

Vietnam 'Program of Action' By Kennedy's Task Force

Excerpts from "A Program of Action for South Vietnam," May 8, 1961, presented to President Kennedy by an interdepartmental task force comprising representatives from the Departments of State and Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the International Cooperation Administration, the United States Information Agency and the Office of the President.

... 2. Military:

a. The following military actions were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961:

(1) Increase the MAAG as necessary to insure the effective implementation of the military portion of the program including the training of a 20,000-man addition to the present G.V.N. armed forces of 150,000. Initial appraisal of new tasks assigned CHMAAG indicate that approximately 100 additional military personnel will be required immediately in addition to the present complement of 685.

(2) Expand MAAG responsibilities to include authority to provide support and advice to the Self-Defense Corps with a strength of approximately 40,000.

(3) Authorize MAP support for the entire Civil Guard force of 68,000. MAP support is now authorized for 32,000; the remaining 36,000 are not now adequately trained and equipped.

(4) Install as a matter of priority a radar surveillance capability which will enable the G.V.N. to obtain warning of Communist overflights being conducted for intelligence or clandestine air supply purposes. Initially, this capability should be provided from U.S. mobile radar capability.

(5) Provide MAP support for the Vietnamese Junk Force as a means of preventing Viet Cong clandestine supply and infiltration into South Vietnam by water. MAP support, which was not provided in the Counter-Insurgency Plan, will include training of junk crews in Vietnam or at U.S. bases by U.S. Navy personnel.

b. The following additional actions are considered necessary to assist the G.V.N. in meeting the increased security threat resulting from the new situation along the Laos-G.V.N. frontier:

(1) Assist the G.V.N. armed forces to increase their border patrol and insurgency suppression capabilities by establishing an effective border intelligence and patrol system, by instituting regular aerial surveillance over the entire frontier area, and by applying modern technological area-denial techniques to control the roads and trails along Vietnam's borders. A special staff element (approximately 6 U.S. personnel), to concentrate upon solutions to the unique problems of Vietnam's borders, will be activated in MAAG, Vietnam, to assist a similar special unit in the RVNAF which the G.V.N. will be encouraged to establish; these two elements working as an integrated team will help the G.V.N. gain the support of nomadic tribes and

other border inhabitants, as well as introduce advanced techniques and equipment to strengthen the security of South Vietnam's frontiers.

(2) Assist the G.V.N. to establish a Combat Development and Test Center in South Vietnam to develop, with the help of modern technology, new techniques for use against the Viet Cong forces. (Approximately 4 U.S. personnel.)

(3) Assist the G.V.N. forces with health, welfare and public work projects by providing U.S. Army civic action mobile training teams, coordinated with the similar civilian effort. (Approximately 14 U.S. personnel.)

(4) Deploy a Special Forces Group (approximately 400 personnel) to Nha Trang in order to accelerate G.V.N. Special Forces training. The first increment, for immediate deployment in Vietnam, should be a Special Forces company (52 personnel).

(5) Instruct JCS, CINCPAC, and MAAG to undertake an assessment of the military utility of a further increase in the G.V.N. forces from 170,000 to 200,000 in order to create two new division equivalents for deployment to the northwest border region. The parallel political and fiscal implications should be assessed....

4. Economic:

1. Objective: Undertake economic programs having both a short-term im-

mediate impact as well as ones which contribute to the longer range economic viability of the country.

a. Undertake a series of economic projects designed to accompany the counter-insurgency effort, by the following action:

(1) Grant to ICA the authority and funds to move into a rural development-civic action program. Such a program would include short-range, simple, impact projects which would be undertaken by teams working in cooperation with local communities. This might cost roughly \$3 to \$5 million, mostly in local currency. Directors of field teams should be given authority with respect to the expenditure of funds including use of dollar instruments to purchase local currency on the spot.

b. Assist Vietnam to make the best use of all available economic resources, by the following action:

(1) Having in mind that our chief objective is obtaining a full and enthusiastic support by the G.V.N. in its fight against the Communists, a high level team preferably headed by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury John Leddy, with State and ICA members, should be dispatched to Saigon to work out in conjunction with the Ambassador a plan whereby combined U.S. and Vietnamese financial resources can best be utilized. This group's terms of reference should cover the broad range of fiscal and economic problems. Authority should be given to make concessions necessary to achieve our objectives and to soften the blow of monetary reform. Ambassador Nolting and perhaps the Vice President should notify Diem of the proposed visit of this group stressing that their objective is clearly to maximize the joint effort rather than to force the Vietnamese into inequitable and unpalatable actions.

(2) As a part of the foregoing effort, an assessment should be undertaken of the fiscal and other economic implications of a further force increase from 170,000 to 200,000 (as noted in the Military section above).

c. Undertake the development of a long-range economic development program as a means of demonstrating U.S. confidence in the economic and political future of the country by the following action:

(1) Authorize Ambassador Nolting to inform the G.V.N. that the U.S. is prepared to discuss a long-range joint five-year development program which would involve contributions and undertakings by both parties....

5. Psychological:

a. Assist the G.V.N. to accelerate its public information program to help develop a broad public understanding of the actions required to combat the Communist insurgents and to build public confidence in the G.V.N.'s determination and ability to deal with the Communist threat.

b. The U.S. Country Team, in coordination with the G.V.N. Ministry of Defense, should compile and declassify for use of media representatives in South Vietnam and throughout the world, documented facts concerning Communist infiltration and terrorists' activities and the measures being taken by the G.V.N. to counter such attacks.

c. In coordination with CIA and the appropriate G.V.N. Ministry, USIS will increase the flow of information about unfavorable conditions in North Vietnam to media representatives.

d. Develop agricultural pilot-projects throughout the country, with a view toward exploiting their beneficial psychological effects. This project would be accomplished by combined teams of Vietnamese Civic Action personnel, Americans in the Peace Corps, Filipinos in Operation Brotherhood, and other Free World nationals.

e. Exploit as a part of a planned psychological campaign the rehabilitation of Communist Viet Cong prisoners

now held in South Vietnam. Testimony of rehabilitated prisoners, stressing the errors of Communism, should be broadcast to Communist-held areas, including North Vietnam, to induce defections. This rehabilitation program would be assisted by a team of U.S. personnel including U.S. Army (Civil Affairs, Psychological Warfare and Counter-Intelligence), USIS, and USOM experts.

f. Provide adequate funds for an impressive U.S. participation in the Saigon Trade Fair of 1962.

6. Covert Actions:

a. Expand present operations in the field of intelligence, unconventional warfare, and political-psychological activities to support the U.S. objective as stated.

b. Initiate the communications intelligence actions, CIA and ASA personnel increases, and funding which were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961.

c. Expand the communications intelligence actions by inclusion of 15 additional Army Security Agency personnel to train the Vietnamese Army in tactical COMINT operations....

7. Funding:

a. As spelled out in the funding annex, the funding of the counter-insurgency plan and the other actions recommended in this program might necessitate increases in U.S. support of the G.V.N. budget for FY 61 of as much as \$58 million, making up to a total of \$192 million compared to \$155 million for FY 60. The U.S. contribution for the G.V.N. Defense budget in FY 62 as presently estimated would total \$161 million plus any deficiency in that Budget which the G.V.N. might be unable to finance. The exact amount of U.S. contributions to the G.V.N. Defense budgets for FY 61 and FY 62 are subject to negotiation between the U.S. and the G.V.N.

b. U.S. military assistance to G.V.N., in order to provide the support contemplated by the proposed program would total \$140 million, or \$71 million more than now programmed for Vietnam in the U.S. current MAP budget for FY 62....

ANNEX 6

Covert Actions

a. **Intelligence:** Expand current positive and counter-intelligence operations against Communist forces in South Vietnam and against North Vietnam. These include penetration of the Vietnamese Communist mechanism, dispatch of agents to North Vietnam and strengthening Vietnamese internal security services. Authorization should be given, subject to existing procedures, for the use in North Vietnam operations of civilian air crews of American and other nationality, as appropriate, in addition to Vietnamese. Consideration should be given for overflights of North Vietnam for photographic intelligence coverage, using American or Chinese Nationalists crews and equipment as necessary.

b. **Communications Intelligence:** Expand the current program of interception and direction-finding covering Vietnamese Communist communications activities in South Vietnam, as well as North Vietnam targets. Obtain further USIB authority to conduct these operations on a fully joint basis, permitting the sharing of results of interception, direction finding, traffic analysis and cryptographic analysis by American agencies with the Vietnamese to the extent needed to launch rapid attacks on Vietnamese Communist communications and command installations.

This program should be supplemented by a program, duly coordinated, of train-

ing additional Vietnamese Army units in intercept and direction-finding by the US Army Security Agency. Also, US Army Security Agency teams could be sent to Vietnam for direct operations, coordinated in the same manner—Approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961.

c. **Unconventional Warfare:** Expand present operations of the First Observation Battalion in guerrilla areas of South Vietnam, under joint MAAG-CIA sponsorship and direction. This should be in full operational collaboration with the Vietnamese, using Vietnamese civilians recruited with CIA aid.

In Laos, infiltrate teams under light civilian cover to Southeast Laos to locate and attack Vietnamese Communist bases and lines of communications. These teams should be supported by assault units of 100 to 150 Vietnamese for use on targets beyond capability of teams. Training of teams could be a combined operation by CIA and US Army Special Forces.

In North Vietnam, using the foundation established by intelligence operations, form networks of resistance, covert bases and teams for sabotage and light harassment. A capability should be created by MAAG in the South Vietnamese Army to conduct Ranger raids and similar military actions in North Vietnam as might prove necessary or appropriate. Such actions should try to avoid any outbreak of extensive resistance or insurrection which could not be supported to the extent necessary to stave off repression.

Conduct overflights for dropping of leaflets to harass the Communists and to maintain morale of North Vietnamese population, and increase gray broadcasts to North Vietnam for the same purposes.

d. **Internal South Vietnam:** Effect operations to penetrate political forces, government, armed services and opposition elements to measure support of government, provide warning of any coup plans and identify individuals with potentiality of providing leadership in event of disappearance of President Diem.

Build up an increase in the population's participation in and loyalty to free government in Vietnam, through improved communication between the government and the people, and by strengthening independent or quasi-independent organizations of political, syndical or professional character. Support covertly the GVN in allied and neutral countries, with special emphasis on bringing out GVN accomplishments, to counteract tendencies toward a "political solution" while the Communists are attacking GVN. Effect, in support, a psychological program in Vietnam and elsewhere exploiting Communist brutality and aggression in North Vietnam.

e. The expanded program outlined above was estimated to require an additional 40 personnel for the CIA station and an increase in the CIA outlay for Vietnam of approximately \$1.5 million for FY 62, partly compensated by the withdrawal of personnel from other areas. The US Army Security Agency actions to supplement communications intelligence will require 78 personnel and approximately \$1.2 million in equipment. The personnel and fund augmentations in this paragraph were approved by the President at the NSC meeting of 29 April 1961.

f. In order adequately to train the Vietnamese Army in tactical COMINT operations, the Army Security Agency estimates that an additional 15 personnel are required. This action has been approved by the US Intelligence Board.