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Friday, June 7, 1968  
10:45 a. m.

*Pres. L.B.*

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MR. PRESIDENT:

The attached paper and tables on South Vietnamese desertions show:

- there has been a post-Tet rise in ARVN desertions;
- but it is more than compensated for by increased recruitment.

The armed forces have increased by over 64,000 since Tet.

The net increase for 1968 could be as high as 236,000.

W. W. Rostow

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White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1992  
By kg, NARA, Date 6-23-92

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988

By kg, NARA, Date 6-23-92

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

7 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

In reference to the VNAF desertion story by Kramer (Washington Post, 5 June, p 14), the following comments are pertinent:

a. Much of the statistical data are correct, or biased somewhat on the favorable side, e. g.:

(1) Feb-Apr 68 desertion rate up 40% over 1967 (actually up 66%).

(2) Desertions in 1967 estimated at 79,000 (actually 81,000).

(3) Desertions in 1967 had dropped 32% below 1966 rate (actually 31%).

(4) Desertions after TET (Feb-Apr 68) averaged 9,000 (actually 11,229).

b. On the other hand, some data err the other way, e. g.:

(1) VC/NVN defections in 1968 are 25% of those in 1967 (actually 30%).

(2) Desertions in Jan 68 dropped to 6,000 (actually 4,867).

c. The most damaging statement is that even though both the volunteer and conscription rates have increased, they are not sufficient to offset the desertion rate and provide the net increase of 135,000 - 268,000 indicated as the GVN goal for this year. The fact is that, since the beginning of Feb 68, VNAF has increased in strength by 64,431. At this rate, which includes some mobilization of reserves, a net increase of 236,000 could be achieved in 1968.

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White House Guidelines, Feb. 21, 1969  
By af, NARA, Date 6-23-92

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.2  
DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1969  
By af, NARA, Date 6-23-92

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d. Insofar as quality of VC/NVN defectors is concerned, the reduced 1968 rate more than offsets an apparent higher proportion of military officers and NCOs. In addition, the NVN defection rate appears to have remained constantly low. It should be noted that captured documents and prisoners indicate that, as occurs in VNAF, the deserters do not often defect but rather try to make their way home. These same sources indicate that the VC/NVN units are experiencing increased desertion problems.

*Art*

Art McCafferty

*L*

William L. Lemnitzer

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VNAF Desertion/Accession Data

VC/NVN Defection Data

VNAF Strengths

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VNAF Desertion/Accession Data

	Desertions		Accessions		Difference		RATE PER 1000 OB.	
	1967	1968	1967	1968	1967	1968	1967	1968
Jan	6,912	4,867	8,120	10,890	1,208	6,023	11.3	7.5
Feb	6,973	10,021	7,179	10,936	206	915	11.5	15.5
Mar	8,127	12,715	6,935	34,542	- 1,192	21,827	13.4	18.8
Apr	5,987	10,950	8,092	43,178	2,105	32,228	9.9	15.4
TOTAL	27,999	38,553	30,326	99,546	2,327	60,993		

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E.O. 12358, Sec. 1.1  
DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1980  
By af, NARA, Date 6-23-92

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VC/NVN Defection Data

	VC		NVN	
	1967	1968	1967	1968
Jan	1,475	953	15	12
Feb	2,083	565	21	19
Mar	3,132	417	22	11
Apr	1,869	(596)	2	(29)
TOTAL	8,559	2,531	60	71

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 5.1

DA Memo, Jan. 5, 1971

By 128 NARA, Date 6-23-92

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