

NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES

General Edward Lansdale recalls that during the summer of 1963, a few months before the anti-Diem coup, Lansdale was invited to breakfast by Averell Harriman, and J.K. Galbraith was present for the initial part of the conversation. Harriman wanted to discuss Diem and Nhu, and Lansdale became worried that a coup was in the process of being engineered. Accordingly, he tried to present a number of alternatives, including getting Diem and Nhu to the U.S., appointing Nhu to the South Vietnamese Embassy in London, etc. Harriman seemed excited by the prospects of non-violence and sent Lansdale to Roger Hilsman who saw him in Bill Sullivan's Georgetown apartment.

Lansdale recalls Hilsman as being uninterested in Lansdale's alternatives, Hilsman being more interested in asking about Australian beaches, etc., since he was preparing for an Asian trip. Hilsman, however, did tell Lansdale that Washington was concerned over a report that Nhu was trying to arrange a deal with NVN whereby Nhu would assume power and form a coalition with the North. In short, Lansdale's proposals were never given a serious hearing, and Lansdale concluded that a coup was, in fact, being engineered.

-16-

State Department review
completed

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

SUMMARY

- I. The JFK Administration was profoundly concerned over Diem's unwillingness to increase the scope of the Counter-Insurgency Program, which would have meant, as it finally did, an increased American presence.

- II. The JFK Administration permitted itself to focus on the Buddhist-Catholic dispute for domestic political reasons after newsmen in Saigon blew up the problem out of all proportion. Ambassador Nolting was later to tell the press that in 2 1/2 years in Saigon he had never seen evidence of religious repression.

- III. Both Washington and Ambassador Lodge used the Buddhist affair as casus belli against Diem.

- IV. Lodge, directly and through CIA representatives, and military contacts not only did not discourage coup planning, he sought means to encourage it, offered asylum to the Generals should their attempt fail, and asked Washington for funds to bribe fence-sitters.

- V. On the record, the lives of Diem and Nhu could have been saved had Lodge acted toward Diem in good faith.

- VI. The New Frontier rationale that a broadened government minus Diem and Nhu could more actively prosecute the war, proved false.

VII. Beginning with the Counter-Insurgency problem, through the Buddhist dispute, Washington's orders to Nolting and Lodge reveal the worst sort of critical paternalism toward the Saigon Government. The record of prodding, quarterbacking and finally plotting against the Diem government is a shameful one.

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

17200

INDICATE... COLLECT
CHARGE TO

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Classification

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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy, SAIGON - EMERGENCY

269
269

Info:

EYES ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE PRESIDENT

You are getting separately a longer message interdepartmental. (Deptel 268) which reflects ~~interdepartmental~~ meeting with me this morning. In this personal message I want to emphasize again that I wish to have your independent judgment and also that of General Harkins at every stage. The basic policies set forth in DEPTELs 243 and 256 represent my best current judgment, but this judgment in turn is heavily dependent on your on-the-spot advice, and I trust you will not hesitate to recommend delay or change in plans if at any time you think it wise.

Messages from Harkins to Joint Chiefs give some impression of uncertainty on his part as to presently planned timing of action by Generals, so I am asking through General Taylor for a direct message from Harkins to me as Commander-in-Chief, giving his personal assessment of the total situation and his best advice as to present and future courses. You will

State and JCS reviews completed

Drafted by:

Text Received from the White House

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by: JAMcKesson SS

Clearances:

The Secretary
FE-RHilsman

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get a copy of Taylor's message, and you should explain to Harkins that I have high confidence in his judgment. While naturally there are differences of emphasis among the many officials concerned here in Washington, ~~XXXX~~ Washington will act as a ~~next~~ unit under my direction, and that unit has respect for what Harkins has accomplished and for his candid judgment at every stage.

In all this, I continue to think of you as my personal representative and repose greatest confidence ~~and~~ in you.

~~XXXX~~ GP-1

END

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INDICATE: COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

JCS review completed

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Origin
Info:

ACTION: Amembassy-SAIGON - EMERGENCY
TOP SECRET EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR AND GEN. HARKINS

Info: Cincpac Polad-Exclusive for Admiral Felt

1. Your 364 reviewed this morning at highest levels and is most helpful. We note that you continue to favor the operation; we also assume your concurrence in conclusion of CAS Saigon 0363, which we share, that if this operation starts it must succeed. But it remains unclear to us that balance of forces in Saigon yet gives necessary high confidence of success, and we need daily assessment from you on this critical point. In particular, we share your view that Big Minh's position and views are important and we await report of his conversation.
2. More broadly, we are assuming that whatever cover you and we maintain, prestige of U.S. will necessarily be engaged in success or failure of this effort. Thus we ask for your present estimate of latest point at which operation could be suspended and what would be consequences of such suspension. We continue to believe Nhus must go and coup will be needed, but we do not repeat not which to bind you against your better judgment at any stage. Conversely, while we

Drafted by:

Text Received from White House

Teletypewriter transmission and

classification approved by: S/S JAMcKesson

Clearance:

The Secretary

State Department review completed

FE - RHillsman

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am to Amembassy-SAIGON

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Generals' assume ~~XXXXXX~~ operation still subject to ~~delay~~ delay or cancellation, if you believe die is cast, we need to know it.

3. In addition to recommendation in your 364, which we are still considering, what other actions do you recommend to ~~XXXX~~ increase prospects of success? Specifically, do you think we should

25X1

(a) add discreet diplomatic and military endorsement to approach made especially to emphasize official view of the USG that Nhus should be replaced, but without direct comment on coup planning?

(b) through General Harkins and other military officers discreetly hint to General Dinh, Colonel Vien and other military leaders who are potential fence-sitters that US opposed to continuation of Nhus?

(c) add financial inducements as ~~appropriate~~ appropriate in affecting all individual decisions of uncertain key figures?

(d) undertake and ~~discreetly~~ discreetly publicize movements of US forces in Pacific toward South Vietnam, in addition to present E and E contingency deployments?

(e) indicate our concern ~~by~~ by beginning evacuation of appropriate US dependent personnel?

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3 of telegram to Amembassy-SAIGON

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4. We have concurred until now in your belief that nothing should be said to Diem, but changing circumstances, including his probable knowledge that something is afoot, lead us to ask again if you see value in one last man-to-man effort to persuade him to govern himself and decisively to eliminate political influence of Nhus. All evidence indicates to us that removal of Nhus is center of problem.

5. We understand that what we have told Generals is that they will have to proceed at their own risk and ^{bailed} will not be ~~pushed~~ out by us. While this is sound initial approach, we must surely be ready to play every effective card at decisive moments. Therefore request your report of ~~additional~~ additional actions you and Harkins expect to take or recommend after coup begins to insure its success.

6. We shall be meeting tomorrow here at noon, our time, with President, and count on having your report by then to keep Washington in fullest coordination with you and Harkins.

KNEBXX
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END

RISK

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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INDICATE: COLLECT
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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON - EMERGENCY 256

Info

INFO: CINCPAC POLAD - EXCLUSIVE FOR FELT
EYES ONLY - AMBASSADOR LODGE

Examination of reports to date gives considerable hope but leaves unanswered questions regarding:

- A. present balance of forces between coup and counter-coup elements
- B. personal force of character of coup participants, and
- C. security of the operation.

Proceeding from the concept outlined in DEPTTEL 243 as modified, now desire your prompt interim appraisal of present prospects to include specifically:

1. Are Generals now committed to the coup plan in CAS Saigon 0343 sufficiently strong and sufficiently united to give high prospect of success in immediate future?
2. Would their chances be improved or lessened by delay, with respect to such factors as
 - a. Additional local military and political support at critical moment?

Drafted by: FE:RHilsman:jmt 8/27/63

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by

FE - Roger Hilsman

Cleanances:

The White House - Mr. Bundy (info) The Secretary (substance)
DOD - Mr. McHarara (info) S/S - Mr. McKesson
JCS - Gen. Taylor (dft)

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FORM DS-322

State Department review completed

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7/15/63

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EYES ONLY - AMBASSADOR LODGE

b. Security, including hazard to coup participants and compromise of U.S. role?

c. Public attitudes?

d. Nhu's own capability for counter-coup or further action of his own?

3. In particular, what is your best estimate of orientation and comparative strength of forces in Saigon area?

4. If operation is initially indecisive how is balance likely to tip as other forces become involved?

5. More generally, highest authority asks whether you and Harkins, in light of developing situation, presently favor operation as currently planned by generals.

We wish to give you all possible support in best available course but not to insist on any decision that developing evidence makes it wise to modify.

END.

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE TO COLLECT CLASS NO

TOP SECRET Classification

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Origin ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

2019

Info: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR

Following summarizes FYI highest level meeting noon Aug. 26.

After discussion E & E plans DOD was directed to consider repositioning US forces in case they required in Viet-Nam. Circular message approved to discourage travel by private US citizens to Viet-Nam and to permit US official travel only as authorized by Department. No public announcement would be made at this time. Also decided to make Saigon's 327 on GVN censorship available to editors in unclassified version not repeat not for publication.

Agreed answers to three questions were urgently needed.

1. What exactly meant by "direct support to the military in an interim period if the central government is ineffective". This interpreted at meeting as possibility of supplying military leaders in the field with logistic support directly without going through central government. Urgent study will be made to see whether alternatives could be worked out to prevent ~~prevent~~ heavy concentration through Saigon. (This being done by Joint Staff with immediate query to Harkins on this point.)

Dictated by: RFE: Roger Wilsman:cst 8/26/63

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by:

U - George Ball

Circumstances: S/S - Mr. McKesson White House - Mr. Fogel

WLS - Mr. Fogel

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FORM 05-322

State Department review completed

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2 of telegram to SAIGON

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2. What is the power status and interrelationship of generals?

Which generals are involved with Minh, Khan, and Khiem? What are their plans?

3. Generals should be queried as to who their alternative leadership candidates would be.

A Who's Who of key personalities in present situation being urgently prepared here.

Another meeting will be held late afternoon August 27. Trust you will give us soonest and if possible in time for meeting your continuing assessment on numbered points 2 and 3 above.

End

RHSK

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 8, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN D. EHRlichman

FROM: EGIL KROGH, JR. & DAVID R. YOUNG

SUBJECT: STATE DEPARTMENT'S MATERIALS ON
DIEM EPISODE

Attached at Tab I is Howard Hunt's review of cable traffic between the State Department and Embassy Saigon April through November, 1963. ("Deptel" is a State outgoing cable and "Embtel" is an Embassy outgoing cable).

Tabs A through F are the most incriminating cables, red-lined for quick reference.

Tab G is a summary of the political meat.

Tab H is a note on non-violent alternatives.

ON-FILE NSC
RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 21, 1971

SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR

HONORABLE RICHARD HELMS
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SUBJECT: October-November 1968 Vietnam Intelligence Data

On 19 March 1970 you forwarded a memorandum to Henry Kissinger containing lists of material bearing on the November 1968 halt of the bombing of North Vietnam. At that time, you indicated that much of this material was not available for distribution because of a "freeze" imposed on the circulation of intelligence reports and preparation of analytic studies by President Johnson during the month of October 1968.

It has been requested that these documents (lists attached at Tabs A-D) be obtained despite prior restrictions on their distribution. Would you please forward copies of the requested documents?


John D. Ehrlichman

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

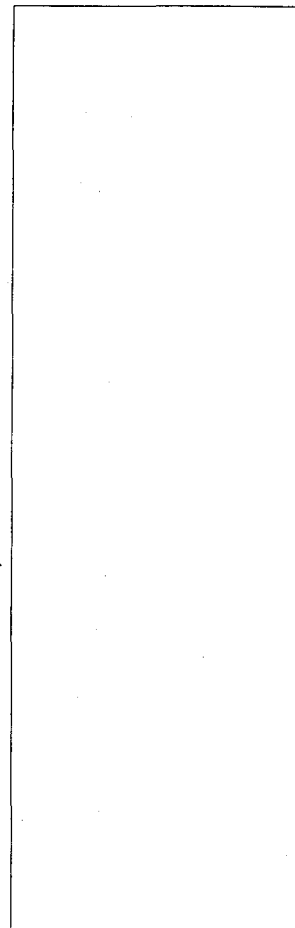
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Attachment 1

"TUESDAY LUNCH" STUDIES

25X1

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
1 October 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam (23-29 September 1968)
8 October 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam South of the 20th Parallel (30 September-6 October 1968)
October 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam (7-13 October 1968)
22 October 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam South of the 20th Parallel (14-20 October 1968)
October 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam (21-27 October 1968)
November 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam South of the 20th Parallel (28 October-3 November 1968)
November 1968	Recent Activities in North Vietnam (4-10 November 1968)



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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy SAIGON

IMMEDIATE

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OCT 5 5 30 PM '61

Info

INFO: CINCPAC FOLAD Exclusive for Admiral Felt

EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

1. Following is overall instruction resulting from NSC consideration of McNamara/Taylor report and recommendations together with those you have submitted in recent weeks. These instructions have the President's personal approval. At any time you feel it necessary you may state to GVN that you are acting under the specific instructions of the President as recommended by the National Security Council.

OSD Review Completed.

2. Actions are designed to indicate to Diem Government our displeasure at its political policies and activities and to create significant uncertainty in that government and in key Vietnamese groups as to future intentions of United States. At same time, actions are designed to have at most slight impact on military or counterinsurgency effort against Viet Cong, at least in short term.

State Department review(s) completed.

3. The recommendations on negotiations are concerned with what US is after, i. e., GVN action to increase effectiveness of its military effort to ensure popular support to win war; and to eliminate strains on U.S.

4112 (no) 27/5/61

Drafted by: FE - Roger Hillsman

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by:

FE - Roger Hillsman

Classified:

The Secretary (in draft)

M - Gov. Harriman (in draft)

DOD - Mr. McNamara (in draft) W. H. - Mr. Bundy

S/S - Mr. Keitt

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Government and public confidence. The negotiating posture is designed not to lay down specific hard and fast demands or to set a deadline, but to produce movement in Vietnamese Government along these lines. In this way we can test and probe effectiveness of any actions the GVN actually takes and, at same time, maintain sufficient flexibility to permit US to resume full support of Diem regime at any time US Government deems it appropriate.

4. We recognize that recommended actions cannot be continued more than a limited period--tentatively estimated at two to four months--before they begin to have substantial impact on counter-insurgency effort. Even within this period, they will require careful and constant evaluation. As they begin to have substantial impact on war effort, further major decisions will be needed.

5. It is not possible to specify with precision the criteria that we should use in determining whether this proposed course of action has brought about adequate changes in performance of Diem Government and should, therefore, be modified or withdrawn, or whether on contrary response of the Diem Government is clearly inadequate so that more drastic action should be considered. The desired GVN measures in this report are grouped under three headings: (1) military actions, (2) political actions, and (3) actions with respect to US itself. Test of adequacy of these actions should be whether, in combination, they improve effectiveness of GVN effort to point where we can

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carry on in confident expectation that war effort will progress satisfactorily. Since we cannot now foresee interlocking impact of possible actions both in GVN and here, we obviously do not expect that GVN will or even can perform on entire list and for this reason this is in no sense a package of demands. While general view here is that some action in each of three areas will be necessary, we do not now wish to prejudge question of balance or quantity of actions which ~~may~~ may justify resumption of full cooperation with GVN.

A. Actions:

6. AID Commodity Import Program. Existing suspension of new commitments will be maintained, and under this policy the presently due second-quarter allocation of \$20-25 million will be withheld. You should make this continued suspension clear in an appropriate manner to the GVN.

No public announcement will be made. In addition, U. S. working levels should inform Vietnamese military that commodity import assumptions being used for budget planning purposes must now be considered uncertain not only from previously stated standpoint of Congressional uncertainty, but because of executive review of program.

7. PL 480. Presently pending supplementary agreement for \$2.9 million worth of condensed milk (5-months' requirement) will be handled by making month-to-month agreements for appropriate portions of this amount until further notice, but outright suspension will not be undertaken. Action on

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other pending items in PL 430 account will become due with respect to wheat flour (\$3 million annually) and raw cotton (\$12 million annually) approximately 1 November, and these items will then be submitted for action by Washington. Remainder of presently planned PL 430 for FY 1964, comprising tobacco (\$2.5 million) and miscellaneous items (\$3.5 million), does not ~~require~~ require any action in next 60 days. Discussions with GVN on PL 430, especially with respect to food, should take note of fact that no deliveries are being held up or negative decisions made; we are simply not able to make forward decisions in October.

8. AID Project Loans. Presently pending balance of loan projects for Saigon-Cholon Waterworks (\$10 million) and Saigon electric power project (\$4 million) will be "suspended for review," and you should inform GVN in appropriate manner to this effect without making public announcement. If this becomes publicly known here or in field, explanation will be limited strictly to bare statement of suspension for review.

9. Assistance to Forces Commanded by Colonel Tung in or near Saigon. You should inform GVN, through whatever channel you deem appropriate, that US can no longer furnish support to these forces unless they are placed under effective operational control of Joint General Staff and committed to field operations. (This applies to MAP and CIA support for certain airborne ranger, Civil Guard, and "civilian airborne ranger" units.) Again no

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public announcement will be made, but if action becomes known explanation here and in field will be that we cannot assist forces that are not contributing to the war effort. Notion that action is a reprisal for political use of these forces should be discouraged.

10. Handling of GVN Inquiries in Saigon. US representatives in Saigon should make clear that these matters ~~xxxx~~ must be taken up with you personally.

B. Negotiating Tactics:

11. Your policy toward the GVN of cool correctness in order to make Diem come to you is correct. You should continue it. However, we realize it may not work and that at some later time you may have to go to Diem to ensure he understands over-all US policy. Decision of when this becomes imperative rests with you, in light of your assessment of situation.

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12. If, as we hope, Diem seeks clarification of US policies and actions, you should present an exposition of how our actions are related to our fundamental objective of victory. There are three issues at root of strained relations between GVN and US and of our judgment that victory may be jeopardiz. The first concerns military effort; GVN must take steps to make this more effective. The second is crisis of confidence among Vietnamese people which is eroding popular support for GVN that is vital for victory. The third is crisis of confidence on the part of the American public and Government. Heart of problem is form of government that has been evolving in Viet-Nam. Diem's regime has trappings of democracy, but in reality it has been evolving into authoritarian government maintained by police terrorist methods. What GVN must do is to reverse this process of evolution.

13. To preserve flexibility and provide an opportunity for testing and probing on effectiveness of measures GVN actually takes, you should avoid laying down specific demands, but consider actions listed below as illustrative examples of general proposition outlined above, picking and choosing particular items as situation warrants.

14. Purpose of all actions listed below is to increase effectiveness of war effort, to ensure popular support, and to relieve strains in GVN/US relations.

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15. Specific military actions listed below are probably most acceptable to Diem, but serve as a test of his commitment to furthering war effort. They should increase effectiveness of war effort and this in turn should feed back to improve political climate. We believe that burden of pressure for military actions should be assumed by General Harkins in direct conversation with Diem and others under your general guidance and that these conversations should not await initiative by Diem, since our continuing posture of cooperative consultation on military matters should not be broken. Conversely, Harkins should not be channel of a discussion on relation between improvements by GVN and resumption of full U. S. support.

16. Political actions are not arranged in order of importance. First of political actions, i. e., entering into negotiations to normalize university life, etc., should set stage for later political actions, such as broadening government.

17. If, in fact, GVN does begin to move along lines we desire, an opportunity will be provided to test and probe effectiveness of the actions in improving war effort, ensuring popular support, and easing strain in GVN/US relations. Paramount need, however, is for GVN to set a psychological tone and image that will make specific actions both real and credible. Although we cannot at this time in complete confidence predict the exact point in this

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complex of actions at which we will be sure war effort will proceed to successful conclusion, it seems probable its achievement will require some restriction of role of Naus. As practical matter, we would expect that Diem would not take such action at outset, but only after he had proceeded a considerable distance down path we desire.

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18. Military

- a. Further shift of military emphasis and strength to Delta (IV Corps).
- b. Increase in military tempo in all corps areas, so that all combat troops are in field an average of 20 days out of 50 and static missions are ended.
- c. Emphasis on "clear and hold operations" instead of terrain sweeps which have little permanent value.
- d. Expansion of personnel in combat units to full authorized strength.
- e. Training and arming of hamlet militia at accelerated rate, especially in the Delta.
- f. Consolidation of strategic hamlet program, especially in the Delta, and action to insure that future strategic hamlets are not built until they can be protected, and until civil action programs can be introduced.

19. Political

- a. Resumption of normal university life. Detained students should be released; school and university classes should be universally resumed. Diem should sit down with rector and faculty of Saigon University to work out conditions of normalization of university life. Since students are fearful of arrests and inclined to riots, this will involve significant negotiations on a variety of police-terrorist techniques, including secret arrests, torture, beatings, etc. For this reason, it is an excellent technique to get Diem to focus on the core issues.

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Similar action should be taken in regard to Hue University, including reinstatement of ex-rector. In both universities, at least some faculty members who have resigned, been fired or jailed should be reinstated.

b. Specific concessions should be made to Buddhists. Those still jailed should be processed for release with all possible speed. Repair of pagodas should be facilitated with government sponsorship. GVN-sponsored "Union Committee for Pure Buddhism" should be expanded and genuinely representative Buddhist leaders given responsible positions. Assembly action should eliminate laws which deny equal status to Buddhism.

c. Renewed activity in land reform program. This was an early Diem achievement but stopped short of completion. It could be revitalized and attract rural support for the GVN and improve its international image.

d. Joint re-emphasis on political aspects of strategic hamlet program. Phasing and security aspects of strategic hamlet program are dealt with under section 1 above. Following is concerned with aspects of strategic hamlet program affecting popular attitudes. This would require an effort to gain more support from peasants through increasing payments to them for their labor and other services and through weeding out graft by local officials. In addition, particularly in delta, redesigning the program to avoid unnecessary relocation of population and increased emphasis on social and economic programs that are likely to elicit

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peasant support.

e. Police techniques. GVN should abandon its present practices of controlling populace by instilling fear through night-time arrests, brutal interrogation (including women) and other police-terrorist methods which contribute to growing resentment and unrest and diminishing acceptance of regime

f. Civil liberties should be restored. Arbitrary arrests should cease and those arrested speedily released or given fair public trial. Religious freedom should be implemented as guaranteed by constitution. Public gatherings should be permitted and controlled only to insure safety of life and property.

g. Refurbishing GVN image. Government should be broadened so as to include respected individuals, including some within Viet-Nam who have not participated in government and some, such as Vu Van Mau, who have departed. It should be pointed out that these respected individuals are not likely to participate in government or return to Viet-Nam until changes such as those described above convince them that GVN has in fact reversed trend towards authoritarian government. Their willingness to accept posts in government or return to Viet-Nam will in turn be convincing evidence to mass of population that changes are, in fact, meaningful.

h. "Changes in personnel." Specific "reforms" described above are apt to have little impact without dramatic symbolic move which convinces

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Vietnamese that reforms are real. As practical matter this can only be achieved by some feasible reduction in influence of Nhus, who are--justifiably or not--a symbol of authoritarianism. Future role of Nhus in government is therefore of paramount importance. At this point it is impossible to tell whether Nhu must be permanently removed or merely confined to well-defined and limited role. In either case, some device must be found both to restrict his activities and to symbolize this restriction by his absence from power center in Saigon. In addition, similar devices must be found for those individuals, such as Colonel Tung, who are most closely associated with Nhu and his authoritarianism.

i. Public and official statement by Diem before National Assembly which would set new tone for government by pointing to steps being taken to respond to popular sentiment, and by making a call for total mobilization of effort on part of officials and people equally.

20. US/GVN Relations

- a. Avoid divisive press attacks, e. g. Times of Viet-Nam story attack. CIA, etc.
- b. Cease public statements slandering the U. S. effort and the role of U. S. military and civilian personnel.
- c. Cease undercover efforts to discredit the U. S. and weaken the will of U. S. individuals to give their full support to programs, e. g. "mendacious briefings" of GVN troops and rumors of physical danger to U. S. families and

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other personnel.

d. Re-cast GVN propaganda in such a way as to gain foreign support of its socio-economic program.

C. Congress, Press, and Public.

21. No public statement will be issued here for the present.

22. At President's next press conference, he expects to repeat his basic statement that what furthers the war effort we support, and what interferes with the war effort we oppose. If questioned on actions U.S. may take, he expects to say only that U.S. programs are being reviewed to insure consistency with this policy.

23. Similar responses will be given if information about any U.S. actions leads to detailed inquiries. If detailed inquiries pertaining to specific actions are made, they will be ~~simply~~ dealt with as indicated in each paragraph of A., above.

24. On Tuesday and Wednesday in meetings with Congressional committees in executive session, Rusk, McNamara and Bell will follow same line. They will explain our three-fold concern as outlined in para 5, above, but they will avoid as you should any listing of desired actions which could be construed as a package of U.S. demands. We believe it of great importance that there should be no public impression of a package of sanctions and a package of demands. We are seeking necessary but limited improvements

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from a government very difficult to move, and we do not wish to encourage unjustified sense of optimism or of itxx triumph from those who wish this situation was easier than it is. In particular, we would prefer press to consider us inactive than to trumpet a posture of "major sanctions" and "sweeping demands." (You should follow same line in briefing Zablocki Code).

XIX D. Coordination in Saigon.

25. Separate cables to Harkins and Breat lay out their areas of these instructions in detail. You should, of course, coordinate all actions by countr team representatives. Suggest you pass this cable to them individually.

GP - 1.

END.

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ACTION: AmEmbassy SAIGON - OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

243

EYES ONLY - AMBASSADOR LODGE
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[Redacted]

reporting General Don's views; Saigon 25X1

320, rank Saigon 316, and Saigon 329.

It is now clear that whether military proposed martial law or whether Nhu tricked them into it, Nhu took advantage of its imposition to smash pagodas with police and Tung's Special Forces loyal to him, thus placing onus on military in eyes of world and Vietnamese people. Also clear that Nhu has maneuvered himself into commanding position.

US Government cannot tolerate situation in which power lies in Nhu's hands. Diem must be given chance to rid himself of Nhu's and his coterie and replace them with best military and political personalities available.

If, in spite of all of your efforts, Diem remains obdurate

Encl'd by

FE:RHilson:ml 8/24/63

Telegraphic instructions and

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State Dept. review completed

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and refuses, then we must face the possibility that Diem himself cannot be preserved.

We now believe immediate action must be taken to prevent Nhu from consolidating his position further. Therefore, unless you in consultation with Harkins perceive overriding objections you are authorized to proceed along following lines:

(1) First, we must press on appropriate levels of GVN following line:

(a) USG cannot accept actions against Buddhists taken by Nhu and his collaborators under cover martial law.

(b) Urgent dramatic actions redress situation must be taken including repeal of decree 10, release of arrested monks, nuns, etc.

(2) We must at same time also tell key military leaders that US would find it impossible to continue support GVN militarily and economically unless above steps are taken immediately which we recognize requires removal of the Nhus from the scene. We wish give Diem reasonable opportunity to remove Nhus, but if he remains obstinate, then we are prepared to accept the obvious implication that we can no longer support Diem. You may also tell appropriate military commanders we will give them direct support in any interim period of breakdown central government administration.

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(3) We recognize the necessity of removing taint on military for pagoda raids and placing blame squarely on Nhu. You are authorized to have such statements made in Saigon as you consider desirable to achieve this objective. We are prepared to have Voice of America make statement along lines contained in next numbered telegram whenever you give the word, preferably as soon as possible.

Concurrently with above, Ambassador and country team should urgently examine all possible alternative leadership and make detailed plans as to how we might bring about Diem's replacement if this should become necessary.

As you will consider with respect to any precautions necessary protect American personnel during crisis period.

You will understand that we cannot from Washington give you detailed instructions as to how this operation should proceed, but you will also know we will back you to the hilt on actions you take to achieve our objectives.

Needless to say we have held knowledge of this telegram to minimum essential people and assume you will take similar precautions to prevent premature leaks.

GP-2.

END

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