

157. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State¹

Saigon, September 30, 1965, 6:40 p.m.

1111. 1. I am glad to be able report that pacification has taken an encouraging new step forward.

2. Yesterday Prime Minister Ky asked Lansdale in his capacity as chairman of the US-Liaison Committee to the GVN Agency for Pacification to bring his committee members from MACV, USOM and JUSPAO and join him and some of his staff in a wide-ranging informal five-hour discussion (including lunch) of a revitalized pacification program.

3. Program has three main elements: (A) General Co will be appointed Deputy Prime Minister for "War and Peace" with overall charge of pacification. Le Van Tien will be appointed Minister of Pacification—an appointment he said he had thought about a great deal, and a man whom he considers very able. Tien has reputation as brilliant brain-truster and idea man. A Catholic, he is said to "retain Buddhist tenets". (B) Special pacification emphasis will be placed on three selected areas. (C) Cadres will be reorganized.

4. Ky also intends discuss his ideas with General Co and chiefs of certain selected provinces tomorrow. He asked that Lansdale's group meet with him again on October 2 to give him benefit of U.S. views. Accordingly, I called special meeting of Mission Council this morning to discuss new program and to enable us to respond constructively.

5. Ky's program calls for mounting major pacification effort in following selected areas: (A) Prime areas—Danang—Quang Nam area: Binh Dinh Province; Saigon—Cholon—Gia Dinh area; (B) Possible additions: Phu Yen area, Cai Son resettlement area (part of An Giang—Ken Giang Province), Phu Quoc island. Pacification efforts now under way other areas should continue.

6. Secondly, he intends to reorganize existing 25,000 cadres in such a way that they would be operationally responsible to Deputy PM for War and Peace to whom new Minister for Rural Construction (Pacification) would also report. Cadres would only receive technical guidance from other interested Ministries. Teams of perhaps 100, composed of 40 PATs and popular forces and 60 public admin, health, works, education, info technicians, would be tailored to needs of each district in Vietnam. Furthermore, he plans establish 4 training centers, [garble] per zone, and give cadres one month of motivational and basic military training. He also plans revitalize concept of national institute of administration and

¹ Source: Department of State, Central Files, POL 27 VIET S. Secret; Priority. Received at 9:27 a.m. and passed to the White House, Department of Defense, and CIA.