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Immediate Release

SCHOLARS AND UNITED STATES

OFFICIALS EXAMINE POLITICAL

DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

Racine, Wisconsin -- A group of thirty leading scholars and United States government specialists discussed the development of political and social forces in war-torn South Vietnam at Wingspread, conference center of The Johnson Foundation, May 14 and 15, 1967.

Among the participants in the off-the-record discussions was Vu Van Thai, former South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States.

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Looking to the future of South Vietnam, the specialists and government representatives examined the influence of elite groups in Vietnamese politics, social forces and political institutions, rural political development and forces of political change in South Vietnam. The two-day meeting was convened by the Council of Vietnamese Studies of the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, which is under the auspices of The Asia Society and the Agency for International Development (AID). The conference was carried out with the cooperation of The Johnson Foundation.

Under the chairmanship of Robert Miller, specialist on Vietnam in the State Department, one conference panel examined the interaction between social forces and political institutions. The panel included: Ithiel De Sola Pool of the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Milton Sacks of Brandeis University; Robert Johnson, of the Policy Planning Council of the Department of State; and Robert Tilman of Yale University.

Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University served as conference chairman and also presided during a discussion of rural political development in South Vietnam, with papers presented by John Donnell and Charles Joiner, of Temple University, and Edward Mitchell, of The Rand Corporation. A member of the staff of the World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), J. Price Gittinger, and Professor John Montgomery, of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, also participated in this panel discussion.

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In another session, the role of elite groups in Vietnam was discussed by a panel under the chairmanship of Wesley Fishel, of Michigan State University. Professor Fishel also serves as an advisor to the United States government.

The implications for research of United States involvement in Vietnamese policy-making was discussed in an evening session by Kenneth Young, Chairman of the Asia Society, and formerly United States Ambassador to Thailand.

During the final session of the conference, the forces for political change in South Vietnam were discussed by John Bennett of the Agency for International Development and Ambassador Vu Van Thai. A complete list of participants in the meetings is attached.

At the conclusion of the conference, Leslie Paffrath, President of The Johnson Foundation, noted that "This conference on the political development of Vietnam has been an appropriate continuation of the broad-focus concern of the Foundation's Trustees over recent years for Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and China. This concern has been not only for the military aspects of United States involvement in South Vietnam, but for the economic, political and social development of Southeast Asia. Earlier conferences supported by The Johnson Foundation included a Wingspread Briefing on Vietnam in March, 1964, and a symposium, "Prospects for Southeast Asia," held in September, 1965.

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"The Trustees of The Johnson Foundation place a high priority on support for deliberations between officials of the United States government and independent specialists. The Wingspread conference just completed was of this order, and the topic of Vietnam's future could not be more timely."

WINGSPREAD

THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION

RACINE, WISCONSIN 53401

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM

May 14 - 15, 1967

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

John Bennett
VN/P/RD
Agency for International Development
New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20523

Edward C. Britton
The Rand Corporation
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 90405

George A. Carver, Jr.
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

John Donnell
Department of Political Science
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 18144

Russell Fifield
Department of Political Science
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Wesley Fishel
Department of Political Science
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

J. Price Gittinger
World Bank
1313 H Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Allan Goodman
Harvard University
56 Perkins Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

William Henderson
The China Institute
125 East 65th Street
New York, New York 10021

Samuel Huntington
Center of International Affairs
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Robert Johnson
Policy Planning Council
State Department
New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20520

Charles A. Joiner
Department of Political Science
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122

H. Charles Ladenheim
VN/P/RD
Agency for International Development
Room 2841, New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20523

John McAlister
Woodrow Wilson School
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Robert Miller
FE/VN State Department
Room 5207
New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20520

Edward Mitchell
The Rand Corporation
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 90405

John Montgomery
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Littauer 119
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

James Osborn
The Asia Society
112 East 64th Street
New York, New York 10021

Leslie Paffrath
President
The Johnson Foundation
Racine, Wisconsin

Guy Pauker
The Rand Corporation
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 90405

Ithiel de Sola Pool
Center for International Studies
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
E 53-401 Hermann Building
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Milton Sacks
Department of Politics
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

Robert Scalapino
Department of Political Science
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Robert Scigliano
Department of Political Science
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Charles Sweet
Agency for International Development
New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20523

Robert O. Tilman
Department of Political Science
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

Sheldon Turner
VN/P/PRE
Agency for International Development
New State Building
Washington, D.C. 20523

Vu Van Thai
3000 Glenhill Lane
Chevy Chase, Maryland

David Wurfel
Department of Political Science
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Kenneth T. Young
Chairman
The Asia Society
112 East 64th Street
New York, New York 10021

Staff Members - The Johnson Foundation:

Leslie Paffrath, President
Kenneth A. Kautzer, Administrative
Assistant
Mrs. Lilian May, Program Assistant