

D R A F T

July 29, 1963

TO: The Ambassador R. B.

FROM: Joseph L. Brent/USOM

SUBJECT: RVNAF Personnel Policies and the Counterinsurgency Effort

1. As the tempo of efforts to overcome the insurgency steps up, the competition for qualified personnel becomes increasingly keen. At present it appears that the RVNAF, through its draft policy, is not only forging ahead of the civilian side of government, but may be seriously imperilling the success of the civilian effort.

2. In recent weeks a sudden increase in the draft call-ups of key civilian personnel by ARVN for an indefinite period (usually defined as "the duration") has been noted. Several hundred schoolteachers are being drafted, including many of the staff of the Blao Agricultural College who were recently trained in the United States. Nearly 80 of the approximately 150 technical personnel in the Ministry of Rural Affairs are apparently to be drafted soon. This seems to be a nationwide pattern -- and the results are made even more serious by the assignment of a high percentage of the better qualified to relatively unimportant duties, as usually happens during military emergencies in almost every country. The situation is so acute that rumors have started that the GVN is building up its force levels far above those communicated to the Americans; is going to de-emphasize the civilian effort in favor of the military, etc.

3. It is appreciated that the agreed-upon force levels, and the present discharge and casualty levels may require the induction of as many as 50,000 into the RVNAF by the end of CY 1964. It is also appreciated that the Armed Forces feel, with justice, that they have an urgent

requirement for more, better-qualified personnel. Undoubtedly they could, if they would and were permitted to, employ usefully all the literate adults of military age and demonstrated ability in the country. The question is to what extent the Armed Forces employment would be as useful as the civilian employment of these same personnel.

4. The consensus is that a successful conclusion of the counter-insurgency program will require much more than military effort, in fact that the civilian effort, or at least effort in fields in which the Armed Forces have either not wished or been permitted to participate, is of very nearly equal importance. (Some, including many with military experience, feel it is even more important, at this stage of this war.) The scarcity of qualified personnel in these fields, ranging from civil administration and agriculture to teaching seems at least as acute as the military shortage of comparably or identically qualified personnel.

5. Accordingly, I believe that we should make strong efforts to convince the GVN of the importance of not draining the civilian side of government of its remaining qualified personnel in order further to increase and improve the Armed Forces. I realize that it may be difficult to accomplish this on anything but a piecemeal basis, but much might be accomplished even in this way.

6. In addition, the long-existing need for the development of a rational and practical military personnel system is becoming increasingly acute as the draft calls ferret out the last remaining visible technicians, and the Armed Forces strength continues to increase in the face of planned

drastic reductions in the relatively near future. The recent preparation of force-structure forecasts dramatically illustrated the lack of coordinated planning, and, in some areas such as demobilization and reserve structure, the lack of any planning. As much as I dislike suggesting the creation of new committees, I feel there should be a group, which in addition to MAAG and MAC/V should include USOM representation to review the status of planning, the overall applicability and logic of the plans in existence, and to recommend action to improve the planning and to implement the plans. To this effort, I would be happy to contribute the part-time services of Mr. Bert Fraleigh, who was very successful in helping to advise the Chinese Armed Forces on personnel planning and demobilization.