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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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August 24, 1964

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By WMA NARS, Date 4/10/78

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
FROM: Mr. Michael V. Forrestal **MF**  
SUBJECT: Q and A and Historical Background  
Paper on Vietnam

I attach two documents prepared by people in Bob Manning's and my offices: a Q and A paper on policy toward South Vietnam and an historical background paper setting forth the official view of past events.

Both these documents have been reviewed extensively here, in DOD, the Agency, AID and USIA. The Q and A is the more politically important of the two, since it deals with the present and future in terms of policy. I have read it quite carefully, and I think it is a good job. It is ready for printing and could be distributed at the end of the week. I think time is important, because the longer we wait, the more it looks like a campaign document. Could you take a look at it this evening, and let me know tomorrow what you think?

The historical background paper has been checked by "scholars" in INR and the Agency for historical accuracy. It appears to me to be internally consistent, and I think is worth getting out at the same time as the Q and A, since it would stand as a companion piece. Both will be made available to newspapermen and scholars. The background paper would go to libraries and educational institutions as well.

Bob Manning assures me that both papers will be attractively presented and will include suitable maps, pictures and charts.

Attachments

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# CET—LINO 1

## INTRODUCTION

On August 2, 1964, three North Vietnamese PT boats fired torpedoes and shells at the U.S. destroyer *Maddox* on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin. The destroyer and U.S. aircraft promptly fired back and drove off the PT boats.

On August 4 that attack was repeated in the same international waters against two U.S. destroyers. Our Navy's response was equally prompt and at least two of the attacking boats were sunk. In addition, air units of our 7th Fleet struck at the bases and other facilities in North Viet-Nam which supplied and supported the attacking boats. This latter action, as President Johnson told the nation that same night, was taken because ". . . repeated acts of violence against the Armed Forces of the United States must be met not only with alert defense but with positive reply."

The next day the President told the nation and the world:

Aggression—deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression—has unmasked its face to the entire world. The world remembers—the world must never forget—that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed.

We of the United States have not forgotten. That is why we have answered this aggression with action.

America's course is not precipitate.

America's course is not without long provocation. . . .

To the south, it [North Viet-Nam] is engaged in aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam.

To the west, it is engaged in aggression against the Kingdom of Laos.

To the east, it has now struck out on the high seas in an act of aggression against the United States of America. . . .

. . . The challenge that we face in Southeast Asia today is the same challenge that we have faced with courage and that we have met with strength in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and in Cuba, and to any who may be tempted to support or to widen the present aggression I say this: There is no threat to any peaceful power from the United States of America. But there can be no peace by aggression and no immunity from reply. That is what is meant by the actions that we took yesterday.

On August 7 the Senate and the House of Representatives in a joint resolution supported and approved the measures taken by the President to repel armed attack against U.S. forces and to prevent further aggression. The resolution then added:

The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Over 200 million people live in the non-Communist countries south of China and east of India, a region rich in culture, land, and resources—the one part of Asia that is relatively underpopulated. From it come Asia's most important food exports, 70 percent of the world's tin, and 70 percent of the world's natural rubber. Lying athwart the crossroads between two oceans and two continents, Southeast Asia is a region of great importance not only to the people who live there but to all the free world.

The Communists of North Viet-Nam and China are eager to take over this fertile area, not by the type of open aggression used in Korea but by attack from within, by covert aggression through guerrilla warfare, and by infiltrating trained men and arms across national frontiers. Communist success in Laos and South Viet-Nam would gravely threaten the freedom and independence of the rest of Southeast Asia. It would undermine the neutrality of Cambodia, would make Thailand's position practically untenable, would increase the already great pressure on Burma, would place India in jeopardy of being outflanked, would enlarge Communist influence and pressures on Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and would impair the free-world defense position in all of Asia. It would confirm the Asian Communist belief that a policy of militancy pays dividends, and could undermine the will of free peoples on other continents to defend themselves.

That is why we stand firm in Southeast Asia today. And that is why we are determined to keep free men free in Southeast Asia tomorrow and in the years ahead.

## HALF GALLEY FOLS.

# 1½ CET LINO

## THE QUESTIONS

1. What are the origins of our commitment in Viet-Nam?
2. What are the chances of peace in Southeast Asia?
3. What has brought about the present crisis in Viet-Nam?
4. What is our goal in South Viet-Nam?
5. What is the current status of loyalty to the Government and morale in South Viet-Nam?
6. What is the New Rural Life Hamlet Program, and how does it work?
7. What were the provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements, and how have they worked?
8. How does the Communist campaign in Viet-Nam differ from conventional war?
9. What is the latest and most realistic estimate of the military situation in South Viet-Nam?
10. What is the relative strength of the opposing forces in South Viet-Nam?
11. Why do we think, after the French defeat in Viet-Nam, that we have any better chance of success?
12. Isn't the war in South Viet-Nam a civil war and thus no concern of ours?
13. What is meant by "war of national liberation"?
14. How do you account for the fact that the Communists can instill such a strong will to fight in their followers?
15. Are the Vietnamese good soldiers?
16. It has been said that night operations—essential in a guerrilla war—are not being conducted by the Vietnamese forces against the Viet Cong. Is this true?
17. What about charges of brutality against captured Viet Cong by Vietnamese Government troops?
18. What are the casualty figures—killed and injured—in Viet-Nam for Americans and Vietnamese?
19. What is the "South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front"?
20. Why do we say that the U.S. role in Viet-Nam has been to provide advice and equipment, when everyone knows Americans have been fighting and dying in that war for more than 2 years?
21. Why don't American advisers take direct command of Vietnamese units?
22. Why not send U.S. combat units to fight in South Viet-Nam?
23. If the situation gets worse, will American dependents be removed from Viet-Nam?
24. Is it true that the equipment we have supplied to the Government of Viet-Nam and to our own personnel is inadequate and obsolescent?
25. How does the U.S. AID program complement the military effort?



26. What about charges of waste and inefficiency in U.S. aid to Southeast Asia?
27. What about reports that AID funds are being used to import luxury goods such as white sidewall tires?
28. Do the U.S. air strikes against North Viet-Nam's PT boat bases mean we intend to carry the war to North Viet-Nam?
29. Why *not* carry the war to North Viet-Nam?

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## CET—LINO 2

30. Why not end the fighting in South Viet-Nam by neutralization through negotiation?
31. How is the military situation in South Viet-Nam related to that in Laos?
32. What were the terms of the 1962 Geneva agreement on Laos?
33. What happened after the 1962 agreement was signed?
34. What are U.S. aims in Laos?
35. What kind of assistance do we provide to Laos?
36. What has brought about the present sense of crisis in Laos?
37. Why not turn the problem over to the United Nations?

### 1. What are the origins of our commitment in Viet-Nam?

The United States has provided economic, technical, and military assistance to Viet-Nam since 1950. After the Geneva accords of 1954 the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) became the only outside source of military aid for the Vietnamese armed forces. This activity was within the framework of the accords.

The policy behind our assistance was stated in a letter from President Eisenhower to the President of Viet-Nam on October 1, 1954: "The purpose of this offer is to assist the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means."

Our commitment was restated by President Eisenhower in 1959 when he said:

Unassisted, Viet-Nam cannot at this time produce and support the military formations essential to it or, equally important, the morale—the hope, the confidence, the pride—necessary to meet the dual threat of aggression from without and subversion within its borders.

. . . Strategically, South Viet-Nam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. . . . The loss of South Viet-Nam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom.

In 1961 President Kennedy paid tribute to the courage of the Vietnamese people and said:

. . . the United States is determined to help Viet-Nam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist assassins, and build a better life through economic growth.

On June 2, 1964, President Johnson said:

It may be helpful to outline four basic themes that govern our policy in Southeast Asia.

First, America keeps her word.

Second, the issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole.

Third, our purpose is peace.

Fourth, this is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity.

President Johnson went on to say:

... we are bound by solemn commitments to help defend this area against Communist encroachment. We will keep this commitment. In the case of Viet-Nam, our commitment today is just the same as the commitment made by President Eisenhower to President Diem in 1954—a commitment to help these people help themselves.

## **2. What are the chances of peace in Southeast Asia?**

At present they are remote.

The North Vietnamese spearheads of aggression are supported by the Communist regime in Peking, which rules over 700 million people.

Beyond its immediate objective of conquering the South, North Viet-Nam has indicated by its acts and statements that it intends to become master of as much of Southeast Asia as it can. This is clearly evident in Laos, where it supports the Communist Pathet Lao military force with men and equipment.

However, the United States has made it clear that a prescription for peace does exist in Laos and Viet-Nam.

As Secretary Rusk has often said, all that is needed to restore peace in Southeast Asia is for the Communists to live up to the agreements they have already made. All that is needed is for the Communists to stop their aggressions, to go home, to leave their neighbors alone.

## **3. What has brought about the present crisis in Viet-Nam?**

Let us review some recent history.

Under the Geneva agreements in 1954 it was hoped that South Viet-Nam would have the opportunity to build a free nation in peace. The country faced staggering problems—to name only one: the 900,000 refugees who, at the time of partition, had fled homes in the North to escape Communist rule.

President Eisenhower directed that the United States provide help—largely economic. With this assistance South Viet-Nam began to grow and develop. Tangible signs of progress were evident in rice production, transportation, land reform, rubber output, and industrial development.

This confounded the expectations of the Communists in Hanoi, who had expected South Viet-Nam to collapse and fall under their control. In 1957 they reactivated the subversive network they had left south of the 17th parallel after Geneva and began the attempt to bring about the collapse of the South through selective terrorism and sabotage. In 1959 Hanoi announced its campaign of “national liberation” and embarked on an aggressive program of wholesale violations of the Geneva agreements.

In a recent speech Secretary of State Dean Rusk pointed out that in 1959 “no foreign nation had bases or fighting forces in South Viet-Nam. South Viet-Nam was not a member of any alliance. If it was a threat to North Viet-Nam it was because its economy far outshone the vaunted ‘Communist paradise’ to the north.”

## CET—LINO 3

Throughout 1960 and 1961 the situation in South Viet-Nam grew more critical. Over 3,000 civilians, in and out of government, were killed and another 2,500 kidnaped. Infiltration from North Viet-Nam increased. People in many areas came under Viet Cong control and were forced to provide the insurgents with food and recruits. The Viet Cong were able to mount attacks with larger units, up to battalion size.

It was apparent that the International Control Commission set up by the Geneva agreements could not restore peace and that the only effective course of action would be to help the Vietnamese Government resist aggression. At their urgent request U.S. military and economic assistance was substantially increased.

The struggle against the Viet Cong was interrupted in 1963 by internal crises arising from disputes between the Government and the Buddhists, as a result of which President Ngo Dinh Diem lost the confidence of his people. There were accusations of maladministration, nepotism, and injustice. Two coups d'état occurred within 3 months, with inevitable dislocations in administration.

The Viet Cong exploited these disruptions by stepping up the scale of its attacks. There was a wave of killings and terrorist acts. But the new government has moved vigorously and swiftly to reconstruct the machinery of government. With our continued assistance it is taking steps to recover the losses that occurred during the period of the coups.

### 4. What is our goal in South Viet-Nam?

In helping the Republic of Viet-Nam to resist the attack mounted against it, the United States has these goals:

- an end to the fighting and terror in South Viet-Nam;
- preservation of the freedom of the South Vietnamese people to develop according to their own desires, without outside interference and without serving the policy of any other nation;
- establishment of the authority of the Government in Saigon over all the territory south of the 17th parallel.

The Communists charge that the United States seeks to establish a military base in South Viet-Nam. This is false. We have no colonial or territorial aims anywhere in Southeast Asia, nor do we seek any national military advantage such as the establishment of bases. It is the Communists who wish to impose their sterile dictatorships on a free people. Our purpose in Southeast Asia is to frustrate these designs.

### 5. What is the current status of loyalty to the Government and morale in South Viet-Nam?

In some parts of Viet-Nam, especially those controlled by the Communists, loyalty to the Central Government is weak or non-existent and morale is poor. The years of war characterized by Viet Cong terrorist acts aimed at the civilian population have taken their toll. The unpopularity of the Diem government in its final period of rule also adversely affected loyalty and morale.

But elsewhere, where Government forces maintain security and where the economic, social, and administrative programs of the

Central Government show results, the reverse is true. In some areas, where the Communists have been strong, peasant attitudes appear to be turning against the Viet Cong as the latter step up heavy taxation, rigid control, and indiscriminate terrorism and are unable to produce on promises made over a period of years.

Overall it is clear that the key to building morale and loyalty to the Government is physical security. As long as the Viet Cong are able to terrorize the civilian population, morale cannot be expected to be good. But it is quite plain that, given adequate protection from Communist reprisals, the South Vietnamese will support their Government.

#### **6. What is the New Rural Life Hamlet Program, and how does it work?**

The New Rural Life Hamlet Program, like its predecessor, the Strategic Hamlet Program, is designed to bring physical safety and security to the countryside and thus to provide the basic conditions in which economic, political, and social progress can take place. No development plans can succeed as long as the Viet Cong are able to terrorize peasants by hit-and-run raids, murder, and arson. On the other hand, military security alone, unaccompanied by tangible benefits, will not convince the rural population that they should support the Government. Thus the hamlet programs serve the dual purpose of providing physical safety *and* a better life through enhanced government services.



## CET—LINO 4

The typical hamlet has rudimentary fortifications and warning systems. The inhabitants are trained and armed to protect themselves against a Viet Cong attack until reinforcements arrive. As security improves, government services in such fields as health, education, and agriculture are provided, in many cases with the support of U.S. aid programs. Along with security and economic improvements come a new political awareness and loyalty to the Central Government. Hamlet elections are held to choose representative leaders who can give voice to the people's aspirations and who help administer the Government services.

To sum up, the New Rural Life Hamlet Program is a military, political, economic, and social program which serves to focus the efforts and energies of the military and the civil agencies of the Central Government on the rural population.

### **7. What were the provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements and how have they worked?**

The Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam, signed on July 20, 1954, by representatives of France and the Viet Minh, established a truce line at the 17th parallel, the Communists to withdraw to the north, the non-Communists and French to the south. Both sides were to order and enforce a complete end to hostilities, and neither zone was to be used as a military base to resume hostilities or further an aggressive policy. No new troops or military equipment were to be introduced except on a replacement or rotation basis. An International Control Commission (ICC) was created to supervise the truce.

The United States, though not a party to the agreement, declared on July 21 that it would refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb it and would view any renewal of aggression "with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."

A separate declaration of the conference stated that the truce line should not be considered permanent and called for nationwide elections in 2 years under the supervision of the ICC.

The Communists assumed South Viet-Nam would quickly collapse and come under the domination of Hanoi. They rightly considered that the provision for elections would work in their favor since they possessed ironclad control over the more populous northern zone and could insure that the people in the North would vote as directed.

In case the South neither collapsed nor fell to the North through elections, the Communists left thousands of arms and ammunition caches hidden in the South, along with large numbers of Viet Minh military personnel under orders to go underground until they were needed. These actions demonstrate their contempt for the Geneva agreements from the very beginning.

Complete independence from France did not come to South Viet-Nam until well after the conference. The basic decision on the form and leadership of the new Government was taken in a referendum on October 23, 1955. The country was declared a republic, and national elections were held on March 4, 1956, for a Constituent Assembly, which was transformed into a National Assembly after promulgation of the constitution it drafted.

By 1956 South Viet-Nam had thus established itself as a free republic determined to resist outside pressures and follow its own course. Government statements made between July 1954, when the Geneva accords were concluded, and July 1956, the date specified for the holding of elections, made it clear that South Viet-Nam did not regard itself obliged to take part in elections that were not free and would thus greatly favor the North. The inability of the ICC to enforce other parts of the Geneva accords showed that adequate con-

ditions for free elections could not be assured in the North. Under such circumstances, South Viet-Nam refused to agree to elections which could only result in its absorption into a totalitarian state.

#### **8. How does the Communist campaign in Viet-Nam differ from conventional war?**

- Communist aggression in Viet-Nam aims at people primarily, not territory or military targets, though in support of this aim there is constant Viet Cong military action against Government forces.
- The Communist weapons are murder, arson, sabotage, random bombings, and torture—aimed at terrorizing the civilian population and destroying the structure of Government and back-stopped by well-equipped conventional forces capable of up to regimental-size operations.
- The Viet Cong uses political and propaganda techniques to supplement and pave the way for military action.
- It concentrates on peasants and their villages, in an effort to undermine morale and loyalty to the Government.
- The Communists use assassination as a weapon to damage the social structure of the nation, killing school teachers, health workers, local administrators, and key officials.

This new type of aggression is harder to recognize and harder to combat than conventional warfare. It seeks to destroy a country from within, a more insidious but no less effective method of waging war than conquest by visible military force. In the case of South Viet-Nam it seeks to destroy the legitimate Government and social institutions and replace them with the total control on which Hanoi's brand of communism relies.

#### **9. What is the latest and most realistic estimate of the military situation in South Viet-Nam?**

The military situation in South Viet-Nam deteriorated from mid-1963 until early this year. In recent months it appears to have stabilized. While the overthrow of the Diem regime brought a measure of national unity, it also disrupted administration and military operations. Control of the countryside was reduced and some territory was lost to the Viet Cong—losses now in the process of being recouped.

Both sides have shown improvement in their ability to conduct both large- and small-scale operations, including ambushes. While the Viet Cong still concentrate on propaganda and acts of terrorism, they can also mount highly effective actions of battalion size and larger.

## CET—LINO 6

Government forces have sustained a high rate of casualties, a further indication of their willingness to take risks under fire. The many examples of individual Vietnamese heroism are too numerous to mention.

To be sure, there have been some instances of poor unit or individual performance—as in all armies. But these are exceptions. The Vietnamese are fighting to protect their homeland and their families. Overall, and especially in regions near their homes, Vietnamese soldiers have proven themselves to be skilled and courageous fighters.

**16. It has been said that night operations—essential in a guerrilla war—are not being conducted by the Vietnamese forces against the Viet Cong. Is this true?**

Failure to conduct night operations, especially of the small unit size necessary for effective antiguerrilla warfare, was a serious shortcoming of the Government military forces under the Diem regime.

The present leadership recognizes that night operations are essential, and they are being undertaken by the Vietnamese regular and paramilitary forces with increasing frequency and effectiveness.

**17. What about charges of brutality by the Vietnamese Government troops?**

There have been several widely publicized allegations along these lines. While it must be recognized that occasionally regrettable incidents do occur in combating an enemy who uses carefully planned murder, terror, and atrocities—particularly against civilians—as his own standard weapons, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the Governments of the United States and Viet-Nam condemn such actions.

**18. What are the casualty figures—killed and injured—in Viet-Nam for Americans and Vietnamese?**

From January 1, 1961, through August 10, 1964, 181 American military personnel have been killed in action in Viet-Nam and over 900 have been wounded. There have also been 84 deaths from noncombat causes.

In the last 5 years almost 20,000 South Vietnamese military have been killed, over 12,000 captured, and over 35,000 wounded.

During 1963, South Vietnamese civilian casualties resulting from Communist terrorist acts totaled 17,710, broken down as follows:

Assassinated	
Civilian population.....	1,558
Local governmental officials.....	415
Civil servants.....	100
Injured.....	8,375
Kidnaped.....	7,262

**19. What is the "South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front"?**

This organization was created in December 1960 by North Viet-Nam to provide a facade of political organization for their campaign of armed subversion of South Viet-Nam. It is unabashedly controlled from Hanoi. Its leadership is not well known in South Viet-Nam and includes none of the real opposition politicians who were out of government or in exile during the Diem years. What political support it has rests largely on fear and force of arms. Its purpose is to serve as a "popular front" for the Viet Cong, and to this end it conducts extensive propaganda both at home and abroad. Its broadcasts and publications depict the United States as a colonialist power, the South Viet-Nam Government as dictatorial, and the Hanoi regime as representing the true government of all Viet-Nam. The front advocates an end to the fighting through neutralization and the "peaceful reunification" of the country.

**20. Why do we say that the U.S. role in Viet-Nam has been to provide advice and equipment, when everyone knows Americans have been fighting and dying in that war for more than 2 years?**

The United States has been the primary supplier of advisers and equipment to South Viet-Nam since 1954. Not until 1961, however, when the security situation became more critical, were U.S. advisers placed at the battalion level of Vietnamese military units and allowed to accompany the units on operations. This step greatly increased the advisers' usefulness because they could demonstrate techniques and could observe and point out shortcomings at first hand. It also exposed them to Viet Cong fire.

At the same time a U.S. Air Force unit was sent to Viet-Nam to assist the Vietnamese Air Force with combat training and in developing new techniques and equipment for use against the Communist insurgents. In addition, U.S. pilots now ferry Vietnamese soldiers to combat locations by helicopter and other types of aircraft. These roles have also brought Americans into the line of fire.

It should be stressed that the Vietnamese bear the heavy brunt of casualties. But there is no question that our involvement in this war requires the kind of exposure that risks American lives.

**21. Why don't American advisers take direct command of Vietnamese units?**

The Republic of Viet-Nam is a sovereign country and, as such, has full responsibility for the command of its own military forces. U.S. personnel work closely with their Vietnamese counterparts, giving advice and assistance of various kinds. For them to give the actual commands would not change the operational situation significantly, since Vietnamese officers provide courageous, capable leadership. It would also raise two serious difficulties.

First, for U.S. officers to take command of Vietnamese units would be to put us in the position of the French. It would smack of colonialism. It would damage the Vietnamese will to fight for themselves and would be vigorously and profitably exploited in Viet Cong propaganda.

## CET—LINO 7

Second, it would aggravate the language problem, since Vietnamese enlisted men do not speak English or French, and not enough U.S. advisers speak fluent Vietnamese. Attempting to command field operations with the aid of interpreters would be cumbersome and unsatisfactory. The training, advice, and support functions are well handled since the language problem is much less serious at the officer level.

### **22. Why not send U.S. combat units to fight in South Viet-Nam?**

The military problem facing the armed forces of South Viet-Nam at this time is not primarily one of manpower. Basically it is a problem of acquiring training, equipment, skills, and organization suited to combating the type of aggression that menaces their country. Our assistance is designed to supply these requirements.

The Viet Cong use terrorism and armed attack as well as propaganda. The Government forces must respond decisively on all appropriate levels, tasks that can best be handled by Vietnamese. U.S. combat units would face several obvious disadvantages in a guerrilla war situation of this type in which knowledge of terrain, language, and local customs is especially important. In addition, their introduction would provide ammunition for Communist propaganda which falsely proclaims that the United States is conducting a "white man's war" against Asians.

### **23. If the situation gets worse, will American dependents be removed from Viet-Nam?**

The decision on whether dependents come to or remain in Viet-Nam is up to each individual family, assuming that housing is available. In the case of military personnel, only a limited number are authorized to bring their dependents. There are now approximately 1,600 U.S. dependents in Viet-Nam, about half of whom are military dependents. At present no change is contemplated in the policy of individual choice.

### **24. Is it true that the equipment we have supplied to the Government of Viet-Nam and to our own personnel is inadequate and obsolescent?**

Definitely not. From the start of our stepped-up involvement in Viet-Nam the highest possible priority has been given to requests for supplies and equipment from our personnel there and from Vietnamese forces, in terms of both quality and quantity. The equipment supplied has been in excellent condition and, in every case, represented what was required for the situation.

It had to be suited to the nature of the Viet Cong threat and the geographical environment, and such needs are not always best satisfied by the most modern equipment in U.S. service inventories. For example, while the standard rifle in the U.S. Army is the M-14, the M-1 has proven adequate in Viet-Nam. The smaller Vietnamese



also make good use of the lighter and older carbines. Our latest jet aircraft are less suitable for use in Viet-Nam than are propeller aircraft, which can be used on shorter, less developed runways on which jet aircraft cannot operate. The propeller airplanes are also better suited to the flying experience of the Vietnamese pilots and easier for the ground crews to service.

On the other hand, much of the equipment sent to Viet-Nam is of the most advanced type, where this is the best for the purpose. An example is the new M-113 armored personnel carriers, which have helped provide an important mobility advantage over the Viet Cong.

#### **25. How does the U.S. AID program complement the military effort?**

U.S. assistance to Viet-Nam is organized to take account of the close relationship between political and military measures in this war.

In each of the 42 mainland provinces of South Viet-Nam a United States military advisory group and AID (Agency for International Development) representative work together to provide advice and assistance to the Vietnamese province chief. Members of the AID mission help bring prompt social and economic benefits to villagers as soon as Vietnamese military forces, in many cases assisted by U.S. advisers, have cleared an area of Viet Cong guerrillas. Initially, relief supplies are provided to families who have suffered from Communist attack or have moved their homes into defended villages. As security is restored, American aid helps provide the villagers with the means to better their lives with a broad variety of programs, including medical, education, agriculture, transportation, well digging, channel dredging, road building, food distribution, and communications.

Because aid is distributed jointly with the Vietnamese Government, these programs have the additional benefit of helping forge administrative links between the villages and the central government in Saigon.

## CET—LINO 8

### **26. What about charges of waste and inefficiency in U.S. aid to Southeast Asia?**

Through years of bitter fighting against the Communist Viet Cong, American economic aid has helped South Viet-Nam and Laos to stay afloat and to mount a resistance that still denies most of the area to the Communists.

Both AID and military assistance personnel have lost their lives to Viet Cong guerrillas and terrorists. The Viet Cong have spared no effort in their attempt to sever the AID lifeline. Supply trains are regularly ambushed or derailed. Snipers ambush malaria control spray teams. Relief supplies must be airlifted to refugees in areas where road transport is absent or too dangerous. AID technicians, seeking to improve the lives of villagers, work and live, like the villagers, in village hamlets that are ringed with sharpened bamboo stakes to guard against Viet Cong attack.

Recently there have been allegations in this country that some economic aid to Viet-Nam and Laos has been wasted or not used efficiently. Some of these charges are false. Some are perfectly true. All of the information in these allegations was known to the AID because it comes from the AID's own investigative and auditing records. Obviously, administering an assistance program under what are essentially wartime conditions is a very different matter from supervising a normal program of assistance. However, the agency has never let these conditions justify a slackening in its audit and supervisory activities.

Very simply, an aid program that is the active operating tool and the lifeline of a counterinsurgency effort in a country at war is not a loan from the bank and cannot be audited the same way.

### **27. What about reports that AID funds are being used to import luxury goods such as white sidewall tires?**

The use of AID funds for such imports is forbidden. AID takes several steps to see that, if such purchases are attempted, the U.S. taxpayer does not pay for them. At congressional direction the purchase of AID-financed goods must be carried out, as far as possible, through private commercial channels. This means that AID prescribes what may be purchased, but the actual purchase is carried out by local importers dealing directly with U.S. exporters. To verify that regulations are followed, AID conducts a complete postaudit of all transactions. When any illegal transactions such as the above are discovered, an immediate claim for refund is made and the refunds are collected from the host government. Recent audits have shown a record of better than 98-percent compliance with AID regulations, which is evidence of the degree to which field supervision has been effective.

### **28. Do the U.S. air strikes against North Viet-Nam's PT boat bases mean we intend to carry the war to North Viet-Nam?**

No. That action was limited in scale and purpose. Its only targets were the weapons and facilities which were used to attack U.S. vessels on the high seas. Its sole intent was to make it unmistakably clear that the United States will not tolerate aggression against its naval forces in international waters and that we will not be deterred by such attacks from discharging our obligations to friendly nations seeking to defend their independence against Communist attack.

### **29. Why not carry the war to North Viet-Nam?**

This course of action—its implications and ways of carrying it out—is under continuing study. Whatever ultimate course of action may be forced upon us by the other side, it is clear that actions outside of South Viet-Nam would be only a supplement to, not a substitute for, progress within South Viet-Nam's own borders.

This conflict within South Viet-Nam must be pursued with the greatest possible vigor and with all possible U.S. support. Wider action is not excluded, but wider action must proceed alongside progress within South Viet-Nam itself if it is undertaken. The main task in South Viet-Nam is to defeat the Communist Viet Cong guerrillas and to establish the authority of the government over all South Viet-Nam.

Any decision to expand the war must take full account of all possible consequences of such action and its implications for the whole of Southeast Asia. As President Johnson said on June 23, 1964:

The United States intends no rashness and seeks no wider war. But the United States is determined to use its strength to help those who are defending themselves against terror and aggression. We are a people of peace—but not of weakness or timidity.

### **30. Why not end the fighting in South Viet-Nam by neutralization through negotiation?**

What is meant by "neutralization"? If it means that South Viet-Nam is to be permitted to develop in peace according to its own wishes, free of interference or control by outside forces, then a solution is indeed at hand. It was spelled out in the 1954 Geneva accords. The fighting in South Viet-Nam is the result of the Government's effort to defend the country against the Communists' rampant violations of the negotiated settlement. Peace can come to South Viet-Nam if the Hanoi authorities and their agents, the Viet Cong, end their aggression and observe the terms of the agreement that was signed 10 years ago.

But the kind of "neutralization" advocated by North Viet-Nam and its puppet organization, the "National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam," plainly means something else. Under their formula all outside assistance to South Viet-Nam would end, despite the fact that it comes at the request of the Government. Negotiations would take place for the reunification of all Viet-Nam, and the absorption of the South into the North, an outcome long aimed at by Viet Cong terrorist tactics, would result.

Neutralization is a two-way street. In the context of current world affairs it requires a severing of ties with both sides of the struggle between communism and freedom. In repeated public statements North Viet-Nam has specifically rejected neutralization for itself. Its aim in advocating neutralization illustrates the Communist maxim "What's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable."

## CET—LINO 9

There is no reason to think that a new agreement to guarantee South Viet-Nam's independence and neutrality would be effective. The Communist authorities in Hanoi and Peiping signed such an agreement for Laos at the 1962 Geneva conference. They have demonstrated no more respect for this document than for the 1954 Geneva agreement.

Nor is there any realistic prospect that a united Viet-Nam would be non-Communist or "Titoist." First of all, the Hanoi regime still maintains strong external ambitions in regard to neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. It is militantly Communist. Moreover, for much of its history the area of Viet-Nam has been under Chinese domination. Most of the North Vietnamese top leaders have been trained in China, and there is little likelihood that they would turn away from the Peiping regime even if they could. The prospect that a united Viet-Nam under Hanoi's control would sever ties with Communist China and follow an independent course is quite unlikely.

### **31. How is the military situation in South Viet-Nam related to that in Laos?**

There is unmistakable and indisputable evidence that the North Viet-Nam government provides direction and support to the Communist forces in both Laos and South Viet-Nam. The Hanoi regime aids the Viet Cong in South Viet-Nam with large numbers of military specialists, vital supplies and equipment, and key communications facilities. Much of the personnel and materiel moves into South Viet-Nam over the so-called "Ho Chi Minh Trail," which runs through eastern Laos. The Communist forces in Laos—the Pathet Lao—are supported in similar fashion, as well as by full combat units of the North Vietnamese army.

### **32. What were the terms of the 1962 Geneva agreement on Laos?**

A Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos and a Protocol to the Declaration were signed at Geneva in July 1962. They stated that Laos would be independent and neutral. All foreign military personnel were to withdraw within 75 days, except a limited number of French instructors requested by the Lao Government. No arms were to be brought in except at the request of the Lao Government. The 14 signatories, who included Communist China, Communist North Viet-Nam, and the Soviet Union, agreed to respect the territorial integrity and to refrain "from all direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs" of Laos and from the use of Lao territory to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. An International Control Commission was set up to assure compliance with the agreement. All signatories promised to support a three-faction neutralist coalition government under Prince Souvanna Phouma.

### **33. What happened after the 1962 agreement was signed?**

We withdrew all 666 of our military adviser personnel from Laos. The Pathet Lao allowed several thousand North Vietnamese military combat men to remain—these are the backbone of almost every Pathet Lao battalion. Later, additional North Vietnamese troops returned to Laos—many of them in organized battalions. The North Vietnamese have continued to use the corridor through Laos to reinforce and supply the Viet Cong in South Viet-Nam.

The Royal Lao Government opened the areas under its control to access by all Lao factions and by the International Control Commission. The Communists have denied access to the areas they control not only to other Lao groups, including the Prime Minister, but to the International Control Commission. They have fired at personnel and aircraft on legitimate missions under the authority of the Royal Lao Government.

In short, the non-Communist elements have made every effort to comply with and support the agreement; the Communist elements have persistently undercut and frustrated it.

#### **34. What are U.S. aims in Laos?**

We want in Laos what the Laotian people want for themselves—that they be left alone to live in peace. This is what was provided in the Geneva agreements. The signatories to those agreements pledged themselves to withdraw their forces from Laos, which was to remain independent and neutral. If those agreements had been treated as more than paper pledges by Communist North Viet-Nam, Laos would not be troubled by war today.

Laos is a divided country with little national cohesion and with strong ethnic and cultural differences among its people. Moreover, it shares a long border with China. Under these circumstances the 1962 Geneva settlement provided an appropriate framework to remove Laos from the stage of big power confrontation and to maintain its neutrality.

#### **35. What kind of assistance do we provide to Laos?**

We are giving substantial economic and technical assistance under AID programs. These include agricultural, health, educational, public works, rural development, and other projects. We also assist large numbers of refugees dislocated as a result of Pathet Lao aggression. Our economic aid meets basic needs of the Lao Government and people and helps to offset the heavy defense burden they must bear in response to Communist aggressiveness. To help control inflation and promote economic stability we contribute to a multilateral stabilization fund and help finance a commodity import program.

At the request of the Lao Government and in accord with the Geneva agreements we are providing small arms, artillery, ammunition, and other equipment and supplies, as well as training abroad and logistical support, to the Royal Lao Army and to the neutralist forces which help uphold Premier Souvanna Phouma's Government of National Union. We have also helped the Laotians create a small air force having primarily a transportation function. We have provided T-28 propeller airplanes to assist in defending against the new Communist attacks.



## CET—LINO 10

### **36. What has brought about the present sense of crisis in Laos?**

Early this spring the Communist Pathet Lao began to build up their forces near the Plaine des Jarres, a key plateau area in Laos held by the neutralist forces headed by Gen. Kong Le. In early May the Pathet Lao, supported by North Vietnamese units (Viet Minh), launched a heavy assault on Kong Le's forces, driving him and his troops off positions on the Plaine des Jarres where they had been since well before the 1962 Geneva agreement. The Pathet Lao have continued their military buildup, Viet Minh units remain in Laos, and the Viet Cong continues to receive reinforcements and supplies via the Ho Chi Minh trail through eastern Laos.

In April Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma took part in a meeting of the three factions aimed at ironing out some of the problems in Laos. The Communists deliberately broke up the meeting by insisting their demands be accepted without change. Faced with this evidence of bad faith Prince Souvanna announced his intention to resign. This precipitated an attempted seizure of power by a group of conservative military leaders in Vientiane. We opposed this action and called for the restoration of the conditions required by the Geneva agreement and support for Souvanna. The attempted coup was ended and Prince Souvanna remained as head of government. But the Communists promptly seized on this episode as a pretext for their long-planned military assault.

These Communist actions show utter disrespect for the 1962 Geneva agreement. They also raise the danger that the Pathet Lao will continue their aggressive conduct, refuse to cooperate with the legitimate Government, and try to establish themselves on the Mekong River and the Thai border.

### **37. Why not turn the problem over to the United Nations?**

The United Nations has been involved in Southeast Asia in a variety of ways. In 1959 the Security Council sent a commission to Laos. A U.N. representative has been working for some time on the border problems between Cambodia and Thailand. In 1963 the General Assembly sent a mission of inquiry to look into alleged violations of human rights in Viet-Nam.

In June 1964 the United States proposed in the Security Council that a U.N. force of perhaps 1,200 men should police the tense Cambodian-Vietnamese border, but there was not sufficient support for that kind of operation. Instead, a commission of three members was named to examine this border situation and to make recommendations.

Hanoi and Peiping condemned even this limited U.N. involvement in the Vietnamese situation. The Communist Viet Cong said

they could not guarantee the safety of this commission and would not accept its findings.

U.N. peacekeeping forces can be extremely useful, but they work best when the parties to a dispute are willing to work out and agree to a peaceful settlement. Such a settlement was spelled out in the 1954 Geneva accords, which have been persistently and flagrantly violated by the Viet Cong and their masters in Hanoi.

It would be very difficult for the United Nations to play an effective peacekeeping role in the present situation of active hostilities, guerrilla attacks, and widespread terrorism. The United Nations lacks the enormous resources that would be necessary. And it is highly unlikely that such an involvement would be approved by the Security Council.

Nevertheless, as it has in many other instances, the United Nations has served as a useful forum in which the United States has been able to bring to world attention the aggressive acts of the Communist powers in Asia. It was there, before the Security Council, for example, that U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson spelled out for all the world to see the story of Hanoi's recent attack on two U.S. warships.

We do not oppose a U.N. role in Southeast Asia. But talk of turning the problem over to the United Nations ignores the hard realities of the situation and should not be permitted to serve as a way to avoid our own responsibilities.

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~~"Paper on Viet-Nam"~~

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

South Viet-Nam is fighting for its life. Communist guerrillas are waging a brutal campaign on a nationwide scale to terrorize and ultimately to seize control of the country.

The communist campaign is being directed and supported and its commanders are sent in from North Viet-Nam. The Hanoi regime has publicly ~~stated~~ <sup>made clear</sup> its intention to take over the South by force.

Neighboring Laos is being used against its will as a supply route and staging area for the aggression against South Viet-Nam, while Viet Minh (North Vietnamese) troops take part in attacks on Laotian government forces.

Cruelly bled by a decade of violence but determined to remain their own masters, the people of South Viet-Nam through their government have appealed to friendly countries for help -- above all to the United States, as the leading power in the free world.

This help has been forthcoming. Today, with the tempo of the struggle increasing, there are XX,000 Americans, civilian and military, helping the Vietnamese on the spot. Our effort there to date has cost more than XX American lives, as well as very substantial sums of money. Aid on a smaller scale has been provided by XXXXX other countries.

The question is raised, and rightly: "Why should the United States be involved in Viet-Nam? What compelling national interest have we there? What are we trying to accomplish -- and can it be done?"

These questions, and the answers, concern us all.

The Issue

The Issue Is Global

It would be easy to note that Viet-Nam is small and distant, and to conclude that its fate need not concern us. But similar logic, applied to Czechoslovakia, led to Munich and the second World War.

The larger fact about South Viet-Nam is that it is a free and peace-minded nation under unprovoked attack by a communist aggressor. It has been a cardinal point of U. S. foreign policy since 1947 to help free nations resist communist attack.

This policy is basic to our national security. History makes abundantly plain that failure to meet and repel one aggression only serves to hasten others. To fail to meet a communist assault in one remote corner of the globe would only lead to new attacks, perhaps closer to home. ~~[Sooner or later the communist leaders, emboldened by success, would move against other important interests of this country -- and we would face a choice between surrender and nuclear war.]~~

To prevent the gradual and piecemeal destruction of free world strength this country has chosen to meet each communist offensive at the outset, before it gains momentum and spreads. It was for this purpose that the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed in 1947 and our aid extended to threatened Greece and Turkey. It was for this purpose that our troops were committed in South Korea in 1950. It was for this purpose that our military alliances were formed around the world, and U. S. forces maintained in Western Europe and Berlin.

The form of aggression mounted by the North against South Viet-Nam is new and insidious, for it is hard to expose and to combat. The communists

call

call it a "war of national liberation", meaning a popular revolt against foreign rulers. In fact there is neither popular revolt nor foreign rule, but a campaign of organized savagery, directed by ~~some~~ Hanoi-trained personnel, bent on destroying government and social order and substituting a communist regime. ~~Common accurate term is "war of national liberation" which is "war of communist imperialism".~~

This new type of aggression is all the more serious because it is intended for use throughout the new and less-developed countries of the world. If the technique succeeds in Viet-Nam, it will be applied wherever circumstances are favorable; there will be not one Viet-Nam, but many.

Our goal in helping South Viet-Nam is simple. It is the restoration of law and order. It is the freedom of the South Vietnamese people to live their lives and build their nation in peace, and in their own way, serving no national policy but their own.

And it is to show the communist strategists in Hanoi, as well as those in Peiping, that the United States and the free world are still both able and willing to protect their vital interests, whatever the threat.

The challenge lies in Viet-Nam, but the issue is global.

The Communists have charged that America aims at establishing a military base in Viet-Nam and at overthrowing the Geneva Accords--charges so patently false that any examination of the historical record gives Hanoi the lie. Because misconceptions and deliberate distortions have blurred the United States' objectives and role in Viet-Nam, however, it

is



is worthwhile at this time to review the record of the United States' commitment in Viet-Nam.

\* \* \* \*

Political Settlement - 1954

In 1954 France lost a costly, nine-year war to maintain its influence in Indochina. During the second World War the independence movement in Viet-Nam had been captured to a large extent by leaders of the Indochina Communist Party. Led by Ho Chi Minh, the communists removed some rival nationalist leaders by betrayal and assassination and deceived others by disguising the real nature of the Viet-Minh. By 1954 the French were fighting a Communist-led movement that had been largely re-equipped with weapons from Communist China, while a large part of the anti-communist Vietnamese population sat on the sidelines because of the failure of the French to grant the Vietnamese full responsibility over their own affairs.

On May 7, 1954, the Viet-Minh captured the French fortified camp at Dien Bien Phu, a major disaster that precipitated the collapse of the French military effort in Indochina.

*INSERT A - 4a - which is following page.*  
~~The Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet Nam, signed on July 20, 1954 by representatives of France and the Viet-Minh.~~ It provided for a truce line at the Seventeenth Parallel, the Communists to withdraw into the northern zone and non-Communists and French forces into the southern. No new troops or military equipment, except on a replacement or rotation basis, were to be introduced into *either zone.* ~~the country.~~ The two parties were to order and enforce a complete end to hostilities. Neither zone was to be used as a military base to resume hostilities or further

INSERT A

- 4a -

At a conference of Foreign Ministers in Berlin January 25-February 18, 1954, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union had agreed to the convening of a conference at Geneva in April for the settlement of Far Eastern problems. In the event, the Geneva Conference began May 8, the day after the fall of Dien Bien Phu. Besides the Four Powers, the conference included representatives of North and South Viet-Nam, Communist China, Cambodia, and Laos. The Geneva Conference resulted in a series of agreements on a general cease-fire in Indochina, one of which was the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam, signed on July 20 by representatives of France and the Viet-Minh.

further an aggressive policy. An International Control Commission, chaired by the Indian representative and including members from Canada and Poland, was established to supervise the truce and the carrying-out of the provisions of the Agreement.

The Agreement was clearly meant to bring about a cessation of all hostilities in Viet-Nam <sup>as well as non-interference by either zone of Viet-Nam</sup> ~~in order that solutions to the manifold problems facing the country could be worked out by the Vietnamese themselves, in peace.~~ In reality, however, the Communists assumed South Viet-Nam would collapse quickly and come under the domination of Hanoi. A provision in the final declaration of the Geneva Conference called for nation-wide elections in two years, under the supervision of <sup>members of</sup> the I.C.C.

*Makes no sense*  
The Communists rightly considered that the election provision would work in their favor, as <sup>they possessed</sup> iron-clad control over the northern half of the country and could assume that the population in the North <sup>which constitutes the majority</sup> ~~of the North~~ would vote as directed. In case the South neither collapsed nor fell to the North through elections, however, the Viet Minh left thousands of hidden arms and ammunition dumps in the South, and a large number of Viet Minh military personnel went underground pending orders to resume military activity-- a form of insurance the Communists undoubtedly considered necessary, but which demonstrated their contempt for the Geneva Agreement from the very beginning.

The United States, although not a party to the Agreement, declared on July 21 that it would refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb it, and would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the Geneva Accords "with grave concern and as <sup>so</sup> seriously threatening international peace and security." It was apparent ~~that~~ that the French withdrawal

*of the Viet-Nam population*

withdrawal had left South Viet-Nam weak and extremely vulnerable, and that the Agreement on Viet-Nam did not provide adequate safeguards for non-interference by the North in South Viet-Nam. Therefore, it fell primarily to the United States, to help preserve what remained of freedom in Viet-Nam, and to assist a war-torn land possessed of virtually none of the means of government to establish itself as a nation.

To bolster the security of the region, and as a deterrent against Communist aggression, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization was formed, consisting of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States. This regional organization came into being as a result of the Manila Pact, signed on September 8, 1954; a protocol to the Pact extended its protective umbrella over the newly independent states of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.

Establishment of the Republic of Viet-Nam

Two weeks before the Geneva Accords were concluded a new cabinet was formed in the State of Viet-Nam, at the request of the Chief of State, Prince Bao Dai. The cabinet was headed by Ngo Dinh Diem. Born into a mandarin family in Hue, Central Viet-Nam, in 1901, Diem had a long and honorable record in administrative posts within the French colonial structure. In 1933 Diem resigned his portfolio in the cabinet of Bao Dai, convinced that France would never modify its rule, and spent the next twenty years working for the overthrow of the French. Having several times refused to rejoin a cabinet under Bao Dai unless it offered an opportunity to work for real independence for Viet-Nam, Diem was finally asked to

asked to form a Government on his own terms, including full civil and military power delegated by the Chief of State. He took office on July 7, 1954.

The record of the Diem Government in the early years was an honorable one, and its accomplishments are the more significant because they were achieved over obstacles that were generally considered insuperable. Some 860,000 refugees fled from Communist North Viet-Nam to the South, taking advantage of the three hundred-day period of free movement from one zone to the other stipulated in the Geneva Accords. The Diem Government was faced with the necessity of feeding, clothing, housing, and integrating them into the community. Another million persons had fled from the countryside into the cities during the war. The civil bureaucracy and national army, led by the French during the war, were disorganized and incapable of constructive activity. The lack of political unity was dramatized by the existence of private armies maintained by two religious sects in open revolt against Premier Diem. The National Police was controlled by a dissident criminal syndicate, the Binh ~~Xuyen~~<sup>Xuyen</sup>. The economy was shattered, and funds for day-to-day operation of the government were virtually nonexistent.

The United States had assisted Viet-Nam since 1950 through a Special Technical and Economic Mission working through the French as middlemen, although some economic aid was furnished directly to Vietnam prior to the Geneva Conference. Following the Geneva Conference, President Eisenhower wrote to Diem on October 1, 1954 offering to aid the new government. In January 1955 the United States began to deal directly with the Vietnamese authorities on all aspects of military and economic assistance.

After



After the Geneva Conference the immediate task facing South Vietnam was to meet the needs of the refugees, and skilled United States advice and financial assistance enabled Diem's government to provide the refugees with relief services and to plan their integration into the national life and economy. The Commissariat General for Refugees became a model for the rest of the bureaucracy, and provided inspiration for the government to act vigorously in other areas.

By mid-1955 Diem had succeeded in greatly reducing the ~~military~~ <sup>threat of</sup> ~~capabilities of the religious sects,~~ <sup>the private armies</sup> and had decisively defeated the Binh Xuyen armed forces who had made a last stand in Saigon-Cholon in April. Moves by some military commanders to use elements of the national army for their own ends were thwarted, and faced with the continued dangers of fragmentation in the South, the army swung behind Diem.

A major Diem accomplishment was the achievement of complete independence from France, a complex and slow process by which authority in many fields had to be transferred from the French administration. (The French Military High Command in Viet-Nam was not dissolved until April, 1956).

The basic decision on the form and leadership of the new government in South Viet-Nam was decided by a nation-wide referendum on October 23, 1955. The Vietnamese people chose Ngo Dinh Diem as the new Chief of State, replacing Emperor Bao Dai. Diem proclaimed the country a republic three days later. National elections were held on March 4, 1956 for a Constituent Assembly, which was transformed into a National Assembly the following October after promulgation of the Constitution it had drafted.

Since

Since 1950, under agreements with France and the three Indochinese States, the United States had been assisting and providing equipment for the national army of Viet-Nam. A United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.), had functioned prior to the conclusion of the Accords, and after 1954 it became the only outside source of training and assistance for the Vietnamese Armed Forces. From this time the United States provided most of the equipment for regular Vietnamese forces. All of this activity in the military field was within the framework established by the Geneva Accords.

By 1956, the Vietnamese had thus established a free republic determined to resist outside pressures and follow its own course. Government statements made between July , 1954 when the Geneva Accords were concluded and July, 1956, the date specified in the "Final Declaration" of the Geneva Conference for the holding of elections, made it clear that South Viet-Nam was not willing to submit its future to elections that could not possibly be free in the North. There is no question but that the firm control apparatus in the North would have put the South at a fatal disadvantage, and the United States supported the South Vietnamese position on the practical grounds that a country can hardly be expected to acquiesce in its own dissolution.

By 1956 forty countries had recognized the young Republic of Viet-Nam, a number of them offering technical and economic assistance. The future for South Viet-Nam was bright.

#### Economic Development in Peace

During the period it was allowed to develop its economy and institutions in relative peace, South Viet-Nam accomplished much. With economic

assistance

assistance primarily from the United States, the nation turned to raising the living standards of its people. The annual rice crop -- staple of the Vietnamese diet, and the backbone of the predominantly agricultural economy -- reached the average pre-war level of 3.5 million metric tons of paddy in 1959, and advanced sharply in 1960 to almost 5 million metric tons. South Viet-Nam is a traditional rice exporter but <sup>by 1956</sup> rice exports had fallen to an insignificant 24 metric tons. By 1960 government development efforts had raised rice exports to over 340,000 metric tons. During the same period the production of rubber, the primary foreign exchange earner of the Vietnamese economy, rose above pre-war levels. A land reform program gave title to a plot of land to about 121,000 families in South Viet-Nam, and new lands were opened to agricultural exploitation in mountainous regions where only primitive slash-and-burn culture had existed. The National Railway running some 700 miles from Saigon to the Seventeenth Parallel was rebuilt, and the repair of old roads and construction of new ones opened unexploited territories and increased marketing opportunities.

The development of small and medium manufacturing plants began to put the Republic of Viet-Nam on the road to self-sufficiency.

Lacking the coal formerly transported from North Viet-Nam the South increased coal production from its own mines in Central Viet-Nam. Under a reparations program Japan helped begin construction of a large hydro-electric project on the Da Nhim river which, when completed, will more than double the present national electric power capacity.

In seven

In seven years school enrollment in South Viet-Nam tripled from about 500,000 in 1954-55 to about 1,500,000 in 1961-62. In the same period, the number of primary teachers employed by the Government more than tripled, from 30,000 in 1954 to over 90,000 in 1961. In the year 1959-60 alone, the Government used its own resources to construct 12,000 new primary classrooms, and the United States aided in building another 250.

In the field of public health, a malaria eradication program begun in 1959 with the help both of the United States and the World Health Organization sprayed more than two million houses throughout the country, until the Viet Cong drastically reduced the scale of the program by deliberate attacks on malaria spray teams. More than 3,000 public aid stations, maternity clinics, and dispensaries were established to supplement the woefully small number of doctors in the country.

These developments in South Viet-Nam should have been encouraging to all friends of peace, and particularly to those powers who worked at Geneva for a viable settlement of the Indochina situation. As Secretary of State Dean Rusk said in a speech in New York last January, in 1959 "no foreign nation had bases or fighting forces in South Viet-Nam. South Viet-Nam was not a member of any alliance. If it was a threat to North Viet-Nam, it was because its economy far outshone the vaunted 'communist paradise' to the North".

In contrast to progress in the South, the record in the "Democratic Republic" north of the Seventeenth Parallel by 1957 was at a low point. The Communist land reform program was copied from the Chinese model.

Adhering

Adhering blindly to an ideological framework that did not match realities in North Viet-Nam -- where land ownership, even under the French, had been broadly based among the peasantry -- the Hanoi leadership sought deliberately to create classes in the countryside and instigate class warfare. Only by organizing the population into a set of highly subjective categories, based on party theory, was the regime able to create the fiction of a landlord class in a country <sup>where</sup> one had hardly existed. Harsh "Special People's Courts", run by young Communist officials <sup>in agricultural affairs, were organized in villages</sup> with little or no training <sup>where</sup> land had been farmed in peace for centuries. Peasants were encouraged to denounce each other, and numerous executions of "landlords" took place.

Figures on executions are unavailable, but their extent caused such widespread discontent that open rebellion broke out in Nghe An province in November, 1956. Local militia units refused to quell it, and the regime was forced to call in units of the "Viet-Nam People's Army" to put down the rebellion. Party Secretary General Truong Chinh, author of the North Vietnamese land reform program, was removed from his post, and in early 1957 Hanoi admitted publicly that excesses had occurred in the land reform program. However, Vice Minister of Agriculture Nguyen Duy Trinh stated in the North Vietnamese national assembly that the Hanoi regime would take no steps to rectify injustices already caused.

#### The Campaign of Aggression

The increasing confidence and sense of security in the South, and the rising standard of living, thus posed a real threat to North Viet-Nam as an example of what could be accomplished by Vietnamese living in freedom. In 1957 Hanoi's policy toward the South changed from one of waiting for it to fall "like a ripe apple" to one of conquest. In that  
year



year Hanoi reactivated the underground movement in the South and began the attempt to bring about the collapse of the South through selective, low-level terrorism and sabotage. The Government of Viet-Nam, in the period January 1957 to July 1959, reported to the International Control Commission that Communist agents had murdered 174 persons in South Viet-Nam. They included ten servicemen, twenty-eight Civil Guardsmen (militiamen), and 124 civilians. The Government reported many of them had been tortured and killed in peculiarly inhumane fashion, a method calculated to interpose a layer of terror between the people and officials of their Government. It was a method aimed particularly at those officials who were effective representatives of the Government for, by making examples of these, the terrorists could discourage others -- especially those who came to replace the murdered ones--from executing their tasks effectively. Reports of the American Mission in Saigon show that during this same period -- 1957 <sup>+</sup>59--from ten to thirty-five persons were killed by the Viet Cong each month. Deliberate terror was thus the foundation of the Communist attempt to take-over South Viet-Nam.

From 1954 to July 1959, the Government also reported the discovery of 3,561 arms and munitions dumps in the South. They contained a wide variety of weapons suitable for insurrection, and the care with which they had been hidden and preserved clearly indicated their intended use.

Military

Military action in the South was followed by frankly aggressive policy statements, in Hanoi. The Third National Congress of the Vietnamese Worker's (Communist) Party adopted a resolution on September 10, 1960, stressing that "in the present stage, the Vietnamese revolution has two strategic tasks: first, to carry out the socialist revolution in North Viet-Nam; second, to liberate South Viet-Nam from the ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in order to achieve national unity and complete independence and freedom throughout the country. These two strategic tasks are closely related to each other...." Just how closely had been revealed by Ho Chi Minh a year earlier in an article in a Belgian Communist publication: "We are building socialism in Viet-Nam, but we are building it in only one part of the country, while in the other part we still have to bring to a close the middle-class democratic and anti-imperialist revolution". As the Party Central Committee First Secretary, Le Duan, stated at the Third Congress, "the North is the common revolutionary base of the whole country. Its constant strengthening not only heightens the confidence and stimulates the revolutionary enthusiasm of our patriotic countrymen in the South, but also helps the balance of forces between revolution and counterrevolution, creating favorable conditions for the powerful development of the revolution in the South".

To create the facade of a political organization behind their campaign of armed subversion, North Viet-Nam in December 1960 established a "South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front", supposed to consist of leading political figures in South Viet-Nam and representatives of major racial  
and

and religious groups. In fact, the leaders of the "Front" are virtually unknown in South Viet-Nam. They include none of the real opposition politicians who remained outside national affairs during the Diem years, and they command no political support not based on force of arms. The "South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front" early in <sup>1961</sup>1961 announced its program in a manifesto that has subsequently been distributed abroad through Communist propaganda agencies. After denouncing the United States for "interfering" in Vietnamese internal affairs, the manifesto announced a 10-point program designed to appear reasonable and altogether non-Communist.

A comparison of some of the points in this program with actual Viet Cong activities demonstrates the depth of hypocrisy reached by this propaganda effort:

--"Overthrow the camouflaged colonial regime of the American imperialists and the dictatorial power of Ngo Dinh Diem". Hanoi alleges the United States' goal in South Viet-Nam is to establish a colony. The benefits in terms of colonial profits that accrue to the United States in return for its program of assistance to the Government of Viet-Nam are not stated because they are non-existent. What is clear is that North Viet-Nam is attempting to take over territory that does not belong to it in defiance of an international treaty. This is the type of behavior usually considered "imperialistic".

--"Institute a democratic and liberal regime." Authoritarian control based on terror characterizes Communist rule in the areas of South Viet-Nam under Viet Cong control. By contrast a liberal,  
democratic

democratic regime is the goal of the South Vietnamese, and there is every hope it will be achieved through the democratic process when peace is restored.

--"Construct an independent and sovereign economy, improve living standard of the people." Far from helping economic progress or bettering the lives of the South Vietnamese people, the Viet Cong have devoted a major part of their effort to destroying the economic infrastructure built up in the early years of independence and to reducing the standard of living of the people in the countryside.

--"Reduce land taxes, carry through land reform in order to give land to the cultivators." The Government of Viet-Nam's land reform programs have already achieved much, and the major obstacle to completion of land reform in South Viet-Nam is rural insecurity created by the Viet Cong.

--"Build a national and democratic culture and education." A major target of Communist terrorism in small towns and villages has been the local school. By September 1961 some 300 elementary schools had been forced by Viet Cong terrorism to close, affecting over 35,000 students and 1,200 teachers. Teachers have consistently been a prime target for Communist assassination.

--"Re-establish normal relations between the two zones /of Viet-Nam/ prepare for the peaceful reunification of the country." The ultimate goal of the Viet Cong and their masters in Hanoi is undoubtedly reunification of the country, but the method they are using is scarcely "peaceful".

"peaceful". Hanoi has shown the only relations it would consider "normal" between the two zones would amount to annexation of the South by the Communist North.

Hanoi revealed the "Front's" true leadership when it announced the formation of an openly Communist party in South Viet-Nam, the "People's Revolutionary Party", in January 1962. Billed as the "vanguard" of Vietnamese workers and peasants, the party's statement announced complete



~~complete~~ approval of the "Front's" program, and in addition called on the North Vietnamese people to make North Viet-Nam "a solid base for the struggle for peaceful reunification of the country, to give active support to their compatriots in South Viet-Nam in their revolutionary struggle." However, Hanoi evidently had second thoughts about the dubious wisdom of having publicly stated that a Communist Party must and would dominate the "National Liberation Front". Shortly after its formation was announced, public mention of the "People's Revolutionary Party" ~~was~~ *dropped sharply.*

It is difficult to understand why in the guerrilla war in South Viet-Nam the Communist leadership in an uncharacteristic lapse temporarily lifted the public veil to show the Communist dominance of the "National Liberation Front," but easy to see why the veil was dropped again.

To carry out the objectives announced by its mouthpiece in the South, Hanoi has infiltrated large numbers of military leaders and technicians into South Viet-Nam to take charge of Viet Cong military units. To maintain the fiction that this is a "civil war" being waged by the South Vietnamese people, North Viet-Nam has so far infiltrated almost exclusively Vietnamese of Southern origin. It is estimated that about 50,000 Southern Communists were regrouped to the Northern or Viet-Minh zone after the ~~case~~-fire, providing <sup>a reservoir</sup> ~~an ample reserve~~ of leaders

of leaders for Hanoi's campaign. The largely unmarked and uncontrolled border between Laos and Viet-Nam provides an easy route for the clandestine introduction of Viet Cong cadres into the South.

Since 1962 the number of hard-core Viet Cong military personnel has ranged from 20,000 to ~~25,000~~ <sup>the present estimate of</sup> 28,000 to 34,000. ~~Many are recruited from South Viet-Nam through terror or persuasion but the leaders has remained relatively constant at 60,000 to 80,000.~~ <sup>and cadres have always consisted of infiltrated personnel.</sup>

The infiltration of weapons was also stepped up to support the guerrilla offensive begun in 1959-60, especially to provide specialized types of equipment to the Viet Cong. Weapons manufactured in Communist China, the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries have appeared in sizeable quantities in the South. They are not the only source of Viet Cong armament, however. In the early years weapons cached in defiance of the Geneva truce were an important supply, and the Viet Cong have since relied heavily on weapons captured from government troops and scattered village militiamen, and on equipment manufactured in jungle workshops.

Response to Aggression

The response of the Government of Viet-Nam to the Communist assault was to expand its military and paramilitary forces, change the focus of military training to put greater emphasis on counter-guerrilla techniques, and experiment with a variety of local defense measures to counter Viet Cong terror. The countryside

countryside was unprepared to face subversion on this new scale, however, and hastily-organized militia units (frequently armed only with spears) could not match an enemy who struck at times and places of his own choosing. The Vietnamese soldier fought courageously against the new guerrilla technique exported from the North but the nature of the war placed the defender at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the aggressor.

Through 1960 and 1961 it became apparent the situation in South Viet-Nam was growing more critical. Communist forces grew as infiltration from North Viet-Nam increased. The population in many areas came under Viet Cong control, and was forced to provide the insurgents food and recruits. The Viet Cong began to attack with larger units, up to battalion size. Terrorist incidents increased sharply. Clearly the Republic of Viet-Nam was the target of an all-out effort by North Viet-Nam. The mechanism of the Geneva Accords -- the International Control Commission -- proved incapable of preserving or restoring peace in these circumstances. The only effective course was to help the Vietnamese resist aggression. The American commitment was therefore increased.

In May 1961 Vice President Johnson visited Viet-Nam to consult Vietnamese leaders and demonstrate American support for South Viet-Nam's resistance. A Joint Communique published at the end of the visit stated that: (1) both governments would  
extend

extend and build upon existing programs of military and economic aid, (2) Viet-Nam's regular armed forces would be increased with U.S. assistance, (3) the U.S. would provide assistance for regional militia forces, (4) U.S. military experts would be used to assist Viet-Nam's armed forces in health, welfare, and public works activities at the village level, and (5) a special group of U.S. economic and fiscal experts would be sent to Viet-Nam to work out financial plans as the basis for joint efforts.

To carry out point five of the Joint Communique, a U.S. Special Financial Group, headed by Dr. Eugene Staley, arrived in Saigon in June, 1961, to review means of improving the Vietnamese financing of the war effort. In October, 1961, General Maxwell D. Taylor visited South Viet-Nam with a group of civilian and military advisors to make recommendations on how to meet the deteriorating security situation.

In response to that situation, an exchange of letters between Presidents Diem and Kennedy took place in December, 1961. President Diem, in his letter, stated that the Communist authorities in North Viet-Nam "have resorted to terror in their efforts to subvert our people, destroy our government, and impose a Communist regime upon us." He appealed for "further assistance from the U.S. if we are to win the war now being waged against us." President Kennedy, in his reply, stated that



that the United States would "promptly increase" its assistance to Viet-Nam's defense effort and that "if the Communist authorities in North Viet-Nam will stop their campaign to destroy the Republic of Viet-Nam, the measures we are taking to assist your defense efforts will no longer be necessary."

The Counterinsurgency Program

To meet the North Vietnamese campaign in the South, a broad counterinsurgency approach was required both to destroy hard-core Viet Cong military units and to strengthen the Government's position in the countryside so that Viet Cong terror could not be used to force the people to provide food, supplies, and involuntary political support to the Communists. While the Viet Cong undoubtedly gained a small amount of genuine support by promising to destroy the old order and improve the peasant's lot, by far the larger part of the tangible support given the Viet Cong by the population was -- and continues to be -- based on fear and the inability of the legitimate government to provide protection. To meet the Viet Cong's technique, much more than a military approach was necessary. The Vietnamese Government's combined approach in the countryside has gone by a variety of names, but the underlying principle has been "clear and hold" -- first employing military force to clear an area of armed Viet Cong units, and then holding it by fighting the Viet Cong in the

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political, social, and economic fields, as well as continuing to maintain security. When the United States assistance to the Republic of Viet-Nam was increased at the end of 1961, it was designed to improve the ability of the Vietnamese in all aspects of "clear and hold" operations, not just the military.

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The Nature of Increased U.S. Assistance to Viet-Nam

As a result of the decision in late 1961 to increase assistance to Viet-Nam, the number of American military personnel in the country was increased to approximately 15,000 in the following months. The functions performed by the personnel in this initial build-up, and carried on today by American military organizations in Viet-Nam, fall into three broad categories: (1) advising the Vietnamese Army, paramilitary organizations, and those appointed officials who have direct responsibility for military actions in the war against insurgency; (2) providing logistical and combat support to the armed forces; and (3) directing the American military effort in Viet-Nam and ensuring overall coordination of this effort with the Vietnamese armed forces.

Detachments of American military advisors are assigned to all Vietnamese army units from Corps level down to and including Battalions and Armored Cavalry Troops. These advisors, both officers and enlisted men, are the U.S. military personnel who assist the Vietnamese most directly in the prosecution of the war. They are in no way commanders of the Vietnamese units, but they advise Vietnamese commanders on combat decisions. Their job is a dangerous one, and often more difficult than an actual combat role. They accompany their Vietnamese counterparts on

combat operations and are generally at the front lines in the Vietnamese effort against the Viet Cong.

In each of the forty-two mainland provinces of the Republic of Viet-Nam there is an American advisory detachment, headed by an army major, that provides advice and assistance to the Vietnamese Province Chief on the military security situation and conduct of clear-and-hold operations within the province. This sector adviser must necessarily learn the political, economic and social situation within the province, since in this guerrilla war all of these factors must be considered together. His job is thus unique in the history of the American Army. The U.S. military sector advisor works closely with the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) *Marketing & Finance* [or U.S.O.M., as it is known in Viet-Nam,] Provincial Representative, and these two individuals form an American military-civilian team which is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the Vietnamese province chief in the pacification of his province.

In addition to programs of military aid to the Vietnamese armed forces and paramilitary units, a large part of American assistance in the counterinsurgency effort is civil in nature, channelled through the A.I.D. mission in Viet-Nam. Members of the Mission advise on all non-military aspects of the clear-and-hold campaign, and help direct United States

assistance toward prompt economic and social benefits to villagers as soon as military forces have cleared an area of Viet Cong guerrillas. Relief supplies are provided families who have suffered from Communist attack or have moved their homes into defended villages, where they will not be vulnerable to Viet Cong depredations. A program of installing village and hamlet radios, making it possible for villagers to call for help when attacked, has been largely accomplished by the A.I.D. mission. As security is restored and normal life resumed, the Mission assists in repairing the economic infrastructure of the countryside and providing villagers the means to better their lives. The following statistics illustrate the kinds of programs A.I.D. operates in support of the struggle, and results achieved to date (largely during the last eighteen months):

-- Over 12,000 health stations were established, 6,500 with paid health workers and regularly supplied simple medical kits. District health centers were established in 151 districts. Three American surgical teams are operating in provincial hospitals. One hundred and twenty-six U.S. military civic action medics, using A.I.D.-provided medical supplies, treat more than one-half million patients annually in remote areas.

-- Almost 900 hamlet and village school classrooms have been built, many with volunteer labor, using supplies provided  
by both

by both A.I.D. and the Vietnamese Government. To supplement regular school systems, more than 1,000 special hamlet school teachers were trained in 90-day courses.

-- Distribution of pesticides has reduced serious rat destruction of crops (up to 80%) in the Central Vietnamese lowlands. Forty-seven thousand tons of improved rice seed have been distributed to farmers. Thirty-four thousand tons of fertilizer were provided to farmers last year. This year eighty-five thousand tons are being provided for distribution in areas not reached by commercial sales, in addition to about 280,000 tons being financed for regular commercial sale.

-- Over 6,000 two-way radios were installed in villages to extend the nationwide security communications network.

-- An accelerated rural water-well drilling program was launched, using 21 deep and 25 shallow rigs manned by 80 Americans (Seabees and A.I.D. technicians) and 300 Vietnamese technicians. About 1,400 wells have been drilled.

-- Eight A.I.D.-financed dredges are operating in the Delta. Two-hundred twenty-three sabotaged highway bridges and 250 railway sabotage cases were repaired with A.I.D.-financed construction equipment and supplies in 1963.

-- Three-thousand eight-hundred community radio receivers have been installed, with an additional 3,000 scheduled by the end of 1964. Ten thousand personal transistor radios have



have been distributed to rural leaders. Two provincial radio stations were established, supplementing locally the national network.

-- Fifteen thousand tons of processed wheat, 4,000 tons of corn meal and 3,000 gallons of cooking oil were distributed to families of Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps personnel. Ten thousand tons of processed wheat and 3,500 gallons of cooking oil were provided hamlet construction workers.

-- Farm cooperatives were strengthened, pig-raising and corn production was expanded in a combined project which has become a model of development.

In addition to the United States, a number of other countries have recognized their own interest in halting aggression in Viet-Nam and are assisting the Vietnamese Government in both the military and civil fields. Of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) members, Australis, New Zealand, and Great Britain currently provide assistance. Australia has since 1962 maintained a military advisory mission in Viet-Nam, and recently increased its size to sixty men. Its members frequently accompany Vietnamese units on operations. Great Britain established an advisory mission in 1961, headed by a former Permanent Secretary for Defense in the Malaya

Federation

*Re: ...  
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Federation, to advise on police, civic action, and other counterinsurgency techniques. New Zealand has recently contributed a military engineering team. Malaysia and Korea have been provided <sup>ing</sup> specialized training to members of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.

In addition to American economic aid, third countries have committed close to \$18 million in grant and loan assistance to the Republic of Viet-Nam during 1964. A large part is from France, which guarantees export credit, provides certain industrial equipment, continues to maintain a hospital and schools in Saigon that were built during the colonial period, and has approved a loan <sup>for</sup> from an industrial complex in Central Viet-Nam. Germany, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and U.N. organizations have also extended economic aid to Viet-Nam.

Additional countries are expected to initiate military or economic aid programs in the near future.

#### The Strategic Hamlet Program

There are three primary goals to the rurally-oriented programs which were developed to counter the Viet Cong: (a) to assist the population in the countryside to become secure from Viet Cong activity; (b) to awaken a community spirit in the hamlets and villages, restoring the institutions of a war-damaged

damaged society and making villagers aware of the possibilities for community development through united action; and (c) to establish <sup>communication</sup> ~~dialogue~~ between all levels of the Vietnamese Government and its people by helping carry out broader development projects.

The vehicle for achieving these objectives in 1962 and 1963 was the Strategic Hamlet, a concept adopted in part from the Malayan experience in fighting a similar form of Communist attack. The announced goals of the Strategic Hamlet program were to institute far-reaching political and social reforms for the Vietnamese peasantry, in addition to providing security and immediate economic benefits. The essentials of a Strategic Hamlet were:

(1) provision of weapons to local volunteer defenders and construction of rudimentary fortifications adequate for resistance until regular forces could come to the hamlet's relief when attacked;

(2) the institution of agricultural and other economic improvement programs, including projects which the whole community could plan and carry out; and

(3) the election of hamlet administrative officials and advisory councils, both to inform district and province officials of popular aspirations and to administer the central government's programs.

The Strategic

The Strategic Hamlet was the object of large-scale propaganda attacks from Hanoi, and numerous misconceptions have arisen about it. The North Vietnamese charged it was a form of concentration camp, ignoring the fact that the defensive arrangements were designed to keep Viet Cong terrorists out, not to keep the population in. It was alleged that Strategic Hamlets have required masses of people to move their houses; in fact only about ten percent of the population living in Strategic Hamlets actually moved their houses inside, the rest already living in communities that could be defended without regroupment. It is, however, <sup>true</sup> that the planned payment of moving costs to relocated families was all too frequently not forthcoming.

The results achieved by the Strategic Hamlet program were uneven. For a variety of reasons, it was most successful in the area north of Saigon. In April, 1963 Quang Ngai province in Central Viet-Nam offered convincing proof of what could be achieved through this coordinated military-political-economic approach to the war in the countryside. Consisting of a coastal strip densely populated by Vietnamese, with hills rising steeply from the plains, Quang Ngai was held by the Viet Minh from 1945 to 1954, and was the headquarters of one of their military regions -- "Interzone Five". After the 1954 Accords, the province was a regrouping zone for Viet Minh armed forces, who made their most

most intensive efforts in Quang Ngai during 1954-55 to ensure a continuing base for thier operations by techniques they used in other parts of the country -- leaving cadres and hidden arms, kidnapping youths, and obliging their soldiers to marry local girls before going North. The hill country of the province, inhabited by primitive tribesmen, offered Viet Cong troops sanctuary and base areas when guerrilla warfare was begun again, and the people in the coastal plains were an easy target for raids and terrorist activities. In 1961 and early 1962, poor agricultural conditions and purposeful disruption of economic activity by the Communists had put the rural people of Quang Ngai in desperate circumstances. The province had become one of the most insecure in the country.

In mid-1962 the Government began the effort to re-establish itself with the people of Quang Ngai. Rural communities were given the means to defend themselves from Viet Cong armed attack until they could be relieved by regular defense forces. Protection and the gradual restoration of order made it possible for the Government to reach the rice farmers of Quang Ngai with essential assistance and services. Rural development projects of the American A.I.D. mission were worked out with province officials. Hamlet inhabitants were given a voice in community affairs through popular election of Strategic Hamlet Councils.

In early



In early 1963 the traditional industry of the Vietnamese peasant was rewarded for the first time in many years in Quang Ngai with a bumper rice crop, and American-supplied pesticides accounted for the death of over two million of the agricultural enemy in Quang Ngai -- rats, their tails preserved for accounting by scrupulous farmers.

With the hitherto-defenseless population able for/once to resist attack, the regular Government forces were able to push the Viet Cong guerrillas farther into the inhospitable mountain terrain of the province, and a gradual feeling of confidence and security asserted itself in the population, which now clearly had a stake in success in the Government's struggle. Viet Cong agents who before had freely entered villages to extort food and organize cells were now being reported to the authorities. The Communists were no longer able to take reprisals against individuals. Defectors from their ranks -- four hundred from January to April, 1963 -- frequently said they had been "drafted" from their villages by the Viet Cong when Communist influence was paramount, but when the insurgents were no longer able to intimidate their families they quickly left. Most who returned under the Government's amnesty program said life with the Viet Cong had become very hard since the Government had returned to Quang Ngai.

The most dramatic evidence of improvement in Quang Ngai  
through

through the "clear-and-hold" approach came on April 15, 1963, when over ten Viet Cong companies simultaneously attacked targets close to the province capital. In six days of battle the Viet Cong launched some fifty separate attacks, most against Strategic Hamlets and the people in them. Their aim was clearly to reinstitute their own program for Quang Ngai, which depended on a climate of uncertainty, terror, and poverty.

The results of their offensive were a rude surprise to the Viet Cong. Six hours before the attacks began the population informed province authorities of the locations the guerrillas planned to strike. Some hamlet militia units were able to withstand company-sized attacks for hours until regular forces came to their relief. During the battle cooperation was close between peasants, paramilitary forces and the Army, and troops were voluntarily provided food. When the Viet Cong finally retreated they had lost close to four hundred killed, as opposed to thirty-three dead on the Government side. Perhaps more important, they had lost whatever remained from Viet Minh days of their claim to be the "wave of the future" in Quang Ngai. The victory there clearly belonged to the people themselves.

Quang Ngai was the most striking example of success in U.S.-assisted counterinsurgency operations under the Diem Government, but it was by no means an isolated case. In many

parts of the coastal lowlands the Viet Cong were being pushed back, and their ties to the population were being severed. In the Central Vietnamese Highlands, tens of thousands of tribespeople fled the Communists and sought refuge and protection in Government centers in 1962 and 1963. With American help the Vietnamese gave them relief supplies, helped them to resettle and plant crops, and trained and equipped them with weapons to defend themselves.

Progress was slow, however, both because of inherent difficulties and because of administrative weakness at all levels. Orders from Saigon caused local officials to move too quickly in establishing Strategic Hamlets in many areas, particularly in the Mekong Delta south of Saigon, and in so doing they created expectations the Government could not meet. Where the strategic hamlet program was overextended, it could not provide either the security or the promise of a better life the Government claimed for it. People long accustomed to Viet Cong domination were not convinced the national authorities would stay.

The problem was compounded by the difficulties faced by all newly-independent nations inexperienced in self-government. Official reports of successes in restoring order and building hamlets were often exaggerated, again especially in the Mekong Delta. These reports were frequently accepted uncritically  
at the

at the national level, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of American assistance suffered.

U.S. ability to overcome the weaknesses in the Strategic Hamlet program was limited by two major factors. First, the problems sprang from general government inadequacies that foreign advisors could do no more than ameliorate. Second, U.S. opposition to the Diem Government's handling of the Buddhist crisis caused the Diem family to be deeply suspicious of American advice. This suspicion led to a temporary but general reduction in the ability of American advisors to influence Vietnamese Government actions.

The Buddhist Crisis and the Coup d'Etat

The long struggle of the Vietnamese Government and people against armed subversion was interrupted by the religious and political crisis that began on May 8, 1963. Disorders broke out in Hue, Central Viet-Nam, when a number of Buddhists were killed during ceremonies marking the 2,507th birthday of Gautama Buddha. Initially, the complaints of the Buddhist leadership and community centered on Government discrimination against their religion, and five demands were formulated by the Buddhists to erase this discrimination. On June 16 a joint communique signed by government and Buddhist representatives offered hope for a reconciliation, but shortly afterwards the Buddhists charged bad faith in carrying out the terms of the communique and reasserted their protests.

In the following months the problem spread to other elements of the population. Fiery suicides by seven Buddhist monks, increasingly large demonstrations by student groups, and increasingly severe repressive measures by police and security forces, increased tensions in the cities and many large towns. During this period the U.S. concern was, on the one hand, to maintain the effectiveness of its aid to the war effort; and on the other, to encourage the Government to deal promptly  
and in



and in a conciliatory fashion with the root causes of the crisis. However, despite President Diem's continued assurances of a conciliatory policy and intent toward the Buddhists and other dissident elements, repressive actions and provocative statements toward the Buddhists continued, largely at the instigation of Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, and Nhu's wife.

The American press corps in Viet-Nam was extremely active in giving full coverage to the Buddhist crisis. As the tension grew the Vietnamese Government became highly critical of the press corps. There were indications that the government intended to interfere with free reporting and there were grounds for some concern for the actual physical safety of some of the reporters.

To meet this situation President Kennedy directed Assistant Secretary of State Robert Manning to go to Viet-Nam to impress upon the leaders of the Vietnamese Government that the United States Government attached the greatest of importance to the continued and uninhibited ability of American press representatives to report fully and freely upon the situation in Viet-Nam. The developing campaign against the reporters was abandoned and very full coverage by the American news media continued to play a central role in the deepening crisis.

On August 21, Government forces (mainly units of the Special Forces and Combat Police) raided a number of pagodas in Saigon and other

and other cities, arrested the monks and nuns in them, and destroyed a number of sacred objects. Martial law was declared throughout Viet-Nam. The Department of State promptly issued a statement deploring the action against the pagodas, and in his first meeting with President Diem August 29, newly-arrived American Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge warned that the international repute of the Diem Government had seriously deteriorated.

The Diem Government's policy of repression continued, however, and massive student demonstrations were put down by large-scale arrests. Opposition within the Government itself became apparent when the highly-respected Foreign Minister, Mr. Vu Van Mau, resigned in protest, shaved his  
head

head to emphasize his Buddhist faith, and announced he would make a religious pilgrimage to India.

The judgment of responsible Americans both in Washington and Saigon after the pagoda raids of August 21 was that continued repression of Buddhists and students, with no effort to satisfy their demands, would damage the war effort that we were assisting. President Kennedy said in a press conference September 12, "...We are for those things and those policies which help win the war there...What helps to win the war we support. What interferes with the war effort we oppose. This is the test which I think every agency and official of the United States Government must apply to all of our actions, and we shall be applying that test in varying ways in the coming months."

During September, in an effort to make clear how seriously we regard<sup>ed</sup> the growing disaffection of the population, the United States withheld payments to those units of the Vietnamese Special Forces that were not engaged in fighting the Viet Cong. At the same time the U.S. began a review and temporary suspension of selected parts of the Commercial Import Program, under which essential imports to Viet-Nam are financed. The visit to Viet-Nam of Secretary  
of Defense

of Defense Robert McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 25 to October 1, confirmed the premises upon which the policy of this period was based. The position of Diem and his family hardened, however, and the scale of demonstrations and repression both mounted.

*The Diem Government Falls*

The political tensions of the summer and fall of 1963 culminated on November 1 in an armed uprising against the Government, led by sixteen of the ~~ten~~ nineteen Vietnamese General officers. The majority of Army divisions, commanded by colonels, other middle-grade officers, and the three other Generals on active service quickly gave their support to the coup leaders headed by General Duong Van Minh. A number of cabinet members, including Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho, offered their resignations to the coup leaders.

Actual fighting, which centered around the Presidential Palace, was over eighteen hours after it began. While it was going on, President Diem and his brother and advisor, Ngo Dinh Nhu, were contacted and offered a chance to surrender. When troops occupied the Palace, however, they discovered that the President and Nhu had escaped. Subsequent events are not clear, but it appears they were able to flee to Cholon, Saigon's twin city, where they were captured and shot by elements of the coup forces.

The overthrow

The overthrow of the Diem Government was entirely the work of Vietnamese Generals who had come to consider the regime unacceptable, either to the Armed Forces or to the mass of the Vietnamese people. The reaction of the population in Saigon and other cities including Hue, where the original Buddhist protest movement had started, was one of jubilation and relief, and it was apparent to observers that the coup had brought about a measure of national unity that had not existed in Viet-Nam for some time. Following the coup the Generals released a large number of persons detained by the Diem Government, including Buddhist leaders. They made clear there would be no large-scale purges of those who served under Diem, that those who had been guilty of crimes under the former Government would be given due process of law, and that the immediate task facing the nation was to get on with the war against the Communists.

A Military Revolutionary Council, headed by General Minh, promulgated a provisional constitutional act stating that Viet-Nam would remain a republic; that executive and legislative powers would be held by the Council; and that existing laws and regulations, except those contrary to the spirit of the revolution, continued in effect. On November 4, executive power was delegated to a provisional  
government



government led by former Vice President Tho as Premier.

The Viet Cong had responded to the Buddhist crisis by stepping up its campaign of depredations during the summer and early fall of 1963. In November the Viet Cong reacted promptly and massively to the dislocations caused by the overthrow of the Diem Government. The guerrillas launched a record number of incidents -- attacks, terrorist acts, kidnappings, and assassinations -- during the month. As a result of this onslaught the shortcomings of the former regime became more apparent, and vulnerable posts and strategic hamlets throughout the country -- but primarily in the Mekong Delta -- were unable to resist. Hundreds of hamlets were lost when Government forces, compelled to react everywhere at once, were unable to relieve village defenders. Too-rapid replacement of province and district officials contributed to the Government's temporary paralysis in the countryside, and more ground was lost in December and January.

*The Khanh Government*

In the face of these circumstances General Nguyen Khanh, then commander of a military corps area in Central Viet-Nam, took over the Government in a bloodless coup January 30, 1964. He became Chairman of the Council, and on February 8 announced the formation of a new  
Government

Government with himself as Prime Minister and General Minh as Chief of State.

The new cabinet is one of the most broadly-based in modern Vietnamese history, including members of all important non-Communist political persuasions in the country, as well as of the major religious and regional groupings. Both persons who remained in Viet-Nam during the Diem years and political figures who lived abroad in self-imposed exile are represented in the Government. Khanh showed an awareness of the need to make contact with the rural population by inviting a Vice President of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor, important in representing farmers' interests, to be the Minister of Labor.

On March 7 General Khanh announced a program to mobilize the country's resources both to resist Communist aggression and to continue to rebuild and develop the nation. He promised his Government would do its best to achieve the program's goals within one year.

The basic idea animating the new program -- to direct the national government's activities primarily at the 85 percent of the population living in rural Viet-Nam -- was well stated by Foreign Minister Phan Huy Quat in a speech to the National Press Club in Washington on June 4:

At the top of the priority list of the program drafted by the Nguyen Khanh<sup>h</sup> government is the rural reconstruction project -- which is a gigantic effort to transfer the bulk of governmental concern and action from the urban areas toward the rural areas. We aim at securing for the agrarian population the benefits of a central organization. We try to help them raise their standards of living, improve their methods of production, market their products, protect their families from the evils of ignorance and disease. Our proposition is to convince them, with concrete achievements, that they belong as full-fledged members to the Vietnamese family, that our dreams are theirs, and that the Vietnamese dream is theirs....

The essentials of the Strategic Hamlet Program will be preserved, but its successor -- the New Rural Life Hamlet -- will be modified to avoid injustices of the past and it will proceed on a more realistic basis. Quality rather than quantity will be

will be stressed, and the Government will not try to apply the program throughout the country. Instead emphasis is placed on the expansion of already secure areas.

General Khanh has already moved to put elements of the program into effect. A national plan for coordinated civil-military action has been developed and is under way. Decrees have been issued extending the terms of both civilian and military national service, to mobilize the entire resources of the country to meet the Viet-Cong challenge. Paramilitary forces -- the Civil Guard, Self-Defense Corps, and hamlet militia units -- are being reorganized, and pay scales and benefits for the lower grades of these forces, which bear much of the brunt of Viet-Cong military attack, have been brought into line with those of the regular Army. The inequitable system of labor contracting on the Saigon docks is in process of reform. Ordinance 10, a law restricting the activities of associations which President Diem had applied to Buddhist groups but not the Catholic Church -- a major complaint in the Buddhist protest campaign last summer -- has been rescinded for Buddhist associations. Land reform measures are under consideration that would extend opportunities for poor farmers to buy land with payments to be made over a longer period of time.

In addition,

In addition, the Khanh Government has sought to gain the support of existing organizations in Viet-Nam for its counter-insurgency effort. The Hoa Hoa and Cao Dai religious sects have been brought behind Government programs in several critical provinces, and results are beginning to appear in the form of improved security. A balanced governmental approach is being made to the Buddhist and Catholic groups in the country.

Registration throughout the country for election of a national constituent assembly was begun in May. On May 31 the Government issued decrees on election of village, province, and municipal councils.

The Khanh Government has also moved to eliminate corruption by decreeing drastic penalties for stealing public funds, including the death penalty for cases involving more than 100,000 Vietnamese piastres (about \$1,370).

The Khanh government has encouraged a climate of considerably greater political and press freedom in Viet-Nam. For example, more than 50 daily newspapers exist in Saigon. As a result, the political and religious rivalries in Viet-Nam are now highly evident. This competitive exercise of political rights

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rights is a natural and healthy development. There will doubtless continue to be tensions in South Viet-Nam as the Khanh government pursues its difficult task of encouraging democratic processes and dissent without impairing the unity essential to the government's war effort.

The Problem Today

It is fair to ask: What is the result of ten years of American assistance to this beleaguered country? Is the United States' goal of a viable, free South Viet-Nam attainable?

It is possible to be cautiously optimistic about the future course of events in South Viet-Nam. The fight will be a long one and the future will doubtless hold reverses as well as successes. But there are solid grounds for hope in the situation:

1. The Vietnamese rural population is aware that its advantage lies with the government and in the defeat of the Viet-Cong.
2. The Vietnamese counter-insurgency program, refined through experience and tempered in war, has been shaped into a more effective instrument with which to defeat Communist subversion.
3. The ~~(South)~~ Vietnamese government is becoming more responsive to public needs and active in seeking a broad public support.
4. A growing number of countries recognize that the Communist attack in Viet-Nam<sup>is,</sup> in effect, an assault on freedom everywhere. As a result, the Vietnamese-U.S. effort is receiving increasing material and moral support from other Free World countries.

If the effort to destroy the Republic of Viet-Nam by subversion is a test case for a new Communist strategy, it is also a clear test of America's ability to help a young, vulnerable nation defend itself. The United States must, in its own interest, meet the challenge successfully.

As of

As of now, Hanoi is determined to conquer South Viet-Nam.

As of now, Hanoi is clearly unwilling to honor agreements intended to keep the peace. Until Hanoi wants peace, and is willing to abandon its aggression and concentrates its efforts on improving the lot of its own people, our assistance and support for the Republic of Viet Nam is the only way to restore peace and maintain South Vietnamese independence.

Opponents of present American policy in Viet Nam frequently urge adoption of a variety of alternatives, in order either to end the problem quickly or to withdraw from a difficult situation that seems, at first glance, remote from American concerns. It is worthwhile to examine these alternatives carefully for their consequences.

#### Neutralization

Neutralization, offered as a solution by some both in the United States and abroad, is most often proposed just for South Viet Nam. Under the formula of neutralization of South Viet Nam all assistance to the Government in its struggle against the Viet Cong would be withdrawn, and the other countries concerned would purportedly agree to respect South Viet Nam's neutral status. Attacks against its independence would, it is said, stop, and the Vietnamese would be free to work out their own solution to the problems created by the attack from the North.

In reality, forced neutralization of South Viet-Nam is precisely and publicly the Communist interim objective. Hanoi's puppet organization, the "National Liberation Front for South Viet-Nam", states that it seeks to establish a neutral regime in South Viet-Nam. This regime would

subsequently

~~Hanoi may force a reaction against its own territory.~~

The Present Course

The American commitment to the defeat in Viet-Nam of the Communist guerrilla strategy is demonstrated both by the extent of our support to the South Vietnamese Government and by our prompt and measured riposte against North Viet-Nam for its attack on American destroyers. The United States is resolved to carry through its present course in Viet-Nam by helping the Vietnamese resist subversive guerrilla attack and build their nation free from outside interference. The job has suffered setbacks, and will undoubtedly suffer others in the future, but it is one the Vietnamese themselves are clearly determined to accomplish. Its success is very much in the American national interest and in consonance with American ideals. Success will come not with a clear-cut military decision, as was the case in World War II and other wars the United States has fought. Success will instead be a gradual restoration of law and order, security, responsive local government, and well-being for all Vietnamese, especially those living in the countryside who are now most under attack. Success will be an end to the terror, uncertainty, intimidation, and poverty which the Communists have created as their political base.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

*JL*  
176

August 24, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BUNDY

SUBJECT: Phone call via communications satellite between  
the President and President Khanh

At your request, I asked State to reconsider the advisability of a phone conversation between the President and President Khanh on the occasion of the inauguration of the satellite communications system between the U. S. and Vietnam.

State has reconsidered and now returns to us with renewed enthusiasm. (See attached memorandum which is notable for its candor regarding the possible disadvantage of such a call.)

In balance, I share your initial hunch that this is something we might pass up; I am not overly swayed by alleged advantages of such a further link between the President and President Khanh at a time of considerable instability in Vietnam.

*Jim*  
James C. Thomson, Jr.

Att: (1) #4468  
(2) #4253

*Still No  
myB  
Told  
who will  
Thomson  
tell State  
ab*

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 4750 law 8/3/76  
By mmg, NARS, Date 5/23/77

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~





DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

S/S 12051

August 21, 1964

4468  
176a  
T. Thompson  
2. Ref.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY  
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Satellite Communications System

Ambassador Taylor has requested that Washington approve in principle the inauguration of a satellite communications system between the United States and Viet Nam by a conversation between President Johnson and President Khanh. Ambassador Taylor further stated that a detailed proposal would be submitted after receipt of approval in principle. The inauguration would take place about September 1, 1964.

The Department agrees with Saigon that this action would help in reaffirming our support for the Government of Viet Nam and General Khanh and would serve to emphasize the closeness of the physical US/GVN ties and our mutuality of interests.

(1) This act, in addition to its salutary effect in the Republic of Viet Nam, will also demonstrate to other nations of Southeast Asia that we are near and ready to assist free nations threatened by communism. The only disadvantage of consequence in Saigon's proposal is the possibility that President Khanh might be deposed shortly before or after the phone conversation. The situation resulting from such a loss would be quite serious and the phone conversation would become a minor issue beside the major issues raised and the actions taken to stabilize the situation. On the positive side, the phone call itself will serve to strengthen the position of the government and President Khanh and act as a deterrent toward any actions to overthrow or depose him.

On balance, we see this as a positive step which demonstrates United States determination, strength and capabilities to the Republic of Viet Nam, Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

A copy

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~


DECLASSIFIED

Authority Deakula 2/27/78  
By pmg, NARS, Date 4/10/78

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 2 -

A copy of the attached cable was sent to you for your approval on August 7. It is recommended that it be approved.

  
for Grant G. Hilliker  
Acting Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Telegram to Saigon.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1766

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ambassador SAIGON

INFO: CINCPAC

SAIGON PASS COMUSMACV

Re Saigon 299

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE/USIA Message

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Sec 2/27/78

By rmg, NARS, Date 4/10/78

We approve in principle proposal to inaugurate satellite communications terminal at Saigon by conversation between Prime Minister Khanh and President Johnson. Will stand by for your detailed proposal mentioned refel.

S/VN:JRD Cleland:pp 8/6/64

S/VN - Michael V. Forrestal

DOD/ISA - Lt. Col. Miller  
USIA - Mr. Price

White House - S/S-

p - Mr. Wright  
JCS/SACSA - Col. Arthur

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

*Returned  
7516*

46-48  
Action  
SVN

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*176c*

Control: 2273  
Rec'd: AUGUST 4, 1964  
2:18 PM

FROM: SAIGON

Info  
SS  
G  
SP  
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FE  
SCI  
E  
P

ACTION: SECSTATE 299

INFO: CINCPAC 139

DATE: AUGUST 4, 8 PM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *State Sec 2/20/78*  
By *lmj*, NARS, Date *4/10/78*

JOINT EMBASSY-MACV-USIS MESSAGE

USIA  
NSC  
INR  
CIA  
NSA  
OSD  
ARMY  
NAVY  
AIR  
OC  
NASA  
  
RMR

ACCORDING PRESENT PLANS, MACV WILL INSTALL SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS TERMINAL AT SAIGON LAST WEEK IN AUGUST, MAKING POSSIBLE DIRECT VOICE AND TELETYPE COMMUNICATIONS WITH HAWAII, POSSIBLY WITH CALIFORNIA. ESTIMATE SYSTEM WILL BECOME OPERATIONAL ABOUT SEPT 1, AND WILL REMAIN ACTIVE UNTIL REPLACED BY SUBMARINE CABLE IN JAN 1965. IN VIEW PUBLICITY VALUE INHERENT IN SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS, SUGGEST THAT SYSTEM BE INAUGURATED BY CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRIMIN KHANH AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON, WITH AMB TAYLOR AND GEN WESTMORELAND ALSO ON HAND HERE. BELIEVE THIS COULD HELP IN BUILDING UP KHANH'S STATURE DOMESTICALLY AND WOULD EMPHASIZE TO ALL INCREASING CLOSENESS OF PHYSICAL US-GVN TIES PARALLELING MUTUALITY OF NATIONAL INTERESTS. PROJECT CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL FOR PLANNING PURPOSES BUT WILL BE DECLASSIFIED WHEN INSTALLED. NOT REPEAT NOT ABLE FORECAST AT THIS STAGE HOURS OF DAY DURING WHICH COMMUNICATION FEASIBLE, BUT IF DEPT APPROVES IN PRINCIPLE WE WILL SUBMIT DETAILED PROPOSAL. BELIEVE PRECEDENTS EXIST IN SIMILAR CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND NIGERIAN PRIMIN AND IKEDA OF JAPAN.

TAYLOR

PLH/22

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~CLASSIFICATION~~

4253  
176-d

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

*1 - Thompson*  
*2 - Return*  
August 7, 1964

Date

Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
The White House

The enclosed is for White House  
clearance prior to transmission.

Benjamin H. Read  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure:

Telegram to SAIGON

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

*State Dept 2/21/78*

By

*mmg*

, NARS, Date

*4/10/78*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
CLASSIFICATION



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~~co-CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ambassy SAIGON

INFO: CINCPAC

SAIGON PASS COMUSMACV

Re Saigon 299

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE/USIA Message

We approve in principle proposal to inaugurate satellite communications terminal at Saigon by conversation between Prime Minister Khanh and President Johnson. Will stand by for your detailed proposal mentioned reftel.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Bu 2/20/78By mg, NARS, Date 4/10/78

S/VN:JRDCleland:pp 8/6/64

S/VN - Michael V. Forrestal

DOD/ISA - Lt. Col. Miller  
 USIA - Mr. Price

White House -  
 S/S-

p - Mr. Wright  
 JCS/SACSA - Col. Arthur

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



177  
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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

August 24, 1964

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

SUBJECT: Information Support for Ambassador Lodge's European Mission

Ambassador Lodge's explanation of U. S. policies on Viet-Nam, although directed primarily to European government officials, has received unprecedented public attention. USIS posts in Paris and Brussels report the widest coverage by press, radio and television of the visit and of Mr. Lodge's remarks.

USIS throughout Europe is seeking to give maximum exposure to the Lodge presentation. It set up press conferences and arranged for special TV and radio interviews in France, Belgium and The Netherlands. In Germany he is scheduled for an off-the-record briefing of the foreign press in Bonn, an appearance on the country's top news-feature television show, "Panorama", and a press conference in Munich after he sees Chancellor Erhard.

In addition, USIS is arranging for showings of Troubled Harvest, a 15-minute USIA film on Viet-Nam specially prepared for the European audience and rushed to the field August 14. Reports so far show that the film is being scheduled for network TV showings in Austria, Denmark, Spain and The Netherlands, with probable similar use elsewhere, especially in those countries to be visited by Mr. Lodge. Foreign language versions of the film are being prepared for additional theatrical and special showings.

Carl T. Rowan  
Director

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Declassified following  
August 24, 1966

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

4443  
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✓  
178

August 20, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Attachment

TO: Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
The White House

Mac:

I thought the attached might amuse you as  
an exercise in administrative frustration. It  
would be funny if it were not so serious.

*Mike*  
Michael V. Forrestal

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Attachment

178a

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D)  
By VB, NARS, Date 0 MAR 76

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

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR  
COUNTERINSURGENCY AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

The Joint Staff

SACSA M-518-64  
14 August 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VIETNAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Subject: Personnel Incentive Suggestions - SVN (U)

Reference: Memorandum to SACSA from Mr. M. V. Forrestal,  
dated 24 July 1964, subject as above

1. The reference has been informally reviewed and the views of the Military Services were solicited. The Service views, in general, are as follows:

a. Best qualified personnel are being selected for duty in SVN and that personnel selection/assignment procedures are adequate. US Armed Forces policy requiring personnel to serve where they are needed in the best interest of the Service(s) and the United States is the basic and controlling factor.

b. The most meaningful incentive is considered to be monetary and reinstatement of the Federal Income Tax exemption such as prevailed during World War II or the Korean conflict and/or an increase in military pay would provide positive recognition of the important role of the US Serviceman.

c. Most of the incentive suggestions advanced have been carefully considered by the Services in one form or another and found incompatible with personnel policies and capabilities.

2. Service reactions to the specific suggestions set forth in the reference are attached.

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GROUP-4  
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

CONFIDENTIAL

Suggestion #3

Provide an opportunity for outstanding personnel currently serving in Vietnam on an unaccompanied tour, when selected by their commanding officer, to bring their families to Vietnam on a two-year tour in Saigon after one year in the field. This entire tour (3 years) would count as a hardship tour.

Comment

DOD Directive 1315.7 Ch 1, dated 28 May 64, establishes tour lengths in Vietnam as 24 months accompanied and 12 months unaccompanied. Thus, the opportunity for certain individuals to have an accompanied tour already exists. US Government housing is non-existent in Vietnam and it is extremely doubtful that sufficient housing is available on the economy to support an appreciable number of dependents. Living conditions in Saigon and the inherent physical danger, make it unattractive as an accompanied tour; therefore, it seems questionable that the offer of an accompanied tour is in fact a practical incentive for service in South Vietnam. An influx of dependents would require augmentation of military support personnel and expand other logistic requirements.

Suggestion #4

Provide opportunity for outstanding personnel currently serving an unaccompanied tour, when selected by their commanding officer, to return to the United States on a 45 day R&R (not charged as leave) after completion of one year's service in RVN. These personnel would then return to RVN for a second year.

Comment

Providing a 45 day R&R to the United States would further increase already high airlift requirements for South Vietnam and the job position vacancy for the period would be unacceptable. Thirty to 60 days takes the man out of the job for too long a period. Replacement normally would be required. Most jobs currently require a two week overlap. A TDY replacement from MACV's components would be necessary. Travel in CONUS would have to be at the individual's expense.

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3. It is pertinent to note that COMUSMACV recently has been granted authority by the Services to involuntarily extend overseas tours of military personnel as deemed necessary in the interest of operational readiness and continuity of effort.

*Buck*  
ROLLEN H. ANTHIS  
Major General, USAF

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Authority E.O. 11652 SEC. 5(A) and (D)  
By JB, NARS, Date 10 MAR 76

SERVICE VIEWS CONCERNING  
US MILITARY PERSONNEL INCENTIVE SUGGESTIONS  
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

This attachment reviews US military personnel incentive suggestions and represents the informal views of the Military Services on the feasibility and applicability to the US advisory assistance program in the Republic of Vietnam.

Suggestion #1

The designation of a special Vietnam campaign medal to be issued in addition to the cold war medal.

Comment

The Armed Forces Expeditionary Forces Medal was specifically authorized to recognize cold war involvements. Army does not favor a separate campaign medal for RVN. Navy is neutral. Air Force and Marine Corps would support. All Services are of the opinion that authorizing a RVN campaign medal would not influence the individual Serviceman's desire for service or retention in RVN.

Suggestion #2

Credit on the record for the equivalent of a command assignment when an officer performs effectively as advisor to a Vietnamese tactical unit.

Comment

To award command assignment credit for service as an advisor to a Vietnamese tactical unit would not clearly depict the capacity in which the individual served. The type of credit posted to an individual's record for a specific period of service is a matter of determination by each Service compatible with their personnel policies. In addition, it has been publicly stated that US Armed Forces personnel are in Vietnam only as advisors and not as commanders. Should the fact that command credit was being given to advisors become known to the press, awkward news items might result.

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GROUP-4  
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

CONFIDENTIAL

Suggestion #5

Provide opportunity for outstanding individuals serving an unaccompanied tour in an area where dependents would be safe, when selected by their commanding officer, to bring their family to this area under the same conditions as outlined in Suggestion #3 above. A case in point would be the sector advisor of Tuyen Duc Province who is quartered at Dalat.

Comment

Comments for Suggestion #3 apply.

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179  
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TO : The Secretary August 20, 1964  
FROM : P - James L. Greenfield  
SUBJECT : American Opinion on Viet-Nam  
and Related Topics, August 13-19

Discussion has continued to be voluminous, including some on Indonesia and Malaysia. The highlights are given here; a fuller analysis is attached.

- 1 - Main focus of attention has returned to the war in South Viet-Nam, which most observers feel is "going badly" -- despite the steadily escalating U. S. commitment.
- 2 - Gen. Khanh's assumption of sweeping powers is generally accepted, in the hope that it may facilitate "winning the war," and despite regret over suspension of democratic processes.
- 3 - U. S. action in the Tonkin Gulf receives continuing approval, and prompts some to favor additional strikes against Communist supply lines.
- 4 - Amb. Lodge's mission to Europe is approved as appropriate, and possibly productive of token assistance in Viet-Nam.
- 5 - The partisan clash over the "semantics" of the strike-back orders in the Tonkin Gulf is deplored as an ill-considered discussion of U. S. military policies.
- 6 - The Senate vote to end aid to Indonesia "makes sense" to a number of editors, though some term it irresponsible and hope for rejection of the ban in Conference.

P/POS:HSF:kmt

# American Opinion Summary

Department of State

179a

FOR U. S. GOVERNMENT USE

August 19, 1964

## VIET-NAM AND RELATED TOPICS

Comment on Southeast Asia continued to be voluminous this week, with Malaysia and Indonesia added to South Viet-Nam as topics of concerned discussion.

- 1 - As the Tonkin Gulf crisis eases, the focus of opinion returns to "the really decisive area of the struggle in Southeast Asia -- the war in Viet-Nam." Most feel that it is "going badly," despite the steadily escalating U. S. commitment.
- 2 - The air strike against the North Viet-Nam PT boat installations appears to have encouraged hopes in some quarters that similar strikes can be launched against Communist lines of communication and supply into South Viet-Nam.
- 3 - Domestic political developments concerning Viet-Nam have provoked (a) pleas for an end to the "semantics" clash over the Administration's strike-back orders in the Tonkin Gulf, which "could inspire rash actions" from our enemies and only dismays our friends; and (b) approval of Amb. Lodge's mission to explain U. S. policies in Viet-Nam to our European allies in the hope it may stimulate at least token support.
- 4 - Gen. Khanh's "reorganization" of his government and assumption of sweeping powers is generally accepted, in the hope that it will accomplish the necessary effective administration and mobilization of the country to "win the war." Some regret, however, that democratic processes must be suspended indefinitely.
- 5 - The Senate vote to end aid to Indonesia "makes sense" to a number of editors; some, however, share the Administration's view that it provides a means of contact with Sukarno in the hope of keeping Indonesia out of the Communist sphere.

Military Situation As the Tonkin Gulf crisis eases, several observers maintain that the strike against North Viet-Nam "has had no effect on the grim, grinding battle against the Viet-Cong in South Viet-Nam; which is "going badly" (Time, Newsweek, New Republic, America, Barrett in N. Y. Herald Tribune, Ray Crowley of Scripps-Howard, Clare Luce, Business Week).

**Public Opinion Studies Staff • Bureau of Public Affairs**

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"Nothing has changed in the civil war in South Viet-Nam, where nothing can be achieved without the backing of the peasants, which is not being got, or perhaps even sought," New Republic complained, in a typical observation.

"The U. S. retaliation didn't really solve anything," agreed U. S. News & World Report. "The Communists suffered no major setback. They are in a better position than ever to push the war where it counts --- on the ground in South Viet-Nam" (similarly, Business Week). The effect of the Tonkin Gulf incident and subsequent air strikes on North Viet-Nam "was simply to stop the clock --- to neutralize time," wrote Beverly Deepe in the N. Y. Herald Tribune.

U. S. Plans "New measures" are being taken, some assert, not only to strengthen Khanh's government, but also to give Americans greater authority by putting American officers "on a virtual parity with their Vietnamese counterparts in making tactical decisions" (e. g., Nicholas Turner of Reuters, Peter Grose of N. Y. Times, N. Y. Herald Tribune, N. Y. Times).

"Escalation of America's commitment in Southeast Asia has been steady and consistent," Warren Rogers observed (in N. Y. Journal-American). "As each new plateau is reached and fails to produce success, it is abandoned for a higher level of U. S. participation."

The "ground rules" are changing, wrote the Baltimore Sun's Rukeyser. "The significant increase in men and weapons from Communist North Viet-Nam has altered the complexion of what had been predominantly a civil war and challenges the U. S. to increase sharply its own involvement. Despite denials that the U. S. plans to increase its role into one of joint command with the Vietnamese, there is growing impatience with a system whereby domestic political considerations in Saigon often impede effective action against the Viet-Cong."

Interdiction? In the coming weeks, some anticipate, the "question which will receive increasing attention is: Can the war ever be won without cutting off Communist lines of communication and supply from the north, and without striking at the root of Viet-Cong power in Hanoi, backed by Communist China?" (U. S. News & World Report).

Support for the "next logical step" --- interdicting the enemy's ground supply lines and depots in North Viet-Nam --- has been expressed by several newspapers (e. g., Oklahoma City Oklahoman, Memphis Commercial Appeal). "Let's follow up our recent strikes at key points in North Viet-Nam by hitting Hanoi and Hainan," the New York News advocates.

According to Scripps-Howard's W. D. Friedenbergl, "there is a strong prospect that U. S. planes will strike at Communist depots, bases, bridges and other key facilities both in North Viet-Nam and in Laos near the South Viet-Nam border." The Catholic weekly, America, is confident that "if pushed to it, we could sorely cripple the North's war potential in much the same way as we plastered North Viet-Nam's PT boat flotilla, without landing a single soldier."

"There is a sizable operation now being built up for interdiction," says the Christian Science Monitor. "Most American members of the Army 'Special Forces' who are now being sent to Viet-Nam in sharply increasing numbers will go into the work of building up raiding teams among the mountain peoples of central and north-western South Viet-Nam to cut the Communist supply routes."

While cutting off supplies from the north "would still not be a major solution to South Viet-Nam's violent subversion, it would have two favorable effects," wrote Rukeyser (in Balt. Sun). "It would cripple the stream of trained Communist leadership, and deal Communist morale a traumatic blow."

Politics and Viet-Nam The "semantics" clash between the Administration and Republican candidate Goldwater over the nuclear implication of the strike-back orders in the Gulf of Tonkin incident is regretted by the press. Editors urge that American political leaders "stick to the facts" from now until November in public debate, and "discuss even those with care" (Phila. Inquirer). "We must not dismay our friends and spur our enemies into precipitate action by ill-considered discussion of U. S. military policies," a number of observers stressed (Scripps-Howard press, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, N. Y. Post, Denver Post, Phila. Bulletin, Richard Wilson in Des Moines Register).

The political implications of Amb. Lodge's acceptance of the assignment to explain U. S. policies and actions in Viet-Nam to Western European capitals intrigue commentators. A number applaud the choice of "the civilian best acquainted with recent developments in Viet-Nam...to win support and understanding in Europe and especially among our NATO allies" (Cleveland Plain Dealer, Des Moines Register, Milwaukee Journal, N. Y. Herald Tribune; Marquis Childs). And "out of the mission," Childs added, "could come at least a token sharing of the burden."

There are persistent complaints from Administration supporters that Sen. Goldwater "decries the lack of a policy in Viet-Nam, but has yet to propose a 'winning' strategy" (Lippmann). Interdicting supply lines in North Viet-Nam, the New York Herald Tribune asserted, "is a tactic, not a strategy, and it leaves

untouched the deeper political problems of the area (which are) inseparable from military solutions."

Some are concerned lest the U. S. Tonkin Gulf action "encourage the Right to claim that a knock-out punch can be delivered with as much impunity, if only we had a President with a strong enough will. The obvious danger," says the Catholic weekly, Commonweal, "is that the presence of Goldwater, plus the success of the current brush with North Viet-Nam, will push President Johnson strongly to the right."

National Review argued that the limited strike "fits in with the conclusion we reached after the June 1-2 Honolulu meeting: that the Administration was going to take a few cautious steps in escalation, and threaten enlargement of the war, in order to hang on through the November election and to move thereafter from a more favorable position toward a new international conference to discuss neutralization." This magazine drew a close parallel between the election-year Tonkin action and the Cuban missile confrontation, charging "a speedy backdown" on the Administration's part in both cases.

Goldwater supporters have criticized the Administration for "bringing up its big guns" from State and Defense "to zero in" on their candidate. "There are plenty of Democrats on Capitol Hill who can deliver barbs and innuendoes and outright attacks at the opposition party without involving the State and Defense Departments in the partisan political game," said David Lawrence. The Chicago Tribune denounced Amb. Stevenson for "directing his impeccable eloquence toward absurdly peccable ends when he tried to suggest that Sen. Goldwater and the Chinese Communists are birds of a feather."

Tonkin Aftermath The easing of tension in the Tonkin Gulf crisis is both gratifying and worrisome to observers. "The cancerous situation in Southeast Asia" out of which this crisis grew "retains its malignancy," said the New York Times, in a representative reaction.

Meanwhile, articulate opinion has focused on assessing the effect on South Viet-Nam and the world of the "bold U. S. response" to the Communist challenge in the Tonkin Gulf.

Insofar as the Communists are concerned, some argue, the American strike "put the 'paper tiger' label on the other camp" (Wash. Star, Chicago American, Toledo Blade, Business Week; Clare Luce).



As for the effect in South Viet-Nam, others assert, it has been good -- "a plus for American policy. Peasants in the villages of South Viet-Nam know about the strike by word of mouth and have been impressed" (Robert Brunn and Donald Neff from Saigon, Business Week).

"It stung the Communists and reinforced the knowledge that in open warfare on sea or in the air, U. S. superiority is vast and virtually unassailable," some opposition sources acknowledged (e. g., U. S. News & World Report). But, they added, "by confining its attacks to installations of the tiny North Vietnamese Navy, the U. S. did little to change the overall military picture. The net strength of North Viet-Nam, in fact, may have been increased by the movement of Red China's MIGs into the country."

Also, said Business Week, "we cannot ignore the fact that our attacks along the coast of North Viet-Nam have left us more deeply committed in this area of the world than ever before. Indeed, the Congressional resolution gives our allies in Southeast Asia almost an open-ended draft on our resources, which could lead to still deeper and more expensive U. S. involvements in the future."

Khanh "Coup" Gen. Khanh's assumption of undisputed power and sweeping governmental reorganization evokes somewhat mixed reactions. Virtually all commenting have agreed that South Viet-Nam's internal political conflicts had grown to such proportions as to constitute "a war within a war" (Beverly Deepe in N. Y. Herald Tribune), and that "something had to be done to strengthen Khanh's position." But there is regret that Khanh had to assume authoritarian powers "like those of Diem," and that democratic processes must be held in abeyance.

Taking the more hopeful view, some editors see in the reorganization the "promise" of the "kind of stability and strength that is sorely needed" (Wash. Star and Post, Balt. Sun, N. Y. Times and Herald Tribune, Scripps-Howard press).

The "new form of government," they concede, "hardly qualifies as a democracy, but possibly it is the only way in a country with wide areas under Communist control and enemy operations within gunshot range of the capital" (Scripps-Howard). Khanh must have authority to act quickly and decisively, the Philadelphia Inquirer agreed; but it criticized the "sham and mockery of representative government and the elective process" which the military council conducted "in a back room."

U. S. officials, according to some, "are vastly relieved" that Khanh has seized emergency powers. "Their reasons are ominous and simple," Marguerite Higgins declared: "The greatest present danger to the fight for Vietnamese freedom comes from the very

real possibility of an internal collapse of the government. The emergency powers given Khanh give him at least some chance of getting on with governing his country and fighting the war. Now we have come full circle...Having gotten rid of Diem because he was too authoritarian, we are now acknowledging that a degree of authoritarianism is required at this critical stage if Viet-Nam is to be held together as a nation."

As far as "gearing up the war effort is concerned, there's no cause for great expectations," a number caution (U. S. News & World Report, Barrett in Herald Tribune, Rukeyser in Balt. Sun).

America (Jesuit weekly) suggests that President Khanh follow up his state of emergency declaration "with a mobilization decree that would put the draft-dodging students and political malcontents where they belong -- in the army."

Indonesia A sizable segment of the press was warmly responsive to the Senate vote on the Tower amendment to terminate all aid and training for Indonesia (Hearst and Scripps-Howard press, Atlanta Journal, N. Y. Herald Tribune, N. Y. News).

"The action is fully justified," said Scripps-Howard's Washington News. "There should be no further appeasement -- not even token appeasement -- of Sukarno, who is intent on further conquest" (also N. Y. News, Herald Tribune, Wash. Star).

Hearst's New York Journal-American welcomes the "evidence that the Senate has reached the end of its patience in giving American taxpayers' money to self-seeking demagogues who reach out with one hand and slug you with the other." But this paper regrets the Senate removal of the President's option to assist Indonesia if he finds it in the national interest.

Sukarno's "antipathy toward Malaysia and his landing of a token party of invaders in the Malayan swamps" puzzles the Baltimore Sun, because he is risking a "blow which unfortunately could push him further into the Chinese orbit without his really wanting it" -- i. e., the end of U. S. aid, and the possibility of a confrontation with British military might.

Sukarno's "potential for opening up still another grave brush war in South Asia" prompts the Scripps-Howard press to assert that the American aid cut "should be only the first step in our reaction to Sukarno's pinpricks. What's needed is a forcible declaration on our part in support of Malaysia," the Washington News declared. "Sukarno should be made to understand he's taking on the united anti-communist front when he moves to 'crush Malaysia'."



Several, however, argue that while "our present aid obviously isn't doing much to produce friendly relations with the Indonesians," it "is one tool among many that the President can use to chip away at the diplomatic problem Indonesia presents. And disagreeable as Sukarno and his friends are, it is important to maintain some kind of contact with them," because the loss of Indonesia to the Communists "would change the whole power balance and make our efforts to hold the line in Viet-Nam pointless" (Boston Herald, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, New York Times).

8/20/64

~~SECRET~~



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

20 AUG 1964

*Bundy*

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

In reply refer to:  
I-27330/64ct

Mr. Michael V. Forrestal  
Special Assistant to the Secretary  
of State for Vietnam Affairs  
Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority DOD ltr. 4/23/76  
By img, NARS, Date 6/28/76

Dear Mike:

Mr. McNaughton asks that I respond to your request for informed Washington military opinion on the recent RVNAF operation Chinh Nghia 45. As you know, COMUSMACV evaluates this operation in his military report for the period. His evaluation shows full awareness of the manpower cost of this operation and at the same time is quite critical and indicates the same concern which you express. Since the nature of required GVN military operations is an agenda item for Ambassador Taylor's visit, I suggest we could explore the subject further at that time.

Meanwhile, the consensus in Washington is that there are requirements for operations of this scope when VC activities threaten the pacification program and when available intelligence indicate a VC concentration to be vulnerable. Thang Long 17 operation also described in COMUSMACV's report is an example of a large scale operation which was successful. In the instance in question it appears that the RVNAF decision to attack was a proper one, granting implementation was not all that could be desired.

Specifically, intelligence, as reported by MACV, located an enemy force of sufficient size to justify Operation Chinh Nghia 45. This intelligence was supported by recent VC activity in the area, which is the only existing overland corridor in the RVN from War Zones C & D south to the Delta. The corridor is vital to VC Delta operations. A GVN success against a VC regiment reinforced would have had considerable impact on VC combat effectiveness, as well as on RVN morale.

Failure of the RVNAF to react to this reported VC concentration would have been more open to criticism than the failure of the operation to produce the desired result. In this respect, while the operation did

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DATE 12/15/83 BY SP8 BTJ/STW  
DOD DIR 5200.10

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fail to make contact with the VC, the dispersing of such a concentration of VC elements may well have precluded a large scale VC operation that would have been far more costly in terms of lives and RVN morale.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

F. J. BLOUIN  
Rear Admiral, USN  
Director, Far East Region

cc: Mr. McGeorge Bundy ✓

~~SECRET~~

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

181 ✓  
4415  
Tab

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

August 19, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

Herewith reports of the Seaborn conversation of last Thursday.

The verbatim account of the conversation still remains to come from Ottawa.

Attachment

*Mike*

Michael V. Forrestal

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority RAC 00014917  
By ns, NARA, Date 10-29-97

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

RPC 4415  
First Report

COPY No. 3 OF TEN

181a

FM CANDEL SAIGON AUG15/64 TSEC BACON NO RPT NO DISTRIBUTION  
TO EXTERNAL 419 OPIMMED  
(TO BE DELIVERED IMMEDIATELY TO ARNOLD SMITH AND FAREAST DIV)  
TT WASHDC DE OTT  
REF YOURTEL Y598 AUG8 AND WASHDC TEL 2872 AUG8  
NORTHVIETNAM

WASHDC REFTEL REACHED ME SUN EVENING AUG9. ON ARRIVAL HANOI AUG10  
I REQUESTED PAVN LIAISON MISSION TO ARRANGE INTERVIEW WITH PM OR  
SOMEONE THOROUGHLY CONVERSANT WITH MY CONVERSATION WITH PM MID-  
MORN. ON EVENING OF AUG12 I WAS TOLD I COULD HAVE APPOINTMENT  
ON AFTERNOON OF AUG14 WHICH WOULD HAVE MEANT MISSING ICC AIRCRAFT  
AND CATCHING NEXT FLIGHT DOWN AUG16, WITH DELAY PROBABLY ENCOUR-  
AGING UNFORTUNATE SPECULATION HERE. ON MY URGING, PM MANAGED TO GIVE  
ME APPOINTMENT AFTERNOON AUG13.

2. AFTER BRIEF PRELIMINARIES AND THANKS FOR RECEIVING ME ON  
SHORT NOTICE (THIS TIME COLONEL MAI LAM OF LIAISON MISSION AND A  
NOTE-TAKER WERE PRESENT), I CONVEYED TO PM VIRTUALLY VERBATIM  
TRANSLATION IN FRENCH OF CONTENTS OF USA MSG DOWN TO AND INCLUDING  
POINT C IN PARA9. I HAD MSG BEFORE ME TO BE SURE NO RPT NO POINTS  
WERE OMITTED OR INCORRECTLY CONVEYED.

3. AS TRANSLATION PROCEEDED, I COULD SEE THAT PM PHAM VAN DONG  
WHO USUALLY MAINTAINS EQUABLE AND EVEN AFFABLE EXTERIOR (HE DID  
SO DURING CONVEYANCE OF FIRST MSG) WAS BECOMING VERY ANGRY IN-  
DEED. AS I FINISHED, I SAID I REGRETTED THAT WHAT I HAD JUST SAID  
WAS NOT RPT NOT VERY PLEASANT FOR HIM TO HEAR BUT I HOPED HE  
WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT I WAS CARRYING OUT FAITHFULLY MY INSTRU-

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DECLASSIFIED

~~TOP SECRET~~

Authority RAC 00014918  
By ics NARA, Date 10-29-97



PAGE TWO 419

TIONS TO CONVEY A SPECIFIC MSG. APPARENTLY CONTROLLING HIMSELF WITH DIFFICULTY, HE SAID THAT EVEN TO DELIVER SUCH A MSG TO A PM WAS NOT RPT NOT VERY POLITE, THAT THE MSG DID NOT RPT NOT MERIT BEING LISTENED TO AND THAT HE WOULD NOT RPT NOT THINK TO REPLY TO QUOTE THESE LIES UNQUOTE. FOR A MOMENT, I FEARED HE WOULD END THE MTG THEN AND THERE AND SHOW ME THE DOOR. I INTERVENED QUICKLY TO SAY THAT JOB OF INTERMEDIARY WAS OFTEN A THANKLESS ONE BUT THAT I HOPED DESPITE HIS DISPLEASURE HE WOULD GIVE ME SOME RESPONSE, SOME REACTION WHICH I WOULD PROMISE TO CONVEY FAITHFULLY TO USA GOVT.

4. CALMING DOWN A LITTLE, PM THEN PROCEEDED TO MAKE STATEMENT WHICH I SHALL SEND SEPARATELY IN CLOSE TO VERBATIM FORM. CHIEF POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: (A) (GRP CORRUPT) OF CRISIS ARE AS GIVEN IN DRVN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. (B) BASIC ABUSE OF USA ACT OF AGGRESSION IS NECESSITY TO SEEK WAY OUT OF IMPASSE IN SOUTH BY CARRYING WAR TO NORTH. THIS (FACT?) AND REQUIREMENTS OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN ARE CONTINUING FACTORS AND THEREFORE USA WILL QUITE PROSIBLY BE LED TO NEW ACTS OF AGGRESSION. (C) SITUATION REMAINS VERY DANGEROUS, DRVN HAVE TRIED FOR PEACE IN AREA BUT USA DO NOT RPT NOT WISH IT AND IT BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE ACT OF WAR HAS BEEN MADE ON DRVN. (D) IF WAR COMES DRVN (AND?) VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WILL FIGHT DEFENSIVE AND PATRIOTIC WAR IN LEGITIMATE DEFENCE. WE ARE NOT RPT NOT ALONE. OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WILL COME TO OUR AID AS KHRUSHCHEVS STATEMENT AND CHINESE GOVTS STATEMENT SHOW. (E) IF USA

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~~SECRET~~



PAGE THREE 419

IS THINKING OF NEW KOREA WAR IT SHOULD KNOW CONDITIONS ARE NOT RPT NOT THE SAME. KOREA IS PENINSULA AND FURTHERMORE QUOTE TIMES HAVE CHANGED UNQUOTE. IF WAR COMES TO DRVN IT WILL COME TO WHOLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA WITH UNFORESEEABLE CONSEQUENCES. MORE USA SPREADS WAR GREATER WILL BE ITS ULTIMATE DEFEAT. (F) SITUATION WAS ALREADY SERIOUS BEFORE AUG5, IT IS WORSE NOW AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT NOT RPT NOT GET WORSE STILL. ICC SHOULD MAKE EFFORT TO STABILIZE SITUATION AND SEEK SOLUTION BASED ON GENEVA AGREEMENT. ICC MUST PLAY MORE IMPORTANT ROLE.

5. PM CLOSED BY SAYING HE WAS SORRY FOR HARSH WORDS HE HAD SPOKEN BUT HE WAS OBLIGED TO SAY THEM. I ASKED IF HE WOULD PERMIT ME TO RPT A FEW PERSONAL WORDS AND HE AGREED.

6. I REPEATED FIRST THAT INTERMEDIARY'S ROLE WAS OFTEN THANKLESS ONE. BEFORE COMING TO INDOCHINA I HAD REALIZED AS HAD CDN GOVT THAT ACCEPTANCE OF SPECIAL MISSION ON BEHALF OF USA COULD LEAD TO AT LEAST APPARENT CONFLICT WITH MY OFFICIAL MISSION AS HEAD OF CDN DEL TO ICC. BUT WE THOUGHT IMPORTANCE OF HAVING CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN USA AND DRVN SO GREAT THAT THIS RISK SHOULD BE TAKEN. I PERSONALLY REGRETTED HAVING TO CONVEY UNPALATABLE MSGS BACK AND FORTH AND HOPED ONE DAY TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY MORE PALATABLE ONES. BUT THAT DAY WAS NOT RPT NOT YET AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER HE PHAM VAN DONG FOUND EXISTENCE OF THIS LINK USEFUL DESPITE TENOR OF MSGS. HE REPLIED WITHOUT HESITATION AND WITH APPARENT SINCERITY THAT HE DID INDEED FIND IT USEFUL AND HE

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PAGE FOUR 419

WANTED CHANNEL TO BE KEPT OPEN. I THANKED HIM AND SAID THAT IF THAT WERE NOT RPT NOT THE CASE THEN THERE WOULD BE NO RPT NO POINT IN MY TRYING TO CONTINUE THE SPECIAL MISSION.

7. SECONDLY, I SAID THAT I WAS PROFOUNDLY CONVINCED THAT USA DID NOT RPT NOT WANT AND DID NOT RPT NOT SEEK WIDER WAR. CAUSES OF TENSION MIGHT CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME, DANGEROUS SITUATIONS COULD ARISE AGAIN, BUT THIS CENTRAL FACT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND. I COULD SEE NO RPT NO POINT AT THIS INTERVIEW IN DISPUTING PRECISE POINTS IN DRVN AND USA VERSIONS OF RECENT CRISIS, BUT I HOPED HE WOULD BE ABLE TO BELIEVE ME ON USA INTENTIONS. PM MERELY REPLIED THAT HE HOPED I WAS RIGHT.

8. MTG CLOSED WITH MUTUAL EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT NEXT MTG WOULD TAKE PLACE IN CALMER ATMOSPHERE.

9. I DID NOT RPT NOT CONVEY POINTS D AND E OF PARA 9 IN USA MSG, IN PART BECAUSE OF REASONS IN YOUR TEL Y606 OF AUG 12 WHICH I SAW UPON RETURN FROM HANOI BUT EVEN MORE SO BECAUSE I FEARED THESE FINAL TWO POINTS IF PUT TO PHAM VAN DONG IN HIS PRESENT MOOD COULD HAVE JEOPARDIZED ANY CHANCE I HAD OF KEEPING DIALOGUE OPEN AND ANY CHANCE OF CONVEYING VIRTUALLY SAME POINTS DURING MID-JUN CONVERSATION.

10. IN SUBSEQUENT TEL I SHALL COMMENT TENTATIVELY ON MTG WITH PM AND ATMOSPHERE IN HANOI

SEABORN



~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

Copy no 4415

2nd report

FM CANDEL SAIGON AUG17/64 TSEC BACON NO RPT NO DISTRIBUTION  
TO EXTERNAL 426 IMMED

(FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY TO ARNOLD SMITH AND FAREAST DIV)

INFO TT WASHDC DE OTT

REF OURTEL 419 AUG15

NORTHVIETNAM

PHAM VAN DONGS ANGRY REACTION TO LATEST USA MSG IS NOT RPT NOT SUR-  
PRISING. ITS WORDING WAS BLUNT, AS BEFITS INCIDENTS IN QUESTION; BUT  
NO RPT NO PM COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE GIVEN TO HIS FACE THE LIE DIRECT  
TO HIS GOVTS RECENT OFFICIAL DECLARATION AND NOT RPT NOT REACT  
STRONGLY. ALSO TO BE KEPT IN MIND IS SHOCK OR AT LEAST CHAGRIN WHICH  
DRVN LEADERS MUST HAVE FELT OVER AERIAL ATTACK, LOSS OF FACE OVER  
FAILURE TO INFLICT ANY DAMAGE ON USA NAVAL VESSELS AND TENSION UNDER  
WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN LIVING NOT RPT NOT KNOWING WHETHER AUG5 ATTACK  
WAS PRECURSOR TO FURTHER AND MORE SERIOUS AERIAL ATTACKS.

2. AFTER VISIT TO HANOI AND INTERVIEW WITH PM I AM STILL LITTLE WISER  
AS TO DRVN MOTIVATIONS IN LAUNCHING AUG2 AND AUG4 ATTACKS ON USA  
VESSELS. BECAUSE THEY HAVE HAD TO TELL OWN PEOPLE AND WORLD THAT THEY  
WERE OBJECT OF USA AGGRESSION, LEADERS HAVE EITHER BEGUN TO  
BELIEVE IT THEMSELVES OR AT LEAST ARE GOING TO SPEAK AND ACT  
AS IF THEY BELIEVED IT. THEY MAY ALSO BELIEVE, DESPITE PRESI-  
DENT JOHNSONS REASSURANCES, THAT THERE IS CHANCE OF NEW USA ATTACK  
EVEN IF THEY DO NOT RPT NOT PROVOKE IT. AGAIN, THEY ARE  
AT LEAST ACTING AS IF THIS WERE THEIR ESTIMATE AND ARE TAKING  
VARIOUS PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES (AIR RAID DRILLS, SLIT TRENCHES, BRICK  
BUNKERS, ETC. AND REPORTEDLY AT LEAST PREPARATION FOR EVACUATION OF  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN).

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~~TOP SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



PAGE TWO 426

3. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT HUE AND (CRY?) RE CONTINUED THREAT AND USA OVERFLIGHTS IS NO RPT NO MORE THAN ATTEMPT TO SQUEEZE LAST BIT OF PROPAGANDA VALUE OUT OF ATTACKS AT HOME AND ABROAD AND LAST BIT OF EXTRA WORK OUT OF ALREADY HARD-PRESSED POPULATION. CERTAINLY SLOGANS SURROUNDING DAILY DEMONSTRATIONS AND MARCHES IN STREETS OF HANOI EMPHASIZED NEED TO WORK HARDER FOR FATHERLAND IN PRESENT SITUATION IN ADDITION TO CONDEMNATION OF USA IMPERIALISTS AND DEFENCE OF COUNTRY. MY PERMREP HANOI THINKS AUG5 ATTACKS ALONE WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENTS ARE SUFFICIENT TO KEEP PRESENT RATE OF TRENCH DIGGING AND MARCHING IN STREETS GOING FOR A GOOD THREE WEEKS.

4. PHAM VAN DONG GAVE NO RPT NO INDICATION OF BEING WORRIED BY FIRMNESS OF USA MSG I DELIVERED AND IN FACT ITS IMMEDIATE EFFECT WAS TO PRODUCE ANGER RATHER THAN DESIRE TO DISCUSS WAY OUT. BUT I FIND IT MILDLY ENCOURAGING THAT HE DID CALM DOWN AS HE TALKED FURTHER AND SIGNIFICANT THAT (HE?) SHOULD STATE UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT HE WANTED TO KEEP OPEN DRVN-USA CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION. I DO NOT RPT NOT HOWEVER AS RESULT OF THIS INTERVIEW SEE LIKELIHOOD OF HIS USING IT FOR SOME TIME AT LEAST TO PUT FORWARD TO USA SIDE PROPOSAL OR REQUESTS FOR DISCUSSION. I THINK HE IS GENUINELY CONVINCED THAT THINGS ARE BOUND TO GO HIS WAY IN INDOCHINA AND THAT THERE IS THEREFORE NO RPT NO NEED TO SEEK COMPROMISES.

5. I HAVE NOW PUT JACKSON COMPLETELY IN PICTURE RE MY SPECIAL MISSION AND HAVE SO INFORMED COL MAI LAN. I HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN JACKSONS DISCRETION AND GOOD JUDGMENT AND I THINK IT IMPORTANT THAT SOMEONE ON SPOT IN HANOI SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACT FOR ME IN CASE OF URGENT NEED OR MY INABILITY TO GET TO HANOI FOR ANY REASON.

SEABORN



NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

August 17, 1964

Note for Mr. Bundy

The Vance statement seems to be uninspired but adequate. I have suggested a few editorial changes, all non-substantive except for ~~"security and welfare," p. 2,~~ and "to attain this goal" (instead of "to achieve victory"), p. 3.

*Jim*  
James C. Thomson, Jr.

*Bundy*

*Forrestal has cleared  
and <sup>has</sup> suggested revisions.  
I made the point about  
"victory" to Friedman.*

*It really means "this  
victory" and I have no trouble  
✓ with it.  
I recommend you file this BKS*

*File*

*Tab*

*182*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

182a

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

17 August 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

SUBJECT: Proposed Unclassified Statement by Mr.  
Vance before House Armed Services Committee  
on August 18, 1964

Mr. Vance has requested that we transmit the attached draft unclassified statement he proposes to use in his appearance before the House Armed Services Committee tomorrow morning. Comments would be appreciated.

*Alvin Friedman*

ALVIN FRIEDMAN  
Deputy

Attachment

DECLASSIFIED

Authority DOD ltr. 4/23/76

By mg, NARS, Date 6/28/76

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

A 9407

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*M. M. Bundy*

DRAFT

UN  
PROPOSED CLASSIFIED

1826

Revision 2 8/17/64

STATEMENT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CYRUS S. VANCE  
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 18, 1964

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

General Wheeler and I are here to summarize for you the situation in South Vietnam during the few weeks since Ambassador Taylor assumed his duties there. Also, in recent days Secretary McNamara has reviewed, publicly and in detail, the North Vietnamese attacks on United States naval vessels in the Tonkin Gulf and the United States response to those attacks. We are prepared today to answer any additional questions there may be about that incident.'

The situation within South Vietnam has not altered dramatically. The day-to-day Communist military activity continues to be directed largely against the civilian population and against district and province level Government officials. Terror, harassment, bombing, kidnapping and similar forms of violence and coercion continue to be the Communists' stock in trade.

There have been a number of large military engagements during the past six weeks, particularly through mid-July. The Government forces acquitted themselves well in many of these engagements. In others, Government forces were unsuccessful. Much work remains to be done to increase the Government units' capabilities, particularly against ambushes by Communist forces.

The Government's program of pacification is making gradual progress. The designation of General Khanh two days ago as President and Chief-of-State, with broad new powers, should serve to <sup>invigorate?</sup> [energize] the governmental <sup>apparatus,</sup> [organization], particularly at the national level. The government reorganization should make

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Authority DOD ltr 4/23/76

By img, NARS, Date 6/28/76

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

for greater unity of effort and <sup>appears to</sup> It reflects a clear understanding among the Vietnamese leaders that their country is engaged in a difficult, hard struggle with the Communist forces. <sup>¶</sup> The key aim in pacification -- indeed, the ultimate objective of all the Government's efforts -- is to achieve adequate security <sup>and welfare</sup> for the civilian population by increasingly foreclosing the Communists from access to the people. It is <sup>to this end</sup> <sup>in this major area</sup> that Ambassador Taylor has established the closest liaison with General Khanh and other responsible <sup>South</sup> [Government of South] Vietnam officials. A plan has been adopted to emphasize pacification efforts in the Vietnam heartland area encompassing the important provinces around Saigon and in the Mekong Delta region. As you know, we are now in the process of providing additional United States military advisory personnel to assist the Vietnamese Government in carrying out this intensified pacification program.

The enlarged United States effort will involve actions in three major areas. First, in connection with the stepped-up pacification program I have referred to, our military advisory effort at the district, or local, level of Government will be intensified, and we will put greater stress on working with the Vietnamese paramilitary forces. These are the places and the people that are often on the immediate firing line of Communist attacks. Second, we will reinforce the United States advisory effort at the Vietnamese regular forces combat level -- at the level of the army battalions, the navy patrol craft and the armored personnel carrier units. Third, we intend to enlarge greatly our assistance to the Vietnamese Special Force units in a maximum effort to step up control of border infiltration.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The <sup>s</sup> increased United States effort [does not] represent <sup>no</sup> any basic change in our policy in South Vietnam or in the concept which has governed our advisory and assistance activities there. The <sup>ultimate goal</sup> [essential challenge] within South Vietnam today remains as it has been -- defeat of the Communist insurgency and restoration of security and conditions of freedom in which individual and national well-being can flourish. The challenge is one which the South Vietnamese must and, with our assistance, can meet with their own military and political and economic capabilities. We have repeatedly made clear -- and intend to continue to make clear -- our commitment to support the South Vietnamese Government's efforts to <sup>attain this objective</sup> [achieve victory.] <sup>goals.</sup>



✓ 183

~~SECRET~~

August 17, 1964

Dear John:

Could you find out what informed Washington military opinion is on the recent thousand-man helicopter operation in Vietnam which had so little result at the end of last week? Is this the type of activity that we are or should be encouraging?

Is it a proper allocation of military resources, especially in light of the fact that the Vietnamese appear to be short of troops for the four top priority province pacification program? If it is not, are we using our control of airlift to exercise our influence against these operations?

In asking these questions, I am not suggesting that we second guess our military team in the field; I am just curious to know the professional opinion here in Washington.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Forrestal

cc: Mr. McGeorge Bundy ✓

The Honorable John McNaughton  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Defense

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Sec 2/27/78  
By smg, NARS, Date 4/10/78

184

Sen. Humphrey's  
California Speech

184

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Take*  
*185 L*

August 20, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

Hubert Humphrey did a long but excellent speech on Vietnam in California on Sunday. We gave him a lot of help on it, and it got a good play out there, although not here. Since this was done pursuant to a request of yours some time back (but delayed by the Gulf of Tonkin affair), we think you may want to have a glance at it. The Senator was very responsive to all our suggestions and comments.

McG. B.

J. W. FULBRIGHT, ARK., CHAIRMAN  
JOHN SPARKMAN, ALA.  
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, MINN.  
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GEORGE A. SMATHERS, FLA.

BOURKE B. HICKENLOPE, IOWA  
GEORGE D. AIKEN, VT.  
FRANK CARLSON, KANS.  
JOHN J. WILLIAMS, DEL.  
KARL E. MUNDT, S. DAK.

185a

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

August 14, 1964

CARL MARCY, CHIEF OF STAFF  
DARRELL ST. CLAIRE, CLERK

Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
Special Assistant to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bundy:

Here is a copy of the Senator's speech on  
Viet-Nam as prepared for delivery.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,



John E. Rielly  
Foreign Policy Assistant to  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

Enclosure

From the Office of  
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
1313 New Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C.  
Capitol 4-3121, Ext. 2424

For Release:

1856  
Monday P.M.'s  
August 17, 1964

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey's Address to the

TOWN HALL

Following is a text of Senate Majority Whip Hubert H. Humphrey's  
prepared speech before the TOWN HALL

. . . . .

During the past two weeks the United States has once again been challenged to match deeds with words in opposing aggression and defending freedom around the world. While protecting the security of an embattled ally in Southeast Asia, American ships were the object of an unprovoked attack by North Vietnamese P-T boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. President Johnson's prompt and decisive response to this naked aggression demonstrates to our friends that our power remains pre-eminent and our devotion to freedom firm, and to our foes that the United States is no "paper tiger". The measured response to this attack proves that we are prepared to meet aggression in whatever form, that we shall not be forced to choose between humiliation and holocaust, that the firmness of our response in no way diminishes our devotion to peace. The joint resolution passed by both Houses of Congress by an overwhelming majority indicates broad support for the President's action.

Our action in the Gulf of Tonkin is a part of the continuing struggle which the American people must be prepared to wage if we are to preserve free civilization as we know it and resist the expansion of Communist power. It is a further indication that the break-up of the bipolar world which has characterized the international relations of the past two decades and the easing of tensions between East and West following the nuclear test-ban may have changed the pattern of U.S. involvement in world affairs, but it has not diminished it. We retain the role of leader of the free world that we inherited at the end of World War II, and in that role our responsibilities remain world-wide. In that role our responsibility extends to distant Asia as well as to countries on our doorstep. The President's action demonstrated that our guard is up -- and we are prepared to meet those responsibilities.

In the light of recent events in the Gulf of Tonkin, I would like to review the background and the nature of our commitment in Southeast Asia. Through this examination I would hope to indicate why we are willing to devote our manpower and our treasure to the defense of that area.

What are the basic questions in the crisis in Viet-Nam which has brought tragedy to hundreds of thousands of Asians and today holds daily danger for thousands of Americans who are serving their country on a distant frontier? I believe the basic questions are four: 1) Why are we there? 2) How did we get there? 3) What should our policy be in this area? 4) How do we carry out this policy?

Once these questions are answered, we can understand why President Johnson acted resolutely to repel aggression in Southeast Asia. We will then be better prepared to preserve and strengthen the broad bipartisan consensus that has existed over the past decade on this issue, and make certain that our nation's objectives and intentions are clearly understood by friend and foe alike.

I. Why are we in Southeast Asia? In simplest terms we are there to prevent the Communists from imposing their power on the people of South Viet-Nam and its neighbors on the Indo-China peninsula. We are in South Viet-Nam to assist the South Vietnamese people to prevent local Communist forces, directed and controlled from North Viet-Nam, backed by the support of Communist China, from taking over the country. The present crisis would not confront us today if the Hanoi and Peiping regimes had abided by the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreements of 1954 on Indo-China and of 1962 on Laos and this crisis could be solved tomorrow if Hanoi and Peiping decide to respect those agreements, to honor both the spirit and the letter of those agreements.

The 1954 agreements established a truce line dividing North and South Viet-Nam at the 17th parallel. The Communists were to withdraw to the North, and the non-Communists to the South. Neither country was to be used as a military base for the resumption of fighting or to carry out an aggressive policy. The language of the agreements was clearly intended to guarantee the independence of each zone from intrusion or interference by the other. Each part of the divided country would be left alone to solve its own domestic problems in peace.



From the start the Communists failed to live up to the letter or spirit of the agreements. They placed thousands of hidden caches of weapons and ammunition scattered through the South. Large numbers of Communist Viet Cong military personnel were instructed to remain in the South, to go underground until orders were given to resume military activity. Initially the Hanoi regime looked on these precautions as a form of insurance in case the South did not quickly collapse and come under Hanoi's domination.

Though not a party to the Geneva agreements of 1954, the Administration of President Eisenhower declared that the United States would respect them and would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the Accords "with grave concern and as a serious threat to peace". This declaration was followed by a pledge of support from the United States government to the fledgling South Vietnamese government, committing us to assist the new government at Saigon in resisting subversion or aggression.

From 1954 to 1959, the two Viet-Nams developed along separate paths. The Communists anticipated decline of South Viet-Nam as a functioning independent nation did not occur. By 1959 it was clearly apparent to the North Viet-Nam government, which had failed to solve the problem of feeding its own people, that South Viet-Nam was not about to fall like a ripe apple into the Communist orbit.

To all but North Viet-Nam, Communist China, and the Soviet Union, the developments in South Viet-Nam appeared encouraging. The country was not a threat to anyone; as of 1959, no foreign nation, including the United States, had bases or fighting forces in South Viet-Nam. The country was not a member of any alliance system. It constituted no "threat" to the North -- except in the sense that its economy far outshone that in North Viet-Nam.

Disturbed by the progress of its neighbor to the South, Hanoi began in 1957 to reactivate the subversive network it had left south of the Seventeenth Parallel after Geneva. It began the attempt to bring about the collapse of the South through selective, low-level terrorism and sabotage.

In 1959 North Viet-Nam through the Viet Cong embarked on a large-scale program of terrorism and subversion aimed at overthrowing the government of South Viet-Nam by undermining the morale and loyalty of the civilian population. Besides activating the cadres that had been left behind, Hanoi began to infiltrate trained men and supplies in a concerted effort to conquer South Viet-Nam.

The extent of this effort could hardly be concealed, though Hanoi pursued its propaganda theme of "national liberation". It was by then evident that this was no war of "liberation" but a war of subjugation. By 1962 the International Control Commission for Viet-Nam had found the Hanoi Government guilty of violating the 1954 agreements. Today it is well established that the Viet Cong and their political arm, the "National Liberation Front," are directed and aided from Hanoi.

Why are we in Viet-Nam today? The answer to the question is evident: We are there to help guarantee the survival of a free nation increasingly menaced by an enemy -- Communist subversion and terrorism. We are there because we were invited by the Government of Viet-Nam. We are there because of our commitment to the freedom and security of Asia.

Some might ask: Why is it so important to preserve the freedom and independence of Viet-Nam? I would answer that the position of the United States in Asia and throughout the world will be greatly affected by the nature of our response to the crisis in Viet-Nam. Our word is either good or it is not. Our commitment is either kept or it is not. If we demonstrate our determination to stick by one friendly government, another such government may never be assaulted. If, on the other hand, we pull out of South Viet-Nam, we can expect more of the same somewhere else. Ultimately it is our own security that is weakened.

II. How did we get there? This leads to the second basic question which I listed at the outset: How did we get where we are today in Southeast Asia?

In regard to Viet-Nam the record is clear. We are defending freedom in Viet-Nam today because three American administrations, Republican and Democratic, committed us to do so. Our commitment today reflects a line of policy we have followed consistently and firmly for ten years.

Our present policy toward Viet-Nam was initiated by President Eisenhower in 1954 in a letter which he wrote to the President of Viet-Nam in October of that year: "We have been exploring ways and means to permit our aid to Viet-Nam to be

more effective and to make a greater contribution to the welfare and stability of the Government of Viet-Nam . . .

"The purpose of this offer is to assist the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means."

Early in 1959, President Eisenhower reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Viet-Nam:

"Strategically, South Viet-Nam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement . . . The loss of South Viet-Nam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom."

In 1959, 1960 and 1961, Communist subversion and terror steadily increased in Viet-Nam, and the need for American assistance increased. In 1961, President Kennedy sent both Vice President Johnson and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Taylor, to examine the situation. On their return a new and stronger program of assistance was organized. Here is what President Kennedy said about it at that time:

"As you know, during the last two years that war has increased. The Vice President visited there last spring. The war became more intense every month -- in fact every week. The attack on the Government by the Communist forces with assistance from the north became of greater and greater concern to the Government of Viet-Nam and the Government of the United States . . .

". . . As the war has increased in scope our assistance has increased as a result of the requests of the Government."

President Kennedy continued, "We have had a very strong bipartisan consensus up till now and I'm hopeful it will continue in regard to the actions that we're taking."

The policy which President Eisenhower began and President Kennedy continued has been carried forward by President Johnson. It should be clear then that we are in Viet-Nam today because three Administrations have considered the defense of this area to be essential to American vital interests. It is not a matter of partisan difference. This was demonstrated once again this last week when the overwhelming majority of both parties in the Congress backed the joint resolution in support of the President's action.

III. What Should Our Policy Be? I now turn to the most fundamental question: What should our policy be?

First of all we must stay in Viet-Nam -- until the security of the South Vietnamese people has been established. We will not be driven out. We have pledged our support to the people of Viet-Nam -- and President Johnson has shown that we intend to keep it. He has let the world know -- friend and foe alike -- that we did not abandon our allies, that we have the will and determination to persevere in the struggle to defend a brave people desiring to preserve their freedom and independence. The Congress of the United States has recently shown that it supports the President.

Second, although our contribution may be substantial, the primary responsibility for preserving independence and achieving peace in Viet-Nam remains with the Vietnamese people and their government. We should not attempt to "take over" the war from the Vietnamese. Our aid, our guidance and our friendship are essential. But the basic decisions must remain Vietnamese. May I remind those latter-day prophets of "total victory" that this is a war for independence -- and no lasting independence can be imposed by foreign armies.

Third, the struggle in Viet-Nam is as much a political and social struggle as a military one. What has been needed in Viet-Nam is a cause for which to fight, a program for which the people of Viet-Nam will sacrifice and die. What has been needed in Viet-Nam is a government that can inspire hope, embodying the aspirations of both the educated elite in the cities and the peasant masses in the countryside. What has been needed is a government in which the people of Viet-Nam have a stake. For the peasant who has known only the sacrifices and ravages of war for nearly 20 years and never the benefits of modern civilization, government



is no longer a burden to be patiently borne, but an oppressor to be cast off. What has been needed is not just guns and tanks, but schools and hospitals, pig production, clean water, land reform and administrative reform. What has been needed is a government that is deeply concerned about the welfare of the peasants and that holds a high regard for their lives and fortunes.

The task of Government leaders in helping the people is enormous. Victory will not come only from trained armies or increasing economic production and improving the material lot of the masses. What is equally important is the problem of inspiring hope, of commanding the intellectual and emotional allegiance of those who will shape the society -- which includes both the elite groups and the peasant leaders.

The struggle in Viet-Nam therefore must be fought as much with land reform as with knives and rifles, with rural development programs as well as with helicopters. Where effective rural development programs are being carried out -- as they are in a number of cases with the aid of United States rural development advisors -- the peasants do respond. If these programs are pushed and the allegiance of the peasants won, the Viet Cong guerrilla can no longer rely on an anti-government populace for support and protection. As Ambassador Lodge has said, "If the people were to deny the Viet Cong, they would thus have no base; they would be through."

The struggle for the allegiance of the peasant will not be won in Saigon, but in the countryside. Nor will it be won by centralized government action alone -- however necessary that might be. The participation of the people in the struggle to preserve their freedom from Communist domination must begin on the lowest level of society -- in the village. A prime objective must be the development of self-governing local organizations, associations and cooperatives. The Government of South Viet-Nam should declare its intention of fostering free elections at an early date with the widest possible participation of the people. Wartime conditions may temporarily require extraordinary measures, but in the long run only a government with a popular mandate can survive.

If I have emphasized here the importance of economic and social programs in winning the struggle in Viet-Nam, it is not because I judge military programs to be unimportant.

They are highly important and essential to the success of the other programs I have described. If physical security without human welfare is no better than a prison, social welfare programs without physical security is no more than an illusion. It is impossible to bring the fruits of tangible economic progress to a village when the Viet Cong can assassinate the skilled, highly motivated local administrator responsible for the program, undoing the patient work of months in a single act of random terror. Safety and security in the countryside are an obvious pre-requisite for any program of social, economic, and political reform.

As I noted earlier in these remarks, the Viet Cong attack began when it became clear that South Viet-Nam was making real progress in the years after the Geneva Accords. Not only had the new Republic not collapsed -- contrary to the Communists' fond expectations -- it had achieved striking advances in such fields as land reform, education, health, agriculture and industry.

Faced with this dismaying fact, and shaken by failure to make similar progress in the territory under their control, the Communists launched their campaign of insurgency against South Viet-Nam.

Much more effective than propaganda was their program of systematic terror aimed at destroying key links in the chain of social and economic progress: teachers, medical workers, local administrators, agricultural experts, and other skilled personnel. The Viet Cong weapon was murder. Thousands of individuals like these were killed. Their schools, offices, and tools were bombed or burned. It was a campaign deliberately calculated to damage South Viet-Nam in the area where its success contrasted most vividly with the situation in North Viet-Nam, the task of providing a good life for its people. And the sad fact is that to a great extent, in many areas it worked. Security in the countryside was undermined, and without safety and protection from reprisals further development was impossible.

The situation today remains very similar. The Viet Cong continue to concentrate their attack on the civilian population, especially on key individuals who represent the effort of the central government to bring a better life to the countryside. The military effort of the government forces is aimed primarily at establishing security, so that development programs can go forward in peace -- the condition of life without which neither development nor economic reform is possible. To achieve the security needed the Government of Viet-Nam will require outside help in strengthening its administrative arm. Technical assistance should be provided by the United States and its SEATO allies to assist the Government in strengthening the administration at all levels. Only such action can repair the damage which the Viet Cong has inflicted on the Vietnamese administration.

The events of the past two weeks do not alter the basic fact that the war will be won or lost in South Viet-Nam. This remains the principal battlefield and this will be the scene of victory or defeat. This does not mean -- as our action in the Gulf of Tonkin indicated -- that North Viet-Nam will remain a privileged sanctuary regardless of provocation. Further attacks will be met with equal firmness. We dare not ignore such aggression. President Johnson has reminded us "aggression unchecked is aggression unleashed." But the President also warned us in his speech before the American Bar Association about the dangers posed by those impulsive spokesmen who are "eager to enlarge the conflict in Southeast Asia".

"They call upon us to take reckless action which might risk the lives of millions, engulf much of Asia, and threaten the peace of the world.

". . . Such action would offer no solution at all to the real problem of Viet-Nam."

President Johnson concluded:

"It has never been the policy of an American President to systematically place in hazard the life of this nation by threatening nuclear war.

"No American President has ever pursued so irresponsible a course. Our firmness at moments of crisis, has always been matched by restraint; our determination by care."

The independence and security of South Viet-Nam therefore will be achieved only in a hard, costly, complex struggle -- which will be waged chiefly in South Viet-Nam. One would hope that discussions here at home during an electoral campaign would not lead to misunderstandings abroad. It would be a tragedy if rash words here at home were to inspire rash actions in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese people -- who have tirelessly and courageously borne the "long twilight struggle" for so long -- know full well that there is no quick or easy victory to be won.

IV. How Do We Implement Our Policy? We implement our policy by standing firmly behind our friends, by being prepared to meet any contingency. As the President has stated, "We seek no wider war". We are therefore prepared to consider negotiations or an enlarged role for the United Nations where this would be effective.

Throughout the present crisis in Southeast Asia the United States has adhered firmly to its view that the peace of the region can be assured through a return to the international agreements that underlie the independence of South Viet-Nam. We have never ruled out the possibility of negotiations at some stage. And we should never rule it out in the future.

But as President Johnson said on April 21, "No negotiated settlement in Viet-Nam is possible as long as the Communists hope to achieve victory by force". But, "Once war seems hopeless, then peace may be possible. The door is always open to any settlement which assures the independence of South Viet-Nam, and its freedom to seek help for its protection."

Our task in Viet-Nam is clearly to make aggression seem hopeless. Out of that new realization can come new grounds for a negotiated settlement that safeguards South Viet-Nam's independence. Negotiations must take place at the proper time however. Premature negotiations can do little more than to ratify the



present achievements of the aggressors and this we will not do.

As for the possible role of the United Nations in bringing about a Southeast Asian settlement, UN Secretary General while in Washington last week, voiced his belief that the UN could not effectively contribute to an immediate solution in Southeast Asia. And yet the United States immediately presented its case before the United Nations General Assembly following the recent attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. I am hopeful that some day a strong UN peacekeeping force backed by the major powers will exist to step into situations like this one. At the present time, however, the UN is not equipped to deal with the war in South Viet-Nam. As the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee stated last month, it is not a question of ruling out UN action, but of deciding on the appropriate timing for UN involvement. Once aggression has been stopped, once a political settlement has been achieved, a UN presence might be helpful in guaranteeing and monitoring the agreement.

There is a possibility for a UN role in the border area between Cambodia and South Viet-Nam which need not interfere with the continuing American presence in Viet-Nam.

As one who has long been a strong supporter of the UN, who has long regarded the UN as "the eyes and ears of peace", I welcome any enlargement of its role in Southeast Asia where this would effectively advance the goals of preserving the freedom and independence, as well as the peace of Viet-Nam.

On the basis of the policy for Southeast Asia described here, our objectives can be achieved. To be sure, it will take a great deal of time and effort and patience and determination -- and the cost will be heavy in money, in lives, and, for some, in heartbreak. But in Asia as elsewhere for the leader of the free world, there is no comfort or security in evasion, no solution in abdication, no relief in irresponsibility.

Our stakes in Southeast Asia are too high for the recklessness either of withdrawal or of general conflagration. We need not choose between inglorious retreat or unlimited retaliation. The stakes can be secured through a wise multiple strategy if we but sustain our national determination to see the job through to success. Our Vietnamese friends look forward to the day when national independence and security will be achieved, permitting the withdrawal of foreign forces. We share that hope and that expectation.

The outcome of the conflict in Southeast Asia will have repercussions for our interests in other areas of the world. Our actions in Southeast Asia are being watched closely by the Communist governments in Moscow and Peking. The world has evolved to a point where aggressive nations hesitate to use nuclear war or large-scale conventional war as normal instruments of policy. But the technique of war by externally supported insurgency remains a favored instrument in the Communist arsenal. If we prove that aggression through externally supported insurgency can be defeated, we will be contributing to the achievement of peace not only in Asia but throughout the world.

I deeply believe that the American people do indeed have the maturity, the sense of perspective, and the determination to see the present crisis through to an outcome that will strengthen the cause of peace everywhere. And our objective in Asia and throughout the world is progress toward that peaceful -- if distant day -- when no man rattles a saber and no one drags a chain.

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Situation Reports  
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## WEEKLY REPORT



# THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority CIAA 6/10/76

By mg, NARS, Date 10/6/77

27 August 1964

INTELLIGENCE AND REPORTING SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE INTERAGENCY  
VIETNAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(21 - 26 August 1964)

	<u>Page</u>
I. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM	1
A. POLITICAL SITUATION	

The current unsettled situation will almost inevitably retard the anti - Viet Cong war (p. 1); the ultimate objective of the student-Buddhist demonstrations is not fully clear, but militant Buddhist leader Tri Quang seems determined to become the eminence grise in the GVN (p. 1); the current situation is ripe for exploitation by both the Viet Cong and the French (p. 3); two terrorist incidents occurred in Saigon last week (p. 3).

B. MILITARY SITUATION

Moderately increased terrorism boosts number of Viet Cong - initiated incidents for second consecutive week, but number of small-scale actions remains low (p. 4); there is no evidence that Viet Cong are reacting militarily to recent US attacks (p. 4); government operations show slight rise, but key pacification efforts continue to



show little progress (p. 4); overall military activity still seems to favor the Viet Cong (p. 5); synopsis of pacification progress (p. 7).

II. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLOC

10

Hanoi media have reported the unrest in South Vietnam; Hanoi has not claimed direct National Liberation Front involvement in the current demonstrations (p. 10).



I. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

A. POLITICAL SITUATION

1. The status of the government continues to be unsettled following Khanh's resignation from his new post as president of South Vietnam on 25 August in response to growing pressure from student and Buddhist demonstrators. The Military Revolutionary Council (MRC) met on 26 August to select a new chief executive, after which it was to dissolve itself. The MRC meeting, however, was inconclusive, and devoted much of its time to debating whether the four "Dalat generals" should be seated and finally deciding that they should not. The MRC adjourned and is scheduled to resume its deliberation to select a new chief executive on 27 August. With last week's provisional constitution rescinded, Khanh's authority now derives from his positions as chairman of the undissolved MRC and as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, from his earlier state of emergency decrees, and from US backing. There is no firm prospect that the situation can be rapidly stabilized even if the MRC, after reconvening, quickly agrees on a president. At a minimum, some setbacks in the government's efforts to prosecute the war against the Viet Cong appear almost inevitable.

Buddhist leaders have declared that Khanh is personally acceptable as head of the government, but only if he divorces himself from military and civilian elements deemed by the Buddhists to be remnants of the Diem regime's control organ, the Can Lao Party. On the other hand, much of Khanh's real power within the MRC and over key armed forces units is dependent upon officers objectionable to the Buddhists. Furthermore, there are signs that some student and Buddhist elements may not be satisfied with any decision reached by the MRC.

2. The ultimate motivation of the student/Buddhist demonstrations protesting Khanh's "dictatorial" rule and demanding civilian rule is not fully clear. While students have become a growing political force of their own, they are also vulnerable to manipulation by the Buddhists and other

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rivals of Khanh. Militant Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang, who now claims to speak for the Buddhist leadership and appears in fact to control it, has boasted that he is responsible for the events of the past week and is considered by Khanh as the mastermind of the demonstrations. Quang claims that Khanh's takeover last January was a move by Can Lao Party elements--e.g., Generals Khiem and Thieu among others--to reassert their control over South Vietnam, and that the ouster of General Minh as chief of state last week was further evidence of Can Lao resurgence. Tri Quang also claims that an alliance exists between Dai Viet Party politicians in the Khanh cabinet and the Can Lao, an alliance reflecting a determination by Vietnamese Catholic elements to rule a primarily Buddhist people. Pointing to recent incidents in central Vietnam as alleged evidence that Saigon's real rulers are prepared to persecute Buddhists under the guise of anti-Communism, Quang claims that Khanh is merely the tool and eventual victim of this alliance. Tri Quang has claimed that Buddhist demands for concessions from Khanh represented the initial phase of a phased campaign of "non-cooperation" which the Buddhists would apply first to the people, then to the civil service, and finally to the armed forces. (EMBTELS 515, 520, and 557 BUO) While there is some circumstantial support for the reasoning which may have led the Buddhists to regard Khanh's takeover from the Minh regime as a "countercoup," there has been little evidence to substantiate a threat of persecution such as the Buddhists purport to fear. There is no solid evidence that Tri Quang is pro-neutralist or pro-Communist. In any case, he seems to be a strong anti-Catholic nationalist with a determination to wield political power behind the scenes rather than a religiously-motivated figure. Until his hand was forced by student demonstrators on 25 August, Khanh was inclined to try to retain control of the situation by granting limited concessions to student and Buddhist demands. Although Quang's power is probably less sweeping than his boasts, there is little question that Khanh's willingness to make concessions reflected a respect for Quang's influence over Buddhist followers, as

-2-

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well as a desire to avoid a new religious crisis which could affect armed forces' loyalties. In addition, Khanh may have felt that a bargain with the Buddhists would give him the means to reduce the power of such rivals as General Khiem and the Dai Viets. His handling of the Buddhists and students, however, has in turn exposed him to criticism by his rivals of weak leadership and of playing into the hands of Tri Quang.

3. The situation is particularly vulnerable to both Viet Cong exploitation and to French exploitation in furtherance of a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. The professional character of the agitation may in fact reflect some Communist or French hand in the events. Overtones of anti-American sentiment have occasionally appeared during the demonstrations along with other real or fancied grievances. War weariness and a desire for a quick solution to the long struggle against the Viet Cong may be an important factor underlying the current agitation. A Saigon University official recently told US Embassy officers that the attraction of a neutralist solution is now very strong in both student and intellectual circles. A recent editorial in a Saigon English-language newspaper took the line that South Vietnam is now really a battlefield for a war between the US and Communist China and argued that it was preferable to escalate the war and achieve a quick victory rather than to continue under present circumstances. (EMBTLS 506 and 526)

Security

4. Two terrorist incidents occurred in Saigon during the past week. On 23 August, a bomb exploded in a movie theatre next to a bar filled with US servicemen, reportedly killing the Vietnamese who planted the device. On 25 August, a bomb exploded in Saigon's Caravelle Hotel. According to a State Department report, four persons--two of them Americans--were slightly injured. While neither of these incidents can be firmly attributed to the Viet Cong, they could represent an overt Communist effort to exploit the tense situation now prevailing in Saigon.

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B. MILITARY SITUATION

A widespread but moderate rise of terrorism accounted for the increase of Viet Cong-initiated activities for the second consecutive week. However, the number of small-scale attacks and ambushes remained at about last week's low level. Harassments, kidnappings and propaganda incidents were numerous. There were three incidents against the railroad in the northern provinces, and acts of sabotage generally rose slightly from the preceding week. The two most significant Viet Cong actions occurred in Phong Dinh and Kien Hoa Provinces; they caused extremely heavy friendly casualties, including the deaths of four US advisors. In this instance, attacks on outposts were used by the Viet Cong to draw friendly reaction forces into the area, which were then engaged or ambushed by Viet Cong elements in two-company to battalion strength. Friendly losses in these two engagements totaled 116 killed, 133 wounded, 106 missing and 153 weapons. Viet Cong losses are not known.

COMUSMACV's analysis of both attacks indicates that repeated attacks on outposts were probably "bait" in order to induce large RVN forces to come to the aid of the besieged posts. This classic ruse, designed to inflict maximum damage on ARVN units at limited risk to the Viet Cong and in terrain of their choosing, has been a favorite Viet Cong tactic for some time.

Although Viet Cong activity rose moderately, it does not appear that it was in response to US attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin but rather a normal upswing in the cyclic pattern. It does appear likely that the Viet Cong will, after a short delay due to their slow reaction time, take advantage of the present political discord.

Government operations rose slightly from last week's totals, including those making contact with the Viet Cong. A search and destroy operation

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which terminated on 16 August in Dinh Tuong netted 14 Viet Cong killed and 48 captured. In I Corps, the long-term pacification operation in Quang Tin and Quang Nam was successfully terminated on 18 August. The results of this operation, conducted in an area of intensified Viet Cong activity, were gratifying. Friendly losses were: 106 killed, 131 wounded, and 5 missing; the Viet Cong lost 316 killed, 24 prisoners, and a large quantity of weapons and supplies.

For the fifth straight week there was very little progress in pacification in the priority provinces. A major causative factor has been the lack of effective follow-up to clearing operations. In many provinces, Viet Cong - initiated incidents continue in the primary pacification area. Some slight progress appears to be indicated in Tay Ninh and Vinh Long. Viet Cong harassment and intimidation continue to hamper most pacification operations. On the government side, some shortages of trained personnel and material continue to plague the overall pacification effort.

The increased tempo of government and Viet Cong operations is reflected in the higher casualty figures. Government casualties totalled 876 (251 KIA) compared to 733 (167 KIA) last week. Viet Cong known casualties rose sharply to 801 (666 KIA) from 167 (154 KIA). Government weapon losses rose slightly to 347 from 307 last week. The Viet Cong weapon losses increased to 295 from 68 last week. Viet Cong losses, however, include those obtained by a major friendly pacification operation in I Corps which began in February and terminated last week.

Conclusions

The overall results of the military activities appear to continue to favor the Viet Cong. They are able to maintain a high level of disruptive activity throughout most of the countryside, generally against ineffective government opposition. While Viet Cong - initiated activities fluctuate weekly, they are consistently raising the weekly

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averages; e.g., the weekly average on 1 January was 342 incidents; to date, it has risen to approximately 550 incidents per week.

This is indicative of the increased pressure the Viet Cong are applying nationwide.

While there has been no indication of Viet Cong reaction to the current internal crisis, it is anticipated that they will endeavor to exploit Saigon's political troubles to the maximum.

-6-

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SYNOPSIS OF PACIFICATION PROGRESS

TABLE I

Indications of Overall Progress in South Vietnam

Positive

None reported.

Negative

Very little progress in the pacification effort reported for the fifth straight week; major causative factor is the lack of effective follow-up to clearing operations; VC reacting strongly to pacification efforts.

TABLE II

Indications of Progress in Priority Provinces

<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
1. Quang Ngai	None reported.	VC reacting strongly in pacification areas.
2. Tay Ninh	Progress shown in school construction; Province Chief able to retain reasonable control over priority zone.	None reported.
3. Binh Duong	None reported.	Little progress; VC harassment plagues province; VC continuing seige tactics against isolated villages.
4. Hau Nghia	None reported.	Pacification efforts at a near standstill; security situation inadequate and VC intimidation remains high.
5. Long An	Noticeable increase of people's morale since Route 4 opened.	Pacification effort astride Route 4 remains static.
6. Dinh Tuong	Original plan for pacification changed from expanding from one oil spot concept to six; increase of 24 hamlets completed in last three weeks and now totals 51.	None reported.
7. Go Cong	None reported.	VC reacting to pacification operations; VC making effort to prevent populace from participating in the October election.



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<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
8. Vinh Long	Pacification operations conducted in all 9 districts; additional people being trained and re-trained to improve their effectiveness.	More forces required to increase tempo of pacification operations.
9. Gia Dinh	Of 308 programmed hamlets, 184 reportedly meet 6 point criteria, remaining 124 being improved; additional 190 cadre being trained.	Pace of pacification remains slow.

-9-

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II. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLOC

A. Hanoi propagandists have used Western press reports to describe the unrest in South Vietnam, claiming that Khanh's concessions constitute an admission of failure but also fall far short of satisfying student-Buddhist demands. On 25 August, North Vietnamese front organizations issued a statement condemning "repressions" and highlighting reports that US servicemen had fired on demonstrators in Danang. The first editorial comment, in Nhan Dan on 26 August, declared that victory of the student-Buddhist struggle "is closely linked" with the political and armed struggle under the leadership of the National Liberation Front. However, as in handling Buddhist protests in 1963, Hanoi does not claim a direct National Liberation Front role in the demonstrations. In addition, the National Liberation Front radio, through 25 August, has issued no statements of support and its few reports of developments appear to be based, like Hanoi, on Western sources.

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OCI No. 2220/64

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
25 August 1964

*Brundy*

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority RAC 14919  
By us NARA, Date 5-7-98

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Situation in South Vietnam

1. The alignment of power in the new government structure that will emerge in Saigon is not yet clear. Just prior to having his hand forced by the implacable demonstrators this morning, Khanh seemed to be attempting to not only stabilize the situation by granting limited concessions but also to turn events to his own advantage.

2. At a 1 AM Tuesday meeting with Ambassador Taylor and other top American officials, Khanh indicated he was disposed to accept Buddhist demands for modifications in the government. Khanh stressed his fear of widespread religious strife developing between Buddhist and Catholic groups which would completely undermine the war effort. (Buddhist forays yesterday into Catholic villages near Danang accounted for scores injured.)

3. Khanh also seemed attracted by the possibility of eliminating the 60-man Military Revolutionary Council from the picture (one of the Buddhist demands). He also said there would be no difficulty in identifying Can Lao elements, "they being well known,"--another of the Buddhist demands.

4. Khanh outlined to Ambassador Taylor a proclamation, issued shortly thereafter, which generally met Buddhist demands but stopped short of his resignation as President and promised only "modifications" in the 16 August constitution. Khanh said he had discussed the matter with Lt. Gen. Khiem, armed forces chief of staff and apparent real power in the Military Revolutionary Council, and had received Khiem's pledge of support in

meeting Buddhist demands provided American officials agreed to this course of action. Ambassador Taylor advised Khanh not to proceed hastily and yield to pressure groups.

5. In recent weeks, Khanh's independence of action and actual powers within the ruling junta seemed to have been diminishing steadily. Real power was slipping into the hands of General Khiem and other former Can Lao stalwarts. Khanh was also beset by the political intrigues of Dai Viet Party members in his government.

6. The Military Revolutionary Council is pledged to meet tonight to elect a new chief of state and to set the stage for a new government. A communique issued by the council promised that the council thereafter would dissolve itself and that the military would devote itself to purely military tasks. The communique stated that the present government meanwhile would act in a caretaker capacity.

7. This latest political upheaval, even if Khanh can retain a semblance of control, will aggravate the serious strains already evident in the anti-Communist camp. The confused situation is extremely vulnerable to exploitation by the Communists and by proponents of a negotiated settlement. There is also the possibility of a coup against Khanh by disgruntled elements of the military, which could vitiate the war effort to an irreparable degree.



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# WEEKLY REPORT



SANITIZED

Authority CIA Rpt 615716  
By Wmg, NARS, Date 10/6/77

# THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

20 August 1964

INTELLIGENCE AND REPORTING SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE INTERAGENCY  
VIETNAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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Published by the Directorate of Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(14 - 20 August 1964)

	<u>Page</u>
I. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM	1
A. POLITICAL SITUATION	

Khanh announces major changes in government and assumes presidency (p. 1); provisional constitution provides for strong executive separated from legislative and judicial branches, but ultimate authority resides with Military Revolutionary Council (p. 2); student demonstration in Hue indicates some opposition to GVN changes (p. 3); Buddhist leaders also reportedly warn Khanh against reversion to Diem's practices (p. 3); favorable reaction to US airstrikes continues, but some Chinese businessmen are reported planning to move to Taiwan (p. 4); Minister of State Le Van Hoach is reported to be continuing his contacts with Liberation Front members (p. 4); no significant acts of anti-American terrorism reported (p. 5); additional police complete training for pacification work in provinces (p. 5).

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B. MILITARY SITUATION

Viet Cong activity rises but no indication of retaliation for US attacks 5 August (p. 6); largest GVN airmobile operation unsuccessful (p. 7); "war of annihilation" possibly planned in Viet Cong MR 5 (p. 8).

C. ECONOMIC SITUATION

Economic situation stabilizes after crisis (p. 15).

II. THIRD COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS

16

A. SOUTH KOREA

GVN General Do Mau visits South Korea (p. 16).

B. AFRICA

GVN Secretary General Foreign Ministry Vinh Tho in Tunisia announces goodwill mission visit (p. 16).

C. NATIONALIST CHINA

Departure of GVN Ambassador designate General Chieu delayed (p. 16).

D. PHILIPPINES

Philippine Vice President Pelaez visits South Vietnam (p. 16); Philippine medical personnel arrive Saigon (p. 17).

E. CAMBODIA

Cambodian government protests Khanh's allegations (p. 17).

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F. FRANCE

Embassy Paris reports increased interest in the NFLSVN in France (p. 17);

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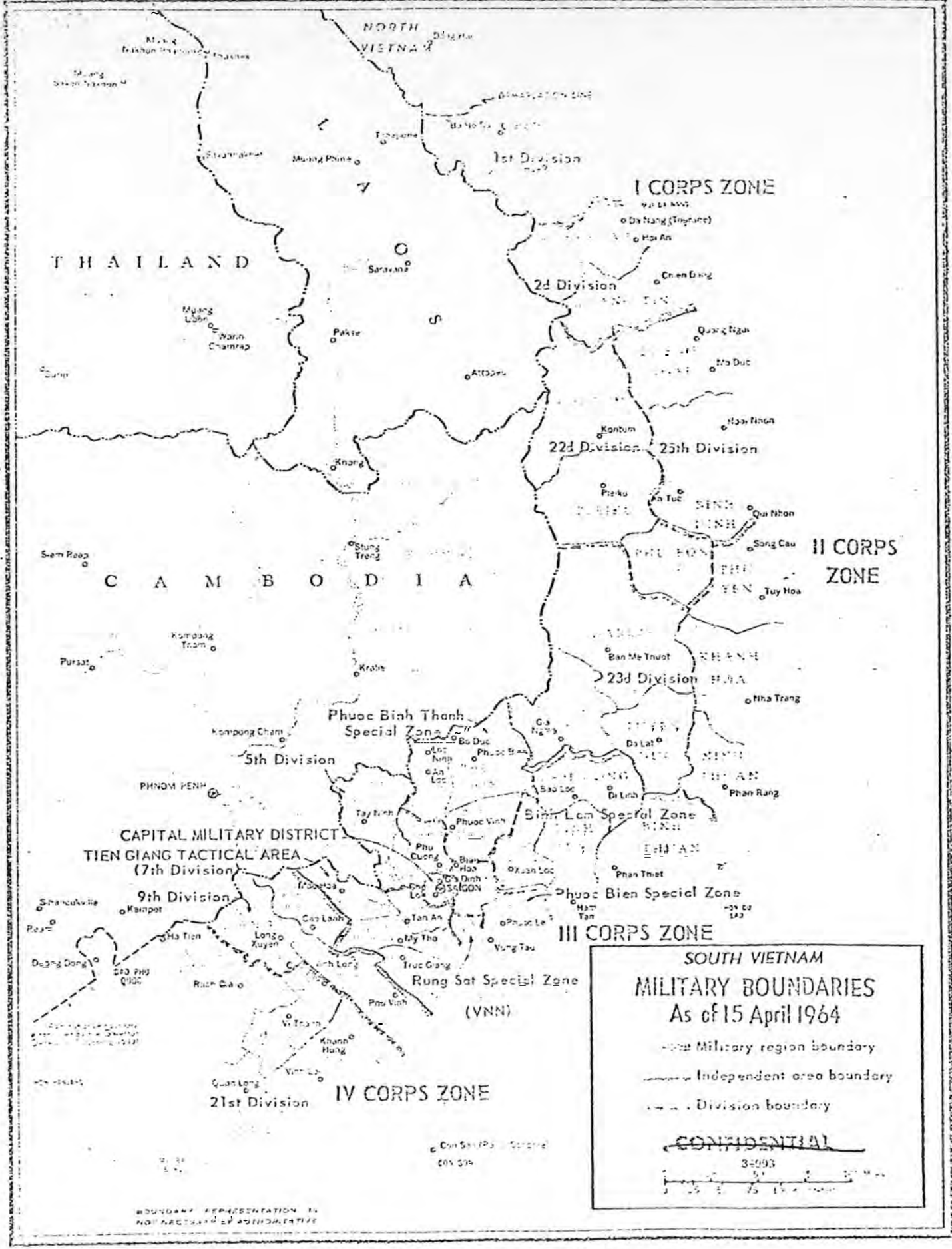
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III. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLOC

18

Efforts to strengthen North Vietnamese air defense continue (p. 18); Burchett, pro-Communist Australian journalist, publishes threatening article (p. 18); Hanoi bars extensive investigation of 2-5 August events (p. 18).



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I. SITUATION WITHIN SOUTH VIETNAM

A. POLITICAL SITUATION

1. On 16 August, major changes in the form of the South Vietnamese government were announced by order of the reconstituted and enlarged Military Revolutionary Council (MRC). The new government is to consist of separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches with the MRC capping the entire structure. General Khanh still heads the MRC and has been chosen president (chief of state) of the new government. General Minh has thus been deposed from an official position in the regime, although he is still described as an "adviser" to the MRC. Leadership of the MRC, in addition to Khanh, consists of Defense Minister General Khiem (reportedly slated to become vice president in charge of military affairs in the new government) as First Deputy Chairman; General Do Mau as Second Deputy Chairman; Air Force chief General Ky as Third Deputy Chairman; and Deputy-Defense Minister General Thieu as Secretary General. The MRC proclamation establishing the provisional constitution or charter declares its allegiance to democratic ideals, but states that the emergency besetting the country necessitates the curtailing of individual liberties as well as of democratic institutions which may only be reintroduced as the national situation improves. Present cabinet members have resigned, but continue in a caretaker status pending announcement of a new cabinet which is expected shortly. (EMBTLS 343, 434, and 440)

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Under a semblance of democratic framework, Khanh has broad powers as president, but his power is not absolute. His actions may still be vetoed by the MRC, which at present stands behind him. His continued control seems to depend upon whether he can prosecute the war in a more vigorous and successful way without crossing powerful generals in the MRC or alienating much of the country as Diem did under similar authoritarian controls. In particular, Khanh's position seems to require that he maintain close relations with General Khiem and followers of the latter in the MRC. The problem of

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General Minh has not been fully resolved. Khanh has proposed that Minh accept an ambassadorship or enroll in a military or civilian school in the US, but Minh has declared that he would rather go back to fighting the Communists. There is no indication that Khanh is currently disposed to give Minh a command.

2. The new provisional constitution outlines the rights of citizens in normal times, and defines the form and powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive is by far the dominant branch of the government, but ultimate power actually rests with the Military Revolutionary Council. The president is given full power to initiate legislation, but must submit it to the approval of the assembly. However, between assembly sessions and in time of war or national emergency, the chief executive has power to issue decrees. Pending eventual elections, the 150-member national assembly will have its 100 civilian members selected by the MRC directly, as is the case for its 50 military members, or from names submitted by provincial and municipal councils or by province chiefs and mayors. The initial selection of judges is to be made by a provisional High Council of Judges appointed by the MRC and approved by the president. The national institutions defined in the constitution are to be operative within a month. (EMBTTEL 393 and 440)

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The new constitution, while defining democratic institutions and addressing itself to individual rights, sets up conditions which prevent their realization for the foreseeable future. The granting of the constitution is probably intended to placate critical elements who felt Khanh lacked a proper constitutional framework. The establishment of a provisional assembly should take some of the pressure off Khanh to hold promised nationwide elections, which appear unfeasible at present, without forcing Khanh entirely to renege on his word. Since Khanh already had acquired sweeping powers under his declaration of emergency on 7 August, the new charter seems designed in part for appearances,

-2-

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while enabling him to reshuffle the government and remove disruptive elements. The charter should provide Khanh a device for stabilizing his leadership of the government although it may in effect result in a sharing of power with other top officers such as General Khiem. Some loss of government momentum could occur as a result of preoccupation with setting up the new cabinet, assembly, judiciary, and other specialized bodies.

3. Some opposition to the new government reorganization is apparent, but its significance for future stability is still uncertain. On 17 August, a minor student demonstration in Hue protested Khanh's election as president and the more authoritarian government charter. There have been rumors of possibly similar student demonstrations in Saigon. The government reportedly is banning all public gatherings in Saigon, presumably to forestall any demonstrations or any Viet Cong disorders in connection with a Communist anniversary on 19 August. The Khanh government has also quietly removed the marker dedicating the square before the Catholic cathedral in Saigon to former President Kennedy. The marker had been a rallying spot for student agitators, and had been objected to by militant Catholics associating the US government with Diem's overthrow and considering the square an informal extension of the cathedral area. (EMBTELS 464 BUO)

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Revised  
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Students, who first became a political force on their own during the Buddhist campaign against Diem, may also be acting under some Buddhist direction or as a result of manipulation by military or civilian rivals of Khanh. The Buddhist leadership apparently is still dissatisfied with Khanh's personal efforts to make amends for two recent cases of alleged persecution in central Vietnam. The Buddhists are using the approach of the first anniversary (20-21 August) of Diem's raids on their pagodas to warn Khanh that they will not tolerate a return to Diem's practices of rule. They may also disapprove of the removal of General Minh who is identified with Diem's overthrow and the lifting of Diem's harsh controls. Two members of the present cabinet who are close to the Buddhist leadership,

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Social Welfare Minister Thuan and Education Minister Huan, claim that they were not consulted on the new reorganization and that they will not serve the new government. There are reports that Buddhist leaders Thich Tan Chau and Thich Tri Quang, who were prominent in the Buddhist campaign against Diem, have issued communiqués warning the present government not to follow the path of Diem regarding religious persecution, and not to use the fight against the Communists as an excuse to terrorize or repress innocent people. (US Cons Hue 39)

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4. There continue to be favorable reactions to the US airstrike against North Vietnam with few discernible signs of disappointment that no further retaliation by the US has been forthcoming. Some elements of the Chinese business community are planning to move to Taiwan in anticipation of a more generalized war, but there is no indication so far that this could become a mass exodus. Most prominent Vietnamese civilian politicians have expressed cautious approval of Khanh's declaration of emergency and the new charter, possibly because normally vocal elements who might be opposed are hesitant to complain at this time or are still hopeful of retaining influence in the new government.

5. [redacted] to civilian Minister of State Le Van Hoach has reported that Hoach knows most of the leaders of the Viet Cong National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, and believes that many of them are non-Communist nationalists who could be won over to the government in a negotiated settlement of the war. Hoach is also reportedly in contact with Front members to try to obtain the release of American prisoners of the Viet Cong. (TDCS-31401771) Hoach apparently is maintaining his self-professed contacts with the Front even though his activities were mentioned to Khanh by Ambassador Taylor. This could indicate that Khanh wishes to maintain this channel to Viet Cong thinking for reasons of his own.

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Security

6. No significant acts of terrorism have been reported during the week against US personnel or installations in the cities. In the capital of An Xuyen Province in the far south, a bomb was exploded in a police headquarters parking lot, but no casualties were reported. US officials report that another 1,000 police have completed training, bringing the total since 6 May to 2,200 of a programmed 10,500. These police are to be used for provincial pacification work. (USMACV MILREP)

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-5-

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B. MILITARY SITUATION

1. After three consecutive weeks of gradually diminishing activity, Viet Cong-initiated actions showed a moderate increase this week. The increase was not reflected in the total number of Viet Cong attacks--which was lower than last week, but in terroristic actions which rose considerably. Main emphasis, as usual, was on widespread harassing activities, with sniper fire against posts and hamlets and extensive interference with transportation routes receiving priority attention. Eight incidents of road and bridge mining occurred in the two northernmost provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, including three along Highway 9, again indicating Viet Cong determination to interdict this east-west communication route with the Laos border. Mining of roads, sabotage of the railroad, and blocking of canals also occurred in other provinces, causing temporary disruption to traffic and harassment of the population. Only two large-scale Viet Cong attacks were reported during the week. One was a battalion-size attack on a Regional Force company in Phong Dinh Province south of Saigon on 12 August. Friendly casualties were 14 killed, 23 wounded, 3 missing, and 13 individual weapons, one 60-mm mortar and 3 radios lost; four Viet Cong were killed and one captured. The second major Viet Cong action was in effect a series of attacks between 15-18 August against two paramilitary posts in Phong Dinh Province coupled with an ambush of government relief forces. Based on initial, fragmentary reports, friendly casualties so far total 41 killed, 57 (including 5 civilians) wounded, and 15 missing. Viet Cong losses are listed as 10 killed, one captured; it is also officially estimated that 35 additional guerrillas were killed by airstrikes.

Although the level of Viet Cong activity rose somewhat over last week, there is no indication yet that the increase represents a deliberate Communist effort to retaliate for the 5 August US actions in the Gulf of Tonkin. So far, the increase seems normal, considering the relatively low level of activity for the preceding several weeks. Neverthe-

-6-

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less, some retaliatory response still seems likely, especially in the light of a 10 August "Radio Liberation" broadcast by the Viet Cong (following their 7 August declaration reported last week) exhorting "all liberation troops, all armed forces, and all paramilitary forces to...step up the struggle in all fields and compete in scoring greater exploits and achievements in order to liberate South Viet-Nam and protect brother North Viet-Nam."

2. Although the number of major and small-scale government operations decreased, friendly casualties showed a substantial increase. Major pacification operations remained the same as last week, with two clearing operations and nine security operations underway. Aided by improved weather conditions, air activity rose sharply this week. The most significant joint operations occurred in Dinh Tuong Province of the Tien Giang Tactical Area and in Binh Duong Province of III Corps Tactical Zone. The Dinh Tuong operation involved four infantry battalions, supported by armor, artillery, armed river assault boats, and air units. The operation was well planned and executed. Artillery support was adequate, and tactical air support was timely and effective. Ground units were properly employed and functioned aggressively. Final results were: Friendly losses of 16 KIA, 41 WIA and Viet Cong losses of 42 KIA, by actual count, with an estimated additional 60 or 70 KIA/WIA carried away. The second major operation, in Binh Duong Province--a major Viet Cong stronghold,--was initiated on 12 August and was highlighted by one of the largest airmobile operations conducted in South Vietnam to date: about 100 helicopters were utilized. The plan called for a government force of approximately eight battalions to surround the Viet Cong, who were estimated to total about 2,500 personnel in the objective area. Primarily due to fog and road blocks established by the Viet Cong, the timing of the operation was changed and the element of surprise lost. In addition, extremely heavy automatic weapons fire in the primary transport helicopter landing zones required the diversion of some troop elements to alternate landing areas. Because of these factors, only minor contact with Viet Cong forces in the area was accomplished and results were less favorable than those

-7-

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obtained in the Dinh Tuong operation. Friendly losses included 4 KIA (including 1 US), 21 WIA (including 2 US), while Viet Cong losses were 17 KIA, 4 prisoners, 4 individual weapons, and a quantity of documents.

3. A possible forecast of Communist plans for the winter of 1964 and the spring of 1965 for Viet Cong Military Region 5 (the nine northern provinces of South Vietnam) was revealed by two prisoners who defected in Quang Ngai Province on 2 August 1964. They were described as "alert and well-informed" and stated that Viet Cong emphasis will be on a "war of annihilation." Each Viet Cong unit must use all ways to annihilate one government unit within six months. In addition, an anti-aircraft campaign will be pressed, attacks against New Rural Life hamlets will be increased, and guerrilla warfare will be further developed.

COMUSMACV has some doubt about the veracity of their statements and suggests they may be provocation agents since both prisoners were defectors and were interrogated together. He further states that Viet Cong activity to date has not evidenced any substantial change in pattern from the "hit and run" and ambush tactics they have employed for the past three years. However, he also mentions a Communist document recently captured in Phu Yen Province which makes reference to an alleged new policy for the autumn-winter campaign of "clinging to the enemy" and that this tactic would require a greater expenditure of ammunition than hit and run tactics. COMUSMACV further comments that unconfirmed indications of a substantial increase in Viet Cong strength in Military Region 5 over the past eight months may be related to these reported changes in VC tactics, since such tactics would require more personnel and logistic support than do guerrilla tactics.

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4. Progress in the pacification effort continued to be hampered by lack of adequate security. In some of the priority provinces, both ARVN and paramilitary troops appear to have reached the point where they cannot expand their efforts until present holdings have been consolidated.

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5. Casualty and weapons loss statistics heavily favored the Viet Cong this week. Government casualties increased considerably, totalling 732 (166 KIA) compared with 504 (126 KIA) last week. Viet Cong known casualties dropped to 167 (154 KIA and 13 captured) from 379 (299 KIA) last week. Government weapons losses increased to 307 compared with 255 last week. The Viet Cong lost only 68 individual weapons, as opposed to 131 a week ago.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The results of the week's military activities appear to favor the Viet Cong: the casualty and weapons loss ratios were clearly to the advantage of the Communists, and they were successful in their efforts to maintain a high level of disruptive activity throughout the country. Government efforts, on the other hand, did not appear to effectively reduce Viet Cong capabilities, nor obtaining appreciably increased cooperation from the general populace.

-9-

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SYNOPSIS OF PACIFICATION PROGRESS

TABLE I

Indications of Overall Progress in South Vietnam

Positive

Nearly 1,000 policemen graduated from a five-week training course. They will join 1,200 others trained since 6 May 64 for provincial assignments to bolster the population and resources control program of the national pacification plan.

Negative

Continuing Viet Cong harassment of New Rural Life hamlets and government security forces is severely inhibiting efforts to expand pacification areas.

-10-

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TABLE II

Indications of Progress in Critical Provinces\*

<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
1. Quang Tin	<p>Program being re-evaluated to take maximum advantage of success enjoyed so far.</p> <p>Division Commander emphasizing to all subordinate commanders the need for their full cooperation with provincial authorities in pacification operations.</p>	None reported.
2. Quang Ngai	<p>One paramilitary operation in Mo Duc District produced significant results. Work of MED-CAP and civilian medical teams continuing to create favorable public impression.</p>	<p>VC continuing to react to pacification program. On 9 August the VC entered a hamlet in a district considered pacified and assassinated the former hamlet chief.</p>
3. Binh Dinh	<p>Major and small unit operations continue to show progress. The chief VC political instructor in province was captured recently.</p> <p>Support for 8,500 relocated persons continues; improvements in provincial government organization being made.</p>	None reported.

\*The fourteen "critical" provinces included in this report will be adjusted in future reports to conform to the newly designed nine "priority" provinces. These are: Quang Ngai, Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Hau Nghia, Long An, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Vinh Long, and Gia Dinh.

-11-

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<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
4. Phuoc Thanh	Some advances made in hamlet relocation program, dissemination of news, and collection of intelligence. Reports on movement of VC units are timely and reliable.	VC harassment of government posts continue unabated in this province.
5. Tay Ninh	Determined effort being made to convince inhabitants of NRL hamlets that GVN will protect them.	None reported.
6. Binh Duong	US-GVN MEDCAP team achieving singular success in the field of civic action.	Increased VC activity, loss of mobile action cadre personnel, and lack of effective security is hampering pacification operations.  VC units of battalion-size conduct raids and ambushes within actual pacification area. Government troops available to province are unable to control or counter VC activity. ARVN offensive operations appear to have accomplished little.
7. Hau Nghia	None reported.	Pacification has reached a standstill, because security forces have been removed for use in other essential operations. VC reaction has been rapid, and they continue to move and operate within the Priority I pacification area.

-12-

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<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
8. Long An	Pacification operations currently being conducted in 29 hamlets. Artillery support is being expanded in defense of the hamlets.	Hamlets continue to lack communications, defense plans, and adequate physical defenses.  VC reaction to pacification program continuing: attacks and sabotage of communications routes occurs frequently.
9. Dinh Tuong	Province chief is optimistic concerning progress in construction of hamlets. Psywar program in province is active and achieving some success. New "oil spot" emerging northeast of My Tho.	None reported.
10. Go Cong	Province claims 18,000 people, or approximately 10% of population, are in 21 completed hamlets. However, only 7 hamlets inspected by US/GVN team; six meet national standards.	Road sabotage and occasional attacks by VC elements continue to occur throughout province.
11. Kien Hoa	VC activity has been kept at a low level in one district by district chief's special force, which conducts day and night patrols. Economic aid projects being implemented.	None reported.

-13-

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<u>Province</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
12. Kien Tuong	Public works projects are underway in pacification areas; progress being made in these areas of effort.	None reported.
13. Chung Thien	None reported.	Province chief became pessimistic and ineffective after the VC major attacks of 10 and 20 July. New province chief has been selected; he is not a Hoa Hao, as is bulk of paramilitary in his province. Maj. Nghia, deputy province chief, hoped to succeed to province chief position. His failure and resultant disappointment may have adverse effect, since he is considered to be key figure in the Hoa Hao structure in this province.
14. An Xuyen	None reported.	VC terrorism has increased in the province. A hamlet, located four kilometers from province capital of Ga Mau, is being subjected to daylight VC attacks. Until security forces are increased, pacification progress will continue to be very limited.

-14-

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C. ECONOMIC SITUATION

1. Prices have declined further since their sudden rise after the Tonkin Gulf incidents. Gold and piaster prices on the black market fell slightly during the week and the general market prices are now near the normal level. The wholesale price of rice has risen about eight percent since the first of August, but the retail prices have returned to levels prevailing before the Tonkin Gulf actions with the help of increased rates of deliveries from the delta in the past two weeks. (US MISSION WEEKLY)

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II. THIRD COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS

A. SOUTH KOREA:

Continuing the recent pattern of sending high level military officers on visits to friendly Asian nations, the GVN dispatched General Do Mau, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Social and Cultural Affairs in the "lame duck" cabinet, to South Korea on a six-day official visit. Upon his arrival in Seoul, Mau made the obvious comparison between Korea and Vietnam and concluded on a euphoric note that US reprisals on North Vietnam had hastened the disintegration of the regime as indicated by "uprisings in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An" following the air attacks. (EMBTEL 468). There are no reports of such disturbances in North Vietnam.

B. AFRICA:

During his visit to Tunisia, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Vinh Tho announced that a goodwill mission would arrive in Tunis by the end of the month. Details concerning this mission have not been available, although the GVN has been talking about sending a roving mission to Africa for some time. (EMBTEL 468).

C. NATIONALIST CHINA:

The departure of Gen. Phan Xuan Chieu, the newly designated ambassador to Nationalist China, was postponed until 22 August (EMBTEL 468). Although the reason for the postponement was not announced, it may have been due to the planned reorganization of the government. Chieu was, until 17 August, the Third Deputy Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council.

D. PHILIPPINES:

Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez arrived in Saigon on 11 August, in the first of a series of visits signifying increased Philippine interest in South Vietnam. Philippine Speaker of the House Cornelio Villareal is also scheduled to

-16-

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arrive. Palaez emphasized Philippine willingness to aid South Vietnam in its struggle which he called the "last battle" of Asia, but said military aid from the Philippines would not be required. (EMBTEL 468) Twenty-eight Philippine military medical personnel arrived in Saigon during the past week and an additional six are expected within the next few days. (EMB MANILA'S 312)

E. CAMBODIA:

The Cambodian Government sent a letter to the Security Council taking exception to recent statements by General Khanh charging Phnom Penh with collusion with the Viet Cong and with permitting the Viet Cong to maintain bases in Cambodia. The Cambodian note challenges the South Vietnamese Government to produce evidence so that the ICC or other missions of enquiry can investigate. (US MISSION NEW YORK 432).

F. FRANCE:

Our Embassy in Paris reports that there is increased interest among French officials and press circles in the "National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam" (NFLSVN). There have probably also been increased contacts between the NFLSVN and the DRV trade delegation in Paris. (PARIS 919)

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III. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLOC

1. Both Hanoi and Peiping allowed much of the tension generated by the Tonkin Gulf incidents to subside last week. Communist efforts to strengthen North Vietnamese air defense capabilities continued, but it appears that a further major augmentation or repositioning of Chinese armed forces will not result from the US air strike. Although Chen Yi on 17 August threatened that the crisis was far from being settled, that the US actions will be punished, and that the initiative is now "in our hands," no military developments indicating an intent to take the offensive have been detected on the part of either the PAVN or the PLA.

2. Hanoi's official propaganda statements have concentrated on building up the image of the US as the real danger to peace in Southeast Asia. The regime is using the threat of US aggression to spur greater industrial and agricultural endeavor from its apathetic populace. DRV propaganda does not reflect the menacing attitude expressed by Chen Yi. However, a threatening article by pro-Communist Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett predicted that continued attacks on DRV territory would result in the "military reunification" of North Vietnam with the "two-thirds" of South Vietnam already controlled by the Viet Cong, and that the use of Laos bases by US planes would have the effect of making the former Indochina a "single battlefield." Burchett's analysis was reportedly based on conversations with Liberation Front officials last winter, and on phone calls to Hanoi since the Tonkin Gulf events.

3. In contrast to its propaganda focus on appeals to the Geneva signatories and to the ICC, however, Hanoi has not permitted the ICC teams in North Vietnam to make any extensive investigation of the events of 2-5 August, and the Polish member of the ICC has cooperated with the DRV in the usual tactics of delay and obstruction. The DRV has still not admitted that any significant damage resulted from the 5 August air strike.

-18-

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