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Henry

Revised version -  
New point  
is No. 1

B

D R A F T

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

From: Henry A. Kissinger  
General Goodpaster

The State Department is proposing a change in NSDM 2 that would require policy papers prepared by NSC Interdepartmental Groups for the NSC to be transmitted through the Secretary of State to the NSC Review Group.

This arrangement is in basic conflict with the concept of direct channels of tasking and response between Interdepartmental Groups and the NSC Review Group, which was the basis on which we proposed retaining the IRG's. It is inconsistent with a strong NSC system in several ways:

1. Unless transmittal were purely pro forma, and hence meaningless, it would carry the power to review, to return for revision, or to re-schedule all functions that should lie with the NSC machinery.
2. The proposal thus retains the idea of State Department control over what reaches the President in the NSC, and when.
3. When the Secretary reviews the substance of the paper in transmitting it, his action freezes the position of the State Department man on the NSC Review Group, which should be free to examine papers from a broad Presidential perspective.
4. The proposed arrangement constricts the Interdepartmental Groups in preparing policy papers to the scope and context of State Department functions, rather than giving them, fully and directly, the broader perspective of Presidential security concerns.

(Please note that this proposal does not involve operational aspects of "interdepartmental activities of the US Government overseas," for which you have assigned responsibility to the Secretary of State. This proposal relates to policy papers.)

In overall effect, the proposal would keep the issue open as to whether you are going to have a State Department oriented system rather than an NSC oriented system. To make clear it is to be an NSC oriented system, the proposal should be rejected.

*topping to get the  
what is done in  
Victims, in Paris, must be  
by its advocates*

ALTERNATIVES

*a favorable outcome  
(i.e., at least a  
partial*

These alternatives present a broad range of possibilities including, but not limited to, all of the alternatives now advocated within the Government. Each alternative is intended to be a coherent military, political and negotiating strategy. The alternatives are grouped according to basic national objectives. The first three are oriented to victory, the next three to a compromise settlement, and the last to extrication. The military strategies described under alternatives I, II, III, could be used to pursue the objectives described under alternatives IV, and V. Other options are possible, based on different combinations of military and negotiating strategies. *Along with all options, would go continued pacification efforts, including local security attacks on the VC infrastructure*

A. Strategies Aimed at Communist "Fade Away" or Negotiated "Victory"

I. Military Escalation.

Expanded military operations, from resumption of bombing, or ground operations into Cambodia, to limited or full invasion of North Vietnam, aimed at obtaining withdrawal of all Communist subversive forces in 1-2 years with maintenance of current GVN. *and continued effort to build and strengthen political and military institutions throughout the country*

II. Current Military Posture.

Continue current force levels and pressures, aimed at withdrawal or destruction of all NVA/VC forces and structure in 1-2 years (but perhaps longer), leaving current GVN in power. We would insist in Paris on withdrawal of all Communist forces.

III. Small Unit Counter-Insurgency Strategy.

Radical restructuring of U.S. and ARVN into small units deployed with RF/PF throughout populated areas and supported by large reserve system and improved police activities. Tacit threat in negotiations that with such changes, U.S. can remain in Vietnam a long time and put meaningful pressure on NLF.

B. Strategies Aimed at Compromise Settlement

IV. Negotiated Political Compromise Settlement; With Alternative Military Strategies.

Seek to negotiate in Paris a compromise political settlement involving a coalition government or elections. Mutual withdrawal or cease-fire acceptable only as part of an agreed overall settlement.

V. Negotiate Mutual Withdrawal Only; With Alternative Military Strategies.

Seek to negotiate in Paris a mutual withdrawal with Hanoi *only*, rather than involving the US directly in negotiations for a political settlement.

VI. Substantial Reduction in U.S. Presence While Seeking Compromise Settlement.

Withdrawal of between 100,000 and 200,000 men in the first year and probably additional withdrawals thereafter, while seeking to negotiate a compromise settlement. Willingness to stay indefinitely at reduced level (and reduced cost) to be used to bargain for NVA withdrawal in exchange for total U.S. withdrawal.

C. Strategy to Extricate the U.S.

VII. Unilateral Withdrawal of All U.S. Forces.

This course involves a U.S. decision (publicly announced, now or later) to withdraw all U.S. forces from SVN in one or two years, whether or not an agreement is reached in Paris. It has no advocates within the US Government, but might become necessary if some of the other alternatives failed.

I. MILITARY ESCALATION AIMED AT COMMUNIST "FADE-AWAY"  
OR NEGOTIATED "VICTORY"

Expanded military operations, from resumption of bombing, or ground operations into Cambodia, to limited or full invasion of North Vietnam, aimed at obtaining withdrawal of all Communist subversive forces in 1-2 years with maintenance of current GVN.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. Military victory - South Vietnam is on its way to victory with the present course (some would say it has "already been won," i.e. assured), but DRV may not yet recognize or accept this. Even with present constraints, the enemy will probably crack within 12-24 months. But with escalated pressure, victory would come sooner.

2. Present constraints allow the defeat of the enemy's army in South Vietnam, but prevent its complete destruction, which cannot be done as long as the enemy's zone of communications remains a sanctuary. He can rebuild his forces and threaten again the security of South Vietnam if he is not destroyed once and for all. The military measures proposed below would cost more in casualties and dollars, but would make possible a U.S. withdrawal--about as soon as by any other approach (i.e. 1-3 years)--that would leave a non-Communist GVN much safer in both the short and long run than any other approach.

3. The credible threat, explicit or tacit, of unrestricted bombing or limited invasion of North Vietnam might well (some would say, probably) cause the DRV to accept our conditions for victory immediately.

4. U.S. public opinion and U.S. allies will tolerate course, especially if DRV proves intransigent in Paris or, even more, if VC/NVA fail to de-escalate or increase activity. Risk of strong response by Soviets or Chinese, for anything short of full invasion, is slight.

B. Military Actions

1. Option A. ~~Resume pre-Tet pattern of operations: increase ground operations against base areas, seek maximum attrition of NVA/Main Force units, resume bombing of North Vietnam either up to 20° or on earlier pattern.~~ *continue maximum pressure against VC/NVA main force units in SVN and accelerate military operations.*

2. Option B. Conduct air and ground operations in Cambodia and increase ground operations in Laos aimed at closing VC supply routes, destroying units, stockpiles and logistic facilities.

3. Option C. Unrestricted bombing of North Vietnam, including Hanoi, Haiphong and facilities near Chinese border, and mining of Haiphong, aimed to destroy will and capability of DRV to support insurgency in South Vietnam.

*options. In combination with other options, in all cases continue to expand and intensify the attack on enemy local forces, guerrillas and infrastructure.*

4. Option D. Limited invasion of North Vietnam and Laos; amphibious landing in southern North Vietnam (perhaps in vicinity of Vinh) and perhaps move from Thailand into Laos, leading to a line of ground forces within and across southern North Vietnam and Laos to the Thai border, to prevent infiltration and cut off NVA troops in South Vietnam.

5. Option E. Any combination of above.

6. Option F. Full-scale invasion of North Vietnam, aiming at downfall of DRV and permanent elimination of North Vietnamese Communist efforts and threat to foment insurgency in Southeast Asia.

C. Paris

*a favorable outcome*

1. ~~Accept GVN lead in negotiations on the assumption it will insist on victory conditions, i.e., withdrawal of all Communist forces and apparatus from SVN, Laos, and Cambodia, except individuals reconciled to current GVN.~~

2. Accept no restriction on U.S. assistance to allow RVNAF to cope with residual security threats after U.S. withdrawal.

D. GVN

1. ~~Emphasize need for stability; support present government;~~ *extend pacification.*
2. ~~Urge but not demand reforms and~~ *Press hard for* improvement of RVNAF.

E. Cost

1. Budget costs increase over current \$24 billion/year.
2. Casualties increase over current level (200 fatalities per week). *for the more extensive options.*
3. Larger U.S. force-level in Southeast Asia--perhaps needed for Option A, probably for Option B, required for Options D and F--would require mobilization of reserves in the U.S.
4. For limited or full-scale invasion of North Vietnam, planning factors on which to base estimate of costs and fatalities are not known, but in any case should be regarded as subject to great uncertainty; upper limits are presently not calculable.

F. Consequences

1. Of those who believe that present course will lead to victory in 12-24 months, some believe various forms of escalation could bring it sooner, more surely, and more permanently, with the very threat or onset of the higher levels (all-out bombing, limited or full invasion of North Vietnam, options C, D or F) likely to bring major concessions from DRV. Many of these would hold that if the present military course should--contrary to their expectations--fail to bring victory close, escalation would remain as the only path to victory. (There are no known advocates of full-scale invasion [Option F] at present, but it might find proponents should C or D be tried and fails.)

2. Most others believe that <sup>sustained maximum pressure</sup> ~~Return to pre-Tet pattern~~ or expanded operations in Laos and Cambodia (Options A and B) would simply fail, at high cost, either to win victory or even to bring a favorable settlement nearer, and that this is probably true of the other options as well, at a much higher level of cost and risk. They also believe that each level of escalation would reduce obstacles and, in failing, increase pressures to go to higher levels, at still higher costs and with increasingly significant risks of confronting larger participation in the war by China or Russia.

3. U.S. domestic opposition to any of these measures and especially to mobilizing reserves, could strongly encourage Hanoi to hold out, without concessions, until U.S. forced to withdraw.

G. Options in Case of Failure

1. U.S. domestic opposition, almost inevitably aroused by any of these options, would probably preclude shift, in case of failure, to strategies requiring continued large-scale combat involvement in South Vietnam for a prolonged period (e.g., Alternatives II, III, or VI).

2. Failure at any one of these levels of escalation would probably confront policy-makers with a choice between escalating still further or arranging to phase out of Vietnam relatively quickly (i.e., unilateral withdrawal or compromise settlements with minimal requirements on an "acceptable" compromise). Critics are especially concerned about the likelihood of pressures to recoup lost U.S. prestige by escalating further, and ultimately--especially after failure of all-out bombing or of limited invasion--to undertake the incalculable costs of full-scale invasion.

H. Unknowns

- No basis for estimating <sup>with any confidence</sup> whether the present course (or these options) would bring the war to an end in 12-24 months. Does appear that major progress + improvement could be achieved
- Considerable uncertainty as to reaction of China + Russia
- Very difficult to estimate the intensity of U.S. domestic reaction, particularly adverse reaction both during first few months and if the fighting goes beyond that time.
- Also difficult to estimate the effects on Hanoi attitude regarding <sup>the direct</sup> continuing <sup>getting</sup> war; this applies both to effects of military operations on these attitudes and to the effects of reactions to them.

II. CURRENT MILITARY POSTURE AIMED AT COMMUNIST  
"FADE-AWAY" OR NEGOTIATED VICTORY"

Continue current force levels and pressures, aimed at withdrawal or destruction of all NVA/VC forces and structure in 1-2 years (but perhaps longer), leaving current GVN in power. We would insist in Paris on withdrawal of all Communist forces with current GVN in power.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. Current levels of U.S. troops, costs, and casualties -- at least for the time required to win DRV acceptance of US/GVN victory (variously estimated: from few months to 3-4 years) -- are acceptable domestically in the U.S., and justified by international advantages of victory.

2. No risk of a major dramatic setback, because Viet Cong/North Vietnam cannot carry out or will not accept costs of major attacks within next 18 months; or if they try, only result will be their visible defeat and further weakening.

3. Although RVNAF improvement is marked, it cannot justify sizeable U.S. troop reductions in next 12-18 months. "Streamlining" to extent of 50,000 troops, ~~might be possible, though even this~~ might have undesirable psychological effects on both GVN and Hanoi.

4. Some advocates propose

5. Preferable to keep up current military pressure till assured, verified victory conditions achieved, than to accept prior cease-fire, de-escalation, or major U.S. reduction in forces (even if accompanied by NVA withdrawals).

B. Military Actions

1. Maintain present U.S. force level.  
Modification: Reduce U.S. forces by limited amount -- 50-75,000 -- designed and declared to be merely "streamlining," with no effect on combat role or strength (feasibility has not been evaluated).

2. Continue current military operations: i.e., emphasis on defense of Saigon and other cities; ~~multi-battalion~~ sweeps, and cordons; increasing U.S. artillery and air support to RVNAF, and re-equipping of RVNAF; military/policy efforts against Vietcong Infrastructure.

and operations into Communist base areas

wide-spread, intensive patrolling and intelligence collection; combat

3. This document has been reviewed pursuant to E.O. 13526 and has been determined to be declassified. aid expand operations in Laos and Cambodia with this possible

of Communist withdrawal (vs local forces, guerrillas + VC) + pacification for several more months. At the present time, it appears we does not permit US reduction now - must observe results. but the practical feasibility of doing this has not been evaluated by responsible committees and it

expansion

*favorable outcome*

C. Paris

1. Let GVN take lead in negotiations on assumption GVN will insist on ~~victory conditions~~: i.e., withdrawal of all Communist forces and apparatus from South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos except individuals reconciled to current GVN.
2. Until convinced of DRV/VC intent to abide by victory terms, avoid ceasefire, de-escalation and withdrawals.

D. GVN

1. Avoid destabilizing pressures on GVN to reform or broaden base; continue low key encouragement toward these.
2. *Make clear to that (but unremittng)* ~~Assure GVN of~~ continued support and large-scale U.S. military presence ~~[till victory assured]~~ *is conditioned upon effective GVN performance including cooperation in negotiations*
3. Discourage ~~GVN/NLF talks or~~ accession to power of Vietnam elements inclined to major compromise.

E. Costs

1. Financial costs continue at current rate of about \$24 billion per year.
2. *Present operations* ~~Viet Cong~~ can continue to impose <sup>*(substantially)*</sup> 200 U.S. casualties a week. (If willing to accept higher casualties themselves, VC/NVA could impose <sup>*100*</sup> ~~much~~ higher loss-rate on U.S.)
3. If 50,000 non-combat troops removed in 1969, costs reduced by \$1 billion by 1970. *Somewhat*

F. Consequences

1. Most proponents now predict "victory" achieved in South Vietnam within 18-24 months, with or without explicit settlement with DRV; a few believe conditions already substantially achieved, settlement possible almost immediately. Some who accept assumptions above believe victory attainable but will take 3-5 years (some of these still prefer this option, some prefer escalation for quicker win, others some form of compromise).

2. ~~But~~ *these* Others reject all beliefs above and believe "victory" unlikely short of 5 years, or possibly ever, by this approach. And they would sharply question

NVA/VC

whether <sup>will be</sup> current costs were acceptable to the U.S. public over two or more years even if victory resulted, especially if "progress" were slow and ambiguous. If, as they expect, the strategy had not brought victory close within two years, once more refuting in public eyes apparently optimistic official beliefs (especially if the ~~we~~ had managed to mount major attacks), they would expect strong public pressure to accept "any" settlement or to carry out unilateral withdrawal.

G. Options in Case of Failure

1. If "victory" were not demonstrably near within 12-18 months, pressure might be strong either to escalate or to phase out of Vietnam relatively rapidly; i.e., it would be politically difficult (though conceivable) to shift to a restructured counter-insurgency program (Option III) or to sustain moderate forces (100-200,000) for a prolonged period (Option VI) or to set strong terms for a compromise political settlement (Option IV).

2. Mutual withdrawal (Option V) could still be chosen as a negotiating aim. However, the U.S. domestic controversy then probably prevailing would encourage Hanoi (unless it was substantially weakened) to become recalcitrant in negotiations, and to await unilateral United States withdrawal. (Threats of escalation could be combined with compromise offers, but might be less credible than earlier).

3. Unilateral U.S. withdrawal (Option VII) would probably become a live option, with strong advocates in Congress and the public. Or, if measures of escalation were tried and failed, pressure for unilateral withdrawal could become strong even sooner.

establishes bargaining centers in the negotiations

H. Unknowns

No basis for <sup>confident estimate</sup> ~~the~~ whether <sup>this course</sup> can be seen, the war to <sup>lead in</sup> 12-24 months. Does appear that major progress and improvement could be achieved. <sup>id to estimate</sup> reaction within the U.S., although the steps of Option I tending to inflame opposition opinion. Likewise, the effects on Hanoi are still hard to estimate. Not clear whether <sup>with view to</sup> accepting another offensive, posing a threat-in-being, or

III. SMALL UNIT COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY  
AIMED AT COMMUNIST "FADE-AWAY OR  
NEGOTIATED "VICTORY"

Radical restructuring of U.S. and ARVN into small units deployed with RF/PF throughout populated areas and supported by large reserve system and improved police activities. Emphasis on protecting population and neutralizing enemy political and logistical support system. Enemy units in remote areas harassed but not engaged in major battles. Tacit threat in negotiations that with such changes, U.S. can remain in Vietnam a long time and put meaningful pressure on NLF.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. Low prospects of achieving negotiated victory or "fade-away" with current strategy.
2. New military tactics and police/intelligence efforts can destroy local forces and guerrillas, while holding off NVA/VC main forces.
3. The enemy, facing unfavorable trends and lacking logistical and operational support by local forces and guerrillas, will find it increasingly difficult to operate and become easier for U.S. to identify and destroy.
4. This approach is likely to lead to victory -- by gaining us control of the population -- while present military course, or even escalation cannot.
5. Given stakes, it is worth trying to implement this approach, though major changes in U.S. Army practices required. These will be difficult to achieve at best and may not be attainable. They certainly will require Presidential and Cabinet-level initiative and monitoring.

B. Military

1. Military-police actions designed to protect the population and to cut the sources of VC regeneration and NVA logistical support rather than aiming at casualties and gains in terrain.
2. Economy of force by concentrating upon populated lowlands and highland district capitals, deferring efforts to drive enemy out of remainder of the highlands. This reduces enemy main force confrontations until after his regenerative and logistical support capacity has been cut.
3. Conversion of the highlands and DMZ area into an in-depth ambush zone.

4. Transformation of part of American combat support and combat service support into light infantry (possibly adapting U.S. Army organization flexibly to Vietnamese conditions).

5. Assign small U.S. units, supported by reserves and artillery, throughout the rural populated areas to bolster a revitalized GVN territorial security system.

6. Revolutionary Forces and Popular Forces integrated with U.S. detachments for greater effectiveness and better morale, equipment, logistical support, and training. Portions of ARVN combined with American units.

7. Major effort addressed to RVNAF leadership problems: officer selection, promotion, and command discipline (aim to reduce impact of corruption and bring competence toward level achieved by Communist Vietnamese military).

8. Fully coordinated, professionalized Vietnamese-U.S. intelligence effort against Communist apparatus, integrated with military activities at all levels.

9. U.S. forces could be reduced under this option by emphasizing reductions in less essential categories of personnel. Possibly as many as 250,000 troops might be withdrawn over several years and more thereafter, reflecting changes in aims, strategy, Vietnamese role, and improvement and U.S. organization.

#### C. Paris

1. Avoid substantial U.S. withdrawal or formal cease-fire until victory negotiated or "fade-away" achieved or strategy proves unsuccessful (at least 18-24 months for test).

2. Confront DRV negotiators with the tacit threat that the U.S. can remain in Vietnam for a long time, given reduction of U.S. forces and reliance upon tactics designed to reduce U.S. casualties.

#### D. GVN

1. Overhaul police and territorial security forces: Improve leadership, training, discipline, etc., and try to create an effective territorial security force by merging Revolutionary Forces, Popular Forces, National Police and other units into a single organization.

2. Greatly increased incentives to RVNAF troops, especially Revolutionary and Popular Forces: pay, dependents' benefits, housing, along with stronger discipline against misbehavior toward civilian population.

*it seems to follow  
a process that*

*much of what is proposed is being  
done now, plus intensive operations  
essentially wearing sustained  
pressure on enemy main force units  
and base areas, and command liaison  
routes. They point out that relief*

3. Strong pressure on GVN to broaden government participation and base of support; to promote cohesion of non-Communist elements; to appoint local representative, competent and responsive province and district officials.

*of pressure on these units, and screening operations would permit resumption of attacks on*

F. Consequences

1. A favorable consequence will either be NVA-VC "fade-away" or willingness to agree to a negotiated victory, or (more likely) major concessions in an attempt to preempt completion of our effort before VC suffers too much damage.

*major cities and towns*

2. An unfavorable consequence will be the long time required for the strategy to produce a military victory. Six to twelve months required for the programs to be instituted, 12-24 months for significant results to appear; at least 4-5 years to achieve military victory.

*and disruption of pacification, though including heavy attacks on small friendly territorial security units.*

3. However, should this strategy fall short of the expected success -- which should become apparent within 1-2 years -- it would nonetheless have improved our bargaining position for a compromise settlement.

*Also,*

4. Opponents of this strategy point out that the U.S. forces at village level throughout countryside may make U.S. presence more visible and provoke anti-American reactions among populace.

*how? spell out*

G. Options in the Event of Failure

1. The U.S. could escalate militarily if failure attributable to massive NVA intervention (Alternative I).

2. The U.S. might still obtain a compromise settlement -- although the terms would be lowered by the fact of failure. (However, the presence of U.S. forces at village level could make mutual withdrawal even more difficult.)

3. The U.S. could still extricate itself. (Alternate VII).

H. Unknowns

*whether VC/NVA can be kept from making major inroads under this concept (73% of population (ref. A 2), whether enemy's logistical capacity can be cut (ref. B 2), whether U.S. forces could be reduced (ref. B 9), what reaction in U.S. if VC/NVA score major successes*

*what reaction in SVN? Could government survive?*

IV. NEGOTIATED POLITICAL COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT;  
CONTINUE CURRENT MILITARY POSTURE

Seek to negotiate in Paris a compromise political settlement. This might involve a coalition government negotiated prior to new elections in South Vietnam, or elections under proper safeguards, the outcome of which may either lead to a coalition government or to the acceptance of the legitimacy of the NLF as a political party. Mutual withdrawal or cease-fire acceptable only as part of an agreed overall settlement.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. There are sufficient elements of common interest among all South Vietnamese to warrant the search for a formula of political compromise that would create an independent, neutralist state in the South, supported by its principal political forces.

2. Given the costs of pursuing victory in continued war with U.S. forces in Vietnam, the Communists might believe (rightly or wrongly) their prospects for achieving dominance in South Vietnam in a political contest are good enough to accept a compromise formula that halts major violence, even one that does not guarantee them success or makes it unlikely in the short run, so long as it leads to U.S. withdrawal.

3. U.S. active participation in the search for a political solution through negotiation in Paris is necessary to get a political compromise, is likely to result in more satisfactory results and, in particular, decreases the possibility of NLF coming to power by violent means than if the Vietnamese were left to settle the conflict on their own. The expected outcome of U.S. efforts outweighs the risks involved in the U.S. assuming greater responsibilities for the immediate settlement and indirectly for later developments that may result therefrom.

4. Some advocates concede that this process could lead to the NLF coming to power by peaceful means but believe that running this risk is acceptable.

B. Military Actions

1. Although this political strategy is compatible with each of the military strategies outlined in options I, II, III, and VI, most proponents favor continuing the current military strategy. They view escalation as unnecessary and likely to increase the cost of accepting a political compromise, and view "small-unit" counter-insurgency strategy as infeasible. Some proponents of a substantial U.S. reduction believe we should negotiate a political compromise (see VI below)

C. Paris Negotiations

1. U.S. participates in direct negotiations concerning the terms of a political compromise including such matters as composition of the Government and election procedures.

2. Negotiate mutual withdrawal of forces with DRV only as part of a political settlement.

D. Relations with GVN

1. Use our leverage on GVN to induce rapidly a genuine policy of accommodation with all non-Communist political forces in South Vietnam, such as militant Buddhists, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, Montagnards, in order to broaden support for the GVN in its negotiations with the NLF.

2. Threaten GVN with complete withdrawal of U.S. support (which would immediately raise the specter of a coup against the present team) or even with unilateral withdrawal from South Vietnam, if it does not negotiate in good faith with the NLF.

E. Costs

1. Casualties and budget costs depend on military strategy pursued while compromise is being negotiated.

2. After the political settlement is agreed, a cease-fire would probably result, which together with U.S. withdrawal would reduce cost rapidly; a saving of \$11 billion with a cease-fire and saving the remainder as U.S. forces are phased out.

F. Consequences

1. Proponents argue that successful negotiations, although they probably will take 12-18 months, could lead to a non-Communist South Vietnam, viable for at least 5 years. NLF coming to power by violence is unlikely.

2. Others argue that such negotiations will almost certainly take 2-3 years at current costs and fatality levels. U.S. will have to put great pressure on Saigon thereby incurring great responsibility for the settlement and for maintaining agreed political structures. Some critics believe that NLF will almost certainly take over in 2-3 years of U.S. and NVN withdraw and NLF incorporation into political life in the South.

*Handwritten notes:*  
Saigon  
to  
disintegrate  
- military  
- political

*Handwritten note:*  
a high likelihood that the Saigon government will disintegrate, probably to be followed by a military coup. Even if the U.S. were successful at present

G. Options in case of failure

The U.S. could expand its military operations if it believes Hanoi is being intransigent or reduce or withdraw its forces if it believes Saigon is not negotiating in good faith.

V. NEGOTIATE MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL ONLY

Seek to negotiate in Paris a mutual withdrawal with Hanoi, only, rather than involving the US directly in negotiations for a political settlement.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. On the one hand, mutual U.S.-NVA withdrawal could give the GVN a ~~fair~~ <sup>good</sup> chance to overcome the VC insurgency gradually. Afterwards, it might survive, like South Korea, with an acceptable level of U.S. support.

2. On the other hand, should the GVN and RVNAF be defeated eventually by the VC, the United States could accept such a Communist take-over in SVN, since it would have resulted from a primarily indigenous conflict. The principal U.S. objective of repelling external aggression would have been met.

3. Hanoi might be willing to run the risk of leaving the VC to fight GVN forces or to compete politically after a cease-fire, provided U.S. forces are withdrawing and unlikely to return. The alternative risk of continuing the war for many years might seem worse to them.

4. Mutual withdrawal could be agreed upon and carried out within three years. Indeed, this might be the only important issue on which we and Hanoi could agree. And such an agreement would be the one objective for which domestic support in the United States is least divided.

B. Military Levels and Actions

1. In one variant, the United States would not initiate withdrawal (or would stop it), unless NVA ~~went along with a tacit or explicit deescalation that, in effect, permitted~~ <sup>also withdrew, thus permitting</sup> the GVN forces to maintain their present partial control of SVN, and ~~to the extent possible under the deescalation understanding permitted the GVN to~~ attempt to extend this control. (Some would advocate that only under these conditions should mutual withdrawal be sought.)

a. U.S. forces play role of reserve reaction for SVN forces, providing needed air and artillery support, but refraining from offensives to broaden GVN control of countryside.

b. U.S. continues to provide military and advisory assistance to GVN. (Under the Accelerated Modernization Program -- if successful -- the SVN forces would have significant manpower and firepower advantage over residual enemy forces.)

2. In another variant, mutual withdrawal would take place without deescalation or a cease-fire. In this case, ~~US forces and RVNAF~~ <sup>might</sup> would have to concentrate on the defense of areas now controlled by them, or even consolidate some of these areas.

3. In further variants, the U.S. might seek to negotiate a formally agreed mutual withdrawal, while pursuing the current military strategy (Alternative II), or escalatory or counterinsurgency strategies (Alternatives I and III)

C. Paris

1. U.S. would not participate in negotiations regarding a political settlement in SVN.

2. The principal choice lies between a formally agreed mutual withdrawal and a tacitly coordinated withdrawal. If an attempt to obtain an agreed mutual withdrawal succeeds, it would have the advantages that:

a. there would be a clear expression, politically useful both for the GVN and the United States, that the main purpose of the U.S. involvement had been accomplished -- hence U.S. withdrawal was appropriate.

b. in the event of major NVA re-entry, the United States would have a better political justification for retaliatory reescalation -- hence against large main unit re-invasion the agreed mutual withdrawal might give better deterrence than a tacit arrangement.

but the disadvantages that:

c. depending on the terms of the agreement, the U.S. troop reductions might be frozen into a specific schedule -- denying the United States flexibility for slower or faster reductions.

d. if the agreement provided specifically for total withdrawal, ~~the~~ final implementation would put us at a disadvantage: U.S. troops are clearly identified, NVA soldiers are not. In particular, there are the vexing issues of NVA cadres in VC units and of the Regroupees.

*if we do not retain some power of unilateral verification, verification will be a great problem.*

3. If the choice is for a formally agreed withdrawal, ~~the question arises whether~~ the United States ~~should~~ insist on Hanoi's agreement also to withdraw ~~(or at least not to increase)~~ its forces in Laos ~~and~~ Cambodia.

*would have to*  
*Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam*

D. GVN

1. Try to maintain good relations with GVN, but not at the price of holding up bilateral talks with Hanoi.

2. Give encouragement and economic aid, but don't press for reforms and concessions, ~~(except, perhaps, for some territorial consolidation under the second variant above)~~ ?

3. Consider retaining an advisory team even after withdrawal. (This is not precluded by the Manila formula, which just refers to "forces," not all personnel.)

E. Cost

1. Budgetary savings from withdrawals per year:

a. Without deescalation, \$3 billion per 100,000 U.S. ground troops withdrawn less \$2.5 billion for building up RVNAF. Reduction of air forces to one-third of present level will save an additional \$5 billion.

b. With cease-fire, \$11 billion (in ordinance, attrition, etc.) plus \$1.5 billion per 100,000 U.S. troops withdrawn and \$2 billion for reducing air forces to one-third.

F. Consequences

1. GVN forces, even with diminishing U.S. role, would be able to prevent VC overrunning major population centers and could ~~provide strong challenge to VC in~~ countryside (depending on deescalation understanding). ~~Under strong pressure from the VC, RVNAF might feel compelled to withdraw to District Towns, leaving the countryside to the VC; under these circumstances it might be preferable for RVNAF to consolidate territorially, abandoning certain districts to VC control.~~

*probably extend their control in the*

2. *Some analysts believe that*

3. After U.S. withdrawal completed, present leadership structure of GVN would probably change, with degree of eventual Communist influence determined by reactions of other SVN political groups (Hoa Hao, Catholics, Buddhists, etc.) and cohesion and effectiveness of GVN forces.

4. *Unless NVA forces were also removed from Cambodia and the Laotian peninsula, the danger would exist that they could quickly intervene, with damaging effect, after U.S. forces had gone.*

G. Options in Case of Failure

1. If Hanoi refused to agree to mutual withdrawal (or failed to carry it out), the U.S. could pursue its current military strategy to obtain a Communist "fade-away" or a victory (Alternative II), or it could escalate or otherwise change its military strategy (Alternative III and I). Alternatively, the U.S. could reduce its forces while building up RVNAF (Alternative VI).

*forces had gone.*

2. If NVA forces were reintroduced after most of US forces withdrawn, U.S. could escalate (Alternative I) or perhaps return to current military posture (Alternative II) by reintroducing troops.

3. If VC defeated GVN, or GVN collapsed for other reasons, see above point A.2.

Unknowns -

- whether Hanoi will agree
  - whether they would fulfill their agreement
  - whether U.S. opinion will hold firm
- during what may be protracted negotiations*

*W. L. ...*

VI. SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN U.S. PRESENCE WHILE SEEKING COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT

Withdrawal of between 100,000 and 200,000 men in the first year and probably additional withdrawals thereafter, while seeking to negotiate a compromise settlement. For the first few months, however, essentially no U. S. troops withdrawn and strategy not revealed in effort to negotiate mutual withdrawal with NVN. Afterwards, preferred mode of implementation is to obtain GVN approval of a schedule for withdrawal and continuing growth of RVNAF capability, so as to get down to 100,000 men by the end of 1971. Willingness to stay indefinitely at reduced level (and reduced cost) to be used to bargain for NVA withdrawal in exchange for total U.S. withdrawal.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. U.S. must remain in SVN for next several years to prevent NLF takeover based on NVN military force. *(unless NVA withdraws)*

2. Domestic political realities in the U.S., as well as need to motivate improved GVN/RVNAF performance, require a reduction in U.S. forces in the short run. Moreover, a substantial reduction in U.S. forces will make it possible politically to sustain U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

3. Even substantially reduced U.S. forces can prevent an NVA/VC victory, though not attain a quick friendly victory.

4. NVN has no incentive to reduce its commitment to the war as long as it believes U.S. support for the war is collapsing. Withdrawal of the U.S. forces will lead Hanoi to revise estimate of U.S. staying power upwards.

5. Favorable outcome depends on improved GVN and RVNAF performance. As long as the U.S. shows no firm signs of leaving, the GVN has limited incentive to reform and RVNAF limited incentive to increase its efforts. *less* *lead improve* *less*

6. Increased assumption of military responsibility by RVNAF will help prevent chances of collapse of U.S. domestic support for war.

7. Advocates of this alternative span a wide range of "optimism" or "pessimism" as to GVN/RVNAF response to U.S. reductions. Either view is consistent with a readiness to consider complete withdrawal if appropriate response is not forthcoming.

B. Military Activity

1. Withdrawal of between 100,000 and 200,000 men in the first year and probably more thereafter. Perhaps going down, so that only 100,000 would be left by December 1971.

2. As U.S. forces are withdrawn, the U.S. military effort would be limited to the protection of Saigon, protection of decreasing number of U.S. bases and substantial logistic and combat support for ARVN.

3. Press ARVN to take over major combat responsibilities. Give high priority to ARVN modernization; turn over to ARVN equipment of withdrawing U.S. forces; maintain high level of military aid and reduce U.S. fire support to ARVN only slowly.

4. Risk of NVA escalation to be deterred or met by (a) threat of resumption of bombing in North with former restraints relaxed, and (b) slow-down of U.S. troops withdrawal.

### C. Paris Negotiations

Two variants:

1. Limit negotiations to mutual withdrawal, de-escalation, P.O.W. release, and, perhaps, cease-fire.
2. Seeking compromise political settlement and NVA and U.S. withdrawal.

### D. GVN

1. Urge GVN to broaden and reform but not threaten to cut off aid.
2. As complement to reduction in military presence, U.S. should limit its prominence in non-military aspects as well.

### E. Costs

1. Annual financial cost reduced from \$25 billion to \$8-10 billion by December 1971.
2. Casualties decline in proportion to troop withdrawal.

### F. Consequences

1. *The proponents point out* U.S. would find it easier to stay in SVN for an indefinite period at reduced cost.
2. *They believe that the* Outcome in SVN will depend on whether GVN/ARVN pulls itself together, collapses, or negotiates with the NLF. There is ample room for differing judgment on what will happen.

3. If Hanoi withdraws in response, result would be de facto mutual withdrawal.

4. *sustains* If Hanoi *and particularly if it increases* increases its level of effort, result could be Communist control of much of SVN. Hanoi may step up its infiltration in an effort to demonstrate to U.S. that its alternatives are a high military effort or total withdrawal. Deterrence of this move may depend on the effectiveness of the threat of resumed bombing in North Vietnam, a slowdown of troop withdrawals, or both.

*The opponents point out that*

*of political disintegration would be serious.*

5. The prospect that the U.S. would find a sizable presence sustainable indefinitely (because it had reduced costs) would press Hanoi to agree to mutual withdrawal, unless it were willing to gamble on "forcing" U.S. out at high costs in casualties at the risk of a resumption of possibly increased penalties against the North.

G. Options in the Case of Failure

1. If U.S. troop reductions lead to open U.S.-GVN <sup>conflict</sup>, this could provoke down-fall of present GVN. Depending on further political developments in Saigon, this might (a) ~~lead to a reformed GVN with wider political support and/or a junior-officers coup which might be only way to reform RVNAF~~, or (b) a neutralist regime and breakdown of RVNAF, necessitating complete U.S. withdrawal and perhaps resulting in a Communist regime in South Vietnam. *or overthrown* *take the form of a military regime*

2. (a). If NVA/VC <sup>conducted sustained attacks, there would be</sup> concentrated their attacks against RVNAF units and keep defeating them, then US/MACV would probably have to encourage RVNAF to consolidate territory and give air and artillery support. *major likelihood that they could disrupt and reverse the pacification process, and make substantial gains in control of territory and population.*

(b). If NVA/VC attacked the residual U.S. forces, U.S. casualties would continue to be high, although less than current levels.

Under both 2a and 2b pressure might be great to escalate or withdraw completely. U.S. leverage to negotiate mutual withdrawal or a political settlement could be reduced if Hanoi believed U.S. would withdraw remaining troops even without a settlement.

Unknowns  
*whether allied forces could major inroads*  
Reaction in US  
Reaction of SVN  
Reaction of Hanoi

*serious*  
likelihood of  
by NVA/VC + major  
reverses to  
US, RVNAF,  
and  
pacification  
process

## VII. UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL OF ALL U.S. FORCES

This course involves a U.S. decision (publicly announced, now or later) to withdraw all U.S. forces from SVN in one or two years, whether or not an agreement is reached in Paris. It has no advocates within the U.S. Government, but might become necessary if some of the other alternatives failed.

### A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. The war is unwinnable (in acceptable ways). No matter what statistics might indicate or official reporters feel, our efforts cannot resolve the political problems that are at the heart of this war. We should therefore cut our losses and avoid unknown additional risks while we can, and devote resources and energies to other activities elsewhere.

2. The new Administration can successfully explain this course to the American people and other nations, particularly in its early days.

a. The American people will be receptive because many are disenchanted with the war, and because many believe that domestic priorities would benefit. (Public opinion has responded favorably to de-escalation and has favored escalation only "to get it over with." If no acceptable "get it over with" prospect is in sight, the public is likely to favor unilateral withdrawal.)

b. Other nations will accept our action because we have met our commitments by large investment in men and resources, and shown "wisdom" in accepting the situation.

3. It is important to start the withdrawal process now and complete it quickly because otherwise -- with every other option -- the new administration runs a risk of getting locked in (War transferred from Johnson to Nixon Administration rather than from U.S. to SVN).

4. The only way to get the SVN to try to negotiate a settlement with the NLF or to assume the burden of fighting is by credible announcement of actual full withdrawal.

5. Withdrawal "limits damage," saves lives, conserves resources now.

### B. Military Actions

1. U.S. forces are drawn down to zero, with possible exception of a MAAG.

2. U.S. immediately assumes posture suited for redeployment and for protection against enemy harassment.

C. Paris

1. U.S. tries to get cease-fire during withdrawal, and reiterates request for NVA withdrawal.

D. GVN

1. U.S. says it will continue to help present or other non-Communist forces as much as we can. Maintains a small force of technical advisers.

2. U.S. applies no pressure for reforms and is friendly to whatever GVN (or non-Communist in a coalition government) wants to do.

E. Cost

1. Fastest and surest way of reducing cost radically.
2. Fastest and surest way of reducing U.S. casualties.

F. Consequences

1. Probable collapse of GVN and Communist takeover, but possibility of non-Communist coalition government. SVN countryside quickly taken over by VC.

2. If U.S. withdrawal were slow, spread over 2 years or more, Communist might possibly step up attacks to speed up departure or to humiliate U.S. But much more likely that Communist would avoid risks of slowing or reversing U.S. withdrawal, desisting from attacks once withdrawal was clearly underway.

3. Possible very serious consequences in other Asian countries.

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15 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

Pursuant to our conversation by phone a week ago, I have prepared memoranda on the following four subjects:

- 1 - Security Affairs Staff Responsibilities Under President Eisenhower
- 2 - Organization and Procedures for the Conduct of National Security Affairs
- 3 - Priority List of Security Projects
- 4 - Defense Organization and Management Procedures

They are presented herewith for consideration, and as a basis for further discussion.



A. J. GOODPASTER  
General, United States Army

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12 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Security Affairs Staff Responsibilities Under  
President Eisenhower.

1. This note undertakes, in response to your request, to describe the organization of security affairs staff responsibilities under President Eisenhower as they existed at the close of his administration. While it is not complete (being produced only from memory) it does, I believe, cover the main essentials.

2. In broadest terms, international and security operations of a current nature involving the action of the President fell to me. National security policy and planning, plus security operations at the interdepartmental rather than the Presidential level, fell to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Obviously, the division was not so clear-cut as these words suggest. Moreover, each of us had other duties extending outside these areas. For these and other reasons, the requirement existed for the closest kind of coordination -- intimate, informal and constant -- together with the fullest cross-flow of information between the two of us. I believe we can fairly say that we met this requirement.

3. In more specific detail, my duties in this capacity involved handling the flow of matters that came to the President from the departments and agencies primarily concerned with security and international activities, operations and programs -- and that went from the President to these same departments and agencies (State, Defense, CIA and AEC, OCDM and its predecessors, MSA and its predecessors, USIA, the Arms Control group, as well as BOB international and defense divisions, the President's Science Advisory Board on security-related matters, plus ad hoc groups from time to time). These "actions" took many forms -- memoranda submitted to the President to provide him information or to request his approval of a proposal or program, or to ask his guidance; oral or written direction from the President, or from me on his behalf; a note sent by me to the departments and agencies regarding an action, decision, or request of the President, frequently in the form of a request to give thought to a certain problem and provide him with views; etc.

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These actions were of varying degrees of formality -- some, such as authorizations to expend nuclear weapons in tests, were in a meticulous, legal format, while others were no more than ideas or suggestions for consideration. One of the most important duties I performed -- as did the Special Assistant -- was to set up meetings in the President's office to take up "specific" problems, bringing in all of the principal officers of government having a material interest in the matter. A large proportion of the most vital items of the government's business in our respective field was handled in this way. Normally, there would be some kind of document that would record the decision taken, and provide a greater or lesser amount of supporting discussion.

4. I carried no title which quite corresponded to the function just described -- which was my principal duty. As Staff Secretary, I was responsible for the flow of all material, the domestic as well as the "international/security," from the Executive Branch to and from the President. However, I handled the material of a domestic nature in a manner separate and distinct from that just described, insofar as my personal participation was concerned. Within my office, I had an assistant who performed essentially the full Staff Secretariat function for domestic matters -- enabling me to limit my role to one of overall supervision, and, in general, to avoid getting into the specifics of these matters. With certain limited exceptions, international/security affairs were not a primary or direct concern of other elements of the President's staff. I also had responsibility as Staff Secretary for the administrative management of the White House Office and for related service and support activities. In the additional capacity of Defense Liaison Officer I had a little extra responsibility for seeing that defense and military service matters were handled with the President. In addition -- and I consider this very important -- as a part of my "international and security" duties I spent a brief period with the President every day giving him an intelligence "up-date," and obtaining his reaction or his comment -- which frequently took the form of a request to obtain further information, to have the matter looked into by a particular department or agency, or to have specific action taken, or explored. Out of this there came a continuing flow of intelligence-stimulated action and reaction between the President and his chief subordinates. (He also had a regular, more comprehensive intelligence report from the Director of Central Intelligence at the weekly NSC meetings). The "operations" of the CIA with which I was concerned for the President were those on which his specific

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action was involved. Often times, these would be taken up with him by the Director of Central Intelligence, with myself and frequently the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in attendance. In all of this work, the duties which I had involved those of an office executive and those of a substantive adviser and analyst, in varying combinations.

5. The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs was responsible for the formulation of national security policies and the conduct of national security planning. In the Eisenhower administration these functions were carried out almost exclusively within the NSC framework, insofar as the top level activity of the Executive Branch was concerned. He also managed the NSC structure and gave broad supervision to the conduct of security affairs at the interdepartmental level through the OCB mechanism. As the manager of the NSC structure, he was concerned with the functioning of its various subcommittees. In addition, through the 5412 group he and other top officials at the undersecretary level reviewed CIA operational activities not handled directly with the President. He was the President's representative on the Committee of Principals, concerned with Disarmament matters. He of course consulted repeatedly and in great detail with the President on all of this. In addition, where approved policy did not exist as guidance for the OCB, for the 5412 group or for other agencies, he would initiate its operation.

6. His main responsibility in all of this, I would say, was to further the development of a comprehensive, thoroughly deliberated, and well-expressed body of explicit policy guidance which, with supporting analyses, covered all major areas of US security affairs. He was responsible for keeping it dynamic and at the same time coherent, constantly reaching out for new formulations and new sources of thought. As previously indicated, he as I would set up meetings with the President of the principal officers of the Government on matters that fell within his field. We would talk by phone, and easily decide who should do the "setting up" on any particular item.

7. One minor anomaly deserves note. It has to do with "foreign policy." Much of what State terms foreign policy consists of a mixture of operations and policy, in the terms I have been using in this memorandum. Where the matter raised a substantive question of international security policy, I normally passed it to

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the Special Assistant for International Security Affairs to handle or return to me as he decided. Where it fell within NSC policy, and particularly where it was a specific action of an operational nature (a message or letter conveying the President's views to a foreign head of government or Chief of State; an invitation to pay a visit or a reply to an invitation; etc.) I would tend to handle it with the President.

8. The Special Assistant "ran" the NSC meeting each week, in the sense that he prepared the agenda (approved by the President), introduced each item, summed up the position taken at the meeting, and finally, after the meeting was over, presented a statement on the matter to the President for a decision. In addition, the Special Assistant presided over the Planning Board, which at that time met twice a week, as I recall, and which prepared essentially all the NSC papers that came before the council. He also established major study groups and study projects such as the Von Neumann Group and the Gaither Panel. Prior to the formation of the OCB he either presided over, or attended and coordinated the work of, the Psychological Strategy Board. In addition to managing the work of the NSC, he was a senior substantive adviser to the President, particularly on the overall tone and tenor of U.S. action in the security field, and on the main lines and directions of effort to be followed over a considerable period by the U.S. in providing for its security.

9. Neither the Special Assistant nor I had direct dealing with the press. We had a minimum of exposure to the public. The rule I set for myself was to handle the President's information the same way I handled his official funds. We provided information to the President's Press Secretary and he obtained a good deal directly from the State Department -- much of it in connection with the meeting we had with the President each week just prior to the Presidential Press Conference. It was the President himself, of course, whose role with the press was primary on matters in this field.

10. If I were to choose the single procedure (other than constant and friendly coordination) that was of the greatest importance in the work of the Special Assistant and myself it would be our practice of bringing the principal officers of Government into the President's office on specific important questions involving security matters, so that each in the presence of all had the

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opportunity -- and the obligation -- to express his views and to hear the President's decision, thereafter going out to carry it out faithfully unless he wished to ask that the matter be brought up again for reconsideration. Where possible, appropriate preparation for the meeting was made in advance. In every case the relevant facts were assembled to the best extent possible.

11. While the foregoing pattern is by no means the only solution that can be imagined or developed, it does represent the product of some eight years of experience and development, and it does, I believe, provide useful elements for a mechanism capable of dynamic yet coherent action.



A. J. GOODPASTER  
General, United States Army

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13 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Organization and Procedures for the Conduct of National Security Affairs

1. Attached are two sets of notes I have prepared:

a. Notes on organization for the conduct of national security affairs. This paper addresses organization and procedures for the Executive Branch as a whole, as well as organization and procedures within the White House.

b. Supplementary notes on staff procedures. These spell out in some detail (and somewhat mechanically, I am afraid) the various component steps involved.

2. I have tried to avoid recommending a particular organizational form, or overall procedural mode, at this time. I feel that these, so far as I am concerned, could better grow out of our discussions.

3. Regardless of such restraint, however, there are certain main functions that practically define themselves. They are "building-blocks" out of which the organization inevitably will be formed. In brief, they are:

a. The NSC itself as the President's highest deliberative, advisory and policy-formulating body. The staff functions here are to prepare for, conduct, and take further action on the meetings, and to manage the NSC supporting structure.

b. The policy planning function. Here the role of a Planning Board, or something like it, is central. The main staff functions are to run the Planning Board and direct the preparatory planning work and studies, and, in addition, to pursue broader, more speculative, more creative studies of a longer-range character -- drawing from sources within and without the Government, keeping channels open to all centers of thought and study.

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c. The handling of current operational matters involving Presidential participation. The functions are those of an executive advisor -- giving a staff-type review to material from the departments and agencies, presenting it to the President and, discussing it with him, and taking follow-up actions; initiating action on the President's behalf, arranging top-level meetings on specific subjects; "keeping the system honest" as to policy-observance and responsiveness; maintaining a limited information bank; and encouraging a flow of new ideas and fresh thinking from every source to the President.

d. Closely related to this -- merging with it, in fact -- is the briefing function of providing a flow of current intelligence and operations information to the President, and proceeding with follow-up action in response to the President's reactions and desires.

e. Next is the handling of interdepartmental operations in the security field not involving the direct participation of the President. Some mechanism along the lines of the OCB or the SIG/IRG structure is required. The problems of achieving and maintaining effectiveness, of relating these operations to Presidential policy and to the policy-planning and current operations functions, and the task of getting the departments and agencies to bring in the problems that should receive this treatment are difficult but inescapable. The main staff functions are to manage the machinery and the program of work, participate in whatever committee structure is maintained, and initiate action to obtain policy guidance where needed.

f. A final function meriting specific recognition is that of formulating broad and far-reaching conceptions of a long-range character, providing the main structure of the nation's approach to its international and security problems. This work should provide coherence and reasoned dynamism, together with a sense of direction, to the whole complex of policy and action. It should be, I believe, the highest preoccupation of the President's top assistant for National security affairs.

4. Additional procedures internal to the security affairs staff should facilitate the work of the whole structure, keep up momentum, bring in new approaches and new issues, and perform an overview of departmental and agency operations.

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5. I believe there is some range of latitude in how these functions can be successfully combined, and fitted into an overall security structure, and will be prepared to consider specific possibilities with you.



A. J. GOODPASTER  
General, United States Army

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NOTES ON ORGANIZATION FOR THE  
CONDUCT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

GENERAL.

1. National security does not, of course, embrace all of our foreign interests and concerns. But because it governs our national survival, it is in a true sense a paramount concern of the President. Also, in national security affairs the President's role is central. "National Security" may therefore be soundly utilized as a major functional focus for organization and operations within the Executive Branch, and within the President's immediate staff.

2. The guiding purpose for the organization employed for the conduct of national security affairs should be to aid the President in the discharge of his responsibility in this field. At the outset of a new Administration, this clear purpose should orient every effort that goes into building organization and establishing procedures in this field. It should be used to provide a sense of priority and a basis of selection among competing possibilities.

3. The national security structure needed is one that is strong and vital -- one whose operations are marked by vigor, keenness and wisdom. The National Security Council and related machinery can be made to fill this need.

4. "Policy" in the form of well-formulated policy documents can provide a valid framework in this field. The policy process must reconcile coherence and duration with dynamism and flexibility of thought and action if it is to be successful. Specifically, the policy machinery must provide open avenues for the introduction of new ideas into an ever-evolving mosaic of policy.

5. The security structure must provide operating elements which can produce timely, informed, coordinated actions which are in harmony with the policy framework.

6. The security structure must assist the President in constantly reshaping, renewing and extending forward his conception of the security situation in all of its principal elements. It must help him set the terms and the tone of our international discourse, and the role in the world of the U.S. under his leadership.

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7. Several distinct major interacting functions can be discerned in the national security structure, both for the Executive Branch as a whole and in the immediate staff serving the President. These include a) planning and policy formulation, b) deliberation by the President and his chief lieutenants, and c) the conduct of operations. Such operations divide further into 1) those involving the active participation of the President and 2) those handled at a departmental or interdepartmental level.

ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES -- EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

8. To provide the assistance the President needs, there is required within the Executive Branch as a whole organizational machinery for performing the functions of deliberation, policy planning and the conduct of operations. Such organizations, to be most effective and responsible, should embody the concept of direct participation both by high departmental and agency officials bearing responsibility for results and by representatives able to reflect the overall viewpoint of the President, to initiate or expedite work in his behalf, and to provide necessary staff analysis, support, and management.

9. In the Eisenhower Administration, these concepts were embodied in the NSC for the performance of the deliberative function and in the planning board and NSC staff for the policy planning function. With regard to operations, those involving the direct participation of the President were handled through his Staff Secretary. Those requiring interdepartmental action without involving the participation of the President were handled by the OCB. Those capable of being handled by an individual department or agency on its own within the framework of presidentially-approved policy or presidential guidance were handled in that fashion. While adjustments in detail are possible, arrangements following these general lines appear responsive, indeed essential, to the needs and purposes earlier described.

10. Among specific questions to be considered in planning the organization are the following:

- a. Persons to attend NSC meetings.
- b. Frequency of meetings.
- c. Nature of papers -- length, depth of analysis, action content, etc.

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- d. Methods for providing overall guiding concepts and setting directions.
- e. Role of advisors, as distinguished from members.
- f. Level of membership of the planning board. Relating of departmental and NSC responsibilities of members.
- g. Staff support for the planning board.
- h. Arrangements for interdepartmental operations. Possibility that the SIG/IRG can be made to work satisfactorily, assuming that a framework of NSC policy is constructed.

ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES -- WHITE HOUSE.

11. Within the White House, the functions to be performed may be divided into a) those relating to policy, b) those relating to international operations and programs (in turn subdivided into (1) those involving the direct participation of the President, and (2) those interdepartmental operations or program activities in which the direct participation of the President was not required) plus c) an intelligence and operations briefing function.

12. These functions can be combined and correlated in a variety of ways. Under President Eisenhower, the policy function -- relating to the Council itself and to its Planning Board -- as well as the overview of interdepartmental security operations not involving direct Presidential participation fell to the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. The other functions fell to the Staff Secretary. In actuality, the two-headed system proved effective. However, a pattern heading up in a single individual can offer evident advantages of unified and coordinated effort, particularly if the single individual is a man suited to large conceptions, and broad far-reaching formulations and interpretations designed to have validity over a considerable period of time.

13. In such case he might well have three principal subordinates -- one for policy planning, one for current operations involving the participation of the President, and one for interdepartmental coordination of operations. Each should be served by a small staff. The assistant for current operations should also be charged with the intelligence and operations briefing function.

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON STAFF PROCEDURES

1. Staff procedures with respect to the NSC itself include:
  - a. Preparation of a plan of work.
  - b. Preparation of the agenda.
  - c. Managing the preparation of papers (in the Planning Board or comparable organization) and distributing them in advance of NSC meetings.
  - d. Introducing or presenting the paper at NSC meetings; relating it to the main lines of the President's security policy.
  - e. Bringing out major issue (significant matters of policy, controversial points, etc.).
  - f. Summing up the discussion.
  - g. Preparation of a record of action and proposed decision for consideration of the President.
  - h. Promulgation of the approved record of action and decision, and distribution of the paper as approved.
2. Staff procedures with respect to the planning function include:
  - a. Preparation of a plan of work.
  - b. Preparation of the agenda for Planning Board meetings.
  - c. Organization of task groups and assignment of tasks to them.
  - d. Initial review of draft papers.
  - e. Chairmanship of the Planning Board; also, provision of supporting services to the Planning Board.

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f. Conduct of additional planning activities within the staff, or by request to an ad hoc group within the Government, or by commissioning outside studies.

3. Staff procedures with respect to the OCB-type function include:

a. Preparation of a plan of work and conduct of staff and committee work to survey and define needs for interdepartmental substantive action.

b. Managing the machinery established, to include, for example, setting up project working groups, and reviewing their work.

c. Initiating action to obtain policy guidance where it is needed but not available.

4. Staff procedures with respect to current operational matters involving Presidential participation include:

a. Staff review of material submitted by departments and agencies to the President for action or information, on their initiative or at the request of the President or his staff. Such review includes checking for completeness (to include balanced presentation of both pros and cons), adequate coordination, and conformance to policy, as well as clarity and effectiveness. Further action as needed is accomplished.

b. Presentation of the matter to the President, and provision of any additional supporting material he requires.

c. Follow-up as required (e.g., sending an instruction, an approved document, or a further request to a department or agency).

d. Arranging meetings with the President of senior department and agency officials to take up specific problems, assuring that all who have a significant responsibility involved in the matter are present, and that all pertinent facts and points of view are aired. Appropriate preparation for the meeting is made, and relevant facts assembled.

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e. Maintenance of systematic controls to make sure that responses are submitted, and scheduled dates are met. Sufficient following of departmental actions and programs to give confidence that they were being conducted within the guidelines of the President's policies and desires -- also to pick up problems at an early stage in order to initiate fore-handed action.

f. Maintenance of selected information of a current nature of interest to the President, or useful for the performance of this group of staff functions.

g. Bringing to the President's attention new ideas, concepts, or contributions from outside the Government having interest or value in the security field.

h. Commissioning studies, or obtaining views and analyses, from a wide range of sources - within and without the Government - on matters of interest to the President.

5. Staff procedures for the provision of current intelligence and operations information to the President, and for Presidential action thereon, include:

a. Arranging a flow of current intelligence from CIA, DOD and State appropriate to the President's needs. Arranging for immediate provision of critical items of intelligence, often in a raw initial state, so identified.

b. Arranging a similar flow of operational information, primarily from State and Defense (significant messages to and from Ambassadors, reports of military operations or actions, etc.)

c. Follow-up as required - often a request for further information, to look into and report on a certain matter, to submit recommendations for action, to take certain action, to set up a meeting of senior officials, etc.

6. A further major staff function is the development for the President's consideration of broad, far-reaching conceptions of central importance in guiding policy and operations. This should be a special responsibility of the senior Presidential staff assistant in the security field. He will have his own methods, but the support

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of a small group of people of the highest ability, some continuing on the group, others serving for one or a few projects, would be of value. In the first instance, their work would be for his use. They should give special effort to developing new perceptions of the evolving international scene, and fresh approaches to the issues that have the greatest role in shaping the security situation.

7. Finally, there are procedures internal to the national security affairs staff that facilitate the work of the whole structure, keep up momentum, and assure that departmental operations conform to policy and are adequately coordinated. Included among specific procedures are:

a. Continuing review of the adequacy and effectiveness of national security machinery.

b. Search for new approaches and new issues for study that could result in improved policy.

c. A continuing look at departmental actions from the standpoint of Presidential policy and decision.

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13 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Priority List of Security Projects.

1. In the thought that suggestions for a priority listing of security affairs planning and study "projects" may be useful, I submit the following contribution:

a. Immediate projects:

- (1) Vietnam
- (2) NATO
- (3) USSR and Eastern Europe
- (4) Basic National Security Policy\*
- (5) Middle East
- (6) Assessment of U.S. Military Security Position
- (7) Assessment of Status of U.S. Defense Research
- (8) Defense Organization and Management Methods

2. Most of these are self-explanatory, and the reasons for their inclusion self-evident. Item (4), marked \*, Basic National Security Policy, is conceived of not as a comprehensive catalogue, but as something analogous to an early study of U.S. posture and concept in the Eisenhower Administration. (It examined three broad alternatives of policy based, respectively, upon roll-back, containment, or drawing a line).

3. Second List:

- (1) Communist China
- (2) UN
- (3) U.S. Organization Overseas

A. J. GOODPASTER  
General, United States Army

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15 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Defense Organization and Management Procedures

1. This memorandum responds to your request for views concerning organization and operation of DOD at the OSD/JCS level. It undertakes to identify steps that might be considered to improve and strengthen this organization and operation.
2. The clear, guiding purpose and criterion for an inquiry of this kind should always be, I believe, the military security of the United States. It is against this criterion that the concerns currently voiced should be weighed. The concerns, in the aggregate, are that although significant innovations in management techniques have been made in recent years, serious problem areas have developed. As to the factors responsible, the following are repeatedly cited:
  - a. Increased size and structure of OSD, involving increased centralization and inappropriate placement of responsibility for detailed program formulation.
  - b. Arrangements which exclude the JCS from full and meaningful participation in the formulation of force and weapons programs.
  - c. Insufficient recognition and consideration of military aspects of major security and strategic decisions, and of JCS advice thereon.
3. There is a feeling that the performance of the Military Departments, the JCS within the role permitted to them, and the field forces has been positive and effective. In contrast, there is a feeling that, at OSD level, there have been problems of delay, excessive impediments to new developments and processes, and substitution of less qualified civilian staff judgment for military judgment, particularly on program and international issues having deep military content.

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4. Proposals for improvement tend to focus on two things: a) major surgery at the ASD level; b) strengthening the JCS contribution, and making better use of it. Detailed suggestions selected from among these proposals are contained in the attached notes.

5. The overall effect of actions along the lines detailed therein would be to restore the role of OSD to one of control over the military structure rather than centralized performance of detailed programming and provision of military advice. As pointed out in the notes, the steps would place added responsibility on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and require them to strengthen their capability to discharge it.

6. The aim of the changes would be to improve the advice reaching the President and the Secretary of Defense, to improve the validity of the program-formulation process, and hence to give better support to the Secretary than he can receive from having this type of work performed in elements of the ASD-level staff. The changes thus should fulfill the purpose and criterion stated in paragraph 2, above.

7. One further effect should be noted. The changes will on occasion cause the President to be more directly confronted with the views of the JCS, and will result in these views having an identity of their own; rather than being embodied in OSD documents. The tendency for OSD to serve as an opaque buffer between the President and the JCS will thus be diminished. In a sense this shift may increase the burden on the President. The steps imply however that the JCS will themselves take increased responsibility and more of the burden of developing military plans and programs within a realistic total context--political, economic and military--conforming to the overall determinations of the President.

8. A source of difficulty in recent years has been the dictum that military requirements were supposed to be met, or would be met, without regard to economic and financial constraints. The purpose of this was widely thought to be one of avoiding the charge that a budget "ceiling" was being imposed upon military security needs. In actual fact there is no way to avoid the necessity of ultimately setting military programs with consideration of both military needs and financial resource availabilities. In consequence, the policy

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as stated seems in practice to have been fulfilled through the technique of refusing to accept as requirements any recommendations which went beyond such constraints or "guidelines"; in the process, the determination (specifically, the application of the financial guidelines) was kept in OSD, beyond the knowledge and participation of the JCS. An implication of the proposals listed herein is that the JCS would have to accept, and to participate meaningfully in, the process of considering military needs against financial constraints.

9. Changes as far-reaching in their ramifications as those detailed herein should only be introduced after the most searching and thorough exploration and deliberation. Accordingly, they are presented here only as specific matters for consideration.



A. J. GOODPASTER  
General, United States Army

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NOTES ON CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION AND  
OPERATION -- OSD AND JCS  

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(SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION)

CHANGES AT OSD LEVEL

1. In general, the proposals are to reduce the number of ASD's, and drastically reduce their staffs. Management should be decentralized and streamlined by pushing meaningful participation in decision making to JCS and Military Department level. ASD's should be taken out of the detailed programming business. Their role should be restored to one of reviewing, questioning, probing, and unifying the work of the Department, rather than superseding program development and military advisory functions in the JCS and the Military Departments. They should advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense but should not undertake to "do it themselves." Their staffs should be a balance of civilian and military, and should be reduced in total numbers to accord with the reduced function. Specific steps for consideration include:

- a. Eliminate ASD (SA). Put a reduced systems analysis function under the Comptroller. Put a competent systems analysis function in the Joint Staff.
- b. Overhaul ISA, reducing it to a small advisory group. Transfer ISA's detailed planning and staff functions to the Joint Staff.
- c. Eliminate ATSD (A/E).
- d. Continue ASD (Admin) with some reduction in personnel. Realign DINS to report to the Chairman JCS, but to provide inspection services for OSD elements.
- e. Reduce weapons development lead time from research to delivery. Encourage more starts; weed out nonperformers prior to major expenditures.
- f. Reinstitute the Armed Forces Policy Council.

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CHANGES AT JCS LEVEL

2. In general, the proposals are intended to provide for more meaningful participation by the JCS, and provision of their judgment and advice on major issues; to place more responsibility on them; and to require steps that would strengthen their capability to discharge it. Specific steps for consideration are:

a. Submit JCS advice on operational matters directly to the President, with SECDEF providing his comments and views if he desires.

b. Insure that within DOD only SECDEF or DEPSECDEF will overrule JCS views and recommendations submitted to them, or change them, disregard them, set them aside or defer action on them, or hold them "for continuing consideration."

c. Direct the Chairman JCS to provide for Joint Staff representation on interdepartmental groups within the National Security Affairs structure.

d. Direct the Chairman JCS to provide for staff-level support, advice and assistance to OSD elements by the Joint Staff.

e. Introduce an appropriate proportion of civilians into the Joint Staff. Raise the present restriction on the numbers of personnel in the Joint Staff.

f. Require the Joint Chiefs of Staff to concentrate their attention on major issues and guiding policies. Eliminate every vestige of the "veto" by services at levels below the JCS themselves. Charge the Chairman with responsibility for procedures to achieve timely and valid action by the JCS on program issues, strategic advice and recommendations, and military advice at staff levels. Vest the Chairman with the authority and responsibility to implement decisions and act within established policy, utilizing the Joint Staff as necessary.

g. Elevate the Chairman JCS to the next higher grade. Make the Director Joint Staff a four-star officer.

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**MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER**

**FROM: GENERAL A. J. GOODPASTER**

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