

January 3, 1968

Talking Points for Today's Vietnam Information Meeting

1. Control of Visitors to Vietnam: Saigon is drowning ^{under} over the load of visitors. Ambassador Bunker has sent in several desperate pleas for relief and has recommended a Washington control office to coordinate all Saigon visitors. I suggest you ask Donnelley and Fryklund for reports on what they have done to cancel or postpone visitors during January and for their Department's views on how to handle this problem. I understand there is some sentiment that the control office should be in the White House. That strikes me as feckless. I think it should be centered in State. I suggest that two responsible-level officers, one from State and one from Defense be charged with approving every visit of official personnel to Vietnam. My nominees would be Habib and Warneke. In any event, after the discussion, I suggest you assign specific action to somebody to set up the control office.

In this connection, Congressman Rooney has expressed the view that Congress should restrict Congressional visits to Vietnam to official, bipartisan and periodic inspection trips. It might be a good idea to have someone follow up informally with Rooney.

2. VIP Groups to Vietnam: The problem here is financial. You might wish to have Dick Fryklund and Col. Hill briefly summarize the money and personnel needed to run this program. DOD is willing to take on the job but is adamant in saying it must be given the resources.

Dix Donnelley wants to discuss the general question of publicity on visiting Congressmen.

3. Captured Documents: Hew Ryan will distribute at the meeting a letter which describes the Saigon procedures for processing these documents. You might ask Ryan to summarize the procedures orally. George Carver should report on the progress (?) on exploiting these documents in Washington. You might want to describe yours and Art McAfferty's efforts in this field.

4. Land Reform Bill Leonhart says the position is that we not use Price Gittinger until Saigon has passed the ordinance. I think it would be useful to fill the group in on where we are on this whole problem and suggest you ask Leonhart to do so.

5. Visit of United States by Vietnamese Legislators: Jack O'Brien wants briefly to flag everybody's attention to this upcoming visit. In this connection, I suggest you urge maximum exploitation of these fellows' presence in the U.S. You might also mention the upcoming visit of ^{ex-}Foreign Minister Tuyen and the expectation that we will make maximum effort to use him with Congressional,

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university, and intellectual groups to counter-balance the military image that the South Vietnamese establishment has in this country. (I have talked with the Vietnam Working Group and Jack O'Brien's office on this -- but a high-level push would be useful.)

6. Information Policy on Infiltrates: Dick Fryklund wants to discuss this.

7. Rusk-McNamara TV Show: This was pre-empted by the President. I understand McNamara wanted out anyway. Donnelley and Fryklund should fill us in on what, if anything, is being done to reschedule the show.

8. Computerization of Vietnam Information: Jack O'Brien should report on what this operation is now doing, and what use it could be to the community in the common effort to put our best foot forward. The idea is to try to generate some imaginative thought on how we can profit from State's computer. I don't think we are getting any profit from it as of now.

9. Douglas Committee: I think the group would be interested in hearing from you a rundown on the Committee's current activities and the pamphlets they intend to produce. Jack O'Brien should report on what forms of support the Government is now giving and how we could make greater use of this asset. (speakers, for example.) I suggest you assign Jack O'Brien and me to get together and work out a comprehensive program.

In

10. CINCPAC's Proposal :/ Long An province the VC is telling its cadres that all intensive operations in Long An will stop after TET. Peace will be achieved through a coalition government in III and IV Corps areas, and ~~that~~ fighting would continue under Hanoi in the I and II Corps areas. CINCPAC suggests a massive exploitation of this line, telling the NV/VC in I and II Corps that they are about to be betrayed by their comrades in III and IV, and telling the VC in III and IV Corps that the whole thing is a propaganda gimmick and that they are being had. I don't think much has been done in response to CINCPAC's cable but you might ask Fryklund to discuss the idea, and, if you think the idea has merit, give it a high-level push.

11. The Current Scene: It would be very useful if you would 'set the tone' of the town's comments on the following three problems:

a. Cambodia: As you know, the Bowles' mission will be announced by George Christian tonight. Unless you give the lead comment for background to the press, this whole story is going to get terribly diffused. One part of this problem on which you may wish to give a lead is the question, Why Bowles and why not Mansfield?

b. Coalition Government : What is our attitude?

c. Negotiations: How do we interpret "will" rather than "could"? What are we doing to find out through direct or indirect contacts the meaning of this shift?

Also, we are going to have increasingly serious problems in having the Government information activity defend the Vietnam policy without appearing to cross the line into campaign activity. The Apple piece in the Times on Monday is a case in point, as was the Lecaz^e piece in the Post yesterday. The travel of VIP groups to Vietnam will be a problem in this regard. I think a discussion of this problem by you would be timely.


Marshall Wright