

8-17-12

CITE: HWA 3445

26 NOVEMBER 1967

DTG : 252203Z

FROM: GEN WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV, HAWAII

TO : GEN ABRAMS, DEPCOMUSMACV, SAIGON



SUBJ: CONCEPT OF SITUATION PORTRAYED DURING RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON

1. DURING MY RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON, I WAS REQUIRED TO PRESENT MY VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM TO HIGHEST AUTHORITY. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, AND THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE. IN ADDITION, I APPEARED ON SEVERAL NATIONWIDE TELEVISION PROGRAMS, ADDRESSED THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, AND HELD AN ON-THE-RECORD PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE PENTAGON. ON EACH OCCASION, I PRESENTED IN FULL OR IN PART THE FOLLOWING CONCEPT:

3. THE CONCEPT LENDS ITSELF TO A PROGRAMATIC APPROACH, AND I WOULD LIKE THE STAFF TO PROCEED WITH STUDYING THE SPECIFIC AREAS AND TIME FRAMES IN WHICH RESPONSIBILITY MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE US TO THE VIETNAMESE. BASED ON THESE STUDIES, I VISUALIZE A PROGRAM THAT WOULD INITIATE AND MANAGE THE MULTIPLE ACTIONS NECESSARY TO PUT THE VIETNAMESE IN A POSTURE TO MAKE POSSIBLE SOME TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY AT THE EARLIEST PRACTICAL TIME.

4. PLEASE HAVE THE STAFF COME TO GRIPS WITH THIS MATTER. WE WILL EXPLORE IT IN DEPTH FOLLOWING ANALYSIS AND UPON MY RETURN.

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WE ARE GRINDING DOWN THE COMMUNIST ENEMY IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AND THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT MANPOWER PROBLEMS ARE EMERGING IN NORTH VIETNAM. OUR FORCES ARE GROWING STRONGER AND BECOMING MORE PROFICIENT IN THE ENVIROMENT. THE VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES ARE GETTING STRONGER AND BECOMING MORE EFFECTIVE ON THE BATTLE-FIELD. THE VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES ARE BEING PROVIDED WITH MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT. THESE TRENDS SHOULD CONTINUE, WITH THE ENEMY BECOMING WEAKER AND THE GVN BECOMING STRONGER TO THE POINT WHERE CONCEIVABLY IN TWO YEARS OR LESS THE VIETNAMESE CAN SHOULDER A LARGER SHARE OF THE WAR AND THEREBY PERMIT THE US TO BEGIN PHASING DOWN THE LEVEL OF ITS COMMITMENT. THIS PHASE-DOWN WILL PROBABLY BE TOKEN AT FIRST.

2. ON MY OWN INITIATIVE, I TOOK THIS POSITION AFTER CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT, BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS: I BELIEVE THE CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVE PLAN FOR OUR FORCES, AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE VIETNAMESE, IS FEASIBLE AND AS SUCH IT SHOULD SERVE AS AN INCENTIVE. THE CONCEPT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE EVOLUTION OF THE WAR SINCE OUR INITIAL COMMITMENT AND PORTRAYS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE "SOME LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL." THE CONCEPT JUSTIFIES THE AUGMENTATION OF TROOPS I'VE ASKED FOR BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF REINFORCING SUCCESS AND ALSO SUPPORTS AN INCREASE IN THE STRENGTH OF THE VIETNAMESE FORCES AND THEIR MODERNIZATION. THE CONCEPT STRADDLES THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 1968, IMPLYING THAT THE ELECTION IS NOT A BENCH MARK FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW. FINALLY, IT PUTS EMPHASIS ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE VIETNAMESE IN CARRYING A MAJOR BURDEN OF THEIR WAR AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS BUT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR A PROTRACTED COMMITMENT

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FROM: GEN WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV, HAWAII

8-1770 : GEN AERAMS, DEPCOMUSMACV, SAIGON

JOINT EXHIBIT 285

Some copy at end of 1st page

West & Aeras re. what he said Nov, 1967 "grinding down"

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