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A STRATEGIC APPRAISAL

VIETNAM

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I. Introduction.

The U. S. effort in Southeast Asia today is great, and growing steadily greater. It represents vast logistic power and substantial military strength, promising soon to approach that which we committed in Korea. Our casualties, not yet great by Korean War standards, are growing nevertheless, and the gross burden on the United States becomes more onerous with each passing day.

Historically, the United States has not recoiled from sacrifice in war, particularly as the object could be seen and the strategy understood. Indeed, the only adverse public reactions to war in this century have occurred in the latter days of Korea, and again today, in each of which cases citizens found it hard to appreciate the military strategy, to visualize the route from where we are to where we want to go.

In the instant case the lack of understanding of what our military strategy is derives from the fact that it has never really been articulated. However, if it were to be described, it would have to be in about these terms:

"Attrit the enemy to a degree which makes him incapable of prosecuting the war, or unwilling to pay the cost of so doing".

If this is indeed the basis for our strategy, it has to be regarded as inadequate. The paragraphs to follow seek to develop a more dynamic alternative, by reviewing briefly all of the major factors which affect the war, and trying to bring them into a reasonable perspective.

II. The Theater.Geography and Meteorology.

The general military geography of the Southeast Asia peninsula (Laos, North and South Vietnam, Cambodia) has come to be reasonably well understood. However a few essentials, which affect our strategy directly, may merit being underscored again.--

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Not over twenty per cent of the whole area is cultivated.

The remainder is forest; much of which is very dense.

Of the cultivation, fully eighty per cent is in rice.

The Mountains are high and rugged, extending in an almost unbroken chain from Yunnan, in China, to Nha Trang in South Vietnam. Altitudes reach 9000 feet and, within 35 miles of Nha Trang, are 7000 feet high. Military cross-country trafficability is poor, and the limited road system is subject to ready interdiction.

The weather is always bad in Vietnam, at some point in the country. It is best, all around, in the early spring. The worst time for military operations in the Mekong Delta is in mid-summer, when there are about 12 inches of rain per month. It is worst in the central highlands in late summer, with 15-18 inches of rain per month. It is worst in the Northern littoral in the autumn and early winter, with 20-30 inches per month. The most rain is found, not in the Mekong Delta as might be expected, but in the Hue-Danang region.

Population.

There are more people in North Vietnam than in South Vietnam (18 million versus 15 million). In North Vietnam almost 90 per cent of the people are squeezed into Tonkin (the Red River basin) where the rural population goes as high as 3000 per square mile. Hanoi has some 750,000 people; Haiphong 370,000.

In South Vietnam the population is concentrated in Saigon and the Mekong Delta (8 million) and along the coastal littoral from Hue to somewhere South of Nha Trang (4 million).

Politics.

This is not the place for a comprehensive political analysis, but there is one political fact affecting directly the military strategy which is often forgotten. It is this;--the people of South Vietnam really have no politics. A great generalization, this is nevertheless a fair one, if one regards politics as extending to the national--or even provincial--level. Except for the Montagnards, whose interests are tribal, the people are interested in their family, their hamlet or their village, and that is all. While they may participate in electing their village elders, they have little loyalty to, and less comprehension of, anything beyond this narrow horizon.

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It has been said that "The National Liberation Front speaks for sixty per cent of the people in South Vietnam." This may be so, but whatever speaking the Front does is certainly without the acquiescence, the understanding--or even the knowledge--of great majority of the people involved.

And much the same is true for the relationship of the people and the Vietnamese government. It is doubtful if one villager in a thousand has ever heard of Premier Ky, or who even knows who his own Province Chief is. Ngo Dinh Diem understood this, and made a mighty effort to extend to the villager an identification with a central government. He was indefatigable in visiting the countryside and talking with the people. Hundreds of thousands of lithographs of his picture were distributed in the hinterland, and were identified, at every turn, with government assistance to the people. Even so, and in eight years, Diem was able to make only a small dent in the amazing Vietnamese provincialism;--and that dent has largely disappeared now, simply by default.

This fact is important to development of a military strategy, because it is these same simple, provincial people who are the battlefield on which the war must be fought. Their provincialism is exploited by the VC at every turn. Not enough--not nearly enough--is being done to give the people a feel for or identity with a strong central government.

Religion.

The canard that 90 per cent of all Vietnamese are Buddhists has largely been disproved, and it is now pretty well accepted that not over 20 per cent of the country is truly Buddhist. The bulk of the people reflect 1000 years of Chinese rule, in their leaning toward Confucianism and Taoism, while there is a healthy salting of Cao Dai, Hoa Hao and Moslems in the country, plus 10-15 per cent Christians. However, there occasionally recurs the apprehension that Vietnam may be "headed for another religious crisis" by virtue of Buddhist unrest. This, of course, could affect the military situation.

The fact is, the hard-core Buddhist hierarchy is overwhelmingly involved in politics. They are well organized and, at any time, can create unrest if they choose. A good example was the recent flurry generated by the alleged damaging of a religious figure in a pagoda near Danang. The local bonzes wanted restitution, apology and assurance of non-recurrence. However, it turned out that they were not

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empowered to accept these gestures when proffered, until approval was received from Saigon. Thich Tri Quang, with too much communist association in his background for our good, can be expected to cause trouble when it suits his purpose.

These facts are important in the contemplation of strategy, mainly as they underscore the need, as a matter of first business, for us to earn the trust and loyalty of the people;--people who can be and often are misguided, to the disadvantage of our effort, as was the case in the politically inspired Buddhist problems of 1963.

Economics.

Outside the cities, fully 70 per cent of the people are involved in rice culture--either for subsistence or for livelihood. Rice is not everything, but in the eyes of the people, whose subsistence staple it is, rice plenty is synonymous with prosperity.

And rice means rice fields--land; and land, being very near the heart of the people's part in the Vietnam War, is thus critical to our strategy.

In the pre-1954 years the absentee landlords wrung maximum tribute from the peasants; all the rent that the traffic would bear, usurious interest rates, and nothing at all in return. The farmer was squeezed between the needs of his own bare subsistence and the cupidity of the faceless landlord who spent his time in Saigon or on the Riviera.

The thousands of farmers who were living in virtual peonage were fertile ground for the communists to plough. They urged the peasants not to pay the rent at all, and promised them that under communist rule the land would be forever theirs. Sometimes, in areas dominated by the Viet Cong (or Vietminh), they actually distributed some of the leaseholds, and provided spurious deeds to give the transfer a semblance of formality. Fortunately for us, the communist forces needed rice to support their military effort, and it has to come from this same land. Consequently, they soon were found exacting rice tribute from the same peasants, in a degree which made them not much more popular than the landlords.

When Ngo Dinh Diem was premier under Emperor Bao Dai, and perceiving the depth to which the land problem affected the country's stability, he sought to promote some limited land reform, without

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success. However, when he became President he procured the passage of laws which put a limit on rents as well as on the amount of land that a landlord could own (some 113 hectares). Following passage of this law Diem initiated a program of buying surplus land from the landlords and distributing it, in small fee-simple parcels, to peasants. He also intended to redistribute expropriated French land, but that program was scarcely started when he was deposed. All in all, Diem had a fine idea, but it never got past the pilot stage, and succeeding governments have done little or nothing to carry it forward. The whole program is now largely ineffective.

So the problem of land reform remains. The communists are still urging the peasants not to pay their rent and taxes--secretly looking ahead to the day when all the peasants will be communized and all the land will be collectivized. The peasants are thus still squeezed between the needs of the government for taxes, the desires of the landlords for rent, and the extortionate pressures of the communists for rice and tribute.

All of this is central to our military campaign, because the war is not going to be won unless and until the peasants believe that the GVN--not the communists--is going to give them meaningful land reform. And this will require far more action than we have yet seen--action in the form of distribution of fee simple land, and in the form of some measure of relief for past unpaid taxes.

Without this we will not have the support of the countryside; which is to say we will not have the popular intelligence that is absolutely essential to winning the guerrilla battle. But if we can gain the rural support, we will gain with it not only the intelligence we require but will increasingly deny to the enemy the rice he needs to support his growing manpower investment as he pursues his strategy in RVN.

III. The Enemy Strategy.

No strategy is likely to be much of a success unless it takes departure from a decent knowledge of who the enemy is, what his object is, and how it is estimated that he is going about achieving his purposes.

In this area we enjoy great advantages, since the communists have announced exactly what they propose to do, and exactly how they are going about it. There is no mystery or doubt, as is often the case in war. Hitler, for instance, was sure we were going to land on the

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continent, but he had no clue as to whether it would be in Brittany, Normandy or elsewhere. However, in Vietnam we know the enemy strategy and tactics exactly; we know where he is planning to go and how he proposes to get there. He has told us.

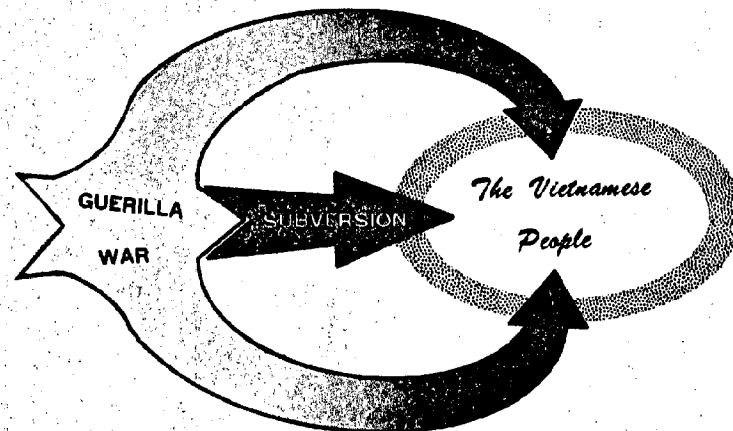
In his own terms, this is the way the enemy intends to bring the people and resources of South Vietnam under his control.

- First, he acknowledged that the people are the target and, by use of trained political cadre, he seeks to subvert the villagers; propagandizing them in terms of promised land reform, no taxes, prosperity and a peaceful life.



This has been going on for over a decade. Now it has come to include propaganda relating to U. S. imperialism, aimed at equating U. S. forces with the French, whom the peasants resented deeply, as being all take and no give.

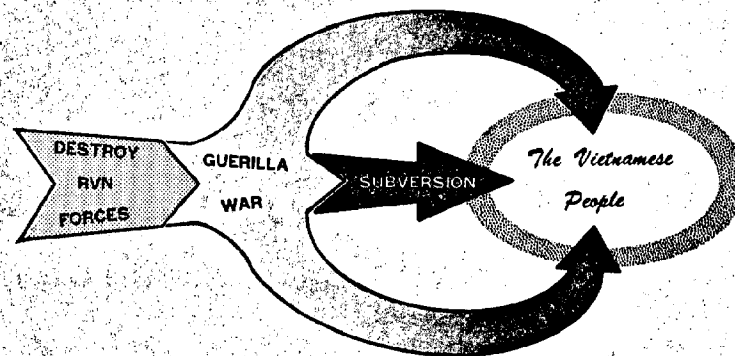
- Second, and in coordination with the subversive effort, he is waging a guerrilla war on the people, seeking to subdue them by terrorism and murder, while extorting their resources and sapping their



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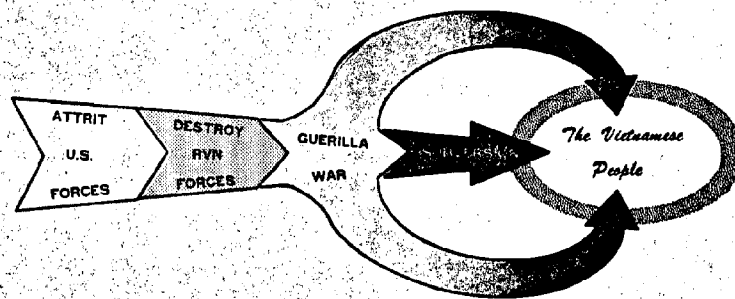
substance by taxation and by kidnapping their youth for recruitment.

- Third, he is seeking to erode the strength of the GVN regular and paramilitary forces, by ambush, localized attack and entrapment. His objective here is the GVN manpower base, which is fragile. By



attacking it he hopes to draw as many as possible of the limited GVN forces away from the more productive task of protecting the people.

Finally, and latterly, he is seeking to attrit U. S. forces, through the process of violent, close-quarters combat which tends to diminish the effectiveness of our supporting arms. He hopes thus to inflict losses which will erode our national will and cause us to cease our support of the GVN. Giap never hoped to defeat the French on the battlefield, but



he was sure that if the cost in casualties and francs was high enough, the French would defeat themselves in Paris. He was right. It is likely that he feels the same about the U. S. A.

There are several significant aspects of this four-part communist

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strategy. First, it will be noted that the overall formula focuses on people. At this juncture, and for the past 15 years, the communists have been struggling for minds, not territory. They are not interested in spilling their blood for hills or towns, nor are they interested in holding any ground except their jungle war zones--and they have been willing to relinquish some of these, on occasion, if the price for preserving them proved too high. Clearly, they feel that if they can possess the people, the territory will come along in good time.

Second, it will be noted that only two of the four concurrent elements of the enemy strategy involve direct contact with the prime target--the people. These are the subversive effort and the guerrilla war. The other two are peripheral to the central strategy; one aimed at degrading the capability of the GVN regular and paramilitary forces to interfere with the two prime actions, and the other aimed at degrading the will of the U. S. A. to help the GVN.

A key point here is this; the conflict between the PAVN/hardcore VC on the one hand, and the U. S. on the other, could move to another planet today, and we would still not have won the war. On the other hand, if the subversion and guerrilla efforts were to disappear, the war would soon collapse, as the VC would be denied food, sanctuary, and intelligence.

The deductions generated by all of this are simply that:

- At all costs we must neutralize the subversion and comb the guerrillas out of the people's lives. And then we must protect the people, surely and continuously, in order that they may establish a strong society. This is the first and greatest task, and justifies the commitment of whatever means are needed.

- Concurrently, but only in those specific cases where intelligence shows the advantage to lie clearly with us, we should seize the initiative and attack their war zones on the ground. In any case, we should interdict the war zones continually from the air, at a level of violence which precludes their effective use for training and logistics.

- Conversely, we must not engage in an attritional contest with the hard-core just for the sake of attrition; nor should we react to Viet Cong initiatives or seek them out just to do battle. The attritional ratio under these circumstances is not going to favor us, and this form of competition has little to do with who ultimately wins anyhow.

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IV. The Reality of Attrition.

At the outset it was observed that our current strategy pivots on attrition. Attrition, in turn, relates both to people and to material things; therefore it will be worthwhile to recall again the essential truth that, in terms of people, the enemy's resources greatly exceed our own, while in material resources the exact reverse is true.

The combined Red Chinese/North Vietnamese military manpower pool is in excess of 100 million men. Ours and the South Vietnamese is not greater than 20 million. Admittedly, this ignores the peripheral manpower resources of Australia/New Zealand and South Korea on the one hand, and of North Korea on the other; however these will not greatly alter the balance.

Thus, in the roughest of mechanical calculations, and contemplating total mobilization, we had better kill substantially more than five for one, or our attritional effort will lose ground, insofar as personnel resources are concerned.

But we are not doing anywhere near that well. Taking the period since the U. S. offensive effort has gained momentum, and under the most favorable terms, where we compare our own known dead and missing with our and GVN claims of enemy killed, we see that:

In September, the kill ratio was 2.6 to 1 in our favor.

In October, it was 2.8 to 1.

In November, it was 2.6 to 1.

In December, it was 1.5 to 1.

And it could very well be less favorable than these figures portray, since our estimates of enemy killed could be optimistic, and our assumption that every dead body is, in fact, a VC may be too sanguine.

But even if our figures are conservative; even if we were killing five--or even ten--for one, it would still require a great sacrifice in our own blood before the attritional effect came to be felt sufficiently by the enemy to bring him to conclude that he was over his head.

One criticism of the above line of reasoning is that it lumps the Chinese and North Vietnamese together, even as it lumps the GVN and the U. S. A., when we are not yet, in fact, confronted with Chinese

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volunteers. However, it would be imprudent not to credit the Chinese with the will to do what they were willing to do in Korea; to percolate their manpower into the battle, as needed, in order to make the attritional battle unprofitable to us. In any case, it would be a grave blow, were we to pursue the attritional program on the optimistic assumption that we and the GVN were matching manpower with the DRV alone, only to see an infusion of Chinese volunteers change the whole name of the game, after we had sacrificed many of our own lives.

A final point which must be mentioned respecting the Chinese factor is the possibility of our reacting with nuclear weapons, should Chinese soldiers appear on the Vietnam scene. Certainly, this would alter the whole equation. However, there are several pertinent questions in this regard.--How many Chinese would we have to see in RVN before we took the great decision? How much would we have suffered, in the interim? And what would we bomb in China in retaliation, besides the nuclear resources?

But even if the Chinese were not to put their manpower into the struggle, we had still best not undertake an attritional battle with the PAVN/VC, unless we are willing to mobilize completely, and to pay a substantial price in lives. Between the two--DRV and VC, there is probably a military manpower pool of 2 1/2 million men. At the rate we are attriting them today, it will cost something like 175,000 U. S./GVN lives to reduce the enemy pool by only a modest 20 per cent. At the present ratio, this means that, of the 175,000 killed, about 10,000 would be U. S.; or, say, 60,000 U. S. casualties just to see the DRV/VC manpower resource degraded by 20 per cent, without any assurance that this would spell victory.

Turning to the material side of the attrition topic, the situation is potentially just the reverse, although not practically so at this time.

The combined Chinese/DRV gross national product is about \$50 billion. Ours, combined with the South Vietnamese, is not less than \$650 billion. We make as much steel in a month as they do in a year. Our food production reflects a net annual surplus of 20 per cent, whereas they are hungry, undernourished countries, with food deficits. Beyond all this, our resources are far more flexible, far more adaptable to powerful application to the war effort.

For the communists to bring their material power to bear in South Vietnam demands a tremendous--and grossly inefficient--transportation effort. Furthermore, we know that, due to the accidents of geography,

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the enemy logistic system has vulnerable pressure points and is susceptible of interruption at the source. For instance, if no tanker ever entered Haiphong, Hong Gay or Vinh, and if no tank car ever ran on the rail lines between Hanoi and Red China, the DRV military effort would suffer a first magnitude blow. Crude though they are, VC and DRV operations need POL to keep the battle moving, and, while there are other ways of importing fuel, the enemy would be hard put to make a go of it without the tankers or the tank cars. And this circumstance will intensify, as the DRV investment in SVN grows.

The same facts apply to other munitions. Fully three quarters of all munitions imports come into North Vietnam by sea.

It is plain, however, that we are not now applying attrition-at-source, where it is most productive, but are seeking instead to intercept and destroy the enemy's material as it flows through the multiple channels of distribution, mainly through the Laos corridor. This, of course, is infinitely more difficult. While we have had some success to date in the armed reconnaissance role, it is plain that we have fallen far short of halting--or even gravely impeding--the flow. Nor has our effort given any evidence, as yet, of degrading the DRV determination. All in all, our current material attrition program can be likened to fighting an alligator by chewing on his tail, well knowing that a shot between the eyes will be more effective, and far safer for you in the end.

It has been said that attacks at the source (the main ports), attacks upon the major DRV stockpiles and attacks upon their heavy industry may be counterproductive, causing guerrilla retaliation on similar type installations in RVN.

The fact is, we should be acting now to prevent or defeat guerrilla attacks on the RVN power sources, POL storage and ports. If, as has been alleged, the communists have eschewed opportunities to damage major installations in the RVN, it is only because they judge that, by doing so, they stand to suffer more than we do. They are not likely to exercise forbearance as a sort of gentlemen's agreement. When and if they feel it advantageous to do so, they will try to destroy the power plants, mine the Saigon river or blow up the ESSO tanks. Meanwhile, it would seem that we are surrendering initiative to them in an area where we are overwhelmingly superior.

In sum, and with respect only to the matter of attrition, there is good basis for concluding that a strategy built around manpower attrition

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promises us nothing but disappointment, whereas one which, among other things, emphasizes material attrition at the pressure points promises tangible benefit. This is not to suggest that the current and prospective commitments of U. S. forces are not necessary. They are; simply because the GVN itself has neither the men nor the skill to do alone the many things that need to be done.

In the end, however, we are brought back to the acknowledgment that attrition alone cannot win the war, either by destroying the war machine or by applying graduated pressure to break the enemy's will. In both functions attrition has a melancholy history, and has disappointed its proponents. The Vietnam conflict ultimately has to be decided among the people in the villages of South Vietnam.

V. Winning the People.

In each of the preceding sections--one way or another--there has emerged the fact that the Vietnamese people are the prize. Much has been said about what should be done for them in terms of agrarian reform in order to win their allegiance and loyalty to an unbroken governmental chain stretching from the hamlet to Saigon.

But land reform is not the whole story. As we compete with the communists for the popular loyalty there are other important battle-grounds;--health, education, agricultural improvements, transportation and communications.

In every one of these areas the GVN, with our help, can be infinitely superior to the communists, whose means for promoting popular betterment are limited.

However, it has to be acknowledged that the GVN/U. S. program of bringing visible improvement to the lot of the peasant has gone forward far too slowly. The reasons are two-fold.

First, organization.--The organization for pacification has been loose, diffuse and inadequately supported at the top.--This goes for both the GVN and U. S. sides. There has been disagreement as to just what role the U. S. should play and, within this, another disagreement as to what role the U. S. military should play.

There has been too little recognition of the fact that Americans are far more efficient at civic action than the Vietnamese officialdom. They are more aggressive, more resourceful, more compassionate and less venal and, of the Americans, the military is best suited, by

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organization, to do this job. All they need are Vietnamese with them, to help distinguish friend from foe.

Only the most modest beginning has been made in this area so far. In the absence of fully adequate authoritative direction from above, U. S. and RVN civil and military forces in I Corps have gotten together in a "Joint Coordinating Council" to sort out responsibilities and to move aggressively toward bringing the promised better life to the people. This sui generis effort is bearing fruit. Pacification in I Corps is a unified effort, and should become a national model.

Second is the matter of military priority. There has been too much generalized talk that "the first priority is destruction of the VC/PAVN main force" on the theory that, once this is done, rural tranquility will automatically emerge. This is idle. It has hurt us gravely already. RVN military and paramilitary resources, which are very limited, are constantly being expended maneuvering about the country, reacting to the initiatives of VC main force units, while the people--literally millions of them--are left essentially naked, to be violated and subverted by the guerrillas.

This is not to say that we should not take the offensive to hurt or destroy main force elements, when circumstances are abundantly in our favor, or that we will not find it necessary to engage them to prevent damage to population centers or invasion of rice-rich areas.

However, it is intended here to say, without qualification, that if the enemy cannot get to the people, he cannot win, and it is therefore the people whom we must protect as a matter of first business. We are not now doing it. Vietnamese manpower programs, Vietnamese and U. S. military tactics, are not now aimed primarily at that part of the enemy who is propagandizing, subverting, terrorizing and--in a real sense--capturing the people, but are pointed at a target farther remote.

Thus, it is concluded that until we reorient our strategy more directly upon the people and their local security, the battle is not going to go well for us.

It will be said that the manpower requirements to bring reasonable protection to 14,000 villages promises to be very great. That is correct. However, it is put in better perspective by two comments. First, the requirements, while certainly large, will be met more and more from manpower resources uncovered by progress in the tranquilization program itself.

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Second, large as the personnel demands are, they are dwarfed by the prospects of trying to fight a battle of manpower attrition against seven hundred million Asians--which is where we seem to be headed now.

VI. A U. S. Strategy.

1. The preceding sections, in brief terms, seek to underscore the essentials of the war, as it really is. From the points made therein, the following three-cornered strategy emerges:

I - Shift the thrust of the GVN and U. S. ground effort to the task of delivering the people from guerrilla oppression, and to protecting them adequately and continually thereafter; meanwhile, seeking out and attacking main force elements when the odds can be made overwhelmingly in our favor.

II - Address our attritional efforts primarily to the source of DRV material introduction, fabrication and distribution;--close the ports, destroy the rail lines, destroy power, fuel and heavy industry, while deemphasizing the armed reconnaissance program as too diffuse and marginally productive.

III - Put the full weight of our top level effort into bringing all applicable resources--U. S. and GVN--into the pacification process. Create a single combined organization that acknowledges openly and exploits the usefulness of U. S. military participation in pacification, while using whatever leverage is available, to move the GVN to undertake an immediate agrarian reform program.

2. The responsive plan of campaign should encompass the following actions, listed under the three strategic points enumerated above:

I - (Shift the effort to delivering and protecting the people).

A. Execute the Phase II and IIa deployments; seek more third country participation; press the GVN for manpower improvements which will reduce diffusion of resources, and see more men productively employed under arms.

B. Secure the U. S. base areas, putting maximum possible reliance on mechanical security, in order to free manpower for offensive employment.

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C. In conjunction with the RVNAF, initiate expanding clearing operations from these base areas as well as from the Saigon area, aimed at creating steadily growing geographic regions which are generally free of Viet Cong influence. Extend these clearing operations to the Mekong Delta, to commence denial of the foodstuffs there to the Viet Cong.

D. Devote whatever resources are necessary, in military and paramilitary force, to the task of protecting the people in the areas cleared, along with their crops and institutions, from subversion and guerrilla action. Under no circumstances remove military and paramilitary protection until police protection is adequate.

E. Combine comint, elint, photo, clandestine, covert and other intelligence programs for the specific purpose of locating accurately the concentrations of enemy main force units, headquarters, supply and training areas. Attack them continuously by air, and at a very much higher level than at present. Attack main force elements on the ground when the convergence of intelligence establish that the benefits promise to be overwhelmingly in our favor, and when to do so will not consume forces needed for protection of cleared areas.

G. Intensify psychological warfare campaigns, utilizing heavily the services of defectors and Chieu Hoi ralliers, and aimed directly at the morale of the VC.

II - (Address attritional efforts primarily to the DRV sources of material introduction and production).

A. Without any further warning destroy

(1) Major DRV POL storage areas.

(2) The Haiphong, Hon Gay and Vinh port areas.

Mine the ports.

(3) The Haiphong River dredges.

(4) The rail lines to South China.

B. Follow the foregoing with a comprehensive psychological warfare campaign aimed at the North Vietnamese people, designed to diminish their support of the war, and to persuade the leadership that the cost will continue to rise.

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C. Proceed, unless contraindicated, with destruction of DRV power sources, heavy industry, coal, chemical and tin production.

D. Seek, by convergence of all intelligence means, including intensive ground reconnaissance in Laos, to discover key way-points in the VC supply distribution system. Attack them by air continually, and in great strength. Attack them with ground sabotage forces.

III (Converge all possible resources in the pacification process).

A. Organize, uniformly, at the Saigon level, and in each Corps tactical zone, joint councils which coalesce the GVN and U. S. military and civilian efforts in a single program which aims to bring health, literacy, agricultural plenty and political awareness to the people.

B. In execution use U. S. and GVN forces together.

C. Increase, many fold, the level of medical assistance, accelerating the current U. S. civilian medical program and obliging all U. S. military units to contribute.

D. Increase the level of popular forces training and compensation. Utilize U. S. forces, as necessary to support the training program.

E. Direct, in specific terms, the conduct of comprehensive military civic action programs by all U. S. armed forces which have contact with the people.

F. Press the GVN to move immediately into a major land reform program to forego back taxes, distribute excess lands and give prompt and tangible assurance that the program will reach every peasant.

VII. Conclusion.

This brief appraisal makes only two basic points which, in the context of achieving victory in Vietnam, are ineludible.--

First, no military strategy will promise success unless it gives full discount to the non-military factors of politics, economics and sociology.

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And second, manpower being the enemy's area of greatest strength, we have no license and less reason to join battle with him on that ground.

The changes in thrust proposed herein are designed around the conviction that scrupulous attention to these two facts is a design for victory, and evasion of their implications is the route to defeat.

TOP SECRETTOPIC: IDEAS RELATED TO A STRATEGY FOR RVNBACKGROUND:

1. Since the entry of U.S. combat forces into the Vietnam conflict, no clearly defined strategy has existed for accomplishing U.S. objectives related to the war in Vietnam.
2. In recent weeks COMUSMACV, by his actions and announced intentions for future actions, has, in effect, developed a strategy of expediency centered about his concern for the presence of PAVN and Viet Cong main force units in the hinterland of South Vietnam.
3. By analysis of COMUSMACV's strategy and the many interrelated factors bearing on a strategy, such as characteristics of the theater of operations, objectives, the enemy's strategy and experiences of the III MAF, FMFPac concluded that:
 - a. There is no clearly defined strategy for Vietnam.
 - b. COMUSMACV has devised a strategy based on a costly war of attrition between U.S. forces and PAVN-VC forces; a strategy which emphasizes operations to find, fix and destroy enemy forces, and which neglects freeing the people from VC oppression and exploitation; a strategy which mismatches U.S. manpower against Asian manpower.
 - c. The essence of a military strategy for Vietnam should include:
 - (1) a shift in the emphasis of the GVN and U.S. ground effort to the task of freeing the people from Viet Cong oppression and exploitation, to protecting them thereafter; meanwhile, seeking out and attacking main force elements where the odds can be made over whelmingly in our favor.
 - (2) An immediate and massive campaign of destruction aimed at the DRV - close the ports, destroy the rail lines, destroy power, fuel and heavy industry.

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(3) An all out GVN/U. S. effort aimed at maximizing the pacification process.

STATUS:

1. CG FMFPac paper, entitled, A Strategic Appraisal, provided by separate means, covers the major factors affecting a strategy for Vietnam and proposes a strategy for winning that conflict.
2. Additionally, a FMFPac presentation, entitled, A Military Strategy for Vietnam, was presented to the Commandant of the Marine Corps on 4 January 1966. This presentation included an analysis of present and projected operations in RVN and proposed a strategy embracing those proposals contained in CG FMFPac's paper, A Strategic Appraisal.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the factors and strategy contained in CG FMFPac's paper, A Strategic Appraisal, be considered in the development of a military strategy for Vietnam.

TOP SECRET



COMMANDING GENERAL
FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC
c/o FPO, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601

IN REPLY REFER TO:

19 June 1965

General Wallace M. Greene, Jr.
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps
Washington, D. C. 20380

Dear Wally:

There has been a tremendous squabble going on here for the past week.

It amounts to this.--The JCS has apparently decided that they will not put the Air-Mobile Division into the highlands. The Army, represented by MACV and others, are determined somehow to upset that decision.

They have been working very hard on Sharp. During the heaviest part of their assault on him, he asked me to draft him up a concept of operations. He called it a General Strategy. In any case, I prepared the attached document. Sharp believes that it is correct, responsive to the JCS decision, and reflective of his own views.

It is my guess that this issue is going to be pursued with all conceivable energy by the Army in Washington and I suggest that the attached might be of some use to you in carrying forward the philosophy which I know you hold.

I am now in a wrestling match with the Navy on a further effort on their part to make us pay more of the freight for the logistics operations in Vietnam. Their latest ploy is to ask us to give them some 285 men to serve as stevedores. This is despite the fact that CinCPacFleet's order specifically taxes 7th Fleet with doing everything outside of the high water mark.

Seventh Fleet's gimmick here is to come to the Marines, in their capacity as Task Force 79 (a 7th Fleet entity), and say that taking the Marines from TF 79 is consistent with CinCPacFleet's directive that 7th Fleet do the job outside the high water mark.

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21 Feb 1979

Signature W. J. Shaw Date 1/8/89

3 copies recd

- (1) - RHP
- (1) - Sec Nav (via G. Dwyer)
- (1) - Dep CTS (P&P)

TAD CRANEY

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19 June 1965

I have directed Mel Henderson (who is CTF-79) to tell them no, and refer them to CinCPacFleet's order. Concurrently, Lew Walt is taking the same position from his posture in Vietnam. I have a feeling that I may find myself in a considerable cat fight here at CinCPacFleet. I regret it, but feel that we simply must draw the line, else we will find ourselves providing not 200 but something more like 2000 men to help the Navy do what it ought to be doing.

Our people in Okinawa are there for one purpose and one purpose only, as I see it.--It is to serve as replacements and reinforcements for our forces in Vietnam and to ensure that the material condition of our units in Vietnam remains at a very high level. If we start degrading our capabilities to provide labor for the Navy, it will not be long before our Okinawa based forces are nothing more than a pool. SecNav comes here this afternoon, and I pray they have not sold him on their idea.

The staff at Headquarters will have briefed you on Westy's idea of sending two of our BLTs up to Pleiku. I resisted it vigorously here with Sharp, and acquired support from him. Walt gave Westy a strong rejoinder along the same line, and we both talked to the Secretary of the Navy about it. As far as I can see the matter is quiescent now, but it could be revived at any minute.

Our operations in Vietnam are going along satisfactorily. We have killed a substantial number of VC, and are killing them more and more as time goes on. I think you will find that our daily situation reports are now reasonably comprehensive, and reasonably prompt. What we are trying to do is to get the essence of what goes on each day to you quickly through the III MAF SITREP. Then, the FMFPac daily SITREP is very complete, serving as a chronological record of what actually went on. Put another way, it is my hope that anyone could take the daily FMFPac SITREPs and have a continuing history of our operations.

Today I have sent in a message requesting augmentation personnel to make the III MAF Headquarters a reasonably adequate thing. As the augmentation which they got from the 1st Marine Brigade gradually goes home, there is no plan for its replacement. Consequently, we have to come to grips with the need.

I have also gone in for a substantial piece of money for fortification material to flesh out the MLR in each of our enclaves. It does look like

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quite a sum, until you realize it is probably about one-fifth the price of one B-52.

The Chu Lai field is operating very well. There is no part of the hardware that has let us down yet. By Tuesday, we will be operating the full 60 planes of three squadrons there, and with no problems. I may say that we are taking great pains to ensure that the record of our close air support performance is fully recorded. As of now we have had no serious difficulties with MACV or the 2d Air Division. In this regard I made plain to the Secretary of the Navy that our system was working and that MACV, is complying with CINCPac's directive on the subject.

Roy Johnson was dragging his feet on the matter of the AirFMFPac merger. Although he told me repeatedly that he had no objection to its taking place, he still had not responded to your telephone call as to his concurrence in the time phasing.

Finally, I asked Chappy to call him and query him as to when you might expect an answer. This resulted in his calling me, and my telling him that Stroop had agreed last Saturday to the time phasing and urging that he call Stroop and confirm this. He did so, following which he telephoned Chappy. The operation is now underway.

I hope your trip to Europe was successful and enjoyable.

In haste,


V. H. KRULAK

Lieutenant General, U. S. Marine Corps

*P.S. Just back from meeting
w/ SecNav. will send you a
message. Went to get this on
phone with Dwyer.*



TOP SECRET



COMMANDING GENERAL
FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC
c/o FPO, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601

IN REPLY REFER TO:

APR 5 1965

~~TOP SECRET~~

General Wallace M. Greene, Jr.
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps
Washington, D. C. 20380

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21 Feb 1979

----- *W. J. Shaw* Signature Date *1/2/99*

Dear Wally:

As the Vietnam story continues to unfold, I put a lot of thought--as I know you do--upon how we can manage to make the best possible contribution to winning the battle.

All in all, I regard our posture as good. We have the hardware; our supply system is sound and adequate--at least until we find unanticipated combat drains; our training is sound; and certainly our people are intent on doing the right thing. Beyond all of this we have a good system for ensuring that all the Marines in authority speak with the same voice.

We do have troubles, although they are generally endemic to the environment.--The Army never intended that the Marines be the first combat troops in Vietnam. Now that we are there, I am sure they hope we do well. But, if anyone is to fail, I would reckon they would rather it were Marines than soldiers.

Likewise, the Air Force, at our lower levels at least, has worked hard to keep us out of the battle.

And the Navy, too, has had no great stomach for relinquishing authority over Marines--or for seeing our air elements placed in a position where they might compete with the carriers.

All of this means that, apart from the success we need to achieve in terms of helping win the battle, we have to do well if we are to keep our brothers off our back. The stakes are high.

This directs my mind to the subject of leaders. In a week or so, we will have 10,000 Marines in Vietnam; arrayed in a most complex geographic deployment and faced with a world of real and potential problems. Tactical air/ground command, logistics, relationships with the ARVN, COMUSMACV, the Navy and with the press--every one a tinder box type of problem, and all subject to intensification, in one way or another, if the VC choose to take the step.

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I believe that we need a major general in Danang when the MEB reaches its 10,000 man level.--We will get on better with MACV, certainly better with the ARVN in I Corps, and better with the Air Force, all by virtue of the two stars alone, and not considering benefits accruing from more experience.

This is not to suggest that Karch is weak or even marginally unsatisfactory. To the contrary, I think he is doing well, although the assortment of tactical--civil--military--interservice problems certainly have put him to a severe test.

In the III MEF we now have a very active command; tremendously busy keeping the support aligned for the 9th MEB, and trying to plan for the future.

And, of course, the rapidly changing scene in the 3d Division and 1st Wing has put a strain on those two commands, in terms of logistics, readiness and training.

As to our leadership in FMFPac.--

Today, Collins has two big jobs--III MEF, 3d Division. Either one is a full day's work.

Collins has no ADC; Karch, of course, being in Danang.

Carl, the Deputy CG III MEF, is now at sea with CTF 76, acting as CG 3dMEB for the landing of the augmentation forces in Vietnam. I am sure that more of this sort of thing can be anticipated.

Fontana and Coursey are, at the moment, situated together, according to the book, and very busy.

What I think is needed--for the current juncture, anyhow, is a major general in Danang, and one as CG III MEF/3dMarDiv or as CG III MEF/1stMAW.

Knowing something of the difficulty you have in stretching generals, I can offer this solution, building it only around the generals in FMFPac--or scheduled to join:

Send Walt to the 9th MEB.

Return Karch to ADC 3dMarDiv.

Send Wade to be CG 3dMarDiv and CG III MEF.

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Make Coursey CG 3dMAW (He is headed there anyhow).
 Send Leek to be Deputy CG FMFPac.
 Permit Carl to go on to be Asst Wing Comdr, 1st Wing (as originally planned).
 Send Henderson to be Deputy CG III MEF.

The above arrangement, as I say, is designed around FMFPac resources only. I realize that there may be better plans embodying other people, but I believe the current requirement is about as I have outlined it.

The requirement, of course, can certainly grow, should we deploy a whole MEF of 35,000. We are told that such a decision might be made 90 days hence. I doubt if the Army would like to see it happen even that soon, since they will not be ready with their contribution. However, it is my personal guess that the VC are going to try something big before then and may force our hand. If we do move in the whole MEF, then, of course, we must split III MEF and 3dMarDiv (1st Wing) and I feel there must be a LtGen as CG III MEF.

If agreeable to you I would like to ponder this problem for awhile, and give you a recommendation later, as to when and how this might be done, if required.

Your patient efforts to keep me informed have helped all of us out here greatly. I am enclosing a couple of messages which illustrate how it helps us stay ahead of the ball.

Also, I am enclosing a couple of messages which give some indication of the kind of guidance we are passing out now.

Times are busy, for sure, and the heavy load of work and responsibility are separating the sheep and goats in my headquarters. Almost to a man, they want to produce. Some can; a few just can't quite.--And the two changes in CINCPACFleet in eight months haven't eased the strain on them either, since each new man has his own ideas.

We are trying to glean every bit of news on our activities in Vietnam that we can--from every source--and to pass it on to your headquarters promptly, so that you will have the word first. Right now I am concerned about the Phu Bai landing. There just is no really good landing area. Every one is poor hydrographically, in terms of egress, or both. I tried to explain this to Westy, but he wasn't hearing. I have been all over the area, and I know the unloading will be slow. I dare say there will be some impatient people in OSD etc., but our people will get it done, and I know they will make you proud.

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Turning to another area of the globe--we concluded our material maintenance, fiscal and mount-out inspection of Force Troops on Saturday. All in all it was good. Some units turned up unsat, in one area or another, but by and large they looked better than any other element of the command.

We are building up a good case on Green Beach at Camp Pendleton, and are keeping statistics.

Hutchinson has relieved McCutcheon. I think he is getting off well with Sharp. I will keep a close watch to see what I can do to help him.

I have enlisted Sharp's aid on the use of the Vietnamese Marines. He will support it.--I don't know what Westy will do. Incidentally, I had a letter from him today; he wants me to send out a liaison visit every three weeks.

Enough rambling;--all the best always.

Sincerely,



V. H. KRULAK

Lieutenant General, U. S. Marine Corps

P.S. Guess who I ran into at Okinawa? (Not Mrs. Reich).--Uncle Sugar and wife. He looks fine;--travelling on an MSTS ship, just for the ride.

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NAVMC HQ 335g-CMC (REV. 9-64)

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21	10. <i>1/23/67</i>		20

REMARKS (Entries to be dated and signed)

ACTION:

CMCM 12-64/112-65 ANALYSIS

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Marine Corps History and Museums
in accordance with the provisions
of CNO ltr Ser 009D323/232095 of
21 Feb 1979Signature *H. Shaw* Date *1/8/89*

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21 Feb 1979

ATA12-ras

MEMORANDUM

Signature Date

From: Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans & Programs)

To: Commandant of the Marine Corps

Subj: Analysis of CMCMs 12-64 and 112-65

1. In response to your request, an analysis of CMCM 12-64, Situation in Vietnam, of 24 February 1964, (the "23 Points" paper), and CMCM 112-65, Southeast Asia, of 16 November 1965 (the "52 points" paper) has been made to determine the extent to which recommendations made by CMC have been accomplished.

2. At Tab A is a spread sheet containing the basic analysis. It is based on the organization of CMCM 112-65 within the following categories:

General Statement
Actions within the US
Actions within SVN
Actions to isolate the VC
Actions against NVN
Actions to Support Thailand and Laos
Actions to deter the CHICOMS

3. It has not been possible to set up a valid tally sheet showing how much has or has not been done because of the complexities of timing and degree of implementation involved. However, by placing the recommendations and action that have been taken in their broadest perspective, a rough indication of the extent that CMC's recommendations have ultimately been adopted can be shown as follows:

<u>CMCM</u>	<u>Total RECs</u>	<u>Full or Partial Implementation</u>	<u>No Action * or OBE</u>
12-64	23	15	8
112-65	52	33	19

4. Of greater interest and significance than the specific actions taken on individual recommendations is the fact that CMC's recommendations have consistently been tabled quite some time before the decision-making authorities were willing to accept the need for them. Following is a generalized summary of the reaction to CMC's papers:

* See TAB B

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A

ANALYSIS
OF
CMCM 12-64 and CMCM 112-67

TAB A

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a. While few of CMC's recommendations have been immediately and fully accepted in their original form, the basic thrust of nearly all the military Vietnam-associated recommendations have been implemented - usually, however, only after it had become obvious that the action was required.

b. Some recommendations have become OBE - some because of a change in the situation, and others because the particular problem area toward which they were directed was solved without specific action from Washington.

c. The most significant differences between what CMC has recommended and what has been or is now being done has nothing to do with individual recommendations. The underlying theme of all of CMC's recommendations was expressed in the "23 Points" - If we are to stay in Vietnam to win; prompt, decisive, dramatic and consistent actions, utilizing the full concerted power of the US must be used. This theme, or underlying concept, has never been implemented. Instead, we have been following a pattern of graduated application of military pressures.

5. The primary conclusion drawn from this analysis is that the administration has not been willing to accept the idea of going all-out to achieve what we believe to be the objective. Strong actions recommended by CMC and the JCS have been approved only when no other alternative appeared to be available. It would seem, then, that CMC (and the JCS) have been using objectives different from those actually used by the administration. The following points appear pertinent to this observation:

a. The basic US courses of action available to us, as we see them, have not changed. The choice still remains as it was stated in February 1964, "...either to pull out of South Vietnam or stay there and win."

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b. The recommendations tabled by CMC have consistently supported a course of action to achieve the objectives stated in NSAM 288-64 - a free, independent, non-communist South Vietnam. They have, in addition, envisioned actions which would take full advantage of our national power, thereby denying the enemy the opportunity to either become inured to our actions, or to effectively counter them.

c. The main thrust of CMCM 12-64 was that we must decide if we are going to get out of Vietnam or if we're going to stay and win. If we are to stay, prompt, decisive, dramatic and consistent actions, utilizing the full power of the US must be used.

d. The thrust of CMCM 112-65 was, that while we had made some progress in SVN, we were heading for a stalemate unless definitive action was taken. Determination of that action could only come from an overall analysis of all our actions, from which we could intelligently derive the future actions required to move toward the objective. To assist in that analysis, 52 specific actions, functionally grouped so as to facilitate analysis, were listed. The individual actions were all keyed to the same thrust contained in CMCM 12-64.

e. The slow, measured application of military power over the last two years tracks better with a goal of "staying in Vietnam until we can negotiate" than it does with CMC's preferred choice of "staying and winning". Other factors such as the apparent concern with domestic or foreign reaction, fear of CHICOM or Soviet action, readiness to order stand-downs contrary to military recommendations, continued and publicized efforts to achieve negotiations, failure to reiterate clearly US policy or approve a JCS concept for the war and the nature of the restrictions on and control over military activity, all

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reinforce the assumption that the primary goal being sought by the Administration (consciously or subconsciously) is to get out of Vietnam. Since the Manila Conference of 25Oct66, we have also seen efforts by individuals in the Administration to articulate a rationale which would ease a disengagement (Draft NSAM of 12Dec66, Mr. VANCE's DPM, Mr. McNAMARA's DPM).

6. CMC's position as an advocate of the "win" policy and of doing promptly that which needs to be done comes through clearly in this analysis. This policy, or at least the way to achieve it, does not appear to be fully accepted by the Administration. Until the question of what the Administration is willing to accept as a "satisfactory outcome" of the war is spelled out, reiteration of recommendations based on what appear to be outdated objectives would not be productive.

F. E. LEE
F. E. LEE
By direction

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CMCM 112-64
24 FEB 1964

1. If reemphasis on U.S. policy with respect to Vietnam and Southeast Asia is to carry any conviction -- with both friends and enemies -- it must be manifested in prompt, positive, dramatic, and consistent action. First, there must be a clear-cut decision either to pull out of South Vietnam or to stay there and win. If the decision is to stay and win -- which is the Marine Corps recommendation -- this objective must be pursued with the full concerted power of U.S. resources.

24. Maintain the necessary defense posture within the United States and world-wide. Fund the expanded Southeast Asia effort by supplemental appropriations to avoid weakening our national readiness posture in other areas.

3. Make clear to the Congress and to the American people that the U.S. policy is to win in South Vietnam. Notify our allies.

2. Indicate unequivocally to Ho Chi Minh, to the Communists, and to the world that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objective has been attained. Warn North Vietnam to stop guerrilla troop and convoy movements into South Vietnam and to cease support of the Viet Cong.

23. While maintaining the necessary tempo of operations to convince the Communists that we mean business, make it clear that the U.S. is willing to confer and negotiate at any time with Ho Chi Minh. Listen patiently to our allies, friends, and enemies, but continue to press home the campaign in South Vietnam until a settlement on U.S. terms is reached.

CMCM 112-65
16 November 1965

The first steps toward a successful resolution of the situation in SVN have been taken...I believe that the present level of effort will result in an inconclusive stalemate which will negate all the efforts that have so far been made.

The US is faced at this time with the necessity to make a basic decision as to the next step in Southeast Asia. The courses of action open to the US are:

- Pull out of Southeast Asia.
- Maintain our present level of deployments and continue our present level of effort.
- Increase our deployments to South Vietnam with no increase in our efforts against the DRV.
- Increase our deployments to South Vietnam with a concomitant increase in our efforts both in the North and South.

I consider that course of action d. provides the only method by which the momentum of our effort can be maintained and which will provide the pressures necessary to bring the DRV to the conference table.

It is essential that our future actions demonstrate to our enemies, to our allies and to the American public the importance of our commitment in Southeast Asia, the seriousness of the situation, and the depth of our determination to prevail.

4. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED WITHIN THE US.

a. Expand the armed forces rapidly to provide the necessary forces for Southeast Asia and other commitments and publicly prepare the American people for mobilization.

b. Reiterate by public pronouncements of US governmental leaders that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objectives have been achieved.

d. Embark on an expanded campaign to inform the American public of the necessity for our commitment in Southeast Asia and our concepts for the conduct of the war.

c. Re-examine draft regulations and veterans' benefits to insure an equitable distribution of military service and that persons who serve are provided educational and vocational training advantages.

e. Continue efforts for more third country participation in South Vietnam.

f. While adhering to our announced readiness to negotiate, concentrate on maintaining our military pressure and leave initiative toward negotiation to the other side.

ACTION TAKEN

The letter of CMCM's 1964 recommendations has been accomplished (a decision was made to stay in Vietnam, and deployments have been increased and pressures against NVN increased). The spirit of CMCM's recommendations appears to be counter to what has been done. There has been no prompt, positive, dramatic and consistent action. There does not appear to be any decision to win -- to pursue the objective with the full concerted power of US resources.

Course of action d. has been implemented

Only now is the American public becoming aware of some of the ramifications of the war.

Partially implemented. The Services made their first in-depth analyses of strength increases required in the summer of 1965. SecDef did not accept the first inputs and a series of plans were developed which resulted in only minimal increases. Mobilization was first recommended in November 1965 to meet the time schedule for the Phase II deployments to SVN. With each subsequent deployment program, the Services have individually, and through the JCS, recommended ceiling increases and requested authority to activate new units in order to maintain an adequate world wide posture. Service increases have been minimal and keyed to the Vietnam war only.

Partially implemented. Administration leaders have made public pronouncements attesting to our resolve to stand in Vietnam. An unclassified White House booklet "Why Vietnam" was published in August 1965. This stand was reaffirmed at both the Manila Conference and the Guam conference this year. Unfortunately, there are lapses in continuity of efforts to convey the conviction that our efforts are firm. The stand-downs for Christmas, TET, Buddha's Birthday, the publicized efforts toward negotiations as well as the restraints imposed, all tend to degrade the US/GVN military efforts and create an unrealistic US attitude towards the war. The recent efforts (Draft NSAM, DPM, etc.), while not public, are symptomatic of a lack of determination within government circles which could easily be reflected in the tenor of future public announcements.

Partially implemented. No specific actions were taken until recent public demands forced Congressional examination of the "lottery" system and other changes in the Draft laws. Some Congressional progress has been made in the area of extension of veterans' benefits.

Implemented. The government has been reasonably active in this area. While a recent newspaper article (WashPost, 4 Jun 57) listed contributions from 37 countries, only three are currently making significant contributions (Korea, Australia and New Zealand).

Partially implemented. There is no question of the US willingness to negotiate. Many channels have been opened to the communists and active efforts made to achieve a situation favoring negotiations. It is not equally clear that the US has made our determination to win as convincing to the communists.

REMARKS

The primary thrust of the "23 Points" paper was: make a decision -- get out of Vietnam, or stay and win; If the decision was to win, then actions must be prompt, positive, dramatic and consistent. The decision was made to stay, but instead of employing the full concerted power of the US, a policy of graduated application of power was followed. This permitted our opponents to escalate in step with, or even ahead, of us and led directly to the CMCM conclusion in CMCM 112-65, that the present level of effort would lead to a stalemate. The situation today is somewhat better in that sufficient forces have been deployed to South Vietnam to insure that we will not be defeated militarily and pressures have been increased on Hanoi. However, these levels of effort have been reached so gradually that today we are still faced with a possibility of a virtual stalemate. Instead of a decision to win, it appears that the administration seeks only to achieve negotiations. It is believed that if the present level of effort had been reached early -- by late 1965, the cumulative effect would have achieved the administration objectives.

Insofar as the Marine Corps is concerned, force level increases have been barely adequate to meet Vietnam needs. There has been no recognition of the lead-time required to train the personnel needed for new activations and as a result, we -- and the other Services -- are at the point where we can not activate new units within acceptable time frames. The calculated risk taken by the administration that significant forces would not be required elsewhere in the world during the Vietnam war, coupled with the "business as usual approach" (no extension of personnel or mobilization), has stripped the US of strategic flexibility.

The continuing debate in Congress and the vocal minorities in the public arena indicate that the US public is aware of some of the problems connected with the Vietnam war. The nature of many of the protests, however, indicates that the government has failed to adequately advise the public of our objectives early enough to establish a firm background for the public debate. This should have been done when first recommended by CMCM in early 1964 -- not when it was too late to possibly influence the direction of our national objectives. The stand-down negotiation proposals, restrictions on military activity, and vocal protest movement in the US have degraded US determination in communist eyes.

It appears to be an unavoidable conclusion that the draft card burnings, refusals to report for induction and public protests could have been avoided for the most part if CMCM's recommendations concerning informing the public and Congress and for suitable draft and veterans' benefit changes had been accepted.

There is considerable governmental opposition to a contribution from the country best able to help - Nationalist China. Other than that, additional Free World support does not appear to be in the cards.

It would appear that the government's entire conduct of the war has been conditioned by their estimate to what would contribute best to a favorable climate for negotiations. It is equally clear that at this time, the restrained campaign has had an effect on the communists exactly opposite to that intended and desired. They have not been convinced of our ability or determination and have taken full advantage of our slow escalation to enhance their position. This had included development of full support from the Soviets and Communist China.

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CNCH 12-64

1. Establish the Secretary of Defense as the Washington focal point for the expanded and concerted effort in South Asia in recognition that, at this point of time, this is primarily a military rather than diplomatic problem.

CNCH 112-65

2. Establish a top level coordinator at the Washington level to supervise out of country development and humanitarian efforts in SEA to include the following actions:

(1) Establish and maintain an overall economic and social development plan for friendly countries in SEA, particularly SVN and insure that this plan is coordinated with military efforts.

(2) Coordinate the efforts of civilian volunteer and governmental agencies in the provision of goods and services to SVN to carry out the economic/social development plan.

(3) Develop a plan to utilize conscientious objectors and other non-combatants in humanitarian efforts among the civilian populace in SVN.

(4) Develop a coordinated plan to utilize civilian doctors and technicians for temporary service among the civilian populace in SVN.

(5) Develop a national public information campaign to publicize our humanitarian efforts within SVN.

3. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED WITHIN SVN.

a. As rapidly as possible deploy Phase II forces to SVN and announce that any further reinforcements that may be required will be provided.

b. Develop a country-wide pacification and rural development plan for SVN and coordinate the efforts of all US agencies in SVN.

c. Develop selected villages or areas of SVN as showcases of what can be done by US and SVN efforts on the behalf of the people of Vietnam, with emphasis on the social, economic and political changes that will provide a society to which the Vietnamese people will want to belong and support.

d. Develop an approved manpower plan within South Vietnam with priorities for civilian and military forces based upon the overall campaign plan and the agreed division of effort between allied/SVN forces.

e. Provide the necessary security forces (PF and RF) that will rapidly follow up US/ARVN clearing actions.

f. Expand the governmental advisory effort to a level comparable to the US Military Advisory effort to provide governmental advisors down to at least the district level.

4. Move necessary U. S. ground, air, and naval units into South Vietnam to guarantee holding the country and the successful conduct of operations outlined herein. Establish a U. S. command, logistic, and training base in each corps area in South Vietnam.

14. Intensify execution of the National Pacification Plan.

15. Extend and strengthen the Rural Life Program, i.e., strategic hamlets. This is a most important step in guaranteeing basic personal safety for the people of South Vietnam. Intensify land reform measures.

12. Establish population controls within South Vietnam to include implementation and firm enforcement of the National Identity Card program, movement controls and curfew.

13. Establish firm control of the movement of material within South Vietnam by implementation of the Material Resources Control Plan.

ACTION

The Administrator of AID was designated by the President to accomplish this responsibility. The Vietnam Coordinating Committee (VACC) and other ad hoc groups have been involved also. Sec Def is a primary focal point; however, it has not been recognized that SVN is a military rather than diplomatic problem.

No such plan or effort has been distributed. There are long-range development plans designed to be implemented under the auspices of regional Asiatic groups. For SVN, Mr. Komer's activities represented the only cohesive governmental effort toward establishing a viable economy in SVN.

AID is responsible for this activity.

No plan has been circulated.

Civilian doctors from US and Free World countries do provide this service --but no coordinated plan has been developed.

Some efforts in this direction have been made, but no concerted campaign has been launched.

These actions have been taken.

All of these actions deal with improvement of the national structure of SVN. Individually, they address specific actions that were keyed to the insurgency nature of the situation or to more effective organization. Some action could be cited for each of the recommended actions, but these actions can not be keyed directly to CMC's recommendations. Additionally, in many cases, the area has been explored, but no satisfactory course of action developed (i.e., land reform).

REMARKS

It is clear that the President has reserved the integration and direction of efforts of the diverse agencies/interests involved at the Washington area. The major difficulty is that there is no clearly defined coordinating apparatus to take care of the day-to-day operations.

Mr. KOMER is presently in SVN as the principal assistant to COMUSMACV for all RD efforts.

While the letter of these recommendations has been carried out, the spirit-providing the forces required has not. Mobilization appears to be the stumbling block.

Initial efforts in this area were hampered by a position that institution of actions by the US in these areas would, in effect, establish a shadow government in SVN and this was contrary to US policy which is that we are there to assist and not govern the country. There has been, particularly in the last year, increased recognition of the fact that the Vietnamese were administratively incapable of establishing sound governmental institutions without help. At the present, there is slow but steady progress being made in the area of actions recommended by CMC. As more and more higher caliber personnel become involved and organizational changes are made to facilitate their work, it can be anticipated that the coordinated effort desired by CMC will eventually come into being. Mr. KOMER's efforts in his new position will undoubtedly lead to increased progress.

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18. Make it known that the U.S. will not tolerate any more coups in South Vietnam.

4. Place a single military officer, COMUSMACV, in complete and total control of all operations. Provide him with a plan, tools (men, weapons, and equipment) and full authority. Give him operational control of South Vietnam forces and have him exercise such control through a U.S. command structure paralleling that of the Vietnamese armed forces. This should include control of all military assets and logistic resources.

5. Establish COMUSMACV's command structure as a subordinate unified command under CINCPAC designed for Southeast Asia as a whole, not just for South Vietnam. Bring CIA resources and activities into a CIA force component directly under COMUSMACV. Bring the public safety and national defense activities currently being pursued by USOM, for example, of the strategic hamlet program, under military direction. Research and development activities under the clear military command of COMUSMACV.

6. Keep U.S. Ambassadors on station and their public stature undiminished. Modify their authority vis-a-vis military operations and the military command structure to the extent required in each country. In South Vietnam itself give the Ambassador a status similar to that which existed in Korea during active hostilities there.

19. Withdraw dependents and other Americans from South Vietnam if this action contributes clearly to the war effort.

7. Establish news censorship and rigid control of accreditation of U.S. and foreign correspondents.

CNCH 12-65

k. Provide the support required to insure that there are no more changes of government by coup.

1. Complete in-country plans for possible escalation and prepare for establishment of a single unified Military/Civilian command over all activities in SEA.

d. Insure that the overall plan of campaign within SVN is based upon a clearly understood and coordinated division of tasks between allied/SVN forces.

Action has been taken in each case where the possibility of a coup has arisen.

COMUSMACV has not been designated as being in total and complete control over all activities in SVN, nor has he been given operational control of the RVNAF. A command system paralleling the Vietnamese has been established, largely at Marine Corps insistence. In the event of escalation, contingency plans now in existence do provide for COMUSMACV to function as COMUSSEASIA. While it does not meet CMC's criteria for an overall campaign plan, COMUSMACV does have campaign plans which assign tasks to ARVN and US/PV forces. Additionally, as a result of the recent conference, there has been a reassignment of the RVNAF to more clearly defined responsibilities for RD support.

COMUSMACV is considered to be a subordinate unified command under CINCPAC. The control aspects of other agency activities in South Vietnam have been largely resolved.

This has been done.

This has not been done.

i. Authorize low-level commanders to employ non-lethal chemical agents as the situation requires and without reference to COMUSMACV prior to employment.

h. Assign the commander of the major ground forces in base areas clear-cut authority over all U.S. elements in carrying out local security tasks.

g. Provide adequate funds and resources to permit rapid development of passive defensive measures around key installations to include fences, revetment, illumination, seismic intrusion devices, etc.

Action has been taken.

This problem has been resolved.

This problem has been resolved.

ACTION

REMARKS

One of the more encouraging aspects of the situation is the relative stability demonstrated by the KY regime. It is believed that much credit for this must be given to the U.S. advisors, military and civilian, on the scene.

The present command relations are considered to be evolving in the direction proposed by CMC. Experience and the efforts of people in the field are establishing working arrangements that accomplish the intent of the recommendation. The intent of the "23 Points" recommendation was to unify command relationships to provide a single control over the complex actions required, thereby insuring integration of effort. Up until recently, this authority was completely vested in the Ambassador. The basic validity of CMC's recommendation is proved by the recent increase in coordinating authority given to COMUSMACV over all activities relating to Revolutionary Development. Again we are seeing an evolution, caused by the pressure of reality, toward concepts espoused by CMC, but not initially accepted.

At the present time, the arrangements in effect are satisfactory. If the administration should decide to go all-out to win, CMC's recommendation should be accepted.

This action was taken only in response to the danger that developed, not as CMC envisioned, as a further means of putting the effort on a war footing.

Some correspondents have favored the idea. Certainly, fewer derogatory articles would have been published and possibly, the American public better informed had this been done. Clearly, some re-orientation effort is needed to convince publishers of need to print news and articles reflecting the achievement of RVN forces, the utility and progress of RD efforts -- as opposed to printing only "newsworthy" items of US battles, casualties, etc.

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ACTION

REMARKS

8. Commence intensive aerial reconnaissance of North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to locate enemy formations and movements.

9. Establish firm control of traffic on the Mekong River and its tributaries and effective surveillance of the coast. Give a U. S. naval component commander operational control of the South Vietnam Navy to the extent necessary to establish firm control of SVN coastal waters and the Mekong River. Stop the smuggling of arms, ammunition, and supplies and the entry of guerrillas from the seas, especially across the coasts of the Mekong Delta. Establish a control point on the Mekong to regulate waterborne traffic to and from Cambodia. Establish a naval and air base on Phu Quoc Island, an amphibious base in northern South Vietnam, and such shore facilities as are needed to control and exploit the Mekong.

16. Warn Laos to stop convoy and guerrilla troop movements and support from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam.

10. Commence attacks against enemy movements in border areas of Laos and Cambodia.

17. Warn Cambodia to stop border crossings and supply from sea to Viet Cong units in the Mekong delta. Tell Sihanouk bluntly that if he does not cooperate we will be forced to consider partition of his country between South Vietnam and Thailand.

11. Commence systematic destruction -- in a rising crescendo -- of targets in North Vietnam by air attack, amphibious raids, covert operations, and naval gunfire. Initially use South Vietnamese in these attacks but prepare to augment and support as necessary with U.S. forces.

6. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED TO ISOLATE THE VC.

a. Destroy primary POL storage sites in the DRV (e.g., Haiphong) to force reliance on other than truck transport of men and material.

b. Place greater emphasis on aerial armed reconnaissance.

c. Interdict DRV ports by obstructions or mining.

d. Increase control measures on the Mekong-Bassac rivers.

e. Accelerate use of shallow-draft, fast craft in Market Time operations. Considerable weight of effort should be placed between the Cambodian border and the southern tip of SVN.

f. Conduct amphibious raids on offshore islands (such as Phu Quoc) to reduce their usefulness as infiltration bases.

g. Expand the covert cross-border surveillance effort and provide for fast reporting of activity on the LOCs so that prompt air action can be taken.

h. Prepare plans and conduct US/CVN airborne/ground attacks against known DRV bases in southern Laos (the Tchepone complex, for example).

i. Increase surveillance of and prepare to quarantine Cambodian ports.

j. Develop and train insurgency/sabotage teams to operate against infiltration LOCs in the DRV, Laos, and elsewhere as required.

k. Warn Sihanouk of the grave consequences that will follow Cambodian continuation of support to the VC. If this warning is ineffective:

(1) Develop and implement a plan of economic warfare against Cambodia.

(2) Authorize hot pursuit into Cambodia.

(3) Conduct air and ground cross-border operations to locate and destroy VC bases.

(4) Support an insurgency movement within Cambodia.

7. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED AGAINST THE DRV.

a. Conduct a demonstrative air strike against a selected element of the DRV industry air/communications facilities (POL, power plants, etc.), followed by a massive leaflet program warning the DRV public of the dangers inherent in their government's policies and the results to be expected from Hanoi's actions.

b. Following the leaflet program, remove the sanctuary around Hanoi/Haiphong and the buffer zone along the CHICOM border.

c. Commence systematic destruction of industrial and military targets in the DRV.

This has been done, but much later than recommended.

These actions are underway.

No approval concerning ports has been received. Limited mining of inland waterways has been authorized.

Game Warden, MONAF and convoy control measures are being implemented.

Most of the shallow draft effort is going into Game Warden, but Market Time has been significantly improved since submission of this recommendation.

No US action has been taken.

No action taken. Item is ORE due to changes in the situation.

The cross-border effort has been significantly expanded and improved.

Clandestine attacks, ground teams and air, have been made in Laos against base areas. Rules of engagement now permit reaction into Cambodia in self-defense.

The intelligence community has intensified its collection program against Cambodia.

To a limited degree, this is underway. The insurgency aspect is not approved, however.

It is believed that Sihanouk is aware of our concern, but no official US warning has been given.

No definitive action taken.

Authorized under certain circumstances.

Limited Daniel Boone operations have been authorized.

Not accepted.

See the current ROLLING THUNDER analysis for specific details on air actions.

The effect has been transitory in that truck transport is still being used and supported by dispersed POL storage. It has succeeded in making the DRV effort much more difficult.

This action requires no Washington level authorization. It is within the purview of the field commander. SLF operations, in a sense, have the same basic objective.

Although restrictions still exist, the activity has been expanded within Laos and to a limited degree in Cambodia.

The attacks are not of the magnitude envisioned by CMC.

State opposition to insurgency teams stems from the US position that we don't seek the overthrow of the NVN government.

State considers that Cambodia will gradually come over to our side or to true neutrality. In the meantime, the intelligence community and a special Cambodia Study Group are developing the sources and information required for determination of possible future courses of action.

The conduct of an adequate air campaign suffers from the same conceptual restraints as the entire war. The shock effect and impact of air operations was lost as soon as a decision was made to apply air power in such a deliberate, slow manner. Now some other approach must be taken. CMC's Outline Estimate addresses pros and cons of different possible air campaigns.

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CHCM 112-65

CHCM 112-65

ACTION

REMARKS

d. Expand the interdiction program to include ports and seaborne traffic into and out of the DRV.

e. Cause diversion of PAVN troop units to defensive missions in the DRV through amphibious demonstrations, raids and attacks on coastal islands.

f. Foster the development of an insurgency movement in the DRV.

9. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED TO SUPPORT THAILAND AND LAOS.

a. Provide increased military and economic aid based upon military/political requirements and free of fiscal restrictions.

b. Increase the assistance and advisory effort in Thailand to enable prompt counter of the developing insurgency in the northeastern provinces.

c. Strengthen the Lao armed forces in the Panhandle area to enable them to cut infiltration into Thailand as well as act effectively against the DRV violation of their sovereignty.

10. (TS) In addition, the US should implement such parts of the President's Billion-dollar AID offer for SEA as is possible in friendly countries and accelerate economic development programs. Countries thus selected could become a showcase of the benefits to be derived from free and independent association with the West.

8. (TS) ACTIONS RECOMMENDED TO CONVINCE THE CHICOMS OF OUR DETERMINATION AND TO SERVE AS A DETERRENT.

a. Increase other deployments to WestPac to establish the deterrent posture envisioned in OPLAN 39.

b. Demonstrate that the US will not tolerate CHICOM intervention and that introduction or use of "volunteers" into Southeast Asia will be considered open intervention.

c. Authorize hot pursuit of any CHICOM forces attacking US/Allied forces in SEA.

This action has been considered many times. CINCPAC was recently denied authority to conduct a feint during the entry of Marines into the DMZ. MULESHOE is the latest Joint Staff addressal of similar actions. Raids and attacks on a small scale have been carried on on a clandestine basis.

Not approved by State

To a very large extent Thailand is now getting all the support it can handle. Some progress is being made by them in countering the developing insurgency.

No specific actions can be pinpointed here. The Lao Air Force has attacked the "Sihanouk Trail".

No action taken. US efforts in this area are centered on Asian initiatives such as the Mekong Development Council.

Not specifically undertaken.

Basic self-defense authority exists; however, pursuit into CHICOM territory is not authorized.

Fear of intervention by the CHICOMS and the statement that we don't have territorial ambitions or desire the downfall of the NVN government seem to be the basis for the unacceptability of these recommendations.

Secdef appears to be concerned about the possibility of "sliding into" another Vietnam and he maintains tight control over everything going into the country.

Laos forces really have all they can do to meet the existing trouble spots. It doesn't seem likely that adequate force level increases could be achieved even if the Lao were to agree to the idea.

Deployment of forces for this purpose isn't warranted. Additionally, the problems created by the cultural revolution and the split with the Soviets would seem to make large scale overt intervention unlikely - at least at present.

22. Extend and accelerate the support and encouragement of the Thai armed forces. Position appropriate U.S. forces in eastern Thailand, focussed on the support of Phoumi forces in southern Laos and as a guarantee of the Thai border.

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TOP SECRETTAB B**B**

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHICH NO ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN
(Does not list those which have become OBE)

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED WITHIN THE US

CMCM 12-64 - Establish SecDef as the Washington focal point...in recognition that...
This is primarily a military rather than a diplomatic problem. *- no*

CMCM 112-65- Establish and maintain an overall economic and social development plan for friendly countries in SEAsia. *- maybe*

CMCM 112-65- Develop a plan to utilize conscientious objectors...in SVN. *- This seems minor*

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED WITHIN SVN

CMCM 12-64 - In SVN modify the authority of the Ambassador vis-a-vis military operations to a status similar to that used during hostilities in Korea. *- no*

CMCM 12-64 - Establish news censorship and rigid control of accreditation of US and foreign correspondents. *- Good idea but not a practical solution at present*

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED TO ISOLATE THE VC

CMCM 112-65- Interdict DRV ports by obstructions or mining. *- OK*

CMCM 112-65- Conduct amphibious raids on offshore islands... *- no*

CMCM 12-64 - Warn Laos to stop convoy and guerrilla troop movements and support from NVN through Laos into SVN. *- OBE*

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETACTIONS RECOMMENDED TO ISOLATE THE VC (Cont'd)

CMCM 112-65- Warn Sihanouk of the grave consequences that will follow Cambodian continuation of support to the VC.

- OK - in a sense

(1) Develop and implement a plan of economic warfare against Cambodia.

- Develop but do not implement

(2) Support an insurgency movement within Cambodia.

- maybe

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED AGAINST THE DRV

CMCM 112-65- Conduct a demonstrative air strike ...followed by a massive leaflet program warning DRV public of the dangers inherent in their government's policies...

- no - OBE

CMCM 112-65- Following the leaflet program, remove the sanctuary around Hanoi/Haiphong and the buffer zone along the CHICOM border.

- Good idea but politically unworkable

CMCM 112-65- Expand the interdiction program to include ports and seaborne traffic into and out of the DRV.

- OK

CMCM 112-65- Cause diversion of PAVN troop units to defensive missions in the DRV through amphibious demonstrations, raids and attacks on coastal islands.

- Good idea but politically unworkable

CMCM 112-65- Foster development of an insurgency movement in the DRV.

- OK but requires great care

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THAILAND AND LAOS

CMCM 112-65- Strengthen the Laos Armed Forces in the Panhandle...

- OK - but OBE

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETACTIONS TO SUPPORT THAILAND AND LAOS (Cont'd)

CMCM 112-65- Implement parts of President's Billion-dollar Aid offer for SEAsia...countries could become showcases of benefits to be derived from free and independent association with the West.

*Not practical
at present*

ACTIONS TO DETER THE CHICOMS

CMCM 112-65- Increase other deployments to WestPac to establish deterrent posture envisioned in OPLAN 39.

OK AntDBE

CMCM 112-65- Demonstrate that US will not tolerate CHICOM intervention and that "volunteers" in SEAsia will be considered open intervention.

*Harder
one do this?*

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET
NAVMC HQ 335a-CMC (REV. 9-64)

S & C 40.

N/15

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RTG.	QPR. CODE	DATE		INITIAL	ADDRESSEES	✓	(If applicable, check one)	AGENCY HAVING PRIMARY INTEREST			
		IN	OUT								
2					COMMANDANT			REQUEST FOR PERMANENT RETENTION (COPY) (BUCKET TAG COPY)			
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					MILITARY SECY TO CMC			RETAIN _____ MONTHS (Information material w/o historical value)			
					CHIEF OF STAFF			DESTROY AFTER ROUTING (No record or information value)			
					DC/S (PLANS & PROGRAMS)			UNIT _____ SIGNATURE _____			
					DC/S (RD&S)			✓ (If applicable, check)			
					DC/S (AIR)			PLEASE ADVISE SECRET & CONFIDENTIAL FILE UNIT REGARDING DISTRIBUTION OF EXTRA COPIES. (In the absence of instructions extra copies will be destroyed after 30 days)			
					SECY OF GEN STAFF			RECORD OF DISCLOSURE			
					G-1			ALL PERSONS WHO HANDLE THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT, SIGN AND DATE IN NUMERICAL ORDER BELOW			
					G-2			DATE	NAME	DATE	NAME
					G-3			1	h		11
					G-4			2	SC/PA/TH		12
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					FISCAL			5			15
					INFORMATION			6			16
					PERSONNEL			7			17
					POLICY ANALYSIS			8			18
					RESERVE			9			19
					SUPPLY			10			20
					S&C FILES			REMARKS (Entries to be dated and signed)			
					JOINT PLANNING GROUP			ACTION:			
					JOINT CONTROL			Plan A CTO			
								Develop Resources			
								For this plan.			
								a Bridge.			
								(For additional remarks attach plain paper)			
								ROUTING - Use numbers to show order of routing			
								OPERATION CODE			
								X - ORIGINATOR OR OFFICE AFFIXING ROUTING SHEET			
								F - FOR CONCURRENCE			
								G - FOR INFORMATION			
								H - RETURN TO			
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								C - PREPARE REPLY FOR SIGNATURE OF			
								D - FOR COMMENT			
								E - FOR RECOMMENDATION			
								INITIAL FOR FILE			

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DO NOT DETACH - THIS FORM IS A PERMANENT PART
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D-10356

TOP SECRETATA-1-jrf
7 Dec 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

From: Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans and Programs)

Subj: CMCM 112-65 (Southeast Asia)

Ref: (a) CMCM 112-65 (attached)

1. Reference (a) was distributed on 16 November 1965. At a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 17 November 1965, the Commandant of the Marine Corps tabled a memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, which set forth a number of recommended actions considered essential to the attainment of US objectives in Southeast Asia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to refer the memorandum to the Joint Staff to examine the actions recommended and to prepare a report for the consideration of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, listing actions that should be taken; pointing out where action has already been taken; and including any appropriate actions not included in the memorandum.

2. The Joint Staff has been working on this item and have prepared an initial flimsy (JCS 2339/211) working paper as to a status report of the recommended actions. This paper is being considered by action officers today.

M. P. Ryan

1

cmc -

This memo responds to your suggestion to "jig" the JCS Staff at action officer level on this matter. Apparently, no urging is required at this time -

mk -

Wapman
TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

COPY NO. _____

CMCM #112-6516 November 1965 ✓Pages 1 - 8, incl.

MEMORANDUM BY THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

for the
CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
on

SOUTHEAST ASIA (U)

1. (TS) The first steps toward a successful resolution of the situation in South Vietnam have been taken. Substantial deployments have been made with the results that the security situation has improved, the chances for a stable government are enhanced and there is more unity of effort. However, the VC are still determined and effective, there is no indication that the DRV is ready to give up their direction and support, and Cambodia is apparently still supporting the VC. While the American public supports the overall US policy, a vocal minority is advising abandonment of our objectives or a reduction in our efforts. I believe that the present level of effort will result in an inconclusive stalemate which will negate all the efforts that have so far been made.

2. (TS) The US is faced at this time with the necessity to make a basic decision as to the next step in Southeast Asia. The courses of action open to the US are:

- a. Pull out of Southeast Asia.
- b. Maintain our present level of deployments and continue our present level of effort.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE
CMCM #112-65

GROUP 1
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
REGRADING; DOD DIR 5200.10
DOES NOT APPLY

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

c. Increase our deployments to South Vietnam with no 1
increase in our efforts against the DRV. 2

d. Increase our deployments to South Vietnam with a 3
concomitant increase in our efforts both in the North and 4
South. 5

I consider that course of action d. provides the only method 6
by which the momentum of our effort can be maintained and 7
which will provide the pressures necessary to bring the DRV 8
to the conference table. 9

3. (TS) It is essential that our future actions demonstrate 10
to our enemies, to our allies and to the American public the 11
importance of our commitment in Southeast Asia, the seriousness 12
of the situation, and the depth of our determination to pre- 13
vail. Specific steps in pursuit of this objective are indicated 14
in the paragraphs which follow. 15

4. (TS) Actions recommended within the US. 16

a. Expand the armed forces rapidly to provide the 17
necessary forces for Southeast Asia and other commitments and 18
publicly prepare the American people for mobilization. 19

b. Reiterate by public pronouncements of US governmental 20
leaders that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our 21
objectives have been achieved. 22

c. Re-examine draft regulations and veteran's benefits 23
to insure an equitable distribution of military service and 24
that persons who serve are provided educational and vocational 25
training advantages. 26

d. Embark on an expanded campaign to inform the American 27
public of the necessity for our commitment in Southeast Asia 28
and our concepts for the conduct of the war. 29

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE
CMCM #112-65

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

e. Continue efforts for more third country participation in South Vietnam. 1 2

f. While adhering to our announced readiness to negotiate, concentrate on maintaining our military pressure and leave initiative toward negotiation to the other side. 3 4 5

g. Establish a top level coordinator at the Washington level to supervise out of country development and humanitarian efforts in SEA to include the following actions: 6 7 8

(1) Establish and maintain an overall economic and social development plan for friendly countries in SEA, particularly SVN and insure that this plan is coordinated with military efforts. 9 10 11 12

(2) Coordinate the efforts of civilian volunteer and governmental agencies in the provision of goods and services to SVN to carry out the economic/social development plan. 13 14 15 16

(3) Develop a plan to utilize conscientious objectors and other non-combatants in humanitarian efforts among the civilian populace in SVN. 17 18 19

(4) Develop a coordinated plan to utilize civilian doctors and technicians for temporary service among the civilian populace in SVN. 20 21 22

(5) Develop a national public information campaign to publicize our humanitarian efforts within SVN. 23 24

5. (TS) Actions recommended within SVN. 25

a. As rapidly as possible deploy Phase II forces to SVN and announce that any further reinforcements that may be required will be provided. 26 27 28

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE
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TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

- b. Develop a country-wide pacification and rural development plan for SVN and coordinate the efforts of all US agencies in SVN.
- c. Develop selected villages or areas of SVN as show-cases of what can be done by US and GVN efforts on the behalf of the people of Vietnam, with emphasis on the social, economic and political changes that will provide a society to which the Vietnamese people will want to belong and support.
- d. Insure that the overall plan of campaign within SVN is based upon a clearly understood and coordinated division of tasks between allied/SVN forces.
- e. Develop an approved manpower plan within South Vietnam with priorities for civilian and military forces based upon the overall campaign plan and the agreed division of effort between allied/SVN forces.
- f. Provide the necessary security forces (PF and RF) that will rapidly follow up US/ARVN clearing actions.
- g. Provide adequate funds and resources to permit rapid development of passive defensive measures around key installations to include fences, revetment, illumination, seismic intrusion devices, etc..
- h. Assign the commander of the major ground forces in base areas clear cut authority over all US elements in carrying out local security tasks.
- i. Authorize low-level commanders to employ non-lethal chemical agents as the situation requires and without reference to COMUSMACV prior to employment.

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j. Expand the governmental advisory effort to a level 1
comparable to the US Military Advisory effort to provide govern- 2
mental advisors down to at least the district level. 3

k. Provide the support required to insure that there are 4
no more changes of government by coup. 5

l. Complete in-country plans for possible escalation and 6
prepare for establishment of a single unified Military/ 7
Civilian command over all activities in SEA. 8

6. (TS) Actions recommended to isolate the VC. 9

a. Destroy primary POL storage sites in the DRV (e.g., 10
Haiphong) to force reliance on other than truck transport of 11
men and materiel. 12

b. Place greater emphasis on aerial armed reconnaissance. 13

c. Interdict DRV ports by obstructions or mining. 14

d. Increase control measures on the Mekong-Bassac rivers. 15

e. Accelerate use of shallow-draft, fast craft in Market 16
Time operations. Considerable weight of effort should be 17
placed between the Cambodian border and the southern tip of SVN. 18

f. Conduct amphibious raids on offshore islands (such 19
as Phu Quoc) to reduce their usefulness as infiltration bases. 20

g. Expand the covert cross-border surveillance effort 21
and provide for fast reporting of activity on the LOCs so that 22
prompt air action can be taken. 23

h. Prepare plans and conduct US/GVN airborne/ground 24
attacks against known DRV bases in southern Laos (the 25
Tchepone complex, for example). 26

i. Increase surveillance of and prepare to quarantine 27
Cambodian ports. 28

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j. Develop and train insurgency/sabotage teams to 1
 operate against infiltration LOCs in the DRV, Laos, and 2
 elsewhere as required. 3

k. Warn Sihanouk of the grave consequences that will 4
 follow Cambodian continuation of support to the VC. If this 5
 warning is ineffective: 6

(1) Develop and implement a plan of economic war- 7
 fare against Cambodia. 8

(2) Authorize hot pursuit into Cambodia. 9

(3) Conduct air and ground cross-border operations 10
 to locate and destroy VC bases. 11

(4) Support an insurgency movement within Cambodia. 12

7. (TS) Actions recommended against the DRV. 13

a. Conduct a demonstrative air strike against a selected 14
 element of the DRV industry air/or communications facilities 15
 (POL, power plants, etc.), followed by a massive leaflet pro- 16
 gram warning the DRV public of the dangers inherent in their 17
 government's policies and the results to be expected from 18
 Hanoi's actions. 19

b. Following the leaflet program, remove the sanctuary 20
 around Hanoi/Haiphong and the buffer zone along the CHICOM 21
 border. 22

c. Commence systematic destruction of industrial and 23
 military targets in the DRV. 24

d. Expand the interdiction program to include ports 25
 and seaborne traffic into and out of the DRV. 26

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e. Cause diversion of PAVN troop units to defensive missions in the DRV through amphibious demonstrations, raids and attacks on coastal islands. 1
2
3

f. Foster the development of an insurgency movement in the DRV. 4
5

8. (TS) Actions recommended to convince the CHICOMs of our determination and to serve as a deterrent. 6
7

a. Increase other deployments to WestPac to establish the deterrent posture envisioned in OPLAN 39. 8
9

b. Demonstrate that the US will not tolerate CHICOM intervention and that introduction or use of "volunteers" into Southeast Asia will be considered open intervention. 10
11
12

c. Authorize hot pursuit of any CHICOM forces attacking US/Allied forces in SEA. 13
14

9. (TS) Actions recommended to support Thailand and Laos. 15

a. Provide increased military and economic aid based upon military/political requirements and free of fiscal restrictions. 16
17
18

b. Increase the assistance and advisory effort in Thailand to enable prompt counter of the developing insurgency in the northeastern provinces. 19
20
21

c. Strengthen the Lao armed forces in the Panhandle area to enable them to cut infiltration into Thailand as well as act effectively against the DRV violation of their sovereignty. 22
23
24

10. (TS) In addition, the US should implement such parts of the President's Billion-dollar AID offer for SEA as is possible in friendly countries and accelerate economic development programs. Countries thus selected could become a show- 25
26
27
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case of the benefits to be derived from free and independent 1
association with the West. 2

11. (TS) It is my position that the actions outlined 3
above constitute the coordinated effort required to achieve our 4
objectives in SVN. Therefore, I recommend that the Joint 5
Staff study these recommendations and in those cases where 6
appropriate action has not yet been taken that suitable JCS 7
action papers be prepared. 8

Wallace M. Greene, Jr.

WALLACE M. GREENE, JR.
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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General Greene's Notes

193400 Feb

Bible - I have read the attached "purple". I don't think it establishes a satisfactory position. It is too parochial (deals primarily with USMC interests) - it discusses "small potatoes" instead of major issues and courses of action - and there is too much B.S. in it.

Having rendered that impression, I want to outline what I think should be in the paper - unvarnished - unadorned - terse, concise and placed in priority of action ^{by the action officers.} My thoughts won't necessarily meet these criteria as I am going to give them to you in the rough and off-the-cuff but you will see what I have in mind as a Marine Corps position.

1 - Make a clear cut decision to either pull out of S. Vietnam or to stay there and win (gain our objective). If the decision is to stay (which is the Marine Corps recommendation) take the following course of action (I am not arranging them all in order of priority.)

X (a) - Unequivocally indicate to Ho Chi Minh, to the Communists and to the world that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objectives have been attained.

X (b) - Sell this position (it won't take much effort) to Congress and the American people. Notify our allies.

X (c) - Withdraw dependents and other Americans from S. Vietnam.

X (d) - Commence intensive aerial reconnaissance of N. Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to locate enemy formations and movements

X (e) - Establish firm control of traffic on the Mekong River and its tributaries

X (f) - Stop smuggling of arms, ammunition and supplies and the entry of guerrillas from the sea especially across the coasts of the Mekong Delta

X (g) - Place one general officer in complete and total control ^{of all operations in S. Vietnam} (perhaps similar to CINCPAC), provide him with a plan, tools (men, weapons and equipment) and full authority. Hold him personally responsible for the success of the operations. Stop meddling from Washington and Honolulu.

X (h) - Permit no more coups or juntas.

X (i) - Establish control of persons within S. Vietnam (National Identity Card program - we have copy)

X (j) - Establish control of material within S. Vietnam (movement control - we hold copy)

X (k) - Intensify execution of National Defense Plan

X (l) - Extend and strengthen "Rural life Program" (i.e., old Strategic Hamlet plan) - [this is most important]

step to establish basic ^{personal} security for the people of S. Vietnam
[thereby getting them on our side]

X (m) - Warn N. Vietnam to stop guerrilla
troop and convoy movements into S. Vietnam
and to cease support of Vietcong.

~~X~~ (N) - Warn LAOS to stop convoy and
guerrilla troop movements and support from
N. Vietnam through LAOS into S. Vietnam.

X (O) - Warn Cambodia to stop border
crossings and supply from sea to Vietcong
units in Mekong Delta.

X (P) - Commence attacks against
enemy movements in border areas of LAOS
and Cambodia.

X (q) - Commence systematic destruction -
in a rising crescendo - of targets in N.
Vietnam by air attack, covert operations
and naval gunfire. Initially use S. Vietnamese
in these attacks but augment and support as
necessary with U.S. forces.

X (r) - Move necessary U.S. ground, air and
naval units into S. Vietnam to guarantee holding

the country, and successful conduct of operations as outlined above.

(5) - Be willing to confer and negotiate at any time with Ho Chi Minh while maintaining the necessary tempo of operations to convince the Communists that we mean business.

(6) - listen patiently to our allies, friends and enemies but continue to press home the campaign in S. Vietnam until a settlement is reached.

(7) - maintain the necessary defense condition within the U.S.

BILL -

Dress up this approach - add, delete, modify steps as desirable - and expedite a draft of a position paper for tabling. I do not intend to present our position until the Air Force has tabled its proposal and I hope the Navy and Army also - in order to get a lead on their thinking and then to modify our own paper quickly if that seems desirable.

AF says it will "table" on Monday afternoon - We should be ready to "hand distribute" on Monday night or Tues morning. Let's go!



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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IN REPLY REFER TO

AO3B13-cwb

CMCM 12-64

24 Feb 1964

Copy No. ___ of ___ copies

MEMORANDUM FOR THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subj: SITUATION IN VIETNAM(U)

1. If reemphasis on U. S. Policy with respect to Vietnam and Southeast Asia is to carry any conviction -- with both friends and enemies--it must be manifested in prompt, positive, dramatic, and consistent action. First, there must be a clear-cut decision either to pull out of South Vietnam or to stay there and win. If the decision is to stay and win -- which is the Marine Corps recommendation -- this objective must be pursued with the full concerted power of U.S. resources. Specific steps in the pursuit of this objective are indicated in the paragraphs which follow. 1
2. Indicate unequivocally to Ho Chi Minh, to the Communists, and to the world that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objective has been attained. Warn North Vietnam to stop guerrilla troop and convoy movements into South Vietnam and to cease support of the Viet Cong. 2
3. Make clear to the Congress and to the American people that the U.S. policy is to win in South Vietnam. Notify our Allies. 3
4. Place a single military officer, COMUSMACV, in complete and 4

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total control of all operations. Provide him with a plan, tools (men
weapons, and equipment) and full authority. Give him operational
control of South Vietnam forces and have him exercise such control
through a U. S. command structure paralleling that of the Vietnamese
armed forces. This should include control of all military assets and
logistic resources.

5. Establish COMUSMACV's command structure as a subordinate
unified command under CINCPAC designed for Southeast Asia as a
whole, not just for South Vietnam. Bring CIA resources and activities
into a CIA force component directly under COMUSMACV. Bring the
public safety and national defense activities currently being pursued by
USOM, for example, much of the strategic hamlet program, under
military direction. Bring research and development activities under
the clear military command of COMUSMACV.

6. Keep U.S. Ambassadors on station and their public stature un-
diminished. Modify their authority vis-a-vis military operations and
the military command structure to the extent required in each country.
In South Vietnam itself give the Ambassador a status similar to that
which existed in Korea during active hostilities there.

7. Establish news censorship and rigid control of accreditation of U.S.
and foreign correspondents.

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8. Commence intensive aerial reconnaissance of North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to locate enemy formations and movements. 1
2
9. Establish firm control of traffic on the Mekong River and its tributaries and effective surveillance of the coast. Give a U.S. naval component commander operational control of the South Vietnam Navy to the extent necessary to establish firm control of SVN coastal waters and the Mekong River. Stop the smuggling of arms, ammunition and supplies and the entry of guerrillas from the seas, especially across the coasts of the Mekong Delta. Establish a control point on the Mekong to regulate waterborne traffic to and from Cambodia. Establish a naval and air base on PhuQuoc island, an amphibious base in northern South Vietnam, and such shore facilities as are needed to control and exploit the Mekong. 3
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- 10 Commence attacks against enemy movements in border areas of Laos and Cambodia. 14
15
11. Commence systematic destruction -- in a rising crescendo -- of targets in North Vietnam by air attack, amphibious raids, covert operations, and naval gunfire. Initially use South Vietnamese in these attacks but prepare to augment and support as necessary with U.S. forces. 16
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12. Establish population controls within South Vietnam to include 21

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implementation and firm enforcement of the National Identity Card 1
program, movement controls, and curfew. 2
13. Establish firm control of the movement of material within South 3
Vietnam by implementation of the Material Resources Control Plan. 4
14. Intensify execution of the National Pacification Plan. 5
15. Extend and strengthen the Rural Life Program, i.e., strategic 6
hamlets. This is a most important step in guaranteeing basic personal 7
safety for the people of South Vietnam. Intensify land reform measures. 8
16. Warn Laos to stop convoy and guerrilla troop movements and 9
support from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam. 10
17. Warn Cambodia to stop border crossings and supply from sea to 11
Viet Cong units in the Mekong delta. Tell Sihanouk bluntly that if he 12
does not cooperate we will be forced to consider partition of his country 13
between South Vietnam and Thailand. 14
18. Make it known that the U.S. will not tolerate any more coups in 15
South Vietnam. 16
19. Withdraw dependents and other Americans from South Vietnam 17
if this action contributes clearly to the war effort. 18
20. Establish the Secretary of Defense as the Washington focal point 19
for the expanded and concerted effort in Southeast Asia in recognition 20
that, at this point of time, this is primarily a military rather than 21

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diplomatic problem.

21. Move necessary U.S. ground, air, and naval units into South Vietnam to guarantee holding the country and the successful conduct of operations outlined herein. Establish a U.S. command, logistic, and training base in each corps area in South Vietnam.
22. Extend and accelerate the support and encouragement of the Thai armed forces. Position appropriate U.S. forces in eastern Thailand, focussed on the support of Phoumi forces in southern Laos and as a guarantee of the Thai border.
23. While maintaining the necessary tempo of operations to convince the Communists that we mean business, make it clear that the U.S. is willing to confer and negotiate at any time with Ho Chi Minh. Listen patiently to our allies, friends, and enemies, but continue to press home the campaign in South Vietnam until a settlement on U.S. terms is reached.
24. Maintain the necessary defense posture within the United States and world-wide. Fund the expanded Southeast Asia effort by supplemental appropriations to avoid weakening our national readiness posture in other areas.
25. It is recommended that copies of this paper:

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- a. NOT be forwarded to commanders of unified and specified commands. 1 2
- b. NOT be forwarded to U.S. officers assigned to NATO activities. 3
- c. NOT be forwarded to the Chairman, U.S. Delegation, United Nations Military Staff Committee. 4 5

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UNCLASSIFIED

ATA12-gat
21 July 1965

#5

POINT PAPER

Subject: Study Entitled "Intensification of the Military Operations in Vietnam - Concept and Appraisal"

1. Review of the study indicates that:

- a. Not based on estimate.
- b. Rejects the enclave concept as "bogging down" and "failure rather than winning".
- c. Forces required in SVN to defeat the VC number ~~44~~ ^{57/85} bat-
talions. ₅₇
- d. Majority increased forces used as mobile striking force.
- e. Marine BLT equivalent to one and one-half (1½) Inf Bn.
- f. Six BLTs required for defense of bases in I Corps, while six BLTs used for mobile striking force.
- g. Finding VC difficult.
- h. Control of resources and population key to success in counterinsurgency operations.
- i. RVNAF can control and protect populated areas and key installations.
- j. VC forces will operate in Bn and larger forces.
- k. Assesses air actions required in SVN and NVN.

2. Hasty analysis reveals that:

- a. Concept follows school solution for conventional operations.
- b. It simplifies or overlooks the following:

(1) This is a counterinsurgency situation not a conven-
Declassified by the Director of
Marine Corps History and Museums
in accordance with the provisions
of CNO ltr Ser 009D323/232095 of
21 Feb 1979

U. J. Shaw Signature Date 11/2/89

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tional operation.

(2) The difficulty of locating the VC main force units. If we could locate them at will our troubles would be over and we'd win in a few months.

(3) The requirement to provide protection to the population on a continuing basis if it is desired to procure their loyalty.

(4) The enclave concept has a built-in capability for offensive operations as the opportunities present themselves.

c. If we cannot locate main force units we will be required to carry out this concept in one or a combination of two ways.

(1) React to VC attacks with the danger of having our units ambushed like the ARVN battalions.

(2) Conduct sweeps into VC held areas. French experience in Vietnam and Algeria was that extensive sweeps netted very few tangible results.

d. Force requirements are understated (I Corps particularly).

e. RVNAF has not demonstrated a capability to control the coastal areas nor capacity by civic action to separate VC from the people.

f. VC adapts tactics to situation.

g. Once situation indicates our intention to find, fix and destroy major units, these targets not available, except at time and place of VC choosing.

h. Although concept for air operations appears correct, study does not consider other offensive operations in DRV.

3. Concept of operations approved by JCS on 16 April 1965 involves:

a. Securing and improving coastal enclaves in SVN.

b. Conducting operations from those enclaves.

c. Securing US inland bases and areas.

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d. Occupying and improving inland bases and conducting operations from them.

4. To date, with fifteen battalions in SVN, this concept in Phase I. Forces addressed in study would permit minimum Phase II operations under JCS approved concept.

5. I recommend:

a. Against adoption of concept proposed in the subject study.

b. Adherence to the concept approved by the JCS on 16 April 1965.

c. Immediate preparation by the Joint Staff of a Commander's Estimate which would result in determining by corps overall force requirements for SVN.

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TOP SECRET**POINT PAPER**

Subject: Concept of Operations and Forces Required for Vietnam

1. CM 744-65 has forwarded a study entitled "Intensification of the Military Operations in Vietnam - Concept and Appraisal". This study includes, among others, a concept of ground operations in SVN and a determination of the forces required to implement this concept.

2. Concept of Ground Operations.

a. The enclave concept, which is rejected in the study, has as its central purpose the establishment of positive RVN and US control over the heavily populated coastal regions of SVN. In these regions are concentrated not only the bulk of the Vietnamese people, but also the preponderance of the cultivated lands, commerce, and lines of communication.

b. Positive control of the key coastal areas will leave the VC with only the unproductive, sparsely settled highlands and jungle covered mountains as an area of operations. Of course, ultimately it will be necessary for the RVN/US forces to commence operations in these areas to crush the last elements of the VC. But, the initial military effort must be directed at obtaining and maintaining control of the populace and resources, not terrain.

c. In rejecting the enclave concept, this study indicates a complete lack of understanding of the concept of operations that is associated with it. Rather than a static defensive situation, the enclave concept is highly offensive in nature. The concept of operations, which was approved by the JCS on 16 April 1965, includes 4 phases.

- Goodpartial
layer*
- (1) Securing and improving coastal enclaves in SVN.
 - (2) Conducting operations from the enclaves.
 - (3) Securing US inland bases and areas.
 - (4) Occupying and improving inland bases and conducting operations from them.

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d. To date, with only 15 battalion-sized forces in SVN, this concept is still in Phase I. If the deployments recommended by the JCS on 2 July 1965, (44 battalions) are approved, it will be possible to enter Phase II and perhaps the initial steps of Phase III. However, even these forces will not be sufficient to permit expansion and merging of the enclaves. To successfully engage in Phase III and Phase IV operations will require vastly increased additional deployments, the study of which should be undertaken as a matter of priority.

e. An analysis of the study contained in CM 744-65 indicates a concept of operations that leaps right into Phase IV operations without consolidation of the initial phases. This is not logical, and is premised on two things occurring.

(1) The RVNAF can control and protect the populated areas and key installations in the coastal areas.

(2) The VC main forces will operate in battalion and larger sized forces that can be located, fixed and destroyed by US/Third Country operations.

f. Previous experience indicates that neither of these conditions will be realized. First, the RVNAF have not demonstrated a military capability to control the coastal areas or a capacity to use appropriate civic actions to further separate the VC from the people. Second, the VC have demonstrated a capability to adopt their tactics to the situation, and once they discovered our intentions of finding, fixing, and destroying major units, these targets would probably not be available, unless it was a time and place of their choosing. Furthermore, there are approximately 100,000 VC guerrillas that must be dealt with in addition to the main forces.

3. Forces Required.

a. In I Corps area, which is of primary concern to the US Marines, the study indicates the need for 19 battalion equivalents. Nine of these battalion equivalents would be used to defend bases (Phu Bai, Danang, and Chu Lai), while the remaining 10 battalion equivalents would be used as a mobile striking force for employment anywhere in I Corps area, with particular emphasis to the Do Xa base area.

b. Using the formula of one Marine BLT equaling 1½ battalion equivalents it is determined that a total of 6 BLTs (2 each in

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Phu Bai, Danang, and Chu Lai) would be required for defense of bases, and 6.7 BLTs would constitute the striking force. Thus, the total force required for I Corps area would be 12.7 BLTs.

c. Currently, the U.S. Marine Corps has 8 BLTs in I Corps area. This number is barely adequate to provide defense of the three base areas and to conduct limited offensive operations along the coastal areas. In fact, a 9th BLT is urgently required to beef up the defenses at Phu Bai. Therefore, increasing the strength of III MAF to approximately 13 BLTs will not provide sufficient forces to expand and merge the 3 enclaves, let alone mount out extensive operations against the VC throughout all of I Corps area.

d. A commander's estimate has been made for the I Corps area to determine the level of forces required to defeat the VC and maintain control of the entire Corps area. It has been determined that approximately 3 Division/Wing Teams are required to accomplish their mission of defending the bases, expanding the enclaves, opening LOCs and attacking the VC anywhere within I Corps.

e. Similar estimates are required for the other 3 corps areas to determine the total forces (US and Third Country) required to be deployed there. These estimates should include all forces (ground, sea, and air) required to defeat the VC and DRV.

4. It is a matter of urgency for the JCS to have an agreed concept on SVN and to recommend the deployment of forces necessary to carry out this concept.

5. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the concept of operations contained in CM 744-65 not be adopted, that the previously approved concept of operations be reaffirmed, and that the deployment of the necessary forces be taken under study as an urgent matter.

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17 JUL 1965

MEMORANDUM

From: Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans & Programs)
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps

Subj: Intensification of Military Operations in Vietnam,
Concept and Appraisal

Ref: (a) CJCS Memo 744-65, same subject

1. Reference (a) was prepared by the Joint Staff at the request of the Chairman, and has been referred to as the "Goodpaster Study". It was not coordinated with the Services. Indications are that this was furnished to SecDef prior to his departure and provides the basis of his estimate of forces required.

2. A review reveals that the study is not valid in several areas. The most significant of these is that it rejects the enclave concept as "bogging down" and "failing rather than winning". It visualizes the US/Third Country forces as using approximately 1/2 their troops in defending their own bases, while the other half finds and destroys VC/DRV battalion sized units in the hinterland. Meanwhile the ARVN protect the populated areas, key installations, and LOCs and conduct operations against VC guerrillas in those areas.

3. Currently, another concept for Vietnam is being prepared by J-5, which parallels this study in several areas. A rough flimsy has been prepared, and an action officer meeting is scheduled for 19 July.

4. Recommend that we reaffirm the validity of the enclave concept and oppose the concept for ground operations as set forth in this study.

5. JPC is preparing staff analysis.
H. W. BUSE, JR.

18 July 1965

CME to Dep CTS (P&P)

(A) Questions are raised perhaps some at an early date in JCS. Advise CME.

- ① - Was Chairman directed to prepare this study? By whom?
- ② - For what purpose was it designed?
- ③ - What staff members produced it? Were all Services represented?
- ④ - Why were not J+Chiefs to CMC notified by Chairman that this study was being prepared? Why were not their

permitted to review study before it was distributed? To whom was it distributed?
⑤ - What is status of study and actions resulting therefrom? (B)

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ANALYSIS OF CM-744-65

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DC/S Air Comments on CM-744-65	TAB B
AC/S G-3 Comments	TAB C

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ANALYSIS OF CM-744-65

CONCEPT AND APPRAISAL FOR INTENSIFICATION
OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM

1. The proposed concept provides for increased military pressures both on the DRV and within SVN. It is considered that the proposal for increased air and naval pressures on the DRV is sound. However one of the assumptions on which this study is based is that there will be no overt invasion of NVN by US/SVN forces. This should not be considered as a hard and fast concept. It may be necessary at sometime in the future to seize a lodgement in the DRV either to force the DRV to withdraw units from SVN or as one of the pressures to force negotiations.
2. The concept of operations within SVN is predicated on the conduct of military operations to demonstrate that the VC cannot win in an insurgency campaign. It provides that GVN forces would retain control over areas now held and that they would extend pacification operations wherever possible. It would depend upon US and allied forces operating in areas not heavily populated to locate and destroy VC forces. It considers that victory will have been achieved when at least 75% of the organized VC battalions have been destroyed and effective GVN control has been established in populated areas. US forces would provide security for their own critical bases.
3. This concept differs from the enclave concept in that most of the forces would be placed in mobile configuration for offensive operations. Limited forces would be disposed for defense of US bases and these defensive positions would provide relative rest areas to which mobile forces could be rotated. While the concept provides for as many battalions as the original enclave concept, by some dubious arithmetic it reduces the overall requirement to control I Corps to 12.7 Marine battalions.
4. It is considered that the principal weaknesses of the proposed concept are:

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a. It oversimplifies the problem of locating VC main force units.

b. It presupposes that VC main force units will always operate in battalion or larger sized forces that can be located, fixed and destroyed by US/third country forces. Experience indicates otherwise.

c. It underestimates the forces required to dominate an area in a counterinsurgency situation. Experience in I Corps indicates that a minimum of 2-1/3 MAF will be required to dominate this area and probably more.

d. It does not provide for the initial domination of the populated areas essential to insure that the GVN has the loyalties of the people and control of the resources of the coastal plain. Without this control and these loyalties location and defeat of VC units will be doubtful, if not impossible.

5. Since, without domination of the population, it will not be possible to locate the VC main force units, this concept would require our offensive forces to operate in one or a combination of two ways:

a. React to VC attacks on key installations with the danger of having our units ambushed, as has frequently been the case in recent ARVN operations.

b. Conduct sweeps into VC held areas. Unless adequate intelligence is available, these sweeps will probably be relatively unproductive. The VC can stay and fight if the situation suits them or they can melt away.

6. The offensive concept cannot be refuted per se. Actually, the proposed concept recognized the necessity to control essential US bases mostly upon the coast. In this respect it bears some relation to the enclave concept just as the enclave concept provides for offensive operations similar to those envisaged in this paper if and when the opportunities present themselves.

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7. This study indicates a complete lack of understanding of the enclave concept. Rather than a static defense, the enclave concept is highly offensive in nature. It provides for four phases:

PHASE I Securing and improving coastal enclaves in SVN.

PHASE II Conducting offensive operations from the enclave.

PHASE III Securing US inland bases and areas.

PHASE IV Occupying and improving inland bases and conducting offensive operations from them.

8. An analysis of CM-744-64 indicates a concept of operations that leaps right into Phase IV operations without consolidation of the initial phases. Phases II and III of the enclave concept are considered essential for the following reasons:

a. They are required to establish the conditions of control and protection essential to winning the confidence of the people. Without this confidence the intelligence required to locate VC main force units will not be available.

b. They are necessary to assist in and demonstrate to the ARVN the method of effective population and resource control. ARVN efforts in this area have been singularly ineffective so far.

c. They are necessary to isolate the VC from the support and resources of the populated areas, and to force them into relatively unpopulated areas where resources for their support can be curtailed.

9. There is no easy or fast solution to the insurgency in SVN. The objective must be the loyalties of the people and control of resources. This can be achieved only by forces that are capable of dominating an area on a continuing basis. While the offensive nature of this concept is not condemned, it is considered that the enclave concept provides the forces required for offensive operations and

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is still oriented toward the true objective of the campaign, that is, people and resources. The proposed concept substitutes elusive main force units for this key objective.

10. It is recommended that discussions of this paper in the Joint Arena emphasize the following:

- a. Forces envisaged in I Corps are unrealistic.
 - b. The objective in this situation must be control of population and resources as envisaged in the enclave concept.
 - c. The enclave concept when carried out fully with adequate forces provides for offensive actions against units that can be located.
 - d. There are no short cuts in the operation and Phases II and III of the enclave concept are essential.
11. The above points will be used as guidance in addressing JCS matters concerning the concept which is the subject of this analysis.

BUCKTAG COMMENT ON:

JCS 2343/630 (#23), (CM-744-65 of 14Jul65)

4

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AAP-1B-rc

COMMENTS on CM-744-65.**B**

1. Page E-1 shows 16 Air Force squadrons in place and on page G-7, 16 USAF squadrons in country. There is no further clarification of this on page E-2, subparagraph E.2(5). Five (5) USMC squadrons in country should be reflected in these totals as well as the two (2) approved for deployment by JCS 6904/281923Z Jul 65.

2. On page G-6, it is indicated that the full capability of the B-52 force is 300 sorties a month for an equivalent of 2,000 tactical fighter sorties. This comparison is felt to be valid only in amount of "iron" dropped, not on operational effectiveness. These 300 sorties seem to be at variance with item II (JCS 2343/637) which assumes that 800 sorties are available each month and Ambassador Taylor answered that 600 of this number could be used against fixed targets and troop concentration targets and 200 for harassment and destruction of known VC secret base areas.

The employment of strategic bombing tactics in SVN is apt to have an adverse effect on the pacification endeavor. Undoubtedly, pro-GVN civilians and even "neutrals" will be subjected to a degree to the the harassment of these tactics and perhaps even the destructive effects. It is felt that controlled, precise strike sorties by fighter/attack aircraft will achieve more desired destruction of the VC capability and contribute correspondingly more to the pacification program which is a major objective.

3. There appears to be considerable disparity in the computations of combat sorties and refinement of the figures are required. For example, an over-all requirement (page G-5) for 20,000 sorties or 6,700 per month over three months for NVN is stated. The SVN sortie requirement is 12,275 per month (page I-6) for a total requirement of 18,975. Current sortie capability of all forces is apparently calculated to be approximately 10,925 sorties per month which would leave a short fall of 8,050 sorties (page G-6). Of the total sortie capability, the CVA-based aircraft capability of 2,550 is expected to remain practically constant (page I-6). This deficit of 8,050 sorties is the basis for the requirement for additional squadrons.

According to the latest data on strike sorties (JCS 2343/633-2) for the period 18 June to 17 July 1965, the CVA-based aircraft conducted 3,236 attack sorties in SVN vice the 2,550 expected and contributed to a grand total of 11,404 attack sorties. The estimated sortie capability of the CVA

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Comments on CM-744-65.

and land-based squadrons in SEA for November is 21,143 sorties (JCS 2343/683-2). This includes the four USAF and two USMC squadrons approved for deployment. This capability is at variance with the total capability of 5,900 - 7,000 sorties as expressed on page G-7 which includes 16 squadrons in country, four USAF squadrons to be deployed, the B-52 force on Guam, the six to nine USAF squadrons recommended for deployment, but does not include the two USMC squadrons.

The military strategy for RVN is in part to:

- a. Separate the Viet Cong from the populace.
- b. Encourage the loyalty of the South Vietnamese.
- c. Destroy the ability of the Viet Cong to enforce their will on the countryside.

The use of B-52's in country provides some military advantage due to tremendous shock power available. Its effects, however, apply equally to the general populace and the Viet Cong. It does not encourage loyalty of the South Vietnamese toward the government. It likewise would tend to force the Viet Cong to retain their infiltrated guerrilla posture in lieu of exposing themselves in larger numbers as a para-military force.

Strategic bombing (B-52) operations should be confined to fixed targets.

Tactical bombing is more clearly identified with a combatant target.

Tactical bombing in counterinsurgency can be justified as a military tool and will withstand critical analysis in a post war, reconstruction period, historical review. Close air support is refinement of tactical bombing

and is used against positively identified military targets. It is the most discriminative of the air support programs, and therefore should receive the greatest emphasis.

Close air support sorties cannot be compared with B-52 sorties for tactical equivalency as was done in the subject study. A direct relationship of tonnage of bombs and military effectiveness in each program has been made. The value of an aimed bomb as opposed to an area bombardment has not been established, and should not be recognized as a valid relationship.

TOP SECRET34 *R*

AO3H12-drw

22 JUL 1965

JCS 23431

AC/S, G-3 COMMENT on CM 744-65 of 14 July 1965

1. The study is already out of date particularly with respect to Viet Cong capabilities and introducing North Vietnamese units and Chicom advisors.
- ✓ 2. Our lack of definitive intelligence is not adequately portrayed.
3. The deteriorating capability of RVN units is not properly assessed.
- ✓ 4. The requirement for population control and lack of increasing demands is not adequately oriented.
5. The threat of cutting the country in half along the lines of Pleiku/Chu Lai is not properly assessed.
- ✓ 6. For these reasons, the strength of the U.S. units (Marine Corps) in the I Corps Section is grossly underestimated and the threat of current invasion from the North is dismissed as an assumption.
7. The effectiveness of the B52 in a conventional role is yet to be justified and an increase at this time is not warranted. Conclusions of the study are not a sound basis for decisions with respect to size of forces required in Vietnam.

E. J. ROWSE
By directionReturn to A03 , Rm 2118
after signature*Maj. [Signature]*
22 JUL 1965**TOP SECRET**

041625 Aug 65

CME to Dep C/s (P20P)

JCS 2343/646 Concept for VietnamUnits by CMC :-

The paper is not specific enough. It collects together a lot of generalities and then proposes :-

- (a) - Increased actions against the North
- (b) - Increased action in the South against V. Cong
- (c) - Establishment of a posture to deter the Chinese from intervening in Vietnam

I say it should then move into specifics as to

- (a) what we are going to do to up actions against North

- e.g. (1) bomb and destroy POZ
- (2) mine (aerial) Haiphong Harbor
- (3) bomb & destroy factories located at ---
etc.

- (b) what we are going to do to up action in South

- e.g. (1) - establish coastal emplacements at ---

- (2) - seize and hold LOCs as follows

- (a) Route 15 from --- to ---
- (b) Route ---
- (c) Consolidate beachheads in I Corps
into strategic emplacements
etc.

- (c) - Establishment of a posture to deter --- and ---

- e.g. (1) - reinforce 7th Fleet in following ---

- (2) - reinforce PAC Command as follows ---

(1)

needs of their plans of operations
already noted by COMUSMACV

After the paper has been completed & commented on by JCS, it should be sent to CINCPAC who would confer with COMUSMACV for info, cost, man. and equipment of specific personnel requirement thus placed (in addition to current authorizations). Paper would then be returned to JCS for completion & forward to Sec. Def.

(Advise CMC re this problem.
 e.g. Should we continue to
 comment in the paper but table
 values ~~also~~ recommended above
 with one or more "specific" outlined
 in detail as examples of what is
 recommended?)

Q

Addendum # 2

04/6/35

to CMC per addendum

to
CMC to Dep C/S (P&P) re Vietnam Concept

I feel certain that the Jt Chiefs will be asked shortly by the President and the Congress — and by the American people ^(+ their Press) — as to how U.S. troops are going to be used ^{& how many are going to be needed} in Vietnam i.e. what is the plan — (and I would like to know myself!!) (my own concept is based on extension of coastal enclave concept, seizure of LOCs and extension of enclave operation inland along LOCs.)

Question — Should we (USMC) table a memo on this on Friday when Viet Concept is next considered?

JP

~~TOP SECRET~~SENSITIVE

18 July 65

CMC to Dep C/s (P&P)

- ① While we should carefully analyze this entire document and prepare a written position and brief talking paper on it for CMC use - I believe we should concentrate our effort on Annex C to Section I and seek to demonstrate the fallacies therein as they apply to I Corps area and U.S.M.C. requirements therein. (See my "arithmetic" and notes on Page I-19)
- Study computations would result in:

- (a) Reduction of B&Ts at each base to 2. (Obviously not enough and how Walt is currently seriously worried about need for more B&Ts at Chon Lai.)
- (b) - no consideration is given to B&T requirement to expand the present 3 secure areas into a single enclave with beneficial results therefrom. This is a serious omission.

CMC comments
on JCS 2343/630
(Good plan study)
copy # 51

- ② - what force is required for offensive operations in I Corps area. Study says 6.6 USMC B&Ts

(cont.) (Concept of Ops.)

(8) cont

blockade by mining harbors in N. Vietnam and Cambodia - if this is necessary -

(9) - Attack economic targets in N. Viet.

(10) - Increase defoliation attacks in VC areas and launch against N. Viet rice areas.

(11) - Attack N. Viet. dikes in August.

(12) - Complete studies (probably have to "initiate" studies) on employment of gas and nuclear weapons in N. Viet and against V.C. strongholds & units in S. Viet. These studies should be completed now whether they are ever used or not.

(9) Expedite

(1) Mobilization

(2) Deployments of US Forces

(3) Production

(a) Helios (what about Kamau?)

(b) Aircraft

(c) Ammo.

(d) AAA (will U.S. need ground guns too?)

(e) Mortars (60 mm - light 81 mm)

(f) Medical (doctors, compounds)

(g) & special medicines)

increase in
analysis in
helio production
indicates "pacemakers"
efforts.

(cont.) (Continued of Opns)

(3) - Extend number of and expand size of present coastal enclaves

(4) - Secure LOCs ^{roads} and ^{railroads} - (I Corps

is a good example of where this can and should be done by rapid introduction of additional U.S. forces)

(5) - ~~Establish~~ secure areas

inland from coastal enclaves which can be supported by ground LOCs (secured by us) and by air heads (if air force can do this - study for Pleiku now underway by COMAIR Pac)

(6) - Expand B-52 area bombing operations

(7) - Establish a sea blockade of N Vietnam and Cambodian coasts and ports. (Very important.)

(8) - Following establishment of blockade supplement

(5)

(d) military operations should be intensified in all zones with initial emphasis on I, II Corps.

(e) - Air field construction should be speeded. The number estimated in this study are not enough. e.g. I believe in I Corps alone we have estimated a need for 7 fixed wing and helio fields

(f) Concept of Operations

(1) - how primarily a military operation rather than a political one. Present military regime should be completely backed with primary of all U.S. effort to military rather than political. Military commander rather than Ambassador should exert top control.

(2) - Intensify bombings into N Viet against

(a) Airfields

(b) MIGS

(c) IL-28s.

(d) POL

⑦ - Additional thoughts by CMC upon
"Reaching this study?"

(a) Objective of military operation is -
we should know be - to whip the
N. Viet as well as the V.C.
instead of reaching to "demonstrate"
that they can't win - or to
bring them to the "table" to
negotiate.

(b) - The strength required to carry
out our objectives should be
accurately determined based
upon an agreed concept of ops
for each Corps area.

Focusing on I Corps this
concept should be the expansion
of the present 3 sema base
areas into an enclave (FBI)
The study does not do
this for I Corps - the concept
is faulty and the troops
required (estimated) are
obviously not enough.

(c) - Additional forces should
be introduced into S Viet
as rapidly as possible -
for military and psychological
reason

(2 cont.) - Is this enough? Also study is based solely on "fixing" and "destroying" VC bns and larger units. What about large scale guerrilla operations instead - or a combination of the two (i.e. large scale and/or guerrilla)?

- All Marine commanders concerned from CMC to CG FMF Pac to CG III MAF have stated to Sec Def et al that a minimum of 2 Divisions and 1 Wing are required for I Corps -

(4) - I also believe it to be a mistake to intensify actions in I, II and III (North) Corps areas ^{only}. We should reinforce as rapidly as possible in all of Corps areas.

(5) - Additional pencil notes in my work copy. (See).

(6) - Close liaison should be maintained on this study with FMF Pac.

TOP SECRETHEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET
NAVMC HQ 335a-CMC (REV. 11-63)

SAC NO.

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TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

ATA15-gat

MEMORANDUM

From: Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans and Programs)
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps

Subj: Analyses - Southeast Asia

Ref: (a) CINCPAC ltr Ser 3010 of 10Dec65

Encl: (1) Analysis COMUSMACV Force Requirements
(2) Analysis of CG, FMFPac - Strategic Appraisal, Vietnam
(3) Message to CG, FMFPac

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded as directed. Enclosure (2) is included as a matter apparently directly related to enclosure (1).

2. The paper analyzed in enclosure (1), although incomplete, provides sufficient information to indicate that MACV force requirements are addressed under four levels of enemy activity. Annexes furnished provide an estimate of friendly forces required under conditions of heaviest enemy buildup only and neither annex considers a balanced strategy for SVN. Annexes omit reference to attritions on PAVN/VC by actions outside SVN, do not mention the rural construction program and concentrate only on ground offensive operations. The Annex on command arrangements provides a level of forces under "VC Lie Low" which coincides with those recommended by CINCPAC in reference (a).

3. Enclosure (2) appears to stem from CG, FMFPac concern with the imbalanced strategy represented by COMUSMACV Force requirements in enclosure (1). The Strategic Appraisal is an excellent vehicle for re-focussing thinking on the overall problem of Vietnam.

4. The message to CG, FMFPac at enclosure (3) reflects the thoughts expressed in the foregoing. It is recommended that it be released.

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ATA15-ecz
16 Jan 1966

ANALYSIS

Subj: COMUSMACV Force Requirements, Analysis of

GENERAL

1. CMC has requested an analysis of the attached MACV documents. The papers in question consist of three Annexes of a study which apparently address alternative force requirements for the end CY 66 time frame based on four assumed VC/PAVN situations. These are:

<u>SITUATION</u>	<u>FORCE REQUIREMENTS 1/</u>	
	<u>US/FW (BNS/TFS)</u>	<u>TOTAL (BNS/TFS)</u>
a. Slow Success	135/45	193/51
b. Large VC/PAVN Buildup (Annex B)	180/54	242/60
c. Much Stronger Enemy (Annex C)	190/60	252/66
d. The VC Lie Low	97/33	151/39

The third annex provided is Annex F, Command Arrangements, which addresses the command relationships required for the major buildups envisioned in Annexes B and C.

2. Annex B, Large VC/PAVN Buildup is based on an assumption that by the end of CY 66, VC/PAVN strength will total 155 Bns. Alternative courses of action are discussed and the following selected:

"Improve the force ratios significantly by substantially reinforcing US/FWMA forces, and continue operations as before but on an accelerated scale, concentrating on offensive action against enemy forces, bases, and LOC's within SVN. Also block the infiltration routes southward from the DRV by positioning ground forces across Quang Tri province and the Laotian panhandle." Force requirements indicated in addition to Phase IIA are:

90 maneuver Bns (Including IIA totals 187 Bns)

21 tactical fighter squadrons

50 helicopter companies

3. Annex C, Much Stronger Enemy assumes a buildup of VC/PAVN to 190 Bns. Four lines of action are discussed with no selection of a preferred course. They are shown with their gross cost:

1/ Taken from Annex F. They do not agree with those shown in Annexes B and C.

ATA15-fcz

1. Assume defensive and rely on intensified air action to reduce logistic support of VC 8 Bns for a total of 105
2. Reinforce to level necessary to conduct Phase II opns. 58 Bns for a total of 155
3. L/A 2, plus screening of RVN border 76 Bns for a total of 173
4. L/A 2, plus blocking infiltration (cordon sanitaire) 99 Bns for a total of 196

4. Annex F, Command Arrangements, centers its rationale on the fact that, as deployments increase to the levels noted above, ground coordination will be the most pressing problem. This is solved as follows:

a. Corps will be established:

1 for Counterinfiltration force (Laos and Quang Tri province. (4½ US divisions)

1 for I CTZ less Quang Tri province. (3 US, 3 1/3 ARVN)

2 for II CTZ (7 US divisions, 3 1/3 ARVN)

1 for III CTZ (4 US divisions, 3 1/3 ARVN)

Task Force Hq for IV CTZ (1½ US divisions, 3 ARVN)

b. A Land Force Headquarters must be established early in the deployments with a second provided later if all deployments are provided. This is to provide a Field Army Hq for I CTZ and the Counterinfiltration force and another for II CTZ.

In order to provide for the coordination required between forces operating in SVN, Laos and from Thailand, the activation of COMUSSEASIA in Saigon instead of Korat is proposed. It is implied that this headquarters should not operate under CINCPAC.

COMMENT

1. A definitive analysis is not possible in view of the incomplete nature of the document. Specifically, the statement of purpose or terms of reference, the conclusions, or the missing annexes could change the thrust of the attached material. However, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the content, acknowledging that their validity may be questionable.

2. Significant impressions derived are:

a. Sufficient commonality of detail between this document and the briefing given SecDef on 28 November exists to suggest a strong interrelationship. It may be that the

ATA15-fcz

attached document was developed as an exploration of various situations in preparation for SecDef's visit, and the estimates of vastly increased VC/PAVN strengths might explain SecDef's "28 points" for acceleration of support.

b. CG, FMFPAC's "A Strategic Appraisal, Vietnam" appears to be designed to counter the thrust of the attached portions of the MACV document and contains a much more complete balanced strategy.

c. The strategy derived from the three annexes provided is based on a war of attrition on a manpower basis between US and VC/PAVN forces. This strategy emphasizes operations to find, fix and destroy enemy forces and neglects freeing the people from VC oppression and exploitation. This strategy mismatches US and communist capabilities.

d. The MACV strategy is not balanced. He does not address civic actions even as a means of improving the GVN manpower base and hence force ratios. He does not assess or address at all the impact of a properly conducted air campaign against NVN and its effects on DRV capabilities. He assesses little value to air-sea actions in SVN.

e. Although the need for stemming infiltration is addressed, it is almost entirely considered from the standpoint of how to do it with complete reliance on ground forces. No solution is provided for stemming infiltration for the year or two it will take to build the logistics support required.

f. Probably the greatest defect is its failure to recognize that the people of Vietnam are the target for both the enemy and for us. The existence or need for an integrated military/civil approach is completely ignored.

3. Several old Army themes appear throughout:

a. Combat troops cannot be deployed until their logistic support is in place.

b. At least 1 to 2 years are required to build the logistic facilities required.

c. Extensive additional headquarters are required.

d. COMUSSEASIA must be activated and operate independently from CINCPAC.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on the information available,

ATA15-fcz

a. This appears to be a pure requirements plan designed primarily to support increased Army force levels.

b. The strategy espoused by COMUSMACV will lead to eventual defeat, probably after gradual intervention by the CHICOMS.

c. It is imperative that the other Services get some highly competent, high-level representation on MACV staff.

d. MACV's strategy is not in consonance with, and in fact ignores, the JCS agreed Concept for Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Marine Corps not support in any way the increased force levels contained in these documents.
2. That the Marine Corps continue to support a balanced concept for Vietnam as contained in agreed JCS papers and the CG, FMFPAC Appraisal.
3. That CG, FMFPAC be so informed.

NAVMC HQ 279b-ADM (REV. 5-65)

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(Date-Time Group/GMT)

FROM: CMC

TO: CG FMFPAC

INFO:

SUBJ: FORCE REQUIREMENTS

TOP SECRET PERSONAL FROM GENERAL GREENE TO GENERAL KRULAK

1. CMC POSITION ON ANY REQUEST FOR VASTLY INCREASED FORCES IN SVN WILL BE BASED UPON THE REQUIREMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF THE PACIFICATION PROCESS. ANY INCREASE BASED UPON A BATTLE OF ATTRITION WITH THE VC/PAVN WILL BE RESISTED. I RECOGNIZE THAT NEARLY THE SAME NUMBER OF FORCES MAY BE REQUIRED IN A STRATEGY BASED UPON DELIVERING THE PEOPLE FROM GUERRILLA OPERATIONS. THEREFORE THE QUESTION WILL REVOLVE AROUND STRATEGIC DIFFERENCES. YOUR STRATEGIC APPRAISAL-VIETNAM IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN OUTSTANDING VEHICLE FOR USE BY OUR PLANNERS IN PRESENTING THE MARINE CORPS POSITION IN THE JOINT ARENA.

2. THE FOLLOWING FACTORS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN EVALUATING FORCE REQUIREMENTS:

ROUTER	CWO	CUTTER	SENDER

OUTGOING **TOP SECRET** MESSAGE
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B-10007

TOP SECRET

A. INCREASES IN VC/PAVN STRENGTH MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT AN EVALUATION OF EFFECT OF PROPERLY COORDINATED AIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DRV SOURCES OF INFILTRATION AND IN-COUNTRY AIR OPERATIONS BASED ON ADEQUATE INTELLIGENCE.

B. FORECASTS OF RVNAF STRENGTH SHOULD REFLECT EFFECT OF INCREASES IN MANPOWER BASE THAT WOULD RESULT FROM ADEQUATE RURAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND ATTENTION TO VITALLY NEEDED CLEARING AND SECURING OPERATIONS.

C. BEFORE ACCEPTING ANY INCREASED TROOP STRENGTHS, COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF THE STRENGTH REQUIRED TO PROVIDE SECURITY IN POPULATION/RESOURCE CENTERS AND TROOP REQUIREMENTS TO MEET FORCE RATIOS DESIRED BY MACV SHOULD BE MADE. CONCEPT THAT ENEMY CAN NOT WIN IF HE CAN NOT REACH THE PEOPLE IS CONSIDERED MORE VALID HERE THAN ATTEMPTING TO MEET ENEMY STRENGTH ON AN ARTIFICIAL FORCE RATIO BASIS.

D. IN SUPPORT OF A BALANCED CONCEPT, CONCERN FREQUENTLY VOICED AT WASHINGTON LEVEL ABOUT POSSIBLE CHICOM INTERVENTION. DIA HAS ESTIMATED THAT SLOW, GRADUAL ESCALATION ON OUR PART IS MORE LIKELY TO BRING CHICOM INTO CONFLICT THAN WOULD RAPID HARD STRIKE AGAINST THE DRV.

3. THE CONCEPT OF BASING FORCE REQUIREMENTS ON A CAPABILITY TO SCREEN EFFECTIVELY HUNDREDS OF MILES OF BORDER IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER I RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF UTILIZING OUR GROUND FORCES TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR EFFORTS AGAINST THE ENEMY LOC'S.

Page 2 of 2

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETOPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

AO3H11-dnw

0003D1066

TO : Director, Joint Planning Group

DATE: 11 JAN 1966

FROM : Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

SUBJECT: Strategic Appraisal, Vietnam

Ref: (a) Your unnumbered routing sheet of 5 Jan 66
(b) AC/S, G-3 memo AO3H1-rhg of 6 Nov (TS); Subj:
CMC Outline Estimate of the Situation in SEA

1. Reference (a) has been reviewed. It is an excellent discussion and analysis of the factors influencing selection of a strategy for RVN, North Vietnam and China. Further, the strategy developed from this analysis is valid and clearly and explicitly stated.
2. It is suggested that greater emphasis could be placed upon the influence that the remainder of Southeast Asia has upon the conflict (reference (b) suggests an expanded concept encompassing the entire area). It is further suggested that the discussion include the requirement for creating a sense of national objective and purpose among the RVN people. This must encompass:
 - a. Strengthening of the RVN political infrastructure.
 - b. A comprehensive psychological/political effort aimed at the South Vietnamese to increase their support of the war and to foster a justifiable confidence in the RVN government.
3. It is recommended that this strategic appraisal be presented to the JCS. Available evidence indicates that the civil agencies of our Government operating in RVN support this strategic approach.

W. R. Collins

W. R. COLLINS

GROUP 4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED
AFTER 12 YEARS

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~~SECRET~~

A02E-JSC-erg

13 JAN 1966

G-2 Comment on "A" Strategic Appraisal - Vietnam"

This paper reflects RVN government weaknesses and inability to effectively administer and manage the affairs of the Republic of Vietnam. It shows the prevailing deficiencies in the administration and security of both people and territory. The paper recommends a number of actions to remedy the situation, improve the RVN/US military posture, and to insure effective civil government by progressive development of required capabilities. The suggested actions require joint high-level decisions by the SVN and US governments to insure effective implementation of the outlined programs of civil and military actions. Such joint decisions would also reflect the combined strategy and national policies of both governments.

[Signature]
T. S. GANTON
Lt Colonel

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
5010-104

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TOP SECRET
Memorandum

TO : Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1

DATE: AOIC/sll-2

13 JAN 1966

FROM : Head, PP&P Branch

SUBJECT: A Strategic Appraisal - Vietnam

Ref: (a) Subject Appraisal dtd 5 January 1966

1. Reference (a) reviews our present military strategy in RVN and describes it as a war of attrition designed to make the enemy either incapable or unwilling to prosecute the war. This thrust is considered inadequate to achieve success.

2. The author outlines a change in our main thrust which he believes will achieve success. The objectives of our thrust should be stated as:

a. Win the People. (This is to be accomplished by delivering the people from guerrilla oppression and protecting them adequately and continually; meanwhile attack the enemy main force elements when the odds are in our favor).

b. Place our weight against material attrition on the North at the source (ports, rails, power, fuel, etc.) (The author points out that any war of attrition in manpower alone will not achieve victory due to comparative manpower resources and resulting casualties.)

c. Put the full US/GVN weight into the pacification program. This is to be a single combined organization. (The I Corps Area is used as the model of what the country ought to be.)

3. The concept outlined in reference (a) is really a restatement of what has been expressed long before now although I am not sure it was ever officially stated as our objective in RVN. The reference is an excellent analysis and pulls the concept together in lucid terms.

4. The problem in RVN to date has been not so much ~~the concept but~~ the lack of a concept, but one of a stable political base, resources and authority to do what needs to be done. The political platform is shaky but it has improved, the resources are in the mill; but the authority to strike his resources, at the source, under existing plans, is lacking.

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5. A keypoint in the paper (p. 8) is the need for continuing security to the people once the VC are cleared. This has been an all too frequent failing in the past. ("Hit and run" vs. "clear and hold".)

6. The appraisal appears to be an excellent vehicle to refocus a lot of thinking and might generate a clearer concept for operations in RVN. I recommend that we concur and suggest that it be forwarded to the JCS for appropriate action. *FOIC will prepare memo to JPG.*

Very respectfully,



1/12/66

I concur with DB above. This is an excellent presentation.

R. G. Davis

1/13/66

G-1 Comment

1. Concur with above.

R. G. Davis

R. G. DAVIS

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1st 6x

ATA15-fcz

ANALYSIS

Subj: CG, FMFPAC - A Strategic Appraisal - Vietnam

GENERAL

1. "A Strategic Appraisal, Vietnam", provided by CG, FMFPAC, is a well written discussion and analysis of the factors influencing selection of a strategy for Vietnam. This appraisal makes two basic points:

a. No military strategy will promise success unless it gives full discount to the non-military factors of politics, economics and sociology.

b. Since manpower is the enemy's greatest strength, we have no license and less reason to meet him there. Scrupulous attention to these two facts is a design for victory. Evasion of their implications is the route to defeat. Our present military strategy is described as a war of attrition designed to make the enemy either incapable or unwilling to prosecute the war; a strategy that is deemed inadequate to achieve success.

2. In developing his analysis, CG, FMFPAC discusses the following factors which have a direct bearing on the strategy:

a. Geography and Meteorology. Only 20% of the land area is cultivated and 80% of that is in rice. The balance is mountainous, heavily forested with poor trafficability. Weather is bad somewhere at all times.

b. Population. Of the 18 million in NVN, 90% are in the Red River Delta. Of the 15 million in SVN, 2/3 are in the Saigon/Mekong Delta area with the bulk of the rest along the coastal littoral.

c. Politics. The people themselves have no politics and little loyalty to or understanding of matters beyond the village level. They don't support either VC or GVN politics. Not enough is being done to get them to identify with the GVN.

d. Religion. Only 20% are Buddhist. They are the most significant religious element only because the priests are politically oriented and well organized.

e. Economics. Outside the cities, 70% are rice farmers. There is a history of peonage and heavy levies. VC promise farmers land (while instituting collectives in NVN). A start had been made in a land reform program, but aggressive reinstitution of this program would pay off well in getting the peasant to identify with the GVN.

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f. Enemy strategy is assessed as having the people as the main target. Guerilla warfare keeps them in line and cuts ties with the GVN. GVN forces are to be eroded so that they can't interfere with actions directed toward organizing the people. US forces are to be attritted to the point that they won't support the GVN. A major point is made that even if the campaign between the hard core units and the US were moved completely away, the war still would not be won.

3. The realities of attrition as a possible strategy are discussed leading to the conclusion that the present comparative casualty rates of less than 3 to 1 are not enough. That the strength ratios are such that at least 5 to 1 are required. It would take 60,000 US casualties (with 10,000 KIA) to reduce VC/PAVN force levels by only 20%. With regard to material attrition, it is pointed out that we have the edge here and can attack material support at its source where such attacks are most effective.

4. With regard to winning the people, the paper notes that progress has been too slow because of a lack of organization, disagreement as to US and military roles, too little recognition of the effectiveness of US troops in this role and a military priority based on destruction of VC/PAVN, with rural tranquility emerging therefrom. It further notes that forces are expended in maneuvering and reacting to the VC while the people are left exposed to VC subversion, extortion and oppression. Basic approach should be to note that if the enemy can't get to the people, he can't win.

5. A three part US strategy is proposed:

a. Shift emphasis to task of delivering the people from guerilla oppression, protect them adequately thereafter, and seek to destroy enemy units when the odds are overwhelmingly in our favor.

b. Address our attritional efforts to the source of DRV material infiltration.

c. Put the full weight of top level effort into bringing all resources into the pacification process. Specific actions comprising a campaign plan for implementation of the strategy are proposed.

COMMENT

1. While the concepts outlined in the Strategic Appraisal have all been expressed at one time or another before, they have not been officially stated in the Appraisal's lucid form as our objective in South Vietnam.

2. A keynote in the paper is the need for continuing security to the people once the Viet Cong have been cleared from an

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area. The "hit and run", instead of the "clear and hold" approach has, in the Marine view, been all too prevalent in the past. While recognizing the need for and importance of attacking the enemy main force units, it is felt that placing the primary emphasis on this approach is unproductive in terms of urgently required population and resource control.

3. The approach suggested requires high-level agreement by both the GVN and the US to insure effective, coordinate implementation of the civil and military actions involved. These joint decisions would, of necessity, reflect the combined strategy and national policies of both governments.

4. It is felt that greater emphasis than appears in the Appraisal should be placed on the influence that the remainder of Southeast Asia has on the conflict. This emphasis has been provided by CMCM 112-65 which covered a broad spectrum of political and military actions.

5. It is suggested that a restatement of only the military concept to place the primary emphasis on control of the people and resources as opposed to searching out main force units, would be relatively meaningless without the follow-on civil actions. The success presently being achieved by the Marines in pacification is making a favorable impression and, as it increases, will ultimately result in reorientation of other efforts to accomplish similar good results.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Available evidence indicates that other agencies of the government and the US Mission Council in Saigon are in general accord with the underlying principles enunciated by the Appraisal and have been making progress in accelerating their programs.

2. The Appraisal is an excellent vehicle to refocus thinking on the overall problem of Vietnam.

3. The requirement for closer coordination between military and political programs was an important theme of CMCM 112-65. An improvement in the flow of information has been noted since submission of the CMCM.

4. No useful purpose would be served by providing this document to the JCS at present. CMCM 112-65 has adequately served the purpose.

UNCLASSIFIED

ATA12-1om
8 Dec 1965JCS met with Press at
Rund on 10 Dec 65TALKING PAPER

Subj: Southeast Asia Strategy

1. It is possible that the individual Chiefs may be asked questions by the President concerning South Vietnam. Possible questions and points to be considered in the answer are listed below.

2. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WE SHOULD DO IN SOUTH VIETNAM?

a. I believe we should decide now to commit the forces and to take the action required to achieve our objectives in South Vietnam. This must be done rapidly enough that the enemy cannot continue to escalate in step with us. It has also long been my opinion that the American people are not informed as to the magnitude and importance of the War in Southeast Asia. Prompt action is mandatory to inform the American people and to influence public opinion to support the crucial effort in South Vietnam. I recommend:

(1) First, initiation of a planned campaign to inform the American people and to mobilize public opinion behind the effort in Southeast Asia. This campaign should include:

(a) A special message by the President to the Congress and the American people outlining the issues and our determination to achieve our objectives.

(b) A planned program of public pronouncements and information releases to inform the American people of the necessity for our commitment in Southeast Asia and the stakes involved.

(c) A program publicizing the efforts and sacrifices of our combat personnel to include re-examination of draft regulations and veteran's benefits to insure an equitable distribution of military service and that persons who serve are provided educational and vocational training advantages.

(2) Second, an increased air program against the DRV as recommended by the JCS on 10 November 1965.

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21 Feb 1979

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(3) Third, prompt approval of the Phase II deployments as recommended by the JCS on 10 November and approval of such additional forces as field commanders may require.

(4) Fourth, increased actions to cut the PAVN/VC LOC's through Laos and Cambodia to include, if required, hot pursuit into Cambodia and air and ground cross-border operations to locate and destroy VC bases as recommended by the JCS on 10 and 12 November.

(5) Fifth, reconstitute our strategic reserve in order to deter further aggression or deal with it if it occurs, as recommended by the JCS on 24 September and 10 November.

3. DO YOU FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT 400,000 U. S. TROOPS ARE REQUIRED IN SVN?

a. Yes. I have considered for almost a year that eventually a force of a minimum of 500,000 will be required to provide the security against aggression the GVN needs in order to make the social, economic and political changes required to gain the lasting support of the people.

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Standard Form 63
November 1961
GSA Gen. Reg. No. 27

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

Date

Time

TO-

☐ YOU WERE CALLED BY-

☐ YOU WERE VISITED BY-

TELEPHONE:

Number or code

Extension

☐ PLEASE CALL

☐ WAITING TO SEE YOU

☐ WILL CALL AGAIN

☐ WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

☐ RETURNING YOUR CALL

☐ IS REFERRED TO YOU BY:

LEFT THIS MESSAGE:

He [unclear]
bought off on this
now we want to hear from Gps

Received By-

63-106

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TALKING PAPER

Subj: Southeast Asia Strategy

1. In the event that the President asks the individual members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff what they recommend in Southeast Asia, the following points should be raised.

2. I believe that we ^{should} decide now to commit the forces and to take the action required to achieve our objectives in SVN. I recommend:

a. First an increased air program against the DRV as recommended by the JCS on 10 November 1965.

b. Second, increased actions to cut the PAVN/VC LOC's through Laos and Cambodia to include, if required, hot pursuit into Cambodia and air and ground cross-border operations to locate and destroy VC bases ^{10 and 12} as recommended by the JCS on 10 November.

c. Third, prompt approval of the Phase II deployments as recommended by the JCS on 10 November and approval of such additional forces as field commanders may require.

d. Fourth, in order to deter further aggression or deal with it if it occurs, an immediate approval of the forces necessary to reconstitute our strategic reserve as recommended by the JCS on 24 September and 10 November.

3. It is my opinion that the American people are not informed ^{as to} on the magnitude and importance of the war in SEA and as a result are not

wholeheartedly behind our efforts. I consider it mandatory that we take prompt action to inform the American public and shape public opinion as necessary to support this crucial effort in SVN. I therefore specifically recommend:

- a. Reiteration by public pronouncements by US governmental leaders that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objectives have been achieved.
- b. Re-examination of draft regulations and veteran's benefits to insure an equitable distribution of military service and that persons who serve are provided educational and vocational training advantages.
- c. Embarkation on an expanded campaign to inform the American people of the necessity for our commitment in SEA and our concepts for the conduct of the war.

DRAFT

TALKING PAPER

Subj: ~~SECRET~~ Southeast Asia Strategy

1. In the event that the President asks the individual members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff what they recommend in Southeast Asia, the following points should be raised.

Background

1. Our enemies have announced to the world that the test of their so-called "wars of national liberation" will be in SVN. We cannot afford to lose because if they win there they will be convinced that they can win throughout the underdeveloped world.
2. We can win in SVN, but the effort will be long and costly. We can expect that it will take over 5 years and require a force of at least 500,000 men - with adequate backup resources in the US.
3. The first steps have been taken with significant troop deployments and overt air attacks against the VC and DRV military capabilities. These actions have improved the security situation and the chances for a stable government, as well as bringing about better unity of effort. However, the VC are still determined and active^{and}, the DRV is engaged in active escalation within SVN. ~~SECRET~~ A vocal minority in the US is advising abandonment of our objectives or

2. We must increase our efforts to interdict the PAVN LOC's through Laos and Cambodia. This will require military actions against PAVN/VC forces located in these countries.

a. Specifically, I recommend that we provide CINCPAC with standby authority to take the necessary offensive action as recommended by the JCS on 10 November (JCSM 811-65) and 12 November (JCSM 812-65, US Policy and Actions to Deal with Cambodian Support of the Vietcong).

3. Within SVN, we must not allow our efforts to bog down. In order to maintain our momentum and to reduce our overall losses, I recommend prompt approval for the Phase II deployments as recommended by the JCS on 10 November (JCSM 811-65) and further recommend that a decision be made now to provide the Phase II add-ons requested by COMUSMACV.

4. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ must We/immmediately reconstitute the forces in our strategic reserve as required to deter further aggression. I therefore recommend the immediate approval of the addition of those forces recommended by the JCS on 24 September and 10 November, JCSM 814-65, US Military Posture), even if mobilization of some National Guard divisions are required.

5. Our enemies are counting on our eventual ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ weakening through the failure of American public opinion to support the war effort. It is my opinion that ~~XXXX~~ the American people are not informed on the magnitude and importance

of the war in SEA and as a result are not wholeheartedly behind our efforts. I consider it mandatory that we take prompt action to inform the American public and shape public opinion as necessary to support this crucial effort in SVN. I therefore specifically recommend:

a. Reiteration by public pronouncements ~~@@~~ by US governmental leaders that we intend to remain in South Vietnam until our objectives have been achieved.

b. Re-examination of draft regulations and veteran's benefits to insure an equitable distribution of military service and that persons who serve are provided educational and vocational training advantages.

c. Embarkation on an expanded campaign to inform the American people of the necessity for our commitment in SEA and our concepts for the conduct of the war.

Summary

1. In summary, Mr. President, I feel that ~~we will win in SVN if we have the will and determination. We cannot afford to lose and~~ I recommend that we make a firm and prompt decision to commit the forces and resources necessary to achieve our objectives, ~~rapidly and decisively enough to capitalize on our national strength, thereby denying our enemies the opportunity to escalate with us.~~