

SECRET

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
 SAIGON
 RECD: 4 SEP 1962
 H. OF M. *New* Dated: 21st August, 1962
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RB
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AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM, VIETNAM -
NOTIFICATION TO INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION.

1. An Australian Army Training Team arrived in Saigon on 34d August, 1962. It comprises thirty men, half of whom are officers and half Warrant Officers and Sergeants. The Team was sent at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to assist that Government in its struggle against Communist armed insurgency by providing instruction in jungle warfare, village defence and other related activities. The Commander of the Team is Colonel F. P. Serong, who will also serve as special adviser on counter-insurgency matters to General Paul D. Harkins, the Commander of the United States Military Assistance Command in Vietnam. Twenty instructors will be allocated to two training establishments near Hue in the far north of the country; two to Tourane, also in the north; four near Ninh Hoa in Central Vietnam; and the balance (four), including Colonel Serong and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel A. S. Mann, will serve in Saigon.

2. Under the terms of the Geneva Agreements of 1954, South Vietnam should notify the International Control Commission (ICC) of the arrival of military personnel. Since last December, however, United States policy has been that South Vietnam should not provide any details to the ICC of the introduction of United States military aid. In a letter to the ICC on 9th December, 1961, South Vietnam expressed its intention of accepting military assistance in excess of the levels set by the Geneva Agreements in furtherance of its self-defence against attacks by North Vietnam. South Vietnam

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has indicated that it does not feel that any further notification is required. The United States shares this view and feels, moreover, that the provision of detailed information on aid to South Vietnam would only invite citations in ICC reports without any opportunity to re-emphasize the casual relationship between United States (and other) assistance to the South and pre-existing and continuing violations by the North. A further United States objection to the provision of detailed information to the ICC is that it would provide useful intelligence to the Communists (via the Polish member of the ICC).

3. The introduction of Australian military personnel may be cited in a future I.C.C. report as a breach of Article 16 of the Geneva Agreements, which specifically prohibits the "introduction into Vietnam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel". In a letter to the ICC dated 5th June, the North Vietnamese Liaison Mission has already lodged a complaint about South Vietnam's intention to accept Australian military training personnel.

4. The Minister has approved a recommendation that Australia, for the following reasons, should not give formal notification to the ICC of the arrival in Vietnam of Australian military training personnel: (a) this is a matter for the South Vietnam Government to decide; (b) formal notification could invite citation by the ICC as evidence of a violation of the Geneva Agreement, without otherwise serving any useful purpose; (c) it would also cut across the established policies of the United States and South Vietnam and set a precedent which might be embarrassing to Australia in the future.

5. If the question of notification to the ICC arises in discussion, posts could mention that Australia had already announced publicly its intention to send thirty military instructors to South Vietnam, but that notification to the ICC would be a matter for decision by the South Vietnam Government. If pressed, posts could also refer to the South Vietnam Government's decision, conveyed to the ICC last December, to accept aid above the levels specified in the Geneva Agreement for the purpose of dealing more effectively with the terrorist and subversive activities which have been fomented by North Vietnam over several years in open violation of the Geneva Agreements. Reference might be made in this connection to the findings of the recently published ICC report on Vietnam. The sequence of events disclosed in that report makes it clear that the Republic of Vietnam's decision to accept increased military aid was taken in response to flagrant communist breaches of the Geneva Accords which threatened its security.

MIN. & DEPT E.A.
MIN. & DEPT DEFENCE
MIN. & DEPT ARMY
P.M.'s.

21st August, 1962

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