

Memo on Johnson's Approval Of Renewed Naval Operations

National security action memorandum from McGeorge Bundy, adviser to the President on national security, to Secretary of Defense McNamara and Secretary of State Rusk, Sept. 10, 1964.

The President has now reviewed the situation in South Vietnam with Ambassador Taylor and with other advisers and has approved the following actions:

1. U.S. naval patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin will be resumed promptly after Ambassador Taylor's return. They will operate initially well beyond the 12-mile limit and be clearly dissociated from 34A maritime operations. The patrols will comprise two to three destroyers and would have air cover from carriers; the destroyers will have their own ASW capability.

2. 34A operations by the GVN will be resumed after completion of a first DeSoto patrol. The maritime operations are by far the most important. North Vietnam has already publicized them, and is likely to publicize them even more, and at this point we should have the GVN ready to admit that they are taking place and to justify and legitimize them on the basis of the facts of VC infiltration by sea. 34A air drop and leaflet operations should also be resumed but are secondary in importance. We should not consider air strikes under 34A for the present.

3. We should promptly discuss with the Government of Laos plans for limited

GVN air and ground operations into the corridor areas of Laos, together with Lao air strikes and possible use of U.S. armed aerial reconnaissance. On the basis of these discussions a decision on action will be taken, but it should be recognized that these operations will in any case have only limited effect.

4. We should be prepared to respond as appropriate against the DRV in the event of any attack on US units or any special DRV/VC action against SVN.

5. The results of these decisions will be kept under constant review, and recommendations for changes or modifications or additions will be promptly considered.

6. The President reemphasizes the importance of economic and political actions having immediate impact in South Vietnam, such as pay raises for civilian personnel and spot projects in the cities and selected rural areas. The President emphasizes again that no activity of this kind should be delayed in any way by any feeling that our resources for these purposes are restricted. We can find the money which is needed for all worthwhile projects in this field. He expects that Ambassador Taylor and the country team will take

most prompt and energetic action in this field.

7. These decisions are governed by a prevailing judgment that the first order of business at present is to take actions which will help to strengthen the fabric

of the Government of South Vietnam; to the extent that the situation permits, such action should precede larger decisions. If such larger decisions are required at any time by a change in the situation, they will be taken.