

February 10, 1971

*Slide I*

Some Perspectives on the VN Problem  
and Its Solution  
(1950-71)

*Slide II*  
1. Origins of U.S. Involvement - 1950

- a. Situation After World War II.
- b. The Cold War
  - Marshall Plan
  - Greece
  - Azerbaijan
  - Korea
  - ~~Vietnam~~ - 1950
- c. National Interest and National Ideals.

*flaw - to much pride?  
Badly carried out  
Self deception*

*Slide II A*  
*Slide II* → 2. Original Miscalculations on VN

- a. That elements left behind by the French were more viable than they, in fact, were.
- b. Over-confidence as to our ability to solve internal problems of other countries.

*Should have been -  
order + economic  
prosperity*

*Slide III* 3. The Nature of the Problem in Viet-Nam

- a. The political and administrative vacuum left behind by the French.
- b. The example of An Giang - where Hoa Hao filled local vacuum.
- c. The Diem experiment - further destruction of power of village.

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4. Causes of Past U.S. Failure in Viet-Nam

- a. Failure to take it seriously and face squarely soon enough.

Examples:

1. Failure to assess situation realistically. Big power complex. Creating reality like airfields.
2. Failure to organize US effort. Separate agency programs.
3. Failure to give local security highest priority before 1965.
4. Inadequate guidance of military effort after 1965.
5. Rapid rotation policy.
6. Ineffective use of leverage.

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BASIC ERRORS in Strategy

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5. Turning Points of the War (1967-68)

- a. Organization of CORDS — importance indicated below.
- b. Tet 1968 - VC lost moral capital, lost best cadre. People did not rise up. GVN gained confidence. Became politically possible to have national mobilization. War became more one of NVN aggression.
- c. Significance in VN of President Johnson's withdrawal (Big brother may no longer be around).

6. Present Situation and Policy

a. Situation — vastly improved — Why?

Answer: (1) Main force war won (1965-68).

(2) Support given to RF/PF (Role of CORDS) — achievement of territorial security.

(3) Better management (Role of CORDS in CPDC).

b. Policy *Quang's* — *US is killed but SVN is not. So get US to withdraw in such manner as to pull down SVN or way out.*

U.S. (1) Negotiations if possible (but don't hold your breath)

US Offer — Mutual withdrawal

Free elections

Hanoi position — U.S. withdrawal

Coalition Government

*Intel support cease for 10 years  
Indochina Peace Conference  
Withdrawal of US forces as hostilities  
Political settlement or self-determination  
Immediate release of prisoners by  
both sides*

(2) Vietnamization — or de-Americanization.

(3) Withdrawal of U.S. — desirable politically at home and operationally in VN, if not too fast (Example of Vinh Kim).

GVN (1) Fill the vacuum in the countryside — from bottom up.

— Restore power to village by elections, budget, control.

— PSDF — a political program.

*- Popular participation  
- Reform against central VC organizations  
- GVN officials must be more active.*

— Local Security — RF/PF, Phung Hoang.

— *Chien/Thien* Province councils, later election of Province Chiefs.

— Land Reform — max. 15 hectares, total 900,000 hectares.

(2) Organize country from top down

- People's Information Program.
- National elections.

7. Conclusions

a. Outcome still not certain.

Favorable factors: - GVN much stronger at all levels.

- Enemy main forces were decimated, but NVN population could generate 130,000 per year.
- GVN instinct of self-preservation now involved.
- Growing GVN confidence after Cambodia. *less after Laos.*
- VC unpopular.
- More efficient US leverage - because GVN self-preservation involved.

Unfavorable Factors:

- Continued bickering in Saigon.
- Continued corruption.
- ARVN leadership.
- Misconduct in Cambodia.
- Economics.
- October Presidential elections?

*Prediction - 50/50 - GVN much stronger  
But - nature of enemy's mission is destructive  
s. Continued importance of US advisors role internal disunity among SVN,*

# Future Prospects

Enemy - (1) VS is likely  
(2) SVN is not yet likely - even though  
is likely to be VS or way out.

## Conclusions

SVN - (2) Elections - a. Outcome still not certain.

Favorable factors: - Natives of SVN

- Enemy main forces were decimated, but

SVN population could generate 130,000 per year.

- GVN instinct of self-preservation now involved.

- Growing GVN confidence after Cambodia.

- VC unpopular.

- More efficient US leverage - because GVN

self-preservation involved.

## Unfavorable Factors:

- Continued pickering in Saigon.

- Continued corruption.

- ARVN leadership.

- Misconduct in Cambodia.

- Economics.

- October Presidential elections?

but - value of country is not clear  
Internal situation of the country is not clear