

'54 Report by Special Committee On the Threat of Communism

Excerpts from Part II of the Special Committee's Report on Southeast Asia, April 5, 1954. Part I was not made available with it.

IV Conclusions

A. The Special Committee considers that these factors reinforce the necessity of assuring that Indo-China remain in the non-Communist bloc, and believes that defeat of the Viet Minh in Indo-China is essential if the spread of Communist influence in Southeast Asia is to be halted.

B. Regardless of the outcome of military operations in Indo-China and without compromising in any way the overwhelming strategic importance of the Associated States to the Western position in the area, the U.S. should take all affirmative and practical steps, with or without its European allies, to provide tangible evidence of Western strength and determination to defeat Communism; to demonstrate that ultimate victory will be won by the free world; and to secure the affirmative association of Southeast Asian states with these purposes.

C. That for these purposes the Western position in Indo-China must be maintained and improved by a military victory.

D. That without compromise to C, above, the U.S. should in all prudence reinforce the remainder of Southeast Asia, including the land areas of Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Recommended Courses of Action*

A. The Special Committee wishes to reaffirm the following recommendations which are made in NCS 5405, the Special Committee Report concerning military operations in Indo-China, and the position paper of the Special Committee, concurred in by the Department of Defense, concerning U. S. courses of action and policies with respect to the Geneva Conference:

(1) It be U. S. policy to accept nothing short of a military victory in Indo-China.

(2) It be the U. S. position to obtain French support of this position; and that failing this, the U. S. actively oppose any negotiated settlement in Indo-China at Geneva.

(3) It be the U. S. position in event of failure of (2) above to initiate immediate steps with the governments of the Associated States aimed toward the continuation of the war in Indo-China, to include active U. S. participation and without French support should that be necessary.

(4) Regardless of whether or not the U. S. is successful in obtaining French support for the active U. S. participation called for in (3) above, every effort should be made to undertake this active participation in concert with other interested nations.

B. The Special Committee also considers that all possible political and economic pressure on France must be exerted as the obvious initial course of action to reinforce the French will to continue operations [sic] in Indo-China. The Special Committee recognizes that this course of action will jeopardize the existing French Cabinet, may be unpopular among the French public, and may be considered as endangering present U. S. policy with respect to EDC. The Committee nevertheless considers that the free world strategic position, not only

*The Department of State representative recommends the deletion of paragraphs A and B hereunder as being redundant and included in other documents.

in Southeast Asia but in Europe and the Middle East as well, is such as to require the most extraordinary efforts to prevent Communist domination of Southeast Asia. The Committee considers that firm and resolute action now in this regard may well be the key to a solution of the entire problem posed by France in the free world community of nations.

C. In order to make the maximum contribution to the free world strength in Southeast Asia, and regardless of the outcome of military operations currently in progress in Indo-China, the U. S. should, in all prudence, take the following courses of action in addition to those set forth in NSC 5405 and in Part I of the Special Committee Report:

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extensive military and political effort, to be futile) or to initiate offensive operations to retake and reorient Indo-China, (which would involve a major military campaign), will greatly exceed those needed to hold Indo-China before it falls.

(4) Furthermore, either of these undertakings (in the light of the major setback to U. S. national policy involved

in the loss of Indo-China) would entail as an urgent prerequisite the restoration of Asian morale and confidence in U. S. policy which will have reached an unprecedentedly low level in the area.

(5) Each of these courses of action would involve greater risk of war with Communist China, and possibly the Soviet Union, than timely preventive action taken under more favorable circumstances before Indo-China is lost.

Political and Military:

(1) Ensure that there be initiated no cease-fire in Indo-China prior to victory whether that be by successful military action or clear concession of defeat by the Communists.

Action: State, CIA

(2) Extraordinary and unilateral, as well as multi-national, efforts should be undertaken to give vitality in Southeast Asia to the concept that Communist imperialism is a transcending threat to each of the Southeast Asian states. These efforts should be so undertaken as to appear through local initiative rather than as a result of U.S. or UK, or French instigation.

ACTION: USIA, State, CIA

(3) It should be U. S. policy to develop within the UN Charter a Far Eastern regional arrangement subscribed and underwritten by the major European powers with interests in the Pacific.

a. Full accomplishment of such an arrangement can only be developed in the long term and should therefore be preceded by the development, through indigenous sources, or regional economic and cultural agreements between the several Southeast Asian countries and later with Japan. Such agreements might take a form similar to that of OEEC in Europe.

Action: State, CIA, FOA

b. Upon the basis of such agreements, the U. S. should actively but unobtrusively seek their expansion into mutual defense agreements and should for this purpose be prepared to underwrite such agreements with military and economic aid and should [rest unavailable].

D. The courses of action outlined above are considered as mandatory regardless of the outcome of military operations in Indo-China.

(1) If Indo-China is held they are needed to build up strength and resistance to Communism in the entire area.

(2) If Indo-China is lost they are essential as partial steps:

a. To delay as long as possible the extension of Communist domination throughout the Far East, or

b. In conjunction with offensive operations to retake Indo-China from the Communists.

(3) Should Indo-China be lost it is clear to the Special Committee that the involvement of U. S. resources either in an attempt to stop the further spread of Communism in the Far East, (which is bound, except in terms of the ~~meas~~

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