

Johnson's Remarks to Officials Of U.S. and Saigon at Honolulu

Excerpts from remarks by President Johnson to senior United States and South Vietnamese after the issuance of a joint communiqué at their Honolulu conference, Feb. 9, 1966, as provided in the body of the Pentagon study. The paragraph in italics is the study's explanation.

(The Vietnamese then thanked the Americans for the conference, and in turn some of the senior members of the American delegation—in order, Admiral Sharp, Leonard Marks, General Wheeler, Ambassador Lodge, Ambassador Harri-
man—made brief statements about the meaning of the conference. The President then made his final statement:

. . . Preserve this communiqué, because it is one we don't want to forget. It will be a kind of bible that we are going to follow. When we come back here 90 days from now, or six months from now, we are going to start out and make reference to the announcements that the President, the Chief of State and the Prime Minister made in paragraph 1, and what the leaders and advisors reviewed in paragraph 2. . . . You men who are responsible for these departments, you ministers, and the staffs associated with them in both governments, bear in mind we are going to give you an examination and the finals will be on just what you have done.

In paragraph 5; how have you built democracy in the rural areas? How much of it have you built, when and where? Give us dates, times, numbers.

In paragraph 2; larger outputs, more efficient production to improve credit, handicraft, light industry, rural electrification—are those just phrases, high-sounding words, or have you coonskins on the wall. . . .

Next is health and education, Mr. Gardner. We don't want to talk about it; we want to do something about it. "The President pledges he will dispatch teams of experts." Well, we better do something besides dispatching. They should get out there. We are going to train health personnel. How many? You

don't want to be like the fellow who was playing poker and when he made a big bet they called him and said "what have you got?" He said "aces" and they asked "how many" and he said "one ace". . . .

Next is refugees. That is just as hot as a pistol in my country. You don't want me to raise a white flag and surrender so we have to do something about that. . . .

Growing military effectiveness: we have not gone in because we don't want to overshadow this meeting here with bombs, with mortars, with hand grenades, with "Masher" movements. I don't know who names your operations, but "Masher." I get kind of mashed myself. But we haven't gone into the details of growing military effectiveness for two or three reasons. One, we want to be able honestly and truthfully to say that this has not been a military build-up conference of the world here in Honolulu. We have been talking about building a society following the outlines of the Prime Minister's speech yesterday.

Second, this is not the place, with 100 people sitting around, to build a military effectiveness.

Third, I want to put it off as long as I can, having to make these crucial decisions. I enjoy this agony. . . . I don't want to come out of this meeting that we have come up here and added on X divisions and Y battalions or Z regiments or D dollars, because one good story about how many billions are going to be spent can bring us more inflation that we are talking about in Vietnam. We want to work those out in the quietness of the Cabinet Room after you have made your recommendations, General Wheeler, Admiral Sharp, when you come to us. . . .