

25 November 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: South Vietnam Situation

ATTENDANCE: The President, Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Ball,
Messrs. Bundy and McCone, Ambassador Lodge
November 24th, 3:00 p.m. - Executive Office Bldg.

1. Ambassador Lodge reported that the change in government had been an improvement, that he was hopeful over the outlook, that he expected a speedup of the war, he thought by February or March we would see marked progress. Lodge stated that we were not involved in the coup, though we put pressures on the South Vietnamese government to change its course and those pressures, most particularly on indications of withdrawal by 1965, encouraged the coup. Lodge stated that there were indications that North Vietnam might be interested in arrangements which would be of a nature satisfactory to us. He did not elaborate. He ^{then} said that everybody was very happy after the coup and showed some pictures of the crowds in Saigon. He mentioned that Gen. Don would be here and that those talking with him should influence him to put on all the pressure he could. He spoke most highly of the Papal delegate and his intention to see the Pope on Wednesday. He carried with him a letter from the Papal Delegate and also from the Bishop of Saigon, apparently praising the actions in upsetting the Diem government. Lodge said he saw dangers of an anti-Christian move and this was his purpose in seeing the Pope. He made a point that Bishop Thuc had engaged in serious persecutions involving the imprisonment of a great many people, including three Catholic priests. He also made the point that Can, Diem's brother, also engaged in a variety of activities of persecution and the execution of individuals and that Can had, on his own premises, a burial ground for his victims. Lodge said that we were in no way responsible for the death of Diem and Nhu, that had they followed his advice, they would be alive today. He said that he saved Can from assassination and that Bishop Thuc was out of Saigon under orders from the Papal delegate. (Note: I question whether the Papal delegate can order a Bishop out of a country.) The tone of Ambassador Lodge's statements were optimistic, hopeful, and left the President with the impression that we are on the road to victory.

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Authority E93-0417; CIA 4/14/11tr
By CR NARA, Date 11/8/24

At this point McCone stated that our estimate of the situation was somewhat more serious. We had noted a continuing increase in Viet Cong activity since the first of November as evidenced by a larger number of Viet Cong attacks. We also noticed with considerable concern a high level of message volume on the Viet Cong military and political networks and this might quite possibly reflect preparations for further sustained guerrilla pressures. Furthermore I stated that the military were having considerable trouble in completing the political organization of the government and were receiving little if any help from civilian leadership. Indeed it seemed to us that the competent civilians were staying on the sidelines and continuing their traditional role of critics rather than turning in and being helpful. I concluded by stating that we could not at this point or time give a particularly optimistic appraisal of the future.

The President then stated that he approached the situation with some misgivings. He noted that a great many people throughout the country questioned our course of action in supporting the overthrow of the Diem regime. He also noted that strong voices in the Congress felt we should get out of Vietnam. Both of these facts give the President considerable concern. He stated that he was not at all sure that we took the right course in upsetting the Diem regime but this was a decision that he did not have to make as it was a fait accompli. He said now that it was done, we have to see that our objectives were accomplished. (Note: The inferences were that, left to his own devices, he would not have supported the courses of action which led to the coup.)

The President then stated he has never been happy with our operations in Vietnam. He said there had been serious dissension and divisions within the American community and he told the Ambassador that he was in total charge and he wanted the situation cleaned up. He wanted no more divisions of opinion, no more bickering and any person that did not conform to policy should be removed. At this point Mr. Bundy stated that we were searching for a replacement for Truehart and what we wanted was a capable administrator who could run the Country Team. The President again repeated his insistence that the Ambassador was the Number One man and he, the President, was holding the Ambassador personally responsible.

Secretary McNamara stated that he had examined the economic situation and that he felt we must give generously of economic aid and must not ask the South Vietnamese government to do the impossible at this particular time.

The President then said that he supported this, but at the same time he wanted to make it abundantly clear that he did not think we had to reform every Asian into our own image. He said that he felt all too often when we engaged in the affairs of a foreign country we wanted to immediately transform that country into our image and this, in his opinion, was a mistake. He was anxious to get along, win the war - he didn't want as much effort placed on so-called social reforms.

Note: I received in this meeting the first "President Johnson tone" for action as contrasted with the "Kennedy tone". Johnson definitely feels that we place too much emphasis on social reforms; he has very little tolerance with our spending so much time being "do-gooders"; and he has no tolerance whatsoever with bickering and quarreling of the type that has gone on in South Vietnam.

The meeting was followed by a statement to the press which was given out by Bundy to the effect that we would pursue the policies agreed to in Honolulu adopted by the late President Kennedy. A picture was taken of the President with Lodge, McNamara, Rusk and Ball.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Authority NSC letter 10-24-80
By DCI, NARS, Date 9-2-81

SUMMARY NOTES OF 545th NSC MEETING
February 6, 1965; 7:45 P.M.

Reprisal Strikes in North Vietnam

(This is a partial record of the meeting because the writer was in and out of the Cabinet Room talking by secure phone from the Situation Room to McGeorge Bundy in Saigon.)

The meeting opened with a discussion of how to react to the surprise attack by the Viet Cong on the U.S. Army barracks at Pleiku in South Vietnam and other attacks on two South Vietnamese airfields. A recommendation was made that U.S. planes attack three targets in North Vietnam and the South Vietnamese, with U.S. air cover, attack a fourth target. There was recognition that MIG's based near Hanoi might respond to the strikes.

General Wheeler: CINCPAC reports that if he receives an execute message by 10:00 P.M. tonight, his planes could be over their targets in North Vietnam at 3:00 P.M. their time.

The President gave the following figures on the four recommended targets:

<u>Target</u>	<u>Troops</u>	<u>Military Casualties</u>	<u>Civilians</u>
Dong Hoi Barracks	6,000	3,600	40
Vit Thu Lu Barracks	150	90	0
Chap Le Army Barracks	1,200	720	30
Vu Con Barracks	----- NO GOOD ESTIMATES -----		

General Wheeler: The attack on Pleiku came as a surprise. There were no South Vietnamese casualties. Our forces were in a compound outside the town. The area has been quiet recently. At one time it was General Khanh's headquarters and formerly was pacified.

Secretary McNamara: However, the Viet Cong had recently been building up in this area.

Under Secretary Ball: We are all in accord that action must be taken. We need to decide how we shall handle the air strikes publicly. The Soviets may call for a conference. We must make clear that the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong are the same. We retaliate against North Vietnam because Hanoi directs

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Under Secretary Ball (cont'd.):

the Viet Cong, supplies arms, and infiltrates men. We need to answer the question as to why we are striking North Vietnam when the Americans were attacked by Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

Deputy Defense Secretary Vance: Arrangements should be made for a joint U.S. -South Vietnamese announcement.

Under Secretary Ball: Should U.S. dependents in South Vietnam be withdrawn at once or only later at a time when the North Vietnamese may be responding to our air attacks?

General Wheeler and Secretary McNamara: Get them out now.

Ambassador Thompson: Should the U.S. dependents be evacuated so quickly that it appears we are running away?

The President: We cannot contemplate the loss of U.S. women and children in an attack by the North Vietnamese or the Viet Cong in Saigon or elsewhere. We have long sought to get out the dependents and have been waiting only for the proper atmosphere.

In summary, we have decided to make the air strikes. Our strikes should be arranged so as to hit in daylight hours. We need a recommendation from Saigon. One hundred and twenty U.S. planes would attack three barracks in the south of North Vietnam and a fourth target would be hit by South Vietnamese planes. A final decision is needed within the hour.

Deputy Secretary Vance: The four targets to be struck are those discussed earlier.

General Wheeler: A total of 132 U.S. planes will be involved, plus 22 South Vietnamese planes for a total of 154. Estimates are that we will lose no planes and the South Vietnamese will lose two planes.

There followed a discussion of several issues including the need for U.S. reinforcements following the air strikes, and whether a Congressional resolution was needed to insure the legal position of the Administration. Under Secretary Ball's position was that the quicker we have a resolution, the better.

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Senator Mansfield: The North Vietnamese attack has opened many eyes. We are not now in a penny ante game. It appears that the local populous in South Vietnam is not behind us, else the Viet Cong could not have carried out their surprise attack.

The President said the group would meet again at 8:00 A.M. tomorrow to decide what additional forces should be moved into South Vietnam. The strike on the four targets was authorized and the request was made that commercial transports be used to fly out dependents. (Location of targets to be struck is marked on the attached map and target list.)

Broudy Smith

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Authority NSC letter 10-24-80
By DCA, NARS, Date 9-2-81

SUMMARY NOTES OF 546th NSC MEETING
February 7, 1965; 8:00 to 9:45 A.M.

Reprisal Strikes in North Vietnam

There was a discussion of the statement to be issued from the White House announcing the reprisal air strikes in North Vietnam.

Senator Mansfield: Why cannot we handle this matter through the United Nations? Can't the Geneva powers act?

The President: This cannot be done.

Secretary McNamara: The surprise attack on our base at Pleiku resulted in 7 U.S. deaths and 109 wounded. Numerous U.S. planes were damaged.

In reprisal, four army barracks in North Vietnam were attacked. Three of the four targets were weathered in. Either the attack planes did not take off or they went to the target but could not see enough to drop their bombs. A total of 33 attack aircraft were involved, plus 8 planes providing aircap and 8 planes engaged in flak suppression.

As to our next move, Ambassador Taylor recommends we attack the three targets not hit because of weather. Notwithstanding his recommendation, no U.S. planes should take part in a second attack. A South Vietnamese attack on their target is acceptable. We would provide an aircap of 4 to 8 planes plus 4 to 8 flak suppression planes to assist the South Vietnamese.

Under Secretary Ball: The reprisal by the South Vietnamese would be for the Viet Cong attack on a South Vietnam village. This is a different situation from the strikes authorized yesterday. We need to avoid appearing to respond only when Americans are attacked.

Secretary McNamara is right in recommending that we should not hit today the three targets not hit yesterday. If we do so, the Communists will get a wrong signal and think that we are launching an offensive. Our officials in Saigon want a graduated response to the entire North Vietnamese military effort rather than merely retaliatory strikes to attacks by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

General Wheeler: The Chiefs believe that ground action against the North Vietnamese effort is adequate to reverse the situation. Air strikes on the three targets are not necessary from a military point of view. However, a South Vietnamese attack on their target is acceptable.

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Ambassador Thompson: We have completed our reprisal action for the North Vietnamese surprise attack. Another attack cannot be called reprisal. The punishment should fit the crime. No additional air strikes should be made now.

(The statement to be issued by the White House was approved and given to George Reedy for release to the press.)

Secretary Dillon: If we encourage an air strike by the South Vietnamese, everyone will think it is a U.S. attack. Therefore, we should send along U.S. planes to ensure that the South Vietnamese strike is successful.

Representative Ford: Why should we only hit one out of four targets? If the plan to strike four was good, why should we not complete it?

Several Council members explained the nature of the decision to make a reprisal strike only.

The President: We need to know the extent of the damage caused by yesterday's strike. This will have a bearing on future decisions. We should give consideration to Taylor's recommendation but for the time being, we should approve a strike by the South Vietnamese only. Bomb damage assessment flights by U.S. planes should be flown.

Secretary McNamara, turning to the question of withdrawing dependents, circulated a text of a White House release covering the subject. It would announce the immediate withdrawal of dependents or their withdrawal in a two-week period, as Ambassador Taylor prefers.

The President: For 15 months we have been trying to bring about the withdrawal of dependents. Thus, a decision to do so within 15 days is acceptable. The number of days in which they will be withdrawn can be worked out so long as it is absolutely certain that the dependents are coming out.

Secretary McNamara: The Hawk Battalion will go ashore at Danang today. Some planes which were diverted and went on to Saigon can be used for withdrawing dependents. As many as 400 or 500 can be removed on these planes.

The President: Do we think that Saigon is going to be a target? If so, why should we make any announcement about the withdrawal of dependents? We should hold the announcement until we have talked to Ambassador Taylor by phone. The word "orderly" should be taken out of the announcement.

The announcement as finally released is attached.

Also attached is the transcript of the Press Secretary's briefing at 10:00 A.M. February 7.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13a
FEBRUARY 7, 1965

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Following meetings with the National Security Council, I have directed the orderly withdrawal of American dependents from South Vietnam.

It has become clear that Hanoi has undertaken a more aggressive course of action against both South Vietnamese and American installations, and against Americans who are in South Vietnam assisting the people of that country to defend their freedom. We have no choice now but to clear the decks and make absolutely clear our continued determination to back South Vietnam in its fight to maintain its independence.

In addition to this action, I have ordered the deployment to South Vietnam of a HAWK air defense battalion. Other reinforcements, ~~ie.~~ units and individuals may follow.

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Authority SIU-183
By LTS NARA, Date 11/8/24

SUMMARY RECORD OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING NO. 548
Wednesday, February 10, 1965, Cabinet Room, 2:10 P.M.

SUBJECT: Vietnam

(See attached list of participants)

NOTE: Minutes of a meeting of these participants prior to the arrival of the President are attached. (Tab A)

Secretary McNamara summarized for the President the latest information on the Viet Cong bombing of the enlisted men's barracks at Qui Nhon. As of that time, one U.S. soldier was known to be dead, 20 injured, and 20 missing. Presumably, the missing soldiers are buried under the rubble of the billet.

Mr. McGeorge Bundy summarized the discussion of the Council members prior to the President's arrival. A response to the Qui Nhon incident by the U.S. in some form is agreed by all present. However, there is a difference as to what the response should be. Some believe we should not launch another raid while Kosygin is in the Far East. Some feel an attack now might force the Chinese Communists and the Soviet Union together.

Acting Secretary Ball reported that the Soviet reaction to the earlier attack on North Vietnam had so far been mild. Mr. Kosygin is leaving for North Korea at 3:00 P.M. today our time. He probably will try to enlist the support of the North Koreans for the holding of the March 1 meeting of Communist Parties which the Soviets are planning despite Chinese Communist opposition. Kosygin is expected to stay two days in North Korea. U. S. Action now puts heavy pressure on the Soviets. We should hold off any reprisal action until Kosygin leaves the area. Ambassador Thompson added that our objective should be to avoid any deeper Soviet commitment to the North Vietnamese. If the Chinese Communist Air Force comes in in response to our retaliatory attack, very heavy pressure is put on the Soviets to come to the aid of the Vietnamese.

Secretary Dillon said he did not believe the Russians would make a major policy decision based on the whereabouts of Kosygin.

Mr. McGeorge Bundy pointed out that we cannot put ourselves in the position of giving the Russians control over our actions by their moving Soviet diplomats from one place to another. If we take no action, the Soviets may think we are in fact a paper tiger.

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Director McCone said that to base our action on a possible Soviet reaction would be to lose sight of our objective which is to help the South Vietnamese overcome aggression.

Secretary McNamara said that Ambassador Taylor, the Joint Chiefs and the Department of Defense recommended a retaliatory strike today at daylight. He said we will soon be facing the difficulty of taking Phase II actions even though there are no incidents created by the Viet Cong. However, the Qui Nhon attack provides us an opportunity today to retaliate immediately. He explained to the President the targets in North Vietnam which could be hit today. They are: Target 14, the Thanh Hoa bridge, which he said he would discuss later; Target 24, the Chanh Hoa army barracks, and Target No. 53, the Phu Vam supply depot, as a weather alternative. In addition to these two U.S. targets, he recommended that Target No. 32, the Vu Con barracks, be struck by the Vietnamese Air Force, assisted by U.S. planes with Target No. 39, the Chap Le barracks, as a weather alternative. (See attached target map with descriptions.) (Tab B)

Mr. McGeorge Bundy said that at an appropriate time we could publicly announce that we had turned a corner and changed our policy but that no mention should be made now of such a decision.

The President stressed the importance of preventing any leaks to newspapers. He appealed to the patriotism of those present and asked the Heads of Departments and Agencies present to survey their departments to ensure that leaks were not coming from their subordinates.

In response to the President's question, the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral McDonald, said he agreed with Secretary McNamara's recommendation. From a military point of view there is no reason to delay a strike.

The President asked what our team in Saigon recommended. Secretary McNamara read parts of a message from General Westmoreland recommending (Tab C) immediate reprisals. (Copy attached) Mr. McGeorge Bundy said that, having talked to Ambassador Taylor recently, he could summarize his views as follows: Reprisals should be undertaken at once, not only to improve morale in South Vietnam but also to give a clear signal to the North Vietnamese. He would not think that Communist behavior would be basically changed if we decided to delay a U.S. strike.

Secretary McNamara said the United States has overwhelming air power in the Southeast Asia area. The Joint Chiefs do not want to add more military power to that already in the Western Pacific. However, he thought that we should move additional forces into the Southeast Asia area for political reasons. He

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suggested that rather than announce the movement of these forces into the area we could informally give the press the list of U. S. forces which have been placed on alert for short notice movement to the Western Pacific.

In response to the President's question, Secretary McNamara said about 130 planes would be used in the strike recommended for approval. He then said he would drop Target 14, the Thanh Hoa bridge, which is much further north than any of the other targets. He suggested that Target No. 53, the Phu Van Support Depot be put in the plan instead of the prestige bridge recommended earlier. He felt that three targets were needed, two for the United States and one for the Vietnamese Air Force to attack. In response to question, he said the targets were not related to the railroad system because damage done to railroad tracks could be easily repaired.

Secretary Ball suggested that today's retaliatory strike be limited to two targets.

The President interrupted to ask whether any casualties had been reported as a result of the earlier strike. Mr. McGeorge Bundy replied that Hanoi had given no casualty figures but merely admitted there had been a loss of life.

There followed a discussion as to whether the last raid by the South Vietnamese had been successful. Secretary McNamara reported that after-battle information revealed that the South Vietnamese planes had hit a target other than the one they were supposed to hit.

The President asked whether all those present agreed we should launch a retaliatory strike.

In response to the President's direct question, the Vice President said he had some doubts as to whether the strike should take place today or whether it should be delayed until Mr. Kosygin left the area. He had mixed feelings about whether we should retaliate as Secretary McNamara had recommended. He shared the State Department's view that Kosygin's presence in Hanoi or in the Far East limited our freedom of action.

Acting Secretary Ball repeated his view that our action should be cautious. He said the strike as now planned, i. e., deleting the Thanh Hoa bridge, minimized the effect on a possible Soviet reaction to the strike.

Ambassador Thompson recommended that the strike be delayed for a few days. He thought we should first give warning that the North Vietnamese must stop their aggressive action now or we would end the safe haven which they now have in North Vietnam. If they then continue their activities we should launch

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Phase II of our December plan for graduated military pressures.

McGeorge Bundy summarized briefly the latest U. S. intelligence estimate of Hanoi's reaction to a new U. S. air strike. (A copy is attached.) (Tab D)

The President suggested we discuss our position with the Soviet Ambassador, possibly sending a message to the Soviet officials as to why we have to react the way we are. McGeorge Bundy said Ambassador Dobrynin gave Ambassador Thompson yesterday a "personal" message from the Soviet Government which had a governmental rather than a personal tone.

The President asked whether we had any other channels of communication. He recalled the Seaborn channel. He was reminded of the conversations which are apparently being carried on informally by the French in Paris.

There followed a discussion of how much news should be made public following the air attack. The consensus was that we should not spell out in detail exactly what we had undertaken to do.

The President raised the question as to whether there should be Congressional consultation. He also asked whether the time had come for him to make a TV speech. He indicated his reluctance to state again what he had said many times previously.

The President then expressed an interest in any possible targets in South Vietnam. In response, Secretary McNamara said there were no worthwhile targets they had been able to find in South Vietnam.

Acting Secretary Ball said we must emphasize South Vietnam's participation in the air attacks. Selecting only two targets, one for U. S. forces and one for the South Vietnamese forces, meant that the operation would be smaller than previously planned. The two targets chosen were closer to the demarcation line and thus an attack on them would be less likely to pull in the MIG airplanes based in North Vietnam.

The President said it had been proper and necessary for us to go into great detail publicly about our first raid in order to reassure the press but he did not think it is necessary following the proposed strike. Public statements should be limited to a generalized description of the new strike.

The President received affirmative answers when he asked Director McCone, Secretary Dillon, and Director Rowan whether they agreed with the recommended strike plan. Mr. Moyers said he thought the strike should be made to meet domestic public opinion requirements.

McGeorge Bundy summarized the consensus that news of the new strike should be released Thursday in Saigon and that special emphasis should be given

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to the joint U. S. - South Vietnamese character of the action.

Secretary McNamara then proposed that the strike be limited to two targets and that the justification for the strike would be a public statement separate from a report of the action.

The President authorized execution of the strike plan as revised.
(The execution ordered is attached.) (Tab E)

As the meeting broke up, the President reviewed a draft State Department telegram to Saigon giving Ambassador Taylor guidance on the political situation in South Vietnam. (Draft telegram attached.) (Tab F)

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

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c #2 - General Eisenhower
no other copies

26
17 February 1965

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, 17 February 1965

Present: The President
General Eisenhower
Secretary McNamara
General Wheeler
Mr. McGeorge Bundy (for part of meeting)
General Goodpaster

The meeting, held in the Cabinet Room, began at 1000 and ended at 1230. The President welcomed General Eisenhower, and said he was hopeful he could hear General Eisenhower's thinking concerning the situation in South Viet-Nam. (During two or three minutes prior to The President's entry into the Cabinet Room, General Eisenhower had begun an exposition of his views on the subject.) General Eisenhower began by stating that he viewed our purpose as that of denying Southeast Asia to the Communists. This is a purpose we share with other nations of the Western World, and they should be brought to acknowledge and support this effort. His second point was that the securing of the area could not be accomplished by a "Roman wall," composed of outside forces such as our own. It is necessary to stop the infiltration, and the Vietnamese themselves must be the basis for that effort. We can, however, play a major part in destroying the will of the enemy to continue the war.

The next major point was that morale is the key factor. He stressed that he was referring to morale in its broadest sense. To emphasize its importance, he quoted Napoleon as saying that "in war morale is to the material element as three is to one"; his only disagreement is that he would rate it as higher than three to one. The factor of morale applies in several ways. First, our aim must be to destroy the enemy's morale; i. e., to destroy his will to continue the war and attack the south. Second, we must do everything possible to raise the morale of our own side. In his judgment, air strikes against the north cannot deny the ability of the DRV to infiltrate. The strikes can, however, discourage the north, and can make them pay a cost for continuing their aggression. He thought that morale is more important in a guerilla war than in a conventional war.

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By: CTS, NARA, Date: 1/8/89

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In the latter case, the combat could be conducted with elite forces, but in the former the participation, and hence the morale, of the entire population is required.

He regarded it as of fundamental importance that the population of South Viet-Nam wants to be friendly to us. He recognized that there are limits as to how far they can manifest such friendliness to us. If security is lacking in the hamlets and in the country side, the population will be frightened and unable to cooperate. If they see that if they defend themselves against the Communists their local leaders will be killed and their village destroyed, they will do little. The question is how to build morale. His first point is that success and victory, even if local and limited, begin to build morale effectively. He noted that morale in the south has risen because of the strikes by U.S. and VNAF against the north. The strikes following the Tonkin Gulf incident raised morale, which then suffered when there was no followup. He also noted that the morale of the ARVN, despite the bitter fighting in which they have been engaged, is high. We should ask ourselves what can be done to get the nation to feel the same confidence in itself as the ARVN units feel.

He made a strong plea for proper support for the Information Service. He referred to the lack of Congressional support for this activity in the past, and commented that he had once been told that the Russians spend more on information activities in France alone than the U.S. spends in the whole world. He related this need to the recent attacks on our embassies. He thought that too many of the people in the countries involved do not know the probity of our aims. While the participation of Communists in such attacks is to be expected, they could not continue without some public participation, or public tolerance. In stressing the need for better information and propaganda, he said he thought the U.S. could take a half billion dollars out of other governmental programs and put it into this with greater advantage. There is too little understanding around the world of the record of the U.S. through recent years, e.g., from 1920 onward. He thought the information activity should fall into three categories. The first is official; everything done in this way should stick strictly to the truth and be entirely objective, disseminating pure information concerning the activities of our country. The second is such activities as Radio Free Europe, which furnish opinion; these should be supported, and should have more latitude. The third should be clandestine; in this field we should get other friends, governments and organizations to do the actual job.

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General Eisenhower then reverted to the needs in South Viet-Nam. There is a need in his opinion for information and inspiration. Also, it is necessary to give security to the population, and to train the local forces in particular for this purpose. He said he understood frequently villagers are threatened and turn over their arms. Mr. McCone had told him that the Viet Cong obtain a large percentage of their arms by capture from the ARVN. He felt that people must want to be saved; otherwise nothing can be done. He added that he believes that the people of South Viet-Nam do want to be saved, but they need a feeling of protection for themselves and their families. They also need the promise of independence and a better life. The French failed to recognize the importance of the desire for independence. We should put great stress on more rice for the people, medical assistance, and local help of many kinds.

Reverting to the question of the air strikes, he said that in his opinion these retaliation actions have helped the situation a great deal. However, he felt it is now important to shift to a campaign of pressure. Targets should be struck north of the border which have an obvious connection with infiltration. He thought such strikes could be well justified before the world.

He commented that he was out of touch with the local political situation there. The changes of government have been bewildering, and it is hard to know whom to deal with. From his experience in the Orient, however, he thought it was important to find someone who is promising and try to bolster him. He commented that he had known Diem well. He recognized the difficulties attending Diem, but recalled that, in the case of France, before De Gaulle came to power, he was anxious to see him gain control. Even though he knew De Gaulle would cause trouble in many areas, he thought De Gaulle was the best hope of saving the situation in France, which was rapidly going to pieces. Diem also was a capable man. Despite his nepotism, he would have been effective, and he felt that the removal of Diem resulted in a great setback for our cause. He reiterated that we need someone to back. He summarized the need for improving the morale of the government, of the population, and of the armed services, particularly the local forces. If morale is up, and with the resources we can make available, there will be progress. We have the basis for this since we are supporting Vietnamese freedom, unlike the French, who would not commit themselves to the freedom of Viet-Nam. He stressed strongly that the U.S. Government must tell our own people just what we are doing in the area, i. e., what our policy is, and what course of action we are following.

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General Eisenhower then reverted to the needs in South Viet-Nam. There is a need in his opinion for information and inspiration. Also, it is necessary to give security to the population, and to train the local forces in particular for this purpose. He said he understood frequently villagers are threatened and turn over their arms. Mr. McCone had told him that the Viet Cong obtain a large percentage of their arms by capture from the ARVN. He felt that people must want to be saved; otherwise nothing can be done. He added that he believes that the people of South Viet-Nam do want to be saved, but they need a feeling of protection for themselves and their families. They also need the promise of independence and a better life. The French failed to recognize the importance of the desire for independence. We should put great stress on more rice for the people, medical assistance, and local help of many kinds.

Reverting to the question of the air strikes, he said that in his opinion these retaliation actions have helped the situation a great deal. However, he felt it is now important to shift to a campaign of pressure. Targets should be struck north of the border which have an obvious connection with infiltration. He thought such strikes could be well justified before the world.

He commented that he was out of touch with the local political situation there. The changes of government have been bewildering, and it is hard to know whom to deal with. From his experience in the Orient, however, he thought it was important to find someone who is promising and try to bolster him. He commented that he had known Diem well. He recognized the difficulties attending Diem, but recalled that, in the case of France, before De Gaulle came to power, he was anxious to see him gain control. Even though he knew De Gaulle would cause trouble in many areas, he thought De Gaulle was the best hope of saving the situation in France, which was rapidly going to pieces. Diem also was a capable man. Despite his nepotism, he would have been effective, and he felt that the removal of Diem resulted in a great setback for our cause. He reiterated that we need someone to back. He summarized the need for improving the morale of the government, of the population, and of the armed services, particularly the local forces. If morale is up, and with the resources we can make available, there will be progress. We have the basis for this since we are supporting Vietnamese freedom, unlike the French, who would not commit themselves to the freedom of Viet-Nam. He stressed strongly that the U.S. Government must tell our own people just what we are doing in the area, i. e., what our policy is, and what course of action we are following.

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He next considered the question of Chinese Communist or Soviet intervention. He said that if they threaten to intervene we should pass the word back to them to take care lest dire results occur to them. He commented on how the armistice was brought about in Korea. Following two years or more of inconclusive effort, shortly after he came to office, he had three messages passed to the Koreans and the Chinese, one through Nehru, one through Chiang Kai-Shek, and one through officials at lower level who were participating in armistice discussions. The gist of the messages was that if a satisfactory armistice were not signed promptly, we would remove the limits we were observing as to the area of combat and the weapons employed. He thought we should let them know now what we are seeking to do in South Viet-Nam, and that we would act against them if necessary. This should not be done publicly, but rather very quietly. He recalled that at the time of the Suez incident, the Soviets had threatened to use rockets against Britain and France. We had immediately passed the word to the Soviets that, although we were in disagreement with Britain and France, if any action were taken against them by the Soviets, we would respond in their support with all means required.

General Eisenhower said he had a final point on tactics and the conduct of operations. He strongly advised decentralization. The essential is to back a commander and trust him. This requires that policies and missions be defined. The mission can be very broadly stated. He recalled his own as a model -- to enter the continent of Europe and bring about the destruction of Germany's war power. He quoted an old adage, "Centralization is the refuge of fear." Our representatives in the field are much more effective if we show that we have confidence in them to do the job. As another tactical point, he said he would not destroy the MIG's in the Hanoi area right away. He would work hard on pacification in South Viet-Nam, and start the attacks in the southern region of North Viet-Nam, in order to begin to charge a price to them for their continued aggression. He would let them and their Communist supporters have no mistaken idea as to our purpose. He would make clear what we are going to do in this regard.

At the President's request General Wheeler commented that the U.S. Government has already started action with the objective of finding ways to strengthen the security of the people of South Viet-Nam. In addition, on the military aspects of General Eisenhower's comments, he stated that in a general way these suggestions have been the approach the Administration has been taking.

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The President, after thanking General Eisenhower for his comments, said he could best give the thinking of the Administration by quoting from a message being sent to Ambassador Bruce as a basis for discussion with Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. The text he read was as follows:

"For your guidance in talking with Wilson, our current thinking is as follows:

"1. We have recommended, and we think the President will concur in, continuing air and naval action against North Viet-Nam whenever and wherever necessary. Our thinking has been and continues to be that any such action shall be limited and fitting and adequate as a response to the continuous aggression in South Viet-Nam directed in Hanoi.

"2. Within 24 hours after the next military action we expect to make a statement. Current plan is that this statement would come from the Secretary of State, but decision is not final. This statement of policy will reflect following elements of our thinking:

"a. First and foremost, we shall intensify by all available means the program of pacification within South Viet-Nam. Every possible step will be taken to find and attack Viet Cong concentrations and headquarters within South Viet-Nam by any and every conventional means available to GVN and US.

"b. Execution of a joint program of measured and limited air action against selected military targets in the DRV. Air strikes under this program will be jointly planned and agreed. We presently plan to present this program to our National Security Council tomorrow.

"c. We plan detailed presentation to UN Security Council of the case against the DRV as the aggressor. We do not repeat not expect to touch upon readiness for talks or negotiations at this time.

"In execution of item c., above, Ambassador Stevenson will call for a meeting of the Security Council immediately after next military action against DRV and will there present a fully documented demonstration that the basic cause of the trouble in SVN is aggression from the North. Stevenson will keep focus on DRV aggression.

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"3. Careful public statements of USG, combined with fact of continuing air action, are expected to make it clear that military action will continue while aggression continues. But focus of public attention will be kept as far as possible on aggression, not on military operations. There will be no comment of any sort on future actions except that all such actions will be adequate and measured and fitting to aggression. Each new military action will be reported at once to the Security Council, together with an account of continuing acts of aggression.

"4. Concurrently with next military action, the US will inform major friendly governments as well as the Soviet Government of our views as outlined above.

"In presenting this position you should emphasize to the Prime Minister the very high degree of secrecy attaching to this plan of action until final Presidential decision and orders have put it into operation."

The President made two comments. First, he was planning to meet with the National Security Council later in the day, or the following day, and expected to make his decision at that time. Second, he commented that there had been a good deal of discussion regarding the reference in paragraph 2. c. of the message to negotiations. Some of his advisers were inclined to go further in the direction of indicating a readiness or desire for an early conference. He invited General Eisenhower's comment on this point. General Eisenhower cited President Lincoln's handling of the Emancipation Proclamation. He had had it ready for issuance long before it was promulgated, and in fact had wanted to put it out. He felt, however, that he had to wait for a success, since otherwise its issuance would be taken as an act of weakness if not desperation. He therefore held it during the dreary months of military reverses, but seized upon Lee's retreat from the Battle of Antietam (at which Lee's army might well have been destroyed) as the occasion to issue it. With regard to negotiations, General Eisenhower felt that negotiation from weakness is likely to lead only into deceit and vulnerability, which could be disastrous to us. On the other hand, if we can show a fine record of successes, or real and dramatic accomplishment, we would be in good position to negotiate. He advised not to negotiate from a position of weakness. He commented that Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. has not had experience with this kind of problem. We, however, have learned that Munichs win nothing; therefore, his answer to the British would be "Not now boys."

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The President read again the text of the message concerning Ambassador Stevenson's presentation of the case in the U. N. -- it is to be cast in terms of DRV aggression from the north. He read again that military action would continue while the aggression continues. General Eisenhower thought the message was a good one. As to tactics, he would suggest that we should have the VNAF ready so that, if the Viet Cong murder a governmental official, within as little as two hours they could strike with six or eight planes against some targets in the north. This should be done every time there is such an atrocity, and in this case the action should be "blared out" publicly to create an immediate impact and let the DRV know they will not be getting a free ride any longer.

The President then read from a message received from Ambassador Martin in Bangkok reporting his meeting with the Thai Foreign Minister. The text he read was as follows:

"This morning in my first meeting with Thanat after my return, I found him in a rosy glow over vast improvement in morale throughout Southeast Asia as a result of American and SVN strikes at DRV. He was particularly pleased at the SVN participation. He said he hoped that as result of release of details on extent of DRV infiltration we would realize we had perfectly justifiable rationale to continue such joint strikes at DCN targets connected with such infiltration. Thanat said future strikes need not, therefore, be limited to reprisals for attacks on American installations or personnel.

"He went on to observe that it was quite possible that we had now seen the low point and future progress should be steadily upward. He said the vastly increased hopefulness would quite likely serve as a cement of sorts among SVN factions and said Quat seemed to have best chance since 1954 to create more broadly based regime. He agreed with my observation it quite likely Viet Cong would try more spectacular strikes but thought prompt retaliatory action would soon prove this unprofitable tactic. He made it clear, in response to my request for elaboration his thought 'low point' had been reached, that he well aware struggle would take long time with sharp reverses from time to time but again expressed conviction that psychological turn-around reached if we remained firm. Thanat said he had only one worry. Referring to 15 Feb issue of Paris edition of NY HERALD TRIBUNE and NY TIMES, carrying spate of stories on 'negotiations', he said he was certain Secretary understood now was not the proper moment to indicate any desire to return to conference

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table. When I pressed him on Thai reaction he said, after considerable pause for reflection, he thought he could bring Thai government to new conference, but only when we had continued pressures on north for sufficient period to make negotiation worthwhile to north to obtain relief from such pressures. This, he said, obviously was quite a bit in the future since Hanoi would undoubtedly need quite a bit of convincing. I said I thought the Secretary had made this position very clear in his reiteration of the necessity for Hanoi to begin observance of the commitments undertaken in 1954 before considering new negotiations. Thanat agreed.

"In response to my question Thanat said he gathered from comments from officials Soviet Embassy here that Kosygin taken completely by surprise at Pleiku attacks. He thought Sovs would confine their reactions to 'noise' and a bit more ink on American Embassy walls throughout the world. He thought Soviet hard-headed appraisal their self-interest almost guaranteed no greater reaction. Similarly, he thought in absence direct threat to ChiCom borders, there would be no Chinese reaction. He did think, however, that Thailand would be subjected to increasing subversive pressures and hoped we could be helpful. I said my consultations in Washington convinced me that specific Thai plans in this regard would find helpful and forthcoming response from U.S. side."

General Eisenhower said this was a fine message, and expressed congratulations to the Ambassador for asking the right questions.

Secretary McNamara picked up the point of not trying to destroy the capability of the DRV to support the insurgency in the south. He thought such an attempt would not succeed. Instead we should try to destroy the will of the DRV to continue their political interference and their guerilla activity. We should try to induce them to get out of the war without having their country destroyed and to realize that if they do not get out, their country will be destroyed. General Eisenhower added that an objective of the strikes is to improve the morale of the people in the south. He cited the example of Mosby's operations in northern Virginia during the Civil War. Mosby could succeed only as long as he had the support of the population. The importance of such support also was shown in Lee's failures both times he attempted to invade the north and found himself without intelligence because he was surrounded by a hostile population.

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The morale of South Viet-Nam will rise when the people see the strikes in the north, and when they are given some security in the south. More than this is needed however. There should be inspiration and some positive contribution. In the Orient the radio is an outstanding way to motivate. General Eisenhower referred to his observation in an Indian village where all the people of the village would gather around a single radio in very bad repair to gain contact with the outer world. Help should also be given to the population of the countryside and the hamlets, to let them know that America is with them. In addition, rice, medical attention and many other practical forms of help to the people should be utilized.

The President said he was much interested in General Eisenhower's recommendations concerning the strengthening of the information services and activities. He stated that he had in mind to send Frank Stanton and Carl Rowan out to Viet-Nam in the near future to see what could be done to strengthen these activities. He observed that the air strikes against the north might well have an additional effect, beyond those mentioned, of helping to stabilize the government in the south.

(Mr. McGeorge Bundy joined the meeting at this point.)

The President next said that he wished to make a close analysis of these strikes, to consider how much provocation they would give, and what the effects of various types of strikes might be. He mentioned specifically the "prestige" bridge target. At his request, General Wheeler explained the targeting that has been accomplished, drawing upon the 94 target list, and indicating the general complex of targets in the south which have been hit and are under consideration for the next strikes. General Eisenhower thought it would be good to confine strike activities to the southern end of North Viet-Nam initially. If the Viet Cong do something big in the way of attacking in South Viet-Nam, then we should "hit them big" in the north. He thought we should do as much as possible with the VNAF. Their airmen are bound to brag about what they have done, and this will give a psychology of accomplishment to the South Vietnamese, with benefit to their morale. He thought the program should be one in which we put the pressure on and keep it on. He would obliterate the facilities the DRV have constructed in the DMZ.

The President asked for a judgment as to the likelihood of the Chinese and the Russians coming into the war. General Eisenhower thought the Chinese would react in a much harder way than the Russians. To a question by The President as to whether the Russians might put pressure on Berlin,

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General Eisenhower felt that, in a matter so serious, they would choose their own course rather than be influenced by what we do. He said he would not fear such a reaction. The President then asked what we might do if Chinese forces were to come south, posing a requirement for eight to ten U.S. divisions in Southeast Asia. General Eisenhower said he would hit them at once with air, picking out the key points along their support routes. He said he would use any weapons required, adding that if we were to use tactical nuclear weapons, such use would not in itself add to the chance of escalation. With regard to starting a bigger war, he felt that the Chinese would not do this unless they had made the decision on their own. He further stated that he believed they would not come in to the war, but that, if they should, he would use some additional ground units against them, but would essentially shift to use of different weapons. He commented that the U.S. must take extreme care never to allow itself to get over-deployed. Our rule must always be to "hit the head of the snake." (As an aside, he commented that in his opinion the U.S. is over-deployed in Europe. The need of the Europeans for U.S. forces there has long since diminished. He acknowledged that many people do not agree with him in this view.) He stated that if our intelligence saw fifteen to twenty Chinese divisions coming into the war, we should hit their LOC with the strongest possible attacks. General Wheeler commented that we have given thought to the possibility of putting one U.S. division south of the DMZ, both to protect and to deter while the strikes against the north go on. General Eisenhower said he would see merit in action of this kind, but would not send in anything like a dozen U.S. divisions, and start a big war of that kind. He would use whatever was needed to immobilize the attacking forces and would secure the key areas in South Viet-Nam, for example, the three major airfield areas which were outlined to him.

At this point members of The President's staff came into the Cabinet Room to ask what might be said to the press, and whether pictures might be taken. The President thought it might simply be pointed out that General Eisenhower was in the city having a monthly physical checkup at Walter Reed, and that he had taken advantage of his presence to meet with him to talk about Europe, Southeast Asia, and other world problems. He asked whether General Eisenhower would care to meet the press, and General Eisenhower said he felt that any statements made concerning meetings in the White House should be made by The President or on his behalf, and that he would simply go out as he had come in, through the south grounds.

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General Eisenhower suggested that every one of our ambassadors should be given the substance of the message sent to Ambassador Bruce, and they should be advised to say to the government to which they are accredited that these governments also should take some responsibility for what is being done in Southeast Asia in behalf of the freedom of South Viet-Nam. To illustrate his point, he described how France and Britain had failed to tell their people what stand our government was taking on the Suez matter prior to the invasion. As a result, there was bitter feeling in those countries on the unjustified grounds that we had not given notice we would oppose them.

The President said he would like to revert to the subject of negotiations. General Eisenhower said there are two requirements in his view. First, the enemy must want to come to us, which means that we must be in the position of strength. The second is that any agreement reached must be self-enforcing, or we must be able to put our own people into the area in order to verify performance. He asked in this regard what the Russians are doing about their recent nuclear tests, which "vented" in violation of the treaty. Mr. Bundy reviewed the exchange of notes with the Russians, and indicated that the dialogue is still going on. He also indicated that the treaty is not precise on this score, and that if the Russians take the view that very small amounts of debris should be disregarded, we may be able to use such latitude ourselves in the future. General Eisenhower saw merit in such a position.

The President next referred to the Resolution the Congress had passed following the Tonkin Gulf incident, giving him authority to act. He asked General Eisenhower whether he thought that Resolution was strong enough, and ample to fill the need. General Eisenhower said that it had sounded to him very much like the Formosa Resolution which had left a large area of discretion and flexibility to The President, and that he thought that this is the way it should be. The President commented that the Formosa Resolution had been the model for this one.

At The President's request Mr. Bundy reviewed very briefly the observations he had made on his recent trip to South Viet-Nam. Two outstanding points were the lack of security for the population in the countryside, and the little experience of government which South Viet-Nam has had. The President commented that steps are being taken to try to strengthen the government and to seek some rapprochement with Khanh. He said he is considering the possibility of trying to get some good U.S. reporters and TV people to go out to the area for a period of thirty to ninety days, in order to

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introduce greater responsibility in the handling of the political reporting. Mr. Bundy made the point that the Buddhists have had no experience in taking responsibility. Theirs has been an opposition role. Also he stated that Khanh is very Asian and devious politically. He added that General Westmoreland had said that, in the military matters on which he deals with Khanh, the latter had never deceived him.

The President said he saw great importance in developing a sense of participation on the part of the South Vietnamese. We should find targets they can really hit, and should work the VNAF hard. General Wheeler reviewed the "MAROPS" program of unacknowledged attacks from the sea conducted by the South Vietnamese. General Eisenhower said he thought these operations were valuable. The President reiterated that we should get as many South Vietnamese as possible in sea and patrol operations.

(At this point The President and General Eisenhower went into The President's office to have pictures taken, and Mr. Bundy left the meeting.)

When the President and General Eisenhower returned, Mr. McNamara asked for further comment on how General Eisenhower would advise responding to escalation, and what he had in mind regarding tactical nuclear weapons. General Eisenhower said he would make use of our carrier strength in the area for instant retaliation. For this purpose it should be kept in constant readiness. He would pass warnings to the Chinese Communists. Pick out the two or three key points in South Viet-Nam, such as Saigon and the air bases, and guard these strongly. General Wheeler identified these as Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. General Eisenhower said tactical nuclear weapons should be used when the enemy comes in large strength as organized formations. If they have strong forces these will have depots which can be struck. General Wheeler commented that there are bridges very important to such a campaign over the Red River north of Hanoi. General Eisenhower commented that this would be in effect a new war. We should be sure that the enemy does not lack an appreciation of our stamina and determination to keep nations free by whatever means required. He thought that if they find we are ready, they will not come in in great strength. He referred to the Chinese in Korea. There was a gentlemen's agreement between us and our allies after the very early days of the war -- well known to the Chinese -- that we would not cross the Yalu or even strike the bridges on the Yalu, nor would we use nuclear weapons. With regard to South Viet-Nam, we should let it be known that we are not bound by such restrictions.

The President asked General Eisenhower what he could tell him about the course of events in Korea. General Eisenhower said that in 1949 severe cuts were made in the U.S. military budget. The Joint Chiefs of Staff at that time (with himself presiding as chairman at The President's request) reached the view that in a global war Korea would not be important, although it was important in a cold war situation. As a result of the cut back of the budget and of the armed forces, it was necessary to withdraw our units from Korea. Secretary Acheson made a public statement at that time that Korea lay outside our security perimeter. Soon thereafter the Communists invaded the country. Mr. Truman initially attempted to meet the attack, using only naval and air forces. General Eisenhower said once we had committed ourselves to the war, he had advised Mr. Truman that we must use whatever force was needed. He had told him that we must succeed, and that if ground forces were required they should be put in. The President said he is concerned regarding the North Vietnamese, and the possibility that war in Viet-Nam might follow the same course as the war in Korea. General Eisenhower said the U.S. has put its prestige onto the proposition of keeping Southeast Asia free. Indonesia is now failing. We cannot let the Indo-Chinese peninsula go. He hoped it would not be necessary to use the six to eight divisions mentioned, but if it should be necessary, so be it. He would warn the Chinese in advance through many channels.

The President asked just what General Eisenhower had done in 1953 to bring the war in Korea to a close. He said he had had the word passed through the three channels he had previously mentioned, telling the Chinese that they must agree to an armistice quickly, since he had decided to remove the restrictions of area and weapons if the war had to be continued. General Eisenhower said that the greatest danger in his judgment in the present situation is that the Chinese get the idea that we will go just so far and no further in terms of the level of war we would conduct. That would be the beginning of the end, since they would know all they had to do was go further than we do. The President asked how such information might be gotten out, i. e., that we think the situation would be most dangerous unless the Chinese understood that we will do whatever is required. He and General Eisenhower discussed the possibility of approaching Ayub on this matter. They agreed he is a very fine man with whom we are having some difficulties at the present time. The President is considering what can be done to improve our ties with him. General Eisenhower described this problem as one boil in the whole world system. We must look at the effect of our actions on the whole world. When we say we will help other countries we must then be staunch. It is, of course, necessary to work out our tactics, and we should not be unnecessarily provocative.

General Eisenhower next referred to a talk which had taken place between himself and General De Gaulle at the Churchill funeral. General Eisenhower had told him that accounts were appearing in the press that General De Gaulle had stated that he had sent a memo on NATO organization to President Eisenhower in 1958, and that the memorandum was never answered or even acknowledged. General Eisenhower recalled to him that the memorandum was fully answered, and, in fact, a counter proposal was made. General De Gaulle stated that he remembered the exchange clearly, and that he had never made a statement such as the press has been carrying. At The President's request, General Eisenhower offered some suggestions as to the manner in which a meeting of The President and De Gaulle might be conducted. At their first meeting he would suggest not getting into specific problems, but talking about the world situation in very broad terms and the cultural role of France. In a subsequent meeting a few specific problems might be introduced, with an explanation of the purposes of the U.S. in this regard. No commitment should be expected from De Gaulle. However, he responds to a friendly approach. General Eisenhower described him as a warm friend of many years standing -- a man who is determined, dedicated and deeply wounded by any slight to France or to himself. The President stated that although France and De Gaulle have done many things that bother us, he is determined not to reply in kind. He commented on an incident that had occurred at the time of President Kennedy's funeral. President De Gaulle had indicated an interest in visiting the U.S. in the spring of 1964. Subsequently, President Johnson, in explaining to a group of governors why he was some minutes late joining their meeting, told them he had been meeting with General De Gaulle and told them of General De Gaulle's interest in a later visit to the U.S. This word was leaked to the press, and the French sent word that General De Gaulle would not visit the U.S., but would be happy to receive President Johnson in Paris. General Eisenhower thought that a visit by The President to Paris, London, Bonn and Rome, this year if possible, would be extremely valuable. The President stated that he had such a trip very much in mind.

At the luncheon of The President and General Eisenhower the primary subject of discussion was the problem of gold flow and U.S. balance of payments. Certain of the problems involved as a result of the requirement that individuals considered for Cabinet posts divest themselves of stock holdings were also discussed.


A. J. GOODPASTER
Lt. General, U.S.A.



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

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17 February 1965

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, 17 February 1965

Present: The President
General Eisenhower
Secretary McNamara
General Wheeler
Mr. McGeorge Bundy (for part of meeting)
General Goodpaster

The meeting, held in the Cabinet Room, began at 1000 and ended at 1230. The President welcomed General Eisenhower, and said he was hopeful he could hear General Eisenhower's thinking concerning the situation in South Viet-Nam. (During two or three minutes prior to The President's entry into the Cabinet Room, General Eisenhower had begun an exposition of his views on the subject.) General Eisenhower began by stating that he viewed our purpose as that of denying Southeast Asia to the Communists. This is a purpose we share with other nations of the Western World, and they should be brought to acknowledge and support this effort. His second point was that the securing of the area could not be accomplished by a "Roman wall," composed of outside forces such as our own. It is necessary to stop the infiltration, and the Vietnamese themselves must be the basis for that effort. We can, however, play a major part in destroying the will of the enemy to continue the war.

The next major point was that morale is the key factor. He stressed that he was referring to morale in its broadest sense. To emphasize its importance, he quoted Napoleon as saying that "in war morale is to the material element as three is to one"; his only disagreement is that he would rate it as higher than three to one. The factor of morale applies in several ways. First, our aim must be to destroy the enemy's morale; i. e., to destroy his will to continue the war and attack the south. Second, we must do everything possible to raise the morale of our own side. In his judgment, air strikes against the north cannot deny the ability of the DRV to infiltrate. The strikes can, however, discourage the north, and can make them pay a cost for continuing their aggression. He thought that morale is more important in a guerilla war than in a conventional war.

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In the latter case, the combat could be conducted with elite forces, but in the former the participation, and hence the morale, of the entire population is required.

He regarded it as of fundamental importance that the population of South Viet-Nam wants to be friendly to us. He recognized that there are limits as to how far they can manifest such friendliness to us. If security is lacking in the hamlets and in the country side, the population will be frightened and unable to cooperate. If they see that if they defend themselves against the Communists their local leaders will be killed and their village destroyed, they will do little. The question is how to build morale. His first point is that success and victory, even if local and limited, begin to build morale effectively. He noted that morale in the south has risen because of the strikes by U.S. and VNAF against the north. The strikes following the Tonkin Gulf incident raised morale, which then suffered when there was no followup. He also noted that the morale of the ARVN, despite the bitter fighting in which they have been engaged, is high. We should ask ourselves what can be done to get the nation to feel the same confidence in itself as the ARVN units feel.

He made a strong plea for proper support for the Information Service. He referred to the lack of Congressional support for this activity in the past, and commented that he had once been told that the Russians spend more on information activities in France alone than the U.S. spends in the whole world. He related this need to the recent attacks on our embassies. He thought that too many of the people in the countries involved do not know the probity of our aims. While the participation of Communists in such attacks is to be expected, they could not continue without some public participation, or public tolerance. In stressing the need for better information and propaganda, he said he thought the U.S. could take a half billion dollars out of other governmental programs and put it into this with greater advantage. There is too little understanding around the world of the record of the U.S. through recent years, e.g., from 1920 onward. He thought the information activity should fall into three categories. The first is official; everything done in this way should stick strictly to the truth and be entirely objective, disseminating pure information concerning the activities of our country. The second is such activities as Radio Free Europe, which furnish opinion; these should be supported, and should have more latitude. The third should be clandestine; in this field we should get other friends, governments and organizations to do the actual job.

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He next considered the question of Chinese Communist or Soviet intervention. He said that if they threaten to intervene we should pass the word back to them to take care lest dire results occur to them. He commented on how the armistice was brought about in Korea. Following two years or more of inconclusive effort, shortly after he came to office, he had three messages passed to the Koreans and the Chinese, one through Nehru, one through Chiang Kai-Shek, and one through officials at lower level who were participating in armistice discussions. The gist of the messages was that if a satisfactory armistice were not signed promptly, we would remove the limits we were observing as to the area of combat and the weapons employed. He thought we should let them know now what we are seeking to do in South Viet-Nam, and that we would act against them if necessary. This should not be done publicly, but rather very quietly. He recalled that at the time of the Suez incident, the Soviets had threatened to use rockets against Britain and France. We had immediately passed the word to the Soviets that, although we were in disagreement with Britain and France, if any action were taken against them by the Soviets, we would respond in their support with all means required.

General Eisenhower said he had a final point on tactics and the conduct of operations. He strongly advised decentralization. The essential is to back a commander and trust him. This requires that policies and missions be defined. The mission can be very broadly stated. He recalled his own as a model -- to enter the continent of Europe and bring about the destruction of Germany's war power. He quoted an old adage, "Centralization is the refuge of fear." Our representatives in the field are much more effective if we show that we have confidence in them to do the job. As another tactical point, he said he would not destroy the MIG's in the Hanoi area right away. He would work hard on pacification in South Viet-Nam, and start the attacks in the southern region of North Viet-Nam, in order to begin to charge a price to them for their continued aggression. He would let them and their Communist supporters have no mistaken idea as to our purpose. He would make clear what we are going to do in this regard.

At the President's request General Wheeler commented that the U.S. Government has already started action with the objective of finding ways to strengthen the security of the people of South Viet-Nam. In addition, on the military aspects of General Eisenhower's comments, he stated that in a general way these suggestions have been the approach the Administration has been taking.

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The President, after thanking General Eisenhower for his comments, said he could best give the thinking of the Administration by quoting from a message being sent to Ambassador Bruce as a basis for discussion with Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. The text he read was as follows:

"For your guidance in talking with Wilson, our current thinking is as follows:

"1. We have recommended, and we think the President will concur in, continuing air and naval action against North Viet-Nam whenever and wherever necessary. Our thinking has been and continues to be that any such action shall be limited and fitting and adequate as a response to the continuous aggression in South Viet-Nam directed in Hanoi.

"2. Within 24 hours after the next military action we expect to make a statement. Current plan is that this statement would come from the Secretary of State, but decision is not final. This statement of policy will reflect following elements of our thinking:

"a. First and foremost, we shall intensify by all available means the program of pacification within South Viet-Nam. Every possible step will be taken to find and attack Viet Cong concentrations and headquarters within South Viet-Nam by any and every conventional means available to GVN and US.

"b. Execution of a joint program of measured and limited air action against selected military targets in the DRV. Air strikes under this program will be jointly planned and agreed. We presently plan to present this program to our National Security Council tomorrow.

"c. We plan detailed presentation to UN Security Council of the case against the DRV as the aggressor. We do not repeat not expect to touch upon readiness for talks or negotiations at this time.

"In execution of item c., above, Ambassador Stevenson will call for a meeting of the Security Council immediately after next military action against DRV and will there present a fully documented demonstration that the basic cause of the trouble in SVN is aggression from the North. Stevenson will keep focus on DRV aggression.

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"3. Careful public statements of USG, combined with fact of continuing air action, are expected to make it clear that military action will continue while aggression continues. But focus of public attention will be kept as far as possible on aggression, not on military operations. There will be no comment of any sort on future actions except that all such actions will be adequate and measured and fitting to aggression. Each new military action will be reported at once to the Security Council, together with an account of continuing acts of aggression.

"4. Concurrently with next military action, the US will inform major friendly governments as well as the Soviet Government of our views as outlined above.

"In presenting this position you should emphasize to the Prime Minister the very high degree of secrecy attaching to this plan of action until final Presidential decision and orders have put it into operation."

The President made two comments. First, he was planning to meet with the National Security Council later in the day, or the following day, and expected to make his decision at that time. Second, he commented that there had been a good deal of discussion regarding the reference in paragraph 2. c. of the message to negotiations. Some of his advisers were inclined to go further in the direction of indicating a readiness or desire for an early conference. He invited General Eisenhower's comment on this point. General Eisenhower cited President Lincoln's handling of the Emancipation Proclamation. He had had it ready for issuance long before it was promulgated, and in fact had wanted to put it out. He felt, however, that he had to wait for a success, since otherwise its issuance would be taken as an act of weakness if not desperation. He therefore held it during the dreary months of military reverses, but seized upon Lee's retreat from the Battle of Antietam (at which Lee's army might well have been destroyed) as the occasion to issue it. With regard to negotiations, General Eisenhower felt that negotiation from weakness is likely to lead only into deceit and vulnerability, which could be disastrous to us. On the other hand, if we can show a fine record of successes, or real and dramatic accomplishment, we would be in good position to negotiate. He advised not to negotiate from a position of weakness. He commented that Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. has not had experience with this kind of problem. We, however, have learned that Munichs win nothing; therefore, his answer to the British would be "Not now boys."

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The President read again the text of the message concerning Ambassador Stevenson's presentation of the case in the U. N. -- it is to be cast in terms of DRV aggression from the north. He read again that military action would continue while the aggression continues. General Eisenhower thought the message was a good one. As to tactics, he would suggest that we should have the VNAF ready so that, if the Viet Cong murder a governmental official, within as little as two hours they could strike with six or eight planes against some targets in the north. This should be done every time there is such an atrocity, and in this case the action should be "blared out" publicly to create an immediate impact and let the DRV know they will not be getting a free ride any longer.

The President then read from a message received from Ambassador Martin in Bangkok reporting his meeting with the Thai Foreign Minister. The text he read was as follows:

"This morning in my first meeting with Thanat after my return, I found him in a rosy glow over vast improvement in morale throughout Southeast Asia as a result of American and SVN strikes at DRV. He was particularly pleased at the SVN participation. He said he hoped that as result of release of details on extent of DRV infiltration we would realize we had perfectly justifiable rationale to continue such joint strikes at DCN targets connected with such infiltration. Thanat said future strikes need not, therefore, be limited to reprisals for attacks on American installations or personnel.

"He went on to observe that it was quite possible that we had now seen the low point and future progress should be steadily upward. He said the vastly increased hopefulness would quite likely serve as a cement of sorts among SVN factions and said Quat seemed to have best chance since 1954 to create more broadly based regime. He agreed with my observation it quite likely Viet Cong would try more spectacular strikes but thought prompt retaliatory action would soon prove this unprofitable tactic. He made it clear, in response to my request for elaboration his thought 'low point' had been reached, that he well aware struggle would take long time with sharp reverses from time to time but again expressed conviction that psychological turn-around reached if we remained firm. Thanat said he had only one worry. Referring to 15 Feb issue of Paris edition of NY HERALD TRIBUNE and NY TIMES, carrying spate of stories on 'negotiations', he said he was certain Secretary understood now was not the proper moment to indicate any desire to return to conference

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table. When I pressed him on Thai reaction he said, after considerable pause for reflection, he thought he could bring Thai government to new conference, but only when we had continued pressures on north for sufficient period to make negotiation worthwhile to north to obtain relief from such pressures. This, he said, obviously was quite a bit in the future since Hanoi would undoubtedly need quite a bit of convincing. I said I thought the Secretary had made this position very clear in his reiteration of the necessity for Hanoi to begin observance of the commitments undertaken in 1954 before considering new negotiations. Thanat agreed.

"In response to my question Thanat said he gathered from comments from officials Soviet Embassy here that Kosygin taken completely by surprise at Pleiku attacks. He thought Sovs would confine their reactions to 'noise' and a bit more ink on American Embassy walls throughout the world. He thought Soviet hard-headed appraisal their self-interest almost guaranteed no greater reaction. Similarly, he thought in absence direct threat to ChiCom borders, there would be no Chinese reaction. He did think, however, that Thailand would be subjected to increasing subversive pressures and hoped we could be helpful. I said my consultations in Washington convinced me that specific Thai plans in this regard would find helpful and forthcoming response from U.S. side."

General Eisenhower said this was a fine message, and expressed congratulations to the Ambassador for asking the right questions.

Secretary McNamara picked up the point of not trying to destroy the capability of the DRV to support the insurgency in the south. He thought such an attempt would not succeed. Instead we should try to destroy the will of the DRV to continue their political interference and their guerilla activity. We should try to induce them to get out of the war without having their country destroyed and to realize that if they do not get out, their country will be destroyed. General Eisenhower added that an objective of the strikes is to improve the morale of the people in the south. He cited the example of Mosby's operations in northern Virginia during the Civil War. Mosby could succeed only as long as he had the support of the population. The importance of such support also was shown in Lee's failures both times he attempted to invade the north and found himself without intelligence because he was surrounded by a hostile population.

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The morale of South Viet-Nam will rise when the people see the strikes in the north, and when they are given some security in the south. More than this is needed however. There should be inspiration and some positive contribution. In the Orient the radio is an outstanding way to motivate. General Eisenhower referred to his observation in an Indian village where all the people of the village would gather around a single radio in very bad repair to gain contact with the outer world. Help should also be given to the population of the countryside and the hamlets, to let them know that America is with them. In addition, rice, medical attention and many other practical forms of help to the people should be utilized.

The President said he was much interested in General Eisenhower's recommendations concerning the strengthening of the information services and activities. He stated that he had in mind to send Frank Stanton and Carl Rowan out to Viet-Nam in the near future to see what could be done to strengthen these activities. He observed that the air strikes against the north might well have an additional effect, beyond those mentioned, of helping to stabilize the government in the south.

(Mr. McGeorge Bundy joined the meeting at this point.)

The President next said that he wished to make a close analysis of these strikes, to consider how much provocation they would give, and what the effects of various types of strikes might be. He mentioned specifically the "prestige" bridge target. At his request, General Wheeler explained the targeting that has been accomplished, drawing upon the 94 target list, and indicating the general complex of targets in the south which have been hit and are under consideration for the next strikes. General Eisenhower thought it would be good to confine strike activities to the southern end of North Viet-Nam initially. If the Viet Cong do something big in the way of attacking in South Viet-Nam, then we should "hit them big" in the north. He thought we should do as much as possible with the VNAF. Their airmen are bound to brag about what they have done, and this will give a psychology of accomplishment to the South Vietnamese, with benefit to their morale. He thought the program should be one in which we put the pressure on and keep it on. He would obliterate the facilities the DRV have constructed in the DMZ.

The President asked for a judgment as to the likelihood of the Chinese and the Russians coming into the war. General Eisenhower thought the Chinese would react in a much harder way than the Russians. To a question by The President as to whether the Russians might put pressure on Berlin,

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General Eisenhower felt that, in a matter so serious, they would choose their own course rather than be influenced by what we do. He said he would not fear such a reaction. The President then asked what we might do if Chinese forces were to come south, posing a requirement for eight to ten U.S. divisions in Southeast Asia. General Eisenhower said he would hit them at once with air, picking out the key points along their support routes. He said he would use any weapons required, adding that if we were to use tactical nuclear weapons, such use would not in itself add to the chance of escalation. With regard to starting a bigger war, he felt that the Chinese would not do this unless they had made the decision on their own. He further stated that he believed they would not come in to the war, but that, if they should, he would use some additional ground units against them, but would essentially shift to use of different weapons. He commented that the U.S. must take extreme care never to allow itself to get over-deployed. Our rule must always be to "hit the head of the snake." (As an aside, he commented that in his opinion the U.S. is over-deployed in Europe. The need of the Europeans for U.S. forces there has long since diminished. He acknowledged that many people do not agree with him in this view.) He stated that if our intelligence saw fifteen to twenty Chinese divisions coming into the war, we should hit their LOC with the strongest possible attacks. General Wheeler commented that we have given thought to the possibility of putting one U.S. division south of the DMZ, both to protect and to deter while the strikes against the north go on. General Eisenhower said he would see merit in action of this kind, but would not send in anything like a dozen U.S. divisions, and start a big war of that kind. He would use whatever was needed to immobilize the attacking forces and would secure the key areas in South Viet-Nam, for example, the three major airfield areas which were outlined to him.

At this point members of The President's staff came into the Cabinet Room to ask what might be said to the press, and whether pictures might be taken. The President thought it might simply be pointed out that General Eisenhower was in the city having a monthly physical checkup at Walter Reed, and that he had taken advantage of his presence to meet with him to talk about Europe, Southeast Asia, and other world problems. He asked whether General Eisenhower would care to meet the press, and General Eisenhower said he felt that any statements made concerning meetings in the White House should be made by The President or on his behalf, and that he would simply go out as he had come in, through the south grounds.

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General Eisenhower suggested that every one of our ambassadors should be given the substance of the message sent to Ambassador Bruce, and they should be advised to say to the government to which they are accredited that these governments also should take some responsibility for what is being done in Southeast Asia in behalf of the freedom of South Viet-Nam. To illustrate his point, he described how France and Britain had failed to tell their people what stand our government was taking on the Suez matter prior to the invasion. As a result, there was bitter feeling in those countries on the unjustified grounds that we had not given notice we would oppose them.

The President said he would like to revert to the subject of negotiations. General Eisenhower said there are two requirements in his view. First, the enemy must want to come to us, which means that we must be in the position of strength. The second is that any agreement reached must be self-enforcing, or we must be able to put our own people into the area in order to verify performance. He asked in this regard what the Russians are doing about their recent nuclear tests, which "vented" in violation of the treaty. Mr. Bundy reviewed the exchange of notes with the Russians, and indicated that the dialogue is still going on. He also indicated that the treaty is not precise on this score, and that if the Russians take the view that very small amounts of debris should be disregarded, we may be able to use such latitude ourselves in the future. General Eisenhower saw merit in such a position.

The President next referred to the Resolution the Congress had passed following the Tonkin Gulf incident, giving him authority to act. He asked General Eisenhower whether he thought that Resolution was strong enough, and ample to fill the need. General Eisenhower said that it had sounded to him very much like the Formosa Resolution which had left a large area of discretion and flexibility to The President, and that he thought that this is the way it should be. The President commented that the Formosa Resolution had been the model for this one.

At The President's request Mr. Bundy reviewed very briefly the observations he had made on his recent trip to South Viet-Nam. Two outstanding points were the lack of security for the population in the countryside, and the little experience of government which South Viet-Nam has had. The President commented that steps are being taken to try to strengthen the government and to seek some rapprochement with Khanh. He said he is considering the possibility of trying to get some good U.S. reporters and TV people to go out to the area for a period of thirty to ninety days, in order to

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introduce greater responsibility in the handling of the political reporting. Mr. Bundy made the point that the Buddhists have had no experience in taking responsibility. Theirs has been an opposition role. Also he stated that Khanh is very Asian and devious politically. He added that General Westmoreland had said that, in the military matters on which he deals with Khanh, the latter had never deceived him.

The President said he saw great importance in developing a sense of participation on the part of the South Vietnamese. We should find targets they can really hit, and should work the VNAF hard. General Wheeler reviewed the "MAROPS" program of unacknowledged attacks from the sea conducted by the South Vietnamese. General Eisenhower said he thought these operations were valuable. The President reiterated that we should get as many South Vietnamese as possible in sea and patrol operations.

(At this point The President and General Eisenhower went into The President's office to have pictures taken, and Mr. Bundy left the meeting.)

When the President and General Eisenhower returned, Mr. McNamara asked for further comment on how General Eisenhower would advise responding to escalation, and what he had in mind regarding tactical nuclear weapons. General Eisenhower said he would make use of our carrier strength in the area for instant retaliation. For this purpose it should be kept in constant readiness. He would pass warnings to the Chinese Communists. Pick out the two or three key points in South Viet-Nam, such as Saigon and the air bases, and guard these strongly. General Wheeler identified these as Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. General Eisenhower said tactical nuclear weapons should be used when the enemy comes in large strength as organized formations. If they have strong forces these will have depots which can be struck. General Wheeler commented that there are bridges very important to such a campaign over the Red River north of Hanoi. General Eisenhower commented that this would be in effect a new war. We should be sure that the enemy does not lack an appreciation of our stamina and determination to keep nations free by whatever means required. He thought that if they find we are ready, they will not come in in great strength. He referred to the Chinese in Korea. There was a gentlemen's agreement between us and our allies after the very early days of the war -- well known to the Chinese -- that we would not cross the Yalu or even strike the bridges on the Yalu, nor would we use nuclear weapons. With regard to South Viet-Nam, we should let it be known that we are not bound by such restrictions.

The President asked General Eisenhower what he could tell him about the course of events in Korea. General Eisenhower said that in 1949 severe cuts were made in the U.S. military budget. The Joint Chiefs of Staff at that time (with himself presiding as chairman at The President's request) reached the view that in a global war Korea would not be important, although it was important in a cold war situation. As a result of the cut back of the budget and of the armed forces, it was necessary to withdraw our units from Korea. Secretary Acheson made a public statement at that time that Korea lay outside our security perimeter. Soon thereafter the Communists invaded the country. Mr. Truman initially attempted to meet the attack, using only naval and air forces. General Eisenhower said once we had committed ourselves to the war, he had advised Mr. Truman that we must use whatever force was needed. He had told him that we must succeed, and that if ground forces were required they should be put in. The President said he is concerned regarding the North Vietnamese, and the possibility that war in Viet-Nam might follow the same course as the war in Korea. General Eisenhower said the U.S. has put its prestige onto the proposition of keeping Southeast Asia free. Indonesia is now failing. We cannot let the Indo-Chinese peninsula go. He hoped it would not be necessary to use the six to eight divisions mentioned, but if it should be necessary, so be it. He would warn the Chinese in advance through many channels.

The President asked just what General Eisenhower had done in 1953 to bring the war in Korea to a close. He said he had had the word passed through the three channels he had previously mentioned, telling the Chinese that they must agree to an armistice quickly, since he had decided to remove the restrictions of area and weapons if the war had to be continued. General Eisenhower said that the greatest danger in his judgment in the present situation is that the Chinese get the idea that we will go just so far and no further in terms of the level of war we would conduct. That would be the beginning of the end, since they would know all they had to do was go further than we do. The President asked how such information might be gotten out, i. e., that we think the situation would be most dangerous unless the Chinese understood that we will do whatever is required. He and General Eisenhower discussed the possibility of approaching Ayub on this matter. They agreed he is a very fine man with whom we are having some difficulties at the present time. The President is considering what can be done to improve our ties with him. General Eisenhower described this problem as one boil in the whole world system. We must look at the effect of our actions on the whole world. When we say we will help other countries we must then be staunch. It is, of course, necessary to work out our tactics, and we should not be unnecessarily provocative.

General Eisenhower next referred to a talk which had taken place between himself and General De Gaulle at the Churchill funeral. General Eisenhower had told him that accounts were appearing in the press that General De Gaulle had stated that he had sent a memo on NATO organization to President Eisenhower in 1958, and that the memorandum was never answered or even acknowledged. General Eisenhower recalled to him that the memorandum was fully answered, and, in fact, a counter proposal was made. General De Gaulle stated that he remembered the exchange clearly, and that he had never made a statement such as the press has been carrying. At The President's request, General Eisenhower offered some suggestions as to the manner in which a meeting of The President and De Gaulle might be conducted. At their first meeting he would suggest not getting into specific problems, but talking about the world situation in very broad terms and the cultural role of France. In a subsequent meeting a few specific problems might be introduced, with an explanation of the purposes of the U.S. in this regard. No commitment should be expected from De Gaulle. However, he responds to a friendly approach. General Eisenhower described him as a warm friend of many years standing -- a man who is determined, dedicated and deeply wounded by any slight to France or to himself. The President stated that although France and De Gaulle have done many things that bother us, he is determined not to reply in kind. He commented on an incident that had occurred at the time of President Kennedy's funeral. President De Gaulle had indicated an interest in visiting the U.S. in the spring of 1964. Subsequently, President Johnson, in explaining to a group of governors why he was some minutes late joining their meeting, told them he had been meeting with General De Gaulle and told them of General De Gaulle's interest in a later visit to the U.S. This word was leaked to the press, and the French sent word that General De Gaulle would not visit the U.S., but would be happy to receive President Johnson in Paris. General Eisenhower thought that a visit by The President to Paris, London, Bonn and Rome, this year if possible, would be extremely valuable. The President stated that he had such a trip very much in mind.

At the luncheon of The President and General Eisenhower the primary subject of discussion was the problem of gold flow and U.S. balance of payments. Certain of the problems involved as a result of the requirement that individuals considered for Cabinet posts divest themselves of stock holdings were also discussed.


A. J. GOODPASTER
Lt. General, U.S.A.

RUSK

In my talks with Dobrynin and Gromyko, they said the Russians were not going to trade with or negotiate. We must deal with Hanoi and Peking. Therefore, there is nothing on Russian side to cause us to hold off bombing.

Perhaps we should bomb again, then pause, and then bomb again.

THE PRESIDENT I thought we were going to pause only 5 days.

McNAMARA

To achieve proper objective, we should go 7 days. One advantage is we will answer TIMES. They wanted us to take a week. We can hold until Wednesday.

THE PRESIDENT I would do it Monday. Start again then and that would make the pause six full days.

McNAMARA

We could start again on Tuesday evening our time.

RUSK

We can start bombing again -- then get the Acheson-Ball plan all worked out. It will be launched by Quat.

BALL

Essentially the plan is worked out on a local basis -- going from military to political action.

RUSK

Gromyko is interested in the Cambodian Conference. Sihanouk is pulling back on his original insistence that Viet Cong be represented at the conference. French and British have talked to Russians and urged them to move forward on Cambodian meeting.

I think we ought to get telegram to Taylor to get his reaction to the Acheson-Ball plan. It will take at least three weeks to get plan launched.

Tonight we don't need any decisions -- except when we start bombing and what we say about the resumption.

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Authority NY 87-235
By CS NARA, Date 1/8/24

THE PRESIDENT If there was going to be any interest on part of Hanoi, we ought to have the reaction by now. You gave them notice on Tuesday. Monday will be six days. If you want to start the bombing on Tuesday, that's okay.

We can tell the Congressional leadership -- that we had some adjustments out there. To me it's a pure question of what happens in this country. If we hold off this bombing longer, people are going to say "What in the world is happening." We can inform Mansfield, the NY TIMES, but we will never satisfy the TIMES.

Now, if this is what you all want, we'll go on Tuesday evening our time, but I would go Monday.

McNAMARA What do we say to the press?

THE PRESIDENT We don't need to disclose every piece of strategy to the press. I would say to Mansfield, Kennedy, Fulbright that we notified the other people -- and for six days we have held off bombing. Nothing happened. We had no illusions that anything would happen. But we were willing to be surprised.

We are anxious to pursue every diplomatic adventure, to get peace. But we can't throw our gun away. We have laid off them for six days - - meanwhile we have lost planes at Bien Hoa. No one has even thanked us for the pause.

McNAMARA We ought to give this out on background. Mansfield ought to know Hanoi spit in our face.

THE PRESIDENT I'm afraid if we play along with this group, we will wind up with no one on our side. We tried out their notion and got no results.

My judgement is the public has never wanted us to stop the bombing. We have stopped in deference to Mansfield and Fulbright, but we don't want to do it too long else we lose our base of support.

THE PRESIDENT We will go Tuesday to satisfy you here tonight. I'd go Monday night myself. However, if you have good reasons, we'll go when you say.

We ought to talk to the leadership and tell them what we did. We can tell them we used the time for reconnaissance--and in deference to Buddha's birthday. We gave them all week. We told Dobrynin and we told Gromyko.

I'd call them in and tell them we are starting Monday night. And then you'll be requested to delay again -- by the NY TIMES.

McNAMARA Let's talk to the leaders on Monday and tell them we are starting again to bomb on Monday night.

THE PRESIDENT Rusk, do you buy that?

McNAMARA Target #29 is military barracks 10 miles further north than we have ever gone. I urge to leave this target in. Our own military will say we have gone soft if we take it out again. Also it can be our message to Hanoi and Peking.

THE PRESIDENT What do you think about the threats from Russia about coming in?

RUSK There is a flash point in the Hanoi area in how far you can go without bringing the Russians in. Gromyko said he was going to help North Viet Nam and help them decisively.

THE PRESIDENT What about the SAM sites? Question is whether we let the clock tick or whether we take them out now.

McNAMARA We can't go after the SAM sites unless you go after the MIG airfields. We don't think we are at that point now. Most you would lose would be 3 or 4 crews. They don't have one SAM operational right now.

We have to go after MIG airfields first. First,

B-52's to plaster the airfields at night. There may be civilians involved since all bombs won't hit target. Then fighter bombers go in. And then we take out the SAM's.

This is a major operation from the Hanoi point of view.

Fair to say not more than one SAM site will be operational in 4 weeks.

(At this point meeting interrupted by call from Bundy)

THE PRESIDENT Now, Rusk will talk to Fulbright and Mansfield -- talk about your visit with Gromyko.

I think you ought to show the leaders we are open and receptive to ideas--but nothing happened on this particular idea.

For six days we didn't touch them and we told them we weren't going to touch them. And yet Gromyko was tougher than he has been in his talks with you, Dean.

ACHESON Important thing is you haven't bombed in six days and now you are going to bomb again. This is good thing for people to know.

RUSK I hope we can keep the barracks target off the first day's bombing -- perhaps put it on the third or fourth day.

McNAMARA Yes, we will.

THE PRESIDENT Ball is going to say our bombing will be keyed to their aggression.

ACHESON Actually the plan is a series of pauses -- in which we interpret the results each time.

ACHESON

First, we put into effect a plan to strengthen the Viet Nam government. They announce the plan. We give the other side two weeks to think it over. For two weeks we will take no offensive action. We defend ourselves, but no offensive action. Government will send troops and officials into all provinces. Perhaps nothing will happen in one province and something will happen in another. But we will find out the temper of the other side. For if this works, the rebellion is over. We will have a practical plan to test the response.

THE PRESIDENT

We want Taylor's reaction to this -- also I think we ought to put extra money into the USIA. Eisenhower thought we ought to spend much more than we are -- we have to give these people a will to fight and a will to win.

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Now, if this is what you all want, we'll go on Tuesday evening our time, but I would go Monday.

McNAMARA What do we say to the press?

THE PRESIDENT We don't need to disclose every piece of strategy to the press. I would say to Mansfield, Kennedy, Fulbright that we notified the other people -- and for six days we have held off bombing. Nothing happened. We had no illusions that anything would happen. But we were willing to be surprised.

We are anxious to pursue every diplomatic adventure, to get peace. But we can't throw our gun away. We have laid off them for six days - - meanwhile we have lost planes at Bien Hoa. No one has even thanked us for the pause.

McNAMARA We ought to give this out on background. Mansfield ought to know Hanoi spit in our face.

THE PRESIDENT I'm afraid if we play along with this group, we will wind up with no one on our side. We tried out their notion and got no results.

My judgement is the public has never wanted us to stop the bombing. We have stopped in deference to Mansfield and Fulbright, but we don't want to do it too long else we lose our base of support.

THE PRESIDENT We will go Tuesday to satisfy you here tonight. I'd go Monday night myself. However, if you have good reasons, we'll go when you say.

We ought to talk to the leadership and tell them what we did. We can tell them we used the time for reconnaissance--and in deference to Buddha's birthday. We gave them all week. We told Dobrynin and we told Gromyko.

I'd call them in and tell them we are starting Monday night. And then you'll be requested to delay again -- by the NY TIMES.

McNAMARA Let's talk to the leaders on Monday and tell them we are starting again to bomb on Monday night.

THE PRESIDENT Rusk, do you buy that?

McNAMARA Target #29 is military barracks 10 miles further north than we have ever gone. I urge to leave this target in. Our own military will say we have gone soft if we take it out again. Also it can be our message to Hanoi and Peking.

THE PRESIDENT What do you think about the threats from Russia about coming in?

RUSK There is a flash point in the Hanoi area in how far you can go without bringing the Russians in. Gromyko said he was going to help North Viet Nam and help them decisively.

THE PRESIDENT What about the SAM sites? Question is whether we let the clock tick or whether we take them out now.

McNAMARA We can't go after the SAM sites unless you go after the MIG airfields. We don't think we are at that point now. Most you would lose would be 3 or 4 crews. They don't have one SAM operational right now.

We have to go after MIG airfields first. First,

B-52's to plaster the airfields at night. There may be civilians involved since all bombs won't hit target. Then fighter bombers go in. And then we take out the SAM's.

This is a major operation from the Hanoi point of view.

Fair to say not more than one SAM site will be operational in 4 weeks.

(At this point meeting interrupted by call from Bundy)

THE PRESIDENT Now, Rusk will talk to Fulbright and Mansfield -- talk about your visit with Gromyko.

I think you ought to show the leaders we are open and receptive to ideas--but nothing happened on this particular idea.

For six days we didn't touch them and we told them we weren't going to touch them. And yet Gromyko was tougher than he has been in his talks with you, Dean.

ACHESON Important thing is you haven't bombed in six days and now you are going to bomb again. This is good thing for people to know.

RUSK I hope we can keep the barracks target off the first day's bombing -- perhaps put it on the third or fourth day.

McNAMARA Yes, we will.

THE PRESIDENT Ball is going to say our bombing will be keyed to their aggression.

ACHESON Actually the plan is a series of pauses -- in which we interpret the results each time.

ACHESON

First, we put into effect a plan to strengthen the Viet Nam government. They announce the plan. We give the other side two weeks to think it over. For two weeks we will take no offensive action. We defend ourselves, but no offensive action. Government will send troops and officials into all provinces. Perhaps nothing will happen in one province and something will happen in another. But we will find out the temper of the other side. For if this works, the rebellion is over. We will have a practical plan to test the response.

THE PRESIDENT

We want Taylor's reaction to this -- also I think we ought to put extra money into the USIA. Eisenhower thought we ought to spend much more than we are -- we have to give these people a will to fight and a will to win.

Monday, June 14, 1965 - 10:30 a.m.

Memorandum Of Record

Meeting with the Apostolic Delegate

11:25 a.m., June 11, 1965, at the Delegate's home-office

After being seated, I immediately told the Delegate that I had a message for him to transmit to the Holy Father.

The Delegate read the memorandum.

He looked at me thoughtfully, nodded his head and spoke quietly of how Catholics were being maltreated by the Quat government. He reported jailings and severe prejudice on the part of Buddhists. Also, he said, rather sorrowfully, that the priests most involved in stirring up the Catholics were emigrants from the North, where the Delegate reluctantly confessed, the hold of the Vatican over the Bishops was slight.

I remonstrated that the President considered the survival of the government of utmost urgency in the successful venture into the future. I told him that unless we were able to help a viable government become a reality in Viet Nam both the United States and the Vatican would be the losers. He agreed.

I told him we were determined to stay in Viet Nam until some semblance of order and cessation of terror became evident. We were ready, I assured him, to sit down at a conference table, and talk out these problems. But we were unable to get the Hanoi people to even consider negotiations at this time. Thus, we were forced to keep our pressure up until talks could begin.

He promised that he would personally transmit this view and the memo to the Holy Father along with his own recommendations that the memo be followed.

Then, he turned to the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Papal Nuncio, Bishop Clarizio, is in Rome and has conferred with the Holy Father. The Delegate asked me what I thought of the Holy Father cabling all Nuncios in Latin America and telling them what Clarizio felt about the Communist intrusion in the Dominican Republic (that unless the Americans had arrived, the Communists would be in total control of the government today.)

I assured him we would find that most helpful and beneficial.

Before I left, I told him that in principle we agreed to the Holy Father coming to the United States to speak at the United Nations. I insisted that the President must however in the best interests of both the Vatican and the United States wait until we see how Article 19 would be resolved before concrete plans could be laid. Then, assuming all would be well on that front, the President would announce he would hope to speak at the United Nations General Assembly in the fall. After a reasonable wait -- say, a month -- the Holy Father could announce he had received an invitation to the United Nations and planned to accept. That way, it would not be so transparent that a meeting was to take place. The President could then, with some justification, meet the Holy Father in New York on the evening of the night the President spoke.

The Delegate assented, saying this was a sound arrangement and one the Vatican could certainly agree to.

He asked me to come back and have dinner with him, quietly, soon. He has other matters to discuss about problems of the United States and the Vatican throughout the world.

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8a

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Authority NJ/NA 10-136
By CTS NARA, Date 1/8/24

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By CTS, NARA, Date 1/8/64

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Jack Valenti

Tuesday, July 13, 1965
10:25 am

SECRET

MR. McGEORGE BUNDY:

Anent our conversation about bringing Bishop Clarizio from Santo Domingo, covertly, to Washington for a private meeting with certain Catholic members of the Congress (Mansfield, McCormack, etc).

The Delegate agrees to this. He would house Clarizio. The meeting could take place at the Delegate's home.

First, shouldn't you talk to Bunker to find out (a) if Clarizio can be spared right now for a couple of days, and, (b) if Clarizio will say the things we truly want him to say viz a viz the Communist intrusion, etc.

Second, shouldn't we set a time and let me check it with the Delegate?

Third, then we could draw up a list of those who would see Clarizio.

What think you?

Jack Valenti

9a

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Authority NY 93-225 KCAP Appeal
By LTS NARA, Date 11/8/24

10

MEMORANDUM

The Crisis in the Dominican Republic and its Solution

1. The accumulated hates of half a century are involved in the present situation. Corruption and social injustices have been rife since the departure of the U. S. troops in 1924. Practically all have some fault and responsibility and cling to vendettas; one group is mortally afraid of the other. Most of the youth are with the rebels because they want the past to be terminated. Recently, the son of Postigo, one of the members of the Junta, has declared himself against his father and in favor of the rebels. Ninety per cent of the population wants a new life because in a country, potentially rich, they are living in misery.

2. The solution of the present crisis has been delayed and has become complicated by changes in personnel concerned with the problem. This is simply an irrefutable fact and not at all an unfavorable judgment on the activity of those who, with good intentions and with a true spirit of sacrifice, have worked intelligently for a solution.

It would be very prejudicial if in the present situation other changes in personnel were made. In the present negotiations three persons are outstanding: Their Excellencies Ambassadors Ellsworth Bunker, Mayobre, the Observer of the U. N., and Mora, Secretary General of the O. A. S.

3. The policy to be followed should be that of restoration and not condemnation. Except for special cases and common crimes, it is useless to punish. The fear

of reprisals causes everybody to be excited.

the amnesty already has been accepted by both parties; it should be extended to the past ten years.

Those who have suffered should be compensated; this will give satisfaction and will not provoke hate.

4. A broad economic reorganization with extensive international assistance (U. S. A., O. A. S., U. N. and certain European countries) will be very much in order.

Such reorganization should be immediate and total; it will be easy to accomplish and not very costly. Plans to increase production and exports should be executed without delay (irrigation, modernization of industry, of agriculture, etc.).

An ideal in the Dominican Republic should be to repeat the miracle of Formosa. That East Asian Island is but a third the size of the Dominican Republic and possesses a population three times greater. With American aid Formosa passed in a few years from misery to prosperity.

July 20, 1965
12:15 p.m. Tuesday

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH ARCHBISHOP VAGNOZZI,
APOSTOLIC DELEGATE TO THE UNITED STATES, AND BISHOP
CLARIZIO, PAPAL NUNCIO TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - At the
Delegate's home on Massachusetts Avenue, Monday, July 19, 1965

I met for an hour and 35 minutes with the Delegate and the Dominican
Papal Nuncio.

Bishop Clarizio made the following points:

1. The people of the Dominican Republic are poor and miserable and without hope. The solution to the Dominican crisis is not political but economic and social.
2. There is no question in his mind but what the landing of American troops saved thousands of lives. There is also little question in his mind that without American troops the Communists would have intruded themselves into the Government rather swiftly, and would have exerted enormous influence if not, indeed, outright power.
3. The American troops should not leave. As a matter of fact, Bishop Clarizio insists that American troops ought to stay for some years. Certainly, he is very much opposed, in the interest of decency, a strong government and a stable society in the Dominican Republic, for the American troops not to leave until well after the new, elected government has established itself.
4. The American troops have behaved spectacularly well. In the Bishop's judgment, the mass of the people have learned now that the American soldier is not the brute that they thought he was or would be, but instead is a very compassionate person who gives them food and medicine.
5. Godoy is a good man and probably the best that can be found in the Dominican Republic at this time to head a provisional government. Clarizio has discussed this personally with both Caamano and Imbert,

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Authority NY 93-225 Appeal
By CTS, NARA, Date 1/8/24

and, particularly in the case of Caamano, Godoy is fully acceptable. The Bishop has great reservations about Imbert. He is of the judgment that many in the Imbert group are willing to go to any lengths to preserve their power and indeed have been the perpetrators of certain outrages. On the other hand, he knows that many in the rebel camp are trying to provoke some kind of show of strength on the part of Imbert so that they can blame the Americans for the outbreak of violence which would be sure to follow.

6. He is unstinting in his praise of Ambassador Bunker. He said, not without truth in his jest, that Bunker would be his candidate to be president of the Dominican Republic. He praised the Ambassador as being patient, understanding, wise, and tough, and by all odds, the most stable and precious force existing in the Dominican Republic today. He also said that Mayrobe and Mora are doing an excellent job.
7. He told me that the Church is determined to pour all of its energies and money into the economic and social rehabilitation of the Dominican Republic. He said the Church will refuse to take any money from the Government as it had in the past. All money that ordinarily would come from the government will be going into the restitution of farms, businesses, and the general welfare of the people. He has made it a rule that no priests will receive gifts of automobiles or any other personal presents such as has been the practice in the past. Instead, the Church is insisting if people want to give gifts that they do it in the form of orphanages or material for hospitals, etc.

The solution as Bishop Clarizio sees it:

1. Begin immediately a program of economic and social reform.

He stressed the need of not waiting for a provisional government or an election. Time, says the Bishop, is playing into the hands of those who would intrude themselves on the future of the Dominican Republic. Start now with emergency plans already on paper for irrigation, water works, agricultural implements, and land

reform. The key to any kind of stable society in the Dominican Republic will rest on the future prosperity and the realized hopes of the Dominican people. (He pointed out that the ideal in the Dominican Republic is to repeat the miracle of Formosa - which some years ago was barren and destitute, a tiny island without hope, and now is a garden spot of prosperity. The Formosa miracle, he insists, is the product of American aid and help and programming. The same can be done in the Dominican Republic.)

Without this instant immediate economic, agricultural, and social help, the encrusted corruption and past sins of Trujillo the social injustices and accumulated hates of half a century will all bury any ideal of decent government in the Dominican Republic.

2. All of the above ought to be done under the guise of an inter-American operation - or under the auspices of the OAS - or under the sponsorship of some international organization. Though American money and machines and technical assistance will bear the burden of this aid, it is important to its success that it be done behind a screen of a cooperative, international venture. He readily admits that everyone in the Dominican Republic would recognize this as an American operation but for purposes of pride and to break the back of Communist opposition, it must be clothed in the garments of an international organization.

If the above can be accomplished, then he is optimistic about the future of the Dominican Republic. If the above cannot be accomplished, no political solution, regardless of its origin or source, will really be successful.

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11a

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7. He told me that the Church is determined to pour all of its energies and money into the economic and social rehabilitation of the Dominican Republic. He said the Church will refuse to take any money from the Government as it had in the past. All money that ordinarily would come from the government will be going into the restitution of farms, businesses, and the general welfare of the people. He has made it a rule that no priests will receive gifts of automobiles or any other personal presents such as has been the practice in the past. Instead, the Church is insisting if people want to give gifts that they do it in the form of orphanages or material for hospitals, etc.

The solution as Bishop Clarizio sees it:

1. Begin immediately a program of economic and social reform.

He stressed the need of not waiting for a provisional government or an election. Time, says the Bishop, is playing into the hands of those who would intrude themselves on the future of the Dominican Republic. Start now with emergency plans already on paper for irrigation, water works, agricultural implements, and land

reform. The key to any kind of stable society in the Dominican Republic will rest on the future prosperity and the realized hopes of the Dominican people. (He pointed out that the ideal in the Dominican Republic is to repeat the miracle of Formosa - which some years ago was barren and destitute, a tiny island without hope, and now is a garden spot of prosperity. The Formosa miracle, he insists, is the product of American aid and help and programming. The same can be done in the Dominican Republic.)

Without this instant immediate economic, agricultural, and social help, the encrusted corruption and past sins of Trujillo the social injustices and accumulated hates of half a century will all bury any ideal of decent government in the Dominican Republic.

2. All of the above ought to be done under the guise of an inter-American operation - or under the auspices of the OAS - or under the sponsorship of some international organization. Though American money and machines and technical assistance will bear the burden of this aid, it is important to its success that it be done behind a screen of a cooperative, international venture. He readily admits that everyone in the Dominican Republic would recognize this as an American operation but for purposes of pride and to break the back of Communist opposition, it must be clothed in the garments of an international organization.

If the above can be accomplished, then he is optimistic about the future of the Dominican Republic. If the above cannot be accomplished, no political solution, regardless of its origin or source, will really be successful.

Jack Valenti

July 20, 1965
12:15 p.m. Tuesday

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH ARCHBISHOP VAGNOZZI,
APOSTOLIC DELEGATE TO THE UNITED STATES, AND BISHOP
CLARIZIO, PAPAL NUNCIO TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - At the
Delegate's home on Massachusetts Avenue, Monday, July 19, 1965

I met for an hour and 35 minutes with the Delegate and the Dominican
Papal Nuncio.

Bishop Clarizio made the following points:

1. The people of the Dominican Republic are poor and miserable and without hope. The solution to the Dominican crisis is not political but economic and social.
2. There is no question in his mind but what the landing of American troops saved thousands of lives. There is also little question in his mind that without American troops the Communists would have intruded themselves into the Government rather swiftly, and would have exerted enormous influence if not, indeed, outright power.
3. The American troops should not leave. As a matter of fact, Bishop Clarizio insists that American troops ought to stay for some years. Certainly, he is very much opposed, in the interest of decency, a strong government and a stable society in the Dominican Republic, for the American troops not to leave until well after the new, elected government has established itself.
4. The American troops have behaved spectacularly well. In the Bishop's judgment, the mass of the people have learned now that the American soldier is not the brute that they thought he was or would be, but instead is a very compassionate person who gives them food and medicine.
5. Godoy is a good man and probably the best that can be found in the Dominican Republic at this time to head a provisional government. Clarizio has discussed this personally with both Caamano and Imbert,

and, particularly in the case of Caamano, Godoy is fully acceptable. The Bishop has great reservations about Imbert. He is of the judgment that many in the Imbert group are willing to go to any lengths to preserve their power and indeed have been the perpetrators of certain outrages. On the other hand, he knows that many in the rebel camp are trying to provoke some kind of show of strength on the part of Imbert so that they can blame the Americans for the outbreak of violence which would be sure to follow.

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Jack Valenti

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Memorandum, prepared in December 1968, of a meeting with the Joint Leadership on July 27, 1965, at 6:30 p.m. (This memorandum is dictated from notes taken July 27, 1965. Nothing not clearly stated in the notes is included.) Present were the President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, General Wheeler, Admiral Raborn, Ambassador Lodge, Senators Mansfield, Dirksen, Hickenlooper, Smathers, Kuchel, and Long; Speaker McCormack, Representatives Ford, Arends, Boggs, and Albert, and from the White House -- Richard Goodwin, Moyers, Busby, Valenti, O'Brien, Cater, Califano and Bundy.

The President began by outlining the five possible choices: first, to blow them up -- not much thought had been given to that.

Second, that we ought to get out. Some people felt that way but did not really come out and say what they thought until you pursued them.

Third, we could leave things just as they are with 80,000 to 90,000 men there today and get Lodge out there and see if he can pull a rabbit out of the hat.

Fourth, we could declare an emergency, call in the reserves, thousands of men and billions of dollars -- tell the country that our best guess was Y billion dollars and X thousand men, and ask for it. That course had a good deal of appeal to the President because we should do what is needed, but there is an argument against it in the possible reaction of Hanoi. We did not want to have things get more violent just as we have a new man going to the U. N. We have hints from the Russians what we should take account of. The President did not want to make this any more provocative than necessary. He had reasons for not overstating the case. He did not himself believe that you can simply get in an airplane and settle this thing.

The fifth choice would be to supply Westmoreland with the men and materials he had requested, increase draft calls (the notes say 17-20, 24-28-35) extend enlistment of sailors and marines; and go into the Senate for an additional appropriation of \$1 or \$2 billion and defer a full presentation of requirements until January, 1966. By then we would be through the monsoon. In the meantime, the Congress would keep its power to call itself back into session. Maybe by then we would be past the monsoon and the Communists would have further thoughts. If the Russians did not come in and if China was not gambling we might be able to say "Cut out your foolishness and come to the conference table." The President didn't think there was much chance of an early settlement but others kept saying we've got to try even though we have tried fifteen times. Before the President went into the districts of the Congressmen and Senators he would have done what Westy and Wheeler want done. Meanwhile he would lay plans for more reserves. The President also reported that the British pound was in great danger.

In summary the President said the choice was between course four and course five. Either way he would give General Westmoreland what he wants. One course would be to go the full Congressional route now and the other way is to give the Congressional leadership the story now and the bill later. Concluding his presentation, the President said that he was prepared to stay in the meeting just as long as members of the Leadership wanted.

The President was followed by the Secretary of State who gave a political analysis. He pointed out that there was no real reason for a basic difference between the U. S. and the U.S.S.R. on Vietnam, but that Moscow had no real influence on the ground. Furthermore, Moscow had a dilemma because of other Communist pressures. At the other end of the spectrum was Peking which was adamant against negotiations -- bitter and harsh.

(At this point Bundy was out of the meeting getting certain "Ike papers") for the President.) When he returned the notes pick up again.

Secretary McNamara was discussing the SAM-site problem.

The President then called on Ambassador Lodge who knocked down choices one, two and three -- alternative one would not solve the problem, alternative two was worse than a victory for the Kaiser or Hitler in the two World Wars. Alternative three was no alternative at all since you needed a bigger perimeter and you also needed Camranh Bay.

Congressman Albert then said that he agreed with the President's proposal.

Senator Smathers said that we did not want to get into World War III but we did want to stay there. Was there any change in this policy?

The President answered that there was no change in policy but that as their effort increased, ours must.

Congressman Boggs asked if there was any major defection of GVN forces. Secretary McNamara replied in the negative. Congressman Boggs asked about the government and Secretary McNamara said it was a weak government and would be while the VC were free to attack it district by district. About this point the President told the Leadership why he did not call the Leadership earlier (the notes say that this statement was "per my memo to him on Lodge").

Congressman Boggs asked why we needed a ten-to-one ratio. General Wheeler took that question and said that perhaps four-to-one was a right ratio, but that ten-to-one was not necessary because the helicopter had provided a new mobility and that this was why the ARVN had been so successful until recently.

The President remarked that we all know that it is a bad situation and we wish we were ten years back or even ten months back.

Senator Long said that Ho Chi Minh talks of a twenty-year war but that he thought that it might be a hundred years long. We should look at the stakes and look at the fact that we have been touched up. Should we put in more men or take a whipping? We'd better go in.

The Speaker said that he did not see any alternatives. Dedicated military leaders have asked for more help. He was impressed by the analogy to Hitler. The road to appeasement was a road to war. We have warned them. We do the things we should, hard as they are. (The notes here remark that "The Leadership seems mighty hawkish so far.") The Russians had problems and weaknesses of their own.

The President read parts of a message from General Eisenhower to Prime Minister Churchill at a time of crisis in Vietnam in 1954. The passage the President was reading came from "Mandate for Change."

Congressman Ford asked for clarification of choices four and five. The answer (the speaker is not clearly defined by the notes) was that in either case Westmoreland would get what he wants. The question was rather how you would go about the process -- under four you would ask funds from the Congress now and under five you would come back in January and ask for them. The President said that we would ask for the money in any event. We can either guess about larger figures or go for a limited sum in the Senate now. He thought there were good reasons for not calling the reserves; if you call them now you really won't be ready.

In January you would have it better worked out. Under alternative five he might tell the Leadership three times that he was sending an additional 30,000 or so, without saying X billion and 100,000 men if he could avoid it.

Representative Ford said that under alternative five you would double draft calls -- and how much of a burden would that place on training forces? The President said that the difference between four and five was that one was more dramatic and blunter and more powerful -- if that is what you wanted.

Secretary McNamara said that the draft calls under option five would be about the same as under option four -- since when we called the reserves we would still have to double the draft calls. Secretary McNamara also pointed out that Sections 512A and C of the Appropriation Act gave authority to spend money and then get a deficiency appropriation.

The President said again that under alternative four he would have to get a new bill and a great big reserve plan and go through a big process. Under five we would simply put \$1.8 billion or whatever into the appropriation bills on the Senate side and then get in order for January.

The Secretary of Defense said that the war was very difficult to predict, that under four we would be asking for a blank check because we did not know what would happen, while under five we would ask for what we see clearly between now and January. Congressman Arends asked what General Westmoreland's needs were. Secretary McNamara answered that he had an immediate requirement of thirteen battalions and 50,000 men. Beyond that there would be a need for further forces before January 1. The Secretary also said that we could supply forces faster than General Westmoreland could receive them. The Secretary of State remarked that while there were sharp engagements, the fighting had not reached the stage of Giap's phase three. The President referred to a speech by the Vice President and said that we were running the danger of saying to Ho what he wants to hear. He also said that he did not want Russia and China in it if he could help it.

Senator Dirksen quoted President Woodrow Wilson to the effect that "the business at hand is undramatic." But the President was going to have to tell the country that we are in a very serious business. There was then an exchange with Secretary McNamara, about which the notes are unclear -- McNamara's comment was that "there was more baloney on that than any other subject," but the notes do not show what he was talking about.

Senator Dirksen apparently also asked about any possible diversion (?) of anticipated shipments. The President's comment is that every man who leaves will be announced. Senator Dirksen noted that he was receiving many questioning calls, and the President said he was going to tell the country just as soon as he got through telling the Leadership. Senator Dirksen said that he was not going to be like the Committee on the Conduct of the War. The President said that in the morning he was going to get to General Eisenhower. Senator Dirksen said that from now to January was five months and you could not wait that long if you need it. "If you need it you ought to ask for it." The

President said that we would get what we needed. There would be a sizable supplementary in January -- a few billion dollars. Senator Dirksen said we should make the country realize that this is dangerous, serious business. The President said he thought the country did realize it.

Senator Mansfield asked the President's indulgence and read a statement in which there appeared remarks about apathy, disquiet, and apprehension. He thought that nothing should be put out from the meeting except by the President. He said he would support the President's position as a Senator and as Majority Leader.

Senator Hickenlooper asked if we were getting low on helicopters and whether we were increasing our orders. Secretary McNamara said we had built up our helicopters enormously. The loss rate was only one in 10,000 sortie's and helicopters did not wear out. Up to now there was no basis for concern about numbers of helicopters. Nevertheless we were increasing production.

Senator Hickenlooper said that alternatives one, two and three were out. That anything short of a result that would make a reliable buffer against Communism would be disastrous. A negotiated so-called peace that did not do this would merely compound the felony. He did not know just which way it should be done -- and he remarked that over the years mistakes had been made. He differentiated between approval and support. He thought his decision now would be to support it but not approve it. The President remarked that he was in the same position as Senator Hickenlooper. He had supported the decisions of 1954 without approving them. Now there were 80,000 to 90,000 men out there asking for help and his answer was yes.

Senator Kuchel asked what Westmoreland's orders were. Must he clean up all the red spots? The notes do not show what answer he got.

Congressman Boggs said that alternative five was the logical way out. The President said that his object was to get the government together, to get the Allies together and to get the country together. And he would make his decision tomorrow. He spelled out three phases in the future and thought that by 1 November we would double our forces.

Congressman Arends asked Secretary Rusk if the Allies could help us on limiting shipping to the DRV. Secretary Rusk answered about help in South Vietnam from Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. Arends persisted on shipping. The Secretary of State said that there had been some improvement and that through various devices we could get a cutback in shipments to Hanoi which might make us feel better but would not really change the situation.

Senator Hickenlooper said that we were treating symptoms; there was a great danger of a negotiated stalemate, and we needed a viable settlement. The President said that Senator Hickenlooper should talk to Mansfield and Bill Fullbright and see what the three could agree on. Now settlement was not a practicable problem, because the Communists were winning. The question of settlement was a good long way away. Senator Hickenlooper said the big question was what we were going to do. The President said that we are going to try to bring about a situation where the government of South Vietnam will be able to defend itself against foreign ideology. "Westmoreland wants help -- I'm going to give it -- the question is how."

The Speaker closed the meeting by saying that the President would have united support. This was a historic meeting. The President would have the support of all true Americans.

After the meeting with the Leadership, the President held a small meeting in his office. Present were the President -- the two Secretaries, Goodwin, Moyers, Busby, and Bundy. The President remarked that we were prolonging the agony for 90 days and that he wanted a statement of 700 words, the essence of which would be that he was giving Westmoreland what he needed. Secretary McNamara repeated the thirteen battalion, 50,000 men figure, and expressed his confidence on the handling of the matter.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 23, 1965
Thurs. 8:30 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This paper came in after I left the office yesterday, and I think it is one you will want to read yourself and discuss directly with Bob.

Bob Komer knows the problem exists, and he will be glad to do any staff work you wish, but I have not cut him in, without your authority. on the numbers involved or on the nature of the McNamara recommendation.

Incl. B.

McG. B.

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& let's get me over
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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON
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By CTS NARA, Date 1/8/23

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22 SEP 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This memorandum outlines the basis for the increase in estimated US force requirements in South Vietnam from the 175,000 discussed in early July and mentioned in my July 20 recommendations to the 210,000 figure referred to in my September 1 memorandum to you.

You will recall that at your July 28 press conference you stated that you had ordered deployments which would raise our fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men almost immediately, that additional forces would be needed later, and that they would be sent as requested.

Prior to that date -- specifically, on July 24 -- the Joint Staff, as a result of MACV requests, had revised their total for 1965 deployment, increasing it to a little more than 195,000. I mentioned this higher figure to you at the time. At the August 2-6 Honolulu Meeting of General Wheeler, Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland, the 1965 "Phase I" requirements were refined to 210,000. The Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 23 therefore made specific deployment recommendations totaling approximately 210,000.

Refinements continue to be made. For example, General Wheeler on September 4 listed an additional 3,000 for the 1965 Phase I (mainly three engineer construction/combat battalions); at the same time he indicated that approximately an equivalent number listed earlier (mainly helicopter personnel) will be arriving after the end of 1965. My prediction is that the final version of the 1965 Phase I requirement will end up exceeding 210,000 by a few thousand.

The differences between the 175,000 figure first mentioned in July and the 210,000 number now being discussed are primarily attributable to additional (a) air lift to move supplies around the country for both civilian and military purposes, (b) air defense, (c) artillery to support offensive operations and to provide immediate response to calls for help by villages under attack, (d) strike aircraft and associated support, (e) engineers, primarily to construct additional air bases, and (f) fleshing out, according to General Westmoreland's requests, of existing operational units and advisory and support elements (refugee relief teams, intelligence teams, communications, and security units, etc.).

You have authorized the deployment of 175,000 US personnel. I recommend that, at the present time, you authorize the movement of an additional

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35,000 men, bringing the total to 210,000. These deployments are essential to our effort. The authority will cover our requirements as they now appear although, as we have discussed before, forces in addition to the 210,000 may be needed later.

Robert S. McNamara

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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McGEORGE GUNDY'S OFFICE

1965 SEP 1 AM 11 54

September 1, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

General Westmoreland has requested and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have concurred in the movement of an additional increment of forces to Vietnam. This increment would be in addition to the 28 combat battalions, associated air squadrons, and logistic support forces--totaling 125,000--announced by you on 28 July. The request is for six additional combat battalions (making a total of 34), associated air squadrons, and logistic support forces--totaling 85,000 additional United States personnel.

I recommend that these additional forces be authorized for movement.

I further recommend that no announcement be made at this time of the decision to deploy additional forces, but that announcements be made only as forces arrive in the theater.

Signed
ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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September 29, 1965

FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Luncheon Meeting with the President, Ball, McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Raborn, Moyers, and Califano

Level of Forces in Vietnam

McNamara reviewed his memorandum of September 22, 1965, (attached) concerning the need to increase the level of forces in Vietnam. He said that the original estimate of 175,000 was now increased to 210,000. The proposed 35,000 increase did not involve any increase in combat troops; they were support troops, such as communications personnel and refugee relief units. McNamara requested an interim authorization to go to 195,000 men and indicated that he would be back to the President about November 15 with a request for the remaining 15,000 men. The President commented that it was a situation in which he had no choice but to approve the increase. McNamara confirmed the President's comment and the President approved the increase to 195,000 men.

McNamara said that the public announcement of increased troops would be made from Saigon as the troops arrived there. While he admitted that this would encourage rumors, he said that this was important for the security of our men and in line with previously announced policies.

Tear Gas

Bundy noted that Secretary McNamara had authorized a one-time use of tear gas by General Westmoreland. He said that the question of the continuing use of tear gas was still up in the air, although the authority to use tear gas technically remained with the field commander, General Westmoreland. Ball said it would be desirable for Westmoreland to use tear gas before the end of the week because of the Red Cross

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By: *CS*, NARA, Date: *1/17/04*

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conference next week in Geneva, which might make some statements opposing the use of tear gas. McNamara said that the use of tear gas must be handled carefully in the right operation and that he was opposed to pushing Westmoreland to use it within the next few days unless Westmoreland felt such action was desirable. Bundy said that the President might get a press query about tear gas if he held a press conference tomorrow. McNamara suggested that the President respond by stating (1) tear gas is a humane way to restore order under certain circumstances and (2) Westmoreland is authorized to use it in those circumstances. Bundy underscored the importance of using the words "tear gas" rather than "non-lethal agents" or "riot control agents". Moyers said that we had been too defensive in our public handling of the tear gas situation, that we should remind the world that the Viet Cong slit throats and bomb children and that any human being in one of the Vietnam caves would prefer to cry from tear gas rather than be killed by hand grenades. Ball and Raborn agreed.

Rice Shipments

Bundy said Lodge had requested 100,000 tons of rice as fast as possible. Bundy proposed to make the rice available in four shipments of 25,000 tons each, rather than in a single shipment. The President approved this. McNamara said that no matter how we were shipping the rice, we were not sending enough rice to South Vietnam and that we should be sending three or four hundred thousand tons of rice. The President agreed and Bundy said he would make sure there was a continuing program for the purchase and shipment of rice to South Vietnam.

Possible Press Conference Statement

Bundy said he was inclined to the view that the President should make a statement at his press conference about the non-military elements of our Vietnam effort. Bundy said that only when the President makes such statements did they get any substantial coverage. He believed it was important to obtain such coverage in view of the world opinion and forthcoming student demonstrations. Bundy said he would submit a statement to the President for his consideration this afternoon.

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Dominican Republic

Bundy reported that the reports from the CIA and Bunker on the Dominican Republic were disturbing. He said that Hector Garcia Godoy had not moved to establish control over the left as he was moving to establish such control over the right. Bundy doubted whether there would be a military take-over as a result of Godoy's actions to date, but noted that General Alvin might well begin to think the situation so out of hand that he would support or approve some Dominican military action. After noting the President's desire to have a meeting on the Dominican problem as soon as possible, Bundy said Bunker believed it important to remain in the Dominican Republic until another OAS representative could arrive. Bundy recommended a meeting on Friday after Bunker's return. The President agreed. Bundy said that as a result of the President's interest in the Dominican Republic, he had held a meeting this morning with Mann, Vance, Helms and others, and that the group agreed that (a) there was a real danger of a popular front through which the communists would gain and (b) there was no clear leadership of the moderate and non-communist liberal elements in the Dominican Republic. In this situation Mann had expressed the view the United States might be forced to make a choice between two undesirable alternatives: (1) postpone the election or (2) let the military take over.

Bundy reported that Mann did not believe there was much hope of doing business with Bosch and also believed that we could not afford a popular front government in the Dominican Republic. Vaughn essentially agreed with Mann, but placed more emphasis on keeping continuing communications with Bosch and continuing to sanitize and improve the military leadership. Bundy said his own view was that we had pushed the military as far as we could at this time without first moving on the leftists.

Bundy reported that Ambassador Stewart was in communication with anti-communist Venezuelan liberals who were backing Miolan for leadership of the PRD and that Ambassador Stewart would like to establish communication with them. Mann told Stewart to go to Caracas on some other business and open those lines of communications.

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-Bundy pointed out that each Dominican faction was trying to find sympathy and support with its counterpart in the United States and thus divide us along the lines the Dominican factions were divided.

The President said that all these things should be sorted out and some proposals should be ready for discussion on Friday. He also said that Senators had reported to him that there would be an Internal Security Meeting in Miami at which testimony would be taken about the communist moving into the Dominican Republic, that Garcia Godoy had duped us, that Tad Szulc had a bad extreme leftist record.

The President asked who recommended Garcia Godoy. Bundy replied that out of the vacuum in June, Bunker and the OAS Committee felt that Godoy was the best man to build on. The President asked Admiral Raborn what he thought. Raborn said that he believed Godoy was fine and so reported at the time he was considered by our government as a provisional president down there, but that since then he has seemed to support the leftist elements.

Fulbright Letter

Ball said he had received a request from the Foreign Relations Committee staff for a compilation of Latin American reactions to Fulbright's speech on the Dominican Republic. Ball said there was very little reaction but it was highly favorable, most indicating that the Senator was correct and the Administration was mistaken. President expressed his concern about the adverse impact of Senator Fulbright's speech in terms of the Dominican Republic and the increased danger of a communist take-over. Moyers noted that USIA had said that the papers which had praised Senator Fulbright's speech were mostly leftist and communist. It was agreed that State should reply to the request putting any comments on the Fulbright speech in the Latin American papers in the true context. The President asked that an analysis of the Latin American press reaction be obtained from Leonard Marks.

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Foreign Visitors

Bundy said that there were several foreign visitors coming into town during the next several weeks but that President did not have to consider this until next week.

Pakistan/India

Bundy reported that Ayub said he could not come to the United States within the next six weeks. Bundy said that the Paks were placing increased pressure against United States installations there. Raborn reported that the Paks had just closed two more of our installations, making four U.S. stations in Pakistan that have been closed. Bundy said we apply our own, non-publicized salami tactics in retaliation. He said that he would have a proposal for the President's consideration in his night reading this evening. Bundy recommended that negotiations on the India/Pakistan question remain in the U.N. and that we concentrate on areas of mutual interest outside of the Kashmir dispute where the two countries might be able to get together in a more fruitful relationship. Ball said that this was tried in 1962 and did not work. Ball also noted that he was bringing in third countries, such as Germany, on our India/Pakistan policy because they felt they had been left out.

Foreign Aid Review

Bundy recommended that the Cabinet Committee do its work on foreign aid and that the special advisers approved by the President be called in to review the work. The President agreed and said he would consider the question of a chairman for the review group at a later date.

Covert Operations Against Cuba

Raborn recommended that we undertake some covert operations against Cuba such as blowing up ships and some shore installations. Raborn said he had well trained commando units who would not be attributable to the United States. He said that at the present time the

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CIA was merely waging a small amount of economic warfare against Cuba and that this left Castro free to work on the subversion of other Latin American countries (such as Venezuela, Peru, Dominican Republic, Paraguay) and Africa. The President asked Raborn what the Castro response would be. Raborn said that Castro's regime was shaky and he believed the only retaliation would be verbal.

McNamara disagreed with Raborn. He believed that Castro was getting stronger and was not as shaky as Raborn implied. McNamara said that such raids would not inhibit Castro activities in other countries, would be attributed to the United States, would merely be a pin prick and could lead Castro to take actions that would require us to respond (such as his prior action in cutting off water or attacking U-2 flights in the U.N.). McNamara strongly recommended against any covert program in Cuba. Ball said he and Rusk agreed with McNamara, particularly in view of the delicate situation in the Dominican Republic. Ball believed that covert activities against Cuba at this time would further stir up leftist elements in the Dominican Republic and in Latin America. Bundy agreed with McNamara, Rusk and Ball. He also pointed out that the intelligence reports on the strength of Castro's government supported McNamara more than Raborn, and that if he were Castro he would like nothing more than to have the U.S. undertake activities of this kind.

The Shipping Question

The meeting adjourned to the President's office with McNamara, Ball, Moyers, Bundy and Califano. McNamara presented the proposed Rolling Thunder program. He also discussed the question of Hanoi's hardening attitude. He noted that there was a National Intelligence Estimate indicating that Hanoi's attitude was hardening, largely because we were not rough enough in our bombing. McNamara pointed out that the estimate was made without the benefit of advice from experts in the government such as Llewellyn Thompson, Maxwell Taylor et al. He urged a special study of the problem of Hanoi's hardening attitude and the reasons for it. Ball concurred and pointed out that it may well be that some aspects of the bombing program were responsible for Hanoi's hardening attitude. The President approved the Rolling Thunder program proposed by McNamara as well as the recommended study by Taylor, Thompson, McNamara, Ball, Bundy et al on the reasons for Hanoi's hardening attitude.

~~TOP SECRET~~ Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

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1000
9-23-65
5:40 P

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 23, 1965
Thurs. 8:30 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This paper came in after I left the office yesterday, and I think it is one you will want to read yourself and discuss directly with Bob.

Bob Komer knows the problem exists, and he will be glad to do any staff work you wish, but I have not cut him in, without your authority. on the numbers involved or on the nature of the McNamara recommendation.

Incl. B.

McG. B.

TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT

Merrin
Put on my desk
& let's get me over
[Signature]

~~TOP SECRET~~

146 4114

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON
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McGEORGE LUNDY'S OFFICE

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Authority NC 84-364
By CTs NARA, Date 11/8/24

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22 SEP 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This memorandum outlines the basis for the increase in estimated US force requirements in South Vietnam from the 175,000 discussed in early July and mentioned in my July 20 recommendations to the 210,000 figure referred to in my September 1 memorandum to you.

You will recall that at your July 28 press conference you stated that you had ordered deployments which would raise our fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men almost immediately, that additional forces would be needed later, and that they would be sent as requested.

Prior to that date -- specifically, on July 24 -- the Joint Staff, as a result of MACV requests, had revised their total for 1965 deployment, increasing it to a little more than 195,000. I mentioned this higher figure to you at the time. At the August 2-6 Honolulu Meeting of General Wheeler, Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland, the 1965 "Phase I" requirements were refined to 210,000. The Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 23 therefore made specific deployment recommendations totaling approximately 210,000.

Refinements continue to be made. For example, General Wheeler on September 4 listed an additional 3,000 for the 1965 Phase I (mainly three engineer construction/combat battalions); at the same time he indicated that approximately an equivalent number listed earlier (mainly helicopter personnel) will be arriving after the end of 1965. My prediction is that the final version of the 1965 Phase I requirement will end up exceeding 210,000 by a few thousand.

The differences between the 175,000 figure first mentioned in July and the 210,000 number now being discussed are primarily attributable to additional (a) air lift to move supplies around the country for both civilian and military purposes, (b) air defense, (c) artillery to support offensive operations and to provide immediate response to calls for help by villages under attack, (d) strike aircraft and associated support, (e) engineers, primarily to construct additional air bases, and (f) fleshing out, according to General Westmoreland's requests, of existing operational units and advisory and support elements (refugee relief teams, intelligence teams, communications, and security units, etc.).

You have authorized the deployment of 175,000 US personnel. I recommend that, at the present time, you authorize the movement of an additional

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35,000 men, bringing the total to 210,000. These deployments are essential to our effort. The authority will cover our requirements as they now appear although, as we have discussed before, forces in addition to the 210,000 may be needed later.

Robert S. McNamara

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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1965 SEP 1 AM 11 54
September 1, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

General Westmoreland has requested and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have concurred in the movement of an additional increment of forces to Vietnam. This increment would be in addition to the 28 combat battalions, associated air squadrons, and logistic support forces--totaling 125,000--announced by you on 28 July. The request is for six additional combat battalions (making a total of 34), associated air squadrons, and logistic support forces--totaling 85,000 additional United States personnel.

I recommend that these additional forces be authorized for movement.

I further recommend that no announcement be made at this time of the decision to deploy additional forces, but that announcements be made only as forces arrive in the theater.

Signed
ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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Page 1 of 1 Pages

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

September 29, 1965

AGENDA FOR 12:30 MEETING, 29 SEPT.

1. Vietnam

- (1) level of forces
- (2) tear gas
- (3) rice shipments
- (4) possible press conference statement

2. The Dominican Republic

- (1) situation report
- (2) Bunker's return and a second meeting

3. Foreign visitors

4. Pakistan/India

5. Foreign aid review

6. Nuclear testing program

7. Operations against Cuba

8. Fulbright and 50-50 shipping on wheat to Communists

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By CTS, NARA, Date 11/8/24

Enclosure

15

December 18, 1965

Meeting in Cabinet Room

Present: The President, Rusk, McNamara, Bundy, Clifford, Ball, Alex Johnson, Abe Fortas, Jack Valenti

Subject: Possible bombing pause in North Vietnam

Time : 12:35 p.m.

President: Publicity seekers and amateurs cannot have a hand in our affairs with other nations (in regard to Fanfani affair). When Adlai (wrote) letter rebuking the Severeid break, CBS only carried 30 seconds. The denial never catches up with the accusation.

Stevenson had a martyr complex but he never was going to resign.

Amateur excursions into diplomacy can cost you greatly. But having to reply to it, it destroyed its effectiveness. We can't conduct negotiations...

(Guard these papers we are reading. We simply cannot allow this information to get out. I had a conversation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- and I can understand what McNamara is living with -- he gave me the reasons why the Chiefs are against a cease-fire and a pause -- it almost makes it impossible to attack...)

(I would treat missions without mentioning or pointing up. After the fact, it is alright but we cannot announce their schedule as a ~~press mention~~. It would get us nowhere.)

peace mission.
The military say a month's pause would undue all we've done.

McNamara: That's baloney -- and I can prove it.

President: I don't think so. I disagree. I think it contains serious military risks. It is inaccurate to say suspension of bombing carries no military risk.

Bundy and McNamara: We can resume bombing at any time.

President: If *confronted* with 60-100,000 more men, and we didn't anticipate it, that's an error. If they fix all their bridges and transportation...

McNamara:

Rusk: I don't ~~believe~~ believe the suspension will last to January 27 unless we are well on the way toward peace.

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by CTS, NARA, Date 1/8/84

President: I agree. It could be a very short duration.

Bundy: It would be better to start on the 23rd or 24th.

McNamara: It would leak if we give Lodge longer than 23rd. Start Wednesday the 22nd.

Bundy: Which is then Thursday, their time. If you go to the UN, the pause ought to come right after.

Think carefully about if there is a turnaround on Lodge's part. The question is do we want to know more before we push the button. If he says the situation would collapse, you may want to know more.

President: What does Max Taylor think? How would he vote?

McNamara: On balance, "no". But he would vote with the President.

Bundy: This is not what he considers his arena.

McNamara: He thinks the military program and pacification is going better than it is.

President: Why do it the 22nd? Why not the 7th or 8th?

Bundy: Christmas time is a good time psychologically -- also get it started before Congress comes back.

President: If you wind up bombing during New Year, wouldn't it be better to do it during their New Year?

Ball: Wouldn't it be better to do it before Congress comes back?

President: Incidentally, do we want a personal State of the Union message? Clark, I want you to think about this. My inclination is not to speak in person. We wrote an 8-year program in our first State of the Union message. We've got all this the first year.

McCormack thinks personal delivery will help elect the Congress. I don't agree.

Rusk: I disagree. If you didn't, you would be giving up your leadership, here and abroad. I do have objection to a 9 p.m. appearance.

McNamara: I don't think you have to go before Congress to assert leadership. You ought not to go unless (the message) has

something to say.

Clifford: I think it would be a serious mistake if you didn't go in person. Last year you laid out a domestic program. This time you report on the shape of the program.

I think, after your illness, failure to appear would be injurious to world leadership. To break a long standing custom would be serious.

Rusk: If we were at peace in Viet-Nam, it might be alright, but not now.

President: I think there is a good deal to what Cliff says.
Clifford: I would to it on the 11th or 12th.

President: We could do it on Monday, the 10th, the first day. That's what we did last year.

(Fortas, Rusk, Clifford all intensely in favor of personal delivery.)

(After reading the position paper on a pause)

It rankles me that we have to prove again to Congress we are striving for peace. We've done that again and again.

Rusk: It's "What have you done for me lately?"

President: Would we read about the suspension on the 23rd?

Bundy: The British will probably leak it.

President: Who will you tell about this?

Rusk: The UK, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Canada, India, Japan, the Philippines. We need to tell them something within 36 hours.

Alex Johnson: After the first Saigon briefing of no mention of an attack on the North, the press will be hounding us.

President: You better move your dates back. I'm not ready to do anything yet. We have a lot of talking to do.

Dean, tell me what you think will be achieved by execution of this recommendation of a pause?

Rusk: First, there is the underlying question of the American people. They are isolationists at heart. (I am) convinced the people will do what has to be done in a war situation if they are convinced there is no alternative. You must think about the morale of the American people if the other side keeps pushing.

We must be able to say that all has been done.

President: Haven't we done this?

Rusk: To my satisfaction, but perhaps not to that of the American people.

Second, it's our deepest *national* purpose to achieve (*our goal*) by peace not war. If there is one chance in ten or twenty, a step of this sort could lead to a settlement on the Geneva agreements and 17th parallel... One chance in twenty is my guess.

Try to create a heavy obligation on the Russian's part to settle. If we pause, they will owe us something. The Russians, Yugoslavs, Hungarians have all pressed this with me. There is a possibility of deception.

President: They are pretty good at that, aren't they?

Rusk: If there is a chance Russia would take advantage of a suspension to start a movement toward peace, it is good. If it fails,....

(I am) influenced by the fact Russia and Iron Curtain countries acted in India-Pakistan crisis.

Also ~~they~~ don't want China policy to win. Also, they don't want a confrontation with the United States over Southeast Asia policy.

If it moves to the U.S. and China directly engaged, they have a deadly problem. This worries them. This ought to be clarified. We may get this clarified on the 3rd day like the last time.

A minor point (it would) make sure the world knows the U.S. is not the obstacle to peace. Those who support us will find it easy to support us.

President: From a propaganda point, there is a long shot chance. First, the Russians owe us something; second, it gives supporters reasons to go with the U.S.

Rusk: Possibility of trap -- parlay pause into unilateral pause.

President: Do we eliminate this by keeping the pause on an indefinite time limit?

Rusk: Right.

Another concern is a pause that fails. It will bring pressure to go all out to get it settled.

President: That is the most dangerous aspect. Don't we know a pause will fail? If we are in worse shape, then, won't we be bringing a deadly crisis on ourselves? The Republicans are looking for an exit. When we suffer reverses, it will be attributable to this. The support we have will be weak as dishwater.

Rusk: The answer to Dirksen is that no real settlement came from Korea. They allowed North Viet-Nam to become communist.

President: Bob.

McNamara: The Soviets have not applied all the pressure they could.

President: Have they ever applied pressure?

Rusk: Yes. During the first pause, they said they didn't have time.

McNamara: Our first pause was a propaganda effort. It was a propaganda effort -- not for the Soviets to help.

Rusk: Another indication is that the Russians have waged a great struggle against China.

President: Do we gain anything by doing this on the heels of the Italian move?

Rusk: There is some disagreement in the timing. One (the hard-liners say to pause in the face of Hanoi's intransigence.) Two (the leftwing says you are pausing because you don't believe anything will happen.)

McNamara: My point is they haven't made all the effort they are capable of.

President: How do you know that? Have they talked with you?

McNamara: No. No contacts. This comes from State.

This pause will give us leverage on them. It stops them from precipitous action against us -- such as an amphibious landing. Such Russian action is less likely if we pause.

I think there is some movement from the DRV. We don't really understand the DRV reactions. We don't really know. We are out of communication. (There is) danger because of this. (There is a) bare chance this pause will help them move toward us.

President: What does Thompson say about the Russians?

Ball: It would relieve them of intense pressure on response to our actions. (There is) more danger of Russian response than Chinese response. So we must push them into a corner.

Rusk: Suppose the Russians were trying to avoid a confrontation with the U.S.? What are those Americans up to?

(The President left the room to take a phone call at 1:40. He re-entered at 1:50 p.m.)

Bundy: We don't think you should contact Ford of the House of Representatives. He will denounce us.

(The President did not answer.)

McNamara: 1. The Soviets have not applied all the pressure they are capable of.

2. Actions stops Russians from responding as forceful to our attacks...

3. North Viet-Nam might make a favorable movement. We don't know enough of their reactions to judge.

4. Suspension of bombing will widen the gap between the Russians and Chinese.

5. Strong feeling of American public that Government peace efforts have been superficial and inadequate.

6. Military solution to problem is not certain -- one out of three or one in two. Ultimately we must find solution, we must finally find a diplomatic solution.

President: Then, no matter what we do in military (field) there is no sure victory.

McNamara: That's right. We have been too optimistic. One in three or two in three is my estimate.

Rusk: I'm more optimistic, but can't prove it.

McNamara: I'm saying: we may not find a military solution. We need to explore other means. It is impossible to negotiate a settlement we find acceptable.

Rusk: I don't agree. The other side knows South Viet-Nam is not going to negotiate on uneven terms.

McNamara: Our military action approach is an unacceptable way to a successful conclusion.

Ball: What you are saying is they quit and come to the conference table?

McNamara: Right. This seems a contradiction. I come to you for a huge increase in Viet-Nam -- 400,000 men. But at the same time it may lead to escalation and undesirable results. I suggest we look now at other alternatives.

1. Military advantage to North Viet-Nam infiltration. I don't think it is serious -- small advantage to North Viet-Nam.

2. Possibility North Viet-Nam will interpret a pause as a sign of weakness.

3. May lead to trouble with Lodge and South Viet-Nam. It doesn't make any difference what or who is in South Viet-Nam -- don't worry about them.

Lodge is a great admirer of the President. He will act like a soldier.

President: I differ with you. I think Lodge and the South Vietnamese government are problems. We've had enough governments out there. We must give thought to where the St. Louis Post-Despatch episode leads to.

Ask Dobrynin in the light of North Vietnamese reaction where are we?

Also Mansfield -- he is arriving with a full report.

McNamara: Pressure for escalation after suspension. Don't believe it will be a major problem. This pressure is only in terms of the North.

Republicans don't dare suggest we bomb cities.

P.O.L.? I will recommend we bomb them too.

Mine Haiphong Harbor? I will suggest this later myself. Three to six months from now we will have to do this. But danger is Russian reaction. It will be less if we have pause.

Rusk: Think you underestimate problem we face with South Viet-Nam.

McNamara: Find it inconceivable that is so.

Greatest danger is right in this room. Simply cannot discuss this with your wife. I can see stories about this -- and I am embarrassed. Please let us check ourselves and discuss with no human being.

(Meeting adjourned for lunch at 2:20 p.m. Meeting resumed at 3:05).

Bundy: For the pause. Share McNamara view that settlement must be political. This will be form of diplomatic initiative.

President: I'm not in a position to quote Wheeler on pros or cons of pause. He is a good soldier and will follow Commander-in-Chief. Don't think his views are emotional. He is loyal to McNamara and me -- -- but has convictions....point up systematically his views.

McNamara: Whatever decision you make, Wheeler will follow.

Bundy: If we are going to do a pause, I'd much rather have done it before the Congress comes back.

Fortas: Divide into two parts:

1. Military effects.
2. Psychological and political aspects.

Political effects on this country:

(1) Case is not proven. Believe this action will be good -- if it results in some kind of conference or suspension of hostilities.

Think public reaction will be negative -- showing uncertainty. Always think there is possibility of error in assessing public opinion. What they really want is cessation of hostilities. Not very much point in responding to manifestation of public opinion that says "you're not doing enough".

Anytime there is evidence of lack of certainty on the government's part, it leads to negative thinking in the public mind. It will cause people to worry about depth of conviction in government objective.

Negative or balance.

Regarding question on whether this action should be taken is whether this action results in actual accomplishment.

As I understand, this action will not be done with pre-arrangement with Russians. This is an action ambivalent and ambiguous. We use the Christmas season -- and by that fact and presentation we are diluting the effort in its hoped-for psychological and political results. Also diluting effect on Russians -- and any bringing about of peace negotiations.

Concerned as to what happens if this fails.

If failure, we won't get credit for it. There will be renewed pressure for drastic action. We'll have obstacles to

negotiations because of failure of major and spectacular effort.

President: What do you think? What would be the value?

Fortas: If we could do this by pre-arrangement with the Russians: "If we would finally consider a pause, would this give you an opportunity to get the VC to the conference table?"

President: We've already done this with the Russians.

Bundy: We don't think we can put them in a corner. The paper to the Russians is drafted carefully to go as far as we can with the Russians.

Rusk: We've tried to engage the Soviets in the Viet-Nam settlement -- (Moscow can't deliver Hanoi.

Fortas: This venture depends on the Russians using our actions for some purpose with North Viet-Nam. All I do is raise the question as to whether we have adequate reason for assumption.

Ball: This assumption is not based on one conversation, but on a number of them. Very often the means used by communists is not direct. Also this assumption is based on direct conversation with the Soviets. If we paused, the Soviets tell us they will do the best they can (based on twenty or more conversations).

Fortas: There is danger Hanoi would a pause as feasible evidence that protests have had effect on the U.S. Government.

Ball: The thing that offsets that is heavy deployment in the South.

Alex Johnson: We can't have it said by Hanoi and China that Russia is conspiring with the United States.

Clifford: Arguments for pause are well presented. Even if I accepted them, I still feel deep concern over this move.

1. Tried to figure out the circumstance under which North Viet-Nam would talk. Only their belief they are not going to win the war in South Viet-Nam. I don't believe they are at that stage now. I think they believe they are not losing. They are sending large numbers of men down. They have the example of the French before them. They believe that ultimately the United States will tire of this and go home and North Viet-Nam will prevail. Until they know they're not going to win the war, they will not talk and the Russians cannot convince them.

2. Believe the President and the government have talked enough about peace. Don't believe any more talk will do any good.

Any objective citizen knows the government's position. Talk of peace is interpreted as a sign of weakness.

This pause would encourage North Viet-Nam -- take this to be a step backward, in response to U.S. protest opinion and world opinion.

Anything that hinders the North Viet-Nam from figuring they can't win hinders the close of the war.

3. When the time comes to resume (and it will resume because chances are only one in twenty or one in fifty) those who want peace at any price, who want us to get out are that we not resume. They will urge enough events to happen to encourage the pause to go on.

4. If you accept the hypothesis that there is no chance of success, others will know it too. And I don't like the President to take a posture that is clearly unproductive. Might end up being viewed as a gimmick. Timing during Christmas is unfortunate.

5. Don't believe Viet-Nam is going to be settled publicly. Humphrey and Harriman publicised trips will not settle anything. Only when Hanoi feels nothing to be gained by further fighting is this war going to end.

6. If Soviets believe it is to their best interest to take favorable steps, they can do it at any time. Simply because bombing is going on will not stop them from intervening.

7. Time might come when pause would be valuable -- if we thought there was a chance it would be successful, then and only then would I do it.

Ball: Think we make a mistake in feeling Hanoi has freedom of action. They can no more give up this war alone than we would let Saigon fall. It's what the communist powers believe is the right course. The bombing China and the USSR.

McNamara: Should we pursue military estimate of 50-50 chance of victory -- or what should we do?

Rusk: In carrying the political battle, I need something more that we have at the present time. We need to make clear that the United States is honorable and has been given no alternative. We strengthen our position by proving we want peace.

Fortas: Seems to me you have already made your case for peace. perhaps it looks different on the inside than it does on the outside.

McNamara: If we put in 400,000 men, what will they do? They will us. We are going to be bombing assets of North

MEETING IN CABINET ROOM - JANUARY 25, 1966

5:30 p.m. until 7:40 p.m.

PRESENT: 19 members of the Senate and House - Bi-Partisan

QUESTION DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING: Whether or not to resume the bombing in North Vietnam.

Seventeen were in favor of resumption. Two Senators were opposed.

TWO SENATORS OPPOSED:

MANSFIELD: (Senator Mansfield read a prepared statement to the group.)

The bombing lull should be continued. We have little to lose by a lull. Time is on the side of the enemy in any war. The best chance of getting to the peace table is to minimize our military action.

The President ought to issue a statement something like this:

"I favor a ceasefire now and I call for a meeting of all the interested parties. I call for free elections within three to six months. I contemplate withdrawal of our forces after a secure amnesty. I favor reunification in accordance with the Geneva agreements:

The lull is to be preferred because:

1. Our casualties go up with escalation.
2. Bombings mean civilian deaths with possibly the use of gas and atom bombs.
3. It increases the isolation of the United States.
4. The more we destroy North Vietnam the more we must treat with China.

FULBRIGHT:

I concur in the Mansfield Statement. The

situation today is not similar to World War I or II. Precedents have no appeal for me. Never before have we tried to reimpose Colonial rule on anyone. We are properly accused of taking the place of the French.

We ought to negotiate a way out.

There is no possibility of negotiation except with the help of Russia. They could reconvene the Geneva Conference. What are we telling the Russians and what have they told us? Perhaps our dialogue with the Russians has been exhausted, I don't know.

If we win, what do we do? Do we stay there forever? There has never been a war in which there has been American discontent like this --

Therefore, I believe we should play for time. Nobody believed the Chinese would enter the Korean war -- but they did.

I hope that we would not resume the bombing -- and try to find a way out.

SEVENTEEN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN FOR RESUMPTION

MC CORMACK: We must protect our soldiers. We must use the means available to us. The time has arrived to resume the bombing.

FORD: (Mr. Ford asked the President what alternatives he faced - what his military advisers suggested - what kind of bombing they recommended.)

If your advisers say bombing is necessary - then I am for it.

DIRKSEN: The President has several alternatives:

1. You can withdraw. This would be disastrous.
2. You could let it be a war of attrition. Keep what we have and be patient. But this is expensive and wearing. It doesn't reduce casualties. The country wouldn't support you.
3. You can fight. You go in to win. If we are not winning now, let's do what is necessary to win. I don't believe you have any other choice. I believe the country will support you in anything you do to win this war. The enemy would be foolish not to use every pause to build up its forces.

RUSSELL:

This is the most frustrating experience of my life. I didn't want to get in there but we are there. I don't think the American people take this war seriously enough. I don't credit the polls in Vietnam. These people have been ground under by some ruler for so long that all they want is peace.

I don't know if our Defense Department is adequate enough to meet all our obligations around the world. We are prepared to fight a war we are not fighting.

I think we have gone too far in this lull -- although I recognize the reason for it.

This pause has cost militarily. For God's sake, Mr. President, don't start the bombing and do it half-way. Let them know they are in a war. We killed many, many civilians in World War II and nobody really got exercised about that. I would rather see civilians killed than have American boys die.

Please, Mr. President, don't get just one foot back in. Go all the way.

SALTONSTALL: It is clear to me that if we have our boys there we have to go forward with the bombings. I don't want to broaden the targets so much as to include civilians, but there are enough targets there. I believe this will be risky, but we must take risks. All four of the Chiefs believe the Chinese will not come in. That is a risk that must be taken. You must give our boys full support. I will support you in any decision you take.

ALBERT: You and your advisers have my trust. I am for anything you decide.

ARENDS: You have proven to the world that you want peace. Now we should resume bombing in the very near future.

BOGGS: The North Vietnamese know they can't run us off. If it were just a localized war, we wouldn't even be there, but this is a much larger part. If ever there has been a demonstration of dedication to the rule of law, it is what we have been doing. This decision is a military one. We are going to stay there, and I am for whatever is necessary to bring an honorable peace. We have made great progress in the last six months and we will defeat them.

BATES: From a military standpoint, we must support our troops in whatever they need.

BOW: I Agree.

MORGAN: I am for resumption of bombing.

RIVERS: Senator Russell has stated my position. The American people are afraid of land war in Asia. We need air protection. We need to stay there. It would be disasterous to leave. American people will not follow indecision. We must win or get out. Let the military select the targets. My Committee will follow you. But we must be decisive.

HICKENLOOPER: If only Vietnam were concerned, I would get out. But we are confronted by the Communist world. We must either get out or lick them. I have been restless with our light bombing in the North.

If we win, we must take out their ability to make war. I don't go for this enclave philosophy. If we get out, we must get ready to fight somewhere else. So we must lick them and this involves risk but all war requires risk.

(At this point, Senator Fulbright said that if we followed Senator Hickenlooper's advice it would get us in World War III.)

MAHON:

In the Congress we have been over-simplifying things. I believe we are in Vietnam for a long time with no easy answer. I think we ought to resume the bombing and I will follow your leadership.

HAYDEN:

We should proceed immediately and promptly to bomb all areas in North Vietnam that contribute to carrying on the war.

LONG:

We got into some trouble by letting the Communist believe that we are weak. The only way China will stay out is to let her know that if she gets in we will ruin her, too. Unless we let them know we are going to be strong and we are going to win, we will be in for trouble.

Whenever the Communists take one country, they will take them all. Every Democratic leader in every other country will know he is doomed and all Southeast Asia will follow.

MRS. BOLTON:

My people believe as I do. We have let our enemies think we would fight as we have done so many times. Don't let them think we won't fight, Mr. President.

(The President urged all present to keep what was said in the room as a top security matter. Too many American lives depend on keeping the security. He thanked all of them for coming by. He read a passage from Bruce Catton's latest book Never Call Retreat. He read an intercept about a meeting of a United States Senator and an emissary of a foreign government. He said that he appreciated their advice and their views and their counsel. He has made no decision, he said. He told the Congressmen and the Senators that he keeps in his pocket the resolution they passed in 1964 which instructed him to do whatever was necessary to deter aggression. The President pointed out that Congress had the power to take that resolution away from him any time it chose to do so and he could not

veto it.

At this juncture, Senator Saltonstall
said "Keep that resolution in your pocket, Mr.
President. We won't take it away from you."

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 9, 1966 - - 5:30 P. M.

AGENDA

VIETNAM: KEY ISSUES

1. The Military Situation and Prospects for the Coming Weeks: General Wheeler
2. The Political and Economic Situation -- Key Issues as Seen from Saigon: Ambassador Lodge
3. Key Political Issues: Secretary Rusk
4. Key Military Issues: Secretary McNamara
5. Key Economic Issues: Mr. Robert Komer
6. Guidance on Further Discussions and Press Handling of Ambassador Lodge's Visit

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Authority E.O. 12958, 3.4(h); White House guidelines
By CTS, NARA, Date 12/14

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

May 9, 1966

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The attached papers were prepared for use during Ambassador Lodge's visit to Washington. Some of the issues raised will be discussed at the National Security Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 1966, at 5:30 p.m. These papers serve, therefore, as background material for the NSC meeting as well as for other discussions with Ambassador Lodge.

Bromley Smith
Bromley Smith
Executive Secretary

Distributed to:

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director, OEP
The Chairman, JCS
The Director, CIA

The Secretary of the Treasury
The Director, USIA
The Director, AID

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By *LS* NARA, Date *1/8/24*

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17b

AGENDA FOR TALKS WITH AMBASSADOR LODGE

Military (Secretary McNamara, except item 3 b)

1. Bombing Policy in the North (To be discussed separately)
2. Bombing Policy in Laos (To be discussed separately)
3. Cambodia
 - a. Rules of Engagement
 - b. Diplomacy (Secretary Rusk)
4. Force Levels
5. Military Situation -- I Corps and First Division

Economic (Mr. Komer)

6. Overall Washington Directives
7. Inflation
 - a. Monetary Strategy
 - b. Increased Supply of Essentials
8. Port Congestion
9. Pacification Policy
10. GVN Manpower Policy
11. Land Reform

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Authority White House Guidelines
By CTS, NARA, Date 1/8/24

Political (Secretary Rusk)

12. Policy Towards Elections for Constitutional Assembly
13. Getting Out the Vote and Protecting the Voters
14. Policy Towards Political Party Formation
 - a. Pre-and Post-Election
 - b. Stimulating Discussion: Information Policy

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15. Technical Assistance on Constitution-making
16. Life of the Present Government
17. Contacts with the VC (To be discussed separately)
18. Damping Anti-Americanism
19. What Must They Do If We Stop Bombing in the North?
(To be discussed separately)

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SUMMARY

Agenda Item

- 3a. Subject: Rules of Engagement - Cambodia (Tab A)
- Problem: Current rules of engagement prevent "hot pursuit" of ground or naval forces into Cambodia. Communist use of Cambodia is increasing. Should we (a) change rules of engagement to permit pursuit of communist forces into Cambodia or (b) retain present rules and lay public information foundation for later change?
- Recommendations: Option b.
- 3b. Subject: Diplomacy - Cambodia (Tab B)
- Problem: We have dealt with Cambodian complaints on border violations by stressing self-defense against communist forces. Cambodia now asserts its own forces were involved. Enlarged ICC border activity would not terminate communist use of Cambodian territory, but it would likely inhibit it.
- Recommendations: (a) After appropriate consultation, a note to the ICC Co-Chairmen and members proposing enlarged ICC border operations.
 (b) A protest to Cambodia against hostile acts from Cambodian territory against US forces.

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By CRS, NARA, Date 1/4/24

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

4. Subject: US Force Levels (Tab C)
- Problem: Present plans call for 383,500 US personnel by the end of 1966. The planned magnitude will cause inflationary pressures and risk increased Vietnamese resentment. Should we (a) continue the planned buildup while taking vigorous action to minimize adverse impact or (b) restrict deployments and military construction and run the risk of a growing communist military advantage?
- Recommendation: Option a.
5. Subject: Military Situation - I Corps and 1st Division (Tab D)
- Problem: RVNAF support of the "Struggle Movement" in I Corps has reduced RVNAF effectiveness and combat capability. Progress toward re-establishing central government authority has been slow and the situation remains potentially explosive. Should we (a) continue to encourage the GVN toward a political solution or (b) press the GVN for military action against anti-government elements.
- Recommendation: Option a.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

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| 6. | <u>Subject:</u> | Overall Directive and Campaign Plan
(Tab E) |
| | <u>Problem:</u> | Need for better coordination of military and non-military plans and programs and assignment of priorities. Komer re-drafting Washington directive. Mission in Saigon developing comprehensive pacification plan (due mid-May). |
| | <u>Recommendations:</u> | Reach agreement such plans are urgent business for top-level review as soon as submitted. |
| 7. | <u>Subject:</u> | Action Program to Cope with Inflation
(Tab F) |
| | <u>Problem:</u> | Inflation threatens our whole effort in Viet-Nam. GVN reluctant to move decisively; U.S. being blamed. IMF Mission now in Saigon. Tab F discusses: (1) GVN fiscal measures; (2) increasing supply of goods; (3) unilateral U.S. measures; (4) U.S. leverage and inducements. |
| | <u>Recommendation:</u> | (a) Agree now that, as soon as IMF proposals are in, we will press GVN for optimum package of stabilization measures; (b) devise parallel package of US measures to reduce as much as possible the inflationary impact of the US buildup. |

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

8.

Subject:

Port Congestion, especially Saigon
(Tab G)

Problem:

Port congestion remains major bottle-neck in fight against inflation. Komer proposals for immediate measures to meet essential civilian needs now under review by DOD. If current efforts prove insufficient, it may be necessary (1) to persuade GVN to declare Saigon port a military zone or (2) US military take over Saigon port area.

Recommendation:

(a) develop immediate contingency plan for MACV operation of Saigon port;
(b) consider establishment of joint civil/military shipping and port priority system.

9.

Subject:

Pacification Program (Tab H)

Problem:

Need to improve capability to secure and hold areas cleared by regular military operations. Need to rationalize roles and missions of the hodge-podge of local military and security forces. Most promising organizations in this field are: Revolutionary Development cadres (PAT's) and the police. Porter and Komer urge doubling RD cadres (39,000 instead of

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

9. (cont.)

19,000) by end of 1966. Washington agencies have various reservations. Program to build up police force (to 72,000 by the end of FY 1967) should be pressed with GVN.

Recommendation:

(a) approve RD Cadre expansion, contingent on cost and manpower problems being resolved;
(b) AID and Saigon Mission to conduct urgent study of police requirements through FY 1969.

10.

Subject:

More Rational Use of Vietnamese Manpower (Tab I)

Problem:

Manpower of all kinds is now critically short. Sharp military and civilian competition for those available. Mission and MACV have undertaken manpower survey (not yet available). GVN urgently needs manpower study and establishment at high GVN level of manpower planning and priority unit.

Recommendation:

(a) Charge DOD and Komer in Washington and Mission and MACV in Saigon to get firm handle on GVN manpower requirements, sort out priorities, develop manpower budget, and urge it on GVN;

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

10. (cont.)

(b) pending above, hold in abeyance FY 1967 actions to implement force ceilings agreed on at Honolulu;
(c) review measures to cut demands on Vietnamese manpower (3rd country labor, better use of returnees, etc.);
(d) develop better procedures here and in Saigon for civil/military review of new manpower demands.

11.

Subject:

Land Reform (Tab J)

Problem:

Land reform offers one of few opportunities for dramatic GVN initiative in "social revolution." Main failure over the years has been lack of vigorous execution by GVN. Special task force chaired by Dorothy Jacobson has been established on interagency basis by Secretary Freeman.

Recommendation:

Jacobson group may have firm proposal ready before Ambassador Lodge's departure. If not, Mission and Washington agencies should be asked for firm recommendations no longer than May 30.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

12.

Subject:

Policy Toward Elections for
Constitutional Assembly (Tab K)

Problem:

Late this summer, South Viet-Nam will elect a Constituent Assembly. Electoral Council now meeting in Saigon to decide election laws and procedures. Unresolved question is role of elected assembly beyond its constitution-drafting job. Some, including Buddhists, see Assembly as having broad powers, including right to determine interim government until constitution goes into effect.

Recommendation:

- (a) We should do everything possible to see that Assembly election is held as promised by GVN;
- (b) take no position now on role of Assembly beyond its constitution-drafting task;
- (c) encourage discussion and political activity to start the process of political party formation;
- (d) encourage formulation of an election law that ensures all non-communist groups are adequately represented in Assembly--probably through constituencies based on population with multiple representation from each;

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

12. (cont.)

- (e) get major non-communist groups to agree before elections on a common body of agreed principles, such as social revolution, progress toward representative government, etc.;
- (f) encourage unity of Directorate and promote reconciliation between Generals Ky and Thi;
- (g) encourage candidate qualification language that would disqualify "agents of a foreign power" or other terms rather than disqualifying "neutralists" or even "communists" by those designations;
- (h) provide election experts to Mission, and quietly to the Vietnamese.

13.

Subject:

Getting Out the Vote and Protecting Voters (Tab L)

Problem:

Maximum voter participation will be required if the forthcoming elections are to be considered a valid expression of Vietnamese popular will and opinion. GVN should consult with Electoral Council on the following:

- (a) major psywar campaign to explain election and disseminate information and voting instructions;

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

13. (cont.)

- (b) flexible system of voter identification to accommodate those from VC-controlled areas;
- (c) widest possible distribution of polling places.

GVN might also consider:

- (a) sending youth teams to rural areas to discuss significance of elections and voting procedures;
- (b) an election period ceasefire of a week or so to encourage large turnout and inhibit VC;
- (c) use of Summer Youth Program personnel as independent poll watchers;
- (d) some form of international observation.

Recommendation:

Discuss above with Prime Minister Ky and, subject to his reaction, with appropriate members of Electoral Council. Try to persuade Ky and Council members that elections offer major potential for political and psychological initiatives.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

14.

Subject:

Policy toward formation of Political
Parties (Tab M)

Problem:

Vietnamese body politic is fractionalized. In the face of a unified, disciplined Viet Cong organization, non-communist Vietnamese groups need to coalesce into a minimum number of broad, major political groupings or into one non-communist front. There is evidence Ky is tempted to form a pro-government party around a military nucleus. We can follow two general lines:

(a) exert strong influence to force coalescence of major parties or groupings and encourage Ky in formation of a military-civilian party; or
(b) encourage beginning of party formation but recognize little progress expectable soon. Aim instead at promoting an Assembly that is as accurately reflective of existing groups as possible, recognizing that coalescence of political groups now is likely to be artificial.

Recommendation:

Exert our influence in favor of an electoral law which ensures adequate representation in constituent assembly of all major groups but which discourages further fractionalization. Actively discourage any effort by Ky to form a government party designed purely to perpetuate himself in power and to exclude the militant Buddhists.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

15.

Subject:

Technical Assistance on
Constitution Making (Tab N)

Problem:

The nature of the constitution will influence prospects for workable representative government. The experience of other newly independent countries is pertinent, and various electoral systems and constitutional devices are adaptable to Vietnam's requirements. Any foreign guidance must take into account Vietnamese sensitivities.

Recommendations:

- (a) We make available reference material on a non-partisan basis.
- (b) Send experts to advise our Mission and as appropriate make quiet contact with the Vietnamese.
- (c) Help constituent assembly members visit other countries with similar problems.
- (d) Establish a public reading room and arrange for films, talks, seminars to facilitate Vietnamese discussion of their political institutional problems.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

Agenda Item

16.

Subject:

Life of the Present Government
(Tab O)

Problem:

The Directorate apparently intends to remain in office until a government is elected under the constitution. Buddhist militants envisage a new interim government once the constituent assembly is elected. A serious renewal of their confrontation could result. We could (a) urge that the GVN's future status be resolved now, possibly in the electoral law or (b) urge continuation of the present government in power until a new one is formed under the constitution or (c) adopt a flexible position avoiding resolution of the issue now, while continually reappraising the desirability of the present GVN remaining in power during the interim period as well as our own influence in that direction.

Recommendation:

Option c.

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SUMMARY (Continued)

18. Subject: Dampening Anti-Americanism (Tab P)
- Problem: Present anti-Americanism reflects surface irritations and may be transitory. However, the large-scale US presence, Buddhist political frustrations and war weariness could deepen this sentiment and endanger our objectives. The causes can only be reduced, not repressed.
- Recommendations: (a) Make clear that we favor an orderly political development and are neither partisan nor anti-Buddhist.
 (b) Reduce to the full extent possible all points of friction, including inflationary pressures, troop-community relations, locations of US personnel and facilities.

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AGENDA ITEM 3 a. Rules of Engagement -- Cambodia

1. Problem. To determine what if any changes in rules of engagement for US forces in Southeast Asia may be desirable to minimize Cambodian support to the VC:

a. Current rules of engagement prevent immediate pursuit of hostile troops or vessels into Cambodian territory or territorial waters. US land forces are forbidden to enter Cambodia or to fire into Cambodia except with prior Washington approval in each instance, or in emergency situations specifically involving self-defense. Pursuit of hostile aircraft into Cambodia air space is permitted when actually engaged in combat.

b. The communists have been exploiting Cambodian territory in support of the VC. Some Cambodians have been involved in direct assistance to the VC/NVA. The degree of involvement by the Royal Cambodian Government has been unclear. However, the RKG has taken no determined or effective measures to curtail support to the VC from or through Cambodia.

c. Recent actions and statements by Sihanouk indicate an ever-closer alignment of the RKG with the Government of North Vietnam and communist objectives in Southeast Asia.

d. Evidence indicates that communist exploitation of Cambodia is increasing. Infiltration LOCs are being extended and improved through northeast Cambodia. VC and NVN forces have launched military operations against US/friendly forces from Cambodia and have withdrawn into Cambodia.

2. Options.

a. Change the rules of engagement to permit pursuit of communist forces into Cambodia in order to reduce the military disadvantage under which US/friendly forces now operate, but at the risk of inciting Sihanouk to even more effective cooperation with the VC and of generating serious international criticism of our "violation of Cambodian sovereignty."

b. Retain our present rules of engagement, perhaps laying the factual public relations foundation for a possible change later on.

3. Recommendation. I recommend Option b.

ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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Authority NY 91-27
By CTS, NARA, Date 1/8/24

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B

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Cambodia: Diplomacy

(Item 3b, Agenda for Talks with Ambassador Lodge)

Problem

To take diplomatic action to reduce Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory, while at the same time dramatizing that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese are to blame for the situation.

Discussion

1. The Cambodian Government has been filing a series of complaints in the UN concerning US and South Vietnamese violations of its territory. Most recently, as a result of the recent action in which our forces received fire from Cambodian territory and returned it, further complaints may be expected. So far we have been dealing with these by pointing out that all of our actions are in self-defense because of VC/North Vietnamese use of Cambodian territory. We have also been pointing out that we have no quarrel with Cambodia, that we respect its independence and territorial integrity, and that the root of the problem lies in Viet Cong presence in the border areas and use of Cambodian territory.
2. In connection with the recent action, the Cambodians have now asserted that their own forces were involved, and that US forces fired first. Embassy Saigon has recommended a protest to the Cambodian Government. We believe such a protest is warranted and have prepared the attached draft, to be conveyed through the Australians, who represent our interests in Cambodia.
3. We believe that the most effective diplomatic action we could take would be to make a strong approach to the British and Soviets, as Co-Chairmen, and to the ICC members (India, Canada, and Poland) to emphasize our support for the Cambodians' own proposal for enlarged ICC activity both in the border areas and in policing any material that may be coming through the port of Sihanoukville to the VC. The record here is that Sihanouk himself proposed the enlarged ICC role some time ago, and the Canadians have been pushing it, with our urging, and have begun to make some headway with India. We have orally stressed to all the interested nations that we support the proposal, and we recommend that we now act by sending a formal diplomatic note to this effect.
4. The practical impact of enlarged ICC operations would not deal

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thoroughly with the problem of VC/North Vietnamese use of Cambodian territory, but even small ICC forces might well uncover the kind of specific installations we now believe exist, and would significantly inhibit VC activity. Even in the event that the ICC enlargement did not take place, we would have made a good record of our own willingness to see the problem solved.

Recommendations

1. That, subject to Ambassador Lodge's comments, the President approve the attached draft note to the five countries involved (UK, USSR, India, Canada, and Poland). We would then seek Vietnamese concurrence and would discuss the note concurrently with the British and Canadians, who are sympathetic but might have tactical suggestions. In the light of these comments, we would then formally present the note to the five countries through their Ambassadors here. We would not make the note public at the outset, although it has been drafted so that it could be made public advantageously if this became desirable.
2. That the President approve the attached draft protest to the Cambodians concerning the incidents on April 29 and 30.

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Draft Note to Geneva Co-Chairmen
and ICC Members

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to _____ and has the honor to refer to the problems existing in the area of the border between Cambodia and South Vietnam.

As the _____ Government is aware, there have been a number of incidents in this area over a substantial period of time, involving military activity on Cambodian territory by forces of the so-called Viet Cong and more recently by regular forces from North Vietnam. On occasion, forces of the Republic of Vietnam, together with United States forces acting in their support, have violated Cambodian territory in responding to hostile military activities, and the combination of these hostile activities and the responsive action by South Vietnamese and United States forces have created a problem which has increased in dimensions and seriousness as the fighting in South Vietnam has increased and particularly as the numbers of regular troops of the North Vietnamese Army have grown. The Government of the United States is in possession of substantial evidence suggesting that there is increasing use of Cambodian territory by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regular forces in the ways described by Ambassador Stevenson at the United Nations

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in the spring of 1964, i. e., "as a passageway, source of supply, and sanctuary from counterattack."

The Government of the United States has long sought for practical means to meet this problem. It supported in 1964 the proposal made to the UN Security Council for the "establishment of an international police force, or a group of observers with sufficient personnel and resources to keep the frontier area under surveillance . . ." It regrets that this proposal was not adopted. The United States has repeatedly stressed its respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cambodia, and the action proposed would have contributed to this end.

More recently, the Government of the United States has noted the repeated requests by the Royal Government of Cambodia for an augmentation of the activities of the International Control Commission in relation to this problem. The International Control Commission has in effect been called on to intensify its efforts to see that Cambodia's frontiers are respected and to supervise the application of the Cambodian declaration of July 20, 1954, concerning the introduction into Cambodia of military personnel and war materials.

The Government of the United States notes with concern that

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the ICC has as yet not taken effective action on the requests of the Royal Government of Cambodia. In view of the seriousness of the problem created by the abuse of Cambodian territory, it requests that the Government of _____ take such measures as are within its competence as (Co-Chairman, member of ICC), to see that effective action is taken on the proposals of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The Government of the United States, for its part, although not a party to the 1954 Geneva Agreement, would be prepared to consider sympathetically any requests which the Co-Chairmen or the ICC might make for material assistance in carrying out effective operations pursuant to the Cambodian request.

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The Department of State wishes to inform the Embassy of Australia that on April 29 and 30 a battalion of the United States 1st Division, engaged in operations against Viet Cong forces in the vicinity of the village of Lồ Gò, Tay Ninh Province, in South Viet-Nam, was subjected to heavy small arms and machine gun fire from the Cambodian side of the Cai Bac River, which forms the Cambodian/South Vietnamese border in that locality. Two United States soldiers were killed by the fire from the Cambodian side of the border. As a measure of self-defense, the United States forces returned fire in order to suppress the hostile fire directed against them from Cambodian territory.

The circumstances of the incident were ascertained to have been as follows. On April 29, United States forces, moving north along the South Vietnamese side of the Cai Bac River, discovered a large Viet Cong cache on the bank of the river, at which time they were subjected to fire from the Cambodian side of the river. The United States forces returned small arms and artillery fire in order to suppress sniper fire being directed against them. On April 30, the United States forces as they approached the village of Lồ Gò were again subjected to heavy

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small arms and machine gun fire from the Cambodian side of the river. Artillery fire was thereupon employed, to a depth of about 200 meters, against a large Viet Cong force which was observed on the Cambodian side of the river. Viet Cong forces holding the Lồ Gồ position, under fire from the American forces, disengaged and withdrew across the river into Cambodia. Subsequent examination of the area from the Vietnamese side of the river showed that the Viet Cong had prepared positions on Cambodian territory so that United States forces attacking Lồ Gồ would at the same time be subjected to flanking fire from the Cambodian side of the river.

It is requested that the Australian Government call these incidents to the attention of the Royal Cambodian Government and express the deep concern of the United States Government at the hostile action directed against United States forces from Cambodian soil, in violation of the declared policy of neutrality of the Cambodian Government. The policy of the United States Government continues to be to respect the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Cambodia, and it has no desire to see the war in Southeast Asia widened. However, the United States Government expects the Royal Cambodian Government to carry out its obligations as a neutral to prevent the use of its territory by North Vietnamese/Viet Cong forces in support of aggression against South Viet-Nam, which remains the root cause of the problem along the Cambodian/South Vietnamese border.

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AGENDA ITEM 4. US Force Levels

1. Problem. To plan US deployments to South Vietnam.

a. Since US combat operations commenced in March 1965, there has been a steady build-up of forces to the current May 1, 1966 in-country total of 251,793. These forces include 50 maneuver battalions and 20 tactical fighter squadrons.

b. It is planned that the US military force building in South Vietnam will continue until, by the end of 1966, there will be a total of 383,500 personnel. Additional deployments will be required in 1967.

c. The additional US deployments are required to offset the increasing Viet Cong main forces and the infiltrating North Vietnamese army units.

d. Deployments of the planned magnitude cause inflationary pressures and risk increased resentment of US presence.

2. Options.

a. Continue deployments and the associated construction programs (1) in order to maximize the chance of destroying VC/PAVN main force units (and thus to contribute to the security of the population), of convincing the enemy that he cannot win, and of leading to acceptable negotiations while (2) taking vigorous actions to minimize the adverse impact on the Vietnamese economy and attitudes toward the United States.

b. Restrict deployments and the accompanying construction program (1) in order to avoid additional pressures on the Vietnamese economy and to minimize the risk of hostility toward the US, while (2) running a serious risk, because of restricted US military operations, that enemy forces will be permitted to grow to the point where the US will be forced first into enclaves and then from the country.

3. Recommendation. I recommend Option a.

ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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AGENDA ITEM 5. Military Situation - I Corps and 1st Division

1. Problem. Are conditions in I Corps such that the area may fall to the VC?

a. The "Struggle Movement," concentrated in Hue and Da Nang, has been supported by RVNAF personnel, particularly by senior commanders of 1st Division who remained loyal to General Thi, deposed I Corps Commander. Other combat units in the Corps area have supported the GVN. This situation has reduced RVNAF force effectiveness and combat capability. There has been no effect on US combat forces. Lt. General Dinh, I Corps Commander, has stated that he can re-establish central government authority. Although he appears confident, it is not possible to predict his success, and progress has been slow.

b. The situation remains fluid and potentially explosive. The spectrum of possibilities varies from a return to relative stability to military action involving RVNAF against RVNAF. If the former should occur, little deterioration of RVNAF effectiveness is expected; in the latter situation, RVNAF combat effectiveness and capability to prosecute this war could be drastically reduced. Elements of the 1st Division have resumed combat operations against the VC/NVA (who have the equivalent of 35-40 battalions plus 15,000 VC militia in the area) at about the same level existing prior to the unrest, and the possibility of a clash between government and anti-government military forces has been reduced.

2. Options. Two options are available to us in our support of the GVN in 1st Corps.

a. Encourage the GVN, as we are currently doing, to press for a political solution in I Corps. Or

b. Press the GVN for military action against the anti-government elements in I Corps.

3. Recommendation. I recommend Option a: We should continue our current policy of supporting GVN attempts for a political solution in I Corps.

ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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LODGE AGENDA

Item 6 -- Overall Directive and Campaign Plan.

Porter and I are convinced that a realistic overall plan is required on the non-military side (a) to pull together our non-military programs; and (b) order them according to some set of realistic priorities. In short, we need a better idea of where we are going, and then to do first things first.

Such a plan is also essential to provide a better basis for coordination of military and non-military plans and programs, which has become indispensable because of increasingly tight Vietnamese resources. For good and sufficient reasons, the US/GVN military buildup has pre-empted the bulk of these resources (e. g. port facilities and manpower), at the expense of the civil side. Thus we face a situation of growing competitive bidding between the civil and military sides, which must be resolved.

A. Komer is redrafting a Washington directive, for issuance as a Presidential NSAM.

B. Porter and the Mission are preparing, for completion by mid-May, a comprehensive pacification plan as the blueprint for operations in the field.

C. Recommendation. We should reach agreement that such plans are urgent business for review at the top level as soon as submitted.

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LODGE AGENDA

Item 7 -- A New Action Program to Cope with Inflation.

Unpleasant as it is, we must face up to yet a new threat--accelerating inflation--which if unchecked could undermine our whole effort in Vietnam. A prime cause has been our military buildup, which has created demands on the feeble economy, increasingly outdistancing its ability to respond.

Money supply was up 75% in 1965--probably another 75% in 1966. Prices up 40% in 1965--another 63% likely in 1966--currently rising at faster rate. Manpower is critically short. An enormous hoard of piasters held off the market threatens to break loose. The problem will be massively compounded by cumulative impact of further major US troop deployments and new military construction.

The dangers involved are already apparent. Economic distress contributed to the political unrest in the I Corps area. If confidence in the piaster disappears (and the piaster overhang descends on the market), distress will be compounded, and those elements on whom we depend most--soldiers, government workers--hit hardest. Equally bad, the Americans will be blamed for inflation, thus powerfully contributing to anti-US tendencies in the pre-election period.

We've been addressing the inflation threat for months, but (a) not enough has been done by a feeble GVN, while (b) the inflationary impact of the US buildup has outdistanced our efforts. The Honolulu agreements called for measures to sop up 12 billion piasters in 1966, but only 4 billion is in sight as yet. The import program to operate on the supply side is moving better, but here port congestion remains a key bottleneck--partly because of the military buildup.

Action Needed. We must press an across-the-board attack on inflation. Given the feebleness of the GVN, we cannot realistically expect its fiscal measures to suffice or that these will be carried out with full effect if involved. So we need a whole arsenal of US as well as GVN actions, in hopes that we can achieve sufficient cumulative restraining effect.

A. GVN Fiscal Measures. To meet our aim of holding the 1966 cost of living rise at 50% or less, 10 billion piasters (\$100 million) will have to be taken out of circulation. We are again pressing the GVN on the Honolulu measures, largely to educate it on the need for drastic action. An IMF Mission, aided by US experts, is now in Saigon to add its weight. Our people

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in Saigon (despairing that a weak GVN could systematically manage via taxes, bonds, and other measures to sop up enough piasters) strongly urge the radical surgery of sharp devaluation. Washington tends to favor a lesser devaluation plus a package of foreign exchange taxes.

B. Increasing the Supply of Goods. This would be least painful all around. We can buy the goods--the problem is to get them in and distributed efficiently. We need an all-out attack on port congestion (see Item 8). We are also urgently studying a \$25 million security stockpile of essential commodities to be available for quick sale to combat price rises.

C. Unilateral US Measures. We must also make every reasonable effort to limit the inflationary impact of the US military buildup. Many impressive steps have already been taken, but the urgency of containing inflation requires yet more. Komer has sent a list of suggestions to the Secretary of Defense. We must develop better management tools for assessing the inflationary impact of the US presence, and for screening new force increases and construction to limit this impact.

D. US Leverage and Inducements. Getting the GVN to move will not be easy. Recapturing some control over the piaster proceeds is essential to this end. But many say that we can exert little leverage, because the GVN no longer believes that we would hold up otherwise important actions--such as force increases. Yet, if the inflationary threat becomes critical, we may have to do so--and lend credibility to our actions. On the other hand, US and GVN interests demand a substantial wage increase for civil servants and the military. We must insist that this be packaged with simultaneous deflationary measures.

E. Recommendations. (a) Take a firm decision now that, as soon as IMF proposals are available, we will press GVN for the optimum realizable package of stabilization measures; (b) devise a parallel package of US measures to further reduce, to fullest extent consistent with our other aims, the inflationary impact of the US buildup.

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Item 8 -- Licking Port Congestion, especially in Saigon.

This remains a major bottleneck in effort to fight inflation in Vietnam. The military have largely licked their problem, but partly by pre-empting port space from the civil side. Throughout April ships waiting off Saigon area averaged over 50 daily. Waiting times for commercial ships are running 40 to 70 days. Problem compounded by inefficient stevedoring, slow removal of goods from the port, and military contractors' pre-emption of civilian facilities. Latest AID projections show military tonnage running higher than expected; hence serious commercial cargo deficits are forecast for the rest of 1966. Query--has the impact of likely new US force increases and military construction yet been factored in?

AID has laid on series of measures aimed at keeping Saigon port capacity at least slightly ahead of civil needs. But these do not solve the short-term problem, and may not catch up at all if new military port demands are now levied.

A. Komer has proposed to SecDef series of immediate measures using DOD assets to meet essential civil needs. These include release of additional civilian port facilities by MACV and military contractors; speed up New Port construction; military unloading, maintenance, and in-country transport for priority civilian needs. These under review.

B. The situation is so serious that, if current efforts seem unlikely to suffice, more drastic remedies are essential:

1. Persuade GVN declare Saigon port a military zone, drafting Vietnamese into port battalion, and assisting with AID and MACV advice and equipment.
2. US military take over Saigon port area, primarily using MACV transport battalion and possibly GVN military transport units.

C. Recommendations.

1. Develop immediate contingency plan for MACV operation of Saigon port;
2. Study establishment of joint civil/military shipping and port priority system to ensure better balance and control of military and civilian cargoes.

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Item 9 -- Stepping Up Pacification Program

Our capability to secure and hold the countryside cleared by regular military operations must be improved. Failing this, we face ever-increasing military commitments, waste of our aid resources, diversion of supplies to the VC, enfeeblement and neutralism in GVN local administration. Roles, missions, and structure of the hodgepodge of local military and security forces need to be rationalized. The two most promising organizations--at present and for the essential subsequent phase--are the RD cadres (PATs) and the police. Buildup of these elements would permit better use of critically scarce manpower and scaling down of US support costs for less effective GVN forces.

Expansion of RD cadres (which also perform local security functions) deserves high priority. The new RD Ministry under General Thang is one of the best in the GVN. Gardner recommends adding medical and public health training to their curriculum. New land reform proposals are based on cadre administration.

A. Porter and Komer have urged a doubling of the output of trained RD Cadres from 19,000 to 39,000 by the end of 1966. It would cost an estimated \$30 million add-on to the \$40 million already planned for FY 1967, unless the GVN will assume the local currency costs. Finding manpower is also a problem. Porter believes it will have to come partly from the Popular Forces. All Washington agencies seem to favor cadre expansion in principle, but have various reservations.

B. Police Expansion. The program to build up the police to 72,000 by the end of FY 1967, especially the 15,000 man Police Field Force (a promising rural constabulary) should also be pressed. We also need an urgent examination of further police expansion through FY 1969 to provide a basis for weighing competing demands for RVNAF and CIDG increases in largely overlapping roles. Komer sees a strong case for gradual expansion of police as on-going local security force in pacified areas.

C. Recommendations.

- a. Approval of RD Cadre expansion, contingent on cost and manpower problems being satisfactorily resolved.
- b. AID and Saigon Mission to lay on urgent study of future police requirements through FY 1969.

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LODGE AGENDAItem 10 -- Need for More Rational Use of Vietnamese Manpower.

Manpower across the board is now critically short. Military and civil demands are increasingly competitive. Increases in authorized strength levels through FY 1967 total 126,000 in RVNAF and CIDG. Similarly, military contractor labor force planned to double from 50,000 to 100,000 in FY 67. Latest Saigon reports indicate RD program seriously behind schedule, with almost all provinces citing shortages of cadres and manpower as key reason. Competitive and uncoordinated bidding for manpower left over from draft, fuels inflation and puts premium on speculative construction and profiteering trades. Draft machinery also needs to be overhauled to forestall continued drafting of people with scarce technical skills.

Since the VC or the US/ARVN military have pre-empted the best available manpower, the civil side is at a real disadvantage. Military planning is generally far ahead of civil, with requirements projected through FY 1969. The Mission and MACV reportedly are undertaking a coordinated manpower study, but it is not yet available. We urgently need a US-devised manpower budget designed to resolve competing priority claims, and then to discuss this with the GVN.

Gardner, Bell, and Komer have recommended urgent GVN manpower study and establishment manpower planning and priority unit at senior GVN level. Manpower survey team now being recruited for May departure. Komer suggests additional possibilities for recovery GVN manpower through better use of refugees and defectors--including stepped-up Chieu Hoi program--and measures to cut down RVNAF desertions.

Recommendations.

- a. Charge DOD and Komer here, plus the Mission and MACV in Saigon, to get a firm handle on total GVN manpower requirements, and sort out priorities, before any FY 67 manpower allocations are approved. In effect, a manpower budget should be developed and then pressed on the GVN.
- b. Pending the above, hold in abeyance FY 67 actions to implement Honolulu-agreed force ceilings (AB-141).
- c. Review urgently measures to reduce demands on Vietnamese manpower, such as greater use of third-country labor, greater use of returnees, etc.
- d. Establish better procedures in Saigon and Washington for civil/military review of new manpower bids.

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LODGE AGENDAItem -- Land Reform Measures

If a workable new plan can be devised, land reform offers one of the few dramatic opportunities for a "revolutionary" GVN initiative.

Since 1957 land reform has been a major GVN aim. Long series of decrees but continued failure vigorous execution by successive regimes. Communists exploit absentee and village landlordism as major propaganda appeal. Most authorities agreed land tenure problems are major source rural discontent and loss of confidence in Saigon governments.

Ky recently expressed eagerness to move ahead. Two US experts have drawn up a sweeping program to abolish landlordism throughout Vietnam as dramatic psychological gesture which would give GVN a revolutionary popular appeal. However, both Washington and Saigon find vague Hewes-Cooper proposals weak on inflationary impact, machinery for implementing, and likely cost. Hewes recommends US underwrite scheme, perhaps to tune of \$300 million.

Secretary Freeman called interagency meeting to consider proposals. Special task force chaired by Dorothy Jacobson set up to refine proposals in time for discussions with Lodge.

A. If it seems politically desirable, economically sensible and administratively feasible, we should press GVN to adopt concept of land reform "Emancipation Proclamation". Implementation would have to be phased with pacification and related to manpower shortages and anti-inflationary effort. However, it might be possible to achieve a quick psychological impact, yet stretch out the implementing phase, thus reducing cost to GVN and US.

B. If above is infeasible, and many think it is, we should continue our effort stimulate better GVN performance on existing land reform legislation. Emphasis on gradual transfers related to present GVN capacities.

C. Recommendation. If Jacobson task force report provides sufficiently firm proposal, it should be discussed and recommendation made to President before Lodge leaves. If not, we should call for Mission and Washington agencies to present firm recommendations no later than 30 May.

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Policy Towards Elections for Constitutional Assembly
(Item 12, Agenda for Talks with Ambassador Lodge)

Problem

1. Late this summer South Viet-Nam will elect a Constitutional Assembly to draft a new constitution for South Viet-Nam. In Saigon an Electoral Council has begun to study the preparation of a electoral law and other arrangements for those elections.

Discussion

2. (a) The coming elections, if held, will set a political pattern, probably a new one, which could profoundly influence not only the situation inside SVN but also our future relations with Viet-Nam and our programs in that country. If the elections are not held, this will be taken internally and internationally as a reneging by the GVN on a clear commitment and the political consequences within and outside Viet-Nam will be profound.

(b) Beyond drafting the constitution, the constitutional assembly has been given no task. Nevertheless it is assumed by the Buddhist political leadership and accepted in some other circles that this body, as soon as it sits, will become the Government of South Viet-Nam in effect and will make decisions about whether or not the present GVN cabinet continues, etc.

(c) There is virtually no political party structure in South Viet-Nam today and none is likely to emerge in time to be a significant factor in the coming elections. If the Directorate were to undertake to establish a military-dominated party, perhaps with Catholic participation, this would almost inevitably tend to sharpen a confrontation in the elections between that group and the Buddhists. At the present time our interest lies instead in securing a constituent assembly which adequately represents all non-communist groups and minorities, looking toward a commitment to the newly elected government of the entire non-communist political spectrum, all the way from the Baby Turks to Tri Quang. Our interest also lies in removing from political controversy among the non-communists the issue of pursuing the fight against the Viet Cong with American help.

(d) The military remain the single best organized and most powerful element and it is in our interest to have this continue while at the same time assuring the commitment of the military to the new government.

(e) Understandably the GVN is disposed to exclude "Communists" and "neutralists" from participating as candidates in the elections and the National Political Congress endorsed this position. From an international and domestic US point of view this exclusion, particularly of neutralists, will be seized upon to discredit the elections and one of the potentially important benefits of the elections, i.e. a better image of the GVN around the world, will be lost.

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3. Therefore our policy toward elections should be the following:

(a) We should make sure that elections for a constitutional assembly are held in accordance with the GVN's commitment.

(b) We should not take a position at the present time as to whether the constitutional assembly will have powers beyond that of drafting a constitution.

(c) We should encourage discussion and political activity which will get under way the process of political party formation but not expect this process to crystallize until after the new assembly has been elected.

(d) We should encourage by discreet discussion the promulgation of an election law which ensures that all non-communist groups are adequately represented in the constituent assembly. To this end it would appear that constituencies should be based on population and multiple representation elected from each constituency.

(e) We should try to bring about the adoption before the elections, by all significant non-communist groups, perhaps in the electoral council, of a common charter calling for:

social revolution;

continuing progress toward civilian, representative government;

a policy of peace and non-alignment once freedom is restored but meanwhile a determined struggle to defend the country's freedom;

rejection of violence as a means of establishing political power; and

recognition of the role of the army as providing the security behind which the nation can develop.

(f) We should use our influence to preserve the unity of the Directorate and try to encourage General Thi's reincorporation in the group, or at least a reconciliation between Ky and Thi.

(g) We should urge candidate qualification language which avoids the exclusion of neutralists and perhaps even communists by name and calls instead for disqualifying those who seek to attain their political goals by violent means, who are agents of a foreign power, or by some such language.

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(h) We should make available to our Mission in Saigon, and quietly to the Vietnamese, experts with experience in matters such as alternative voting procedures and other election arrangements.

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Getting Out the Vote and Protecting the Voters
 (Item 13, Agenda for Talks with Ambassador Lodge)

Problem

If the forthcoming constituent assembly elections are to be a valid expression of popular will in South Viet-Nam, and if they are to be considered valid by U.S. international opinion, maximum voter participation will have to be sought. This will require a major effort by the GVN to educate the voters, to have adequate administrative machinery for carrying out the elections, to provide maximum security for the voters, and to minimize possible Viet Cong obstruction and harassment of the elections.

Desirable GVN Actions

The GVN should consult with the electoral council to reach agreement on a program of action along the following lines:

1. A major psywar campaign by radio, TV and leaflet, to explain that the constituent assembly election is open to all Vietnamese citizens who meet the eligibility rules, and to disseminate election information and instructions.
2. The adoption of a flexible system of identification for voters designed to accommodate voters from VC-controlled areas who may not have proper ID cards.
3. The widest possible distribution of polling places to maximize the voter turnout.

The following GVN actions might also be desirable:

1. The dispatch of youth teams (e.g., as part of the Summer Youth Program) to educate voters in rural areas is the significance of the elections and election procedures. The use of such youth teams would be preferable to the use of RD teams, including PATs, for such a purpose.
2. The declaration of an election cease-fire of a week or so to permit candidates to move about more freely, to permit more voters to get to the polls, and to make it politically and psychologically more difficult for the VC to obstruct and harass the elections. Any announcement of a cease-fire should make clear that the GVN would continue military patrolling and normal police functions to reduce the possibilities for the VC to exploit the cease-fire covertly.
3. The Summer Youth Program might also be utilized as independent poll-watchers on election day to ensure that correct election procedures are followed.

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4. The GVN might consider inviting international observation of the election proceedings-- e.g., representatives from countries contributing troops to South Viet-Nam, plus India and Japan. While the GVN might balk at the suggestion of international observation of an internal election, they might be convinced of the potential benefits vis-a-vis international opinion that such a move might have.

Recommended position

Some of the above items will require further study as to feasibility. Nevertheless, we should discuss all of them with Ky and, subject to Ky's reactions, with appropriate members of the electoral council. We should attempt to persuade Ky and members of the electoral council that the elections offer major potential for political and psychological initiatives which should not be overlooked.

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Policy Toward Formation of Political Parties
(Item 14, Agenda for talks with Ambassador Lodge)

Problem

The Vietnamese body politic is badly fractionalized into religious, regional, political and ethnic groupings; there is no tradition in Vietnamese politics of advancing groups or individual fortunes by joining with other groups in a common national cause. In the face of a unified, disciplined Viet Cong political and military organization, non-Communist Vietnamese groups need to coalesce into a minimum number of broad, major groupings or perhaps even into one non-communist front if they are to compete successfully with Communism in a constitutional system of government based on free elections. However, there is little likelihood that, either through the mechanics of an electoral law or by voluntary action, any meaningful degree of coalescence of groupings will be possible prior to the forthcoming elections.

A related problem: There is some evidence that Ky is tempted to try to form a broadly-based government party around a nucleus of military officers. Ky's idea may be to perpetuate himself (or the Directorate) in power by capitalizing on the growing reaction within the military establishments and among Catholic and right-wing political groups against the strength of the militant Buddhist element.

Discussion

We have two general lines we might follow:

1. To exert our strong influence in favor of an election law designed to force the coalescence of major parties or groupings as insurance against Viet Cong exploitation of this election conceivably, but more realistically, of elections which would follow an eventual political settlement. Also to encourage Ky and his military supporters to form a broad military-civilian political party of "national union" as a means of maximizing continuity of government and, hopefully, stability until the constitution is fully in effect.
2. To stimulate the political process to begin, with consultations, meetings and the like. Perhaps it might at a certain point be useful to encourage movement in the direction of the formation of broad groupings, recognizing that while little progress is likely to be made before elections, any progress in this direction would be desirable. This would mean refraining from working for the formation of formal political parties prior to elections. Instead the objective would be to produce a constituent body which is as accurately representative as possible of existing groupings and their relative strengths rather than forcing what is likely to be an artificial coalescence of forces in the short time available.

Since the elections are for a constituent assembly, a coalescence of groupings would seem to be less pressing than it would be for a more permanent legislative body or government. In fact, for a body elected to draft a constitution it would seem to be preferable to ensure that the elections reflect as accurately

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as possible the relative strengths of the various existing groupings, leaving the emergence of political parties or groupings as a normal outgrowth of the later process of political development. Exploitation of the elections by the Viet Cong, if that is considered a problem in the present case, can be minimized by other means, such as the screening of candidates and by the electoral system used.

Recommendation:

We should exert our influence in favor of an electoral law which ensures adequate representation in the constituent body of all major groups but which at the same time discourages further fractionalization. To this end it would appear that the election law should provide for constituencies based on population and for the election of multiple representation from each constituency.

We should actively discourage any effort by Ky to form a government party designed purely to perpetuate himself in power and to exclude the militant Buddhist element. We should also discourage any effort by Ky to split the moderate Buddhist elements off from the extremist Buddhists in order to isolate and exclude the latter. Such efforts by Ky will only prolong and intensify existing political disequilibrium in the form of a continued confrontation between dissatisfied Buddhist extremists and with anti-Buddhist forces. This could lead to increased Central Viet-Nam dissidence from Saigon. If, on the other hand, Ky can form a political party with civilian and military elements which is prepared to compete freely in a political system with other elements, this could be acceptable.

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Technical Assistance on Constitution Making
(Item 1b, Agenda for Talks with Ambassador Lodge)

Problem

1. South Viet-Nam is about to hold elections for a constitutional assembly which will draft a new constitution for the country. It is in our interest to help in every constructive way to ensure that the electoral law and other arrangements, the actual conduct of the elections, the drafting of the constitution, and the transfer of authority from the present government to its successor are all carried out in a manner best calculated to help the Vietnamese to preserve their freedom and develop their country politically, socially and economically. While no one expects that the problems of South Viet-Nam will be solved by a constitution, the better the constitution is and the better it is fitted to the character of the country and its people, the more chance that representative, constitutional government will work.

Discussion

2. The process now getting under way in Viet-Nam is one in which most of the leaders of the country have had little or no experience. Those who have had formal training in law and government have received it mostly in France where it obviously related to situations worlds apart from that in South Viet-Nam. On the other hand, a number of newly independent countries have over the last 20 years had to go through the process the Vietnamese are now undertaking and their experience is in varying degrees pertinent. Moreover, there are numerous electoral systems and constitutional devices, some of which might be adopted or adapted to meet Vietnamese requirements if the Vietnamese responsible for the process are aware of them.

On a subject which touches as closely as this on national sensibilities, the decision must be Vietnamese and it must be arrived at in Vietnamese forums. Any foreign participation in the process would have to be very delicately handled and this is doubly true of American involvement when the Vietnamese are already apprehensive about our overwhelming impact on their country.

Recommendations

3. (a) That we make available to the appropriate Vietnamese of all political persuasions all reference material and analyses which will assist in broadening their knowledge on these subjects. At the same time, we should quietly make available in Saigon, preferably through private channels or through third countries, experts who can advise our Mission on electoral and constitutional problems and, where appropriate, make contact with the Vietnamese themselves.

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