

for five years, necessarily will take longer. This pacification program, however, is a program which cannot involve heavy American casualties. While it does involve violence and killing, it is of a kind which must be done by the Vietnamese, and largely with police type techniques. The American participation is indispensable, but it is in the way of advice, providing the straight economic and social programs and being political catalysts for the whole.

4. I recommend, therefore:

A. That in this new war, which the North Vietnamese have recently inflicted on us and the South Vietnamese by bringing in NVN troops, we take extremely drastic action against everything that pertains to North Viet-Nam, wherever it may be, so as completely and rapidly to neutralize and render harmless their military potential; and

B. In South Viet-Nam, continue to help the pacification-country-side-rebuilding-uplift program (which would not involve substantial American casualties) but which would go on for several years and which, I hope, the American public could learn to live with. Your handling of public opinion is so able—particularly at this difficult time—that I do not doubt your ability to do this.

5. I'm sorry if I was obscure on this point, but I try in all my telegrams to give you the thing that is preoccupying me at the moment—in a way, to think out loud—hoping that this may be suggestive and helpful.

Lodge

21. Report Prepared by the Deputy Ambassador to Vietnam (Porter) and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Unger)<sup>1</sup>

Washington, January 13, 1966.

SUBJECT

Warrenton Meeting on Viet-Nam, January 8-11, 1966

1. The Warrenton meeting was originally called for mid-December, 1965 in order to bring together senior representatives of the U.S Mission

<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of State, S/S-Vietnam Briefing Books: Lot 70 D 207, Vietnam, Jan 1966. Secret. Drafted by Unger. The report was addressed to Rusk, McNamara, Raborn, Bell, McGeorge Bundy, and Lodge.

Saigon, the Viet-Nam Coordinating Committee,<sup>2</sup> Washington, and several other individuals (see Annex A)<sup>3</sup> to a) review the joint GVN-US pacification/rural construction program and seek to promote its more effective operation and b) address the problem of the increasingly serious shortages and bottlenecks in manpower, materials and transport in Viet-Nam and to designate priorities and machinery for resources control and allocation.

2. Before the meeting convened on its postponed date (January 8) it had also been agreed to take advantage of the presence here of the Saigon representatives to hold an additional day of meeting in Warrenton to discuss the problems, *inter alia*, of Montagnards, Chieu Hoi, land tenure and urban questions such as Labor and Youth and to meet 2 days more in Washington on, *inter alia*, Prisoners of War, Economic Warfare, Free World Assistance, and Elections and Political Parties. This latter set of Washington meetings is still underway as this report is being written. Meanwhile, Messrs. Bell, Poats and Chester Cooper and Mr. Richard Cooper's group have visited Saigon to develop emergency programs to meet the grave inflationary threat, the problem of port congestion and to review the organization of the U.S. Mission to handle economic problems. For this reason the Warrenton meeting did not address the first two problems at any length.

3. On the basis of the several days' discussion, considerably assisted by numerous reports from the Saigon representatives, the general conclusions were reached that: a) the military situation although not critical nevertheless continues grave in Viet-Nam with a prospect under the present strategy of several years' more fighting at least on the current scale before the GVN will be in a position to exercise effective control over substantially all of South Viet-Nam except over Viet Cong base areas; b) there have been some instances of weakening Viet Cong morale, but the Viet Cong, buttressed by continuing infiltration from the North, continue to be a dangerous and effective fighting force; c) the Ky Government continues in relative stability with its collegial division of responsibility, is willing and in a limited degree able to take certain measures long considered necessary to improve its domestic and international position but remains fragile and is failing to live up to its "revolutionary" billing as originally presented by Prime Minister Ky or to produce a fighting force appreciably larger or more aggressive than earlier.

<sup>2</sup> The Viet-Nam Coordinating Committee, chaired by Unger, was a Washington-based interagency group established in 1965 to coordinate non-military programs in Viet-nam.

<sup>3</sup> Annexes A-E are attached but not printed. Among the attendees from Saigon were Habib, Jorgensen, Lansdale, Charles Mann, Porter, Zorthian, and Brigadier General James Collins of MACV. Among the attendees from Washington were Colby, Chester Cooper, DeSilva, Alvin Friedman of OSD/ISA, Stanley Marlowe of USIA, Major General William Peers of JCS, and Unger.

4. In view of this evaluation in general and, in particular, the interdependence of military operations and rural construction, it is recommended that a SNIE be promptly produced on the likely development of the politico-military situation over the next two years, based upon present estimates of enemy capabilities and Vietnamese and allied deployment plans, with particular attention to certain outside factors which could produce unanticipated shortfalls in the execution of present plans (identified at Annex B).

5. The sense of the participants also was that it would be advisable to review the current political-military strategy in Viet-Nam and related areas. Such a study (also see Annex B) should include: a) scope and phasing of force deployment (U.S., Free World and GVN), b) alternative concepts for the employment of forces in South Viet-Nam; against infiltration through Laos and by sea; and related actions against North Viet-Nam. (The projected Honolulu meeting<sup>4</sup> at the end of this January might serve this purpose among others.)

6. In its deliberations on rural construction/pacification ("the reconstitution of the social and governmental fabric") the Warrenton meeting noted some encouraging actions by the GVN: a) to develop, in frequent consultation with the U.S. Mission, promising concepts to provide an agreed basis for this effort (see Annex C), b) to issue detailed instructions about the operation of the rural construction program including provision for continuous coordination between the civilian and military branches at national, corps, division and province levels and c) to organize cadre teams and groups designed to see the effort through from the conclusion of large-scale military action to the point where reconstituted governmental and social institutions can resume their functions in cooperation with a receptive population.

7. On this same subject conclusions and recommendations were adopted (see Annex D) on the following aspects:

a. concentration of effort and resources on the four already designated rural construction priority areas for 1966, with lower priorities in turn for the extensive remaining areas where that program is also underway and for other kinds of U.S. programs in rural areas (a report will be submitted to the VNCC by the Mission by March 31 on the prospects for successful execution of the plans for the four priority areas in 1966),

b. continued direct U.S. funding to support the most crucial aspects of the rural construction program (i.e. cadre for the teams in the Rural Construction 80-man Groups),

c. the importance of encouraging the development of representative bodies at the hamlet or village level, as well as the development of non-government institutions such as cooperatives and labor unions,

d. the optimum organization of the U.S. Mission for its support of the rural construction/pacification program—a senior official with a supporting staff with full-time responsibility in this field was considered necessary. (Coordination is also required with Ambassador Lodge and Mr. Bell's conclusions on this point.) It would also be desirable for such an official to have in Washington a high-level point of liaison to assure the expeditious discharge here of urgent Viet-Nam business in this field (See also items 10 and 14 below.),

e. the proper relation of the respective roles and missions of rural construction teams, police and regional and popular forces, and with the missions of the regular forces, and the requirement for a police force of adequate size and charged with an appropriate mission,

f. the collation both in Washington and Saigon of available material on the primary needs and requirements of the rural population (e.g. as reflected in findings of the Census Grievance Teams)—(See Annex D.).

8. The need to be prepared for an expanded role of the police in a situation of ceasefire (and eventual peace) was also noted and Mission Saigon will prepare a contingency plan for the immediate incorporation of some element of the various paramilitary forces into the police in anticipation of such circumstances.

9. On the matter of resource allocation the meeting took note of the grave danger to essential GVN and U.S. programs of insufficiently controlled construction and free bidding for scarce manpower and the contribution of these activities to the inflation problem. In this connection, the Saigon Mission representatives described the setting up of the Deputy Ambassador's committee on construction priorities and the joint GVN-US committees on manpower, construction, logistics, construction material and wages. Measures recently taken to relieve port congestion were also noted.

10. It was the sense of the participants that Ambassador Lodge be invited to consider the appointment as his own direct adviser or assistant of a high-level resource allocation official to devote full time to the anticipation and elimination of resource stringencies; such an official might chair the U.S. side of the joint GVN-US committees mentioned above and serve as principal adviser to the Deputy Ambassador on the construction priorities committee. He should also have a Washington counterpart to follow up such business here (see also paragraphs 7d above and 14 below). For guidance in this field, it was proposed that the Mission regard combat operations, the rural construction program and the logistical support for both of these, and measures for economic stability as having top priority; other GVN-US activities will take second place. Pending the preparation of the strategy paper mentioned in paragraph 13, the meeting did not attempt to agree on any further refinement of priorities for resource allocation.

11. On the other subjects treated at Warrenton the following conclu-

<sup>4</sup> Reference is to a military conference in Honolulu involving General Westmoreland with General Thieu and Prime

a. The U.S. should take advantage of General Co's recent invitation (see Embtel 2451)<sup>5</sup> to submit suggestions on a GVN program for the Montagnards as an opening to press hard for concrete improvements in GVN-Montagnard relations in the economic, social and, as soon as possible, political fields.

b. At present the Chieu Hoi program most requires effective reception and resettlement of returnees. The Mission will seek to stimulate this through the provincial authorities, perhaps through the occasional direct application of funds; it will also continue to press the GVN for recognition of the importance of the program at national level and continue to urge the designation of an effective head.

c. Studies of land tenure, credit and related programs will be expedited to enhance their use as support of the rural construction program.

d. While rural construction takes priority over urban programs in general, the U.S. Mission will examine how the U.S. might expand its educational and cultural activities directed at youth in urban as well as rural areas.

12. On a number of occasions during the meeting there was discussion of the intensity of pressure the U.S. should seek to exert on the GVN to adopt or vigorously pursue policies or programs which we favor. In principle the U.S., by paying attention to forms, should take care to maintain the full appearance of GVN independence, but in view of the U.S. involvement and commitment in South Viet-Nam, it may be necessary to exert considerable pressure. Ambassador Lodge and the Saigon Mission will have to be the judges of how pressure, persuasion and manipulation are managed in any specific case. (Some of the participants believe that unless this basic issue—the U.S. ability to influence the GVN—is resolved satisfactorily, our already questionable chances of success in South Viet-Nam will be significantly reduced.)

13. Finally, with regard to policies and programs in Viet-Nam, the absence of any recent strategy paper was noted and the Saigon Mission will undertake the preparation of a first draft to cover the coming 3-5 year period. This should correlate political, military, economic and propaganda policies and future activities, assure that they are in harmony with each other and best serve U.S. objectives. Such a paper will have to be related to several alternative assumptions provided by Washington.

14. Note was taken also of the inadequacy of present U.S. Government machinery in Washington to handle Viet-Nam problems quickly and decisively. The need for referral of too large a number of problems to the Secretarial level was one of the problems mentioned. While the meeting did not have time to come to any firm conclusions, there was a view that the VNCC because of its coordinating rather than decision-cum-enforcement powers could not perform this task except in part. If endowing the VNCC or its Chairman with larger powers, and with a staff

associated with no one agency, is not a feasible solution, it was considered that the required directing position might have to be set up at a higher level, perhaps related to the National Security Council. (See also paragraphs 7d and 10 above.)

22. Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Johnson<sup>1</sup>

Washington, January 14, 1966, 3 p.m.

SUBJECT

Top Level Reorganization in Saigon

Dave Bell, Bob McNamara, George Ball and I have now had a chance to talk some more about top level organization in Saigon which you asked me to work on at the end of December.

There is fairly general agreement now that the most important gap in Saigon is in the overall command of the pacification effort and establishing real security in a growing number of villages. According to Bell and others this is more critical than the task of resource allocation.

There is also considerable agreement that the right man to run this pacification job is Deputy Ambassador Porter. He has fully lived up to the expectations of his backers, and McNamara and I have both decided that our doubts of last summer are unjustified.

Porter's only trouble is that he has become fully indispensable to Lodge in a lot of day-to-day administration and hand-holding. The pacification job is a full time task, and if we settle on Porter, we shall have to get another senior diplomat type to support Lodge on the things that Porter is doing now. A lot of us lean toward Leonard Unger for this job.

In addition to a pacification chief, we need a stronger requirements planning group in Saigon to deal with the real problem of resource allocation. But we think this could be done by finding the right first-rate bureaucrats. We do not see room in Saigon for a business executive. There is agreement that MACV and AID have plenty of management.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Memos to the President—McGeorge Bundy, vol. 18, Secret.