

~~SECRET~~ -- EXDIS

Saturday, July 15, 1967
2:50 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith the Viet Nam situation
report for today.

W. W. Rostow

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By 729, NARA, Date 7-11-91

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Situation Report on Viet-Nam

July 15, 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 92-224

By ju, NARA, Date 8-13-92

New Developments

Ambassador Bunker saw Ky July 13 and encouraged him to campaign actively for the Thieu-Ky ticket (Saigon's 1082). In response to Bunker's query, Ky said he had a definite understanding with Thieu but added that it remains to be seen whether Thieu would stick to his word. On Big Minh, Bunker urged Ky to base any decision to keep him out of the country on fair and legal considerations. Ky agreed but made no additional comment.

Bunker also briefly discussed campaign issues and the question of international observers for the election with Ky. Ky felt the two primary campaign issues would be corruption and how to end the war. On international observers, Ky appeared to agree. Although he made no commitment, we believe the GVN will make a satisfactory effort to encourage full observation.

A reliable Central Election Council source yesterday said to Embassy officer that both Big Minh's and Au Truong Thanh's candidacies will probably be disqualified by the Assembly.

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Comment

Ambassador Bunker plans to see Ky again in the next few days to go into greater detail on the progress of the election and on Ky's attitude toward the campaign. Bunker plans to have a similar discussion with Thieu and is seeing Vietnamese Ambassador Bui Diem who is in Saigon. There is apparently still no basic agreement achieved between Thieu and Ky and Bunker's efforts to get them to focus on this will need to continue. Similarly, Bunker's advice to Ky to get behind the ticket will require constant reiteration. Until Ky has what he considers a satisfactory deal with Thieu, and then commits himself fully, the ticket's campaign organization will falter.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 92-223

DRAFT

By JW, NARA, Date 11-23-13

July 14, 1967 - 1:30 p.m.

Secretary McNamara, Under Secretary Katzenbach, and General Wheeler have reported to me on their recent trip to Vietnam; and, as you know, General Westmoreland has also been back briefly in Washington.

I wish to share their impressions with you.

They are all heartened at the progress which has taken place over the past nine months. At the same time they recognize the problems that all of us must solve to achieve our common objectives.

As you well know, a war of this kind, without a fixed front, cannot be assessed as easily as a conventional engagement. But here are some of the indexes which I have found most impressive:

-- Early in 1965 the ARVN forces were losing three weapons to every Communist weapon they captured. A year later they and their allies were capturing as many as they lost; now our forces are capturing four Communist weapons for every weapon lost to our side.

-- Early in 1965 the ratio of Communists killed in action to friendly forces was perhaps 2 to 1; a year later it was about 3 to 1; now it is running well over 4 to 1.

-- In all of 1965 there were about 10,000 defectors under the Chieu Hoi program; in 1966 the figure was about 20,000; this year the rate has been running almost twice that of 1966.

-- Despite the need to deal with the offensive across the DMZ, population under government control is expanding and both main highways and feeder ~~highways~~ ^{roads} are being opened up for commercial as well as military purposes.

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-2-

7/14/67

-- Our logistical base is secure; the ports are no longer a problem; and, although inflation must always be watched, the danger of a runaway inflation -- which was real some time ago -- has now passed.

In more general terms they report the military situation as follows: The campaigns of the past nine months have successfully prevented the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces from achieving any significant gains on the ground. Their attempts at offensive action have been regularly blunted by the energetic employment of our joint military power. The enemy's attempts to gain superiority on the ground in the Northern provinces -- to which he has applied substantial new forces -- have been frustrated. Hanoi's major commitment of men of its regular forces is an obvious recognition of its difficulties in the face of allied military power. The armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam have improved in aggressiveness and have achieved higher standards in operations against the enemy.

[Although there are some indications that the enemy's recruiting capability within South Vietnam has been reduced, the use of infiltration routes in Laos and Cambodia, despite losses from our interdiction campaigns, is sufficient to allow the enemy to supply forces in the field and replace his losses. Along with the sustained infiltration of personnel, the enemy has been receiving major assistance in the form of improved weapons, and these are being brought to bear in all areas but particularly in the Northern sector. The current military pressures in that area reflect the ability of the enemy to take advantage of his short supply lines and

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-3-

7/14/67

areas in the DMZ.]/

Our bombing in North Vietnam takes a heavy toll, and the enemy must make a great effort to meet losses and keep open the lines of communication. From all indications the cumulative effect of our sustained effort against military targets in North Vietnam is now being felt. Our men in the field are steadily improving our ability to damage the enemy's supply capability. However, this in itself is not and cannot be decisive.

In both military and civil activities, Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland were full of praise for the contributions of the allies.

On the economic front, our people believe that price increases will not exceed 30 to 40% this year. The people continue to receive adequate food, clothing and shelter and the first steps toward sound longer term economic development are being taken. The rice situation continues to require massive imports; and it will be a long and slow process before Vietnam will be once again self-sufficient in its food requirements, and, indeed, the exporter it should be. Health and education facilities are expanding and the normal technical services of government to the countryside have been maintained despite obvious difficulties.

Progress in Revolutionary Development/Pacification continues to be slow but there is good reason to believe a foundation has been laid for solid progress in the months ahead. The organization on the allied and the Vietnamese sides has been greatly improved. Vietnamese military, paramilitary and

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-4-

7/14/67

civilian resources that are now involved in this program have increased considerably. Training of personnel is better and their dedication to the tasks is greater.

[In the immediate future we shall attach highest priority to an improved Chieu Hoi program and make a special effort toward rooting out the Viet Cong network in the countryside. We believe that better intelligence and the opportunities for better coordination of the various forces available make possible an effective attack on the basic Viet Cong infrastructure. We are now able to exploit more effectively information on the Viet Cong that is available at the village and hamlet levels. This will enable us to get at the mechanism of Viet Cong control and influence among the Vietnamese people.]

It is against this background of progress and problems that the people of South Vietnam are moving towards constitutional government. Perhaps the fundamental fact is that they believe they have a future to forge.

Our people are, therefore, encouraged that the process of political evolution in Vietnam is moving rapidly and, thus far, successfully. The work of the Constituent Assembly was conducted efficiently and a widely acceptable Constitution promulgated. The elections which will be held this fall are engaging the support and attention of the Vietnamese people. The political ferment that has been taking place is a natural part of a young nation experiencing its first election fever. Military and civilian leaders with whom they met affirmed the Vietnamese desire to proceed to a successful conclusion

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-5-

7/14/67

of this next step in Vietnam's political development. They all recognize the importance of free and honest elections with a maximum degree of national unity, whatever the outcome. All of us will be following these developments closely, knowing the complexities that are involved and the high stakes.

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FOR KOREA: General Westmoreland was high in his praise of valiant the valiant efforts, dedicated leadership, and combat effectiveness of the ROK armed forces. They have demonstrated remarkable capacity not only to deal with the enemy in combat but also in their inability to proceed with the work of pacification within their areas of operations.

AND NEW ZEALAND:

FOR AUSTRALIA: General Westmoreland had the highest praise for the high spirit and professional capabilities exhibited by the Australian-New Zealand contingent.

FOR THE PHILIPPINES: General Westmoreland had the highest praise for the dedication of the officers and men of the PHILCAG and for the major contribution they have made to improve the situation in their area of operations. Their excellent relations with the Vietnamese officials and people have been a manifestation on a daily basis.

FOR THAILAND. General Westmoreland had high praise for those Thai officers and those men of the Air Force and Navy who have been helping in Vietnam. Plans for the forthcoming deployment of the Thai Army contingent are well along. His staff has been working closely with the advance contingent and he has nothing but praise for their professionalism and dedicated approach.

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FOR ALL: In sum, the general picture is one that ~~effize~~ offers grounds for confidence in the lines of action that are now being followed. At the same time, there continues to be no sign that Hanoi is prepared to recognize the futility of its military effort. Both the South Vietnamese and we recognize the South Vietnamese that/~~their~~ own military and civilian effort can and must be clear improved. But ~~we~~ even as this is done, there is a ~~xxxxxx~~ need for us to consider additional effort, in order to prevent any loss of in our current momentum and to speed up the processes that can lead to a successful outcome.

Sincerely,

LBJ UNQUOTE

2. Septels will follow amplifying last para in manner appropriate to each nation.