

DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL RECORD (NIXON PROJECT)

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DOCUMENT TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE OR CORRESPONDENTS	DATE	RESTRICTION
1	Telegram	Gen Abrams to Adm Moorer, et al. SANITIZED PER RAC 2008/06/13	06 Oct 69	B
2	Report w/attach	DoD Intelligence Information Report	18 Oct 69	B
3	Telegram	Saigon to the White House	1969 Oct 29	B
4	Telegram	Gen Wheeler to Gen Chapman, et al.	1969 Oct 27	B
5	Telegram	Gen Wheeler to Kissinger, et al. SANITIZED PER RAC 2008/06/13	1969 Oct 20	B
6	Memo	Gen Abrams to Gen Wheeler and Ambassador Berger SANITIZED PER RAC 2008/06/13	14 September 1969	B
7	Memo w/attach	Kissinger to the President	June 23, 1969	B

FILE GROUP TITLE

National Security Council, Vietnam Subject Files

BOX NUMBER

89

FOLDER TITLE

[No Title – Briefing Papers for General Goodpaster]

RESTRICTION CODES

A. Release would violate a Federal statute or Agency Policy.
 B. National security classified information.
 C. Pending or approved claim that release would violate an individual's rights.
 D. Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy or a libel of a living person.

E. Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information.
 F. Release would disclose investigatory information compiled for law enforcement purposes.
 G. Withdrawn and return private and personal material.
 H. Withdrawn and returned non-historical material.

Briefing Papers for General Goodpaster

Tab A --- Bunker Assessment of Current Situation and Outlook for Vietnamization in 1970.

Tab B --- Abrams Assessment of the Enemy Situation.

Tab C --- Kissinger Memorandum to the President, re: Vietnamizing the War.

Tab D --- Kissinger Memorandum to the President, re: Cease Fire in Vietnam

Tab E --- Text of President's November 3 Speech on Vietnam.
Kissinger Backgrounder.

Left-hand side of folder:

Text and Briefing Memorandum on COSVN Resolution 9.

[89/3/1]

CONFIDENTIAL
EYES ONLY

IMMEDIATE

06 OCT 69

O 061006Z ZYH ZFF4 ZFF1

FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV

TO ADM MOORER ACJCS

ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC

LTG WEYAND

ZEM

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION ONE OF TWO MAC 13031 EYES ONLY

SUBJECT: TEXT OF A BRIEFING ON "COSVN RESOLUTIONS 6,
7, 8, AND 9." (C)

1. (C) THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A BRIEFING ON "COSVN
RESOLUTIONS 6,7,8, AND 9," PRESENTED TO GEN WHEELER,
CJCS, ON 5 OCT 69.

QUOTE.

SIR, THE PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING IS TWO FOLD. FIRST,
IT SUMMARIZES THE SIGNIFICANT POINTS OF A CAPTURED COSVN
DOCUMENT, CLASSIFIED ABSOLUTE SECRET, WHICH WE BELIEVE
IS A DETAILED LESSON PLAN FOR COSVN RESOLUTION 9. THIS
DOCUMENT ESTABLISHES POLICY FOR THE ENEMY'S 1969-1970
WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN. SECOND, THE BRIEFING COMPARES
THE POLICIES CONTAINED IN RESOLUTION 9 WITH THOSE CONTAINED
IN RESOLUTION 8 PUBLISHED A YEAR AGO, AND ITS PREDECESSORS
7 AND 6.

THE RECENTLY CAPTURED LESSON PLAN CLEARLY TELLS US
THE ENEMY'S ASSESSMENT OF THE ALLIED POSITION, HIS OBJECTIVES
FORMULATED IN LIGHT OF THIS ASSESSMENT, AND THE TACTICS
HE PLANS TO EMPLOY TO ACHIEVE THEM. THE DOCUMENT STATES:

A. THE U.S. IS ANXIOUS TO SETTLE THE VIETNAM WAR, BUT

ARMY Review Completed

DISTRIBUTION PER CJCS:

CSA-GEN WESTMORELAND

CNO-ADM MOORER

CSAF-GEN RYAN

CMC-GEN CHAPMAN

DJS-ADM JOHNSON

DJ3-GEN VOGT

DJ5-GEN UNGER

SACSA-GEN BLACKBURN

DIAAP-GEN BROWN

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...ING TO ACCEPT A COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR
 B. IS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT A COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR
 VC CONTROL.
 FEAR OF EVENTUAL VC CONTROL.
 ... PROLONGING ITS WITHDRAWAL TO GIVE RVNAF
 C. THE U.S. IS PROLONGING ITS WITHDRAWAL TO GIVE RVNAF
 TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. HOWEVER, TO
 ADEQUATE TIME TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. HOWEVER, TO
 ...ORT, THE DOCUMENT INDICATES THAT COSVN
 COUNTER THIS EFFORT, THE DOCUMENT INDICATES THAT COSVN
 PEOPLE THAT THE U.S. CANNOT HOLD DOWN
 IS TELLING HIS PEOPLE THAT THE U.S. CANNOT HOLD DOWN
 MODERNIZE RVNAF BEFORE THE NIXON ADMINISTRA-
 CASUALTIES AND MODERNIZE RVNAF BEFORE THE NIXON ADMINISTRA-
 BY AMERICAN PUBLIC PRESSURE TO WITHDRAW
 TION IS FORCED BY AMERICAN PUBLIC PRESSURE TO WITHDRAW
 TROOPS.
 LARGER NUMBER OF TROOPS.

...ASSESSMENT HAS LED HIM TO ADOPT FOUR MAJOR
 THIS COSVN ASSESSMENT HAS LED HIM TO ADOPT FOUR MAJOR
 HIS WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN:
 OBJECTIVES FOR HIS WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN:
 ...OREMOST, FORCE A RAPID AND COMPLETE
 A. FIRST AND FOREMOST, FORCE A RAPID AND COMPLETE
 U.S. FORCES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM.
 WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM.
 ...AF IMPROVEMENT.
 B. DISRUPT RVNAF IMPROVEMENT.
 ...HE PACIFICATION PROGRAM
 C. ROLL BACK THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM TO PREVENT ITS
 ...ALS AND,
 HAMPERING HIS GOALS AND,
 ...GROUND WORK FOR EXPLOITATION OF A
 D. PREPARE THE GROUND WORK FOR EXPLOITATION OF A
 SETTLEMENT.
 NEGOTIATED PEACE SETTLEMENT.

...ES ARE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY PROSECUTING
 THESE OBJECTIVES ARE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY PROSECUTING
 U.S. TROOPS ARE COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN,
 THE UNTIL THE U.S. TROOPS ARE COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN,
 RVNAF ARE DESTROYED. THEREBY, HE WIL
 AND THE GVN AND RVNAF ARE DESTROYED. THEREBY, HE WIL
 /GVN PLANS FOR ENDING THE WAR IN A STRONG
 DISRUPT THE U.S./GVN PLANS FOR ENDING THE WAR IN A STRONG
 ...ATING GRADUAL U.S. DE-AMERICANIZATION
 POSITION BY DEFEATING GRADUAL U.S. DE-AMERICANIZATION
 ...L RESULT IN AN NVA/VC VICTORY.
 POLICY. THIS WILL RESULT IN AN NVA/VC VICTORY.

...E OBJECTIVES THE DOCUMENT INDICATES HE
 TO ATTAIN THESE OBJECTIVES THE DOCUMENT INDICATES HE
 FOLLOWING TACTIC:
 WILL EMPLOY THE FOLLOWING TACTIC:

- A. CONDUCT VIOLENT ATTACKS ON U.S. TROOPS TO INFLICT
HEAVY CASUALTIES.
- B. ATTACK RVNAF AND GVN AT ALL LEVELS TO ANNIHILATE

(2)

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THEM.

C. DEVELOP GREATER MILITARY AND POLITICAL FORCES AND COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS TO CREATE A STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE POSITION.

D. PROSELYTE THE MASSES TO LEND SUPPORT TO HIS CAUSE.

E. HOLD THE POSITION AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THREE STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS: URBAN, RURAL, JUNGLE AND DELTA.

IN REFERRING TO THESE LAST GEOGRAPHIC AREAS, COSVN SAYS, "AT PRESENT AND IN THE FUTURE, THE RURAL AREAS AND PARTICULARLY THE MEKON DELTA ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT STRATEGIC AREAS OF ACTIVITIES. MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THESE AREAS AND CONTROL OF A GREAT PART OF THEM IS ESSENTIAL TO TURN THEM INTO WELL-DEFENDED BASES. THE MOUNTAINS THE JUNGLE AREAS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE THE SAFE BASE AREAS. THEY HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH THE LARGE REAR BASE IN NORTH VIETNAM AND PROVIDE A FAVORABLE AREA FOR ACTIVITIES OF THE MAIN FORCE UNITS. THEREFORE, EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO STRENGTHEN THE LIBERATED JUNGLE AND MOUNTAIN AREAS TO TURN THEM INTO CONSOLIDATED DEFENDED BASES TO MEET PRESENT AND FUTURE COMBAT REQUIREMENTS."

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS

(3)

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IMMEDIATE

06 OCT 1969

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FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV

TO ADM MOORER ACJCS

ADM MC CAIN CINCPAC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF TMO MAC 13031 EYES ONLY

PRIOR TO PRESENTING THE RESULTS OF A DETAILED COMPARISON OF RESOLUTION 9 WITH RESOLUTION 8, A FEW BRIEF OBSERVATIONS APPEAR APPROPRIATE. RESOLUTION NO 8 WAS ISSUED ABOUT AUGUST 1968 FOR THE 68-69 WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN. IT CALLED FOR AN ULTIMATE MILITARY VICTORY SIMILAR IN NATURE TO THAT PROPOSED FOR THE 68 TET OFFENSIVE. HOWEVER, HE FAILED TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE IN THE FOURTH OFFENSIVE AND HE WAS FORCED TO MODIFY HIS STRATEGY.

CAPTURED DOCUMENTS IN THE SUMMER OF 1969 REVEALED THAT HE SOUGHT A LESSER MILITARY SUCCESS AND HAD DEVELOPED A PROGRAM OF "HIGH POINTS" AND LIMITED-OBJECTIVE ATTACKS TO ACHIEVE IT. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF SIGNIFICANT LOSSES, THE ENEMY'S SUMMER AND EARLY FALL CAMPAIGN GRADUALLY ATTENUATED. RESOLUTION 9, THEREFORE, APPEARS TO BE A DIRECT CONTINUATION OF THE HIGH POINT STRATEGY WHICH APPEARED IN MAY. HOWEVER, WHEN WE COMPARE THE RESOLUTION 8 WITH RESOLUTION 9, WE FIND THAT THERE ARE SOME SIGNIFICANT CHANGES.

FIRST, REFERENCES TO A COMPLETE MILITARY VICTORY

(4)

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CONTAINED IN RESOLUTION 8 WERE DROPPED. RESOLUTION 9 CALLED ONLY FOR CONTINUED MILITARY OPERATIONS COORDINATED WITH POLITICAL MOVES TO ATTAIN AN ULTIMATE VICTORY THROUGH SPEEDING THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS AND FORMULATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. THIS SHIFT IN EMPHASIS IS SUPPORTED BY POLICY GUIDANCE STRESSING GREATER POLITICAL PREPARATION OF HIS CADRE TO ENSURE A CAPABILITY TO GOVERN ONCE THE INTERMEDIATE SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED, AND A COALITION GOVERNMENT FORMED.

FROM A GEOGRAPHICAL VIEWPOINT, THE PRIORITY OF IMMEDIATE ATTENTION HAS BEEN SHIFTED FROM THE LARGE URBAN AREAS IN RESOLUTION 8, TO THE RURAL AND THE HEAVILY POPULATED RICE PRODUCING DELTA IN RESOLUTION 9. THIS SHIFT DISPLAYS HIS PLANS TO EXPAND HIS POLITICAL BASE TO PREPARE FOR COALITION GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION, TO PROTECT HIS LOGISTIC LOC'S AND TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR HIS BASE AREAS, HE HAS STRESSED INTEREST IN THE JUNGLE AND MOUNTAIN AREAS.

REGARDING PACIFICATION, RESOLUTION NUMBER 8 MAINTAINED A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY APPROACH TO DISRUPTION OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, IN RESOLUTION NUMBER 9, THERE WAS A STRONG EMPHASIS TO PROSELYTE AND CONDUCT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE MEMBERS OF THE ACCELERATED PACIFICATION PROGRAM. THIS SHIFT IN EMPHASIS REFLECTS THE ENEMY'S AWARENESS OF THE THREAT POSED BY THE GROWING SUCCESS OF PACIFICATION.

FINALLY, RESOLUTION 8 GIVES ONLY MINOR EMPHASIS TO DISRUPTION OF THE RVNAF IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. IN CONTRAST, RESOLUTION 9 PLACES STRONG EMPHASIS ON EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM FROM REACHING ITS INTENDED GOALS. BY INCREASING AMERICAN CASUALTIES

(5)

AND CREATING POLITICAL PRESSURE IN THE U.S., THE ENEMY HOPES FOR A MORE RAPID AND MORE SIZABLE TROOP WITHDRAWAL PROGRAM, THEREBY CAUSING VIETNAMIZATION TO OCCUR BEFORE RVNAF IS FULLY PREPARED.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO INCLUDE RESOLUTIONS 7 AND 6 IN OUR COMPARISON. WE FIND THESE RESOLUTIONS SIMILAR IN CONCEPT TO RESOLUTION 8, WITH THE OBJECTIVES, GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF INTEREST AND EMPHASIS ON PACIFICATION ALMOST IDENTICAL. THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BEING THAT THERE IS NO MENTION OF IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION IN RESOLUTIONS 7 AND 6, MINOR EMPHASIS IN RESOLUTION 8, BUT STRONG EMPHASIS TO DEFEAT VIETNAMIZATION IN RESOLUTION 9. THIS INDICATES THE ENEMY'S GROWING CONCERN WITH THE VIETNAMIZATION OF THE WAR.

IN CONCLUSION, THE CAPTURED COSVN DOCUMENT, BELIEVED TO BE A LESSON PLAN FOR RESOLUTION 9, PROVIDES A DETAILED OUTLINE OF HIS PLANS FOR THE 69-70 "WINTER-SPRING" CAMPAIGN. IT CALLS FOR CONTINUED MILITARY OPERATIONS WITH MORE MODEST AIMS, PREPARATION OF HIS POLITICAL CADRE, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DELTA AS A PRIORITY AREA, DISRUPTION OF THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM AND DEFEAT OF THE POLICY FOR VIETNAMIZATION OF THE WAR. IT FORMALIZES THE STRATEGIC MODIFICATIONS ALREADY MADE BY HIM AS A RESULT OF RVNAF/ ALLIED OPERATIONS AND DEMONSTRATES HIS RECOGNITION THAT HE CANNOT WIN AS LONG AS SIGNIFICANT U.S. FORCES REMAIN IN VIETNAM.

UNQUOTE

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS

(6)

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS PROJECT
DOCUMENT CONTROL RECORD

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A

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MR HELMS CIA

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GEN CHAPMAN CMC
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FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON
TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
ZEM

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SECTION ONE OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY
SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM (U)

REF: MAC 13584/191123Z OCT 69

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO SET FORTH MACV' S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM AS OF 15 OCTOBER 1969. REF IS CODEWORD MESSAGE CONTAINING DETAILED INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT. THIS MESSAGE IS A GENERAL ASSESSMENT INTEGRATING CONSIDERATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ENEMY, THE ALLIED SITUATION, PROGRESS IN PACIFICATION, AND PROGRESS IN IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF THE RVNAF.

2. THE ENEMY SITUATION.

A. THE ENEMY REMAINS DISPOSED IN STRENGTH THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM AND IN ADJACENT AREAS OF CAMBODIA, LAOS, AND NORTH VIETNAM. HE HAS APPROXIMATELY 230,000 TROOPS POSING A DIRECT MILITARY THREAT TO SOUTH VIETNAM, AND IS CAPABLE, ON RELATIVELY SHORT NOTICE, OF ATTEMPTING A MAJOR OFFENSIVE.

B. THE CURRENT ENEMY THREAT IS GREATEST IN III CORPS, AND IN NORTHERN I CORPS. THE THREAT TO NORTHERN BINH DINH PROVINCE IN II CORPS HAS BEEN INCREASED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE 3RD NVA DIVISION ON THE BINH DINH-QUANG NGAI BORDER. CONVERSELY, THIS TENDS TO REDUCE THE THREAT SOMEWHAT IN QUANG NGAI AND MAY OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCELERATED ADVANCES IN PACIFICATION IN THAT

AREA. IN II CORPS, THE THREAT IN THE HIGHLANDS IS AT ITS LOWEST LEVEL IN SEVERAL YEARS. THIS SITUATION HAS PERMITTED EMPLOYMENT OF INCREASED NUMBERS OF ALLIED FORCES IN BINH DINH PROVINCE WHICH HAS LED TO SEVERAL SUCCESSES AGAINST ENEMY MAIN FORCES AND SOME APPARENT ACCELTRATED PROGRESS IN PACIFICATION. HOWEVER. DEPLOYMENT OF TWO NVA REGIMENTS TO THE PHUOC LONG,

QUANG BUI BORDER INCREASED THE THREAT IN THAT AREA. IN IV CORPS THE THREAT HAS BEEN INCREASED BY THE PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN AREA OF TWO ADDITIONAL REGIMENTS, ONE NVA AND ONE VC, THE LATTER CONSISTING OF ABOUT 80 PERCENT NVA TROOPS. NVA REPLACEMENTS HAVE APPEARED IN MR2. THE PRESENCE OF NVA TROOPS IN IV CORPS MAY INDICATE A SITUATION IN WHICH THE ENEMY, BECAUSE OF HIS ACCUMULATED LOSSES AND POSSIBLE DECLINE OF RECRUITMENT BASE, HAS CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO BRING NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS INTO THE AREA. THE INCREASED NVA PRESENCE IN IV CORPS HAS DECREASED THE THREAT TO WESTERN III CORPS TO SOME DEGREE. THIS ALSO APPEARS TO BE A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF FRICTION AND ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE NVA AND THE VC IN THIS TRADITIONAL VC STRONGHOLD.

C. SINCE 1966 ENEMY OPERATIONS HAVE INCREASED IN INTENSITY IN THE SPRING OF EACH YEAR, HAVE GRADUALLY DECLINED IN INTENSITY TOWARD THE END OF THE YEAR, AND THEN HAVE RISEN IN INTENSITY EARLY IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING. THIS CYCLIC OPERATIONAL PATTERN HAS BEEN SUSTAINED WITH RATES OF INFILTRATION FROM NORTH VIETNAM WHICH GENERALLY HAVE FOLLOWED THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF HIS COMBAT ACTIVITY. ENEMY OPERATIONS IN 1969 HAVE REPEATED THIS PATTERN. THE CURRENT DOWNSWING IN ENEMY ACTIVITY IS AT A LEVEL ROUGHLY THE SAME AS THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD IN THE FALL OF 1967, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT LOWER THAN IN 1968.

D. INFILTRATION IN 1969 IS NOW IN A DOWNSWING CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD IN PAST YEARS. WHILE 1969 INFILTRA-

TION IS AT A LESSER RATE THAN IN 1968, IT IS HIGHER THAN IN EITHER 1966 OR 1967. IT IS, IN OCTOBER 1969, AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS OCTOBER 1967. THIS REFLECTS AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR NVA MANPOWER IN THE SOUTH WHICH APPEARS TO BE CAUSED BY THE FOLLOWING:

(1) HIGH RATES OF ENEMY KIA.

(2) RISING ENEMY HOI CHANH RATES.

(3) INFUSION INTO VC UNITS OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF NVA REPLACEMENTS (IN SEPTEMBER 1969, 70 PERCENT OF ALL ENEMY COMBAT PERSONNEL IN THE SOUTH WERE NORTH VIETNAMESE; IN SEPTEMBER 1966 THIS FIGURE WAS 46 PERCENT).

E. THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO RECRUIT, BUT AT A REDUCED RATE FROM HIS PAST PERFORMANCE, UTILIZING ABDUCTION AS WELL AS OTHER MEANS. THE LOWER RATE APPEARS TO BE RELATED IN LARGE MEASURE TO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN POPULATION SECURITY IN MANY AREAS.

F. ENEMY LOSSES UP TO MIDYEAR 1969, BOTH IN KIA AND HOI CHANH, ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE BEEN HIGHER THAN AVERAGE MONTHLY LOSSES IN PREVIOUS YEARS. THIS HAS LED TO WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DETERIORATING MANPOWER SITUATION.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
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MR HELMS CIA
GEN WEYAND [Redacted]

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GEN CHAPMAN CMC
O 191120Z ZYH ZFF-4 ZFF-1
FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON
TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
ZEM

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SECTION TWO OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY

G. TO DATE, THE ENEMY HAS MADE NO IDENTIFIABLE, POSITIVE, RECIPROCAL RESPONSE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA EITHER TO THE US BOMBING HALT OF 1 NOVEMBER 1968, OR TO US TROOP REDEPLOYMENTS MADE SINCE JULY 1969. THE NORMAL ENEMY OPERATIONAL CYCLE CONTINUED AFTER THE BOMBING HALT AND HAS, IN 1969, FOLLOWED THE PATTERN OF HIS PAST PERFORMANCE, EXCEPT FOR INCREASED EMPHASIS, STARTING IN MID-YEAR, ON ATTACKS BY FIRE, AND SAPPER RAIDS.

H. ALL CURRENT INDICATIONS (SET FORTH IN REFERENCE) UNDERSCORE THE FACT THAT THE ENEMY HAS MANAGED TO RETAIN HIS FIELD COMBAT "SYSTEM". HE CONTINUES TO DEVELOP INFILTRATION ROUTES AND SUPPORT FACILITIES. HE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE FIELD LOGISTICS SUPPORT TO INCLUDE THE STOCKPILING OF SUPPLIES IN NVN, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA. HE SUSTAINS, DESPITE HEAVY LOSSES, A FORCE STRUCTURE POSSESSING A CAPACITY TO ABSORB REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL RAPIDLY. AND, FINALLY, HE RETAINS A COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITY SUFFICIENT TO CONTROL LARGE FORMATIONS IN BATTLE. IN SUMMARY, THE "SYSTEM" REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE ANOTHER OPERATIONAL HIGH EARLY IN 1970 HAS BEEN RETAINED INTACT.

3. THE ALLIED SITUATION.

A. PRIOR TO PHASE ONE REDEPLOYMENTS, JUL-AUG 69, US MANEUVER BATTALIONS MADE UP ABOUT ONE-THIRD THE TOTAL ALLIED COMBAT FORCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM. IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1969, THIS ONE-THIRD OF THE COMBAT FORCE ACCOUNTED FOR OVER TWO-THIRDS OF THE OPERATIONAL RESULTS, ESPECIALLY IN ENEMY KIA AND CACHE FINDS, THE TWO KEY FACTORS BEARING MOST DIRECTLY ON THE ENEMY COMBAT CAPABILITY.

B. BY 15 DECEMBER 1969, AS A RESULT OF REDEPLOYMENTS IN PHASES ONE AND TWO, ALLIED MANEUVER BATTALIONS WILL HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO ABOUT 82PCT OF THEIR PRE-JULY 69 LEVELS. IN ADDITION, BUDGET REDUCTIONS WILL HAVE REDUCED B-52 SORTIES TO 78PCT OF THEIR PREVIOUS AUTHORIZATION, AND TACTICAL AIR/STRIKE SORTIES TO 80PCT OF THE MONTHLY AVERAGE FLOWN DURING 1969. THE BUDGET LIMITATIONS, IN EFFECT, REDUCE B-52 AND TACTICAL AIR/STRIKE SORTIES TO SEPTEMBER 1969 EXPERIENCE LEVELS, WHICH SUPPORTED OPERATIONS AGAINST A REDUCED LEVEL OF ENEMY COMBAT ACTIVITY.

C. IN ADDITION TO REDUCTIONS IN COMBAT POWER, US REDEPLOYMENTS WILL, BY 15 DECEMBER, HAVE RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE FLEXIBILITY OF ALLIED FORCES TO RESPOND TO ENEMY INITIATIVES. SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN THIS REGARD ARE:

(1) THE ENEMY THREAT TO NORTHERN I CORPS IS SUBSTANTIAL, AND HAS REMAINED UNDIMINISHED THROUGHOUT REDEPLOYMENT OF THE 3RD MARINE DIVISION. SHOULD REINFORCEMENT OF NORTHERN I CORPS BECOME NECESSARY, GENERAL VIEN HAS AGREED THAT THE REINFORCING TROOPS SHOULD BE VIETNAMESE, PROBABLY ALL OR PART OF THE AIRBORNE DIVISION FROM III CORPS. THE CONTINUED STRONG ENEMY PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN I CORPS PRECLUDES A NORTHWARD SHIFT OF THE 2D ARVN DIVISION.

(2) THE ENEMY THREAT IN IV CORPS HAS BEEN INCREASED BY TWO REGIMENTS, ONE VC AND ONE NVA, SINCE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION. GENERAL VIEN HAS AGREED THAT REINFORCEMENTS, IF REQUIRED IN IV CORPS, SHOULD BE VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM III CORPS.

(3) IN III CORPS THE SHIFT OF ENEMY FORCES NORTHWARD INTO NORTHERN TAY NINH, BINH LONG, AND PHOUC LONG PROVINCES REDUCES THE PRESSURE ON SAIGON, BIEN HOA, LONG BINH, AND TAY NINH CITY, BUT FACILITATES THE REFURBISHING OF THESE FOUR DIVISIONS FROM CAMBODIAN SANCTUARIES FOR FUTURE OFFENSIVE ACTIVITY. THIS, COUPLED WITH THE MODERATE TO LOW EFFECTIVENESS OF THE THREE ARVN DIVISIONS IN III CORPS MAKES ANY REDUCTION OF FORCE IN III CORPS A HIGH RISK PROPOSITION. IT HAS BEEN AGREED BETWEEN COMUSMACV AND GENERAL VIEN THAT REINFORCEMENT OF III CORPS WOULD, IF NECESSARY, BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MOVEMENT OF US FORCES FROM II CORPS, HOWEVER, THE INCREASED ENEMY PRESENCE IN NORTHERN BINH DINH, THE RELATIVELY LOW EFFECTIVENESS OF RF AND PF UNITS IN II CORPS, AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF RELATIVELY ISOLATED BASES, PARTICULARLY USAF BASES IN II CORPS, MAKE THIS HIGH RISK COURSE OF ACTION.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
CROC NO. 1382

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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

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INFO DR. KISSINGER WHITE HOUSE
MR ROGERS STATE DEPT
MR HELMS CIA
GEN WEYAND
GEN CHAPMAN CMC
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FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON
TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SECTION THREE OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY

(4) ALLIED LOSS IN FLEXIBILITY RESULTING FROM REDEPLOYMENT OF THE 3RD MARINE DIVISION, THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION, AND THE 3D BDE, 82D AIRBORNE, WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO RESPOND TO MORE THAN ONE CONTINGENCY.

(5) IN ADDITION TO THE LOSS OF FLEXIBILITY ON THE GROUND, THE HEAVY DRAWDOWN ON TACAIR AND B-52 SORTIE AVAILABILITY HAS REDUCED THE ALLIED CAPABILITY TO RESPOND TO MULTIPLE CONTINGENCIES WITH MASSES FIREPOWER. MASSES AIR STRIKES HAVE IN THE PAST BEEN THE ONLY REAL ALLIED RESERVE. BOTH THE STRENGTH OF THAT RESERVE AND ITS FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO MULTIPLE CONTINGENCIES HAVE BEEN REDUCED. THIS SITUATION IS AGGRAVATED BY INCREASED DEMANDS FOR AIR SUPPORT FOR THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO DEFEAT THE NVA/PATHET LAO COMPAIGN IN NORTHERN LAO.

D. THE SIZE AND TIMING OF FUTURE US REDEPLOYMENTS SHOULD BE BASED ON:

(1) REDUCTION IN ENEMY OPERATIONS CONDUCTED BY BATTALION AND LARGER SIZE UNITS.

(2) AN EFFECTIVE EXPANSION OF GVN CONTROL AND POPULATION SECURITY.

E. THE PROCESSES DESCRIBED IN D ABOVE MAY BE GRADUALLY TAKING PLACE IN SOME AREAS. IN GIA DINH, FOR EXAMPLE, IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS TO MOVE ALL US FORCES OUT FROM THE SAIGON DEFENSES, THEIR MISSIONS BEING ASSUMED BY ARVN FORCES. THE 3D BDE, 82D, BEFORE ITS REDEPLOYMENT WAS ORDERED, WAS IN THE PROCESS OF MOVING FROM THE CMD TO PURSUE NEW MISSIONS FURTHER FROM THE CAPITAL. UNDER CONSIDERATION IS A PROPOSAL TO ALSO MOVE ARVN UNITS FURTHER OUT FROM THE CMD AS WELL, TURNING THEIR CMD MISSIONS OVER TO THE TERRITORIAL FORCES. THIS SITUATION TYPIFIES WHAT HAS TO TAKE PLACE OVER MOST OF THE KEY AREAS IN SOUTH VIETNAM IF THE GOALS SET FOR THE ALLIED EFFORT ARE TO BE MET.

F. IT IS HOWEVER, NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT ACCURATELY AT WHAT STAGE THE CUMULATIVE PRESSURES OF ALLIED MILITARY POWER, AND THE ACCELERATED PACIFICATION PROGRAM WILL BRING ABOUT A FAVORABLE TURN OF EVENTS IN A GIVEN AREA. SIX MONTHS AGO, THE SITUATION IN GIA DINH WAS NOT VIEWED WITH EVEN THE MODERATE OPTIMISM IMPLIED IN E ABOVE. WITH THE SITUATION NOW DEVELOPING IN HAU NGHIA, LONG AN, AND BINH DINH, FOR EXAMPLE, IT MIGHT BE HOPED THAT BEFORE LONG THERE COULD BE CAUSE FOR THE SAME KIND OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM EXPRESSED WITH REGARD TO GIA DINH.

4. PACIFICATION.

A. THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM HAS DEVELOPED SUBSTANTIAL MOMENTUM DESPITE SOME WEAKNESSES. TERRITORIAL FORCES ARE DISPLAYING INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS AND ARE DEPLOYED OVER A WIDER AREA. THUS THE PRESENCE AND AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO NEW TERRITORY AND NEW POPULATION GROUPS. INCREASED SAFETY OF MOVEMENT INTO PREVIOUSLY DENIED AREAS, INCREASED TRADE AND TRAFFIC BETWEEN COUNTRY AND TOWN, AND REOCCUPATION OF MANY ABANDONED AREAS BY ERSTWHILE REFUGEES, ALL MARK THE DECLINE OF VIET CONG AUTHORITY AND WIDER PRESENCE OF THE GVN. OF PERHAPS GREATER LONG TERM IMPORTANCE IS THE BEGINNING OF A SENSE OF POLITICAL COHESION AMONG THE POPULATION OF MANY VILLAGES AND HAMLETS. THIS IS EVIDENCED BY THEIR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL AFFAIRS, BY INCREASED AUTHORITY OF THEIR ELECTED LEADERSHIP, BY MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PEOPLE'S SELF DEFENSE FORCE AND BY AN INCREASING DRAIN ON ENEMY MANPOWER REFLECTED IN RISING HOI CHANH RATES.

B. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT ALL PARTS OF THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM ARE OPERATING AT OPTIMUM EFFECTIVENESS. INFORMATION PROGRAMS ARE STILL MARRED BY AN ARTIFICIAL AND MECHANICAL QUALITY. THE PHUNG HOANG PROGRAM AGAINST THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE. THE POLICE, DESPITE SUCCESS IN THE POPULATED CENTERS, HAVE NOT REALLY FOUND A ROLE IN RURAL LAW AND ORDER. THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY IS STILL LARGELY UNORGANIZED. THE BUREAUCRACY IS FREQUENTLY HAPPY WITH FORM RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
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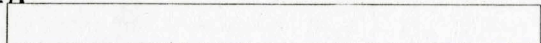
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MR ROGERS STATE DEPT
MR HELMS CIA

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GEN WEYAND



GEN CHAPMAN CMC

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FM GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON
TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SECTION FOUR OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY

C. THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, HOWEVER, DISPLAYS SOME MOMENTUM AND INCREASINGLY A SENSE OF DIRECTION. THE PRESIDENT IS CALLING FOR CONSOLIDATING AND SOLIDIFYING SECURITY AND THE POLITICAL BASE OF THE NATION. HIS EMPHASIS ON DECENTRALIZATION OF DECISION MAKING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IS DESIGNED TO CREATE THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY, SO LONG ABSENT FROM VIETNAM. SPECIAL ATTENTION IS BEING GIVEN TO DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISPOSSESSED ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION THROUGH LAND REFORM, BETTER LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION, AND NEW ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS OF RESETTLEMENT. THE PACIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, THROUGH ORGANIZATION AND THE INTENSE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ATTAINED MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN. THE STATISTICS WITH REGARD TO THESE PROGRAMS MAY IMPART AN APPEARANCE OF GREATER SUCCESS THEN MAY BE THE ACTUAL CASE; HOWEVER, SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE NUMBERS MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO CONCEAL THE VERY REAL STRENGTH THE PROGRAMS ARE PRODUCING AMONG THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

D. THE ENEMY HAS RECOGNIZED THIS MOMENTUM OF PACIFICATION AS A MAJOR THREAT. HE HAS RECENTLY DIRECTED GREATER ATTENTION TO IT AND HAS INCREASED ATTACKS ON THE PROGRAM. HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SOME LOCAL SUCCESSES, FOR LOCAL SECURITY AND PACIFICATION ARE VULNERABLE TO ACTION BY MAJOR ENEMY FORCES. INTENSIFIED ALLIED EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING SECURITY IS REQUIRED TO INSURE THAT THE BASIC TRENDS NOTED ARE NOT REVERSED.

E. I CORPS ASSESSMENTS PERTAINING TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE 9TH RLT FROM QUANG TRI DO NOT INDICATE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON PACIFICATION. PROGRESS CONTINUES IN BOTH THE NORTHERN TWO PROVINCES. IT IS TOO SOON TO EVALUATE FULLY THE IMPACT OF WITHDRAWAL OF THE REMAINDER OF THE 3D MARINE DIVISION; HOWEVER, PHASE II WITHDRAWALS WILL RESULT IN A THINNING OF US PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE NORTHERN PORTION OF I CORPS. PROGRESS IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES, WHERE SIGNIFICANT HARDCORE GUERRILLA AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRENGTH REMAINS, IS APPRECIABLY SLOWER.

F. IN II CORPS, THE IMPROVEMENT IN SECURITY IN BINH DINH, AS IN SOME OTHER AREAS, REFLECTS THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US TROOPS. IN LARGE PARTS OF II CORPS, WHERE FRIENDLY FORCES ARE THINLY SCATTERED AND THE TERRAIN DIFFICULT, AN INCREASE IN POPULATION SECURITY HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, IN SOME AREAS, BY CONCENTRATING THE PEOPLE IN SECURE AREAS RATHER THAN TRYING TO EXTEND SECURITY TO THEM.

G. IN III CORPS POPULATION SECURITY IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON THE PRESENCE OF MAJOR FRIENDLY FORCES ON THE AVENUES OF APPROACH TO THE NORTH AND WEST OF SAIGON. LONG AN, LONG KHANH, AND HAU NGHIA PROVINCES AND THE RUNG SAT ARE STILL PROBLEM AREAS. THE EFFECT ON PACIFICATION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE 3D BRIGADE, 82D AIRBORNE DIVISION CANNOT BE ASSESSED AT THIS TIME.

H. SLOW, BUT STEADY, PACIFICATION PROGRESS IS EVIDENT IN IV CORPS. IN THIS HEAVILY, BUT EVENLY, POPULATED AREA, THE STEADY INFUSION OF TERRITORIAL FORCES APPEARS TO HOLD THE KEY TO IMPROVED SECURITY. THE APPEARANCE OF NVA TROOPS AND FILLERS POSES A THREAT TO PACIFICATION, TOWARD WHICH ALL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES INDICATE THEY ARE TARGETED. OTHER THAN AN INCREASE IN ENEMY-PROPAGANDA CONCERNING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE TWO BRIGADES OF THE 9TH DIVISION AND A DECREASE IN THE CHIEU HOI RATE, THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A LOSS OF MOMENTUM IN THE PACIFICATION PROGRAMS OF DINH TUONG AND KIEN HOA.

SSO NOTE DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
CROC NO 1882.

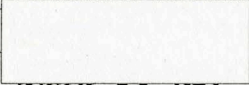
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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

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TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE SECTION FIVE OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY
5. RVNAF EFFECTIVENESS.

A. RVNAF CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO PROGRESS AS CURRENT PROGRAMS PROVIDE MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT AND INTENSIFIED TRAINING. US COMBAT, LOGISTICS, COMMUNICATION, AND AIR SUPPORT HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN PROGRESS TO DATE, AS HAS PARTICIPATION BY RVNAF IN COMBINED OPERATIONS WITH US UNITS. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IS THE RVNAF'S INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN ITS OWN ABILITY TO MEET AND DEFEAT THE ENEMY. HOWEVER, RVNAF REMAINS DEPENDENT UPON EXTENSIVE US COMBAT SUPPORT FOR HIGH EFFECTIVENESS. ESPECIALLY IN COMBATING LARGER ENEMY FORCES. THE RAPID EXPANSION OF RVNAF HAS IMPEDED IMPROVEMENT IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING UNITS. BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR QUALIFIED CADRE, LEADERS, AND PERSONNEL WITH HIGH SKILL LEVELS TO MAN NEW UNITS. A LACK OF QUALIFIED LEADERS AND A SERIES OF MANPOWER PROBLEMS, RANGING FROM DESERTION TO A HIGH PROPORTION OF NONEFFECTIVES, PREVENT MORE RAPID IMPROVEMENT IN RVNAF COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS. BECAUSE OF EMPHASIS ON PACIFICATION, ARVN UNITS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED ON ACTIVE PACIFICATION MISSIONS, ALTHOUGH INCREASES IN NUMBERS OF UNITS AND STRENGTH HAVE ENABLED RF/PF TO ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TERRITORIAL, HAMLET, AND VILLAGE SECURITY. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE AND THAT ARVN UNITS WILL BE RELEASED FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS AS RF/PF ASSUME SECURITY AND PACIFICATION MISSIONS. THE EXPANSION IN, AND IMPROVEMENT OF, TERRITORIAL FORCES THUS BECOME KEYS TO DECREASED EMPLOYMENT OF ARVN IN A SECURITY ROLE.

B. ASSESSMENTS OF THE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 1ST ARVN DIVISION IN NORTHERN I CORPS AND THE DIVISION'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY GOOD OVER THE PAST THREE QUARTERS. EXCEPT FOR THE CONTINUED THREAT IN THE DMZ AREA, THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN I CORPS IS IMPROVING. THE ARVN 2D DIVISION IN SOUTHERN I CORPS ALSO RECEIVES HIGH RATINGS IN EFFECTIVENESS, BUT, ALONG WITH US UNITS IN THE AREA, IT IS FACED WITH A STUBBORN ENEMY. THE PERFORMANCE OF TERRITORIAL FORCES IN THE AREA IS GENERALLY

No Objection To Declassification 2008/06/13 : NLN-NSC-89-3-5-9
C. IN THE CASE OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF ARVN UNITS ARE NOT IMPRESSIVE. THIS IS CAUSED BY EXTENSIVE EFFORT ON PACIFICATION, LOW ENEMY AND FRIENDLY TROOP DENSITY IN A LARGE LAND AREA, AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF MOVING TROOPS OVER CONSIDERABLE DISTANCES. TERRITORIAL FORCES IN II CORPS ARE THE LEAST EFFECTIVE SUCH FORCES IN THE COUNTRY.

D. PERFORMANCE OF THE THREE DIVISIONS IN III CORPS HAS BEEN POOR. SOME INDICATIONS OF IMPROVEMENT HAVE BEEN NOTED RECENTLY, PARTICULARLY IN THE 25TH DIVISION, AS A RESULT OF STRONG US PRESSURE TO CONDUCT COMBINED OPERATIONS. CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP IN THE 5TH AND 18TH DIVISIONS, AND INCREASED EMPHASIS ON GETTING BOTH DIVISIONS MOVING, MAY BE HAVING THE DESIRED EFFECT. TERRITORIAL FORCE PERFORMANCE IS BUT SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN THAT IN II CORPS AND CAN BE CONSIDERED POOR.

E. OF THE THREE DIVISIONS IN IV CORPS, TWO ARE CONSIDERED AVERAGE, AND THE OTHER ABOVE AVERAGE. ALL STILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS WITH PERSONNEL SHORTAGES. TERRITORIAL FORCES IN IV CORPS ARE PERFORMING RELATIVELY WELL.

F. AS SET FORTH ABOVE, THE FAILURE TO MAINTAIN A SATISFACTORY STRENGTH LEVEL IN ARVN COMBAT UNITS IS A CONTINUING SHORTCOMING CAUSED BY HIGH DESERTION RATES AND BY PROBLEMS IN THE FIELDS OF PROCUREMENT, ACCOUNTING, DISTRIBUTION, AND TRAINING MANAGEMENT. THESE PROBLEMS ALSO PLAGUE TERRITORIAL FORCES. RF DESERTION RATES, EXAMPLE, HAVE RISEN RECENTLY UNTIL THEY APPROACH ARVN DESERTION RATES. PROGRAMS ARE UNDERWAY TO COPE WITH THESE PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH LITTLE IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN NOTED.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
CROC NO. 1882.

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MR ROGERS STATE DEPT
MR HELMS CIA

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

EYES ONLY

GEN WEYAND [Redacted]

GEN CHAPMAN CMC

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TO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII
GEN WHEELER CJCS WASHINGTON
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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE FINAL SECTION OF SIX MAC 13589 EYES ONLY
G. THE PROGRAM TO ADD QUANTITATIVELY TO THE GROUND COMBAT
POWER OF THE ARVN IS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE. EXCEPT FOR SOME
ARTILLERY AND ENGINEER BATTALIONS, THERE ARE NO MAJOR COMBAT OR
COMBAT SUPPORT FORCES YET TO BE DEPLOYED. FROM THIS TIME FORWARD,
QUANTITATIVE IMPROVEMENT IS THE PRIMARY BASIS FOR ADVANCES
EFFECTIVENESS.

IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN
IF ALL ARVN DIVISIONS WERE BROUGHT TO THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL,
THEY WOULD INDIVIDUALLY BE EQUIVALENT TO ONLY ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF
A US DIVISION. THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE IN
PERSONNEL STRENGTHS, EQUIPMENT, AND ORGANIC FIREPOWER. THE
MOST ATTRACTIVE MEANS FOR IMPROVING THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF
RVNAF, EXCEPT FOR SOLVING THE MAIN PROBLEM IN MANPOWER MANAGE-
MENT, LEADERSHIP, AND OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, IS TO EXPAND
SECURITY TO THE POINT WHERE TERRITORIAL FORCES CAN TAKE OVER
THAT FUNCTION, FREEING REGULAR FORCES TO PROJECT OPERATIONS INTO
AREAS VACATED BY REDEPLOYING US FORCES. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, THE
IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ARVN, AND OF TERRITORIAL FORCES AS WELL
MUST BE THE SUBJECT OF CONTINUING ATTENTION AND EMPHASIS.
H. VNAF AND VNN ON THE OTHER HAND, WHILE QUANTITATIVELY NOT
AS FAR ALONG IN THEIR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AS ARVN, ARE QUALITATIVELY
QUITE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS, WITH FEW OF THE PROBLEMS NOTED
AS BEING SO TROUBLESOME TO ARVN AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.
VNMC EFFECTIVENESS IS RATED ABOVE AVERAGE AMONG RVNAF UNITS, AND
FURTHER QUANTITATIVE INCREASES ARE PLANNED.

6. CONCLUSIONS.

SSO NOTE: DELIVER DURING DUTY HOURS
CROC NO. 1882

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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE EYES ONLY

No Objection To Declassification 2008/06/13 : NLN-NSC-89-3-5-9

SECRET/EYES ONLY

14 September 1969

FROM: General Abrams COMUSMACV

TO: General Wheeler CJCS

Ambassador Berger

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1. Ambassador Berger and I saw President Thieu at 0830 hours for an hour.
2. I said I had brought back the details of the next redeployment and a proposed press release which I was to show him, obtain his comments, and report back. The plan was to release it Tuesday, September 16, at

SECRET/EYES ONLY

-2-

3D BDE, 82D ABN DIV, which has been in Saigon/Gia Dinh for the last 7 to 8 months. This would be the last combat element to be brought out and this would take place in December, Saigon/Gia Dinh would then be exclusively protected by GVN forces. Generals Ewell & Tri had already had discussions about phasing this brigade out of this area.

5. President Thieu asked what the present strength in country was (I said 509,000) and then he asked how much below the 484,000 authorized ceiling would the actual figures be after the next slice moves out. I said SecDef and the services have agreed to try to keep the authorized and actual strength the same, although minor variations may well occur because of casualties and other variables.

6. President Thieu said we had agreed on the second 25,000 and now we have a new figure. He asked me to see General Vien as soon as possible. He said if General Vien says this reduction will have no, repeat no great effect on combat efficiency, that it will not, repeat not compromise territorial security, not destroy the results of pacification and the RD programs scheduled for the balance of the year, and would permit the GVN to go forward with the pacification plan in 1970, when there will be further US redeployments, and if General Vien approves, he will agree.

7. President Thieu added parenthetically that if as a result of this redeployment, the enemy overran some city or destroy the results of the pacification,

SECRET/EYES ONLY

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- 3 -

then people here will denounce the withdrawal as too fast.

8. President Thieu then turned to the text of the proposed press release saying he wished to offer the following comments: the words beginning "on September 2, 1969" through "such a commitment exists" gives him trouble. He said Xuan Thuy had used a figure of 100,000 as a significant number. If we ^{only} announce 65,000, Hanoi will say it is not enough and then where are we. Secondly, these sentences respond too bluntly to what the other side says. People here know well President Nixon's three criteria for troop reductions, and we can only justify the first and second reductions in terms of one of the criteria, i. e., improved capability of the GVN forces. If we incorporate these sentences, people here will say that we now have a new criteria, which responds to what the enemy says as distinct from what it does here in a military sense or in Paris. This is "gravely disadvantageous to us politically."

9. Ambassador Berger said he was unaware that Xuan Thuy had used any figure and his recollection is that the 100,000 was advanced in one of the press questions.

10. President Thieu said that may be but if we tie this reduction too closely to Xuan Thuy's statement, it still gives the enemy the chance to say that this is inadequate, and we still have nothing in return except a vague statement that they "will take it into account."

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11. After some further discussion, we together developed language which he thought might meet the difficulty. The sentences in para 8 above he objects to would be deleted, and a new sentence added just below as follows:

BEGIN QUOTE: "The lowering of our troop level by 65, 500 is significant, It is another indication by our side of our desire to move forward toward a negotiated settlement as soon as possible." END QUOTE

12. President Thieu said with this change he thought, repeat thought the press release was acceptable, subject to what General Vien had to say on the further troop reduction. However, we had the impression he wanted to have another look at it.

13. I met at 1030 with General Vien for about 30 minutes and reviewed the new troop reduction figures. He told me that he felt it was manageable and would report to President Thieu.

14. Will report when we hear from President Thieu.

15. I have not addressed this to Admiral McCain because reference was not.

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NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS PROJECT
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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF THE ADDRESS BY THE
PRESIDENT ON VIETNAM, DELIVERED
TO NATIONAL TELEVISION AND RADIO
AUDIENCES FROM THE WHITE HOUSE,
NOVEMBER 3, 1969

Tonight I want to talk to you on a subject that deeply concerns every American and other people throughout the world -- the war in Vietnam.

I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division in this nation about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what their government has told them about our policy. The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy.

Tonight I would like to answer some of the questions that I know are on the minds of many of you listening to me.

How and why did America get involved in Vietnam in the first place?

How has this Administration changed the policy of the previous Administration?

What has really happened in the negotiations in Paris and on the battlefield in Vietnam?

What choices do we have if we are to end the war?

What are the prospects for peace?

Let me begin by describing the situation I found when I was inaugurated on January 20.

- The war had been going on for four years.
- 31,000 Americans had been killed in action.
- The training program for the South Vietnamese armed forces was behind schedule.
- 540,000 Americans were in Vietnam with no plans to reduce the number.
- No progress had been made at the negotiations in Paris and the United States had not put forth a comprehensive peace proposal.
- The war was causing deep division at home and criticism from many of our friends as well as our enemies abroad.

In view of these circumstances there were some who urged I end the war at once by ordering the immediate withdrawal of all American forces.

From a political standpoint this would have been a popular and easy course to follow. After all, we became involved in the war while my predecessor was in office. I could blame the defeat which would be the result of my action on him and come out as the peacemaker. Some put it quite bluntly: This was the only way to avoid allowing Johnson's war to become Nixon's war.

MORE

But I had a greater obligation than to think only of the years of my Administration and the next election. I had to think of the effect of my decision on the next generation and the future of peace and freedom in America and the world.

Let us all understand that the question before us is not whether some Americans are for peace and some against it. The great question at issue is not whether Johnson's war becomes Nixon's war.

The question is: how can we win America's peace?

Let us turn now to the fundamental issue. Why and how did the United States become involved in Vietnam in the first place?

Fifteen years ago North Vietnam, with the logistical support of Communist China and the Soviet Union, launched a campaign to impose a Communist government on South Vietnam by instigating and supporting a revolution.

In response to the request of the government of South Vietnam, President Eisenhower sent economic aid and military equipment to assist the people of South Vietnam in their efforts to prevent a Communist takeover. Seven years ago, President Kennedy sent 16,000 military personnel to Vietnam as combat advisors. Four years ago, President Johnson sent American combat forces to South Vietnam.

Many believe that President Johnson's decision to send American combat forces to South Vietnam was wrong. Many others - I among them - have been strongly critical of the way the war has been conducted.

But the question today is - now that we are in the war, what is the best way to end it?

In January I could only conclude that the precipitate withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam would be a disaster not only for South Vietnam but for the United States and for the cause of peace.

For the South Vietnamese, our precipitate withdrawal would inevitably allow the Communists to repeat the massacres which followed their takeover of the North fifteen years ago.

- They then murdered more than fifty thousand people and hundreds of thousands more died in slave labor camps.
- We saw a prelude of what would happen in South Vietnam when the Communists entered the city of Hue last year. During their brief rule there, there was a bloody reign of terror in which some 3,000 civilians were clubbed and shot to death.
- With the sudden collapse of our support, these atrocities of Hue would become the nightmare of the entire nation - and particularly for the million and a half Catholic refugees who fled to South Vietnam when the Communists took over the North in 1954.

For the United States, this first defeat in our nation's history would result in a collapse of confidence in American leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world.

Three American Presidents have recognized the great stakes involved in Vietnam and understood what had to be done.

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- In 1963, President Kennedy said with his characteristic eloquence and clarity, "we want to see a stable government there carrying on the struggle to maintain its national independence. We believe strongly in that. We're not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia, so we're going to stay there."
- President Eisenhower and President Johnson expressed the same conclusion during their terms of office.

For the future of peace, precipitate withdrawal would thus be a disaster of immense magnitude.

- A Nation cannot remain great if it betrays its allies and lets down its friends.
- Our defeat and humiliation in South Vietnam would without question promote recklessness in the councils of those great powers who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest.
- This would spark violence wherever our commitments help maintain peace -- in the Middle East, in Berlin, eventually even in the Western Hemisphere.

Ultimately, this would cost more lives.

It would not bring peace but more war.

For these reasons, I rejected the recommendation that I should end the war by immediately withdrawing all our forces. I chose instead to change American policy on both the negotiating front and the battlefield.

In order to end a war fought on many fronts, I initiated a pursuit for peace on many fronts.

In a television speech on May 14, in a speech before the United Nations, and on a number of other occasions I set forth our peace proposals in great detail.

- We have offered the complete withdrawal of all outside forces within one year.
- We have proposed a cease-fire under international supervision.
- We have offered free elections under international supervision with the Communists participating in the organization and conduct of the elections as an organized political force. The Saigon Government has pledged to accept the result of the elections.

We have not put forth our proposals on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We have indicated that we are willing to discuss the proposals that have been put forth by the other side and that anything is negotiable except the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future. At the Paris peace conference, Ambassador Lodge has demonstrated our flexibility and good faith in 40 public meetings.

Hanoi has refused even to discuss our proposals. They demand our unconditional acceptance of their terms; that we withdraw all American forces immediately and unconditionally and that we overthrow the government of South Vietnam as we leave.

We have not limited our peace initiatives to public forums and public statements. I recognized that a long and bitter war like this usually cannot be settled in a public forum. That is why in addition to the public statements and negotiations I have explored every possible private avenue that might lead to a settlement.

MORE

Therefore, tonight I am taking the unprecedented step of disclosing some of our other initiatives for peace - initiatives we undertook privately and secretly because we thought that we thereby might open a door which publicly would be closed.

I did not wait for my inauguration to begin my quest for peace.

- Soon after my election through an individual who is directly in contact on a personal basis with the leaders of North Vietnam I made two private offers for a rapid, comprehensive settlement. Hanoi's replies called in effect for our surrender before negotiations.
- Since the Soviet Union furnishes most of the military equipment for North Vietnam, Secretary of State Rogers, my Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Lodge, and I, personally, have met on a number of occasions with representatives of the Soviet Government to enlist their assistance in getting meaningful negotiations started. In addition we have had extended discussions directed toward that same end with representatives of other governments which have diplomatic relations with North Vietnam. None of these initiatives have to date produced results.
- In mid-July, I became convinced that it was necessary to make a major move to break the deadlock in the Paris talks. I spoke directly with an individual who had known Ho Chi Minh on a personal basis for twenty-five years. Through him I sent a letter to Ho Chi Minh.

I did this outside of the usual diplomatic channels with the hope that with the necessity of making statements for propaganda removed, there might be constructive progress toward bringing the war to an end. Let me read from that letter:

"Dear Mr. President:

"I realize that it is difficult to communicate meaningfully across the gulf of four years of war. But precisely because of this gulf, I wanted to take this opportunity to reaffirm in all solemnity my desire to work for a just peace. I deeply believe that the war in Vietnam has gone on too long and delay in bringing it to an end can benefit no one -- least of all the people of Vietnam.

"....."

"The time has come to move forward at the conference table toward an early resolution of this tragic war. You will find us forthcoming and open-minded in a common effort to bring the blessings of peace to the brave people of Vietnam. Let history record that at this critical juncture, both sides turned their face toward peace rather than toward conflict and war."

I received Ho Chi Minh's reply on August 30, three days before his death. It simply reiterated the public position North Vietnam had taken in the Paris talks and flatly rejected my initiative.

MORE

The full text of both letters is being released to the press.

- In addition, Ambassador Lodge has met with Vietnam's chief negotiator in Paris in 11 private meetings.
- We have taken other significant initiatives which must remain secret to keep open some channels of communication which may still prove to be productive.

The effect of all the public, private and secret negotiations which have been undertaken since the bombing halt a year ago and since this Administration came into office on January 20, can be summed up in one sentence --

No progress whatever has been made except agreement on the shape of the bargaining table.

It has become clear that the obstacle in negotiating an end to the war is not the President of the United States. And it is not the South Vietnamese Government.

The obstacle is the other side's absolute refusal to show the least willingness to join us in seeking a just peace. It will not do so while it is convinced that all it has to do is to wait for our next concession, and the next until it gets everything it wants.

There can be now no longer any doubt that progress in negotiation depends above all on Hanoi's deciding to negotiate seriously.

I realize that this report on our efforts on the diplomatic front is discouraging but the American people are entitled to know the truth -- the bad news as well as the good news where the lives of our young men are involved.

Let me now turn, however, to a more encouraging report on another front.

At the time we launched our search for peace, I recognized that we might not succeed in bringing an end to the war through negotiation. I, therefore, put into effect another plan to bring peace -- a plan which will bring the war to an end regardless of what happens on the negotiating front.

It is in line with a major shift in U.S. foreign policy which I described in my press conference at Guam on July 25. Let me briefly explain what has been described as the Nixon Doctrine -- a policy which not only will help end the war in Vietnam but which is an essential element of our program to prevent future Vietnams.

We Americans are a do-it-yourself-people -- an impatient people. Instead of teaching someone else to do a job, we like to do it ourselves. This trait has been carried over into our foreign policy.

In Korea and again in Vietnam, the United States furnished most of the money, most of the arms, and most of the men to help the people of those countries defend their freedom against Communist aggression.

Before any American troops were committed to Vietnam, a leader of another Asian country expressed this opinion to me when I was traveling in Asia as a private citizen. "When you are trying to assist another nation defend its freedom, U.S. policy should be to help them fight the war but not to fight the war for them."

In Guam, I laid down these three principles as guidelines for future American policy toward Asia:

1. The United States will keep all of our treaty commitments.
2. We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

MORE

3. In cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.

After I announced this policy, I found that the leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea and other nations which might be threatened by Communist aggression welcomed this new direction in American foreign policy.

The defense of freedom is everybody's business -- not just America's business. And it is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened. The policy of the previous Administration not only resulted in our assuming the primary responsibility for fighting the war but even more significantly it did not adequately stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese so that they could defend themselves when we left.

The Vietnamization Plan was launched following Secretary Laird's visit to Vietnam in March. Under the plan, I ordered a substantial increase in the training and equipment of South Vietnamese forces.

In July, on my visit to Vietnam, I changed General Abram's orders so that they were consistent with the objectives of our new policy. Under the new orders the primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam.

Our air operations have been reduced by over twenty percent.

We have now begun to see the results of this long overdue change in American policy in Vietnam.

- After five years of Americans going into Vietnam, we are finally bringing American men home. By December 15, over 60,000 men will have been withdrawn from South Vietnam -- including twenty percent of all of our combat troops.
- The South Vietnamese have continued to gain in strength. As a result they have been able to take over combat responsibilities from our American forces.

Two other significant developments have occurred since this Administration took office in January.

- Enemy infiltration over the last three months is less than twenty percent of what it was over the similar period last year.
- Most important -- United States casualties have declined during the last two months to the lowest point in three years.

Let me turn now to our program for the future.

We have adopted a plan which we have worked out in cooperation with the South Vietnamese for the complete withdrawal of all U.S. ground combat forces and their replacement by South Vietnamese forces on an orderly scheduled timetable. This withdrawal will be made from strength and not from weakness. As South Vietnamese forces become stronger, the rate of American withdrawal can become greater.

MORE

I have not and do not intend to announce the timetable for our program. There are obvious reasons for this decision. As I have indicated on several occasions, the rate of withdrawal will depend on developments on three fronts:

- One is the progress which may be made at the Paris talks. An announcement of a fixed timetable for our withdrawal would completely remove any incentive for the enemy to negotiate an agreement.
- They would simply wait until our forces had withdrawn and then move in.

The other two factors on which we will base our withdrawal decisions are the level of enemy activity and the progress of the training program of the South Vietnamese forces. Progress on both these fronts has been greater than we anticipated when we started the withdrawal program in June. As a result, our timetable for withdrawal is more optimistic now than when we made our first estimates in June. This clearly demonstrates why it is not wise to be frozen in on a fixed timetable.

We must retain the flexibility to base each withdrawal decision on the situation as it is at that time rather than on estimates that are no longer valid.

Along with this optimistic estimate, I must - in all candor - leave one note of caution.

If the level of enemy activity significantly increases we might have to adjust our timetable accordingly.

However, I want the record to be completely clear on one point.

At the time of the bombing halt last November, there was some confusion as to whether there was an understanding on the part of the enemy that if we stopped the bombing they would stop shelling cities of South Vietnam. I want to be sure there is no misunderstanding on the part of the enemy with regard to our withdrawal program.

We have noted the reduced level of infiltration and the reduction of our casualties and are basing our withdrawal decisions partially on those factors.

If the level of infiltration or our casualties increase while we are trying to scale down the fighting, it will be the result of a conscious decision by the enemy.

Hanoi could make no greater mistake than to assume that an increase in violence will be to its own advantage. If I conclude that increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces in Vietnam, I shall not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

This is not a threat. This is a statement of policy which as Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces I am making in meeting my responsibility for the protection of American fighting men wherever they may be.

I am sure that you can recognize from what I have said that we have only two choices open to us if we want to end the war.

- I can order an immediate, precipitate withdrawal of all Americans from Vietnam without regard to the effects of that action.

MORE

-- Or we can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary -- a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom.

I have chosen the second course.

It is not the easy way.

It is the right way.

It is a plan which will end the war and serve the cause of peace -- not just in Vietnam but in the Pacific and in the world.

In speaking of the consequences of a precipitate withdrawal, I mentioned that our allies would lose confidence in America.

Far more dangerous, we would lose confidence in ourselves. The immediate reaction would be a sense of relief as our men came home. But as we saw the consequences of what we had done, inevitable remorse and divisive recrimination would scar our spirit as a people.

We have faced other crises in our history and have become stronger by rejecting the easy way out and taking the right way in meeting our challenges. Our greatness as a nation has been our capacity to do what had to be done when we knew our course was right.

I recognize that some of my fellow citizens disagree with the plan for peace I have chosen. Honest and patriotic Americans have reached different conclusions as to how peace should be achieved.

In San Francisco a few weeks ago, I saw demonstrators carrying signs reading: "Lose in Vietnam, bring the boys home."

One of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and to advocate that point of view. But as President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that view and who attempt to impose it on the nation by mounting demonstrations in the street.

For almost two hundred years, the policy of this nation has been made under our Constitution by those leaders in the Congress and in the White House who were elected by all the people. If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority this nation has no future as a free society.

I would like to address a word to the young people of this nation who are concerned about the war.

I respect your idealism.

I share your concern for peace.

I want peace as much as you do.

MORE

There are powerful personal reasons I want to end this war. This week I will have to sign 83 letters to mothers, father, wives and loved ones of men who had given their lives for America in Vietnam. It is very little satisfaction to me that this was only one-third as many as I signed during my first week in office. There is nothing I want more than to see the day come when I no longer must write any of these letters.

- I want to end the war to save the lives of those brave young men in Vietnam.
- I want to end it in a way which will increase the chance that their younger brothers and their sons will not have to fight in another Vietnam someplace in the world.
- I want to end the war so that the energy and dedication of our young people, now too often directed into bitter hatred against those they think are responsible for the war, can be turned to the great challenges of peace, a better life for all Americans and for people throughout the world.

I have chosen a plan for peace. I believe it will succeed.

If it does succeed, what the critics say now will not matter. If it does not succeed, anything I say then will not matter.

I know it may not be fashionable to speak of patriotism or national destiny these days. But I feel it is appropriate to do so on this occasion.

Two hundred years ago this nation was weak and poor. But even then, America was the hope of millions in the world. Today we have become the strongest and richest nation in the world. The wheel of destiny has turned so that any hope the world has for the survival of peace and freedom in the last third of this century will be determined by whether the American people have the moral stamina and the courage to meet the challenge of free world leadership.

Let historians not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people on this earth to be suffocated by the forces of totalitarianism.

And so tonight - to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans - I ask for your support.

I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge.

The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed; for the more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate in Paris.

Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that.

Fifty years ago, in this very room and at this very desk, President Woodrow Wilson wrote words which caught the imagination of a war-weary world during World War I. He said: "This is the war to end wars." His dream for peace after that war was shattered on the hard realities of great power politics, and Wilson died a broken man.

MORE

Tonight I do not tell you that the war in Vietnam is the war to end wars.

I do say that I have initiated a plan which will end this war in a way that will bring us closer to that great goal of a just and lasting peace to which Woodrow Wilson and every President in our history has been dedicated.

As President I hold the responsibility for choosing the best path to that goal and then for leading our nation along it.

I pledge to you tonight that I will meet this responsibility with all of the strength and wisdom I can command in accordance with your hopes, mindful of your concerns, sustained by your prayers.

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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

IN THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION,
HE REFERS TO AN EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE
HE HAD WITH PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. FOR YOUR
INFORMATION AND USE, THIS EXCHANGE OF
CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWS:

July 15, 1969

Dear Mr. President:

I realize that it is difficult to communicate meaningfully across the gulf of four years of war. But precisely because of this gulf, I wanted to take this opportunity to reaffirm in all solemnity my desire to work for a just peace. I deeply believe that the war in Vietnam has gone on too long and delay in bringing it to an end can benefit no one -- least of all the people of Vietnam. My speech on May 14 laid out a proposal which I believe is fair to all parties. Other proposals have been made which attempt to give the people of South Vietnam an opportunity to choose their own future. These proposals take into account the reasonable conditions of all sides. But we stand ready to discuss other programs as well, specifically the 10-point program of the NLF.

As I have said repeatedly, there is nothing to be gained by waiting. Delay can only increase the dangers and multiply the suffering.

The time has come to move forward at the conference table toward an early resolution of this tragic war. You will find us forthcoming and open-minded in a common effort to bring the blessings of peace to the brave people of Vietnam. Let history record that at this critical juncture, both sides turned their face toward peace rather than toward conflict and war.

Sincerely,

/s/

RICHARD NIXON

His Excellency
Ho Chi Minh
President
Democratic Republic of Vietnam
Hanoi

* * * * *

Hanoi, 25 August 1969
(Received in Paris August 30)

To His Excellency Richard Milhous Nixon
President of the United States
Washington

Mr. President,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter.

MORE

The war of aggression of the United States against our people, violating our fundamental national rights, still continues in South Vietnam. The United States continues to intensify military operations, the B-52 bombings and the use of toxic chemical products multiply the crimes against the Vietnamese people. The longer the war goes on, the more it accumulates the mourning and burdens of the American people. I am extremely indignant at the losses and destructions caused by the American troops to our people and our country. I am also deeply touched at the rising toll of death of young Americans who have fallen in Vietnam by reason of the policy of American governing circles.

Our Vietnamese people are deeply devoted to peace, a real peace with independence and real freedom. They are determined to fight to the end, without fearing the sacrifices and difficulties in order to defend their country and their sacred national rights. The overall solution in 10 points of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam is a logical and reasonable basis for the settlement of the Vietnamese problem. It has earned the sympathy and support of the peoples of the world.

In your letter you have expressed the desire to act for a just peace. For this the United States must cease the war of aggression and withdraw their troops from South Vietnam, respect the right of the population of the South and of the Vietnamese nation to dispose of themselves, without foreign influence. This is the correct manner of solving the Vietnamese problem in conformity with the national rights of the Vietnamese people, the interests of the United States and the hopes for peace of the peoples of the world. This is the path that will allow the United States to get out of the war with honor.

With good will on both sides we might arrive at common efforts in view of finding a correct solution of the Vietnamese problem.

Sincerely,

/S/

HO CHI MINH

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This Copy For _____

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
(President's Vietnam Speech)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER,
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

AT 8:20 P.M. EST

NOVEMBER 3, 1969

MONDAY

MR. ZIEGLER: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have the text of the President's address for this evening, also the exchange of correspondence attached to that between President Nixon and President Ho Chi Minh.

Dr. Kissinger will discuss the President's address with you and take your questions. What Dr. Kissinger says will be for BACKGROUND, not directly attributable to Dr. Kissinger and not for direct quotations. You can attribute Dr. Kissinger's remarks to White House sources.

DR. KISSINGER: Ladies and Gentlemen, I don't think there is any purpose served in my summarizing the speech. Let me just make one or two very brief observations.

The first is that probably nothing that we have done since we came into office has been done with as much seriousness, I may say with as much anguish, as this speech. We did not lack for advice. The temptation to try for some spectacular initiative was very great. But we believed that our responsibility was to do what was right, not what was new.

We believe that we have a plan that can work. We believe it is the right plan. And the President wanted to put before the American people why he believes that the plan should be carried out.

He has written most of the speech -- in fact, he has written all of the speech -- himself. He presented the major ideas to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General and myself, on Thursday. All present unanimously agreed that this was the correct course to pursue.

Then the President wrote the final draft at Camp David over the weekend.

I think this is all that I care to say at this moment. I will be delighted to answer your questions.

OVER

Q At the bottom of Page 6, you speak of a plan we have worked out to withdraw all U. S. ground combat forces. Can you tell me, sir, what is the number you are talking about there? How many men?

DR. KISSINGER: Frankly, I don't have the exact number, but whatever it is, they will be withdrawn under this plan.

Q On that same general point, on Page 8, and I don't know whether this is a contradiction or not, you say you have a plan for withdrawing all forces. Does the withdrawal of combat forces become a part of the plan to withdraw all of the forces or is there some explanation?

DR. KISSINGER: The plan that we have is that the first increment, the big package, is withdrawal of ground combat forces over the period of time that the plan calls for, and the objective will be to withdraw all forces as I stated.

So what is on Page 6 is the first basic installment of the overall plan.

Q In the course of the speech, the President has disclosed private peace initiatives that he took during the course of 1969.

DR. KISSINGER: That is right.

Q Was there any fear in his mind or in the minds of any of his advisors when he decided to do so that in revealing any of these initiatives it would make Hanoi any less cooperative in the future?

DR. KISSINGER: As a logistician it would be interesting to observe an escalation uncooperatively. Secondly, we have released only those initiatives which we believe are clearly shut off and which offer no further prospect of success. We have deliberately not released anything else that might still have the slightest possibility of success.

I might, in this connection, also point out that during February we were often criticized for not having taken dramatic moves during the early days of the Administration. I think the reason is obvious now.

MORE

Q In that case, could you identify the gentleman who has known Ho Chi Minh for 25 years since he is no longer useful as a conduit?

DR. KISSINGER: This is not our judgment and therefore we cannot release his name.

Q Can you release his nationality?

DR. KISSINGER: No.

Q Dr. Kissinger, can you tell us whether you personally expect the combat troops all to be out by the end of 1970 or 1971 or some other date?

DR. KISSINGER: The President carefully explained why he would not give a time schedule. He has a schedule in his mind. We know what we intend to do, but we will not give any public time schedule.

Q Dr. Kissinger, is there any element in here which you regard as particularly significant in terms of the negotiating situation in Paris?

DR. KISSINGER: We are repeating as we have on innumerable occasions, our openness to compromise and our willingness to talk, including the propositions of all parties.

I believe also it is important for Hanoi to understand that if they are waiting in order to elicit more and more concessions, if this is the only reason why they are waiting, then this hope will be disappointed. Insofar as Hanoi may be counting on our not being willing, on our following the experiences of the French, we believe too that after this speech that they will be disappointed.

Q You speak of the plan being the first increment of the package to withdraw combat forces. What about the rest of the package. What should we look forward to in terms of non-combat forces in Vietnam? Have you plans for that?

DR. KISSINGER: As I pointed out, the objective is to withdraw ultimately all forces in relation to the criteria that has previously been stated. I cannot be more specific than I have been.

MORE

Q Doctor, are the 60,000 already announced a part of your timetable, a gradual timetable?

DR. KISSINGER: The answer is yes.

Q Dr. Kissinger, how can there be an orderly, scheduled timetable for withdrawal when, as the President says on page 6, the withdrawal decisions still depend on the three criteria, and he must retain a flexibility, to base each withdrawal decision on the situation as it is at the time? Maybe it is a question of semantics. What is an orderly, scheduled timetable?

DR. KISSINGER: There is obviously a problem about rigidly following a timetable, regardless of what the other side does. We have made it clear that we are holding the other side to the present levels of infiltration and to the present level of combat. If that should change significantly, then the level of violence in Vietnam will be directly traceable to them and we will have to take appropriate measures.

Q Dr. Kissinger, the President says on page 7 that our withdrawal timetable is now more optimistic because of the reduction in enemy activity and progress in Vietnamization. Can one draw as a logical conclusion from that that we intend, if these factors remain like that, to accelerate the pace of the withdrawals and perhaps announce a new one sometime in December.

DR. KISSINGER: I don't want to speculate about any troop withdrawals, about any dates or any numbers. We will announce these withdrawals as soon as we possibly can, the numbers we can conscientiously make.

I would like to stress this, ladies and gentlemen: We will not be justified before the American people by the numbers we withdraw and the date we withdraw them, but by how it will come out a year from now. We will withdraw the number of forces we responsibly can over as short a period of time as we responsibly can. But we are not going to engage in a numbers game or in a competition in escalation of estimates. We will not estimate on numbers or dates.

Q I am interested in the statement on page 6 about our air operations have been reduced over 20 percent.

DR. KISSINGER: That is right.

Q First of all, was there an order to reduce those by 20 percent? Second, does this refer only to B-52 operations or does it refer to all the operations?

DR. KISSINGER: The answer is that there was an order to reduce air operations by 20 percent; that the order applies to B-52s as well as to tactical air, and it has been in effect since August.

MORE

Q Dr. Kissinger, the President said repeatedly that we will withdraw all of our forces, stressing only that it will not be done precipitously. He no longer says that the North Vietnamese have to withdraw as he did in his May 14 speech, when he said he would rule out an unilateral withdrawal. Is this not a major change in our position?

DR. KISSINGER: First of all, you have to distinguish two separate problems with relation to withdrawal; one, a negotiated withdrawal, in which case we are assuming that it must be mutual. The other is a withdrawal by the United States as South Vietnamese forces become able to assume their responsibilities initially with American support.

The second process is, of course, going to be slower than the first. The May 14 speech spoke entirely of a negotiated settlement. This speech addresses itself to both a negotiated settlement and an end to the war that will come about without negotiation.

I must again reiterate, ladies and gentlemen, that we are also insisting on the levels of combat and infiltration that have been characteristic over the last three months.

Q On that very point that you were just addressing yourself to, can you give us a word of guidance of what the President has in mind on Page 7, when he says, "I shall not hesitate to take strong, effective measures to deal with that situation"?

Is the implication there that the timetable would be delayed or is the implication of escalation?

DR. KISSINGER: The question is, what is meant by the reference on Page 7 to the measures that the President may take if the levels of infiltration increase significantly or if the casualties of American forces and the level of violence rise.

I would not want to speculate on the specific measures that could be taken, but as the President said, we hope that they will be adequate to the situation.

Q Dr. Kissinger, after the American combat forces have been withdrawn, will the United States rely on Vietnamese forces to protect American support troops that remain in Vietnam?

DR. KISSINGER: The policy is to rely to the greatest extent possible on Vietnamese forces. You understand, of course, that the process will be gradual and that there will not be any sharp cutoff points. Ultimately, that is the direction in which we are headed.

Q Dr. Kissinger, could you tell us anything about the President's timing in deciding to make this very important speech which occurs midway between these two public demonstrations and on the very eve of elections in a number of States?

MORE

DR. KISSINGER: I can answer this one very precisely. The President had always intended that he would give an account to the American people on November 1, the anniversary of the bombing halt, about the progress of the negotiations and the state of the war.

He had always felt that this was an important watershed for assessing various points. As it turned out, November 1 was a Saturday, and we had been committed for a long time to give a speech on October 31. So the prosaic explanation is that we picked the first week day after November 1, which happened to be November 3.

Q Can you relate in a clarifying way what is said here tonight as against the instructions given to Ambassador Lodge in Paris and what has transpired there in the last two weeks?

DR. KISSINGER: The instructions to Ambassador Lodge in the last two weeks in Paris were intended to underline that we believe that the plenary sessions in Paris had reached a total stalemate. If you look over the record of these plenary sessions, you will find that every proposal except the presentation of the ten-points by the other side, has come from us; that most of the sessions are now devoted on the other side to invective and vituperation. We attempted to underline that we are serious about the process of negotiations, but that we thought that the people in Vietnam deserved the more serious treatment than they had received at the plenary sessions in Paris.

Therefore, two weeks ago, Ambassador Lodge chose not to reply to another recital of the essentially same speech that we had heard for many previous weeks, and at the last session, Ambassador Lodge proposed a different procedure: Less public, more restrictive, which, hopefully, would give both sides an opportunity to state their real concerns and, therefore, to get a serious negotiation started.

We do believe that what has been going on in Paris is not likely to lead to a solution; that the time for serious negotiations has long since arrived, and that it cannot go on indefinitely simply as a repetition of the old sterile positions without any response to any proposal.

Q Dr. Kissinger, you met with Soviet representatives who, you say, are supplying the majority of the arms to the North Vietnamese. Did you urge them to stop this kind of shipment of military equipment?

If you did make that urgent, what response did you get?

DR. KISSINGER: We put before the Soviet representatives our conviction that the time for a settlement of the Vietnamese issue had arrived in the interest of all the parties. We left it to them to choose the method. They have in the past proved, when basic Soviet interests were at stake, they knew how to find the proper method.

It would be presumptuous for us to tell them how to make their views effective. As we point out in the text, we have not had a response. We have not had a response from Hanoi.

Q Dr. Kissinger, I presume that while the President was deliberating for this speech, that he considered and talked with many different groups. I wonder if he talked with any group that dissented very much from this speech?

DR. KISSINGER: The President has had the benefit of a great deal of advice in preparing the speech. He has spoken personally to leading Senators of the opposition whose views are not fully reflected in this speech but which were fully presented to the President.

He has had the advice and he has had summaries of all of the presentations that were made to other staff members.

He has had the fullest spectrum of different opinions. He has reflected about this problem with great care. He has concluded that within his responsibilities for the future of America, he had to make the choice that he made here.

I can assure you he did not make it frivolously.

Q Dr. Kissinger, is there anything in the Nixon plan for winding down the American military role in Vietnam and withdrawing American troops which is seriously inconsistent with the language in the next-to-the-last paragraph of Ho Chi Minh's letter?

DR. KISSINGER: In the context of the Ho Chi Minh letter which spoke of American governing circles instead of the President of the United States, which accused us of intensifying B-52 operations at a time when the North Vietnamese knew, and I repeat knew, that the B-52 operations were being reduced by 20 percent -- in the context of this letter this was another repetition of the demands for an immediate unconditional withdrawal of American forces -- a demand which has been repeated since then innumerable times in Paris, in which Hanoi's representatives pointed out that they did not care about a withdrawal that might be spaced over a period of -- I am quoting them now and not us -- over a period of two or three years, but only a period of months would be adequate.

So in this particular context, as it has been stated publicly by Radio Hanoi, it is inconsistent. If it should turn out that Hanoi is willing to cooperate with this definition of our plan, we could only be delighted. We have no interest in depriving Hanoi of enjoying credit for our plan if they wish to.

MORE

Q On page 7, the section in which the President says that if the level of infiltration is increased -- and so on -- does that refer to American or all Allied casualties?

DR. KISSINGER: Ours refers mainly to our casualties. But there is another sentence in which we point out that Hanoi would make no greater mistake than to assume that an increase in violence would be to its own advantage, which is stated in general terms.

Q The President is on the record as stating that he believes the war will be over in three years. Is it safe to presume, therefore, that the timetable as currently constructed envisions the withdrawal of all American forces by then?

DR. KISSINGER: Ladies and gentlemen, I think I can save us a great deal of trouble. I am not going to give any times. I am not going to speculate on any tables. I am not going to be moved into doing it. I therefore can't answer that question.

Q Dr. Kissinger, in the May 14th definition of our terms, we had mutual withdrawal in 12 months and the remainder over some indefinite period, and there were to be cease fires, supervised, in the plural. In this you have a singular cease fire. Is there any significance?

DR. KISSINGER: Let me explain the May 14th speech and the difference, such as it is, between the two speeches. The reasoning in the May 14th speech was that Hanoi might find it difficult to move all its forces out of South Vietnam and leave the NLF without any possibility of support if there was any violation of the agreement.

Therefore, we provided for some minimum residual forces which either side could use to police the agreement. As it has turned out, this particular provision which we did not consider essential to our program, has been violently attacked by Hanoi, and we saw no great reason to insist on this. If Hanoi would prefer that there be no residual forces left in Vietnam in case of an agreed mutual withdrawal, we are willing to go along with this.

The second is we are flexible on the issue of cease fire whether it is a general or a series of local ones. Obviously, if there is to be a mutual withdrawal, there has to be a prior cease fire since obviously troops cannot be withdrawn while combat continues.

Again, we remain flexible on whether this should be done locally or whether it should be done on a general basis. Again, this was put into the May 14th speech in order to make possible local arrangements; not to preclude a general arrangement. We have stated the general version here. Conversely, we are prepared to consider local arrangements.

MORE

Q Dr. Kissinger, you said in answering a previous question that you thought the Vietnamese Government knew we had ordered a reduction in the B-52 raids. Did we communicate this to them by some private channel and have we communicated other military orders like that?

DR. KISSINGER: I had pointed out the North Vietnamese knew that we had reduced the operations by 20 percent. I don't want to go beyond what I said, except to reiterate it. We have tried to make sure throughout that Hanoi has understood what we are doing. We have tried to give Hanoi a maximum incentive for a reasonable solution. If our orders or our actions have been misunderstood, it has not been by accident.

Q Dr. Kissinger, the President refers on page 6 to his general orders to General Abrams in July. Could you tell us in practical terms what the change in orders means?

DR. KISSINGER: I think it has been characterized in the speech about as well as it can be, that the primary emphasis of our strategy now is less on the previous objective of the destruction of enemy influences than it is the protection of the Vietnamese forces and strengthening their capability to defend their country.

Q The three criteria were laid down with the proviso that if the enemy responded to any one or all three of them, there would be a response from our side.

Now, you said tonight that you were holding the enemy to the low level of infiltration and to the lower level of combat. Yet there is no announcement in this speech of any specific response on our part. Does that mean that you are now focusing attention solely on Paris, that you are in a sense changing that criteria and unless there is progress in Paris from the other side that we will not announce a specific action?

DR. KISSINGER: I am not saying that. I am saying that we will choose the time of any future troop withdrawals and we will choose the size of any future troop withdrawals for the moment that it is most consistent with our best judgment on how to bring peace.

We will make these announcements when our best judgment convinces us that it is the right response in those circumstances. We will have to see, now that the rainy season is over, if there may not be another offensive. What the right timing is has to be left to judgment. But the three criteria remain in force and we will act accordingly.

MORE

MR. ZIEGLER: This will be the last question.

Q Dr. Kissinger, you mentioned the Soviet Union among the sources that have been tried and proved futile in arranging peace. Do you still consider this channel a live one, or is it not possible to make headway through the Soviet channel? And what about Laos?

DR. KISSINGER: The answer is that we are always delighted to hear from the Soviet Union, to hear the Soviet Union's view, on Vietnamese developments; that if we have any views that we think would be particularly appropriate to put before the Soviet Union, we still will feel free to do so.

We recognize that the Soviet Union does not have unlimited influence in Hanoi, and that for the Soviet Union there may also be a problem of choosing the right moment to make its influence effective.

Therefore, we are not closing off any channel.

MR. ZIEGLER: Thank you, gentlemen.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 8:56 P.M. EST.)

I. Purpose of Speech:

1. The speech's fundamental purpose is to give a full accounting of the Administration's Vietnam policy -- what it is and how and why it was formed.

2. The account is as full as possible to give the American people an opportunity to judge for themselves the situation and the course we must follow. It is not an attempt to claim success in everything the Administration has done or to make false promises.

3. It contains no gimmicks. The President is confident that a full account like this provides, in itself, persuasive evidence that the course we are on is the only right one.

II. Themes

1. The speech describes the basic choice we face between:

-- an immediate, precipitate withdrawal of all Americans from Vietnam; or

-- persisting in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement, if possible, or through a continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary. The Administration has chosen to seek a just peace. Precipitate withdrawal would have grave consequences for South Vietnam, for the cause of peace and for the US. All three effects are most serious. The effect on the US has not before now received proper emphasis. Not only would our allies lose confidence in us, but we Americans would lose confidence in ourselves and be torn by remorse and recrimination.

2. The speech describes how the Administration has greatly changed US policies in Vietnam from those of the previous Administration. We have adopted a plan following two tracks in seeking peace -- negotiations and Vietnamization. While these obviously have different elements, they are basically complementary. The greater the success of Vietnamization, the more uncertain Hanoi must be about its own chances for success, and the more willing it must therefore be to seek a negotiated settlement now. Hanoi's sensitivity to Vietnamization has been demonstrated in its public statements on the subject.

3. Negotiations

The speech provides a record of US efforts in good faith to find a negotiated settlement. It briefly reviews our basic proposals, as put forth in the May 14 speech and elsewhere, but does not go into these in detail since they are already on the public record. Rather, it goes beyond such a catalog of public offers and reveals a number of secret initiatives. These include efforts before the inauguration, approaches through the Soviet Union and other nations, and even a letter from the President to Ho Chi Minh. (Some secret initiatives we have made are not revealed in the speech, lest we prejudice channels of communication which may still prove to be productive.)

This record shows that Hanoi is the barrier to a negotiated settlement. For example, Ho's response to the President's letter flatly rejected both its substance and its moderate tone. Ho's letter referred to "American governing circles," falsely accused the US of intensifying military operations when the opposite was true, and asked, in effect, for our surrender.

The record demonstrates the futility of our making further unilateral concessions, since these simply serve to persuade Hanoi that it need only wait for each concession until we have conceded defeat.

The record shows that our negotiating efforts have not yet proved successful. This does not mean, however, that we have given up our search for a negotiated settlement, or that such a settlement is impossible in the near future. The history of these and other negotiations with the Communists shows that there is very little or no advance warning of decisions on their part to make concessions. We hope that as Vietnamization proceeds, as the American people rally to the President's position, and as Hanoi continues to suffer heavy losses in the South, it will recognize that time is not on its side and therefore seek a just settlement.

4. Vietnamization

This is, of course, a policy of building up South Vietnam to the point where it can defend itself. The program allows South Vietnamese troops to replace our men on an orderly scheduled timetable. Consonant with this policy, General Abrams' orders were changed in July and air operations have been reduced 20%.

The speech places Vietnamization in the context of the Nixon Doctrine, which the President enunciated at Guam on July 25. The speech gives a good, concise statement of that doctrine.

The speech here points to some successes for the Administration's policies. More than 60,000 American troops will have returned home by December 15, and the capabilities of the South Vietnamese forces are increasing. Other

significant developments on the battlefield have included a decline in US casualties to the lowest point in three years, and a drop in enemy infiltration. Infiltration over the last three months has been less than 20% of what it was over the same period last year. As a result, our timetable for withdrawal is more optimistic now than when we made our first estimates in June.

No Vietnamization timetable is given. If a timetable were announced, Hanoi's incentive to negotiate an agreement would be destroyed, and the enemy would also know that it need simply wait until a certain date for us to leave, and then move in.

The President states that the three criteria -- progress in negotiations, progress in building up South Vietnamese forces, and the level of enemy activity -- still apply with regard to future decisions on troop withdrawals.

The President wants to make sure that there is no misunderstanding on the part of the enemy with regard to our withdrawal program. If the level of infiltration or our casualties increase while we are trying to scale down the fighting, it will be the result of a conscious decision by the enemy. Hanoi could make no greater mistake than to assume that an increase in violence will be to its advantage. If the President concludes that increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces, he will not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation. This is not a threat. It is a statement of policy which as Commander-in-Chief he is making in meeting his responsibilities for the protection of American fighting men wherever they may be.

5. The President concludes by addressing both the young critics and the great silent majority of Americans.

-- To the critics he states his sympathy with their idealism. He fully shares their desire for peace. But as President he cannot allow a minority to impose its will through demonstrations on the majority.

-- To the majority, the President asks for their support as America does what it must do. This support will shorten the war. The more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate in Paris.

Hanoi cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. The President intends to lead the country along the path to a just peace.

III. Background

1. The President paid a great deal of attention to this speech, and chose its wording carefully.
2. The South Vietnamese government was briefed in advance on the content of the speech.

SPEECH OUTLINE

I. Speaking to American people to answer their questions:

- How and why did America get involved in Vietnam?
- How has this Administration changed the policy of the previous one?
- What has really happened in the negotiations in Paris and on the battlefield?
- What choices do we have if we are to end the war?
- What are the prospects for peace?

II. January -- Situation and decision against immediate withdrawal

A. Description of situation on January 20: four years of war; 31,000 American dead; 540,000 in Vietnam and no plans for withdrawal; no negotiations progress or comprehensive U.S. peace proposal; division at home and criticism abroad.

B. On assuming office, could have withdrawn U.S. forces, blaming war on predecessor. But, while this would have been a politically popular and easy course, there was an obligation to think of its effect on the future. "The great question at issue is not whether Johnson's war becomes Nixon's war. The question is how we can win America's peace."

C. How U.S. became involved:

- NVN campaign against South with USSR and CPR logistic help;
- Response by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

D. Could only conclude that precipitate withdrawal would be disaster for SVN, for the U.S., and for the cause of peace:

-- For SVN: terror

-- For U.S.: repudiation of three Presidents' word.

-- For cause of peace: U.S. defeat would promote recklessness in councils of great ^{powers} who retain goals of world conquest, and spark violence in areas of U.S. commitment -- Middle East, Berlin, eventually the Western Hemisphere.

Therefore, rejected immediate withdrawal.

III. Changed U.S. policies on negotiating front and battlefield:

A. Negotiations -- public efforts

1. New proposals in public statements -- complete withdrawal of all outside forces in one year; internationally supervised ceasefire; free elections; etc. Not on take-it-or-leave-it basis.
2. Good faith demonstrated at Paris at 40 public meetings.
3. Hanoi's refusal to discuss them; demand for U.S. withdrawal and overthrow of GVN.

B. Negotiations -- private efforts

1. Two pre-inauguration initiatives. Rejected.
2. Efforts to enlist help of Soviet Union and others in getting meaningful negotiations started. No results to date.
3. Letter to Ho in mid-July. Rejected in response received August 30. Both letters to be released to the press.

C. Thus, Hanoi -- not the President or the GVN -- is the obstacle to peace. Hanoi will not negotiate while it thinks it can simply wait for each succeeding concession.

D. More encouraging report on another front -- Vietnamizing the search for peace.

1. Guam doctrine. Three principles for U.S. policy toward Asia:
 - keep treaty commitments;
 - provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security;
 - furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with treaty commitments. But nation directly threatened assumes primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.
2. Approval of Guam doctrine of Asian leaders.
3. Vietnamization Plan -- launched in March following Laird visit to Vietnam.
 - a. Increase in training and equipment for SVN forces.
 - b. New orders in July for General Abrams consistent with objectives of new policy. Primary mission of our troops now -- to enable SVN troops assume full responsibility for security of SVN.
 - c. Air operations cut by 20%.
4. Results: Over 60,000 men home by December 15, including 20% of combat troops.
5. Two other significant developments:
 - enemy infiltration over last 3 months 20% of similar period last year;
 - U.S. casualties lowest in 3 years.

D. Program for the future

1. Withdraw from strength, not weakness. The stronger SVN, the faster withdrawal.
2. No timetable to be announced. Why?
 - Would remove enemy incentive to negotiate.
 - They would simply wait until our forces withdrawn, and then move in.
3. Will also base withdrawal decisions on level of enemy activity and progress of SVN forces' training program.
 - Progress on both these fronts greater than expected, so timetable for withdrawal more optimistic than first estimates in June.
4. One note of caution: if level of infiltration or our casualties increase while we are trying to scale down the fighting, will be result of enemy decision. If increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces, will not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

IV. Two Choices Open to End the War

1. Precipitate withdrawal
2. Negotiated settlement or Vietnamization.

Have chosen the second.

If chose the first, allies would lose confidence in us, and we in ourselves.

V. Honest and patriotic Americans have reached different conclusions on how to achieve peace.

- A. Some have advocated losing. They have right to do so. But President cannot allow policy to be made by minority who seek to impose their view through demonstrations.
- B. Shares concern of the young for peace. Wants war to end:
 - to save U. S. lives;
 - in such a way as to increase chance of avoiding another Vietnam;
 - so energies of the young can turn to challenges of peace and better life for people in U. S. and throughout the world.

VI. Survival of peace and freedom in the last third of this century will be determined by the moral stamina and courage of the American people.

- A. Asks for support of the great silent majority of Americans. The more support, the faster can be redeemed the pledge to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. For the enemy is then more likely to negotiate.
- B. Does not say Vietnam is the war to end war; but has initiated a plan to end this war in a way that will bring us closer to the ideal of a just and lasting peace.
- C. Has responsibility for choosing nation's path and leading.

"I pledge to you tonight that I will meet this responsibility with all of the strength and wisdom I can command in accordance with your hopes, mindful of your concerns, sustained by your prayers. "