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KEY VIETNAM TEXTS FROM

Following are texts of key documents accompanying the Pentagon's study of the Vietnam war, dealing with the Administration of President John F. Kennedy up to the events that brought the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. Except where excerpting is specified, the documents are printed verbatim, with only unmistakable typographical errors corrected.

U.S. Ambassador's '60 Analysis Of Threats to Saigon Regime

Cablegram from Elbridge Durbrow, United States Ambassador in Saigon, to Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, Sept. 16, 1960.

As indicated our 495 and 538 Diem regime confronted by two separate but related dangers. Danger from demonstrations or coup attempt in Saigon could occur earlier; likely to be predominantly non-Communist in origin but Communists can be expected to endeavor infiltrate and exploit any such attempt. Even more serious danger is gradual Viet Cong extension of control over countryside which, if current Communist progress continues, would mean loss free Viet-nam to Communists. These two dangers are related because Communist successes in rural areas embolden them to extend their activities to Saigon and because non-Communist temptation to engage in demonstrations or coup is partly motivated by sincere desire prevent Communist take-over in Viet-nam.

Essentially [word illegible] sets of measures required to meet these two dangers. For Saigon danger essentially political and psychological measures required. For countryside danger security measures as well as political, psychological and economic measures needed. However both sets measures should be carried out simultaneously and to some extent individual steps will be aimed at both dangers.

Security recommendations have been made in our 539 and other messages, including formation internal security council, centralized intelligence, etc. This message therefore deals with our political and economic recommendations. I realize some measures I am

Terms in Texts

- A.S.A.P.—As soon as possible.
- CHICOM—Chinese Communist.
- CHINAT—Chinese Nationalist.
- CHMAAG—Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group.
- CINCPAC—Commander in Chief, Pacific.
- COUNTRY TEAM—Committee of senior U.S. officials.
- D.R.V.—Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam.
- G.V.N.—Government of (South) Vietnam.
- I.C.A.—International Cooperation Administration.
- I.C.C.—International Control Commission for Vietnam.
- J.C.S.—Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- J.C.S.M.—Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum.
- JORDEN REPORT—Paper by William J. Jorden of State Department on Vietnam.
- JUNGLE JIM—Aerial commando operations.
- MAAG—Military Assistance Advisory Group.
- M.A.P.—Military Assistance Program.
- N.S.C.—National Security Council.
- NVN—North Vietnam.
- R AND D—Research and Development.
- R.L.G.—Royal Lachian Government.
- RVNAF—Republic of (South) Vietnam Armed (or Air) Forces.
- SEA—Southeast Asia.
- SVN—South Vietnam.
- T.O. & E.—Table of organization & equipment.
- U.S.O.M.—U.S. operations mission, the economic aid group of the embassy.
- VM—jetminh.

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recommending are drastic and would be most [word illegible] for an ambassador to make under normal circumstances. But conditions here are by no means normal. Diem government is in quite serious danger. Therefore, in my opinion prompt and even drastic action is called for. I am well aware that Diem has in past demonstrated astute judgment and has survived other serious crises. Possibly his judgment will prove superior to ours this time, but I believe nevertheless we have no alternative but to give him our best judgment of what we believe is required to preserve his government. While Diem obviously resented my frank talks earlier this year and will probably resent even more suggestions outlined below, he has apparently acted on some of our earlier suggestions and might act on at least some of the following:

1. I would propose have frank and friendly talk with Diem and explain our serious concern about present situation and his political position. I would tell him that, while matters I am raising deal primarily with internal affairs, I would like to talk to him frankly and try to be as helpful as I can be giving him the considered judgment of myself and some of his friends in Washington on appropriate measures to assist him in present serious situation. (Believe it best not indicate talking under instructions.) I would particularly stress desirability of actions to broaden and increase his [word illegible] support prior to 1961 presidential elections required by constitution before end April. I would propose following actions to President:

2. Psychological shock effect is required to take initiative from Communist propagandists as well as non-Communist oppositionists and convince population government taking effective measures to deal with present situation, otherwise we fear matters could get out of hand. To achieve that effect following suggested:

(A) Because of Vice President Tho's knowledge of south where Communist guerilla infiltration is increasing so rapidly would suggest that he be shifted from ministry national economy to ministry interior. (Diem has already made this suggestion but Vice President most reluctant take job.)

(B) It is important to remove any feeling within armed forces that favoritism and political considerations motivate promotions and assignments. Also vital in order deal effectively with Viet Cong threat that channels of command be followed both down and up. To assist in bringing about these changes in armed forces, I would suggest appointment of full-time minister national defense. (Thuan has indicated Diem has been thinking of giving Thuan defense job.)

(C) Rumors about Mr. and Mrs. Nhu are creating growing dissension within country and seriously damage political

position of Diem government. Whether rumors true or false, politically important fact is that more and more people believe them to be true. Therefore, becoming increasingly clear that in interest Diem government some action should be taken. In analagous situation in other countries including US important, useful government personalities have had to be sacrificed for political reasons. I would suggest therefore that President might appoint Nhu to ambassadorship abroad.

(D) Similarly Tran Kim Tuyen, Nhu's henchman and head of secret intelligence service, should be sent abroad in diplomatic capacity because of his growing identification in public mind with alleged secret police methods of repression and control.

(E) One or two cabinet ministers from opposition should be appointed to demonstrate Diem's desire to establish government of national union in fight against VC.

3. Make public announcement of disbandment of Can Lao party or at least its surfacing, with names and positions of all members made known publicly. Purpose this step would be to eliminate atmosphere of fear and suspicion and reduce public belief in favoritism and corruption, all of which party's semi-covert status has given rise to.

4. Permit National Assembly wider legislative initiative and area of genuine debate and bestow on it authority to conduct, with appropriate publicity, public investigations of any department of government with right to question any official except President himself. This step would have three-fold purpose: (A) find some mechanism for dispelling through public investigation constantly generated rumors about government and its personalities; (B) provide people with avenue recourse against arbitrary actions by some government officials; (C) assuage some of intellectual opposition to government.

5. Require all government officials to declare publicly their property and financial holdings and give National Assembly authority to make public investigation of these declarations in effort dispel rumors of corruption

6. [Words illegible] of [word illegible] control over content of the Vietnamese publication [word illegible] magazines, radio, so that the [words illegible] to closing the gap between government and [words illegible] ideas from one to the other. To insure that the press would reflect, as well as lead, public opinion without becoming a means of upsetting the entire GVN [word illegible], it should be held responsible to a self-imposed code of ethics or "canon" of press-conduct.

7. [Words illegible] to propaganda campaign about new 3-year development plan in effort convince people that government genuinely aims at [word illegible] their welfare. (This suggestion [word illegible] of course upon assessment of soundness of development plan, which has just reached us.)

8. Adopt following measures for immediate enhancement of peasant support of government: (A) establish mechanism for increasing price peasant will receive for paddy crop beginning to come on market in December, either by direct subsidization or establishment state purchasing mechanism; (B) institute modest payment for all corvee labor; (C) subsidize agrovillage families along same lines as land resettlement families until former on feet economically; (D) increase compensation paid to youth corps. If Diem asks how these measures are to be financed I shall suggest through increased taxes or increased deficit financing, and shall note that under certain circumstances reasonable deficit financing becomes a politically necessary measure for governments. I should add that using revenues for these fundamental and worthy purposes would be more effective than spending larger and larger sums on security forces, which, while they are essential and some additional funds for existing security forces may be required, are not complete answer to current problems.

9. Propose suggest to Diem that appropriate steps outlined above be announced dramatically in his annual state of union message to National Assembly in early October. Since Diem usually [word illegible] message in person this would have maximum effect, and I would recommend that it be broadcast live to country.

10. At [words illegible] on occasion fifth anniversary establishment Republic of Vietnam on October 26, it may become highly desirable for President Eisenhower to address a letter of continued support to Diem. Diem has undoubtedly noticed that Eisenhower letter recently delivered to Sihanouk. Not only for this reason, but also because it may become very important for us to give Diem continued reassurance of our support. Presidential letter which could be published here may prove to be very valuable.

Request any additional suggestions department may have and its approval for approach to Diem along lines paras 1 to 9.

We believe US should at this time support Diem as best available Vietnamese leader, but should recognize that overriding US objective is strongly anti-Communist Vietnamese government

which can command loyal and enthusiastic support of widest possible segments of Vietnamese people, and is able to carry on effective fight against Communist guerillas. If Diem's position in country continues deteriorate as re-

sult failure adopt proper political, psychological economic and security measures, it may become necessary for US government to begin consideration alternative courses of action and leaders in order achieve our objective.