

AIDE MEMOIRE

To : The Honorable Lyndon B Johnson
President of the United States

From: Dr Phan Huy Quat
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Vietnam

1. Your words of encouragement to, and unstinting support for our government and country have been most deeply appreciated. We need your help and that of your government in many ways, if we are to save our country and our people from the Communists. The value of your aid can best be judged from the fact that any hint of lack of resolution by your country gives great comfort to the Communists, and severely lowers the morale of those who oppose them.

2. Your government and people have been most selfless in stationing in Vietnam many of your high-ranking military and civilian leaders who have had outstanding careers. These leaders have been sympathetic to our cause, have sought to understand our problems, and have capably and untiringly sought to assist us. Their work merits and receives our sincere thanks and our deep gratitude.

3. I would be less than honest, and my country would poorly requite your assistance, if I did not tell you that the situation in my country is now most critical, wellnigh as critical as it was in 1964 when the so-called "experts" of both our countries believed that free Vietnam could not last out the year. Our people are gradually losing heart in this seemingly interminable war. This arises from many causes, and can best be cured by our government demonstrating the dynamic leadership which the situation demands.

4. You may well ask why we have failed in this, especially in view of the high quality of the leaders whom your government has sent to advise us. Without meaning in any way to deprecate the ability, knowledge, and devotion of the advisors whom you have sent, we feel in honor bound to tell you why their efforts have been less than fully successful. We know, too, that serious consideration is being given to reinforcing their efforts by sending many more advisers, and possibly having some of them openly assume command roles. This will not work; it will only cause our people who have fought so long for their independence to lose all heart, all hope. It will, for the first time, give some credibility to the Communist charges that American assistance is but a cloak for American imperialism.

5. What we do need, at this crucial moment, more than increased material aid, increased numbers of advisers, or more visits from highranking officials, is understanding, unfaltering support. This can best be given through the presence on the scene of an American with authority whom we Vietnamese accept as our own brother at the same time that we know he represents the best interests of the United States, and who we know understands us as he does his own brothers in blood. Only such a man whom we all trust, even where we may not trust one another, can unite us and spark into effectiveness that leadership which our situation and our people demand. Only he can serve as the bridge of understanding between our peoples; without him this desperate moment in our history shows little hope of satisfactory solution.

6. What can save us, what will win, Mr President, is what saved us in 1954 - the presence and efforts of General Ed Lansdale with

a small team of assistants. Now, even more than in 1954, when his presence, his advice, and above all, his warm confidence-inspiring personality spelled the difference between life and death for our new-born Republic, our government and yours need his unique and irreplaceable talents.

7. This Aide-Memoire, while not cleared in detail by every member of our government, does faithfully represent the sentiments of our Prime Minister and his supporters, as well as those of many respected Vietnamese leaders who are not officials in our present government. General Lansdale's presence would do much to rally increased support to our administration at the same time that it would lend new hope to us. Thank you for the honor of receiving me, Mr President, and allow me again to express on behalf of my government as well as myself our esteem and our appreciation of your understanding support. Allow me also to reiterate and re-emphasize our determination to justify that support by our efforts to keep Vietnam a free, democratic, and staunchly anti-Communist nation.