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#2 report	summary notes of 565th NSC Meeting <i>open 5-26-86 NLJ 53-476</i> Secret <i>sanitized 10-23-84 NLJ 82-189 2 p</i>	10/15/66	A
#3 Memo	to the President from Robert McNamara top secret <i>10 p</i>	10/24/66	A
#4 memo	to the Sec Def from Gen Wheeler top secret <i>5 p</i>	10/14/66	A
#5 cable	State 66738 <i>pages 6-8</i> Secret <i>8 p</i> <i>open 6-24-94 NLJ 93-465</i>	10/14/66	A

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 93-476
By CG, NARA, Date 8-30-96

SUMMARY NOTES OF 565th NSC MEETING
October 15, 1966; 2:40 to 3:30 P.M.

Vietnam -- Manila Conference

The Council Meeting had originally been planned to give Secretary McNamara a chance to report on his visit to Vietnam. However, it was later decided to spend the meeting time discussing the President's Asian trip.

Following the change in the subject matter of the meeting, it was arranged that Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler see the President alone prior to the NSC Meeting. The purpose of this private session was to have been a discussion of the differences between General Wheeler and the Chiefs and Secretary McNamara with respect to future military actions in Vietnam.

The meeting in the President's office included, in addition to Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler, the Vice President and possibly the Secretary of Treasury. There is no record of this discussion but it apparently centered on the differences recorded in memoranda from Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler, single copies of which are attached.

The formal NSC Meeting was opened by the President, who requested Secretary McNamara, General Wheeler and Under Secretary Katzenbach to report briefly on their recent visit to Vietnam.

Secretary McNamara: The military situation in Vietnam is better than he expected it to be. Military preparations are progressing in an entirely satisfactory way. Progress in pacification is less than he had hoped. More emphasis needs to be placed on pacification programs. The pacification situation was worse than it had been when he was last in Vietnam.

We will be in Vietnam longer than we have thought. We should prepare now contingency plans looking toward the future so that if it turns out that we have to stay a long time, we would be prepared to do so.

General Wheeler: There has been substantial improvement in the military situation. The morale of our troops is the best ever.

General Wheeler then gave a short summary of fighting in and along the Demilitarized Zone, citing the activity of the North Vietnamese 324B Regiment. He described Operation IRVING and said that there was still a belief in the field that the North Vietnamese were trying to separate the two most northern provinces from the rest of South Vietnam.

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Under Secretary Katzenbach: Efforts in the field of pacification are not as good as they should be. Lack of security in many areas prevented progress toward re-establishment of the authority of the South Vietnamese Government. For example, we constructed 65 school rooms in one area, only to have 55 of them destroyed within the year.

The Council then turned to a discussion of the President's Asian trip, including the Manila Conference.

Secretary Rusk: The purpose of the conference is to give the President an opportunity to meet with the Heads of State of those countries contributing to the war effort in Vietnam. Although there is basic unity among the seven countries involved, there is rivalry among Korea, Thailand and the Philippines for Asian leadership. The conference will come out satisfactorily for us.

Bill Moyers: The purpose of the Asian trip is to show our friendship for Asian countries rather than accomplish substantive policy gains. There are specific problems which will be encountered in each country, e.g., Malaysia -- the rubber problem; Thailand -- the internal security problem. In addition, there is the problem of rivalry between Korean President Park and the Philippines President Marcos.

There followed a discussion of public information problems which was initiated by the President who referred to a leak to Drew Pearson of the substance of the President's conversation with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

The President: There should be no backgrounding on the Manila Conference unless it is cleared with Bill Moyers. Our public information must be coordinated. Our Ambassadors in these countries should talk to the heads of government about the dangers of public airing of differences among us as well as the critical need for unity.

Mr. Moyers: We should play down any expectation that a hard peace proposal will come out of the conference. Our emphasis should be on reconstruction in Vietnam after the fighting stops.

Secretary Rusk: Summarized the draft communique (copy attached).

The President: The conference will probably accomplish little so we must consider now how to keep the initiative in the period ahead.

Brouley Smith

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

14 October 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Actions recommended for Vietnam

1. Evaluation of the situation. In the report of my last trip to Vietnam almost a year ago, I stated that the odds were about even that, even with the then-recommended deployments, we would be faced in early 1967 with a military stand-off at a much higher level of conflict and with "pacification" still stalled. I am a little less pessimistic now in one respect. We have done somewhat better militarily than I anticipated. We have by and large blunted the communist military initiative -- any military victory in South Vietnam the Viet Cong may have had in mind 18 months ago has been thwarted by our emergency deployments and actions. And our program of bombing the North has exacted a price.

My concern continues, however, in other respects. This is because I see no reasonable way to bring the war to an end soon. Enemy morale has not broken -- he apparently has adjusted to our stopping his drive for military victory and has adopted a strategy of keeping us busy and waiting us out (a strategy of attriting our national will). He knows that we have not been, and he believes we probably will not be, able to translate our military successes into the "end products" -- broken enemy morale and political achievements by the GVN.

The one thing demonstrably going for us in Vietnam over the past year has been the large number of enemy killed-in-action resulting from the big military operations. Allowing for possible exaggeration in reports, the enemy must be taking losses -- deaths in and after battle -- at the rate of more than 60,000 a year. The infiltration routes would seem to be one-way trails to death for the North Vietnamese. Yet there is no sign of an impending break in enemy morale and it appears that he can more than replace his losses by infiltration from North Vietnam and recruitment in South Vietnam.

Pacification is a bad disappointment. We have good grounds to be pleased by the recent elections, by Ky's 16 months in power, and by the faint signs of development of national political institutions and of a legitimate civil government. But none of this has translated itself into political achievements at Province level or below. Pacification has if anything gone backward. As compared with two, or four, years ago, enemy full-time regional forces and part-time guerrilla forces are larger; attacks, terrorism and sabotage have increased in scope and intensity; more railroads are closed and highways cut;

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the rice crop expected to come to market is smaller; we control little, if any, more of the population; the VC political infrastructure thrives in most of the country, continuing to give the enemy his enormous intelligence advantage; full security exists nowhere (not even behind the US Marines' lines and in Saigon); in the countryside, the enemy almost completely controls the night.

Nor has the ROLLING THUNDER program of bombing the North either significantly affected infiltration or cracked the morale of Hanoi. There is agreement in the intelligence community on these facts (see the attached Appendix).

In essence, we find ourselves -- from the point of view of the important war (for the complicity of the people) -- no better, and if anything worse off. This important war must be fought and won by the Vietnamese themselves. We have known this from the beginning. But the discouraging truth is that, as was the case in 1961 and 1963 and 1965, we have not found the formula, the catalyst, for training and inspiring them into effective action.

2. Recommended actions. In such an unpromising state of affairs, what should we do? We must continue to press the enemy militarily; we must make demonstrable progress in pacification; at the same time, we must add a new ingredient forced on us by the facts. Specifically, we must improve our position by getting ourselves into a military posture that we credibly would maintain indefinitely -- a posture that makes trying to "wait us out" less attractive. I recommend a five-pronged course of action to achieve those ends.

a. Stabilize US force levels in Vietnam. It is my judgment that, barring a dramatic change in the war, we should limit the increase in US forces in SVN in 1967 to 70,000 men and we should level off at the total of 470,000 which such an increase would provide.^{a/} It is my view that this is enough to punish the enemy at the large-unit operations level and to keep the enemy's main forces from interrupting pacification. I believe also that even many more than 470,000 would not kill the enemy off in such numbers as to break their morale so long as they think they can wait us out. It is possible that such a 40 percent increase over our present level of 325,000 will break the enemy's morale in the short term; but if it does not, we must, I believe, be prepared for and have underway a long-term program premised on more than breaking the morale of main force units. A stabilized US force level would be part of such a long-term program. It would put us in a position where negotiations would be more likely to be productive, but if they were not we could pursue the all-important pacification task with proper attention and resources and without the spectre of apparently endless escalation of US deployments.

b. Install a barrier. A portion of the 470,000 troops -- perhaps 10,000 to 20,000 -- should be devoted to the construction and maintenance of an infiltration barrier. Such a barrier would lie near the 17th parallel -- would run from the sea, across the neck of South Vietnam (choking off the new infiltration routes through the DMZ) and across the trails in Laos. This interdiction system (at an approximate cost of \$1 billion) would comprise to

^{a/} Admiral Sharp has recommended a 12/31/67 strength of 570,000. However, I believe both he and General Westmoreland recognize that the danger of inflation will probably force an end 1967 deployment limit of about 470,000

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the east a ground barrier of fences, wire, sensors, artillery, aircraft and mobile troops; and to the west -- mainly in Laos -- an interdiction zone covered by air-laid mines and bombing attacks pin-pointed by air-laid acoustic sensors.

The barrier may not be fully effective at first, but I believe that it can be made effective in time and that even the threat of its becoming effective can substantially change to our advantage the character of the war. It would hinder enemy efforts, would permit more efficient use of the limited number of friendly troops, and would be persuasive evidence both that our sole aim is to protect the South from the North and that we intend to see the job through.

c. Stabilize the ROLLING THUNDER program against the North. Attack sorties in North Vietnam have risen from about 4,000 per month at the end of last year to 6,000 per month in the first quarter of this year and 12,000 per month at present. Most of our 50 percent increase of deployed attack-capable aircraft has been absorbed in the attacks on North Vietnam. In North Vietnam, almost 84,000 attack sorties have been flown (about 25 percent against fixed targets), 45 percent during the past seven months.

Despite these efforts, it now appears that the North Vietnamese-Laotian road network will remain adequate to meet the requirements of the Communist forces in South Vietnam -- this is so even if its capacity could be reduced by one-third and if combat activities were to be doubled. North Vietnam's serious need for trucks, spare parts and petroleum probably can, despite air attacks, be met by imports. The petroleum requirement for trucks involved in the infiltration movement, for example, has not been enough to present significant supply problems, and the effects of the attacks on the petroleum distribution system, while they have not yet been fully assessed, are not expected to cripple the flow of essential supplies. Furthermore, it is clear that, to bomb the North sufficiently to make a radical impact upon Hanoi's political, economic and social structure, would require an effort which we could make but which would not be stomached either by our own people or by world opinion; and it would involve a serious risk of drawing us into open war with China.

The North Vietnamese are paying a price. They have been forced to assign some 300,000 personnel to the lines of communication in order to maintain the critical flow of personnel and materiel to the South. Now that the lines of communication have been manned, however, it is doubtful that either a large increase or decrease in our interdiction sorties would substantially change the cost to the enemy of maintaining the roads, railroads, and waterways or affect whether they are operational. It follows that the marginal sorties -- probably the marginal 1,000 or even 5,000 sorties -- per month against the lines of communication no longer have a significant impact on the war. (See the attached excerpts from intelligence estimates.)

When this marginal inutility of added sorties against North Vietnam and Laos is compared with the crew and aircraft losses implicit in the activity (four men and aircraft and \$20 million per 1,000 sorties), I recommend, as a minimum, against increasing the level of bombing of North Vietnam and against increasing the intensity of operations by changing the areas or kinds of targets struck.^{a/}

^{a/} See footnote on page 7

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Under these conditions, the bombing program would continue the pressure and would remain available as a bargaining counter to get talks started (or to trade off in talks). But, as in the case of a stabilized level of US ground forces, the stabilization of ROLLING THUNDER would remove the prospect of ever-escalating bombing as a factor complicating our political posture and distracting from the main job of pacification in South Vietnam.

At the proper time, as discussed on pages 6-7 below, I believe we should consider terminating bombing in all of North Vietnam, or at least in the Northeast zones, for an indefinite period in connection with covert moves toward peace.

d. Pursue a vigorous pacification program. As mentioned above, the pacification (Revolutionary Development) program has been and is thoroughly stalled. The large-unit operations war, which we know best how to fight and where we have had our successes, is largely irrelevant to pacification as long as we do not lose it. By and large, the people in rural areas believe that the GVN when it comes will not stay but that the VC will; that cooperation with the GVN will be punished by the VC; that the GVN is really indifferent to the people's welfare; that the low-level GVN are tools of the local rich; and that the GVN is ridden with corruption.

Success in pacification depends on the interrelated functions of providing physical security, destroying the VC apparatus, motivating the people to cooperate, and establishing responsive local government. An obviously necessary but not sufficient requirement for success of the Revolutionary Development cadre and police is vigorously conducted and adequately prolonged clearing operations by military troops, who will "stay" in the area, who behave themselves decently and who show some respect for the people.

This elemental requirement of pacification has been missing.

In almost no contested area designated for pacification in recent years have ARVN forces actually "cleared and stayed" to a point where cadre teams, if available, could have stayed overnight in hamlets and survived, let alone accomplish their mission. VC units of company and even battalion size remain in operation, and they are more than large enough to overrun anything the local security forces can put up.

Now that the threat of a Communist main-force military victory has been thwarted by our emergency efforts, we must allocate far more attention and a portion of the regular military forces (at least half of the ARVN and perhaps a portion of the US forces) to the task of providing an active and permanent security screen behind which the Revolutionary Development teams and police can operate and behind which the political struggle with the VC infrastructure can take place.

The US cannot do this pacification security job for the Vietnamese. All we can do is "massage the heart." For one reason, it is known that we do not intend to stay; if our efforts worked at all, it would merely postpone the eventual confrontation of the VC and GVN infrastructures. The GVN must do the job; and I am convinced that drastic reform is needed if the GVN is going to be able to do it.

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The first essential reform is in the attitude of GVN officials. They are generally apathetic, and there is corruption high and low. Often appointments, promotions, and draft deferments must be bought; and kickbacks on salaries are common. Cadre at the bottom can be no better than the system above them.

The second needed reform is in the attitude and conduct of the ARVN. The image of the government cannot improve unless and until the ARVN improves markedly. They do not understand the importance (or respectability) of pacification nor the importance to pacification of proper, disciplined conduct. Promotions, assignments and awards are often not made on merit, but rather on the basis of having a diploma, friends or relatives, or because of bribery. The ARVN is weak in dedication, direction and discipline.

Not enough ARVN are devoted to area and population security, and when the ARVN does attempt to support pacification, their actions do not last long enough; their tactics are bad despite US prodding (no aggressive small-unit saturation patrolling, hamlet searches, quick-reaction contact, or offensive night ambushes); they do not make good use of intelligence; and their leadership and discipline are bad.

Furthermore, it is my conviction that a part of the problem undoubtedly lies in bad management on the American as well as the GVN side. Here split responsibility -- or "no responsibility" -- has resulted in too little hard pressure on the GVN to do its job and no really solid or realistic planning with respect to the whole effort. We must deal with this management problem now and deal with it effectively.

One solution would be to consolidate all US activities which are primarily part of the civilian pacification program and all persons engaged in such activities, providing a clear assignment of responsibility and a unified command under a civilian relieved of all other duties.^{a/} Under this approach, there would be a carefully delineated division of responsibility between the civilian-in-charge and an element of COMUSMACV under a senior officer, who would give the subject of planning for and providing hamlet security the highest priority in attention and resources. Success will depend on the men selected for the jobs on both sides (they must be among the highest rank and most competent administrators in the US Government), on complete cooperation among the US elements, and on the extent to which the South Vietnamese can be shocked out of their present pattern of behavior. The first work of this reorganized US pacification organization should be to produce within 60 days a realistic and detailed plan for the coming year.

From the political and public-relations viewpoint, this solution is preferable -- if it works. But we cannot tolerate continued failure. If it fails after a fair trial, the only alternative in my view is to place the entire pacification program -- civilian and military -- under General Westmoreland. This alternative would result in the establishment of a Deputy COMUSMACV for Pacification who would be in command of all pacification staffs in Saigon and of all pacification staffs and activities in the field; one person in each corps, province and district would be responsible for the US effort.

^{a/} If this task is assigned to Ambassador Porter, another individual must be sent immediately to Saigon to serve as Ambassador Lodge's deputy.

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(It should be noted that progress in pacification, more than anything else, will persuade the enemy to negotiate or withdraw.)

e. Press for negotiations. I am not optimistic that Hanoi or the VC will respond to peace overtures now (explaining my recommendations above that we get into a level-off posture for the long pull). The ends sought by the two sides appear to be irreconcilable and the relative power balance is not in their view unfavorable to them. But three things can be done, I believe, to increase the prospects:

(1) Take steps to increase the credibility of our peace gestures in the minds of the enemy. There is considerable evidence both in private statements by the Communists and in the reports of competent Western officials who have talked with them that charges of US bad faith are not solely propagandistic, but reflect deeply held beliefs. Analyses of Communists' statements and actions indicate that they firmly believe that American leadership really does not want the fighting to stop, and that we are intent on winning a military victory in Vietnam and on maintaining our presence there through a puppet regime supported by US military bases.

As a way of projective US bona fides, I believe that we should consider two possibilities with respect to our bombing program against the North, to be undertaken, if at all, at a time very carefully selected with a view to maximizing the chances of influencing the enemy and world opinion and to minimizing the chances that failure would strengthen the hand of the "hawks" at home: First, without fanfare, conditions, or avowal, whether the stand-down was permanent or temporary, stop bombing all of North Vietnam. It is generally thought that Hanoi will not agree to negotiations until they can claim that the bombing has stopped unconditionally. We should see what develops, retaining freedom to resume the bombing if nothing useful was forthcoming.

Alternatively, we could shift the weight-of-effort away from "Zones 6A and 6B" -- zones including Hanoi and Haiphong and areas north of those two cities to the Chinese border. This alternative has some attraction in that it provides the North Vietnamese a "face saver" if only problems of "face" are holding up Hanoi peace gestures; it would narrow the bombing down directly to the objectionable infiltration (supporting the logic of a stop-infiltration/full-pause deal); and it would reduce the international heat on the US. Here, too, bombing of the Northeast could be resumed at any time, or "spot" attacks could be made there from time to time to keep North Vietnam off balance and to require her to pay almost the full cost by maintaining her repair crews in place. The sorties diverted from Zones 6A and 6B could be concentrated

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on the infiltration routes in Zones 1 and 2 (the southern end of North Vietnam, including the Mu Gia Pass), in Laos and in South Vietnam.^{a/}

To the same end of improving our credibility, we should seek ways -- through words and deeds -- to make believable our intention to withdraw our forces once the North Vietnamese aggression against the South stops. In particular, we should avoid any implication that we will stay in South Vietnam with bases or to guarantee any particular outcome to a solely South Vietnamese struggle.

(2) Try to split the VC off from Hanoi. The intelligence estimate is that evidence is overwhelming that the North Vietnamese dominate and control the National Front and the Viet Cong. Nevertheless, I think we should continue and enlarge efforts to contact the VC/NLF and to probe ways to split members or sections off the VC/NLF organization.

(3) Press contacts with North Vietnam, the Soviet Union and other parties who might contribute toward a settlement.

(4) Develop a realistic plan providing a role for the VC in negotiations, post-war life, and government of the nation. An amnesty offer and proposals for national reconciliation would be steps in the right direction and should be parts of the plan. It is important that this plan be one which will appear reasonable, if not at first to Hanoi and the VC, at least to world opinion.

3. The prognosis. The prognosis is bad that the war can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion within the next two years. The large-unit operations probably will not do it; negotiations probably will not do it. While we should continue to pursue both of these routes in trying for a solution in the short run, we should recognize that success from them is a mere possibility, not a probability.

The solution lies in girding, openly, for a longer war and in taking actions immediately which will in 12 to 18 months give clear evidence that the continuing costs and risks to the American people are acceptably limited, that the formula for success has been found, and that the end of the war is merely a matter of time. All of my recommendations will contribute to this strategy, but the one most difficult to implement is perhaps the most important one -- enlivening the pacification program. The odds are less than even for this task, if only because we have failed consistently since 1961 to make a dent in the problem. But, because the 1967 trend of pacification will, I believe, be the main talisman of ultimate US success or failure in Vietnam, extraordinary imagination and effort should go into changing the stripes of that problem.

^{a/} Any limitation on the bombing of North Vietnam will cause serious psychological problems among the men who are risking their lives to help achieve our political objectives; among their commanders up to and including the JCS; and among those of our people who cannot understand why we should withhold punishment from the enemy. General Westmoreland, as do the JCS, strongly believes in the military value of the bombing program. Further, Westmoreland reports that the morale of his Air Force personnel may already be showing signs of erosion -- an erosion resulting from current operational restrictions.

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President Thieu and Prime Minister Ky are thinking along similar lines. They told me that they do not expect the enemy to negotiate or to modify his program in less than two years. Rather, they expect the enemy to continue to expand and to increase his activity. They expressed agreement with us that the key to success is pacification and that so far pacification has failed. They agree that we need clarification of GVN and US roles and that the bulk of the ARVN should be shifted to pacification. Ky will, between January and July 1967, shift all ARVN infantry divisions to that role. And he is giving Thang, a good Revolutionary Development director, added powers. Thieu and Ky see this as part of a two-year (1967-68) schedule, in which offensive operations against enemy main force units are continued, carried on primarily by the US and other Free World forces. At the end of the two-year period, they believe the enemy may be willing to negotiate or to retreat from his current course of action.

Note: Neither the Secretary of State nor the JCS have yet had an opportunity to express their views on this report. Mr. Katzenbach and I have discussed many of its main conclusions and recommendations -- in general, but not in all particulars, it expresses his views as well as my own.

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APPENDIX

Extracts from CIA/DIA Report "An Appraisal of the Bombing of North Vietnam through 12 September 1966"

1. There is no evidence yet of any shortage of POL in North Vietnam and stocks on hand, with recent imports, have been adequate to sustain necessary operations.
2. Air strikes against all modes of transportation in North Vietnam increased during the past month, but there is no evidence of serious transport problems in the movement of supplies to or within North Vietnam.
3. There is no evidence yet that the air strikes have significantly weakened popular morale.
4. Air strikes continue to depress economic growth and have been responsible for the abandonment of some plans for economic development, but essential economic activities continue.

Extracts from a March 16, 1966 CIA Report "An Analysis of the ROLLING THUNDER Air Offensive against North Vietnam"

1. Although the movement of men and supplies in North Vietnam has been hampered and made somewhat more costly [by our bombing], the Communists have been able to increase the flow of supplies and manpower to South Vietnam.
2. Hanoi's determination [despite our bombing] to continue its policy of supporting the insurgency in the South appears as firm as ever.
3. Air attacks almost certainly cannot bring about a meaningful reduction in the current level at which essential supplies and men flow into South Vietnam.

Bomb Damage Assessment in the North by the Institute for Defense Analysis'
"Summer Study Group"

What surprised us [in our assessment of the effect of bombing North Vietnam] was the extent of agreement among various intelligence agencies on the effects of past operations and probable effects of continued and expanded Rolling Thunder. The conclusions of our group, to which we all subscribe, are therefore merely sharpened conclusions of numerous Intelligence summaries. They are that Rolling Thunder does not limit the present logistic flow into SVN because NVN is neither the source of supplies nor the choke-point on the supply routes from China and USSR. Although an expansion of Rolling Thunder by closing Haiphong harbor, eliminating electric power plants and totally destroying railroads, will at least indirectly impose further privations on the populace of NVN and make the logistic support of VC costlier to maintain, such expansion will not really change the basic assessment. This follows because NVN has demonstrated excellent ability to improvise transportation, and because the primitive nature of their economy is such that Rolling Thunder can affect directly only a small fraction of the population. There is very little hope that the Ho Chi Minh Government will lose control of population because of Rolling Thunder. The lessons of the Korean War are very relevant in these respects. Moreover, foreign economic aid to NVN is large compared

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to the damage we inflict, and growing. Probably the government of NVN has assurances that the USSR and/or China will assist the rebuilding of its economy after the war, and hence its concern about the damage being inflicted may be moderated by long-range favorable expectations. Specifically:

1. As of July 1966 the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam had had no measurable direct effect on Hanoi's ability to mount and support military operations in the South at the current level.
2. Since the initiation of the Rolling Thunder program the damage to facilities and equipment in North Vietnam has been more than offset by the increased flow of military and economic aid, largely from the USSR and Communist China.
3. The aspects of the basic situation that have enabled Hanoi to continue its support of military operations in the South and to neutralize the impact of U.S. bombing by passing the economic costs to other Communist countries are not likely to be altered by reducing the present geographic constraints, mining Haiphong and the principal harbors in North Vietnam, increasing the number of armed reconnaissance sorties and otherwise expanding the U.S. air offensive along the lines now contemplated in military recommendations and planning studies.
4. While conceptually it is reasonable to assume that some limit may be imposed on the scale of military activity that Hanoi can maintain in the South by continuing the Rolling Thunder program at the present, or some higher level of effort, there appears to be no basis for defining that limit in concrete terms, or for concluding that the present scale of VC/NVN activities in the field have approached that limit.
5. The indirect effects of the bombing on the will of the North Vietnamese to continue fighting and on their leaders' appraisal of the prospective gains and costs of maintaining the present policy have not shown themselves in any tangible way. Furthermore, we have not discovered any basis for concluding that the indirect punitive effects of bombing will prove decisive in these respects.

Robert M. Vane

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

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JCS letter 10-5-78	
By <u>QCH</u>	NARS, Date <u>11-23-82</u>

JCSM-672-66
14 October 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Actions Recommended for Vietnam (U)

1. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed your memorandum to the President, subject as above. Their views as to the situation in Vietnam and the proper courses of US actions coincide substantially with yours in many areas; however, in some important areas the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree with you. For convenience of reference their comments are set forth in subsequent paragraphs in the same sequence and with the same headings as in your memorandum.

2. (TS) Evaluation of the Situation.

a. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the military situation obtaining in Vietnam has improved substantially over the past year. Since the President authorized the deployment of US ground forces to South Vietnam (SVN), Free World military forces have enjoyed an almost unbroken series of successes in combat. The few enemy victories have been gained at the expense of South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Force units. Our present posture achieves our often-expressed objective of ensuring that the enemy cannot win militarily in SVN at his current level of effort; our future programs should be geared, as a minimum, to retaining this favorable situation. Our restricted air campaign against North Vietnam (NVN) has destroyed substantial quantities of military supplies and war-supporting facilities, inflicted major damage on lines of communication, and forced the diversion of at least 300,000 men from agriculture and industry to repair and maintenance activities. The demands of communist leaders and leftist sympathizers for cessation of bombing give strong indication of the impact the bombing is having on the North Vietnamese. Widespread and uninhibited Viet Cong (VC) sabotage in SVN over a period of five years has been far less detrimental to a sustained war effort.

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b. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree there is no reason to expect that the war can be brought soon to a successful conclusion.

c. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also agree that the enemy strategy appears to be to wait it out; in other words, communist leaders in both North and South Vietnam expect to win this war in Washington, just as they won the war with France in Paris. In this regard, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that there is reason for such expectations on the part of the communist leadership.

d. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that, manpower-wise, the enemy should be able to replace his heavy combat losses. This assessment, however, does not - indeed, cannot - take into account the adverse impact over time of continued bloody defeats on the morale of VC/NVA forces and the determination of their political and military leaders. Pertinent to the foregoing, there is evidence that the VC increasingly must resort to forced conscription to fill their ranks, and that men furnished from NVN to replace casualties suffered by the 324B Division are a mixture of hard-nosed regular soldiers (about 25%), fanatical communist volunteers (about 25%), and unmotivated conscripts (about 50%).

e. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that pacification (revolutionary development) programs have not been, and are not now, adequate to the situation.

f. Additional Comment. The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that your memorandum addresses only SVN; it does not consider the prospect of the expanding threat in northeast Thailand or Laos, or the requirement for the Free World forces to cope with these threats.

3. (TS) Recommended Actions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concur in your general recommendations that we should continue to press the enemy militarily, improve pacification programs, and attain a military posture we can maintain indefinitely. Their comments on your specific recommendations are:

a. Stabilize US Force Levels - The danger to Government of Vietnam (GVN) viability imposed by inflation is recognized. However, while the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that a stable, sustainable force level in SVN is desirable, the suggested level of 470,000 is substantially less than earlier recommendations of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC. Hence, the Joint Chiefs

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of Staff reserve judgment upon the force level required until they have reviewed the revised programs now being prepared under the supervision of Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland at Headquarters, Pacific Command. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff point out the necessity of having in CONUS, Hawaii, and Okinawa, forces capable of immediate deployment to SVN to cope with contingencies.

b. Install Barriers - The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that barriers properly installed and defended by ground and air effort can impede infiltration into SVN from NVN. As you know, they have reservations concerning the effectiveness of the currently-proposed air-laid munitions barrier; moreover, they consider that this effort must not be permitted to impair current military programs.

c. Stabilize ROLLING THUNDER - The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur in your recommendation that there should be no increase in level of bombing effort and no modification in areas and targets subject to air attack. They believe our air campaign against NVN to be an integral and indispensable part of our over-all war effort. To be effective, the air campaign should be conducted with only those minimum constraints necessary to avoid indiscriminate killing of population.

d. Improve Pacification Program - The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed you earlier that, to achieve early optimum effectiveness, the pacification program should be transferred to COMUSMACV. They adhere to that conclusion. However, if for political reasons a civilian-type organization should be considered mandatory by the President, they would interpose no objection. Nevertheless, they are not sanguine that an effective civilian-type organization can be erected, if at all, except at the expense of costly delays. As to the use of a substantial fraction of the ARVN for pacification purposes, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concur. However, they desire to flag that adoption of this concept will undoubtedly elicit charges of a US takeover of combat operations at increased cost in American casualties.

e. Press for Negotiations - The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur with your proposal that, as a carrot to induce negotiations, we should suspend or reduce our bombing campaign against NVN. Our experiences with pauses in bombing and resumption have not been happy ones. Additionally, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the likelihood of the war being settled by negotiation is small; and that, far from inducing negotiations, another bombing pause will be regarded by North

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Vietnamese leaders, and our Allies, as renewed evidence of lack of US determination to press the war to a successful conclusion. The bombing campaign is one of the two trump cards in the hands of the President (the other being the presence of US troops in SVN). It should not be given up without an end to the NVN aggression in SVN. As to maintaining contacts with NVN and the USSR in order to find ways to end the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree; however, they advocate that US personnel involved should reflect a quiet determination to prosecute the war until communist aggression against SVN ceases.

4. (TS) Prognosis. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree we cannot predict with confidence that the war can be brought to an end in two years. Accordingly, for political, military, and psychological reasons, we should prepare openly for a long-term, sustained military effort.

5. (TS) Additional Comment. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the war has reached a stage at which decisions taken over the next sixty days can determine the outcome of the war and, consequently, can affect the over-all security interests of the United States for years to come. Therefore, they wish to provide to you and to the President their unequivocal views on two salient aspects of the war situation: the search for peace; and military pressures on NVN.

a. The frequent, broadly-based public offers made by the President to settle the war by peaceful means on a generous basis, which would take from NVN nothing it now has, have been admirable. Certainly, no one - American or foreigner - except those who are determined not to be convinced, can doubt the sincerity, the generosity, the altruism of US actions and objectives. In the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff the time has come when further overt actions and offers on our part are not only nonproductive, they are counterproductive. A logical case can be made that the American people, our Allies, and our enemies alike are increasingly uncertain as to our resolution to pursue the war to a successful conclusion. The Joint Chiefs of Staff advocate the following:

(1) A statement by the President during the Manila Conference of his unswerving determination to carry on the war until NVN aggression against SVN shall cease;

(2) Continued covert exploration of all avenues leading to a peaceful settlement of the war; and

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(3) Continued alertness to detect and react appropriately to withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from SVN and cessation of support to the VC.

b. In JCSM-955-64, dated 14 November 1964, and in JCSM-982-64, dated 23 November 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided their views as to the military pressures which should be brought to bear on NVN. In summary, they recommended a "sharp knock" on NVN military assets and war-supporting facilities rather than the campaign of slowly increasing pressure which was adopted. Whatever the political merits of the latter course, we deprived ourselves of the military effects of early weight of effort and shock, and gave to the enemy time to adjust to our slow quantitative and qualitative increase of pressure. This is not to say that it is now too late to derive military benefits from more effective and extensive use of our air and naval superiority. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend:

(1) Approval of their ROLLING THUNDER 52 program, which is a step toward meeting the requirement for improved target systems. This program would decrease the Hanoi and Haiphong sanctuary areas, authorize attacks against the steel plant, the Hanoi rail yards, the thermal power plants, selected areas within Haiphong port and other ports, selected locks and dams controlling water LOCs, SAM support facilities within the residual Hanoi and Haiphong sanctuaries, and POL at Haiphong, Ha Gia (Phuc Yen) and Can Thon (Kep).

(2) Use of naval surface forces to interdict North Vietnamese coastal waterborne traffic and appropriate land LOCs and to attack other coastal military targets such as radar and AAA sites.

6. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff request that their views as set forth above be provided to the President.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chief
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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CONFERENCE - SUBSTANCE

To show you the shape of our current thinking on the possible contents of a communique and accompanying Declaration, ~~xxx~~ we are sending you for quick over-night comment very preliminary drafts of these two documents. Without attempting to provide ^{us} you with detailed drafting changes, you should give us your broad-brush comments on scope and content for further discussions tomorrow. We expect them and our accompanying to refine these documents ~~and to summarize the results of our analysis~~ of the scope and issues of the conference. Do not repeat not discuss these drafts with GVN.

Drafted by:

Tel. Ext.

Telegraphic transmission and

Classified by: W.P. Bundy:bmra 10/14

4235

classification approved by:

William P. Bundy

S/S - Mrs. Davis

DECLASSIFIED

State letter 6-13-79

By: DCH

NARS, Date 11-23-81

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COMMUNIQUE

1. Leaders of seven nations in the Asian and Pacific world have met for the past two days in Manila. Represented in the Philippine capital were Australia, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States and Viet-Nam. Their common concern is the defense of the freedom of South Viet-Nam to which they are all contributing forces and resources. Their common goal is the restoration of peace to that troubled land and the opportunity this will afford to build a good and free life for the entire Vietnamese people living in tranquillity among their brothers in Southeast Asia and in the larger world of Asia and the Pacific.

Action Programs

2. Security provides the shield behind which the South Vietnamese people can build up their country -- without it there can be neither peace nor freedom, neither progress nor prosperity. Thus the seven nations turned their attention first to the military struggle and the equally important "other war". Through the program of revolutionary development, and behind the military shield, the Government of Viet-Nam has begun the forging of a social revolution. It is joining hands with the villager to root out the poisons of terror and intimidation and replace them with schools and wells and clinics and a revived local government at the service of the people. The conference also learned of the measures taken by the GVN to bring under control an inflation which, if left unchecked, could have undermined all the efforts to provide a better livelihood for the Vietnamese people.

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3. Even while the leaders were meeting in Manila the first steps to establish a new constitutional system for South Viet-Nam were being taken in Saigon through the work of the Constituent Assembly, elected on September 11. The conferees heard reports of these deliberations and the successive steps which are to follow until there is installed in Saigon some time next year a government of the people fashioned according to the framework of the constitution now being drafted.

4. The leaders of South Viet-Nam set the Manila consultations in motion by their effective presentation of their efforts and their objectives in each of the fields mentioned above. They recalled the goals set last February at the Honolulu Meeting and noted what progress had been made since that time. Specifically they underlined the greatly expanded training for cadre in the revolutionary development program, the reorganization and retraining of army units to gear them better to the pacification efforts, new anti-inflationary fiscal and budgetary provisions to be enacted shortly, forward steps in land policy/~~and the undertaking of a joint GVN-US study on the longer-range economic development of SVN under (name) and (name), and (etc., etc.).~~ and (etc., etc.).

5. The contributing nations all pledged their continuing help, according to their means, in the civil programs of the "other war", whether in funds, technicians, equipment, goods or whatever. They congratulated the leaders of South Viet-Nam for their vision and courage in setting their course toward representative, constitutional government even while engaged in a bitter war within their borders. All of the conferees recognized that this progressive

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action by the GVN was as essential to defending its country and winning the peace which will follow as any other single step.

The Search for Peace

6. A central question for the leaders of the seven conferring countries was and is: "how can peace come to Viet-Nam?" Despite efforts ranging world-wide which have sought over and over again to follow up every avenue and approach to North Viet-Nam and its supporters, Hanoi has not been persuaded to abandon the path of violence and join in some dialogue, tacit or explicit, to find the way back to peace. The Conference reviewed the efforts which have been made and the courses which might be opened in the future. They consulted among themselves on terms which could assure full security and freedom of choice for South Viet-Nam and which might also hasten the day when the authorities of North Viet-Nam will realize that their real interests lay in peace and not in continuing the war. Finally the Conference looked ahead to a happier time when a peaceful Viet-Nam would live in tranquillity with its neighbors, with all of them benefitting from an expanding exchange of goods, of people and of ideas brought about by individual national, and broad, cooperative regional efforts.

7. The six nations providing help to South Viet-Nam solemnly affirmed their determination to stand by that country's side until its security and freedom of choice is assured. They undertook at that time to withdraw their forces and to seek to retain no special position or rights in South Viet-Nam.

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8. The Conference endorsed the efforts which have been made, particularly by the Government of the United States of America, to convert the struggle from one of force of arms to a contest across the negotiating table or even in some quieter diplomatic context. Despite the discouraging lack of any meaningful response it was unanimously agreed that every remotely promising lead should be followed up. After vigorous discussion of differing points of view, a thorough understanding was reached on the possible kinds of settlement terms which could bring peace and assure to South Viet-Nam the precious right to determine its own future. This was based on the statement of South Viet-Nam's peace objectives formulated by Foreign Minister Tran Van Do on June 22, 1965.

9. (At this point there would be a statement of the contributors on the prisoner-of-war issue.)

10. Finally the conferees discerned the further goals of a community of Asian and Pacific nations, each respecting the independence and the territorial integrity of the others, and all working together for their common benefit despite differences in political or economic systems. Such a comity of nations would provide a further assurance that Viet-Nam, North as well as South, would have a home where it could survive and follow its own pattern for its internal system but benefitting from the freest interchange of goods and people and ideas."

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 93-465By ig, NARA, Date 5-10-94

DECLARATION OF MANILA

(Names and Titles of Participants and their nations, in appropriate order)

have joined together in Manila on this 25th day of October in order to make clear their objectives in South Vietnam and the relationship of those objectives to the wider purposes they believe to be shared by all free Asian nations, for the future of Asia.

1. We are unalterably determined that South Vietnam shall be independent and free from political interference in the determination of its own future. We support ~~support~~ the peace objectives enunciated by the Government of South Vietnam and will join with that Government in seeking any avenue to a peaceful settlement.

2. The basic principle at stake in South Vietnam is that aggression in any form, overt or covert, must not be allowed to succeed in Asia or indeed in any other part of the world. Although it is primarily the task of each individual nation to secure and defend itself against aggression, the assistance of other nations for these purposes, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, must continue to play an important cooperative part in view of the fact of aggression in South Vietnam and the threat of such action elsewhere in Asia.

3. As we here dedicate ourselves anew to assist South Vietnam in its present struggle and in the economic development and progress of its people, we believe it to be useful to set forth certain principles which we hold in common. We believe that the effort we are now making in South Vietnam is consistent with, and

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indeed fundamental to, these principles. We base our hopes/not only for the future
of South Vietnam, but for the future of Asia and the Pacific region.

a. It is the unalienable right of peoples freely to determine their own
future and to create for themselves the political, economic, and social institutions
that they decide they want to meet their own needs and desires.

b. The use of force is an unacceptable means to alter territorial arrangements
or to impose on ~~others~~ others against their will a system of government or a political
ideology. This is true whether the aggression be direct or by ~~proxy~~ proxy, whether it be
overt or covert.

c. Each nation has the inherent right of self-defense and the right to seek
the help of others in preserving its chosen way of life and its territorial integrity.

d. It is vital to the security of men and to the peace of the world that aggression
can be deterred where possible, and that it be met and turned back quickly where
it occurs.

e. We affirm our respect for the sovereignty and for the territorial integrity
of all states, whatever their prevailing ideological tendencies or political systems.

f. The economic interdependence of our ~~nations~~ nations and of our
neighbors in the Asian and Pacific region is evident and we are determined to work
toward increasing the flow of goods, skills and resources among us to mutual
advantage.

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g. In Asia and the Pacific, as in other regions of the world, there is a clear responsibility of the nations concerned to develop closer regional ties and institutions that will meet the demands of our peoples more effectively than can ever be possible if we move individually or only through bilateral channels.

h. There is a fundamental responsibility for the industrially advanced and economically strong nations to provide as much assistance as possible to ^{young} ~~young~~ and under-developed nations. This is a matter both of moral right and of mutual benefit.

i. We seek always to erase the differences -- ancient and modern -- that divide us one from another, large nations from small, Communist nations from non-Communist, industrially advanced from less developed.
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j. Peace is the greatest ~~treasure~~ of men and of nations -- and we are pledged here and henceforward to work always to preserve the peace where it exists, and to find peaceful solutions where it does not.

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LIST OF ATTENDEES, NSC MEETING, OCTOBER 15, 1966

Saturday, 2:00 P.M.

Vice President Humphrey

Secretary of Defense McNamara
Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance
Assistant Secretary of Defense McNaughton

Secretary of State Rusk
Under Secretary of State Katzenbach
Assistant Secretary of State Bundy

CIA Director Helms

JCS Chairman Wheeler

Secretary of the Treasury Fowler

USIA Director Marks

Walt Rostow
Bill Moyers
Robert Kintner
Bromley Smith
Bill Jorden
Robert Komer