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UNITED STATES-VIETNAM RELATIONS  
1945-1967

STUDY PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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UNITED STATES-VIETNAM RELATIONS  
1945-1967

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STUDY PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



Printed for the use of the House Committee on Armed Services

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NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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## INTRODUCTION

The following is the unclassified text of the 1968 Department of Defense study, "United States Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967," popularly known as the Pentagon Papers.

At the time the existence of this study became known, through unauthorized public disclosures, the Committee on Armed Services requested a copy of the study, which was provided to the Committee and which has been continually available for inspection by Members of Congress. At the same time, as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and with the concurrence of the senior minority member, Rep. Leslie C. Arends, I asked the Department of Defense to declassify the study on an expedited basis so that it could be made available to Members of Congress and to the American people.

I am now directing that it be printed as a Committee document and that a copy be provided to each Member of the House of Representatives. Copies will also be on sale to the public at the Government Printing Office. The 12-volume text here contains the first 43 volumes of the original 47-volume study. The last four volumes have not as yet been declassified because they deal with negotiations which are still in progress.

F. EDW. HÉBERT, *Chairman,*  
*Committee on Armed Services.*

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
*Washington, D.C., September 20, 1971.*

Honorable F. EDWARD HÉBERT,  
*Chairman, Committee on Armed Services*  
*House of Representatives*  
*Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the discussions which took place at the time of the delivery to the Congress of the classified version of the 47-volume 1968 study of "U.S. Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967," we are transmitting herewith for your use four sets of the declassified study. You will note that the declassified review contains 43 volumes. The last four volumes of the 47-volume set have not been declassified because they deal exclusively with sensitive negotiations seeking peace and the release of prisoners of war. Their disclosure would adversely affect continuing efforts to achieve those objectives.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the review of approximately 7,000 pages has been a difficult task, complicated by the pattern of prior unauthorized disclosures and pending and potential actions in the courts. Of course, some of the material has been declassified solely on the basis of prior disclosures. The review has been accomplished on an expedited basis in order to comply with your request for the material on a declassified basis for hearings which the Congress has indicated are in prospect. Because of the time constraint imposed on the review, it is possible, even probable, that errors of omission and commission have been made during the review. This, however, represents the best possible effort taking into consideration the time available and the numerous complicating factors which influenced the review. Other than the last four volumes, we have been able to make available to you in unclassified form the bulk of the study.

Sincerely,

RADY A. JOHNSON,  
*Assistant to the Secretary for Legislative Affairs.*



**FINAL REPORT—OSD Task Force, Vietnam  
and  
INDEX**

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THROUGH: Mr. Paul C. Warnke, ASD/ISA

Dr. Morton H. Halperin, DASD/Policy Planning and Arms Control/ISA

SUBJECT: Final Report, OSD Vietnam Task Force

*15 January 1969.*

On June 17, 1967, Secretary Robert S. McNamara directed that a Task Force be formed to study the history of United States involvement in Vietnam from World War II to the present. Mr. McNamara's guidance was simply to do studies that were "encyclopedic and objective." With six full-time professionals assigned to the Task Force, we were to complete our work in three months. A year and a half later, and with the involvement of six times six professionals, we are finally done to the tune of thirty-seven studies and fifteen collections of documents contained in forty-three volumes.

In the beginning, Mr. McNamara gave the Task Force full access to OSD files, and the Task Force received access to CIA materials, and some use of State Department cables and memoranda. We had no access to White House files. Our guidance prohibited personal interviews with any of the principal participants.

The result was not so much a documentary history, as a history based solely on documents—checked and rechecked with ant-like diligence. Pieces of paper, formidable and suggestive by themselves, could have meant much or nothing. Perhaps this document was never sent anywhere, and perhaps that one, though commented upon, was irrelevant. Without the memories of people to tell us, we were certain to make mistakes. Yet, using those memories might have been misleading as well. This approach to research was bound to lead to distortions, and distortions we are sure abound in these studies.

To bring the documents to life, to fill in gaps, and just to see what the "outside world" was thinking, we turned to newspapers, periodicals, and books. We never used these sources to supplant the classified documents, but only to supplement them. And because these documents, sometimes written by very clever men who knew so much and desired to say only a part and sometimes written very openly but also contradictorily, are not immediately self-revealing or self-explanatory, we tried

both to have a number of researchers look at them and to quote passages liberally. Moreover, when we felt we could be challenged with taking something out of context, we included the whole paper in the Documentary Record section of the Task Force studies (Parts V and VI. A and B). Again seeking to fend off inevitable mistakes in interpretation and context, what seemed to us key documents were reviewed and included in several overlapping in substance, but separate, studies.

The people who worked on the Task Force were superb—uniformly bright and interested, although not always versed in the art of research. We had a sense of doing something important and of the need to do it right. Of course, we all had our prejudices and axes to grind and these shine through clearly at times, but we tried, we think, to suppress or compensate for them.

These outstanding people came from everywhere—the military services, State, OSD, and the "think tanks." Some came for a month, for three months, for six months, and most were unable, given the unhappiness of their superiors, to finish the studies they began. Almost all the studies had several authors, each heir dutifully trying to pick up the threads of his predecessor. In all, we had thirty-six professionals working on these studies, with an average of four months per man.

The quality, style and interest of the studies varies considerably. The papers in Parts I, II, III, and IV.A, concerning the years 1945 to 1961 tend to be generally non-startling—although there are many interesting tidbits. Because many of the documents in this period were lost or not kept (except for the Geneva Conference era) we had to rely more on outside resources. From 1961 onwards (Parts IV.B and C and VI.C), the records were bountiful, especially on the first Kennedy year in office, the Diem coup, and on the subjects of the deployment of ground forces, the decisions surrounding the bombing campaign against North Vietnam, US-GVN relations, and attempts at negotiating a settlement of the conflict.



Almost all the studies contain both a Summary and Analysis and a Chronology. The chronologies highlight each important event or action in the monograph by means of date, description, and documentary source. The Summary and Analysis sections, which I wrote, attempt to capture the main themes and facts of the monographs—and to make some judgments and speculations which may or may not appear in the text itself. The monographs themselves stick, by and large, to the documents and do not tend to be analytical.

Writing history, especially where it blends into current events, especially where that current event is Vietnam, is a treacherous exercise. We could not go into the minds of the decision-makers, we were

not present at the decisions, and we often could not tell whether something happened because someone decided it, decided against it, or most likely because it unfolded from the situation. History, to me, has been expressed by a passage from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* where he writes: "This is a world of chance, free will, and necessity—all interweavingly working together as one; chance by turn rules either and has the last featuring blow at events." Our studies have tried to reflect this thought; inevitably in the organizing and writing process, they appear to assign more and less to men and free will than was the case.

LESLIE H. GELB,  
*Chairman, OSD Task Force.*

## OSD VIETNAM TASK FORCE OUTLINE OF STUDIES

### INDEX

#### (Book 1 of 12)

- I. *Vietnam and the U.S., 1940-1950*
  - A. U.S. Policy, 1940-50
  - B. The Character and Power of the Viet Minh
  - C. Ho Chi Minh: Asian Tito?
- II. *U.S. Involvement in the Franco-Viet Minh War, 1950-1954*
  - A. U.S., France and Vietnamese Nationalism
  - B. Toward a Negotiated Settlement
- III. *The Geneva Accords*
  - A. U.S. Military Planning and Diplomatic Maneuver
  - B. Role and Obligations of State of Vietnam
  - C. Viet Minh Position and Sino-Soviet Strategy
  - D. The Intent of the Geneva Accords
- IV. *Evolution of the War*
  - A. U.S. MAP for Diem: The Eisenhower Commitments, 1954-1960
    1. NATO and SEATO: A Comparison
    2. Aid for France in Indochina, 1950-54
    3. U.S. and France's Withdrawal from Vietnam, 1954-56

#### (Book 2 of 12)

4. U.S. Training of Vietnamese National Army, 1954-59
5. Origins of the Insurgency
- B. Counterinsurgency: The Kennedy Commitments, 1961-1963
  1. The Kennedy Commitments and Programs, 1961

#### (Book 3 of 12)

2. Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961-63
3. The Advisory Build-up, 1961-67
4. Phased Withdrawal of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, 1962-64
5. The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May-Nov. 1963
- C. Direct Action: The Johnson Commitments, 1964-1968
  1. U.S. Programs in South Vietnam, November 1963-April 1965: NSAM 273-NSAM 288-Honolulu
  2. Military Pressures Against NVN
    - a. February-June 1964

#### (Book 4 of 12)

- b. July-October 1964
- c. November-December 1964
3. ROLLING THUNDER Program Begins: January-June 1965
4. Marine Combat Units Go to DaNang, March 1965
5. Phase I in the Build-Up of U.S. Forces: March-July 1965

#### (Book 5 of 12)

6. U.S. Ground Strategy and Force Deployments: 1965-1967
  - a. Volume I: Phase II, Program 3, Program 4
  - b. Volume II: Program 5
  - c. Volume III: Program 6



**(Book 6 of 12)**

7. Air War in the North: 1965-1968
  - a. Volume I
  - b. Volume II
8. Re-emphasis on Pacification: 1965-1967

**(Book 7 of 12)**

9. U.S.-GVN Relations
  - a. Volume 1: December 1963-June 1965
  - b. Volume 2: July 1965-December 1967
10. Statistical Survey of the War, North and South: 1965-1967

**V. *Justification of the War***

**A. Public Statements**

- Volume I: A—The Truman Administration  
B—The Eisenhower Administration  
C—The Kennedy Administration  
Volume II: D—The Johnson Administration

**B. Internal Documents**

1. The Roosevelt Administration

**(Book 8 of 12)**

2. The Truman Administration
  - a. Volume I: 1945-1949
  - b. Volume II: 1950-1952

**(Book 9 of 12)**

3. The Eisenhower Administration
  - a. Volume I: 1953
  - b. Volume II: 1954—Geneva

**(Book 10 of 12)**

- c. Volume III: Geneva Accords—15 March 1956
- d. Volume IV: 1956 French Withdrawal—1960

**(Book 11 of 12)**

4. The Kennedy Administration  
Book I

**(Book 12 of 12)**

Book II

**VI. *Settlement of the Conflict***

- A. Negotiations, 1965-67: The Public Record
- B. Negotiations, 1965-67: Announced Position Statements
- C. Histories of Contacts (This material not printed.)
  1. 1965-1966 (This material not printed.)
  2. Polish Track (This material not printed.)
  3. Moscow-London Track (This material not printed.)
  4. 1967-1968 (This material not printed.)

LESLIE H. GELB,  
*Chairman, OSD Task Force.*



# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

## 1945 - 1967

V.B.4.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR  
- INTERNAL DOCUMENTS -

The Kennedy Administration:  
January 1961 - November 1963

BOOK I

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR -- INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

The Kennedy Administration: January 1961 - November 1963

Foreword

This volume contains a collection of internal U.S. Government documents and position papers regarding U.S. policy toward Vietnam. The volume of materials for this period is so large as to preclude the inclusion in such a collection of more than a sample of the documents in the files. Those classified materials that are included, however, were circulated at the highest levels of the Government and either bore directly on the process of policy formation or were decision-making instruments. The collection is organized chronologically and devoted exclusively to the Kennedy years. A separate volume covers the Johnson Administration.

BOOK I : January thru December 1961

BOOK II : January 1962 thru October 1963



U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR -- INTERNAL DOCUMENTSThe Kennedy Administration: January 1961 - November 1963Contents andChronological List of Documents

|  | <u>1961</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1. General Lansdale reports on his January visit to Vietnam: "The U.S. should recognize that Vietnam is in a critical condition and should treat it as a combat area of the cold war..." He recommends strong support for Diem personally as the best available South Vietnamese leader, and the prompt transfer of Ambassador Durbrow, whose relations with Diem are poor. Memo for Secretary of Defense, 17 January 1961 .....   |             | 1           |
| 2. Embassy Saigon is advised that Kennedy has approved Counter-Insurgency Plan (prepared by previous Administration) calling for increases in U.S. support for Vietnamese armed forces, contingent on reforms by Diem. State to Saigon 1054, 3 February 1961.....  |             | 14          |
| 3. The President requests the SecDef to examine means for placing more emphasis on the development of counter guerrilla forces. NSAM 2, 3 February 1961.....   |             | 17          |
| 4. The Secretary of Defense is instructed to report his views on actions in the near future to launch guerrilla operations in Viet Minh territory. NSAM 28, 9 March 1961.....  |             | 18          |
| 5. The JCS comment on the recommendations of Lt Gen Trapnell. In addition to the Trapnell recommendations, the JCS suggest that the U.S. provide Defense support funds on the same basis for 170,000 forces as for 150,000; that the U.S. provide MAP support for the entire 68,000-man Civil Guard; and that the U.S. exploit these contributions to induce the GVN to accept the Counter Insurgency Plan. Memorandum reflects conflict of views between MAAG and Embassy in Saigon. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, JCSM 228-61, 11 April 1961..... |             | 19          |

6. Unsigned paper, apparently by Lansdale, proposes a Presidential directive organizing a Task Force to come up with an approved plan of action in Vietnam. The goals of U.S. policy in Vietnam fall into three interrelated parts: (1) pacification, (2) stabilization and (3) unification of Vietnam under anti-communist government. Tasks are outlined in this memorandum to accomplish these three goals. Paper in Deputy Secretary of Defense Task Force file, 19 April 1961..... 22
  
7. General Lansdale provides a detailed description of President Diem and his family apparently intended for Vice President Johnson's use. Lansdale first met Diem in Saigon in 1954. "Here is our toughest ally...a 60-year old bachelor who gave up romance with his childhood sweetheart...to devote his life to his country." Lansdale Memorandum for Deputy Secretary of Defense, 25 April 1961..... 36
  
8. In view of the serious military deterioration within South Vietnam and in order to accomplish the U.S. objective of preventing communist domination of the South, this first draft of the Vietnam Task Force report calls for a comprehensive political, economic and military program of U.S. support. Among other recommendations are an increase in MAAG and MAP and a visit by the Vice President in the near future. Task Force Draft "Program of Action," 26 April 1961..... 42
  
9. The effect of a political settlement in Laos would be (1) to inhibit U.S. assistance in preventing a communist take-over in SVN; and (2) to permit an expansion of the VC effort in SVN owing to the greater possibilities for uninhibited infiltration; and (3) give complete control to the North Vietnamese of the three passes through the Annamite Mountains. With an expanded training program in SVN, however, the GVN should be able to defend itself even in the event of a Laotian settlement. Second Draft "Laos Annex" to Task Force report, 28 April 1961..... 58
  
10. Attorney General Kennedy asks the question "Where would be the best place to stand and fight in SEA -- where to draw the line?" Secretary McNamara thinks the best place to take a stand is in Thailand and SVN. General Decker thinks there is no good place to fight in SEA. State Department Memorandum of Conversation, 29 April 1961..... 62
  
11. Secretary Rusk decides at this meeting at the State Department that "We should not place combat forces in SVN at this time." Colonel Robert M. Levy Memorandum for Record, 5 May 1961..... 67



12. Final Draft of the Task Force Report recommends sending U.S. Battle Groups and an Engineer Battalion for training purposes; the assignment of coastal patrol missions to CINCPACFLT; and the air surveillance and close-support role to CINCPACAF. It also recommends the Vice-Presidential trip, a letter to Diem from Kennedy, increased MAP and other assistance, and a general U.S. commitment to support of Diem. Final Draft Task Force Report "A Program of Action," 6 May 1961..... 69
13. OSD requests the JCS to review and study the military advisability of possible commitment of U.S. forces to SVN. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Chairman, JCS, 8 May 1961..... 131
14. President Kennedy provides Vice President Johnson with a personal letter to present to President Diem. Kennedy suggests that, in addition to actions in the Counter-Insurgency Plan, the U.S. is prepared to: (1) augment the personnel of MAAG, (2) expand MAAG's duties, (3) provide MAP support for the Civil Guard, and (4) provide support for the Vietnamese Junk Force. President Kennedy letter to President Diem, 8 May 1961..... 132
15. The President makes the following decisions: (1) the U.S. objective is to prevent communist domination of SVN and to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society, (2) the President directs full examination of the size and composition of forces which would be desirable in the case of a possible commitment of U.S. forces to Vietnam, (3) finally, the President approves continuation of the special Task Force on Vietnam. The decisions of this NSAM are based on the report "A Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of SVN." NSAM 52, 11 May 1961... 136
16. President Diem asserts that the recent developments in Laos emphasize the grave Vietnamese concern for the security of their country with its long and vulnerable frontiers. President Diem states that "as a small nation we cannot hope to meet all of our defense needs alone..." and expresses confidence that the Vietnamese needs will be given consideration in Washington. President Diem letter to President Kennedy, 15 May 1961..... 155
17. Lensdale summarizes information on the possible deployment of U.S. combat forces in VN. He refers to a conversation between Diem and Vice President Johnson on the subject.



"Much of the thinking has been on stationing U.S. combat forces in the high plateau...however, General Williams has written a brief memorandum to me recommending such U.S. forces to be stationed on the coast..." Lansdale Memorandum for Deputy Secretary Gilpatric, 18 May 1961.....

157

18. The Vice President reports on his mission to SEA. Johnson feels, on the basis of his visit, that the situation in Laos has created doubt and concern about U.S. intentions throughout all of SEA. "No amount of success at Geneva can, of itself, erase this." It is Johnson's impression that his mission arrested the decline of confidence in the U.S. "We didn't buy time -- we were given it. If these men I saw at your request were bankers, I would know -- without bothering to ask -- that there would be no further extensions of my note." The fundamental decision required of the U.S. is whether we are to attempt a major effort in support of the forces of freedom in the area or "throw in the towel." Johnson recommends "we proceed with a clear-cut and strong program of action." Vice President Johnson Memorandum to President Kennedy, 23 May 1961.....

159

19. President Diem sends the U.S. a study on Vietnamese needs to meet the insurgency situation in the South. Diem suggests that, in light of the current situation, an additional 100,000 men above the new force level of 170,000 will be required to counter the threat of communist domination. Diem recommends a considerable expansion of the U.S. Military Advisory Group in SVN as an essential requirement, and, finally, Diem expresses his mistrust of Sihanouk's communist sympathies and antagonism of SVN. President Diem letter to President Kennedy, 9 June 1961....

167

20. President Kennedy requests that the Secretary of Defense estimate requirements and make recommendations with respect to the anticipated future U.S. needs in the field of unconventional warfare and paramilitary operations. NSAM 56, 28 June 1961.....

174

21. Lansdale relates a conversation between Vice President Tho and Colonel Black. In discussing the Staley Mission, Tho concedes that it is impossible for the U.S. to provide SVN with piastres. The GVN feels an increase in piastre return per dollar would cause inflation and, in turn, an inevitable demand for wage increases. Tho further concedes that the basic problem in VN is more political than economic. Tho's impression of the current situation in SVN is more pessimistic

- than that of the Americans. Lansdale Memorandum for Deputy Secretary Gilpatric, 12 July 1961..... 175
22. Mr. William P. Bundy forwards the joint action program proposed by the GVN-US. Special Financial Group to the Assistant Secretary of Defense. The report prepared by Dr. Eugene Staley, Chairman of the Group, has been submitted to President Ngo Diem and President John F. Kennedy, and includes the fiscal and economic implications of increasing the Vietnamese armed forces to 200,000 strength. The military portions, in addition to the requirements already planned, would require approximately \$42 million, during the 18-month period, July 61-December 62. Bundy Memorandum to Gilpatric, 25 July 1961, (Staley Report attached)..... 177
23. General Lionel C. McGarr, Chief, MAAG-Vietnam, reviews the military situation and offers recommendations for continued improvement of the situation in SVN to President Diem. Among the recommendations made by McGarr are: (1) that a national internal security council be established to prepare and execute the Vietnamese National Counter Insurgency Plan; (2) that effective border and coastal surveillance capabilities be initiated; (3) that U.S. advisers be more effectively utilized by accompanying ARVN units on combat operations; and (4) finally, that the reorganization of the military command structure and establishment of a single chain of command be implemented as recommended in the Counter Insurgency Plan. Aide-Memoire for President Diem, received Secretary of Defense, 2 August 1961..... 227
24. The JCS do not believe that an alternate force of 270,000 would be required to enable the RVNAF to conduct counter-insurgency operations and, concurrently, be prepared to meet overt aggression. They recommend that the strategic force objectives for VII remain at the 9 division level (200,000) subject to further assessment. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, JCSM 518-61, 3 August 1961..... 239
25. The President approves the Staley recommendations and decides that the U.S. will provide equipment and training assistance for an increased RVNAF from 170,000 to 200,000. It is hoped that President Diem will get the maximum mileage in terms of internal political support from this new commitment, and that he will involve more elements of the non-communist political opposition in the civic action program. NSAM 65, 11 August 1961..... 241



26. The situation in North and South VN is analyzed and the scope of the communist threat to SVN is estimated for the following year. The analysis concludes that the DRV is in thorough political control in North VN and "when Ho is no longer active, there will probably be a struggle for power between the Moscow-oriented and the Peking-oriented elements of the Party." Dissatisfaction continues in South VN with Diem's leadership. The Army continues to be a major factor in future political developments in the South. The outlook is for a prolonged and difficult struggle between the VC insurgents and the GVN. RFE 14.3/53-61, 15 August 1961..... 245
27. The President approves the following actions: (1) intensification of diplomatic efforts to achieve Souvanna's agreement to the Paris proposals; (2) authorization to undertake conversations with SEATO allies on an enlargement of the concept of \_\_\_\_\_ and (3) an increase in U.S. advisors in Laos. NSAM 80, 29 August 1961..... 247
28. The JCS sends the Secretary of Defense a draft memorandum for the President on military intervention in Laos. The JCS suggests that if the President decides that U.S. forces should be employed in Laos, that \_\_\_\_\_ the proper basic vehicle for the contemplated action. The political objective of the intervention is to confront the Sino-Soviet Bloc with a military force of Asian and Western powers capable of stopping the communist advance. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, JCSCM 661-61, 20 September, 1961..... 249
29. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research assesses the crisis in South VN and analyzes the short term prospects. The study recognizes that communist progress toward its objective of overthrowing President Diem has been substantial. Since 1960, more than 6,500 civilians, officers, and military personnel have been killed or kidnapped. Recent U.S. support has raised Diem's political stature, but there has been no conclusive reversal of deteriorating trends. The security situation remains unimproved. However, the Government's comprehensive CIP, supported by U.S. aid, is beginning to show favorable results. Over the next year, developments in Laos may have more influence on VN than any improvement in the Diem Government. Department of State Research Memorandum RFE-1, 29 September 1961..... 258
30. It is estimated that present armed, full-time VC strength is about 16,000, an increase of 12,000 since April of 1960, .



and of 4,000 in the past three months. While only 10-20% of this strength consists of cadres infiltrated from North VN, the remaining 80-90% includes remnants of the approximately 10,000 stay-behind personnel who went underground during the 1954-1955 regroupment and evacuation of Vietnamese communist army units following the Indo-China War. Though some weapons and equipment have been infiltrated into South VN, there has been no positive identification of Communist Bloc-manufactured military equipment in South VN. SNIE 53-2-61, 5 October 1961.....

291

31. The JCS feel the time is now past when actions short of intervention by outside forces can reverse the rapidly worsening situation in Southeast Asia. They consider the execution of ..... or a suitable variation thereof, to be the military minimum commensurate with the situation. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, JCSM 704-61, 5 October 1961.....

295

32. It is the opinion of the JCS that the use of SEATO forces at the greatest possible number of entry points along the whole South VN border, i.e., over several hundred miles, is not feasible. Further, the alternative of using SEATO forces to cover solely the 17th parallel is militarily unsound. "What is needed is not the spreading out of our forces throughout SEA, but rather a consolidated effort in Laos where a firm stand can be taken..." A limited interim course of action is provided herewith in the event ..... is considered politically unacceptable. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, JCSM 716-61, 9 October 1961.....

297

33. "For what one man's feel is worth, mine -- based on very close touch with Indo-China in the 1954 war and civil war afterwards until Diem took hold -- is that it is really now or never if we are to arrest the gains being made by the Vietcong." Bundy suggests that an early, hard-hitting operation has a 70% chance of success. "The 30% is that we would wind up like the French in 1954; white men can't win this kind of fight. On a 70-30 basis, I would, myself, favor going in." Bundy memorandum for Secretary McNamara, 10 October 1961.....

312

34. It is estimated that the Communist Bloc would not commit North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist forces to a large-scale military attack against South VN or Laos in response to an assumed SEATO action to patrol the GVN coast

and secure the border involving about 25,000 men. Neutralist governments in SEA would be most concerned at the increased tension and danger of general hostilities. Nationalist China would be elated with the SEATO action. SNIE 10-3-6, 10 October 1961.....

313

35. At a meeting with President Kennedy, the following actions were agreed upon: (1) the Defense Department is authorized to send the Air Force Jungle Jim Squadron to VN; (2) General Maxwell Taylor will leave for SVN on a Presidential mission; and (3) the State Department will pursue specific political actions, i.e., protest to the ICC on North VN support of the VC; table a White Paper at the UN; and consult with our SEATO allies regarding support in VN. Gilpatric Memorandum for Record, 11 October 1961..... 322
36. "With respect to training the Vietnamese Army for the 'wrong war', it seems clear that in recent months the insurgency in South Vietnam has developed far beyond the capacity of police control. All of the Vietnamese Army successes this past summer have met Viet Cong opposition in organized battalion strength...This change in the situation has not been fully understood by many U.S. officials. In this regard, there is some concern that the Thompson Mission may try to sell the Malayan concept of police control without making a sufficiently careful evaluation of conditions in South Vietnam." JCS Memorandum for General Taylor, CM-390-61, 12 October 1961..... 324
37. The President requests that General Taylor proceed to Saigon to appraise the situation in South Vietnam and to report his views on the courses of action which the U.S. might take to avoid further deterioration in the situation and eventually to eliminate the threat to the independence of South Vietnam. President Kennedy letter to General Taylor, 13 October 1961..... 327
38. The President directs the following actions be taken: (1) make preparations for the publication of the White Paper on North Vietnamese aggression; (2) develop plans for presentation of the VN case in the UN; (3) introduce the Jungle Jim Squadron into SVN for the purpose of training Vietnamese forces. He indicates that General Taylor should undertake a mission to Saigon. NSAM 104, 13 October 1961..... 328
39. It is the conclusion of the DoD General Counsel that the proposed introduction of U.S. combat and logistic forces into VN would constitute violations of Articles 16 and 17 of the



Geneva Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in VI of July 20, 1954. Introduction of U.S. troops even for purposes of flood control would still constitute a violation of the Geneva Accords by the Government of VN. If a decision is made to send U.S. troops into VN, the U.S. should justify it on the ground of collective self-defense.

"Nothing in the Geneva Accords should be read as abridging the inherent right of Vietnam and the United States to take actions in collective self-defense." DoD General Counsel Memorandum for Mr. Hadyn Williams, 26 October 1961..

329

40. General Taylor summarizes the fundamental conclusions of his group and his personal recommendations. Taylor concludes there is a double crisis in confidence: doubt that the U.S. is determined to save SEA, and doubt that Diem's methods can defeat the Communist purposes and methods. Taylor recommends that the U.S. Government join with the GVN in a massive joint effort as part of a total mobilization of GVN resources to cope with both the VC and the ravages of the flood. Specifically, the U.S. Government will provide individual administrators, conduct a joint survey of conditions in the provinces, assist the GVN in effecting surveillance and control over the coastal waters, and finally, offer to introduce into South VN a military Task Force to operate under U.S. military control. General Taylor telegram (cite EAGI00005) for President Kennedy, 1 November 1961.....

331

41. Taylor presents his reasons for recommending the introduction of a U.S. military force into South Vietnam. "I have reached the conclusion that this is an essential action if we are to reverse the present downward trend of events... there can be no action so convincing of U.S. seriousness of purpose and hence so reassuring to the people and government of SVN and to our other friends and allies in SEA as the introduction of U.S. forces into SVN." Taylor suggests that the strategic reserve of U.S. forces is seriously weak and that U.S. prestige would be more heavily engaged in SVN by this action. However, the size of the U.S. force introduced need not be great to provide the military presence necessary to produce the desired effect. General Taylor telegram (cite EAGI00006) for President Kennedy, 1 November 1961.....

337

42. The JCS and Secretary McNamara do not believe major units of U.S. forces should be introduced in SVN unless the U.S. is willing to commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of SVN to communism and to support this



commitment by military action and preparation for possible later action. They recommend that the U.S. commit itself to this objective and support the recommendations of General Taylor toward its fulfillment. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for the President, 8 November 1961.....

343

43. The head of the British Advisory Mission submits to Diem his plan for clearing the VC from the Delta. The central idea is the creation of a network of "strategic hamlets" akin to those employed successfully by Thompson in defeating the communist guerillas in Malaya. R.G.K. Thompson letter to Diem, 11 November 1961.....

345

44. Reversing the November 8 Defense recommendation for a commitment of substantial U.S. ground forces to South Vietnam this November 11 Rusk-McNamara memorandum to the President (perhaps prepared at Kennedy's specific direction) escalates the rhetoric regarding U.S. interest in a free South Vietnam, but restricts the military recommendation: (a) employ only support forces now; (b) defer any decision to send "larger organized units with actual or potential direct military missions." Whether Kennedy fully accepted the high-blown statements of U.S. interest and commitment to the GVN is not known. State/Defense Memorandum to the President, 11 November 1961.....

359

45. The Joint Staff submits to the Chairman, JCS, briefs of the military actions contained in the draft National Security Action Memorandum resulting from the Taylor Mission Report. The military actions indexed pertain to the use of significant and/or substantial U.S. forces, provision of increased airlift, provision of additional equipment and U.S. personnel, provision of training and equipment for the Civil Guard and SDC, and finally, overhaul of the GVN military establishment and command structure. In connection with the draft memorandum, the Joint Staff considers it militarily desirable to pre-position forces and equipment and is currently considering augmentation of U.S. Army Forces Pacific, with one infantry division plus appropriate logistic and combat support units. Joint Staff Memorandum for the Chairman of the JCS, 14 November 1961.....

368

46. Rusk instructs Ambassador Nolting to seek an immediate appointment with President Diem to inform him that President Kennedy has decided that the Government of the U.S. is prepared to join the Government of VN in a sharply increased joint effort to avoid further deterioration in the situation of SVN. The joint effort requires certain undertakings by



both governments. On its part, the U.S. would immediately support the GVN with increased airlift, additional equipment, U.S. personnel, expedited training and equipping of the Civil Guard and increased economic aid. The GVN, however, would have to initiate the following actions: (1) begin prompt legislative and administrative action to put the nation on a wartime footing to mobilize its resources; (2) give governmental wartime agencies adequate authority to perform their functions effectively; and (3) overhaul the military establishment and command structure to create an effective military organization. "President Kennedy contemplates an immediate strong affirmative reply to satisfactory letter along indicated lines from President Diem, which will simultaneously be made public." Rusk NIACT 619 to Saigon, 15 November 1961.....

400

47. After three days of talks in Saigon, Ambassador Galbraith feels there is scarcely "the slightest practical chance that the administrative and political reforms being pressed upon Diem will result in real change." Gailbraith sees a comparatively well equipped army of a quarter million men facing 15 to 18,000 lightly armed men. "...there is no solution that does not involve a change of government... to say there is no alternative (to Diem) is nonsense." Ambassador Gailbraith Memorandum for the President, 20 November 1961.....

406

48. "The key and inescapable point then is the ineffectuality (abetted debatably by the unpopularity) of the Diem Government. This is the strategic factor. Nor can anyone accept the statement of those who have been either too long or too little in Asia that it is the inevitable posture of the Asian mandarin. For one thing, it isn't true, but were it so, the only possible conclusion would be that there is no future for mandarins. The communists don't favor them." Gailbraith feels that it is politically naive to expect that Diem will reform either administratively or politically in any effective way. "However, having started on this hopeless game, we have no alternative but to play it out for a minimum time...since there is no chance of success we must do two things to protect our situation. One is to make clear that our commitment is to results and not to promises...and we can press hardest in the area of Army reform where the needed changes are most specific and most urgent." It follows from Gailbraith's reasoning that the only solution must be to drop Diem, and we should not be alarmed by the Army as an alternative. Gailbraith New Delhi 9941 for President Kennedy, 21 November 1961.....

410



49. The U.S. is prepared to join the VN Government in a sharply increased joint effort to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in SVN. This joint effort is contingent upon initiation of certain actions on the part of the GVN and consists of increased economic and military support by the U.S., based on recommendations of the Taylor Report. NSAM 111, 22 November 1961..... 419
50. Bundy comments on the command arrangements for VN and recommends that General McGarr be elevated to the new position or that a replacement be found. He also recommends sending Lansdale back as Diem has requested. Bundy Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 25 November 1961..... 422
51. General Taylor relates a list of questions proposed by President Kennedy to be used at a meeting of his key advisors. Among the questions are: (1) what is the situation with regard to Diem as reported by Ambassador Nolting; (2) can we delay longer in obtaining an answer from Diem; (3) what are the views of the JCS on the military organization required to support the new program; (4) what is our plan for flood relief; (5) who should the President regard as personally responsible for the effectiveness of the Washington end of this operation? General Taylor Memorandum for Secretary McNamara, 27 November 1961..... 423
52. The President approves U.S. participation in a selective and carefully controlled joint program of defoliant operations in VN starting with the clearance of key routes and proceeding thereafter to food denial. NSAM 115, 30 November 1961..... 425
53. McNamara confirms to Rusk the command arrangements under which the senior U.S. military commander in Vietnam will have the title "Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Forces - Vietnam" and will have equivalent rank to the Ambassador, reporting through CINCPAC to the JCS. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for the Secretary of State, 18 December 1961..... 426
54. Diem is apprehensive about giving control authority to Big Minh as military field commander because of his fear of a coup. While U.S. policy is to support Diem and he has been so informed by the President, we must find a way to reassure him about a coup. "It is the basis for his real reluctance to do what the Americans want him to do and this basic point needs resolving...what realistic assurances can we give Diem that the action he fears won't take place?" Lansdale Memorandum for the CJCS, 27 December 1961..... 427

1962

55. The Chairman of the JCS summarizes the current situation in VN, methods of VC operations, routes of infiltration and supply, relative strengths, and discusses U.S. military units in place or enroute to VN. "The objectives of the Diem Government in SVN include not only survival against the communists, but also improvement of the national economy, enhancement of SVN's position among Southeast Asian nations, creations of an effective armed force, and preservation of a pro-Western orientation. "Policies directed toward the achievement of these objectives suffer from the concentration of power in the hands of the President, Ngo Dinh Diem, and a small clique headed by his extremely influential and powerful brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu." Chairman JCS Talking Paper for Briefing President Kennedy, 9 January 1962..... 428
56. The JCS agree that the basic issue of Diem's apprehension about a coup needs to be resolved. "I don't believe there is any finite answer to the question you pose as to how to convince Diem he must delegate authority to subordinates he doesn't fully trust." JCS Memorandum for General Lansdale, CM-491-62, 18 January 1962..... 440
57. The President establishes a Special Group (Counter Insurgency), the functions of which are as follows: (1) to insure proper recognition throughout the U.S. Government that subversive insurgency ("wars of liberation") is a major form of politico-military conflict equal in importance to conventional warfare; (2) to insure that such recognition is reflected in the organization, training, equipment and doctrine of the U.S. armed forces and other U.S. agencies; (3) to continually review the adequacy of U.S. resources to deal with insurgency; and (4) to insure the development of adequate programs aimed at preventing or defeating insurgency. NSAM 124, 18 January 1962..... 442
58. State Department agrees that an increase in the Vietnamese armed forces to the 200,000 man level should be supported provided the following factors are considered: (1) that U.S. military advisors and the Vietnamese authorities continue to set valid tactical and strategic plans; (2) the rate of increase should consider the ability of the Army to absorb and train the additional men and the manpower resources of SVN; (3) that the armed forces should level off at 200,000 and further efforts should be devoted to



strengthening the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps; and (4) that our training programs for ARVN be based on the concept that the Vietnamese Army will start winning when it has the confidence of the Vietnamese populace. U. Alexis Johnson letter to Mr. Gilpatric, 26 January 1962.....

445

59. Secretary McNamara forwards a JCS Memorandum to the President with the comment, "I am not prepared to endorse the views of the Chiefs until we have had more experience with our present program in SVN." The JCS Memorandum recommends that if, with Diem's full cooperation and the effective employment of SVN armed forces, the VC is not brought under control, then a decision should be made to deploy suitable U.S. military combat forces to SVN sufficient to achieve desired objectives. Secretary of Defense Memorandum for the President, 27 January 1962 (JCSM-33-62, 13 January 1962, attached).....

447

60. The President requests that AID review carefully its role in the support of local police forces for internal security and counter-insurgency purposes, and recommend to him through the Special Group (Counter Insurgency) what new or renewed emphases are desirable. NSAM 132, 19 February 1962.....

455

61. The President approves training objectives for personnel who may have a role to play in counter insurgency programs as well as in the entire range of problems involved in the modernization of developing countries. The training objectives include the study of: the historical background of counter insurgency, departmental tactics and techniques to counter subversive insurgency, instruction in counter insurgency program planning, specialized preparations for service in underdeveloped areas. Training of foreign nationals will also be included in the program. The President desires that current counter insurgency training be examined to ascertain if it meets the above training objectives. NSAM 131, 13 March 1962.....

457

62. The President forwards a memorandum on the subject of VN from Ambassador Galbraith and requests Department of Defense comments. The Gailbraith Memorandum (4 April 62) asserts that the U.S. is backing a weak and ineffectual government in SVN and that "there is a consequent danger that we shall replace the French as the colonial force in the area and bleed as the French did." Gailbraith urges that U.S. policy keep open the door for political solution, attempt to involve other countries and world opinion in a settlement, and reduce our commitment to the present leadership of GVN. In



addition to recommended specific actions, Galbraith suggests the U.S. should resist all steps to commit American troops to combat action and dissociate itself from programs which are directed at the villagers, such as the resettlement programs. White House Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, 7 April 1962 (Galbraith Memorandum attached)...

460

63. The JCS comment on Ambassador Galbraith's Memorandum to President Kennedy. The JCS cite the Kennedy letter of 14 December 1961 to President Diem as a public affirmation of the intention of the U.S. Government to support President Diem to whatever extent necessary to eliminate the VC threat. In sum, it is the JCS opinion that the present U.S. policy toward SVN as announced by the President "be pursued vigorously to a successful conclusion." JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, JCSM 282-62, 13 April 1962.....
64. ISA discusses the circumstances surrounding the Defense reply to Galbraith's Memorandum and notes the absence of formal staffing by the State Department. In a penciled note "Secretary of Defense has talked to Ambassador Galbraith and feels no reply needed. Mr. Forrestal informed this date that none would be sent." ISA Memorandum to Secretary of Defense, 14 April 1962.....
65. The President requests contingency planning in the event of a breakdown of the cease-fire in Laos for action in two major areas: (1) the holding by Thai forces with U.S. back-up of that portion of northern Laos west of the Mekong River; and (2) the holding and recapture of the panhandle of Laos from Thakhek to the southern frontier with Thai, Vietnamese or U.S. forces. Kennedy indicates that he contemplates keeping U.S. forces in Thailand during the period of the negotiations by the three Princes and the early days of the government of national union. NSAM 157, 29 May 1962.....
66. In an evaluation of the first three months of systematic counter-insurgency, Hilsman of State's INR reports some progress and reason for modest optimism although acknowledging the great amount yet to be done. State Department INR Research Memorandum RFE-27, 18 June 1962.....
67. The President approves assignments of responsibilities in the development of U.S. and indigenous police, paramilitary, and military resources to various agencies as recommended by the Special Group on Counter Insurgency. Deficiencies revealed in the study pursuant to NSAM 56 include: country

464

466

467

469



- internal defense plans, improvement of personnel programs of agencies concerned with unconventional warfare, orientation of personnel, deployment of counter insurgency personnel, support of covert paramilitary operations, increased use of third-country personnel, exploitation of minorities, improvement of indigenous intelligence organizations, and research and development for counter insurgency. NSAM 162, 19 June 1962..... 481
- 6 The President approves a national counter insurgency doctrine for the use of U.S. departments and agencies concerned with the internal defense of overseas areas threatened by subversive insurgency. NSAM 182, 24 August 1962..... 485
69. In a year-end summary of the Vietnamese situation and prognosis, Hilsman (State INR) concludes that at best the rate of deterioration has been decreased. GVN control of the countryside, the Strategic Hamlet Program notwithstanding, has increased only slightly. State Department INR Research Memorandum RFE-59, 3 December 1961..... 487
- 1963
70. A National Intelligence Estimate states that "Communist progress has been blunted and that the situation is improving. Strengthened South Vietnamese capabilities and effectiveness, and particularly U.S. involvement, are causing the Viet Cong increased difficulty, although there are as yet no persuasive indications that the Communists have been grievously hurt." The VC will continue to wage a war of attrition and there is no threat of overt attack from the North. On the basis of the last year's progress the VC can be contained but it is impossible "to project the future course of the war with any confidence. Decisive campaigns have yet to be fought and no quick and easy end to the war is in sight." NIE 53-63, "Prospects in South Vietnam," 17 April 1963..... 522
71. The President approves and directs certain actions outlined in the Department of State Memorandum of 17 June 1963, relative to Laos planning. The President wishes to obtain suggestions for actions in Laos in light of the deteriorating situation and from the British and the French before initiating any action under the Memorandum. Kennedy asks about additional U.S. actions to be taken in Laos before any action directed against NVN. NSAM 249, 25 June 1963... 525
72. The President is briefed on developments in Indonesia, Laos and VN. Specifically, on SVN, discussions cover the possibility



of getting rid of the Nhhus (the combined judgment was that it would not be possible), pressure on Diem to take political actions, possible results of a coup, and the replacement of Ambassador Nolting with Ambassador Lodge. Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, 4 July 1963.....

526

73. A Special National Intelligence Estimate evaluates the political crisis in South Vietnam arising from the Buddhist protest. It concludes that if Diem does not seek to conciliate the Buddhists new disorders are likely and there will be better than even chances of coup or assassination attempts. U.S.-GVN relations have deteriorated as a function of Diem's distrust of U.S. motives in the Buddhist affair and he may seek to reduce the U.S. presence in Vietnam. The Communists have thus far not exploited the Buddhist crisis and they would not necessarily profit from a non-Communist overthrow. A successor regime with continued U.S. support would have good chances of effectively pursuing the war. SNIE 53-2-63, "The Situation in South Vietnam," 10 July 1963.....

529

74. In a subsequently controversial cable, State informs Lodge that if Diem is unwilling or unable to remove Nhu from the government, that the U.S. will have to prepare for alternatives. Lodge is authorized to inform the Vietnamese generals plotting a coup that if Nhu is not removed we will be prepared to discontinue economic and military aid, to accept a change of government and to offer support in any period of interim breakdown of the central government mechanism. State Department Message to Saigon 243, State to Lodge, 24 August 1963.....

536

75. U.S. policy with respect to a coup is defined in more detail for Lodge and Harkins as a result of an NSC meeting with the President. "The USG will support a coup which has good chance of succeeding but plans no direct involvement of U.S. armed forces. Harkins should state (to the generals) that he is prepared to establish liaison with the coup planners and to review plans, but will not engage directly in joint coup planning." Lodge is authorized to suspend aid if he thinks it will enhance the chances of a successful coup. State Department Message 272, State to Lodge and Harkins, 29 August 1963.....

538

76. Rusk raises with Lodge the possibility of a last approach to Diem about removing Nhu before going ahead with the coup. He notes that General Harkins favors such an attempt. Rusk



- feels that if accompanied by the threat of a real sanction -- i.e., the withdrawal of U.S. support -- such an approach could be timed to coincide with the readiness of the generals to make their move and might, therefore, offer some promise of getting Diem to act. State Department Message 279, State to Lodge, 29 August 1963..... 539
77. Vice President Johnson presides over a meeting at the State Department on the subject of SVN. The generals' plot having aborted, Rusk asks what in the situation "lead us to think well of a coup." Further, Rusk feels that it is unrealistic now "to start off by saying that Nhu has to go." McNamara approves Rusk's remarks. Hilsman presents four basic factors bearing on the current situation: (1) the restive mood of the South Vietnamese population; (2) the effect on U.S. programs elsewhere in Asia of the current GVN policy against the Buddhists; (3) the personality and policies of Nhu; and (4) U.S. and world opinion. Vice President has great reservations about a coup because he sees no genuine alternative to Diem. General Krulak Memorandum for the Record, 31 August 1963..... 540
78. Lodge is instructed by the White House that since there is no longer any prospect of a coup, pressure must be applied to Diem to get him to adopt an extensive list of reforms. In particular Lodge is authorized to hold up any aid program if he thinks such action will give him useful leverage in dealing with Diem. CAP Message 63516, White House to Lodge, 17 September 1963..... 545
79. The President explains to Lodge his urgent need for the McNamara-Taylor assessment of the situation. The visit is not designed to be a reconciliation with Diem, rather he expects McNamara will speak frankly to him about the military consequences of the political crisis. State Department Message 431, The President to Lodge, 18 September 1963..... 548
80. Lodge's reply to the White House CAP Message 63516 indicates agreement that a coup is no longer in the offing, but opposes both an approach to Diem on reforms or the use of an aid suspension as a lever. He regards both as likely to be unproductive or worse. Embassy Saigon Message 544, Lodge to State for President Only, 19 September 1963..... 549
81. President Kennedy outlines his reasons for sending McNamara and Taylor to VN: "I am asking you to go because of my desire to have the best possible on-the-spot appraisal of

the military and paramilitary effort to defeat the VC." While the results from programs developed after Taylor's Mission in 1961 were heartening, the serious events in the South since May 1963 have prompted the President to ask McNamara to make a fresh, first-hand appraisal of the situation. "In my judgement the question of the progress of the contest in SVN is of the first importance..." President Kennedy Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, 21 September 1963.....

551

82. Pending McNamara's visit and the subsequent review of policy, Lodge is given the following interim guidance: "(1) The United States intends to continue its efforts to assist the Vietnamese people in their struggle against the Viet Cong. (2) Recent events have put in question the possibility of success in these efforts unless there can be important improvements in the government of South Vietnam. (3) It is the policy of the United States to bring about such improvement." State Department Message 458, Eyes Only for Lodge from Ball, 22 September 1963.....
83. The McNamara-Taylor Mission Report concludes that the military campaign has made great progress, and, while the political crisis in Saigon is serious, "there is no solid evidence of the possibility of a successful coup..." The Report recommends against promoting a coup and, although it is not clear that U.S. pressure will move Diem to the moderations and reforms we desire, nevertheless, as the only course of action with any prospect of producing results, the report recommends the application of selective economic sanctions, including a suspension of funds for the commodity import program. The Mission further recommends a shift of military emphasis to the Delta and a consolidation of the Strategic Hamlet Program. In addition, it is recommended that a training program be established for RVNAF such that the bulk of U.S. personnel may be withdrawn by the end of 1965. In conjunction with this program, the U.S. should announce plans to withdraw 1, 000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963..
84. Lodge is advised that as a result of the policy review just completed, the "President today approved recommendation that no initiative should now be taken to give any active covert encouragement to a coup." Efforts to build and maintain contacts with "alternative leadership" is authorized, however. CAP Message 63560, to Lodge via CAS channel, 5 October 1963.....
85. Contact has been renewed by the generals with a CAS agent who has been apprised of the reactivation of plotting. In the

553

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574



87. The President approves the detailed military recommendations contained in the McNamara-Taylor Report, but directs that no announcement of the implementation of the 1,000-man withdrawal plan be made. NSAM 263, 11 October 1963..... 578
88. A Department of State Research Memorandum contends that the statistical indicators on the war in Vietnam reveal "that the military position of the Vietnam Government may have reverted to the point it had reached six months to a year ago." The analysis angers the JCS and Rusk subsequently apologizes to McNamara. Department of State, INR Research Memorandum RFE-90, 22 October 1963..... 579
89. With the coup plotting now far advanced and the U.S. clearly committed to the generals' attempt, Lodge seeks to calm Washington's anxieties about the lack of detailed information on the generals' plans. He is at pains to oppose any thought of thwarting the coup because he thinks the military will create a government with better potential for carrying on the war, and because it would constitute undue meddling in Vietnamese affairs. Embassy Saigon Message 1964, Lodge to McGeorge Bundy, 25 October 1963..... 590
90. While thanking Lodge for his views, the White House indicates that short of thwarting a coup we should retain the prerogative of reviewing the plans and discouraging any attempt with poor prospects of success. CAP Message 63590, McGeorge Bundy to Lodge, 25 October 1963..... 592

93. General Harkins takes detailed exception to the interpretations of a deteriorating war effort that Lodge has been transmitting throughout October. He offers an optimistic appraisal of the trend of the war and sees the political crisis as having only a marginal effect on troop morale and military effectiveness. MACV Message 2033, Harkins to Taylor, 30 October 1963.....

597

95. Taking note of the difference of opinion on the advisability of a coup between Lodge and Harkins, the White House specifically informs Lodge that he is to discourage the generals from any attempt that in his judgement has a poor prospect of success. Lodge is given full authority for country team actions in the event of a coup; if he has left for Washington, Harkins will have charge. In the event of a coup, U.S. policy will be: (a) to reject appeals for direct intervention from either side; (b) if the contest is indecisive, U.S. authorities may perform any actions agreed

to by both sides; (c) in the event the coup fails, asylum  
may be offered to anyone to whom we have an obligation; but  
(d) once the coup has started, it is in our interests to  
see that it succeeds. CAS Washington Message 79407, 30  
October 1963:.....

604



JAN 17 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

From: BrigGen Lansdale, OSO/OSD

Subj: Vietnam

As desired by you, I visited Vietnam 2-14 January 1961. After twelve days of intensive looking and listening over some old familiar ground, I have come to the following personal convictions:

- a. 1961 promises to be a fateful year for Vietnam.
- b. The Communist Viet Cong hope to win back Vietnam south of the 17th Parallel this year, if at all possible, and are much further along towards accomplishing this objective than I had realized from reading the reports received in Washington.
- c. The free Vietnamese, and their government, probably will be able to do no more than postpone eventual defeat - - unless they find a Vietnamese way of mobilizing their total resources and then utilizing them with spirit.
- d. The U. S. team in Vietnam will be unable to help the Vietnamese with real effectiveness, unless the U.S. system of their operation is changed sufficiently to free these Americans to do the job that needs doing, and unless they do it with sensitive understanding and wisdom.
- e. If Free Vietnam is won by the Communists, the remainder of Southeast Asia will be easy pickings for our enemy, because the toughest local force on our side will be gone. A Communist victory also would be a major blow to U. S. prestige and influence, not only in Asia but throughout the world, since the world believes that Vietnam has remained free only through U.S. help. Such a victory would tell leaders of other governments that it doesn't pay to be a friend of the U.S., and would be an even more marked lesson than Laos.
- f. Vietnam can be kept free, but it will require a changed U.S. attitude, plenty of hard work and patience, and a new spirit by the Vietnamese. The Viet Cong have been pushing too hard militarily to get their roots down firmly and can be defeated by an inspired and determined effort.

g. Ngo Dinh Diem is still the only Vietnamese with executive ability and the required determination to be an effective President. I believe there will be another attempt to get rid of him soon, unless the U.S. makes it clear that we are backing him as the elected top man. If the 11 November coup had been successful, I believe that a number of highly selfish and mediocre people would be squabbling among themselves for power while the Communists took over. The Communists will be more alert to exploit the next coup attempt. At present, most Vietnamese oppositionists believe that the U. S. would look favorably upon a successful coup.

h. Vietnam has progressed faster in material things than it has spiritually. The people have more possessions but are starting to lose the will to protect their liberty. There is a big lesson here to be learned about the U.S. aid program which needs some most serious study.

### Recommendations

Before I left Saigon, I discussed my impressions with Ambassador Durbrow who was most gracious towards me during the visit. Included in these impressions was my feeling that many of the Americans in Saigon perhaps subconsciously believed in defeat, probably had spent too much time and energy on the political situation in Saigon instead of on the very real Viet Cong menace, and were in need of some bolstering up by the Chief of Mission. In this feeling of defeat, I would have to except the Chief of MAAG and the local CIA Chief who believe we can win. Ambassador Durbrow told me of the memo he had issued to all Americans in Saigon after the 11 November coup attempt. I said this was a good move, but much more than writing a paper was needed.

He asked me what suggestions I had. I said that I didn't have much immediately and would have to do a lot of thinking about it. The situation in Vietnam is not black and white, but a most complex one in all shades of gray. Many Americans and Vietnamese expected me to come up with some sort of a miracle, to turn Ngo Dinh Diem into an Americanized modern version of the ancient Vietnamese leader Le Loi. However, the task requires more than a gimmick or some simple answer. It will take a lot of hard work and follow-through. In 12 days, all I could do was learn as much as I could and to "plant a seed or two" with Ngo Dinh Diem and other Vietnamese leaders who know that I speak out of deep affection for the free Vietnamese.



Since leaving Vietnam, I have spent many hours thinking about the situation there. I am far from having a complete proposal to solve the situation. However, I do have some recommendations now for steps which should be taken to start remedying the downhill and dangerous trend in Vietnam. They are:

a. The U. S. should recognize that Vietnam is in a critical condition and should treat it as a combat area of the cold war, as an area requiring emergency treatment.

b. When there is an emergency, the wise thing to do is to pick the best people you have, people who are experienced in dealing with this precise type of emergency, and send them to the spot with orders to remedy the situation. When you get the people in position and free them to work, you should then back them up in every practical way you can. The real decisions will be made in little daily actions in Vietnam, not in Washington. That's why the best are needed on the spot.

c. Our U.S. team in Vietnam should have a hard core of experienced Americans who know and really like Asia and the Asians, dedicated people who are willing to risk their lives for the ideals of freedom, and who will try to influence and guide the Vietnamese towards U.S. policy objectives with the warm friendships and affection which our close alliance deserves. We should break the rules of personnel assignment, if necessary, to get such U.S. military and civilians to Vietnam.

d. Under emergency conditions, our aid to Vietnam should be treated as contingency business and be given expedited priority handling until we can afford to take a breathing spell.

e. Ambassador Durbrow should be transferred in the immediate future. He has been in the "forest of tigers" which is Vietnam for nearly four years now and I doubt that he himself realizes how tired he has become or how close he is to individual trees in this big woods. Correctly or not, the recognized government of Vietnam does not look upon him as a friend, believing that he sympathized strongly with the coup leaders of 11 November.

f. The new Ambassador should arrive as many weeks as possible before the April elections, for which the Communists are now actively preparing with their "political struggle" tactics almost unhindered. The new Ambassador should be a person with marked leadership talents who can make the Country Team function harmoniously and spiritually, who



can influence Asians through understanding them sympathetically, and who is alert to the power of the Mao Tse Tung tactics now being employed to capture Vietnam and who is dedicated to feasible and practical democratic means to defeat these Communist tactics.

g. Serious consideration should be given to replacing USOM Chief Gardiner. A number of Vietnamese pointedly answered my questions about Gardiner by talking about his deputy, Coster, while admitting that "Gardiner seems to be a nice man who has fallen asleep in our climate."

h. U.S. military men in Vietnam should be freed to work in the combat areas. Our MAAG has a far greater potential than is now being utilized. U.S. military men are hardly in a position to be listened to when they are snug in rear areas and give advice to Vietnamese officers who have attended the same U.S. military schools and who are now in a combat in which few Americans are experienced. MAAG personnel from General McGarr on down expressed desire to get more into real field work; let's give them what they want as far as U.S. permission is concerned and let them earn their way into positions of greater influence with the Vietnamese military in the field.

i. A mature American, with much the same qualifications as those given above for the selection of the next Ambassador, should be assigned to Vietnam for political operations which will start creating a Vietnamese-style foundation for more democratic government without weakening the strong leadership required to bring about the defeat of the Communists. This must not be a "clever" type who is out to gain a reputation as a "manipulator" or a word-smith who is more concerned about the way his reports will look in Washington than in implementing U.S. policy in Vietnam.

j. We must support Ngo Dinh Diem until another strong executive can replace him legally. President Diem feels that Americans have attacked him almost as viciously as the Communists, and he has withdrawn into a shell for self-protection. We have to show him by deeds, not words alone, that we are his friend. This will make our influence effective again.

K. We must do much, much more constructive work with the oppositionists. I suspect that the U.S. has taught them to be carping critics and disloyal citizens by our encouragement of these traits. They need to put together a constructive program which can save

Vietnam from the Communists by building something worth a man's life to preserve. If it's a good program, we should encourage one strong political opposition to emerge, without endangering the national security. Here is where our political skill needs to be used. This political work is needed as a matter of grave urgency. Unless a constructive outlet is found quickly, the opposition in Saigon is going to explode in violence again and the Viet Cong are wide awake to exploit it this time.

### The Communist Threat

It was a shock to me to look over maps of the estimated situation with U.S. and Vietnamese intelligence personnel, as well as with President Diem who held similar grim views. The Communist Viet Cong now dominate much of the 1st and 5th Military Regions, as well as being active in spots in other regions, according to these estimates. The probable strength of the Communist armed forces in South Vietnam was given to me in various guesses from 3,000 to 15,000. My guess is that the strength is now closer to the latter figure and that only Hanoi knows accurately.

This strength estimate by itself isn't what shocked me. The shocking part was to realize that the thousands of disciplined and trained Communist graduates of "proletarian military science" had been able to infiltrate the most productive area of South Vietnam and to gain control of nearly all of it except for narrow corridors protected by military actions and for a few highly-localized spots where loyal paramilitary forces (Civil Guards and Self-Defense Corps) have undertaken inspired counter-guerrilla actions or where villagers work closely with the military.

The Viet Cong have the initiative and most of the control over the region from the jungled foothills of the High Plateau north of Saigon all the way south down to the Gulf of Siam, excluding the big city area of Saigon-Cholon. This is Vietnam's "bread-basket" where most of its rice and rubber are grown.

Unlike the Philippines or Malaya, the Communists cannot be cordoned off at the country's borders and then dealt with as an internal security problem alone. The borders of Vietnam are long and include some of the most difficult terrain in the world to patrol. It is apparent that many of the Viet Cong infiltrate from Cambodia, particularly from Svayrieng Province. Also, southeastern Laos has a reported Communist



build-up, with RLG forces committed elsewhere, and increasing infiltration into Vietnam is reported.

There is an intense psychological attack being waged against Free Vietnam by the Communists. This not only includes an almost constant barrage from powerful Radio Hanoi, which is reportedly relayed from Cambodia and is received as a loud and clear signal in South Vietnam, but also a heavy campaign by on-the-spot agitprop agents. A part of the psychological attack is directed against Americans, particularly against U.S. MAAG personnel, along the lines of the Chinese Communist "hate America" campaign. I did not have the time or means to assess the effect of this psychological attack which has been going on for years.

The big city area of Saigon-Cholon undoubtedly is a target of Communist operations, although I was able to find out little about either the Communist organization or its operations in this city area. U.S. intelligence personnel believed that Vietnamese counter-intelligence organizations were so actively "hustling" so many suspects that the Communists have been unable to institute much of an organization. President Diem believed that the Communists were concentrating their work elsewhere, following the dictum: "first the mountains, then the countryside, and then the city." The attitude of Vietnamese and U.S. officials reminded me of the French and Vietnamese officials in Hanoi in 1953-54, who were so surprised later to discover that a complete, block-by-block clandestine Communist apparatus existed there. Or, of Filipinos and Americans who believed the Huks were in central Luzon in 1950 and were so surprised when an entire Communist politburo was captured in the city of Manila. I believe that the people in Saigon-Cholon have been the target of considerable subversive effort by the Communists and that it takes an in-place organization to carry this out.

Communist strength figures are difficult to determine due in part to the different categories of personnel. I was able to get no estimate on the number of Communist political-psychological operators, although the DRV reportedly have trained many for work in the south. Also, the Communist military personnel include regulars who have infiltrated from the north, plus territorial forces and guerrillas who apparently are recruited locally. Colonel Thanh Thien Khiem, who commands the 5th Military Region, broke his estimate of some 7,000 Viet Cong military in his region into 3,320 regulars, 1,170 territorials, and 2,590 guerrillas. When the Vietminh troops were transferred to the north in 1954-55 under the Geneva Agreement, many left families.



behind in the south, along with stay-behind organizations and arms caches. Although the pacification campaigns of 1955-56 cleaned up what the Communists had left behind to some extent, there were remnants remaining which the Viet Cong have since exploited and augmented greatly over the past 5 years.

### President Ngo Dinh Diem

President Diem and I are friends. Also, he is a man who put other Vietnamese friends of mine in jail or exiled them. It is hardly a blind friendship.

Prior to my departure from Washington, Jeff Parsons asked if I would please size-up President Diem carefully to see if he had changed much from when I had worked with him so closely in 1954-56. In our first meeting, he was a bit cautious with me. I suspected that he was waiting for me to drop Washington's other shoe as a follow-up to the Ambassador's demands that he reform his ways. So, I reminisced on what we had been through together in the past and he joined in, adding the story of the 11 November coup as he saw it. Our meetings from then on became more like the old days, with plenty of give and take. . . . but only after I convinced him that I still had affection for the Vietnamese people and was trying to understand their problems before sounding off.

He seems to have a better grasp of economic matters than formerly. Also, I believe he sincerely wants to pass some of his daily burden of work to others. He said that he had found this extremely hard to do, since too many others were soft in carrying out responsibilities or else were too vain to knuckle-down to hard work. This has forced him to over-burden Nguyen Dinh Thuan, Secretary of State for the Presidency, who doesn't hesitate to make tough decisions when needed, who has had to act as hatchet-man when others were too soft to get rid of incompetents, and who has been loyal to his boss (although he speaks right up for his own views). Vice President Tho is so soft-hearted that he really never takes corrective action against wrong doers. Vu Van Thai is a "blackmailer" by threatening to resign after convincing the Americans that he is the most brilliant Vietnamese in economic matters, although he is a poor executive whose work is in bad shape; if Diem accepted Thai's resignation, the Americans would feel that the Vietnamese Government was going to hell. (Unfortunately, there's some truth in these feelings of Diem's about Tho and Thai).



I believe President Diem is more screened in by his "palace guard" than he realizes - - but then much the same could be said of other leaders elsewhere. I noted that he still has a personal informant net and I managed to talk to some of them privately. The largest influence, but not the only one, is wielded by his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. However, I found President Diem unusually well informed on the situation in Vietnam, including the bad aspects - - better informed than any other Vietnamese among the many with whom I talked.

In reflecting on our conversations, I have concluded that most folks who talk to him have little empathy for, or sensitive understanding of, him. They fail to realize that Diem is human and doesn't like the idea of people trying to kill him out of hatred; the coup attempt of 11 November opened at 3 a.m. by bursts of heavy machine gun fire into his bedroom in an obvious try at liquidating him in his bed. On top of this, he has now had nearly 7 years of venomous attack by the Communists who know that he is a major obstacle which must be destroyed before they can win. This is a daily psychological attack on him in his own country, in his own language, and listened to by his own people. The only way he could shut this off today would be to give up what he, and we, believe in. On top of this, he has criticism heaped on him by many who are simply being-destructive, he has administrators who are disloyal or whose vanity is expressed in talking a better job of work than in doing it. And then, to cap the criticisms, he feels that many Americans have contempt for him - - that the U.S. which could be Vietnam's staunchest friend is somehow taking the same psychological line with him as do the Communists, that somehow our nobly-expressed policies get carried out with much pettiness in actual practice.

If the next American official to talk to President Diem would have the good sense to see him as a human being who has been through a lot of hell for years -- and not as an opponent to be beaten to his knees -- we would start regaining our influence with him in a healthy way. Whatever else we might think of him, he has been unselfish in devoting his life to his country and has little in personal belongings to show for it. If we don't like the heavy influence of Brother Nhu, then let's move someone of ours in close. This someone, however, must be able to look at problems with understanding, suggest better solutions than does Nhu, earn a position of influence.

The next time we become "holier than thou", we might find it sobering to reflect on the DRV. Do the Soviets and the Chinese Communists give Ho Chi Minh a similar hard time, or do they aid and abet him?



## U. S. Political Efforts

The United States has been the main foreign political mentor for Free Vietnam since it became an independent nation. Of course other nations have had their influence. But we were the ones who have spoken with authority, who have held the purse-strings, who trained and advised the government personnel, and to whom most Vietnamese in political life have looked for guidance. It is only human to want to find someone else to blame for what has gone wrong. But, we won't be able to start doing effective political work until we admit that our own actions carry responsibilities with them. There are plenty of Aaron Burr's, a few Alexander Hamilton's and practically no George Washington's, Tom Jefferson's or Tom Paine's in Saigon today . . . largely as a result of our U. S. political influence. This certainly is not the U. S. policy we had hoped to implement.

Ambassador Durbrow seemed genuinely surprised when I told him that the Can Lao Party in Vietnam was originally promoted by the U. S. State Department and was largely the brain-child of a highly-respected, senior U. S. Foreign Service professional. Several weeks after this action was undertaken originally, I learned of it and warned that the benefits were extremely short-term and that great lasting harm could result by a favored party forcing older parties to go underground. However, the decision had been made, the Can Lao party had been started, and we had to start working from that reality. We cannot go back to living in the past and must keep moving ahead, but that doesn't mean that we have to pay forever for our mistakes.

However, the real point is that we don't seem to have very long memories or enough solid feeling of responsibility for our acts. Many U. S. Foreign Service officials leap into attacks on the Can Lao Party. I agree with their reasons. Any thinking American would. But I sure would feel better about it if they could only remember the consequences of their own actions for a few short years - and learn from that memory. I cannot truly sympathize with Americans who help promote a fascistic state and then get angry when it doesn't act like a democracy.

So, what should we do about it? I have a concrete recommendation. We need an American in Saigon who can work with real skill, with great sensitivity to Vietnamese feelings, and with a fine sense of the dangerous limits of Vietnamese national security in a time of emergency. This unusual American should be given the task of creating



an opposition party which would coalesce the majority of the opposition into one organization, of helping this new party adopt a platform which contains sound ideas for building national entities which the Vietnamese people would find worth defending against the Communists, and of strongly influencing it to play the role of loyal opposition while President Diem is in power and the nation is in such great danger.

This work with the opposition is a matter of grave urgency. Unless the energies of the malcontents, the frustrated, the patriots on the outs are quickly channeled into constructive political works, they are going to explode into destructive political work. This opposition situation in Saigon-Cholon is at the bursting point, and there is no safety valve. When it next blows, and if Diem cannot cope with it, the Saigon political scene has all the makings of turning into anarchy. It can happen, and soon.

I saw a number of opposition people, officials of various parties, members of the National Assembly, and disgruntled members of President Diem's administration. They eagerly told me how they were criticizing Diem's actions more and more openly. I asked them what their own program was, other than to seize power for themselves or to have me pat them on the head for being critics. Few of them had any sensible ideas. I told them they'd better get busy scratching for a better program themselves or else I could only assume that they were being disloyal or treasonous in a time of great national danger. I trust that other Americans talking to these oppositionists will do the same or we will be inviting disaster by listening to this and keeping mum when we should be working like beavers to turn it into constructive channels.

.. If we can get most of the oppositionists meeting with each other to try to put together a platform they can all agree on, and can protect such work so that it can be done fairly openly, we will have an extremely useful political action in motion. It will absorb months of political energies which otherwise will go towards the solution of armed overthrow. A major opposition party, once it starts becoming a reality, will tend to make the several governmental groupings such as the Can Lao, MNR, and Nhu's labor organizations start coalescing into one stronger group. In this way, we can help promote a two-party system which can afford to be surfaced, end much of the present clandestine political structures, and give sound encouragement to the development of new political leaders. There are many fine younger patriots who need this sort of a healthy political atmosphere to develop in, it we ever expect Vietnam to have a real future.



## Comments

Here are some additional thoughts:

a. President Diem said that if it hadn't been for the dedicated anti-communism of about a million Catholics, Vietnam could never have kept going this long. Yet his brother, Archbishop Thuc, told me that the refugees from the north (including many Catholics) had been settled into such remunerative new lives in the south that they had gone soft, no longer wanted to fight, and criticized the government for wanting to continue the war. Also, the Saigon-Cholon area is seething with political discontent while the people are far better off in material possessions than ever before. The shops are full of goods for Tet and the people are buying heavily. Somehow, the U. S. has filled their bellies but has neglected their spirit.

b. Many of the Vietnamese in the countryside who were right up against the Viet Cong terror were full of patriotic spirit. Those who seemed to be in the hardest circumstances, fighting barefoot and with makeshift weapons, had the highest morale. They still can lick the Viet Cong with a little help. There's a lesson here on our giving aid. Maybe we should learn that our funds cannot buy friends or a patriotic spirit by mere materialistic giving. Perhaps we should help those who help themselves, and not have a lot of strings on that help.

c. The Viet Cong crowded a lot of action into the year 1960. They infiltrated thousands of armed forces into South Vietnam, recruited local levies of military territorials and guerrillas, and undertook large scale guerrilla and terroristic operations. In so doing, they neglected doing sound political work at the grass roots level and broke one of Mao Tse Tung's cardinal rules. Many people in the south now under their thumb are unhappy about it, but too terrified to act against these new rulers. The Viet Cong apparently have been working hard recently to rectify this error, and now have political cadres in the field. We still have a chance of beating them if we can give the people some fighting chance of gaining security and some political basis of action. Since both of these actions will have to be carried out by Vietnamese forces in their Defense establishment, it is worthwhile to make U. S. help to the Vietnamese in the contested provinces along these sorely needed lines a priority mission of the U. S. military in Vietnam. The political actions should be the implementing of Vietnamese governmental policy by Vietnamese



force commanders, aided by Vietnamese psychological warfare units. If the U.S. military doesn't ride herd on this, it is apt to be neglected and is too vital to keeping Vietnam free to be made a secondary work.

d. I am passing a copy of this to Admiral Felt at CINCPAC. Suggest that copies be passed also to selected persons in Defense, State, and CIA.

*E G Lansdale*

Edward G. LANSDALE  
Brigadier General, U.S.A.F..

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

January 30, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense

You should understand that as a result of our meeting on Saturday morning, January 28, I authorize an increase of expenditure of \$28.4 million to expand the Viet-Nam force level by 20,000; and an increase in expenditure of \$12.7 million for a program to improve the quality of the Viet-Nam civil guard.

Initialed/J.F.K.



SENT TO: AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY 10 4

RPTD INFO: CINCPAC POLAD AMEMBASSY VIETINNE  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 1146 AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PHOM PHEN AMEMBASSY PARIS

JOINT STATE-DEFENSE-ISA MESSAGE

2761

(NVNAF)

Counterinsurgency Plan, including 20,000 men increase VN armed forces/and provision training and equipment 32,000 Civil Guard, approved on basis following FY 61 funding: \$28.4 million MAP for expanded NVNAF and \$12.7 million MAP for Civil Guard. \$660,000 as proposed for psychological operations and communications equipment also approved.

Highly command Ambassador, Country Team and staffs. Recognize Plan allows considerable latitude for changes and refinements as implementation worked out with GVN and as situation requires. However, U.S. would as Plan provides expect GVN absorb local currency costs these increases aid does not contemplate further US dollar grants to generate additional local currency for this purpose.

preparation abridged version plan suitable for use Ambassador and in presenting plan to Diem. In presenting plan to Diem recommend you emphasize implementation will require extraordinary effort US-GVN cooperation, but that if implemented promptly and vigorously, we believe it will give GVN means turn tide against VC and at same time improve GVN capacity resist event aggression. Immediate purpose Plan is to enable GVN defeat insurgency, but Plan also envisages that GVN must move on political front towards liberalization

FE:SEA;CTWood;tha;erc 2/3/61

SEA - Mr. Anderson

S/S - Mr. Seip

FE - Mr. Parsons  
ICA - Mr. Sheppard  
(in substance)

The Secretary

DOD - Adm Rainz  
C/MBC - Mr. Ball

to retain necessary popular cooperation; that various economic steps be taken; and that there be adequate cooperation with RKG on frontier control. It considered US view that success requires implementation entire plan.

Should make clear our present commitment to support Counterinsurgency Plan is only for FY 61 part of program. Future funding will require Congressional approval. Views Congress likely be influenced by developments in political as well as security situation. FY 61 component represents large increase in US support Viet-Nam. If GVN willing to accept the obligations involved in its implementation, the US is ready give full and immediate support in carrying it out.

Suggest proposing to Diem that members US Missions ready confer with GVN opposite numbers work out agreed version Plan within, say, two week time limit. Urge changes be kept minimal to avoid necessity referred CINCPAC and Washington.

In implementing Plan recommend that Country Team:

- a) Conduct annual or more frequent review question balance as between forces committed primarily against VC and those intended primarily resist external aggression.
- b) Emphasize importance GVN-RKG border control.
- c) Urge GVN improve treatment VC prisoners, as done by Magaaysay, to encourage desertions.
- d) Urge GVN increase efforts to infiltrate VC in SVN.

In view Congressional interest monetary reform advise whether GVN should be pressed for early establishment unitary rate or whether additional costs



imposed on GVN by Plan will have same affect.

If Ambassador considers GVN does not provide necessary cooperation, he should inform Washington with recommendations which may include suspension US contribution.

RUSK

Pouched by DCT

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

February 3, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 2

TO: The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Development of Counter-guerrilla Forces

At the National Security Council meeting on February 1, 1961, the President requested that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with other interested agencies, should examine means for placing more emphasis on the development of counter-guerrilla forces.

Accordingly, it is requested that the Department of Defense take action on this request and inform this office promptly of the measures which it proposes to take.

(Signed)

McGeorge Bundy  
Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

Copy 1 of 4



March 9, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 28

TO: ✓ THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Subject: Guerrilla Operations in Viet-Minh Territory

In view of the President's instruction that we make every possible effort to launch guerrilla operations in Viet-Minh territory at the earliest possible time, would you report to the President as soon as feasible your views on what actions might be undertaken in the near future and what steps might be taken to expand operations in the longer future.

*McGeorge Bundy*  
McGeorge Bundy

CC: The Secretary of State

Copy 1.



WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

(SECDEF HAS SEEN)

JCSM-228-61

11 APR 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Recommendations on South Vietnam (U)

1. On 28 March 1961, Lieutenant General T. J. H. Trapnell submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff a report and ten recommendations on the situation in South Vietnam. These recommendations were:

a. US should support Counterinsurgency Plan and promote its acceptance by the Government of Vietnam.

b. Decide and direct military matters through military rather than Country Team channels.

c. Avoid reduction in MAAG strength.

d. Provide Defense Support funds on same basis for 170,000 force as for 150,000.

e. Provide MAP support for entire 68,000 Civil Guard.

f. Provide MAP FCL support for Civil Guard.

g. Provide MAP support for British-make personnel carriers and scout cars.

h. Expedite immediate shipment by air of 12,000 M1 carbines.

i. Expedite shipment of 625 AN/GRC-9 and 2245 AN/PRC-10 radios; 80 RS-6 radios and 80 GN-43 generators.

j. Expedite shipment of 3000 Claymore anti-personnel mines.

Copy ..... of ..... 9 ..... Copies each  
of ..... pages series ..... "K".....



2. On 31 March 1961, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the recommendations listed in subparagraphs 1 a, b and c above and requested the Secretary of Defense to take action deemed appropriate. The recommendations listed in subparagraphs 1 d, e, f and g above were forwarded to CINCPAC for comment and recommendation. The recommendations listed in subparagraphs 1 h, i, and j above were referred to CINCPAC for action deemed appropriate, with advice to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of action taken, and of requirements for further assistance on such action.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have received and considered the comments of CINCPAC, and his reports on action taken. The Joint Chiefs of Staff approve the Trapnell recommendations below subject to the following considerations:

a. Provide Defense Support funds on same basis for 170,000 force as for 150,000. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have taken due cognizance of the primary functions and responsibilities assigned to the State Department and ICA in determining the source and allocation of Defense Support funds. However, the Government of Vietnam apparently feels it cannot provide the financial support required in the Counterinsurgency Plan. Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff feel that prompt acceptance of the Counterinsurgency Plan by the Government of Vietnam is a matter of overriding concern in that country's present critical situation. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff request the Secretary of Defense to take action to the end that Defense Support funds are provided for a 170,000 man force on the same basis as that now provided for 150,000.

b. Provide MAP support for entire 68,000 Civil Guard. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend approval for provision of MAP materiel and supplies within the limits of the current FY 61 MAP, to carefully selected Civil Guard units beyond the 32,000 ceiling currently authorized MAP support. Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend full MAP support for 68,000 Civil Guard be initiated in FY 62, and approximately \$20 million be added to the Pacific Command FY 62 MAP ceiling to support this.

c. Provide MAP POL support for Civil Guard. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend approval for provision of MAP POL to the Civil Guard.

d. Provide MAP support for British-made personnel carriers and scout cars. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend approval for MAP support of British vehicles in Vietnam to the extent only of providing general supply and repair parts of items common to the MAP.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the increased US contributions to the Government of Vietnam, proposed above, be appropriately exploited by US representatives in Vietnam to induce that government's acceptance of the Counterinsurgency Plan. (2)

5. The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that CINCPAC has taken appropriate action to implement the recommendations of General Trappnell:

- a. To airlift 12,000 carbines.
- b. To expedite shipment of needed radios and generators.
- c. To expedite shipment of Claymore mines.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



L. L. LEMNITZER  
Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff



VIETNAM

I. Background

Vietnam today is largely the child of the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

The Geneva Agreement was billed as a "cease-fire" between the French and Vietminh armed forces for all of Indo-China, and was forged in the gloom of the French disaster at Dien-Bien-Phu. The British and Soviets were its sponsors. The U.S. was an observer, not a signatory.

The political portions introduced into the agreement by the Communists should be noted carefully. Among these are the temporary partition of Vietnam with provision for a plebiscite, the establishing of an international inspection commission, and a proviso for keeping a military status quo in weaponry.

Vietnam was partitioned at the 17th Parallel. This gave the Communist North the majority of the population (estimated then at 14 million) and its most important industries (including coal and cement). The Free South had an estimated 12 million people and an export potential of rice and rubber.

The plebiscite was to be held in 1956, to determine whether Vietnam was to be Free or Communist. Communist control over the majority of the population seemed to make the outcome plain to predict. However, the vigor of the Ngo Dinh Diem government in making Free Vietnam a viable state, plus the movement of nearly a million refugees from the Communist North to the Free South, changed the political climate strongly by the end of 1955. The Soviet and British sponsors of the agreement then decided that the plebiscite should be postponed indefinitely.

(SECDEF HAS SEEN)

The International Control Commission was established, with Polish, Indian, and Canadian members. It is still in being, a monument to the ineffectiveness and dangers of such an international body: the Free South is observed far more closely than the Communist North, because we play the game legally.

As to the military status quo there were two points: a prohibition on introducing new weapons into Vietnam and a ceiling on foreign military personnel in the country (the number to be no more than were in Vietnam at the time of the "cease-fire"). There were some 400 U.S. military in Vietnam at that time, plus the many thousands of French military. No foreign communists were reported, and the Vietminh had no aircraft at the time.

## II. Today

In the North is the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Its Constitution in key provisions makes it into a Communist state in the image of the Soviet Union. In January 1961, its population was estimated at 16,375,000. Its armed forces total around 300,000, with reported heavy fire power capability in new artillery and tanks. Also, aircraft have been reported, not only transports, but jet fighters. In March 1960, it was estimated that there were 6 to 10 thousand Bloc personnel in the North, most of whom were advisors to the Vietnamese. About two-thirds were Chinese, the remainder being mostly Soviets, East Germans, and Czechs.

In the South is the Republic of Vietnam, with a government somewhat patterned on ours. In January 1961, its population was estimated at 14,300,000. Its armed forces total about 150,000, not counting 64,000 in the Civil Guard (similar to a state constabulary) or the 40,000 in the Self Defense Corps, which is the ill-equipped and untrained village militia. Official Americans in Vietnam are: 98 in the Embassy, 685 in MAAG, 230 in USOM (ICA), and 30 in USIS. There are more than a thousand other Americans, dependents of officials, business people, and missionaries. Only a few French and British remain in Vietnam. U.S. aid to the South, in millions of dollars, is indicated as:



|  | <u>FY 1960</u> | <u>FY 1961</u> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| In local piastres (for<br>Defense Support, etc.)   | 156            | 160            |
| In U.S. currency (for<br>technical services, etc.) | 3.8            | 3.8            |
| MAP  | 73.9           | 65.            |
|  | <u>233.7</u>   | <u>228.8</u>   |

Since 80% of the population in the South is employed in agriculture, much of the U.S. aid to South Vietnam in the years right after 1954, (estimated at over \$1-billion), went to rehabilitate the agrarian economy and to settle some 900,000 refugees. The ever-present threat of invasion from the North, and large scale subversive activities has required continued expenditure by the new government to give unusually heavy support to its national security forces. The South now is self-sufficient in basic food-stuffs, but has no heavy industry.

### III. Situation Analysis

The situation map at MAAG in Saigon early this month shows the South's major current problem at a glance: the Communist internal security threat. (Map attached)

The Communist "National Liberation Front" claims that the Communists will "liberate" the South in 1961. The main reliance is on Communist armed forces, now estimated at about 10,000, who have been infiltrated into the South from the North (overland through Cambodia and Laos, or by sea in coastal junks), and who fight as guerrillas. These are the Viet Cong.

As the Free Vietnamese become more effective at countering these Communist guerrillas, (in January and February, the government initiated 529 attacks on the guerrillas, compared to 310 attacks initiated by the Viet Cong), the Communists have been forced to consider further means for winning. Current Communist plans include:

a. Readiness to exploit any future coup d'etat attempts in the South. (The Communists were caught unprepared in last November's attempt at a non-Communist coup in Saigon).

b. Use the proposed forthcoming 14 nation conference on Laos as a forum to gain political agreement to a new partition of Vietnam at the 13th Parallel.

c. Possibly establish an enclave in the Kontum area of South Vietnam, using forces from Attopen in Laos to do this, and start a revolutionary government there.

Meanwhile, Free Vietnam has just completed a successful Presidential election, returning Ngo Dinh Diem to office, with Nguyen Ngoc Tho as Vice-President. The U.S. Country Team has taken up with Diem's government a Counter-Insurgency Plan, mostly written by Americans in Vietnam last year. It is hoped that the implementation of this plan will solve the Viet Cong internal threat. In addition, MAAG-Vietnam has produced a work, "Tactics and Techniques of Counter-Insurgent Operations," which is being translated for use in Vietnamese military manuals and texts.

The Counter-Insurgency Plan calls for better-integrated control of the military-economic-political effort against the Viet Cong, a more effective chain-of-command, improvement of military strength and structure, coordinating and unifying the intelligence effort, gaining more popular support, changing some of the political structure, and increasing the Vietnamese contribution to the economic support of the struggle. The Vietnamese have adopted a number of these proposals, have changed some to more acceptable Vietnamese forms, and balked at part of the political proposals (the inclusion of opposition politicians in the Cabinet and elimination of the Can Lao party which has supported President Diem).

Diem's actions to achieve objectives of the Counter-Insurgency Plan include:

a. The Civil Guard (constabulary) was transferred from the Department of Interior to Department of Defense. 32,000.



of the Civil Guard are now being trained and equipped by the Army. Since the Vietnamese are hard put to pay the cost of the increased burden, U.S. Defense officials suggest that we train and equip the remaining 36,000 Civil Guard immediately. They figure that \$20-million would cover the initial equipment and first year costs. We could start training and equipping the best of the remaining 36,000 from FY 61 funds.

b. Control and power of the Joint General Staff has been improved, with U.S. advisors in a more favorable position to assist. The Director of the Civil Guard is now subordinate to the Chief of Staff. Time lag between alert and air strike has been shortened considerably. Logistical methods are being improved.

c. The Internal Security Council was founded and now meets weekly. Other structural changes of the government, (such as having "super-Secretaries" in charge of a group of related Departments), have been announced but await implementation. The Vietnamese agreed to having a national planning system, as recommended in the U.S. Plan, and progress is reported.

d. The Vietnamese government published a decree on the tactical zone organization, although not as complete as in the U.S. Plan. At the same time, the Vietnamese have accepted, de facto, closer MAAG help at the tactical level; U.S. military are now actually visiting small tactical units on operations.

e. The Vietnamese have agreed to Chief MAAG's proposed 20,000 additional troops, as in the Plan. Implementation of this increase is tied-up with discussions on the Plan in Saigon. Our Ambassador wants the Vietnamese to accept responsibility for pay and allowances of this increase; U.S. Defense officials propose that the increase be supported the same as other MAP forces.

On top of the problem of the Viet Cong actions, and getting the Counter-Insurgency Plan implemented, there still remains the continuing threat of a coup against President Diem. Much of this is still parlor talk in Saigon and other urban areas, but there reportedly are groups seriously plotting. Some plain, private

talk with key Vietnamese leaders by a responsible U.S. official would end this plotting, especially if the political oppositionists had another outlet for their energies. A small start on providing another use of political energies has been made by the younger leaders of the Northern Dai Viets, who have started trying to coalesce all the non-Communist opposition parties in a "Front for Democratization."

In the propaganda field, the Communists are way out in front. They have made this a major effort, while we have done too little, too late. Radio facilities in the South are still inadequate, with Radio Hanoi coming in more powerfully to many areas than do Free Vietnamese broadcasts. The Communists reportedly have ten transmitters in the Hanoi area, all 100 KW medium and short-wave; relay transmitters built by Chinese Communists in Cambodia apparently give Radio Hanoi strong broadcast coverage of the South. The South has 15 transmitters listed, with 9 in the Saigon area; 4 are medium wave (1KW to 5KW), 5 short-wave (12 KW and 25 KW); the remainder are 1 KW transmitters scattered around the country.

In this connection, Vietnam is the Asian counterpart of Germany, as far as being a showplace of direct competition between the Free World and the Bloc is concerned. Americans in Vietnam too often forget that they have Bloc opposite numbers just to the North of them, working like beavers to make the place get ahead of us or at least appear that way.

One of the customary working groups in Washington is being called together next week by John Steeves, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. It will be composed of "desk" personnel handling Vietnam's daily problems in State, Defense, ICA and CIA. It will address itself to some of the current questions arising out of the U.S. formulated Counter-Insurgency Plan.



#### IV. Action Proposed

The President should at once determine that conditions in Vietnam are critical and establish a Washington task force for that country. This will permit the task force to come up with an approved plan of action prior to sending a new U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, so that he can start moving towards U.S. goals upon arrival.

##### Initial Actions

1. A Presidential directive should name a Director and provide for members of a Vietnam Task Force from Defense, State, CIA, ICA, and USIA. The organization providing the Director will support the Task Force administratively.

2. The Task Force will submit a statement of U.S. goals and implementing planning to the President for approval by 21 April.

3. The Task Force will prepare a list of candidates for a special three-man staff for the Ambassador (plans officer, operations officer, fiscal officer), and will have this staff selected and appointed with the Ambassador's approval.

4. The Task Force will bring the Ambassador and his three-man staff together in Washington, "marry" them, and present them to the President for his instructions.

5. The Task Force will then supervise and coordinate the activities of every U.S. agency carrying out operations pursuant to the plan in Vietnam to insure success of the approved plan, until the contingency in Vietnam is determined to have been overcome and that U.S. goals can be achieved by normal procedures.

##### Goals

Present U.S. policy objectives are now stated in general terms. Detailed plans, such as the Counter-Insurgency Plan, only cover part of the actions needed to reach U.S. goals. A fresh statement of goals and tasks, making use of work now underway, would provide firmer purpose to U.S. efforts. True objectives in Vietnam seem to fall into three inter-related parts:

1. Pacification - to end the internal Communist threat in South Vietnam.

2. Stabilization - to promote the growth of healthy democracy in South Vietnam.

3. Unification - to provide a favorable climate for a free choice by the Vietnamese to unify their country, and then to give them the opportunity to make that choice.

### Tasks

#### Pacification

- Assign top priority to the defeat of Viet-Cong forces and the denial of South Vietnam to further entry of Communist para-military and subversive forces.

- Aggressively implement the Counter-Insurgency Plan, while recognizing that it probably requires adjustment to fit both native Vietnamese needs and the newest U.S. military techniques and hardware.

- Give Vietnam stronger U.S. psychological-political support. The Vice President might visit Saigon and announce U.S. determination to support Vietnam's desire to remain free.

- Concentrate U.S. military research and development to develop better military equipment for use in resolving insurgency problems in Vietnam. The area should be treated as a laboratory and proving ground, as far as this is politically feasible.

- Eliminate artificial restrictions imposed by the strict U.S. interpretation of the Geneva Agreement so to permit as many U. S. personnel in Vietnam as are needed to help the Vietnamese help themselves effectively.

- Use the force of world opinion to stop Viet-Cong transit of Cambodia. A task force of journalists should visit Cambodia to report on activities in border provinces such as Svayrieng and on policies being implemented by Sihanouk and other officials.



## Stabilization

- Good public administration should follow the troops, moving immediately into pacified areas. The U. S. Peace Corps can be used dynamically to assist in this, particularly in fields of public health, education, and agriculture. Community development in the democratic tradition can be undertaken by combined teams of U.S. Peace Corps, Vietnamese Civic Action, and Filipino Operation Brotherhood.

- With the agreement of the Vietnamese government, the U. S. should use its "good offices" to bring out all political parties, to help them define party platforms for the national good, to encourage the coalescing into two major political groupings, and to redefine political crimes in realistic objective, rather than subjective terms.

- Communications and transport should be expanded rapidly to knit national unity. Light aircraft capabilities should be improved. Government officials should be induced to get away frequently from their desks in Saigon for more direct actions in the field. The President should be encouraged to hold occasional Cabinet meetings in the provinces, particularly in newly pacified areas.

- The Washington Task Force should send into Vietnam a practical economic team, which should include representatives of U.S. business, to work out with the Vietnamese effective plans to speed up national development, give Vietnam a better tax structure, and establish a sound basis for foreign investment. The numerous U.S. and other economic plans for Vietnam should be re-examined for sound ideas to be incorporated into a firm new plan.

- Viet-Cong prisoners should be rehabilitated along the lines of experiences with Communist prisoners in Greece and in EDCOR in the Philippines. U.S. teams, headed by U.S. military, should assist the Vietnamese in this work.

## Unification

- Communist North Vietnam should be subjected immediately to a heavy and sustained psychological campaign; a first step would be to beef up radio broadcast capabilities beamed to the North.

- Areas just south of the 17th Parallel in Free Vietnam should be developed as show-places,, particularly in agricultural improvements. News about "fish-ponds" built in Vietnam by Filipinos of Operation Brotherhood travelled throughout the north rapidly, giving a highly desirable contrast between the methods of free men and those of the Chinese Communist agricultural advisors.

- Introduce teams of Free Vietnamese into the North to create the means for the people to liberate themselves from Communist controls and coercion. Related actions could be undertaken by Chinese Nationalists in Southern China. Hope could be awakened by taking initial actions against symbols of Communist power; the railroad, the cement plant, and the large modern printing plant in Hanoi (which the Viet-Minh took in 1955).

- Encourage again the movement of refugees into the South by stimulating the desire to do so among the people in the North, by establishing better means of ingress to the South, and by re-establishing the highly successful refugee settlement program. Sustained world opinion should be focused on the plight of the Northern people in order to bring pressure on the International Control Commission to assist the movement of refugees. The goal should be a million refugees.

- An internal liberation movement should be created in the North, organized along lines of political-revolution, with the goal of freeing the North of Communist control and eventually unifying a Free North with a Free South. The movement should be affiliated with the government of South Vietnam.

- When a clear majority can be counted upon to vote for freedom, and election machinery can be set up to protect a free vote, the sponsors of the Geneva Agreement of 1954 should be induced to hold the plebiscite promised in that document. It was written to accommodate the then-known control of the electorate by the Communists, but there is no reason why the Free World should not turn the table when it is able to do so.



## V. Immediate Steps

Fullest use should be made of the existing position of personal confidence and understanding which General Lansdale holds with President Diem and other key Vietnamese. In addition to giving a major assist to the new Presidential Task Force for Vietnam in Washington, General Lansdale should accompany the new U.S. Ambassador to Saigon to facilitate good working relations with the Vietnamese Government from the earliest moment and to be in command of the initial implementation of President Kennedy's Task Force Plan for Vietnam. This would speed early actions in the field and assure, upon Lansdale's return to Washington, that the Task Force in Washington applied itself to practical priorities to win this one.

While in Vietnam, Lansdale also could obtain President Diem's permission and then call non-Communist political opposition leaders together and encourage them to rely on legal means of opposition, to help in the fight against the Communist Viet Cong, and to cease scheming coup d'etats.

Other actions he could take while in Vietnam include:

a. Confer with President Diem on expediting of obtaining a popular base through such means as a "Presidential Complaints and Action Commission." This would fit appropriately into the tasks of the Secretary of State for the Presidency, where President Diem now has one of his ablest executives, Nguyen Dinh Thuan. The Filipino expert on this subject, Frisco Johnny San Juan, who assisted Magsaysay and who is favorably known to President Diem, could be brought to Saigon to help establish this. It would give the people an immediate feeling of personal connection with a responsive government.

b. Visit the Hue area, just south of the demarcation line of the 17th Parallel, to see what might be done to dramatize the benefits of U.S.-Vietnam friendship. The Communists are highly aware of what goes on in this region. If American youth from the Peace Corps worked side by side with Vietnamese on

some dramatic agrarian projects, in this area, word of this would spread among the farmers throughout the Communist North and offer a sharp contrast to the Chinese advisors on the land there. This could be strengthened quickly by adding a team of Filipinos from Operation Brotherhood to work side by side with Americans and Vietnamese

c. Radio broadcasts should be surveyed realistically, for facilities and content, to be certain that the word of what free men are doing in Vietnam is heard loudly and acceptably by Vietnamese who are staking their lives on freedom's cause in the South, by Vietnamese who dream of lost freedom in the Communist North, and by neighbors in Cambodia and Laos. Any mobile radio broadcasting equipment and staffs available to the U.S. should be brought in to action here as a priority matter.

d. A small R&D section could be established in the Vietnamese Army, to work closely with a small team from U.S. Defense, which could be attached to MAAG. This R&D section would actually produce locally materiel for use in the fight against the Viet Cong, as well as offer a Vietnamese means of introducing improved American techniques and materiel. A similar section in the Philippine Army produced faulty ammunition and booby-trapped grenades which were sold secretly to the Huks; it was a highly effective operation.

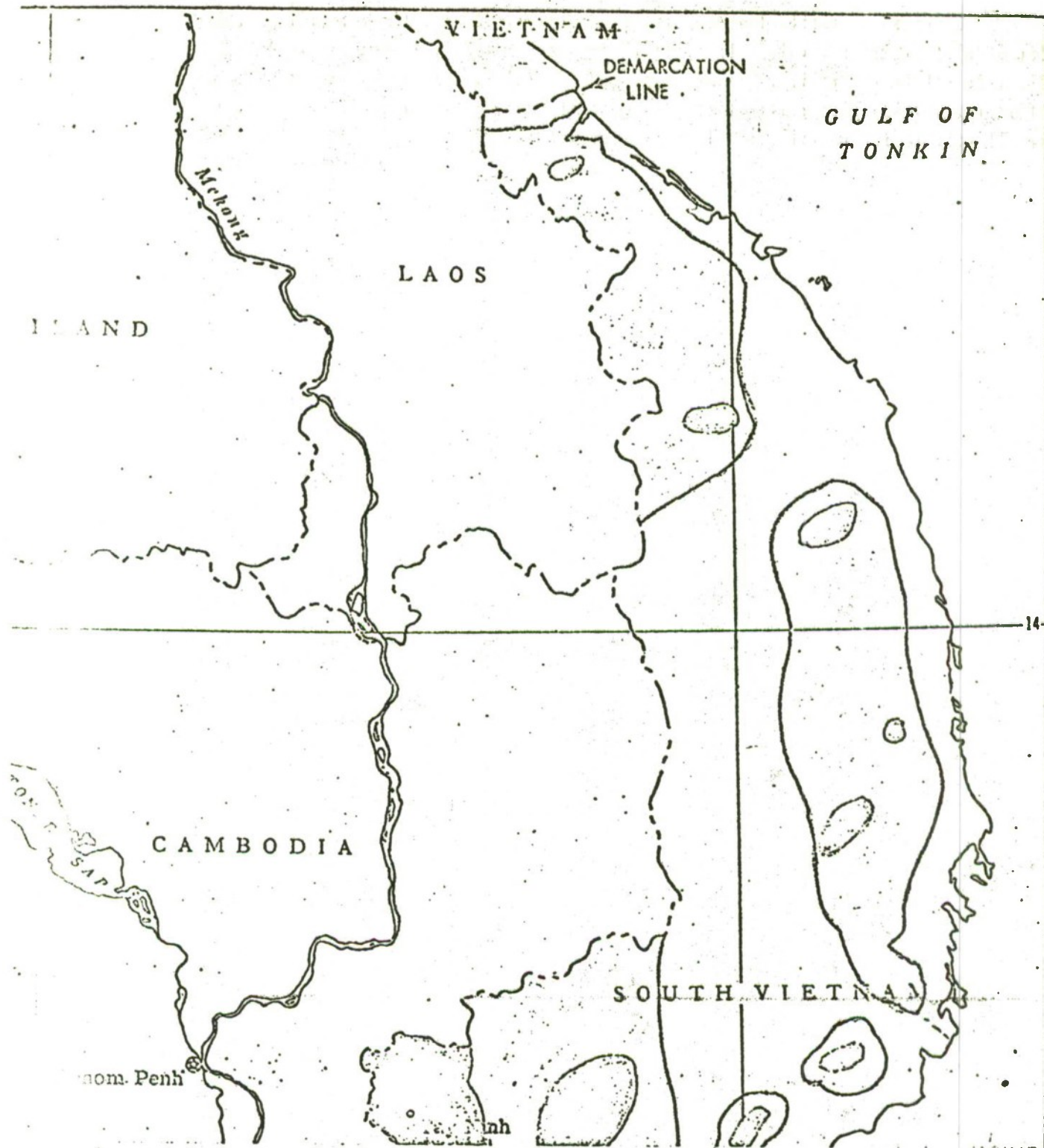
All available Americans who played key action roles in helping the Vietnamese in the 1954-55 birth of their nation should be mustered to assist Lansdale both in South Vietnam and in appropriate North Vietnam operations. This could include members of Lansdale's 1954-56 team as well as Generals O'Daniel and Williams. Also, other selected personnel with practical experience in the fields of work required could be listed by Lansdale and assigned on a priority basis.

A special economic-trade mission of highly-regarded American leaders, to include Dean James Landis if possible, should visit Vietnam. This mission would step-up existing projects and to demonstrate the strong, new U.S. initiative in support of the Vietnamese government under Diem.



Dramatic visits by Americans who would capture world headlines should be scheduled. The proposed visit to Vietnam by Vice President Johnson is a case in point. If other duties prevent this, then consideration should be given to the possibility of Eisenhower or Nixon visiting Vietnam for President Kennedy.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Mr. Gilpatric

25 April 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY GILPATRIC

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *Ed*

Subject: Ngo Dinh Diem

Few people outside Vietnam really know the man who was re-elected President of the Republic of Vietnam earlier this month. With your new responsibilities towards Vietnam for President Kennedy, you might find it useful to have an insight about this dedicated man drawn from my close association with him. Also, you might like to pass this along to Vice President Johnson prior to his trip.

First of all, there is his name. Ngo Dinh Diem is pronounced as "No Din Zee'em." He is properly addressed as "President Ngo," although most Americans, including myself, think of him as "President Diem." The family name is Ngo. Diem is his given name and it is customary for Vietnamese to be called by their given names. Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho is "Vice President Tho," (pronounced as "Tuh"). Secretary of State for the Presidency Nguyen Dinh Thuan is "Mr. Thuan," (pronounced as "Twan"). The use of "President Ngo" is a formal mark of respect. Since I think of him as "Diem," I will call him that to make the remarks come easier.

It takes a perceptive eye to see Diem's true character when meeting him. He is short and round and "mild-spoken." Many people miss his "snapping" black eyes by noting, instead, that his feet seem barely to reach the floor when he is seated. However, he is not defensive about his short stature and is at ease around tall Americans. He has a very positive approach to Westerners, not the least bit concerned about differences such as Asian-Caucasian background. When the Vice President sees him, he will find him as interested in cattle as any Texan and as interested in freedom as Sam Houston.

At the table, he shows that he enjoys eating (and usually has a good appetite). His smile is shy and infrequent. Usually he is serious and becomes passionately so when he talks about his true love, Vietnam. Age lines show around his eyes, particularly on those mornings when he has stayed up most of the night reading, which is often. He reads in English, French, and Vietnamese. While he speaks and understands English rather well, he is embarrassed over his pronunciation and is reluctant to use it. In his official contacts with Americans, he uses French.

Diem was born in Hue, the ancient capital in central Vietnam, on 3 January 1901. His 60 years have been full of sharp tests of his moral courage, of devotion to a highly-principled ideal of patriotism. This is worth understanding, particularly since the truth has been hidden by decades of "character assassination" by his bitterest enemies, the Communists and the French colonialists. Much false information has stuck, by sheer repetition. The truth is even more interesting.

For example, in the Spring of 1955 the Presidential Palace was under artillery fire from the Binh Xuyen forces, who opened up on his bedroom wing with 81-mm. mortars at midnight. The French colons in the Saigon bars told a story with great glee of how Diem had hidden under his bed quivering with fear. What he actually did was typically different. He went out in his night-shirt into the Palace grounds where some of the Guard Battalion had abandoned their artillery to take cover, and drove them back to their guns with a tongue-lashing while paddling around the yard in a pair of old slippers.

When someone describes him as an aloof mandarin, I recall how he cried on my shoulder when our close friend, Trinh Minh The, was killed, his anguish over the loss of Phat Diem province in the North to the Communists, and the agony he went through in his final break with Chief of State Bao Dai. He simply doesn't parade his feelings for everyone to see, particularly when things are going wrong.

President Diem has been criticized for his "family," meaning primarily the influence of his younger brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu (pronounced as "No Din New"), and Madame Nhu. This younger brother



handles many of the more sensitive political party and intelligence "special operations" for President Diem, as well as helping him privately with speeches, planning, and family affairs. Some Americans have been strongly critical of brother Nhu, seeing in him a continuing influence towards a Diem dictatorial regime, with control of the press, arrests of political dissenters, etc. Actually, brother Nhu is a whole complex subject in himself, as is Madame Nhu in herself. Both have been defamed maliciously. There is a grain of truth in some of the stories about them. But, the reality is that Diem trusts Nhu for certain activities which he cannot entrust to anyone else, and needs him. We will hardly help Diem be the strong leader we desire by insisting that he get rid of his trusted right-hand man; we would do better to influence that right-hand man more effectively. Incidentally, Madame Nhu is the daughter of Tran Van Chuong, the Vietnamese Ambassador in Washington.

The Ngo family needs mention further. Diem's father was Grand Chamberlain of the old Imperial Court at Hue, in central Vietnam. He spent his life striving to maintain some semblance of Vietnamese rule under French control -- and brought up his sons to carry on the fight for eventual Vietnamese independence. In effect, it was a family organized for revolution. The sons are:

- Ngo Dinh Khoi - killed by the Communists
- Ngo Dinh Thuc - ("Took") - Catholic Archbishop
- Ngo Dinh Diem - President
- Ngo Dinh Nhu - Presidential Adviser
- Ngo Dinh Luyen - Ambassador in London
- Ngo Dinh Canh - At family home, Hue - in local politics there.

In Vietnamese family style, each brother is responsible for his next younger brother. Thus, Archbishop Thuc feels a heavy responsibility for President Diem (and is well-worth talking to about his brother's problems), and President Diem feels a heavy responsibility for brother Nhu.

Diem was educated at Hue, in the Vietnamese equivalent of legal training. He was the honor graduate of the last Government class

before the French stopped the training. Diem concentrated on tribal law, becoming the outstanding expert on the subject through an exhaustive study of all books and manuscripts in the Imperial library. His real bent was towards engineering, evidenced today in his love for mechanical gadgets and plans for public works.

At 25, he was appointed as a Province Chief, and served from 1926 to 1932 as such, governing Phan Rang and Phan Thiet in central Vietnam. At the time, these provinces had large French plantations which were practically feudal worlds into themselves. Diem, making use of tribal laws, opened lands for Vietnamese settlers. When workers started leaving plantations for land of their own, Diem became a hero among his people -- and earned some French hatred which still has remnants today.

During these same early years, Diem came up against the Communists and started fighting them. The French brought in Chinese coolies from Singapore to build plantation railroads; the Chinese brought in Communist pamphlets and distributed them to Vietnamese plantation labor. Diem argued forcibly against this dangerous practice, but wasn't heeded by the plantation owners. He then started working directly with the Vietnamese against Communist influence. (In other words, he has been actively up against all forms of Communist operations for 30 years now.)

In 1933, he had become such an outstanding leader among the Vietnamese that he was made Prime Minister. After 6 months in office, the French proposed government "reforms." It actually meant the final form of Vietnamese abdication of all political rights. Diem defied the French openly on this issue, finally resigned and returned all French honors (including their helpful remuneration). He became a real hero to the Vietnamese.

The family went through some hard times then. Diem's father was forced out of his position in 1940 for actions against the Communists, and for returning tribal lands to the Vietnamese. They lived for a time on the family farm, with Diem helping with plowing and chores. However, the family spent every spare moment working for Vietnamese freedom. Brother Nhu handled the funds. They fought a long, secret war against both the French and the Communists.



In 1950-53, Diem came to the U.S., staying at Maryknoll, N.J. He lectured at several U.S. universities, studied, tried to interest Americans in helping Vietnam, and had a book published. The book was about the meaning of democracy in Vietnam, pointing out similarities between U.S. and Vietnamese "checks and balances" in government powers.

Diem then went to Belgium (where he met a number of German industrialists and engineers who impressed him). In 1954, as the Geneva Agreement was bringing a "cease fire" to the Franco-Vietminh War after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Chief of State Bao Dai asked Diem to return to Vietnam to form a government. He arrived as half of his country was given away at Geneva and as French troops pulled back into smaller perimeters, abandoning the countryside to the Communist Vietminh.

I first met him when he came to Saigon in 1954.- The situation for the free Vietnamese was disastrous, so I jotted down some suggestions for vigorous actions by the new Prime Minister to start remedying the situation, had them approved by our Ambassador and MAAG Chief, and then went to the Palace and introduced myself. This started a working relationship which gradually grew into one of trust and respect, despite the fact that such Vietnamese enemies as General Hinh (Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Army who plotted to overthrow Diem) were friends of mine. Diem and they knew that I, as an American, was honestly trying to help bring unity and stability out of chaos to give the free Vietnamese a chance at life. I came to see him almost daily as we moved refugees from the Communist North, pacified the South as the Communists withdrew regular forces, fought down a rebellion by gangster sects, established government administration throughout the South, went through two serious coup attempts, brought the independent religious sect armies into the regular army, held a plebiscite to choose a Chief of State, elected a Constituent Assembly, and finally wrote a Constitution for the new country. They were 2-1/2 tough years, with plenty of give and take.

As the leader of a modern nation which has just been governing itself for 5 years, Diem has worked extremely long hours daily. For a long time, he was really the only competent executive in the government and had to check on infinite details of administration. He has a

phenomenal memory for details, dates, places, and personal biographies -- and is short-tempered with Ministers who know less about the current work in their Departments than he does. (U Nu of Burma shocked him once by not knowing the strength of the Burmese Army; Diem not only knows the strength and location of Vietnamese Armed Forces units, but also the names and family background of practically all the officers). He now is starting to get a few competent executives. As he gets them, he gives them all the responsibility and authority needed to do the work. Few can stand the burden.

So, here is our toughest ally against Communism in South-east Asia. A 60-year-old bachelor who gave up romance with his childhood sweetheart (she remains a spinster in Hue) to devote his life to his country. He is a person of immense moral courage and of demonstrated physical courage. He is intensely honest. And, despite seeing hundreds of people daily and visiting frequently all over the country, he is essentially a lonely man. He is hungry for the understanding friendship of responsible Americans.

cc: Secretary of Defense



26 April 1961

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Vietnam

Pursuant to your decision at the Cabinet meeting on April 20, 1961, I am submitting for consideration by the National Security Council a program of action to prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam.

This program was prepared by an inter-departmental Task Force consisting of representatives from the Departments of State and Defense, CIA, ICA, USIA and the Office of the President. In addition, the Task Force had the benefit of advice from the Joint Staff, CINCPAC and the Chief, MAAG, Vietnam.

In the short time available to the Task Force, it was not possible to develop the program in complete detail. However, there has been prepared a plan for mutually supporting actions of a political, military, economic, psychological and covert character which can be refined periodically on the basis of further recommendations from the field.

Toward this end, Brigadier General E. G. Lansdale, USAF, who has been designated Operations Officer for the Task Force, will proceed to Vietnam immediately after the program receives Presidential approval. Following on-the-spot discussions with U.S. and Vietnamese officials, he will forward to the Director of the Task Force specific recommendations for action in support of the attached program.

You will be advised of any changes as this program proceeds and be provided a status of actions as appropriate.

Roswell L. Gilpatric

26 April 1961

A Program of ActionTo Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam

Appraisal of the Situation: After a meeting in Hanoi on 13 May 1959, the Central Committee of the North Vietnamese Communist Party publicly announced its intention "to smash" the government of President Diem. Following this decision, the Viet Cong have significantly increased their program of infiltration, subversion, sabotage and assassination designed to achieve this end.

At the North Vietnamese Communist Party Congress in September, 1960, the earlier declaration of underground war by the Party's Control Committee was re-affirmed. This action by the Party Congress took place only a month after Kong Le's coup in Laos. Scarcely two months later there was a large-scale military uprising in Saigon. The turmoil <sup>created</sup> ~~acted~~ throughout the area by this rapid succession of events provides an ideal environment for the Communist "master plan" to take over all of Southeast Asia.

Since that time, as can be seen from the attached map, the internal security situation in South Vietnam has become critical. What amounts to a state of active guerrilla warfare now exists throughout the country. The number of Viet Cong hard-core Communists has increased from 4400 in early 1960 to an estimated 12,000 today. The number of violent incidents



per month now averages 650. Casualties on both sides totaled more than 4500 during the first three months of this year. 58% of the country is under some degree of Communist control, ranging from harassment and night raids to almost complete administrative jurisdiction in the Communist "secure areas."

The Viet Cong over the past two years have succeeded in stepping up the pace and intensity of their attacks to the point where South Vietnam is nearing the decisive phase in its battle for survival. If the situation continues to deteriorate, the Communists will be able to press on to their strategic goal of establishing a rival "National Liberation Front" government in one of these "secure areas," thereby plunging the nation into open civil war. They have publicly announced that they will "take over the country before the end of 1961."

In short, the situation in South Vietnam has reached the point where, *primary emphasis should be put on* at least for the time being, a solution to the internal security problem

*must take priority over other programs directed towards the political or economic fields.* *immediately applicable to*

The U.S. Objective: To prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam.

Concept of Operations: To initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions of a military, political, economic, psychological and covert character designed to achieve this objective. In so doing, it is intended to use, and where appropriate extend, expedite or build

upon the existing U.S. and Government of Viet Nam (G.V.N.) programs already underway in South Vietnam. There is neither the time available nor any sound justification for "starting from scratch." Rather the need is to focus the U.S. effort in South Vietnam on the immediate internal security problem; to infuse it with a sense of urgency and a dedication to the over-all U.S. objective rather than to the success of individual agency programs; to achieve, through cooperative inter-departmental support both in the field and in Washington, the operational flexibility needed to apply the available U.S. assets in a manner best calculated to achieve our national goal; and, finally, to impress on our friends, the Vietnamese, and on our foes, the Viet Cong, that come what may, the United States intends to win this battle.

Program of Action:

1. General: The most significant step taken to date to counter Communist subversion in South Vietnam has been the development of the Counter Insurgency Plan. This Plan, which has been fully coordinated within the U.S. government, has been forwarded to President Diem. Those portions of the Plan which are agreed to by the G.V.N. will be implemented as rapidly as possible.

As part of the over-all program, it is proposed that Vice President Johnson visit Vietnam at an early date.



2. Political:

a. Assist the G.V.N. to develop within the country a healthy, non-Communist political party structure, guiding this development as appropriate toward the ultimate formation of a two-party system.

b. Assist the G.V.N. to develop techniques to make it more *focus political*  
*and focus* responsive to the needs of the people, including, if agreeable to the President, a "Presidential Complaints and Action Commission."

c. Obtain the political agreements needed to permit the prompt implementation of SEATO contingency plans providing for military intervention in South Vietnam should this become necessary to prevent the loss of the country to Communism.

d. Obtain the cooperation of other free nations in the area in support of regional measures designed to inhibit the transit or safe haven of Communist subversive or guerrilla forces operating in South Vietnam. In particular, secure the cooperation of Cambodia and Laos in the implementation of appropriate military and civil measures to prevent the use of their territory for the infiltration of Communist personnel or supplies into South Vietnam. *then USG should*  
*then USG should*

e. Assist the Vietnamese to become the polarizing spirit against Communism in the Southeast Asia region. Encourage closer working liaison with other anti-Communist Asian nations. Step-up the exchange of visits of political, cultural, civic, military, veterans, youth,

and labor groups between Vietnam and her neighbors. Increase and systematize existing exchanges of information on Communist agents, couriers, and terrorists between national governments throughout the region.

Where restrictions on U.S. operations exist as a result of the 1954 Geneva Agreement, take such measures as may be necessary to prevent them from interfering with the implementation of this program.

a. change  
b. Integrate military  
c.

### 3. Military

a. Increase the MAAG as necessary to insure the effective implementation of the military portion of the program. Initial appraisal of new tasks assigned CHMAAG indicate that approximately 100 additional military personnel will be required immediately.

b. Expand MAAG responsibilities to include authority to provide support and advice to the Self Defense Corps.

c. Authorize MAP support for the entire Civil Guard force of 68,000. (MAP support is now authorized for 32,000).

d. Install as a matter of priority a radar surveillance capability which will enable the GVN to obtain warning of Communist overflights being conducted for intelligence or clandestine air supply purposes. Initially, this capability should be provided from U.S. mobile radar capability, with permanent AC&S<sup>W</sup> installations established as rapidly as practicable.



e. Provide MAP support for the Vietnamese Junk Force as a means of preventing Viet-Cong clandestine supply and infiltration into South Vietnam by water, (MAP support, which was not provided in the Counter Insurgency Plan, will include training of junk crews in Vietnam or at U.S. bases by US Navy personnel).

f. Assist the G.V.N. to establish a Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam to develop, with the help of modern technology, new techniques for use against the Viet Cong forces.

#### 4. Economic:

a. Until further notice, defense support of approved regular and paramilitary forces should be given primacy over the important, but less urgent need to rectify the growing gold and dollar reserve position of the G.V.N. and the need to avoid serious inflation.\* (The precise level of U.S. defense support shall be determined through appropriate negotiations,

\* State - ICA versions: That the United States at present hold firm against the provision of additional aid to cover piaster requirements, but at the same time assure the G.V.N. at the highest level that it need feel no concern over U.S. willingness to provide resources if they prove necessary in the future. Early monetary reform should be strongly urged, as another source of revenue. At the same time the G.V.N. should be assured that we are prepared to help if the reform produces unsatisfactory results.

but the guiding principle in these negotiations shall be to insure that the confidence of President Diem in the wholehearted U.S. support of the counter-insurgency program is not prejudiced. Within these guidelines, the Country Team should study and recommend realistic steps to ameliorate the adverse economic effects of more generous defense support.)

*organize*  
b. Liberalize current ICA procedures to permit USOM to send into pacified areas complete, *organize* functional field teams composed of public administrators, public health officials, educators, agricultural experts, *to send to* etc., organized functionally to meet the specific needs of the G. V. N.

c. Review the Buy-American Act to determine whether it would be in the mutual interest of both countries for the President to make an exception in the case of Vietnam.



## 5. Psychological

a. Encourage the GVN to continue liberalizing its public information policies to help develop a broad public understanding of the actions required to combat Communist insurgents and to build public confidence in the GVN's determination and capability to deal with the problem.

b. Assist the GVN to develop and improve the USOM-supported radio network for the country, to include the prompt establishment of the presently planned new stations at Soc Trang, Banmethout and Quang Ngai : and the installation of the more powerful, new transmitters now on USOM order for Saigon and Hue.

c. Assist the GVN to initiate a training program for information and press attaches in the various ministries and directorates.

d. Assist the GVN to establish a Press Institute for the training of selected young people for careers in journalism.

e. In cooperation with the MAAG and the Ministry of Defense, make use of the troop information and education program of the GVN armed forces as a channel of communication between the Government and the people in the rural areas.

f. Encourage President Diem to continue the effective "fireside chat" and other getting-to-the-people techniques which were begun during the recent election campaign. Provide maximum press, film, and radio coverage for such appearances.

g. Reorient the current (USIS) program <sup>in the</sup> (in South Vietnam) by <sup>so that they can be used as</sup> converting the existing bi-national centers into training centers for rural information and educational cadres.

h. In coordination with the MAAG, CIA, and the GVN Ministry of Defense, compile and declassify for use of media representatives in South Vietnam and throughout the world, documented facts concerning Communist terrorists' <sup>infiltration, and</sup> activities, and the measures being taken by the GVN to counter such attacks.

i. In coordination with CIA and the appropriate GVN Ministry, increase the flow of information to media representatives of the unsatisfactory living conditions in North Vietnam.

j. Develop agricultural "show-places" throughout the country, with a view toward exploiting their beneficial psychological effects. This project would be accomplished by combined teams of Vietnamese (Civic Action personnel), Americans (Peace Corps), Filipinos (Operation Brotherhood), and other Free World nationals.

k. Exploit as a part of a planned psychological campaign the rehabilitation of Communist Viet Cong prisoners now held in South Vietnam. Testimony of rehabilitated prisoners stressing the errors of Communism should be beamed to Communist-held areas, including North Vietnam, to induce defections. This rehabilitation program would be assisted by a team of U.S. personnel, including U.S. Army (Civil Affairs, Psychological Warfare, and Counter-Intelligence), USIS, and USOM experts.



6. Covert Actions:

a. Intelligence: Expand current positive and counter-intelligence operations against Communist forces in South Vietnam and against North Vietnam. These include penetration of the Vietnamese Communist mechanism, dispatch of agents to North Vietnam and strengthening Vietnamese internal security services. <sup>Consideration</sup> Authorization should be given for the use in North Vietnam operations of civilian air crews of American and other nationality, as appropriate, in addition to Vietnamese.

c. Unconventional Warfare;

Expand present operations of the First Observation Battalion in guerrilla areas of South Vietnam, under joint MAAG-CIA sponsorship and direction. This should be in full operational collaboration with the Vietnamese, using Vietnamese civilians recruited with CIA aid.

In Laos, infiltrate teams under light civilian cover to Southeast Laos to locate and attack Vietnamese Communist bases and lines of communications. These teams should be supported by assault units of 100 to 150 men for use on targets beyond capability of teams. Training of teams could be a combined operation by CIA and US Army Special Forces. These operations should continue despite a possible ceasefire in Laos.

In North Vietnam, using the foundation established by intelligence operations, form networks of resistance, covert bases and teams for sabotage and light harassment. A capability should be created by MAAG in the South Vietnamese Army to conduct Ranger raids and similar military actions in North Vietnam as might prove necessary or appropriate. Such actions should try to avoid any outbreak of extensive resistance or insurrection which could not be supported to the extent necessary to stave off repression.

Conduct over-flights for dropping of leaflets to harass the communists and to maintain morale of North Vietnamese population,



and increase gray broadcasts to North Vietnam for the same purposes.

d. Internal South Vietnam:

Effect operations to penetrate political forces, government, armed services and opposition elements to measure support of government, provide warning of any coup plans, and identify individuals with potentiality of providing leadership in event of disappearance of President Diem.

Build up an increase in the population's participation in and loyalty to free government in Vietnam, through improved communication between the government and the people, and by strengthening independent or quasi-independent organizations of political, syndical, or professional character. Support covertly the GVN in allied and neutral countries, with special emphasis on bringing out GVN accomplishments, to counteract tendencies towards a "political solution" while the Communists are attacking GVN. Effect, in support, a psychological program in Vietnam and elsewhere exploiting Communist brutality and aggression in North Vietnam.

e. The expanded program outlined above will require an additional

7. Funding

J JB

Direct that \$49 million from the FY 62 Contingency Fund be added to the current FY 62 Military Assistance Program for VN to meet this emergency. The current military assistance program for VN of \$60.8 million in FY 62 provides only minimum funds required to maintain existing GVN armed forces of 170,000 and 32,000 of the Civil Guard. In order to provide necessary new equipment, training and other support required for GVN armed forces of 170,000, a Civil Guard of 68,000, and Self Defense Corps of 40,000, an additional \$49 million for MAP is required in FY 62 for a total of about \$110 million. Additional funds may be required for Defense Support to meet the local currency for the GVN military budget.

Estimates to cover the use of the Peace Corps and Operations Brotherhood are being developed.



8. Follow on Actions

a. Hold a Counter-Insurgency Conference in Saigon of MAAG Chiefs from Southeast Asia countries for the purpose of developing best methods and procedures for mutual support on a regional basis.

b. Authorize U.S. Army engineers to complete construction of a highway from the Vietnam Coast through Laos to the Mekong as an international "Peace Highway" for the economical betterment of Southeast Asia. Publicly announce plans to eventually extend this "Peace Highway" to Rangoon.

c. Determine the feasibility of an appeal by Vietnam to the U.N. to provide ground observers to help control subversion and infiltration of South Vietnam by the Communists.

d. Study the need for further possible increases in Vietnamese military strength to meet the growing threat to the security of the G. V. N.

e. Encourage other Free World countries to assist the G. V. N. in achieving its goal of preventing Communist domination of Vietnam.

f. Provide adequate funds for an impressive U. S. participation in the Saigon Trade Fair of 1962.

g. Sponsor the visit of a practical U.S. economic team, drawing heavily on U.S. private industry, to South Vietnam to work out with the Vietnamese effective plans to speed up national development, to give

Vietnam a better tax structure, to establish a sound basis for foreign investment, and to institute specific programs designed to have an early impact upon agricultural areas now vulnerable to Communist take-over.

h. Develop a long-range plan for the economic development of southeast Asia on a regional basis, allocating priority of funds and technical assistance to South Vietnam.

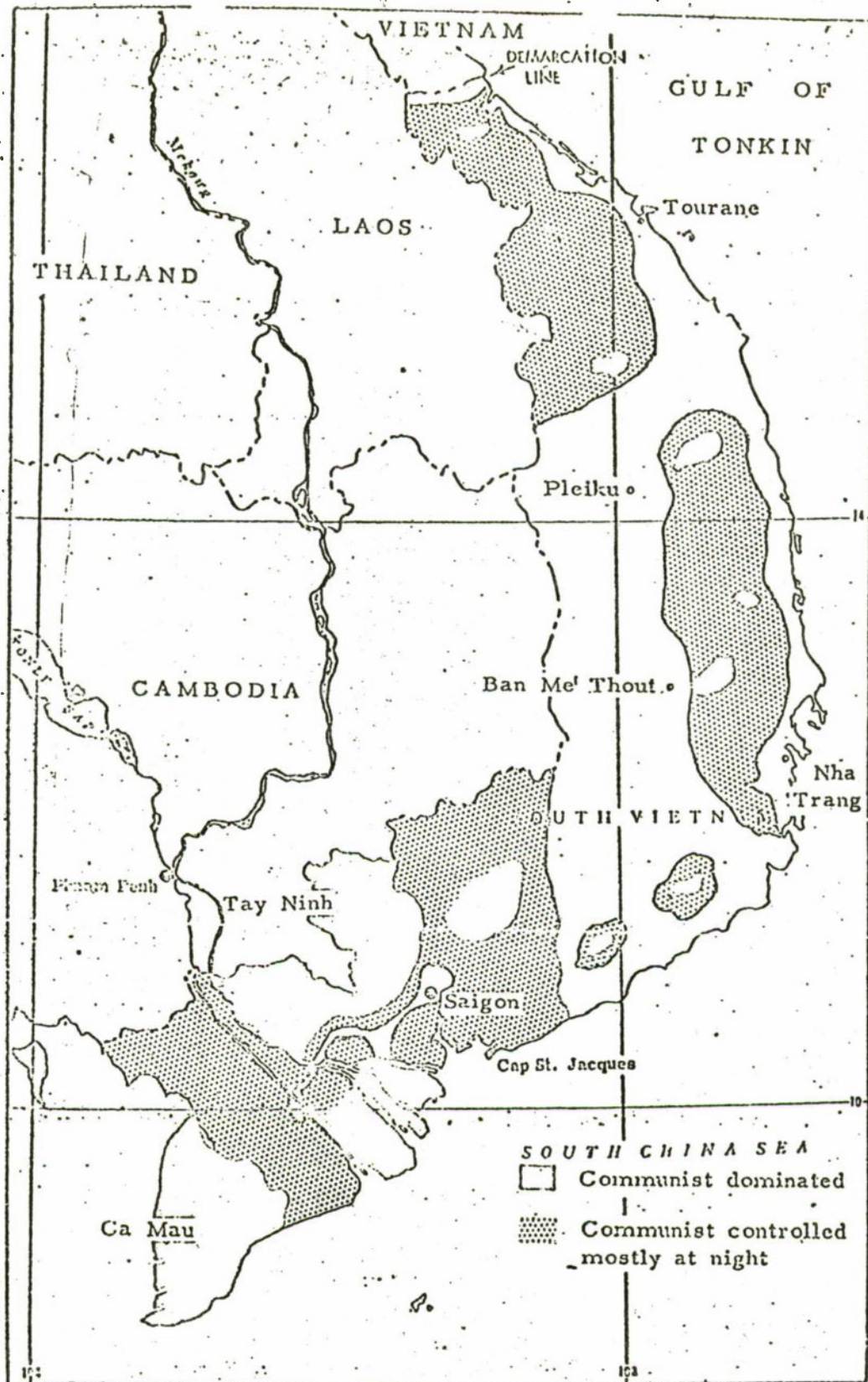
9. Organizational Arrangements:

For purposes of U.S. actions in support of this program, the President hereby declares that Vietnam is a critical area and approves the organizational concept whereby over-all direction, inter-agency coordination and support of the program will be effected through a Presidential Task Force constituted as follows:

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Director:                | Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric   |
| Operations Officer:      | Brig. Gen. Lansdale   |
| Executive:               | Col. Black  |
| Liaison:                 | Mr. Frank Hand  |
| Defense:                 | Assistant Secretary (ISA), Mr. Nitze  |
| JCS:                     | Gen. Bonesteel and Col. Levy  |
| State:                   | Deputy Under Secretary Alexis Johnson<br>(or Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Mr. McConaughy) |
| ICA:                     | Mr. William Sheppard  |
| CIA:                     | Chief, Far East Division, Mr. Fitzgerald  |
| USIA:                    | Deputy Director, Mr. Sorenson   |
| Office of the President: | Mr. Rostow.   |

In carrying out his duties while in the field, the Operations Officer of the Task Force will cooperate with and will have the full support of the Ambassador and the Country Team.





EFFECT OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN LAOS ON THE PROPOSED  
PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR VIETNAM

If agreement is reached on a cease fire, political negotiations on the future of Laos will begin on May 12 at the Fourteen Power Conference in Geneva. However, the April 26th statement on Laos by the Chinese Communist indicates that the Communist members of that conference intend to expand the negotiations to include other areas of Southeast Asia. As a result, it can be expected that the Fourteen Power Conference will be prolonged, covering several months or more.

The effect of these negotiations on the Proposed Program of Action for Vietnam are threefold:

First, the very fact that the Fourteen Powers are meeting under essentially the same ground rules as the 1954 Geneva Accords, including the concept of an ICC mechanism in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, could have a politically inhibiting effect on any significant measures which the U.S. might undertake to prevent a Communist take-over in South Vietnam.

Second, as has been their practice in the past, the Communists can be expected to use the cover of an international negotiation to expand their subversive activities. In this case, close coordination



of their efforts in southern Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam can be expected. The 250 mile border between South Vietnam and Laos, while never effectively sealed in the past, will now be deprived of even the semblance of protection which the friendly, pro-western Laos offers.

Third, the three principal passes through the Annamite Mountains (the Nape Pass, Mugia Gap, and Lao Bao Pass) lie in Southern Laos. These passes control three key military avenues of advance from North Vietnam through Laos into the open Mekong valley leading to Thailand and South Vietnam. A Lao political settlement that would afford the Communists an opportunity to maintain any sort of control, covertly or otherwise, of these mountain passes would make them gate keepers to the primary inland invasion route leading to Saigon and flanking the most important defensive terrain in the northern area of South Vietnam.

The first is of little significance since this government has already indicated that we will not consider ourselves bound by any limitations imposed by the 1954 Geneva Agreements.

As to the second, the neutralization or loss of Laos to the Free World will, of course, compound the problems which the G.V.N. faces in maintaining the security of their border with Laos. It will also improve the Communist capabilities to infiltrate personnel and equipment into Southern Vietnam through Cambodia. The extremely rugged nature of

the terrain along the Laos-G.V.M. boundary makes it almost impossible to establish a "water-tight" border. However, this same rugged terrain limits the smuggling routes to one principal road, (the east-west highway from Savannahhet to Tchopone to Quang Tri) and to some 12-15 reasonably passable trails. With the reinforcement of the G. V. N. Army in the Konium plateau region; with the establishment of a thoroughly effective intelligence and patrol system using the most modern communications equipment; with regular aerial surveillance of the entire border region; and with the application of new technological area-denial techniques (e.g., high plastic, air-droppable landmines, fluorescent materials, etc.); it should be possible to hold the flow of Communist agents and supplies to the current levels. As these measures are applied the efficiency of the border patrol system can be expected to increase and it is not unreasonable to expect that the flow of Communist aid to the Viet Cong might even be reduced somewhat.

The third, however, poses a direct and serious military threat to the entire western flank of South Vietnam. It cannot be met within the dimensions of our internal security program alone. It requires the prompt organization of two new G.V.N. divisions and a vastly accelerated U.S. training program for the entire G.V.N. army. This cannot be conceived of in terms of regular MAAG training, as its success depends upon raising the combat effectiveness of the South Vietnamese forces by an entire order



of magnitude within a matter of 6-8 months. To meet this new situation it will be necessary to augment the MAAG with two U.S. training commands, each capable of establishing a divisional field training area. One camp would be established in the vicinity of Kontum; the other, near Ban Me Thuot. Each of these training commands would require approximately 1600 U.S. soldiers drawn from Army or Marine Corps sources.

In addition to the regular divisional training program, a major step-up of Special Forces training is indicated to assist the G. V. N. forces counter the increased move level of Viet Cong guerrilla activity which can be expected to follow a cease fire in Laos. This will require a further MAAG augmentation of a Special Forces Group. To meet the urgency of the situation, the 1st Special Forces Group now stationed in Okinawa should be deployed at once to Nha Trang for this purpose.

In summary, the most effect of a political settlement in Laos, while complicating one important aspect of the problem of the defense of South Vietnam, will not make the over-all task impossible or even impracticable.

Specifically, force levels for the G. V. N. Army will have to be increased by two divisions; modern equipment, primarily of the communication and reconnaissance types, will have to be provided to assist the G. V. N. in setting up and operating an effective border control system; and the MAAG will have to be augmented by the addition of two U.S. divisional training commands (1,600 U.S. military personnel each) and one Special Forces Group (400 U.S. military personnel).

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: April 29, 1961

SUBJECT: Laos

|                |                          |                             |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PARTICIPANTS:  | The Secretary            | Admiral Arleigh Burke       |
|                | Secretary McNamara       | Mr. McGeorge Bundy          |
|                | Attorney General Kennedy | Assistant Secy McConaughy   |
|                | The Under Secretary      | Deputy Asst. Secy Steeves   |
|                | General C.E. Le May      | Mr. Charles E. Bohlen       |
|                | General David M. Shoup   | Mr. Daniel V. Anderson      |
|                |                          | Ambassador Kenneth Young    |
|                |                          | Mr. G. Edward Reynolds, Lao |
| Copies to: S/S |                          | Desk Officer                |
|                | C-Mr. Johnson            |                             |
|                | S/P Mr. McGhee           | EUR-Mr. Kohler              |
|                | FE-Mr. McConaughy        | IO-Mr. Cleveland            |
|                | S/B Mr. Rohlen           | IN/C-2                      |
|                |                          | DOD-Secy McNamera           |
|                |                          | Wri-Mr. McGeorge Bundy      |

The Secretary observed that the principal change on the ground had been that forces had moved from such points as Muong Kassy and Tha Thom. However, there had been no major change that would in itself make the difference between our carrying out Plan 5 today and three weeks ago.

Mr. McNamara said that the real question was whether we could land forces in Vientiane because of the danger of Chinese air retaliation, local sabotage and the action by PL guerrillas who could move into Vientiane at any time. The Secretary observed that the presence of these guerrillas had been noted for weeks.

General Le May observed that there had been a large build-up of supplies by the Pathet Lao side.

Admiral Burke said that we were faced with the "folding" of the FAB, which was not fighting.

The Secretary asked to what extent we were influenced by the movement of Chinese Communist fighter bombers and pointed out that this capability certainly existed three weeks ago.

General Le May



General Le May said that these aircraft could always be moved in to scare us off.

The Secretary next asked to what extent the Defense Department had been influenced by the danger of escalation. Had this made any considerable difference? Mr. McNamara replied that it would be easy for the PL or Chinese Communists to prevent successful landings at Vientiane or Somo.

Admiral Burke said that the situation had deteriorated quite a bit but he still thought it possible to go in. War is dangerous, he said. If pushed we could retreat across the river, reinforce from Udorn and go back and fight.

When the Secretary asked whether we could send in troops to secure the airfield, Admiral Burke said that would be a first task. Mr. McNamara said it would be easy for the enemy to deny us the airfield as we would need thirty-six sorties a day to get US troops into Vientiane.

Mr. Bundy said that if we took this action we would be doing something which most countries would not appreciate.

The Attorney General asked where would be the best place to stand and fight in Southeast Asia, where to draw the line. Mr. McNamara said he thought we would take a stand in Thailand and South Viet-Nam. The Attorney General asked whether we would save any of Laos, but the major question was whether we would stand up and fight.

Admiral Burke said that we could hold Scurane, and General Le May observed that we could use our air power back as far as necessary, letting the enemy have all of the countryside but that the PL could be stopped by air power.

Mr. McNamara said that we would have to attack the DRV if we gave up Laos.

The Secretary suggested that the part of Laos from the 17th Parallel across to the Mekong might be easier to hold than the entire country.

General Decker thought that there was no good place to fight in Southeast Asia but we must hold as much as we can of Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos. At this point the Secretary said that we had missed having government troops who were willing to fight.

Mr. Steeves



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-3-

Mr. Steeves pointed out that we had always argued that we would not give up Laos and that it was on the pleas of our military that we had supported Phoumi; that we had reiterated in the press and to the public what Laos meant to us. If this problem is unsolvable then the problem of Viet-Nam would be unsolvable. If we decided that this was untenable then we were writing the first chapter in the defeat of Southeast Asia. Mr. McNamara said the situation was not as bad five weeks ago as it was now.

Admiral Burke pointed out that each time you give ground it is harder to stand next time. If we give up Laos we would have to put US forces into Viet-Nam and Thailand. We would have to throw enough in to win--perhaps the "works". It would be easier to hold now than later. The thing to do was to land now and hold as much as we can and make clear that we were not going to be pushed out of Southeast Asia. We were fighting for the rest of Asia.

Mr. McNamara wondered whether more VietCong would necessarily enter South Viet-Nam if Laos went down the drain. He mentioned that some 12,000 Viet Cong had entered South Viet-Nam under present conditions and that the Communists held the area south of the 17th Parallel to a depth of twenty-five miles with a supposedly friendly government in South Viet-Nam. (Several of those present questioned the accuracy of the figure of 12,000,)

Turning to the question of the morale of the Southeast Asians, the Secretary recalled that the Thai Foreign Minister had told him during the recent SEATO conference that Thailand was like a "golden bell" which had to be protected from outside. The Secretary said he was not sure the Foreign Minister was wrong. He added that he was less worried about escalation than he was about infectious slackness. He said he would not give a cent for what the Persians would think of us if we did not defend Laos.

General Decker thought that we should have stood last August and wondered what would happen if we got "licked". The Secretary suggested that Thai and US troops might be placed together in Vientiane and, if they could not hold, be removed by helicopter. Even if they were defeated they would be defeated together and this would be better than sitting back and doing nothing. General Decker said we cannot win a conventional war in Southeast Asia; if we go in, we should go in to win, and that means bombing Hanoi, China, and maybe even using nuclear bombs. He pointed out that all the advantage we have in heavy equipment would be lost in the difficult terrain of Laos where we would be at the mercy of the guerrillas. The Secretary pointed out that this fact was also true at the time of the Bangkok Resolution but that we had gone ahead with the resolution anyway and had issued statements indicating that we would



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-4-

would back up our words with deeds. Mr. McNamara repeated that the situation is now worse than it was five weeks ago. Mr. Steeves pointed out that the same problems existed in South Viet-Nam, but Admiral Burke thought that South Viet-Nam could be more easily controlled.

General Becker then suggested that troops be moved into Thailand and South Viet-Nam to see whether such action would not produce a cease-fire. Admiral Burke asked what happens if there is still no cease-fire. General Decker said then we would be ready to go ahead.

Mr. Kennedy said we would look sillier than we do now if we got troops in there and then backed down. He reiterated the question whether we are ready to go the distance.

The Secretary said that we would want to get the United Nations "mixed up" in this.

Mr. Behlen said he saw no need for a fixation on the possibility of a reaction by the Chinese Communists. He said we had no evidence that they want to face the brink of nuclear war. He said that he was more concerned about the objectives we would seek if we took military action.

There followed a discussion about the possibility of restoring the kingdom of Champassak where Boun Oum relinquished the throne and where he is popular. It was thought that Sihanouk would support a partition of Laos. General Decker thought that if a cease-fire could be effected now, it would be possible to secure southern Laos.

General Le May did not believe that it would be possible to get a cease-fire without military action. He admitted that he did not know what US policy is in Laos. He knew what the President had said but he also pointed out that the military had been unable to back up the President's statements. He then enumerated a number of possibilities: 1) do nothing and lose Laos; 2) use B-26's and slow up the enemy; 3) use more sophisticated bombers and stop supplies and then perhaps Phoumi's forces could be brought up to where they could fight; 4) implement Plan 5, backing up troops with air. General Le May did not think the Chinese would escalate but believed on the contrary that a cease-fire would then be brought about. He added that he believed we should go to work on China itself and let Chiang take Hainan Island. He thought Chiang had a good air force.

General Shoup



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-5-

General Shoup suggested that B-26's should be used before troops are landed. He felt that it might then be possible to obtain a cease-fire and get the panhandle of Laos. Mr. Kennedy asked if any appreciable dent could be made on the guerrillas with B-26's. General Le May said it would be possible to knock out a big wad of supplies with B-26's and 100's. Mr. Kennedy asked what would be the next step. The Secretary said it would be necessary to get the UN in quickly. Mr. Kennedy asked what the others would do then. General Le May said the worst that could happen would be that the Chinese Communists would come in. Mr. Kennedy asked if it could all be done by air. General Le May said it could. Mr. McNamara said you would have to use nuclear weapons. Mr. Kennedy asked if South Viet-Nam and Thailand could be held if Laos were lost. The Secretary and Admiral Burke agreed that it would take a greater effort to hold them after Laos had been lost and Mr. Johnson pointed out that Thailand had to be defended from the other bank.

Mr. Steeves felt that the prize to be focused on was South-east Asia. The question to be faced, he thought, was whether we could afford to lose Southeast Asia.

The Secretary thought that if a cease-fire is not brought about quickly, then it would be necessary to get the UN to come in with the SEATO forces committed in a Plan 5 action. He thought that a majority could be found in the UN for such action if the cost is not distributed. Mr. McNamara and Admiral Burke thought that more than two weeks would be required for UN action. Admiral Burke said that only the United States could pull its own chestnuts out of the fire. (There followed a general discussion on the extent to which others would support us. It was agreed that the Pakistani could be relied upon if we paid for them and that a few Malays, New Zealanders and others would help.)

Ambassador Young suggested the possibility of training 50 to 60,000 Vietnamese. He pointed to the ready access to ports in the area of the Lao border and to the fact that the terrain in the area is not too bad.

Mr. Bowles said he thought the main question to be faced was the fact that we were going to have to fight the Chinese anyway in 2, 3, 5 or 10 years and that it was just a question of where, when and how. He thought that a major war would be difficult to avoid. General Le May said that, in that case, we should fight soon since the Chinese would have nuclear weapons within one or two years.

Mr. McNamara said that the situation was worsening by the hour and that if we were going to commit ourselves, then we must do so sooner rather than later.

The Secretary then adjourned the meeting saying he would like to consider the matter further.





THE JOINT STAFF

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

5 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: 5 May 1961 Meeting at State

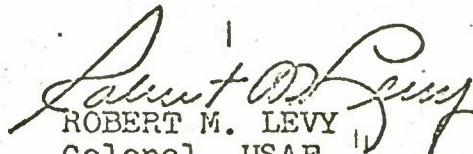
Secretary of State Rusk posed the question of the introduction of US forces into Vietnam prior to the beginning of the Geneva Conference. A discussion ensued between Secretary Rusk, Secretary Gilpatric, Mr. Steeves, Ambassadors Johnson, Young and others present. The following points were dominant:

- Should we place combat troops in South Vietnam - if so, should it be prior to 12 May?
- The size of the forces and the mission or objectives.
- North Vietnamese violations of the Geneva Accords - and the extent of proof the US can provide.
- UK's expressed caution against any military buildup in Vietnam prior to the Geneva Conference and during its early phase.
- US privilege to make counter moves at least to the extent of the North Vietnam violations.
- Augmentation of the MAAG and to what extent.

Secretary Rusk decided that:

- a. We should not place combat forces in South Vietnam at this time.
- b. We should proceed to augment the MAAG, in small increments, with up to 100 additional military personnel, and not discuss it with the UK or ICC. He recommended that these personnel be placed in varied locations to avoid attention.

It was agreed that the deployment of additional US forces should receive further study and consideration.

  
ROBERT M. LEVY  
Colonel, USAF  
JCS Representative

Distribution: |

Mr. Gilpatric  
Admiral Burke  
Lt Gen Wheeler  
Maj Gen Dean  
Maj Gen Bonesteel  
Brig Gen Lansdale



SENSITIVE

May 8, 1961

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Program of Action for Vietnam

Transmitted herewith is one copy of "A Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam," in final draft form based largely upon the Department of State paper. There are 7 annexes which are now being produced and which will be delivered later today.

Deputy Secretary Gilpatric desires that this paper be compiled in final form for presentation to the NSC without further formal meetings of the Task Force on Vietnam, if possible. Thus, your comments on this final draft and its annexes are requested by 1430 hours tomorrow, Tuesday, May 9.

Comments should be given to my office, room 3E-947, the Pentagon. Telephone extensions are: 57742, 57786, and 57792.

*E. G. Lansdale*

EDWARD G. LANSDALE  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Assistant to the  
Secretary of Defense

Attachment

## A Program of Action

## To Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam

Appraisal of the Situation: The internal security situation in South Vietnam has become critical, as can be seen on the attached map, with an estimated 12,000 Viet Cong Communists waging guerrilla warfare inside the country. The strongly anti-Communist, pro-American government of South Vietnam, with American aid, is increasing its capabilities to fight its attackers. Should the Communist effort increase, either directly or as a result of a collapse of Laos, additional measures beyond those proposed herein may be necessary. (Details in Annex 1.)

The U.S. Objective: To prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam and to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society.]

Concept of Operations: To initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions of a military, political, economic, psychological and covert character designed to achieve this objective. In so doing, it is intended to use, and where appropriate extend, expedite or build upon the existing U.S. and Government of Vietnam.



(G. V. N.) programs, including as much of the Counter-Insurgency Plan (CIP), as can be agreed by both governments, already underway in South Vietnam. There is neither the time available nor any sound justification for "starting from scratch." Rather the need is to focus the U.S. effort in South Vietnam on the immediate internal security problem; to infuse it with a sense of urgency and a dedication to the overall U.S. objective; to achieve, through cooperative inter-departmental support both in the field and in Washington, the operational flexibility needed to apply the available U.S. assets in a manner best calculated to achieve our objective in Vietnam; to give the U.S. Ambassador and the U.S. team under his leadership general authority to undertake a series of accelerated measures as noted below; and finally, to impress on our friends, the Vietnamese, and on our foes, the Communists, that come what may, the U.S. intends to win this battle.

Program of Action:

I. General: The situation in South Vietnam has reached the point where, at least for the time being, primary emphasis must be placed on providing a solution to the internal security problem. A significant step which has already been taken by the Country Team to counter Communist subversion in South Vietnam has been the development of the Counter-Insurgency Plan (CIP). Those portions



of the CIP which are agreed to by the G. V. N. will be implemented as rapidly as possible.

Communist domination of South Vietnam needs more than military measures alone to be stopped. Our military program must be accompanied and supplemented by a strong, positive political-economic program.

2. Military:

a. The following military actions were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961:

(1) Increase the MAAG as necessary to insure the effective implementation of the military portion of the program including the training of a 20,000-man addition to the present G. V. N. armed forces of 150,000. Initial appraisal of new tasks assigned CHMAAG indicate that approximately 100 additional military personnel will be required immediately in addition to the present complement of 685.

(2) Expand MAAG responsibilities to include authority to provide support and advice to the Self Defense Corps with a strength of approximately 40,000.

(3) Authorize MAP support for the entire Civil Guard force of 68,000. MAP support is now authorized for 32,000; the remaining 36,000 are not now adequately trained and equipped.



(4) Install as a matter of priority a radar surveillance capability which will enable the G. V. N. to obtain warning of Communist over-flights being conducted for intelligence or clandestine air supply purposes. Initially, this capability should be provided from U. S. mobile radar capability.

(5) Provide MAP support for the Vietnamese Junk Force as a means of preventing Viet Cong clandestine supply and infiltration into South Vietnam by water. MAP support, which was not provided in the Counter-Insurgency Plan, will include training of junk crews in Vietnam or at U. S. bases by U. S. Navy personnel.

b. The following additional actions are considered necessary to assist the G. V. N. in meeting the increased security threat resulting from the new situation along the Laos-G. V. N. frontier:

(1) Assist the G. V. N. armed forces to increase their border patrol and insurgency suppression capabilities by establishing an effective border intelligence and patrol system, by instituting regular aerial surveillance over the entire frontier area, and by applying modern technological area-denial techniques to control the roads and trails along Vietnam's borders. A special staff element (approximately 6 U. S. personnel), to concentrate upon solutions to the unique problems of Vietnam's borders, will be activated in MAAG, Vietnam, to assist a similar special unit in the RVNAF which the

G. V. N. will be encouraged to establish; these two elements working as an integrated team will help the G. V. N. gain the support of nomadic tribes and other border inhabitants, as well as introduce advanced techniques and equipment to strengthen the security of South Vietnam's frontiers.

(2) Assist the G. V. N. to establish a Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam to develop, with the help of modern technology, new techniques for use against the Viet Cong forces. (Approximately 4 U.S. personnel.)

(3) Assist the G. V. N. forces with health, welfare and public work projects by providing U.S. Army civic action mobile training teams, coordinated with the similar civilian effort. (Approximately 14 U.S. personnel.)

(4) Deploy a Special Forces Group (approximately 400 personnel) to Nha Trang in order to accelerate G. V. N. Special Forces training. The first increment, for immediate deployment to Vietnam, should be a Special Forces company (52 personnel).

(5) Instruct JCS, CINCPAC, and MAAG to undertake an assessment of the military utility of a further increase in the G. V. N. forces from 170,000 to 200,000 in order to create two new division equivalents for deployment to the northwest border region. The parallel political and fiscal implications should be assessed.



c. In preparation for possible commitment of U.S. forces to Vietnam, which might result from an NSC decision following discussions between Vice President Johnson and President Diem, Defense is undertaking an immediate study of the size and composition of U.S. forces required to:

- provide maximum psychological impact in deterrence of further Communist aggression from North Vietnam, China, or the Soviet Union, while rallying the morale of the Vietnamese and encouraging the support of SEATO and neutral nations for Vietnam's defense;

- release Vietnamese forces from advanced and static defense positions to permit their fuller commitment to counter-insurgency actions;

- provide maximum training to approved Vietnamese forces; and

- provide significant military resistance to potential North Vietnam Communist and/or Chinese Communist action.

The following possible actions are being considered in this Defense study:

- (1) Deploy to South Vietnam two U.S. battle groups (with necessary command and logistics units), plus an engineer (construction-combat) battalion. These units would be located in the

"high plateau" region, remote from the major population center of Saigon-Cholon, under the command of the Chief, MAAG. To help accelerate the training of the G.V.N. army, they would establish two divisional ~~field~~ training areas. The engineer battalion would undertake construction of roads, air-landing strips, and other facilities essential to the logistical support of the U.S. and Vietnamese forces there.

(2) Assign the Naval component of CINCPAC the responsibility for coastal patrol activities, employing minimal U.S. Naval forces in conjunction with Vietnamese forces, to prevent the seaborne infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and material into South Vietnam.

(3) Assign the air component of CINCPAC the responsibility for border surveillance and close-support of G. V. N. ground forces in counter-insurgency actions, employing minimal U.S. Air Force means in conjunction with Vietnamese forces, to help seal the Vietnamese borders and to defeat the Communist guerrillas within those borders.

(An Appraisal of the Military Concept is given in Annex 2.)



3. Political:

I. Objective: Develop political and economic conditions which will create a solid and widespread support among the key political groups and the general population for a Vietnam which has the will to resist Communist encroachment and which in turn stems from a stake in a freer and more democratic society.

a. Increase the confidence of President Diem and his government in the United States, by the following actions:

(1) A message has been dispatched to President Diem informing him of your personal support for his courageous leadership in the struggle against communism and of Vice President Johnson's trip, indicating that Vice President Johnson will be carrying a more detailed expression of your thoughts on a broad range of proposals for joint action between our two countries.

(2) A letter from you to President Diem has been prepared for Vice President Johnson identifying the key objectives contained in this Task Force report which we propose as a joint U.S. - Vietnamese address to the existing threat to Vietnam's freedom, stability and security, seeking an expression of Diem's support for this joint effort.

(3) Vice President Johnson's trip to Vietnam should be focused on obtaining broad agreement on how the U.S. and Vietnam

view the problem confronting Vietnam's security including the range of political, economic and military actions required to preserve the freedom and integrity of that country.

b. Strengthen President Diem's popular support within Vietnam, by the following actions:

(1) Instruct Ambassador Nolting to reappraise the political situation and undertake to obtain agreement of the G. V. N. on an urgent basis for a realistic political program along the lines indicated in the CIP. The objective of the program would be to seek to produce favorable attitudes and active popular cooperation against the VC. While the Ambassador's recommendations might well include actions directed toward fiscal and monetary reform measures, it is presumed that the major recommendations in this area will be developed by the Ambassador in conjunction with the special team of U.S. economic experts which it is proposed be dispatched to Vietnam for this purpose (in Economic section following).

(2) As a part of this initial assessment, the Ambassador should also consider such special arrangements within the field organization as he may deem required to assure a capability for rapid Country Team response to evolving problems. This should include an assessment of staff requirements, both with a view to requesting such additional personnel as required and to reviewing the employment.



of existing field staff to assure the most efficient application of available personnel to major objectives to be accomplished.

II. Objective: Improve Vietnam's relationships with other countries and its status in world opinion.

a. Improve relations with Cambodia leading to full border control cooperation, by the following actions:

(1) Instruct our Ambassadors in Phnom Penh and Saigon to urge host governments to enter promptly into renewed border control negotiations. In order to secure Cambodian cooperation, the Cambodian government should be informed that requests for additional military assistance will be sympathetically considered. It also should be informed immediately of the approval of its recent request for four T-37 aircraft.

b. Call for United Nations observers to observe externally supported Communist actions of subversion, infiltration and other violations of Vietnam's sovereignty, by the following action:

(1) Instruct our Ambassador in Saigon to consider discussing this matter with the G. V. N. Ambassador Stevenson might later be asked to explore informally the idea with Mr. Hammarskjold and friendly foreign representatives in New York.

c. Accept contributions of other free world countries toward meeting the Communist guerrilla threat in Vietnam as a means

of bringing a wider allied support to the effort to assist Vietnam, by the following action:

(1) Instruct our representatives in Saigon to prepare, in consultation with the Vietnamese, proposals providing for the use of third country contributions, particularly that already offered by the British, to the training of Vietnam's forces and counter-guerrilla efforts.

III. Objective: Undertake military security arrangements which emphasize the U.S. intention to stand behind Vietnam's resistance to Communist aggression.

a. Undertake a new bilateral arrangement with Vietnam, by the following action:

(1) On the grounds that the Geneva Accords have placed inhibitions upon free world action while at the same time placing no restrictions upon the Communists, Ambassador Nolting should be instructed to enter into preliminary discussions with Diem regarding the possibility of a defensive security alliance despite the inconsistency of such action with the Geneva Accords. This action would be based on the premise that such an undertaking is justified in international law as representing a refusal to be bound by the Accords in a degree and manner beyond that which the other party to the Accords has shown a willingness to honor. Communist violations, therefore, justify the establishment



of the security arrangement herein recommended. Concurrently, Defense should study the military advisability of committing U.S. forces in Vietnam (as noted in Military section above).

(Political details in Annex 3.)

4. Economic:

I. Objective: Undertake economic programs having both a short-term immediate impact as well as ones which contribute to the longer range economic viability of the country.

a. Undertake a series of economic projects designed to accompany the counter-insurgency effort, by the following action:

(1) Grant to ICA the authority and funds to move into a rural development-civic action program. Such a program would include short-range, simple, impact projects which would be undertaken by teams working in cooperation with local communities. This might cost roughly \$3 to \$5 million, mostly in local currency. Directors of field teams should be given authority with respect to the expenditure of funds including use of dollar instruments to purchase local currency on the spot.

b. Assist Vietnam to make the best use of all available economic resources, by the following action:

(1) Having in mind that our chief objective is obtaining a full and enthusiastic support by the G. V. N. in its fight against the Communists, a high level team, preferably headed by Assistant Secretary



of the Treasury John Leddy, with State and ICA members, should be dispatched to Saigon to work out in conjunction with the Ambassador a plan whereby combined U. S. and Vietnamese financial resources can best be utilized. This group's terms of reference should cover the broad range of fiscal and economic problems. Authority should be given to make concessions necessary to achieve our objectives and to soften the blow of monetary reform. Ambassador Nolting and perhaps the Vice President should notify Diem of the proposed visit of this group stressing that their objective is clearly to maximize the joint effort rather than to force the Vietnamese into inequitable and unpalatable actions.

(2) As a part of the foregoing effort, an assessment should be undertaken of the fiscal and other economic implications of a further force increase from 170,000 to 200,000 (as noted in the Military section above).

c. Undertake the development of a long-range economic development program as a means of demonstrating U. S. confidence in the economic and political future of the country by the following action:

(1) Authorize Ambassador Nolting to inform the G. V. N. that the U. S. is prepared to discuss a long-range joint five year development program which would involve contributions and undertakings by both parties.

(Economic details in Annex 4.)



5. Psychological:

a. Assist the G. V. N. to accelerate its public information program to help develop a broad public understanding of the actions required to combat the Communist insurgents and to build public confidence in the G. V. N.'s determination and ability to deal with the Communist threat. (Details in Annex 5.)

b. The U.S. Country Team, in coordination with the G. V. N. Ministry of Defense, should compile and declassify for use of media representatives in South Vietnam and throughout the world, documented facts concerning Communist infiltration and terrorists' activities and the measures being taken by the G. V. N. to counter such attacks.

c. In coordination with CIA and the appropriate G. V. N. Ministry, USIS will increase the flow of information about unfavorable conditions in North Vietnam to media representatives.

d. Develop agricultural pilot-projects throughout the country, with a view toward exploiting their beneficial psychological effects. This project would be accomplished by combined teams of Vietnamese Civic Action personnel, Americans in the Peace Corps, Filipinos in Operation Brotherhood, and other Free World nationals.

e. Exploit as a part of a planned psychological campaign the rehabilitation of Communist Viet Cong prisoners now held in South Vietnam. Testimony of rehabilitated prisoners, stressing the errors

of Communism, should be broadcast to Communist-held areas, including North Vietnam, to induce defections. This rehabilitation program would be assisted by a team of U.S. personnel including U.S. Army (Civil Affairs, Psychological Warfare, and Counter-Intelligence), USIS, and USOM experts.

f. Provide adequate funds for an impressive U.S. participation in the Saigon Trade Fair of 1962.

6. Covert Actions:

a. Expand present operations in the field of intelligence, unconventional warfare, and political-psychological activities to support the U.S. objective as stated.

b. Initiate the communications intelligence actions, CIA and ASA personnel increases, and funding which were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961.

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(Details of covert actions are given in Annex 6.)

7. Funding:

a. As spelled out in the funding annex, the funding of the counter-insurgency plan and the other actions recommended in this



program might necessitate increases in U.S. support of the G. V. N. budget for FY 61 of as much as \$58 million, making up to a total of \$192 million compared to \$155 million for FY 60. The U.S. contribution for the G. V. N. Defense budget in FY 62 as presently estimated would total \$161 million plus any deficiency in that Budget which the G. V. N. might be unable to finance. The exact amount of U.S. contributions to the G. V. N. Defense budgets for FY 61 and FY 62 are subject to negotiation between the U.S. and the G. V. N.

b. U.S. military assistance to G. V. N., in order to provide the support contemplated by the proposed program would total \$140 million, or \$71 million more than now programmed for Vietnam in the U.S. current MAP budget for FY 62.

(Details are given in Annex 7.)

#### 8. Organizational Arrangements:

a. Because of the critical nature of the situation in Vietnam, and the need for accelerated action, the direction, coordination, and support of the program will be effected through a special Task Force on Vietnam, established in and directed by the Department of State, constituted as follows:

Director: Sterling J. Cottrell

Executive Officer: Chalmers B. Wood

Members:

Defense:

Treasury:

BOB:

ICA:

USIA:

CIA:

Office of the President:

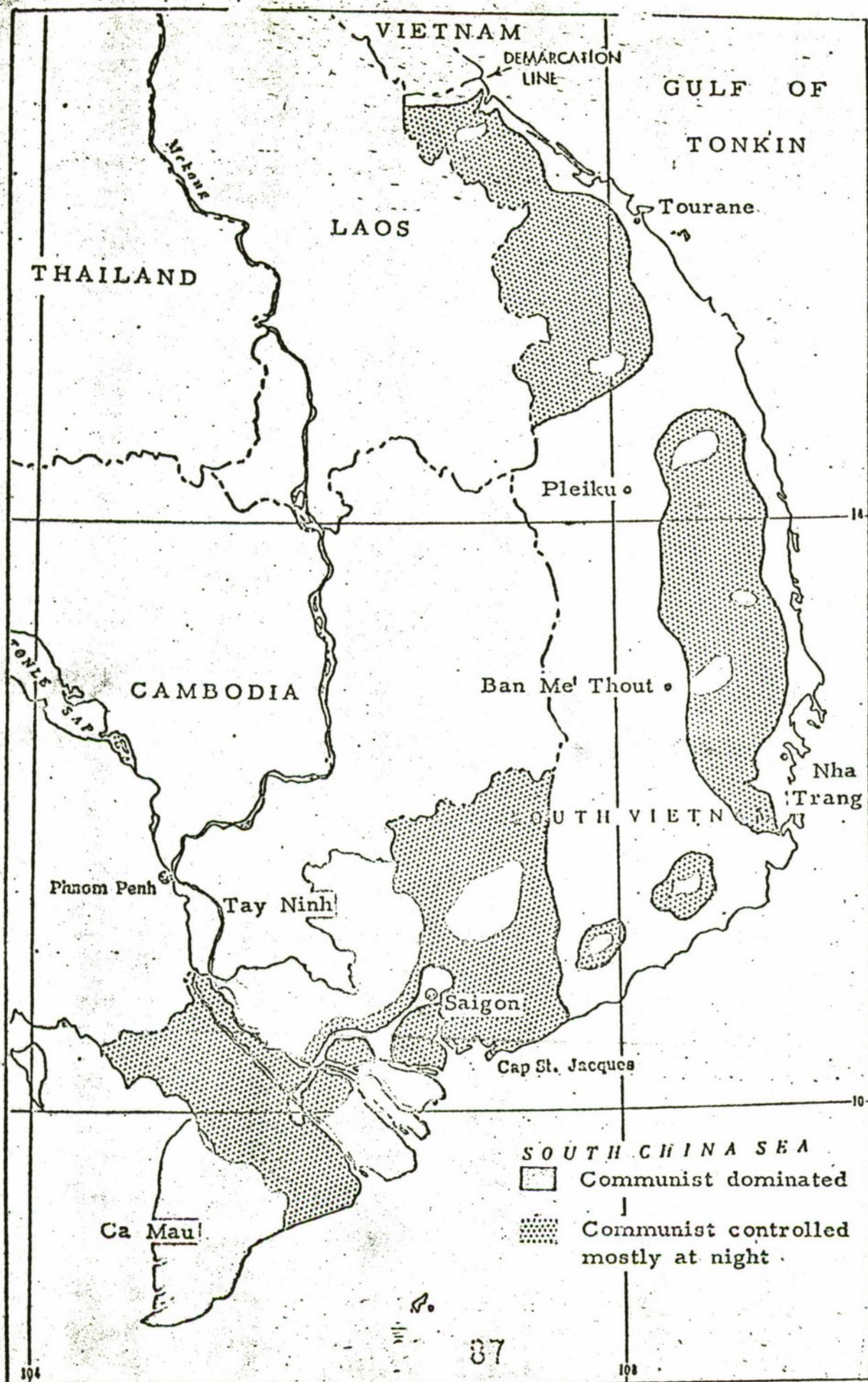
b. It shall be the responsibility of the Director and the Deputy Director of the Task Force:

(1) To see that the action program as approved is carried out;

(2) To keep under continual review the adequacy of the action program to meet its objectives; and

(3) To bring to the attention of the Secretary and the Under Secretary of State and to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense the need for any changes in or additions to the action program to meet its objectives.





8 May 1961

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Annexes to a Program of Action for South  
Vietnam

Transmitted herewith are <sup>7</sup>6 Annexes to the final draft of the "Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam" delivered to you earlier today. Your comments on these annexes are invited, at the same time as those on the main paper.

The annex on "Covert Actions" has been withheld from this distribution, since there were no substantive changes from the initial concept.

*E G Lansdale*

EDWARD G. LANSDALE  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Assistant to the  
Secretary of Defense

Attachments



## ANNEX 1

### Appraisal of the Situation

After a meeting in Hanoi on 13 May 1959, the Central Committee of the North Vietnamese Communist Party publicly announced its intention "to smash" the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Following this decision, the Viet Cong have significantly increased their program of infiltration, subversion, sabotage and assassination designed to achieve this end.

At the North Vietnamese Communist Party Congress in September, 1960, the earlier declaration of underground war by the Party's Control Committee was re-affirmed. This action by the Party Congress took place only a month after Kong Le's coup in Laos. Scarcely two months later there was a military uprising in Saigon. The turmoil created throughout the area by this rapid succession of events provides an ideal environment for the Communist "master plan" to take over all of Southeast Asia.

Since that time, as can be seen from the attached map, the internal security situation in South Vietnam has become critical. What amounts to a state of active guerrilla warfare now exists throughout the country. Despite greatly stepped up efforts by South Vietnamese, the number of Viet Cong hard-core Communists has increased from 4400 in early

1960 to an estimated 12,000 today. The number of violent incidents per month now averages 650; casualties on both sides totaled more than 4500 during the first three months of this year. These figures, while alarming, are also a reflection of increased efforts by South Vietnamese forces. 58% of the country is under some degree of Communist control, ranging from harassment and night raids to almost complete administrative jurisdiction in the Communist "secure areas."

The Viet Cong over the past two years have succeeded in stepping up the pace and intensity of their attacks to the point where South Vietnam is nearing the decisive phase in its battle for survival. If the situation continues to deteriorate, the Communists will be able to press on to their strategic goal of establishing a rival "National Liberation Front" government in one of these "secure areas," thereby plunging the nation into open civil war. They have publicly announced that they will "take over the country before the end of 1961."

If agreement is reached on a cease fire in Laos, political negotiations on the future of that country will begin on May 12 at the Fourteen Power Conference in Geneva. However, the April 26 statement on Laos by the Peiping government indicates that the Communist members of that conference intend to expand the negotiations to include other areas of Southeast Asia. As a result, it can be expected that the Fourteen Power meeting will be prolonged, covering several months or more.



The effect of these negotiations on the situation in Vietnam will be threefold:

First, the very fact that the Fourteen Powers are meeting under essentially the same ground rules as the 1954 Geneva Accords, including the concept of an ICC mechanism in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, could have a politically inhibiting effect on any significant measures which the U.S. might undertake to prevent a Communist take-over in South Vietnam.

Second, as has been their practice in the past, the Communists can be expected to use the cover of an international negotiation to expand their subversive activities. In this case, close coordination of their efforts in Southern Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam can be expected. The 250 mile border between South Vietnam and Laos, while never effectively sealed in the past, will now be deprived of even the semblance of protection which the friendly, pro-western Laos offers.

Third, the three principal passes through the Annamite Mountains - the Nape Pass, Mugia Gap, and the pass that controls the road from Quang Tri to Savanakheth - lie in Southern Laos. These passes control three key military avenues of advance from North Vietnam through Laos into the opening Mekong valley leading to Thailand and South Vietnam.

A Lao political settlement that would afford the Communists an opportunity to maintain any sort of control, covertly or otherwise, of these mountain passes would make them gate keepers to the primary inland invasion

route leading to Saigon and flanking the most important defensive terrain in the northern area of South-Vietnam.

Thus, the situation is critical but not hopeless. The South Vietnamese Government, with American aid, is increasing its capabilities to fight its attackers. It provides a strong anti-Communist government and generally pro-American population as a base upon which the necessary additional effort can be founded to defeat the Communist attack. Should the Communist effort increase, either directly or as a result of a collapse of Laos, additional measures may be necessary.



## ANNEX 2

### Military Concept

1. The military considerations involved in a national program of action designed to prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam and to create in that country a viable, increasingly democratic society are complicated by:

a. The Post Cease-fire Situation in Laos:

Indications are that the Communists are attempting to use the post cease-fire period to consolidate their control over the areas in which the Pathet Lao forces have been operating. If they are successful, this will

(1) Greatly increase the problem of guarding the G.V.N. -Laos border against the infiltration of Communist terrorists and supplies, and

(2) Allow the Communists to gain control over the three principal passes through the Annamite Mountains, which lie along the frontier between Vietnam and Laos. These passes (The Nape Pass, Mugia Gap, and the pass that controls the road from Quang Tri to Savannakhet) are located in Southern Laos and control the three key military avenues of advance from North Vietnam through Laos into the open Mekong Valley leading to Thailand and South Vietnam. Ability to use these internal lines of advance would enable an attacker from the North to avoid the coastal road which is vulnerable to interdiction by naval gunfire or demolitions and to flank the most defensive terrain in the northern area of South Vietnam.

b. The Forthcoming Fourteen-Power Conference:

The very fact that the Fourteen Powers are meeting under essentially the same ground rules as the 1954 Geneva Agreements, including the concept of an ICC mechanism in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, could have a politically inhibiting effect on any significant measures which the U.S. might undertake to prevent a Communist take-over in South Vietnam.

c. SEATO Responsibilities under the Manila Pact:

Responsibility for the defense of South Vietnam, both against external aggression and internal subversion, was assumed by the SEATO powers under the protocol to the Manila Pact. The unanimity principle governing SEATO action has prevented that organization from taking any measures to resist Communist advances to date. Yet the very existence of SEATO makes it politically desirable that any military operations in Southeast Asia be conducted under its aegis. This in turn inhibits, to a certain degree, U.S. unilateral military actions.

d. The Morale Problem within South Vietnam:

The failure of SEATO to take any action to halt the Communist actions in Laos has in large measure impaired the credibility of that organization insofar as providing collective assistance in the defense of any nation in the area. Similarly, the U.S. reluctance to play a more active leadership role in SEATO has also contributed to a general lowering of morale among the G.V.N. governmental officials and intelligentsia. Meanwhile the Communist terrorist campaign has been stepped up, thereby



increasing the sense of uncertainty and fear throughout the official government of South Vietnam.

2. Taking these military considerations into account, the problem of preventing Communist domination of South Vietnam can be broken down into:

a. Internal Security Measures:

These have been carefully worked out and coordinated within the U.S. Government in the form of a counter-insurgency plan (CIP) for Vietnam. This plan has been presented to President Diem and is to be implemented as rapidly as possible as he approves the various specific elements of the plan. In support of the CIP, the President at the NSC Meeting of 29 April 1961 approved the actions listed under Part I of the Military Section of the proposed Program.

b. Protection of the Land Border of South Vietnam:

Communist capabilities to infiltrate personnel and equipment into South Vietnam across either the Lao or the Cambodia border will be facilitated by the cover provided by the cease-fire and the forthcoming Fourteen-Power Conference. Along the Laos-G.V.N. boundary, the extremely rugged nature of the terrain makes it almost impossible to establish a "water-tight" border. However, this same rugged terrain limits the smuggling routes to one principal road, (the east-west highway from Savannakhet to Tchepone to Quang Tri) and to some 12-15 reasonably passable trails.

Barring a significant increase in the present level of guerrilla infiltration and military aggression, the G.V.N. armed forces (170,000) and the Civil Guard (68,000) bolstered by the establishment of an effective intelligence and patrol system, regular aerial border surveillance and the application of technological area-denial techniques (e.g., CW, BW, light plastic, air-droppable landmines, fluorescent materials, etc.), have the capability of continuing the suppression of the insurgency and even making considerable headway against it. This capability will, of course, depend on a major acceleration of the present retraining program. Given the augmentation and strengthening of the G.V.N. armed forces now being proposed, it is considered an acceptable military risk that South Vietnam can cope successfully with the Laos border problem.

Similar considerations apply to the frontier between South Vietnam and Cambodia. It is hoped, however, that a realization of the increased threat to their own security posed by Communist advances into Laos would persuade the G.V.N. and Cambodia Governments to cooperate more effectively in the maintenance of adequate border security between the two countries.

In furtherance of these efforts, a special staff element (approximately 6 U.S. personnel), to concentrate upon solutions to the unique problems of Vietnam's borders, will be activated in MAAG, Vietnam, to assist a similar special unit in the RVNAF which the G.V.N. will be encouraged



to establish; these two elements working as an integrated team will help the G.V.N. gain the support of nomadic tribes and other border inhabitants, as well as introduce advanced techniques and equipment to strengthen the security of South Vietnam's frontiers.

Additionally, there will be established a combined U.S. -Vietnamese Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam which will assist the G.V.N. to develop, with the help of modern technology, new techniques for use against Communist terrorists and subversive activities throughout the country. The Center will seek to devise practical applications of the latest scientific techniques to the conditions of the sub-limited warfare now being waged throughout Southeast Asia, taking into account particularly the local terrain, the level of training of the Vietnamese population, and the possibilities of local production of any new weapons or equipment which may be developed.

c. Protection Against Infiltration by Sea:

The provision of MAP support for the Vietnamese Junk Force (already approved by the President) will greatly improve that Force's capabilities in preventing clandestine supply and infiltration from the sea. Additionally, however, it will be necessary for CINCPAC's naval component to assume an active responsibility jointly with the Vietnamese navy for coastal patrol activities from the Cambodian border to the mouth of the Mekong River. In conjunction with the Junk Force, these naval

forces can be expected to substantially reduce the quantity of Communist supplies and personnel currently reaching the southern delta area of Vietnam.

d. Training the G.V.N. Armed Forces for Combat:

The changed military situation in South Vietnam resulting from the Communist successes in Laos poses a direct and serious military threat to the entire western flank of South Vietnam which cannot be met within the dimensions of our internal security program alone. This new threat requires the prompt organization of two new G.V.N. divisions and a vastly accelerated U.S. training program for the entire G.V.N. army. Because of the shortage of trained officers and non-commissioned officers cadres, the success of such a program depends upon raising the combat effectiveness of the South Vietnamese forces by an entire order of magnitude within a matter of 6-8 months. To meet this new situation, it will be necessary to process the entire G.V.N. army through a greatly intensified divisional training program as rapidly as possible. A task of this magnitude is well beyond the capabilities of the existing MAAG and will require the augmentation of the U.S. Advisory Group with as much as two U.S. training commands, each capable of establishing a divisional field training area in the "high plateau" area of South Vietnam. These training areas, established in remote locations away from population centers and organized on a completely austere basis, simulating to the maximum extent combat conditions in the country, would each be able to process an entire G.V.N. division every ten weeks.



U.S. personnel required to establish these training commands would be introduced into South Vietnam in phased increments through northern ports, such as Tourane and Nha Trang in a manner calculated to minimize, as much as possible, public attention to these MAAG augmentations. Preliminary estimates indicate that in order to process the existing 7 Vietnamese divisions through this intensified combat training program in the short time available, each of these U.S. training commands would require approximately 1600 U.S. instructors from Army or Marine Corps sources.

In addition to the regular divisional training program, an acceleration of Special Forces training is indicated to assist the G.V.N. forces counter the increased level of Viet Cong guerrilla activity which can be expected to follow a cease-fire in Laos. This will require a further MAAG augmentation of a Special Forces Group. To meet the urgency of the situation, a Special Forces Group (approximately 400 military personnel) should be deployed at phased increments to Nha Trang for this purpose. Initially a Special Forces Company (52 personnel) would be sent at once to prepare for the arrival of the remainder of the Group.

e. Possible Introduction of U.S. Flag Forces into Vietnam:

Should the situation in South Vietnam deteriorate to the point where the measures outlined above are not adequate to prevent the Communist domination of the country, it may be necessary to introduce U.S.

flag forces either as a part of a bi-lateral U.S. -G.V.N. defense agreement or as a fulfillment of U.S. -SEATO obligations. In this event, it is considered desirable to deploy to either Tourane or Nha Trang a tailored, composite joint task force specially designed for carrying out a counter guerrilla-civic action-limited war mission in South Vietnam. In the absence of intelligence indications of an overt attack on the G.V.N., it is contemplated that this composite force would be deployed throughout the country in small "task force" units on specific mission assignments of a counter-guerrilla or civic action nature. For example, combat engineer troops would undertake priority road and airfield construction in preparation for their possible military use by U.S. or other allied forces, but which would also be of long term benefit to the Vietnamese economy. Similarly, mobile medical teams would travel throughout the area providing help and assistance to rural G.V.N. villages and to the mountain tribes. As needed, truck-borne water purification units will assist in areas where water pollution presents a serious health problem. These small specialized "task forces" working jointly with similar units in the Vietnam armed forces would not only give concrete evidence of U.S. willingness to commit its military strength in a combined effort with the G.V.N. to defend South Vietnam against Communist domination, but would also demonstrate that while in the country, they will make a positive contribution to the civil and economic needs of the local population.



General Objectives

1. In order to develop the political and economic conditions for solid and widespread support of the GVN by key political groups and the general population which will enable it to continue to resist Communist encroachment, we must continue to work through and support the present Vietnamese government despite its acknowledged weaknesses. No other even remotely feasible alternative exists at this point in time which does not involve an unacceptable degree of risk. At the same time, we do not underestimate the difficulties inherent in attempting to effect a major alteration in the present governmental structure or in its objectives. To accomplish this will require very astute dealing between US government personnel and the Vietnamese. However, we believe that we have the combination of positive inducements plus points at which discreet pressure can be exercised which will permit accomplishment of this objective.

US Support for Diem

2. President Diem is not now fully confident of United States support. This confidence has been undermined partly by our vigorous efforts to get him to mend his ways politically, and partly by the equivocal attitude

he is convinced we took at the time of the November 11, 1960, attempted coup. It is essential that President Diem's full confidence in and communication with the United States be restored promptly.

3 Increasing the confidence of President Diem and his government in the United States must be the starting point of our new approach to Vietnam. Fortunately a number of circumstances are favorable; a new administration in the United States, a new ambassador going to Vietnam, and the fact that President Diem has received a new mandate. Nevertheless, the going will not be easy. Given Diem's personality and character and the abrasive nature of our recent relationships, success or failure in this regard will depend very heavily on Ambassador Nolting's ability to get on the same wave-length with Diem.

4. A series of Presidential Communications have been recommended and several have been sent. The President sent President Diem a short oral message on his election, and a warm public message on the occasion of his inauguration on April 29. A classified brief personal message has been sent saying that Ambassador Nolting is on his way with new proposals for joint actions to defeat the Communist insurgents. Messages relating to the Vice President's visit have also been sent. Another message from the President is in preparation laying out the broad outline of the Task Force program seeking Diem's cooperation and endorsement and proposing, in effect, that this become a Joint Presidential Plan.



5. The Vice President's visit will provide the added incentive needed to give the GVN the motivation and confidence it needs to carry on the struggle. We believe that meetings between the Vice President and President Diem will act as a catalytic agent to produce broad agreement on the need for accelerated joint Vietnamese-US actions to resist Communist encroachment in S.E. Asia. These meetings will also serve to get across to President Diem our confidence in him as man of great stature and as one of the strong figures in S.E. Asia on whom we are placing our reliance. <sup>[Insert A]</sup> At the same time, these conferences should impress Diem with the degree of importance we attach to certain political and economic reforms in Vietnam which are an essential element in frustrating Communist encroachments. Recognizing the difficulties we have had in the past in persuading Diem to take effective action on such reforms, as specific an understanding as possible should be solicited from Diem on this point. <sup>[Insert B]</sup> Finally it might be possible for the Vice President to return to Washington with a letter from Diem to the President replying to the letter referred to in Paragraph 4 above.

#### Internal Support

6. Despite his recent success at the polls, President Diem lacks adequate support of a large proportion of opinion-making elements in Vietnam. He also needs more understanding and support of the mass of people. His

autocratic methods and his lack of communication with the Vietnamese people are a continuing cause of concern.

7. The chief threat to the viability of President Diem's administration is, without a doubt, the fact of Communist insurgency and the government's inability to protect its own people. Thus military measures must have the highest priority. There is, nevertheless, strong discontent with the government among not only the elite but among peasants, labor and business. Criticism focuses on the dynastic aspects of the Diem rule, on its clandestine political apparatus and on the methods through which the President exercises his leadership. This is aggravated by Communist subversive attempts to discredit the President and weaken his government's authority. All this is made the easier because of a communication void existing between the government and the people. For many months United States efforts have been directed toward persuading Diem to adopt political, social, and economic changes designed to correct this serious defect. Many of these changes are included in the Counter-Insurgency Plan. Our success has been only partial. There are those who consider that Diem will not succeed in the battle to win men's minds in Vietnam.

Thus in giving priority emphasis to the need for internal security, we must not relax in our efforts to persuade Diem of the need for political, social and economic progress. If his efforts are inadequate in this



field, our overall objective could be seriously endangered and we might once more find ourselves in the position of shoring up a leader who had lost the support of his people.

8. Next to specifying the means, the cost and the resources for interdicting Viet-Cong access to South Vietnam and reducing Viet-Cong operations to a minimum, the tasks of rallying the people to the government and improving the government's relations with the people are the most urgent. A new type of political development is long overdue in Vietnam to spark a new spirit. This should be something much broader and more relevant than the so-called "liberalization" program. The government's rapport and acceptability must be strengthened with the following key elements of the population:

(a) The young professional intelligentsia in the civil service, private organizations, and the faculties.

(b) The provincial, district and village administrators who must be replaced or reoriented for democratic, humane, modern style handling of the little people.

(c) Village youth leaders, village councilors, farm family heads, and teachers.

These key groups could reach the general population in rural and urban areas on a personal basis; new means of mass media can reach the population on a quantitative basis.

9. A realistic political program would seek to produce favorable attitudes, active popular cooperation against the Viet-Cong, and cadres to execute the government's programs intelligently. For example, the program could include establishment of:

- (a) A professional and young Community Development Corps for the whole country,
- (b) Political training schools,
- (c) A trained administrative corps,
- (d) A mass radio and television system for political communication,
- (e) Training for teams of young Vietnamese professionals for important longer-range projects in the economic electric power, and educational fields.

It may prove desirable to provide the Ambassador with the assistance of one of more experts in Asian political development to assist him in developing and explaining a political communications program.

#### External Relations

10. While it is vital that Vietnam's internal political situation be improved it is also important that its external political relations with its neighbors and with the world community similarly be improved. Vietnam's relationships with its neighbor Cambodia are generally bad, nevertheless, defeat of the Communist insurgents requires close



cooperation with Cambodia on border control. This will require a major effort of reconciliation. Other free world countries should be asked to assist or at least support Vietnam in its struggle. Vietnam is a Free World problem, not just a United States problem.

11. Cooperation between Cambodia and Vietnam on border control is an essential means of combating the Communists. Vietnam and Cambodia have always had difficulty in negotiation on any issue, especially a complex and politically-charged problem like border-control. In 1960, Cambodia made a major request for military assistance to which we made only a token response. We should endeavor to obtain better Cambodian cooperation, using a step up of military assistance as "quid pro quo." To maximize the benefit to be derived from provision of additional military assistance we should specifically agree to provide 4 jet trainers requested by the Cambodians thereby precluding provision of these aircraft by Czechoslovakia which has already offered to make the aircraft available to the Cambodians. This would forestall further Communist penetration in this area.

12. Because of the failure of the ICC to control subversion and infiltration it has been suggested that Vietnam appeal to the United Nations Security Council for ground observers in both North and South.

Vietnam. The Soviets would probably veto any such action, and action in the General Assembly would be required. Not only does the provision of United Nations Observers have intrinsic merit but in any event, United Nations consideration would have the value of focusing world opinion on Communist actions in Vietnam.

13. An appeal by Vietnam to the United Nations for the dispatch of ground observers to supplement the work of the ICC in patrolling against the infiltration of arms and armed personnel into Vietnam would normally be dealt with first in the Security Council and, if a veto by a permanent member prevented the Security Council from acting the appeal could then be taken up by the General Assembly. There are various reasons for concluding that such an appeal ought to be dealt with first in the Security Council rather than in the General Assembly:

(a) The Security Council, under Article 24, has primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

(b) A similar call for assistance by Lebanon during the summer of 1958 was handled by the Security Council.

(c) An attempt to deal with such an appeal in the General Assembly in the first instance, without having gone to the Security Council, might



meet resistance in the General Assembly, perhaps led by such permanent members of the Security Council as France and the Soviet Union.

(d) Proceedings in the Council are more manageable, and it would be relatively easier to secure majority agreement on a satisfactory text. If the USSR should veto, this same text could then be introduced in the Assembly, with probable avoidance of a difficult many-powered negotiation.

14. A resolution providing for the dispatch of a United Nations observer group would be likely to receive the support of seven or more members of the Security Council. Nevertheless, its passage could be prevented by the negative vote of one of the permanent members of the Council. The Soviet Union would be likely to veto such a resolution. Then the processes of the General Assembly could be invoked to deal with the question, pursuant to the Uniting for Peace Resolution. Action in the Assembly would presumably be undertaken on the basis of the draft resolution which failed of adoption in the Security Council. Under Article 18 (2) of the Charter, questions involving recommendations with respect to the maintenance of peace and security are important questions requiring a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting in the General Assembly. In the case of a request by Vietnam for United Nations observers, such a majority could probably be secured in support of a resolution providing for the dispatch of a United Nations Observer Group.

15. The presence of United Nations observers would stimulate the Indian and Canadian members of the ICC to step up their surveillances. Infiltration would be exposed to a much greater extent than is now the case and hence might be deterred; South Vietnam would be strengthened by the presence of United Nations observers. The prestige and political influence of the General Assembly and of its members would be brought into play in support of a position designed to prevent the infiltration of arms and men into Vietnam.

16. The United Kingdom has already expressed a strong interest in cooperating to help the Vietnamese stop the Communists. It has offered to provide training personnel with years of experience in Malay. It has also offered financial support. Other like-minded countries, notably, the Philippines, and Australia have a capability and a possible interest in this regard. While the use of third country personnel may create some administrative problems for us and the GVN, it is of overriding importance that others share with us the responsibility for helping Vietnam win its struggle. Particularly as we can obtain a British participation we will maximize the political benefits to be obtained within the western alliance by sharing responsibility for this difficult problem.



## Civic Action

17. The anti-guerrilla effort should be accompanied and followed up by economic and political consolidation. A broad range of community development activities both in the political and economic field should be pressed forward. Not only should roads, wells, schools, etc., be pushed forward, but village political councils should be created and an imaginative communications system should be established, geared to bring the rural people of Vietnam into the body politic.

## Improved Security Arrangements

18. It is doubtful whether the Vietnamese government could weather the pressure which would be generated if Laos were lost, without prompt and dramatic support for its security from the U.S. Similarly, the extent to which the remainder of the S.E. Asian countries would be prepared to go "in resisting Bloc pressures or in withstanding local Communist threats would depend on whether they still assessed that the U.S. could stem further Communist expansion in the area. Although they would be disillusioned regarding U.S. resolution after the loss or division of Laos, they would nonetheless welcome demonstrations of U.S. firmness, and might, in response, modify their appraisal of their own future in due course." (NIE of March 28, Outlook in Mainland S.E. Asia). Thus to further strengthen and improve the internal and external political

position of Vietnam described above, and as a complementary action to the economic undertakings described above, the U.S. should endeavor to develop various strengthened security arrangements.

19. The Geneva Accords have been totally inadequate in protecting South Vietnam against Communist infiltration and insurgency. Moreover, with increased Communist success in Laos dramatic U.S. actions in stiffening up its physical support of Vietnam and the remainder of Southeast Asia may be needed to bolster the will to continue to resist the Communists. The inhibitions imposed on such action by certain parts of the Geneva Accords, which have been violated with impunity by the Communists, should not prevent our action. We should consider joining with the Vietnamese in a clear cut defensive alliance which might include stationing of U.S. forces on Vietnamese soil. As a variant of this arrangement certain SEATO troops might also be employed.

20. Bilateral military assistance by the United States pursuant to a request by South Vietnam along the lines of that undertaken during 1958 in response to the request by Lebanon for military assistance, would be in keeping with international law and treaty provisions. The provisions of the Geneva Accords of 1954, which prohibited the introduction of additional military arms and personnel into Vietnam, would not be a bar to the measures contemplated. The obvious, large-scale and



continuous violation of these provisions of the Geneva Accords by North Vietnam in introducing large numbers of armed guerrillas into South Vietnam would justify the corresponding non-observance of these provisions by South Vietnam. Indeed, authorization for changing PEO Laos into an ordinary MAAG was justified on this legal theory. It should be recognized that the foregoing proposals require careful and detailed consideration and preparation particularly with regard to the precise mission of U.S. forces used.

21. In addition to the previously cited advantages such an action might have at least two other important political and military advantages:

(a) It could release a portion of the ARVN from relatively static military functions to pursue the war against the insurgents and

(b) It would place the Sino-Soviet Bloc in the position of risking direct intervention in a situation where U.S. forces were already in place, accepting the consequences of such action. This is in direct contrast to the current situation in Laos.

22. Alternatively, there are several potential political and military disadvantages to such an action, principal among these being:

(a) Some of the neutrals, notably India might well be opposed - the attitude of the U.K. and France is uncertain.

(b) This would provide the Communists with a major propaganda opportunity.

(c) The danger that a troop contribution would provoke a DRV-CHICOM reaction with the risk of involving a significant commitment of U.S. force in the Pacific to the Asian mainland. The French tied up some 200,000 troops during the unsuccessful Indo-China effort.

This might significantly weaken the Diem regime in the long run, having in mind the parallel of Rhee in Korea.



ANNEX 4  
Economic

Best Use of Resources

1. Our capability to assist Vietnam is hampered by its own inability to make the best use of its available resources. A broad range of agreement between our governments on fiscal and monetary measures to correct this situation is urgently needed.

2. In spite of the increased insurgency, Vietnam has been making good economic progress. It has increased production and its exports have been increasing rapidly. Despite a steady decrease in economic aid, its foreign exchange reserves have been going up and are now in excess of its normal needs. On the other hand, GVN revenues are now inadequate, in GVN opinion, to meet the increased local currency costs of further anti-insurgency measures. This presents the US with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, the enthusiastic cooperation of the GVN in moving forward against the Communists is essential, but on the other hand, if we give in to their request for more aid in support of the military budget, this might not only fail to produce additional local currency, but could provide a serious disincentive to GVN efforts to find more resources. More importantly, coming after a protracted

US effort to obtain an increased Vietnamese financial contribution which has recently gained a limited Vietnamese agreement (the Vietnamese have agreed to meet the FY 61 local currency costs of the CIP) a relaxation in our previous position might well be interpreted as an acceptance by the US that the problem is of greater concern to it than to Vietnam. Such an attitude could be highly disruptive to an effective joint US-Vietnamese effort. They have the means to raise more revenue, including increased taxation and monetary reform, but both of these solutions, particularly the latter, are unpalatable in the extreme to President Diem. However, one thing is certain, payment of Vietnamese troops will receive first priority in the Vietnamese budget and US failure to provide additional defense support aid will not affect the ability or willingness of Vietnam to carry out necessary military actions.

3. Vietnam is essentially a "have" rather than a "have not" country. It has land, resources, and an able and energetic people. If it were not for the Communists, Vietnam would probably be, like Thailand, economically viable today. We should help it move ahead with a long range development program against the day when the Communist menace has been brought under control and it can press ahead into an era of self-sustaining economic growth.



4. Perhaps the most effective means of establishing Vietnamese confidence in the political and economic future of their country would be for the US to commit itself to a long range economic development program. Under peaceful circumstances, Vietnam would unquestionably be one of the most rapidly developing countries in the area, having the resources, both human and natural, to bring this about. Substantial amounts of additional US development grant assistance for long range projects can be effectively employed in Vietnam. The additional amounts would supplement current programs as well as those contemplated for FY 1962. They should in their aggregate serve to significantly accelerate the overall development of the Vietnamese economy and provide some additional social and physical infrastructure support.

5. While the following does not pretend to be a comprehensive long range development program, it unquestionably includes priority components of any sound long range program. Contingent upon the Vietnamese cooperation, assistance could be directed into the following areas:

(a) Agriculture - A 20 per cent increase of agricultural output is a feasible 5-year goal. Expanded extension service, additional agricultural credit facilities and greater use of fertilizer are called to meet this objective.

(b) Health Services - Present deficient facilities should be expanded through training of additional physicians, nurses, and technicians to provide for staffing of hospitals and local health centers.

(c) Education - Priority should be accorded to accelerated teacher-training programs with an augmented technical-vocational education program.

(d) Fishing - The deficient protein content of the Vietnamese diet can be inexpensively augmented by the provision of additional larger and specially equipped fishing boats to provide for greater range and more efficient processing of catch.

(e) Roads - There exists an urgent need for further development of secondary road systems in the rural areas to permit more efficient marketing of agriculture products as well as to assist in exploitation of presently untapped forestry resources.

(f) Public Administration - To obtain effective government direction of essential public services, public administration training should be augmented at the national, provincial, and local levels:

(g) Industrial Development - The present Industrial Development Center could be used to expand light industry, through the provision of additional resources and the improvement of managerial, entrepreneurial and technical skills.



6. In order to help strengthen the will of the people to resist the incursions of the Viet Cong, the United States should begin immediately to assist the GVN undertake concentrated work in those rural areas currently subject to intensive Viet Cong activities. A number of Task Force teams should be organized which would undertake, in cooperation with local communities, a series of short-range, simple, inexpensive projects, the benefits of which can be readily recognized. Examples of projects to be undertaken are:

- (a) well digging
- (b) construction of inexpensive schools using local materiel
- (c) construction of markets
- (d) introduction of medical dispensaries
- (e) construction of simple irrigation ditches
- (f) agricultural extension services
- (g) veterinary services
- (h) strengthening of rural agricultural cooperatives
- (i) construction of local roads, etc.

7. The above and related actions--which would incorporate a maximum of self-help operations--could be initiated on a crash basis. They should be addressed to meeting the needs of the village communities.

It is proposed that the "Task Force" pattern of operations of USOM/Laos be adopted. This program was designed to accommodate to the disorganized conditions after the Battle of Vientiane. The objective of the Task Force concept was to provide relief to non-infiltrated and liberated areas and to accelerate self-help in rural development activities. This program, despite numerous difficulties, has achieved satisfactory results to date and presents itself as a most convenient and realistic mechanism for the Presidential Task Force program for Vietnam.

In carrying out the foregoing, the cooperation of existing Vietnamese organizations should be utilized to the maximum. In particular the full cooperation of the military would be required.



ANNEX 5

Psychological

The following are the types of actions envisioned to help the GVN accelerate its public information program with the objectives of gaining broad public understanding of the actions required to combat the Communist insurgents and to build public confidence in the GVN's determination and ability to deal with the Communist threat:

- a. Assist the GVN to develop and improve the USOM-supported radio network for the country, to include the prompt establishment of the presently planned new stations at Soc Trang, Banmethout and Quang Ngai and the installation of the more powerful, new transmitters now on USOM order for Saigon and Hue.
- b. Assist the GVN to initiate a training program for information and press attaches in the various ministries and directorates.
- c. Assist the GVN to establish a Press Institute for the training of selected young people for careers in journalism.
- d. In cooperation with the MAAG and the Ministry of Defense, make use of the troop information and education program of the GVN armed forces as a channel of communication between the Government and the people in the rural areas.

e. Encourage President Diem to continue the effective "fireside chat" and other getting-to-the-people techniques which were begun during the recent election campaign. Provide maximum press, film, and radio coverage for such appearances.

f. Reorient the programming of the existing USIS bi-national centers so that they can serve as training centers for rural information and educational cadres.



ANNEX 6

Covert Actions

a. Intelligence: Expand current positive and counter-intelligence operations against Communist forces in South Vietnam and against North Vietnam. These include penetration of the Vietnamese Communist mechanism, dispatch of agents to North Vietnam and strengthening Vietnamese internal security services. Authorization should be given, subject to existing procedures, for the use in North Vietnam operations of civilian air crews of American and other nationality, as appropriate, in addition to Vietnamese. Consideration should be given for over-flights of North Vietnam for photographic intelligence coverage; using American or Chinese Nationalists crews and equipment as necessary.

c. Unconventional Warfare: Expand present operations of the First Observation Battalion in guerrilla areas of South Vietnam, under joint MAAG-CIA sponsorship and direction. This should be in full operational collaboration with the Vietnamese, using Vietnamese civilians recruited with CIA aid.

In Laos, infiltrate teams under light civilian cover to Southeast Laos to locate and attack Vietnamese Communist bases and lines of communications. These teams should be supported by assault units of 100 to 150 Vietnamese for use on targets beyond capability of teams. Training of teams could be a combined operation by CIA and US Army Special Forces.

In North Vietnam, using the foundation established by intelligence operations, form networks of resistance, covert bases and teams for sabotage and light harassment. A capability should be created by MAAG in the South Vietnamese Army to conduct



Ranger raids and similar military actions in North Vietnam as might prove necessary or appropriate. Such actions should try to avoid any outbreak of extensive resistance or insurrection which could not be supported to the extent necessary to stave off repression.

Conduct over-flights for dropping of leaflets to harass the Communists and to maintain morale of North Vietnamese population, and increase gray broadcasts to North Vietnam for the same purposes.

d. Internal South Vietnam: Effect operations to penetrate political forces, government, armed services and opposition elements to measure support of government, provide warning of any coup plans, and identify individuals with potentiality of providing leadership in event of disappearance of President Diem.

Build up an increase in the population's participation in and loyalty to free government in Vietnam, through improved communication between the government and the people, and by strengthening independent or quasi-independent organizations of political, syndical, or professional character. Support covertly the GVN in allied and neutral countries, with special emphasis on bringing out GVN accomplishments, to counteract tendencies

in equipment. The personnel and fund augmentations in this paragraph were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961.



## ANNEX 7

### Funding

This funding program is discussed under two headings: (a) GVN Defense Budget (local currency) and (b) MAP. It is understood that these are estimated figures and that the Task Force will attempt more detailed estimates as programs are approved.

a. Defense Budget: (Local currency GVN defense budget requirements in millions of dollars.)

1. To provide for defense against increased Communist insurgency, the GVN defense budget has had to be increased materially over the past two years. The GVN defense budget is mutually agreed upon by the GVN and MAAG. The budget for FY 60 and our present estimate for FY 61 and for FY 62 GVN defense budget are in dollars (Vietnamese FY is also CY):

| FY 60 | FY 61 | FY 62 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 168.0 | 212.0 | 247.0 |

The figures for FY 62 include the increased costs for the already approved (but not funded) actions as well as the additional actions recommended in this program.

2. Funding of budget: Funding of its defense budget is accomplished by GVN, with the US providing imported commodities which are

sold for local currency. The agreed budget and financing for FY 60 was as follows:

|                        | FY 60 |
|------------------------|-------|
| US Contribution        | 155.5 |
| GVN Contribution       | 12.5  |
| TOL GVN Defense Budget | 168.0 |

Prior to the initiation of the CIP, the GVN proposed a defense budget of \$177 for FY 61. No agreement has been reached between the USG and GVN as to provisions of funds for this budget. Prior to the development of the Program of Action for Vietnam anticipated expenses associated with the implementation of the Counter-Insurgency Plan, and other requirements, made it necessary to increase the earlier estimate of GVN Defense Budget for FY 61 to \$212.0. The status of funding of this amount is as follows: ICA has agreed to provide \$134.0 and GVN has agreed to provide \$20.0 leaving a short-fall of \$58.0. The Country Team has recommended that US contribute an additional \$19.0. If this were approved, it would raise the total FY 61 US contribution to \$153.0 million, but would still leave a short-fall of \$39.0 million. Mr. Thuan (GVN Secretary of State for the Presidency and Minister of Defense) stated on 24 March 1961 that the GVN would like to receive more American aid, but if this were not possible the GVN will have to choose between the Communist danger and the danger of inflation. The



GVN in this case, of course, would choose to risk the danger of inflation and could meet the financial burden of the Counter-Insurgency Plan in 1961. Secretary Thuan, however, expressed considerable concern regarding the prospects for 1962.\*

While recognizing that the final levels of both US and Vietnamese contributions to the FY 61 defense budget are still under negotiation, it must be kept in mind that in order to be certain that the 20,000 additional soldiers now authorized for the GVN Army are brought into the troop basis promptly, it may be necessary for the US to increase FY 61 contribution by the amount of the short-fall of \$58 million to insure the success of the Counter-Insurgency Plan.

In order to implement items in the Counter-Insurgency Plan which are agreed to by the GVN and to carry out the additional measures recommended herein, the GVN defense budget for FY 62 might be in the order of \$247. This budget would include, if mutually agreed upon, a US contribution of \$161.0 million and a Vietnamese contribution of \$86.0 million. This would provide the local currency needed to carry out this program of action for Vietnam. The Task Force points out that this level requires a four-fold increase

\* See Foreign Service Dispatch 456.

over the FY 61 GVN contribution. If the Vietnamese are unable to provide this level of funds, there will again be a substantial short-fall which the US might have to meet if the program as outlined is to be mounted.

b. MAP: In order to provide the necessary equipment, training and other support required for a GVN armed force of 200,000, a Civil Guard of 68,000, Self Defense Corps of 40,000 and those portions of para. 2 above properly chargeable to military assistance, a total of \$140 million is required for Military Assistance in FY 62 for Vietnam. This amount is \$71 million more than is currently programmed for Vietnam within the current World Wide FY 62 MAP of \$1.6 billion, which is a holding program pending results of an Executive Branch study of the Military Assistance Program now underway.

It is necessary, therefore, that this additional \$71 million required for the Vietnam Military Assistance Program be provided by supplemental appropriations over and above the presently contemplated World Wide FY 62 \$1.6 billion program.



May 8, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JCS

SUBJECT: U. S. Forces for South Vietnam

In preparation for the possible commitment of U. S. forces to Vietnam, it is desired that you give further review and study of the military advisability of such an action, as well as to the size and composition of such U. S. forces. Your views, which I hope could include some expression from CINCPAC, would be valuable for consideration prior to the NSC meeting this week (currently scheduled for Friday, May 12.)

The missions for such U.S. forces, and preliminary concepts of size and composition, are given in section 2c of the May 6 draft of "A Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam." JCS members of the Presidential Task Force participated in formulating the thinking on these. With this guidance, and with the other studies which I appreciate you have undertaken already on this area, it is my hope that you will be able to provide me with a recommendation which will assist the NSC discussion of this subject.

s/Roswell Gilpatric  
Deputy

BGen. E. G. Lansdale  
57742 3E-947 8 May61

May. 8, 1961

Dear Mr. President:

I have asked Vice President Johnson to go to Viet-Nam on my behalf to visit you personally, to give you my warmest greetings, to witness the valiant struggle of your people against Communist aggression, and to assure you that my message of April 27 was more than an expression of moral support.

Since I took office my colleagues and I have watched developments in Viet-Nam with attention and concern. We have been urgently considering ways in which our help could be made more effective. I can now tell you that, for our part, we are ready to join with you in an intensified endeavor to win the struggle against Communism and to further the social and economic advancement of Viet-Nam. Because of the great importance we attach to this matter, I have asked Vice President Johnson and Ambassador Nolting to discuss it fully with you.

If such an expanded joint effort meets with your approval, we are prepared to initiate in collaboration with your government a series of joint, mutually supporting actions in the military, political, economic and other fields. We would propose to extend and build on our existing programs including the Counterinsurgency Plan and infuse into our actions a high sense of urgency and dedication.

It is my understanding that certain of the proposals in the Counterinsurgency Plan may not entirely reflect your own judgment. However, I hope you would feel free to discuss any issues frankly with Ambassador Nolting so that we may find a common viewpoint. I am happy to tell you, however, that the steps already taken to implement the Plan have made it possible for us to have approved Military Assistance Program support of the 20,000 increase of your regular forces.



I speak first of military measures. But I fully share your view that Communism cannot be stopped by such measures alone. Parallel political and economic action is of equal importance. I believe we are in agreement that the military actions proposed in the Counterinsurgency Plan for controlling and defeating the Viet Cong are soundly conceived and should be taken. However, in light of current conditions, these measures may no longer be sufficient. Therefore, in addition to actions in the Counterinsurgency Plan, we would be prepared to:

1. Augment the personnel of the MAAG to enable it to carry out increased duties.
2. Expand the MAAG's duties to include supporting and advising the Self Defense Corps.
3. Provide Military Assistance Program support for the entire Civil Guard force of 68,000.
4. Provide material support for the Vietnamese Junk Force to help it prevent clandestine supply and infiltration of the Viet Cong.

We would also be prepared to consider carefully with you, if developments should warrant, the case for a further increase in the strength of your forces beyond the 170,000 limit now contemplated.

I also believe that the problem of Viet-Nam's borders requires our further urgent joint study to develop techniques whereby crossing of these borders by unfriendly elements can be more effectively controlled.

I believe we should consider the establishment in Southeast Asia of a facility to develop and test, using the tools of modern technology, new techniques to help us in our joint campaign against the Communists.

We would be prepared to collaborate with your Government in the use of certain military specialists to assist and work with your armed forces in health, welfare and public works activities in the villages. We can also offer additional Special Forces training to assist your government in accelerating the training of its Special Forces.

In the political field, in addition to the steps contemplated in the Counterinsurgency Plan, I feel you will agree that the strengthening of border control arrangements, particularly with Cambodia, is perhaps the most important element. While I fully recognize the difficulty and delicacy of this problem, I urge you to authorize the renewal of negotiations on this subject with the Royal Khmer Government. If you concur, we will use our best efforts with the Cambodians to facilitate these discussions.

Other governments have shown an interest in assisting Viet-Nam in its actions against the guerrillas and have indicated that certain expert personnel with long experience, e.g., in Malaya, might be made available to help. We would be glad to cooperate with your government in planning the most effective use of this welcome assistance.

Turning to the economic aspects, I am aware of the increased burden that an increase in your military forces will place on your internal budget. However, budgetary problems must not be permitted to interfere with the successful prosecution of our joint effort against the Communists. It seems to us that the chief problem is how to make the best possible use of all available resources. This is a complex problem which taxes the ability of the best experts and we feel must be attacked by the best talent we both can muster. If you concur, I will send to Viet-Nam a group of highly qualified economic and fiscal experts who would meet with your experts and work out a financial plan on which our joint efforts can be based.

I wish to assure you of our continued interest in the social advancement and economic betterment of your people. Various joint programs are under way and much has been accomplished. These will be continued and improved.



In addition, Ambassador Nolting will be prepared to discuss new economic and social measures in rural areas to accompany the anti-guerrilla effort in which the U.S. can provide direct assistance, if desired. Such programs, we feel, can be organized, in close cooperation with military operations and with maximum mobility, speed and flexibility. Funds for expanded efforts along these lines can be allocated.

We have great confidence in the long-range political and economic future of Viet-Nam. Therefore, I am certain you will agree that, despite our present focus on the immediate Viet Cong problem, it would be good for us to work together toward a longer range economic development program, including increased assistance on our part in the fields of agriculture, health, education, fisheries, highways, public administration and industrial development. I have authorized Ambassador Nolting to enter into preliminary discussions with members of your government concerning the best ways of moving forward with a program whose eventual goal would be a Viet-Nam capable of self-sustaining economic growth.

This, Mr. President, is the broad outline of our thinking on how we can help you and your brave countrymen to help themselves in their determined struggle to defeat the Communists and find a better way of life. I am confident of your success. I look forward with great interest to Vice President Johnson's report on his talks with you, and I would be especially happy to hear from you personally.

Please accept again, Mr. President, the expression of my warmest friendship and respect.

Sincerely;

His Excellency  
Ngo Dinh Diem  
President of the  
Republic of Viet-Nam

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 11, 1961

B. Kr. Gilpatrick

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 52

TO: The Secretary of State

The President today reviewed the report of the Vietnam Task Force, entitled "Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam." Subject to amendments or revisions which he may wish to make after providing opportunity for a further discussion at the next meeting of the National Security Council, now scheduled for May 19, the President has made the following decisions on the basis of this report:

1. The U. S. objective and concept of operations stated in the report are approved: to prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam; to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society, and to initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions of a military, political, economic, psychological and covert character designed to achieve this objective.
2. The approval given for specific military actions by the President at the National Security Council meeting on April 29, 1961, is confirmed.
3. Additional actions listed at pages 4 and 5 of the Task Force Report are authorized, with the objective of meeting the increased security threat resulting from the new situation along the frontier between Laos and Vietnam. In particular, the President directs an assessment of the military utility of a further increase in G. V. N. forces from 170,000 to 200,000, together with an assessment of the parallel political and fiscal implications.
4. The President directs full examination by the Defense Department, under the guidance of the Director of the continuing Task Force on Vietnam, of the size and composition of forces which would be desirable in the case of a possible commitment of U. S. forces to Vietnam. The diplomatic setting within which this action might be taken should also be examined.

65/100



5. The U. S. will seek to increase the confidence of President Diem and his government in the United States by a series of actions and messages relating to the trip of Vice President Johnson. The U. S. will attempt to strengthen President Diem's popular support within Vietnam by reappraisal and negotiation, under the direction of Ambassador Nolting. Ambassador Nolting is also requested to recommend any necessary reorganization of the Country Team for these purposes.

6. The U. S. will negotiate in appropriate ways to improve Vietnam's relationship with other countries, especially Cambodia, and its standing in world opinion.

7. The Ambassador is authorized to begin negotiations looking toward a new bilateral arrangement with Vietnam, but no firm commitment will be made to such an arrangement without further review by the President.

8. The U. S. will undertake economic programs in Vietnam with a view to both short term immediate impact and a contribution to the longer range economic viability of the country, and the specific actions proposed on pages 12 and 13 of the Task Force Report are authorized.

9. The U. S. will strengthen its efforts in the psychological field as recommended on pages 14 and 15 of the Task Force Report.

10. The program for covert actions outlined on page 15 of the Task Force Report is approved.

11. These decisions will be supported by appropriate budgetary action, but the President reserves judgment on the levels of funding proposed on pages 15 and 16 of the Task Force Report and in the funding annex.

12. Finally, the President approves the continuation of a special Task Force on Vietnam, established in and directed by the Department of State under Sterling J. Cottrell as Director, and Chalmers B. Wood as Executive Officer.

*info by*  
McGeorge Bundy

Information copies to:

Defense

CIA

USIA

Treasury

137

## A Program of Action

### To Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam

Appraisal of the Situation: The internal security situation in South Vietnam has become critical, as can be seen on the attached map, with an estimated 12,000 Viet Cong Communists waging guerrilla warfare inside the country. The strongly anti-Communist, pro-American government of South Vietnam, with American aid, is increasing its capabilities to fight its attackers. Should the Communist effort increase, either directly or as a result of a collapse of Laos, additional measures beyond those proposed herein may be necessary. (Details in Annex 1.).

The U.S. Objective: To prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam and to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society.

Concept of Operations: To initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions of a military, political, economic, psychological and covert character designed to achieve this objective. In so doing, it is intended to use, and where appropriate extend, expedite or build upon the existing U.S. and Government of Vietnam



(G. V. N.) programs, including as much of the Counter-Insurgency Plan (CIP), as can be agreed by both governments, already underway in South Vietnam. There is neither the time available nor any sound justification for "starting from scratch." Rather the need is to focus the U. S. effort in South Vietnam on the immediate internal security problem; to infuse it with a sense of urgency and a dedication to the overall U. S. objective; to achieve, through cooperative inter-departmental support both in the field and in Washington, the operational flexibility needed to apply the available U. S. assets in a manner best calculated to achieve our objective in Vietnam; to give the U. S. Ambassador and the U. S. team under his leadership general authority to undertake a series of accelerated measures as noted below; and finally, to impress on our friends, the Vietnamese, and on our foes, the Communists, that come what may, the U. S. intends to win this battle.

Program of Action:

1. General: The situation in South Vietnam has reached the point where, at least for the time being, primary emphasis must be placed on providing a solution to the internal security problem. A significant step which has already been taken by the Country Team to counter Communist subversion in South Vietnam has been the development of the Counter-Insurgency Plan (CIP). Those portions

of the CIP which are agreed to by the G. V. N. will be implemented as rapidly as possible.

Communist domination of South Vietnam needs more than military measures alone to be stopped. Our military program must be accompanied and supplemented by a strong, positive political-economic program.

2. Military:

a. The following military actions were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961:

(1) Increase the MAAG as necessary to insure the effective implementation of the military portion of the program including the training of a 20,000-man addition to the present G. V. N. armed forces of 150,000. Initial appraisal of new tasks assigned CHMAAG indicate that approximately 100 additional military personnel will be required immediately in addition to the present complement of 685.

(2) Expand MAAG responsibilities to include authority to provide support and advice to the Self Defense Corps with a strength of approximately 40,000.

(3) Authorize MAP support for the entire Civil Guard force of 68,000. MAP support is now authorized for 32,000; the remaining 36,000 are not now adequately trained and equipped.



(4) Install as a matter of priority a radar surveillance capability which will enable the G. V. N. to obtain warning of Communist over-flights being conducted for intelligence or clandestine air supply purposes. Initially, this capability should be provided from U.S. mobile radar capability.

(5) Provide MAP support for the Vietnamese Junk Force as a means of preventing Viet Cong clandestine supply and infiltration into South Vietnam by water. MAP support, which was not provided in the Counter-Insurgency Plan, will include training of junk crews in Vietnam or at U.S. bases by U.S. Navy personnel.

b. The following additional actions are considered necessary to assist the G. V. N. in meeting the increased security threat resulting from the new situation along the Laos-G. V. N. frontier:

(1) Assist the G. V. N. armed forces to increase their border patrol and insurgency suppression capabilities by establishing an effective border intelligence and patrol system, by instituting regular aerial surveillance over the entire frontier area, and by applying modern technological area-denial techniques to control the roads and trails along Vietnam's borders. A special staff element (approximately 6 U.S. personnel), to concentrate upon solutions to the unique problems of Vietnam's borders, will be activated in MAAG, Vietnam, to assist a similar special unit in the RVNAF which the

G. V. N. will be encouraged to establish; these two elements working as an integrated team will help the G. V. N. gain the support of nomadic tribes and other border inhabitants, as well as introduce advanced techniques and equipment to strengthen the security of South Vietnam's frontiers.

(2). Assist the G. V. N. to establish a Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam to develop, with the help of modern technology, new techniques for use against the Viet Cong forces. (Approximately 4 U.S. personnel.)

(3). Assist the G. V. N. forces with health, welfare and public work projects by providing U. S. Army civic action mobile training teams, coordinated with the similar civilian effort. (Approximately 14 U.S. personnel.)

(4) Deploy a Special Forces Group (approximately <sup>512 U.S. personnel</sup> 76 <sup>personnel</sup> 400 personnel) to Nha Trang in order to accelerate G. V. N. Special Forces training. The first increment, for immediate deployment to Vietnam, should be a Special Forces company (52 personnel).

(5) Instruct JCS, CINCPAC, and MAAG to undertake an assessment of the military utility of a further increase in the G. V. N. forces from 170,000 to 200,000 in order to create two new division equivalents for deployment to the northwest border region. The parallel political and fiscal implications should be assessed.



c. In preparation for possible commitment of U.S. forces to Vietnam, which might result from an NSC decision following discussions between Vice President Johnson and President Diem, Defense is undertaking an immediate study of the size and composition of U.S. forces required to:

- provide maximum psychological impact in deterrence of further Communist aggression from North Vietnam, China, or the Soviet Union, while rallying the morale of the Vietnamese and encouraging the support of SEATO and neutral nations for Vietnam's defense;
- release Vietnamese forces from advanced and static defense positions to permit their fuller commitment to counter-insurgency actions;
- provide maximum training to approved Vietnamese forces; and
- provide significant military resistance to potential North Vietnam Communist and/or Chinese Communist action.

The following possible actions are being considered in this Defense study:

(1) Deploy to South Vietnam two U.S. battle groups (with necessary command and logistics units), plus an engineer (construction-combat) battalion. These units would be located in the

"high plateau" region, remote from the major population center of Saigon-Cholon, under the command of the Chief, MAAG. To help accelerate the training of the G. V. N. army, they would establish two divisional field training areas. The engineer battalion would undertake construction of roads, air-landing strips, and other facilities essential to the logistical support of the U.S. and Vietnamese forces there.

(2) Assign the Naval component of CINCPAC the responsibility for coastal patrol activities, employing minimal U.S. Naval forces in conjunction with Vietnamese forces, to prevent the seaborne infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and material into South Vietnam.

(3) Assign the air component of CINCPAC the responsibility for border surveillance and close-support of G. V. N. ground forces in counter-insurgency actions, employing minimal *or element* ~~U.S. Air Force~~ means in conjunction with Vietnamese forces, to help seal the Vietnamese borders and to defeat the Communist guerrillas within those borders.

(An Appraisal of the Military Concept is given in Annex 2.)



3. Political:

L. Objective: Develop political and economic conditions which will create a solid and widespread support among the key political groups and the general population for a Vietnam which has the will to resist Communist encroachment and which in turn stems from a stake in a freer and more democratic society.

a. Increase the confidence of President Diem and his government in the United States, by the following actions:

(1) A message has been dispatched to President Diem informing him of your personal support for his courageous leadership in the struggle against communism and of Vice President Johnson's trip, indicating that Vice President Johnson will be carrying a more detailed expression of your thoughts on a broad range of proposals for joint action between our two countries.

(2) A letter from you to President Diem has been prepared for Vice President Johnson identifying the key objectives contained in this Task Force report which we propose as a joint U.S. -

Vietnamese address to the existing threat to Vietnam's freedom, stability and security, seeking an expression of Diem's support for this joint effort.

(3) Vice President Johnson's trip to Vietnam should be focused on obtaining broad agreement on how the U.S. and Vietnam

view the problem confronting Vietnam's security including the range of political, economic and military actions required to preserve the freedom and integrity of that country.

b. Strengthen President Diem's popular support within Vietnam, by the following actions:

(1) Instruct Ambassador Nolting to reappraise the political situation and undertake to obtain agreement of the G. V. N. on an urgent basis for a realistic political program along the lines indicated in the CIP. The objective of the program would be to seek to produce favorable attitudes and active popular cooperation against the VC. While the Ambassador's recommendations might well include actions directed toward fiscal and monetary reform measures, it is presumed that the major recommendations in this area will be developed by the Ambassador in conjunction with the special team of U.S. economic experts which it is proposed be dispatched to Vietnam for this purpose (in Economic section following).

(2) As a part of this initial assessment, the Ambassador should also consider such special arrangements within the field organization as he may deem required to assure a capability for rapid Country Team response to evolving problems. This should include an assessment of staff requirements, both with a view to requesting such additional personnel as required and to reviewing the employment



of existing field staff to assure the most efficient application of available personnel to major objectives to be accomplished.

II. Objective: Improve Vietnam's relationships with other countries and its status in world opinion.

a. Improve relations with Cambodia leading to full border control cooperation, by the following actions:

(1) Instruct our Ambassadors in Phnom Penh and Saigon to urge host governments to enter promptly into renewed border control negotiations. In order to secure Cambodian cooperation, the Cambodian government should be informed that requests for additional military assistance will be sympathetically considered. It also should be informed immediately of the approval of its recent request for four T-37 aircraft.

b. Call for United Nations observers to observe externally supported Communist actions of subversion, infiltration and other violations of Vietnam's sovereignty, by the following action:

(1) Instruct our Ambassador in Saigon to consider discussing this matter with the G. V. N. Ambassador Stevenson might later be asked to explore informally the idea with Mr. Hammarskjold and friendly foreign representatives in New York.

c. Accept contributions of other free world countries toward meeting the Communist guerrilla threat in Vietnam as a means

of bringing a wider allied support to the effort to assist Vietnam, by the following action:

(1) Instruct our representatives in Saigon to prepare, in consultation with the Vietnamese, proposals providing for the use of third country contributions, particularly that already offered by the British, to the training of Vietnam's forces and counter-guerrilla efforts.

III. Objective: Undertake military security arrangements which emphasize the U.S. intention to stand behind Vietnam's resistance to Communist aggression.

a. Undertake a new bilateral arrangement with Vietnam, by the following action:

(1) On the grounds that the Geneva Accords have placed inhibitions upon free world action while at the same time placing no restrictions upon the Communists, Ambassador Nolting should be instructed to enter into preliminary discussions with Diem regarding the possibility of a defensive security alliance despite the inconsistency of such action with the Geneva Accords. This action would be based on the premise that such an undertaking is justified in international law as representing a refusal to be bound by the Accords in a degree and manner beyond that which the other party to the Accords has shown a willingness to honor. Communist violations, therefore, justify the establishment



of the security arrangement herein recommended. Concurrently, Defense should study the military advisability of committing U.S. forces in Vietnam (as noted in Military section above).

(Political details in Annex 3.)

4. Economic:

I. Objective: Undertake economic programs having both a short-term immediate impact as well as ones which contribute to the longer range economic viability of the country.

a. Undertake a series of economic projects designed to accompany the counter-insurgency effort, by the following action:

(1) Grant to ICA the authority and funds to move into a rural development-civic action program. Such a program would include short-range, simple, impact projects which would be undertaken by teams working in cooperation with local communities. This might cost roughly \$3 to \$5 million, mostly in local currency. Directors of field teams should be given authority with respect to the expenditure of funds including use of dollar instruments to purchase local currency on the spot.

b. Assist Vietnam to make the best use of all available economic resources, by the following action:

(1) Having in mind that our chief objective is obtaining a full and enthusiastic support by the G. V. N. in its fight against the Communists, a high level team, preferably headed by Assistant Secretary

of the Treasury John Leddy, with State and ICA members, should be dispatched to Saigon to work out in conjunction with the Ambassador a plan whereby combined U.S. and Vietnamese financial resources can best be utilized. This group's terms of reference should cover the broad range of fiscal and economic problems. Authority should be given to make concessions necessary to achieve our objectives and to soften the blow of monetary reform. Ambassador Nolting and perhaps the Vice President should notify Diem of the proposed visit of this group stressing that their objective is clearly to maximize the joint effort rather than to force the Vietnamese into inequitable and unpalatable actions.

(2) As a part of the foregoing effort, an assessment should be undertaken of the fiscal and other economic implications of a further force increase from 170,000 to 200,000 (as noted in the Military section above).

c. Undertake the development of a long-range economic development program as a means of demonstrating U.S. confidence in the economic and political future of the country by the following action:

(1) Authorize Ambassador Nolting to inform the G. V. N. that the U.S. is prepared to discuss a long-range joint five year development program which would involve contributions and undertakings by both parties.

(Economic details in Annex 4.)



5. Psychological:

a. Assist the G. V. N. to accelerate its public information program to help develop a broad public understanding of the actions required to combat the Communist insurgents and to build public confidence in the G. V. N.'s determination and ability to deal with the Communist threat. (Details in Annex 5.)

b. The U. S. Country Team, in coordination with the G. V. N. Ministry of Defense, should compile and declassify for use of media representatives in South Vietnam and throughout the world, documented facts concerning Communist infiltration and terrorists' activities and the measures being taken by the G. V. N. to counter such attacks.

c. In coordination with CIA and the appropriate G. V. N. Ministry, USIS will increase the flow of information about unfavorable conditions in North Vietnam to media representatives.

d. Develop agricultural pilot-projects throughout the country, with a view toward exploiting their beneficial psychological effects. This project would be accomplished by combined teams of Vietnamese Civic Action personnel, Americans in the Peace Corps, Filipinos in Operation Brotherhood, and other Free World nationals.

e. Exploit as a part of a planned psychological campaign the rehabilitation of Communist Viet Cong prisoners now held in South Vietnam. Testimony of rehabilitated prisoners, stressing the errors

of Communism, should be broadcast to Communist-held areas, including North Vietnam, to induce defections. This rehabilitation program would be assisted by a team of U.S. personnel including U.S. Army (Civil Affairs, Psychological Warfare, and Counter-Intelligence), USIS, and USOM experts.

f. Provide adequate funds for an impressive U.S. participation in the Saigon Trade Fair of 1962.

6. Covert Actions:

a. Expand present operations in the field of intelligence, unconventional warfare, and political-psychological activities to support the U.S. objective as stated.

(Details of covert actions are given in Annex 6.)

7. Funding:

a. As spelled out in the funding annex, the funding of the counter-insurgency plan and the other actions recommended in this



program might necessitate increases in U. S. support of the G. V. N. budget for FY 61 of as much as \$58 million, making up to a total of \$192 million compared to \$155 million for FY 60. The U. S. contribution for the G. V. N. Defense budget in FY 62 as presently estimated <sup>58</sup>/<sub>13</sub> could total \$161 million plus any deficiency in that Budget which the G. V. N. might be unable to finance. The exact amount of U. S. contributions to the G. V. N. Defense budgets for FY 61 and FY 62 are subject to negotiation between the U. S. and the G. V. N.

b. U. S. military assistance to G. V. N., in order to provide the support contemplated by the proposed program would total \$140 million, or \$71 million more than now programmed for Vietnam in the U. S. current MAP budget for FY 62.

(Details are given in Annex 7.)

#### 8. Organizational Arrangements:

a. Because of the critical nature of the situation in Vietnam, and the need for accelerated action, the direction, coordination, and support of the program will be effected through a special Task Force on Vietnam, established in and directed by the Department of State, constituted as follows:

Director: Sterling J. Cottrell

Executive Officer: Chalmers B. Wood

Members:

Defense:

Treasury:

BOB:

ICA:

USIA:

CIA:

Office of the President:

b. It shall be the responsibility of the Director and the Deputy Director of the Task Force:

(1) To see that the action program as approved is carried out;

(2) To keep under continual review the adequacy of the action program to meet its objectives; and

(3) To bring to the attention of the Secretary and the Under Secretary of State and to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense the need for any changes in or additions to the action program to meet its objectives.



May 15 , 1961

Dear Mr. President :

The gracious visit of Vice-President of the United States and Mrs. Johnson to Vietnam has brought to us an even warmer feeling of friendship for the American people and strengthened the bonds of friendship which had existed between our two countries since the birth of the Republic of Vietnam. The presence of your brother-in-law and your charming sister, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Smith, brought to the Vietnamese people a warm feeling of your own personal interest in Vietnam, an interest which you may be sure will be long remembered.

Your thoughtful and understanding letter of May 8th, 1961, which was handed to me by Vice-President Johnson, contains wise and far-sighted proposals, many of which I myself have advocated for four years or more. I was accordingly glad to tell Vice-President Johnson without hesitation that the Government of Vietnam accepts the proposals in your letter to initiate, in collaboration with the Government of the United States, the series of joint, mutually supporting actions to win the struggle against communism in Vietnam and further the advancement of our country. Our agreement to these proposals was made public in the joint communique which was released to the press on Saturday morning 13th, just before Vice-President Johnson's departure from Saigon.

In the course of our frank and fruitful conversations, Vice-President Johnson graciously asked for my own suggestions as to the most urgent needs as we see them to save our country from the vicious communist aggression being waged against us, both within our borders and from every side today. I was most deeply gratified by this gracious gesture by your distinguished Vice-President, particularly as we have not become accustomed to being asked for our own views as to our needs. The recent developments in Laos have emphasized our grave concern for the security of our country with its long and vulnerable frontiers.

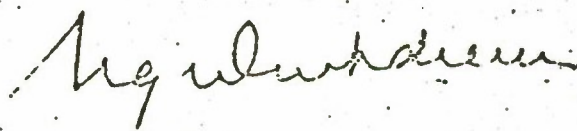
With the very real possibility that we may find ourselves faced with communist military forces pressing our borders not only from the north of the 17th parallel but from a possibly communist dominated Laos and a communist or neutral Cambodia on the west as well, we have undertaken urgent plans to determine the needs to save our country. These studies will be completed in preliminary form in about a week.

We now know that as a small nation we cannot hope to meet all of our defense needs alone and from our own resources. We are prepared to make the sacrifices in blood and manpower to save our country, and I know that we can count on the material support from your great country which will be so essential to achieving final victory.

I was deeply gratified at Vice-President Johnson's assurances that our needs will be given careful consideration in Washington. An estimate of these needs as we see them will accordingly be furnished to you in a second letter which I shall write in about a week. The Government and people of Vietnam have been greatly heartened by the encouraging visit of your distinguished Vice-President and the members of his official party. I now feel confident that in the mutual interest of our two countries the sacrifices the Vietnamese people are prepared to make will find full support from the United States in our joint effort to save Vietnam and consequently Southeast Asia from being overwhelmed by communist aggression.

Please accept, Mr. President, this expression of my deep respect and friendship.

Sincerely,

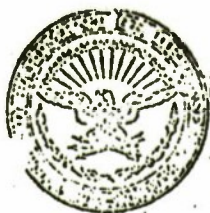


His Excellency

JOHN F. KENNEDY

President of the United States of America





OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

May 18, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY GILPATRIC

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *Ed*

Subject: U.S. Combat Forces for Vietnam

The following sums up the information made available to me on the possible deployment of U.S. combat forces in Vietnam.

Use:

On 10 May, the JCS recommended that President Diem be encouraged to request that the U.S. fulfill its SEATO obligation, in view of the new threat imposed by the Laotian situation, by the immediate deployment of appropriate U.S. forces to South Vietnam. Details of size and composition of suitable forces were awaiting the views of CINCPAC and CHMAAG.

On 12 May, this subject was discussed by President Diem and Vice President Johnson in Saigon. Ambassador Nolting reported this discussion, noting that President Diem would desire U.S. (or SEATO) combat forces only in case of overt aggression. The introduction of foreign combat forces would contravene and signify the end of the Geneva accord. (General Williams, former MAAG Chief, agrees that this is in line with previous thinking by President Diem.)

Ambassador Nolting added that President Diem would welcome as many U.S. military personnel as needed for training and advising Vietnamese forces. General McGarr, Chief of MAAG who was present at this discussion also, reported that while President Diem would not want U.S. combat forces for the purpose of fighting Communists in South Vietnam, he would accept deployment of U.S. combat forces as trainers for the Vietnamese forces at any time.

### Size and composition:

There has been considerable study of the size and composition of U.S. combat forces for possible deployment to Vietnam. The latest I have seen were CINCPAC's tentative views, after refinement. A U.S. Army infantry division to the High Plateau region, reinforced with Army Aviation, Engineers, Artillery, etc. The Seventh Fleet would relieve the Vietnamese need for readiness to resist large scale invasion by sea. A minimum number of U. S. Navy patrol craft to help develop and train the Vietnamese Junk Forces, while initially supplementing the efforts. The air effort would be based near Saigon, with eight B57's (later relieved by F100 squadron) for border surveillance, four F102's for possible air defense, two or three TAC recce aircraft, and provisional C47 squadron.

### Location:

Much of the thinking has been on stationing U.S. combat forces in the High Plateau, where they would be well located in relation to borders vulnerable to overt Communist aggression. However, General Williams has written a brief memo for me, recommending such U.S. forces be stationed on the coast, at Da Nang (Tourane), Nha Trang, and Phan Thiet, where sea, road, rail, and air facilities would permit further deployment as necessary in a contingency.

Any of the above locations would permit the relief of Vietnamese forces for training or operations against the Viet Cong. Also, any of the above locations have good areas for training of Vietnamese forces, if this were to be a mission of the U.S. forces.

### Recommendations:

Since the deployment of U.S. combat forces in Vietnam is predicated on the request for them by the Government of Vietnam, since this request hasn't been made yet, and since President Diem is sending Nguyen Dinh Thuan (Secretary of Security, Defense, Interior, etc.) to Washington next week to bring us Vietnam's "definitive military needs," it is recommended that you explore this subject with Secretary Thuan towards getting a precise definition of the use of U.S. forces in Vietnam. With concrete information, you will then have a firm position for further decisions.

cc: Secretary McNamara

General Lemnitzer

Assistant Secretary Nitze



May 23, 1961

MEMORANDUM

TO: The President

FROM: The Vice President

SUBJECT: Mission to Southeast Asia, India and Pakistan

The mission undertaken May 9, 1961, at your request, was informative and illuminating far beyond my expectations. Unusual candor -- as well as unusual length -- marked exchanges in each country. Each leader bisited selcomed and sought to take full advantage of my presence as a means of transmitting to uou their strongly held personal views on many matters.

The purpose of this memorandum is to convey such of my own impressions and evaluations as seem most pertinent to decisions now under your consideration. It would be unrealistic to assume that such limited visits afford a basis for detailed substantive policy judgments. It would be equally unrealistic not to recognize that the circumstances and timing of this mission elicited a depth and substance of expression not normally present in exchanges through casual channels. My purpose is to offer perspective -- not, I wish to emphasize, to propose details of policy.

The Impact of Laos

There is no mistaking the deep - and long lasting -- impact of recent developments in Laos.

Country to country, the degree differs but Laos has created doubt and concern about intentions of the United States throughout Southeast Asia. No amount of success at Geneva can, of itself, erase this. The independent Asians do not wish to have their own status resolved in like manner in Geneva.

Leaders

Leaders such as Diem, Chiang, Sarit and Ayub more or less accept that we are making "the best of a bad bargain" at Geneva. Their charity extends no farther.

### The Impact of the Mission

Beyond question, your judgment about the timing of our mission was correct. Each leader -- except Nehru -- publicly congratulated you on the "timing" of this mission. Chiang said -- and all others privately concurred -- that the mission had the effect of "stabilizing" the situation in the Southeast Asian nations.

What happened, I believe, was this: the leaders visited want -- as long as they can -- to remain as friends or allies of the United States. The public, or, more precisely, the political, reaction to Laos had drastically weakened the ability to maintain any strongly pro-US orientation. Neutralism in Thailand, collapse in Vietnam, anti-American election demagoguery in the Philippines were all developing prior to our visit. The show of strength and sincerity -- partly because you had sent the Vice President and partly, to a greater extent than you may believe, because you had sent your sister -- gave the friendly leaders something to "hang their hats on" for a while longer.

Our mission arrested the decline of confidence in the United States. It did not -- in my judgment -- restore any confidence already lost. The leaders were as explicit, as courteous and courtly as men could be in making it clear that deeds must follow words -- soon.

We didn't buy time -- we were given it.

If these men I saw at your request were bankers, I would know -- without bothering to ask -- that there would be no further extensions on my note.

The purpose



### The Purpose of Joint Communiques

Starting with President Diem at Saigon, it was my conclusion that the interests of the United States would be served -- and protected -- by the issuance of joint communiques. My purpose was this: to attach the signature and the name of each of the leaders to a joint public statement embodying their acceptance of an agreement with the details of your letters which I delivered in your behalf. Without such statements in writing, it was clear that the United States would be victimized later by self-serving statements that you -- and the Administration -- had offered "nothing" or "too little," etc.

As you recognized, the joint communiques followed item by item the statements in your letters. In most instances, where substantive pledges and policies were involved, the communiques were cleared through Washington before issuance. The extensive, important and almost unprecedented communique with Nehru largely reflects the high regard the Indian Government holds for Ambassador Galbraith.

I should make these two points clear: assurances I gave were those you sent me to convey, and no commitments were asked and none were given beyond those authorized in your letters. In some instances, for various reasons, I did not express all the commitments or proposals authorized in the State position papers.

### The Importance of Follow-Through

I cannot stress too strongly the extreme importance of following up this mission with other measures, other actions, and other efforts. At the moment -- because of Laos -- these nations are hypersensitive to the possibility of American hypocrisy toward Asia. Considering the Vienna talks with Khrushchev -- which, to the Asian mind, emphasize Western rather than Asian concerns -- and considering the negative line of various domestic American editorials about this mission, I strongly believe it is of first importance that this trip bear fruit immediately.

### Personal Conclusions



## Personal Conclusions from the Mission

I took to Southeast Asia some basic convictions about the problems faced there. I have come away from the mission there -- and to India and Pakistan -- with many of those convictions sharpened and deepened by what I saw and learned. I have also reached certain other conclusions which I believe may be of value as guidance for those responsible in formulating policies.

These conclusions are as follows:

1. The battle against Communism must be joined in Southeast Asia with strength and determination to achieve success there -- or the United States, inevitably, must surrender the Pacific and take up our defenses on our own shores. Asian Communism is compromised and contained by the maintenance of free nations on the subcontinent. Without this inhibitory influence, the island outposts -- Philippines, Japan, Taiwan -- have no security and the vast Pacific becomes a Red Sea.
2. The struggle is far from lost in Southeast Asia and it is by no means inevitable that it must be lost. In each country it is possible to build a sound structure capable of withstanding and turning the Communist surge. The will to resist -- while now the target of subversive attack -- is there. The key to what is done by Asians in defense of Southeast Asian freedom is confidence in the United States.
3. There is no alternative to United States leadership in Southeast Asia. Leadership in individual countries -- or the regional leadership and cooperation so appealing to Asians -- rests on the knowledge and faith in United States power, will and understanding.
4. SEATO is not now and probably never will be the answer because of British and French unwillingness to support decisive action. Asian distrust of the British and French is outspoken. Success at Geneva would prolong SEATO's role. Failure at Geneva would terminate SEATO's meaningfulness. In the latter event, we must be ready with a new approach to collective security in the area.

We should



We should consider an alliance of all the free nations of the Pacific and Asia who are willing to join forces in defense of their freedom. Such an organization should:

- a) have a clear-cut command authority
- b) also devote attention to measures and programs of --  
social justice, housing, land reform, etc.

Asian leaders -- at this time -- do not want American troops involved in Southeast Asia other than on training missions. American combat troop involvement is not only not required, it is not desirable. Possibly Americans -- fail to appreciate fully the subtlety that recently-colonial peoples would not look with favor upon governments which invited or accepted the return this soon of Western troops. To the extent that fear of ground troop involvement dominates our political responses to Asia in Congress or elsewhere, it seems most desirable to me to allay those paralyzing fears in confidence, on the strength of the individual statements made by leaders consulted on this trip. (This does not minimize or disregard the probability that open attack would bring calls for U. S. combat troops.) But the present probability of open attack seems scant, and we might gain much needed flexibility in our policies if the spectre of combat troop commitment could be lessened domestically.

6. Any help -- economic as well as military -- we give less developed nations to secure and maintain their freedom must be a part of a mutual effort. These nations cannot be saved by United States help alone. To the extent the Southeast Asian nations are prepared to take the necessary measures to make our aid effective, we can be -- and must be -- unstinting in our assistance. It would be useful to enunciate more clearly than we have -- for the guidance of these young and unsophisticated nations -- what we expect or require of them.
7. In large measure, the greatest danger Southeast Asia offers to nations like the United States is not the momentary threat of Communism itself, rather that danger stems from hunger, ignorance, poverty and disease. We must -- whatever strategies we evolve -- keep these enemies the point of our attack, and make imaginative use of our scientific and technological capability in such enterprises.



8. Vietnam and Thailand are the immediate and most important trouble spots, critical to the U. S. These areas require the attention of our very best talents -- under the very closest Washington direction -- on matters economic, military and political.

The basic decision in Southeast Asia is here. We must decide whether to help these countries to the best of our ability or throw in the towel in the area and pull back our defenses to San Francisco and the "Fortress America" concept. More important, we would say to the world in this case that we don't live up to treaties and don't stand by our friends. This is not my concept. I recommend that we move forward promptly with a major effort to help these countries defend themselves. I consider the key here is to get our best MAAG people to control, plan, direct and exact results from our military aid program. In Vietnam and Thailand, we must move forward together.

a. In Vietnam, Diem is a complex figure beset by many problems. He has admirable qualities, but he is remote from the people, is surrounded by persons less admirable and capable than he. The country can be saved -- if we move quickly and wisely. We must decide whether to support Diem -- or let Vietnam fall. We must have coordination of purpose in our country team, diplomatic and military. The Saigon Embassy, USIS, MAAG and related operations leave much to be desired. They should be brought up to maximum efficiency. The most important thing is imaginative, creative, American management of our military aid program. The Vietnamese and our MAAG estimate that \$50 million of U. S. military and economic assistance will be needed if we decide to support Vietnam. This is the best information available to us at the present time and if it is confirmed by the best Washington military judgment it should be supported. Since you proposed and Diem agreed to a joint economic mission, it should be appointed and proceed forthwith.

b. In Thailand, the Thais and our own MAAG estimate probably as much is needed as in Vietnam -- about \$50 million of military and economic assistance. Again, should our best military judgment concur, I believe we should support such a program. Sarit is more strongly and staunchly pro-Western than many of his people. He is and must be deeply concerned at the consequence to his country of a communist-controlled Laos. If Sarit is to stand firm against neutralism, he must have -- soon -- concrete evidence to show his people of United States military and economic support. He believes that his armed forces should be increased to 150,000. His Defense Minister is coming to Washington to discuss aid matters.

9. The



9. The Republic of China on Taiwan was a pleasant surprise to me. I had been long aware of the criticisms against Chiang Kai-shek and his government and cognizant of the deep emotional American feelings in some quarters against him. I know these feelings influence our US policy.

Whatever the cause, a progressive attitude is emerging there. Our conversations with Chiang and Mme. Chiang were dominated by discussions of measures of social progress, to my unexpected but gratified surprise. As with the Republic of Germany in Western Europe, so I believe we might profitably and wisely encourage the Republic of China in Asia to export talents, skills, and resources to other Asian lands to assist in programs of progress.

10. I was assured that there were no problems for the U. S. in the Philippines. There is a great reservoir of good feeling toward America among Filipinos, with many of the usual Latin qualifications. But a widespread belief that corruption exists is sapping the effectiveness of the government. Remoteness of the leadership from the people seems a problem.

11. India could well be the subject of an entire report. Nehru, during our visit, was clearly "neutral" in favor of the West. This Administration is highly regarded and well received in India. Only part of this flows out of hope or expectation of aid. Mainly, there is an intellectual affinity, or an affinity of spirit. This, in my judgment, should be exploited not with the hope of drawing India into our sphere -- which might be as unnecessary as it would be improbable -- but, chiefly, with the hope of cementing under Nehru an India-U. S. friendship which would endure beyond any transition of power in India.

12. President Ayub in Pakistan is the singularly most impressive and, in his way, responsible head of state encountered on the trip. He is seasoned as a leader where others are not; confident, straightforward and I would judge, dependable. He is frank about his belief, offensive as it is to us, that the forms of representative government would only open his country to Communist take-over at this time. Nonetheless, Ayub understands -- and is in agreement with -- the aims of eradicating poverty, ignorance and disease. We can have great influence and -- because of his administrative organization -- achieve dramatic success by supporting Pakistan's needs. Our military should see how to improve the effectiveness and achieve modernization of Pakistan's army. Ayub is wisely aware of Pakistan's strategic position, wants to make his forces more modern, and wants to resolve the Kashmir dispute to

Release Indian and Pakistani troops to deter the Chinese rather than each other. He spells out the fact that U.S. leadership rests on our own self-confidence and confidence we permit Asians to have in us.

To recapitulate, these are the main impressions I have brought back from my trip.

The fundamental decision required of the United States -- and time of the greatest importance -- is whether we are to attempt to meet the challenge of Communist expansion now in Southeast Asia by a major effort in support of the forces of freedom in the area or throw in the towel. This decision must be made in a full realization of the very heavy and continuing costs involved in terms of money, of effort and of United States prestige. It must be made with the knowledge that at some point we may be faced with the further decision of whether we commit major United States forces to the area or cut our losses and withdraw should our other efforts fail. We must remain master in this decision. What we do in Southeast Asia should be part of a rational program to meet the threat we face in the region as a whole. It should include a clear-cut pattern of specific contributions to be expected by each partner, according to his ability and resources. I recommend we proceed with a clear-cut and strong program of action.

I believe that the mission -- as you conceived it -- was a success. I am grateful to the many who labored to make it so.

Lyndon B. Johnson



*Nhiệm Vọng Cộng Hòa*

Saigon, the 9th of June, 1961

*Phủ Tổng Thống*

Dear Mr. President :

This document consists of 7 pages.  
Number 3 of 7 copies, Series 11

In reference to my letter dated 15 May 1961 and in reply to the invitation that was made to me in your name by Vice President Johnson, I have the honor to send you a study on our needs to meet the new situation.

As I expressed verbally to your eminent representative, it pertains to a situation which has become very much more perilous following the events in Laos, the more and more equivocal attitude of Cambodia and the intensification of the activities of aggression of international communism which wants to take the maximum advantage to accelerate the conquest of Southeast Asia. It is apparent that one of the major obstacles to the communist expansion on this area of the globe is Free Vietnam because with your firm support, we are resolved to oppose it with all our energies. Consequently, now and henceforth, we constitute the first target for the communists to overthrow at any cost. The enormous accumulation of Russian war material in North Vietnam is aimed, in the judgement of foreign observers, more at South Vietnam than at Laos. We clearly realize this dangerous situation but I want to reiterate to you here, in my personal name and in the name of the entire Vietnamese people, our indomitable will to win.

On the second of May, my council of generals met to evaluate the current situation and to determine the needs of the Republic of Vietnam to meet this situation. Their objective evaluation shows that the military situation at present is to the advantage of the communists and that most of the Vietnamese Armed Forces are already committed to internal security and the protection of our 12 million inhabitants. For many months the communist-inspired, fratricidal war has taken nearly one thousand casualties a month on both sides. Documents obtained in a recent operation, along route No. 9 which runs from Laos to Vietnam, contain definite proof that 2,860 armed agents have infiltrated among us in the course of the last four months. It is certain that this number rises each day.

However, the Vietnamese people are showing the world that they

are willing to fight and die for their freedom, not withstanding the temptations to neutralism and its false promises of peace being drummed into their ears daily by the communists.

In the light of this situation, the council of generals concluded that additional forces numbering slightly over 100,000 more than our new force level of 170,000 will be required to counter the ominous threat of communist domination. The 100,000 reservists to be called up according to the plan of my council of generals were to meet the requirement for an augmentation of the Vietnamese Army by nine infantry divisions plus modest naval and air force increases. First priority called for one division to reinforce each of the three Army Corps in Vietnam plus a two divisional general reserve for a total of five divisions. In second priority, an additional division for each of the three Army Corps plus one in general reserve brought the total to nine new divisions. With the seven existing divisions, fragmented in anti-guerilla operations, the Army of Vietnam would thus have a strength of 16 divisions of slightly less than 10,000 men each plus appropriate combat and logistic support units.

We have now had an opportunity to review this initial force requirement with General McGarr and the MAAG staff who have recommended certain modifications which are basically in consonance with our plan and with which we agree.

After considering the recommendations of our generals and consulting with our American military advisors, we now conclude that to provide even minimum initial resistance to the threat, two new divisions of approximately 10,000 strength each are required to be activated at the earliest possible date. Our lightly held defensive positions along the demilitarized zone at our Northern border is even today being outflanked by communist forces which have defeated the Royal Laotian Army garrisons in Tchepone and other cities in Southern Laos. Our ARVN forces are so thoroughly committed to internal anti-guerilla operations that we have no effective forces with which to counter this threat from Southern Laos. Thus, we need immediately one division for the First Army Corps and one for the Second Army Corps to provide at least some token resistance to the sizeable forces the communists are capable of bringing to bear against our Laotian frontier. Failing this, we would have no recourse but to withdraw our forces southward from the demilitarized zone and sacrifice progressively greater areas of our country to the communists. These divisions should be mobilized and equipped, together with initial logistic support units immediately after



completion of activation of the presently contemplated increase of 20,000 which you have offered to support.

Following the activation of these units, which should begin in about five months, we must carry on the program of activation of additional units until over a period of two years we will have achieved a force of 14 infantry divisions, an expanded airborne brigade of approximately division strength and accompanying supporting elements of logistical, naval and air units. In other words, our present needs as worked out with General McGarr's advice and assistance call for a total force of 15 divisional equivalents plus combat and logistic support units instead of our original plan for a 16 division force. The strategic concept and mission of this total 270,000 man force remains the same, namely, to overcome the insurgency which has risen to the scale of a bloody, communist-inspired civil war within our borders and to provide initial resistance to overt, external aggression until free world forces under the SEATO agreement can come to our aid. The question naturally arises as to how long we shall have to carry the burden of so sizeable a military force. Unfortunately, I can see no early prospects for the reduction of such a force once it has been established, for even though we may be successful in liquidating the insurgency within our borders, communist pressure in Southeast Asia and the external military threat to our country must be expected to increase, I fear, before it diminishes. This means that we must be prepared to maintain a strong defensive military posture for at least the foreseeable future in order that we may not become one of the so-called "soft spots" which traditionally have attracted communist aggression. We shall therefore continue to need material support to maintain this force whose requirements far exceed the capacity of our economy to support.

To accomplish this 100,000 man expansion of our military forces which is perfectly feasible from a manpower viewpoint will require a great intensification of our training programs in order to produce, in the minimum of time, those qualified combat leaders and technical specialists needed to fill the new units and to provide to them the technical and logistic support required to insure their complete effectiveness. For this purpose a considerable expansion of the United States Military Advisory Group is an essential requirement. Such an expansion, in the form of selected elements of the American Armed Forces to establish training centers for the Vietnamese Armed Forces, would serve the dual purpose of providing an expression of the United States' determination to halt the tide of communist aggression and of preparing our forces in the

minimum of time.

While the Government and people of Vietnam are prepared to carry the heavy manpower burden required to save our country, we must know that we cannot afford to pay, equip, train and maintain such forces as I have described. To make this effort possible, we would need to have assurances that this needed material support would be provided. I have drawn on our past experience of United States support we have received to make some extremely rough estimates of the costs of these proposals.

The costs of providing essential initial equipment to the added forces under the Military Assistance Program would probably be in the neighborhood of \$175,000,000 with deliveries to be distributed over the next two and one-half years as units can be activated. If the United States assumes the task of providing this initial equipment for the additional forces, I understand that the annual Military Assistance Program for force maintenance will increase by about \$20 million above the level of MAP support for the presently authorized 170,000 force.

The Vietnamese Military Budget, which includes piaster requirements, must also be supplemented. As you know, Vietnam contributes to this budget to its fullest capability now with respect to existing forces. Despite our best efforts, your Government has largely supported this budget through Defense Support Assistance. Although we have made significant progress in developing our economy in the last four years, the support of even the inadequate armed forces we have has far exceeded the modest capabilities of the economy of our small country. In order to carry out the expansion of forces, the piaster military budget now averaging nearly 7.0 billion piasters a year will have to be supplemented. As I see it, the annual maintenance cost will increase gradually during the force implementation and will ultimately level off at approximately 10.60 billion piasters.

This program, I realize, will be expensive in money, equipment and personnel. The benefits to be gained, however, in preventing the subjugation of our free people and in establishing a solid obstacle to the advance of communism, I know you will agree, far outweigh the cost. With your support, we stnad determined to survive in independence and freedom.

It goes without saying that in the face of the extremely serious situation created by the communist aggressor, we must temporarily



accord priority to the military problems. However, my Government does not attach less importance to economic, political and social problems. At this point the doctrinal position which pertains to South Vietnam is clear and clean. It was expressed in a free and sincere manner in my message to the American Congress in April 1957. It has not varied since. Neither did it vary during the recent presidential campaign when I was elected by a very large majority.

Presently, it is necessary not to be maneuvered by the communists, who exploit our tendency to consider military efforts as reactionary and fruitless, to divert our effective action, which is necessitated by the mortal communist attacks, toward a long range project of economic and social improvement, and which, of course, supposes that we are still alive. We see for the army an economic and social mission along with military role, a conception which rationally responds to the double challenge which the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia have had to face : underdevelopment and communist subversive war. It is along this line that, since my taking office in July 1954, I have undertaken to create an economic infrastructure throughout the country, including the least inhabited regions ; to develop the lines of communication with the double purpose of facilitating intercourse and facilitating the mobility of our troops ; to increase and diversify the agricultural production ; to give each family a tract of land which will belong to them ; to create each day more employment by industrializing the country ; in brief to open new horizons to the rural masses, the determining factor in the struggle against communism. It is sufficient to consider the product of our exportation these last two years, the reduction of our importation program, to count the factory chimneys which make their appearance to realize the progress already made . On the other hand, in spite of its lack of resources, the Government increases the social investments to respond to the diversified needs of a population which increases at the rate of 30/o per year : hospitals in the towns, dispensaries in the villages, primary schools in each commune, secondary schools in each city of whatever importance . Education is developing at the annual rate of 20o/o while in the domain of public health, we have a hospital bed available for each thousand inhabitants. We want to progress more rapidly but, in addition to the budgetary limitations which constitute a primary obstacle, the lack of trained personnel has made itself felt despite our accelerated training programs . The agrovilles, which I have built in the last year, are another proof of the Government's efforts : These are agricultural communities located between two urban centers to give the rural population the benefits of the commodities of modern life and to correct the extreme dispersion of the

population. All foreign observers who travel in the country are struck by the standard of living enjoyed by the mass of peasants: sewing machine, bicycle, transistor radio for each family in more or less comfortable circumstances, theater, movies in the most backward areas, motor boats on the innumerable canals, tricycle busses on all passable roads. And it is precisely in order not to interrupt this development program that we ask for supplementary aid to finance our war effort; otherwise we will be forced to make the tragic decision to abruptly cease all our social and economic programs.

Concerning Cambodia, our diplomatic efforts would have results only if we recognize our adversary.

The idea of Cambodia being afraid of Vietnam is a myth. For 7 years, Sihanouk has not missed one chance to provoke South Vietnam, of which he has militarily occupied six islands. Having no reason to fear a Vietnam, divided and weakened by the subversive communist war, Sihanouk has nothing to fear at all. However, this idea would be pleasing to those who would seek to arbitrate between Cambodia and South Vietnam. It would also be pleasing to certain Vietnamese because this idea is flattering to their vanity and to their infantilism which consists of minimizing the difficulties and proposing any solutions. It would also be pleasing to Sihanouk who has a need to give substance to another myth that of encirclement which he needs to excuse his internal failures in order to justify his presence in power, to accuse the Americans and to court the communists. In reality, Sihanouk is committed intellectually and morally to communism, which he considers the stronger party and the inevitable victor in the future. In spite of the aid which he receives from America, has Sihanouk ever aided the US in the battle with the communists? He always takes positions favorable to the communists against the USA. His conduct in the Laotian affair is clear. Not only does he serve the communists, but he is proud to serve a stronger master. On the other hand, Cambodia, like Laos, is unable to ensure the security of her territory from the communist guerillas because he will not or does not wish to make the appropriate efforts. It is for this reason that he takes refuge in communist servitude under the guise of a neutralist. It is also for that reason that he has always refused to accept any arrangement for the effective control of the Cambodian-Vietnamese border under the fallacious pretext of neutrality.

From the political point of view, the reforms that I have anticipated,



that is to say the elective system established at the village level, the creation of the provincial councils, the institution of a High Economic Council, of a National and Social Council - all these measures are tending to assure more and more active participation by the population in public affairs, in the dramatic situation of an underdeveloped country, divided and mortally menaced by communism.

Such is the direction of my efforts and such is our regime - a regime open to progress and not a closed system, I am convinced that with your support and so generously aided by your great, friendly nation, I will manage to reestablish law and order in our provinces, in our villages, to accelerate progress in all other areas for the edification of a society of free men, happy and prosperous. Vietnam thus constitutes a pole of attraction for the countries of Southeast Asia, for those who fight communism as well as for those who still doubt the future of the free world.

I wish to assure you, Mr. President, of the sincerity of my sentiments and most cordial wishes.

*Nguyen Dinh Diem*

His Excellency JOHN F. KENNEDY

United States of America

Washington, D.C.

1961 JUN 29 16 53

OFF SECY OF DEFENSE

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 28, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 56

TO: The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Paramilitary Requirements

The President has approved the following paragraph:

"It is important that we anticipate now our possible future requirements in the field of unconventional warfare and paramilitary operations. A first step would be to inventory the paramilitary assets we have in the United States Armed Forces, consider various areas in the world where the implementation of our policy may require indigenous paramilitary forces, and thus arrive at a determination of the goals which we should set in this field. Having determined the assets and the possible requirements, it would then become a matter of developing a plan to meet the deficit."

The President requests that the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Department of State and the CIA, make such an estimate of requirements and recommend ways and means to meet these requirements.

*McGeorge Bundy*  
McGeorge Bundy

cc: Secretary of State  
Director, CIA  
General Maxwell D. Taylor

(SECDEF HAS SEEN)

381 (28 June 61)

174





1961 JUL 12 15 21

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
OFF SECY OF DEFENSE WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

12 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY GILPATRIC

From Brig Gen Lansdale *SL*

Subject: Comments by Vietnamese Officials

The following information has been received from Colonel Ed Black:

Following is memo of my conversation with Vice President Tho on 10 July prepared for the Ambassador at his request. Mr. Tho invited me to his office as a result of a note of introduction from General Lansdale.

Taking advantage of the opportunity I reviewed briefly the presentation which Staley-Thuc were preparing to make to President Diem stressing the "breakthrough concept," the need to mobilize Vietnam's full effort to meet the current crisis, and the principle of a complete joint approach on the part of both VN and US Governments to the emergency. Mr. Tho appeared to be already briefed on this subject. He freely conceded that it was impossible for the US to provide Vietnam with piasters. He acknowledged that the main source of piaster revenues was for the GVN to provide for a higher piaster return per dollar of US economic aid imports. The problem which troubled the GVN was their fear that such an increase in piaster return per dollar of US economic aid would cause a rise in prices and thus, in turn, would create an irresistible demand for broad-based wage increases. Thus the GVN might find itself involved in a wage-price spiral which it would be unable to control. He conceded, however, that the basic problem was more political than economic.

Turning to more general subjects, Tho pressed me for my opinion of the current situation in VN. I replied that based on my observations made during my last visit in 1956, the country had achieved tremendous progress. Tho agreed, but still left me with the impression that he held a more pessimistic view of the situation.

*SL*  
*6/1/61*

SecDef Cont. No. *SD-1165*

Tho then said he wished to speak frankly concerning the underlying concern throughout VN, at all levels, that if the GVN were invaded by communist forces, the US might not repeat not respond. In this regard, he cited the developments in Laos, which he said were uppermost in the minds of people throughout SE Asia, and which had added fuel to these fears. He noted that if the communists did attack it would probably be in conjunction with a well-planned, general Viet Cong uprising throughout South Vietnam. He indicated there were two ways in which the US might provide tangible reassurances, but that both of these presented political obstacles. The first was the stationing of token US combat units in the country. This was impracticable at this time as it left the GVN open to the highly-exploitable communist charge that the government was merely substituting the US for France as a colonial, occupying power. The second was a mutual defense treaty with the US. This also appeared to be impractical since it would constitute an open repudiation of the Geneva Agreements of 1954.

Concerning the internal security situation, Tho stressed the importance of providing the self defense forces with modern weapons. Today 30 percent of their weapons and ammunition are unusable. He pled for early distribution of up-to-date individual weapons to the self defense forces as one of the most effective means of getting on top of the Viet Cong terrorist campaign. He strongly recommended that the weapon needed by these forces was the light weight carbine, not the larger, heavy M-1.

Referring to the emergency program, recommended in the Staley-Thuc economic report, I asked Tho if he thought the GVN had the administrative and managerial resources to complete 100 new agrovilles in 18 months. He said he believed it could be done provided it were handled in a manner which did not antagonize the people. I told him the cost estimates in the report included funds to pay the villagers reasonable wages for their labor in constructing the new agrovilles. Tho was greatly relieved to hear this and indicated that this being the case he was reasonably confident the agrovillage program could be completed on schedule.

New subject. President briefed on joint economic program of action from 4:30 to 8:00 PM 11 July. Staley-Thuc made joint presentation.



Problem of more realistic realization of piasters from US commercial aid was outlined in detail. President and senior members GVN who were present now have full picture of this key element of economic equation. President allowed Thuan to state current GVN position. For their part in 18 month crash program GVN will institute tax reforms, float victory bond issue, take measures to insure realization of 60 piasters per dollar US commercial aid, and borrow from Central Bank up to legal limit. These measures will provide about half estimated 6.5 billion piasters needed to finance crash program of action recommended in Staley-Thuc report. They hope that in addition to increased MAP of 42 million US for its part will provide commercial imports of 169 million in FY62 and 190 million in FY63, exclusive of PL 480. Will report further in subsequent message.

cc: Secretary McNamara  
Admiral Heinz/Colonel Kent, ISA  
Colonel Levy, JCS

26 1961

I-15565/61

SUBJECT: Joint Action Program Proposed by the Vietnam-United States Special Financial Groups

2. With favorable action by the Congress on the FY-62 MAP submission, and necessary decisions to adjust priorities of other requirements, funds can be made available to meet these additional requirements.

Acting Assistant Secretary  
Present FY 1962 MAP planned for VN  
is \$140 million. I suggest the  
"augmenting assistance" - which comes out  
of the economic aid account - would  
be more than. The Senate Committee  
total. 50-1257  
67/238





OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

25 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GILPATRIC

SUBJECT: The Staley Report.

Attached is the "Joint Action Program Proposed by the Vietnam-U.S. Special Financial Groups" which has been submitted to both President Kennedy and President Diem. The latter read the report very carefully before we left Saigon and we understand has approved it insofar as his country is concerned. I recommend you read, as a minimum, the covering letter, paragraph 6 and sections III and IV (these are marked with paper-clips).

In Vietnam, as in many other areas of the world where the fight with the Communists is joined, the difference between success or failure will be determined not so much by the amount of the money we spend, but by the speed with which we act. The critical factor is time.

The amount of additional U.S. funds recommended by the Staley group over and above the current level of U.S. effort in Vietnam comes to the modest sum of \$85.5 million, for the next eighteen months, of which \$42 million is MAP.

You will note that while the U.S. is making this contribution, the Vietnamese will also be contributing \$6.5 billion piasters (approximately \$108 million at 60 piasters per/dollar). In other words, the attached program is truly, as its title indicates, a joint action program by both the Vietnamese and the U.S. Governments.

From the standpoint of maintaining impetus behind the current counter-insurgency program within Vietnam, and to insure that the U.S. Government takes prompt action on the Staley report, it is recommended that you:

- a. Invite Dr. Staley to brief the JCS on his report at your next meeting with the JCS. Mr. Nitze should be invited to attend;
- b. Approve the report in principle and so notify the Secretary of State (draft letter attached;
- c. Have the report considered at an early NSC meeting to obtain formal Presidential approval of the "Joint Action Program" and the general order of magnitude of the additional U.S. assistance to Vietnam which is recommended;

- d. Have President Diem informed, through appropriate channels, that the proposed force level of 200,000 men by the end of CY '62 is approved, subject only to the Vietnamese ability to build its forces up to this level within that time.

*Black*

Edwin F. Black  
Colonel, U.S. Army



DRAFT

Dear Dean:

The Department of Defense has reviewed the "Joint Action Program Proposed by the Vietnam-U.S. Special Financial Groups" (The Staley Report) and considers it a well-conceived, realistic program for meeting the stepped-up level of Communist activities in south Vietnam. The Department of Defense concurs in the recommendations contained in the "Joint Action Program", including the proposed force level of 200,000 men for the regular forces by the end of CY 1962.

I suggest that the report be forwarded to the National Security Council for approval, with the understanding that the cost figures and details of the broad programs outlined therein are subject to refinement and adjustment by the appropriate U.S. Government agencies in Vietnam, acting jointly with their Vietnamese counterparts under the guidance of the U.S. Ambassador.

Honorable Dean Rusk  
Secretary of State

JOINT ACTION PROGRAM PROPOSED BY THE  
VIET NAM - UNITED STATES SPECIAL FINANCIAL GROUPS

TO

President Ngo Dinh Diem

President John F. Kennedy

The Viet Nam and United States Special Financial Groups charged with considering the means of further cooperation between their two countries for mutually shared purposes have the honor to propose to their respective governments the attached joint program of action.

Viet Nam is today under attack in a bitter, total struggle which involves its survival as a free nation. Its enemy, the Viet Cong, is ruthless, resourceful, and elusive. This enemy is supplied, reinforced, and centrally directed by the international Communist apparatus operating through Hanoi. To defeat it requires the mobilization of the entire economic, military, psychological, and social resources of the country and vigorous support from the United States.

The long-term economic future of Viet Nam is bright. In fact, the promising start already made toward improvement in the living conditions of its people appears to be one of the factors which precipitated the recent intensification of Communist pressure. The contrast between the achievements of recent years in South Viet Nam and the hardships and failure in Communist North Viet Nam was becoming too glaring. Given the means to throw back the Communist attack and to resume its march of economic, social, and political



progress, Viet Nam can be an example in Southeast Asia for the progressive potentialities of men who are determined to remain free. We strongly urge that our two governments make this the purpose of their continued cooperation.

At the moment, however, the primary problem is the restoration of internal security in the face of tough, widespread, externally aided Communist guerrilla warfare and subversion. To meet this problem requires stepped-up military and policing action. But the problem is more than a military problem. Its solution also demands stepped-up economic and social action, especially in rural areas, closely integrated with the military action. For example, one of the more promising counter-guerrilla methods tried up to this time involves regrouping scattered rural populations into more readily defensible communities so designed and assisted as also to offer improved opportunities for livelihood.

Recognizing this close interdependence of the military and the economic-social problems, we have based our recommendations on the following three central considerations:

1. The military-internal security requirements must for the time being have first call on Viet Nam's manpower and economic resources and on U.S. assistance. This is a short-term but essential requirement.
2. At the same time, the degree to which the military-internal security operations achieve lasting success will, in large measure, depend on the speed and effectiveness with which the recommended emergency economic and social programs are applied.
3. The ultimate objective of these economic and social programs and of the longer-range development planning which we also recommend is to hasten the day when Viet Nam will be a self-sustaining economy and a peaceful, free

society. This is desired by the Vietnamese, who want to be independent in the fullest sense, and by the Americans, who conceive their aid as helping people to help themselves toward a condition where they can continue to progress by their own efforts.

The recommendations which our two groups, working jointly together, have thus prepared call for major increases in the level of effort of both Viet Nam and the United States.

These increases reflect our sincere conviction that the subversive, intensive warfare being waged today in South Viet Nam can be brought to a successful conclusion only by the prompt application of effective military power, coupled with large-scale economic and social action reaching every part of the country, especially the rural areas. From the financial standpoint, we believe it far less costly to provide fully adequate resources today than to attempt to match Communist initiatives with just enough strength to meet each new threat. The first course offers a real possibility of early victory and thus an end to the tragic waste of human life and of the material assets so sorely needed for the economic development of the country. The second, while less costly in terms of current budgets, will not provide sufficient resources to achieve a decisive defeat of the Viet Cong organization and therefore will, in the long run, prove more expensive as the war drags on with increased intensity year after year.


Accordingly, the intensified program which we recommend our two countries adopt as a basis for mutual actions over the next several years



is designed not just to hold the line but to achieve a real breakthrough. Our joint efforts must surpass the critical threshold of the enemy's resistance, thereby putting an end to his destructive attacks, and at the same time we must make a decisive impact on the economic, social, and ideological front.

Respectfully,

Viet Nam Special Financial Group



Vu Quoc Thuc, Chairman

Duong Tan Tai

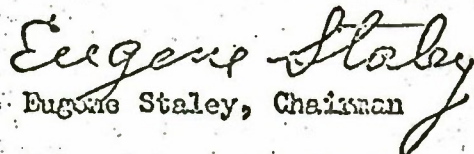
Dinh Quang Chieu

Huynh Van Diem

Luu Van Tinh

Bau Hoan

U.S. Special Financial Group



Eugene Staley, Chairman

Colonel Edwin F. Black

William W. Diehl

Paul F. Geren

Herman Kleins

Warren A. Silver

## I. INTRODUCTION

Conscious of the serious problems created throughout Southeast Asia by the accelerated Communist campaign of subversion and creeping aggression in Laos and in Viet Nam, President John F. Kennedy, in response to an invitation of the Government of Viet Nam, sent Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson to Saigon to discuss with President Ngo Dinh Diem various measures which might be undertaken by both their governments to preserve the freedom and security of Viet Nam. One of the consequences of these talks was an agreement to send a Special Financial Group composed of U.S. experts to Saigon to explore with their Vietnamese counterparts the economic and financial implications of a plan of action in which the two governments could cooperate in meeting the emergency situation.

President Ngo Dinh Diem appointed a similar group of experts to represent the Government of Viet Nam. At their first meeting, the Vietnamese and U.S. chairmen decided that any report or recommendations which they would submit should be prepared on a joint basis, emphasizing thereby the close partnership in which the two governments desire to approach the problem. Accordingly, they merged their two groups into one and conducted all their business as a completely integrated committee. The following is the special action program which they recommend to the Presidents of Viet Nam and the United States.

This program is based on the concept that the two governments must together do what is necessary to achieve a "breakthrough" simultaneously on the military-internal security front and on the economic-social front. At the same time, the economic-social action should be so planned as to help Viet Nam move toward its objective of a free society with a growing and self-sustaining economy. The spirit of partnership which animated the work of the joint groups is considered as a guiding principle in the implementation of the special action program.



## II. SPECIAL ACTION PROGRAM

### A. MILITARY-INTERNAL SECURITY ACTION

#### 1. The Situation

The Communist-inspired insurgency in Viet Nam, which is aimed at the destruction of the authority and prestige of the established government, is assumed to be a prelude to further attempted invasions designed ultimately to absorb the entire country into the Communist Bloc. North of the 17th parallel, The Communist-led Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (DRV) with the help of international Communism has the capability of overtly defeating the present military forces of Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam, either singly or in combination. It is the primary source of support and cadres for the Viet Cong efforts to gain control of Viet Nam. Current intelligence estimates indicate that, rather than resorting to overt attack, the Communist Bloc probably will continue, through the DRV, to exploit the use of insurgent forces as long as it appears to them that such action might succeed in bringing about the downfall of the GVN.

Although the threat of overt attack by DRV forces presently exists (and will probably increase as the GVN establishes effective control within Viet Nam), the most pressing problem, from a military viewpoint, is the destruction and elimination of the approximately 12,000 DRV supported and inspired Viet Cong guerrillas presently conducting insurgency operations within the borders of Viet Nam. The increase in Viet Cong strength and activities since late 1959 has resulted in the commitment of approximately 90 per cent of the combat forces of the RVNAF to counter-insurgency operations. This heavy commitment has enabled the RVNAF to begin to take the offensive, but more military forces are

needed to bring the Viet Cong under effective control.

The turn of events in Laos has created further serious problems with regard to the maintenance of the GVN as a free and sovereign non-Communist nation. In particular, the uncovering of the Laotian-Viet Nam border to DRV or DRV-supported forces creates a serious threat of increased covert infiltration of personnel, supplies, and equipment to the Viet Cong. With such increased support, the Viet Cong undoubtedly hope to seize firm military control of a geographic area and announce the establishment therein of a "rebel" government for South Viet Nam which would then be recognized by and receive military support from the DRV, Communist China, and Soviet Russia. (Example: The present situation in Laos.)

Confronted with this combination of an intensified Communist-directed insurgency campaign within the country and an ever-increasing danger from overt military aggression by superior forces from the North, the RVNAF has taken the calculated risk of deploying almost its entire regular forces against the Viet Cong guerrillas. The present conditions of internal subversion require the massive and widespread application of military power by highly-trained, disciplined forces. By thus providing fully adequate strength to do the job, it is intended to reduce the current insurgency situation rapidly to manageable proportions where it can then be maintained by the normal internal security forces.

## 2. GVN Armed Forces

a. The major elements of ARVN under the 150,000 force structure were the Joint General Staff; a Field Command Headquarters; three Corps Headquarters;



seven reduced strength Infantry Divisions; five separate Infantry Battalions; one Airborne Brigade (five Battalions); four Armored Regiments; eight non-divisional Artillery Battalions; sixty-five Ranger Companies; and sub-minimal logistic support units.

b. The VN Navy and Marines consisted of a small Navy Headquarters and Shore Establishment, a small Sea Force of about 27 vessels, a small River Force, and three Marine Battalions. The major units of the small VN Air Force were one Transport Group (G-47), one Fighter Squadron (AD-5), one Special Air Mission Squadron, two Liaison Squadrons (L-19), one Helicopter Squadron (H-19/H-34) and essential base and maintenance support elements.

c. Under the 20,000 force increase recommended and subsequently approved under the counter-insurgency plan, the RVNAF gained the following additional major elements: three separate Infantry Regiments; twenty-one Ranger Companies; one Military Intelligence Battalion; one Engineer Combat Battalion; one Navy Shallow Draft Boat Group; one Marine Battalion; one Airforce Helicopter Squadron; and selected logistic support units and augmentations to help correct the critical imbalance previously existing in the RVNAF.

d. The three Infantry Regiments were activated on 10 May 1961. Activation of the twenty-one Ranger Companies began on 1 May 1961. A recent RVNAF estimate indicates that the 170,000 force level should be reached prior to the end of CY 1961.

e. The developing situation in Laos has, however, indicated an urgent requirement for a further increase in the RVNAF force structure. There exists a requirement for an additional force increase of approximately 100,000 over a

period of the next 3-1/2 years, with an immediate requirement for two additional Infantry Divisions and essential supporting forces. The two additional Infantry Divisions are considered essential to bolster present forces in Northern and Central Viet Nam due to the continuing deterioration of the situation in Laos.

### 3. The Civil Guard

Current authorized strength for the Civil Guard is 68,000. It is organized into companies and battalions. Each province has a battalion composed of four or five companies. Its primary mission is to complete training and to assume the bulk of the semi-static security missions in Viet Nam, thus freeing the majority of Rangers and regular ARVN units for offensive operations and training. In view of the critical threat posed by the insurgency, control of the Civil Guard was transferred on 3 December 1960 from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Defense. Training of Civil Guard is now conducted by ARVN. Civil Guard units have been equipped or are in the process of being equipped with vehicles, weapons, radios, and other essential items.

A short supply situation has necessitated suspension of equipment issue to all units except those separate companies entering unit training at the Song Mao Civil Guard Training Center. This suspension will be lifted when more material arrives in Viet Nam. A significant quantity and variety of equipment should be on hand before the end of CY 1961 to complete the equipping of the first 32,000 civil guardsmen. It is estimated that all of the 70,000 Civil Guard force will be completely equipped by the end of CY 1962.

### 4. The Self-Defense Corps

The Self Defense Corps (SDC) is a para-military "village militia" type



organization which is responsible to the Department of the Interior. The SDC has an authorized strength of 58,000 during CY 1961.

The missions of the SDC are: To protect the village committee; to maintain order and security in the village; to oppose subversion and terrorist activities; to protect public buildings and public works; and to assist the public during disasters.

At present, the SDC is a relatively untrained, poorly equipped, and poorly paid force. The SDC has no trained officers or NCO's but depends on the Civil Guard or ARVN for leadership. The general level of individual training is low. Equipment consists primarily of individual weapons and ammunition. There is no communications equipment. Available weapons consist of a collection of French, British, German, Indochinese and American rifles, pistols, and some automatic weapons. Ammunition is old, unreliable, and in short supply.

At present the SDC is purely a defensive organization. To date because of training deficiencies SDC operations are not well conducted. The SDC have been a chief target of Viet Cong attacks and almost invariably suffer disproportionately heavy losses, often losing weapons and ammunition to the Viet Cong.

##### 5. The Youth Corps

During the past year the GVN has engaged in a major effort to mobilize the youth of the country for the purpose of supporting the government and combatting Communism. It is an indirect way to commit the population in the struggle against the Communists. The most important youth group in Viet Nam today is the Republican Youth Movement (RYM) which has approximately 1.7 million members and is closely identified with the present regime.

The RYM has become the major GVN effort to organize the younger elements



of the Vietnamese population and to use the organization to increase the awareness of people of the true nature of Viet Nam's fight for survival against Communist insurgency and terrorist techniques.

#### 6. Financial Implications

The joint VN-US group does not consider itself competent to make specific recommendations as to desired force levels for the defense of Viet Nam. They have, however, after consultation with their respective military authorities, adopted for economic planning purposes certain estimated strength figures for the GVN armed forces under two alternative assumptions. Alternative A assumes that the Communist-led insurgency effort remains at approximately its present level of intensity and that the Government of Laos maintains sufficient independence from the Communist Bloc to deny authority for the transit of DVN or Communist Chinese troops across its borders. Alternative B assumes that the Viet Cong are able to significantly increase their insurgency campaign within Viet Nam and that the situation in Laos continues to deteriorate to the point where the Communists gain de facto control of that country.

Under these alternative assumptions, the following force levels and costs have been assumed in the preparation of this report and its recommendations:

|                             | <u>FORCE LEVELS</u> |             |                |                |                  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                             | <u>1961</u>         | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u>    | <u>1964</u>    | <u>1965</u>      |
| <u>Regular Forces:</u>      |                     |             |                |                |                  |
| (1) <u>Alternative A</u>    | 170,000             | 200,000     | 200,000        | 200,000        | 200,000          |
| (2) <u>Alternative B</u>    | 170,000             | 200,000     | <u>230,000</u> | <u>260,000</u> | <u>278,000</u> * |
| <u>Civil Guard</u>          | 67,500              | 70,000      | 70,000         | 70,000         | 70,000           |
| <u>Local Defense Forces</u> | 58,000              | 60,000      | 60,000         | 60,000         | 60,000           |
| <u>Youth Corps</u>          | -                   | 108,000     | 108,000        | 108,000        | 108,000          |

\* To be reached during the first months of 1965.



VIETNAMESE COSTS \*  
(in millions of piasters)

|                          | <u>1961</u> | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u>  | <u>1964</u>   | <u>1965</u>   |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Regular Forces:          |             |             |              |               |               |
| (1) Alternative A        | 6,700       | 7,800       | 8,200        | 8,300         | 8,400         |
| (2) <u>Alternative B</u> | 6,700       | 7,800       | <u>9,000</u> | <u>10,200</u> | <u>11,200</u> |
| Civil Guard              | 1,435       | 1,540       | 1,550        | 1,600         | 1,600         |
| Local Defense Forces     | 322         | 684         | 684          | 684           | 684           |
| Youth Corps              | 48          | 595         | 600          | 650           | 600           |

\* Do not include military equipment, transport, or P.O.L.

U.S. COSTS \*  
(in millions of dollars)

|                          | <u>1961</u> | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u> | <u>1964</u> | <u>1965</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Regular Forces:          |             |             |             |             |             |
| (1) Alternative A        | 62          | 120         | 71          | 65          | 66          |
| (2) <u>Alternative B</u> | 62          | 120         | <u>135</u>  | <u>136</u>  | <u>83</u>   |
| Civil Guard              | 11          | 20          | 14          | 14          | 12          |

\* Do not include costs to U.S. of MAAG operations (salaries, subsistence, administrative costs) estimated at \$12 million a year.

7. Civic Action

One of the prerequisites of successful military action against insurgency or guerrilla attack is for the soldier to convince the population that he is a brother of the people, as well as their protector. The Communists claim an

## B. EMERGENCY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTION

The major problem now confronting Viet Nam is that of internal security. But the joint groups were in emphatic agreement that this problem cannot be solved by military means alone. They therefore considered the nature and the costs of economic and social measures which can be undertaken or expanded in order to give direct and early support to the solution of the internal security problem.

The following activity areas are those which deserve highest priority. Rough cost estimates are shown where major additional piaster and dollar outlays are required.

### 1. Information and communications

Measures now underway to establish communication facilities are well designed and oriented. All possible steps should be taken to speed up the implementation of these programs. The joint Groups believe, however, that at the same time a re-examination of this program is now in order with special reference to (1) increasing the broadcast power and coverage of radio stations, and (2) possible initiation of a television system. The latter would be a dramatic and unprecedented attack on the problem of national unification. It would undoubtedly require phasing as to area and programming.

Of particular interest are the programs to increase the number of transistor receivers in the rural areas, and to expand the inter-village communications system.

The importance is underscored of adequate programming to achieve the desired results from the physical communications facilities now being established. This programming should give attention to making available useful information to rural listeners in such fields as agricultural and health education.



ideological or dogmatic kinship to the people so as to gain their support and to be able to hide among them. The soldier must temporarily have to provide training to the villagers to help them get started in their pioneering resettlement efforts. Army personnel may find it necessary to show the people how to build a community house, a school, a market, a simple first aid station. They may be needed to give on-the-job training to volunteers in teaching, village administration, sanitation, elementary public works and simple agricultural techniques.

The joint groups commend the GVN armed forces for their outstanding achievements in civic action in the past and for the work they are doing throughout the country today. The U.S. is making a special effort to help, by sending to Viet Nam several small teams of civil affairs technicians who will be available to work with the GVN military authorities in the furtherance of an expanded civic action campaign on a national scale.

Such a campaign will enable the GVN Army to contribute materially to the success of the closely related "crash" program of economic and social development outlined below. Similarly, the rapid implementation of the economic and social program will strengthen popular support and help to instill a sense of confidence in ultimate victory which cannot but be reflected in the morale and fighting spirit of the Vietnamese armed forces.

#### COST SUMMARY

The following is a rough, order-of-magnitude estimate of additional costs for the military program, from July 1961 through December 1962. During this period the costs are the same for either alternative force level.

Piaster costs..... 3,700 million

Dollar costs..... 42 million

Without awaiting the re-examination suggested above, measures already underway to increase the output of the Saigon broadcasting station should be intensified.

Piaster cost..... 10 million

Dollar cost..... 6.5 million

## 2. Agrovilles and Land Development

Agrovilles and land development projects contribute materially to the solution of security problems in the rural areas. All possible effort should be made to speed up these programs. An important element of these programs should be the construction of village roads with heavy use of local labor, and of self-help housing - with aid - maximizing use of local materials and labor. It is difficult to forecast with precision the costs for the proposed VN target of 100 additional agrovilles over the next eighteen months. The following estimate represents a rough order of magnitude. The real figures will depend on (a) actual mobilization of skilled manpower to organize and manage the program, and (b) refined costing on an austere, emergency basis. The piaster estimate covers local costs while the dollar estimate covers the equipment and supplies not domestically available.

Piaster cost..... 1,500 million

Dollar cost..... 3.5 million

## 3. Rural Medical Programs

Adequate care of the wounded, both civilian and military, is essential for psychological as well as for obvious humane reasons. Civilian and military authorities must confer on an urgent basis to determine how best to make use of the available medically trained manpower in Viet Nam. To maximize the use of



the limited trained medical manpower in Viet Nam, programs should be initiated to develop an effective evacuation system for the seriously injured. Specific programs that should be further considered to assure the best use of available medical personnel in caring for casualties would be the creation of mobile medical teams and the provision of needed equipment and medical supplies in existing hospital and medical facilities. A rough estimate of the costs of this type of program is:

Piaster cost..... 8 million

Dollar cost..... 3.5 million

4. Training of civil administrators in the lower and middle levels, especially in the rural areas

Good relations between civil administrators and the people are of paramount importance, as is the making known of the needs and wants of the population to the Government. Further consideration should, therefore, be given to the establishment of a system of reporting of complaints and suggestions by citizens to the highest government authorities for appropriate study and investigation.

Urgent attention should be given to the acceleration and intensification of the training of civil administrators in the lower and middle levels serving in the rural areas.

5. Training of the Youth Corps

As the Vietnamese Government proceeds with the expansion of the Youth Corps, the contribution of Youth Corps members to the national effort can be greatly enhanced by using their services in economic and social fields.

Planning should, therefore, be initiated for training Youth Corps members in appropriate health, agricultural, medical, small public works, and communications

(radio) activities. The last activity would serve the needed inter-village communication requirement.

COST SUMMARY

The following is a rough, estimate of costs for the emergency economic-social program from July 1961 through December 1962:

Plaster costs..... 1,788 million

Dollar costs..... 13.5 million



## C. LONGER RANGE DEVELOPMENT TOWARD SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMY

### 1. Current programs

The earliest possible consideration of the emergency projects mentioned above is essential, in connection with military-security efforts, but the current successful programs in the economic and social areas must be continued.

#### a. Improvement of agricultural productivity

The Vietnamese economy is based on its agriculture. This heavy reliance will undoubtedly continue. To improve the productivity of Viet Nam's agricultural resources, further efforts should be encouraged in training of agricultural personnel, research, diversification of crops, more intensive use of fertilizers, and the provision of adequate agricultural credit facilities. Particularly promising are the possibilities in the development of livestock and fisheries and complementary processing activities.

#### b. Economic and social services to rural population

While the agrovillage-land development program merits special action on a more immediate basis, the build-up of economic and social services to the great mass of the rural population not encompassed by the agrovillage-land development program must be continued. Such improved services as extension education, agrarian reform, pest control, and farmers' cooperatives and production credit can yield considerable economic and social benefits in return for relatively limited investment.

#### c. Creation of a stronger industrial base

Taking into account the anticipated population increases, the future of Viet Nam will, however, demand a reorientation of its economy toward one with stronger reliance on a firm, viable industrial base. To achieve this

development with minimum loss and best use of resources, additional efforts are recommended: (1) in the planning area, including manpower, and (2) to encourage the use of domestic savings for local investment and to attract foreign capital, by improving the local climate and procedures for investment.

## 2. Acceleration toward a self-sustaining economy

In addition to the current economic and social programs of longer range development, including those singled out above, there are general considerations underlying acceleration toward a self-sustaining economy that the Joint Groups believe warrant special attention.

### a. Development planning

The Joint Groups recommend a strengthening of the planning mechanism. This would make possible the preparation of an integrated plan, on the basis of the statement by national leaders of the country's goals covering a period of four or five or eight years. The plan would also indicate the government programs that will be necessary, the expansion of private activity that is anticipated, and the results that will be obtained. Such a plan is a useful framework for year-to-year budgeting of specific government programs, but it may also serve a broader purpose. The nation's leaders can, through the vehicle of the plan, combine these sector goals into a concrete statement of the nation's purposes and philosophy aimed at capturing the public's imagination.

### b. Private investment

In marshalling its resources to meet immediate and longer-term economic problems, the Vietnamese Government recognizes the importance of the potential contribution by the private sector of the economy. This contribution can be maximized by governmental measures to assure the potential domestic and



foreign investor that his capital and, sometimes even more important, his technical and managerial know-how are being sought. An active and determined campaign, well publicized, would help to demonstrate to the whole world that Viet Nam faces the future with resolution and confidence.

Of course, a major obstacle in the stimulation of private investment is the security situation. However, despite its seriousness there have been new investments both local and foreign. This impetus should continue and accelerate. Some measures in this direction that should be considered are:

(1) Investment law: Enactment of an investment law to provide guidance and policy to public officials and to investors would help establish a legal framework of rights, privileges, and obligations of the investor.

(2) Industrial Development Center reorganization: Establishment of an effective agency to provide leadership, direction, coordination, and operational personnel to formulate and effect a program for encouraging private investment is recommended. The Industrial Development Center seems a logical institution to serve this need. It must be re-organized to become an investment promotion center rather than a financial support agency. Its activity should be devoted principally to:

- stimulating creation of new industries
- encouraging expansion of existing industries
- creating a productivity agency

The Industrial Development Center should be able to give to investors all information they need on the general economy of the country, procedures for establishment of their industries, fiscal advantages, labor, etc.

(3) Credit facilities: Improved facilities with more adequate

resources to provide medium and long-term credit to meet needs for industrial development is considered desirable.

(4) Research: Initiation of an effective research program applying professional techniques and practices to identify and promote investment opportunities is also suggested.

If private investors can be attracted to the priority industries, the great bulk of profits can become government revenue or private savings. By comparison, large public sector investments that do not produce comparable surpluses clearly do not provide the same kind of help for sustained development.

c. Government investment

Public sector investment may be undertaken for a variety of reasons. For example, private capital may be unwilling to invest its limited savings in projects that require several years to complete and that sometimes offer uncertain business prospects thereafter. It has been found that public sector investment often stimulates private investment. Within limits, the one complements the other. But public investments in productive enterprises will serve the economy less satisfactorily than private enterprise unless prices are set to cover full costs and produce comparable surpluses.

Where public investment is necessary to initiate or promote productive enterprise, such investment should as public policy be on an interim basis. At the earliest practical time, public investment should be converted to private investment.



CCST SUMMARY

The following estimate is offered for additional development projects, beyond those already programmed, during the eighteen month period July 1961 through December 1962:

Plaster costs..... 1,000 million

Dollar costs..... 30 million

### III. FINANCIAL PLAN TO SUPPORT THE SPECIAL ACTION PROGRAM

Once the security problem is in hand and the nation's resources can be devoted to peaceful pursuits, Viet Nam will move rapidly toward a viable, prosperous economy with a progressively higher standard of living. In order to attain this desired situation, the present emergency requirements - military, economic, social and financial - must be met by mobilizing and combining domestic and external resources more effectively.

The following table, based on the action program set forth in Section II, indicates the financial magnitudes involved.

#### Summary of Additional Costs for Programs\*

(July 1961 - December 1962)

|                           | <u>US \$</u><br><u>(millions)</u> | <u>VN Piasters</u><br><u>(billions)</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Military-Security         | 42.                               | 3.7                                     |
| Emergency Economic-Social | 13.5                              | 1.8                                     |
| Longer-range Development  | <u>30.</u>                        | <u>1.0</u>                              |
| Total                     | 85.5                              | 6.5                                     |

\*Those estimates are subject to further study to determine technical feasibility and precise amounts.

#### A. EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS

The domestic resources which are immediately available are in themselves inadequate to meet and overcome the Communist threat. Supplementary external support directly keyed to the phased utilization of local resources must therefore be provided to enhance the effectiveness of the joint action. Funding of this input has a major impact on the problem of generating piasters.



As the requirement for import of goods, material, equipment, and technical training rises, it will be met largely in the form of direct grant aid in physical terms, will go directly into the government sector, and therefore will not generate plasters.

Extraordinary aid in the form of imports to be sold for economic and social objectives in the program will serve to strengthen the economy and will also generate plasters for use by the government.

The import program, as a matter of policy, should be governed by the following criteria:

1. The program should be viewed as a whole, and the portion supplied by American aid integrated with the total import program. This requires jointly keeping the eligibility list under review. It is also desirable to increase the emphasis on capital goods.
2. The long term goal is a self-sustaining economy with a rising level of living; but in the present emergency the objective is to prevent a rise in per capita consumption and mobilize resources for urgent purposes.
3. The foreign exchange reserves of Viet Nam should be held in the region of \$200 million.
4. Aid should, over the next several years, be equal roughly to the estimated difference between the foreign exchange receipts and the foreign exchange payments of the VN economy.
5. Imports should be regulated with a view to protecting sound infant industries and encouraging private investment on the one hand while on the other protecting the Vietnamese consumer against undesirable rises in prices.

6. Import of luxury goods to an extent that would widen the gap between the rich and the other economic groups should not be allowed, and the means of controlling such luxury imports should be taxation.

7. To the extent consistent with other criteria, imports should be employed to promote general orderliness of markets and to avoid disruptive speculation.

The Vietnamese experts estimate the appropriate level of commercial aid imports to be as follows:

(US) FY 1962 - annual rate of \$169 million (excluding P. L. 480)

(US) FY 1963 - annual rate of \$193 million (excluding P. L. 480)

It is recommended that the parallel committees proposed in Section IV, working together, examine at an early date the application of the above criteria in order to arrive at an agreed estimate for the next six months and then for the rest of FY 1962 and subsequent periods, and that they jointly keep under review the trend of imports, exports, commodity stocks, foreign exchange reserves, and markets. It is also desirable that they jointly consider possible improvements in procedures.

Looking to the future in terms of medium and longer term economic development, external financing does not appear to be a limiting factor for programs and projects which are tested and approved on the basis of mutually accepted criteria. Private capital, and from other friendly governments, The International Development Association, and The Development Loan Fund afford varied and substantial funds for capital projects. The variety of terms currently available will be broadened still further if the recommendations made by the Executive to The United States Congress on foreign aid are accepted.



Such financing could involve grace periods in which no interest is paid, interest rates as low as one per cent annually, and amortization periods as long as fifty years.

Even though the security problem is not yet completely solved, capital is flowing into Viet Nam, and this flow may be substantially increased. The Joint group endorses the view that Viet Nam has tremendous potential for economic progress and development.

Plans already underway or in a preliminary stage for agriculture, water works, mining, fisheries, forestry, small industries, steel, textiles, and sugar refining could utilize \$60 to \$70 million annually - a total of \$300 to \$350 million over a five year period.

#### B. INTERNAL REQUIREMENTS

To cover the resource requirements of the special action program, domestic resources must be fully utilized so as to effectively transfer and compensate manpower while increasing domestic production and avoiding disruptive effects on the civilian sector of the economy. The physical resources available, supplemented by external support, are sufficient to sustain the action program. There remains the requirement for an additional supply of local currency to cover the increase in plaster expenditures.

This increase should be met by: 1) tax reform, designed to restrain any increase in consumption per capita, to encourage production, and to more equitably redistribute the sacrifice imposed by military efforts; 2) exchange reform, which aims at absorbing any windfall profit created by some present unrealistic rates of exchange; 3) by a savings and victory bond campaign to provide additional revenues for the government and to provide opportunity to all citizens to participate with the government in its security effort;

4) by sales of goods derived from additional external resources, to the amount compatible with a sound policy on the balance of payments; 5) by borrowing, as necessary from the National Bank, limited only by the danger of rises in price which should be kept within manageable limits, fixed temporarily at 5 per cent per year.

With respect to the realization of additional piasters from sale of CAP imports, the following observations are made:

1. There is complete agreement in the joint groups on the desirability of simplifying and unifying the Vietnamese system of exchange. In other terms, the principle of a single and realistic exchange rate instead of the present multiple rate system is recommended.

2. The Vietnamese experts esteem that an open exchange reform cannot take place in present circumstances, but that the same results may be obtained through a revised form of taxation, especially taxation of imports.

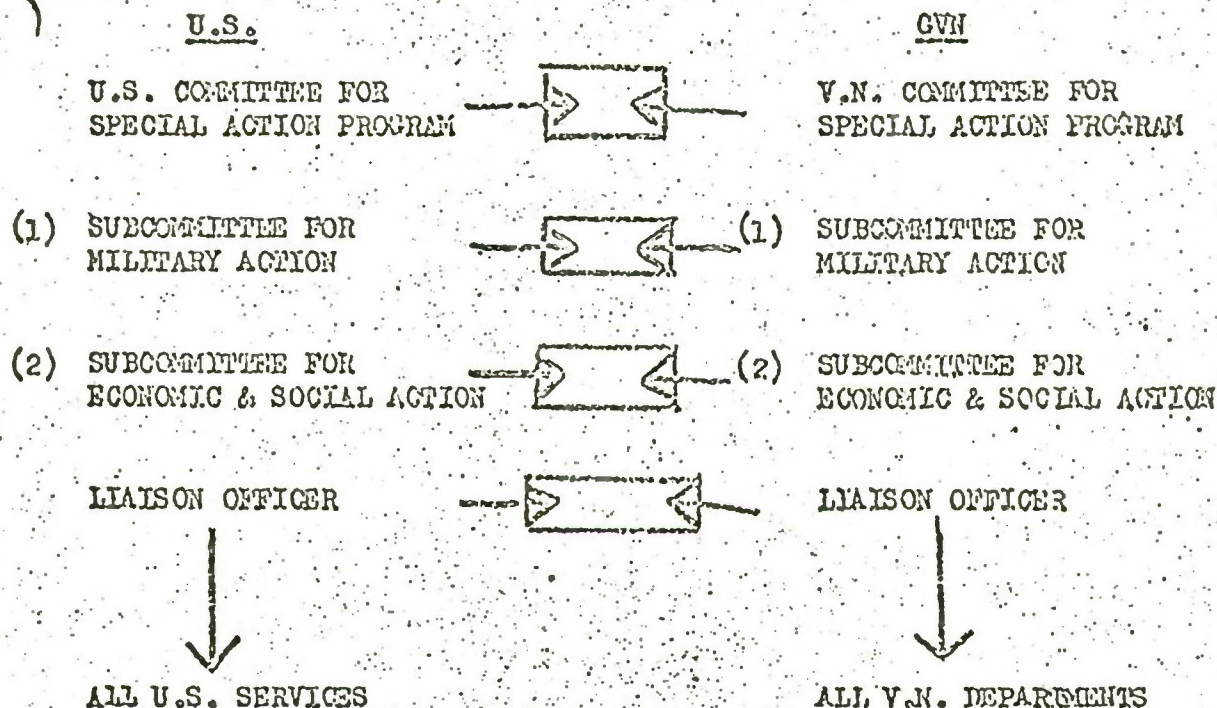
3. The American experts, agreeing with their Vietnamese colleagues on the objectives, are of the opinion that it would be more desirable to have a clearcut operation that would set a defensible rate of exchange, produce immediately a larger supply of piasters, avoid the necessity of a complicated system of subsidies on exports and taxes on imports, encourage new investment, and remove incentives to capital flight or speculation against the piaster by removing the fear that still further adjustments in the value of the piaster would be forced in the future. However, they recognize that political and psychological factors which they are not in a position to evaluate must influence any decision of the Government of Viet Nam, and they agree with their Vietnamese colleagues in urging a quick step as far as seems possible in the direction above indicated.



#### IV. IMPROVED ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION

The joint Groups recommend that for the implementation of the special action program it is desirable to adopt a form of parallel committees, which will meet together from time to time, as shown on the following chart:

##### SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR PARALLEL PLANNING AND ACTION



Within the constitution and legal procedures of their respective governments each of the two sets of committees shown above should be delegated maximum power to take rapid and flexible action in the following respects:

1. To initiate follow-up action for the implementation of the special action program.
2. To approve necessary modifications in the special action program.
3. To recommend measures to improve and adapt the special action program as the situation changes.

# A JOINT VN-US EMERGENCY PROGRAM AND ITS FINANCING

I. THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH.

II. THE RECOMMENDED PROGRAM AND ESTIMATES OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED.

A. MILITARY-INTERNAL SECURITY ACTION.

B. EMERGENCY ("CRASH") ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTION.

C. LONGER RANGE DEVELOPMENT TOWARD SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMY.

III. TOTAL ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

A. DOLLAR FINANCING.

B. PIASTER FINANCING

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS ON ORGANIZATION FOR MORE EFFECTIVE JOINT PLANNING AND ACTION.



# RECOMMENDED APPROACH

A. OBJECTIVE: A BREAKTHROUGH  
ON MILITARY - SECURITY PROBLEM,  
ON ECONOMIC - SOCIAL PROBLEM.

B. THREE PART PROGRAM: TO MOBILIZE  
RESOURCES FOR JOINTLY SUPPORTED  
EFFORT.

C. THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTNERSHIP.

# MILITARY INTERNAL - SECURITY ACTION

1. *FORCE LEVEL AND ESTIMATED COSTS THRU 1965.*
2. *ADDITIONAL COSTS ABOVE 1960 LEVEL (JULY 1961-DEC. 1962)*
3. *"CIVIC ACTION" BY MILITARY*



# FORCE LEVELS

|                             | <u>1961</u> | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u> | <u>1964</u> | <u>1965</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>REGULAR FORCES:</b>      |             |             |             |             |             |
| (1) ALTERNATIVE A           | 170,000     | 200,000     | 200,000     | 200,000     | 200,000     |
| (2) ALTERNATIVE B           | 170,000     | 200,000     | 230,000     | 260,000     | 278,000*    |
| <b>CIVIL GUARD</b>          | 67,500      | 70,000      | 70,000      | 70,000      | 70,000      |
| <b>LOCAL DEFENSE FORCES</b> | 58,000      | 55,000      | 50,000      | 40,000      | 30,000      |
| <b>YOUTH CORPS</b>          | —           | 108,000     | 108,000     | 108,000     | 108,000     |

\* TO BE REACHED DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF 1965

## VIETNAMESE COSTS\*

(IN MILLIONS OF PIASTERS)

|                             | <u>1961</u> | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u> | <u>1964</u> | <u>1965</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>REGULAR FORCES:</b>      |             |             |             |             |             |
| (1) ALTERNATIVE A           | 6,700       | 7,800       | 8,200       | 8,300       | 8,400       |
| (2) ALTERNATIVE B           | 6,700       | 7,800       | 9,000       | 10,200      | 11,200      |
| <b>CIVIL GUARD</b>          | 1,435       | 1,540       | 1,550       | 1,600       | 1,600       |
| <b>LOCAL DEFENSE FORCES</b> | 322         | 500         | 540         | 440         | 340         |
| <b>YOUTH CORPS</b>          | 48          | 595         | 600         | 650         | 600         |

\* DO NOT INCLUDE MILITARY EQUIPMENT, TRANSPORT, OR GASOLINE AND LUBRICANTS.

## U.S. MAP COSTS\*

(IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

|                        | <u>1961</u> | <u>1962</u> | <u>1963</u> | <u>1964</u> | <u>1965</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>REGULAR FORCES:</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| (1) ALTERNATIVE A      | 62          | 120         | 71          | 66          | 66          |
| (2) ALTERNATIVE B      | 62          | 120         | 135         | 136         | 83          |
| <b>CIVIL GUARD</b>     | 11          | 20          | 14          | 14          | 12          |

\* DO NOT INCLUDE COSTS TO US OF MAAG OPERATIONS (SALARIES, SUBSISTENCE, ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS) ESTIMATED AT \$12 MILLION/YEAR.

# SUMMARY

## ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR MILITARY PROGRAM, JULY 1961 - DEC. 1962

US \$  
(MILLIONS)

42.0

VN P<sub>Δ</sub>  
(BILLIONS)

3.7



# MILITARY SUPPORT OF CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM

## PACIFICATION

RENDERING AREAS SAFE FOR  
CIVIL POPULATION

## RECONSTRUCTION

HELPING TO REPAIR WAR DAMAGE

1. PROVISION OF MEDICAL CARE  
TO CIVIL CASUALTIES
2. REHABILITATION OF ROADS, RAIL-  
ROADS AND BRIDGES
3. REPAIR OF CIVIC FACILITIES: i.e.  
SCHOOLS, MARKETS, HOSPITALS, ETC.

## ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND CLOTHING  
ENGINEERING ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE  
TRAINING OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS  
COUNTER PROPAGANDA ACTIONS  
PROVISION OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT  
TEAMS

# EMERGENCY ("CRASH") ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTION

## 1 STRENGTHENED COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION PROGRAM

RADIO BROADCASTING

TV?

VILLAGE RECEIVERS AND LOUDSPEAKERS

RADIO LINKAGE OF VILLAGES (YOUTH CORPS)

CONTENT OF INFORMATION PROGRAM

## 2 TARGET OF 100 NEW AGROVILLES AND STEPPED UP LAND DEVELOPMENT

TASKS: EARTHMOVING, CONSTRUCTION,  
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH CENTERS, GRANARIES,  
SUBSIDIES FOR RESETTLEMENT, ETC.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: DREDGES, BULLDOZERS,  
TRACTORS, GENERATOR SETS, ETC.

## 3 RURAL MEDICAL PROGRAM.

## 4 TRAINING OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATORS IN LOWER AND MIDDLE LEVELS SERVING IN RURAL AREAS

## 5 TRAINING OF YOUTH CORPS IN CIVIC ACTION

HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, SMALL PUBLIC  
WORKS, COMMUNICATIONS (RADIO).



# EMERGENCY ECONOMIC- SOCIAL PROGRAM

## ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS ABOVE EXISTING PROGRAMS

(JULY 1961 - DEC. 1962)

|                               | IMPORTED<br>EQUIPMENT,<br>US \$<br>(MILLIONS) | LOCAL<br>COSTS,<br>VN P <sub>6</sub><br>(MILLIONS) |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. COMMUNICATIONS .....       | 6.5   | 280.   |
| 2. AGROVILLES .....           | 3.5   | 1,500.   |
| 3. MEDICAL PROGRAM .....      | 3.5   | 8.   |
| 4. TRAINING ADMINISTRATORS. — | —   | —  |
| 5. TRAINING YOUTH CORPS ..... | —   | —  |
|                               | <hr/> 13.5                                    | <hr/> 1,788.                                       |

# LONGER RANGE DEVELOPMENT TOWARD SELF SUSTAINING ECONOMY

## 1. DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

- TENTATIVE 5 YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- STRENGTHENING PLANNING MACHINERY
- MEANWHILE, PROCEED WITH BASIC  
PROJECTS IN :

:AGRICULTURE

:INDUSTRY

:PUBLIC WORKS

## 2. ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTAL INVESTMENT - LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

## 3. TAKE FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF D L F AND OF PROPOSED LONG-TERM, LOW-INTEREST LOAN FACILITIES.



# SUGGESTIONS ON ENCOURAGING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTAL INVESTMENT

- *INVESTMENT LAW*
- *INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
REORGANIZATION*
- *IMPROVEMENT OF SAVINGS AND  
FINANCING INSTITUTIONS*
- *RESEARCH*
- *VOCATIONAL EDUCATION*
- *MANAGERIAL TRAINING*
- *SMALL INDUSTRIES*

# LONGER RANGE DEVELOPMENT

## ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS ABOVE EXISTING PROGRAMS

(JULY 1961 - DEC. 1962)

IMPORTED  
EQUIPMENT  
US \$  
(MILLIONS)

LOCAL  
COSTS  
VN P.  
(MILLIONS)

30.

1,000.



# SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COSTS

## FOR PROGRAMS

(JULY 1961 - DEC. 1962)

|                             | US\$<br>(MILLIONS) | VN P.<br>(BILLIONS) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| MILITARY-SECURITY           | 42.                | 3.7                 |
| EMERGENCY ECON-SOCIAL       | 13.5               | 1.8                 |
| LONGER-RANGE<br>DEVELOPMENT | 30.                | 1.0                 |
|                             | <hr/>              | <hr/>               |
|                             | 85.5               | 6.5                 |

# WAYS OF MEETING THE ADDITIONAL PIASTER NEEDS

ESTIMATED  
18 MONTHS GAIN

---

- ① TAX REFORM ..... 1.25 ?
  - ② VICTORY BONDS & STAMPS ... .3 ?
  - ③ INCREASED COUNTERPART  
RECEIPTS FROM U.S. COM-  
MERCIAL AID PROGRAM ..... ?
  - ④ CENTRAL BANK BORROWING ... 1.5 ?
- 

( ADDITIONAL PIASTERS  
NEEDED FOR 18 MONTHS PROGRAM : 6.5 )



# WAYS OF INCREASING THE PIASTER COUNTERPART FROM U. S. COMMERCIAL AID PROGRAM

## *1. ENLARGE THE FLOW OF SUCH IMPORTS*

*—POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS*

*—ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES*

*a. CONSUMER GOODS*

*b. RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-  
PROCESSED GOODS*

*c. CAPITAL GOODS*



## *2. ENLARGE THE PIASTRE REALIZATION PER UNIT OF CAP IMPORTS*

*—POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS*

*—ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES*



# POLICY CRITERIA TO GOVERN IMPORT PROGRAM

- ① PROGRAM SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A WHOLE THE U.S. AID PORTION INTEGRATED WITH TOTAL.
- ② LONG TERM GOAL: A SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMY WITH RISING LEVEL OF LIVING.  
EMERGENCY GOAL: PREVENT RISE IN PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION AND MOBILIZE RESOURCES FOR URGENT PURPOSES.
- ③ HOLD FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES IN REGION OF \$200 MILLION.



④ AID OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS TO ROUGHLY EQUAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE PAYMENTS LESS FOREIGN EXCHANGE RECEIPTS.

⑤ IMPORTS REGULATED TO PROTECT SOUND INFANT INDUSTRIES, ENCOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND PROTECT CONSUMER FROM UNDESIRABLE PRICE RISES.

⑥ PREVENT, BY TAXATION, IMPORT OF LUXURY GOODS TO EXTENT WHICH WOULD WIDEN GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR.

⑦ TO EXTENT CONSISTENT WITH OTHER CRITERIA, USE IMPORTS TO PROMOTE ORDERLINESS OF MARKETS AND TO AVOID DISRUPTIVE SPECULATION.

POSSIBLE GAINS IN PIASTER RECEIPTS FROM  
US COMMERCIAL AID PROGRAM AT TWO LEVELS  
OF AID IMPORTS AND VARIOUS RATES OF  
PIASTER REALIZATION PER DOLLAR OF IMPORTS

1. CAP Import Level: US\$ 114.5 m (current level, FY 1961)

|        |        | Piasters<br>(billions) | Gain Over Current Receipts<br>(billions of Piasters) |                  |
|--------|--------|------------------------|--|------------------|
|        |        |                        | Per year   | During 18 months |
| 54/1   | yields | 6.2                    | 0  | 0                |
| 60/1   | yields | 6.9                    | .7   | 1.1              |
| 73.5/1 | yields | 8.4                    | 2.2  | 3.3              |
| 100/1  | yields | 11.5                   | 5.3  | 8.0              |

2. CAP Import Level: US\$ 150 m

|        |       |      |     |      |
|--------|-------|------|-----|------|
| 54/1   | yards | 8.1  | 1.9 | 2.9  |
| 60/1   | yards | 9.0  | 2.8 | 4.2  |
| 73.5/1 | yards | 11.0 | 4.8 | 7.2  |
| 100/1  | yards | 15.0 | 8.8 | 13.2 |



OFF SECRET OF DEFENSE

AIDE MEMOIRE FOR PRESIDENT DIEM

REF SER HAD SENT

219  
6REVIEW OF MILITARY SITUATION AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

Mr. President, as your American military advisor, I feel this is, again, an appropriate time to review the military situation. I know you also feel that we are at a decisive period in the military history of Vietnam, which is today in the vanguard of the Free World's fight against Communism. Events are moving so fast that it behooves us from time to time to review the events of the recent past so that we may give better direction to our present and future activities.

Largely because of your keen understanding and assistance, we can point with mutual pride to the accomplishments of the past few months. Although the urgency is great and there is still much to do, I am particularly heartened by the following actions.

Your approval of the Armed Forces reorganization portion of the Counter-Insurgency Plan has established a single chain of command from JCS through Field Command to the operating units. The most important implementation phase of this reorganization, which I shall later discuss at greater length, is now under way.

As you know, the actual build up of the 20,000 man increase in the RVNAF force structure is now in process with the attendant budgetary problems apparently on the way to resolution. At your direction, certain of these units are now being activated and equipment is beginning to arrive for them in significant quantities:

Also, I feel we can both be well pleased with the progress made in the overall Civil Guard Program since transfer was effected to the DOD.

Your establishment of the Central Intelligence Organization is another improvement which, when it becomes fully operational, will, together with Military Intelligence improvements, contribute greatly to the counter-insurgency campaign by ensuring improved Operational Intelligence to the Armed Forces.

The Combat Development and Test Center, discussed with you by Mr. Godel and myself, and which you have authorized also holds great promise of assisting in the overall Counter-Insurgency effort.

28/2/62

These organizational type improvements have been accompanied by what I feel is equally heartening progress in the long delayed training of RVNAF forces and the Civil Guard. All training programs, both in-country and off-shore, have been re-examined and revised to place additional stress on anti-guerrilla tactics and techniques. Many training courses are now being conducted under the revised programs and results are beginning to be felt.

Immediately following the transfer of the Civil Guard to the Department of Defense, we developed a concept of employment for Civil Guard units, which now serves as the basis for all Civil Guard training. This program includes special leadership training as well as individual unit training, all oriented toward anti-guerrilla combat. 3,500 of the Civil Guard have been trained to date, and 6,000 are now undergoing individual and unit training at Quang Trung and Song Mao. In addition, 650 are now undergoing OCS and NCO training.

The Ranger training program has continued to receive high priority and emphasis. As you know, a series of U.S. Special Forces teams were brought to Vietnam, one of which is still here, and MAAG developed a program of instruction which was adopted by RVNAF for Ranger Cadre Training. In this respect, your Ranger Training Center at Nha Trang is outstanding. Additionally, an on-site unit training program has been developed to further train Ranger Companies in the vicinity of their actual operational areas using ARVN-US Mobile Training Teams.

Closely tied to improvements in training is the work now being done by the joint RVNAF-MAAG study group on the MAAG paper, "Tactics and Techniques of Counter-Insurgent Operations." This is an important project because it will establish RVNAF tactical doctrine in the Vietnamese language which will be widely distributed to the Armed Forces. Once refined and distributed, I believe we can expect another significant increase in training improvement and subsequently in operations. As you know, however, certain of the concepts proposed in this study, because of their far reaching and comprehensive nature, will require policy decisions at a very high governmental level before the full effect can be gained in the field. The timing and timeliness of these decisions is most essential for anti-guerrilla combat to be successful.

In the field of tactical operations, you have authorized MAAG advisors to accompany RVNAF battalion and company-size units engaged in operations, with the understanding that they will observe and advise but



will not actually participate in hot war activities. MAAG has arranged for the same authorization from U.S. military authorities. In addition, RVNAF officers have been encouraged to work closely with U.S. advisors in the all important operational planning phase which needs additional emphasis.

Also in the field of operations, I am particularly pleased at the improvements realized in Air-Ground operations. The reaction time on requests for air support and for airborne forces has been significantly reduced as a result of improved operational procedures worked out, with MAAG advice, between your Army and Air Force. In this regard, a concept has been developed employing a specially trained force of company-size, on constant airfield alert, with another company-size force equally trained in H-34 helicopter operations, on camp alert. This ready force, coupled with the airborne capability will materially increase the ability of the RVNAF to counter widely dispersed guerrilla attacks. This, of course, requires that the primary use of these H-34's be operational and not administrative.

The foregoing, Mr. President, are only some of the achievements we have realized in the past few months. They result from close cooperation between the RVNAF and MAAG. It is this type of cooperation which we both must re-emphasize in order to continue our progress toward victory over the Viet Cong guerrillas.

As you know, I am convinced, and I have repeatedly given assurances to my superiors that the GVN has the will and determination as well as the ability to achieve victory if provided with required U.S. support and if GVN accepted and implemented the military and other supporting recommendations contained in the Counter-Insurgency Plan. I am sure you will agree from recent events that the United States will render the required support. We both know that there is general acceptance of the Counter-Insurgency recommendations in principle on the part of the GVN. However, there are certain specifics regarding their military implementation which I would now like to take up with you, together with some other closely related MAAG recommendations.

One of the major recommendations of the proposed Counter-Insurgency Plan was that a National Internal Security Council be established to promulgate the policy for and to coordinate the preparation and execution of a Vietnamese National Counter-Insurgency Plan, incorporating the political, economic, psychological, and military aspects of that plan. I realize the



complexity of this task at the national level and am aware that although certain existing agencies are capable of working in this field, it will take some time to implement fully this comprehensive but vitally important recommendation. I merely wish to invite your attention to the urgent need for expediting the full activation and operation of such a National Agency.

Another matter of urgency at the present time is that of effective border and coastal surveillance capabilities for Vietnam. As pointed out in the Counter-Insurgency Plan, both of these capabilities require high level coordination and will not be fully implemented until a national agency such as the Internal Security Council is in operation. There are, however, certain portions of the border and coastal surveillance concepts which can be initiated piecemeal. I know you will agree that any action which can reduce the ability of the Viet Cong to make full use of the land or sea frontiers should be taken as soon as possible. Naturally, MAAG stands ready to work with appropriate agencies of the RVNAF to this end.

As you know, a portion of the 20,000 man force increase was devoted to the activation of three separate Infantry Regiments. In recommending these three units, MAAG intended the creation of a badly needed rotational training base so that regiments from those Infantry Divisions which have, of necessity, been committed to hot war operations for extended periods of time could be rotated for badly needed rest, rehabilitation and retraining in anti-guerrilla tactics. As you know, my superiors approved U.S. support of these Regiments, primarily on my strong personal conviction and consequent recommendation that a rotational capability by Regimental size units was absolutely essential to the adequate and timely training of the RVNAF. There was, and still remains, a critical need for such a rotational training plan, especially in the three divisions in the III Corps area. These three new regiments have, in fact, been activated and are training toward operational readiness. However, I am informed that it is now proposed to use them in security roles, one per Corps area. If so, I feel this should be reconsidered, Mr. President, in light of the most urgent need to improve the combat effectiveness of the combat divisions now committed to fighting the Viet Cong and especially as the approval of the increase to 170,000 was made contingent on this use of the forces.

I mentioned earlier that U.S. advisors are now authorized to accompany ARVN units on operations down to battalion and separate company level. This is a significant improvement over the former arrangement, when advisors were not authorized to accompany units into operational



areas except in exceptional circumstances." While I feel that this is a major step forward in the more effective utilization of MAAG advisors, I am concerned that this forward looking authorization is not being fully implemented. The implementing directive (RVNAF Memorandum, Number 563/TTH/P3/1, dated 5 May 1961) reserves the decision as to whether or not MAAG advisors are permitted to accompany units, largely to ARVN field commanders - based on their estimate of "security limits imposed by battlefield conditions." While I recognize and concur in the concern of the GVN at all levels regarding the security of U.S. military personnel, I feel that ARVN commanders are often over zealous in their desire to insure the one hundred percent security of MAAG advisors in operational areas - a condition which cannot be attained under current circumstances. Of course, I do not wish advisors to engage in actual combat except in self defense. However, I feel that lack of absolute security measures should not preclude them from performing their mission. In the future, I am hopeful that ARVN commanders will avail themselves more frequently of the professional competence available to them through MAAG advisory assistance in both the planning and conduct of tactical operations.

I am convinced that the most fundamental military recommendations contained in the Counter-Insurgency Plan are those pertaining to reorganization of the command structure and a single chain of command. As you know, in my military assessment of the situation last September, one of my basic conclusions was the absolute necessity for a single, inviolate chain of command, which could implement an integrated national plan for counter-insurgency. You will recall our numerous discussions and conferences on this subject prior to your decree 98/QP and the directives which were derived therefrom. In essence, this important decree resulted in elimination of Military Regions and placed the three Corps under an operational Field Command, charged with the conduct of military operations. Province Chiefs retained certain military responsibilities, however, the DOD directive specifically placed them within the military chain of command for military matters. As you know, MAAG was apprehensive about the retention of Province Chiefs in the military chain of command. However, we felt that your decree represented a workable solution and were enthusiastic about the opportunity for improvement in this vital area. In recent weeks, however, during the detailed implementation of these directives some tendencies have developed which, if not checked, will negate much we are both trying to accomplish. I refer specifically to some instances of violation of the officially established chain of command and to difficulties in isolating and defining the role of the Province Chief, as pertains to military affairs.



I am sure you agree that the military chain of command, to be effective, must be respected by all - both subordinates and superiors alike. Confidence in the command structure is fundamental to military operations and I am convinced that a national plan for counter-insurgency cannot successfully be administered without it. Naturally, if commanders are bypassed or their orders countermanded, they are unable to make effective plans and it is most difficult to execute successful operations within their assigned areas of responsibility.

Of course, unforeseen circumstances will often develop requiring the immediate commitment of security forces in a particular area. Provided such a requirement is levied through the normal chain of military command, the mission can normally be accomplished with minimum disruption of training, security and operations against the Viet Cong. In this respect, I have received reports recently indicating that major command elements have been bypassed, both up and down the chain of command.

In this regard, I must also report that in establishing the new chain of military command, in certain cases problems have been encountered in defining the role of the Province Chief within that chain. The directives are clear that the Province Chief, in his role of a military commander, is within the military chain of command. However, above and beyond the normal Civil Guard Force which has been assigned to each province, the Province Chief should not automatically assume command of all military units physically present in his province, but should command only those forces allocated to him by his next higher military superior, normally the Division Tactical Zone Commander. This arrangement is, of course, parallel to the system at the Corps level, which seems to be understood by all. For example, the Corps Commander does not command units of the General RVNAF Reserve merely because they are physically present in his Corps Tactical Zone. Rather, such units must be allocated by Field Command or JGS before the Corps Commander exercises command or control. I feel it essential that the same principle prevail at Province level. While I fully understand the dual capacity of Province Chiefs as military and civil leaders, I feel that this dual position must be brought into harmony with the need for clear-cut command channels and unit assignments on the military side. Otherwise, piecemeal assignment, as already reported, of ARVN battalions to Province Chiefs could well result in the conduct of 37 miniature campaigns - each one proceeding at its own pace and intensity, rather than a national campaign against the Viet Cong in accordance with a cohesive, coordinated plan.



Another area to which I must invite your attention has to do with the utilization of the H-34 helicopter squadron. This aircraft is not a simple item of equipment, and I am fully aware of the complex problems involved having to do with maintenance and specialized personnel. However, it is potentially one of the most effective items of equipment in the hands of RVNAF for defeating the Viet Cong. The helicopter provides superior mobility over all types of terrain, and as you know guerrilla warfare is essentially mobile warfare. Increased effort is necessary to expedite the training of troop units in helicopter borne operations. To accomplish this, priority utilization of these aircraft must be given to this training, and to the subsequent use of helicopters on their primary mission of combat operations. During my inspection of the 21st Division Operation in Vinh Binh Province, 27 June, there were only two of the six operational H-34's made available for operations. As you know, these H-34's were delivered ahead of schedule by my government only upon my insistence that they were urgently required for actual hot war military operations. Although these aircraft are being used in important combat support missions, increased operational use of H-34's is required to justify this earlier delivery.

Also, during my inspection of the 21st Division Operation mentioned above, I noted an apparent lack of adequate prior planning and coordination between the civil administrative functions of the Province and the military operation. On this seventh day of the military operation, the Commanding General, Field Command, Commanding General, III Corps, the National Delegate and the Province Chief were holding a meeting to coordinate and resolve problems of a combined politico-military nature. These included the problems such as the movement of villagers and civil control after completion of the military phase. As you recall, the concept of progressive coordinated, phased clearing of the country, spelled out in the Counter-Insurgency Plan and the Tactics and Techniques paper, requires a high degree of civic-military coordination in all areas, and particularly in areas where actual fighting is taking place. This is especially important not only prior to and during the operation, but following it. Active and positive cooperation between the Province administrative authorities and the military commanders is essential to ensure a coordinated pacification of the area plus the all important follow-up and take over by the Province authorities. Only in this way can permanent results be obtained - by denying the Communists re-entry into the area after the operation has been completed. The overall concept of the Province Chief using the Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps to perform this mission is sound but requires close supervision and coordination in each major clearance operation by RVNAF.



Another element of RVNAF which has a greater capability for effective operations against the Viet Cong than at present is the River Forces of the VNN. Two general problem areas are currently preventing more effective employment.

The first is the problem of joint planning. The operational commander of the River Force is Commanding General, III Corps. As an Army Commander, he cannot be expected to know the many details of how best to employ the potential combat and support capabilities of these forces. I feel the solution lies in the establishment of a joint planning section with Naval representation on the Corps staff. Given proper technical advice, the Corps Commander could then realize much more effectiveness from the River Forces.

The second problem area is support for the River Forces, to include additional draft, better priority for maintenance, increased command recognition and assistance with some acute personnel problems to include officer shortages and an equitable promotion policy within the VNN. Military missions should also be coordinated with civilian requirements for these craft.

In addition, as indicated in the Vinh Binh operation, better coordination with respect to the Sea Forces in Joint Operations appears necessary. This coordination should be accomplished at Joint General Staff level. Although some preplanning was accomplished at Joint Staff level, difficulty was experienced in coordination with the ground operation.

Another important progressive step was the establishment of three logistic commands, one in each of the three Corps areas. This is resulting in the coordination of the six technical services in the field and is producing materially improved logistic support for the combat forces assigned to the Army Corps. Also, I am pleased to note that the RVNAF Deputy for Logistics, General To, has been given a degree of increased coordinating authority. However, there still remain many complicated delaying procedures which impair the effectiveness of logistic support to combat units. It appears particularly desirable that some of the ABA fiscal functions be decentralized to permit prompter response to the needs of combat units.

Another matter which I consider of sufficient importance to bring to your personal attention is the immediate requirement for additional civilian personnel in the technical service depots and other logistic installations.



As of 31 May 1961, there was a cumulative shortage of 568 civilian personnel from the 4,821 authorized for the 150,000 RVNAF force level. No new authorizations have been made to provide the increased capability required for the 20,000 man increase and the MAP support of the 68,000 Civil Guard force. Additional permanent as well as temporary civilian personnel are most urgently needed so that the technical services will be able to properly receive, account for, store, issue, and maintain the significant tonnages of supplies and equipment scheduled to arrive on an accelerated basis beginning in mid-July. Although an interdepartmental commission has been established to solve this problem, little progress has been made in augmenting the civilian technical force. The inability of your technical services to process these supplies could well retard the entire training and supply program. As MAAG has made the urgency of this program its main reason for budgetary recommendations, this must not happen.

I know that you share my concern that the officers and men of Vietnam's military and para-military forces shall be well uniformed and equipped as individuals. The transfer of the military clothing factory from its present inadequate quarters on Dai Lo Tran Hung Dao to a more spacious facility in the Quartier Pasteur is a matter of the greatest urgency. The capacity of the existing uniform factory, 35,000 combat uniforms per month, is entirely inadequate to meet the demand - particularly since the supported forces basis has been greatly increased - and the shortage will become most critical by mid-July. New power sewing machines have been procured from the U.S. but the modification to the new facility will not be completed until some time after the arrival of these machines in Saigon. In addition to action already in process, I feel that we must take additional urgent action to solve this problem as soon as possible.

One final major matter I would like to mention has to do with the all important continued improvement of ARVN tactical operations. As a result of its responsibility for continuing analysis of operations against the VC, my staff has developed a synthesis of what appear to be recurring weaknesses in the preparation for, and the conduct of, tactical operations by GVN forces. I have discussed these from time to time with appropriate RVNAF general officers and shall, of course, continue these discussions in the future. I have also furnished General Ty and General Minh with full details of the MAAG analysis. There are seven general areas which require the continued attention of all concerned in order to achieve the desired improvement. Briefly stated, they are:



## COMMAND AND CONTROL:

There appears to be too much delegation of responsibility and too little centralized control of tactical operations. Of course, decentralization in tactical operations is sound practice, if sufficient centralized control is maintained to ensure active supervision by higher commanders. Such is not always the case, however, because of a somewhat natural tendency for higher commanders to stay fixed in offices and CP's instead of getting out with subordinates to whom control has been delegated, to inspect, supervise, and give guidance needed to take advantage of the developing tactical situation. In this regard, an essential adjunct to strengthening the chain of command is the establishment in the RVNAF of an effective inspection system.

## INADEQUATE INTELLIGENCE AND RECONNAISSANCE

Large forces, up to battalion size, are at times committed without sufficient knowledge of enemy locations. Consequently, these operations often produce negative results and are wasteful of time, energy and resources. Equally important, as they are non-productive, they are harmful to the morale and esprit of the officers and men. Better intelligence coordination between civil and military intelligence agencies are indicated.

## INCOMPLETE PLANNING:

In many ARVN operations, the planning emphasis appears to be primarily on a scheme of maneuver, with inadequate attention to such other important aspects as sound coordination, teamwork, task organization, fire support, air support, communications, supply and resupply, and administration. Each phase must be thought through and planned for in detail, from the initial reconnaissance to locate the enemy, to his final destruction. Appropriate planning, units and resources must be allocated to each of these phases if we are to be successful.

## USE OF PROVISIONAL TASK FORCES:

Operations are too often conducted by makeshift, "provisoire," task forces under a provisional commander, when there are available regular units of appropriate size and composition. A commander who finds an immediate opportunity to gain a victory, properly commits everything at his disposal into battle - often with provisional organizations. This, however, should be the exception, not the rule. The reason for units such as



divisions, regiments and battalions is to provide a coordinated, smooth functioning team, capable of applying the proper degree of combat power to fit the specific situation. The commanders of such units, through prior training exercises, have developed a team, they know their subordinates personally -- they understand the unit's capabilities and limitations. Such is not normally true with "provisoire" organizations.

#### OVEREMPHASIS ON TERRAIN OBJECTIVES:

Junior leaders tend to become "fixed" upon a particular terrain objective and there have been instances where opportunities to destroy VC have been lost in order to occupy a terrain objective on schedule. The solution lies in increased emphasis on the job of killing Viet Cong. Subordinate commanders must be constantly reminded that their primary mission is to destroy the Viet Cong who normally hit and then run to avoid casualties.

#### IMPROPER AND INSUFFICIENT USE OF AIR AND ARTILLERY:

Air and Artillery support are weapons the VC do not possess and cannot effectively counter. Their advantages must be exploited to the maximum. In many instances commanders do not adequately plan in advance for this support. Air support of operations, properly planned, coordinated with the ground forces, and timely executed, provides the ground commander extremely effective support. Too often, ground artillery support of operations has been unobserved fire by means of map coordinates. This is the most ineffective type of fire support and should rarely be used. Artillery support, for maximum effectiveness, must be observed and adjusted by observers on the ground with the forces being supported or in the air and in communication with the ground forces. Artillery and air support, where applicable, must be preplanned and integrated into the overall plan for all major operations.

#### NEED FOR AN OFFENSIVE SPIRIT:

Despite improvement in this area, there is still too much reliance on defensive operations and reaction to Viet Cong initiative rather than taking the actual initiative ourselves. The ultimate solution does not lie in defending against the guerrilla; but in boldly and energetically attacking him. Anti-guerrilla fighters must gain and maintain the initiative and truly become the hunter rather than the hunted. The Viet Cong often retains the initiative, even though we take the offensive. This is because he

strikes unknown out of the jungles, swamps or mountains and then fades away again. To prevent this, the RVNAF must penetrate and control these Viet Cong safe areas. Although the key to success is the spirit of the offensive, to permit the guerrilla to retain the initiative is to court ultimate defeat. The Vietnamese Forces, to an ever increasing degree, must continue to carry the fight to the enemy, rather than permit him to select the time and place for battle. Larger guerrilla units must be hit in their assembly areas and smaller groups must be hunted down and destroyed before they are able to accomplish their mission. This, of course, requires improved patrolling and training, a climate of assistance by the population to ensure accurate, timely intelligence, the ultimate in offensive spirit together with tactical innovation at all levels, and the highest order of small unit leadership. Our current training programs are oriented in this direction but much remains to be done to ensure maximum results.

This concludes my discussion, Mr. President. Although we have previously touched on many of these matters in our many discussions, I felt I should review the considerable accomplishments we have made as a cooperative team, and highlight those areas in which I feel further corrections and improvements are required.

I am confident that, by continuing to work together we can build an efficient fighting force, led by commanders duly invested with adequate command authority, and the fighting capabilities of the Armed Forces of Vietnam will continue to improve.





THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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13 AUG 1961

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OFF SECY OF DEFENSE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Increase of GVN Armed Forces to 270,000 (C)

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) dated 10 July 1961, subject as above, requesting the Joint Chiefs of Staff to submit recommendations on increasing the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) to 270,000.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not believe that an ultimate force of 270,000 would be required to enable the RVNAF to conduct counter-insurgency operations and concurrently be prepared to meet overt aggression.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that for the foreseeable future the force objectives for Vietnam of a nine division equivalent force (200,000) is adequate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff will continue to assess the Government of Vietnam (GVN) and RVNAF capabilities and will be prepared to recommend increases in the force objectives for Vietnam should circumstances indicate there is a requirement.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that:

a. The strategic force objectives for Vietnam remain at the nine division equivalent force level (200,000), subject to future assessment.

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b. Priority efforts be continued to enhance the capabilities of the already authorized 20,000 RVNAF augmentation, 68,000 Civil Guard (CG), 48,000-52,000 Self Defense Corps (SDC) and the rotation and retraining of existing forces.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "L. L. Lemnitzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

L. L. LEMNITZER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff



THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

August 11, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 65  
(Supplement to National Security Action Memorandum N . 52,  
dated May 11 1961)

TO: The Secretary of State

SUBJECT: Joint Program of Action with the Government of Viet-Nam

Following his review of the "Joint Action Program Proposed by the Viet-Nam-United States Special Financial Groups to President Ngo Dinh Diem and President John F. Kennedy," the President on August 4 made the following decisions:

1. The President agrees with the three basic tenets on which the recommendations contained in the Joint Action Program are based, namely:
  - a. Security requirements must, for the present, be given first priority.
  - b. Military operations will not achieve lasting results unless economic and social programs are continued and accelerated.
  - c. It is in our joint interest to accelerate measures to achieve a self-sustaining economy and a free and peaceful society in Viet-Nam.
2. The United States will provide equipment and assistance in training for an increase in the armed forces of Viet-Nam from 170,000 to 200,000 men. In order to make this increase as effective as possible, the United States and Viet-Nam should satisfy themselves, before the time when the level of 170,000 is reached, on the following points:

- a. That there then exists a mutually agreed upon geographically phased strategic plan for bringing Viet-Cong subversion in the Republic of Viet-Nam under control.
  - b. That on the basis of such a plan there exists an understanding on the training and use of those 30,000 additional men.
  - c. That the rate of increase from 170,000 to 200,000 will be regulated to permit the most efficient absorption and utilization of additional personnel and material in the Vietnamese armed forces with due regard to Viet-Nam's resources.
3. In view of the fact that the force level of 200,000 will probably not be reached until in 1963, a decision regarding the further increase above 200,000 will be postponed until next year when the question can be re-examined on the basis of the situation at that time. Meanwhile, the build-up in equipment and training of the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps within already agreed levels should be expedited.
4. Within the limits of available funds, the United States will provide the external resources required to implement the Joint Action Program, including commodity imports which can be justified and absorbed under the seven criteria of the Joint Action Program (pp. 20-21). The parallel Committees of the United States and Viet-Nam will immediately cooperate in working out target estimates for an import program that will give the United States Government a basis for planning.
5. In order to direct the resources of Viet-Nam to the highest priority requirements, Viet-Nam should be strongly urged to undertake to generate piasters through the several means spelled out on pp. 22-23 of the Joint Action Program.
6. Strongly urge early implementation by the Vietnamese of the recommendation regarding tax reform and the principle of a single and realistic rate of exchange.



7. The Ambassador should make clear to President Diem that if this is to be a truly joint effective effort, action by each country must be related to that by the other. In particular, the U.S. attaches great importance to the reasonable implementation of the agreed criteria governing imports; we also consider the gaining of the effective piaster rate applicable to U.S. commodity aid, to which it is understood President Diem has already agreed, to be an indispensable part of our effort. Action by Viet-Nam on both of these matters will be very closely related to the U.S. contribution to the over-all effort. The Ambassador is authorized to assure President Diem that increased piaster realization per dollars worth of imports will not be used as a reason for reducing the U.S. share of our joint efforts.
8. The President directs the Director of International Cooperation Administration to conduct through USOM Viet-Nam and in cooperation with appropriate Vietnamese experts, a thorough and expeditious review of the new proposals for emergency social action outlined in Section B of the Joint Program and of programs already underway which these proposals are intended to supplement.
9. In order to derive long-range benefits from our joint efforts to win in the present emergency, Viet-Nam needs long-range planning. Accordingly, urge the Vietnamese to create more effective planning machinery to develop a long-range plan and urge them to expedite the training of staff to carry on planning activities.\* The Parallel Committees should develop specific development projects in line with the general recommendations in the Joint Action Program.
10. Make clear to Diem that we hope that one consequence of our new joint efforts will be an effective projection to the nation, its friends and its enemies, of our confidence in a long-range

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\* Such planning activities should, inter alia, cover such particulars as the use of medical manpower and teachers, for which Viet-Nam has competing civilian-military requirements.

future for an independent Viet-Nam. In this connection, the Ambassador should seek discreetly to impress upon President Diem that he should use the total U.S. program for the greatest political effect in his achievement of maximum appreciation of his government by the people of Viet-Nam and the people of the world. (It is hoped that the Ambassador will continue his efforts to persuade President Diem to engage more fully in his civic action program non-Communist elements now in political opposition.)

11. The Parallel Committee should be given a maximum delegation of authority to assure follow-up action, approve modifications of the program and "recommend measures to improve and adapt the Special Action Program as the situation changes." In this connection, the President has emphasized that the chief responsibility for the planning and execution of the U.S. share of the program will, more than ever, rest with the Ambassador and, under his direction, with MAAG and USOM.
12. The President shall be informed of matters arising in the implementation of this Joint Program requiring his attention so that they may receive his immediate consideration.

McGeorge Bundy

Information Copies to:

The Secretary of Defense  
The Director, International Cooperation Administration  
The Director, United States Information Agency  
The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Director, Bureau of the Budget  
The Director of Central Intelligence



# PROSPECTS FOR NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM

## THE PROBLEM

To assess the situations in North and South Vietnam, to analyze the nature and scope of the Communist threat to South Vietnam, and to estimate the prospects for the next year or so.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) has thoroughly consolidated its political control in North Vietnam and, with extensive Bloc assistance, will probably continue to make rapid economic progress. Regimentation and food shortages have increased public unrest and dissatisfaction and resulted in some slackening of discipline among local officials. However, there is no significant organized opposition. The moderating influence of the aged Ho Chi Minh has prevented policy differences among top DRV leaders from erupting into serious intraparty strife. When Ho is no longer active there will probably be a struggle for power between the Moscow-oriented and the Peiping-oriented elements of the party. (Paras. 13, 15, 21, 23-25)

2. There is some dissatisfaction in South Vietnam with Diem's leadership among members of the cabinet, the bureaucracy, and the military, arising out of the serious internal security situation and irritation with Diem's system of family rule. Diem

has initiated a number of political reform measures, but probably will not relinquish his highly centralized method of government control. The degree of dissatisfaction will probably be directly related to the success or failure of the Government of Vietnam (GVN) efforts against Communist guerrilla and subversive activity. (Paras. 31, 34, 39)

3. The army will continue to be a major factor in future political developments in South Vietnam. We believe that the chances of a military coup have been reduced by recent manifestations of US support of the Diem government and by the substantial increase in US aid to help South Vietnam meet its internal security problems. Although there has been a decrease in indications of coup-plotting within the military in recent months, certain basic dissatisfactions with the national leadership persist. If the fight against the Viet Cong goes poorly during the next year or the South Vietnamese Army suffers heavy casualties, the



chances of a military coup would substantially increase. (Para. 37)

4. A major Hanoi-directed Communist offensive against the Diem government and directed toward reunification of Vietnam under Communist control is under way. The Communist apparatus in South Vietnam, the Viet Cong, now probably has more than 12,000 hard-core members and several thousand supporters engaged in guerrilla warfare, terrorist operations, political and propaganda activity, sabotage and intelligence activities. This campaign is intended to assert Communist authority over increasingly large parts of the countryside in anticipation of setting up fully "liberated areas" in which GVN authority is effectively denied, or of so weakening the Diem government as to precipitate its overthrow, or both. At present, more than half of the rural area in the productive and highly populated region south and southwest of Saigon, as well as several areas to the northwest of Saigon, are under extensive control of the Communists. (Paras. 50-51)

5. We believe that the Hanoi regime will increase the pace and scope of its paramilitary activity during the next few months. South Vietnam's urban centers will probably be subjected to increasing Viet Cong terrorism. Further Viet Cong attempts to assassinate Diem are likely. However, we believe that with continued high levels of US aid and a strenuous and effective GVN effort, the problem of Viet

Cong control of large areas of the countryside can in time be reduced. (Paras. 58-60)

6. Even if the GVN does reduce Viet Cong strength, it will require continued maximum effort—military, political, and economic—to maintain its authority. South Vietnam will not be able to seal completely its borders with North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to the infiltration of material and personnel from North Vietnam. (Paras. 60-61)

7. Thus, the outlook in South Vietnam is for a prolonged and difficult struggle with the Viet Cong insurgents. At the same time that the government is prosecuting the military campaign in the war against the Communists, it will have to act to prevent internal weaknesses and strains from causing its collapse. Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces already control most of southern Laos except for towns along the Mekong, and if a Communist or leftist government comes to power in Laos the GVN struggle against the Viet Cong will take on new, more perilous dimensions. If there is a serious disruption of GVN leadership as a result of Diem's death or as the result of a military coup any momentum GVN's counterinsurgency efforts had achieved will be halted or reversed, at least for a time. The confusion and suspicion attending a coup effort could provide the Communist an opportunity to seize control of the government. (Paras. 61-62)



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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

OFF SECY OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 80

August 29, 1961

Decisions approved by the President at the Meeting on Southeast Asia, August 29, 1961

Participants:

The Secretary of Defense ✓  
The Secretary of State  
The Attorney General  
Ambassador Harriman  
Mr. Allen Dulles  
General Lemnitzer  
Mr. Edward Murrow

Mr. Alexis Johnson  
Mr. John Steeves  
Mr. Robert Johnson  
General Taylor  
Mr. Bundy

The President approved the following actions:

1. An intensification of the diplomatic effort to achieve agreement to the Paris proposals on the part of Souvanna, especially by direct conversations between Ambassador Harriman and Souvanna, with an emphasis not only upon the interlocking importance of the Paris proposals, but also upon U. S. support of Souvanna in the event that he accepts the Paris plan.
2. Authorization to undertake conversations with SEATO allies both bilaterally and with the SEATO Council, exploring the possibility of an enlargement of the concept of SEATO Plan 5. It must be understood that this exploration was in the nature of contingency planning and did not represent a flat commitment of the United States to participate in such an enlarged enterprise.
3. An immediate increase in mobile training teams in Laos to include advisers down to the level of the company, to a total U. S. strength in this area of 500, together with an attempt to get Thai agreement to supply an equal amount of Thais for the same purpose.

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4. An immediate increase of 2,000 in the number of Meos being supported to bring the total to a level of 11,000.

5. Authorization for photo-reconnaissance by Thai or sanitized aircraft over all of Laos.

It is assumed that these actions will be carried out under the general direction of the Southeast Asia Task Force under the direction of Deputy Under Secretary Johnson.

/Signed/ McGeorge Bundy

CORRECTED page to National Security Action Memorandum No. 80, August 29.



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Special Assistant's Office  
Bureau of Intelligence & ResearchDEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

OCT 19 1961

Research Memorandum

RFE-1, September 29, 1961

JNE/RE

SOUTH VIETNAM: CRISIS AND SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS<sup>1</sup>

See 11-22

ABSTRACT

Since late 1959 the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) has been faced with greatly accelerated, diversified, and unremitting Communist guerrilla and terrorist warfare and subversion directed and supported by the North Vietnamese regime. During this period the armed component of the Communist apparatus has grown from 3,000 cadres to a well-organized, adequately armed, and increasingly aggressive guerrilla-terrorist force of about 17,000 as a result of stepped-up infiltration and recruitment locally. Although Communist armed operations are concentrated in the rural areas of the Mekong River delta, they have spread to the once relatively quiescent central and northern provinces and have occurred increasingly closer to urban areas. The immediate Communist objectives are to demoralize the peasantry, weaken and supplant government authority in the countryside, and discredit President Ngo Dinh Diem's leadership to the point of precipitating his overthrow.

Communist progress toward these objectives has been substantial. More than one-half of the entire countryside in the highly productive Mekong River delta, as well as some areas north of Saigon and in the central provinces, have come under varying degrees of Communist control. In many of these and other areas, the Communists, have restricted the flow of rice to the marketing centers, forced the curtailment of government agrarian and other rural programs, and gained control of many inland waterways, thereby adversely affecting the economy. Since the beginning of 1960, Communist guerrillas and terrorists have killed or kidnapped more than 6,500 civilians, local officials, and security and military personnel, thus increasing the shortage of trained local administrators and weakening morale particularly among the security services and the local civil bureaucracy. Moreover, in the face of the government's inability to provide adequate protection to the populace in many rural areas, Communist reprisals and propaganda have aggravated peasant dissatisfaction and have made the peasantry reluctant to participate in local government projects and to assist the security forces with vitally needed intelligence on the Communists.

1. This paper is based on material prepared as a contribution to NIE 14.3/53/61 Prospects for North and South Vietnam, August 15, 1961. It has been substantially revised for publication at the present time.



The domestic political repercussions of the Communist insurgency have also been severe. Numerous officials at all levels of the government and the military and security establishments have criticized Diem's handling of the security situation and have seriously questioned his ability to lead the people during what they regard as the most critical period since the end of the Indochina war. Their concern with the Communist threat, however, is almost inseparably entwined with an accumulation of grievances principally over Diem's failure to delegate responsibility, the power exercised by members of Diem's family, and Diem's methods of policing the attitudes and loyalty of the government bureaucracy. Open deprecation of Diem's leadership on these and other grounds has also increased sharply among intellectual-clite circles and disgruntled ex-politicians in Saigon, largely a politically impotent however vocal lot, and to a lesser extent, among labor and business elements.

Recent developments—including Diem's outstanding success at the presidential polls last April and some modest political reforms to date but, more importantly, strong US public manifestations of support and a substantial increase in US military and economic aid—have given Diem something of a political reprieve. However, the political situation remains fluid and, as yet, there has been no conclusive reversal of deteriorating trends. Although reports of coup-plotting and of criticism of Diem have decreased in recent months, their persistence is indicative of the continuing and potentially explosive political situation in South Vietnam. Moreover, below the surface of open discontent, there is probably a growing and increasingly desperate element of dissenters who are silent either because of fear of being suppressed or because of the realization that there is little they can do legally to improve conditions.

Neither has there been any conclusive improvement in the security situation although the government's comprehensive counterinsurgency program, supported by substantial US aid, is beginning to show favorable results. The Communists can be expected to maintain a pressing and diversified campaign of guerrilla-terrorist and subversive warfare, and there are strong indications they will attempt a greater armed effort after the end of the rainy season later this year; however, they may continue to avoid any large-scale engagement with the increasingly aggressive Vietnamese army, except in places and at times of their own choosing. In the short run, the Communist apparatus does not appear to have the capacity to foment a large-scale insurrection or to seize control of the government without considerable assistance from North Vietnam, which would necessarily be of such magnitude that it would be tantamount to overt military aggression. Farring such a development and given effective implementation of the counterinsurgency plan, the government should be able to reduce somewhat the level of Communist insurgency during the next year or so and conceivably even reverse the trend against the Communists. In the longer run, Communist insurgency can be substantially reduced but the government cannot, within the foreseeable future, eliminate it entirely, principally because of the government's inability to seal completely South Vietnam's frontiers with North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.



Security prospects over the next year, however, may well be influenced more by developments in neighboring Laos than by the extent to which the Diem government can improve the effectiveness of its military and security forces. If Laos comes under predominantly Communist control, Communist capabilities in South Vietnam would almost certainly be strengthened to a degree unprecedented since 1954. Southern Laos could become the most important base for Communist operations against South Vietnam. In this event, the level of Communist insurgency might assume the proportions of widespread guerrilla warfare and some areas would probably come under complete Communist control, within which Hanoi might attempt to establish a Communist but ostensibly independent government with both military and political support from the Bloc, Vietnam's agricultural economy would suffer further and urban centers probably would be increasingly subjected to Communist guerrilla and terrorist attacks designed to heighten anxiety in the centers of government power and spark a non-Communist coup effort.

In the face of a Communist offensive of such proportions, South Vietnam would be required to make a maximum military effort in order to survive. There would be no immediate collapse. In the long run, however, the maintenance of South Vietnam's independence would rest principally on the nature and amount of US support and on a maximum effort by the South Vietnamese Government to develop the political, psychological, and economic programs required to gain and retain popular support.

The stability of the government during the next year or so, will depend principally on Diem's handling of the security situation. If Diem can demonstrate a continuing improvement in security conditions, he should be able to strengthen his position, alleviate concern and boost morale within his bureaucracy and military establishment, and lessen the urgency with which many of the members view the current situation. However, if the fight against the Communists goes poorly or the South Vietnamese Army suffers heavy casualties, the chances of a coup would substantially increase. Moreover, a coup may be attempted at any time. The odds favor a coup if security declines appreciably further, particularly if accompanied by a virtual Communist takeover of Laos.

Any coup attempt during the next year or so is likely to be non-Communist in leadership, involving army elements and civilian officials and perhaps some disgruntled oppositionists outside the government. The participating elements probably would be broader than those involved in the 1960 attempt, would have greater popular support, and would be better prepared to execute their plan quickly and successfully. Moreover, a major split within the military leadership does not appear likely; most of the generals probably would elect to remain uncommitted at the outset of the coup, as they apparently did in November 1960, adding their tacit or active support to whatever side they judged likely to win. Under these circumstances, a military coup attempt would have better than an even chance to succeed.

Diem's removal--whether by a military coup, assassination death, from accidental or natural causes--would considerably strengthen the power of the military. The odds appear about even between a movement led by



military junta or by Vice President Tho, with the army playing a major if not the predominant role behind the scenes. On the one hand, the military might conclude that a military-led government would be better able to maintain national unity and internal political cohesion and, more importantly, to conduct a determined and effective campaign against the Communists. On the other hand, they might conclude that Tho, who has been on good terms with some of the present military leaders, would not disagree with their views on the manner of conducting the fight against the Communists and that his constitutional succession would legalize the change in government and avert a serious power struggle. Another important factor which would almost certainly enter into the calculations of the military would be the fortunes of the coup group in South Korea and the course of US-ROK relations. In any event, a government led by the military, by Tho, or by any other civilian approved by the military would probably maintain Vietnam's pro-US orientation.

If a military coup or Diem's death seriously disrupted government leadership, any momentum the government's counterinsurgency efforts had achieved probably would be halted and possibly reversed, at least for a time. Moreover, the confusion and suspicion attending the disruption would provide the Communists an opportunity to strengthen their position in the countryside, and they might even be emboldened to attempt to seize control of the government. Since a serious split within the military leadership does not appear likely, Communist attempts to take over the government in Saigon would probably fail.

In the meantime, the Diem government will almost certainly continue to press for increased aid, further expansion of the armed forces, and a clear priority of military over political and economic efforts to undercut the Communist insurgency. Diem will be adamant in his views as to how the anti-Communist campaign should be waged and will tend to regard US differences with such views or criticism of his inner circle as indications of weakening US confidence in him. In the event of another coup effort against him, he would probably expect quick and strong US public support. Diem will also continue to press the US for a strong anti-communist posture in the Far East. If he concludes that this posture is weakening, he will almost certainly make strong protests and become increasingly assertive and stubborn in his relations with the US. However, in the absence of any acceptable alternative to US support and assistance to South Vietnam, he is likely to avoid jeopardizing seriously basic US-South Vietnamese ties. Indeed, he would probably seek to establish closer ties with the US by such means as a mutual defense treaty and possibly the stationing of US forces in South Vietnam if, for example, the Communists take over Laos or Communist China achieves a nuclear capability. Failure of current international efforts to establish a neutral Laos or a resumption of all-out rebel military operations in Laos would greatly tempt Diem to increase substantially his covert forces in southern Laos in order to prevent complete Communist control of that area; Diem would probably seek US-Thai participation as well as assurances that the US defend South Vietnam in case such action precipitated open aggression by North Vietnam. Diem would also be tempted to involve his government in another plot to overthrow Norodom Sihanouk in the event the latter became too accommodating to impending Communist pressure in the area.



# I. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The past year and a half has witnessed a marked deterioration in the security and political situations in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam); overshadowing all other internal developments and breaking the relative stability and general surface calm that had prevailed since President Ngo Dinh Diem consolidated his authority in 1955-56. The Communist clandestine apparatus -- maintained and directed by the Communist regime to the north, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) -- has stepped up its guerrilla, terrorist, and other subversive activities to levels unprecedented since the end of the Indochina hostilities (1946-54). The gravity of the security situation in turn has generated serious criticism of Diem's leadership both in and outside the government bureaucracy, including the military establishment, and has aggravated discontent among the traditionally politically apathetic peasantry. These trends were climaxed in an abortive anti-Diem coup in Saigon in November 1960 by a small group of middle level and junior army paratroop officers and civilian oppositionists.

As in the past, Diem and his close advisors tend to view virtually every problem besetting their country as caused directly or indirectly by the dual Communist threat of internal subversion and external aggression. In their planning, therefore, they continue to give the absolute highest priority to military and security measures directed toward what they consider to be their most urgent tasks: 1) to defend against Communist encroachment essentially by maintaining a larger and stronger military establishment (with substantial US aid); and 2) to maintain firm control over the bureaucracy and over the military and security establishments in order to prevent their use to dislodge Diem and his advisors from power and in order to organize the population to serve their programs. At the same time, the Vietnamese leadership is no less anxious to keep the people fed and supplied at a level sufficient to avert serious unrest.

In Diem's scale of values, democracy in the sense of individual freedom, although it remains an ultimate goal, under present circumstances frequently ranks below (and has sometimes been inimical) to these urgent tasks. While eschewing the systematic regimentation and repression of the population characteristic of North Vietnam, Diem and other government leaders are seeking to stimulate a more cohesive group effort by the people of South Vietnam than yet obtains. Although attempting to do so within the framework of constitutional government, any conflict between the two is generally resolved in favor of strong central authority. Accordingly Diem has been willing to maintain the forms of representative institutions and the promises of civil rights instituted when the Republic of Vietnam was first established, but the country continues to be governed in an authoritarian manner tempered by Diem's paternalistic outlook. It is not certain that the institutional framework of government would survive the death or removal of Diem, its creator.



The deterioration of the security and political situations has contributed to some deceleration in the pace of economic growth. Expansion in both the agricultural and industrial sectors has continued, however, and the South Vietnamese people remain, if not prosperous, at least relatively well-off in terms of Southeast Asian living standards. Nonetheless, the economy is still heavily dependent on US aid, and there is the growing fear that much of the economic progress achieved to date may be undone by the Communists whose efforts in this direction give testimony of a major objective.

In foreign affairs, the South Vietnamese government has sought to maintain its close ties with the US but, until recently, Diem and some of his top advisors have been critical and resentful of many urgent US recommendations and even doubtful of US political support for their regime. During the past few months, a clear and public reaffirmation of US support and increased US assistance, on the one hand, and on the other, Diem's willingness to push ahead more vigorously with expanded measures to fight the Communists have provided a basis for a continuing close relationship between the US and South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese Government's most urgent concern, however, has been with the crisis in neighboring Laos. Communist insurgent forces and capabilities in South Vietnam have been appreciably strengthened by infiltration across the Lao frontier, and the South Vietnamese Government is extremely alarmed at the prospects of a Communist takeover of Laos. In the South Vietnamese Government's view, Communist activities in Laos are part of a broader and coordinated DRV offensive aimed at South Vietnam, and a Communist takeover of Laos would quickly result in a Communist encirclement of South Vietnam since neighboring Cambodia would be unable or unwilling to resist Communist encroachment.



## II. THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO SOUTH VIETNAM

Since the cessation of the Indochina hostilities and the partition of Vietnam at the 17th parallel in 1954 by the Geneva Conference, the DRV, while holding over the Republic of Vietnam an implied threat of eventual invasion by its numerically superior military forces, has used armed guerrilla and terrorist warfare, penetration, sabotage, bluster, and propaganda in an effort to weaken and disrupt its rival and eventually extend Communist control over all of Vietnam. These activities have been carried out by a covert Communist subversive apparatus of armed cadres and political agents, commonly known as the Viet Cong, left behind by the DRV after it withdrew most of its military forces to the north in 1954 and reinforced since then by infiltration from North Vietnam and by recruitment locally.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the DRV has assiduously attempted to give the impression that it abides in every detail with the Geneva Accords and has urged the holding of Vietnam-wide elections (as provided for by the Geneva Accords) and the unification of the country.

### A. Tactics and Objectives

1. First Post-Geneva Phase: 1954-57. From 1954 to about 1957, Communist subversive activities in South Vietnam were largely non-violent, in line with the DRV's new tactics of maximizing the "political" struggle and minimizing the "armed" struggle as the means to bring about the downfall of the precariously weak Diem government. The Communist leadership in Hanoi probably viewed the future with confidence in view of the political chaos and economic dislocation prevailing in the South. However, the success of Diem and his lieutenants in forging a stable government and an effective armed force to withstand both Communist and non-Communist subversive pressures and in moving rapidly against critical economic problems (with considerable US assistance) and Diem's persistent refusal to enter into any political negotiations with the DRV (much less permit area-wide elections under conditions which would assure a Communist majority), contributed to a readjustment in Communist tactics. Other probable contributing factors were the concern of the DRV leadership over South Vietnam's increasingly close alignment with the US, considerable progress by the Communist regime in consolidating its control in North Vietnam, and the poor morale of the hard-pressed Communist apparatus in South Vietnam.

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1. Viet Cong is the popular term used by the South Vietnamese to refer to Vietnamese Communists, singularly or collectively. For all practical purposes, the Viet Cong apparatus is an extension of the North Vietnamese Communist Party; the Dang Lao Dong Viet Nam or merely Lao Dong, which also operates in Laos, Cambodia and other countries with important Vietnamese minority groups.



2. Second Post-Geneva Phase: 1957-59, Communist armed activities of all types began increasing in mid-1957. Largely of a terrorist type, involving assassinations, kidnappings, bombings, etc., these actions were concentrated in remote parts of the southern and southwestern provinces or the former Cochinchina area, were carried out by a few or several armed cadres, and were aimed principally at local administrative officials, police and security personnel, and village leaders. Within a year, however, it was clear that the Communist leadership in Hanoi was conducting a planned and increasingly diversified, although still low-level, armed campaign in South Vietnam, coordinated with stepped-up propaganda and other non-violent subversive activities and designed to weaken security and government authority in rural areas and demoralize the peasantry. In addition to the continuing rise in terrorist incidents, the number of guerrilla raids against small security and army units and remote villages increased, reflecting greater Communist armed capabilities and aggressiveness. Vietnamese intelligence sources, however, estimated the armed component of the Communist apparatus at just over 2,000 which included some remnant armed bands of the once-powerful Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects and of the Binh Xuyen bandit organization. By the end of 1959, estimated Communist armed strength reached 3,000, with a proportionate increase in the size of attacking guerrilla bands. During this period, Communist terrorists are believed to have assassinated or kidnapped a total of at least 1,100 persons, in addition to the number of military and security personnel killed during armed operations.<sup>2</sup>

3. Present Phase, Since the latter part of 1959, the Communist apparatus has waged an intensive and considerably expanded terrorist-guerrilla offensive in South Vietnam, supported by increasingly effective propaganda and intelligence operations. Terrorist acts against local officials and civilians and guerrilla raids against army and security units have increased to levels unprecedented since the end of the Indochina war. The number of persons assassinated and kidnapped during 1960 alone is more than double the total for 1957-59, Communist armed strength has more than quintupled, substantial parts of the countryside have come under varying degrees of Communist control and political influence, travel throughout most of the countryside has become extremely hazardous, and terrorist acts in Saigon itself have increased.

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2. These and other statistics on casualties inflicted by Communist or government forces are based on official Vietnamese sources, are not completely reliable, and should be considered essentially as indicative of the order of magnitude of the fighting in South Vietnam.



Because of geographic, logistical, and other considerations, Communist activities are concentrated, as in the past, in the highly populated and productive former Cochinchina region. The terrain, most of which is swamp, as in the Mekong River delta, or virtually jungle, as along the Cambodian frontier, has favored hit-and-run tactics and infiltration from (and regroupment in) Cambodia. Since the latter part of 1960, however, the Communists have stepped up substantially their armed operations in the once relatively quiescent central and northern provinces. While this may be partly a tactical maneuver to relieve increasing government pressure on Communist forces in the southern provinces, the Communist leadership may be in the process of opening a second major "front" in an area where the prospects of infiltrating cadres from neighboring southern Laos have become more favorable than ever before. In any event, the size of Communist forces in the central and northern provinces has increased greatly, and Communist capabilities there are likely to improve still further. Other infiltration routes are across the Demilitarized Zone along the 17th parallel and by junk landings along South Vietnam's long coastline.

Judging from their actions and from alleged secret directives from Hanoi, the Communists appear to be aiming at isolating as much of the countryside as possible from urban centers (as they were able to do to a considerable extent during the Indochina hostilities), hoping to weaken the government and ultimately precipitate its overthrow. The plan apparently has been to build up sufficient armed strength in relatively inaccessible areas (including areas under Communist influence since 1954) where cadres could rest, train, and regroup and from which operations could be launched. The Communists presumably hope that the number and size of these areas could be progressively increased and that they could eventually become completely Communist-controlled and strong enough to resist attack by government forces. By Communist definition, they would then constitute "liberated" areas. Since about the middle part of this year, however, Communist guerrilla and terrorist attacks have occurred closer to urban areas than ever before, and two provincial capitals have been attacked and held temporarily.

The Communists have also stepped up their propaganda and other non-violent subversive activities, particularly during the past six months. In urban areas, they have sought to exploit dissatisfaction with Diem's leadership among non-Communist opposition and labor and youth groups and have urged cooperation in a popular front against Diem. They have announced the creation of a "National Liberation Front", reportedly composed of various youth, women's, labor, and other groups and equipped with its own news agency and mobile radio transmitter, ostensibly to give the Communist conspiracy the facade of political legitimacy and broad political support. Efforts to penetrate the government services and the military and security



establishments have also increased. In rural areas, the Communists have attempted to subvert local government projects and inspire anti-government demonstrations and have undertaken major campaigns to gain control over the tribal minorities and to aggravate economic conditions.

#### B. Communist Accomplishments

Communist successes since the beginning of 1960 have been high. Probably the most significant gain has been the spread of Communist control and influence over increasing sectors of the countryside largely through organized coercion and terrorism. The number of Communist cadres and converts is probably small in most villages, but in the absence of government forces sufficient to protect the village against reprisals, those inclined to support the government and turn against the Communists are effectively contained. The high rate of assassinations of local officials and retaliatory murders, moreover, is a continual reminder of the penalty of noncooperation with the local Communist forces.

Although the Communist armed-political apparatus does not appear to have succeeded in completely supplanting the government over any sizeable area, it is believed that more than one-half of the entire rural region south and southwest of Saigon, as well as several areas just to the north and in the central provinces, may be under substantial Communist control by night, with the government generally capable of maintaining its authority only by day. However, in some of these areas (for example, portions of the Ca Mau peninsula and of the swampy Plaine des Jones), the Communists have benefitted from the extended absence of sufficient government military and security forces and reportedly exercise considerable control by day as well as by night. Moreover, these areas are believed to be dangerously close to becoming "liberated" areas, the Communists frequently being reported levying and collecting taxes, directing the harvesting and controlling the distribution of rice and other farm products, conducting indoctrination programs on the populace, conscripting cadres, and setting up overt party organizations and provisional local government units similar to those established during the Indochina fighting.

Another highly significant gain by the Communist network has been the sharp increase in the size and in the armed capability of its guerrilla-terrorist force. Total armed strength is now estimated at about 17,000 and the number of political agents, although still unknown, probably has also increased. The bulk of the Communist armed force is still distributed in the southern region, despite the substantial increase of forces in the rest of the country. The total numerical increase in strength, which is due both to stepped-up infiltration and recruitment locally, enabled the Communists during most of 1960 to operate frequently in large bands and on several occasions of several hundred armed personnel, e.g., during the attack on an army regimental headquarters in Tay Ninh in January 1960.



and the series of attacks against army and other government outposts in the Kontum-Pleiku area in October 1960. Since the beginning of this year, Communist guerrillas have generally operated in smaller bands, making it more difficult for government forces to find and engage them. However, a series of attacks principally against security forces this month has reportedly involved about 1,000 Communist personnel.

The capture of weapons and equipment has significantly improved Communist armed capability. Communist bands appear to be adequately armed with a variety of small weapons, frequently utilize light machine-guns and mortars and occasionally rocket launchers and recoilless rifles, and are becoming increasingly adept in the manufacture and use of land mines and other explosives. During some engagements, Communist guerrillas have been reported wearing South Vietnamese military uniforms, complete with steel helmets, utilizing night flares, land vehicles, and motor-boats, and being aided by radio communications.

The casualties inflicted by Communist terrorists and guerrillas have been heavy. According to incomplete official Vietnamese statistics, Communist terrorists assassinated about 2,000 local officials and civilians and kidnapped almost another 1,800 from January 1960 through June 1961, while Communist guerrillas killed about 2,700 military and security personnel during armed engagements from May 1960 through June 1961. In comparison, the government claims that about 19,000-20,000 Communists have been killed or captured during 1960 and the first half of this year, but this estimate appears exaggerated. In any event, the casualties inflicted by the Communists have been sufficient to aggravate the existing shortage of experienced local government officials, weaken morale particularly among the local bureaucracy and the security services, and foment peasant discontent.

The effects of the Communist guerrilla-terrorist campaign in the countryside has been severe in other respects. Government operations in many areas have been constantly harassed and in some instances have been indefinitely suspended. For example, approximately 200 elementary schools in the south and southwest, affecting about 25,000 students and 800 teachers, had closed down last year, and it is now believed that the number of schools inoperative because of the insurgency is about 300. Certain land development operations in the central provinces have been reduced by almost fifty percent, and Communist attempts to disrupt the economy have caused a shortage in the amount of rice available for export and have contributed to a rise in rice prices. Sabotage has increased substantially; by the first quarter of 1961, for example, about 250 bridges had been partially or totally destroyed by the Communists. Finally, an increasing number of inland waterways in the Mekong delta area, particularly minor canals leading to major waterways, have come under Communist control.



### C. Government Countermeasures

Increased Communist activities have required the government to adopt extraordinary internal security measures which come close to constituting a national emergency. The great bulk of its military, security, and police forces has been employed directly or indirectly in counterinsurgency operations since the beginning of 1960, and these forces are being increased substantially: the 158,000-man defense establishment (with an army of about 140,000) is being increased to 170,000 and eventually to 200,000; the Civil Guard, in effect a paramilitary security and police force, has been increased from 48,000 to about 65,000 and eventually to about 70,000; and the Self-Defense Corps, a village constabulary force, has been increased from about 40,000 to 51,000. The regular police services, the Municipal Police and the National Sûreté, have remained at about their previous levels of 10,500 and 7,500 respectively. Assisting the military establishment and the security and police services are a number of other groups such as the small Gendarmerie, the Self-Defense Corps Youth, and the Republican Youth, the latter being essentially a political organization but recently armed for defensive purposes.

With the help of US advisors and with increased US aid, the South Vietnamese Government has proceeded to implement a broad and comprehensive counterinsurgency plan designed to strengthen its military and security capabilities as well as improve related political, economic, and social conditions. Among the many military-security measures already enacted (some of which had been implemented prior to the formulation of the counterinsurgency plan), the government has accelerated significantly a training program in anti-guerrilla warfare for its military and security services, increased substantially the number of army "ranger" units to be formed by the personnel trained under this program, reorganized the army's tactical command structure in order to increase the effectiveness of field operations, improved military communication and transportation facilities, centralized the intelligence functions of most if not all agencies, and created a high-level advisory council for security affairs.

These measures have increased the effectiveness of the government's military and security forces to the point that they have been able since the first part of this year to take more offensive action against Communist guerrillas than ever before. Moreover, several unprecedentedly large operations, involving elements of the three military services, have been launched since last June principally in southern areas of considerable Communist armed strength. While these operations have significantly improved the ability of the military services to carry out coordinated offensives, in only three operations have the government's numerically superior forces been able to inflict heavy casualties on the Communist guerrillas.



South Vietnam's military capabilities and other resources for fighting the Communists are considerable. The military leadership is among the best in Southeast Asia and the rank and file troops have the spirit and willingness to fight. The civilian bureaucratic leadership is also strongly anti-Communist, but its effectiveness is impeded by inadequate delegation of authority. There are no serious trends toward neutralism or toward a political accommodation with Hanoi. Finally, the Vietnamese peasants, however politically apathetic and discontented with the government, are by no means ready to surrender themselves to the Communists, given a greater effort by the government to protect them from Communist intimidation.

### III. THE POLITICAL SITUATION

#### A. Stability of the Diem Government

President Diem's leadership and the stability of his government have been more seriously questioned during the past year or so than at any time since he consolidated his authority in 1955-56. Since the beginning of 1960, criticism of Diem has increased substantially in various sectors of the Vietnamese society but has been more urgently articulated within the government bureaucracy itself, including the military establishment. A wide range of officials including Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho and other important members of the cabinet, the bureaucracy, and the military have privately questioned Diem's handling of the internal security problem and his ability to rally and lead the people against the Communists during what they regard as the most critical period since the end of the Indochina war. Their concern with the Communist threat, however, is almost inseparably entwined with an accumulation of grievances principally over Diem's failure to delegate responsibility, the power exercised by some of Diem's close advisors, particularly his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, and the use of the Can Lao, the government's semicovert political apparatus, to police the attitudes and loyalty of the government bureaucracy. This discontent culminated in a near-successful military coup effort in Saigon in November 1960.

Open depreciation of Diem's leadership has increased sharply among intellectual-elite circles and disgruntled ex-politicians in Saigon, the focal point of non-Communist political opposition to Diem since 1956, and to a lesser extent, among labor and business elements. They have consistently and, on occasion, vociferously demanded that Diem liberalize and reform the regime, lift restrictions on civil liberties, and permit an opposition to operate. These demands have been supported by a disparate group of anti-Diem Vietnamese expatriates in Paris who have long advocated Diem's removal. There is little likelihood, however, that the activities of the Saigon opposition will contribute appreciably to any immediate political crisis in South Vietnam. Their leaders are largely opportunists and political idealists with political views covering a wide spectrum, including neutralist. They are not believed to have support within the upper echelon of the government, have little popular appeal outside Saigon and expatriate Vietnamese communities, and have been consistently unable to maintain unity within their own ranks or to agree on a principal leader or spokesman. A number of them were involved in coup attempt last year, but there is no reliable evidence that they had entered into any close planning or understanding with the military coup leaders.



Until this period, few high or middle level officials dared to criticize Diem or any member of the ruling family or to attack the Can Lao even privately, while non-Communist anti-Diem elements outside the government had limited themselves almost entirely to guarded expressions of dissent. Diem had heretofore not hesitated to remove any critical official, including cabinet members and military leaders, or to use the government's varied resources to pressure and otherwise silence grumblers outside the government. Fear of unfavorable reaction from the US and of precipitating greater active opposition probably has kept Diem from dismissing critics within his official family and, with exception of those involved in last year coup attempt, from suppressing anti-government activities among Saigon intellectuals and ex-bureaucrats.

Unrest has also increased among the peasantry principally because of the government's inability to assure adequate protection from depredations and taxation by the Communist guerrillas and terrorists but partly because of the cumulative effort of excessive and roughshod methods by local security and administrative officials. Although dissatisfaction in the countryside is difficult to measure because of the peasantry's traditional political apathy and suspicion of government, it does not appear to be widespread. It is probably limited to areas where the level of Communist insurgency and the excesses of government control are highest; and would probably be alleviated by a general improvement in the security situation and by less government coercion. Some recent reports indicate that a trend in this direction is already noticeable due to the increased effectiveness of military and security forces, suspension of forced labor practices, and greater government effort to discipline and remove corrupt, harsh, and unpopular local officials. If these problems are not dealt with effectively, rural discontent may in the long run develop as the principal source of political instability. In the short run, neither the government nor the Communists seem capable of building up a ground-swell of positive popular support among the peasantry or using it extensively as a militant force.

The impact of these developments on the Vietnamese military establishment, however, appears to be much more serious. From senior down through junior officer ranks, there has been a growing concern over the course of the fighting against the Communists. Morale particularly among junior and middle grade officers and non-commissioned personnel has suffered further from extensive commitment without sufficient rotation in the seemingly endless pursuit of the Communists under the most adverse conditions of guerrilla warfare. A fairly recent unconfirmed report has alleged growing neutralist sentiment among the junior army officers. The concern of a significant segment of the top military leadership is further aggravated by Diem's reluctance to permit them a greater role in the planning of operations against the Communists, by his frequent disregard of the regular channels of command, and by the activities of the Can Lao



within the military establishment. Most of the top military leaders are considered by US military observers to be excellent professional officers, and greater utilization of their talents would increase the effectiveness of the government's counterinsurgency program.

#### B. Diem's Attitude

President Diem's reaction toward the current crisis reflects both general optimism and serious concern. Diem's attitude apparently continues to be shaped by the basic premise that the overriding problem is the Communist threat which he believes can be met virtually by military measures alone. He is inclined to view criticism of his system of rule, whether emanating from the bureaucracy or from the political opposition on the outside, as being substantially less important presumably because he feels that such criticism is either Communist-inspired or, to the degree that it is legitimate, is stimulated by concern over the Communist danger which he seems confident he can counter with increased US aid. In addition, he probably feels confident of his ability to forestall or suppress any armed coup attempt against him.

Equally important, however, is Diem's basic impatience with democratic processes which he considers useful as ultimate goals but liable in a country such as South Vietnam to be wasteful and dangerous to political stability and public safety. Diem appears to hold, therefore, that Vietnamese, with their national survival at stake, must learn to submit to a collective discipline until they develop a better sense of civic responsibility. For these and other reasons, Diem has not only given low priority to expanding democratic processes but he has also been disdainful and even suspicious of most Vietnamese who have agitated for political reforms. Diem's convictions of the correctness of his political views and of his approach to the current situation probably have been strengthened by a series of recent developments, including his suppression of last year's revolt, his easy victory during the elections last April, and the strong US public reaffirmations of support.

Below the surface of apparent optimism, Diem and his lieutenants exhibit considerable apprehension over the stability of their positions. During their actions against the coup plotters, they made it clear that future attempts of this type or of even strong public criticism of the government leadership will be severely dealt with. Nhu has indicated to US observers that many of the officials criticising the government are self-seeking and that the military critics are speaking more from a "lack of understanding" of the political situation than from political conviction. In the meantime, Diem has attempted to tighten his controls over the government and the military establishment through the Can Lao and such measures as increased police surveillance and removal and reassignment of personnel. He has, for example, conveniently used the cabinet reorganization



of last May to remove some of its critical (but admittedly weak) members; he has increased the authority of officials helpful to him during the 1960 coup attempt, as in the case of Brig. Gen. Nguyen Khanh; and he has established a "political commissar" system in the armed services ostensibly to conduct political indoctrination programs but probably also to strengthen Diem's informant and control mechanism. According to recent reports, Diem has created a "Military Task Force" of trusted military leaders and units which would be prepared to move quickly against any attempted coup.

At the same time, Diem appears to have realized that some liberalization of his pervasive personal role in running the government is necessary. To date, Diem's political reforms have been modest and appear to be motivated more by practical considerations, i.e. persistent US urging and increased US aid, than by any change in his political convictions. Among other things, he has permitted the "election" of youth representatives to village councils in a number of southern provinces, though the representatives come from the government's Republican Youth Organization. He has sought to improve the quality of local government officials and has disciplined and removed (with adequate publicity) an increasing number of those guilty of graft, excessive harshness, and ineffectiveness in office. He has allowed (probably ordered) the National Assembly to indulge in slightly more open debate of government-sponsored legislation and occasionally to question publicly cabinet members on the operation of their departments. Restrictions over the press have been relaxed somewhat and, with the exception of those involved in last year's coup attempt, the opposition has not been actively harassed. Finally, he has made a number of administrative changes within the military establishment designed to improve its effectiveness and ostensibly to delegate greater authority to its hierarchy.

#### C. Diem's System of Rule

Diem's system of rule remains essentially unchanged. As before, his personal impress is upon almost every aspect of the government and he continues to make all important decisions as well as many less important ones. What limited authority his subordinates possess, from the secretaries of state heading cabinet departments down to middle-level operational personnel, is largely determined by their personal standing with him rather than by formal legal requirements. Even his close advisers, including members of his own family, are balanced against each other and operate in relative obscurity, never being permitted to share the public spotlight focused on Ngo Dinh Diem. Thus, while he maintains the form of constitutional government, he directs the bureaucracy largely on a personal basis and with the help of an "inner circle" of advisors, bound to him by family ties and personal loyalty, operating largely outside the formal government structure, and extending their controls throughout the national and local bureaucracy.



Changes in the composition of the inner circle have not been frequent. Its principal and consistent members have been Diem's own family: Ngo Dinh Nhu, who is officially political advisor to Diem; Ngo Dinh Can, who has no official status but is the political boss of the central and northern provinces; Ngo Dinh Thuc, who is one of three Roman Catholic archbishops in South Vietnam but holds no official position in the government; and probably Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, Diem's sister-in-law and a member of the National Assembly, whose influence is now difficult to judge in view of Diem's recent efforts to impress the government and the public with her absence from the inner circle in order to counter sharp criticism of her activities. Outside the Diem family, membership in the inner circle has changed from time to time and currently includes Nguyen Dinh Thuan, Secretary of State for the Presidency, and Brig. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, Chief of Staff of the Army. Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho's position within the inner circle is no longer clear in view of his known criticism of Diem and the mutual dislike between him and Nhu.

Control over the implementation of policies outside the inner circle appears to be maintained by the Can Lao and by the large bureaucracy of local officials. Headed by Diem's brothers, Nhu and Can, the Can Lao also serves as a surveillance mechanism both within and outside the government. Its trusted and carefully selected members are placed at every echelon of government, including the military establishment and the police and security services, and frequently exercise greater authority than their non-party superiors. The power of the Can Lao outside the government bureaucracy is further enhanced by its direction of the government's mass political party, the National Revolutionary Movement, by its influence over other pro-government political organizations and labor, social, and cultural groups, and by its illegal control of certain economic activities. The importance of the local government bureaucracy for controlling policy implementation is derived from the fact that practically all officials at all levels, from the region down to the village, are appointed and removed directly or indirectly by the central government and frequently by Diem personally. These officials tend to operate essentially as Diem's personal agents, particularly the provincial chiefs who continue to exercise virtually unlimited powers over the people, despite efforts to inculcate in them a greater degree of public responsibility.



#### D. Elections and Cabinet Reorganization

President Diem and Vice President Tho were returned to office for another five years by an outstanding majority (89 percent) of the vote cast in the presidential and vice presidential elections of April 9, 1961, the first under Vietnam's constitution.<sup>1</sup> However, rather than constituting an accurate barometer of support for the national leadership, Diem's easy victory at the polls was due largely to the overwhelming advantages accruing from his utilization of the vast government bureaucracy, including the military and security establishments, the virtual political nullity of the opposition candidates, and the failure or inability of the Communists network to exercise its maximum armed and other subversive capabilities during the brief electoral period.

There is no reliable evidence of extensive government interference in the actual voting or manipulation of the ballots, and Diem made considerable effort to give impression that the elections were free. Among other things, he permitted extensive coverage and observation of the campaign and of the voting by foreign and Vietnamese correspondents, campaigned extensively even in provinces where Communist activities were fairly intensive (partly in order to show that he was actively seeking the office), and reportedly instructed his officials and agents to concentrate their efforts on an effective campaign and on providing adequate internal security during the voting rather than on intimidating the opposition candidates. This may have been due to Diem's expectation of an easy victory and to his desire to counter Western criticism of his authoritarian rule. Nevertheless, the elections were obviously closely controlled by the government. The national and local bureaucracy, including the almost 300,000 military, police, and security personnel, the equally large political party apparatus, and the propaganda media, including the government-controlled radio and press, were monopolized by the government in waging its campaign, instructing the voters how and apparently for whom to vote and seeing to it that the voters actually voted.

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1. Diem became president by deposing Bao Dai, the Chief of State, in a referendum on October 23, 1955, which simply called upon the people to vote against Bao Dai and recognize Diem, then Prime Minister, in his stead. The vote for Diem was overwhelming, over 98 percent of the vote cast, and on October 26, 1955; Diem proclaimed a republic, with himself as its first President. A little more than a year later, he appointed Nguyen Ngoc Tho as Vice President, in accordance with special provisions in the constitution promulgated on October 26, 1956.



The four opposition candidates (there were two opposition tickets, with two candidates on each ticket) would have had little chance of winning even if the elections had been completely free. They had no notable popular appeal of their own in or outside official circles and were not among the most vocal, articulate, or well-known critics of the government. A number of the latter were probably fearful of running or are still under arrest as a result of their alleged involvement in the 1960 abortive coup. Even in the Saigon area, where the opposition candidates concentrated their efforts and where they expected to do well, the Diem-Tho ticket got more than 70% of the vote cast.

The following month Diem reorganized his cabinet, ostensibly to increase efficiency and liberalize the regime. The reorganization created three new departments with "coordinating" but still vague responsibilities over all other departments, established another new department for agriculture by merging the functions of two former departments as well as other executive agencies concerned with agrarian affairs, and placed under the existing departments a number of the functions formerly within the Office of the President. While the new cabinet members for the most part seem technically more competent than their predecessors, their effectiveness will depend largely on the authority delegated to them by Diem -- something which Diem has been reluctant to do and which has generated discontent within his official family.

#### E. Political Reprieve for Diem

Recent developments appear to have given President Diem something of a political reprieve. Diem's outstanding success at the polls last April, however questionable, probably deflated some of his critics, while the modest political reforms implemented to date may have given others some hope of further liberalization of the regime. However, what lessening of the sense of urgency over the crisis in South Vietnam has taken place, and there almost certainly has been some, can be attributed principally to strong US public manifestations of support for the Diem government, including Vice President Johnson's visit, and to the substantial increase in US aid to help South Vietnam defeat the Communist insurgents. Moreover, the reorganizations within the military establishment and the degree of tactical planning permitted the military leadership appear to have alleviated dissatisfaction somewhat within the upper echelon of the armed forces, while the recent large offensive operations against the Communists have presumably improved morale among the middle and lower echelons.

At best, however, the political situation remains highly fluid and, as yet, there has been no conclusive reversal of deteriorating trends. Although reports of coup-plotting and of dissatisfaction with Diem's leadership have decreased in recent months, their persistence is



disconcerting and indicative of the continuing and potentially explosive political situation in South Vietnam. For example, some military leaders are still critical of Diem's handling of the internal security situation and of his reluctance to delegate responsibility and give sufficient attention to political, economic, and social programs as a necessary adjunct to military operations against the Communist insurgents. Morale in the security and police services and in the army reportedly has been weakened further by the suspension or delay in the payment of pensions to widows of personnel killed by the Communists. Ngo Dinh Luyen, Diem's youngest brother currently in Saigon and Ambassador to the UK, has been critical of some of Diem's policies, and a number of other officials continue to be dissatisfied with Diem's organizational changes within both the national and local government structures and have little hope for meaningful political reforms. Moreover, below the surface of open discontent, there is probably a growing and increasingly desperate element of dissenters who are silent either because of fear of being suppressed or because of the realization that there is little they can do legally to improve conditions.

#### IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Having passed the period when emergency action was required to meet critical economic problems, the South Vietnamese government has since about 1959 given greater attention to future economic development. Progress in this direction has been tangible despite the continuing priority given to defense and security needs, the effects of Communist insurgency in the countryside, and the precarious political situation. The economy, with about 80% of the people employed in agriculture, is self-sufficient in food, the population-land ratio is still relatively favorable, and cultivable lands are still available. Approximately 7 million acres (about 6 million acres in rice), 17% of the national area, are under permanent cultivation, perhaps as much as an additional 20% of the country is potentially productive, and the average peasant land-holding is about five acres.

Although the government's outlook is influenced by a felt need to compete in economic as well as political terms with North Vietnam, it has not been disposed to grant priority to long-range programs of modernization, industrialization, and economic growth. Instead, it continues to regard economic improvements as feasible and desirable only to the extent that they contribute to or at least do not detract from current defense strength. The maintenance of the military and security establishment continues therefore to be accorded overriding importance in current economic programming followed by what is regarded as a political essential -- the maintenance of the consumption standards of the people at large. All other programs requiring the expenditure of funds tend to be ranged in order of their pertinence to immediate defense and security needs.

The economy of South Vietnam was severely weakened by the years of recurrent warfare after 1940, particularly during the Indochina hostilities, and by the subsequent loss through partition of the mines and manufacturing industry of North Vietnam. Sources of supply and markets were disrupted and the economic balance of the region destroyed. In the countryside, vital water control works were damaged or neglected, large areas of rice land were abandoned, and the livestock population was seriously depleted as farmers moved to urban areas in search of security. The influx of about 900,000 refugees from North Vietnam in 1954-55 further burdened the economy.

Supported by heavy US assistance after 1955, South Vietnam was able by 1959 to make several notable economic achievements. Besides building up a modern military force and absorbing the refugees from the North (activities which themselves accounted for about 85 percent of the aid furnished by the US), South Vietnam made progress in repairing its heavily damaged transportation network, in restoring the productivity of its agriculture, in providing land to its landless peasants (including the



refugees) and in carrying out other agricultural reforms, and in establishing some basis for industrial growth. For example, the reconstruction of the principal railroad, running for almost 700 miles along the coast from Saigon to just north of Hue, was completed; the production of rice, which supports most of the population, reached the estimated prewar annual average of 3.5 million metric tons of paddy; about 140,000 landless persons were resettled in sparsely populated areas in the highlands and Mekong delta as another means to counter Communist infiltration as well as to relieve population pressures in the crowded coastal region; and construction or planning had begun on several medium-size manufacturing plants, principally in the textile industry.

Despite the serious security and political situations during the past year and a half, agricultural and industrial output has increased and the main reconstruction projects have been completed. Paddy rice production in 1960 (the 1959-60 crop) rose to over 5 million metric tons, exceeding the prewar level for the first time, and the 1960-61 crop, which began to come on the market toward the end of 1960, was slightly higher. By the end of 1960, as a result of the government's agrarian reform and land distribution programs, the number of landless peasants resettled in villages in the highlands and delta areas increased to more than 170,000, an additional 123,000 tenant farmers were able to purchase land holdings they formerly worked or to establish homesteads on abandoned lands, and some 44,000 other peasants were resettled in 22 "agrovilles", the highly controversial government built villages in the delta area. Significant progress has been made in the reconstruction and expansion of the road system by completion of three principal projects, National Routes 19 and 21 in the central part of the country and the Saigon-Bien Hoa highway, and the approaching completion of work on other important routes. Industrial expansion since the end of 1959 has been greater than at any time since 1955. There has been a sharp increase in the number of medium-size and small plants constructed, under construction, or planned for South Vietnam's light industry (which includes textiles, fertilizer, sugar, glass, paper, etc.); coal production has risen appreciably and is soon expected to supply all of South Vietnam's requirements; and construction has begun on a large hydroelectric plant at the Da Nhim river (financed through the Japanese reparations program) which, when finally completed in 1965, is expected to more than double the present electric power capacity.

Since the latter part of 1960, however, the effects on the economy of Communist insurgency and of unstable political conditions have become noticeable and have contributed to some slackening in the momentum of economic progress built up during previous years. Communist interference with the flow of rice from the countryside to the urban centers has caused a decrease in the amount of rice available for export and forced the government to suspend the issuance of licenses for rice exports, thereby almost assuming a decline in rice exports during 1961. In addition, the threat of rice shortages for domestic consumption in certain areas has



increased substantially, and the domestic price of rice has risen. Since the end of last year Saigon merchants have reported increasing difficulty in delivering their merchandise to the villages, and domestic commerce has declined in part because of the uncertainties of the political situation. Communist sabotage of roads and bridges and Communist control of certain areas have set back the government's reconstruction and agrarian reform and land distribution programs. Finally, although there has been an increase in the production of rubber, the leading source of foreign exchange, rubber plantations have come under increasing harassment by Communist terrorists.

South Vietnam's reliance on US grant aid has not lessened over the past several years. During fiscal years 1955-60 total economic aid amounted to about \$1.4 billion, including several loans totalling about \$83 million. The continued high degree of dependence derives primarily from the burden imposed on the economy by the defense establishment. Military and security costs alone were budgeted at about 5.8 billion piasters (or about \$221 million at the official rate of 35 to the dollar) in 1960, an amount which exceeds the total revenue which the government is currently extracting from the underdeveloped economy.

Dependence on foreign assistance is also clearly reflected in the external trade of South Vietnam. Exports in the period 1955-60 have covered only about 28% of imports, averaging \$68 million per year compared with average annual imports of \$244 million. In 1960, rubber and rice furnished 89% of the exports by value, with rubber alone accounting for 57%. Consumer goods make up a significant portion of the imports, reflecting the necessity for increased development of South Vietnam's domestic manufacturing capacity. About 74% of all imports are financed by the US commodity import program whereby goods purchased with aid dollars are sold for Vietnamese piasters and the proceeds used to support the national budget and pay the piaster costs of economic assistance projects. France has remained South Vietnam's principal buyer and supplier, although its importance as a supplier of imports has declined considerably since 1955. The US is the second leading buyer and supplier while Japan is becoming increasingly important as a supplier.



25.  
V. FOREIGN AFFAIRS

In its overall foreign policy orientation, the South Vietnamese Government remains rigidly uncompromising in its anti-Communist stand and is generally content to follow US leadership on world issues, remaining consciously dependent on the US as its major source of assistance and protection and principal international sponsor. Government leaders continue to display largely an ambivalent attitude toward France, which they admire as a cultural fount but still suspect of political intrigue in South Vietnam as well as in Laos and Cambodia. Other current features of South Vietnam's foreign relations are: a) the apparent reduction of confidence in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) to provide limited collective security; b) increased dissatisfaction with the failure of the International Control Commission (ICC) to take effective action on repeated strong South Vietnamese complaints of increased Communist subversion and external intervention; and c) the expansion of relations with non-Communist countries in the Far East in order actively to promote anti-Communism in the area and with countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America in order to counter DRV diplomatic efforts and provide additional support for the Diem government's international position as the legitimate government of Vietnam.

Until recently, Diem and his close advisors have been extremely sensitive to urgent US recommendations, particularly those pertaining to Vietnam's relations with Cambodia and to such domestic issues as corruption and nepotism in government and political reforms. Diem, Nhu, and some other leaders frequently expressed (usually privately) resentment at what they considered US attempts to dictate to them and to restrict their freedom of action at home and abroad. At the same time, they evidenced apprehension over the extent of US political support of their regime, particularly in view of growing criticism of their leadership in and outside official circles, unfavorable publicity of their regime in the Western press, and their apparent suspicion that the US sympathized with the abortive coup in November 1960. Moreover, their evaluation of US actions in Laos during the past year had led them to question the strategic objectives of the US in South Vietnam. In recent months, however, the leadership's apprehension over the extent of US support of the regime and over US defense commitments in South Vietnam has been allayed considerably by strong public US statements of support, Vice President Johnson's visit, and increased US aid.

The government's most immediate source of anxiety is that the Communist incursions in neighboring Laos and Cambodia may result in a Communist encirclement of South Vietnam. South Vietnam's relations with Laos have generally been friendly, with South Vietnam coming to assume an almost avuncular air and undertaking to influence Lao policies in general and



particularly those policies that might have dangerous implications for South Vietnamese security. South Vietnam's concern has become acute since the Kong Le coup in August 1960 and the ensuing rapid deterioration in the Laotian security and political situations. South Vietnam repeatedly advocated stronger political support by the US for the Boun Oum-Thoum Nosavan government against the Souvanna Phouma-Kong Le group and has favored armed intervention by SEATO or the West against the Pathet Lao-Kong Le insurgency which from the outset of the present Lao crisis the Diem government has labelled as being clearly directed and assisted by the DRV. Concern over the security of its frontier with Laos has led the government to place its armed forces in the border area under a continuing alert status, to dispatch a small contingent of covert military personnel into southern Laos ostensibly to carry out intelligence and reconnaissance operations, and to enter into secret negotiations with the Lao Government for joint planning to defend southern Laos and the border area. Regarding the current international efforts to resolve the Laos situation, the Diem government has held that the "neutralization" of Laos would inevitably result in a Communist takeover and thereby aggravate greatly the already serious Communist threat to South Vietnam.

The strained relations with Cambodia since 1954 have been highlighted by several serious crises and protracted exchanges of highly inflammatory propaganda. The persisting problems include border incidents, territorial and financial claims, and covert political conspiracies. The most serious crisis, for example, occurred in the early part of 1959 and centered around probable involvement by the Diem government in an abortive conspiracy against Chief of State (then prime minister) Prince Sihanouk. During the first half of 1961, tensions were exacerbated by the capture of two Vietnamese fishing boats in Cambodian waters and by the flight of some 1,500 Cambodian residents in South Vietnam into Cambodia, probably in order to escape internecine fighting between Vietnamese army and security forces and Communist guerrillas.<sup>1</sup> However, the basic factor in South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations has been Diem's and Sihanouk's intense dislike and distrust of each other, aggravated by their essentially divergent international political orientations. For his part, Diem seems convinced that Sihanouk is unstable and weak, sympathizes with and possibly supports anti-Diem activities by Vietnamese Communist and non-Communists, and cannot be relied upon to keep Cambodia out of Communist hands.

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1. The Cambodian or Khmer minority in South Vietnam has been variously estimated at 300,000-500,000 and is scattered throughout much of the Mekong delta area and along the Cambodian frontier.



Relations with Thailand, strained somewhat in 1959 because of Thailand's decision to repatriate its Vietnamese refugee minority to North Vietnam, have improved largely because of common and overriding concern with increased Communist encroachment in Southeast Asia during the past year. South Vietnam, nonetheless, probably still continues to feel that the repatriation (already more than 20,000 of the estimated 70,000-80,000 refugee Vietnamese have been sent to North Vietnam) would strengthen DRV propaganda and diplomatic efforts for international recognition as the legitimate government of Vietnam.

Since the latter part of 1959, DRV propaganda against South Vietnam, in line with the step-up in Communist subversive activities, has been more aggressive and provocative than at any time since the end of the Indochina hostilities. The persistence of bids to "regularize" relations with the Diem government, an earlier important feature of DRV propaganda, has all but been replaced by blatant calls for intensification of the "people's struggle" and for Diem's overthrow. For its part, the Diem government has since 1959 increased its efforts to counter DRV propaganda and diplomatic activities and has taken the initiative within the ICC to cite the DRV with subversive activities in the south and with violations of the 1954 Geneva Accords.

## VI. OUTLOOK

### A. Internal Security

The Vietnamese Communist apparatus can be expected to maintain a pressing and diversified campaign of guerrilla-terrorist and subversive warfare in South Vietnam. The principal immediate Communist objectives will continue to be the demoralization of the public, weakening and supplanting of government authority in countryside, and precipitation of a non-Communist coup effort. There are strong indications that Communists will attempt a greater armed effort after the rainy season later this year although they may continue to avoid any large-scale engagement with the increasingly effective Vietnamese army, except in places and at times of their own choosing. Statistics indicate that the total number of casualties among military-security personnel and local officials during 1961 is likely to exceed the total for 1960. In the meantime, the Communists will continue to place considerable importance on political, propaganda, and economic activities, in order to strengthen their controls in the countryside, encourage a popular front opposition, and disrupt further the economy.

In the short-run, the Communist apparatus in South Vietnam does not appear to have the capacity to foment a large-scale insurrection or to seize control of the government without considerable assistance from North Vietnam, which would necessarily be of such magnitude that it would be tantamount to overt military aggression. Barring such a development and given effective implementation of the government's counterinsurgency plans, reinforced by substantial US aid, the government should be able to reduce somewhat the level of Communist insurgency during the next year or so and conceivably even reverse the trend against the Communists. In the longer run, Communist insurgency can be substantially reduced but the government probably cannot, within the foreseeable future, eliminate it entirely, principally because of the government's inability to seal completely South Vietnam's frontiers with North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

However, security prospects over the next year may well be influenced by developments in neighboring Laos than by the extent to which the Diem government can improve the effectiveness of its military and security forces. If Laos comes under predominantly Communist control, Communist capabilities in South Vietnam would almost certainly be strengthened to a degree unprecedented since the end of the Indochina hostilities. Southern Laos could be expected to become a major, if not the most important, base for directing, supplying, and expanding Communist operations in South Vietnam. In this event, the level of Communist insurgency might assume the proportions of widespread guerrilla warfare and some areas (including portions of the central highlands) would probably come under complete Communist control, within which Hanoi might attempt to establish a Communist but ostensibly independent government with both military and political support from the bloc. South Vietnam's urban centers probably would be increasingly subjected to Communist guerrilla and terrorist acts insighting much anxiety in the centers of government power and spark a non-Communist coup



effort. The possibility of Communist attempts to assassinate Diem would increase, and Americans would probably be singled out as special targets for terrorist attacks.

In the face of a Communist offensive of such proportions, South Vietnam would be required to make a maximum military effort in order to survive. There would be no immediate collapse. In the long run, however, the maintenance of South Vietnam's independence would rest principally on the nature and amount of US support and on a maximum effort by the South Vietnamese government to develop the political, psychological, and economic programs required to gain and retain popular support.

#### B. Domestic Political

The stability of the government during the next year or so will depend principally on Diem's handling of the internal security situation. If Diem can demonstrate a continuing improvement in security conditions, he should be able to strengthen his position, alleviate concern and boost morale within his bureaucracy and military establishment, and lessen the urgency with which many of their members view the current situation. However, if the fight against the Communists goes poorly or the South Vietnamese Army suffers heavy casualties, the chances of a coup would substantially increase. Moreover, the possibility of a coup attempt at any time cannot be discounted. The odds favor a coup if security declines appreciably further, particularly if accompanied by what amounts to a Communist takeover of Laos.

The Communists would like to initiate and control a coup against Diem, and their armed and subversive operations, including "united front" propaganda among disaffected groups in South Vietnam, are directed toward this purpose. It is more likely, however, that any coup attempt which occurs during the next year or so would be non-Communist in leadership, involving army elements and civilian officials and perhaps some disgruntled oppositionists outside the government. In any event, the participating elements probably would be broader than those involved in the 1960 attempt, would have greater popular support particularly among the youth and labor groups, and could be expected to be better prepared to execute their plan quickly and successfully. Moreover, while the role of the military leadership is by no means certain, a major split among the generals does not appear likely. Most of them probably would elect to remain uncommitted at the outset of the coup, as they apparently did in November 1960, adding their tacit or active support to whatever side appeared to have the best chance of winning. Under these circumstances, a military coup attempt would have better than an even chance of succeeding.

Diem's removal -- whether by a military coup, assassination, or death from accidental or natural causes -- would considerably strengthen the power of the military. The odds appear about even between a government



led by a military junta or by Vice President Tho, with the army playing a major if not the predominant role behind the scenes. (On the one hand, the military might conclude that a military-led government would be better able to maintain national unity and internal political cohesion and, more importantly, to conduct a determined and effective campaign against the Communists. On the other hand, they might conclude that Tho, who apparently has been on good terms with some of the present military leaders, would not disagree with their views on the manner of conducting the fight against the Communists and that his constitutional succession would legalize the change in government and avert a serious power struggle. (Although Diem's brothers, Nhu and Can, would probably also be removed by a coup, they might attempt to retain real political power in the event Diem left the scene by means other than a coup. However, the army would probably act quickly to neutralize their efforts.)) Another important factor which would almost certainly enter into the calculations of the military would be the fortunes of the coup group in South Korea and the course of US-ROK relations. (In any event, a government led by the military, by Tho, or by any other civilian approved by the military would probably maintain Vietnam's pro-US orientation.)

If there is a serious disruption of government leadership as a result of a military coup or as a result of Diem's death, any momentum the government's counterinsurgency efforts had achieved would probably be halted and possibly reversed, at least for a time. Moreover, the confusion and suspicion attending the disruption would provide the Communists an opportunity to strengthen their position in the countryside, and they might even be emboldened to attempt to seize control of the government. Since a serious split within the military leadership does not appear likely, Communist attempts to take over the government in Saigon would probably fail.

### C. Economic

Because of the greatly increased internal and external Communist threat, improvement in South Vietnam's economic position during the next few years will depend largely on developments in the security and defense fields. Moreover, if larger and more effective military and security forces are to be maintained, South Vietnam is likely to remain increasingly dependent on US aid during this period. The security situation also will continue to affect adversely the willingness of the government to undertake fiscal reforms, urged by the US, aimed at increasing tax revenues.

Agrarian reform and land distribution programs, as well as highway and canal reconstruction, will continue to suffer as long as the government's control of much of the countryside, particularly in the Mekong delta area, remains as tenuous as it is at present. Prolonged, unrelieved insecurity in the countryside would result in a decline of agricultural output, a further decline in domestic commerce, and a lowering of business



confidence in South Vietnam. The cumulative effect of all these developments could be inflation, particularly if the government were to undertake large-scale deficit financing of its budget. One of the encouraging factors in South Vietnam has been the fact that the price level has not risen commensurately with the money supply, reflecting increased private holdings of piasters. Impairment of this confidence could bring out of hoarding 3 to 4 billion piasters which would create serious inflation.

Unless the security and defense situations deteriorate appreciably further, development of South Vietnam's light industry, concentrated in the Saigon-Cholon area, probably will continue at about the present pace. Most of the effort, however, may be directed toward the completion of plants currently under construction or in the planning stage. The GVN can also be expected to give high priority to the Da Nhim hydroelectric project and to increasing coal production.

The security situation has thus far not prevented an increase in the export of rubber which, along with rice, is the mainstay of South Vietnam's foreign trade. The trade gap, although still substantial, has been progressively narrowed in recent years and can be further decreased in the short run only by maintaining the availability of rubber and rice for export. The short-run outlook is not bright, however, in view of the adverse effects of Communist insurgency on rice exports and increased Communist harassment of rubber plantations. In the long run South Vietnam will probably have to rely increasingly on agricultural diversification which, as in the cases of pork and kenaf, leads to new exports and on increased consumer goods production which, as in the cases of coal and textiles, replace imports or substitute the importation of raw materials for finished goods respectively. In any event, South Vietnam will continue for the foreseeable future to require extensive US aid to finance its large balance of payments deficit.

#### D. Foreign Affairs

Recent increases in US assistance, a jointly agreed plan to combat Communist insurgency, and manifestations to Diem of US sympathy and backing, have provided a basis for a continuing close relationship between the US and South Vietnam. To a considerable extent, however, Diem and his advisors appear to regard recent US decisions toward South Vietnam as a vindication of the wisdom of their basic approach to political and economic problems, as a recognition of their long-standing efforts to get special US consideration of their appraisal of the seriousness of the Communist threat, and as a reward for South Vietnam's steadfast support and anti-Communist orientation. The Vietnamese leaders, therefore, will almost certainly continue to press for increased aid, further expansion of the armed forces, and a clear priority of military over political and economic efforts to undercut the Communists. Moreover, Diem will be



adamant in his views as to how the campaign against Communist insurgency should be waged, and he will tend to regard US differences with such views or criticism of his inner circle as indications of weakening US confidence in him.

Dien probably still has some lingering suspicion of the extent of US confidence in and support of his leadership, resulting from the abortive coup attempt of November 1960 and urgent and persistent representations made during that year for liberal political reforms. In the event of another coup effort against Dien, he would probably expect quick and strong US public support and would feel that he did not have US confidence if such support were not forthcoming.

Dien will also continue to press the US for a strong anti-Communist posture in the Far East, particularly as it pertains to US policy toward Laos, Nationalist China, and the issue of Chinese Communist representation in the UN. If he concludes that the US is weakening its anti-Communist posture in the Far East, he will almost certainly make strong protests and become increasingly assertive and stubborn in his relations with the US. However, in the absence of any acceptable alternative to US support and assistance to Vietnam, he is likely to avoid jeopardizing seriously basic US-South Vietnamese ties. Indeed, he would probably seek to establish closer ties with the US by such means as a mutual defense treaty and possibly the stationing of US forces in South Vietnam if the Communist threat to the area increased substantially, as would be manifested, for example, in a Communist takeover of Laos or in the achievement of nuclear capability by Communist China.

In the event of the failure of the international conference at Geneva to reach an effective and satisfactory settlement on Laos or a resumption of all-out military operations by the rebel forces in Laos, Dien would be greatly tempted to increase substantially his covert forces in southern Laos and, in cooperation with Lao government forces, attempt to prevent complete Communist control of that area. Dien would probably seek US and Thai participation in a concerted armed effort in southern Laos as well as assurances that the US would defend South Vietnam in case such action precipitated open DRV aggression.

In South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations, the best that probably can be expected from what now appears to be a temporary and ephemeral situation of mutual restraint by Dien and Sihanouk is the resolution of one or more outstanding problems. Although this could probably lessen the chances of recurring crises and possibly strengthen the current political "cease-fire," there is little prospect that cordial relations will develop so long as the present leaders of the two countries remain in power. Moreover, if Sihanouk were to become too accommodating to Communist pressure, particularly in the event the Communists gained a predominant position in Laos, Dien may be unable to resist the temptation



to involve his government again in a plot to overthrow Sihanouk (and consequently, at least in the minds of the Cambodians, involve the US as well).

The Diem government will continue its efforts to get the ICC to consider its charges that the DRV is engaged in subversive activities south of the 17th parallel. While the government probably will not go as far as to renounce its policy of not blocking the implementation of the 1954 Geneva accords, it may well announce that it temporarily refuses to be bound by specific articles of the accords which restrict its ability to defend itself against DRV subversion and armed intervention. In any event, the DRV will maintain an increasingly threatening propaganda campaign against the Diem government and may announce that its "national Liberation Front" (probably under some other name) constitutes the legitimate "government" in South Vietnam -- an act which would likely be followed by an intensive propaganda and diplomatic effort to achieve local and international recognition for its satellite.

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NUMBER 53-2-61

BLOC SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNIST  
EFFORT AGAINST THE GOVERN-  
MENT OF VIETNAM

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 5 October 1961. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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# BLOC SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNIST EFFORT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM

## THE PROBLEM

To estimate the extent and nature of Bloc support of the Communist effort against South Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

## THE ESTIMATE

1. The Communist subversive and guerrilla apparatus in South Vietnam, known as the Viet Cong, is an integral part of the North Vietnamese Communist Party and it looks to Hanoi for political and military guidance and various forms of support. Hanoi is the implementing agency for Bloc activity in South Vietnam, and the Hanoi authorities are allowed considerable local freedom in conducting Viet Cong guerrilla and subversive activity. The Communist Bloc probably views the guerrilla and subversive campaigns in Laos and South Vietnam as two parts of a single broad political-military strategy, and of the two, considers South Vietnam as the more significant prize.

2. The Viet Cong are using Maoist tactics. A large part of the North Vietnam Army was trained in Communist China during the Indochina war ending in 1954, and some of these troops are leading operations in South Vietnam now. Each Bloc country has supported the "struggle" in the South with propaganda, notably during Pham Van Dong's trip to other Bloc areas in June-August, 1961.

3. Since early 1960 a general Hanoi-directed political and paramilitary Communist offensive against President Diem and his government of Vietnam (GVN) has been underway, and during the past year this campaign has taken on increased tempo and scale. The Viet Cong apparatus has undergone rapid expansion, and the scope and area of operations of its guerrilla units have increased significantly. More recently, the Viet Cong has begun to operate in larger sized units (500-1,000 men) and they have extended large-scale attacks to include, for the first time, the plateau area in the northern part of South Vietnam.

4. Apparently in response to this direction from Hanoi, cadre personnel and many special items, such as communications equipment, chemicals, medical supplies, and other items needed for guerrilla warfare not available in the countryside, are being infiltrated into South Vietnam via long established land and sea routes. Thousands of junks which ply the coastal routes of the Indochina peninsula provide a means of infiltration extremely difficult to control. Mountain trails in southern Laos have been used freely by the Communists for years for movement of men and supplies between North and South Vietnam. Other infiltration routes pass through Cambodia. Nevertheless, the Viet Cong effort is still

<sup>1</sup>For a broader treatment of the situation and prospects in South Vietnam, see NIE 143/53-61, "Prospects for North and South Vietnam," dated 15 August 1961.



largely a self-supporting operation in respect to recruitment and supplies. The Viet Cong live upon locally produced food which they either grow themselves or levy upon villages. They meet most of their currency needs by taxing areas under their control, by robbery, or by blackmail. Most of their arms and much of their ammunition have been locally acquired or captured from GVN Army and security forces.

5. We estimate present armed, full-time Viet Cong strength at about 16,000, an increase, despite substantial combat losses, of 12,000 since April of 1960 and of 4,000 in the past three months. About 10-20 percent of total Viet Cong strength consists of cadres infiltrated from North Vietnam mostly via mountain trails through southern Laos. Most of the remaining 80-90 percent of the Viet Cong are local recruits, but they also include remnants of the approximately 10,000 stay-behind personnel who went underground during the 1954-1955 regroupment and evacuation of Vietnamese Communist Army units following the Indochina War. Approximately 90,000 Vietnamese Communist troops were evacuated to North Vietnam during this period, most of whom were from south and central Vietnam. It is from this pool of experienced fighters that most of the guerrilla cadres now operating in South Vietnam are drawn. These hard-core guerrillas are augmented by several thousand supporters who, under the cover of normal civilian pursuits, join the organized insurgent bands to assist in intelligence, sabotage, propaganda, and terrorist operations. In addition, local inhabitants in many areas provide the Viet Cong with recruits, food, refuge, and operational support, in some cases voluntarily and in others as the result of intimidation or coercion.

6. As part of the buildup for their current campaign, the Viet Cong have established an extensive communications network. Much of the communications equipment in use is probably quite primitive and some of it is assembled in the field. There is evidence, however, that in addition there are substantial quantities of sophisticated communica-

tions equipment and well-trained technicians serving the Viet Cong. Such equipment and the necessary maintenance and operating personnel were infiltrated into South Vietnam.

7. There has been no positive identification of Bloc manufactured military equipment in South Vietnam. Most of the arms and equipment now in use by the Viet Cong is of US or French origin. Although weapons have been infiltrated from North Vietnam, most Viet Cong equipment is probably from caches established at the end of the Indochina War or is equipment captured from GVN armed forces or security forces. During 1960, over 3,000 small arms were lost by GVN armed forces during combat. Some items, such as grenades, land mines, booby traps, and small arms ammunition are locally manufactured by village level Viet Cong "arsenals," from materials procured locally or imported from North Vietnam and Cambodia. Moreover, in view of the physical problems of infiltrating large amounts of arms and ammunition into South Vietnam, many Viet Cong operations are primarily for the purpose of capturing arms, ammunition, medical supplies, and other equipment. A major buildup of Bloc equipment in South Vietnam is likely to await the improvement of lines of communication into and within South Vietnam.

8. Outlook. Viet Cong control of the Ca Mau peninsula at the southern tip of South Vietnam has been virtually complete for several years. During the dry season beginning in November, the Viet Cong will probably intensify the exploitation of GVN weaknesses in the plateau areas of the north and central parts of the country, seeking to establish another "liberated area" as a logistics base from which larger scale operations could be mounted. The creation of a second "liberated area" in the plateau region adjacent to southern Laos would enable the Viet Cong to keep GVN forces split and prevent the concentration of effort against either. Moreover, a strong Viet Cong position in the plateau area would seriously threaten the rear of Diem's troops posted along the demilitarized zone.



9. To a considerable extent the ability of the Viet Cong to maintain this expanded effort will depend upon improved logistical support from the outside. It is probable that the Bloc intends to build up the eastern part of south Laos, improving the roads, mountain trails, and airfields, as a major supply channel to

support a stepped up Viet Cong campaign in north and central Vietnam. There has already been a considerable increase in Communist troop strength in south Laos, a substantial supply buildup, particularly east of Thakhek, and an increase in the Communist airlift into the area.



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

JCSM-794-61

5 OCT 1961

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OFF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Planning for Southeast Asia (U)

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 3 October 1961, subject as above.
2. Over a period of time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have examined various alternatives to the solution of the problems of Laos and Southeast Asia. They have recommended certain military actions short of US intervention which might have had the desired effect and could have altered the situation to our advantage. However, the time is now past when actions short of intervention by outside forces could reverse the rapidly worsening situation. They consider thereof, to be the military minimum commensurate with the situation. It is the view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, lacking an acceptable political settlement prior to the resumption of overt hostilities, there is no feasible military alternative of lesser magnitude which will prevent the loss of Laos, South Vietnam and ultimately Southeast Asia.
3. If this intervention causes escalation, additional mobilization would be required in order to maintain our strategic reserve. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirm their opinion that we cannot afford to be preoccupied with Berlin to the extent that we close our eyes to the situation in Southeast Asia, which is now critical from a military viewpoint.
4. Planning by the Joint Chiefs of Staff has contemplated simultaneous contingencies in Berlin and Southeast Asia. In such planning the Joint Chiefs of Staff have agreed that implementation of                      would provide a US initiated counter to USSR denial of access to Berlin. The

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201

123

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current build-up of forces will improve our military posture to support action in Southeast Asia in addition to that in Berlin. It is not a question of the desirability of having two limited war situations going at the same time. The fact of the matter is that we may be faced with such a contingency.

5. In reply to your two lesser questions:

a. Naval forces in support of operations would consist of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces. The employment of these units would not unacceptably reduce Seventh Fleet capabilities in other areas of the Western Pacific. In the event that overt Chinese Communist intervention required the deployment of additional Seventh Fleet forces to Southeast Asia, First Fleet forces and elements of a Marine Division/wing team from the Eastern Pacific could be deployed to maintain the required level of naval capabilities in the Western Pacific. These actions are in consonance with currently approved military plans.

b. The "massive deterrent US air power" referred to in the paper was designed to provide the North Vietnamese with evidence of the US intent, determination and capability. This "show of force" exercise could be conducted by Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aircraft deployed to Southeast Asia under USAF aircraft based at Clark AB, Philippines, other PACOM aircraft using air-to-air refueling, or by SAC training flights. This type of exercise would not dilute other deployments and would serve the dual purpose of providing useful reconnaissance, both photo and visual. The basic posture for nuclear strikes would not be affected since alert aircraft would not be used for the purpose of conducting a show of force operation.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



L. L. LEMNITZER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff



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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
OFF SECY OF DEFENSE WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

JCSM-716-61

9 OCT 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Concept of Use of SEATO Forces in  
South Vietnam (C)

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 5 October 1961, subject as above. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the proposed concept for the use of SEATO forces in South Vietnam and the suggested two principal military possibilities for its implementation.

2. It is their opinion that the use of SEATO forces at the greatest possible number of entry points along the whole South Vietnam border, but excluding that part of the 17th parallel now held by the South Vietnamese Army itself, is not feasible for the following reasons:

a. SEATO forces will be deployed over a border of several hundred miles and will be attacked piecemeal or by-passed at the Viet Cong's own choice.

b. It may reduce but cannot stop infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and material.

c. It deploys SEATO forces in the weakest defense points should DRV or CHICOM forces intervene.

d. It compounds the problems of communications and logistical support.



3. Further, the alternative possibility of using SEATO forces to cover solely the 17th parallel, although considered feasible to a limited extent, is militarily unsound in view of the following considerations:

a. The 17th parallel is not a main avenue of approach being used by the Viet Cong.

b. North Vietnam may interpret such SEATO action as preparation for aggression against them, thus promoting the possibility of communist harassment and destruction of friendly combat and logistic forces concentrated near the parallel, if not escalation.

4. As stated in your memorandum, the proposed concept set forth must be analyzed in the total context of the defense of Southeast Asia. Any concept which deals with the defense of Southeast Asia that does not include all or a substantial portion of Laos is, from a military standpoint, unsound. To concede the majority of northern and central Laos would leave three quarters of the border of Thailand exposed and thus invite an expansion of communist military action. To concede southern Laos would open the flanks of both Thailand and South Vietnam as well as expose Cambodia. Any attempt to combat insurgency in South Vietnam, while holding areas in Laos essential to the defense of Thailand and South Vietnam and, at the same time, putting troops in Thailand, would require an effort on the part of the United States alone on the order of magnitude of at least three divisions plus supporting units. This would require an additional two divisions from the United States.


5. What is needed is not the spreading out of our forces throughout Southeast Asia but rather a concentrated effort in Laos where a firm stand can be taken saving all or substantially all of Laos which would, at the same time, protect Thailand and protect the borders of South Vietnam.

6. The over-all objective could best be served by the implementation of \_\_\_\_\_ or a variation thereof, now. This would accomplish the objective of assisting to secure the border of South Vietnam against the infiltration of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong thus freeing Vietnamese forces to conduct more effective offensive operations

in South Vietnam. In addition, this action would stem further communist gains in Laos and, at the same time, give concrete evidence of US determination to stand firm against further communist advances world-wide.

7. If implementation of \_\_\_\_\_ or a variation thereof, is considered a politically unacceptable course of action at this time, there is provided herewith a possible limited interim course of action. This course of action, covered in the Appendices hereto, could provide a degree of assistance to the Government of South Vietnam to regain control of its own territory, and could free certain South Vietnamese forces for offensive actions against the Viet Cong. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that implementation of this limited course of action would not provide for the defense of Thailand or Laos, nor contribute substantially or permanently to solution of the over-all problem of defense of Southeast Asia, they consider the Plan preferable to either of the two military possibilities described in referenced memorandum.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

  
L. L. LEMNITZER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment



## POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

1. To enable the Government of South Vietnam to regain full control of its own territory and to eliminate the Viet Cong threat.

2. To defend Thailand and South Vietnam, holding Laos or areas thereof to the extent required as being essential to the defense of Thailand and South Vietnam.

## MILITARY OBJECTIVES

1. To assist by the use of SEATO forces in securing the borders of South Vietnam to the maximum extent possible against the infiltration of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong.

2. To assist the Government of South Vietnam to regain full control of its own territory and to eliminate the Viet Cong threat by freeing South Vietnam forces for offensive action against the Viet Cong.

3. To defend Thailand and South Vietnam, holding Laos or areas thereof essential to such defense.

## ASSUMPTIONS

1. Forces available will be the British Commonwealth Brigade, Pakistan, Philippine, and US forces and a limited amount of Thai forces.

2. The United States will provide for stationing in Thailand one US Brigade Task Force Team as suggested to Foreign Minister Thanat by Deputy Undersecretary of State Johnson.

3. South Vietnamese forces released by SEATO forces will conduct effective offensive operations against the Viet Cong.

4. Maximum possible use of SEATO forces will be made to establish an effective communications network in as wide an area as possible and to serve as a means for introducing new techniques into the South Vietnamese Army.

#### CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. SEATO ground and air forces will deploy to South Vietnam to assist in protecting the South Vietnam-Laos border, exclusive of that part of the 17th parallel now held in force by I Corps of the South Vietnamese Army (I Corps Tactical Area), southward to the Cambodian border.

2. SEATO ground forces of approximately one division strength (11,000) initially will deploy to the high plateau region of the Pleiku area. Securing this region with SEATO forces will free South Vietnamese forces to conduct effective offensive operations elsewhere. Further deployments to assist in interrupting the flow of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong into South Vietnam will be at the discretion of the SEATO Field Force Commander in light of the existing tactical situation. The SEATO force will further assist South Vietnamese forces by the provision of air, communications and logistic support.

3. The additional command and control communications - electronics requirements for the support of this concept are set forth in Appendix B to Enclosure B.



## COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS

Command arrangements for this concept would be as now provided for in ----- except that the United States would have the responsibilities of the Appointed Nation. In addition, coordination between the SEATO forces and the Government of South Vietnam would be required.

## FORCE INVOLVEMENT

1. The forces involved in support of this concept would include those forces now committed to support ----- less both the Thai commitment and the US commitment to the Central Reserve. This force would be composed of approximately 9600 combat forces, of which about 5000 would be US. Headquarters units, air component, logistic and other support units would total about 13,200. This would provide a total force of about 22,800.

2. SEATO forces in South Vietnam would be approximately as follows:

|                     |       |      |
|---------------------|-------|------|
| a. Headquarters     |       | 700  |
| b. Ground Component |       |      |
| Philippines         | 200   |      |
| Commonwealth        | 4400  |      |
| United States       | 5000  |      |
|                     | <hr/> | 9600 |
| c. Air Component    |       |      |
| Commonwealth        | 200   |      |
| United States       | 850   |      |
|                     | <hr/> | 1050 |

d. Reserve Component

Pakistan

1400

e. Base Area Command

(Hq & Hq Det)

100

Psy War Units

150

Common Service Log.  
Support Units

3800

Log. Units In Support  
of National Forces

6000

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10,050

Grand Total

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22,800

3. There are no US Navy forces assigned to the SEATO force. SEVENTH FLEET forces consisting of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces would operate in direct support of SEATO operations as required. Other units of the SEVENTH FLEET including patrol aircraft are available to assist the South Vietnamese Navy Coastal Patrol Force, as requested, in operations against Viet Cong sea infiltration.

4. The source of US forces to support this concept would be from those forces now assigned to the Pacific Command. Our military posture is such that the employment of the SEATO forces would not adversely affect our capability to conduct planned operations in Europe relating to Berlin.



## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. SEATO forces may take whatever action is, in the opinion of the Commander, necessary to insure the security of the force itself.

2. Offensive actions by SEATO forces against the Viet Cong will be limited normally to those necessary to destroy such Viet Cong forces as pose a threat to either:

a. The borders of South Vietnam, or

b. The security of the SEATO force itself. Such offensive action envisages the possibility of reasonably limited projection of SEATO air and/or ground forces beyond the borders of South Vietnam into Laos.

3. Aerial reconnaissance by the SEATO Air Component will normally be confined to Laos and South Vietnam.

4. SEATO forces will be permitted to retaliate immediately against North Vietnam overt military intervention by launching air strikes against military targets in that country.

Bloc overt aggression to counter the movement of SEATO forces into South Vietnam is considered unlikely. The most probable course of action by the communists would be continued use of insurgents and infiltration. However, if the Bloc did decide to act overtly to counter the introduction of SEATO forces into the area, this action would probably follow, in general, the pattern set forth below:

GROUND ACTIONS

a. Basically an infantry invasion of South Vietnam and Laos and deployed in strength and direction as follows:

(1) Five divisions on the North/South Vietnam border to Saigon along the coastal route via Dong Ha - Tourane - Binh Dinh.

(2) One division (light) to Vientiane via Xieng - Khouang - Paksane.

(3) One division (light) to Thakhek and Savannekhet via Mugia Pass and Keo Neua Pass.

(4) A follow-up force of up to six divisions moving as follows:

(a) Two divisions to Saigon or Bangkok via Lao Bao Pass - down the lower Mekong Valley along Route 13 to Saigon or across the Mekong River to Bangkok.

(b) Two divisions to Bangkok via Routes 7, 8 and 13 through Laos into Thailand and on to Bangkok.

(c) Two divisions to be held in reserve along the North/South Vietnam border to be available to put additional momentum along the coastal route, or to effect a subsidiary effort in the Kontum-Pleiku Plateau.



b. A secondary effort, or threat thereof, by about nine Chinese Communists divisions into Burma and Northern Thailand, which could be supported as follows:

(1) Three divisions, one lightly equipped, to northern Thailand via northwest Burma.

(2) Six divisions toward Rangoon along the Burma Road and via Myitkyina to Mandalay, then south in the internal transport system of Burma.

c. There would probably be a build-up in North Vietnam and possibly a build-up along the China-Burma border before any invasion was initiated. The invasion would probably be on the broadest possible front employing lightly equipped troops to infiltrate between defending forces and thereby minimizing the effects of nuclear weapons against deployed ground troops. These infiltrating forces would be supported by columns advancing quickly down main routes. Battalion-size or smaller airborne units might be used, chiefly to seize and hold key features such as bridges, airfields, critical road junctions. The communists would exploit to the fullest their ability to infiltrate through the most difficult country and would not necessarily be tied to the highways and roads. Large numbers of porters and pack animals would be available and jungle trails would be used to a great extent, though this would restrict the speed of attack and the weight of equipment that could be used.

## AIR ACTIONS

a. The Chinese Communists maintain, on a routine basis, approximately 250 jet fighters in South China. These and other aircraft, including jet light bombers, could be rapidly deployed to bases in North Vietnam and South China to conduct air operations in support of the Communist objective. In the event of a ground invasion of the magnitude suggested above, it is well within the CHICOM's capability to neutralize the air bases and port facilities in Thailand and South Vietnam in an attempt to deny their use by SEATO forces. Such an operation could precede or accompany the invasion of ground forces.

## REACTION TO CONTINGENCIES

1. If North Vietnamese forces overtly intervened, the SEATO force would have to be increased from the equivalent of approximately one division at the initiation of the SEATO Plan to twelve divisions, seven Regimental Combat Teams and five battalions. In addition, the SEATO force would have air and naval superiority. Such a force is considered adequate to defeat the North Vietnamese forces.

2. US force contribution to the enlarged SEATO force required to combat such DRV action would include two Army divisions, one Marine division/wing team and five USAF tactical squadrons deployed in Thailand and South Vietnam. The US forces would be increased from 14,000 to a total of approximately 129,000, not including Navy forces. One division for this force must come from the continental United States. This could require the call up of one division plus other appropriate forces to maintain the US strategic reserve.



3. The mission of the enlarged SEATO force would be to defend Laos and South Vietnam against attack by forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and to inflict a quick and decisive defeat on the military forces of the DRV. The general concept is to hold the enemy as far forward as possible, destroy his forces, his lines of communication, and those installations directly supporting his war making capability. When appropriate, SEATO forces would mount a general offensive against the enemy. They would have a capability of conducting amphibious assault operations in North Vietnam in case the military situation so dictated.

4. If the Chinese Communists intervene, whether by regular or "volunteer" forces, political authorization for essential military actions must be anticipated since prompt counteractions would be required. There would be issues whether to attack selected targets in South China with conventional weapons and whether to initiate use of nuclear weapons against targets in direct support of Chinese operations in Laos.

5. In this event the SEATO force would be increased to fifteen divisions and eight RCTs (278,000) deployed in the defense of Southeast Asia.

6. The US contribution to this force would be three ground divisions deployed in Thailand and South Vietnam and one Marine Division/Wing Team, prepared for amphibious assault operations against North Vietnam as the military situation dictated. Two divisions and additional air forces would have to come from the continental United States. This could require the call up of two additional divisions plus other appropriate forces to maintain the US strategic reserve.

7. The mission of the SEATO force would be expanded to defend Southeast Asia against attack by Chinese Communist forces and those of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The general concept of operation would be to launch air and naval attacks, to delay the enemy's advance with local forces and interdict his lines of communications with air and naval forces, while conducting an unremitting air and naval offensive to destroy the enemy's war-making capacity.



APPENDIX B

COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPORT OF SEATO  
FORCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM (C)

1. Long Haul Gateway Communications.

a. Long haul gateway communications now supporting the Southeast Asia area will require expansion and augmentation as follows:

(1) Establish Saigon-Okinawa Voice and record communications system.

(2) Establish Saigon-SEATO Force Headquarters voice and record communications.

(3) Expand Saigon-Bangkok system to provide voice and record channels.

b. Provision of the above communications will involve the following actions:

(1) Saigon-Okinawa Sideband System - Expedite completion of the sideband equipment now in the process of installation at Saigon. Okinawa installation has been completed. To fulfill this requirement pending completion of the present installation now in progress at Saigon, it would be necessary to move by air one mobile AN/TSC-16 radio equipment (contingency package) with operating personnel from Clark Air Base to Saigon. Operating personnel would be furnished initially from DCS STARCOM Station Clark AB.

(2) Saigon-SEATO Force Headquarters - Move by air two complete mobile radio relay equipments (4 terminals, 4 relays with associated carrier, channel derivation switching and terminal equipments) with operating personnel from the US to Saigon. Mission will be to establish voice and record communications between DCS station Saigon and SEATO Force Headquarters.

(3) Saigon-Bangkok Expansion - Move by air two mobile AN/TSC-20 radio equipments (contingency packages) with operating teams from the US, one to Saigon and one to Bangkok.

2. SEATO Force Communications-Electronics to component Forces Headquarters, Subordinate Field Forces and National Forces Headquarters will be provided by CINCPAC, and National Forces initially, utilizing resources currently available augmented by three mobile AN/TSC-20 equipments with operating teams air lifted from the US to locations designated by CINCPAC.



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Washington, D.C.

10 October 1961

International Security Affairs

Refer to: 1 19126/61

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Viet-Nam

Even if the decision at tomorrow's meeting is only preliminary-- to explore with Diem and the British, Australians, and New Zealanders would be my guess -- it is clearly of the greatest possible importance. Above all, action must proceed fast.

For what one man's feel is worth, mine -- based on very close touch with Indochina in the 1954 war and civil war afterwards till Diem took hold -- is that is really now or never if we are to arrest the gains being made by the Viet Cong. Walt Rostow made the point yesterday that the Viet Cong are about to move, by every indication, from the small unit basis to a moderate battalion-size basis. Intelligence also suggests that they may try to set up a "provisional government" like Xieng Khuang (though less legitimate appearing) in the very Kontum area into which the present initial plan would move SEATO forces. If the Viet Cong movement "blooms" in this way, it will almost certainly attract all the back-the-winner sentiment that understandably prevails in such cases and that beat the French in early 1954 and came within an ace of beating Diem in early 1955.

An early and hard-hitting operation has a good chance (70% would be my guess) of arresting things and giving Diem a chance to do better and clean up. Even if we follow up hard, on the lines the JCS are working out after yesterday's meeting, however, the chances are not much better that we will in fact be able to clean up the situation. It all depends on Diem's effectiveness, which is very problematical. The 30% chance is that we would wind up like the French in 1954; white men can't win this kind of fight.

On a 70-30 basis, I would myself favor going in. But if we let, say, a month go by before we move, the odds will slide (both short-term shock effect and long-term chance) down to 60-40, 50-50, and so on. Leos under a Souvanna Phouma deal is more likely than not to go sour, and will more and more make things difficult in South Viet-Nam, which again underscores the element of time.

William P. Bundy  
Acting

Cy furnished:  
Deputy Secretary

312

10 October 1961

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-3-61: PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO  
CERTAIN SEATO UNDERTAKINGS IN  
SOUTH VIETNAM

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable Communist reactions to the use of  
SEATO forces in South Vietnam to prevent Communist incursions  
or infiltration from North Vietnam.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Other National Estimates pertinent to this problem are  
SNIE 10-2-61, "Likelihood of Major Communist Military  
Intervention in Mainland Southeast Asia," dated 27 June  
1961; SNIE 58-2-61, "Probable Reactions to Certain  
Courses of Action Concerning Laos," dated 5 July 1961;  
NIE 14.3/53-61, "Prospects for North and South Vietnam,"  
dated 15 August 1961; and SNIE 53-2-61, "Bloc Support of  
the Communist Effort Against the Government of Vietnam,"  
dated 5 October 1961.



## THE ASSUMPTION

For the purpose of this estimate it is assumed that in response to an appeal from the Government of Vietnam (GVN), SEATO ground, naval, and air forces numbering about 25,000 are committed to patrol the GVN coast and to secure the GVN-Laotian border against incursions or infiltration from the Communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in North Vietnam. The SEATO objective, which will be publicly announced, is to stop external Communist assistance to the Viet Cong Communist guerrillas, while avoiding direct engagement by these troops in the conflict within South Vietnam.

## THE ESTIMATE

1. We believe that the Communist Bloc would not commit North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist forces to a large-scale military attack against South Vietnam or Laos in response to the assumed SEATO action. The DRV would probably seek to avoid having its regular units enter into a direct military engagement with SEATO, and in particular US, forces. Hanoi,

Peiping, and Moscow<sup>2/</sup> would almost certainly be concerned over the increased risks for each of them of broadened hostilities involving US forces. Moreover, they are generally confident that their current low risk tactics of local subversion and supporting "national liberation" struggles will continue to be successful in Southeast Asia.

2. Nevertheless, Peiping and Hanoi in particular would be highly concerned as to the intentions of the SEATO forces, particularly during the initial deployment. The presence of SEATO forces so near its border would be a source of constant unease to the DRV. Moreover, both Hanoi and Peiping would consider it a particularly urgent matter to prevent any invigoration or strengthening of SEATO which could result from

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2/ The Communist guerrilla organizations in both Laos and South Vietnam (the Pathet Lao and the Viet Cong) are under the control of the Communist Party of North Vietnam and look to Hanoi for guidance and support. We believe that Hanoi exercises considerable local tactical latitude in conducting the Communist struggle in both countries. When the struggle is elevated to the international level, as is now the case with Laos, the major Bloc partners play an increasingly important leadership role. It is also likely that the USSR exercises considerable restraint on DRV or Chinese Communist decisions which would risk the broadening of hostilities and raise the issue of USSR or US participation.



a successful SEATO operation. Both would seek by political means and by military means short of major overt attack, to frustrate the SEATO effort.

3. In the situation assumed, we believe that the DRV would seek at first to test the seriousness and effectiveness of the SEATO effort by subjecting the SEATO forces and their land lines of communication to harassment, ambush, and guerrilla attack. The Communists could not be expected to recognize the announced intention of the SEATO forces to avoid involvement in the internal struggle in South Vietnam. They would probably estimate that by using their Viet Cong apparatus in South Vietnam, by committing additional experienced guerrilla forces from North Vietnam<sup>3/</sup> to operations in territory long familiar to them, and by exploiting the opportunities offered by the sizable junk traffic in coastal waters, they

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<sup>3/</sup> Approximately 90,000 Vietnamese Communist troops, most of them from south and central Vietnam, were evacuated to North Vietnam in the regroupment of forces following the Indochina War. The DRV has maintained relatively intact a large part of this pool of manpower experienced in guerrilla operations in South Vietnam, drawing upon it for cadres to reinforce the Viet Cong.

could harass the SEATO land forces and infiltrate the SEATO blockade. The Communists would expect worthwhile political and psychological rewards if their harassment and guerrilla operations against SEATO forces were successful, including lowered GVN morale and increased tensions among some of the SEATO members. While seeking to test the SEATO forces, the DRV would not relax its Viet Cong campaign against the GVN.

4. It is expected that the SEATO action would cause the DRV to try to gain "compensation" in some manner, such as possibly declaring the 1954 Geneva Agreements, or certain articles of the Agreements, abrogated. It might also begin to receive increasing military assistance from the Soviet Union and Communist China openly and in unconcealed violation of the Agreements, and to buildup an air force which would include jets. The Bloc would attempt to encourage and instigate Laos and Cambodia to protest to the UN if any SEATO forces crossed the South Vietnam border.

5. If no agreement on Laos had been reached at Geneva prior to the assumed SEATO action, we believe that the Communists would take steps to hasten their takeover of Laos. They would intensify their efforts to achieve political control, and they would step up military pressures against the



.. Laotian Army. Communist strength in south Laos would probably be increased by forces from North Vietnam to guard against an effort to partition Laos or an attack against the Pathet Lao forces. The Soviet airlift would probably be increased with a heavier flow of military supply into south Laos, and the Communists would probably intensify their efforts to establish a secure route for motor traffic into the south. On the other hand, if the SEATO action took place after the establishment of a coalition government in Laos under Souvanna Phouma and the conclusion of an agreement at Geneva, the Communists would probably emphasize political rather than military measures to win control of the country. In either case, the scale of Communist infiltration of men and equipment from North to South Vietnam through Laos would probably not be significantly affected.

6. If the SEATO action appeared to be proving effective in reducing the present scale of infiltration the Communists probably would increase their use of the mountain trail system through Cambodia. This is a longer and more difficult route but its use could keep at least minimum support flowing to the Viet Cong. At the same time, in order to reduce the apparent success of the SEATO action, they could intensify small unit

attacks, assassinations, and local terrorism in South Vietnam; they could also commit more DRV irregular personnel for the harassment of the SEATO forces. It would probably be part of Communist tactics to play upon possible SEATO weariness over maintaining substantial forces and accepting losses in South Vietnam over a long period of time.

7. With the introduction of SEATO troops into South Vietnam, Communist China might increase its ground and air forces in South China and strengthen its military posture opposite Taiwan. It might also announce various types of military assistance to the DRV "to meet the imperialist threat" from South Vietnam, possibly including the stationing of Chinese Communist air units in North Vietnam. Nevertheless, we do not believe Peiping would consider assignment of SEATO forces to South Vietnam as an immediate and direct threat to its own national security.

8. At the same time, the Communist powers would immediately launch a major propaganda and political campaign designed to label the SEATO action as aggression, as a threat to the peace in the Far East, and as a disguised US effort to re-establish colonial rule over Indochina. To increase the fears of war in the Far East, Hanoi and Peiping



would charge that the US, through SEATO, was preparing to attack the DRV and Communist China. The USSR would probably remind the world of its defense commitments to both Peiping and Hanoi.

9. The reaction to the assumed SEATO action among concerned non-Communist governments would vary widely. The Asian members of SEATO would find renewed confidence in the organization and the US, if the plan were to go well. If, on the other hand, the SEATO action were to become costly, prolonged, or to involve heavy casualties, the Asian members

10. The neutralist governments in the area would be most concerned at the increased tension and danger of general hostilities. They would denounce the SEATO action and call for a peaceful solution. None of them, however, would be

without some secret sympathy for the SEATO action for they all have fears of Communist subversion and expansion. For example, Sihanouk has become increasingly fearful of and disillusioned with the DRV's subversive and guerrilla organizations in Laos and South Vietnam, both of whom have violated Cambodia's borders. He has no desire to see Laos or South Vietnam under Communist domination. Despite his genuine and justifiable fear of Communist China and North Vietnam, Sihanouk might cooperate, covertly, with the SEATO action.

11. Moscow and Peiping would bring strong pressures against Japan. Although the Japanese Government would be under strong leftist internal pressure, it would probably tolerate US logistic activities and would not officially oppose the SEATO effort. Nationalist China would be elated with the SEATO action.



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Washington, D.C.

October 11, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: South Vietnam

At this morning's meeting with the President the following course of action was agreed upon with relation to South Vietnam:

1. The Defense Department is authorized to send the Air Force's Jungle Jim Squadron into Vietnam to serve under the MAAG as a training mission and not for combat at the present time.

2. General Maxwell Taylor accompanied by Dr. Rostov from the White House, General Lansdale, a representative of JCS, Mr. Cottrell from State and probably someone from ISA will leave for Vietnam over the weekend on a Presidential mission (to be announced by the President at this afternoon's press conference as an economic survey) to look into the feasibility from both political and military standpoints of the following:

(a) the plan for military intervention discussed at this morning's meeting on the basis of the Vietnam task force paper entitled "Concept for Intervention in Vietnam".

(b) an alternative plan for stationing in Vietnam fewer U.S. combat forces than those called for under the plan referred to in (a) above and with a more limited objective than dealing with the Viet Cong; in other words, such a small force would probably go in at Tourane and possibly another southern port principally for the purpose of establishing a U.S. "presence" in Vietnam;

(c) other alternatives in lieu of putting any U.S. combat forces in Vietnam, i.e. stepping up U.S. assistance and training of Vietnam units, furnishing of more U.S. equipment, particularly helicopters and other light aircraft, trucks and other ground transport, etc.

3. During the two or three weeks that will be required for the completion of General Taylor's mission, State will push ahead with the following political actions:

(a) protest to the ICC on the step-up in North Vietnamese support of Viet Cong activities,

(b) tabling at the UN a white paper based on Mr. William Jordan's report concerning Communist violations of the Geneva Accords, and

(c) consultation with our SEATO allies, principally the British and Australians, regarding SEATO actions in support of the deteriorating situation in Vietnam.

Roswell Kilpatric



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D.C.

CM-390-61  
18 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TAYLOR

SUBJECT: Counterinsurgency Operations in South Vietnam

1. You will recall that I recently had occasion to look into allegations that the United States is overtraining the Vietnamese Army for a Korea-type war with little or nothing being done to meet the terrorist problem in Vietnam. My inquiries have highlighted the following main points:

a. The success of the counter-terrorist police organization in Malaya has had considerable impact.

b. The concept of using local police force to combat local insurgency is politically and diplomatically attractive.

2. I fully agree that we should make maximum use of these aspects of the British counterinsurgency experience in Malaya which are pertinent to the situation in Vietnam. You will recognize, however, that there are major differences between the situations in Malaya and South Vietnam:

a. Malayan borders were far more controllable in that Thailand cooperated in refusing the Communists an operational safe haven.

b. The racial characteristics of the Chinese insurgents in Malaya made identification and segregation a relatively simple matter as compared to the situation in Vietnam where the Viet Cong cannot be distinguished from the loyal citizen.

c. The scarcity of food in Malaya versus the relative plenty in South Vietnam made the denial of food to the Communist guerrillas a far more important and readily usable weapon in Malaya.

d. Most importantly, in Malaya the British were in actual command, with all of the obvious advantages this entails, and used highly trained Commonwealth troops.

c. Finally, it took the British nearly 12 years to defeat an insurgency which was less strong than the one in South Vietnam.

3. Furthermore, as you well know, the success of the counter-insurgency operations in Malaya is not unique. Major terrorist activities have been defeated in both the Philippines and Burma, and in neither place was the police organization used as the framework for coordination and control. In the Philippines, for example, the military framework used was highly successful.

4. Closely associated with the allegation that the MAAG is "overtraining" the Vietnamese Army is the concern frequently expressed over the length of time required to train military officers and NCO's. No one knows better than you do that well-trained officers and NCO's are not produced in brief training programs. I am sure you will want to discuss this in detail with General McCarr when you visit Saigon. It is most important to note that the heaviest casualties in the Vietnam insurgency have been suffered by the Civil Guard previously trained as police. Almost without exception, the Viet Cong have attacked the untrained Civil Guard rather than the better trained Army units. This has resulted in a heavy loss of weapons and equipment to the Viet Cong. Untrained Civil Guard units have, in fact, been an important source of weapons and supplies for the Viet Cong, and their known vulnerability has been an invitation for the Viet Cong to attack. General McCarr believes that reversion of the Civil Guard to police control would set back the counterinsurgency operation in South Vietnam by at least a year.

5. With respect to training the Vietnamese Army for the "wrong war", it seems clear that in recent months the insurgency in South Vietnam has developed far beyond the capacity of police control. All of the Vietnamese Army successes this past summer have met Viet Cong opposition in organized battalion strength. Even larger Communist units were involved in the recent Viet Cong successes north of Kontum. This change in the situation has not been fully understood by many U.S. officials.



6. In this regard, there is some concern that the Thompson Mission may try to sell the Malayan concept of police control without making a sufficiently careful evaluation of conditions in South Vietnam. Additionally, there are some indications that the British, for political reasons, wish to increase their influence in this area and are using the Thompson mission as a vehicle. Consequently, your forthcoming trip to South Vietnam is most timely. Despite repeated urging, the Government of South Vietnam has not yet written an over-all national plan for counterinsurgency. The question of police or military organization for combatting Viet Cong insurgency should be laid to rest in that plan. Your evaluation of this matter could have an important effect on the Governments of both South Vietnam and the United States.

(Sgd) L.L. LEMNITZER

L.L. LEMNITZER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 12, 1961

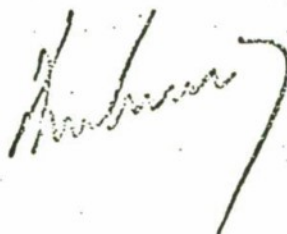
Dear General Taylor:

I should like you to proceed to Saigon for the purpose of appraising the situation in South Viet-Nam, particularly as it concerns the threat to the internal security and defense of that country and adjacent areas. After you have conferred with the appropriate United States and South Viet-Namese authorities, including the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, I would like your views on the courses of action which our Government might take at this juncture to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in South Viet-Nam and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence.

In your assessment you should bear in mind that the initial responsibility for the effective maintenance of the independence of South Viet-Nam rests with the people and government of that country. Our efforts must be evaluated, and your recommendations formulated, with this fact in mind.

While the military part of the problem is of great importance in South Viet-Nam, its political, social, and economic elements are equally significant, and I shall expect your appraisal and your recommendations to take full account of them.

Sincerely,



General Maxwell D. Taylor  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

October 13, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 104

TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Southeast Asia

The President on October 11, 1961, directed that the following actions be taken:

1. Make preparations for the publication of the white paper on North Vietnamese aggression against South Viet Nam which is now being drafted in the Department of State.
2. Develop plans for possible action in the Viet Nam ICC based upon the white paper, preliminary to possible action under paragraph 3 below.
3. Develop plans for presentation of the Viet Nam case in the United Nations.
4. Subject to agreement with the Government of Viet Nam which is now being sought, introduce the Air Force Jungle Jim Squadron into Viet Nam for the initial purpose of training Vietnamese forces.
5. Initiate guerrilla ground action, including use of U.S. advisers if necessary, against Communist aerial resupply missions in the Tchepone area.
6. General Taylor should undertake a mission to Saigon to explore ways in which assistance of all types might be more effective.

The President also agreed that certain other actions developed by the Task Force and concurred in by the agencies concerned, but which do not require specific Presidential approval, should be undertaken on an urgent basis.

/s/ McGeorge Bundy

Information copies to:

The Director, U.S. Information Agency  
The Military Representative of the President  
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Administrator, Agency for International Development



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

*Call for file*  
Noted by Mr. Williams

107

26 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HADYN WILLIAMS

SUBJECT: The Geneva Accords of 1954 and the Introduction of  
U.S. Combat and Logistic Forces into Viet Nam

You have requested that I submit an opinion on the legal question of the compatibility with the Geneva Accords of the actions proposed in Saigon's telegram 537 to the Department of State. The pressure of time forces this opinion to be a preliminary one. A full statement of my reasoning will follow as soon as it can be prepared.

My conclusion is that the actions proposed in the above mentioned telegram would constitute violations of Articles 16 and 17 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet Nam of July 20, 1954. That conclusion is not affected by the reasons, ostensible or real, for the actions.

Article 16 prohibits "the introduction into Viet Nam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel". The article does permit, however, under strict conditions, "the rotation of units and groups of personnel". Since there were 170,000 foreign troops in Viet Nam at the time of the 1954 Agreement, it can be argued that the United States could introduce up to 170,000 combat troops without causing a violation of that Agreement. That argument would of necessity be based upon the supposed rationale of a decision of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in View Nam, dated April 19, 1960, in which an increase in the MAAG was approved. The Commission gave no reasons for its ruling, and it is far from clear that it would extend its scope to cover combat troops. It is difficult to contend that where troops are introduced to replace other troops which departed five to seven years previously there is a "rotation" of units. Reliance upon the "rotation" defense in the present circumstances would run grave risks of an adverse ICC decision.

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329

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Page 2 of 2 Pages



Even if there were a 170,000 troop "credit" which we could legally draw upon, I doubt that the actions proposed in Saigon's telegram 537 are compatible with the further limitations contained in Article 16. For example, no unit introduced could be larger than a battalion, and rotation would have to be (1) on a man-for-man basis, (2) notified to the ICC two days in advance, (3) carried on through certain listed entry points, and (4) supervised and inspected by the ICC.

The provisions of Article 17 might prove even more burdensome. Entry of military equipment must take place at listed entry points under the supervision of the ICC and may only consist of replacement of "war material, arms and munitions which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cessation of hostilities . . . on the basis of piece-for-piece of the same type and with similar characteristics."

It should be noted that the United States was not a party to the Geneva Accords, but it did declare at the Conference in 1954 that ". . . it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb. . ." the Accords. Viet Nam, although it was not a signatory of the cease-fire Agreement in question, is, on the other hand, bound by its terms. The Agreement was signed by the Commander in Chief of the French Union Forces (Viet Nam being part of the French Union), and this signature was within the authority of the Commander in Chief. Thus, on the strictly legal plane we need be concerned only about a possible violation by the Government of Viet Nam of its obligations.

As a final comment I would point out that the purpose of the introduction has no legal relevance; introduction of U.S. troops for purposes of flood control would still constitute a violation of the Geneva Accords by the Government of Viet Nam. I suggest that, if a decision is made to send U.S. troops into Viet Nam, we should justify their introduction on the ground of collective self-defense. Nothing in the Geneva Accords should be read as abridging the inherent right of Viet Nam and the United States to take actions in collective self-defense. If you wish, I shall prepare a memorandum on this point.

*George H. Aldrich*

cc: Mr. Wm. McCormick

GEORGE H. ALDRICH

Office of the Assistant General Counsel  
International Affairs

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FROM:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO: WHITE HOUSE

TOP SECRET CITE BAGUDDIS

EYES ONLY FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM GENERAL TAYLOR.

1. Transmitted herewith are a summary of the fundamental conclusions of my group and my personal recommendations in response to the letter of the President to me dated 13 October

1961.] At our meeting next Friday I hope to be allowed to explain the thinking which lies behind them. At that time I shall transmit our entire report which will provide detailed support for the recommendations and will serve as a working paper for the interested departments and agencies.

2. It is concluded that:

a. Communist strategy aims to gain control of Southeast Asia by methods of subversion and guerrilla war which by-pass conventional U.S. and indigenous strength on the ground.

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331



The interim Communist goal -- en route to total take-over -- appears to be a neutral Southeast Asia, detached from U.S. protection. This strategy is well on the way to success in Vietnam.

b. In Vietnam (and Southeast Asia) there is a double crisis in confidence: doubt that U.S. is determined to save Southeast Asia; doubt that Diem's methods can frustrate and defeat Communist purposes and methods. The Vietnamese (and Southeast Asians) will undoubtedly draw rightly or wrongly -- definitive conclusions in coming weeks and months concerning the probable outcome and will adjust their behaviour accordingly. What the U.S. does or fails to do will be decisive to the end result.

c. Aside from the morale factor, the Vietnamese Government is caught in interlocking circles of bad tactics and bad administrative arrangements which pin their forces on the defensive in ways which permit a relatively small Viet-Cong force (about one tenth the size of the GVN regulars) to create conditions of frustration and terror certain to lead to a political crisis, if a positive turning point is not soon achieved. The following recommendations are designed to achieve that favorable turn, to avoid further deterioration in the situation in South Vietnam, and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence.

3. It is recommended:

General

a. That upon request from the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to come to its aid in resisting the increasing aggressions of the Viet-Cong and in repairing the ravages of the Delta flood which, in combination, threaten the lives of its citizens and the security of the country, the U.S. Government offer to join the GVN in a massive joint effort as a part of a total mobilization of GVN resources to cope with both the Viet-Cong (VC) and the ravages of the flood. The U.S. representatives will participate actively in this effort, particularly in the fields of government administration, military plans and operations, intelligence, and flood relief, going beyond the advisory role which they have observed in the past.

Specific

b. That in support of the foregoing broad commitment to a joint effort with Diem, the following specific measures be undertaken:

(1) The U.S. Government will be prepared to provide individual administrators for insertion into the governmental machinery of South Vietnam in types and numbers to be worked out with President Diem.

(2) A joint effort will be made to improve the military-

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DD FORM 173-1  
1 MAY 55

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING

383



political intelligence system beginning at the provincial level and extending upward through the government and armed forces to the Central Intelligence Organization.

(3) The U.S. Government will engage in a joint survey of the conditions in the provinces to assess the social, political, intelligence, and military factors bearing on the prosecution of the counter-insurgency in order to reach a common estimate of these factors and a common determination of how to deal with them. As this survey will consume time, it should not hold back the immediate actions which are clearly needed regardless of its outcome.

(4) A joint effort will be made to free the Army for mobile, offensive operations. This effort will be based upon improving the training and equipping of the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps, relieving the regular Army of static missions, raising the level of the mobility of Army forces by the provision of considerably more helicopters and light aviation, and organizing a Border Ranger Force for a long-term campaign on the Laotian border against the Viet-Cong infiltrators. The U.S. Government will support this effort with equipment and with military units and personnel to do those tasks which the Armed Forces of Vietnam cannot perform in time. Such tasks include air reconnaissance and

photography, airlift (beyond the present capacity of SVN forces), special intelligence, and air-ground support techniques.

(5) The U. S. Government will assist the GVN in effecting surveillance and control over the coastal waters and inland waterways, furnishing such advisors, operating personnel and small craft as may be necessary for quick and effective operations.

(6) The MAAG, Vietnam, will be reorganized and increased in size as may be necessary by the implementation of these recommendations.

(7) The U. S. Government will offer to introduce into South Vietnam a military Task Force to operate under U. S. control for the following purposes:

(a) Provide a U. S. military presence capable of raising national morale and of showing to Southeast Asia the seriousness of the U. S. intent to resist a Communist take-over.

(b) Conduct logistical operations in support of military and flood relief operations.

(c) Conduct such combat operations as are necessary for self-defense and for the security of the area in which they are stationed.

(d) Provide an emergency reserve to back up the Armed Forces of the GVN in the case of a heightened military

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DD FORM 173-1  
MAY 55

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1959

336



crisis.

(e) Act as an advance party of such additional forces as may be introduced if CINCPAC or SEATO contingency plans are invoked.

(8) The U.S. Government will review its economic aid program to take into account the needs of flood relief and to give priority to those projects in support of the expanded counter-insurgency program.

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| Eyes Only for the President from General Taylor.  |              |                                   |       |        |                   |                   |                             |
| TWX - Reference: Saigon to State 537 - TOP SECRET   |              |                                   |       |        |                   |                   |                             |
| This message is for the purpose of presenting my reasons for recommending the introduction of a U.S. military force into South Vietnam (SVN). I have reached the conclusion that this is an essential action if we are to reverse the present downward trend of events in spite of a full recognition of the following disadvantages: |              |                                   |       |        |                   |                   |                             |
| <p>a. The strategic reserve of U.S. forces is presently so weak that we can ill afford any detachment of forces to a peripheral area of the Communist bloc where they will be pinned down for an uncertain duration.</p>  |              |                                   |       |        |                   |                   |                             |
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DD FORM 173  
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REPLACES DD FORM 173, 1 OCT 49, WHICH WILL BE USED UNTIL EXHAUSTED

337

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365



b. Although U.S. prestige is already engaged in SVN, it will become more so by the sending of troops.

c. If the first contingent is not enough to accomplish the necessary results, it will be difficult to resist the pressure to reinforce. If the ultimate result sought is the closing of the frontiers and the clean-up of the insurgents within SVN, there is no limit to our possible commitment (unless we attack the source in Hanoi).

d. The introduction of U.S. forces <sup>may</sup> will increase tensions and risk escalation into a major war in Asia.

On the other side of the argument, there can be no action so convincing of U.S. seriousness of purpose and hence so reassuring to the people and Government of SVN and to our other friends and allies in SEA as the introduction of U.S. forces into SVN. The views of indigenous and U.S. officials consulted on our trip were unanimous on this point. I have just seen Saigon 5<sup>4</sup>/<sub>15</sub> to State \* and suggest that it be read in connection with this message.

The size of the U.S. force introduced need not be great to provide the military presence necessary to produce the desired effect on national morale in SVN and on international opinion. A bare token, however, will not suffice; it must have a significant value.

The kinds of tasks which it might undertake which would have a

significant value are suggested in BACW 4413 They are:

(a) Provide a US military presence capable of raising national morale and of showing to Southeast Asia the seriousness of the US intent to resist a Communist take-over.

(b) Conduct logistical operations in support of military and flood relief operations.

(c) Conduct such combat operations as are necessary for self-defense and for the security of the area in which they are stationed.

(d) Provide an emergency reserve to back up the Armed Forces of the GVN in the case of a heightened military crisis.

(e) Act as an advance party of such additional forces as may be introduced if CINCPAC or SEATO contingency plans are invoked.

It is noteworthy that this force is not proposed to clear the jungles and forests of Viet Cong guerrillas. That should be the primary task of the Armed Forces of Vietnam for which they should be specifically organized, trained, and stiffened with ample U.S. advisors down to combat battalion levels. However, the U.S. troops may be called upon to engage in combat to protect themselves, their working parties, and the area in which they live. As a general reserve, they might be thrown into action (with U.S.

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PAGE  
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NR OF  
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DD FORM 173-1  
1 MAY 55

339

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1955 - 462

362



agreement) against large, formed guerrilla bands which have abandoned the forests for attacks on major targets. But in general, our forces should not engage in small-scale guerrilla operations in the jungle.

As an area for the operations of U. S. troops, SVN is not an excessively difficult or unpleasant place to operate. While the border areas are rugged and heavily forested, the terrain is comparable to parts of Korea where U. S. troops learned to live and work without too much effort. However, these border areas, for reasons stated above, are not the places to engage our forces. In the High Plateau and in the coastal plain where U. S. troops would probably be stationed, these jungle-forest conditions do not exist to any great extent. The most unpleasant feature in the coastal areas would be the heat and, in the Delta, the mud left behind by the flood. The High Plateau offers no particular obstacle to the stationing of U. S. troops.

The extent to which the Task Force would engage in flood relief activities in the Delta will depend upon further study of the problem there. As reported in Saigon 537, I see considerable advantages in playing up this aspect of the Task Force mission. I am presently inclined to favor a dual mission, initially help to the flood area and subsequently use in any other area of SVN where

FORM

PAGE  
NR  
4

NR OF  
PAGES  
6

DD FORM 173-1  
MAY 55

U. S. GOVERNMENT

340

its resources can be used effectively to give tangible support in the struggle against the Viet Cong. However, the possibility of emphasizing the humanitarian mission will wane if we wait long in moving in our forces or in linking our stated purpose with the emergency conditions created by the flood.

The risks of backing into a major Asian war by way of SVN are present but are not impressive. NVN is extremely vulnerable to conventional bombing, a weakness which should be exploited diplomatically in convincing Hanoi to lay off SVN. Both the DRV and the Chicomso would face severe logistical difficulties in trying to maintain strong forces in the field in SEA, difficulties which we share but by no means to the same degree. There is no case for fearing a mass onslaught of Communist manpower into SVN and its neighboring states, particularly if our airpower is allowed a free hand against logistical targets. Finally, the starvation conditions in China should discourage Communist leaders there from being militarily venturesome for some time to come.

By the foregoing line of reasoning, I have reached the conclusion that the introduction of a U.S. military Task Force without delay offers definitely more advantage than it creates risks and difficulties. In fact, I do not believe that our program to save SVN will succeed without it. If the concept is approved, the exact size

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DD FORM 173-1  
MAY 55

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1959



and composition of the force should be determined by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the JCS, the Chief MAAG, and CINCPAC. My own feeling is that the initial size should not exceed about 8000, of which a preponderant number would be in logistical-type units. After acquiring experience in operating in SVN, this initial force will require reorganization and adjustment to the local scene.

As CINCPAC will point out, any forces committed to SVN will need to be replaced by additional forces to his area from the strategic reserve in the U.S. Also, any troops to SVN are in addition to those which may be required to execute SEATO Plan 5 in Laos. Both facts should be taken into account in current considerations of the FY 1963 budget which bear upon the permanent increase which should be made in the U.S. military establishment to maintain our strategic position for the long pull. *20/*

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DD FORM 173-1  
MAY 55

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1955

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Washington, D.C. 20301

8 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: South Vietnam

The basic issue framed by the Taylor Report is whether the U.S. shall:

a. Commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism, and

b. Support this commitment by necessary immediate military actions and preparations for possible later actions.

The Joint Chiefs, Mr. Gilpatric, and I have reached the following conclusions:

1. The fall of South Vietnam to Communism would lead to the fairly raped extension of Communist control, or complete accommodation to Communism, in the rest of mainland Southeast Asia and in Indonesia. The strategic implications worldwide, particularly in the Orient, would be extremely serious.

2. The chances are against, probably sharply against, preventing that fall by any measures short of the introduction of U.S. forces on a substantial scale. We accept General Taylor's judgment that the various measures proposed by him short of this are useful but will not in themselves do the job of restoring confidence and setting Diem on the way to winning his fight.

3. The introduction of a U.S. force of the magnitude of an initial 8,000 men in a flood relief context will be of great help to Diem. However, it will not convince the other side (whether the shots are called from Moscow, Peiking, or Hanoi) that we mean business. Moreover, it probably will not tip the scales decisively. We would be almost certain to get increasingly mired down in an inconclusive struggle.

4. The other side can be convinced we mean business only if we accompany the initial force introduction by a clear commitment to the full objective stated above, accompanied by a warning through some channel to Hanoi that continued support of the Viet Cong will lead to punitive retaliation against North Vietnam.



5. ~~If we act in this way, the ultimate possible extent of our~~ military commitment must be faced. The struggle may be prolonged and Hanoi and Peiping may intervene overtly. In view of the logistic difficulties faced by the other side, I believe we can assume that the maximum U.S. forces required on the ground in Southeast Asia will not exceed 6 divisions, or about 205,000 men, (MACV Plan 32-59, Phase IV). Our military posture is, or, with the addition of more National Guard or regular Army divisions, can be made, adequate to furnish these forces without serious interference with our present Berlin plans.

6. To accept the stated objective is of course a most serious decision. Military force is not the only element of what must be a most carefully coordinated set of actions. Success will depend on factors many of which are not within our control -- notably the conduct of Diem himself and other leaders in the area. Laos will remain a major problem. The domestic political implications of accepting the objective are also grave, although it is our feeling that the country will respond better to a firm initial position than to courses of action that lead us in only gradually, and that in the meantime are sure to involve casualties. The over-all effect on Moscow and Peiping will need careful weighing and may well be mixed; however, permitting South Vietnam to fall can only strengthen and encourage them greatly.

7. In sum:

a. We do not believe major units of U.S. forces should be introduced in South Vietnam unless we are willing to make an affirmative decision on the issue stated at the start of this memorandum.

b. We are inclined to recommend that we do commit the U.S. to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism and that we support this commitment by the necessary military actions.

c. If such a commitment is agreed upon, we support the recommendations of General Taylor as the first steps toward its fulfillment.

(5)  
Robert S. McNamara

Enclosure No. 1  
Despatch No. 205  
From Saigon

BRITISH ADVISORY MISSION,  
196, Cong Ly,  
Saigon

November 11, 1961

Your Excellency,

As promised at my interview with Your Excellency last Wednesday, I now enclose a memorandum briefly outlining plan and the measures required for the clearance of the communists from the Delta area.

As I explained to Your Excellency it will be much easier to make a start on these lines in one area and for this purpose the whole Delta area, south and west of Saigon, comprising the present 32nd and 33rd tactical zones, would appear to be the most promising starting point as compared with the area north of Saigon and the Highlands which require, at the present time, more specifically military measures. Arrangements have now just been made for my mission to visit the Highlands area and Central Vietnam and we are leaving on Monday morning (November 13) and returning on Friday evening (November 17). This will enable us to get a clearer picture of the problems throughout the country as a whole.

I also attach a short note by Mr. Palmer on intelligence, which is related to the organization mentioned in paragraphs 27 and 28 of the memorandum. Mr. Palmer has attempted to provide Your Excellency with a number of examples showing how life can be breathed into the organization. He would, of course, be ready to discuss this further at any time convenient to Your Excellency.

Your Excellency will also understand from the outline plan in the attached memorandum that it should lend by stages to a reorganization of the Government machine for directing and co-ordinating all action against the communists and to the production of an overall strategic operational plan for the country as a whole defining responsibilities, tasks and priorities. At the same time it will lead to the establishment of a static security framework which can

His Excellency  
The President of the Republic of Vietnam



Enclosure No.1,  
Despatch No.: 205  
From Saigon

be developed eventually into a National Police force into which can be incorporated a single security intelligence organization for the direction and co-ordination of all intelligence activities against the communists. I agree with Your Excellency that it would be too disruptive at the present time to try to achieve these immediately and that they should be developed gradually. Using a medical analogy, the remedy should be clinical rather than surgical.

I look forward to seeing Your Excellency again on my return.

I have the honour to be, with  
the highest consideration,  
Your Excellency's obedient Servant,

(R.G.K. Thompson)

MEMORANDUM

The aim of this memorandum is to outline a plan and the measures required for the clearance of the communists from the Delta area.

Overall aim

2. The overall aim of any counter insurgency plan must be to win the people. The killing of communist terrorists will follow automatically from that. If the main emphasis is placed merely on killing terrorists there is a grave risk that more communists will be created than are killed. Winning the people must, therefore, be kept in the forefront of the minds of every single person, whether military or civilian, who is engaged in anti-terrorist operations.

Combined Headquarters

3. There is a very similar terrain throughout the whole area of rice fields and swamp, with mangrove on the coast. The area is at present divided into 12 provinces with two tactical zones (the seven southern provinces and five northern provinces) in each of which a military division is stationed. At the present time there is inadequate direction and co-ordination of the campaign with the result that the 12 provinces are tending to fight separate battles and the communists are able to take advantage of the boundaries between the respective spheres of responsibility.

4. We should therefore establish a Combined Headquarters for the area to direct and co-ordinate:

- (a) all anti-terrorist operations;
- (b) all civilian emergency measures;
- (c) all security intelligence;
- (d) information and propaganda; and
- (e) as a follow up, social improvements.

It is logical that these Headquarters should be the present 3rd Corps reinforced by Administrative, Civil Guard, Self-Defence Corps and Propaganda elements. There is great advantage in the fact that the Corps Headquarters itself is based in the Saigon area where the best facilities for control are available.

5. This would make it desirable to relieve this headquarters of any responsibility for the 31st tactical zone and for the special zone of Saigon, and it is for consideration whether these two zones could best be handled by Field Army Headquarters as a separate command.



command or, perhaps, incorporated into 2nd Corps. The Combined Headquarters at 3rd Corps should cease to be responsible to Field Army Headquarters (which can then concentrate on the area north of Saigon and the Highlands), and should be directly responsible to the National Security Council presided over by His Excellency the President. The Corps and all its military units would, however, continue to draw logistical support from the H.Q. A.R.V.N.

#### The Tactical Zones

6. Given this one Combined Headquarters for the whole area, the 32nd and 33rd Tactical Zones as such are no longer necessary. Instead there would only be an operational dividing line between the two divisions but this would be changeable, depending both on the situation and on the operations planned. This will allow such greater flexibility with regard to the movement of military forces throughout the whole area.

#### Provinces

7. It follows from this that the chefs de Province will be directly responsible to the Combined Headquarters on all emergency matters (though they will continue to work to the Ministries concerned in respect of normal routine administration). The Chef de Province should remain responsible for the direction and co-ordination of all emergency measures in his Province and the District chefs should similarly remain responsible to their respective Chefs de Province. Bearing in mind that most of them are military officers this is likely to be more satisfactory in the present circumstances than the Malayan District or Executive Committee system. This system should only be developed gradually as military Chefs de Province can be replaced by civil administrators.

#### Command Channels

8. (a) The military chain of command will operate in the normal way, from the Military Corps staff at the Combined Headquarters to the two Divisional Headquarters and thence to regiments and battalions. It may be desirable for Ranger Companies, specifically attached to a particular Province, to come under the operational command of the Chef de Province, but the latter should not command any army battalion or regiment operating in his province. He should, however, be responsible for co-ordinating operations with the commander of that battalion or regiment, as the case may be.

/(b) The

- (b) The Chef de Province will, however, be responsible for all civil emergency measures and their direction and, in that respect, will exercise command over the civil departments concerned.
- (c) Civil Guard and Self-Defence command channels are discussed in paragraphs 17 and 14 below.

#### Civil Measures

9. The basic units of population are the village and Hamlet. Although the sizes vary, there are normally about 4 to 5 Hamlets of 200-300 houses to each village. The main civil emergency measures required at this level are:

- (a) regrouping of hamlets round the perimeter i.e. along the Cambodian frontier and on the fringes of the mangrove swamp areas, particularly those which have become long established communist bases. These hamlets should be known as "defended Hamlets"; and
- (b) the establishment of "strategic hamlets" in the remainder of the area.

10. The establishment of a "Cordon Sanitaire" along this part of the frontier (or elsewhere on the perimeter) is not desirable, except possibly at special points, because:

- (a) it gives up ground;
- (b) it eliminates intelligence coverage;
- (c) it established a more or less permanent patrol commitment for either Civil Guard or Military forces; and
- (d) it still does not solve the problem of the populated areas wherever they may start.

Regrouping of hamlets is likely to prove a better solution provided that they are of a convenient size for defence and control and the inhabitants are not moved too far from their normal work. Regrouped villages might be too big and unwieldy and cause too drastic a move of the population. The ideal size for a defended hamlet is about 300 houses (8-10 to an acre).

#### Control measures

- 11. (a) Prohibited areas from which the population is totally excluded until further notice should be declared and all Government forces should have complete freedom to shoot on sight in such areas;

/(b) Curfews,



- (b) Curfews, particularly at night, should be introduced on certain roads and waterways, in areas surrounding defended hamlets and in such other areas as may be required. Anyone breaking the curfew should be liable to be shot on sight.
- (c) Identity cards should be issued to the whole population and the Delta area should be given priority for the new plastic cards. The inhabitants of each house should be recorded (as is being done in most strategic hamlets) and a photograph of the complete household should be pinned inside the house with duplicates available at district and province level (as in Vinh Binh province).
- (d) Check points should be established on all roads and waterways. There should also be surprise checks at other points. This will help to prevent the present freedom of movement enjoyed by communist agents and couriers.
- (e) It may be possible to introduce a limited degree of food control (and of other supplies) particularly in the areas where defended hamlets are established.

#### Self-Defence Corps

12. I was very impressed with the good progress being made with the establishment of the self-Defence Corps ;and Self-Defence Corps' posts, (particularly in Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh and Vinh Long Provinces) based on strategic hamlets with a larger post at village level. The potentiality of this policy is tremendous and the Self-Defence Corps could be made the key to the whole situation. Although the pay is low and the equipment is still poor, the necessary spirit seems to be there and should be easily encouraged. If this is done successfully, the great advantage will lie in the fact that the people are defending themselves. Their local intelligence is good and provided that they are given sufficient confidence not to fear reprisals, they will pick off communist agents and supporters and small guerrilla units. (In one of the Provinces visited they have the highest score of kills over the last few months).

13. The pay problem might be solved by making the permanent members more part-time on a roster basis so that they can still attend to some of their normal work. With regard to equipment I hope that carbines can soon be issued. Every post should, however, also have a grenade discharger. Other minor equipment and better uniform would greatly improve morale. Each post should also have a Very pistol or at least a rocket. The drum seems to be very adequate for raising the alarm within the hamlet itself.

14. Being essentially a force which operates only at the village and hamlet level no elaborate chain of command is required above that level. A very small staff is required at District level to

/ensure

ensure co-ordination between the villages and to the intelligence aspect and similarly at the Province level. Above that there should only be an inspectorate, the main purpose of which should be to visit posts as frequently as possible to find out their needs, stay with them and help them to understand the importance of their mission. The Civil Guard at Province and District level should be responsible for logistic and administrative support.

15. A prerequisite for the establishment of Self-Defence Corps units, including their posts in strategic and defended hamlets, is that they can be adequately and rapidly supported by Civil Guard units in the event of an attack developing and, in turn, the Army should be responsible for dealing with any large concentration which may develop against such hamlets. It would be fatal to establish such units and posts before this support can be provided. Training is not a major problem as only a minimum is required and in many places there are a number of former soldiers. All peasants have a natural instinct for small scale guerrilla and anti-guerrilla operations.

#### Civil Guard

16. The Civil Guard should be organised to provide the permanent static framework of the Government's security forces within each Province. Their present organisation on a battalion and company basis is desirable only for the purpose of equipment and retraining. Their subsequent deployment requires that battalion Headquarters should be the provincial headquarters with company headquarters becoming the district headquarters. Provinces should then be reinforced by additional companies as may be required particularly for mobile operations. As the security situation improves companies may be transferred elsewhere, except that a company headquarters must remain at district level even though the number of men in that particular company may be reduced. This means that the total strength of the Civil Guard in a Province can vary considerably but that the headquarters framework at the Province and District level must always remain.

17. The operational direction of the Civil Guard in a Province should rest with the Chef de Province through the battalion commander and at district level with the District Chief through the company commander (when the Chef de Province and the Chef de District are military officers). In all other respects the command and administrative channel should go direct from the battalion commander to the Civil Guard element at the Combined Headquarters, and thence to the main Civil Guard Headquarters in Saigon. As and when provinces are declared "white"; and civil administrators are appointed as Chefs de Province, then the whole command chain will run direct from Civil Guard headquarters in Saigon through Combined Headquarters to the Battalion Headquarters at Province level and thence to its companies.

/It is



It is this organisation which should then gradually be developed into a national police force with the amalgamation of other suitable forces.

Military Units (including Rangers)

18. The initial aim of military units should be to keep the main communist forces off balance while the whole framework of defended and strategic hamlets is being developed and consolidated and their main tasks will therefore be:

- (a) active patrolling and engagement of communist terrorists outside the populated areas;
- (b) prevention by planned operations of communist terrorist concentration;
- (c) support of defended hamlets in bad areas and rescue of them if attacked;
- (d) enforcement of control measures especially curfews and prohibited areas.

19. As the framework is established, military units should gradually be relieved of all static duties, except in defence of their own establishments and, where any static duties remain, a mobile reserve should always be available. This will be the time when the communists will either have to concentrate to attack the framework or else will withdraw to their bases in the swamp. Planned military operations will be necessary to deal with both these eventualities.

20. In so far as the Delta area is concerned it would be desirable gradually to withdraw Ranger Companies as they can be replaced by retrained Civil Guard companies in order that the Ranger Companies themselves can be retrained for their proper task in the jungle areas north of Saigon and in the Highlands. But, as already stated, where they must initially remain allocated to a Province they should be under the operational command of the Chef de Province (when a military officer) and used in much the same role as mobile Civil Guard companies.

Air Force

21. The main role of the Air Force should be to increase the mobility of the security forces in areas where other communications are lacking, It will also have the normal tasks of reconnaissance and communications and, where a suitable target presents itself, of ground attack. The priority task for helicopters should be the evacuation of wounded, including those from the Self-Defence Corps who should receive equally good treatment as the Army and Civil Guard.

/Navy

### Navy

22. The main task of the Navy must be to prevent the entry of supplies, reinforcements, agents and weapons by sea into the area. Simultaneously the Navy should prevent all communist movement by water along the coasts. At the present time large communist units are able to move rapidly from island to island across the mouth of the Delta with impunity. Not only should these be stopped completely but, if suitable craft are obtained and fitted with radar, there should be considerable slaughter on the first few occasions. The type of vessel required is a seaward defence motor launch, inshore mine sweeper, or sea-going customs launch (like the police P-raft as used in Malaya). They are all quite small with crews of between 10 and 15 men but they must be fitted with radar, wireless, search light, at least one 20 mm. and machine guns. They should carry sufficient fuel and stores to stay at sea for about 7 days.

### Inland Waterways

23. With regard to the Mekong itself and other inland waterways this should not be a naval task (although the Navy may be required to help for a specific period or operation). River patrol units are required in the Civil Guard (as in Kien Hoa Province). It is understood that small landing craft suitable for troop movement and patrolling of the Mekong are being provided. These should be very adequate but, in addition, there will also be a requirement for smaller and faster boats, possibly fibre glass with outboard motor, capable of carrying about 6 men. In the initial stages these should be used, if based on static control points, to check traffic up and down the rivers and, in the later stages when security has improved, for patrolling and quick communications.

### Roads

24. Some Civil Guard battalions now have a road patrol platoon at Provincial Headquarters using mainly former Malayan G.M.C.'s and Lynx scout cars. These are all very old and problems are arising with regard to spare parts and tyres. For the future it is considered that a light armoured car to take the place of these vehicles is essential. As far as I know the only one being produced is the United Kingdom Ferret scout car and this is due to go out of production in 1962. It may be possible to make a final order. Its cost is about £ 15,000 excluding spares. If this cannot be done then the best solution is to devise a fairly simple system of armour plating jeeps and light trucks (as was in fact done in Malaya).

### Wireless Communications

25. These will need to be gone into in some detail to see that they all tie in correctly. At the lowest level strategic hamlets may have to communicate with the village by courier, flare or rocket but at village level the Self-Defence Corps certainly needs a simple

/transmitter/



transmitter/receiver and this may also be required in the defended hamlets. These sets should work back to a control set at District Headquarters next door to the Civil Guard Company set which would then be responsible for relaying any messages as required to Civil Guard Headquarters at the Province level. The Civil Guard Company Headquarters at District level would also provide the connecting link with Civil Guard patrols and any other Civil Guard posts within the district.

26. When the Army is operating in any Province it should always provide a set to serve as the connecting link at the appropriate point in the static framework. Naval patrol craft and the larger river patrol craft must also be able to link to the nearest Province (or District) as well as to their own headquarters.

### Intelligence

27. Bearing in mind the whole framework the first requirement here is to establish a joint committee in one room at district level with representatives of the Surete, the Chef de District, the Self-Defence Corps, the Civil Guard and, if military units are operating in the District, the Army together. The most suitable person among these should be placed in charge to direct, under the Chef de District, the intelligence effort in the District. At this level, the closest contact must be kept with the Self-Defence Corps, villages and hamlets which will be the main source of intelligence. At the Provincial level there should be a similar but larger joint intelligence staff directing and co-ordinating intelligence for the Province as a whole and undertaking intelligence projects which are beyond the capability of the District. At the Combined Headquarters there should be a similar intelligence staff directing intelligence for the area as a whole. As this system is developed it will gradually turn into a security intelligence organisation and eventually, if the Civil Guard and Surete in particular can be amalgamated, will become part of the National Police Force. There can always be attached to it at any level an army intelligence officer to provide the army link.

28. Another important source of intelligence, though not always of immediate tactical importance, will be JEPs (Surrender enemy personnel) and captured documents. JEPs should always be interrogated at the nearest District Headquarters in case they have any tactical intelligence which can be immediately exploited. They should then be returned to Province Headquarters each of which should have a small interrogation centre where JEPs can be interrogated on communist orders of battle, sources of supplies and other particulars. If of sufficient importance the JEP may need to be brought back for further interrogation at the Combined Corps Headquarters. Everything possible should be done to encourage surrenders and all JEPs, including any captures, should be well treated as they may become of great importance for propaganda purposes.



### Information and Propaganda

29. A strong section must be established at the Corps Headquarters covering all fields of information and propaganda from the radio downwards. It is essential that a common line should be taken throughout the whole area on every subject. In the field at provincial level, however, mobile units are required (both boats and jeeps) in order that every hamlet can be visited as frequently as possible. In addition each hamlet should have a receiving set (as already supplied by Australia under the Colombo Plan). Greater use also needs to be made of leaflets to be dropped either by patrols or by aircraft and for this purpose the Combined Corps Headquarters should either have under its control, or should be able to call on, adequate printing resources. Voice aircraft would also be a tremendous asset particularly for exploiting successful action and any surrenders.

### Social improvements

30. It may not be possible to introduce the necessary social improvements simultaneously with the emergency measures already enumerated but they should follow as soon as possible particularly when an area becomes 'white' with emphasis on improved schools and medical facilities. Much good work to the effect was already being done in the provinces visited. Such measures should, however, be undertaken in defended hamlets simultaneously with regrouping in order to demonstrate the advantages of such a measure. In defended hamlets it may also be desirable to install small generating sets capable of providing in the first instance perimeter and street lighting. The inhabitants should be informed that as soon as the Communists have been eliminated these generating sets may then be used to provide house lighting in the hamlet.

### Civic Action

31. There is great scope for Civic Action and Youth Corps cadres particularly in relation to the activities covered in the last two paragraphs. All this requires careful co-ordination so that the timing of all activities are properly related to the establishment of strategic and defended hamlets and to military operations.

### Compensation, Rewards and Subsidies

32. Funds should be provided by the central Government at provincial level to pay immediate compensation to the members or families of the Self-Defence Corps and any other innocent person who is wounded or killed by the communists. The present system tends to be too slow and the amounts may often be inadequate. Funds should also be available

/for



for the payment of rewards to members of the Self-Defence Corps and any other person (not a member of the security forces) for information leading to the killing of communists and the capture of weapons. It is desirable to produce a set scale which should be uniform throughout the country. Subsidies may also be necessary in cases where houses are regrouped into defended hamlets. A sum of about Piastres 2,500 for each house which has to be moved would not be unreasonable particularly if roofing material was also supplied free.

#### Summary of Material and Equipment Requirements

33. (a) Coastal and river patrol craft;  
(b) Wireless communications;  
(c) Better equipment for the self-Defence Corps including carbines, grenade dischargers, uniforms, flare pistols (or rockets);  
(d) Helicopters;  
(e) Large quantities of barbed wire; (It is understood that Chefs de Province are having to buy barbed wire for this purpose from provincial funds in the open market. This should be a central Government commitment).  
(f) Mobile information units and small receiving sets;  
(g) Suitably packed medical supplies for defended and strategic hamlets;  
(h) Roofing material - either corrugated iron, aluminum or asbestos (if regrouping is carried out on any scale this is bound to be a bottle neck and even supplies of nipah palm may not be available in the right places in sufficient quantity);  
(i) Pyres for present Civil Guard scout cars and their eventual replacement either by ferrets or armour plated jeeps or land revers; and  
(j) Small generating sets and perimeter lighting for defended hamlets.

#### Results

34. The main results of establishing a framework as proposed should be:

- (a) protection for the population;  
(b) increased mobility for the security forces particularly the Army;  
(c) greater flexibility in the use of forces where required at any given time in the whole area;  
(d) with mobility and flexibility and improved communications there should also be greater economy of force;  
(e) all this will instill greater confidence both in the population and in the security forces;

/(f) this

- (f) this, in turn, will lead to better intelligence; and
- (g) better intelligence will result in more kills.

Protection, confidence, intelligence and kills should become a constantly expanding circuit.

#### Communist reaction

35. The Communists will not be slow to react and will make a determined effort to prevent the framework being established particularly at the village and hamlet level. This requires that there should be careful judgement and timing in its establishment. As it grows, so break it. That is the time for the security forces, and particularly the Army, to get them. Once the communist rank and file starts to break the leaders will attempt to withdraw, preferably over the frontier where they will be safe, but, if that is denied to them, then into the more inaccessible mangrove swamps in the coastal area where they can be steadily starved out and eliminated.

#### Priority Areas

36. Even within the Delta itself these measures cannot all be carried out simultaneously in every Province or District. First priority should be given to the Provinces along the Mekong with the intention of clearing a corridor through the middle of the whole area along its easiest axis. In fact regrouping should start there as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the damage caused by the floods. The main intention in this area, however, would be initially to prevent further infiltration and subsequently to deny the frontier as a safe refuge. The final aim should be to push the communists back into the Mangrove swamps along the coast where they can do little harm and where they can then be starved out and eliminated.

#### Summary of Expected Achievements

37. (a) The first achievement should be a cleared corridor along the line of the Mekong followed by
- (b) the declaration of 'white' areas in the provinces concerned which will raise the morale of the whole country;
  - (c) the safeguarding of the rice crop;
  - (d) the release of troops from the Delta area for the more specific military operations North of Saigon and in the Highlands;

/(e) the



Enclosure No. 2  
Despatch No. 205  
From Saigon

- (e) the establishment of a solid security framework which it will be comparatively easy to maintain, and
- (f) a model for operations in the remaining parts of the country, particularly in the area immediately North and East of Saigon and along the coastal plain.

British Advisory Mission,  
Saigon.

November 13, 1961.

November 11, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: South Viet-Nam

1. United States National Interests in South Viet-Nam.

The deteriorating situation in South Viet-Nam requires attention to the nature and scope of United States national interests in that country. The loss of South Viet-Nam to Communism would involve the transfer of a nation of 20 million people from the free world to the Communist bloc. The loss of South Viet-Nam would make pointless any further discussion about the importance of Southeast Asia to the free world; we would have to face the near certainty that the remainder of Southeast Asia and Indonesia would move to a complete accommodation with Communism, if not formal incorporation within the Communist bloc. The United States, as a member of SEATO, has commitments with respect to South Viet-Nam under the Protocol to the SEATO Treaty. Additionally, in a formal statement at the conclusion session of the 1954 Geneva Conference, the United States representative stated that the United States "would view any renewal of the aggression . . . with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."

The loss of South Viet-Nam to Communism would not only destroy SEATO but would undermine the credibility of American commitments elsewhere. Further, loss of South Viet-Nam would stimulate bitter domestic controversies in the United States and would be seized upon by extreme elements to divide the country and harass the Administration.

2. The Problem of Saving South Viet-Nam

It seems, on the face of it, absurd to think that a nation of 20 million people can be subverted by 15-20 thousand active guerrillas

if



if the Government and people of that country do not wish to be subverted. South Viet-Nam is not, however, a highly organized society with an effective governing apparatus and a population accustomed to carrying civic responsibility. Public apathy is encouraged by the inability of most citizens to act directly as well as by the tactics of terror employed by the guerrillas throughout the countryside. Inept administration and the absence of a strong non-Communist political coalition have made it difficult to bring available resources to bear upon the guerrilla problem and to make the most effective use of available external aid. Under the best of conditions the threat posed by the presence of 15-20 thousand guerrillas, well disciplined under well-trained cadres, would be difficult to meet.

### 3. The United States' Objective in South Viet-Nam

The United States should commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Viet-Nam to Communism. The basic means for accomplishing this objective must be to put the Government of South Viet-Nam into a position to win its own war against the guerrillas. We must insist that that Government itself take the measures necessary for that purpose in exchange for large-scale United States assistance in the military, economic and political fields. At the same time we must recognize that it will probably not be possible for the GVN to win this war as long as the flow of men and supplies from North Viet-Nam continues unchecked and the guerrillas enjoy a safe sanctuary in neighboring territory.

We should be prepared to introduce United States combat forces if that should become necessary for success. Dependent upon the circumstances, it may also be necessary for United States forces to strike at the source of the aggression in North Viet-Nam.

### 4. The Use of United States Forces in South Viet-Nam.

The commitment of United States forces to South Viet-Nam involves two different categories: (A) Units of modest size required for the direct support of South Viet-Nameese military effort, such as communications, helicopter and other forms of airlift, reconnaissance aircraft, naval patrols, intelligence units, etc., and (B) larger organized units with actual or potential direct military missions. Category (A) should be introduced as speedily as possible. Category (B) units pose a more serious problem in that they are much more significant from the point of view of domestic and international political factors and greatly increase the probabilities of Communist bloc escalation. Further, the employment of United States combat forces

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(in the absence of Communist bloc escalation) involves a certain dilemma: if there is a strong South Viet-Namense effort, they may not be needed; if there is not such an effort, United States forces could not accomplish their mission in the midst of an apathetic or hostile population. Under present circumstances, therefore, the question of injecting United States and SEATO combat forces should in large part be considered as a contribution to the morale of the South Viet-Namense in their own effort to do the principal job themselves.

5. Probable Extent of the Commitment of United States Forces.

If we commit Category (B) forces to South Viet-Nam, the ultimate possible extent of our military commitment in Southeast Asia must be faced. The struggle may be prolonged, and Hanoi and Peiping may overtly intervene. It is the view of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, in the light of the logistic difficulties faced by the other side, we can assume that the maximum United States forces required on the ground in Southeast Asia would not exceed six divisions, or about 205,000 men (CINCPAC Plan 32/59 Phase IV). This would be in addition to local forces and such SEATO forces as may be engaged. It is also the view of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that our military posture is, or, with the addition of more National Guard or regular Army divisions, can be made, adequate to furnish these forces and support them in action without serious interference with our present Berlin plans.

6. Relation to Laos.

It must be understood that the introduction of American combat forces into Viet-Nam prior to a Laotian settlement would run a considerable risk of stimulating a Communist breach of the cease fire and a resumption of hostilities in Laos. This could present us with a choice between the use of combat forces in Laos or an abandonment of that country to full Communist control. At the present time, there is at least a chance that a settlement can be reached in Laos on the basis of a weak and unsatisfactory Souvanna Phouma Government. The prospective agreement on Laos includes a provision that Laos will not be used as a transit area or as a base for interfering in the affairs of other countries such as South Viet-Nam. After a Laotian settlement, the introduction of United States forces into Viet-Nam could serve to stabilize the position both in Viet-Nam and in Laos by registering our determination to see to it that the Laotian settlement was as far as the United States would be willing to see Communist influence in Southeast Asia develop.

7. The



#### 7. The Need for Multilateral Action.

From the political point of view, both domestic and international, it would seem important to involve forces from other nations alongside of United States Category (B) forces in Viet-Nam. It would be difficult to explain to our own people why no effort had been made to invoke SEATO or why the United States undertook to carry this burden unilaterally. Our position would be greatly strengthened if the introduction of forces could be taken as a SEATO action, accompanied by units of other SEATO countries, with a full SEATO report to the United Nations of the purposes of the action itself.

Apart from the armed forces, there would be political advantage in enlisting the interest of other nations, including neutrals, in the security and well-being of South Viet-Nam. This might be done by seeking such assistance as Malayan police officials (recently offered Diem by the Tumka) and by technical assistance personnel in other fields, either bilaterally or through international organizations.

#### 8. Initial Diplomatic Action by the United States.

If the recommendations, below, are approved, the United States should consult intensively with other SEATO governments to obtain their full support of the course of action contemplated. At the appropriate stage, a direct approach should be made by the United States to Moscow, through normal or special channels, pointing out that we cannot accept the movement of cadres, arms and other supplies into South Viet-Nam in support of the guerrillas. We should also discuss the problem with neutral governments in the general area and get them to face up to their own interests in the security of South Viet-Nam; these governments will be concerned about (a) the introduction of United States combat forces and (b) the withdrawal of United States support from Southeast Asia; their concern, therefore, might be usefully expressed either to Communist bloc countries or in political support for what may prove necessary in South Viet-Nam itself.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense recommend that:

1. We now take the decision to commit ourselves to the objective of preventing the fall of South Viet-Nam to Communism and that, in doing so, we recognize that the introduction of United States and other

SEATO

SEATO forces may be necessary to achieve this objective. (However, if it is necessary to commit outside forces to achieve the foregoing objective, our decision to introduce United States forces should not be contingent upon unanimous SEATO agreement thereto.)

2. The Department of Defense be prepared with plans for the use of United States forces in South Viet-Nam under one or more of the following purposes:

(a) Use of a significant number of United States forces to signify United States determination to defend South Viet-Nam and to boost South Viet-Nam morale.

(b) Use of substantial United States forces to assist in suppressing Viet Cong insurgency short of engaging in detailed counter-guerrilla operations but including relevant operations in North Viet-Nam.

(c) Use of United States forces to deal with the situation if there is organized Communist military intervention.

3. We immediately undertake the following actions in support of the GVN:

(a) Provide increased air lift to the GVN forces, including helicopters, light aviation, and transport aircraft, manned to the extent necessary by United States uniformed personnel and under United States operational control.

(b) Provide such additional equipment and United States uniformed personnel as may be necessary for air reconnaissance, photography, instruction in and execution of air-ground support techniques, and for special intelligence.

(c) Provide the GVN with small craft, including such United States uniformed advisers and operating personnel as may be necessary for quick and effective operations in effecting surveillance and control over coastal waters and inland waterways.

(d) Provide expedited training and equipping of the civil guard and the self-defense corps with the objective of relieving the regular Army of static missions and freeing it for mobile offensive operations.

(e) Provide such personnel and equipment as may be necessary to improve the military-political intelligence system beginning

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at the provincial level and extending upward through the Government and the armed forces to the Central Intelligence Organization.

(f) Provide such new terms of reference, reorganization and additional personnel for United States military forces as are required for increased United States participation in the direction and control of GVN military operations and to carry out the other increased responsibilities which accrue to MAAG under these recommendations.

(g) Provide such increased economic aid as may be required to permit the GVN to pursue a vigorous flood relief and rehabilitation program, to supply material in support of the security effort, and to give priority to projects in support of this expanded counter-insurgency program. (This could include increases in military pay, a full supply of a wide range of materials such as food, medical supplies, transportation equipment, communications equipment, and any other items where material help could assist the GVN in winning the war against the Viet Cong.)

(h) Encourage and support (including financial support) a request by the GVN to the FAO or any other appropriate international organization for multilateral assistance in the relief and rehabilitation of the flood area.

(i) Provide individual administrators and advisers for insertion into the Governmental machinery of South Viet-Nam in types and numbers to be agreed upon by the two Governments.

(j) Provide personnel for a joint survey with the GVN of conditions in each of the provinces to assess the social, political, intelligence, and military factors bearing on the prosecution of the counter-insurgency program in order to reach a common estimate of these factors and a common determination of how to deal with them.

4. Ambassador Nolting be instructed to make an immediate approach to President Diem to the effect that the Government of the United States is prepared to join the Government of Viet-Nam in a sharply increased joint effort to cope with the Viet Cong threat and the ravages of the flood as set forth under 3., above, if, on its part, the Government of Viet-Nam is prepared to carry out an effective and total mobilization of its own resources, both material and human, for the same end. Before setting in motion the United States proposals

listed

listed above, the United States Government would appreciate confirmation of their acceptability to the GVN, and an expression from the GVN of the undertakings it is prepared to make to insure the success of this joint effort. On the part of the United States, it would be expected that these GVN undertakings would include, in accordance with the detailed recommendations of the Taylor Mission and the Country Team:

(a) Prompt and appropriate legislation and administrative action to put the nation on a wartime footing to mobilize its entire resources. (This would include a decentralization and broadening of the Government so as to realize the full potential of all non-Communist elements in the country willing to contribute to the common struggle.)

(b) The establishment of appropriate Governmental wartime agencies with adequate authority to perform their functions effectively.

(c) Overhaul of the military establishment and command structure so as to create an effective military organization for the prosecution of the war.

5. Very shortly before the arrival in South Viet-Nam of the first increments of United States military personnel and equipment proposed under 3., above, that would exceed the Geneva Accord ceilings, publish the "Jorden report" as a United States "white paper," transmitting it as simultaneously as possible to the Governments of all countries with which we have diplomatic relations, including the Communist states.

6. Simultaneous with the publication of the "Jorden report," release an exchange of letters between Diem and the President.

(a) Diem's letter would include: reference to the DRV violations of Geneva Accords as set forth in the October 24 GVN letter to the ICC and other documents; pertinent references to GVN statements with respect to its intent to observe the Geneva Accords; reference to its need for flood relief and rehabilitation; reference to previous United States aid and the compliance hitherto by both countries with the Geneva Accords; reference to the USG statement at the time the Geneva Accords were signed; the necessity now of exceeding some provisions of the Accords in view of the DRV violations thereof; the lack of aggressive intent with respect to the DRV: GVN intent to return to strict compliance with the Geneva Accords

as



as soon as the DRV violations ceased; and request for additional United States assistance in framework foregoing policy. The letter should also set forth in appropriate general terms steps Diem has taken and is taking to reform Governmental structure.

(b) The President's reply would be responsive to Diem's request for additional assistance and acknowledge and agree to Diem's statements on the intent promptly to return to strict compliance with the Geneva Accords as soon as DRV violations have ceased.

7. Simultaneous with steps 5. and 6., above, make a private approach to the Soviet Union that would include: our determination to prevent the fall of South Viet-Nam to Communism by whatever means is necessary; our concern over dangers to peace presented by the aggressive DRV policy with respect to South Viet-Nam; our intent to return to full compliance with the Geneva Accords as soon as the DRV does so, the distinction we draw between Laos and South Viet-Nam; and our expectation that the Soviet Union will exercise its influence on the Chicoms and the DRV.

8. A special diplomatic approach made to the United Kingdom in its role as co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference requesting that the United Kingdom seek the support of the Soviet co-Chairman for a cessation of DRV aggression against South Viet-Nam.

9. A special diplomatic approach also to be made to India, both in its role as Chairman of the ICC and as a power having relations with Peiping and Hanoi. This approach should be made immediately prior to public release of the "Jorden report" and the exchange of letters between Diem and the President.

10. Immediately prior to the release of the "Jorden report" and the exchange of letters between Diem and the President, special diplomatic approaches also to be made to Canada, as well as Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia, Ceylon, the UAR, and Yugoslavia. SEATO, NATO, and OAS members should be informed through these organizations, with selected members also informed individually. The possibility of some special approach to Poland as a member of the ICC should also be considered.

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OFF SECY OF DEFENSE  
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D. C.

THE JOINT STAFF

DJSM-1383-61  
14 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subject: South Vietnam (U)

1. Reference is made to the memorandum for the National Security Council, subject as above, dated 13 November 1961.
2. Briefs of the military actions contained in the draft National Security Action Memorandum attached to the above referenced memorandum are enclosed. These briefs are indexed to relate directly to appropriate paragraphs of the draft memorandum. Because of the security classification involved with the provision of additional equipment and United States uniformed personnel for special intelligence in South Vietnam, the brief for this item has been provided separately.
3. In connection with paragraph 1 of the draft memorandum, the Joint Staff considers it militarily desirable to preposition forces and equipment and is currently considering augmentation of US Army forces Pacific with one infantry division plus appropriate logistic and combat support units. CINCPAC has recommended that, in consideration of the requirement to locate army forces in close proximity to Southeast Asia, this division be prepositioned in the Philippines. The Army has established a Pacific Forward Depot on Okinawa for prestocking essential non-air-transportable items of materiel required for a one division force. In addition, there are ammunition stocks in Japan. There are also limited prestocks of aviation fuel and ammunition in Thailand for use by the USAF. Prestocks have not been established in South Vietnam. CINCPAC has recommended and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have concurred in the additional prestocking of railroad rolling

368



stock, POL, ammunition, heavy engineer equipment and other materiel in Southeast Asia for use by US Forces in contingency actions. These recommendations are currently under consideration by the Department of Defense. If these recommendations are approved necessary country-to-country bilateral agreements with Thailand and South Vietnam will be required.

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Director, Joint Staff  
Lieutenant General, USA

Enclosure  
Index and Briefing Items  
on South Vietnam

INDEX

PARAGRAPH

SUBJECT

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| 1. (a) | Use of Significant US Forces  |
| 1. (b) | Use of Substantial US Forces  |
| 1. (c) | Use of US Forces in the Event of Organized Communist Military Intervention  |
| 2. (a) | Provide Increased Air Lift to the GVN Forces by:  |
| (1)    | Helicopters   |
| (2)    | Light Aviation (L-20/L-23/T-28)   |
| (3)    | Transport Aircraft  |
| 2. (b) | Provide Additional Equipment and US Personnel for:  |
| (1)    | Air Reconnaissance and Photography  |
| (2)    | Instruction In and Execution of Air Ground Support Techniques   |
| (3)    | Special Intelligence (Under separate cover)   |
| 2. (c) | Provide the GVN with Small Craft  |
| 2. (d) | Provide Expedited Training and Equipping of the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps  |
| 2. (e) | Provide Personnel and Equipment to Improve Military Intelligence System   |
| 2. (f) | Provide New Terms of Reference, Reorganization and Additional Personnel to Support US Participation in Direction and Control of GVN Military Operations and Expanded MAAG Functions |
| 3. (c) | Overhaul of GVN Military Establishment and Command Structure  |

NOTE:

The above paragraph designations are directly related to the subparagraphs under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, of the draft National Security Action Memorandum.

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.  
DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.10



Paragraph 1 a. USE OF SIGNIFICANT US FORCES

A Brigade Task Force of three battle groups from the Pacific area, and approximately 3,500 combat and logistic support units from CONUS, has been earmarked by the Army as a force that could be deployed to South Vietnam. The deployment of this Task Force could meet the requirements set forth in the related paragraph. If so deployed, it would not only serve to signify United States determination to defend South Vietnam and to boost South Vietnam morale but would also serve to preposition forces which would be required in implementation of further plans.

Paragraph 1 b.      USE OF SUBSTANTIAL US FORCES

CINCPAC Operation Plan 32-59 Phase II, Counter-Insurgency Vietnam (approximately 1½ US divisions), provides the basis for US military action to meet purposes of Paragraph 1 b. A SEATO Plan to provide for Counter-Insurgency Operations in Vietnam is being developed.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are not cognizant of relevant operations in North Vietnam, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have requested that the Central Intelligence Agency prepare plans for covert sabotage operations against Pathet Lao and Viet-Cong in North Vietnam



Paragraph 1c. USE OF US FORCES IN THE EVENT OF  
ORGANIZED COMMUNIST MILITARY INTERVENTION

CINCPAC Operation Plan 32-59 Phase III, North Viet-Nam Aggression (3 US divisions in Southeast Asia, 1 US division in support), and Phase IV, Chinese Communist Intervention (4 US divisions in Southeast Asia, 2 US divisions in support), provides for US military action to meet purposes stated in paragraph 1c.

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It is estimated that the maximum US forces on the ground in Southeast Asia will not exceed six divisions or about 205,000 men in implementing Phase IV CINCPAC Operation Plan 32-59.

Paragraph 2. a. (1) HELICOPTER SUPPORT

PRESENT STATUS

a. Two H-21 helicopter packages will load and depart the West Coast on 20-22 November. The destination will be announced enroute. The USNS CORE and two commercial freighters will be used for lift. As of 14 November all equipment and baggage of both company packages (except H-21s from Fort Bragg) was at the West Coast port; the H-21s from Fort Bragg are enroute to the West Coast; ETA 16 November. Personnel, less air crews, to arrive port for loading on 20 November.

b. A third H-21 Helicopter package, located at Fort Deven, has been alerted for possible deployment overseas. This unit is a low priority unit and will require an estimated three weeks before readiness date is reached. Earliest availability date of ocean shipping for Fort Deven package is 15 December.

FORCES AND EQUIPMENT

438 personnel

40 H-21 helicopters

4 H-13 helicopters

COST INVOLVED

CONARC has been allocated \$400,000 to cover packing, crating, and movement of first two packages within CONUS.



Unit cost of aircraft is as follows:

|        | A/C               | <u>Spare Parts and Spt</u> |
|--------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| H-13 \ | \$ 38,500         | 24% of A/C cost            |
| H-21   | \$250,000 (FY 56) | 24% of A/C cost            |

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION

20-22 November Last increment to arrive West Coast

20-22 November USNS CORE and two freighters depart  
West Coast

11-13 December USNS CORE arrive Saigon. Freighters will  
probably arrive Saigon from 5 to 10 days after the CORE.

Note: Departure of the CORE was delayed from 15 to  
20-22 November awaiting the arrival of other military cargo.

PRESENT STATUS

T-28

The US Navy has provided 15 T-28C aircraft on loan basis to Vietnam. They will be shipped from the West Coast aboard the USNS CORE on 20-22 November. These aircraft will be replaced at a later time by 30 Navy combat configured T-28B aircraft with armor plate and self-sealing tanks.

L-20

CINCPAC has requested 9 additional L-20 light aircraft be provided for expansion of RVNAF light observation capability.

L-28

L-28 aircraft are now being produced at the rate of 2 per month. CIA is taking the current production through December 1961. Beginning January 1962, the US Air Force is planning to procure an additional 14 L-28. They are presently conducting an evaluation of this aircraft for support of SAC missile operations. The evaluation report will be available about 30 January 1962.

FORCES AND EQUIPMENT

15 T-28C aircraft (on loan basis from US Navy)

30 T-28B aircraft (to replace the above)

9 L-20 aircraft

14 L-28 aircraft



COST (ESTIMATED)

15 T-28 on loan

Spares and misc. equip. \$989,000

Transportation 105,000

Total \$1,094,000

30 T-28B \$1,470,000

Spares 617,000

Transportation 210,000

Total \$2,297,000

9 L-20 Aircraft \$540,000

14 L-28 Aircraft \$840,000

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION

T-28 (on loan) depart San Francisco, Calif. 20-22 Nov. 1961. ETA Saigon about 10 Dec. 1961.

T-28B replacement aircraft readiness as follows,

29 December 1961 -2

5 January 1962 -5

12 January -8

19 January -8

31 January -7

Depending upon urgency, planes can be shipped as they are made available. Add 30 days to above dates for ETA Saigon if shipping immediately available.

L-20 OSA/ISA is now staffing an affirmative answer. Delivery will commence 3rd quarter FY 62 if this action is approved.

L-28 Production could be increased to a rate of 14 per month providing an order of sufficient magnitude were placed. Air Force procurement of 14 will provide a lesser number for operation in South Vietnam as a part of the Jungle Jim project. Air Force has requested DOD approval of a program to deploy 3 L-28s to Vietnam in December 1961 provided approval is received by 14 November 1961.



Paragraph 2 (a) (3) --- Transport Aircraft

STATUS: USAF has requested CINCPAC<sup>AF</sup> views relative to augmentation of PACAF transport capability with C-123 aircraft based on current situation in Vietnam.

FORCE: The composition and number of personnel cannot be determined until specific requirements have been ascertained.

EQUIPMENT: USAF tentative consideration of augmenting airlift capability for Vietnam is based on the use of C-123 aircraft.

USAF presently has five C-123 squadrons assigned to Tactical Air Command, CONUS.

COST: Unknown.

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION: Augmentation of airlift capability up to twelve aircraft could be in place in Vietnam within 25 days after deployment order is issued. These aircraft can be flown from CONUS to their overseas destination.

Paragraph 2. (b) (1) ----- Air Reconnaissance and Photography

STATUS: There are 2 USAF Reconnaissance Task Forces (RTF) units presently established in Southeast Asia. Project "PIPESTEM" consists of four RF-101 aircraft which were established at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam on 20 October 1961 for aerial reconnaissance within the borders of South Vietnam. In addition, project ABLE MABLE, composed of four RF-101 aircraft was established at Don Muang Air Base, Thailand, on 6 November 1961. Project ABLE MABLE was to replace project PIPESTEM and provide US aerial reconnaissance of Laos, as well as South Vietnam. Project PIPESTEM was scheduled for termination on 10 November 1961 but has been extended for a 4 week period, on request of CHMAAG, South Vietnam.

FORCE: Each RTF consists of four RF-101 aircraft with necessary operations, maintenance, support, personnel and equipment and photo processing/interpretation capability.

EQUIPMENT: Eight RF-101 aircraft with associated camera, ground support equipment and two photo processing/interpretation vans.

COST: Not available at this time.

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION: Currently operating.



Paragraph 2. (b) (2) -- INSTRUCTION IN AND EXECUTION OF  
AIR GROUND SUPPORT TECHNIQUES

STATUS: PACAF, in coordination with CINCPAC and USAF, is presently studying the feasibility of establishing a limited Tactical Air Control System (TACS) in South Vietnam. TACS has three objectives: (1) Teach and train Vietnamese; (2) Provide a structure to apply Vietnamese air capability; and (3) Establish framework for control of US air effort. Plan presently envisions that TACS would be under US command and control. It would provide a Joint Operations Center (JOC), a Control and Reporting Center (CRC) at Tan Son Nhut, a Control and Reporting Point (CRP) at Tourane, two Air Support Operations Centers (ASOC), and Forward Air Controllers. The two ASOCs would be co-located with the two northernmost Army corps. The southernmost corp would be directly supported by the JOC. A suitably modified course of instruction from the air/ground operations school would be deployed to furnish comprehensive training for Vietnamese Army and Air Force Personnel. Vietnamese personnel would participate directly in system operation. The Jungle-Jim detachment could handle training of Vietnamese T-28 pilots and indoctrination of these pilots in the air to ground support role. AD-6 pilot indoctrination is within the capability of the MAAG advisors now assigned to the AD squadron.

FORCE: Personnel requirement for the TACS are estimated at 314 in addition to the 67 now in place at Tan Son Nhut. The 4400th Detachment at Bien Hoa consisting of eight T-28's, four SC-47's.

and four RB-26's with approximately 230 personnel would also be under TACS control. In addition, USAF tactical fighter squadrons could be deployed to operate with and under control of TACS.

EQUIPMENT: Radar and communications equipment necessary to establish a TACS. 4400th Detachment has necessary maintenance and ground support equipment for its aircraft.

COST: Not available at this time.

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION: TACS could be operational within 30 days after receipt of implementation decision.



1. An effective naval command and control organization would as a minimum consist of:

a. A naval planning group, closely associated with MAAG and with the JGS planning section.

b. An operations control center at Naval Headquarters, with integral or adjacent naval intelligence center, and adequate communications to:

- (1) Naval Coastal District Opcon/Intel Centers
- (2) River Force OpCon/Intel Center (includes Delta operations)
- (3) Civil Guard River Control Center (incorporated with, or in close liaison with, River Force Control)
- (4) RVNAF Headquarters (OpCon center when established)
- (5) Joint Intelligence Group (when established)
- (6) Operations Evaluation Center, Saigon.

2. Operating Forces consisting of:

a. Sailing junks, motor junks, patrol and amphibious craft for offshore operations.

b. Shallow draft small boats for river and Delta patrol, including offensive action against VC elements located.

c. Troop transport craft (LCVP or equivalent) for patrol and counter VC troop operations, river and Delta area.

d. Coast watchers ("shore posts") - may be Army, Navy, or civil, preferably under Naval control, but at least tied in directly to naval communications reporting net.

3. Coordinating (supporting) forces:

a. Aircraft of RVNAF available for reconnaissance and attack missions, coordinated at primary Opcon/Intel center.

b. RVNAF or civil security forces to conduct investigations/interrogations and to take action against VC suspects on craft brought to port. (Important that intelligence gained be promptly fed into the Joint Intelligence Group)

c. Mobile RVNAF or civil security forces ashore to apprehend landing parties from craft sighted but not captured in time; and responsive to intelligence of landings reported by coast watchers.

d. Civil control, inspection, and clearance (under procedures coordinated with Navy) of all maritime traffic at all ports.

4. Operations concept

a. A barrier patrol of junks and patrol craft to identify and interdict VC traffic near 17th parallel and off the Delta.

b. Sailing and motor junks to operate offshore for as complete coverage as possible along coast, and in concentrations of fishing junks for intelligence of traffic and interdiction as practicable.

c. River and Delta operations not primarily against infiltration but in support of mobile offensive Army operations.

384



d. Any craft not following normal routes, or landing at other than controlled ports, to be considered suspect and reported/ investigated/destroyed.

e. Land operations on coasts, rivers, and in Delta MUST include Naval planning and be jointly conducted to insure maximum results.

5. Problem areas recognized:

a. Reluctance of Vietnamese Navy to accept US Navy advice

b. Gaining acceptance of USN personnel as working and advisory members in OpCon/Intel centers and aboard ship.

c. Getting the Vietnamese Navy really accepted and written into RVNAF operations and intelligence plans in the Counter-Insurgency effort.

d. Increasing rate at which the Vietnamese Navy can man and operate the craft and equipment which is now available and that can be made available. Problems are recruitment, training and increased personnel ceiling.

e. Establishing effective command and control organization, with necessary coordination between the Vietnamese agencies necessary to make the concept work. (The ships, craft, and boats are only one element in the overall surveillance/interdiction operation.)

NOTE: Rear Admiral H. S. Persons, USN, and officers of CINCPAC Staff including a Coast Guard Officer, are now in Vietnam to assist in planning for the integration of the Vietnamese Navy

into the over-all plans for counter-insurgency. Detailed recommendations may be expected in the near future. Appended are briefing sheets for current and projected programs related to integrated Vietnamese naval operations in support of a GVN national effort.



14 November 1961

Paragraph 2(c). Appendix 1

Provide the GVN with small craft.

Status: PCE (Patrol Craft Escort) and PGM (Patrol Gunboat) for Coastal patrol.

Forces: PGM (100') - Normal complement 3 officers, 24 enlisted.  
PCE (180') - Normal complement 9 officers, 90 enlisted.  
Vietnamese Navy now operating seven (7) patrol craft in coastal operations.

Equipment: PCE and PGM tailored to requirement for coastal patrol. Advantages are cheaper operating costs, smaller personnel requirements and simplified training programs in comparison to larger patrol ships. They will add increased firepower, mobility and communications to the overall patrol effort.

Costs: PCE - \$825,000 plus \$45,000 for concurrent spare parts to activate and convert from MSF (removing minesweep gear and installing guns on steel-hulled fleet minesweepers).  
PGM - \$400,000 plus \$20,000 for concurrent spare parts. New construction only - delivery lead time 12 months. None in U.S. active or reserve fleets.

Schedule of execution:

PCE - Three (3) now scheduled for delivery with first of these on 29 November 1961 and another in April 1962. Last delivery date scheduled for January 1963. Only two (2) MSF are currently uncommitted out of 41 MSF in the U.S. Reserve Fleet. These possibly could be made available to SVN and converted to PCEs.

PGM - 10 now funded with delivery dates of 3 in October 1962, 3 in November, 3 in December and 1 in January 1963. Delivery times for both PCE and PGM could be expedited about two months at a cost premium of approximately 20%.

14 November 1961

Paragraph 2(c). Appendix 2

Provide the GVN with Small Craft.

Status: Swimmer-Support Craft for river and ranger operations.

Forces: Up to 250 boats eventually to be required for mobility in delta and inland waterway operations, as well as for covert (ranger) operations. Plastic swimmer-support craft carry 6-8 troops each.

Equipment: 50 plastic unsinkable swimmer-support craft to be initially provided, each with 40 H.P. commercial outboard motor fitted with a bronze weedless propeller. 125 French manufactured, rubber inflatable "Zodiac" boats with outboard motors also have been procured.

Costs: 50 Swimmer-support craft - approximately \$50,000 for boats, motors and fuel tanks (about \$1700 each complete boat). "Zodiac" boat contract was approximately \$80,852 (about \$1570 each complete boat).

Schedule of Execution: 20 plastic boats to be delivered in Vietnam early in January 1962. Materials and equipment to fabricate 30 boats in Vietnam plus a U.S. instructor to teach the Vietnamese have been funded by ARPA and are to be delivered via the highest MATS priority. 125 "Zodiac" boats have been procured. 90 have been delivered to Vietnam. 35 are in the pipeline.

2384



Paragraph 2(c). Appendix 3

Provide the GVN with small craft.

Status: Provide LCVP (Landing Craft, Personnel) to Civil Guard boat platoons.

Forces: MAAG has proposed formation of 17 Civil Guard boat platoons to free Vietnamese naval forces for direct support of Army operations.

Equipment: 8 LCVP for each boat platoon, total of 136 required.

Cost: Approximately \$7,000 each - total of \$952,000 for 136 LCVP.

Schedule of Execution: LCVP available in Norfolk and San Diego. First one could be available in 5 days, thereafter 20 per month from Norfolk. 30 per month from San Diego.

NOTE: LCVP deliveries can be effected faster than the Vietnamese reportedly can be trained to use and maintain them.

Paragraph 2(c). Appendix 4

Provide the GVN with Small Craft.

Status: Expedite GVN Junk Patrol Force Program.

Forces: 420 sailing junks; 63 motor junks are planned.  
80 sailing junks now operational in Tourane area.  
1 motor junk undergoing design modifications.  
Sailing junks have crew of 5, motor junks crew of 7.  
300 personnel now in training.

Equipment: 60 H.P. Japanese diesels in motor junks; eventually 10 H.P. diesels in the sailing junks. Sailing junks are procured from indigenous commercial sources. Motor junks prototype being built and modified at Saigon Naval Shipyard.

Navy is dependent on Vietnamese Army sources for communications equipment, small arms and certain other required equipage. Considerable difficulty experienced in filling these requirements.

Costs: \$300 for each sailing junk.  
Cost data not yet available for motor junk.  
Commander, Vietnamese Navy, has stated that he has been promised or provided sufficient funds from the GVN piastre budget for the entire junk force.  
Approximately \$18,000 per junk division (20 sailing, 3 motor junks) for the communications gear, small arms, etc. mentioned above in "Costs."

Schedule of Execution: 60 more sailing junks due to be operational by end of 1961. Motor junk prototype due for second sea trials in November 1961.

Entire program scheduled for completion in 1963. Program is to be expedited but to what degree is currently unknown.

Accelerated procurement has a direct relationship to recruitment and training of the junk force personnel. The training cycle is approximately three (3) months and is conducted orally in South Vietnamese due to the illiteracy problem.



14 November 1961

Paragraph 2(c). Appendix 5

Provide the GVN with U.S. uniformed advisors and operating personnel as may be necessary for surveillance and control operations in coastal and inland waterways.

Status: Provide U.S. uniformed advisors and operating personnel.

Forces: The only advisors currently assigned are attached to MAAG, Vietnam. No U.S. operating personnel are assigned now to the Vietnamese Navy.

The Seventh Fleet does conduct on-board training of Vietnamese Navy personnel in U.S. ships of the same or similar types as are in the Vietnamese Navy inventory.

Additional Advisors and Operating Personnel.

A realistic estimate of the numbers and employment of U.S. Navy or Coast Guard Personnel, and time phasing of their integration into the overall Vietnamese Naval effort, must necessarily await the acceptance of an integrated concept of operations, including command and control.

It is considered that U.S. personnel will be required in the Operations Control Centers, the Naval intelligence effort and the operational communications network. Additionally, the U.S. personnel could be assigned as advisors to the afloat forces. The augmentation of MAAG instructors will be dependent upon the success of efforts to increase the personnel strength of the Vietnamese Navy.

Paragraph 2. (d) PROVIDE EXPEDITED TRAINING AND EQUIPPING  
OF THE CIVIL GUARD AND SELF DEFENSE CORPS

STATUS

a. Civil Guard: Increased effort in this basic task has been progressing since January 1960 when the Civil Guard was transferred to the GVN Department of Defense. Enlargement of this program is being actively pursued; acceleration time-wise to obtain trained units is difficult, particularly in view of a shortage of trained leaders and priority requirements for the ARVN.

Additional training sites and input have been recently approved. Additional US advisors are enroute to assist in this training. Officer and NCO training has been stepped-up but prospects for a short term leadership solution are not encouraging. Chief MAAG is currently working on providing additional interpreters to permit greater use of more US advisors.

b. Self Defense Corps (SDC): Subject to the individual desires of Province Chiefs, the SDC has achieved no real uniformity of organization or training. However, these locally available citizens are being equipped, and additional US advisors are being made available during the next three months to take over training duties at the SDC training sites throughout the country.



US carbines, ammunition, and communications equipment have been programmed for the entire SDC. 25,000 carbines are now enroute to Vietnam. US MAAG advisors to the Civil Guard also have responsibilities for the SDC. Expansion of this program is developing as local resources allow.

#### FORCES

a. Civil Guard:   Authorized 68,000  
                    Actual       64,000

Has only 37 per cent of officers and 55 per cent of authorized NCO strength. Consists of 303 separate companies (15 have completed current training program; 24 are in training cycle). Approximately 1500 officers and enlisted personnel are in school.

b. Self Defense Corps:   Authorized 59,000  
                            Actual       53,000

Reportedly have only 76 officers. Consists of locally recruited and organized citizens to defend their community. Administered by Civil Guard personnel who are detailed to such duties.

c. US Advisors:   Of the 724 personnel augmentation approved for MAAG in October, 207 are specifically for supervision of training at nine Civil Guard Training Sites.

#### EQUIPMENT

a. Civil Guard:   Equipment being processed by US Army includes carbines, ammunition, vehicles, communications, POL, medical, and clothing. Deliveries have commenced in Saigon.

Pending arrival of equipment, units are equipped with ARVN stocks to extent possible.

b. Self Defense Corps: Present equipment is a collection of unreliable French small arms and ammunition. US carbines and communications equipment have been programmed. AN/PRC-10 radios and sound power phones are now expected to be delivered in 1962.

COST: Approximately \$8.8 million has been funded in FY 61 and \$11.2 million in FY 62.

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION:

a. Training: A continuing project that may take up to two years for completion.

b. Equipment: Some basic equipment can be made available faster than individuals and units can be trained to use and maintain it. Based on overall programming and priorities with ARVN, total equipping will probably extend over 18 months.



Paragraph 2. e. PROVIDE PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT  
TO IMPROVE MILITARY-POLITICAL  
INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM.

PRESENT STATUS

The CIA representative on the Taylor Mission was responsible for recommendations in the political intelligence field. The status of those recommendations is not known.

In the military intelligence field the Military Committee made the following three basic recommendations:

a. Establish a joint US-GVN Military Intelligence Group, under the control of Chief MAAG, to direct the South Vietnamese national intelligence effort. This recommendation was also submitted by CINCPAC on 14 November 1961 with a request for approximately 150 additional manpower spaces. This request is now being staffed by the Joint Staff.

b. Enlarge in size and scope the US Evaluations Center in Saigon to enable that agency to properly evaluate and disseminate all available intelligence bearing on the security of South Vietnam. This recommendation was approved by the JCS and OSD on 9 November 1961.

c. Increase the number of Intelligence Advisors in MAAG and provide intelligence advisors at the province level. This recommendation was also submitted by CINCPAC on 14 November and is now being staffed by the Joint Staff.

## SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION

J-2 CINCPAC, G2 USARPAC, and J2 MAAG Saigon have been informally briefed on the recommendations but the Taylor Military Committee is not aware that they have been directed to implement <sup>the</sup> ~~and~~ recommendations.

It is not believed that the formulation of the necessary plans by CINCPAC are far enough advanced to include firm requisitions of specific personnel. The accomplishment of the recommendations is limited only by the availability of qualified personnel.



Paragraph 2f PROVIDE NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE, REORGANIZATION AND ADDITIONAL US PERSONNEL TO SUPPORT US PARTICIPATION IN DIRECTION AND CONTROL OF GVN MILITARY OPERATIONS AND EXPENDED MAAG FUNCTIONS

STATUS: Under its present terms of reference, MAAG Vietnam is not directed to participate actively in operations, operational planning and intelligence activities. There are, currently, no MAAG advisors at any level of combat command solely responsible for intelligence. In addition, there is a requirement to provide unit advisors at battalion and selected company level throughout the RVNAF, the Civil Guard, and the Self Defense Corps. Under current directives, US advisors do not fully participate in planning for and conduct of operations. In order to be successful against the Viet Cong, operations must be carefully planned, coordinated, and energetically implemented. Vietnamese officers are not as well qualified in this area as available US military advisors who, by their experience, schooling, and higher professional standings, could supply the much needed know-how, techniques, knowledge of joint and combined operations and the vigor required. If US personnel were working continuously in the various operations centers, CHMAAG would know the true situation at all times and keep abreast of new requirements as they arose.

PERSONNEL: In order to provide for essential MAAG assistance to RVNAF in the operations, operational planning, unit advisor, and intelligence fields, it is estimated that the authorized strength of MAAG Vietnam should be raised from the present

figure of 1,573 to approximately 2,500. CINCPAC has this date requested an increase of 320 in MAAG Vietnam strength which, when approved, would raise the authorized strength to 1,893.

COST: Unknown.

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTION: Actions which must be taken as a matter of urgency:

1. Amend the terms of reference to direct MAAG Vietnam to engage in operations, operational planning, and intelligence activities.

2. Expedite the request for and selection of personnel necessary to bring the MAAG Vietnam strength to approximately 2,500, to accomplish the actions referred to in the above paragraph, and to provide advisors at battalion and selected company level throughout the RVNAF, the Civil Guard, and the Self Defense Corps.



Paragraph 3.(c) OVERHAUL OF GVN MILITARY  
ESTABLISHMENT AND COMMAND STRUCTURE

PRESENT STATUS

This item is a proposal in which no implementing action has been taken. The proposal entails five <sup>includes</sup> <sup>major</sup> actions as follows:

- a. Designate one Intelligence Agency as a central control.
- b. Establish a single inviolate chain of command and compel Diem to adhere to it. (Remove province chiefs from chain of command.)
- c. Rework Vietnamese Joint General Staff Organization to provide for proportionate Service representation and membership of all Service Chiefs.
- d. Release 50% of the ARVN troops from static duties -- place on combat duties.
- e. Organize to provide for participation of MAAG personnel at all planning levels in operations centers and as team members on a 24-hour basis during operations.

# Department of State

## Classification

ACTION: Ambassador, SAIGON  
INFO: Ambassador BANGKOK  
CINCPAC/POLAD -

NIAC 619  
NIAC 714  
PRIORITY

06980

15-8

FOR AMBASSADOR NOLTING

LIMIT DISTRIBUTION

You are instructed to seek an immediate appointment with President Dien and inform him that President Kennedy, after conferring with General Taylor and carefully considering his report, has decided that the Government of the United States is prepared to join the Government of Viet-Nam in a sharply increased joint effort to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in South Viet-Nam and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence.

The joint effort we have in mind would require certain undertakings by both governments, as outlined below:

1. On its part, the U.S. would immediately take the following actions in support of the GVN:

a. Provide increased air lift to the GVN forces, including helicopters, light aviation, and transport aircraft, manned to the extent necessary by United States uniformed personnel and other United States operational control.

b. Provide such additional equipment and United States uniformed personnel

TS/US: SJCottrell:rmb - 11/14/61

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by

S - Dean Rusk

Classification

WH - THE PRESIDENT

FE - Mr. McCaughy

S/S - Mr. Olsen

U. Alexis Johnson

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personnel as may be necessary for air reconnaissance, photography, instruction in and execution of air-ground support techniques, and for special intelligence.

c. Provide the GVN with some small craft, including such United States uniformed advisers and operating personnel as may be necessary for operations in effecting surveillance and control over coastal waters and inland waterways.

d. Provide expedited training and equipping of the civil guard and the self-defense corps with the objective of relieving the regular army of static missions and freeing it for mobile offensive operations.

e. Provide such personnel and equipment as may be necessary to improve the military-political intelligence system beginning at the provincial level and extending upward through the Government and the armed forces to the Central Intelligence Organization.

f. Provide such new terms of reference, reorganization and additional personnel for United States military forces as are required for increased United States military assistance in the operational collaboration with the GVN and operational direction of U.S. forces, and to carry out the other increased responsibilities which accrue to the U.S. military authorities under these recommendations.

g. Provide such increased economic aid as may be required to permit the GVN to pursue a vigorous flood relief and rehabilitation program, to supply material in support of the security efforts, and to give priority to projects in support of this expanded counter-insurgency program. (FYI. This could include increases in military pay, a full supply of a wide range of materials such as food, medical supplies, transportation equipment, communications equipment, and any

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401

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any other items where material help could assist the GVN in winning the war against the Viet Cong. END FYI)

h. Encourage and support (including financial support) a request by the GVN to the FAO or any other appropriate international organization for multi-lateral assistance in the relief and rehabilitation of the flood area. (One objective here would be political objective of engaging widest possible multinational interest in and concern with GVN.)

i. Provide individual administrators and advisers for the Governmental machinery of South Viet-nam in types and numbers to be agreed upon by the two Governments.

j. Provide personnel for a joint survey with the GVN of conditions in each of the provinces to assess the social, political, intelligence and military factors bearing on the prosecution of the counter-insurgency program in order to reach a common estimate of these factors and a common determination of how to deal with them.

2. On its part, the GVN would initiate the following actions:

a. Prompt and appropriate legislative and administrative action to put the nation on a wartime footing to mobilize its entire resources. (This would include a decentralization and broadening of the Government so as to realize the full potential of all non-Communist elements in the country willing to contribute to the common struggle.)

b. The vitalization of appropriate governmental wartime agencies with adequate authority to perform their functions effectively.

c. Overhaul

402

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Classification

c. Overhaul of the military establishment and command structure so as to create an effective military organization for the prosecution of the war and assure a mobile offensive capability for the Army.

3. Before setting in motion the joint effort outlined above, the United States Government would need confirmation of its acceptability by the GVN, and an expression from the GVN of the measures it is prepared to take under the broad headings listed in para 2 above in order to ensure the success of this joint effort. The foregoing subheadings under para 2 are purposely broadly phrased so as to permit you to spell out specifics in manner you feel will be most effective. We realize that the U.S. cannot successfully dictate from here precisely what measures the GVN should take since they might be unworkable in the circumstances peculiar to South Viet-Nam and necessarily must leave these details and manner of their negotiation with Diem to your judgment. However, it is most important that Diem come forth with changes which will be recognized as having real substance and meaning. Rightly or wrongly his regime is widely criticized abroad and in the U.S., and if we are to give our substantial support we must be able to point to real administrative political and social reforms and a real effort to widen its base that will give maximum confidence to the American people, as well as to world opinion that our efforts are not directed towards the support of an unpopular or ineffective regime, but rather towards supporting the combined efforts of all the non-Communist people of the GVN against a Communist take-over. You should make this quite clear, and indicate that the U.S. contribution to the proposed joint effort depends heavily upon his response to this point.

4. It

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4. It is anticipated that one of the first questions President Diem will raise with you after your presentation of the above joint proposals will be that of introducing U.S. combat troops. You are authorized to remind him that the actions we already have in mind involve a substantial number of U.S. military personnel for operational duties in Viet-Nam and that we believe that these forces performing crucial missions can greatly increase the capacity of GVN forces to win their war against the Viet Cong. You can also tell him that we believe that the missions being undertaken by our forces, under present circumstances, are more suitable for white foreign troops than garrison duty or missions involving the seeking out of Viet Cong personnel submerged in the Viet-Nam population. You can assure him that the USG at highest levels will be in daily contact with the situation in Viet-Nam and will be in constant touch with him about requirements of the situation.

5. You should inform Diem that, in our minds, the concept of the joint undertaking envisages a much closer relationship than the present one of acting in an advisory capacity only. We would expect to share in the decision-making processes in the political, economic and military fields as they affected the security situation.

6. You may inform Diem that concurrently with the commencement of the joint effort, we intend to make additional strong approaches to the Soviet Bloc designed to impress them with our determination to see that South Viet-Nam is not overrun and to deter them from continuing their aggression.

7. FYI. If Diem responds well to above demarche, and outlines measures he will take corresponding to para 3, which you and we regard as satisfactory, you should



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should then inform him that we wish to provide our aid in response to his written request, to which we would plan to give wide publicity. This, combined with the Jordan Report, would serve as the public base for our support. Consequently, you may at a time you consider suitable offer him the proposed draft letter from him to President Kennedy the text of which is supplied in the immediately following telegram. When you give him the draft, you may indicate that we do not expect his letter to be a verbatim copy. In fact, we hope it will not be, but we think it wise from the standpoint of world opinion to include the substantive points mentioned therein. ~~It is our intention to make it clear that we are not making any commitment to him at this time. We shall keep you advised concerning the handling and timing of release of the Jordan Report and the letter from Diem. President Kennedy contemplates immediate strong, affirmative reply to satisfactory letter along indicated lines from President Diem, which also will simultaneously be made public.~~

Rusk

RUSK

To Director, CIA, From Bangkok, 20 November 1961

For The President From Ambassador Galbraith

I have just completed three intensive days in Saigon which, with CINCPAC talks, gives me a much better feeling for this tangled situation. Tomorrow night I am sending you a full and, I trust rather close analysis which I pray you read at average speed. That concerns our longer course but meanwhile I must register conclusions on two or three matters on which action may be pending and I add a general thought or two.

(1) There is scarcely the slightest practical chance that the administrative and political reforms now being pressed upon Diem will result in real change. They reckon without deeper political realities and insecurities of his position and the nature of politicians of this age. He will promise but he will not perform because it is most unlikely that he can perform. Accordingly, it is important that in exchange of letters which I suppose now to be inevitable that our proposed aid be geared to demonstrated action not promises. This may slightly increase the effect. But mostly it will keep us from what otherwise will be a purely one-sided commitment to Diem. In the absence of fundamental reform, the help we are now proposing will not save the situation.



(2) In my judgement, in the immediate situation there should be no, repeat no, change in either political or MAAG leadership.

Political leadership is using accumulated capital to get whatever slight administrative and political improvement may result from this initiative. MAAG change would, in my judgement, set back whatever slight chance there is for military reforms and sensible counter-insurgency action.

(3) While situation is indubitably bad, military aspects seem to me out of perspective. A comparatively well-equipped army with para-military formations numbering a quarter million men is facing a maximum of fifteen to eighteen thousand lightly armed men. If this were equality, the United States would hardly be safe against the Sioux. I know the theories about this kind of warfare.

(4) The foregoing, among other things, leads me to believe that your decision against troop commitment was wholly sound and with full discount for my high threshold on this matter. Decisive military factor is not manpower or even confidence but bad organization, incompetent use and deployment of forces, inability to protect territory once cleared, and probably poor political base. American forces would not correct this. Their inability to do so would create a worse crisis of confidence as this became evident.

(5) I note that problem of confidence is partly our making. There is a fashionable tendency, though not by most senior military and diplomatic figures, to depict your decision of last spring on Laos as a disaster without any reference to alternatives available. This flows over to local community. Word should be passed down that when we make the best of bad alternatives second guessing of this sort does no service.

(6) As I will argue, there is no solution that does not involve a change of government. To say there is no alternative is nonsense for there never has seemed to be where one man has dominated the scene. So while we must play out the ineffective and hopeless course on which we are launched for a little while, we must look ahead very soon to a new government. On this more later. Given an even moderately effective government and putting the relative military power into perspective, I can't help thinking that the insurgency might very soon be settled.

(7) As I shall argue more fully in my letter, the diplomatic initiative should of course go forward. But I am convinced that the insurrection has more internal material base and less to meet it than I had previously imagined. Accordingly, the calling off of or stopping



of outside materiel support as distinct from encouragement and guidance might not make too much difference.

Ambassador Galbraith requested CIA Chief of Station, Bangkok forward this message via this channel as it is "faster and more secure."

For CIA Chief of Station, New Delhi: Please hand carry to Ambassador upon his return.

DATE: 21 NOV 61

RECD: NOV 21 2137Z 61

FROM: NEW DELHI 9941

OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

TO : DIRECTOR

IN 25879

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH

POLICY IN VIETNAM

FROM JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

1. HERE IS MY FULL ANALYSIS OF OUR PROBLEM AND COURSE IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

FROM MY STAY THERE, TALKS AT CINCPAC AND BANGKOK, PREVIOUS READING OF THE TRAFFIC AND EXPERIENCE OF THE REGION I FEEL REASONABLY SURE OF MY GROUND. YOU WILL BE AWARE OF THE INTENSE THEOLOGICAL DISPUTES WHICH RAGE OVER SUCH ISSUES AS THE POLITICAL POSITION OF DIEM, THE SCOPE OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO THE INSURRECTION AND OTHERS. WHERE A SOLUTION OF THESE IS NOT RELEVANT TO A PRACTICAL COURSE OF ACTION I HAVE NOT ENTERED THE DEBATE. I HAVE ALSO ENDEAVORED TO WORK FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE ACTION RATHER THAN THE MORE CUSTOMARY PROCEDURE WHICH IS TO MOVE FROM THE PREFERRED COURSE OF ACTION BACK TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES. WHERE MY BIAS INTRUDES, AS IN THE CASE OF TROOP COMMITMENT, I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR.

2. THE VIET CONG INSURRECTION IS STILL GROWING IN EFFECT. THE OUTBREAK ON THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS IS MATCHED BY A POTENTIALLY EVEN MORE DAMAGING IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY AND ESPECIALLY ON THE MOVEMENT OF RICE TO SAIGON.

3. IN THE ABSENCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ADMIXTURE OF TERROR AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EVANGELISM WE HAD BEST ASSUME THAT IT IS EMPLOYING BOTH. WE MUST NOT FOREVER BE GUIDED BY THOSE WHO MISUNDERSTAND THE DYNAMICS OF REVOLUTION AND IMAGINE THAT BECAUSE THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT APPEAL TO US THEY ARE ABHORRENT TO EVERYONE.

4. IN OUR ENTHUSIASM TO PROVE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION BEFORE WORLD OPINION

~~WE HAVE UNQUESTIONABLY EXAGGERATED THE ROLE OF INTERNAL RESISTANCE ESPECIALLY~~



NEW DELHI 9941

IN 25879

IN THE MAIN AREA OF INSURRECTION IN THE FAR SOUTH. THAT LEADERS AND RADIO GUIDANCE COME IN WE KNOW. BUT THE AMOUNT OF AMMUNITION AND WEAPONRY THAT A MAN CAN CARRY ON HIS BACK FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED KILOMETERS OVER JUNGLE TRAILS WAS NOT INCREASED APPRECIABLY BY MARX. NO MAJOR CONFLICT CAN DEPEND ON SUCH LOGISTIC SUPPORT.

5. A MAXIMUM OF 18,000 LIGHTLY ARMED MEN ARE INVOLVED IN THE INSURRECTION. THESE ARE GVN ESTIMATES AND THE FACTOR OF EXAGGERATION IS UNQUESTIONABLY CONSIDERABLE. TEN THOUSAND IS MORE PROBABLE. WHAT WE HAVE IN OPPOSITION INVOLVES A HEAVY THEOLOGICAL DISPUTE. DIEM IT IS SAID IS A GREAT BUT DEFAMED LEADER. IT IS ALSO SAID HE HAS LOST TOUCH WITH THE MASSES, IS IN POLITICAL DISREPUTE AND OTHERWISE NO GOOD. THIS DEBATE CAN BE BYPASSED BY AGREED POINTS. IT IS AGREED THAT ADMINISTRATIVELY DIEM IS EXCEEDINGLY BAD. HE HOLDS FAR TOO MUCH POWER IN HIS OWN HANDS, EMPLOYS HIS ARMY BADLY, HAS NO INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION WORTHY OF THE NAME, HAS ARBITRARY OR INCOMPETENT SUBORDINATES IN THE PROVINCES AND SOME ACHIEVEMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING, HAS A POOR ECONOMIC POLICY. HE HAS ALSO EFFECTIVELY RESISTED IMPROVEMENT FOR A LONG WHILE IN FACE OF HEAVY DETERIORATION. THIS IS ENOUGH. WHETHER HIS POLITICAL POSTURE IS NEPOTIC, DESPOTIC OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE VILLAGERS AND HENCE DAMAGING OR WHETHER THIS DAMAGE IS THE FIGMENT OF SAIGON INTELLECTUALS DOES NOT BEAR ON OUR IMMEDIATE POLICY AND MAY BE BY-PASSED AT LEAST IN PART.

6. THE SVN ARMY NUMBERS 170,000 AND WITH PARAMILITARY UNITS OF THE CIVIL GUARD AND HOME DEFENSE FORCES A QUARTER OF A MILLION. WERE THIS WELL DEPLOYED

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ON BEHALF OF AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT THE VIET CONG WOULD HAVE NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS OR TAKEOVER. WASHINGTON IS CURRENTLY HAVING AN INTELLECTUAL ORGASM ON THE UNBEATABILITY OF GUERRILLA WAR. WERE GUERRILLAS EFFECTIVE IN A RATIO OF ONE TO FIFTEEN OR TWENTY-FIVE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT NO GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SAFE. THE VIET CONG, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, IS STRONGEST IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA WHICH IS NOT JUNGLE BUT OPEN RICE PADDY.

7. THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFICULTIES IN COUNTERING THE INSURGENCY, APART FROM ABSENCE OF INTELLIGENCE, ARE TWO-FOLD. FIRST IS THE POOR COMMAND, DEPLOYMENT, TRAINING, MORALE AND OTHER WEAKNESSES OF THE ARMY AND PARAMILITARY FORCES. AND SECOND WHILE THEY CAN OPERATE - - SWEEP - - THROUGH ANY PART OF THE COUNTRY AND CLEAR OUT ANY VISIBLE INSURGENTS, THEY CANNOT GUARANTEE SECURITY AFTERWARDS. THE VIET CONG COMES BACK AND PUTS THE ARM ON ALL WHO HAVE COLLABORATED. THIS FACT IS VERY IMPORTANT IN RELATION TO REQUESTS FROM AMERICAN MANPOWER. OUR FORCES WOULD CONDUCT THE ROUND-UP OPERATIONS WHICH THE RVN ARMY CAN ALREADY DO. WE COULDN'T CONCEIVABLY SEND ENOUGH MEN TO PROVIDE SAFETY FOR THE VILLAGES AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EFFECTIVELY TRAINED CIVIL GUARD AND HOME DEFENSE FORCE AND, PERHAPS, A POLITICALLY COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY.

8. THE KEY AND INESCAPABLE POINT, THEN, IS THE INEFFECTUALITY (ABETTED DEBATABLE BY THE UNPOPULARITY) OF THE DIEM GOVERNMENT. THIS IS THE STRATEGIC FACTOR. NOR CAN ANYONE ACCEPT THE STATEMENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN EITHER TOO LONG OR TOO LITTLE IN ASIA THAT HIS IS THE INEVITABLE POSTURE OF THE



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IN 25879

ASIAN MANDARIN. FOR ONE THING IT ISN'T TRUE, BUT WERE IT SO THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSION WOULD BE THAT THERE IS NO FUTURE FOR MANDARINS. THE COMMUNISTS DON'T FAVOR THEM.

9. I COME NOW TO A LESSER MISCALCULATION, THE ALLEGED WEAKENING EMPHASIS OF THE MEKONG FLOOD. FLOODS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD ARE AN OLD TRAP FOR WESTERN NON-AGRICULTURISTS. THEY ARE JUDGED BY WHAT THE OHIO DOES TO ITS TOWNS. NOW AS THE FLOOD WATERS RECEDE IT IS ALREADY EVIDENT THAT THIS FLOOD CONFORMS TO THE ASIAN PATTERN, ONE REPEATED EVERY YEAR IN INDIA. THE MUD VILLAGES WILL SOON GROW AGAIN. SOME UPLAND RICE WAS DROWNED BECAUSE THE WATER ROSE TOO RAPIDLY. NEARER THE COAST THE PRESSURE ON THE BRACKISH WATER WILL PROBABLY BRING AN OFFSETTING IMPROVEMENT. NEXT YEAR'S CROP WILL BE MUCH BETTER FOR THE SILT.

10. I COME NOW TO POLICY, FIRST THE BOX WE ARE IN PARTLY AS THE RESULT OF RECENT MOVES AND SECOND HOW WE GET OUT WITHOUT A TAKEOVER. WE HAVE JUST PROPOSED TO HELP DIEM IN VARIOUS WAYS IN RETURN FOR A PROMISE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL REFORMS. SINCE THE ADMINISTRATIVE (AND POSSIBLY POLITICAL) INEFFECTUALITY ARE THE STRATEGIC FACTORS FOR SUCCESS. THE ABILITY TO GET REFORMS IS DECISIVE. WITH THEM THE NEW AID AND GADGETRY WILL BE USEFUL. WITHOUT THEM THE HELICOPTERS, PLANES AND ADVISER'S WON'T MAKE APPRECIABLE DIFFERENCE.

11. IN MY COMPLETELY CONSIDERED VIEW, AS STATED YESTERDAY, DIEM WILL NOT REFORM EITHER ADMINISTRATIVELY OR POLITICALLY IN ANY EFFECTIVE

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IN 25879

WAY. THAT IS BECAUSE HE CANNOT. IT IS POLITICALLY NAIVE TO EXPECT IT. HE SENSES THAT HE CANNOT LET POWER GO BECAUSE HE WOULD BE THROWN OUT. HE MAY DISGUISE THIS EVEN FROM HIMSELF WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HE LACKS EFFECTIVE SUBORDINATES BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCE REMAINS UNCHANGED. HE PROBABLY SENSES THAT HIS GREATEST DANGER IS FROM THE ARMY. HENCE THE REFORM THAT WILL BRING EFFECTIVE USE OF HIS MANPOWER, THOUGH THE MOST URGENT MAY BE THE MOST IMPROBABLE.

12. THE POLITICAL REFORMS ARE EVEN MORE UNLIKELY BUT THE ISSUE IS ACADEMIC. ONCE THE IMAGE OF A POLITICIAN IS FIXED, WHETHER AMONG OPPOSITION INTELLECTUALS OR PEASANTS, IT IS NOT CHANGED. NOR DO POLITICIANS CHANGE THEMSELVES. DIEM'S IMAGE WOULD NOT BE CHANGED BY HIS TAKING IN OTHER NON-COMMUNISTS, INITIATING SOME SOCIAL REFORMS OR OTHERWISE MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR DEMARCHE.

13. HOWEVER HAVING STARTED ON THIS HOPELESS GAME WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE, BUT TO PLAY IT OUT FOR A MINIMUM TIME. THOSE WHO THINK THERE IS HOPE OF REFORM WILL HAVE TO BE PERSUADED. SINCE THERE IS NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS WE MUST DO TWO THINGS TO PROTECT OUR SITUATION. ONE IS TO MAKE CLEAR, AS I SUGGESTED PREVIOUSLY, THAT OUR COMMITMENT IS TO RESULTS AND NOT TO PROMISES SINCE DIEM IS EXPERIENCED IN BOTH PROMISING WITHOUT PERFORMING OR IN PROVIDING THE SHADOW WITHOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF PERFORMANCE. AND WE CAN PRESS HARDEST IN THE AREA OF ARMY REFORM WHERE THE NEEDED CHANGES ARE MOST SPECIFIC AND MOST URGENT. THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUNDAMENTAL PROGRESS GIVEN DIEM'S SUSPICION OF THE ARMY IS, HOWEVER, NOT GREAT.

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NEW DELHI 9941

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14. AMBASSADOR NOLTING AND GENERAL MCCARR, BOTH HEAVILY IDENTIFIED WITH THIS PRESSURE FOR REFORM SHOULD REMAIN TO PRESS THEIR CASE. THOUGH ACTING LOYALLY, NOLTING IS NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE EFFECT OF PRESSURE ON DIEM. HE BELIEVES RATHER THAT WE SHOULD LEND HIM OUR PRESTIGE AND POWER WHILE WORKING MORE GRADUALLY FOR REFORM. THIS POLICY BY MY ANALYSIS WOULD MERELY CONFIRM DIEM IN HIS INADEQUACY A RISK WHICH NOLTING CONCEDES. IF OUR PRESTIGE WOULD HAVE PROVIDED THE SECURITY FOR REFORM WE WOULD HAVE HAD RESULTS LONG BEFORE NOW.

15. IT FOLLOWS FROM MY REASONING THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION MUST BE TO DROP DIEM. KOREA REPRESENTS THE ONLY MODEL THAT HOLDS OUT ANY PROMISE WHATEVER FOR US. WITHOUT DOUBT DIEM WAS A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE IN HIS DAY. BUT HE HAS RUN HIS COURSE. HE CANNOT BE REHABILITATED. INCIDENTALLY THIS VIEW IS HELD INDEPENDENTLY BY THE SENIOR POLITICAL COUNSELLOR OF OUR EMBASSY, THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN LONGEST IN VIETNAM.

16. IN MY VIEW, AND THIS IS NECESSARILY SPECULATIVE, DROPPING DIEM WILL NEITHER BE DIFFICULT NOR UNDULY DANGEROUS. THE VIET CONG ARE IN POSITION TO CAUSE TROUBLE WIDELY OVER THE COUNTRY. THAT IS FAR FROM MEANING THAT THEY ARE ABLE WITH THEIR SMALL NUMBER TO TAKE OVER AND CONTROL THE COUNTRY. THE ARMY IF INEFFECTIVE IS THOUGHT TO BE NON-COMMUNIST. THE RUMORS OF COUPS ARE ENDEMIC. NOLTING WHILE NOT IN FAVOR HAS SAID THAT A NOD FROM THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE INFLUENTIAL. AT THE EARLIEST MOMENT THAT IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT DIEM WILL NOT AND CANNOT IMPLEMENT IN ANY REAL

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IN 25879

WAY THE REFORMS WASHINGTON HAS REQUESTED WE SHOULD MAKE IT QUIETLY CLEAR THAT WE ARE WITHDRAWING OUR SUPPORT FROM HIM AS AN INDIVIDUAL. HIS DAY WOULD THEN I BELIEVE BE OVER. WHILE NO ONE CAN PROMISE A SAFE TRANSACTION WE ARE NOW MARRIED TO FAILURE.

17. IT IS A CLICHE THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO DIEM'S REGIME. THIS IS POLITICALLY NAIVE. WHERE ONE MAN HAS DOMINATED THE SCENE FOR GOOD OR ILL THERE NEVER SEEMS TO BE. NO ONE CONSIDERED TRUMAN AN ALTERNATIVE TO ROOSEVELT. THERE IS NONE FOR NEHRU. THERE WAS NONE I IMAGINE FOR RHEE. THIS IS AN OPTICAL ILLUSION ARISING FROM THE FACT THAT THE EYE IS FIXED ON THE VISIBLE FIGURES. IT IS A BETTER RULE THAT NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESSORS.

18. WE SHOULD NOT BE ALARMED BY THE ARMY AS AN ALTERNATIVE. IT WOULD BUY TIME AND GET A FRESH DYNAMIC. IT IS NOT IDEAL; CIVILIAN RULE IS ORDINARILY MORE DURABLE AND MORE SALEABLE TO THE WORLD. BUT A CHANGE AND A NEW START IS OF THE ESSENCE AND IN CONSIDERING OPINION WE MAY NOTE THAT DIEM'S FLAVOR IS NOT MARKEDLY GOOD IN ASIA.

19. A TIME OF CRISIS IN OUR POLICY ON SOUTH VIETNAM WILL COME WHEN IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT THE REFORMS WE HAVE ASKED HAVE NOT COME OFF AND THAT OUR PRESENTLY PROFFERED AID IS NOT ACCOMPLISHING ANYTHING. TROOPPS WILL BE URGED TO BACK UP DIEM. IT WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR THAT I THINK THIS MUST BE RESISTED.

would not deal with the vital weakness.

OUR SOLDIERS / ~~DO NOT KNOW HOW TO CONTINUE TO SERVE US~~ THEY COULD PERPETUATE IT. THEY WOULD ENABLE DIEM TO CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE ON PROTECTING HIS OWN POSITION.



AT THE EXPENSE OF COUNTERING THE INSURGENCY. LAST SPRING, FOLLOWING THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S PROMISE OF MORE AID, PROPOSALS FOR INCREASED AND REFORM TAXES WHICH WERE WELL ADVANCED WERE PROMPTLY DROPPED. THE PARALLEL ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL REFORM COULD BE CLOSE.

20. IT WILL BE SAID THAT WE NEED TROOPS FOR A SHOW OF STRENGTH AND DETERMINATION IN THE AREA. SINCE THE TROOPS WILL NOT DEAL WITH FUNDAMENTAL FAULTS -- SINCE THERE CAN'T BE ENOUGH OF THEM TO GIVE SECURITY TO THE COUNTRY-- SIDE -- THEIR FAILURE TO PROVIDE SECURITY COULD CREATE A WORSE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE. YOU WILL BE AWARE OF MY GENERAL RELUCTANCE TO MOVE IN TROOPS. ON THE OTHER HAND I WOULD NOTE THAT IT IS THOSE OF US WHO HAVE WORKED IN THE POLITICAL VINEYARD AND WHO HAVE COMMITTED OUR HEARTS MOST STRONGLY TO THE POLITICAL FORTUNES OF THE NEW FRONTIER WHO WORRY MOST ABOUT ITS BRIGHT PROMISE BEING SUNK UNDER THE RICE FIELDS. DULLES IN 1954 SAW THE DANGERS IN THIS AREA. DEAN ACHESON KNEW HE COULD NOT INVEST MEN IN CHIANG.

21. WE SHOULD PRESS FORWARD ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT TO GET ALL POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION AND TO RAISE THE BARRIER TO MORE OVERT HANOI INTERVENTION AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE. THIS WAS ALWAYS A LONG SHOT. AS THE RESULT OF MY TRIP I THINK IT A LONGER ONE. THAT IS BECAUSE THE ACTUAL MATERIAL SUPPORT IS SMALLER THAN OUR PROPAGANDA HAS PERSUADED US TO BELIEVE AND I DON'T SUPPOSE WE CAN STOP THE MORAL SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP WHICH THE INSURRECTION RECEIVES. HOWEVER WE SHOULD MAKE ALL EFFORT.

22. IN THIS CONNECTION, IN ADDITION TO THE OTHER MOVES AT GENEVA, ON THE ICC AND THROUGH THE INDIANS TO HANOI AS DISCUSSED WE SHOULD ASK OUR NATO ALLY THE CANADIANS AND OUR SEATO ALLY THE AUSTRALIANS TO MAKE CLEAR TO

THE CHINESE THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO PLACE IN THIS AREA. THERE CAN NO LONGER BE ANY QUESTION THAT THE FOOD THESE TWO ARE SUPPLYING IS OF NEARLY DESPERATE IMPORTANCE TO THE CHINESE. I VERIFIED THE POINT FURTHER IN LONG TALKS IN HONG KONG. PROPERLY APPROACHED THE CANADIANS AND AUSTRALIANS WOULD SURELY MAKE THE POINT FORCEFULLY.

23 AS I HAVE SAID THE PRESENT GAME MUST BE PLAYED MOST WITH THE PRESENT DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THERE BE ANY IMPAIRMENT OF THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP BY INTERPOSITION OF A NEW HIGH-RANKING GENERAL. WHEN POLICY CHANGES ON DIEM IT WILL BE TIME TO CHANGE THE LEADERSHIP. IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ECONOMIC FACTORS WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL AND THERE IS NOW <sup>NO</sup> ~~AN~~ ONE IN THE COUNTRY WITH AN ADEQUATE GRASP OF THESE ISSUES OR THE POWER TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH WASHINGTON. SOMEONE OF UNDOUBTED ABILITY IN THIS FIELD - - EUGENE STALEY IF HE CAN BE DRAFTED OR JACK BELL IF GUATEMALA CAN WAIT - - SHOULD BE SENT FORTHWITH. IN THE MILITARY FIELD WE WILL HAVE AN UP-TO-DATE PROGRAM OF REFORMS FOR PUTTING IN THE DAY DIEM GOES. WE ARE NOT AS WELL SITUATED ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SIDE AND THE SITUATION HERE IS CHANGING RAPIDLY.

24. MY OVERALL FEELING IS THAT DESPITE THE ERROR IMPLICIT IN THIS LAST MOVE AND THE SUPPOSITION THAT DIEM CAN BE REFORMED, THE SITUATION IS NOT HOPELESS. IT IS ONLY HOPELESS IF WE MARRY OUR COURSE TO THAT OF A MAN WHO MUST SPEND MORE TIME PROTECTING HIS OWN POSITION AND EXCLUDING THOSE WHO THREATEN IT THAN IN FIGHTING THE INSURGENCY. DIEM'S CALCULATION INSTINCTIVE OR DELIBERATE IS EVIDENT. HE HAS ALREADY BEEN DEPOSED ONCE AND NOT BY THE COMMUNISTS. HE CAN SEE HIS CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER AS WELL AS ANYONE.

END OF MESSAGE



THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

TOP SECRET

November 22, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 111

TO: The Secretary of State

SUBJECT: First Phase of Viet-Nam Program

The President has authorized the Secretary of State to instruct our Ambassador to Viet-Nam to inform President Diem as follows:

1. The U.S. Government is prepared to join the Viet-Nam Government in a sharply increased joint effort to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in South Viet-Nam.
2. This joint effort requires undertakings by both Governments as outlined below:
  - a. On its part the U.S. would immediately undertake the following actions in support of the GVN:
    - (1) Provide increased air lift to the GVN forces, including helicopters, light aviation, and transport aircraft, manned to the extent necessary by United States uniformed personnel and under United States operational control.
    - (2) Provide such additional equipment and United States uniformed personnel as may be necessary for air reconnaissance, photography, instruction in and execution of air-ground support techniques, and for special intelligence.
    - (3) Provide the GVN with small craft, including such United States uniformed advisers and operating personnel as may be necessary for operations in effecting surveillance and control over coastal waters and inland waterways.
    - (4) Provide expedited training and equipping of the civil guard and the self-defense corps with the objective of relieving the regular Army of static missions and freeing it for mobile offensive operations.

(5) Provide such personnel and equipment as may be necessary to improve the military-political intelligence system beginning at the provincial level and extending upward through the Government and the armed forces to the Central Intelligence Organization.

(6) Provide such new terms of reference, reorganization and additional personnel for United States military forces as are required for increased United States military assistance in the operational collaboration with the GVN and operational direction of U. S. forces and to carry out the other increased responsibilities which accrue to the U. S. military authorities under these recommendations.

(7) Provide such increased economic aid as may be required to permit the GVN to pursue a vigorous flood relief and rehabilitation program, to supply material in support of the security efforts, and to give priority to projects in support of this expanded counter-insurgency program. (This could include increases in military pay, a full supply of a wide range of materials such as food, medical supplies, transportation equipment, communications equipment, and any other items where material help could assist the GVN in winning the war against the Viet Cong.)

(8) Encourage and support (including financial support) a request by the GVN to the FAO or any other appropriate international organization for multilateral assistance in the relief and rehabilitation of the flood area.

(9) Provide individual administrators and advisers for the Governmental machinery of South Viet-Nam in types and numbers to be agreed upon by the two Governments.

(10) Provide personnel for a joint survey with the GVN of conditions in each of the provinces to assess the social, political, intelligence, and military factors bearing on the prosecution of the counter-insurgency program in order to reach a common estimate of these factors and a common determination of how to deal with them.



b. On its part, the GVN would initiate the following actions:

(1) Prompt and appropriate legislative and administrative action to put the nation on a wartime footing to mobilize its entire resources. (This would include a decentralization and broadening of the Government so as to realize the full potential of all non-Communist elements in the country willing to contribute to the common struggle.)

(2) The vitalization of appropriate Governmental wartime agencies with adequate authority to perform their functions effectively.

(3) Overhaul of the military establishment and command structure so as to create an effective military organization for the prosecution of the war and assure a mobile offensive capability for the Army.

McGeorge Bundy

Information Copies to:

The Secretary of Defense ✓  
Director of Central Intelligence  
General Maxwell D. Taylor



NOV 25 1961

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

25 November 1961

Refer to: I-19366/61

(SECDEF HAS SEEN)

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Command Arrangements for Vietnam

Mr. Nitze and I have examined the JCS paper, and believe that it represents the best possible current solution. The following points may be noted:

a. The fact that we have parallel command arrangements in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan should remove most of the possible political disadvantage of having a US "commander" in a situation where Geneya calls for our having only an advisory role.

b. Under the President's letter of May 29, a US "commander" becomes coequal with the Ambassador. (See page 6 of the JCS views for text distinguishing this from the MAAG.)

I recommend that we either elevate General McGarr promptly to the new position, or find a replacement soonest.

Re General Lansdale, General McGarr has sent two messages by special channels reporting disappointment by Diem that no decision has been made on Ed's coming back. (From these and other indications, it is clear that McGarr himself would favor this.) In spite of the importance of Ed's current assignment, I think he belongs in Vietnam, where he is of unique value.

The importance of both these points is underscored by Nolting's negative talks with both Diem and Thuan. We badly need something to sweeten the mixture. You may have seen the report in today's Post (page opposite the editorial page) that the Saigon controlled press has sharply criticized the US, a most novel and disturbing symptom.

W P Bundy

William P. Bundy  
Acting

SecDef Cont. No. 571 7693

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449 941 Page 1 of 1 Pages

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27 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY RUSK  
SECRETARY McNAMARA ✓  
MR. U. ALLEN JOHNSON  
GENERAL LEMNITZER  
MR. FOWLER HAMILTON  
MR. ALLEN DULLES  
MR. McGEORGE BUNDY  
MR. WALT ROSTON

Subject: Meeting on Southeast Asia,  
5:30 p.m., November 27, 1961

The President wishes to use this meeting as a round-up of actions to date and of new decisions required now or shortly. He would like the following questions to serve as a framework for discussion.

a. State

- (1) What is the situation with regard to Dien as reported by Ambassador Nolting?
- (2) Can we delay longer in obtaining an answer from Dien?
- (3) Should Nolting be called to Washington in order to expose him to our thinking on the situation?
- (4) What is the present plan for the use of the Jordan Report?
- (5) Are we in danger of losing the psychological impact of our new program through its delayed and piecemeal implementation?

b. Defense

- (1) What is the state of Defense actions in implementing the new program?
- (2) What is being done to expedite delivery of river and coastal craft?
- (3) What about increasing the training and readiness of the Civil Guard and the Self Defense Corps?

Remedy w/8 in light of 13-11-61

11/29/61

(4) What are the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with regard to the military organization in Saigon required to support the new program?

c. Agency for International Development

(1) Have the revised requirements for economic aid been forthcoming from Saigon? What is our plan for flood relief?

(2) What is being done to meet these requirements?

d. Organization in Washington

(1) Have State-Defense agreed upon the division of responsibilities for the implementation of the new program?

(2) Whom should the President regard as personally responsible for the effectiveness of the Washington end of this operation?

(NOTE: The President wishes a proposal to meet this point, having in mind an individual to be identified with this program as Mr. Kohler has been for Berlin.)

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR



1961 DEC 1 12 04 THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

OFF SECY OF DEFENSE

November 30, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 115

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense ✓

SUBJECT: Defoliant Operations in Viet Nam

The President has approved the recommendation of the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of Defense to participate in a selective and carefully controlled joint program of defoliant operations in Viet Nam starting with the clearance of key routes and proceeding thereafter to food denial only if the most careful basis of resettlement and alternative food supply has been created. Operations in Zone D and the border areas shall not be undertaken until there are realistic possibilities of immediate military exploitation.

The President further agreed that there should be careful prior consideration and authorization by Washington of any plans developed by CINCPAC and the country team under this authority before such plans are executed.

McGeorge Bundy

Information Copies to:

The Director of Central Intelligence  
The Director, U. S. Information Agency  
The Director, Bureau of the Budget  
The Administrator, Agency for  
International Development  
The Military Representative of the President

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18 December 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

This will confirm our discussion of this morning in which we agreed that:

1. The Senior U. S. Military Commander in South Vietnam will have the direct responsibility for all U. S. military operations in that country, and the authority to discuss both the U. S. and Vietnamese operations directly with Diem and the leaders of his government.
2. The Senior U.S. Military Commander will have the title "Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Forces - Vietnam."
3. The Senior U.S. Military Commander will have direct access to CINCPAC and through him to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense on all military matters.
4. The U.S. Ambassador in Vietnam will be responsible for political and basic policy matters.
5. The two U.S. representatives will keep each other informed of the operations within their respective spheres.

SIGNED

Robert S. McNamara

cc: Mr. Wm. P. Bundy  
Mr. Nitze  
DepSecDef



27 December 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JCS

SUBJECT: Vietnamese Command Problem

CINCPAC's message to you, 232137Z December 1961, outlines the problem of President Diem giving control authority to Big Minh as his military field commander, when Diem is apprehensive of a coup. CINCPAC then solicited your help to get State to direct Ambassador Nolting to make a concerted approach to Diem with General McGarr.

In CINCPAC's proposal, as in other comments on this problem, I have yet to note anyone come up with an answer to Diem's apprehension. It is the basis for his real reluctance to do what the Americans want him to do, and this basic point needs resolving. How are Nolting and McGarr to reassure him on this point?

U.S. policy is to support Diem and he has been so informed by the President. We know that Big Minh has been outspoken about a coup. Diem certainly knows about the way Big Minh has been talking, also. Now we ask Diem to give practical control of his military force to a man who has talked about a coup. What realistic assurances can we give Diem that the action he fears won't take place?

It would seem that the increased U.S. military stake in Vietnam should afford some means for stabilizing the political relationships within the Vietnamese Armed Forces long enough for all concerned to get on with the war. Armed with facts about such a political stability, Nolting and McGarr should have little trouble in getting Diem to play ball.

SIGNED

EDWARD C. LANSDALE  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense  
(Special Operations)

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