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ANNEX C

AVAILABILITY OF AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALIONS FOR OPERATIONS

Appended is a table showing the availability of Australian infantry battalions for operations up to December, 1966.

2. At present there is a battalion committed to operations in Borneo, and there are two other battalions now available in Australia for operations. In addition, a small composite battalion could be formed if necessary from the existing companies of 2 RAR and 5 RAR. This would retard the build-up of these battalions with National Service personnel.

3. By March, 1966, a further three battalions will have been built up to strength in Australia and will be trained and available for operations. An additional battalion will be available by June, 1966.

Unit	Present Location	At Full Strength	Availability	Remarks
1 RAR	Holsworthy	Now	Now	Now at 21 days notice to move.
2 RAR	Enoggera	Sep 65 *	Mar 66	Due to reorganize in Jun 65 to provide basis of two battalions.
3 RAR	Borneo	Now	Now	Returns to Australia Oct/Nov and provides elements to form 7 RAR.
4 RAR	Woodside, S.A.	Now	Now	Earmarked to relieve 3 RAR Oct/Nov.
5 RAR	Holsworthy	Sep 65 *	Mar 66	Currently being raised from elements provided by 1 RAR.
6 RAR	To be formed Enoggera	Sep 65 *	Mar 66	To be raised from elements of 2 RAR.
7 RAR	To be formed Puckapunyal	Dec 65 *	Jun 66	Formed from elements of 3 RAR on return to Australia.
8 RAR	To be formed E Comd	Dec 66 *	Mar 67	

* Primarily dependent on National Service intake.

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The South Vietnamese Government agreed.

Nevertheless, the U.S. was prepared to take "substantially larger measures of a military nature" if such measures were required by serious increases in the strength of the communist forces in South Vietnam.

A challenge presented by such increases, if they occurred, would have to be met but this would open a new phase in the problem.

The U.S. intended in the near future to reinforce the marine force at Da Nang by one or two battalions.

Australia might consider giving some help.

4. As regards sea activity, it was now apparent, Rusk said, that the Junk patrol had not been as effective as had been hoped in stopping infiltration.

The U.S. itself was therefore commencing a very substantial effort to stop this infiltration.

If successful, this would place considerable strain upon the Viet Cong which would have to make greater use of the more tedious method of supply by land.

There were indications that the U.S. effort along the south Vietnamese coast (Rusk confirmed that there was at present no intention of extending this effort to the North Vietnamese coast) was already paying dividends.

5. Rusk said that the U.S. did not now contemplate bombing targets in the Haiphong-Hanoi area.

While the U.S. would eventually run out of military targets in the region to which the bombing attacks had so far been confined, there were still enough targets there to enable the bombing attacks to go on for a while.

6. If there were to be increases in the numbers of forces supporting the South Vietnamese forces, it would be important Rusk said, to have further international representation.

In this connection there were limits to the amount of help South Korea could or should give.

The despatch of South Korean forces to South Vietnam was a political problem in Seoul.

Moreover, if the war in Vietnam mounted in intensity, there were sound military reasons for keeping South Korean forces at home.

As we would have seen from the military staff talks with Air Marshal Scherger in Hawaii, some of the American military were already thinking of the deployment of substantial land forces in South Vietnam.

Rusk emphasized that no decisions in this sense had yet been taken and that any thinking in this direction at this stage was only contingency planning.

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9. Rusk continued that the political situation was compounded by the complexity of the positions taken from time to time by the various communist countries directly involved.

For this reason, it was difficult to discern what the communist position, assuming that there was one communist position, exactly was.

Some times Moscow and Peking appeared to vie in their support of Hanoi, other times Moscow appeared to be being dragged along by Hanoi and on other occasions Moscow and Peking seemed to be playing upon the Vietnamese problem as a facet in their rivalry with each other.

Moreover what was one to make of the recent indication from Hanoi that a solution could only come from direct negotiations between the U.S. and the National Liberation Front?

To sum up this point, the differences of approach between Hanoi, Peking, Moscow and the National Liberation Front were "intriguing but hardly illuminating".

10. Turning to the nature of a satisfactory negotiated settlement Rusk said that the U.S. preferred to avoid getting into details "at a point when there was no place from which to start" (I understood this remark to mean in the absence of any indication of a willingness on the part of the communists to negotiate in good faith).

However, what the U.S. would want would be the cessation by Hanoi of its direction of the war in South Vietnam, the end of infiltration, the removal of infiltrators already in South Vietnam and satisfactory assurance that these things would be done.

There were some in the administration who also thought that the Viet Cong organisation in South Vietnam should be broken up.

One difficulty associated with this view was that the U.S. was not sure whether Hanoi controlled all the elements of the Viet Cong.

Against the view of these people in the administration there was also some feeling that if pre-1959 or pre-infiltration days could be restored, the South Vietnamese Army would be able to clean out the Viet Cong organisation.

With respect to the policing of a negotiated settlement, Rusk said the U.S. would want "a substantial international presence" in the area (to which the Indians had from time to time said they would be prepared to contribute) something which would "verify infidelity".

11. Rusk continued that the U.S. had not yet sighted any indication from communist sources or a readiness to negotiate.

He was therefore puzzled to know what the British Foreign Secretary had meant when he referred yesterday in the House of Commons to some hopeful sign in the last day or two.

It was hard to say exactly what the U.S. would do if and when a signal of readiness to negotiate came along.

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