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FINAL REPORT - TASK FORCE VIET-NAM

July 1, 1962

A. Presidential Program (Initiated May 23, 1962)

1. Seek to increase GVN confidence in US by Vice-Presidential visit.

Achieved.

2. Attempt strengthen Diem's popular support by reappraisal and negotiation.

Continues: Our attempts continue, but Diem's popular support has decreased.

The January 4, 1962, GVN-US Joint Communique spelled out a program aimed at providing every Vietnamese with a stake in the outcome of the war. The communique resulted from negotiations which began with Vice President Johnson's visit and the Staley Mission. Negotiations aimed at producing action which will increase popular support continue.

The December 4, 1961 Memorandum of Understanding between Diem and Nolting specifically recognized the importance of developing democratic institutions. The GVN has taken a number of actions following from and related to this understanding which are calculated to increase popular support. These include the establishment of Provincial Councils, a National Economic Council, a Constitutional Court, a national flood relief organization (which included oppositionists), a continuing purge of officials charged with various abuses, an organization within the Presidency charged with the responsibility for collecting and acting on popular complaints, the continued toleration of at least a minimum of opposition activity (example: the opposition candidates in the 1961 Presidential elections are at large and have organized a Democratic Bloc; another oppositionist group has been permitted to set up the Front for National Unity which has publicly demanded a forum and legal status for opposition groups).

A more vigorous civilian civic action program has been set in motion, combining the personnel of the

former

former Youth, Information and Civic Action Ministries. U. S. officials have influenced this program through constant contact and assistance to the information program and to the civic action aspects of counterinsurgency plans.

3. Begin negotiations looking toward bilateral arrangement with VN.

Suspended: The December 4 Memorandum of Understanding, plus our on-going joint programs constitute an adequate bilateral "arrangement" for realizing our objectives in VN. A bilateral treaty would probably bring us into conflict with the provisions of the Geneva Accords, commit us irrevocably, and Diem has shown little interest in such a treaty since General Taylor's visit, and the increased American assistance which resulted.

4. Negotiation to improve VN's relationship with other countries, especially Cambodia, and its standing in world opinion.

Continues: Vietnamese-Cambodian relations continue to be bad. In spite of many US efforts to bring the two parties together, little progress has been registered. VN's standing in world opinion has probably improved as a result of clearer international understanding of the nature of the hostilities there.

In contacts with other governments, the U. S. has consistently sought to present the facts of the Vietnam situation. In December 1961, the US published the evidence linking the DRV with the VC and documenting DRV aggression against SVN in our report "A Threat to the Peace". At our suggestion, President Diem on March 31, 1962, sent a letter to all heads of Government and Chiefs of State outlining the facts of the DRV attack on his country. The June 2 ICC Report charging the DRV with a deliberate campaign aimed at the violent overthrow of the GVN has been used by our diplomatic Missions to focus world attention on the DRV attack.

5. Strengthen

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5. Strengthen border control arrangements with Cambodia.

Continues: In spite of repeated efforts by the US, joint VN-Cambodian control has not been effected and incidents are frequent. This continuing friction and the absence of effective joint border controls has helped the VC.

6. Cooperate with GVN in planning effective use of assistance from other governments.

Continues: The British have sent a special advisory mission to Viet-Nam under R. G. K. Thompson. In cooperation with the Thompson Mission, the US and the GVN have worked out the Delta Plan. The Australians have agreed to send a military training mission which will be integrated into MAAG activities. The Koreans have sent a military survey mission, the Thais are being approached to send observers. We intend to approach New Zealand. Malaya has trained several hundred Vietnamese in counter-guerrilla operations.

The US is currently seeking to coordinate economic assistance to Viet-Nam by means of a special coordination group of donor nations. We are urging other countries to increase their assistance to VN, particularly in the form of commodity imports formerly financed by the US aid program.

Over the past few years economic aid from countries other than the US has amounted to more than \$108 million, including both grants and loans. Donor countries include Japan, France, Germany, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, China, and The Philippines.

7. Examine diplomatic setting for commitment of U.S. forces to VN.

Suspended: Accomplished by the Taylor Mission. The present level of U.S. assistance, i.e. training and logistic support plus some limited operational forces, appears to be the most effective "mix" at this time.

8. Assess

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8. Assess political implications of increasing GVN forces from 170,000 to 200,000.

Achieved: The current strength level is over 197,000.

9. Request recommendations from Nolting to accomplish actions 1 and 2.

Achieved.

10. Install radar to obtain warning of Communist overflights for intelligence or air supply.

Achieved: Temporary installations were set up and operational at Danang in October 1961. Permanent installations are under construction with a target date of early Spring 1963.

11. Military Assistance Program for 20,000-man increase in ARVN is approved.

Achieved.

12. Increase MAAG as necessary for 20,000-man ARVN increase.

Achieved.

13. Consider case for increase ARVN strength above 170,000.

Achieved: Current ARVN strength is 197,000. Target for the end of Fiscal Year 1964 is 225,000.

14. Provide MAP support for Civil Guard Force of 68,000.

Achieved.

15. Expand

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15. Expand MAAG responsibilities to include support and advice to Self-Defense Corps.

Achieved.

16. Provide MAP support for Vietnamese Junk Force, including training of junk crews.

Continues: See Action 54.

17. Accelerated Special Forces Training.

Continues: Eleven Special Forces teams are engaged in training programs in Viet-Nam.

18. Collaborate with GVN in use of military, health, welfare and public works specialists for activities in villages.

Continues: With U.S. assistance, ARVN's Civic Action Program has improved steadily. However, this program still requires a great deal of effort to realize its full potential.

19. Study jointly with GVN border control techniques.

Continues: The use of defoliants, dogs, portable radar, invisible chemical markings and other devices and techniques are undergoing study and tests at the combat development test center in VN. See also Action 65.

20. Consider establishment in SEA of testing facilities for new techniques against Communist aggression.

Achieved: Combat test development centers have been established and are in operation in VN and Thailand.

21. Full

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21. Full examination of size and composition forces required in case of commitment U.S. Forces VN.

Continues: Contingency planning is under continual review.

22. Dispatch to VN economic and fiscal experts to work out with GVN a joint financial plan.

Achieved: The Staley Mission completed its work in June of 1961. Its plan was adopted as the Joint Action Plan (SEE Actions 34 through 44 below).

23. ICA (AID) is authorized to undertake rural development - civic action programs.

Continues: The January 4, 1962 Joint Communique outlined these programs. USOM/Saigon has mounted an impact crop protection program, including rat destruction and eradication of rice destroying insects, which will directly benefit 50,000 families. A program for Montagnard relief and resettlement is under way. The International Voluntary Service under contract to AID has been expanded to 69 people.

Civic action in connection with the two clear-and hold operations, plus the country-wide strategic hamlet program, is being planned and supported jointly. This civic action effort includes agricultural credit and extension, schools, and rural medical programs from village dispensaries to provincial surgical facilities.

24. Undertake long-range economic development program as a means of demonstrating U.S. confidence in the future of VN.

Continues: The GVN has announced a formal 5-year plan. The on-going U.S. AID program has contributed and will continue to contribute significantly to the long-range development of the economic infrastructure, including both agricultural development and

industrialization

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industrialization. U.S. aid continues to make important contributions to education, medicine, and other social services.

25. Assess economic implications of an ARVN force increase of 170,000 to 200,000.

Achieved.

26. Assist GVN public information programs to build public understanding of actions required to combat VC and increase public confidence in GVN.

Continues: USIS has worked closely with the GVN to develop its information program. Accomplishments include the establishment of a radio net serving the entire nation, production and distribution of films, and the development of rural newspapers. We are currently negotiating for the establishment of joint branch USIS-VIS posts throughout the country.

27. Country Team in coordination with GVN should compile documented facts of Communist infiltration and terrorism for dissemination in VN and throughout the world.

Continues: The US publication "A Threat to the Peace" and Under Secretary Ball's speech on Viet-Nam, published by the Department in June, brought the evidence of Communist aggression to the attention of an international audience. USIS in Saigon works with the Vietnamese authorities on a continuing basis to collect and cross-file such information for use in media throughout the world.

28. In coordination with CIA and GVN, USIS will publicize unfavorable conditions in NVN.

Continues: Information which can be declassified is not plentiful, but USIS continues to cross-file stories on unfavorable conditions whenever available.

29. Development

29. Development Agricultural Pilot Projects throughout the country.

Suspended: Security conditions make this type of project difficult. A US-financed center near My Tho is in operation, however, with IVS personnel (who have been fired on by the VC). Ten pilot agricultural stations are conducting tests and demonstration work in crop and livestock development.

30. Exploit rehabilitation of VC prisoners and broadcast their stories to Communist areas.

Continues: The GVN does not have a well-defined rehabilitation program for VC prisoners. (See Action 68). It has been reluctant to make prisoners available for interviews. Interviews with refugees from Communist NVN have been made and broadcast, however.

31. Provide funds for US participation in Saigon trade fair.

Cancelled: The fair was called off.

32. Covert action to be carried forward and coordinated at appropriate levels.

Continues.

33. President reserves judgment on levels of funding proposed.

No Task Force action required.

B. Joint Action Program (Staley Report)

34. Provide equipment and assistance in training for an increase in armed forces from 170,000 to 200,000. To increase effectiveness of increase,
mutually

mutually agreed geographically phased plan, understanding on training and use of 30,000 additional men, and regulation of rate of increase for most efficient absorption should be accomplished.

Continues: The force level now stands at 197,000. We have encountered difficulties in setting up and implementing a geographically phased plan. The Delta plan meets this requirement, but we are not sure that it will be completely implemented.

35. Decision regarding increase above 200,000 will be postponed until next year (1962). Meanwhile, training and equipment for Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps should be expedited.

Achieved: Force levels now stand at 197,000. The ultimate target is 225,000 by the end of FY 64. On the Self-Defense Corps and the Civil Guard see Action 55.

36. Within limits of available funds U.S. will provide resources required to implement action program, including commodity imports.

Continues: The commodity import target for FY 62 was set at \$135 million. The Vietnamese economy has been able to absorb only \$110 million. Other external resources, i.e. equipment for economic and military projects, have been provided as needed.

37. VN should be strongly urged to undertake generation of piasters by the means spelled out in Joint Action Program.

Continues: The GVN instituted fiscal reforms, including what amounted to a devaluation, in January 1962. These reforms are a direct result of U.S. urgings.

Internal tax receipts have increased over 1961. Piaster revenue remains inadequate, however, to cover counterinsurgency needs. The GVN has been unwilling to use deficit financing to meet this shortfall and has requested a cash grant from US. The problem is under negotiation.

38. Strongly

38. Strongly urge GVN undertake tax reform and adopt principle of single and realistic rate of exchange.

Continues: Although the January 1962 fiscal reforms represent considerable progress, the GVN still has a multiple exchange rate which is set too high. Tax collections should also be improved.

39. Ambassador should make clear to Diem that we attach great importance to agreed criteria governing imports, we consider raising effective piaster rate indispensable, and increased piaster realization per dollar will not be used as reason for reducing U.S. aid.

Continues: GVN has abided by the agreed criteria for imports in spite of shortfalls in the commodity import program. The January reforms raised the effective piaster rate but at the appropriate time it should be raised further.

40. President directed ICA to conduct thorough review of new proposals for emergency social action and of programs already under way.

Achieved: Review continues.

41. Encourage long-range planning and urge Vietnamese create more effective planning machinery to develop a long-range plan.

Continues: The GVN has recently announced a five-year plan, but this plan is more in the nature of a catalogue of projects than an integrated economic plan. Manpower planning is still very haphazard. One step forward: doctors are subject to the draft and medical talent will presumably be allocated to the most urgent needs.

42. Make clear to Diem that we hope one consequence new joint efforts will be effective projection our confidence in future of Viet-Nam.

Continues: Our joint effort has markedly improved Vietnamese morale.

morale. Diem has been understandably concerned that the extent of U.S. assistance may make the GVN appear to be the creatures of the U.S.

43. Parallel committees should be given maximum delegation of authority.

Suspended: Parallel committees have been discarded in favor of direct contact and negotiation between the action people on both sides at each level.

44. President shall be informed of matters arising in implementation of joint program requiring his attention.

Continues: TF/VN provided the White House with regular Status Reports, the NSC has provided an observer on TF/VN, and the Director of the Task Force appears bi-weekly at meetings of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency).

C. Actions under NSAM 104

45. Make preparations for publication white paper on DRV aggression against SVN.

Achieved: "A Threat to the Peace" was published in December 1961.

46. Develop plans for action in ICC based on white paper.

Achieved: The ICC report of June 2, 1962 confirms the U.S. position, i.e. the hostilities in VN are caused, directed, planned and led by the DRV.

47. Develop plans for presentation of VN case in UN.

Suspended: After studying matter several times it was concluded that in present circumstances presentation to UN would result in more complications than gains.

48. Introduce

48. Introduce Jungle Jim squadron into VN for training purposes.

Achieved. See Action 53.

49. Initiate guerrilla ground action against Communist aerial supply missions in Tchepone area.

Suspended: Due to possible effects on Lao negotiations.

50. General Taylor should undertake mission to Saigon.

Achieved: General Taylor went to Viet-Nam in October 1961.

51. President agrees that certain other actions developed by TF/VN which do not require specific presidential approval should be undertaken on an urgent basis.

Continues.

D. Actions under NSAM 111

52. Provide increased airlift to GVN forces.

Continues: The U.S.-provided airlift has sharply increased ARVN mobility and reduced reaction time. Perhaps more than other factors, it has enabled the GVN to take the offensive and upset the VC timetable. There are now 80 U.S.-manned helicopters, 20 other (U-1A), and 21 C-123's in Viet-Nam. In addition, 32 C-123's based at Clark are available for operations in Viet-Nam.

53. Provide equipment and personnel for air reconnaissance, photography, instruction in and execution of air-ground support techniques, and for special intelligence.

Continues: Operation Farmgate (including 8 T-28's, four C-47's and four B-26's) now provides instruction in and

execution

execution of air-ground support. Results have been good, with evidence that many VC attacks and bases have been disrupted by air action. Equipment and personnel have also been provided for air reconnaissance and photography and for special intelligence.

54. Provide small craft, including advisers and operating personnel, for control of coastal waters and inland waterways.

Continues: A joint Junk Patrol has been organized with the Vietnamese Navy and elements of the Seventh Fleet to cut infiltration from North Viet-Nam. Construction is underway to develop a Junk Force of 28 Divisions (20 junks per Division). Four Junk Divisions are now operational. Three Junk Force training centers are operating, and recruitment of Vietnamese fishermen is satisfactory.

The U. S. has provided the GVN with 713 craft in all. These include 693 boats for inland waterway patrol and to increase ARVN mobility in the delta, 9 harbor support and logistics type vessels, and 11 vessels with off-shore and major river capability.

55. Train and equip CG and SDC with objective relieving ARVN of static missions.

Continues: Training of the Civil Guard by MAAG began January 1961 at a single training center. At MAAG's urging, the training was speeded up by establishing four other centers and reducing the training period from 24 to 12 weeks. By mid-June, 128 companies were trained, 51 were in training at the centers, and 21 additional were in training on-the-spot under MAAG contact training teams. The target for FY 62 is 372 trained companies. By the end of FY 64, total strength will be 90,000. Current strength, trained and untrained, is 75,000. FY 63 strength is set for 78,950 and FY 64, 80,000.

56. Provide personnel and equipment to improve intelligence system from provincial level upward.

Continues.

Continues: 194 U.S. military intelligence personnel are in Viet-Nam working at all levels to improve the GVN intelligence capability. CIA has regional intelligence advisors in place and works closely with the Vietnamese Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) at the national level. CIO has assumed unified national intelligence responsibilities, and with U.S. advice, is reorganizing itself.

57. Provide new terms reference, reorganization and additional personnel as required by increased responsibilities of U. S. military.

Continues: A military assistance command under General Harkins was established in February 1962 to direct our increased operational and training activities in Viet-Nam. U.S. military personnel in Viet-Nam have been increased to 9,069 to carry out our increased responsibilities.

58. Provide increased economic aid for flood relief and to support the counterinsurgency program.

Continues: Emergency food relief assistance from the U.S. included medicaments and PL 480 foodstuffs. Major items in our increased economic aid in support of counterinsurgency to date include: funds and equipment for two clear-and-hold operations now in progress (Hai Yen and Binh Minh or Sunrise), funds and equipment for Montagnard refugee relief and resettlement; the establishment of a special stockpile of supplies and equipment for fast servicing of rural counterinsurgency programs (particularly the strategic hamlet program); funds and equipment for 25 new surgical suites (which will treat battle casualties) to be set up in provincial hospitals; new strategic road construction and repair of bridges and roads sabotaged by the VC; and the rapid development of communications systems, in particular a broadcasting net and the village radio program which now has installed 670 of a projected 2500 two-way radios.

59. Encourage GVN to request international or multilateral assistance for flood relief.

Suspended: Assistance was received from Malaya and Australia.

60. Provide

60. Provide administrators and advisors for the GVN as agreed by two governments.

Continues: The GVN has not yet formally requested advisers. MAAG advisers are operating in all provinces.

61. Provide personnel for joint provincial surveys.

Continues: Three joint provincial surveys were completed by a formal joint US-GVN team. Joint intelligence surveys of all provinces were made by CIA. Formal joint surveys have been abandoned, since it is found that the information can best be obtained by continuing local contacts. All agencies continue to collect the required information in cooperation with the GVN.

62. GVN action to place nation on war footing, including measures to tap full potential all non-Communist elements.

Continues: See Action 2. In addition to the measures noted under Action 2, the GVN has reactivated its National Internal Security Council, which Diem promised he would use as a war cabinet, created an Inter-Ministerial Strategic Hamlet Committee under Ngo dinh Nhu, provided military training for civil servants and women, and in Central Viet-Nam organized a promising political-military irregular force to operate in the hamlets. Little or no genuine effort has been made to get the support of opposition cliques or to realize the potential of the religious sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao.

A great deal of effort has gone into programs designed to give the rural population a stake in the war. The war will be won or lost in the provinces.

63. Vitalization of appropriate governmental wartime agencies.

Continues: An acute shortage of skilled administrators plus the temperamental reluctance of Diem to delegate authority (a reluctance understandably reinforced by the real dangers of subversion or another coup attempt) have made progress on this action slow. The National Internal Security Council has apparently met only

five

five times since its inception in January and the Strategic Hamlet Committee is little more than an extension of Nhu. Progress has been registered in cutting red tape and increasing efficiency. Best results will probably be achieved by ad hoc arrangements and continued steady but patient pressure from the U.S. rather than by insistence on dramatic structural changes in the GVN.

64. Overhaul of the military establishment and command structure.

Continues: Considerable progress registered on this item. With U.S. assistance, ARVN has cut its reaction time and markedly improved its mobility. A Field Command, a Joint US-GVN Operations Center, a Joint General Staff and a Tactical Air Command, have been organized and are operating. U.S. advisors have been accepted and are operating effectively with all units, with the Province Chiefs, and in the intelligence organizations. The GVN has increased pay and benefits for the Civil Guard and the lower ranks of ARVN. The weakest link in the GVN military is still its citizen defense forces, the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps, but as noted in Action 55, this problem is being rapidly solved.

E: December 4 Diem-Nolting Memorandum of Agreement.

In addition to the Actions above, the following specific actions should be added from the Diem-Nolting agreement.

65. Border Ranger Force.

Continues: Ten companies of ARVN Rangers and 14 companies of Montagnard Rangers were made available for the Border Ranger Force on March 20. However, the old MAAG border control plan has not been implemented because high ARVN officers feel it is unrealistic. Plans and concepts for border control are under study by both RVNAF and their U.S. advisors. The forces presently engaged in border control total about 7,000 in 88 posts.

66. Develop

66. Develop more contacts between GVN officials and people.

Continues: Increased activity by Civic Action cadre plus frequent trips to rural areas by the President, National Assembly Deputies, and Cabinet Ministers have helped. The President has been unwilling to undertake regular "fireside chats." The basic problem is a change in attitude by District and Provincial officials. This is well understood at the top, but changing attitudes is slow work.

67. Bring non-Communist prisoners promptly to trial.

Continues: No non-Communist prisoners of note have been brought to trial. The principal civilian leaders of the November 1960 coup are still being held without trial in spite of reports that Diem intends to release them.

68. Develop and announce an amnesty policy for VC defectors.

Continues: The GVN has developed a nationwide plan approved by Thuan and General Ty, but it has not yet been coordinated with all Ministries. Surrender leaflets and rewards have been used locally in a number of areas with varying success. Although it seems to have great promise, the GVN has not yet really given this tactic a trial.