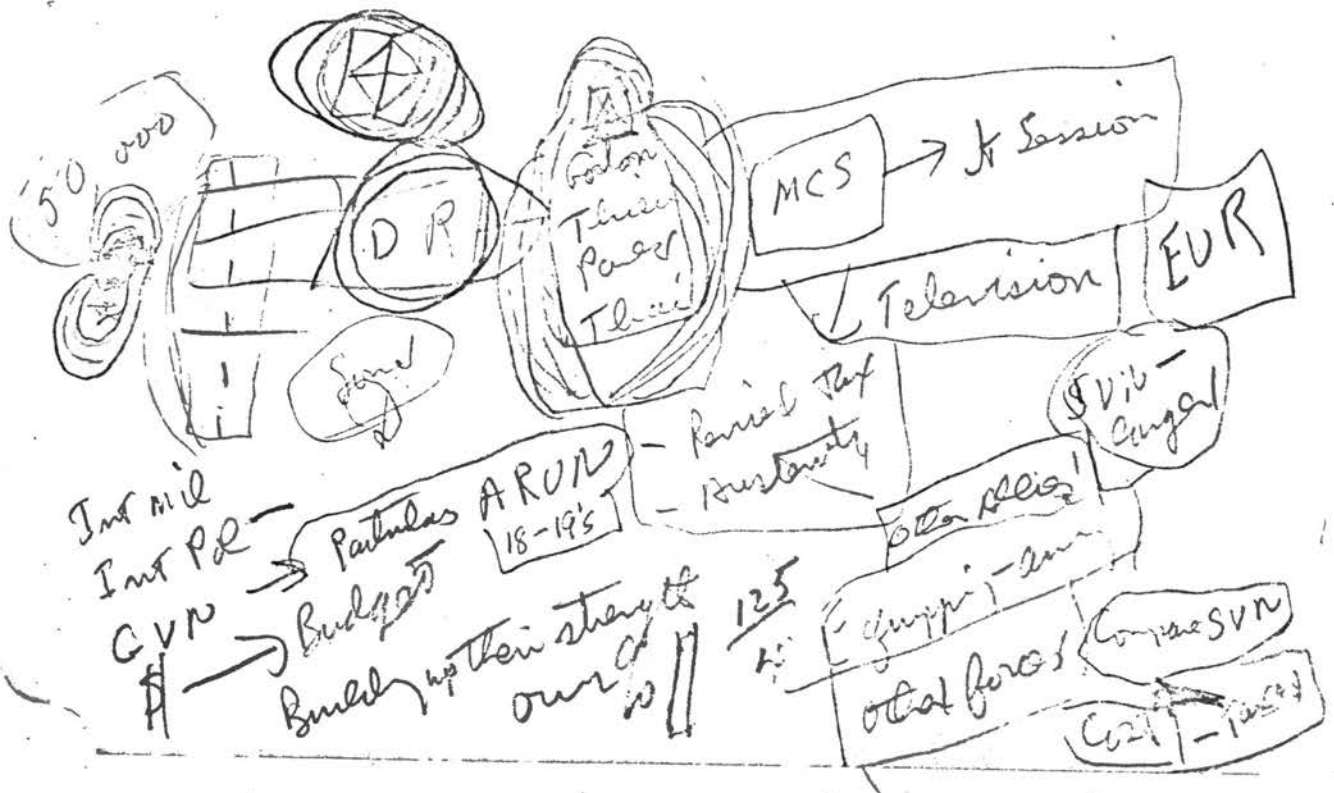
1. VN-ARVN
2. I Corps
3. Laos - Laotian

Call-up
S+H
FR-C
Fulbright
Doe M.
mm/M.

cc
AF

Time Ph
Budget
Trans
CEA
KSP Draft

Thurday



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

68

Monday, March 25, 1968

11:00 a. m.

SECRET

MR. PRESIDENT:

You may wish to give some time today to consider the key questions you may well put to the Advisory Group tomorrow morning.

Here are my tentative suggestions; although I shall file a second memo tomorrow morning in the light of this evening's discussions.

I have tried to keep the questions as close to those of November 2 as possible so that you will be able to gauge the change of view between then and now; although, of course, new issues have arisen -- notably, additional troops; and the timing of our actions with respect to the ending of the winter-spring offensive (say, May 15).

Question 1. Should we send more troops to South Vietnam? Do you suggest any change of military strategy or tactics in South Vietnam?

Question 2. With respect to the North, should we: continue what we are doing? Mine the ports and plan to take down the dikes when the water is high? Unilaterally reduce or eliminate bombing of North Vietnam?

Question 3. In the light of our experiences with negotiating probes over the past year, should we:

- remain passive, awaiting a signal from Hanoi?
- initiate negotiations?
- if so, what formula of initiation do you recommend?
- when should we take the initiative?

Question 4. Taking into account all that you know, do you believe we should, in one way or another, get out of Vietnam and leave it to the Communists?

Question 5. If you believe we should stay the course in Vietnam, what measures would you suggest to rally and unite our own people behind the effort in Vietnam?

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79, NSC 3-27-80By if, NARS, Date 7-23-80

W. Rostow

R

69
INFORMATION

~~TOP SECRET~~

Monday, March 25, 1968

12:40 p.m.

Mr. President:

- This is how State and Defense
plan to structure the briefing of the
Advisory Group tonight.

W. W. Rostow

~~TOP SECRET~~

WWRostow:rln

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State 3-13-79; NSC 3-27-80
By if, NARS, Date 7-23-80

~~TOP SECRET/NODIS~~

69a

March 25, 1968

INTRODUCTORY MEMORANDUM

This group will be asked to give its judgment in three broad areas of policy:

- a. Possible US force increases and related strategy.
- b. The US negotiating posture.
- c. Bombing policy, either in relation to negotiating posture or separately.

The first of these issues will be presented orally by Secretary Clifford at the appropriate time. Certain of the options in the negotiating areas are included in these briefing papers as indicated below, but would be further refined by Secretary Rusk orally. Bombing policy will also be discussed orally.

The schedule calls for oral briefings this evening on the military situation, the over-all security situation and enemy capabilities and intentions, the internal political situation in South Viet-Nam, and the negotiating situation.

In preparation for these briefings, and for the ensuing discussion of policy issues, we have prepared this briefing book. It may well be too bulky for any member of the group in toto, but is designed to contain essential general material and also considerable detail on certain aspects of particular interest to individual members of the group--notably in the military area.

An index of the papers in this book will be found on the next page. Broadly, the papers are divided as follows:

Section A contains excerpts from over-all reports recently received from Ambassador Bunker, with dates.

Section B contains intelligence evaluations prepared in Washington dealing with the situation in key areas and with certain estimates of the reaction of the other side to postulated courses of action by us.

~~TOP SECRET/NODIS~~

DECLASSIFIED
OSD letter JUL 25 1979
Authority _____
By inf, NARS, Date 10-19-79

Section C is a paper dealing with required actions by the South Vietnamese, their status and problem areas.

Section D contains a number of detailed papers on the military situation.

Section E is a short summary of certain key problem areas on the economic side.

Section F is Secretary McNamara's analysis of last August of the bombing program, to serve as a general basis for oral discussion of this topic.

Section G is a discussion of possible options in the area of our negotiating posture, discussing possible actions that might be taken in conjunction with the announcement of whatever actions may be decided upon.

March 22, 1968

John --

Would you please make sure that the attached alternatives are included among those examined by the Monday-Tuesday group.

W. W. Rostow

Mr. John Walsh
Department of State

WWRostow:rlh

a. Stepping up the level of bombing in North Vietnam to include targets heretofore declared off limits.

b. A consolidation of the positions now held in Vietnam and a withdrawal to enclaves which can be securely held with forces now available.

c. Redeployment of the troops at Khe Sanh to other areas which might be regarded as having greater strategic importance.

d. Re-enforcement of the troops by additional increments from the United States and a determined effort to extend the area of allied control.

e. A public announcement that the United States will cease the bombing and proceed to a conference table at some specified location in the hope that North Vietnam would show up with some negotiators on its part. (This might be accompanied by a mobilization of reserve forces with an announcement that the United States would wish to be prepared in the event that the North Vietnamese use the pause treacherously to improve their military position.)

Tuesday, March 26, 1968
12:55 p. m.

~~SECRET~~

MR. PRESIDENT:

You may wish to have the meeting proceed as follows:

1. Just as a tidbit and to cheer them up a little, you might read the marked passages from this latest Bunker cable, attached.

2. You might ask Gen. Abrams to comment on two matters:

-- the performance and prospects for the ARVN, including their present strengths in the field including the Regional and Popular Forces. In this connection, ask him at some point: How bad is it in the countryside?

-- what are the prospects for the battle against the main North Vietnamese units in the western highlands and especially in I Corps? In his judgment, what is the timing of that battle?

3. I would then ask Mac Bundy to summarize the views presented this morning.

4. You may then wish to go around the table and ask for brief supplementary statements from the individuals.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~ attachment

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By g/1/g NARA, Date 6/30/95

DECLASSIFIED

Authority STATE letter MAY 7 1979

Tuesday, March 26, 1968

72

By ing, NARS, Date 7-18-79

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER (Saigon 23069)

I took Ambassador Berger to call on President Thieu this morning and we had about an hour with him. Following are the highlights of the conversation.

I recalled to the President that I had already discussed with him and separately with the Prime Minister the question of adequate procedures to assure the deferment of essential civilian personnel from the current mobilization effort. I added that I had the impression that this was being handled quite well in terms of the central government and the Saigon area, but in the provinces there were reports of some essential civilian personnel already being drafted. I emphasized that it was important to get a uniform policy established; otherwise the government and the economy in the provinces could be seriously affected. Thieu said he planned to discuss this question further today with Ministers Vy and Vien and General Cao Van Vien. I reiterated the suggestion that the mobilization directorate be moved up to the Prime Minister's or President's office in order to assure coordination of all the Ministries.

Thieu then said that he was announcing today the appointment of five new Province Chiefs for the provinces of Bien Hoa, Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Phong Dinh, and Vinh Binh. He expected to make a few more appointments within the next day or two, including Gia Dinh, where he stressed that he wanted to get the best man for the job.

With respect to increased tax measures, Thieu said he was sending a draft law to the National Assembly, proposing a surtax for reconstruction and solidarity which he hoped would bring in about 3 billion piasters; on March 30, he plans to issue an Executive Order increasing taxes on luxury and imported goods. He stated that Assembly action was not required and he anticipated about 4 billion piasters from this measure. Thieu added that with respect to petroleum products taxes, he planned to move in two stages since these products were so widely used in the economy and affected all the main means of transportation, especially since Tet. He did not wish too drastic an impact and therefore as a first step, would raise the tax per liter from 9 piasters to 13. He thought that in one or two months he could raise it again to 17 piasters. This measure should bring in an additional 2 billion piasters, for a total of 9 billion.

In connection with these measures, Thieu made a plea for our authorities to work closely with his own to tighten up on supplies from American sources getting into illegal channels of trade. He noted that non-taxable gasoline will obviously become more attractive and said that he would talk with General Westmoreland about this and the related question of PX supplies getting into the economy. He claimed that

large sales of cosmetics and other ladies' items had posed serious competition for the local merchants which he hoped could be controlled effectively. I asked Thieu about his measures to limit the black market trade in all these items. He said that he had instructed the mayor to keep up the pressure on the illegal street traders, and added that he planned to check this activity himself.

In connection with this discussion Thieu said he would like to have a detailed exchange of views with us on the pacification policy, on how we should proceed and how the pacification program should be tied into other military policy. I said I thought this a very good idea and that I thought it also might be useful to have periodic meetings of two or three top leaders on both the U. S. and Government of Vietnam side to discuss these problems and others. Thieu agreed.

I then asked Thieu how his plans for the organization of civil defense were developing. He reiterated that he had asked the Vice President to take hold of this subject and come back to him with recommendations for a comprehensive plan which would apply throughout the country. Thieu agreed that veterans could be a useful focal point for this organization. He said one must first develop and help the cadre in the countryside and that financial support was important to this effort.

I asked Thieu how he thought things were going in the Fourth Corps. He said one of the main problems was getting the cadre out into the villages and hamlets and talking to the people there. The Viet Cong were very active in the villages with their propaganda and the Government of Vietnam was very much in need of highly qualified cadre to put over the Government's objectives and programs in a meaningful way to the people. I told Thieu that General Westmoreland was very pleased with the way Generals Thang and Lan were taking hold of their new positions. Thieu agreed that things seemed to be going well in both the Second and Fourth Corps and enemy activity was on a reduced scale. He thought the enemy was reinforcing and preparing for the next offensive, which he still anticipated would be some time during the period from May or June to October.

I referred to our earlier conversation about the Vice President's duties and asked Thieu whether he was moving ahead with the draft legislation on the councils and other bodies. Thieu said that he had sent draft laws on the Inspectorate, the Supreme Court, the Special Court, and on political parties to the Assembly on March 22. He plans to send the laws governing the three Councils which the Vice President will head to the Assembly on March 26, and on March 28 he will submit a draft law to govern the press. In about a week he expected to submit drafts governing the National Security Council and the Armed Forces Council. He is planning to address the Lower House when it convenes about April 1 in order to explain these legislative drafts.

I said that I had heard reports of the setting up of a Council of Spiritual Advisors and I wondered how his efforts to appoint advisors was coming along. Thieu said that so far 18 individuals had agreed to serve and he is planning to talk to three or four others before making any announcement. As he described it, these advisors would be both spiritual and temporal. He said Phan Quang Dan and Ha Thuc Ky had

both agreed to serve. Tran Van Huong had agreed to serve privately as an advisor at any time that the President wanted to see him but did not wish to be officially listed as such. They had all agreed that it was best not to try and meet formally in a large group since this would not lend itself to frank and constructive discussion in all cases. He had therefore decided that meetings with these advisors would normally be in small select groups, or individually.

I referred to our earlier conversation about Tran Van An's appointment as Information Minister and said I had heard that Nguyen Ngoc Linh had decided not to serve as Vice Minister. Thieu confirmed this and said Linh had preferred to remain as head of Vietnam press. I remarked that Thieu really needed a good press relations man in the Presidency. Thieu thought that Linh could act as government spokesman in his position as head of Vietnam press. I mentioned one or two other names such as Dang Duc Khoi, Ton That Thien, and Nguyen Thai. Thieu showed an interest in Thien.

I suggested to Thieu that it might be useful to consider a further relaxation in the curfew hours, particularly from the viewpoint of the morale of the population. Thieu said that as a matter of fact he planned to review this question with the Recovery Committee when he meets with them on March 27. Thieu also noted that he had spent several hours yesterday with Bui Diem, who had explained the atmosphere in Washington in detail. We did not go into this conversation further but I am reporting separately a subsequent talk which I have had with Bui Diem.

ACTION

13

Monday, March 25, 1968 -- 12:50 p.m.

MEMORANDUM TO: Jim Jones

Herewith 14 for sure, plus 5 with question marks, at the President's pleasure, for lunch tomorrow.

George Ball
General Bradley
Douglas Dillon
Cabot Lodge
McGeorge Bundy
Arthur Dean
Justice Fortas
Dean Acheson
Robert Murphy
Cyrus Vance
General Ridgway
General Taylor
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford

General Wheeler? _____
General Abrams? _____
W. W. Rostow? _____
George Christian? _____
Tom Johnson? _____

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

~~TOP SECRET~~
Copy No. 1

74

SANITIZED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 89-15 appeal
By ing, NARA, Date 3-8-95

S



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

74
SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ

89-15 appeal

By 48, NARA, Date 3-8-85

26 March 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Walt W. Rostow
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT : The Growing Strength of North Vietnamese Army
Forces in South Vietnam

1. In response to the President's request, we have taken a fresh look at our data on North Vietnamese Army (NVA) strength in South Vietnam and the rates of North Vietnamese infiltration over recent months.

2. Force Levels. During the past three or four months there has been a dramatic increase in the movement of regular North Vietnamese Army units into South Vietnam. This Agency now believes that last fall (1 November) there were over 70,000 North Vietnamese soldiers fighting in South Vietnam. The number has risen rapidly in the past five months and today may be over 100,000. This increase in NVA strength in South Vietnam has been achieved despite the thousands of casualties suffered by the North Vietnamese in the intensified combat of the past two months.

3. The following tabulation shows what we believe to be the relative strengths of VC and NVA Main and Local forces as of 1 November 1967 and 25 March 1968, without adjustment for casualties:

	<u>1 November 1967</u>	<u>25 March 1968</u>
<u>NVA Forces</u>		
In NVA units	61,000	88,000
In VC units	<u>10,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Sub-total	71,000	103,000
<u>VC Forces</u>		
	71,000	61,000
Total	<u>142,000</u>	<u>164,000</u>

Copy No. 1

[REDACTED]

4. The above tabulation shows that the relative strength of NVA forces probably increased from 50 percent of total Main and Local force strength on 1 November 1967 to 63 percent as of late March 1968. The relative strength of NVA forces is even greater when these figures are adjusted for the extraordinary casualties of the Tet offensive (30 January-21 February 1968). We have made a very rough and preliminary estimate that the bulk of these casualties were sustained by VC Main and Local forces (including guerrillas upgraded and attached to Local force units). We estimate tentatively that the infiltration of NVA fillers has been more than adequate to maintain NVA force levels at their pre-Tet level of some 100,000 troops. VC Main and Local force strength has probably declined to a level of about 45,000-50,000 troops.

5. Thus, we estimate that today there may be nearly two times as many North Vietnamese regular army soldiers in South Vietnam as there are VC regular (i. e., Main and Local force) soldiers. In the I Corps area, NVA units account for 50 percent of the enemy forces. On a country-wide basis North Vietnam now has nine divisions, consisting of 26 regiments, plus an additional 16 independent regimental equivalents deployed in South Vietnam. This compares to a VC Main and Local force strength of two divisions of three regiments each and an additional 22 regimental equivalents. Perhaps a third of what we carry as the "VC" force is actually composed of North Vietnamese Army personnel.

6. Infiltration. During the past four to five months, we believe Hanoi has moved at least two infantry divisions [REDACTED] plus additional replacement or "filler" personnel into South Vietnam.

7. Official figures indicate that at least 5,600 North Vietnamese soldiers arrived in South Vietnam during November and December 1967. (This figure is almost identical to the total for the same period in 1966.) Most of last November and December's infiltrators were probably replacement personnel for forces already in South Vietnam (both NVA and VC).

8. During November and December 1967 [REDACTED] two entire North Vietnamese divisions [REDACTED] were moving toward South Vietnam. Components of these two divisions began to arrive in December, but neither are considered to have become operational in the south until January 1968. Each division probably had a strength of at least 8,000 men -- which accounts for most of the troops in MACV's infiltration total for January of 19,400 men. The remainder of this total was probably composed of miscellaneous groups of replacement personnel.

[REDACTED]

9. The picture for the past two months, February and March, is much less clear, but it is one of a marked increase in the usual indicators of infiltration suggesting significant movement. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We are not sure of the personnel strength of any of these groups, but there is indirect evidence that they each approximate battalion strength -- about 400 men.

10. In addition, we have had unusually good evidence [REDACTED] in the month of March that battalion size groups are deploying southward through the central section of North Vietnam. More than 20 such groups have been noted in the period 2-25 March. Some of these groups may by now have progressed far enough south to be reflected among the [REDACTED]

11. We cannot provide firm figures for infiltration in February and March, but the evidence suggests that at least about 4,000 NVA troops entered South Vietnam in February and at least some 8,000 will arrive during the month of March.

12. In sum, we believe that something on the order of 35-40,000 NVA personnel have been infiltrated into South Vietnam since 1 November 1967. Furthermore, [REDACTED] the entire infiltration apparatus is under heavy pressure to accomplish a major deployment in the near future. While we cannot confidently estimate the size of this additional deployment, the available evidence suggests it could be on the order of magnitude of two division equivalents.

A. G. Carver, Jr.
George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

[REDACTED]
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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By W NARS, Date 7-5-84

26 March 1968

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Document #

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Walt W. Rostow
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: The Growing Strength of North Vietnamese Army
Forces in South Vietnam

1. In response to the President's request, we have taken a fresh look at our data on North Vietnamese Army (NVA) strength in South Vietnam and the rates of North Vietnamese infiltration over recent months.

2. Force Levels. During the past three or four months there has been a dramatic increase in the movement of regular North Vietnamese Army units into South Vietnam. This Agency now believes that last fall (1 November) there were over 70,000 North Vietnamese soldiers fighting in South Vietnam. The number has risen rapidly in the past five months and today may be over 100,000. This increase in NVA strength in South Vietnam has been achieved despite the thousands of casualties suffered by the North Vietnamese in the intensified combat of the past two months.

3. The following tabulation shows what we believe to be the relative strengths of VC and NVA Main and Local forces as of 1 November 1967 and 25 March 1968, without adjustment for casualties:

	<u>1 November 1967</u>	<u>25 March 1968</u>
<u>NVA Forces</u>		
In NVA units	61,000	89,000
In VC units	<u>10,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Sub-total	71,000	103,000
<u>VC Forces</u>	71,000	61,000
Total	<u>142,000</u>	<u>164,000</u>

Approved for Release
Date 11 Jun 84

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4. The above tabulation shows that the relative strength of NVA forces probably increased from 50 percent of total Main and Local force strength on 1 November 1967 to 63 percent as of late March 1968. The relative strength of NVA forces is even greater when these figures are adjusted for the extraordinary casualties of the Tet offensive (30 January-21 February 1968). We have made a very rough and preliminary estimate that the bulk of these casualties were sustained by VC Main and Local forces (including guerrillas upgraded and attached to Local force units). We estimate tentatively that the infiltration of NVA fillers has been more than adequate to maintain NVA force levels at their pre-Tet level of some 100,000 troops. VC Main and Local force strength has probably declined to a level of about 45,000-50,000 troops.

5. Thus, we estimate that today there may be nearly two times as many North Vietnamese regular army soldiers in South Vietnam as there are VC regular (i.e., Main and Local force) soldiers. In the I Corps area, NVA units account for 80 percent of the enemy forces. On a country-wide basis North Vietnam now has nine divisions, consisting of 26 regiments, plus an additional 16 independent regimental equivalents deployed in South Vietnam. This compares to a VC Main and Local force strength of two divisions of three regiments each and an additional 22 regimental equivalents. Perhaps a third of what we carry as the "VC" force is actually composed of North Vietnamese Army personnel.

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9. The picture for the past two months, February and March, is much less clear, but it is one of a marked increase in the usual indicators of infiltration suggesting significant movement.

We are not sure of the personnel strength of any of these groups, but there is indirect evidence that they each approximate battalion strength -- about 400 men.

10. In addition, we have had unusually good evidence that battalion size groups are deploying southward through the central section of North Vietnam. More than 20 such groups have been noted in the period 2-25 March. Some of these groups may by now have progressed far enough south to be reflected among the 21 subscribers on the Hanoi external radio net.

11. We cannot provide firm figures for infiltration in February and March, but the evidence suggests that at least about 4,000 NVA troops entered South Vietnam in February and at least some 8,000 will arrive during the month of March.

12. In sum, we believe that something on the order of 35-40,000 NVA personnel have been infiltrated into South Vietnam since 1 November 1967. Furthermore,

While we cannot confidently estimate the size of this additional deployment, the available evidence suggests it could be on the order of magnitude of two division equivalents.

A. A. C. 2.
George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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File 3/27/68
4-18

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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pr

Wednesday, March 27, 1968
4:35 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Amb. Lodge clarifies
and submits the text of his views on
Vietnam.

W.W. Rostow

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Authority State 3-13-79; NSC 3-27-80
By ip, NARS, Date 7-23-80





DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 27, 1968

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Authority STATE letter MAY 7 1979

By WJG, NARS, Date 7-18-79

Dear Mr. President:

In the hope that it will be helpful, I enclose a copy of the statement which I made in the Cabinet room yesterday afternoon.

I am as strongly opposed to "disengagement" as I have ever been -- and this is total. But, as the paper tries to indicate, I favor a different emphasis in the use of U. S. power with less stress on the "war of attrition" and more stress on organizing South Vietnamese society so that it becomes truly competitive with North Viet-Nam society.

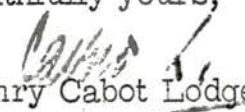
I do not even, as was alleged by Bob Murphy, favor abandonment of "search and destroy" raids since there may be occasions when such raids will be adviseable in order to protect the population which we will be seeking to organize.

It is organization of the population (with ferreting out of the hard core terrorists as its prime feature) and not of the "war of attrition" which, under the terms of my proposal, would be the main effort.

I hope you feel, as I do, that real progress was made yesterday in bringing our strategy up to date with all the latest realities. It is something which must be done in all wars.

With warm and respectful regard,

Faithfully yours,


Henry Cabot Lodge

The President of the United States
The White House

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PROPOSAL BY H. C. LODGE
March 26, 1968

I believe that urgent consideration be given to a shift of emphasis away from "search and destroy" and the "war of attrition," in which a purely military victory appears to be, I believe, the unattainable goal, towards a strategy of using military power as a shield behind which South Vietnamese society would be organized as effectively as North Vietnamese society is organized. This last would be done by intensive and repeated scourings--that is "comb-out" by police-type methods, precinct by precinct, block by block, house by house and farm by farm, much as was done by General Massu in Algiers and which is set forth in David Galula's book "Counter Insurgency Warfare."

Less stress on "search and destroy" would mean fewer casualties (U.S. and Vietnamese), less destruction, fewer refugees, less ill will, and more public support at home.

More stress on organization of South Vietnamese society would make South Vietnamese truly competitive with Communism--not just on the conventional battlefield, but in every aspect of life. For a precinct to be thus thoroughly organized would be a durable accomplishment, however limited in scope. It would end the "safe haven" for the infiltrator in that precinct. It would be putting first things first--putting the egg in the cake before putting on the frosting.

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Such a goal in effect admits that a quick solution is not to be expected.

If we had focused our past effort on population organization rather than on search and destroy, we would, I believe, undoubtedly have been less badly hurt by the Tet raids.

U.S. force increases, therefore, should be in numbers sufficient only to enable us to keep faith with our troops in exposed position, as in Khe Sanh, and not to continue the past emphasis on "search and destroy."

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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April 4, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Subject: 583rd NSC Meeting, 1:00 pm, Wednesday, March 27, 1968

The President stated that he had asked General Abrams to join the meeting so that he and General Wheeler could report on the situation in Vietnam before the Council turned to the problem of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. He asked General Wheeler to summarize his report on his recent trip to Vietnam.

General Wheeler stated that the situation in Vietnam was very difficult to assess. The Vietnamese government had not been broken by the powerful VC/NVA attacks during the Tet offensive but had been "frozen" in a defensive posture. The reason for this was that the VC had established a stranglehold around the cities. General Westmoreland had told President Thieu that one could not afford to defend a city from the inside and had to go out after the enemy. Thieu, however, was hesitant to have his forces leave the cities since he felt the government simply could not afford another Tet offensive. However, Thieu was now beginning to push out again from the cities. For example, the current offensive around Saigon was not simply a US operation but was made up of 12 ARVN and 6 US battalions. Westmoreland told him that he believed the ARVN had in general performed well, had maintained high morale, and was now regaining the initiative. While he expected further hard fighting, Westmoreland had no fear of a general defeat. However, the enemy does have the capability of further local victories which can be blown up for propaganda purposes. Westmoreland estimates that the NVA can bring in two more divisions in the next 30 to 45 days and that there are now some 8,000 to 10,000 NVA troops coming down from North Vietnam. Khe Sanh appears to have served the NVA's purpose. Earlier there were two NVA divisions surrounding Khe Sanh with an additional division in reserve. Now one division has moved to the south and the reserve division has moved east. The enemy seems primarily interested now in Hue and Saigon, and Westmoreland believes that the enemy's near-term efforts will be to continue harassments and strangulation of these two cities. In conclusion, he stated that General Westmoreland had no concern that we would suffer a major defeat in South Vietnam.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines
By X, NARA, Date 3/5/01
& DOD Dir. 5200.30

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The President introduced General Abrams to the group and stated that he had been working closely with the ARVN for some time so that they will be in a better position to take care of themselves. He read excerpts from a memorandum from General Taylor commending General Abrams' excellent record as both a battlefield and staff officer. He then asked General Abrams to tell the group about the plans and problems of the ARVN, particularly with regard to the decision to draft 19- and 18-year-olds.

General Abrams stated that at General Westmoreland's request, he had been working for almost a year directly with the ARVN forces and had gotten to know most of the officers above the level of regimental commander and some of the regimental commanders as well. He felt that the ARVN, as well as the RF and PF, were continually gaining confidence in themselves. Some deficiencies had been revealed during the Tet offensive, but the general performance of the ARVN had been good -- exceeding the expectations of most Americans. The performance of only eight out of the 149 battalions was considered unsatisfactory. Thirty battalions distinguished themselves, and the remainder did very well. He noted that the first ARVN division took 10% casualties -- 30% in the rifle battalion -- but continued to fight. He recounted the story of an ARVN lieutenant who received a field promotion to captain as a result of his aggressive leadership in the recapture of Hue. An increase of 140,000 is now planned in the present ARVN force of around 600,000. They will now draft 19-year-olds and in June will begin the draft of 18-year-olds. He noted that the training centers were all back in operation but that the training job of this large increase is a major task which places a limit on how rapidly the forces can be expanded. He was confident, however, that the ARVN can achieve this force level objective. He reported that they are now trying to obtain from 4,000 to 6,000 additional officers and that a major source will be the commissioning of noncoms who distinguished themselves during the Tet offensive. With regard to new weapons, he noted that a major effort is being made to supply the ARVN with the M-16 rifle as quickly as possible. This program has been completed in I Corps and they are now moving ahead rapidly, particularly in the Highlands where the ARVN is fighting regular NVA units which have modern equipment. He noted the program to upgrade ARVN units with M-60 machine guns and grenade launches as well as a new mortar. There will be new equipment available by the time the 140,000 new recruits are trained. He reported that an effort must be made to also improve the RF and PF and that, pending availability of additional M-16 rifles, they would be supplied with M-2 automatic carbines as they were replaced in the regular ARVN forces with M-16 rifles.

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The President asked how the Korean forces had operated during the Tet offensive.

General Abrams replied that the Korean forces leave nothing to be desired. They have the finest officers in the junior grades that he had ever seen. This particularly pleased him since they had been trained in the schools that we had set up after the Korean War.

The President asked whether the ARVN forces would ever be as good as the Koreans which, he observed, were not considered very good at the beginning of the Korean War.

General Abrams replied that he saw no reason why the ARVN could not be just as good as the Koreans.

The President asked how the Australian troops have done.

General Abrams replied that the Australians had performed very well and that now that they had an additional battalion they had a large enough force to operate independently.

The President asked what the results of the Tet offensive had really been and what we could look forward to.

General Abrams stated that the Tet offensive had given a quantum jump to the improvement of the ARVN morale since the ARVN had met and beaten the best of the NVA forces. He observed that nothing you can do does more for a soldier's morale than to give them a victory. The morale of the ARVN is now at the highest point it has ever been. The morale of US soldiers has been good and continues to be so. He told a story of the Marine group on Hill 821 at Khe Sanh that ran up the flag every morning in a bugle ceremony in order to attract fire so that the enemy would use up its quota of shells against them for the day all at once. For the future, he expected more fighting in April. The enemy will apply all the pressure that he can.

The President asked whether he had enough troops for adequate protection.

General Abrams replied that, with the currently planned augmentation, he believed that the situation can be adequately handled.

The President thanked General Abrams and asked Amb. William Foster to discuss the status of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

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