

# Memo From Rostow to Kennedy With Nine Proposals for Action

*Memorandum from Walt W. Rostow, deputy Presidential assistant for national security, to President Kennedy, April 12, 1961.*

Now that the Viet-Nam election is over, I believe we must turn to gearing up the whole Viet-Nam operation. Among the possible lines of action that might be considered at an early high level meeting are the following:

1. The appointment of a full time first-rate back-stop man in Washington. McNamara, as well as your staff, believes this to be essential.
2. The briefing of our new Ambassador, Fritz Nolting, including sufficient talk with yourself so that he fully understands the priority you attach to the Viet-Nam problem.
3. A possible visit to Viet-Nam in the near future by the Vice President.
4. A possible visit to the United States of Mr. Thuan, acting Defense Minister, and one of the few men around Diem with operational capacity and vigor.
5. The sending to Viet-Nam of a research and development and military hardware team which would explore with General McGarr which of the various techniques and gadgets now available or being explored might be relevant and useful in the Viet-Nam operation.
6. The raising of the MAAG ceiling,

which involves some diplomacy, unless we can find an alternative way of introducing into Viet-Nam operation a substantial number of Special Forces types.

7. The question of replacing the present ICA Chief in Viet-Nam, who, by all accounts, has expanded his capital. We need a vigorous man who can work well with the military, since some of the rural development problems relate closely to guerilla operations.

8. Sending the question of the extra funds for Diem.

9. The tactics of persuading Diem to move more rapidly to broaden the base of his government, as well as to decrease its centralization and improve its efficiency.

Against the background of decisions we should urgently take on these matters, you may wish to prepare a letter to Diem which would not only congratulate him, reaffirm our support, and specify new initiatives we are prepared to take, but would make clear to him the urgency you attach to a more effective political and morale setting for his military operation, now that the elections are successfully behind him.