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ASSASSINATION - DIEM AND NHU

HALBERSTAM, DAVID

SHEEHAN, NEIL

AMBASSADOR LODGE

DE GAULLE, CHARLES

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WILLIAM BUNDY

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FOR STATE, DOD, JCS AND CIA

HONOLULU FOR CINCPAC AND CIA

JOINT EMBASSY, MACV, CAS MESSAGE

REF: DEPTTEL 570

1. THIS IS THE FIRST OF THREE MESSAGES IN RESPONSE TO
REFERENCE AND DEALS WITH IN-COUNTRY PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS.

2. ARRANGEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN COMPLETED FOR THE TURNOVER
BY CAS TO MACV OF BORDER SURVEILLANCE AND MOUNTAIN SCOUT ASSETS.
THIS MESSAGE DEALS WITH THE REMAINING IN-COUNTRY PARAMILITARY
OPERATIONS SPECIFIED IN DEPTTEL 570. THESE ARE THE COMBAT INTELLI-
GENCE TEAM PROGRAM, THE CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGERS, AND THE
BRITISH/MALAYAN TEAM.

3. IT IS JOINTLY RECOMMENDED THAT THESE IN-COUNTRY PARA-
MILITARY ASSETS BE TURNED OVER TO MACV FOR SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE.

4. THE COMBAT INTELLIGENCE TEAM PROGRAM COMPRISES SOME
650 INDIVIDUALS OPERATING IN TEAMS OF APPROXIMATELY 18 MEN EACH.
IT PARALLELS IN EVERY WAY THE MOUNTAIN SCOUT PROGRAM, THE ASSETS
OF WHICH ARE NOW BEING ABSORBED INTO THE CIDG PROGRAM. HOWEVER,
IT OPERATES IN NON-MONTAGNARD AREAS AND IS COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF
ETHNIC VIETNAMESE. THIS PROGRAM ORIGINALLY CAME UNDER THE SUPPORT
OF CAS SINCE IT WAS BASED ON A STAY-BEHIND PROGRAM WHICH WAS
ACTIVATED WHEN THE NEEDS OF THE INSURGENCY SITUATION SO DICTATED.
THE ASSETS HAVE NOW BECOME OVERT. MACV HAS THE CAPABILITY TO
ABSORB THEM AS A PART OF THE CIDG STRIKE FORCES. THIS ACTION
WOULD ENHANCE U.S. MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF THESE ASSETS.

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5. THE CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGERS, COMPRISING THREE COMPANIES OF APPROXIMATELY 150 MEN EACH AND A REPLACEMENT COMPANY OF 92 MEN, WERE ORIGINALLY INTENDED AS STRIKE FORCES FOR OPERATIONS IN LAOS AND NORTH VIETNAM, AS WELL AS SUPPORT OF SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS WITHIN SOUTH VIETNAM. THEY HAVE, IN THE PAST, PERFORMED THESE MISSIONS TO A LIMITED DEGREE AND HAVE ALSO BEEN ATTACHED TO REGULAR OPERATIONS WHEN DESIRABLE. VIETNAMESE SPECIAL FORCES ARE NOW UNDER THE FULL CONTROL OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF AND MOST EFFICIENT UTILIZATION OF THESE FORCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER OPERATIONS BEING CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PLAN. THEREFORE, THESE UNITS SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF VIETNAMESE SPECIAL FORCES, THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF WHICH IS ALREADY A MACV RESPONSIBILITY. MACV WILL SEEK TO REGULARIZE THESE GROUPS BY THEIR INDUCTION INTO ARVN AND UTILIZATION ON OPERATIONS IN THE SAME FASHION AS OTHER SPECIAL FORCES. THE UNITS ARE WELL TRAINED, FLEXIBLE, AND AGGRESSIVE.

6. THE BRITISH/MALAYAN TEAM COMPRISES SIX BRITISH OFFICERS AND 14 MALAYANS WHO HAVE HAD PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS AMONG MONTAGNARDS DURING THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY. BECAUSE OF THE UK'S POSITION AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION, THE OVERT COMMITMENT OF THESE FORCES IS NOT DESIRABLE; HOWEVER, THE BRITISH AND MALAYANS DID DESIRE TO MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR AGAINST THE VIET CONG. THROUGH CAS AND THE GOOD OFFICES OF USOM, THE BRITISH/MALAYAN TEAM, INTENDED TO CORRESPOND ROUGHLY TO A UNITED STATES SPECIAL FORCES "A" TEAM, WAS INTRODUCED IN VIETNAM UNDER USOM COVER AS A MONTAGNARD RURAL AFFAIRS ADVISOR GROUP. THE BRITISH/MALAYAN TEAM HAS TAKEN UP ITS POSITION ON

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PLATEAU G BUT SO FAR HAS NOT BEEN ENGAGED IN OPERATIONS DUE TO DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES WHO HAVE DONE LITTLE TO ASSIST THE TEAM. BECAUSE OF THIS AND BECAUSE OF THE CRISIS SITUATION IN MALAYA, THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW THE MALAYANS FOR COMMITMENT IN BORNEO. UNDER THE NEW SITUATION AFTER THE COUP D'ETAT, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO PERSUADE THE MALAYAN GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE ITS DECISION, PROVIDED THERE IS SOME STRONG INDICATION OF INTEREST IN THE TEAM ON THE PART OF THE NEW VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. THE BRITISH AND MALAYANS HAVE AGREED TO DEFER WITHDRAWAL UNTIL SUCH EXPRESSION CAN BE OBTAINED. IN THE EVENT OF A MALAYAN REVERSAL OF THE DECISION, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE FIELD OPERATIONS OF THE TEAM SHOULD BE HANDLED AS A SPECIAL FORCES "A" TEAM ENGAGED IN A CIDG PROJECT AND, THEREFORE, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF MACV. THEY WOULD MAINTAIN THEIR USOM COVER. CAS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INTER-GOVERNMENT LIAISON AND COORDINATION.

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7. IF THESE TRANSFERS TO MACV ARE MADE, MACV WILL HAVE UNIQUE SUPPORT AND CONTROL OF OVERT IN-COUNTRY PARAMILITARY ASSETS AND WILL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO SYSTEMATIZE COMMAND AND SUPPORT OF THESE IRREGULAR UNITS.

8. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT CAS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPLY FUNDS AND MATERIAL TO MACV FOR THESE ACTIVITIES AT NOT LESS THAN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SUPPORT THROUGHOUT FY 64. FY 65 FUNDING WILL BE HANDLED BY MACV, HOWEVER, CAS CHANNELS MAY BE UTILIZED FOR THESE FUNDS IF SO AGREED BY DOD AND CAS HEADQUARTERS.

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Hit 1 of 1

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

Gen Taylor -

If your memory is as
clear as mine on The U.S.
position with respect to France
and Indo-China circa 1954,
I think you will find this
very interesting.

Gene.



THE JOINT STAFF

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

J-5 (PLANS AND POLICY) DIRECTORATE

DECLASSIFIED BY JOINT STAFF
DATE: JUL 10 1997

J-5 M 622-64

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

Subject: Report on Deliberations of the US on
Southeast Asia (1953-1954) (U)

1. The attached report is submitted in accordance with your oral request of 1 June 1964 for a review of the US position toward Indochina in 1953-1954.

2. A summary of the attached report is as follows:

a. The US position during the period 1953-1954 with respect to French Indochina was contained primarily in NSC 124/2, approved 25 June 1952, and NSC 5405, approved 14 January 1954. In essence, NSC 124/2 called for:

(1) Assistance to Southeast Asia non-communist countries.

(2) A warning to Communist China to stop aggressive actions, but such warning was contingent upon French and United Kingdom agreement to act militarily with the US against Communist China if she did not heed the warning. Such action would involve US air and naval forces with token allied support plus French and indigenous ground forces.

(3) A Naval Blockade.

b. NSC 5405 reiterated the above and stated that the loss of Indochina to communism would have "the most serious repercussions on US and Free World interests in Europe and elsewhere." It flatly opposed any idea of accepting a cease-fire prior to opening negotiations with the communists.

c. The US supported the French throughout the war with military and economic assistance, as well as on most political issues related to the war. Disagreements centered around:

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By 24019 NARA Date 2/23/21

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(1) French lack of aggressiveness in prosecuting the war.

(2) French (and UK) reluctance to join the US in warning the Chinese communists that further aggression would result in retaliation on Red China itself. (As a result, such a warning was never given).

(3) US insistence on independence for the Associated States (Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia) as a prerequisite to furnishing troops, and French desire to hold on to colonial possessions.

d. Areas in which State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff held divergent views concerned paragraph 2.a. (2) above. At State insistence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff softened their position and decided to "take action against Communist China in the event of further aggression." There was also a difference of opinion between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the subject of what the US would do if France gave up the struggle. The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted the question resolved and the Secretary of Defense backed by the National Security Council and the President sidestepped the question.

e. Other factors influencing the resulting situation in Indochina stemmed in part from:

(1) A deteriorating political situation in France.

(2) The fact that the American people and Congress had not been prepared for unilateral American action in Indochina.

f. The US noted (rather than signed) the Geneva conference declaration, and presented a unilateral statement to the last plenary session on 21 July 1954.

g. US Military assistance was halted when the decision was made to divide Vietnam. Materiel withdrawn from North Vietnam was used as much as possible to equip the Associated States forces.

h. Few US policies toward Southeast Asia have changed since 1954. For example, air and naval action was advocated in 1954 but the use of indigenous ground forces only was

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contemplated. The statement made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the loss of Indochina to communism would have critical psychological, political and economic consequences for the US, is still valid. Likewise the question of whether or not to resort to nuclear weapons in the event of large scale communist Chinese aggression has never been completely resolved at governmental level.



P. S. EMRICK
Major General, USAF
Director for Plans and Policy

PREPARED BY:
Colonel Harry Wilds, USAF
P&SEA Branch, J-5
Exts. 57043/73242

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REPORT ON DELIBERATIONS OF THE US ON SOUTHEAST ASIA (1953-1954)

1. The purpose of this paper is to review US policies with respect to the Indochina situation during the period 1953-1954 to include areas in which the French Government was supported by the US and the views of the US Government departments and agencies with respect to US policy.

2. During 1952 four important trends developed in the Indochinese war with respect to United States policy.

a. Washington was taking its place with Paris and Saigon as a center of political and military strategic planning for the war.

b. The US Government was being drawn into closer cooperation with the British and French on the problems of the area. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, fearing that this tendency might lead to a combined command of some sort, or to increased American responsibility in the Indochinese conflict, sometimes protested against it, though with little success.

c. The threat of Chinese communist intervention was beginning to dwarf other factors in the Southeast Asia picture, especially for the French, who seemed obsessed with this danger.

d. France was beginning to crack under the triple burden of the Indochinese war, European rearmament, and the chronic instability of its own government.

3. On 25 June 1952, President Truman approved a comprehensive US policy* toward Indochina. For the purpose of holding the entire area this policy provided that, with respect to Southeast Asia the United States should:

a. Continue programs of economic and technical assistance designed to strengthen the indigenous non-communist governments of the area.

b. Seek agreement with other nations, including at least France, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, for a joint warning to Communist China regarding the grave consequences of Chinese aggression against Southeast Asia, the issuance

* NSC 124/2, 25 June 1952

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of such a warning to be contingent upon the prior agreements of France and the UK to participate in the following minimum courses of military action, either under the auspices of the UN or in conjunction with France and the UK and any other friendly governments:

(1) A resolute defense of Indochina itself to which the US would provide such air and naval assistance as might be practicable.

(2) Interdiction of Chinese communist communication lines including those in China but avoiding targets near the USSR boundaries.

(3) The US would provide the major forces for task (2) above, but would expect token forces from France and the UK and would expect France to carry the burden of providing, in conjunction with the Associated States (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), the ground forces for the defense of Indochina.

c. Seek UK and French agreement in principle that a naval blockade of Communist China should be included in minimum courses of action set forth above.

d. Strengthen covert operations designed to assist in the achievement of US objectives in Southeast East Asia.

e. Encourage the spirit of resistance among the people of Southeast East Asia to Communist Chinese aggression.

f. Make clear to the American people the importance of Southeast Asia to the security of the US.

g. Consider taking unilateral action in the event the concurrence of the UK and France to expanded military action against Communist China is not obtained.

4. Following a Tripartite conference (UK, France, and the US) the JCS took issue with the UK and French position which opposed action against Communist China outside the area of aggression. At State insistence the JCS softened their position and decided to take action against Communist China in the event of further Chinese aggression.*

* History of the Indochina Incident, Historical Section, JCS, pages X 20-21

5. The foregoing policy (NSC 124/2) was the most important development in the US policy toward Indochina in 1952. The US continued to keep responsibility for the war in the hands of the French, refused to be drawn into a combined military command in Southeast Asia, and side-stepped any commitment to participate in a purely local defense of Indochina. However, the US was backing the French position in the UN and was expanding and publicizing its military aid program for Indochina.

6. As the war progressed the US received more and more requests for military assistance but the JCS found French plans deficient in aggressive spirit. After considerable prodding by the US, the French "Navarre Plan" appeared to offer sufficient promise of success to warrant increased American aid. The French Government had indicated that such aid was the only alternative to withdrawal from Indochina.

7. The JCS recognized two conditions under which French withdrawal might take place - intervention by the Chinese communists or political deterioration within France. Hopefully the JCS considered that French withdrawal might not occur until the expansion of native forces had reached an advanced state. In that event the US might be able to forego the commitment of ground troops and achieve results by providing air and naval support or logistic support for the Vietnamese operation. If Red Chinese aggression drove the French to withdraw there were no feasible courses of military action that the US could take in Indochina to prevent communist forces from overrunning the country.* Preventing the situation from reaching so serious a state as this was a prime objective of American policy. The US Government had encountered continued French and British reluctance to subscribe to a joint declaration advising Red China that any further acts of aggression would call forth a united retaliation that might not observe geographic limitations such as those imposed on the Korean action.**

8. In issuing a unilateral US warning*** against further incursions in Southeast Asia Secretary of State Dulles suggested that retaliatory actions might not be limited to Indochina. The JCS concluded that such action could not be so confined.

* JCS 1992/187, 28 October 1952

** Doc D-9 State Dept Press Release No. 160, 28 March 1953

*** Doc D-39 State Dept Press Release No. 469, 2 Sept 1953

9. In redrafting the 25 June 1952 statement of American objectives and courses of action in Southeast Asia (NSC 124/2), the Planning Board of the National Security Council in late 1953 made an assessment of the probable consequences of a French defeat in Indochina. In June 1952 the Security Council had agreed that the loss of any Southeast Asia country would probably lead to the relatively swift realization of communist domination over the whole area. But in November 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency would go no further than to say: "A Viet Minh victory in Indochina would remove a significant military barrier to a communist sweep through Southeast Asia, expose the remainder of that region to greatly increased external communist pressures, and probably increase the capabilities of local communists..." However the Deputy Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff registered a dissenting view: "The establishment of communist control over Indochina by military or other means would almost certainly result in the communization of all of Southeast Asia...." Accordingly, the Planning Board's redraft contained the statement that the loss of Indochina would have "the most serious repercussions on US and Free World interests in Europe and elsewhere." Drawing upon Korean experience, the Planning Board also recommended that the US flatly oppose any idea of accepting a cease-fire prior to opening negotiations because of the probable result - irretrievable deterioration in the French Union military position.**

10. Since the Board needed military advice the JCS directed the Joint Strategic and Logistics Plans Committees to review an earlier study*** on the subject. As in the earlier study, the committees assumed that:

The US could take over French responsibilities in an orderly manner at the invitation of the Associated States.

11. The committee reaffirmed the conclusion that the successful defense of Indochina was essential since loss of the area would have critical psychological, political, and economic consequences for the US.**** The course of action offering the US the greatest assurance of success was to support and step-up the development of native troops and to deploy American and Allied forces to Indochina for operations that would have the objective of reducing communist elements to scattered guerrilla bands.

12. The board foresaw that the threat of French withdrawal might take two forms. There was, first, the possibility that France might seek peace unless America offered to participate

* SE-52, CIA Sp Est Probable Consequences in non-communist Asia of Action Possible Developments in Indochina before mid 1954, 10 Nov 1953

** NSC 5405, 10 Jan 1953

*** JCS 1992/227, 22 Jan 1953

**** JCS 1992/262, 24 Dec 1953

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in the war with military forces. Should this contingency arise, two choices would be open to the US. Either the US Government might do nothing to prevent the loss of Indochina or it might provide the forces needed to keep France in the war. The second threat foreseen by the board was even more ominous. The French Government might refuse to continue the struggle even if the US did agree to commit troops. Under these circumstances again the US might write off Indochina. On the other hand, it could consider taking the course of action that had just been evaluated by the Joint Staff (para 11 above). The board submitted this study for NSC consideration in December 1953 as the Special Annex to NSC 177. The JCS agreed,* in general, with the board's position on 6 January 1954.

13. The Joint Strategic Survey Committee recognized that if the French withdrew in spite of American intervention, the worldwide situation might oblige the US to accept the loss of Indochina. Nevertheless, the US should be prepared to do what it could to offset such a development. Therefore, the committee recommended that the Special Annex be revised to reflect the following views:

"Should the French make an arbitrary decision to withdraw from the conflict in Indochina despite all offers of US assistance, the US should in any event, and as a minimum urge the French to phase their withdrawal over a protracted period and to take all practicable measures to prepare the indigenous forces better to assume the responsibilities of their own defense. Additionally, the US, preferably in conjunction with its Allies, should provide such military assistance to the indigenous forces of Indochina as is determined to be advisable and feasible in the light of conditions then prevailing, and as is consistent with US objectives both with respect to Southeast Asia and world-wide.**

* JCS 1992/267, 4 Jan 1954

** JCS 1992/267, 4 Jan 1954

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14. Admiral Carney (CNO) suggested that if US forces were to participate in the war, they should do so in sufficient strength to insure an early and lasting military victory. He also wished to strengthen the arguments in favor of the most vigorous alternative course, supporting native troops while deploying American and Allied forces for operations which would reduce the communist to scattered guerrilla bands.*

15. At a meeting of the Armed Forces Policy Council on 7 Jan 54, Admiral Radford indicated that the JCS had hastily prepared some comments on the Special Annex to NSC 177. However, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Roger M. Kyes did not address himself to the principal problem at hand - that of being prepared for a French request for intervention. The Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, supported Mr. Kyes and decided to request that the Special Annex be withdrawn from further consideration. In addition, the Department of Defense suggested to the Security Council that, in the future, requests for military advice, such as that contained in the Special Annex, should be addressed to the Secretary of Defense, not to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.**

16. On 14 Jan 54, President Eisenhower approved the Planning Board's policy statement toward Southeast Asia, NSC 177 which was later circulated as NSC 5405 and became the charter for US action in the months to come, assuming the French fought on. However, the Secretary of Defense and the council had sidestepped the question raised by the JCS, of what the US would do if France gave up the struggle.

17. After the fall of Dien Bien Phu and the continuing deterioration of the French position, Vice President Nixon took action of his own to test public opinion. Asked what the country should do if the French withdrew from Indochina, Mr. Nixon replied:

" . . . there was no reason why the French could not stay on and win, but on the assumption they did withdraw - an assumption he did not accept - Indochina would become Communist in a month. The US as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia. It was hoped that the US would not have to send troops there, but if this Government could not avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces."***

* JCS 1992/268, 5 Jan 64

** AFPC Advice of Action, US Objectives and Courses of Action with respect to SEA (NSC 177) 11 Jan 54.

*** New York Times 4 May 1954 Page 4

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Public reaction was so unfavorable that the Department of State took pains to point out that the Vice President had been addressing himself to a hypothetical question.

18. With public opinion and the Congress obviously still unready for unilateral American action and the British unwilling to internationalize the war, the only course open to the Administration was the use of moral suasion to keep the French from selling out at Geneva.

19. Meanwhile a ceasefire was being discussed at Geneva. In assessing the Indochinese situation, the JCS considered that the US should adopt the following as its minimum position:

"The United States will not associate itself with any French proposal directed toward cease-fire in advance of a satisfactory political settlement. The United States urges the French Government to propose that negotiations for a political settlement be initiated at once. During the course of such negotiations, French Union Forces should continue to oppose the forces of the Viet Minh with all means at their disposal in order to reinforce the French negotiating position. In the meantime, as a means of strengthening the French hand, the United States will intensify its efforts to organize and promptly activate a Southeast Asian coalition for the purpose of preventing further expansion of Communist power in Southeast Asia. If the French Government persists in its intention of entering armistice negotiations or accedes to immediate ceasefire negotiations, the United States will disassociate itself from such negotiations in order to maintain maximum freedom of action in taking whatever measures may be feasible for opposing extension of Communist control into Southeast Asia".*

20. The obvious answer to Geneva was American intervention, but the French seemed to dread the cure fully as much as the complaint. Twice during April the French Government had sought American intervention to save Dien Bien Phu and both times had been unwilling to pay the price of independence for the Allied States. Mr. Dulles made this requirement clear when he stated:

" . . . I firmly believe that it is essential to remove any taint of colonialism in order to attract vital Asian support and forestall opposition by other Asian and Middle East countries".**

* JCS 1992/308, 6 May 54 (as amended on 7 May 54)

** Msg SecState to AmEmb (Paris) NIACT 4064, 13 May 54

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21. In late June the US and the UK received an aide memoire from the French Government stating that French authorities must face two sorts of difficulties: on the one hand it would be most difficult to obtain concessions from the Viet Minh in the north; and on the other hand the negotiations risk causing, if the agreement is concluded, dangerous reactions by the Vietnamese Government whose citizens are serving at the present time under the orders of the French command.*

22. The British and American Governments drafted an answer to the aide-memoire in the hope of stiffening the French position. The two governments informed the French that they would be willing to respect an agreement that:

"1. preserves the integrity and independence of Laos and Cambodia and assures the withdrawal of Vietminh forces therefrom;

2. preserves at least the southern half of Vietnam, and if possible an enclave in the Delta; in this connection we would be unwilling to see the line of division of responsibility drawn further south than a line running generally west from Dong Hoi;

3. does not impose on Laos, Cambodia or retained Vietnam any restrictions materially impairing their capacity to maintain stable non-Communist regimes; and especially restrictions impairing their right to maintain adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers;

4. does not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control;

5. does not exclude the possibility of the ultimate unification of Vietnam by peaceful means;

6. provides for the peaceful and humane transfer, under international supervision, of those people desiring to be moved from one zone to another of Vietnam; and

7. provides effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.**

* Msg, Dulles to Amb (Paris) 4852, 28 June 1954

** Msg, Dulles to Amb (Paris) 4853, 28 June 1954

23. When the diplomats at Geneva formally agreed to partition Vietnam, the Defense Department immediately suspended all shipments of materiel to Indochina. Between 1950 and the suspension date of July 1954 such assistance had amounted to 2.7 billion dollars. Subsequently, the US adopted an interim policy of sending to Indochina only items directly alleviating suffering, preventing disease and assisting in the evacuation of military forces and refugees.* It was the US intention to use as much as possible of the materiel rescued from northern Vietnam to help equip the native forces of the Associated States. This disposition of the equipment was in line with the idea that the non-communist nations would have to build up their own forces for internal security. This initial equipping of native forces was the forerunner of the more extensive MAP in effect in 1964.

24. In determining the degree to which the US might be willing to be associated with an agreement which might be reached in Geneva, the US issued a statement to the effect that it was not prepared to join in the conference declaration. Instead, the following unilateral declaration** was presented by Under Secretary Smith to the last plenary session of the conference on 21 July:

"The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations takes note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954 between (a) the France-Laotian Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam; (b) The Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21, 1954 declares with regard to the aforesaid agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern

* History of Indochina Incident, Historical Section, JCS (Page 1, Summary of the Aid Program)

** US Declaration on Indochina, Under Secretary of State 21 July 54, State Dept. Bulletin VOL XXXI, No. 788 (2 Aug 54)

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and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

In connection with the statement in the declaration concerning free elections in Viet-Nam my government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954, as follows:

' In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly.'

With respect to the statement made by the representative of the State of Viet-Nam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.

We share the hope that the agreements will permit Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam to play their part in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future."

25. The US Government might have been able to stave off the consequences of the Geneva Conference if, as the Joint Chiefs of Staff were prepared to do, it had committed its own forces to the struggle. But the National Security Council postponed decision on this step in favor of an attempt to raise international support for united action. The National Security Council never met the question squarely, and certainly the American people and Congress had never been properly prepared for fighting alone, or even with allies, in Indochina. The principal shortcoming in the establishment of US policy regarding Southeast Asia was the reluctance of Washington to face squarely what action the US would take if the Chinese Communists became involved in the conflict. Then, as now, the use of large contingents of US ground forces in Southeast Asia was viewed unfavorably. At the same time, it was recognized that air action with conventional weapons might not be adequate. This poses the question which has not been faced squarely and answered by all branches of the US Government concerned. Would the US resort to nuclear weapons?

~~Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~TOP SECRET~~

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1639

DATE RECEIVED

22 June 64

CLASSIFICATION

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20 June 64

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J-5 M 622-64

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SUBJECT:

Report on Deliberations of the US on Southeast Asia (1953-1954)

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[illegible]

SD FORM 349
1 NOV 58

E 25624

TOP SECRET

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET -- SSO CABLE -- IMMEDIATE

28 May 1964

FROM: General Maxwell D. Taylor, CJCS

TO: Admiral Felt, CINCPAC

General Harkins, COMUSMACV

⁻²⁶²⁵
CITE JCS- 2624-64 EYES ONLY

PK Copy to:
SecDef
Mr. McNaughton

DTG: 281505Z May 64

1. In addition to items for discussion at Honolulu conveyed by State
(State to Saigon 2095)
to Ambassador Lodge, SecDef desires to have views of CINCPAC and
COMUSMACV on following questions:

Part I

- a. What military actions might we consider to strengthen the situation in Laos? What should be done about reequipping Kong Le's forces?
- b. What military actions might be taken in ascending order of gravity to impress Hanoi with our intention to strike NVN?
- c. What are time factors and force movements involved in achieving readiness for action against NVN?
- d. What should be the purpose and pattern of the initial air strikes against NVN?
- e. What is your concept of the actions and reactions which may arise from the progressive implementation of CINCPAC 37-64 and 32-64? How may NVN and Communist China respond to our escalating pressures?
- f. If at some point Hanoi agrees to desist from further help to VC and PL, how can we verify fulfillment? How long should we be prepared to maintain our readiness posture while awaiting verification?

TOP SECRET

EYES ONLY

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g. What help should be sought from SEATO nations in relation to the situation (a) in Laos? (b) in SVN?

Part II

a. Reference CINCPAC 270805 Zulu. What is your view of providing 4-man advisory teams at once for each district in the seven selected provinces? (State-Saigon 2095); in all 239 districts? It is assumed mission of teams would be to supervise unit training, operational performance, and operational planning of the paramilitary units in the district.

b. In addition to these district-level advisory teams, in what other ways could military personnel be used to advantage in forwarding the pacification program in the seven selected provinces?

c. What are your views with regard to relocating the headquarters of General Khanh and COMUSMACV?

d. What is the current status of the following projects:

(1) Proposed increase in regular and paramilitary forces of GVN, including expansion of VNAF; reorganization of paramilitary forces; increased compensation for GVN military forces.

(2) Formation of an intelligence net of US advisers reporting on conditions in RVNAF.

(3) Development of a capability for offensive guerrilla operations.

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Page 2 of 3 pages.

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(4) Progress under decrees for national mobilization.

(5) Progress in detailing and carrying out operational plans in implementation of clear-and-hold (oil-spot) operations.

2. Discussions are desired in groups of minimum size formed on basis of need to participate.

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Page 3 of 3 pages.

13187

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

JCS

27 6 13 PM '61

I. You will have surmized from yesterday's telegram from President and Secretary that we here are fully aware that gravest decisions are in front of us and other governments about free world's interest in and commitment to security of Southeast Asia. Our point of departure is and must be that we cannot accept overrunning of Southeast Asia by Hanoi and Peiping. Full and frank discussion of these decisions with you is purpose of Honolulu meeting.

We are pleased you agree with Suggestion that meeting begin on Monday June 1, and Secretary is arranging his homeward schedule from New Delhi on that basis.

President

Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

The Acting Secretary

S/S - Mr. Read

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TOP SECRET
2075
3

President will continue in close consultation with congressional leadership (he met with Democratic Leadership and Senate Republicans yesterday) and will ~~very probably~~ wish the Congress associated with him ~~off~~^{off} steps which carry with them substantial acts and risks of escalation. At that point, there will be three central questions:

(a) Is the security of Southeast Asia vital to the United States and to the Free World? ~~this is a question which is~~
~~not a question~~

(b) Are the additional steps necessary?

(c) Will the additional steps accomplish their mission of stopping the intrusions of Hanoi and Peiping into the South?

Whether approached from (b) or (c), above, it seems obvious that we must do everything in our power to stiffen and strengthen the situation in South Viet Nam. We recognize that stiffening and strengthening measures will require lengthy preparations and we know that the time sequence of communist actions may force the critical decisions before any such preparatory measures could achieve tangible success.

II. Nevertheless, in Honolulu, ~~this is a question which is~~, we would

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_____ to be prepared to discuss with us _____ to be able to improve the _____ the most radical of such proposals _____ in some detail. This would _____ into a group of selected _____ Vietnamese are currently unable to execute their _____ It is our belief that the Vietnamese have _____ the concepts of their pacification QUOTE: _____ because they have not undertaken the _____ steps to convert the conceptual features of _____ a coordinated schedule of actions making best use _____.

_____ personnel, both civilian _____ the establishment currently in _____ into the current Vietnamese _____ in order to induce a state of _____ to produce extensive competence in those _____ them in their current function as _____ can be accomplished.

_____ the assignment of civilian

_____ with a civilian

TOP SECRET

function to work in the provincial administration, and insofar as it is feasible, down into the district level of administration. On the military side, it would mean the introduction of mobile training teams ~~(from the Saigon area to selected provinces)~~ to train, stiffen, and improve the status of the Vietnamese paramilitary and of district operational planning. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have already sent a message to General Harkins asking his views on this mobile training team concept. Finally, our proposal suggests that the propaganda and information programs in these selected provinces similarly be enhanced by the assignment of US civilian and military personnel to train, guide and work with Vietnamese counterparts in that field of action.

In order to test the utility of such a proposal, we would suggest that seven provinces be chosen for this purpose. We would offer the provinces of Long An, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia, which are five critical provinces in immediate vicinity of Saigon. Additionally, we would propose Quang Ngai, because it is a critical province considerably removed from Saigon, and finally Phu Yen, because it is a province in which significant pacification has already been achieved.

It would

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It would be our concept that the US personnel assigned to these functions would not RPT not appear directly in the chain of command, either civilian or military. They would instead be listed as QUOTE: US Assistants UNQUOTE to the Vietnamese officials. In practice, however, we would expect them to carry a major share of the burden of decision and action in these provinces and districts. Apart from the military personnel assigned the mobile training teams, we do not have precise estimates of the numbers that might be involved in this assignment. However, we would expect a total (exclusive of training teams) in the neighborhood of 100 men. To the extent these men are not available from civilian pool and to the extent that they can be provided from military personnel in-country, such personnel might be so assigned.

We realize this proposal might also require a close integration of US and Vietnamese pacification activities in Saigon. We understand that some discussion has already been held concerning the possible establishment of a joint US-Vietnamese Pacification Operation Center and that initial reactions are favorable.

III. In addition to this radical proposal, we also believe that you should be prepared to consult with us on the manner in which the

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the Honolulu talks can best be used to accomplish any of the other stabilizing actions which you have been seeking to achieve over the past few weeks. We continue gravely concerned about the differences between Khanh and the Generals, the problem of Big Minh, and the religious differences, both Catholic and Buddhist. (Deptel 2086)

IV. Finally, we wish to consult with you on the manner in which we can make to eliminate the business as usual attitude in Saigon. We share ^{your} ~~your~~ view that the US community should set the example and we feel that on your return from Honolulu you may wish to institute such specific measures as the elimination of cocktails parties, black-tie dinners and other dispensable social customs. We will also wish to examine the best means of reducing the problem of dependents and otherwise clearing the decks for action in the American community.

V. Before the Honolulu meeting certain diplomatic actions will have been set in train and we will report further when we meet. Among these will have been the consultation with the Canadians, on which I think our views are very close and which I hope will result in the early despatch of the new Canadian Commissioner to Saigon preferably no later than next week.

If

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If there are any other matters on which you feel you wish to have us fully prepared before the Honolulu meeting, please advise immediately.

There may be such matters as the broadening or alternatively narrowing of the base for the Khanh Government, the introduction of other national efforts into Viet Nam, and the organization of the United States Mission which you will want to raise with us collectively or in more private discussions. We would naturally welcome your views on any of these matters.

VI. Additionally you should be aware that Graham Martin from Bangkok and ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{Chadbourn} DCM/ from Vientiane will participate in the meeting. For your own team my suggestion would be that, in addition to those you have listed you might wish to bring Hurt of USIA and Zorthian of USIS.

You will appreciate that until you receive further instructions nothing concerning this proposed meeting should be said to Khanh or other Vietnamese officials. We wish to control from Washington the manner in which foreign officials are made aware of our planning for this meeting.

BALL

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1963

R-12899

RECEIVED DIA30 COMMCENTER 23/0337Z

O 230240Z ZFF-1

FM HARKINS, SAIGON

TO MACNAMARA, SEC DEF

TAYLOR, JCS

INFO FELT, CINCPAC

ARULAK, OSD/SACSA

EYES ONLY

SECRET

MAC 1751 363 9 EYES ONLY

EXCLUSIVE FOR MACNAMARA, TAYLOR, FELT, ARULAK

1. POSSIBLE PRES DIEM WILL HOST DINNER WHICH WILL BE BLACK TIE.
ANY OTHER SOCIAL EVENTS, IF SCHEDULED, WILL BE KEPT INFORMAL.

2. DUE CURRENT WEATHER SUGGEST PARTY BRING RAINCOATS.

3. REQUEST YOUR DESIRES CONCERNING PRESS REPS ACCOMPANYING
PARTY ON FIELD VISITS. PRESS HAS INDICATED DESIRE TO ACCOMPANY.
ALSO MEDIA REPS TO PRESS FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF
PARTY. REQUEST GUIDANCE YOUR DESIRE THIS REGARD.

4. COL BAKER (MACV PIO) EXTENDS INVITATION TO MR SYLVESTER AS
HOUSE GUEST.

5. MR BRENT (USOM) EXTENDS INVITATION TO MR BUNDY AS HOUSE GUEST.

SECRET

SECRET

EYES ONLY MAC 2081

DTG: 030429Z November 1963
FROM: HARKINS, COMUSMACV
TO: TAYLOR, CJCS, WASHINGTON
INFO: FELT, CINCPAC
SECRET MAC 2081 EYES ONLY

1. Saigon is quiet and orderly and all evidence indicates revolutionary committee has situation well in hand. Some troops still positioned throughout city and police also in evidence. Martial Law continues with curfew hours changed to 1900 to 0500.

2. With ref your JCS 4279 intend to press the new government for same military improvements which we have been endorsing in the past, specifically:

A. Direct chain of command.

B. Subordination of Prov Chief to Corps and Div Commanders in military matters

C. Emphasis on training of units, including hamlet militia.
(and militia squad leaders).

D. Operational use of general reserve

E. Operational use of special forces under JCS and Corps commanders.
(now reported accomplished).

F. Better use of military engineers.

G. Better use of navy and civil guard boat companies in Delta.

H. Lifting of restrictions on aircraft armament.

I. Increased tempo of operations with emphasis on those types of operations which augur success of desired objectives.

SECRET

EYES ONLY

MAC 2081

SECRET

EYES ONLY

2081

J. Freeing of ARVN elements from static security missions and reduction isolated outposts.

3. All of the above have previously been discussed with military leaders who were responsive to the need for such improvements and I anticipate that they, functioning under the new government structure, will be inclined to institute desired changes.

4. As concerns the effect of the change in administration on the province chiefs I do not have at this time details on country-wide reaction of these very important individuals. Am in the process of assembling info on this point and will report in detail soonest. As a general response to your query and based on info presently available.

A. As a general rule, with some exceptions, we have been satisfied with current line up in so far as their military duties are concerned.

B. Do not anticipate any wholesale shakeup of present incumbents.

C. Agree that it to our best interests to prevent removal of effective or experienced chiefs, and to experience the minimum of changes.

D. Several Prov chiefs have to date declared their allegiance to the new Government. Consolidated list being assembled and will be forwarded ASAP.

E. Have received information of temporary replacement two (2) Prov Chiefs in I Corps.

5. Senior advisor IV Corps advises that Gen Cao has been replaced as CG IV Corps by Colonel Nhon who continues to function as CO 21st Div.

SECRET

EYES ONLY

~~MAC 8753~~

CRITIC

021036Z (?)

CRITIC - Secret
FROM: SSO MACV

2 November 1963

TO: Dir, NSA

A. Indicators of coup success

1. The initial objective of the coup group has been attained. Open resistance to the coup forces has ceased leaving the military in full control of the apparatus of government.
2. Deaths of President and Counsellor, protective custody of Can, would appear remove only significant symbol around which supporters of former regime might rally.
3. From all outward appearances there is strong public support of the Armed Forces and the new government those forces have established. The mood of the population is jubilant, by Vietnamese standards; rapport between troops and people is excellent; everywhere, people are bringing food to troops.

B. Status of public order

1. During morning hours there were numerous large, spontaneous and enthusiastic demonstrations. As of now (mid-afternoon), it is quieter, but the streets are crowded; this is, of course, Saturday and a holiday to boot (Memorial Day for VN War Dead).
2. There has been some sacking and looting but, thus far, it has been highly selective. In addition to the palace, the targets have been holdings of the Nhus (Times of Vietnam; Book Stores; Commercial concerns; Hq. of Women's Solidarity League); residences of Minister Hien (Civic Action), Luong (Interior) and Trinh (Education); and Home of Senior Republican youth leader. In all actions, student groups have been in vanguard.
3. Few civil police in evidence, many having discarded uniforms and jobs yesterday, those on duty are making little or no effort to influence crowds. Military have reacted quickly to the incipient danger of crowds getting out of hand. Military police and some line troops are deployed at critical locations and handling situation in relaxed, effective manner. Notably, Minh, Don, and Dinh have been personally moving to reported trouble spots to supervise. Reconstitution of police force is a first priority task of regime.
4. All public utilities continue in full operating condition.
5. Martial law in effect, country wide.

C. Personalities in new government

1. Following changes to initially reported lineup:
 - A. M/Gen Duong Van Minh is Chief, Joint General Staff.
 - B. M/Gen Tran Van Don is Minister of Nation Defense.
 - C. B/Gen Mai Huu Xuan is Director, National Police.
 - D. Do Khac Mai, promoted to Colonel, and named Commander, VNAF.
2. Promotions:
 - A. Ton That Dinh, III Corps Cmdr and Minister of Interior designate, promoted to Major General. He is currently responsible for military security of Saigon-Cholon area again.

SCJ
82

2 November 1963

FROM SSO MACV

TO: Dir, NSA

- B. To Brig. Gen.
Do Mai, Chief MSS
Co, now CG 7th Div.
Thieu, now CG 5th Div.

3. B/G Nghiem, formerly I Corps Cmdr, has assumed command of VN Special Forces.

D. Threats to US Nationals

- 1. No report of US casualties as result of coup action.
- 2. Rapport between US and VN military continues excellent. What is notable is new warmth of common man towards US personnel.
- 3. Condition yellow remains in effect, with intention to relax to grey tomorrow.

E. VC Reaction to Coup

- 1. While it cannot be directly linked to exploitation of situation, unusual pattern of VC attacks reported in Vinh Long. After daylight this morning, VC aggregating 200, attacked 6 strategic hamlets. VC described as clad in blue uniforms.
- 2. 33rd Ranger Bn has flushed estimated 300 VC in Ho Bo area, Binh Duong Province.
- 3. No evidence any direct VC participation in minor disorders (para B2 above,) in Saigon.

F. Effects of Saigon events on SVN forces and their operations against VC

- 1. Understandably, as the result of nationwide military interest in coup developments combined with a national holiday, the tempo of offensive operations slowed drastically today.
- 2. It recognized here that it will take several days to refocus the attention of the new government on priority military tasks. The attention of the entire higher command structure is now centered upon the most pressing of all immediate problems: the establishment of viable government. There is also an impact upon field commanders, particularly sector commanders who face, in varying degrees, personal and political reorientation.

G. Steps being taken to form new government

- 1. Nothing substantial to report.
- 2. Coup leaders are making determined efforts to maintain order and at the same time, transform popular exuberance into political support. For example, Generals Minh and Don were reported as being well-received this morning as they shook hands with, and moved freely among the people of Saigon.

TOP SECRET

Harkins 2168
EYES ONLY

DTG: 120945Z November 1963

FROM: GENERAL HARKINS, SAIGON

TO: GENERAL TAYLOR, CJCS, WASH D.C.

INFO: ADMIRAL FELT, CINCPAC

AMB LODGE, SAIGON

TOP SECRET MAC 2168 EYES ONLY

1. Your attention invited to Neil Sheehan (UPI) story datelined Saigon November 11.
2. Greater part of story is speculative in nature and not factual with respect to specifics cited. While it portrays me personally, my Command and the Defense Department in Washington in an unfavorable light it is also detrimental to the US national interest and is viewed with concern. This concern is over certain parts of story which indicate without doubt that Sheehan has by some means obtained information concerning the existence and content of most highly classified and extremely sensitive messages. Such leaks can only result in erosion of the best interest of the U.S.

TOP SECRET

EYES ONLY

SECRET

EYES ONLY

DTG: 150425Z November 1963

FROM: HARKINS, SAIGON

TO: TAYLOR, CJCS

INFO: FELT, HAWAII

SECRET MAC 2197 EYES ONLY FOR TAYLOR EXCLUSIVE FOR FELT

In the military situation there has been little change from what you and Secretary McNamara witnessed just over a month ago. I visited all Corps this week for a round-up before the Hawaii meeting.

The VC reaction to the coup though late in starting was violent when it got going. There was no set pattern. It was something like a blind dog in a meat shop - a bite here and a bite there. The incidents ran the gamut; attacks, harassments, propoganda, ambushes, road cutting, assassinations, kidnapping, etc. All told they exceeded the peak of any week since I have been here. The intensity lasted for just about a week and have now dwindled to almost nothing.

To me the VC seemed to be celebrating the change in Government in their diabolical manner. Taking advantage of the fact that government forces for obvious reasons reached a near low as far as offensive operations were concerned. The reason for the drop off in RVNAF operations was the fact that heads were falling right and left and everyone sat around waiting to see who was next. All new Province Chiefs in the II Corps, three in the First, several in the III'd and they are still making changes in the IV corps. There are new Division Commanders in the 1st, 22nd, 23rd, 7th, 9th, and 21st; new Corps Commander in the IV Corps and a new CO of the VNAF.

SECRET

EYES ONLY

SECRET

EYES ONLY

Captain Quyen CNO murdered; same for Colonel Tung (SF's). Changes are still being made across the board in staffs, regiments and districts. While waiting to see where the axe would fall, the units, along with their Commanders, did a bit of celebrating, relaxed their guard, and the VC walked in. As a comparison with the tremendous upsurge of last week, only 27 incidents were reported for the 12th and 13th and only six of these were armed attacks; one in the I Corps, two in the II Corps, none in the III Corps, and three in IV Corps. This was while the ARVN showed over five hundred initiated actions for the same period, so things are getting back to normal, however, it will be some time before the new Commanders, Province and District Chiefs can digest all their problems and come up with answers.

I discussed my visit to the Corps with Gen Don yesterday. I told him many decisions must be made at his level so the people in the field could get on with the war. He informed me they were going to use the NCP as the basic plan and that he was going to start visiting in the field ASAP. Incidentally, he is visiting the 7th Division and III Corps and intends to visit I and II Corps next week. I sent Stillwell along with him today. I also gave Gen Don a list of what I consider musts for getting on with the war. I'm going to have lunch with him Monday and should be able to report to you in Hawaii some of these actions he is taking. Regards.

SECRET

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET

EYES ONLY

MAC
2097

DTG: 041745Z November 1963

FROM: HARKINS SAIGON

TO: TAYLOR, JCS, WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET MAC 2097 EYES ONLY

RE YOUR JCS 4285

Plane with Nhu children aboard departed Saigon at 042020 local
repeat 042020 local. Destination Bangkok. Children accompanied by
Mr. Flott from Embassy plus nurse. One of children apparently not
too well. Onward passage from Bangkok not known here.

TOP SECRET

EYES ONLY



THE JOINT STAFF

TOP SECRET

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

Army
Gen G
Hogan

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR
COUNTERINSURGENCY AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

md

DECLASSIFIED BY JOINT STAFF

DATE: JUL 10 1997

23 March 1964

Admin
CP

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subject: Lodge Proposal to the President Re-
garding Vietnam

1. In the Ambassador's message at Tab A he advances the thought that the US must determine how to apply its power in relatively limited doses as a warning to the North Vietnamese. He mentions in paragraph 9 that some overt reconnaissance flights might be useful as an initial step and recommends in paragraph 11 that an intensive study be made.

2. In the President's reply at Tab B it is stated that judgment is reserved for the present on overt military action and that planning for action against the north is on a contingency basis at the present.

3. In the Ambassador's response at Tab C he agrees that overt action should be held until Vietnam and US covert steps have been tried and offers that it is not premature to initiate this move as part of an essentially diplomatic pressure move. In his paragraph 3 he mentions a report which is expected to propose additional actions on a "tit-for-tat" basis which was referred to in the President's message at Tab D, and which are specifically in reference to renewal of attacks on Americans.

4. In discussing the above with the Department of State, representatives consider Mr. Lodge's message is unclear to them, also. They believe his message concerning the report on the "tit-for-tat" methods will bring clarification and intend to wait for Mr. Lodge's report before taking further action.

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5. We believe that Mr. Lodge's reference to covert actions refers to the operations included in 34-A, but until there have been some successful military actions, it will be difficult to initiate the diplomatic pressures which he refers to in his paragraph 2 of Tab C and which is what he is recommending to the President; i.e., initiate diplomatic pressure based upon successful covert actions.

OK
6. I recommend that we await the report from Mr. Lodge concerning "tit-for-tat" methods prior to making judgment on what Mr. Lodge is recommending to the President.

my
SACSA (Lester) *(initials)*
was informed 24 May
JOM

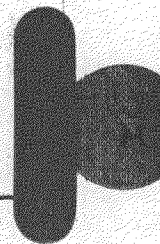
Walter M. Higgins Jr

WALTER M. HIGGINS, JR.
Colonel, USA
Deputy Special Assistant

TOP SECRET

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

JCS



B
Action

SS

nfo

TOP SECRET

Control:

14074

Rec'd:

MARCH 19, 1964

3:04 AM

FROM: SAIGON

ACTION: SECSTATE 1776 PRIORITY

13-6

DATE : MARCH 19, 3 PM

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE TO THE PRESIDENT

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR 1454. I WILL CARRY OUT THE PROGRAM WITH MAXIMUM ENERGY.

2. IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO COMMENT FURTHER ON TWO MATTERS: FIRST, THE PROPOSAL TO PUT PRESSURE ON NORTH VIETNAM, AS REFERRED TO IN YOUR PARA FOUR, SUBPARAGRAPH THREE, SO THAT THEY WILL CEASE THEIR AGGRESSION; AND, SECOND, THE IMAGINATIVE AND INTERESTING SUGGESTION, WHICH DESERVES CAREFUL ANALYSIS, THAT I SEE GENERAL DE GAULLE.

3. AS REGARDS PRESSURE ON NVN, I SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING:

4. US PROBLEM IN ANY UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY IS HOW TO APPLY OUR POWER. THE COMMUNISTS, CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL NOT USE OUR MISSILES, ARE TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE PEOPLE IN THE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAD A TREMENDOUS WARSHIP CAPABLE OF DOMINATING THE SEAS, BUT WERE FACING A PROBLEM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT. IN SUCH A SITUATION OUR POWER SEEMS USELESS.

5. LAST AUTUMN THE US DID FACE THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO APPLY OUR POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM. PRESIDENT KENNEDY, VERY PROPERLY I THOUGHT, WANTED TO BRING ABOUT SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN THE BEHAVIOR OF THE GVN. BUT WE SEEMED TO BE UP AGAINST A BLANK WALL. THERE SEEMED TO BE NO WAY WE COULD USE OUR GREAT POWER WHICH WOULD NOT EITHER DAMAGE THE WAR EFFORT OR BRING ON

TOP SECRET

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CJCS-2 DJS-1 SJCS-1 SACS-4
NMCC DUTY GEN/ADM-1 FILE-1

TOP SECRET

-2- 1776, MARCH 19, 3 PM FROM SAIGON

AN ECONOMIC PANIC WITH WIDESPREAD UNEMPLOYMENT AND STARVATION.

6. YET, FINALLY, MUCH THOUGHT AND STUDY IN WASHINGTON AND IN THE EMBASSY DISCOVERED WAYS TO APPLY US POWER. WE HAMMERED AWAY AT ONE PLACE AND THEN AT ANOTHER AND, AFTER AWHILE, THERE WAS A CRACK IN THE BLANK WALL. THE BEGINNING OF A CHANGE IN DIEM'S ATTITUDE WAS BECOMING APPARENT WHEN THE NOV. 1 COUP CAME. A DESCRIPTION OF THESE METHODS IS IN MY 949, NOV 6.

7. NOW WE FACE THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO APPLY OUR POWER TO NVN, AND WE SEEM ALSO TO BE UP AGAINST A BLANK WALL. YET WE SEEM TO BE QUITE SURE OF TWO THINGS: (A) ONE SINGLE SATURATION RAID ON NVN COULD DESTROY THE FRUITS OF EIGHT YEARS' FIGHTING AGAINST THE FRENCH AND OF TEN YEARS BACKBREAKING LABOR SINCE 1954; AND (B) WHILE THERE WOULD BE SOME SORT OF CHICOM REACTION, THE ABOVE RAID WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BRING ON NUCLEAR WAR OR A REAL WORLD WAR.

8. IF NVN THOUGHT THAT THE US HAD THE WILL TO USE JUST WHAT WE HAVE OUT HERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (THE 7TH FLEET, US AIR FORCE UNITS, ETC.), THEY WOULD SEE THAT THEY CANNOT AFFORD A VIET CONG VICTORY IN SVN. THE PRICE WOULD BE TOO HIGH.

9. THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO PERSUADE NVN, AND A COROLLARY IS HOW TO APPLY OUR POWER IN RELATIVELY LIMITED DOSES SO AS TO GIVE THEM A SAMPLE OF HOW REALLY DANGEROUS WE ARE. SOME OVERT RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS MIGHT BE USEFUL AS AN INITIAL STEP.

10. WHAT WE CAN DO TO THEM SHOULD ALSO BE LINKED TO WHAT WE CAN DO FOR THEM -- IN TERMS OF RICE AND REMOVING WHATEVER US PERSONNEL WE INTEND TO REMOVE ANYWAY.

11. I RECOMMEND THAT THE SAME KIND OF INTENSIVE STUDY BE NOW GIVEN TO THE ABOVE IN WASHINGTON THAT WAS GIVEN LAST FALL TO APPLYING SANCTIONS TO DIEM. I AM CONFIDENT THAT GOOD RESULTS WOULD BE OBTAINED AND THAT SOME THINGS WHICH LOOK PRETTY STRONG TODAY WOULD START FALLING APART.

12. AS REGARDS

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

-3- 1776, MARCH 19, 3 PM FROM SAIGON

12. AS REGARDS DE GAULLE, I LOOK FORWARD TO CHANCE TO COMMENT, WHICH YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR LAST PARAGRAPH, ON INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADOR BOHLEN. PARIS SEEMS HONESTLY TO BELIEVE THAT 1964 IS 1954, WHICH LEADS THEM INTO STILL OTHER DANGEROUS ERRORS.

13. AS REGARDS MY GOING TO PARIS TO EXPLAIN REALITIES TO THE GENERAL, THE FOLLOWING CAN BE SAID IN FAVOR:

14. A LIFE-TIME OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE FRENCH, THE WARTIME CONNECTION OF WHICH YOU SPOKE, AND MORE RECENT CONTACTS IN 1960 AND IN 1961, AT WHICH TIME I LOCATED THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ATLANTIC INSTITUTE IN PARIS. ABOVE ALL, THE FACT THAT I WOULD BE VISITING HIM AS YOUR REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE, IF ANYTHING CAN.

15. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE IS THE REACTION IN THE GVN. PROLONGED REFLECTION CONVINCES ME THAT GVN, FROM GENERAL KHANH ON DOWN, WOULD BE FILLED WITH APPREHENSION AND THAT, GIVEN THEIR MENTALITY, NOTHING COULD CONVINCE THEM THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO PARIS TO SELL THEM DOWN THE RIVER. AS US REPRESENTATIVE, I AM EXTREMELY PROMINENT HERE, AND A TRIP BY ME TO PARIS TO SEE DE GAULLE, AT THIS TIME, WOULD BE A BODY BLOW TO MORALE AND WOULD, WITH ONE HAND, DESTROY WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

GP-1.

LODGE

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NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 6:40 AM MARCH 19
PASSED WHITE HOUSE AT 7:35 a.m. MARCH 19

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10449

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON 1484

MAR 20 5 58 PM '64
9-8

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

1. We have studied your 1776 and I am asking State to have Bill Bundy make sure that you get our latest planning documents on ways of applying pressure and power against the North. I understand that some of this was discussed with you by McNamara mission in Saigon, but as plans are refined it would be helpful to have your detailed comments. As we agreed in our previous messages to each other, ^① judgment is reserved for the present on overt military action in view of the consensus from Saigon conversations of McNamara mission with General Khanh and you on judgment that movement against the North at the present would be premature. We here share General Khanh's judgment that ^② the immediate and essential task is to strengthen the southern base. For this reason our ^③ planning for action against the North is on a contingency basis at present, and immediate problem in this

3/20/64
Drafted by: _____
at rec'd from White House: amp _____
Clearances _____
Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

THE SECRETARY

S/S - Mr. Read

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NMCC DUTY GEN/ADM-1 FILE-1

TOP SECRET

area is to develop the strongest possible military and political base for possible later action. There is additional international reason for avoiding immediate overt action in that we expect a showdown between the Chinese and Soviet Communist parties soon and action against the North will be more practicable after than before a showdown. But if at any time you feel that more immediate action is urgent, I count on you to let me know specifically the reasons for such action, together with your recommendations for its size and shape.

2. On dealing with de Gaulle, I continue to think it may be valuable for you to go to Paris after Bohlen has made his first try. (State is sending you draft instruction to Bohlen, which I have not yet reviewed, for your comment.) It ought to be possible to explain in Saigon that your mission is precisely for the purpose of knocking down the idea of neutralization wherever it rears its ugly head, and on this point I think that nothing is more important than to stop neutralist talk wherever we can by whatever means we can. I have made this point myself to Mansfield and Lippmann and I expect to use every public opportunity to restate our position firmly. You may want to convey our concern on this point to General Khanh and get his ideas on the best possible joint program to stop such talk in Saigon, in Washington, and

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in Paris. I imagine that you have kept General Khanh/~~agreed~~ ^{abreast} of
our efforts in Paris. After we see the results of the Bohlen
approach you might wish to sound him out on Paris visit by you.

END

GP-1

RUSK

TOP SECRET

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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Info

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Control:
Rec'd:

16669
MARCH 23, 1964
1:58 AM

FROM: SAIGON

ACTION: SECSTATE 1803

DATE : MARCH 23, 1 PM

EXDIS

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM LODGE

YOUR 1484.

1. I WILL OF COURSE BE GLAD TO COMMENT ON WHATEVER YOU SEND ME REGARDING PRESSURE ON THE NORTH.

2. I CONTINUE TO AGREE THAT OVERT U. S. ACTION SHOULD BE WITHHELD UNTIL AFTER VIET-NAM AND U. S. COVERT STEPS HAVE BEEN TRIED -- AND TRIED AS PART OF AN ESSENTIALLY DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE MOVE. I DO NOT RPT NOT THINK THAT SUCH A MOVE, INCLUDING THE VIET-NAM AND U. S. COVERT ACTIVITIES INVOLVED, IS PREMATURE. IF SUCH AN EFFORT COULD BE SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY GREATLY DISCOURAGE THE VC AND HELP GENERAL KHANH STRENGTHEN HIS SOUTHERN BASE. IN FACT IT MIGHT VERY MUCH HASTEN THE END OF THE WAR HERE. I HAVE NOTED WITH INTEREST YOUR EXPECTATION OF A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTIES AND AGREE THAT THIS IS A MAJOR ELEMENT TO BE CONSIDERED IN ANY SUCH DIPLOMATIC EFFORT.

3. U. S. MISSION (COUNTRY TEAM) WILL HEAR A REPORT, PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTION IN YOUR 1454, PARAGRAPH 4, SUBPARAGRAPH 4 ON "TIT FOR TAT" METHODS AT THE REGULAR MEETING THIS WEEK.

4. AS REGARDS DE GAULLE, I WILL OF COURSE BE GLAD TO CARRY OUT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, SHOULD YOU DECIDE YOU WANT ME TO GO. I AM COMMENTING ON PROPOSED INSTRUCTION

TO AMBASSADOR

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-2- 1803, MARCH 23, 1 PM FROM SAIGON

TO AMBASSADOR BOHLEN IN SEPARATE TELEGRAM. I LIKE YOUR REASONING REGARDING KNOCKING DOWN THE IDEA OF NEUTRALISM AND WILL DISCUSS WITH GENERAL KHANH.

GP-1.

LODGE

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NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 4:06 AM MARCH 23
PASSED WHITE HOUSE AT 4 AM MARCH 23

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TELEGRAM Department of State

TOP SECRET

1454

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON PRIORITY
EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Mar 17 9 28 PM '64

1. I have now personally reviewed your cables 1754 through 1757 and have considered them with Secretaries of State and Defense. I am delighted to find that we have a very high measure of agreement.

2. Your comments on various sections of McNamara report make good sense to all of us, and report has been revised to meet most of your points. Revised version as approved today in National Security Council follows by air.

3. We have also shortened and amended the White House statement to reconcile it with your comments. Different people seem to view the past differently, but there is no point in letting such differences worry us as we go forward.

4. Specifically with respect to the comments in your 1757 your whole-hearted support of first eleven recommendations covers our most important efforts which are still in South

The Secretary

Drafted by: Text recd from White House
3/17/64: jmj

Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

S/S - Mr. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Baldwin

Cleavances:

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Vietnam. On your additional comments, I have reached the following conclusions:

(1) I think additional actions against Laos and Cambodia should be intensively examined. We have agreed that cross-border ground penetrations should be initiated into Laos along any lines which can be worked out by Khanh and Phoumi with Souvanna's endorsement, and I will authorize low-level reconnaissance there wherever the present high-level flights indicate that such reconnaissance may be needed.

The questions of further U.S. participation and of air and ground strikes against Laos raise tough diplomatic issues and I have asked Rusk and McNamara to concert a further recommendation. My first thought is that it is important to seek support from Souvanna Phouma and to build a stronger case before we take action which might have only limited military effect and could trigger wider Communist action in Laos.

On Cambodia we find ourselves hard put to keep abreast of the rapid changes Sihanouk introduces into the scene. Our impression is that bilateral GVN-RKG talks may now be in progress and State has sent you some thoughts on those prospects. However, in the event of further deterioration, I would expect to authorize hot pursuit.

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On overt high- or low-level reconnaissance over North Vietnam, we are not ready to make a decision now. I have asked that political and diplomatic preparations be made to lay a basis for such reconnaissance if it seems necessary or desirable after a few weeks, for military or political reasons, or both.

(2) As I read your comments on John McCone's points, the main items are those discussed above on Laos and Cambodia. We agree that Mekong traffic is a trump card, and State has already sent you a message on this question.

We agree that large-scale Chinese Nationalist incursion would be a mistake, but high quality advisers are different matter and we will send further thoughts on that.

(3) I have ordered a review of your paper on October 30. My own inclination is to favor such pressures, short of overt military action.

(4) Like you, I reserve judgment on such overt U.S. measures against North Vietnam. Question of direct retaliation for attacks on Americans is more complex. As I understand it from McNamara's decision, these attacks are not an immediate present threat, but you are authorized to prepare contingency recommendation for specific tit-for-tat action in the event attacks on Americans are renewed.

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Your cable does not mention it, but Bob McNamara has reported your concern about the effectiveness of our representations to the French. I have discussed this matter with Bohlen and we now plan that he will raise these matters with General de Gaulle personally when latter returns from Caribbean. Department is drafting instructions and will circulate them for your comment before they are final. Meanwhile we may wish to consider whether at some point it would be fruitful for you to go to Paris yourself to explain the realities of the situation to the General. In the light of your wartime connection with France, possibility seems to me to have real merit. GP-1.

END

RUSK

TOP SECRET