History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and The First Indochina War

1947–1954

Office of Joint History
Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Washington, DC ◆ 2004

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first Indochina War, 1947–1954.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Indochinese War, 1946–1954—United States. 2. United States. Joint Chiefs of Staff—History—20th century. 3. Indochina—Foreign relations—Indochina. 4. United States—Foreign relations—Indochina. 5. United States—Foreign relations—1945–1989. I. Title: Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first Indochina War, 1947–1954. II. United States. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint History Office.

DS553 .1.H57 2004
959.704'12—dc22

2003027687

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov—Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800—DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2250, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402–9328
ISBN 0–16–072430–9

Foreword

Established during World War II to advise the President regarding the strategic direction of the armed forces of the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) continued in existence after the war and, as military advisers and planners, have played a significant role in the development of national policy. Knowledge of JCS relations with the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense in the years since World War II is essential to an understanding of their current work. An account of their activity in peacetime and during times of crisis provides, moreover, an important series of chapters in the military history of the United States. For these reasons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that an official history be written for the record. Its value for instructional purposes, for the orientation of officers newly assigned to the JCS organization and as a source of information for staff studies, will be readily recognized.

Written to complement *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy* series, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam* series focuses upon the activities of the Joint Chiefs that were concerned with the conflicts in Indochina and later Vietnam. The nature of the activities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the sensitivity of the sources used caused the volumes of the series to be written as classified documents. Classification designations are those that appeared in the classified publication.

This volume describes those JCS activities related to the war in Indochina during the period 1947–1954. The original text was a collaborative effort of the entire Historical Section, JCS, including: Major Norman E. Cawse-Morgon, USAF, Major William P. Moody, USAF; Captain Ernest Giusti, USMCR; Captain Wilber M. Hoare, USA; Lieutenant (jg) Norman B. Ferris, USNR; Second Lieutenant Robert M. Utley, USA; Mr. Vernon E. Davis; Mr. Samuel A. Tucker; Mr. Paul K. Wood; Mr. Eugene A. Green; Miss Julia A. Coppa; Mrs. Pauline S. Butler; Mrs. Janet W. Ball, and Mrs. Celia G. Crown. An unclassified version was published as *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam—History of the Indochina Incident, 1949–1954* (Michael Glazier: Wilmington, DE, 1982). The current version has been substantially revised by Dr. Walton S. Moody who condensed the first five chapters into a single chapter revising and updating the material and revised later sections of the book to reflect evidence and scholarship currently available. Dr. Walter S. Poole reviewed Dr. Moody's work, and Dr. David A. Armstrong edited the resulting manuscript. Ms. Susan Carroll prepared the Index and Ms. Penny Norman prepared the manuscript for publication.

The volume was reviewed for declassification by the appropriate US Government departments and agencies and cleared for release. The volume is an official publication of the Joint Chiefs of Staff but, inasmuch as the text has not been

considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it must be construed as descriptive only and does not constitute the official position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on any subject.

Washington, DC
October 2004

DAVID A. ARMSTRONG
Director for Joint History

Preface

One of the results of the warfare that raged in Southeast Asia in the late 1940s and early 1950s was to put Vietnam on the map. The decolonization of French Indochina left the region divided into four independent states: North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Officially known as "Annamites," the Vietnamese, the major ethnic group in Indochina, were largely settled in three territories: Tonkin in the north, Annam in the center, and Cochin in the south, with Hanoi, Hue, and Saigon (since 1975 Ho Chi Minh City) as the respective capitals. Cambodia and Laos were included with these among the five territories of Indochina. When a provisional government in Hanoi declared the independence of the "Democratic Republic of Viet Nam" (DRV) on 2 September 1945, it claimed to mark the culmination of generations of political struggle to secure a national identity for the Vietnamese people. The war that followed between the communist-led forces of the DRV and the forces of the French Union would lead to the creation of the two states, each claiming to embody this Vietnamese national identity.

For the United States, the Second World War had brought new knowledge of Indochina and its problems. The Americans in Indochina at the time managed to disappoint the expectations of both sides in the impending struggle, but the military services managed to extricate themselves with minimal cost. As between the combatants, the French and the Viet Minh insurgents, America had every reason to avoid involvement until the situation came to be seen as a communist threat to all of Southeast Asia. The preferred solution would have been to win the support of the Vietnamese people to resist that threat. But the communist-led Viet Minh seemed to most Vietnamese as the only force that truly represented the cause of national independence. This left the military forces of the French Union as the primary means to hold Indochina. France, with all its troubles, was a crucial ally, especially in holding Europe against Soviet power. The problem was that Indochina was drawing off some of France's best soldiers and sapping that nation's morale. The dilemma could only be solved by a seemingly unattainable victory or by abandoning an Asian empire.

For the United States and for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the years from 1947 to 1954 were a period when these problems slowly grew in importance. Efforts to build a Vietnamese army bore little fruit. If the French gave up, the question of direct American intervention would arise. The potential engagement of US armed forces in a land war in Southeast Asia was a daunting prospect. But there were dangers to any alternative strategy. The problem reached crisis proportions in the early months of 1954, when dangers of a serious split with a valuable ally, the loss of a strategically crucial region to communism, or even a major war with the communist bloc all seemed to come together.

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World War II and the Coming of the Indochina War

French Indochina and the Coming of the Pacific War

The French had extended their control over Indochina gradually. First occupied in 1859, Cochin became a French colony in 1867 and remained the only French territory in Indochina. Protectorates were established over the other territories during the 1880s and 1890s. The imperial dynasty of the Nguyen family at Hue retained nominal authority over Tonkin and Annam, the Emperor Bao Dai taking the throne in 1925 at the age of twelve. Like Bao Dai, the Kings of Cambodia and Laos were guided by French *Residents*; the French Governor-General at Saigon held supreme power in Indochina. By the 1940s the population of the region passed twenty-five million, two-thirds of them ethnic Vietnamese, while the Khmer (Cambodians) and Laotians were the next groups in importance. Other communities included Chinese (especially in Cholon, adjacent to Saigon) and tribal groups in the Central Highlands, often known as "Montagnards" (hill people).[1]

Culturally, the Vietnamese had absorbed much from China, including Buddhism for the peasant masses and Confucianism for an elite educated in Chinese writing (a romanized form of Vietnamese writing emerged in the nineteenth century). Nevertheless, the central political tradition was one of resistance to Chinese imperial expansion. In fact, China had ceded its claims to the region to France. The French had encountered fierce military resistance during the 1880s before pacifying Tonkin and Annam. Under French rule the mandarin (Confucian scholar-gentry) class had been undermined, and many began to merge into a new urban middle class intelligentsia. The peasants seem to have suffered an increasingly precarious status on the land mostly due to exploitation by French and Vietnamese entrepreneurs. Mines and factories began to create a working class under harsh conditions.

Many Vietnamese became Catholics, but most peasants retained their folk traditions and Buddhist sympathies. A few Vietnamese rose to form a Francophilic upper class.[2]

Economically, the French preferred developing Indochina as a source of raw materials and a market for French products. Some industry appeared, but rice was the leading export, especially from the rich Mekong delta of Cochin and the Red River delta of Tonkin. Rubber and coal were among the other products. In time Vietnamese ("Tonkinese") contract laborers were recruited under virtual slave conditions to work in the French islands of the South Pacific. At the same time, French medical researchers made the Pasteur Institute a leading center for tropical medicine, and engineers developed the waterways to increase rice production. By the early twentieth century a railroad ran from the port of Haiphong in Tonkin to the interior of South China in Yunnan Province.[3]

French colonists sought their fortunes in Indochina from the start. By 1940 there were some 40,000 Europeans in the region. The scale of French participation in government can be seen in the observations of a French official who visited the American-controlled Philippine Islands in the 1920s and who saw many government jobs held by Filipinos that would have belonged to Frenchmen in Indochina.[4] Although some local elections were permitted, France made no effort to prepare the Indochinese for greater political autonomy.[5]

As the defeated mandarin generation died out, new groups emerged to support the cause of national independence. Often guided by Chinese and Japanese exponents of Asian modernization and resistance to the West, these groups had little contact with the peasants or workers. Grievances against unfair land tenure laws, the corvee (obligatory labor), and taxes on salt, tobacco, and alcohol occasionally led to unrest in rural areas, as in 1908. On the other hand, as many as one hundred thousand Indochinese served in France during the First World War as soldiers or laborers. In the wake of the war, as Saigon grew, reaching a population of one million in the 1940s, intellectuals and workers began to organize. French-educated intellectuals formed a legal Constitutionalist Party. Grass-roots religious movements took hold in rural Cochin. Two sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, became numerous and influential. Middle-class intellectuals in 1927 formed other nationalist groups, including the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD or Nationalist Party) in Hanoi. The VNQDD took the Chinese nationalists (Kuomintang) as their model. Other revolutionary groups formed and survived, sometimes hiding out in China, sometimes eluding the French police in Indochina, and sometimes benefiting from amnesties decreed by the government in Paris.[6]

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 also came to provide a model for some Vietnamese seeking independence. In 1919 Lenin formed the Third, or Communist, International (Comintern) and at the Second Congress of that organization in 1920 presented his "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions." A "First Congress of the Peoples of the East" held at Baku in the same year proclaimed the

message that Soviet communism supported the struggles of Asian peoples against European imperialists. By the middle 1920s the Comintern had an agent ready to work in Vietnam.[7]

Later known to the world as Ho Chi Minh (the one who enlightens), this agent was then going by the name Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen the patriot). The son of a mandarin of peasant origin who had refused to work for the French, he had originally been named Nguyen Sinh Cung and renamed Nguyen That Than at the age of ten. From northern Annam, he had been educated in Hue and had taught school before shipping as a mess boy on a passenger liner, under the name Ba. After many travels he found himself in Paris at the time that the French Communist Party was formed; there he read Lenin's "Theses." Quoc then formed a group of revolutionary colonial natives in Paris before going to Moscow to be trained by the Comintern. In January 1930, Nguyen Ai Quoc gathered a number of groups in a house in British Hong Kong to form the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP).[8]

The new party suffered disaster almost immediately, as 1930 saw a series of unsuccessful uprisings in Indochina. Both the VNQDD and the communists supported revolts and suffered under the French reprisals that followed. Finding shelter where they could, especially in South China, the leaders survived as best they could; Nguyen Ai Quoc was actually reported dead. In fact he had been arrested in Hong Kong by the British and released in 1933. He then went to Moscow, where he apparently was an instructor in the Comintern's training program for several years. At the end of the 1930s, Vietnamese revolutionaries remained active. The Communists and the VNQDD were not the only groups; there was even a Trotskyist party in Saigon. But French power seemed unshaken in Indochina. It was only when France joined with Great Britain in September 1939 in war against Hitler's Germany that fate began to bring opportunities to the ICP.[9]

America had little knowledge of Indochina in 1940. Thirteen years before, the US consul in Saigon had advised that there was no need to submit a monthly political report to the State Department, as there were no political developments to report. The American presence of a few missionaries and businessmen generated little interest back home. Reports of the uprisings in 1930 retailed the French characterization of them as "communistic." By the late 1930s, however, Americans were learning more about nationalism in Indochina. A new consul observed such tendencies, and in 1937 *French Indochina*, by Virginia Thompson, exposed the conditions of the peasant work force and asserted that Nguyen Ai Quoc's main emphasis was nationalistic. Still, such reports, as well as the occasional article in *National Geographic*, gave the American public little idea that Indochina was an area of importance. It was not until the summer of 1940 that the US Government had reason to have a policy of any kind toward French Indochina.[10]

By then, Japan controlled vast areas of northern and eastern China, and the Kuomintang government at Chungking was virtually cut off from the sea. While the United States wanted to help China in its struggle with the invader, the means of

getting aid to the Chinese were limited. However, there were ways into the interior of China. The Japanese estimated that over 40 percent of Chiang's supplies came through the port of Haiphong and via the Yunnan railroad. Tied down by its war in Europe, France was unwilling to close the railroad.[11]

But on 10 May the Germans launched their offensive against the Low Countries and France, and on 17 June the new French Prime Minister, Philippe Petain, asked for an armistice. Soon Petain and his government were installed at Vichy, outside the German-occupied zone. On 19 June the Japanese Government demanded that France close the Yunnan railroad. Although the French Governor-General yielded, he sought time to prepare resistance to further demands. In the region France had little more than a cruiser and some 50,000 troops, including natives. Early in August the Japanese demanded that Vichy grant it full transit rights as well as economic concessions in Indochina. Vichy decided to temporize while seeking support from the Americans.[12]

James C. Dunn, political adviser to the Department of State, advised the French Ambassador that the United States was exerting what pressure it could on the Japanese. After receiving a rebuff from Germany, Vichy advised the United States that they had no choice but to yield. On 29 August a Franco-Japanese accord was signed in Tokyo. Further maneuvering failed to ward off a military agreement, and on 23 September Japanese troops crossed the frontier from their zone in China into Tonkin. French resistance collapsed in two days. Although the French continued to govern the region, the Japanese held all the key positions in Tonkin. Following a brief war with Thailand, the French were also forced to cede some Cambodian territory.[13]

Secretary of State Cordell Hull responded to the French concessions by advising the French of US displeasure, and the State Department protested to the Japanese. The French asserted that the Americans had agreed to the accord with Japan, forcing the State Department into a public denial. The Japanese reply was also unacceptable, and the US Government announced a loan to the Chinese Government and cut Japan off from exports of scrap iron. These steps began a new escalation of tensions between the United States and Japan. On 27 September 1940, Japan, Italy, and Germany became formal allies in the Tripartite Pact.[14]

The United States refused requests from Vichy to buy armaments for use to defend Indochina against Japanese encroachment.[15] The American government chose to rely on the fleet at Pearl Harbor and, later in 1941, a buildup of air power in the Philippines to deter further Japanese action. In April 1941 Japan and the Soviet Union concluded a neutrality treaty that gave the Japanese a free hand in Southeast Asia.[16] However, this treaty did not preclude Asian communists from intensifying their resistance to Japanese occupying forces.

To support its planned push to the south, especially to seize control of the oil of the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia) as a substitute for American oil, Japan decided to extend its occupation zone in Indochina. Accordingly, on 12 July 1941,

Japan demanded bases in southern Indochina. Washington immediately instructed Ambassador William D. Leahy in Vichy to delay French action. The Japanese move underscored the seriousness of the situation and led to President Franklin D. Roosevelt approving an embargo on oil and the freezing of Japanese assets on 26 July. On 21 September Japanese troops started moving into Cochin, and by the end of the month Vichy had acquiesced.[17] Events unfolded with grim inevitability, and on 7 December the Japanese offensive began with attacks on the Americans at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as well as in the Philippines, the British in Malaya, and the Dutch in their islands. Within days the grand alliance of America, Great Britain, and the USSR against the powers of the Tripartite Pact formed.

A factor in bringing the United States into a global war was that French Indochina, while occupied by the Japanese, remained under the administration of Vichy France was itself under strong German influence. The United States did not yet support the Free French led by General Charles de Gaulle and based in London. Interested in maintaining relations with Vichy, President Roosevelt supported assurances to the French that he favored the restoration of all of France's possessions at the end of the war; this remained American policy to the end of 1942. On 7 November 1942, US and British forces landed in French North Africa, and the Vichy forces capitulated after three days. Meanwhile, the Germans overran unoccupied France, confirming Vichy's puppet status. It became clear soon after that Roosevelt's motives in promising the restoration of France's colonial empire had been to induce Vichy's cooperation with American plans. That need having passed, a new policy emerged. Once troops were ashore in North Africa, the President ceased to show much interest in restoring France's empire.[18]

The Formation of the Viet Minh

After the 1930 uprisings in Indochina the various communist and nationalist groups had struggled to survive. Leaving Moscow, Nguyen Ai Quoc had gone to Yenan in 1938 and spent time with Mao Tse-tung's Chinese communists before going to South China in 1939. His ideas on organizing the peasants for revolution reflected the influence of Mao's ideas on the subject. The Chinese communists in 1938 were beginning their resistance to the Japanese occupation of North China. Despite Mao's quarrel with Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang, the ICP found shelter in South China and even survived under British police surveillance in Hong Kong. The Kuomintang and its supporters were trying to organize resistance to the Japanese, and after the invaders had occupied Indochina the Vietnamese groups had become useful for guerrilla operations. Nguyen Ai Quoc connected with other agents of the Indochinese Communist Party, including Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong. Because of Kuomintang suspicion, the Communists sought to remain clandestine and worked through front organizations.[19]

In May 1941, Quoc managed to gather some communists in the hills across the Chinese frontier in Tonkin, a region since known as the Viet Bac, the main area of the insurgents' hideouts. There the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Viet Nam Independence League), known as the Viet Minh, a coalition of Vietnamese nationalists under communist leadership was formed. Although organized shortly after the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact, the Viet Minh were, nevertheless, committed to guerrilla war against the Japanese.[20] When Germany attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the French communists rallied to the support of the Free French, but as the French in Indochina remained aligned with Vichy, they remained, along with the Japanese, the enemy of the Viet Minh.

Vo Nguyen Giap began to organize guerrilla forces in Tonkin, and resistance groups began to emerge throughout Vietnam. Increasingly, the Viet Minh was the most successful in recruiting promising supporters and operating effective forces on the ground in Indochina, small and poorly armed as they were. The Chinese tried to encourage noncommunist Vietnamese groups, and in April 1942 Quoc was arrested. Some nationalists of the VNQDD in China helped organize a new "Revolutionary League," usually known as the Dong Minh Hoi, consciously modeled on the Kuomintang. But neither this nor any other Vietnamese group proved effective at organizing a unified effort, and the Chinese finally released Quoc in June of 1943. Apparently about this time, he began to be known as Ho Chi Minh, the better to divert Chinese attention from his communist connections. At Liuchow (Liuzhou) in March 1944 the Viet Minh and the Dong Minh Hoi combined under Chinese auspices.[21]

America and Indochina, 1942–1945

First meeting on 9 February 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were involved only tangentially with Indochina for some time. The JCS became the American half of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) that consisted of the members of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee as well as the JCS and bore responsibility for the strategic direction of the Anglo-American war effort. Indochina had been important primarily because of its strategic position bordering on China and the splendid harbor at Cam Ranh Bay; in 1942 the Allies included Indochina in the China Theater of Operations. President Roosevelt strongly supported building up Chiang's China as a postwar great power. Chiang was given command of the China Theater, under American strategic direction and with an American Chief of Staff at Chungking. American advisers also served with the Chinese forces. Beginning on 9 August 1942, US aircraft based in China (Tenth Air Force until March 1943, then Fourteenth Air Force) struck Japanese targets in Indochina. In 1943 the Allies also set up a Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) under Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. Mountbatten arrived at a "gentlemen's agreement" with Chiang that SEAC regular forces might operate in Indochina if necessary, and boundaries might be adjusted

accordingly. But clearly, the efforts of the Chinese to utilize Vietnamese irregulars in Indochina were in keeping with the assignment of the region to their theater.[22]

By 1943 the French Committee of National Liberation had established its headquarters at Algiers. The committee asserted its commitment to the restoration of French rule over the entire colonial empire. With this went a vague pledge for self-government by the peoples involved; for example, on 7 December 1943 the committee announced that "the French mean to give a new political status by which, within the French community [rights] will be reshaped and established on a wider scope; a status whose institutions will have a more liberal character. . . ."[23] The French began to organize a battalion-sized force for special operations against the Japanese in Indochina which put them at cross purposes with President Roosevelt, whose personal antipathy toward Charles de Gaulle affected all US policy concerning France.

Over time the Joint Chiefs of Staff learned of the complications that might arise over the French colonies. In January 1943, President Roosevelt told the Chiefs that Ambassador Robert Murphy had exceeded his authority in conveying assurances to the French before the North Africa landings.[24] For some time Roosevelt's views on Indochina had been based on his hostility toward the European colonial empires, a view that was not unusual in America. His son Elliot recalled him commenting: "The native Indo-Chinese have been so flagrantly downtrodden that they thought to themselves: Anything must be better, than to live under French colonial rule!"[25] The President said he did not intend to be "wheedled into" helping the imperial powers regain their possessions.[26]

Late in the same year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff again heard from the President on this subject. The occasion was a request from the French Committee of National Liberation for arms and for a seat on the Pacific War Council, the diplomatic body in Washington representing the countries involved in the war against Japan. The arms were to be in addition to those received for the Free French forces in Europe, and the request made explicit the committee's desire to send troops to the Far East.[27]

The Joint Strategic Survey Committee[28] reviewed the French request and concluded that there was no military need for French forces in the Pacific war that would justify the allocation of equipment. Reconquering Indochina had no strategic importance. The Joint Chiefs of Staff accepted the report on 8 November 1943. President Roosevelt went further. The Chiefs' assumption that Indochina would be returned to France at the end of the war was incorrect, and the United States would make no such commitment. The State Department was equally unresponsive to the request concerning a seat on the Pacific War Council. Roosevelt made it clear at his meetings with the Prime Minister of England, Winston S. Churchill, that he favored some form of international trusteeship for Indochina (under the then fashionable idea that colonized peoples were usually not "ready" for self-government). The Joint Chiefs of Staff ignored further French requests. This was the

general policy of the government, and the Joint Chiefs avoided making the President's views on Indochina explicit to the French.[29]

Policy concerning irregular or clandestine operations in French Indochina proved a much more complicated matter and would lead to a lengthy controversy over who was to blame for what in the region. American officials in the Far East had difficulty determining what American policy actually was, much less implementing it. With the Fourteenth Air Force, commanded by Major General Claire L. Chennault, USA, at Kunming in Yunnan, attacking the Japanese, the Americans needed targeting information and aid for downed air crewmen. Working with the Chinese, Chennault's staff was able to develop the necessary contacts. At the same time, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was interested in developing intelligence sources and clandestine forces in Indochina, especially among the Montagnards. Late in 1944, Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, USA, then commanding in the China Theater, told Chennault that Ambassador Hurley was concerned about the degree of cooperation with the French. Hurley made it clear that his concern stemmed from the President's unwillingness to support imperialist ambitions in Southeast Asia.[30]

In July 1944 the French asked the British to intervene with the Americans to give them a role in the war against Japan. The British Chiefs of Staff advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that they agreed that there was no reason for active participation of French field forces in the Far East. However, they did favor a French mission at SEAC to coordinate clandestine operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff responded with ambiguous statements that rejected a French mission at SEAC but supported French participation in planning at that headquarters.[31]

Meanwhile, the Free French established military missions at Calcutta, India, and at Kunming where they developed good working relations with the Fourteenth Air Force. The French groups were to begin to organize resistance to the Axis in the Far East.[32] In August 1944, allied forces entered Paris, and a provisional government was established under de Gaulle. The new government made no secret of its intention to regain all colonial possessions. At the same time, the French administration in Indochina abandoned Vichy and began to establish contact with Paris.

President Roosevelt continued to support an international trusteeship for Indochina and steadfastly refused to commit the United States to French recovery of its empire. But, in declining health, occupied with a variety of problems, and sympathetic to the need to use all forces against the Axis, he made some compromises. In October 1944 he told the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, that Mountbatten should help the French but not "ask questions" that would prejudice political action. At the conference with Churchill and Stalin at Yalta in February, Roosevelt told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the United States should support the French fighting the Japanese but not align itself with the French.[33]

Cooperation was further complicated by the sensitivity of Wedemeyer's position in China. He asked the French what they thought of a Chinese push from

Yunnan into Indochina and learned that the French were suspicious of any move by the Chinese. The French in Washington used these contacts to garner JCS support for clandestine operations in Indochina. The Joint Staff Planners (JSP) were consulted and concluded that the French were seeking an implicit statement of US policy. Meanwhile, the British were trying to establish their interest in the Indochina area and subvert US policy. Therefore, these French suggestions and any further ones should be referred to the State, War, Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC); SWNCC, in turn, temporized until the issue was overtaken by events in Indochina.[34]

Mountbatten and Wedemeyer were working at cross-purposes; because of their disagreements, communications had been chancy. Then, on 23 January 1945, Fourteenth Air Force fighters mistakenly shot down three British bombers on a clandestine mission over Indochina. The two commanders were unable to iron out their differences, and Wedemeyer complained to Washington that Mountbatten was operating in Indochina without his permission.[35]

In Indochina, the Viet Minh survived attacks by the Japanese and the French. Heavy flooding created famine conditions in which as many as two million persons are thought to have died. Allied bombing aimed at transportation nets cannot have helped conditions. At the same time, the contacts between French agents in SEAC and the French in Indochina were conducted with a remarkable amateurishness that made it clear to the Japanese that the colonial administration could not be trusted. By the beginning months of 1945, observers were freely predicting strong action by the Japanese. On 2 February 1945 the French attaché in Chungking asked Wedemeyer whether the French could expect support if they opposed a Japanese takeover. Wedemeyer received an affirmation of existing policy of noninvolvement from Washington.[36]

Crisis and Policy

On 9 March 1945 Japanese action ended the awkward situation of mutual suspicion and apparent cooperation. They seized power in Indochina and interned those French officials and forces that could not escape. A few thousand French troops under Generals Sabattier and Alessandri managed to get to south China, covered part of the way by close air support from the US Fourteenth Air Force. Meanwhile, the Japanese declared that Vietnam was now independent under the rule of the Emperor Bao Dai, who in turn adhered to the coalition of Japanese puppet states in the Far East. Bao Dai attempted to base a government on such pro-Japanese groups as the Restoration League and the Dai Viet (Greater Viet Nam Nationalist Association).[37]

On 12 March the French embassy in Washington asked for assistance for the French resistance in Indochina; a formal French request to the CCS called for intelligence support, closer coordination, and air operations for bombing and airdrops

of equipment.[38] Wedemeyer, then in Washington, met with Roosevelt and learned that the President still did not want to help the French. Nevertheless, by 19 March he was ready to allow operations "to help French provided such aid does not interfere with planned operations."[39] However, the President continued to enjoin caution about French and British political motives in Indochina. At the time of his death at Warm Springs, Georgia, on 12 April 1945, Roosevelt was negotiating with Churchill about the terms for cooperation between Mountbatten and Wedemeyer over Indochina.[40]

In Paris, the Japanese action in Indochina brought an affirmation of French policy to regain the region. On 24 March the Provisional Government issued a statement outlining a postwar plan for Indochina. The French Empire, reconstituted as the French Union, would include an Indochinese Federation consisting of the five territories. All forms of ethnic discrimination would be abolished. Representative assemblies would be elected, but international affairs would be handled in Paris, and the Governor-General would appoint the executive officials.[41] In prewar Indochina this declaration might have been acceptable to most Vietnamese nationalists, but in 1945 it was not enough.

For the Viet Minh the Japanese coup was an opportunity to move toward a national uprising. The unsettled conditions of a country in famine, under foreign occupation, and a weak government given little power by the occupier and despised as foreign puppets by everyone else created what the leadership termed a "preinsurrectionary" phase. The Viet Minh called for a united front against the Japanese and declared their willingness to cooperate with French resistance groups in Indochina. Giap's military forces began a cautious guerrilla campaign against the Japanese, while a "Liberated Zone" took shape in the Viet Bac. The Viet Minh made a point of declaring that, as the allies of the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom, they were on the winning side. The surrender of Germany in May 1945 could be presented as proof of impending victory. The uprising would come, whether or not Allied forces actually reached Indochina.[42]

The Japanese coup wiped out the Allied intelligence contacts within the French administration; the OSS largely started from scratch. Teams began working with Sabattier and Alessandri, and elements of their forces took part in some clandestine operations in Tonkin. However, the French were at a distinct disadvantage, since the Vietnamese population was unwilling to work with them, and on one occasion even guided a French party into a Viet Minh ambush. One American officer reported: "I don't think the French will ever do a hell of a lot of good in Indochina because Annamite hatred makes it a more dangerous place for them than for us."[43] In fact, Americans came to fear being mistaken for French.

The Army Air Forces Air Ground Aid Service at Kunming had contacted Ho Chi Minh about providing him with equipment to help rescue Allied fliers downed in Indochina. The OSS was also interested in Viet Minh support, and on 16 July 1945 a team under Major Allison K. Thomas parachuted into Tonkin near Thai Nguyen and

were met in person by Ho Chi Minh—whom they came to know as "Mr. C. M. Hoo." Thomas's party worked with the Viet Minh over the coming month and provided some weapons, although the subsequent French assertion that the OSS had "armed" the Viet Minh was an exaggeration.[44]

Ho appears to have told Thomas of the Viet Minh position on a return of the French. The Viet Minh leader had attempted to advise the French mission at Kunming of the Vietnamese demands that a national assembly be established and that the French commit themselves to complete independence for Vietnam within five to ten years. Bound by the declaration of March 24, the French essentially ignored Ho's demands.[45]

Ho Chi Minh anticipated the news on 15 August of Japan's surrender. The atomic attack on Hiroshima on 6 August set off wide speculation that the Japanese were finished. For the Viet Minh this was the signal for the general uprising, and they were on the move. On 14 August a congress at Thai Nguyen formed a coalition People's Liberation Committee. Following a massive rally in front of the National Theater in Hanoi on 19 August, the Viet Minh took control of the city as the Japanese looked on. Local resistance crumbled throughout Tonkin and Annam. On 25 August Bao Dai abdicated at Hue. These were heady days; Vietnamese who lived through the time never forgot it. Even in Cochin, although the Viet Minh had far less control and were forced to play a lesser role than in the north, a United National Front joined in a group called the Committee of the South at Saigon which was headed by a Viet Minh agent, Tran Van Giau.[46]

On 22 August the first Americans arrived in Hanoi, headed by an OSS officer, Major Archimedes L. A. Patti. They were accompanied by Major Jean Sainteny, a French intelligence officer from the mission in Kunming. The French in Hanoi were not in any position to oppose the Viet Minh. The four or five thousand French troops interned in the citadel by the Japanese were still there. Patti was on the platform for the ceremonies at Hanoi on 2 September attending the declaration of independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Ho Chi Minh was the President of the Provisional Government, and he told Patti that the new republic wanted good relations with the United States. The declaration of independence quoted the Americans' own declaration of 1776 as well as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789.[47]

The Viet Minh had seized the moment. Their position on the ground was sustained by rising popular enthusiasm owing to famine, Japanese occupation, and the memory of French oppression as well as the communists' organizing skills. The assistance of the Americans had been useful but not crucial. Only a fraction of their weapons had come from the Americans. Many had been captured from the French or the Japanese, and with the final Japanese surrender in the offing, it appears that stocks of their weapons found their way into the hands of Vietnamese nationalist groups, especially the Viet Minh. Later French allegations that the Americans had "armed" the Viet Minh were essentially false. But the Americans on the

scene were basically uninformed about US policy and were largely unaware that their government no longer posed any objection to French return to Indochina.[48]

President Roosevelt's opposition to the French regaining Indochina had come under heavy opposition, and he had been forced into pragmatic adjustments to allow the French to help fight the Japanese. With his death, US policy became formally neutral in the sense of neither supporting nor opposing the French. On 14 April 1945 SWNCC decided to seek a firm policy statement from President Harry S. Truman. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred in a draft statement to the effect that the United States would do nothing for France that it would not do for any other ally, would not oppose restoration of Indochina to France, and would favor, in principle, French participation in the war against Japan. The State Department could not agree, and the statement did not go forward. Over the spring of 1945 proposals for a trusteeship for Indochina faded away. De Gaulle voiced his resistance, and at the United Nations Conference at San Francisco the matter never arose. On 8 May Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., informed French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault that the United States had never officially opposed French sovereignty over Indochina.[49] And on 2 June SWNCC submitted a statement on the Far East to President Truman that included the statement, "the United States recognizes French sovereignty over Indochina."[50]

Americans on the ground in the Far East had little clear idea of what government policy actually was, let alone what changes were being made. At the end of May, Wedemeyer was increasingly frustrated at Mountbatten's actions in running special operations in Indochina without permission. The two commanders were still appealing to their own governments over the matter. Ambassador Hurley supported General Wedemeyer in his concern. But General Marshall in his reply to Wedemeyer's complaints pointed out that US policy now welcomed French participation in the war against Japan. A trusteeship in Indochina was unlikely. There was no objection from a policy standpoint to Mountbatten's operations in the region.[51]

The Truman administration left it to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, who was to command the invasion of Japan, to decide what assistance the French could provide; nothing was to be done specifically to get troops to Indochina. The French advised that two divisions would be ready for the Far East, the 9th Colonial Infantry Division (DIC) by the end of June and the 1st DIC by the end of July. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that shipping for these divisions would not be ready nor be required for months. When the heads of government met at Potsdam in July, the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that the French would eventually be employed against Japan but decided to stall on equipping the divisions. The CCS also agreed that in the event of a Japanese surrender the China Theater should be responsible for occupying Indochina north of the 16th parallel; SEAC would take over south of that line.[52]

The French Return and the Americans Depart

The surrender of Japan did not bring immediate peace to Asia. But the US Government assumed that its goal now was to get out of the region. In Indochina, America recognized French sovereignty but did not consider itself obliged to help them regain control and did not want to appear to be helping. Sensitivity to Asian and American opinion alone would have justified a policy that seemed to eliminate any need to keep troops or spend money in the region. No sooner had the news of the surrender become known than the French asked for transportation to Indochina for the two divisions previously promised for the war effort. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were happy to refer the matter to the British. While neither the British nor the Americans had aircraft available to move Alessandri's men back from China into Indochina, shipping was soon available for the troops coming from Europe.[53] The French troops, commanded by General Leclerc, began to arrive in the Far East by the end of September 1945.[54]

The Potsdam agreement did not require waiting for the French. Chiang Kai-Shek (with Wedemeyer advising him) and Admiral Mountbatten were responsible for occupying Indochina and disarming and repatriating the Japanese. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department wanted to disassociate the United States from SEAC as quickly as possible; the American advisers accompanying the Chinese forces in northern Indochina were to avoid any political involvement.

The Chinese commander for northern Indochina was Lieutenant General Lu Han, a relative of the Yunnan warlord Lung Yun, and his troops were largely the warlord's men. The Kuomintang thus hoped to weaken the warlord; Lu Han's motive in the occupation was to enrich himself, his family, and his adherents. His agenda apparently was not known by the French and Americans in the region. His adviser was Brigadier General Philip E. Gallagher. Until Lu Han's arrival in Hanoi on 18 September, the small group of Americans with Patti and the OSS group observed the Viet Minh gaining control of the situation. Under the circumstances, cross-purposes hardly begin to describe the welter of goals of the Viet Minh, other Vietnamese nationalists, the French, the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Americans. General Gallagher's mission was doomed to being misunderstood because of the expectations everyone had of the Americans.[55]

The French understood that they needed protection. French civilian residents of Hanoi were subject to frequent attacks by Vietnamese and the prisoners of war remained unarmed in the citadel. Lu Han began by refusing to allow the French flag to fly at the ceremony of surrender by the Japanese. Patti had warned that arming the French would lead to fighting with the Vietnamese; Gallagher secured the release of the Frenchmen in the citadel but refused to arm them. A major fiasco resulted from Chinese efforts to manipulate the currency. When the French-controlled Bank of Indochina tried to rescue the piaster, it incurred the ire of the

Chinese and the DRV. Gallagher was only partially successful in ending the crisis in November.[56]

The French complained to the US Government about Gallagher. Although the charge that he had met secretly with the Chinese to keep the French out of northern Indochina was proven to be unfounded, his observations in correspondence with General Wedemeyer would not have pleased Paris. "I pointed out [to Ho Chi Minh] frankly that my job was not as a representative of the State Department nor was I interested in the political situation . . . that I was merely working with Lu Han. Confidentially I wish the Annamites could be given their independence, but of course we have no voice in this matter."[57] Wedemeyer needed Gallagher's staff elsewhere, and the War Department was concerned that Gallagher was becoming a liability. On 12 December he was recalled from Indochina, and an official American presence in north Indochina ceased.[58]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted even less to do with the situation in southern Indochina. Advanced elements of an OSS team were among the first Allied personnel parachuted into Cochin, arriving 1 September. The team chief, Major A. Peter Dewey, arrived on 4 September, and the British commander, Major General Douglas Gracey, reached Saigon two days later. An Anglo-French agreement committed SEAC to turning over southern Indochina to the French. In Saigon the Committee of the South was trying to hold its position among the Japanese, Trotskyists, noncommunist nationalists, the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects, the Binh Xuyen (a powerful crime syndicate), and the beleaguered local French community. British-Indian troops did not begin arriving in force until 20 September, and Gracey, refusing to rely on the Committee of the South, gave the task of keeping order to the Japanese. The Committee staged a massive demonstration on 17 September to protest. Gracey armed the French prisoners of war, who then went on a rampage. The Committee of the South responded with a general strike, and the Binh Xuyen massacred 150 French civilians. The OSS team, whose missions involved helping any Americans and looking for war criminals, offended General Gracey by contacting the Vietnamese leaders. On 26 September Dewey was killed in an ambush, apparently mistaken for a Frenchman, although at the time the circumstances were a complete mystery.[59]

In October Leclerc and his troops began to reach Cochin. Leclerc outlined his plans to Dewey's successor, who then received orders from Washington to avoid all political contact. Meanwhile, British-Indian and French troops began to take control of southern Indochina. A schedule for turnover to the French was concluded on 9 October, and troops reached Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the next day. By 25 October the French had a full division available, talks with the Committee of the South had failed, and the Viet Minh were driven from Saigon. Although they managed to eliminate the Trotskyists, the united front in the south had broken up. Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, the new French High Commissioner for Indochina, arrived in Saigon on 31 October.[60]

American policy meanwhile was aimed at disassociating the United States as much as possible from Indochina. In spite of State Department hesitation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff insisted on reducing US participation in SEAC to a liaison team. On 15 October 1945 SWNCC agreed to US withdrawal from Mountbatten's command as soon as possible, "in order that the implication of United States participation in Southeast Asia Command policies and activities in the Netherlands East Indies and Indo-China may be eliminated immediately."[61] The reduction to a US liaison team at SEAC took effect 1 November, but no public notice was given of this action until January 1946, which weakened the benefit of a clear separation from Dutch and French efforts to restore their colonial empires.[62]

At the end of January, the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted that the British planned to withdraw from Indochina and leave the French in charge south of the 16th parallel. The Joint Chiefs did not want the British to relinquish authority for disarming and repatriating Japanese troops, a task that was still far from complete, as this would require renegotiating the surrender agreement. This position won SWNCC approval, and on 1 February the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked the British to retain control. The British Chiefs of Staff objected but agreed to a compromise by which Lord Mountbatten would retain a reduced position in Indochina solely for the purpose of repatriating the Japanese, while leaving southern Indochina otherwise under French control. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to this arrangement.[63]

The Chinese Government at Chungking had succeeded in removing Lung Yun and was willing to withdraw Lu Han's troops from Indochina. In Tonkin the Chinese continued to hope that the Dong Minh Hoi could gain control of the country. The Viet Minh, however, continued to hold the upper hand. Ho Chi Minh's success at combating famine and organizing the population bore fruit in the negotiations and in the election of 6 January 1946 that gave the Viet Minh control of the DRV national assembly. A coalition government with the Dong Minh Hoi forced the Chinese to choose between the Viet Minh and the French. D'Argenlieu's visit to Chungking and negotiations between China and France produced a treaty on 28 February. France gave up all its concessions in China under the "unequal treaties." In turn China would give up control of northern Indochina effective 31 March.[64]

The French asked the Combined Chiefs of Staff to approve the transfer agreement. On 3 April the CCS approved the transfer and prescribed that the French should assume overall responsibility for the repatriation of the Japanese in both parts of Indochina. The British Chiefs of Staff announced the transfer of this responsibility in southern Indochina effective 13 May. Meanwhile, the Chinese began their withdrawal from northern Indochina. While some Chinese troops remained in control of parts of the Laotian highlands until September 1946, when they captured the opium harvest, Tonkin was largely free of Chinese troops by the summer.[65]

The French were back in Indochina to deal with the Viet Minh on their own. Each side's expectations of the Americans had been disappointed. Whatever his

sincerity, Ho had expressed hope for support from the United States. Among the French there were many signs of bitterness over what they perceived as American betrayal. It is true that Roosevelt had been less than forthright about his unwillingness to let the French return to Indochina, and Patti and Gallagher may have been somewhat indiscreet in their dealings with the Viet Minh. But some of the allegations by French participants were without foundation. In particular, it was alleged that the Americans in Hanoi, motivated by an "infantile anticolonialism" (as Sainteny termed it), had incited Viet Minh opposition (as if that had been necessary) to promote US economic interests in the region.[66] In fact, whatever the vagaries of American policy, one of its wellsprings was to avoid any responsibility for developments in Indochina, hardly the way to advance selfish imperialistic schemes. As for obstruction, the lack of shipping, however convenient a rationale for delaying the movement of French troops, had been a perennial issue throughout the Second World War. But accusations of American double-dealing would later surface whenever there was criticism of French policy and action in Indochina.

In any case, France was in a critical situation. The determination of de Gaulle's government to return to their eastern empire was evidently popular with the voters. The French Communist Party was in the government coalition and was reluctant to risk its position by supporting Ho Chi Minh's aspirations for full independence. As 1946 began, the Constituent Assembly was meeting in Paris. De Gaulle resigned from office on 20 January and Felix Gouin succeeded him. During the year the French frequently voted on constitutions and assemblies before a new constitution took effect for the Fourth Republic (and for the French Union) in the fall. Bidault succeeded Gouin in June.[67] Against a backdrop of instability in France, d'Argenlieu labored to extend French control in Indochina.

For his part, Ho Chi Minh struggled to balance the demands of the nationalists who insisted on immediate and total independence and his willingness to accommodate French demands. Stalin was hoping to help the French Communist Party as well as obtain French cooperation with his German policy against the Anglo-American position. Lacking strong support from Moscow, Ho was forced into a conciliatory approach. On 6 March he reached an accord with Sainteny. The French agreed to recognize the DRV within the French Union and gained the right to move troops into Tonkin.[68]

The rest of 1946 saw continued dispute over the implementation of the March 6 Accords. Vietnam cannot be said to have been at peace as incidents continued; it was really a matter of averting full-scale war. Vietnamese nationalists denounced Ho's concessions to the French, and Bao Dai abandoned his support for the DRV and went to Hong Kong. Long and arduous negotiations followed in Indochina and in France. Ho spent most of the summer in France trying to find an accommodation. The French concluded pacts with the Kings of Cambodia and Laos in January and August. D'Argenlieu took steps to undermine an accord and strove to make sure that Cochin did not fall under the DRV. An agreement of 14 September

between Ho and the Minister for Overseas France, Marius Moutet, sought to avert total collapse.[69]

Tensions escalated, however, and on 20 November an incident involving a French patrol boat in Haiphong harbor led to sporadic fighting in the town. Lieutenant General Jean Valluy in Saigon, with backing from d'Argenlieu, then in Paris, overruled the local commander and ordered forcible action to gain control of Haiphong. A devastating naval bombardment on 23 November helped the French clear the town. This incident seems to have persuaded Ho Chi Minh that further efforts at a peaceful settlement were hopeless. The French reinforced their positions in the north. Ho made a last-minute appeal to the new acting head of the French Government, the socialist Leon Blum, which French authorities seem to have prevented from reaching him. Warned by an agent, the French in Hanoi were on alert on the evening 19 December when the Viet Minh struck. After days of brutal house-to-house fighting, the French cleared the city. Ho and the Viet Minh got away to the countryside. Giap announced a general offensive against the French and fighting spread over Tonkin. Blum declared that France wanted a peace based on the consent of the Vietnamese people, once order was restored.[70] The eight-year war had begun.

Department of Defense Photo (Sgt. Hall)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff meet the press. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson *(seated, left)* confers with General Omar N. Bradley *(seated, right)*, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at an informal press conference. *Standing left to right are:* General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Chief of Staff, USAF; General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, USA; and Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, USN.

Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal in conference with the Joint Chiefs, 1948. *Left to right:* General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, USAF; Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, USN; General Omar N. Bradley, USA; and Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, USN.

2

Stalemate and US Non-involvement

After the war, the American armed forces focused on their primary postwar tasks, demobilization and the occupation of former enemy territory. The emerging challenge of Cold War between the free nations and the communist bloc did not seem to entail any involvement in the embattled French possessions of Southeast Asia. Although Ho Chi Minh was undoubtedly a communist, the Viet Minh could still appear to Americans, if they paid any attention at all, as a nationalist coalition fighting French colonialism. The British had given up India and Burma, and the Dutch had agreed to let Indonesia go, but the French insisted on fighting for their Asian empire.

Developments in Indochina and in Europe were to involve the United States once again in Southeast Asia. In Indochina the war went on for nearly three years before American aid began to arrive. The French found themselves unable to end the war in that time. Once the Communist Party had left the government in Paris early in 1947, there was no thought to giving up the effort to regain control of the Asian empire. Further French attempts at conciliation with the Viet Minh failed. The succession of governments and the French authorities in Indochina tried both military and political solutions to no avail. Americans were often critical of the French failure on both counts. The critics tended to overlook the effectiveness of the Viet Minh's guerrilla tactics, with the widespread support of the Vietnamese population, in keeping their forces intact against the seemingly overwhelming superiority of the French Union Forces. A major offensive against the Viet Minh at the end of 1947 finally ended without decisive results. The proposed political solution, rallying noncommunist Vietnamese around the former Emperor Bao Dai, was undermined by suspicions that the French had no intention of granting real independence. For the French, however, after the demoralizing losses of the First

World War, the catastrophe of 1940, and the need for foreign help to liberate France, the need to prove that they were still a great power outweighed considerations of cost.

In Europe, France aligned with the West and the Truman administration's Cold War policies increased American commitments to the French. The Truman Doctrine, formulated early in 1947, specifically applied to Greece and Turkey, but enunciated the principle that the United States would assist countries resisting aggression. The Marshall Plan, announced in June 1947, was intended to provide American economic assistance to European countries, including France, in their postwar recovery programs. In 1948 a serious crisis over Berlin drew France into the creation of a democratic West Germany. And on 12 April 1949, France was one of the nations that joined in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for the security of the West. The fact that over one hundred thousand of France's best troops and substantial sums of money the Republic could hardly spare were tied down in Indochina limited the contribution the French could make to European defense. A settlement of the war along the lines of the Bao Dai solution began to seem the preferable alternative to the United States. It allowed the United States to oppose communism, to favor independence for colonized Asian peoples, and to get its French ally out of a debilitating mess.

Military Situation in the Spring of 1947

The outbreak of war in late 1946 tended to unify the various parties in the Viet Minh-controlled DRV in opposition to France. The Viet Minh had long been under attack from other nationalist parties and extremist elements within the coalition, all of whom strongly opposed Ho Chi Minh's apparent willingness to compromise with the French. In early 1947, however, the DRV concentrated on the conduct of military action, procurement of supplies, control of the flood relief program in Tonkin, and coordination of the nationwide educational program. All DRV parties now joined in the non-controversial policy of supporting the war against the French and in a common effort to achieve social and economic progress. To bring the various parties together, the DRV government was twice reshuffled, giving the appearance of more equal representation to all political forces in the nationalist alliance, but in fact the communists and Viet Minh representatives continued to dominate the government.[1]

During the first five months of 1947, Ho Chi Minh's attempts to reach a peaceful settlement through negotiation gradually ceased in the face of French intransigence. Although the French Premier declared his willingness to submit the unity of Cochin China to a popular referendum, he insisted that all previous agreements had been made null and void by the Viet Minh attack in December. Firmly adhering to this view, the French Government rejected a Vietnamese proposal for an

armistice based on the accord of 6 March; it also rebuffed a peace appeal by Ho Chi Minh on 20 February calling for an end to the war, independence, and unity within the French Union.[2]

This diplomatic impasse was reflected in the military situation. From February on it became increasingly clear that the war had reached a stalemate. In the early weeks of the conflict the French had regained control over the major cities of the Tonkin Delta and had lifted the siege of Hue. Elsewhere, except for the principal highway from Haiphong to Hanoi, the road system and most of the countryside were in the possession of the Viet Minh forces. The fighting had spread from Tonkin southward into Cochin China, and bands of nationalist guerrillas appeared from time to time on the outskirts of Saigon to harass the numerically superior French forces.[3]

Early in 1947 the Viet Minh commanded a force of approximately 150,000 troops, but the units of this force were still basically guerrilla formations. Only about one-third of the troops were organized and equipped with small arms; heavy weapons included about 50 artillery pieces, 650 automatic weapons, and 150 mortars.[4]

The Viet Minh army was concentrated in Tonkin, but Giap was also able to control most of Annam's long coastline against relatively weak French opposition. In Cochin China, the lack of unity among the nationalist forces and French military strength restricted the Viet Minh to ineffective guerrilla activity. In the north, however, Giap's larger, better equipped, and better organized units were more successful, and by 7 February they had inflicted 1,855 casualties on the French.[5]

The French budget for 1947 called for the expenditure of $25 million to support the campaign in Indochina during the first three months of the year. Although desperate efforts were being made in Paris to trim other budgetary expenses, there was little protest, except by the Communists, against the government's proposals to increase military spending for Indochina.[6]

The French Break with the Viet Minh

The caretaker government of Leon Blum, which had responded to the outbreak of fighting in Indochina by insisting on the restoration of order, gave way in January 1947 to the first constitutional government of the Fourth Republic. Headed by Paul Ramadier, this government was an uneasy coalition of left-wing parties, including the Communists. During the early months of 1947 Ramadier struggled with economic instability, colonial troubles (in Madagascar as well as Indochina), and the question of the future of Germany, in which the divergent views of the Americans and the Soviets gave the French little leeway. The Communists were uncomfortable with the Indochina war and Ramadier's wage-freeze program. In May they split with the government over a major strike and were forced out of the government. From that point, the one French political party that, for whatever reason, expressed

reservations about the war in Indochina was largely without influence. The Fourth Republic was sliding into a posture of *immobilisme*, in which a succession of weak, short-lived governments showed little capacity to institute bold new departures of any kind.[7] In spite of growing reason to believe that the war would require unacceptably drastic measures, France was in no position to take extreme steps or to hold out hope to Vietnamese nationalists.

In March, while French forces battled the Viet Minh in Indochina, French legislators fought each other on the floor of the National Assembly in a series of spirited debates on Indochina policy. On three separate occasions, the Communist delegates walked out of the chamber after sharp verbal clashes; once, blows were exchanged. A Communist deputy, Pierre Cot, accused the government of instructing French troops to use the accord of 6 March 1946 as a lever to bring about a coup d'etat. He stated that the day of colonialism was over and that the only practical policy was one of free collaboration and association with the Indochinese people.[8]

In rebuttal, Premier Ramadier took the position that the French constitution of October 1946 invalidated several provisions of the March 6 Accords.[9] He made no promise of negotiation or peace in Indochina, saying only that:

> We have done everything possible, conceded everything reasonable; it did not work. One of these days there will be some representatives of the Annamite people with whom we can talk reason. If it is desired, France will not oppose union of the three countries nor refuse to admit the independence of Viet Nam within the French Union.[10]

At the end of the debate on Indochina, the Premier received a vote of confidence from the Assembly. The delegates approved his position on Indochina by a vote of 410–0, with 195 abstentions. The balloting appeared to indicate that French Communists were not seriously concerned with the struggle for independence in Vietnam except as it served their own ends. Although the Communist deputies withheld their votes, their fellow party members in the cabinet voted with the majority in support of the war. Also, the Communist Vice-Premier, Marcel Thorez, signed a directive ordering military action against the Viet Minh.[11]

Throughout April and May, the French adhered to an inflexible policy toward Indochina; there was little progress toward a settlement. In March, Emile Bollaert, Radical-Socialist parliamentarian and politician, replaced Admiral d'Argenlieu, who had been the subject of increasing criticism. Bollaert arrived in Saigon on 1 April and immediately set to work to implement Ramadier's policy. He announced in May that "France will remain in Indochina and Indochina will remain within the French Union. That is the first axiom of our policy.... We do not admit that any group has a monopoly on representing the Vietnamese people."[12] This assertion was the first important indication that the French were considering doing business with someone other than Ho Chi Minh in their search for

a solution to the Indochinese problem. This idea was soon to become the keystone of French policy, but in April there were several items holding a higher place on M. Bollaert's agenda. First, agreements had to be negotiated with Cambodia and Laos, to draw them more closely into the French sphere and reduce the possibility that they would, at some future time, join with Vietnam to oppose the French.

On 6 May, Cambodia changed from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. The new government included a cabinet responsible to an elected bicameral legislature, the functions of the upper house being mostly advisory. Division of power among three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—provided a system of checks and balances. All power emanated from the King; his authority, however, had to be exercised in accordance with the constitution, and each of his acts, except those pertaining to palace matters, had to be signed by the Prime Minister and one other member of the cabinet.[13] On 11 May, a Laotian constitution, similar to that of Cambodia, was promulgated. Despite the complete newness of representative government in the country, the document was seemingly assured of strong popular support owing to its approval by a "highly respected" monarch.[14]

The DRV continued to press the French for a settlement. As early as February, Ho Chi Minh stated the terms on which he proposed to base all future negotiations when he said, "we want unity and independence within the French Union.... [Then] we will respect the economic and cultural interests of France in this land."[15] On 19 April 1947, the DRV Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a proposal for "the immediate ending of hostilities and the opening of negotiations for the pacific settlement of the conflict" to the French Government. In reply, the French drew up a series of clearly unacceptable demands and sent Paul Mus, M. Bollaert's personal counselor, to contact the DRV leaders.[16] He was directed to request the Vietnamese forces to:

1. Cease immediately all hostile acts, terrorism and propaganda.
2. Deliver over the greater part of their armament.
3. Allow free circulation of French troops throughout Viet Minh territory.
4. Surrender hostages, prisoners and deserters.[17]

These demands made it a foregone conclusion that the Mus mission would fail. It was hardly correct to claim, as did the Minister of Overseas France, that the mission failed only because of the clause in the French demands concerning the handing over of foreigners in the ranks of the Viet Minh.[18] Bollaert had accomplished little more than his predecessor; revision of French policy was long overdue.

The Bao Dai Plan

The failure of the Mus mission in early May convinced the French that talks with Ho Chi Minh would serve no purpose. They decided to encourage and assist the formation of an anti-Viet Minh government for Indochina. French emissaries had been in touch with Bao Dai in Hong Kong as early as March, but he had declined to commit himself to any particular course of action. Indications were, however, that the ex-Emperor realized the strength of his position and that he would demand concessions similar to those insisted upon by Ho Chi Minh. It was M. Bollaert's task to bring Bao Dai to agreement on terms favorable to the French. A number of Vietnamese nationalists were willing to work with Bao Dai to create a new central government under French auspices. Among these nationalists were the exiled leaders of the VNQDD and Dong Minh Hoi who, after losing control of the nationalist movement to the Viet Minh in 1945, had fled to China where they had established a "National Union Front" under Chinese sponsorship. This group of Bao Dai supporters was soon augmented by the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and a number of mandarins and monarchists in Annam.[19]

These political elements constituted a core around which Bao Dai could form an anti-Viet Minh government; the French saw to it that a steady procession of nationalist leaders called upon the former Emperor to keep this idea firmly planted in his mind. In response, Bao Dai gravitated toward a position of alignment with the National Union Front, twice rejecting Viet Minh suggestions that he negotiate with the French in the name of the DRV.[20]

On 5 July 1947, Bao Dai finally broke his long silence, declaring that:

> If all Vietnamese place their confidence in me, and if through my presence I can contribute to reestablishing good relations among our people and France, I will be happy to come back to Indochina. I am neither for the Viet Minh nor against it. I belong to no party. . . . Peace will return quickly if the French are only ready to admit that the spirit of our people is not the same today as it was ten years ago.[21]

Bollaert was busy preparing the way for Bao Dai's return to Indochina. During May, he presided over the installation in Saigon and Hue of two "Provisional Administrative and Social Committees." These two groups worked with the French to rally Indochinese public opinion behind the Bao Dai restoration movement. The committee in Saigon demanded the unification of Vietnam, the admittance of a free and independent Vietnam to the French Union, and the creation of a central national government disassociated from the DRV.[22]

Even with French support it was clear that Bao Dai's only hope for lasting success lay in securing from France the two major concessions that Ho Chi Minh had failed to obtain. Conscious of this, Bao said in September: "I want first of all to get

independence and unity for you."[23] As the French learned, he did not intend to compromise on these terms.

In a last bold attempt to come to terms with the DRV, the French High Commissioner planned a striking departure from his government's recent policy of intractability toward Ho Chi Minh. Bollaert decided to direct a conciliatory speech to the DRV on 15 August, the day on which India and Pakistan received their independence. He intended to offer Ho Chi Minh a cease-fire and French recognition of an independent Vietnam within the French Union. Before he could make his speech, Commissioner Bollaert was summoned to France for consultation, presumably because news of the content of his address had reached the French Government. When Bollaert arrived in Paris, the French Cabinet was called into session and the Mouvement Populaire Republicaine (MRP) members made clear their firm opposition to taking any action from which Ho Chi Minh might profit. It would be the Viet Minh who would be strengthened if there were to be a truce in Vietnam, and therefore, France could not afford peace.[24]

Commissioner Bollaert finally gave his speech on 10 September, but it bore little resemblance to the original. No mention was made of either a truce or independence for Vietnam, and the address included the condition that all of the proposals put forth by the High Commissioner would have to be accepted without alteration. It stipulated that:

> a. The Indo-Chinese people must agree to remain in the French Union.... On the other hand, France will not interfere in the three disputated States' [Cochin China, Annam, Tonkin] decision to join in a Vietnamese Federation or remain aloof.
>
> b. France is prepared to surrender direct and indirect administration to a qualified Government.
>
> c. The French will retain control over foreign relations, although the Indo-Chinese States are expected to participate in the representation of the Union....
>
> d. The French Republic will ensure the coordination of the military resources to be pooled by all members of the French Union (including Viet Nam) for the defense of the Union as a whole.
>
> e. Collaboration among the several States in such general problems as customs, currency, immigration policy, and in economic development will proceed under the aegis of the French High Commissioner.
>
> f. The High Commissioner will further guarantee the protection of French interests in Indo-China and will oppose any interference by one State in the internal affairs of another.
>
> g. The French pledge themselves not to take reprisals against the Vietnamese, and all prisoners will be exchanged under conditions of reciprocity.[25]

Ho Chi Minh rejected these terms. It appears probable that the French offer had been purposely vague and unacceptable in order to provide an excuse for

resuming military operations the following month. The rainy season was drawing to a close, and good fighting weather was expected.[26]

From October 1947 to the beginning of 1948, a lull occurred in the French-Bao Dai conversations while the French military forces attempted to "liquidate" the DRV and clear the way for Bao Dai's return. Although the French Minister of War had estimated that it would require a force of at least 500,000 men to take back the areas controlled by the Viet Minh,[27] not more than 60,000 French troops were utilized during the fall campaign. The objectives of this drive were to close the China frontier, cut DRV lines of communication, kill or capture the DRV leaders, and destroy, as far as possible, their regular army.[28]

The French succeeded in cutting the principal supply route between Tonkin and China, but traffic continued to move freely across other parts of the border. Although they captured large stocks of DRV military supplies and seized two broadcasting stations, shortages of manpower and supplies forced the French to withdraw from many of the areas they had occupied. "None of the principal DRV leaders were killed or captured [and]... DRV political and military resistance to the French remained basically unimpaired."[29] The unsuccessful fall offensive cost the French heavily. It was reported that France spent more than $33,613,446 (4 billion francs) monthly on Indochina during this period and lost over 600 men a month in combat.[30]

Before military operations had ceased, Bao Dai and M. Bollaert resumed negotiations. On 8 December, aboard a French cruiser in D'Along Bay, they initiated a secret protocol, in which Bao Dai tentatively agreed to return to Indochina as soon as France sanctioned a united Vietnam. The following were reported to be the terms of agreement:

> (1) Viet Nam, which will include Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin-China, will be granted "independence" within the French Union;
>
> (2) Viet Nam will have an "independent" army, which will, however, be "available for defense of any part of the French Union";
>
> (3) foreign relations are to be conducted by France, with Viet Namese included in the French Foreign Service; and
>
> (4) there will be common customs and integration of transportation facilities in the several states of Viet Nam.[31]

The D'Along Bay Agreement did not measure up to the expectation of Bao Dai's supporters in Hong Kong and Vietnam. They urged him to disavow it and seek more favorable terms.[32] Taking the position that he had approved the protocol in the capacity of a private individual, Bao Dai soon renounced the agreement.[33]

The French were not ready to give up hope of reaching an agreement. On 23 December 1947, the French Cabinet announced that it had instructed M. Bollaert "to carry on, outside the Ho Chi Minh government, all activities and negotiations necessary for the restoration of peace and freedom in the Vietnamese countries."[34] By making the Bao Dai restoration solution the official policy of France, the

French Government enhanced Bao Dai's bargaining position. But M. Bollaert, during several interviews with Bao Dai in January, refused to compromise on his terms of 8 December. While both Bao Dai and the French agreed that he was to return to head a provisional government in Vietnam, they differed on procedure. Bao Dai insisted upon unity and independence prior to his return, whereas the French wanted him to return immediately as head of a nationalist government with which they could then negotiate regarding the manner in which unity and independence would be realized.[35]

Following Bai Dai's return to Hong Kong in March 1948, a growing coolness became apparent in his relations with the French. While Bao Dai doubted French assurances that they would no longer attempt to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh, the French for their part suspected that the former Emperor was engaged in undercover dealings with the Viet Minh.[36] Another factor contributing to Bao Dai's suspicion of French intentions was the announcement on 4 March 1948 of the foundation under French auspices of a Thai Federation in upper Tonkin. This step appeared to indicate a French desire to weaken any Vietnamese government that might come to power by setting up French-controlled political subdivisions under the pretense of protecting minority rights. There was a precedent for such a French policy in Admiral d'Argenlieu's recognition of the Cochinchinese Republic during the Fontainebleau Conference and, later, the establishment of a separate Moi state in southern Annam.

Culmination of the Bao Dai Solution

As 1948 unfolded, Bao Dai remained adamant in refusing to return to Indochina without official French recognition of Vietnamese independence and unity that the French were not prepared to grant. Reluctantly they turned to General Nguyen Van Xuan, President of the Provisional Government of South Viet Nam (Cochin China), to form a provisional government for Vietnam.

Plans for the establishment of such a government were formulated in consultation with Bao Dai, and differences between the various nationalist elements in opposition to the Viet Minh were gradually resolved. Finally, on 20 May 1948, a number of representatives from Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China, "all of whom had been hand-picked by Xuan and approved by the French," met at Saigon as a "Vietnamese Congress" to form a central government for Viet Nam.[37] Bao Dai's approval of General Xuan, expressed in a letter that General Xuan read before the delegates, was sufficient to overcome the remaining opposition to the general's leadership. Without debate, he was designated President of the "Provisional Central Government" of Viet Nam, which was later to supersede the government of Cochin China. The new government would negotiate with France on the status of

Vietnam and would be replaced by a permanent government as soon as agreement regarding the powers and responsibilities of the latter was reached.

The weakness of the new government was recognized by all. Powerful elements from among the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao movements refused to lend it their support. Le Van Hoach, ex-President of the defunct Cochin China Republic, rejected an offer of the Vice Presidency. Moreover, administrators of ability were dissuaded by the temporary nature of the new government from joining its ranks; they preferred to wait until Bao Dai returned to Vietnam before offering their services.

The Xuan regime was formally installed at Hanoi on 6 June. The day before, Bao Dai had met with General Xuan and M. Bollaert at D'Along Bay to seek mutual understanding. Out of this meeting came an agreement wherein the French promised to recognize the unity and independence of Vietnam within the French Union as a state associated with France.[38] The text of this agreement as reproduced by a French source follows:

> 1. France solemnly recognizes the independence of Viet Nam, whose unity must be freely accomplished. For its part, Viet Nam proclaims its adherence to the French Union in the capacity of a State associated with France. The independence of Viet Nam is limited only by that which its attachment to the French Union imposes upon itself.
>
> 2. Viet Nam pledges itself to respect the rights and interests of French nationals, constitutionally to ensure respect for democratic principles, and to give priority to French councilors and technicians for the needs of its internal organization and its economy.
>
> 3. After the constitution of a provisional government, the representatives of Viet Nam will pass with the representatives of the French Republic various arrangements of a cultural, diplomatic, military, economic, financial, and technical nature.[39]

It appeared that an acceptable basis for an anti-Viet Minh government had been laid down in the D'Along Bay Agreement. But the gift of independence was hedged with qualifications, unity was yet to be accomplished, and the fact was that the French had dealt with a group that did not control the country. Paris seemed reluctant to implement the agreement. Gaston Palewski, de Gaulle's political advisor, said on 7 June that the formation of the Provisional Central Government was "illegal and in violation of the French Constitution."[40] Two days later, M. Coste-Floret, Minister of Overseas France, told the National Assembly that the agreement did not imply French recognition of the unity of Vietnam, since the status of Cochin China could be changed only with formal approval of the French Parliament. He went on to state that France would not approve a Vietnamese army, apart from police forces, nor would a separate Vietnamese diplomatic service be tolerated. Vietnamese public opinion "reacted with great discouragement" to these declarations, and the prestige of the Xuan government sank lower.[41]

The D'Along Bay Agreement was not ratified by the French National Assembly until 19 August, and then only "in principle." It was under constant attack by a number of influential Frenchmen. Georges Bidault, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a leader in the MRP, said that the concessions granted by M. Bollaert were "very dangerous" in view of probable repercussions in French North Africa. He condemned the use of the word "independence" in any form.[42] The failure of the Paris government to implement the agreement speedily cost the French more in terms of Vietnamese popular support than they had gained by signing it in the first place; more and more Vietnamese began to believe further negotiations with the French useless.[43] In view of his failure to persuade Bao Dai to return to Indochina without further concessions, M. Bollaert was recalled to France, and Leon Pignon, formerly French Commissioner in Cambodia, took his place on 20 October 1948.[44]

By the end of 1948, the Xuan government was so obviously a puppet administration that it steadily lost ground in its efforts to win popular support. No Vietnamese of any stature would consent to serve in the administration, and there were rumors of graft and corruption at all levels. It controlled no territory of its own; the governors of north, south, and central Vietnam felt no responsibility to General Xuan, and in the south Governor Huu openly defied him. Although the French proclaimed that they had granted independence to Vietnam, French administrators refused to turn over the most limited powers to General Xuan. Even in areas where a Vietnamese administration existed, the French retained control of the army, police forces, and the financial structure.[45]

By contrast, Ho Chi Minh's government in its third year of existence controlled the greater part of the countryside. In these areas over half the population lived producing practically all the food. The DRV aimed at economic self-sufficiency, directing its efforts toward raising the living standards of the peasants. To this end it set up factories to manufacture items formerly imported, such as textiles and weapons urgently needed by the Viet Minh army. It endeavored to increase food production and won considerable popularity by lowering land rents as much as 25 percent.[46] The DRV continued to pose as a nationalist movement during 1948. Although communist control was being tightened, little in the way of communist inspiration appeared openly in its activities and policies. As yet, it did not reject the Bao Dai restoration plan, appearing to entertain the hope that the ex-Emperor could be brought to join Ho Chi Minh in combating the French.[47]

The military situation changed little throughout 1948. The French retained control of Saigon, Hanoi, and Haiphong and established small garrisons in Annam, but attempts to expand local perimeters met with little success. At the same time, the Viet Minh gradually stepped up the pace of their activities and harassed the French throughout all of Vietnam; the north-south lines of communication were immobilized, owing to the inability of French units to seize and hold them.[48] In view of the growing difficulty in replacing casualties and troops who had been rotated, the French offered bonuses to all officers and men who extended their service in

Indochina beyond two years.[49] In January and February of 1948, a twelve thousand-man French task force undertook offensive operations in Cochin China, the overall effect of which was to expand French control slightly in the Saigon and Mekong River delta areas.[50] The French also began an offensive in Tonkin during October, as they had the previous year. Their objective was to secure communications between Hanoi and outlying garrisons; they failed, "owing to low morale, inadequate military transportation facilities, and the replacement of French troops by locally recruited forces of doubtful loyalty."[51]

Not having achieved appreciable military success, the French again resumed talks with Bao Dai; there was now a note of haste in the negotiations. A series of Chinese Communist victories seemed to foreshadow the collapse of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the appearance of a potential Viet Minh ally on the northern border. Since the French and Bao Dai were still far apart in their demands, a compromise seemed in order if they were to collaborate successfully in creating a government capable of drawing popular support away from Ho Chi Minh.

During the winter of 1948–1949, the French-Bao Dai negotiations made considerable headway and, on 8 March 1949, Bao Dai and President Auriol of France reached a "compromise agreement" at the Elysee Palace in Paris. By means of an exchange of letters, a program for the future of Indochina was agreed upon:

> . . . France recognized the independence of Vietnam within the French Union. In foreign relations, the government of Vietnam was limited in its independence by its membership in the French Union; internally, Vietnam's autonomy was confirmed, except for certain limitations in the judicial sphere. Vietnam was to have its own national army, and French forces stationed in Vietnam in peacetime were to be confined to designated bases, garrisons, and communication facilities. Vietnam undertook to give priority to French political and technical advisers. It agreed to reciprocal assurances concerning the status and properties of nationals and the freedom of enterprises in both countries, and to similar guarantees with regard to French educational institutions in Vietnam. Vietnam was to enter into a monetary and customs union with the other Indochinese states, and joint institutions were to be created to harmonize the interests of the three states with each other and with those of France.[52]

Had the French attitude kept pace with this document, a Bao Dai government would have had at least a fair chance of capturing enough popular support to function effectively. The "new" French approach was almost indistinguishable from the old. Ex-Premier Ramadier expressed the attitude of a good many Frenchmen when, during March 1949, he said: "We will hold on everywhere, in Indo-China as in Madagascar. Our empire will not be taken away from us, because we represent might and also right."[53]

Until the French Assembly formally declared Cochin China a part of Vietnam, the Elysee Agreement was worth nothing. Therefore, on 12 March 1949, the Assembly voted to authorize the creation of a Territorial Assembly of Cochin China, the

sole function of which was to vote union with Vietnam. This it did on 23 April. A month later the French Assembly ended the colonial status of Cochin China, which, henceforth, was to be "attached to the Associated State of Vietnam."[54]

The way was now open for the Elysee Accord to go into effect. On 14 June, Bao Dai and the French High Commissioner met at a formal ceremony in Saigon to exchange letters in confirmation of the agreement. Bao Dai assumed the position of "Chief of State" of the "Independent State of Viet Nam" and General Xuan's ill-favored government resigned in favor of the new regime. Vietnam was united, but only on paper. Before real unification could take place, the French and the new State of Viet Nam had to cope with the Viet Minh.

American Policy toward Indochina, 1947–1949

The war in Indochina posed a dilemma for the makers of American foreign policy. Aid to the French might alienate the peoples of Southeast Asia from the Western Powers. Support for complete independence for the Vietnamese might lead to a communist state in Indochina. The State Department sought to steer a middle course. While recognizing French sovereignty, the United States refused to supply the French with arms or ammunition to help them assert it. And while opposing an independent Vietnamese state, the United States sought to persuade the French to abandon their "outmoded colonial outlook" and grant the Vietnamese a large measure of autonomy. Such a concession, the State Department hoped, would strengthen the hands of anticommunist Vietnamese. As a special ad hoc committee of the State, War, Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) stated it:

> Our objective is a prompt, peaceful, and lasting settlement of the present French-Vietnamese dispute providing for the creation of a stable Vietnamese state that will remain in voluntary association with France and will meet the legitimate demands of the Vietnamese for self-government, and be responsive to their fundamental interests. We consider the creation of such a state as the best defense against disintegrative tendencies in Indochina that could lead to a chronic disorder and political extremism, offer opportunities for the extension of Communism, or tempt the intervention of other powers.[55]

Long before the committee set this objective down on paper, the State Department had found it difficult to achieve. Four days after the outbreak of hostilities, Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson had invited the French Ambassador to a conference at the State Department. Expressing deep concern over the situation in Indochina, Acheson made it clear that, while the United States did not wish to mediate the Franco-Vietnamese conflict, it was willing to offer its "good offices" to the French. From every point of view, Mr. Acheson asserted, it was essential that the Indochina question be settled as soon as possible, by conciliatory means.

Two weeks later, the French rejected Mr. Acheson's offer of "good offices"; they preferred to handle the problem their own way. The immediate French military objective in Indochina, said M. Lacoste, Minister in the French embassy, was "to restore order and reopen communications." Once order was restored, the French would try to live up to the accord of 6 March and to the modus vivendi of 15 September 1946. When asked whether he believed the French could restore order "within the foreseeable future," M. Lacoste answered in the affirmative but "without much evidence of conviction."[56]

Because of the instability of the current French Government, the United States did not press the matter further. When the Chinese proposed joint mediation by the United States, British, and Chinese Governments, the State Department rejected the idea, partly on the ground that any appearance of intervention would provide political ammunition for the French Communists. Throughout the remainder of 1947 the State Department avoided measures that might embarrass the French Government. While repeating its offer of "good offices," the State Department coupled it with a disclaimer of American intentions to mediate the Franco-Vietnamese conflict and with a frank statement that the United States had no specific solution to propose. Other than urging the French to adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward the Vietnamese and to keep the United States informed of developments, the State Department adhered to the position that the Indochina problem was one for the French and Vietnamese.

Once in 1947 the State Department ventured slightly beyond that position, with negligible results. In September Secretary of State George C. Marshall informed the American Ambassador to France, Mr. Jefferson Caffery, of his concern over reports that the French were planning to launch an offensive against the Vietnamese in the dry season toward the end of September. "It is obvious," Secretary Marshall said, "that such an offensive, if it took place under these conditions, would have serious effect on public opinion here which would be reflected in a Congress which will be called upon to consider extensive financial aid for western European nations, including France." Secretary Marshall asked Ambassador Caffery to find out whatever he could about this offensive. Ambassador Caffery reported that he had talked informally with M. Bidault along the lines suggested by Secretary Marshall. Bidault "understood" the American point of view and said that as far as he knew there were no plans for such an offensive. Whether or not M. Bidault was misinformed is uncertain, but early in October the French launched a major military offensive "to annihilate the Viet Minh forces in Tonkin."[57]

By the summer of 1948 the State Department had decided to urge the French toward more decisive action to settle the Indochina conflict, but to avoid any pressure that might imperil the French Government. As Secretary of State Marshall viewed the situation, nothing should be left undone that would strengthen the "truly nationalist groups" in Indochina at the expense of the communists. In July the French were informed that the United States believed they were faced with two

alternatives: either they must promptly and unequivocally approve the union of Cochin China with the rest of Vietnam and carry out the D'Along Bay Agreement or they would lose Indochina. As an inducement to earnest effort, the French were informed that, once they put this program into effect, the United States would publicly support it as a "forward looking step" toward solving the Indochina problem and toward fulfilling the aspirations of the Vietnamese. The French were also told that when these measures were adopted the United States would reconsider its policy of withholding assistance to Indochina through the Economic Cooperation Administration. But something more than promises was required to obtain action from the French Assembly, and in October Ambassador Caffery reported that he saw little hope of obtaining any positive action toward a solution for Indochina.[58]

As the war continued the United States drew closer to direct involvement. Alarmed by the communist victory in China, the State Department looked for ways to avert a communist Vietnam. To Mr. Acheson there appeared no alternative to supporting Bao Dai, and in May 1949, he told the American consul in Saigon that no effort should be spared by the Western Powers or by the noncommunist nations of Asia to assure the success of Bao Dai. At the proper time and under the proper circumstances, said Mr. Acheson, the United States would do its part by extending to Bao Dai official American recognition. And it would do much more; it would provide Bao Dai with military and economic aid. But before these steps were taken, Mr. Acheson wanted both the French and Bao Dai to demonstrate that American assistance was justified. The French should make every possible concession to make the Bao Dai government attractive to the nationalists. Bao Dai should demonstrate his own capacity to conduct his affairs wisely enough to obtain popular support. Otherwise, the Bao Dai experiment would be doomed to failure.[59]

By 1949, the conditions affecting American policy in Indochina were changing. The North Atlantic Treaty was an alliance that included France. In the Far East, the Chinese communists were clearly gaining the upper hand in their war with the KMT. In January Peking fell to the communists, and in April they took Nanking. The Nationalists began to collapse, and the Viet Minh found that Mao's forces were across the border. Time was now running out for the West in Indochina. At the same time, the news in September 1949 that the Soviets had exploded an atomic bomb created a sense that the communist bloc was on the move. The threat to the French in Indochina suddenly seemed a threat to the whole region of Southeast Asia.

3

Origins of American Involvement, June 1949–June1950

In 1948 French officials suggested that American economic assistance to the Bao Dai regime would help stabilize Vietnam. Likewise, the weaknesses of French Union Forces in Indochina could be attributed to a lack of adequate equipment. No formal request for US help from the French Government arrived until February 1950, but in the State and Defense departments planning for an aid program started in the summer of 1949. Planners saw two overall objectives in Southeast Asia: the containment of communism and the encouragement of noncommunist nationalist movements.[1] The deteriorating situation in Indochina pushed the Truman administration into action. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were given the task of organizing a program of military assistance for the French in Indochina and planning the allocation of money. In December 1949, the JCS began to call for an integrated policy on Southeast Asia.

The Chinese nationalists withdrew to the island of Taiwan in December 1949. On 18 January 1950 the Chinese Communist regime recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and in February Mao Tse-tung and Stalin concluded a friendship treaty. The French put the Bao Dai regime in place by the end of 1949. The United States recognized the "Associated States" of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos on 7 February 1950. In Washington, the State Department initiated the final decision to aid the French with a study known as NSC 64 (National Security Council). Circulated to the JCS and other officials in March 1950, this paper urged "all practicable measures designed to protect US security interests in Indochina." President Truman approved NSC 64 on 24 April.

Southeast Asia was important as a source of oil, rubber, and other strategic materials, either for the free world or for its enemies, as a potential springboard for

attacks on the Philippines or India and as a threat to the sea lanes between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. According to the Secretaries of State and Defense:

> the choice confronting the United States is [either] to support the French in Indochina or to face the extension of Communism over the remainder of the continental area of Southeast Asia and possibly farther westward. We would then be obligated [either] to make staggering investments in that part of Southeast Asia remaining outside of Communist domination or to withdraw to a much-contracted Pacific line of defense.[2]

France's defeat could mean the end of her empire and status as a great power, and it would be a blow to US prestige. The Joint Chiefs of Staff supported this assessment and moved to implement plans for aiding the French; they favored establishing a US military aid group in Indochina and machinery for interdepartmental coordination of aid to Indochina. The military aid program would give the JCS a critical role in policy concerning Indochina.

Drawing Lines in Indochina, June 1949-January 1950

The logical path for Mao Tse-tung to follow in a conquest of Southeast Asia lay through Indochina, where the situation was ideally suited to communist penetration. China and Vietnam possessed a common boundary over 500 miles long. Direct support of the Viet Minh war effort over this border was anticipated, and the threat of overt Chinese intervention was a possibility. Without foreign aid the Viet Minh had resisted the French for over three years. Even if Ho Chi Minh failed to secure Chinese aid, the war gave no signs of ending.

This situation had its repercussions in Europe, and the United States found that the Indochinese war endangered erection of a Western European security system. It was becoming increasingly apparent to the United States that France's ability to become an effective partner in the North Atlantic alliance would be gravely jeopardized by the drain on her resources stemming from the war in Indochina. The annual expenditure of $500 million for Indochina was damaging a French economy struggling to recover from the effects of World War II. Approximately $1.5 billion had already been consumed combating the Viet Minh insurgents.[3] Since 1948, the United States had been attempting to revive the French economy with Marshall Plan dollars, a process largely nullified by French budgetary requirements for Indochina. The North Atlantic Treaty had been signed on 4 April 1949, and French troops were expected to play a vital role in the European army that the United States proposed to equip. Yet French Union Forces approximating 156,000 ground troops, plus three fighter squadrons, three transport squadrons, and a small navy, were tied down in Indochina.[4] By the end of 1949, the French Expeditionary

Corps had suffered 16,270 casualties.[5] The consequences to France's prestige of an Indochinese defeat would hamper her contribution to the European coalition.

The Indochinese situation during the latter half of 1949 offered little hope for improvement. Most discouraging was the persistent evidence of closer ties between Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse-tung. As the Communist Chinese moved closer to the Tonkin frontier in the fall of 1949, the Viet Minh underwent a change that gave promise of future collaboration between China and the DRV. Ho Chi Minh had previously posed as a genuine anticolonial patriot fighting for a democratic, independent Vietnam; now, he publicly identified himself more closely with international communism.[6]

Viet Minh fighting techniques were also changing. Although guerrilla tactics and large-scale infiltration remained the dominant characteristics of Viet Minh operations, regularly organized combat units began to make their appearance. The French outposts in Tonkin were subjected to intensified pressure, and their supply became a serious problem. By the close of 1949, the fort at Dong Khe, lying between Lang Son and Cao Bang on the Tonkinese border, had to be provisioned entirely by air. French Union Forces abandoned a number of scattered strong points in northern Tonkin and concentrated on strengthening and extending the defensive perimeter around Hanoi.[7]

The base of the French difficulties was the nationalist-colonialist conflict that had prevented a military decision for three years. French efforts to solve the political problem were directed at implementing the Elysee Accords of 8 March 1949. The failure of these accords to effect a lasting political solution was probably due to the fact that neither the Vietnamese people nor the sovereign Asian nations believed the new government sufficiently representative of the people or independent of French domination.

Bao Dai was proclaimed Chief of State on 14 June. A week later the government of General Nguyen Van Xuan resigned but consented to serve temporarily while Bao Dai consolidated his position. Although no constitution was promulgated, two ordinances issued on 1 July defined temporary agencies by which Vietnam was to be ruled pending the establishment of internal stability. The principal governing institutions, as outlined by the ordinances, were to be the Chief of State, a cabinet with a prime minister, and the Consultative National Council.

The members of the Cabinet were appointed by, and responsible to, the Chief of State. The members of the Consultative National Council were designated by the Chief of State on the basis of their ability to represent regional and national interests and express public opinion. The council was to develop into a more representative organ, and it was anticipated that the appointments of the councilors would later be confirmed by popular election. The ordinances also specified that upon the restoration of peace, an elected Constituent Assembly would replace the Consultative National Council and decide upon the future government. For the time being, government by executive was established on all levels.[8] The Consultative National

Council did not meet until September 1952, and then under a different name. The Constituent Assembly was never convened. As a result, the Bao Dai government was essentially authoritarian. In addition, the nature and organization of the future government remained extremely vague. The preamble to Ordinance No. 1 left open the question of whether Vietnam's political authority would be concentrated in a republic or a constitutional monarchy, a highly centralized or loosely federated regime. One reason for Bao Dai's failure to unify the country behind his government was that while it would not have been realistic to expect a truly representative government, in view of the instability of the internal situation, it was obvious to all that Bao Dai's source of power lay with the French, not with the Vietnamese people.

Although the ordinances of 1 July established Bao Dai's regime, specific agreements had to be concluded to transfer services from the French colonial administration to the Vietnamese government, and the French National Assembly had to ratify the 8 March Accords. As the first step in this process, a Joint Commission convened at Saigon in August 1949. The commission sat for four months, and on 30 December signed twenty-nine specialized conventions by which the French arranged to hand over certain internal administrative services to the Bao Dai government. Although the concessions to native independence were substantial, France still dominated in such fields as military affairs, press and information, the judiciary, and police.[9] Acceptance of the status of an Associated State within the French Union entailed a limitation on the right to engage in international relations. The Vietnamese were especially sensitive to the restriction of their right to send diplomatic representatives abroad. By the agreements of 30 December, the French retained key functions that made Bao Dai extremely vulnerable to charges of being a French puppet. The privileged position that Frenchmen continued to enjoy, both in government and society, did not impress the Vietnamese or their Asian neighbors as a significant reduction in French influence.

Although the French encountered a more troublesome political problem in Vietnam than in the other two Associated States, they faced similar difficulties in Laos and Cambodia. Treaties with Laos and Cambodia were signed on 19 July and 8 November 1949. These agreements closely resembled the Elysee Accords with Vietnam. Implementing conventions concluded with Laos on 6 February 1950, and with Cambodia on 15 June 1950, transferred sovereignty to the two kingdoms on the same basis as the agreement of 30 December 1949 with Vietnam. The governing structures that evolved in Laos and Cambodia were, however, more representative than those in Vietnam. Although the two smaller states were presided over by hereditary monarchs, the national assemblies were popularly elected and exercised important legislative powers.[10]

The United States watched with great interest French efforts to translate the 8 March promises into reality. Consistent with its twin aims of halting the spread of communism and encouraging noncommunist nationalist movements, the State Department desired the Bao Dai government to be sufficiently independent of

France to win the support of Vietnamese nationalists, as well as the respect and recognition of other Asian countries. Beginning in the summer of 1949, the State Department encouraged the French to interpret the 8 March Accords liberally enough to achieve these aims. Although American sympathy for Vietnam's new regime was publicly declared in June 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson doubted that the French intended to make the essential concessions. The Secretary felt that the United States could not back a puppet regime; recognition and aid must be withheld until the French understood the necessity of making the solution attractive to the nationalist elements and until the Bao Dai regime itself demonstrated a capacity for independent government. Despite their denials, Secretary Acheson feared that French officials in general, and High Commissioner Leon Pignon in particular, regarded the Elysee Agreement as a final concession, whereas the American view was that it was but one step in the evolution of Vietnamese independence.[11]

The United States and Great Britain worked together to induce the French to declare their purpose of adjusting the French-Vietnamese relationship in a liberal manner. Indochina was a subject for discussion at tripartite talks held 28 September 1949 between Secretary Acheson and the British and French Foreign Ministers, Ernest Bevin and Robert Schuman. On this and subsequent occasions, Schuman declared his agreement with the American view that the 8 March Accords were one step in the evolution of the Indochinese problem. But French delay in implementing the Elysee Accords led the United States to doubt the sincerity of his declaration. State Department experts believed France unwilling to make liberal concessions to Vietnamese independence, or to publicize the concessions already made, for fear of causing trouble in North Africa. Schuman was urged to push ratification of the 8 March Accords in the National Assembly and to place as few restrictions as possible on Vietnamese conduct of their own foreign relations. In particular, the United States and Great Britain wished to see Associated States affairs transferred from the Department of Overseas Possessions to the Foreign Ministry. Schuman, however, felt that this could not be done until after the accords were ratified by the National Assembly.[12]

The United States and Great Britain attached great importance to French concessions to Vietnam in the field of foreign affairs. They felt that unless France made these concessions the Asian nations would refuse to recognize the Bao Dai regime as it was not truly independent. Recognition by such sovereign Asian countries as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Burma was considered essential to the success of Bao Dai's attempts to strengthen his government. These nations were highly respected in the Far East because they had rid themselves of foreign rule. The United States and Great Britain felt that recognition of Vietnam by these states might influence wavering Vietnamese intellectuals to back Bao Dai. At the very least, it would improve his standing with the rest of the world. Finally, acceptance of Vietnam into the community of Asian nations would place the Western Powers in a better position to extend recognition and aid.

Unfortunately, the Asian countries did not look with favor upon the Elysee solution. India regarded Bao Dai as a French puppet with no genuine popular support. The Indian attitude was not improved by the strained relations with France over continued French rule in Pondichery. Despite British and American prodding, Indian Prime Minister Nehru refused to recognize Vietnam, and the other Asian nations, with the exception of Thailand, followed his lead. While urging the Asian countries to reconsider their stand, the State Department, in January 1950, decided to extend diplomatic recognition to Vietnam as soon as the French National Assembly should ratify the 8 March Accords, an event anticipated in late January.[13]

After an acrimonious debate and a vote of 396-193, the French National Assembly formally approved the 8 March Accords on 29 January 1950. That same day, actually before the parliamentary vote, United States Ambassador-at-Large Philip C. Jessup, in Saigon, extended the congratulations of the United States to Bao Dai on his assumption of the powers transferred early in January and expressed "confident best wishes for the future of the State of Viet Nam with which [the United States] looks forward to establishing a closer relationship. . . ."[14] Formal recognition of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia followed. The United States Consulate at Saigon was elevated to legation status, although Consul Edmund Gullion continued to represent the United States in Vietnam until Minister Donald R. Heath arrived on 5 July 1950.

Even before ratification of the Elysee Accords, however, opposition in the Indochinese war had stiffened. American and British efforts to secure world backing for Bao Dai were accompanied by evidence of similar Soviet activities on behalf of the Viet Minh. On 19 January Communist China recognized the DRV as the legitimate government of Vietnam; the Kremlin followed suit twelve days later. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Albania, and Yugoslavia subsequently recognized the Viet Minh. Secretary Acheson, commenting on the international diplomatic support that Ho was receiving, declared that "The Soviet acknowledgment of this [the Viet Minh] movement should remove any illusions as to the 'nationalist' nature of Ho Chi Minh's aims and reveals Ho in his true colors as the mortal enemy of native independence in Indochina."[15] American recognition of Bao Dai was accompanied by similar action on the part of England and twenty-five other western countries. Indochina became an increasingly important center of conflict in the diplomacy of the Cold War.

The situation in Indochina at the close of 1949 pushed the United States to adopt a positive stand. The Viet Minh was growing stronger; the French were growing weaker. Increasing Chinese activity promised to strengthen the Viet Minh, and the possibility of Chinese intervention made future prospects dim. The Bao Dai solution gave scant hope of unifying the Vietnamese in support of the war effort, and it was received with suspicion by most of the Asiatic nations. Throughout the latter half of 1949, the United States had been reassessing its interests in the Far East and by January 1950 it had arrived at an appreciation of the vital role of the

Indochinese war in the contest for Southeast Asia. On this appreciation, plus a realization of France's precarious position, the decision to assist the French was taken.

Emergence of a Far Eastern and Indochinese Policy

The decision to help France combat the Viet Minh was the logical outgrowth of a reassessment of American interests in Asia. This process began in the summer of 1949 in the National Security Council but was given considerable impetus by a bitter dispute in Congress that served to focus public and official attention on Asia. The result was the formulation of an Asian policy that emphasized the Indochinese problem and prescribed a program of assistance to bolster anticommunist forces in Indochina.

The movement leading to the National Security Council actions on Asia was initiated in the summer of 1949 by Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. Secretary Johnson deprecated the "day-to-day, country-by-country approach" of United States policy in Asia. On 10 June 1949 he called upon the staff of the National Security Council to determine exactly how American security was threatened by the current situation in the Far East and to formulate tentative courses of action for consideration by the National Security Council. These courses of action, he emphasized, should be coordinated for the whole region and outline specific objectives to be attained.[16]

While this study progressed behind the scenes, a congressional battle over the military assistance bill heightened public concern for the Far East and laid the basis for the Indochinese aid program. Although the arms bill was primarily concerned with equipping the projected North Atlantic Treaty armies, a group led by Senator William Knowland (R, CA) sponsored a section to appropriate funds for assisting the Nationalist Chinese armies on Formosa. But the State Department had abandoned the Nationalist cause and administration forces refused to accept any Asian aid formula that mentioned Chiang Kai-shek or Formosa. Several attempts at compromise failed, but at length a plan was agreed upon by the opposing factions. This resulted in Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act, the so-called Connally Amendment, which set aside the sum of $75 million, to be spent at the President's discretion, for combating communism in "the general area of China."[17]

This money was eventually spent in a manner different than that intended by Senator Knowland. On 17 December 1949 the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted a plan for programming Section 303 funds. They defined "the general area of China" as including "not only China proper, but also such areas as Hainan and Formosa, French Indo-China, Burma and Thailand."[18] The JCS took the first step in shifting the battle for Asia from China to Southeast Asia. The inclusion of Indochina in "the general area of China" provided for an early program of assistance in the French struggle against Viet Minh.

In recommending methods for employing the $75 million, the JCS did not appraise American strategic interests in the Far East or point out the importance of Southeast Asia and Indochina to the United States. They merely proposed to undertake overt and covert measures to support anticommunist forces and undermine communist movements in the countries of Southeast Asia. They had nevertheless laid the groundwork for a series of important policy decisions reached by the National Security Council within the next two months and created a vehicle by which those decisions could be carried out.

The National Security Council study prepared at Secretary Johnson's request and considered by the Council on 29 December warned of the threat to United States security of communist expansion in the Far East. It reaffirmed that the loss of Asia to communism would secure for the USSR and deny to the United States a power potential of the first magnitude, a major source of raw materials, and control of coastal and overseas lines of communication. It would also seriously threaten America's defensive island chain. To counter this danger, American objectives in Asia should include the reduction and eventual elimination of Soviet influence and the prevention of any power relationships that might threaten "the peace, national independence or stability of the Asiatic nations." Specifically, the study proposed that the United States provide military assistance and advice to Asian nations threatened by external aggression and internal subversion and use its influence to resolve the nationalist-colonialist conflict to satisfy nationalist demands with minimum strain on the colonial powers.[19]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that the conclusions of the National Security Council report were too general; they desired an integrated policy toward Asia, embodying more concrete courses of action. "The time has come," the JCS declared, "for determination, development, and implementation of definite United States steps in Asia, otherwise, this nation will risk an even greater and more disastrous defeat in the ideological conflict in that area." Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act provided the means for initiating immediate action in specific areas; the JCS recommended that an urgent program for spending this money be undertaken.[20]

The National Security Council revised the original report; the resulting policy declaration, NSC 48/2, established more clearly a course of active "support," as distinguished from "encouragement," of Asian countries threatened by communism. The United States would provide "political, economic, and military assistance and advice where clearly needed to supplement the resistance" of noncommunist governments in the Far East. Authority was given for immediate programming of Section 303 funds, and an ad hoc committee was formed by the JCS to decide how best to spend the money.[21]

The United States' resolve to adopt a definite stand in Asia was indicated by Secretary of State Acheson in two public speeches. Before the Washington Press Club and the Commonwealth Club of California, the Secretary declared that the

United States was now prepared to grant military and economic assistance to selected Far Eastern countries where it was "the missing component in a problem which might otherwise be solved."[22]

During January and February 1950, it became apparent that a successful solution of the Indochinese problem was an essential precondition to attaining the new objectives in Asia. NSC 48/2 recognized the necessity of giving "particular attention" to Indochina by urging the French to remove the barriers preventing Bao Dai from winning native allegiance. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were more specific. In proposing military aid programs for certain Southeast Asian countries, they warned that the situation in Indochina would be greatly complicated should the Communist Chinese come to the aid of the Viet Minh. An Asian aid program should give first priority to anticommunist forces in Indochina; the sum of $15 million programmed for Indochina from Section 303 funds.[23] The judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff indicated a growing conviction that the war in Indochina was among the most critical and immediate concerns to the United States.

In late April 1950, the President approved NSC 64 which noted the growing strength of the Viet Minh, the possibility of active Communist Chinese intervention, and the failure to date of French efforts to solve the political problem. The significance of Indochina in US eyes was concisely stated: "It is important to the United States security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is the key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat." The Departments of State and Defense were directed to prepare a program embracing "all practicable measures designed to protect United States security interests in Indochina."[24]

In January 1950 the United States, by adopting NSC 48/2, abandoned the uncertain and seemingly confused approach to Asian problems apparent throughout 1949 and took a definite stand against communist expansion in the Far East. By adopting NSC 64, the United States, in April 1950, decided that the most direct means of attaining the overall objective lay in concentrating American efforts on the battle for Indochina. The next step would be to inaugurate a program of assistance aimed at neutralizing Viet Minh strength and stabilizing the Associated States economies.

Beginnings of American Aid

The principle of extending military and economic aid to threatened Asian countries had been agreed upon by February 1950, and Indochina had been determined the area in most immediate danger. The United States, however, had yet to make specific commitments or enter formal arrangements. During the spring of 1950 the aid machinery was developed and the program of assistance to Indochina began.

Although the United States had concluded by February that the French would have to be helped in Indochina, negotiations on the subject were opened by France. French overtures were inspired by communist recognition of Ho Chi Minh's government. Paris interpreted the action of Moscow and Peiping as presaging Soviet or Chinese aggression in Indochina and realized that substantial outside assistance was imperative. Henri Bonnet, French Ambassador in Washington, presented an aide-memoire to the State Department on 16 February which urged the United States to make a public "affirmation of solidarity before the Communist menace" as a warning to China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and to undertake immediate measures to grant military and economic aid to France and the Associated States in Indochina. The French also suggested that the "French and American General Staffs" jointly examine French and Vietnamese military requirements and the military situation in general.[25]

A week later, Alexandre Parodi, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, further emphasized the need for help. In discussing Indochina with American Ambassador David Bruce and Minister Charles Bohlen, Parodi warned that the United States must inaugurate a program of long-term assistance or France might be forced to withdraw from Indochina. French withdrawal was precisely what the United States feared. Since the success of any program of external assistance would be decided by the French determination to remain in Indochina, the United States considered it necessary to obtain a firm French pledge to continue the war. Ambassador Bruce and Mr. Bohlen impressed Secretary Parodi with this fact in unequivocal terms.[26]

The final decision to undertake the Indochinese military assistance program was reached in March. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had proposed that $15 million be set aside for Indochina and $10 million for Thailand. The State and Defense Departments approved the recommendations on 6 March. Secretary Acheson advised the President that "The choice confronting the United States is to support the French in Indochina or to face the extension of communism over the remainder of the continental area of Southeast Asia and possibly farther westward." He recommended that $15 million be reserved from the Section 303 fund to finance the beginnings of a military aid program for Indochina, plus $10 million for Thailand. President Truman approved the recommendation on 10 March 1950.[27]

A program of economic aid was slower in developing; the reports of two surveys and a conference in progress in the Far East would play a major role in determining the form of these programs. Ambassador-at-Large Philip C. Jessup had been visiting various Asian countries since December; Jessup's mission was to analyze the situation in Asia and report his recommendations for an integrated Far Eastern policy. Robert Allen Griffin headed an economic survey team charged with formulating a coordinated economic aid policy for Asia. In addition the Southeast Asian chiefs of diplomatic missions met in Bangkok, Thailand, in February to discuss regional problems and consider prospective economic programs.

The diplomats at the Bangkok conference believed that emphasis should be placed upon Point IV type technical aid to increase Asian capacity for self-help, and they agreed that the focal point of the Southeast Asian economic program should be Indochina.[28] The recommendations of Dr. Jessup in March and Dr. Griffin in May coincided substantially with the Bangkok conclusions. Both of these authorities were convinced that only through Indochina could Southeast Asia be saved from communism, and they believed that small amounts of money properly spent would go far toward achieving this result.[29] As the program subsequently developed, however, the emphasis was on economic projects of immediate benefit to the war effort. Nevertheless, the program, as originally conceived, was based upon the Bangkok conference conclusions and upon the Griffin and Jessup recommendations.

The decision to undertake an economic aid program was not made public until 11 May, when Secretary Acheson, at the conclusion of the London Foreign Ministers Conference, announced the American intentions. On 24 May separate notes were delivered to representatives of the Associated States in Saigon and to the President of the French Union in Paris. These notes defined the nature of the proposed assistance. It would, declared the notes, be "complementary to the effort made by the three Associated States and France, without any intention of substitution."[30] Robert Blum was placed in charge of the Special Technical and Economic Mission (STEM) to the Associated States, and he was to begin work even before the bilateral agreements regulating the arrangement were concluded. It was announced in June that $23.5 million from unexpended China Aid Funds would be spent in Indochina for Fiscal Year 1951.

In spite of the obvious importance of economic aid in achieving stability, the prospect of military equipment in large quantities had more immediate effect on the political atmosphere of Indochina. The announcement of prospective American assistance created new complexities in French-Vietnamese relations and in Vietnamese domestic politics. Repercussions were felt alike in Paris and Washington and resulted in strained relations between the two capitals that affected the development of the aid program. The French realized that a military assistance program would represent a direct American investment in the Indochinese war and feared that it would be used as a lever for American pressure in the political field. French apprehension was misdirected; it was the Vietnamese who attempted to turn the pending aid program to their own political advantage.

In discussions with France over American arms aid, the United States emphasized the fact that a political solution was essential to military success. France, however, regarded immediate conclusion of an agreement to furnish military equipment to French troops in Indochina of infinitely greater importance. The French position was summed up in instructions given to Foreign Minister Robert Schuman by the Cabinet before the London Foreign Ministers Conference. Schuman was to impress upon Secretary Acheson that, if the United States wanted to save Indochina from communism, it should quit encouraging Bao Dai to believe he could win

greater independence and proceed to the more urgent business of supplying aircraft and arms to French forces in Indochina. France was amazed that the United States insisted upon discussing future Vietnamese independence from France when Vietnamese independence from communism was at stake.[31]

Although Paris feared that the United States would insist upon greater French concessions to Bao Dai as a condition for arms aid, the American position was that for the present the French had conceded enough provided they executed the Elysee Accords in good faith. The State Department held that "Bao Dai and Co." were "barely able to discharge responsibilities they are now facing," and tried to convince France that the United States was not arguing for further immediate concessions.[32] The State Department did believe, however, that not only must Bao Dai win the allegiance of the Vietnamese people but the Asian countries must also be convinced that Vietnam would evolve into a truly democratic, independent nation. France was pressed to make a public declaration of what had been accomplished by the 8 March adjustment and a public promise of future concessions. France refused to make such a statement, protesting that it would encourage the belief that the 8 March settlement had not granted a high degree of independence.[33]

Paris feared that the United States would use the arms program to win Bao Dai more independence, and the Bao Dai government apparently decided that American generosity might be used to accomplish this purpose. As early as January, Vietnamese actions indicated they intended using the arms program to their own advantage. A list of military and economic requirements for Vietnam, prepared by Bao Dai's staff without French knowledge, was handed to Ambassador-at-Large Philip Jessup.[34] On 18 March 1950, Chargé d'Affairs Gullion warned that "responsible Vietnamese believed they held the whiphand on the French and could play us off against them" in an effort to acquire functions not contemplated by the 8 March Accords.[35]

This judgment appeared valid in light of an astute move by the Vietnamese government a week later. Defense Minister Phan Huy Quat outlined to Gullion a plan for equipping the Vietnamese army without French participation. Quat's plan envisioned an American-equipped Vietnamese army trained and advised by United States military personnel. Although Gullion labeled Quat's views "fantastic," he admitted that the Vietnamese attitude raised serious problems.[36] The logical outgrowth of the proposal would have been an American-controlled Vietnamese army serving under the operational command of the French army within a state of the French Union. Meanwhile, the French had submitted their list of arms requirements and briefed American military attachés at the legation in Saigon on their equipment deficiencies. The list was prepared by the French General Staff in Indochina without consultation with Vietnamese officials. The United States confronted two estimates of arms needs and a delicate diplomatic problem.

If the United States decided to deal with the Vietnamese government in equipping the indigenous army, the French would be highly incensed and probably withhold essential cooperation. But a measure of Vietnamese authority in the direction

of their own military affairs was implicit in the 8 March Accords. To deal exclusively with the French would contradict the American position on the accords and increase Franco-Vietnamese tension and undermine Vietnamese friendship for the United States. The separate Vietnamese overtures to the United States had already caused friction between High Commissioner Leon Pignon and the Bao Dai government and led the French to force the resignation of Premier Nguyen Phan Long.

Commissioner Pignon flatly informed the United States that France, and not the Associated States, must control distribution of arms. In Pignon's view, the "operations of receiving and distributing important quantities of material involve a series of complex technical problems which only the French military services can resolve at this time." Since the French Commander-in-Chief in Indochina was responsible for the conduct of military operations, he must direct the distribution of materials. The French lists would be prepared by the French commander, acting in his capacity of Chief of Staff of National Defense for each Associated State, and "There can be no question of changing this established program (procedure)."[37]

The United States needed to devise an aid formula that would have minimum adverse effect on the political situation. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognized the political implications of military aid, they believed that because of the urgent need for immediate shipment of arms, the aid program should be adapted to the reality of French control of Vietnamese affairs. The requirement estimates drafted by the French General Staff reflected a more realistic appraisal of military needs, and contained more information essential to programming, than the "broadly generalized Bao Dai list." Consequently, deliveries should be made to French authorities, with such Vietnamese participation in reception as the Secretary of State might desire. Although development of a coordinated aid policy for all Southeast Asia was necessary, the JCS believed that Indochina should be given top priority and shipments dispatched with haste. The Joint Chiefs recommended that French requests be carefully analyzed and military aid integrated with political and economic programs. This could be accomplished by the creation of a Southeast Asia Aid Committee composed of representatives of the State and Defense Departments and the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) charged with drafting and executing an overall aid program for Southeast Asia. Although final approval of all requirements would rest with the Joint Chiefs, a military aid group should be established in Indochina to screen French requests and coordinate them with French operational plans.[38]

The French gave the American plan a chilly reception; they wanted American arms with no strings attached. Their views indicated a desire that the United States simply fill French orders for equipment without attempting to influence types or quantities of material or how it was employed. General Marcel Carpentier, French Commander-in-Chief of Indochina, said that he "would welcome" a United States military mission but wished it to be as small as possible and a part of the attaché group at the American legation in Saigon. Although he "would welcome" representatives of

the Associated States in the receiving and distributing apparatus, only the French High Command "would be equipped [to] receive and stock American materiel for Indochina." Chargé d'Affaires Gullion, however, believed that General Carpentier could be induced to moderate his stand on the size of the military aid mission.[39]

A formula designed to satisfy Vietnamese demands for participation in the aid program was agreed upon in April. The Vietnamese High Military Committee, a French organ with Vietnamese representatives, would devise the arms programs for submission to the United States. Mixed commissions, including Vietnamese officers, would receive and distribute the equipment. Similar organizations would perform these duties in Laos and Cambodia.[40] Implicit in the arrangement was French control, and in practice the Vietnamese were not admitted to programming conferences until the summer of 1952. The many problems created by the new character of the Indochinese struggle and the new American role in Far Eastern affairs indicated that Indochina and Southeast Asia would occupy a prominent position on the agenda for the approaching American-British-French Foreign Ministers Conference, scheduled for May 1950.

In preparing for the Foreign Ministers Conference, the State Department faced the knotty problem of formulating a position that would resolve the Franco-Vietnamese conflict over control of the aid program. The State Department decided upon a compromise under which the United States, in aid matters, would treat "the three Associated States and the French as a unified force"; this implied French control of all aid. Although military success depended upon political success, it also depended upon the vigor with which the French prosecuted military operations. The more political concessions the French made in Indochina, the less they had to fight for. Although not abandoning its desire for a French declaration of future intentions, the United States was led to accept an arms program with a few surface concessions to Vietnamese pride, but controlled by France.[41]

The JCS, in light of recent statements by General Carpentier, advised the Secretary of State to "make unmistakable the firm desire of the United States to send a military aid group to Indochina at the earliest possible date. . . . " They linked this to a rejection of the French suggestion made in February that the "French and American General Staffs" proceed to a "joint examination" of the Indochinese military situation; the same purpose could be accomplished by consultation between the aid mission and the French High Command in Indochina.[42]

The Foreign Ministers Conference convened in London early in May. Discussions on Indochina were taken up primarily on a bilateral basis between Secretary Acheson and Foreign Minister Schuman, who declared that France accepted primary responsibility for holding Indochina against the communists and promised that she would not withdraw. He pointed out, however, that the continued drain on French resources made it impossible for France to carry on alone in Indochina and at the same time meet her obligations in the defense of Western Europe. Therefore, the United States must support France in the war against the Viet Minh.[43] Secretary

Acheson gave assurances of American aid but emphasized that no large sums of money would be available until Congress convened. Although $20 million could probably be programmed before 30 June, he declared, the extent of future support would be up to Congress, which also must reckon with American obligations throughout the world.[44]

The Secretary voiced his concern about Bao Dai's failure to gain prestige at home and abroad but did not press the point. Schuman affirmed France's intention of granting more autonomy to the Associated States when internal conditions made it safe to do so. Reflecting French discontent with American interest in Bao Dai, M. Schuman predicted that "If the United States gives France its support in the military field and trusts it for the internal development of its policy, a happy ending will be achieved." He did state that France was removing all restrictions on the diplomatic representation of the Associated States and had reached a decision to establish a "Ministry for relations with the Associated States." This new ministry would be charged with handling Associated States affairs and would be staffed with personnel who thoroughly understood the new status of the Associated States.[45] It was hoped that this would remove the stigma of colonialism inherent in regulation by the Ministry of Overseas Possessions.

The May Foreign Ministers Conference quieted American fears that France would abandon Indochina to the communists and clarified for France American intentions on military and economic aid. Politically, it marked a further French concession to the independence of the Associated States, though the public announcement of intention desired by the United States was still not forthcoming. It also coordinated American, British and French policy on Southeast Asia, although Great Britain, fearing Commonwealth reaction, refused to join in a tripartite declaration of solidarity and collaboration to resist communism in the region.

The May Foreign Ministers Conference cleared the way for early inauguration of aid shipments to Indochina. In Washington, machinery was devised to handle a long term, coordinated aid program for Southeast Asia. On the policy level, the Southeast Asia Aid Committee, proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in March, was established. In June its name was changed to the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee (SEAAPC) to distinguish it from an operating agency. SEAAPC was charged with coordinating general policy for political, economic, and military assistance to Southeast Asian countries. The Foreign Military Assistance Coordinating Committee (FMACC), an interdepartmental organ that supervised worldwide military assistance programs, was still to have final responsibility for policy matters involving military assistance to Southeast Asia. The two committees would cooperate closely on military aid policy.[46]

On the operating level, economic assistance would be handled by the Economic Cooperation Administration in Washington and a Special Technical and Economic Mission in Indochina. Responsibility for the military program was lodged with the Office of Military Assistance (OMA), Department of Defense. A Military Assistance

Advisory Group (MAAG) attached to the American legation in Saigon was to screen French requests and oversee distribution of the material. Both OMA and MAAG Indochina would work closely with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and use screening criteria drafted by the JCS.[47]

A special Joint Survey Team, with representatives from the State and Defense Departments, was to be sent to Southeast Asia. The mission of the team was to gather information on the internal situation in the various Southeast Asian countries benefiting from the program and to make recommendations regarding specific on-the-spot organization necessary to carry out the program efficiently. Neither the shipment of material nor the formation of MAAG Indochina was to be delayed pending the survey team's report.[48] The Secretary of Defense appointed Major General Graves B. Erskine, USMC, to head the military section of the Joint Survey Team.[49] The Joint Chiefs of Staff, early in June, proposed that the $15 million already earmarked for expenditure in Indochina be augmented by an additional $16 million for equipment, supplies, and training. They further advised that, of all Asian aid programs, Indochina should have first priority.[50]

The spring of 1950 saw the beginning of a program of military assistance to French and Associated States forces fighting in Indochina and a program of economic aid designed to stabilize the economies of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Although the initiation of these programs marked the fulfillment of recommendations made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as early as the preceding December, it was the logical outgrowth of basic policy decisions reached in January and February and was spurred by fear of a disintegration of France's will to continue the war.

Indochina on the Eve of the Korean War

During the first half of 1950, the decisions reached and actions taken by the Western Powers and the Soviet bloc with regard to Indochina gave an international significance to the Indochinese war. The American-led coalition was arrayed behind France to free Indochina and Southeast Asia from the threat of communist subversion and domination. The recognition of Bao Dai's government by the United States and other powers of the free world cleared the way for the American decision to grant military assistance to France and the Associated States. Recognition of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by the communist world presaged similar aid agreements with the Viet Minh. When, in June 1950, the Korean conflict put a new complexion on the Cold War, the power alignment had formed in Indochina.

Although the prospect of large quantities of American arms encouraged new determination and hope of success among French and Vietnamese forces, the introduction of Soviet and Communist Chinese equipment to Viet Minh troops vastly improved Ho Chi Minh's ability to wage war. By June 1950, intelligence estimates indicated that Communist China and the DRV had agreed upon a general plan for

Chinese aid and participation in Viet Minh operations. Reinforcing this fact, the intelligence sources discovered that during March 1950 alone Viet Minh forces received from China fifty-two thousand rifles, together with a quantity of automatic weapons, mortars, and artillery pieces. The makings of a major buildup were perceived in the development of a supply corridor from China through northern Tonkin to central Annam. In this region roads were improved, bridges built, concealed supply dumps established, and airfields constructed. Two training camps, which intelligence agencies estimated capable of accommodating twenty to thirty thousand Viet Minh troops, were established in South China. The presence of Soviet training teams at these centers was strongly suspected.[51]

The new Viet Minh strength did not immediately affect the military situation. Although the Viet Minh possessed new and dangerous capabilities, it was apparently holding them in reserve. The pressure on the French, however, was undiminished. During the fighting season of 1949-1950, French Union Forces succeeded in clearing and securing the Red River delta in Tonkin, but on Tonkin's vital northern frontier the French retained only a few scattered and hard-pressed outposts that were supplied with great difficulty.[52]

If the French could anticipate better days to come, there was little good news in the current military and political situation. The drain on the financial and manpower resources of France and the Associated States continued. The Vietnamese army, authorized by the agreements of 30 December 1949, was still no more than a hope for the future. Many of the old political problems remained, with some new ones created by the measure of autonomy granted under the 8 March Accords.

As the US Government started putting together the usual alphabet soup of agencies for coordinating the aid program for Indochina, the National Security Council was the venue for an even broader study of American policy. By April a report logged in as NSC 68 was calling for major increases in the American defense program. Couched in the language of the global struggle between the free world and the communist bloc, this report was a perfect fit with the NSC papers that saw Southeast Asia as a battleground in the struggle.

In any case, the influx of equipment to both sides was likely to intensify the conflict. The failure of the Bao Dai regime to win serious public support in Vietnam, as well as French suspicions concerning the role of the proposed MAAG, showed that American policy faced serious challenges. The French tried to reassure the Americans that simply passing them the necessary equipment would ensure final victory. In a sense, the Americans had little confidence that the French could win complete control of Indochina, but no one was ready to do the fighting. American policymakers would soon learn that the situation in Indochina was more critical than they realized.

4

Impact of War in Korea, June 1950–January 1951

The first shipments of American equipment for Indochina were being prepared for loading when forces of the communist regime in North Korea struck across the 38th parallel, attacking the pro-American regime in South Korea. The beginning of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 came as a surprise to American leaders, but NSC 68 had given notice of a new aggressiveness on the part of the communist bloc. The war in Indochina was clearly part of a broader struggle in the Far East. When he decided to send ground troops to South Korea, President Truman also ordered an acceleration of the aid program for the French in Indochina. The challenge was to find the means to fight in Korea and at the same time provide ever-increasing quantities of materiel to the French Union Forces (especially including Vietnamese) in Southeast Asia. The possibility of direct intervention by the Chinese Communists against the French also loomed until they appeared in North Korea in November.

The French forces went through a crisis in the fighting. Serious setbacks eliminated any ability to block the movement of supplies or reinforcements to the Viet Minh from China. The Americans hoped that the misfortunes would galvanize the French into more effective action. In any case, while French politicians were trying to square the circle by giving Vietnam its independence while retaining control, the military command in Indochina betrayed its suspicions of the Americans. The United States' insistence on assurance that their aid was being used effectively was not welcomed by the French.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff took a grave view of the strategic situation in the Far East. In their view NSC 64 was not out of date. In conjunction with increased American aid, they proposed revisions to emphasize how important it was for the French to commit themselves to an independent Indochina with a national army. It was essential to avoid a general war with the Chinese Communist regime; Chinese

intervention in Korea ended any suggestion that American troops might be used in the Indochina theater. The Joint Chiefs continued to advocate a major aid program, although they objected to sending light bombers to the French. In that case they were overruled by Secretary Acheson and the new Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall. The proposed revision of NSC 64 was not adopted, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff continued to push for urgent measures by the United States and France.

On 27 June 1950 President Truman announced the intervention of American armed forces in Korea, and he had "directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indochina and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces."[1] The first result was the approval of the JCS recommendation to increase the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP) aid programmed for Indochina by $16 million, bringing military aid for Indochina from Fiscal Year 1950 funds to $31 million. As of 31 July the Army was scheduled to provide $11.9 million in equipment, the Navy $15.3 million, and the Air Force $4.9 million.[2]

Although the aid program was slow at the start, supplies soon began to make their way by sea and by air to Saigon. On 30 June eight C-47s loaded with spare parts arrived in the Indochinese capital. The Director, Office of Military Assistance (OMA), reported that on 31 July Army equipment for twelve Indochinese battalions was afloat, consigned to the High Military Committee of the Army of the French Union. A French aircraft carrier was scheduled to take on forty F6F aircraft in California in September, while another French ship was expected to depart the United States in the near future with eighteen LCVPs (landing craft, vehicle, personnel), six LSSLs (support landing ship, large) and other mixed cargo. The first shipment of infantry equipment arrived in Saigon on 10 August and was delivered to the French supply facilities.[3]

Further grants of military aid to Indochina were not long in coming. President Truman, on 1 August, asked the Congress for a Fiscal Year 1951 supplemental appropriation of $4 billion for the MDAP. The general appropriations bill, which had already been submitted, was passed on 6 September and included $75 million for "Aid to the General Area of China." Of this amount Indochina was scheduled to receive $25.7 million. Three weeks later the supplemental appropriations bill requested by the President was passed with $107.3 million allocated to Indochina. By 31 October 1950, the total Fiscal Year 1951 program for military aid to Indochina was $133 million; this sum was in addition to the $31 million Fiscal Year 1950 funds.[4]

The Erskine Report

The Joint State-Defense MDAP Survey Mission for Southeast Asia, headed by Mr. John F. Melby of the Department of State, arrived in Saigon on 15 July. Major General Graves B. Erskine, USMC, was chief of the military group, which

included members from each of the armed services and the United States Coast Guard, which was included because of the smuggling problem in Indochina. For a period of three weeks members of the mission talked with French and Indochinese officials, both military and civilian, and observed conditions in the country. The High Commissioner for Indochina was recalled to Paris during their stay, so they were unable to hold final talks with him; many of the Indochinese officials were in France attending the Pau Conference. Nevertheless, the members of the mission believed that they were able to accomplish their aims.

Before leaving Saigon for Singapore on 7 August the MDAP Survey Mission submitted a bulky interim report on Indochina to the Foreign Military Assistance Coordinating Committee (FMACC). This report set forth most of the criticisms of French actions in Indochina and the far from optimistic estimates of future prospects which would be echoed by American representatives in Indochina in the years that followed. The absolute interdependence of the military, political, and economic problems in the country; the mutual distrust and lack of good faith between French and Indochinese on all levels; and the lack of offensive spirit in the French high command and the poor strategic distribution and use of its forces were stressed by General Erskine. Investigations by the mission, wrote General Erskine, indicated that there were "grounds to doubt that the French authorities have sincerely put forth their best efforts to train and equip a Vietnamese army and thus remove one of the great sources of distrust now existing."

The basic problem in establishing internal security in Indochina and defeating the Viet Minh was winning the cooperation of the people. Military victory was necessary, but it was unlikely to be decisive without a political solution that included concessions on the part of the French and definite plans for eventual independence of Vietnam. In the words of the report:

> The magnitude of the problem which confronts the French in this respect [internal security against communism] can hardly be overestimated. . . . Many elements which have aligned themselves with the Communists are basically hostile to Communism, but believe that the problem of independence must be solved first and other problems subsequently. It should be noted, parenthetically, that no responsible Vietnamese suggest the desirability of the total withdrawal of French forces at present on the grounds that this would only result in an early Communist victory. Rather, they speak of a timetable for independence and assumption by the French of responsibility for defense against outside attack, leaving internal matters to the Vietnamese. Much public opinion which finds itself in open opposition to the Viet Minh secretly supports the Viet Minh as the group which is having the greatest success in opposing the French. These Vietnamese elements, at the same time, are skeptical of French protestations. The great political problem which confronts the French in Indochina, therefore, is to persuade the Indochinese that they will implement their signed agreements, and at the same time, to persuade that co-operation with the Communists will not, in the end, secure Vietnamese independence, but will represent only another form of subjection to an external force. At the present

> moment, it may be questionable whether the French can do this in view of the long standing suspicion and deep-seated hatred with which the Indochinese regard the French. . . . It is the opinion of the Mission that unless some agreed political-solution can be found, the French will, in time, find themselves eliminated from the scene.[5]

The United States, the mission believed, should continue to use its influence to obtain implementation in good faith of the political programs agreed upon by the French and Indochinese.

The report went on to the statement, significant for the history of the American effort to hold Indochina against communism, that the mission made its recommendations and observations without particular reference to the internal situation in France or to that nation's commitments in NATO. All too often in the succeeding years reports such as this were acted upon without reference to the political situation in metropolitan France, yet that situation was a morass in which every solution to the basic political problem stated by the mission faltered. Regardless of the variations of public opinion in France on the Indochina question, the various French governments considered themselves the guardians of the French Empire (officially the French Union) on which rested France's prestige and her position as a great nation. American pressure for concessions to the Indochinese exerted on the French governments through diplomatic channels, for the most part, had to overcome the natural resistance of those governments to giving up part of France's colonial position. Even when a French government did make important concessions, their implementation was delayed and resisted by the colonial administrators and the army.[6]

The MDAP Survey Mission found that the existing military aid program was inadequate. General Erskine noted that there had been a considerable increase in Viet Minh offensive capabilities in recent months, as well as a developing threat of invasion by the Chinese communists in support of Ho Chi Minh. As a result the French urgently needed more equipment, and they turned over a list to the survey mission on its arrival in Saigon. The mission viewed the French requests as reasonable but requested that the MAAG, Indochina, the first elements of which had arrived in the country, screen the list and furnish its comments to the mission before it left the Southeast Asia area. The mission did state that the materiel requested seemed to be the maximum that the French and Indochinese forces were capable of using without reinforcement.[7]

The Indochina Report of the Survey Mission was received in Washington toward the end of August and action on its recommendations began immediately. An estimate of the Indochinese situation, submitted to the JCS by the Joint Intelligence Committee on 25 August, confirmed General Erskine's view that Viet Minh capabilities for launching an offensive had grown; it stated that the Viet Minh intended to make a large-scale attack and that their preparations would be sufficiently complete for it to begin on 1 September. A French offensive during the period of good autumn

weather would, with the troops and equipment presently available, only postpone the Viet Minh attack since the rebels could retreat across the Chinese border. The Joint Intelligence Committee regarded covert participation by the Chinese in a Viet Minh offensive as more probable than overt aggression. The Committee's estimate noted, however, that a communist attack in Indochina in September might reduce United Nations pressure in Korea at a time when the buildup of General MacArthur's forces would be reaching considerable proportions.[8]

The JCS were well aware of the urgency of the situation when, on 6 September, the Secretary of Defense requested them to prepare "an interim program of items for immediate supply action based upon the lists of current military requirements" contained in the Erskine Report. This task was given to the Ad Hoc Committee on Programs for Military Assistance, which reported on 16 October.[9] In the meantime, the French had experienced a severe reverse in Tonkin and were impatient for more military aid. On 12 October the French Minister of Defense, Jules Moch, pressed Secretary of Defense Marshall for a schedule of aid to be furnished for Indochina, and especially for quick delivery of thirty B-26 light bombers. When asked for their recommendation on furnishing the bombers, the Joint Chiefs replied that while the planes would not materially aid the situation in Indochina their diversion to that country could weaken United States capabilities in Korea and Europe. They recommended against sending the aircraft. The Secretaries of State and Defense overruled the JCS and ordered the immediate programming of twenty-one B-26s, the remaining nine to be included in the final Fiscal Year 1951 program for Indochina. These aircraft were to be furnished on a priority ahead of all other MDAP programs and equal to that of requirements for the Far East Air Force (FEAF) scheduled to be shipped subsequent to 1 November.[10]

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Programs of Military Assistance on 16 October was approved two days later. A program of $133 million worth of equipment was set forth, to be provided as a matter of urgency. The list included ninety F8F and thirty B-26 aircraft, three PC vessels and other light craft, considerable signal and engineer equipment, other ground force supplies, and a large amount of ammunition for all three services The committee noted that only a small amount of the aid could be shipped within sixty days, and placed its standard of availability at six months. Certain items, such as Army general purpose vehicles and SCR 300 radios, were in short supply; none could be furnished in that time. Fulfilling the program would occasion deficiencies in essential equipment for United States forces (especially Army) in being and scheduled for activation within the next six months, although precautions had been taken to insure that equipping such units would not be seriously hampered.

Because French authorities were in charge of the campaign in Indochina and in control of the native armies, the ad hoc committee recommended, and the JCS agreed, that all military assistance should be delivered to the French with "such participation by the representatives of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as the

Secretary of State may deem appropriate." The Joint Chiefs informed the Secretary of Defense that increases in military aid should be provided in accordance with operational plans that were acceptable to the United States and therefore the recommended assistance to Indochina would be observed and supervised by the MAAG in Saigon.[11]

On 23 October the Joint Chiefs of Staff program was approved; it was assigned a priority immediately below that of United States forces in combat or alerted for early movement to the Korean area and above all military assistance programs other than those in direct support of the Korean effort.[12] The services lost no time in scheduling what deliveries they could. In a message of 26 October the Chief of Staff of the Army instructed General Douglas MacArthur to ship to Indochina at the earliest possible date a considerable amount of ordnance spare parts, signal equipment, some armored cars, one hundred 105mm howitzers, and a large quantity of ammunition. The Navy began shipping fighter aircraft and additional small vessels, and the Air Force scheduled the first flight of seven B-26s to leave the United States by 1 November. Cargo tonnages shipped to Indochina were low during October and November but increased during December, so that by the end of 1950 a total of 43,400 measurement tons had been sent, of which over 19,000 measurement tons had been dispatched in the last month.[13]

France and the Crisis in Indochina

During the latter half of 1950 the military position of the French forces in Indochina constantly grew worse. The estimates of the MDAP Survey Mission and the Joint Intelligence Committee concerning the dangerous increase in Viet Minh offensive capabilities were borne out in a dramatic fashion along the northeast Tonkin border. On 16 September rebel forces organized for conventional combat struck at the border post of Dong Khe destroying two companies of the French Foreign Legion in a two-day battle. As a result the important post at Cao Bang became untenable and its evacuation was ordered. In the first week of October the garrison, consisting of three battalions, left Cao Bang for Thatkhe while a similar force started from Thatkhe to meet and reinforce it. After joining, the two groups were smashed by a massive Viet Minh attack and scattered, to straggle back to Thatkhe. A week later only about one-seventh of the six-battalion force had reached Thatke, which was being evacuated in turn.[14]

Although the forces engaged at Cao Bang were small by World War II standards, they were considerable for the Indochina war and the defeat was all but a disaster for the French. Before the year was out they were compelled to abandon all of their northeast border outposts except Moncay, which was near the coast. This withdrawal opened the border and strengthened the communications of the Viet Minh with the Chinese communists in Southeast China. The rebels had easier

access to supplies and equipment. Moreover, they were in a position threatening the rice-rich delta. Not only was the military position of the Viet Minh greatly strengthened and their morale bolstered, but also the triumph at Cao Bang increased their prestige among the Indochinese people.

The autumn Viet Minh campaign had important repercussions in other areas; it spurred the flow of American military aid. It also prompted the French to make certain concessions to Vietnamese nationalism and to speed implementation of some already made. A new strategy was devised, calculated to meet the shift of the Viet Minh from guerrilla to conventional warfare, and a new commander was sent out to implement it.

On 17 October General Alphonse-Pierre Juin, French Resident General in Morocco, an officer with long experience in colonial affairs, arrived in Saigon to review the military situation with an eye to changing French strategy and possibly reinforcing the effort in Indochina. He was accompanied by Jean Letourneau, Minister of State for the Associated States in the French Cabinet, whose mission was to assess the political actions required to halt the rapid deterioration of the French position. After a week-long survey the two men returned to Paris to report to the French Government. On the basis of their reports the French Government took some drastic, necessary, but long-belated actions. In the military sphere, the basic decision was made to pass from a defensive strategy of "pacification" in Indochina to concerted offensive effort to destroy the Viet Minh forces. To accomplish this Letourneau was given increased power over the military direction of the war, enabling him to coordinate the activities of the armed service bureaus as they concerned Indochina. To complement the unification of direction in France, the government decided to unite in the person of General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny the functions of High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Indochina. This step, it was hoped, would eliminate much of the conflict between the French political and military functionaries in Indochina, which had contributed greatly to the confusion of aims, the defensive strategy, and the defeatist attitudes of the French forces. The National Assembly backed these decisions with a strong resolution voted by a large majority.[15]

Alongside the military reforms, which were begun in November and December, the French Government made some sweeping political concessions to satisfy the claims of Indochinese nationalism and attract support for the fight against communism. The 27th of November saw the signing at Pau, in France, of ten conventions regulating the internal relations of the Associated States and the influence of the French in the Indochinese economy. The Elysee Accords of 8 March 1949 had stipulated that an interstate conference (Conference inter-etats) was to be held between France and the three Indochinese states to determine the scope of joint committees that were to be erected to govern communications facilities, foreign trade and customs, immigration control, finance, and economic planning. This conference had met on 29 June 1950 and continued for four months with little real

progress but with mounting friction and controversy. Not only was the position of the French delegates removed from that of the Associated States, but also quarrels developed among the states themselves, the representatives of Laos and Cambodia resenting what they felt to be an attempt by the Vietnamese delegation to dominate them. After the military defeats of October, however, it behooved the French to compromise. The conference was rapidly and, to some extent, successfully brought to a close with agreement on the subjects specified, plus conventions regulating the port of Saigon and navigation of the Mekong River. A group of interstate agencies was set up, staffed by personnel of all four countries, to take over the tasks of the "common services" of the former Indochinese Union, which had been administered directly by the French High Commissariat. Agreement on a monetary union and a customs union of the Associated States preserved to a large extent the economic unity of the peninsula.

Neither the French nor the Indochinese were really satisfied with the Pau accords. Frenchmen who felt that France's prestige rested on her empire believed that too much had been given up. The Indochinese, while recognizing the fact that the Pau conventions were an advance from the Elysee agreements, wanted much more independence than the French had been willing to concede. From the standpoint of the Indochinese nationalists, French control was perpetuated by the inclusion of French representatives in the joint agencies and by the guarantees protecting French interests in money and banking, foreign investments and exchange, tariff policy and customs control, and certain educational establishments. The port of Saigon and navigation on the Mekong remained under the effective control of Frenchmen. Too many French officials were to remain in Indochina. The Pau conventions, insofar as they were aimed at stimulating native support for a "free and independent Vietnam" and for the fight against communism, fell short of the mark.[16]

Although the Pau conference began before the autumn attacks of the Viet Minh, the fact that the signing of the conventions came hard on the heels of a series of French defeats gave the impression French concessions were the result of those defeats. Vietnamese who regarded the Viet Minh as the most successful force working for Indochinese independence were strengthened in their belief. Events buttressed the argument that more was to be gained for Vietnamese freedom by permitting the French forces to fall before communist guns than by supporting an army that, if victorious against Ho Chi Minh, might be used to reassert colonial government.

In early December the French made another concession intended to bestow on the Emperor Bao Dai the missing halo of sovereignty and to convince the Indochinese that the French would convey the powers of government to them as rapidly as possible. This concession was the establishment of an independent national Army of Vietnam, a step long desired by the JCS and urged on the French by the Department of State in Washington and by Minister Donald Heath in Saigon. The measure was decided upon by the French and Vietnamese Governments in October, and

about six weeks were spent in discussions at Dalat about the size, organization, and command structure of the army. Finally, on 8 December, the retiring High Commissioner, Leon Pignon, signed a military convention with officials of Vietnam. According to the agreement Bao Dai would be in supreme command of the national army, but responsible to the French High Command in Indochina. French officers and cadres, in Vietnamese uniforms and paid by Vietnam, would be subject to Bao Dai's command. The army was not expected to be effective for at least a year, after which it might be able to take over certain "pacification duties," freeing French units for offensive work in the north.

It was obvious that a Vietnamese army would require heavy support from the MDAP; there was no other source of armament and supplies. Nevertheless, no American representative was invited to the discussions at Dalat. Edmund A. Gullion, the Special Assistant for MDAP to the American Minister at Saigon, complained to Washington, that this "appeared further to delay implementation of the project."[17]

The concessions made by the French in the autumn of 1950 came too late. The growing strength of the Viet Minh, the threat of invasion by the Communist Chinese, as well as their increasing ability to support the Viet Minh materially and politically, and the growing distaste in France for the war meant that there was not enough time for the measures to have the desired effect. The critical importance of the time factor was apparent to American observers in Indochina. Minister Heath reported from Saigon, "Had French willingly made two years ago 1950 concessions and had Bao Dai and his government had two years experience under new formula, there would have been radically different IC [Indochina] situation. Basic political question today is whether there is time enough to utilize new political framework to mobilize mass allegiance behind Bao Dai."[18]

MAAG Indochina

General de Lattre's arrival in Indochina presaged a change in the French attitude toward the American military aid program and toward the MAAG in Saigon. While welcoming American assistance, French commanders had shown considerable suspicion of American military personnel sent to Saigon to administer the program. Upon their arrival in Indochina, General Carpentier observed that the MAAG was larger than he had anticipated and had arrived without his agreement. At the end of August, the first full month of MAAG activity in Saigon, Mr. Gullion reported "some atmosphere of reluctance about French cooperation." He attributed this to the fact that the French High Command had not understood the necessity for, or the advantages of, having the MAAG in Indochina, and had even mistaken its functions. More important in explaining the French attitude were the fears of some officials that the MAAG personnel would attempt to interfere in the political and military affairs of

Indochina. Despite some improvement in the MAAG's relations with the French, the latter continued to regard the group with less than enthusiastic approval.[19]

The MAAG was hampered in accomplishing its mission by several conditions. The group was to screen and pass to the Department of Defense French requests for military aid, and observe and supervise the distribution and use of the equipment provided under the program. For these tasks the thirty-eight officers and enlisted men authorized for the MAAG were too few. The authorization was later increased, but the group continued to suffer from a shortage of personnel.

Screening of French requests was based on JCS screening criteria (to eliminate nonmilitary items, etc.), French and Indochinese needs, and availability of personnel trained to use the materiel requested. The cooperation of the French military authorities was necessary; it was not immediately forthcoming. The MDAP monthly report from Saigon for October 1950 contains a complaint about the poor liaison between French officials and the MAAG; this "led the French Command to deny the abandonment of Cao Bang even after it had taken place, to withhold information on the extent of French losses in the North, to keep the Legation and MAAG in ignorance of military developments in Tonkin and of French plans for coping with the new situation." Both the legation and MAAG "made every effort to impress upon the French authorities the imperative need for adequate military briefings if the MDAP were to have its maximum effect and by the end of the month definite signs of improvement were to be noted."[20] Nevertheless, sufficient information on French-Indochinese forces continued to be unavailable to MAAG. No troop bases, or even order of battle, were furnished by the French, and screening had to be done by "educated guess." French supply and accounting procedures often made it impossible for the Americans to determine exactly what the forces had on hand. As a result MAAG personnel sometimes hesitated to amend French requests when they were excessive.[21]

In observing and supervising the use of end items provided under MDAP, the Army Section of the MAAG was impeded by French restrictions. Because Air Force equipment was employed chiefly at fixed installations, such as airbases, its day-to-day use and maintenance could be checked. Similarly the Naval member of MAAG could inspect ships, which were in more or less constant use and readiness. Army members were not allowed to go into the combat areas to view the employment and care of ground force supplies. Inspections of troop units were scheduled beforehand with the French Command. Units to be inspected had been sent to rearward areas and prepared for the event. The entire inspection was performed with parade-ground spit and polish and with French officers accompanying the American. Such inspections were limited to MDAP equipment only; the French guarded from view that which they themselves had furnished. The value of the inspections for calculating French needs and for determining the efficiency with which American materiel was used was impaired by these procedures. In distributing MDAP equipment, the MAAG dealt almost exclusively with French authorities who desired to minimize

contacts between Americans and Vietnamese. Not until the end of 1951 was the MAAG able to require that signatures of Vietnamese officials appear on manifests of supplies delivered to native units. There is no evidence, however, that shipments destined for any of the Associated States were withheld by French authorities.[22]

By the end of December 1950 the change wrought by the new French commander was noticeable, and the MDAP report for January 1951 stated that "relations between the MAAG and the French Command were unquestionably better than at any previous point of the Indochina program."[23] By contrast, General Carpentier, as late as November, was described as "mildly skeptical about American aid."[24]

On 23 December at Saigon Minister Heath signed an "Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina" with representatives of the Associated States and France. This agreement provided for military assistance, in accordance with Public Law 329, 81st Congress, to the four states fighting in the peninsula. Similar to MDAP agreements between the United States and other recipient nations, the agreement stated: "With respect to aid received from the United States of America, each State shall designate a member or representative of the High Military Committee and authorize such person to receive . . . the title to the materials received." With respect to MAAG Indochina, the Associated States and France were "to extend to such personnel facilities freely and fully to carry out their assigned responsibilities, including observation of the progress and the technical use made of the assistance granted."[25]

Development of US Policy toward Indochina, July-December 1950

At the outbreak of the Korean conflict, American policy toward Indochina was set forth in NSC 64 and NSC 48/2. There was general agreement that everything possible must be done to maintain Indochina, and especially Tonkin. With its forces tied down in Korea, the United States would confine itself to providing military aid in the form of munitions and equipment. Within the government, the Department of Defense was the most anxious about the dangers in Southeast Asia; this concern was stimulated by constant prodding by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They saw a threat to the United States strategic position in the Far East inherent in a communist Viet Nam, and were eager to act with the resources at hand.

The advanced position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff became clear in the first week of July, when the Joint Chiefs were required to comment on a National Security Council paper dealing with "The Position and Actions of the United States with Respect to Possible Further Soviet Moves in the Light of the Korean Situation." The question was what to do in the event China provided overt military assistance to Ho Chi Minh. If such assistance were given the Viet Minh forces the JCS commented

that, "the United States should increase its MDAP assistance to the French and urge the French to continue an active defense, with the United States giving consideration to the provision of air and naval assistance." Also, the United States should ask the United Nations to call upon its members to make forces available to resist the aggression by Communist China.[26] On 14 August, in commenting on a revision of the same NSC paper, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that in the event of overt attack by Communist Chinese forces against Indochina the United States should support France and the Associated States, in concert with the United Kingdom; accelerate and expand the present military assistance program; and mobilize to the extent necessary to meet the situation. Other agencies represented in the NSC drew back from such a strong position. The National Security Council's decided to accept the recommendation of the JCS on supporting French and Indochinese forces and on stepping up MDAP assistance. Mobilization was not accepted and was replaced with a stipulation that, should the Chinese Communists attack Indochina, the United States should not engage in a general war with them.[27]

A similar difference in attitude appeared during the preparations for talks between the Foreign Ministers of France and Great Britain and the Secretary of State in September. A State Department position paper on Indochina submitted to the JCS recommended that Secretary Acheson emphasize liberal implementation of the Elysee agreements and that the political program must not be delayed. The French should be urged to speed the formation of new national armies and to intensify their information activities in Asia. The Secretary was also to recommend staff talks between the United States, United Kingdom, and France regarding "pooling and coordination of resources in Southeast Asia in the event of invasion."[28] In their comments the Joint Chiefs noted that

> the recommendations as a whole do not reflect the urgency which, from the military point of view, should be attached to planning, preparing for, and providing adequate means to insure the security of Indochina. . . . Intelligence reports indicate that the Viet Minh military preparations may be sufficiently complete in the very near future to launch a large-scale effort to seize control of all of Indochina. Prior to 1 January 1951, the currently planned level of United States military aid to the French and native allied forces of Indochina should increase their military capabilities but not to the extent of counterbalancing Viet Minh capabilities. In view of these considerations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest that the proposed United States position take cognizance that the situation in Indochina is to be viewed with alarm and that urgent and drastic action is required by the French if they are to avoid military defeat in Indochina. . . .

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that the French be urged to conclude the Pau conference immediately and successfully, to give widespread publicity to its accomplishments, and to initiate bolder political measures. Regarding the military staff talks, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked that the "coordination of resources" be changed to "coordination of operations." They also wished Secretary Acheson to

indicate to the French that increases in military aid would be provided in accordance with operational plans acceptable to the United States and compatible with United States capabilities. But, because of the situation in Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked that the Secretary "Inform the French that, regardless of current US commitments for provision of certain assistance to French Indochina, the United States will not commit any of its armed forces under present circumstances."[29] The records of the September Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meetings do not indicate that Secretary Acheson exerted much pressure on the French. He seems to have wished to let the JCS work out their problems in the proposed military staff talks. The Secretary did refuse a French request that the United States furnish tactical air support for the French forces.[30]

In October the Joint Chiefs of Staff pressed for stronger and more precise American policy than that contained in NSC 64; particularly concerned that there was "no clearly stated United States policy covering the contingency of an attack on Indochina by Viet Minh forces supplied and/or otherwise aided by Communist China."[31] The deteriorating situation in Indochina after the defeat at Cao Bang demanded a revision of American policy. The apparent collapse of communist resistance in North Korea seemed to offer an opportunity; if the Korean conflict could be quickly wound up, the United States global strategic position would be greatly strengthened, and some American armed forces would be freed for employment in other areas.

On 18 October General J. Lawton Collins laid before his colleagues a proposal for reappraising the government's stand. "I believe that the loss of Indochina would be such a blow to the US strategic position in the cold war that its loss is unacceptable, if we can possibly avoid it," he wrote. "All practicable measures" to deny Indochina to the communists should be explored, including "even the use of US armed forces if the situation can be saved in no other way." The Army Chief of Staff forwarded a study prepared by G-3 recommending that the United States "be prepared to commit its own armed force." But any such commitment must not endanger the US strategic position in the event of a world war; it must offer a reasonable chance of success, and it should be done in concert with other UN members.[32]

The Joint Chiefs considered General Collins' views in preparing comments on a proposal by the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee for a new National Security Council decision on United States policy toward Indochina. This proposal roughly conformed to the ideas of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, although it did not provide for the use of American armed forces and in their opinion did not reflect the urgency of the current situation in Indochina.[33] The JCS delayed their comments while awaiting a report from Brigadier General Francis G. Brink, commander of the MAAG in Saigon. They had instructed General Brink to confer with General Juin during the latter's visit to Indochina and to furnish them an estimate of the chances of French success against the Viet Minh. By the time the Joint Chiefs of Staff were ready to present their recommendations on the paper by the Southeast Asia Aid

Policy Committee the Communist Chinese had struck in North Korea and a longer war was in prospect. Consequently, the Joint Chiefs would not advise using American combat forces in Indochina in the foreseeable future.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff sent their recommendations on the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee's proposal to the Secretary of Defense on 28 November. Instead of commenting on the paper they proposed their own broad policy, a revision of NSC 64. As NSC 64/1 it was presented on 21 December to the National Security Council for consideration. The JCS proposal listed both short-term and long-term objectives for the United States in Indochina. For the short term, the report stated: "The United States should take action, as a matter of urgency, by all means practicable short of the actual employment of United States military forces, to deny Indochina to communism." The French should continue to have the main responsibility for "the restoration of peace and security" in Indochina. The French should prepare the overall military plan, under which the United States was to provide logistical support. American and French authorities in Indochina should handle allocations to the French and to the Associated States. It was essential that the French should move toward self-government for Indochina and the creation of national armies. The French should provide additional forces until these national armies could be effective. The US Government needed to make sure that the French established an effective military command, "Eliminate its policy of 'colonialism'," and support recognition of the Associated States in Asia. The United States should also be prepared to use all means short of war and the use of American forces against a Communist Chinese intervention in Indochina. The French should also not refer the problem to the United Nations or withdraw from the war. For the longer term, a regional security organization in Southeast Asia that included the Associated States and other countries should be formed.

An "Analysis," written by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, accompanied the draft policy and explained the strategic concept that kept the Joint Chiefs of Staff from recommending armed intervention. Involvement of United States forces against Viet Minh forces, according to the Committee, would be likely to lead to a war with Communist China, which would probably be a prelude to global war. The chief enemy in a global war, "in all probability," would be the USSR, and the principal theater would be Western Europe. The strength of the Western Powers was insufficient to fight a war on the Asian mainland and accomplish Allied objectives in Europe.[34] This line of reasoning was generally accepted by the American Government at the time.

Despite the urgency communicated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council did not adopt NSC 64/1; NSC 64 remained the basic United States position on Indochina for months. Nevertheless, the JCS strove to realize the objectives that they advocated, and other agencies of the government gradually moved toward their point of view. The policy enunciated in NSC 64 was modified by the

prevailing climate of opinion in Washington, and movement toward a stronger stand on the Indochina question was apparent at the end of 1950.

Although the Chinese intervention in Korea lowered the chance of China coming directly to the aid of the Viet Minh, the situation in Europe and the Far East in the last weeks of 1950 was grim. Secretary Acheson succeeded in galvanizing the NATO allies to agree to a unified military command, to which Truman named General Dwight D. Eisenhower, USA, in the waning days of the year. American troops were to go to Europe, but the allies had to do their part. The diversion of many of France's best officers and noncommissioned officers to Indochina became all the more serious. The unwillingness of the French Government to dispatch young conscripts to the Far East was stronger as these men were needed in Europe.

The French recognized the urgency of the situation in Indochina. Perceiving that a lack of leadership was part of the problem, they sent General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny as High Commissioner and Commander in Chief; de Lattre's reputation in France was like that of Eisenhower or Patton in the United States. His arrival at Saigon in December was expected to boost French morale. With American aid, the new commander might begin to reverse the fortunes of the French.

5

The De Lattre Episode, 1951

Stabilization of the front in Korea and the beginning of the buildup of American military force in Europe gave some breathing space to the United States and its allies. Negotiations between the United Nations Command and the communist forces in Korea began in July 1951 but were soon deadlocked. In Indochina de Lattre gained some local successes. Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1951 the situation was serious, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a directive to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) to prepare plans for covering a French evacuation of Tonkin. Meanwhile, President Truman was reluctant to increase the amount of aid to the French.

United States policy regarding Indochina changed little during 1951. The basic document, NSC 64, was not revised during 1951; NSC 48/2 was replaced in May by 48/5, but the section of the new paper that concerned Indochina continued current policies including the decision not to commit US armed forces.[1] Whatever evolution of policy occurred resulted from American participation in various military and diplomatic conferences; from liaison and consultation between the French, British, and American commands in the Far East; and from decisions on several specific questions. None of these actions occasioned major alteration in American aims in Indochina during the year.

Pressures to change policy increased, however. The Joint Chiefs were concerned about preserving American freedom of action in Southeast Asia. They opposed participation in the three-power (American, British, and French) military conference that met at Singapore in May and, when it did take place, made sure that no major commitments resulted. Foreseeing further pressure from the French and British to commit the United States to an allied strategy in the region, possibly involving American combat forces, the JCS sought to make their position clear when de Lattre visited Washington in September. The pressure for closer coordination continued. When the French Prime Minister[2] visited the United States in

January, the question of possible Chinese Communist intervention in Indochina had come up. The Joint Chiefs of Staff offered an American response to de Lattre that would strike directly at Chinese military power rather than trying to stem the tide in Tonkin. They warned the Secretary of Defense, Robert A. Lovett, who had succeeded Marshall in September, that, without political guidance, further talks with the allies would not produce useful results.

But de Lattre was suffering from cancer. After his visit to Washington, he returned to France and was replaced in Indochina by General Raoul Salan and a civilian High Commissioner, Jean Letourneau. The great hopes the French had placed on de Lattre made his death on 11 January 1952 all the more tragic. American confidence in the French war effort, never robust, began to decline.

The Military Situation in Indochina Improves

During 1951 the French military position in Indochina showed a definite improvement. In the early part of the year General de Lattre, by consolidating his defenses, was able to repulse a series of attacks and inflict heavy losses on the Viet Minh while keeping his own losses relatively low. In November the French commander undertook a limited offensive in the Hoa Binh area southwest of Hanoi.

The French forces successes under de Lattre were made possible by American military assistance. The effect of United States support became apparent in mid-January, when the Franco-Vietnamese forces defeated the largest offensive the Viet Minh had yet mounted. About forty thousand rebel troops fought in the battle of Vinh Yen, and their losses may have been as high as six thousand. Minister Heath reported from Saigon that the French victory could "in very large part be attributed to the action of French air, artillery, especially 105 mm. howitzers, and napalm, all of which were provided to the French Forces under the Mutual Assistance Defense Program (MDAP)." The aid program, he continued, "has thus in its first full-scale test been fully vindicated."[3]

Some of the equipment used in repulsing the Viet Minh offensive had arrived at Hanoi only in the nick of time, as the result of personal intervention by General Brink, who asked General MacArthur's headquarters to have materiel shipped from the Far East Command (FECOM) stocks outside established MDAP channels. De Lattre acknowledged the value of this assistance; his public expressions of gratitude promoted better relations between the French and the Americans in Indochina. The attitude of the French toward the MAAG changed from suspicion and annoyance to qualified approval that eased the work of the agency during the months that followed.[4]

After the battle of Vinh Yen, the French and Vietnamese forces made a series of minor advances, recapturing several outposts around the Tonkin Delta perimeter. At the same time they repulsed a number of Viet Minh attacks, reportedly inflicting

severe losses on the enemy, and forged ahead with a campaign to clean the rebels out of the delta area itself. Early in April the French reported intercepting a radio broadcast by Ho Chi Minh ordering his troops, who had been maneuvering in daylight in organized units since January, to revert to guerrilla warfare. While this report indicated some discouragement in Viet Minh ranks, the rebels did not give up the initiative in Indochina. Their attacks continued, in general with little or no success, until the rainy season slowed all military operations in the country.[5]

With the return of good weather in the autumn the French returned to the offensive for the first time since their defeat at Cao Bang in the preceding year. In a well-executed surprise move they advanced out of the delta to capture and fortify positions in the Cho Ben-Hoa Binh area southwest of Hanoi. The purposes of this operation were political as well as military. De Lattre hoped to disrupt Viet Minh communications and collection of rice, while impressing public opinion with his initiative and skill and demonstrating to the United States the fact that he was using American equipment to good advantage.

The Hoa Binh offensive proved to be less than a strategic success. It overextended French lines and weakened the defense of the Hanoi perimeter, opening the door to heavy Viet Minh infiltration into the delta area. By the end of the year it was apparent to American observers in Indochina that the French would be hard pressed to maintain the position at Hoa Binh (which was being subjected to counterattack by regular Viet Minh troops), since they had to protect the delta from rebel infiltration.[6] Nevertheless, the French and Vietnamese forces were in better condition with respect to training, spirit, equipment, organization, and strategic situation at de Lattre's death than when he had taken over the High Command.

General improvement in the military situation in Indochina during 1951 brought no corresponding development in Vietnamese internal political affairs. The basic problem continued to be lack of public support for the Bao Dai government and for the struggle against the Viet Minh. Behind the indifference of the natives lay their unabated dislike of the French colonial officials, who seldom relaxed their resistance to the reforms dictated from Paris or ceased to interfere in the internal affairs of Vietnam. Bao Dai could not shake the identification of his regime with French policies and his new army with the French High Command.

Despite the concessions to Indochinese nationalism in the Pau Conventions, the reduction of French control over the economic and political life of the Associated States was scarcely visible to the average person in Vietnam. The turnover of authority was painfully slow and grudgingly conceded by French officials. For some of the delays the French were not entirely responsible. It was difficult to find Vietnamese sufficiently experienced in governmental administration to handle the agencies to be transferred. But the easing of the military situation seems to have reduced the French sense of urgency for carrying out political reforms begun in more trying times. Gullion reported from Saigon that as early as March more confident French officials, including General de Lattre, had begun to utter doubts about

the wisdom of maintaining the current tempo and limits of Vietnamese independence.[7] The United States Government, which had been pushing the French toward more rapid reforms, relaxed its pressure. The official attitude of the State Department was that the Pau Conventions, formally instituted in December 1950, had satisfied Indochinese nationalist aims. American officials, however, continued to urge the French to implement the conventions and establish the national armies.[8]

The equivocal character of French policies was reflected in the actions and attitudes of General de Lattre who, until his death on 11 January 1952, was probably the most important single factor in Vietnamese politics. On the one hand the High Commissioner considered himself a "kingmaker" who would go down in history as the father of Indochinese independence. In April, at a ceremony commemorating the victory of Vinh Yen, he pledged himself to "fulfill the independence of Vietnam." "I have come," he announced, "to accomplish your independence, not to limit it."[9] On the other hand, General de Lattre represented France and "independence" meant independence within the French Union. A few weeks before uttering his April pledge the general had remarked to Minister Heath, "These states [the Associated States of Indochina] could hardly hope to enjoy the same status as members of the British Commonwealth since France has spent too much to protect them."[10]

Native nationalists were not content with the rate at which authority was being transferred to the Bao Dai government. General de Lattre seems to have wished to clear up the Viet Minh rebellion before devoting his time and energy to political reorganization. Certainly the demands of the military situation were more immediate; the one reform that the High Commissioner was most active in accomplishing was the establishment of the Vietnamese National Army. But his attitude was not conducive to harmonious relations with the Vietnamese government and people, who wanted to see immediate evidence of independence. The general was impatient of administrative details and with the failures and mistakes of inexperienced native officials. This trait caused him to intervene personally in the internal affairs of Vietnam, much to the annoyance of Bao Dai and his premier, Tran Van Huu. The Emperor frequently complained to Minister Heath about de Lattre's interference and referred with disgust to the "colonial-minded advisors" retained by the High Commissioner.[11]

On 20 January the Vietnamese cabinet was dissolved to form a new government, still under Tran Van Huu, with a broader base representative of the major noncommunist political groups. This attempt to draw into the government the dissident nationalist parties ended in a fiasco, presaging the failure of the Premier to win any great measure of popular support. After a month of negotiations, intrigues, and squabbles, Tran Van Huu emerged with a cabinet very much like the last. The Premier held the portfolios of the Defense Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of the Interior.[12] The involvement of de Lattre and French officials in the governmental shake-up cannot be determined, but Gullion reported that in April "Some of the animosity at French intervention in the cabinet crisis in February had begun to subside."[13]

The reshuffling of Huu's government was only one of the factors that delayed the organization of the Vietnamese National Army during the first half of 1951. A similar crisis in France, which began at the end of February and lasted until 9 March, resulted in the replacement of the Pleven cabinet by one under Henri Queuille. The uncertainty accompanying the change paralyzed activity in Saigon and in Paris. Development of the army was impeded by disagreements between the French and the Vietnamese governments over the amount of money each should contribute to its support, by the failure of the Saigon government to complete its budget, by the lack of trained cadres, and by the inability of Premier Huu to find a suitable defense minister and a chief of staff. Also, while MDAP materiel for the French Union Forces was arriving at a generally good rate (seven ships unloaded over ten-thousand long tons at Saigon during April), equipment for the projected Vietnamese battalions was coming in slowly. While recruiting for twenty-four battalions was proceeding satisfactorily, the new army was meeting competition from the French Union Forces, who recruited more than seven thousand Vietnamese during March and April. Such French activity gave rise to charges of bad faith in their agreement to establish national armed forces in Vietnam.[14]

Despite confusion and delay some increase in the national armies of the Associated States was achieved during the year. As of 1 May the regular Army of Viet Nam consisted of about 38,500 men. Cambodia and Laos, whose needs were comparatively small, had under arms 7,500 and 4,000 men. The program for the Vietnamese army called for the formation of four divisions during 1951. An expansion to eight divisions was decided upon later in the year. By the time of General de Lattre's death the Vietnamese Regular Army comprised thirty-seven battalions with strength of approximately 65,000 men augmented by various auxiliary units (59,000 men) and semi-military forces. In the Associated States as a whole, men in the regular and auxiliary forces numbered over 132,000; those in semi-military forces about 76,500.[15] Seriously deficient in training, leadership, and the will to fight, these forces, despite being combined with the 189,000 troops of the French Union in Indochina, did not give the French High Command an overwhelming superiority against the Viet Minh.

A primary purpose in establishing the national armies had been to stimulate public enthusiasm for the "independent" governments of the Associated States and for the struggle against the Viet Minh. In this respect, the project cannot be described as a great success. The measure of its achievement in 1951 can be seen in the results of the various mobilization measures authorized by the Vietnamese cabinet on 15 July. A series of decrees from the Huu government asserted the principle of obligatory military service and authorized the conscription of sixty thousand men in four increments for a period of two months training, after which they were to form a partially trained reserve. It also announced its plans to draft eight hundred specialists and technicians for the National Army and to select one thousand candidates for training

as reserve officers. This program did not meet the demands of the situation according to observers in the American Legation, who reported:

> Actually, the severely limited scope of the planned mobilization falls far short of supplying Viet Nam's basic military needs. The calling up of 60,000 men for only two months of training is an expensive gesture which is ill afforded by the shaky military budget; further, two months of training will provide no semblance of a trained manpower pool. Similarly, the call-up of only 1000 candidates for reserve officer training is woefully inadequate of estimated requirement; at least four times that number of both categories of personnel are needed to round out the present four division national army. This estimate, of course, makes no allowance for normal attrition or for the necessity of a rapidly expanded force.[16]

Even this modest program fell short. Little more than half of the specially selected candidates reported for training. The second increment of conscripts was released after only five weeks of training, and the fourth increment was never summoned. Of the first increment of fifteen thousand men, only seven percent could be persuaded to enlist in the National Army after completing their training; the quota of eight hundred specialists to be drafted was reduced to five hundred.[17]

The response to the mobilization program was scarcely an indication of popular support for the Vietnam government or the National Army. Some French officials blamed the non-arrival of MDAP materiel as well as financial difficulties for the indifferent success of the project. American observers noted that the Vietnamese government had done a poor job of selling mobilization to people for whom the Confucian contempt of military service was traditional. Public apathy, which the National Army and mobilization were intended to decrease, was the chief stumbling block for the mobilization scheme.[18]

Another mark of the National Army's failure was the defection of some of the Cao Dai forces. In June the Cao Dai Chief of Staff led 2,500 of his troops out of Vietnam into Cambodia to "await developments." The immediate causes of this action probably were attempts to subordinate forces, such as those of the Cao Dai, to the National Army, and the curtailment of the subsidy paid by the French to the Cao Dai troops. A more basic reason was the belief that Vietnam had not been given full independence and was not likely to achieve it under Tran Van Huu.[19]

Near the end of the year, the situation in Vietnam was complicated by the growing enmity between the High Commissioner and the Premier. General de Lattre was disturbed by Huu's inability to develop the vigorous and popular government necessary to military as well as political success. He had misgivings concerning Huu's use of state funds and the Premier's monopoly of the most important posts in the government. Huu seemed convinced that the High Commissioner was bent on having the determining voice in all Vietnamese affairs. The tensions between the two men, which persisted until de Lattre's death, exacerbated the old French-Vietnamese quarrels and weakened their efforts against the Viet Minh.[20]

The struggle for control of Vietnamese policy became apparent in October when both men returned from visits to the United States. By November General de Lattre was hinting that he might use his "influence" to replace Huu. Huu waved the banner of nationalism, sought the support of dissident groups, including the Cao Dai and the Dai Viet, and revived democratic projects, such as the establishment of popular assemblies. At the end of November, when de Lattre and Huu went to Paris to attend the first meeting of the High Council of the French Union, their rivalry became even more bitter. Their rivalry ended with de Lattre's death, but Huu's position had grown so weak that his government fell a few months later.[21]

The de Lattre-Huu dispute affected the meeting of the High Council of the French Union. Before the meeting the Vietnamese delegation had been expected to press for an alteration of the quadripartite committee structure laid down in the Pau Conventions, which permitted the French to dominate committees that supervised the governmental departments and activities of the Associated States. It was also expected to ask for admission to the United Nations (desired by the United States but considered premature by the French) and for changing the system of representation between Vietnam and France by an exchange of ambassadors. Premier Huu refrained from advocating ambitious reforms. The meeting settled a few minor matters and decided certain procedural questions; the French did agree to UN membership for the Associated States. Again a major inter-state conference ended without satisfying the demands of Indochinese nationalism.[22]

The political position of the anticommunist elements in Vietnam improved very little during 1951. Americans in the legation at Saigon observed a few hopeful developments such as the growth of the National Army, a revival of export trade and commerce, and the beginnings of a conscious Vietnamese administration. But the essential objective of attracting wide popular support for the government was not achieved. Given a breathing spell by de Lattre's military prowess, the French sank into old colonial routines instead of building a strong Vietnamese government recognized and respected by loyal citizens.

On the other side, the Viet Minh in 1951 took the final steps in achieving an orthodox communist organization. At two congresses in February and March the Lao Dong (Workers) Party was formed and the Viet Minh League consolidated into the Lien Viet (National United) Front. These actions tightened communist control of the Viet Minh movement, and their hard core, the Lao Dong, was officially recognized as the dominant force. The Lao Dong now exercised direct authority over the civilian population in the Viet Minh occupied areas. There was a purge of government officials at all levels; those who remained in power were solidly communist and supporters of the Soviet bloc of nations.[23]

Toward the end of the year the Viet Minh began to suffer severely. A food shortage arose when French successes interfered with communist rice collection by tightening defenses around the rice producing areas and stiffening peasant resistance against Viet Minh demands. This resistance also led to a serious financial

deficit, owing to the difficulty of collecting taxes. In addition, the Viet Minh had to combat corruption and inefficiency in its own ranks. Combined with the losses suffered in combat, these factors partially offset the advantages obtained from tighter communist control of the rebel movement.[24]

Singapore Conference

The first important international military conference that concerned Indochina in this period was held at Singapore. With the concurrence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Acheson, during the Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meetings in September 1950, had made an agreement with the British and French that military commanders of the three nations in the Far East should meet to discuss the defense of Southeast Asia. The meeting took place in May, but only after the Joint Chiefs of Staff objections to holding it had been overridden. At the time the Joint Chiefs had agreed to United States participation in discussions, the Korean conflict had been going well for the United Nations forces. The Chinese intervention placed such heavy demands on American fighting strength that the JCS could visualize no means of assisting Indochina other than increasing the flow of supplies in the event of an emergency; there was little that could be accomplished by a conference. Any matters that might require consultation with the French in Indochina could be handled through General Brink, who had already conferred with Generals Juin and Carpentier. Furthermore, the JCS regarded the Chinese intervention as having so changed the general strategic situation in the Far East that new basic decisions at the political level were required. Until such decisions were made there would be little value in holding the tripartite military discussions.

The Joint Chiefs advanced these arguments when they recommended to Secretary of Defense Marshall early in January that no military conference on Indochina be held in the near future.[25] But an agreement had been made, the French insisted that the meeting be held, and the State Department exerted pressure on the Department of Defense to carry out the obligation. Political considerations were overriding, and on 9 February Secretary Marshall directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to proceed with the arrangements. The JCS complied but resolved to limit the scope of the discussions and not permit them to deal with "matters of strategy affecting United States global policies and plans." Instead of sending the Commander in Chief, Far East, who was preoccupied with the Korean operations, the Joint Chiefs directed the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), to designate an officer from his command to take part in the conference as the United States representative. This officer was to be assisted by General Brink.[26]

After some delay in working out meeting arrangements and an agenda, General de Lattre, General John Harding, Commander of British Forces in the Far East, and Vice Admiral A. D. Struble, USN, met in Singapore on 15 May. Before

the conference, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had made plain to the British and French their view that the discussions should be confined to studying the situation in Southeast Asia and that the conclusions reached by the participants would in no way commit their respective governments.[27]

Although the talks were concerned with the defense of all Southeast Asia, there was general agreement that Indochina presented the most critical problem and that the defense of Tonkin was the key to the security of the entire area. The delegates recommended continuing the accelerated delivery of material aid and periodic meetings between military representatives of the three powers to discuss the Indochinese logistical situation. They also proposed increasing the exchange of intelligence information between the commanders in the Far East using existing channels, and conferences at regular intervals between the chiefs of the British and French military intelligence staffs in Singapore and Saigon, with participation by American intelligence officers. Such meetings would help alleviate the difficulties that all experienced in securing adequate information about Communist Chinese armed forces and lines of communication and about arms smuggling to communist guerrilla forces.

The delegates considered an invasion of Indochina by the Chinese Communists, and their report included a French estimate of the reinforcements required to defend Tonkin against them. They finished their work by making recommendations on certain logistical questions in Indochina, on control of contraband, and on control of shipping in Southeast Asian waters in the event the communists began operations on the high seas.[28]

The recommendations contained in the report of the Singapore Conference were not immediately put into effect; they were subjects for negotiations between the three governments for the rest of the year. For the most part the British and French were anxious to have them carried out. The Joint Chiefs were averse to American participation in further tripartite military conversations on the defense of Indochina, including the conferences on intelligence and logistics problems recommended in the report. They feared that the British and French might try to erect a new Combined Chiefs of Staff organization or an overall three-power command for Southeast Asia. They wished to keep their hands free so that a new global war might not find them encumbered by established combined commands (other than NATO). But disagreements between the three governments over the recommendations of the Singapore Report, as well as changing circumstances, would oblige the Joint Chiefs of Staff to participate in another three-power military conference in January 1952.

The Pleven Visit

While the Joint Chiefs of Staff were arguing against the Singapore Conference, two meetings were held in Washington between American officials and important figures in the French Government. The first, and the more important,

took place on 29-30 January when Prime Minister Rene Pleven visited the United States for talks with President Truman. The President and M. Pleven agreed that, while it was necessary to resist aggression in the Far East, nevertheless, "The U.S. and France should not over-commit themselves militarily in the Far East and thereby endanger the situation in Europe." They also agreed that the "interested nations" should maintain continuous contact on the problems of the area, but when M. Pleven proposed the establishment of a British, French, United States consultative body to coordinate Far Eastern policies the President declined, expressing preference for existing mechanisms.

With reference to Indochina, the Prime Minister assured President Truman that France would continue to resist communist aggression. Truman promised to expedite deliveries of increased quantities of material under the aid program. But the French wanted more. For the National Armies, they said 58 billion francs (approximately $166 million) would be required, of which the combined budgets of France and Vietnam could supply only 33 billion (approximately $97 million). They formally requested the United States to furnish additional aid of $70 million to make up the deficit. President Truman "held out no hope" for the provision of such assistance. As Secretary Acheson informed the National Security Council, "We cannot become directly involved in local budgetary deficits of other countries." The Secretary of State did initiate detailed studies in the hope of devising "some other method to assure that necessary funds for the development of the National armies be forthcoming."[29]

During the conversations the French also asked for an aircraft carrier for service in Indochina. The CVL *Langley* had recently been transferred to France for use in Mediterranean waters and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unwilling to provide another at this time. Secretary of Defense Marshall, however, informed M. Pleven that the conditions imposed on the employment of the *Langley* would be lifted to permit its operation in Indochinese waters if the French chose.[30] The carrier, which was being refitted in the United States, joined French naval forces in July, enabling the French to keep at least one carrier constantly in service in Indochina.

The threat of a Communist Chinese invasion of Tonkin, which colored every assessment of the Indochinese situation, was also discussed by the President and the Prime Minister. In accordance with JCS advice, the French were informed that in the event an invasion forced the French to retire from Tonkin, the United States would not commit any ground troops but would, if possible, assist in the evacuation of French forces.[31] The Chiefs had been working on this problem for some weeks. On 26 December 1950 General Juin had written to Secretary Marshall saying that if the Communist Chinese came in, the French would have to pull out of Indochina. A National Intelligence Estimate published a few days later contained the opinion that even a relatively small force of Chinese, combined with the Viet Minh, would be able to drive the French from the delta in a short time.[32] In mid-January, the Joint Chiefs directed CINCPAC to prepare plans to give United States

naval and air support in case the French requested aid in evacuating their forces from Tonkin under communist pressure. These preparations were not to be disclosed to the French but, after the Truman-Pleven discussion of the subject, General Bradley recommended to Secretary Marshall that CINCPAC be permitted to coordinate his plan with General de Lattre. On 28 March the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized CINCPAC to consult with the French Commander.[33]

Other subjects, such as the European situation, were discussed by the President and the Prime Minister, but the most important result of the conversations was a better understanding of the other's attitude toward Indochina. President Truman hewed to the line of established American policy. Pleven planted in the minds of American officials the idea that France would require direct budgetary support to carry out the plans for the National Army of Vietnam.

Two months after the Prime Minister's visit the President of France, Vincent Auriol, arrived in Washington, bringing with him the Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. Once again Indochina was a subject for discussion, but there was no change in the American position. The conferences with Auriol and Schuman added nothing to the results of the Pleven visit.

The Visit of General de Lattre

Of more significance for the development of United States policy toward Indochina was the visit of General de Lattre in September, but it was in the preparations made by the JCS for his visit that its greatest importance lay. In considering the position they would take in discussion with the French Commander, the Chiefs concluded that current policy needed revision. On 14 September they recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the National Security Council make a review.[34]

An advance in JCS thinking was implicit in the position paper adopted for the talks. One of the items in their paper read: "It would be in the United States security interests to take military action short of the actual employment of ground forces in Indochina to prevent the fall of that country to Communism." This statement was a modification of the policy that no United States armed forces would be committed in Indochina other than air and naval forces required to aid in a French evacuation of Tonkin. It was followed by another important paragraph:

> If the Chinese Communist Government intervened in Indochina overtly, appropriate action by U.S./U.N. forces might include the following:
>
> (1) A blockade of the China coast by air and naval forces with concurrent military action against selected targets held by Communist China, all without commitment of United States ground forces in China or Indochina; and
>
> (2) Eventually the possible participation of Chinese Nationalist forces in the action.[35]

The ideas in this paragraph were not new. For months the Joint Chiefs had considered them in connection with the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea. Since July, however, the opening of armistice negotiation in Korea had given the concepts increasing importance, for the conclusion of an armistice would release strong communist forces that might be directed against Indochina. Taken together, the paper provided a basis for a review of United States Indochina policy, and the ideas behind it were eventually included in the National Security Council's study that superseded NSC 64 nine months later.

The conversations between de Lattre and Defense Department officials were for the most part about the aid program for Indochina. A good deal of time was spent in explaining the limitations, such as those imposed by congressional appropriations, under which the MDAP operated. Procedures for administering the program were agreed upon. General de Lattre had brought with him a list of items badly needed in Indochina: trucks, combat vehicles, signal equipment, and automatic weapons. General Collins promised delivery by 1 January, provided shipping was available, of all of the ground force items on the list except 2,700 radios, only one-fourth of which could be provided. The United States Government, General Collins assured de Lattre, would do all it could for Indochina and would attempt to make deliveries as early as possible.[36]

General de Lattre put forth the thesis that the conflicts in Korea and Indochina were actually one war and should be fought as such. The implications of his theory were that there should be a single command for both and a single logistical organization under which requirements of the Indochina war would have equal priority with those of Korea. He was unable to convince American officials or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who told the Secretary of Defense (since 17 September, Robert A. Lovett) that while they recognized the two wars as "but two manifestations of the same ideological conflict between the USSR and the Western World.... It would be wholly unacceptable... to attempt, under existing circumstances, to integrate the forces of the Western World engaged in the two wars...."[37]

De Lattre's visit had other effects; he succeeded in dramatizing for the American people the issues of the Indochinese war. He painted a rosy picture proclaiming that the Associated States were indeed independent, that France had abandoned all rights and privileges but was retaining the risks and burdens of the war, that the governments of the Associated States were gaining in popular support, and that popular elections would be held as soon as the military situation permitted. Nevertheless, his statements were not unwelcome to the United States Government, since they helped to justify, in the public mind, government support for the French and Indochinese.

The controlled Indochinese press extolled the general's trip to Washington as a tremendous victory for French policy. The legation reported:

> De Lattre was also credited with being successful in his presentation in the United States of the "one war (Korea and Indochina) in the Far East"

> theme, press accounts made it appear that his visit had resulted in a vast increase and acceleration of shipments of arms and materiel for Indochina. . . .
>
> De Lattre also issued a rather flamboyant open letter to Bao Dai in which he claimed to have radically changed American thinking about Indochina, with the implication that all aid programs would now be very greatly stepped up.[38]

The French statements were greatly exaggerated; no basic change in American policy, or in the aid program, had occurred. Some adjustments in the administration of the MDAP relative to Indochina had been made, and delivery of certain critical items was speeded up. General de Lattre departed from Washington in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, and there was considerable disappointment in the American capital at the news of his death in January.

Inter-Allied Military Conferences

One of the few recommendations of the Singapore Conference realized in 1951 was the institution of tripartite intelligence conferences in Southeast Asia. In the first of these conferences United States officers participated as "observers." At the end of August the Joint Chiefs of Staff had informed the British and French Chiefs of Staff by memorandum that they were willing "to direct U.S. intelligence officer participation in joint meetings with the French and British Armed Forces Intelligence Staffs in Saigon and Singapore on a regular basis. . . ." The British made arrangements for an initial conference in October, to which the French agreed. At first the JCS declined to take part in this meeting, considering it premature, but since the British felt committed to meet with the French, they consented. As they regarded certain items in the proposed agenda as beyond the competence of such a conference, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CINCPAC to designate a representative to attend only as an observer. They did not want this representative to subscribe to or aid in preparing "agreed estimates" that might bind them in the future.[39]

The conference met in Saigon on 9-10 November. American armed services attachés stationed in the various Southeast Asian capitals and an officer of the Far East Air Force attended, along with the official representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Captain E. T. Layton, USN, designated by CINCPAC. Both British and French were disappointed that the Americans were not there as full participants. But Admiral Radford, in forwarding the report of the conference to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarked that "as observers the U.S. delegation met the objectives of the conference, i.e., 'the further exchange of information,'" and recommended that the observer status be continued for future meetings.

The information revealed at the Saigon Conference was not startling to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A member of the French delegation presented an estimate of the situation but gave no data on French plans of operations. His conclusions were

interesting because of their moderate optimism, in contrast to recent estimates of General de Lattre, who had been publicly predicting an end to the war in as few as fifteen months if China did not interfere. The French delegation expected no "spectacular change in the situation, but only slow suffocation of the moral and armed strengths of the Viet Minh." The conference was on the whole successful, and "some sound and valuable information" was exchanged. It made the delegates aware of each other's problems and procedural shortcomings that could be remedied in future meetings.[40]

In late autumn it was becoming apparent that the British and French Governments were not satisfied with United States interpretations of the results of the Singapore Conference. The disagreement rested on a basic conflict. The British and French wanted an overall strategy for the defense of Southeast Asia closely coordinated between the three powers by some sort of tripartite organization. They wanted to have the United States more deeply committed to the defense of the area than American policies would allow. The United States held that cooperation should be achieved through existing mechanisms and strove to avoid any commitment in Southeast Asia that might limit its military flexibility in the event of a global war.

Early in November the British Government surfaced the issue in an aide-memoire addressing the Chinese threat in Southeast Asia. The British position was that

> 2. That part of the Singapore Report dealing with operational aspects made it clear that in the event of Chinese invasion of South East Asia considerable reinforcements would be required for successful resistance and that these could only come from outside the area. The provision of such reinforcements involves priorities that could only be settled in the light of an agreed tripartite policy for the defence of South East Asia and the relation of that defence to global strategy.
>
> 3. His Majesty's Government believes that a meeting of the United Kingdom, United States and French Chiefs of Staff to formulate such a policy and to make recommendations to the three Governments would be desirable. They consider that the forthcoming Meeting of the N.A.T.O. Military Committee in Rome affords a convenient opportunity for such a meeting. . . .[41]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted nothing to do with the suggested meeting. "In effect," they wrote the Secretary of Defense, "this proposal by the British reopens the entire question of the establishment of a single military organization for the strategic direction of the armed forces of the Western World in a global war." They would not agree to the formation of such an authority "even by implication" at this time. Not only would it superimpose another structure over the NATO command organization but it would also be premature, it would be labeled warmongering, and, since the USSR did not seem intent on global war at this time, it was unnecessary. Furthermore, the alignment of the Western nations and their contributions in a future conflict was not rigidly fixed and could not be forecast with sufficient accuracy to justify an immediate decision on a future command organization. The

JCS declined the invitation, but added that they would not object to conversations restricted to economic and political matters affecting Southeast Asia.[42]

At the end of November, when General Bradley attended the NATO meeting in Rome, the British and French strongly urged him to agree to tripartite discussion between the Chiefs of Staff on the Singapore Report. They proposed to hold a conference in Washington early in January. Despite his protest that the JCS thought a meeting unnecessary, they asked him to have the matter reconsidered when he returned to the United States.[43] This he did, and on 28 December the Joint Chiefs changed their minds, assented to a conference with the provision that the discussions would involve no commitment on their part. They issued invitations for a meeting in Washington; the meeting was in session when the news of General de Lattre's death arrived on 11 January.[44]

By the end of 1951 other agencies of the American Government had joined the Joint Chiefs of Staff in calling for a review of United States policy toward Indochina.[45] Almost half a year was to pass, however, before the President and the National Security Council formally approved a new policy. Nevertheless, the ideas that prompted the Joint Chiefs to urge a revision appeared in JCS actions and planning even before the new National Security Council decision was made and affected their participation in the Washington Conference.

Progress of Aid to Indochina

During the first four months of 1951 MDAP aid flowed to Indochina at a constant rate, averaging over 10,000 long tons per month exclusive of aircraft and vessels delivered under their own power. In May, however, shipments fell off sharply and the average monthly tonnage unloaded at Saigon from July through September was only 4,147 long tons. The lowest point was reached in October, when only 1,772 long tons of MDAP cargo were received in Indochina.[46]

In May the French and Vietnamese began to express considerable anxiety over the delay of expected shipments for the National Army. A seven months delay in its activation schedule was attributed to this cause by the Vietnamese government. From Saigon the United States legation reported:

> ... In assessing the matter at the end of the month [May] it was determined that out of 34 planned battalions—of which 27 already exist—only eight battalions had been fully equipped and three partially equipped, whereas 16 battalions have been activated with only equipment supplied from French reserve. The final 7 battalions, which are to be activated by February, apparently have little prospect of obtaining army equipment from the FY 1951 program. In the Legation's opinion this is a serious situation since ultimate solution of the entire Indochinese problem is strongly dependent on accelerating the development of an adequate Vietnamese national army.[47]

French concern about the slow arrival of MDAP equipment culminated in General de Lattre's complaints to American officials during his visit in September.

Their dissatisfaction had a reasonable basis. MDAP shipments had been lagging behind schedule, and not only those slated for Indochina but those programmed for other nations as well. In October Secretary Lovett listed for President Truman the reasons why deliveries had been sluggish during the preceding eight months. "One important factor," he wrote, "has been the indefinite extent and nature of the total program which the Defense Department was to undertake when related to the amount of funds that would be available for its implementation." In addition, there was a shortage of machine tools, "spot shortages" of some critical materials, strikes in important industries, some shortage of production capacity and of skilled personnel, and a lack of experience in producing newly developed items of equipment.[48] Efforts were being made to correct this situation with the result that equipment shortages in Indochina were considerably lessened in 1952. The French admitted, among themselves, that in 1952, owing to United States aid, "the supply situation became virtually sound and the services could . . . claim to function normally."[49] Yet the French continued to complain about deficiencies in the aid program.

The extraordinary measures taken by the Defense Department to speed deliveries after the de Lattre visit caused the shipments to Indochina to increase greatly. In November 25,200 measurement tons of cargo were shipped and during December 30,050 measurement tons. This tempo was maintained generally throughout the following year.[50]

The magnitude of the United States contribution is indicated by the MDAP Status Report for December, which contained a resume of the shipments of items listed as critical by General de Lattre in September. As of 31 December, of 4,500 general purpose vehicles requested, 2,977 trucks and 854 trailers had been shipped or were in port awaiting shipment; of 300 combat vehicles, 40 had left port and 205 were at port awaiting shipment; 600 radio sets had been shipped; and of 8,900 machine guns, 4,172 had been shipped and 4,743 were in port awaiting shipment. A total of 30 LCMs, 36 LCVPs, 26 Coast Guard Patrol Craft, and 1 LST had left the United States for Indochina. In January 1952 FECOM stocks were levied upon for 622 additional trucks; by the end of the month the bulk of the items on General de Lattre's list had been shipped.[51]

As of the end of 1951, since the beginning of the MDAP program for Indochina, 260,045 measurement tons of supplies, valued at $163.6 million, had been shipped. A total of $320.1 million had been programmed, and this figure was to rise in January 1952 to $460 million.[52]

By mid-1951 the economic aid (ECA) program administered by the United States STEM in Saigon was making itself felt in support of the military effort. Funds were provided for road construction and improvement (over $3 million); for the purchase of earthmoving equipment and asphalt for the improvement of

airstrips; and for the procurement of medical supplies, marine engines and ferries, tin plate used in canning army rations, and many other items directly or indirectly aiding the armed services. In addition, STEM was taking care of civilian needs, such as housing and medical facilities, important to civilian, and to army, morale. In fighting disease and social unrest the ECA program was contributing to the battle against communism in the Associated States.[53]

The year had begun auspiciously for Franco-American relations in Indochina. MDAP materiel had furnished the substance for General de Lattre's defensive victories and the High Commissioner had proven grateful. But as the ECA program developed there was a resurgence of French suspicion and jealousy of Americans in Indochina. Noting the reappearance of French distrust, the legation in Saigon attributed it to an upsurge of old colonial phobias, to the professional jealousy of military men, to fear of losing prestige, and to exaggerated fears that American participation in the military effort might stimulate Communist Chinese retaliation.[54] While these feelings were directed much less toward MDAP and MAAG than toward STEM, they limited the freedom of action afforded General Brink's group. There was no question, however, of a return to the antagonistic attitude toward MAAG of the pre-de Lattre days.

The chief target of French suspicions was STEM since this agency dealt directly with the governments of the Associated States and not through the French. Also, the publicity given STEM's work had resulted in a growth of American prestige in Indochina. An event symptomatic of the French state of mind occurred in June, when a United States–Vietnamese Economic Assistance Agreement was scheduled for signing. The French interposed some rather artificial objections at the last minute delaying completion of the agreement until September. When an American news story ascribed the delay to the French, General de Lattre responded with a "rather irritated" press release.[55] During his visit to Washington, the High Commissioner indicated he had not been happy, early in 1951, about "a number of young men with a 'missionary zeal' [who] were dispensing economic aid with the result that there was a feeling on the part of some that they were using this aid to extend American influence." He added, however, that his relations with the economic mission had since become much better.[56] But French suspicion persisted.

As the year ended another disquieting note was introduced into Franco–American relations as they concerned MDAP in Indochina. In its report for December the legation in Saigon informed the State Department:

> As the difficulties of the military situation here increased [as a result of the Hoa Binh offensive], the Legation has noted the disturbing tendency of both the French high officials and medium-level bureaucrats to misrepresent the volume and timing of American military aid deliveries. The theme has been "too little and too late." Mr. MASSOT and M. DUPONT, who are members of Parliament and shortly to visit Viet Nam, have made statements in the French Assembly to this effect. The Minister for the AS, M. LETOURNEAU, is himself

> responsible for the statement that by the end of the year only 43 shiploads of war material had been delivered to IC amounting to some 70,000 tons and valued at somewhere about 60 million francs. Actually, some 93 ships had offloaded in the ports of IC with a total tonnage approximately 90,000 tons with a value many times that cited by the French.
>
> Appropriate steps were taken at MAAG conferences with the French General Staff to induce these officers, who very well know the actual amount of deliveries, to correct misstatements and prevent further publication of tendentious and erroneous articles.[57]

The implications of this report were made explicit in the report for the following month:

> there was an intensification of the trend noticed last month for the French to exculpate themselves in advance of a deteriorating military situation by criticizing the amount and timeliness of American aid.[58]

There was no justification for the misrepresentations described in the legation reports. These pronouncements affected the atmosphere in which the assistance program was conducted.Despite the vastly increased rate of MDAP deliveries in the last two months of 1951, the aid program for the year was not entirely successful. During a considerable part of the period the flow of materiel was behind schedule. Although the history of the Indochina war indicates that the delay in activation of some National Army battalions did not affect the final outcome, those battalions might have done more in 1952 and 1953 had they received the lost months of training. On the whole, however, the United States had done fairly well and it must be remembered that in 1951 the men fighting in Korea had first call on American equipment. The "limited war" was also a limiting war.

Aside from the impact on morale of de Lattre's death, the situation in Indochina seemed to have changed little. There was a tradition in the French armed forces of giving great emphasis to morale. Had de Lattre lived some of the operations of the French Union Forces in Indochina would have been carried out with more drive and might have had a better chance of success. But the failure of the National Army to take form was but one more symptom of the underlying weakness of the French position. Undoubtedly American aid had made a difference. But unless the French could find more troops, or invigorate the Vietnamese and win over the peasants, it was difficult to see how they could end the war.

General of the Army Omar N. Bradley (second from the left), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, holds a meeting in the Pentagon. *Left to right:* General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Chief of Staff, US Air Force; General of the Army Bradley; Lt General Charles P. Cabell, Director, Joint Staff; General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, US Army; Major General Clyde D. Eddelman, Assistant Chief of Staff, G–3, Operations, US Army; Admiral William M. Fechteler, Chief of Naval Operations; Vice Admiral James Fife, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Operations); General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commandant, US Marine Corps; and Major General Walter W. Wensinger, Deputy Chief of Staff, US Marine Corps.

25 November 1952

6

The Truman Administration's Struggle, 1952

A conference of the Chiefs of Staff of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States convened at Washington on 11 January 1952, the day of de Lattre's death in France. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had hoped to avoid the meeting, but the issue of how to deal with the Chinese communist threat to Indochina was clearly stated. The Americans were reluctant to use their forces in defending the ground anywhere in Southeast Asia. The JCS could not foresee that truce talks in Korea would not produce a cease-fire for another year and a half; they were concerned that the fighting might move to Indochina. Then in February 1952 the NATO meeting at Lisbon, Portugal, committed the allies to the buildup in Europe, to include arming the West Germans. Neither the French nor the Americans could envision sending more men to fight in Indochina.

American policy turned to deterring the Chinese from intervening in the Indochina war; if deterrence failed, the Joint Chiefs favored action directly against Communist China. NSC 124/2, adopted in June 1952, authorized planning for such operations. The British and French feared provoking the Communists and consensus proved impossible. But even without overt Chinese intervention, the prospects for French success in Indochina seemed slim. Neither the military nor the political situation was much improved, and the French public was showing signs of losing faith in the war. However, American aid had eased the war's burden on France's economy.

The Military Situation in Indochina

Time was on the side of the communists. But the Viet Minh forces were not growing so fast that they would soon be able to crush the French. French and

Vietnamese regular troops outnumbered the Viet Minh regulars. They had superior equipment and were supported by air and naval forces to which the rebels could offer little active opposition. In addition, they held well-fortified positions that could not be easily overrun. But in France the people and the government were becoming weary of a war that seemed without end. If the war could not be won quickly in Indochina, it might be lost in France.

De Lattre's successor was General Raoul Salan. Conservative, and defensive-minded, Salan conducted the war with a "barbed-wire strategy" reminiscent of the First World War. His concept of operations seems to have been to fortify strong points and wait for the enemy to attack them in the hope of inflicting many more casualties on the attackers than his own forces suffered. In 1952, he had enough success to keep his strategy from being discredited. But the Viet Minh usually held the initiative.

Unlike General de Lattre, General Salan was not the High Commissioner. The duties of that office were given to Jean Letourneau, who as Minister Resident also retained his position in the French Cabinet as Minister for the Associated States. The French Government returned to the system that had worked so poorly prior to 1951, dividing responsibility in Indochina between a civil administrator and a military commander.[1]

The new French Commander entered under distressing circumstances. He had to contend with a decline in morale following the death of de Lattre, whom many had regarded as the one man who could bring the war to a successful end. Salan had to give up Hoa Binh and acknowledge failure of the one strategically offensive operation undertaken by the French since the autumn of 1950. In addition, he had to fight in the shadow of what the French were convinced was a growing threat of Chinese Communist intervention. According to a US intelligence estimate of August 1952, "The French [were] apprehensive that substantial French victories would bring about such intervention, with which the French, because of their limited capabilities, would be unable to cope."[2]

Viet Minh attacks against the French position at Hoa Binh had been accompanied by extensive infiltration of the Tonkin Delta area. In February, when the French evacuated Hoa Binh, this infiltration grew to serious proportions and occasioned the heaviest fighting since 1950. The French employed mobile units against the Viet Minh forces within the delta perimeter and by July had restored the area to a relatively calm condition. Reportedly, they had crippled one Viet Minh division and inflicted severe losses on other units.[3]

During the late summer the French undertook two limited operations south of the delta against an isolated enemy regiment that produced a large number of Viet Minh casualties but did not annihilate the regiment. In the meantime Ho Chi Minh's main forces reportedly were being reorganized and put through a course of training, including combined maneuvers, in preparation for the fall campaign.[4]

When dry weather appeared at the end of September, General Salan was in a position to attack, and possibly to defeat, the Viet Minh regular forces. He had a substantial numerical superiority (about 26,000). He could dispose of superior equipment, firepower, mobility, and air support. He could operate on interior lines, backed by the fortifications of the delta perimeter. He knew, in general, the strength and disposition of his enemy. But he did not take the initiative.

Early in October the communist forces began attacking French outposts in the Tai country west and north of the delta. The area was of secondary importance, and the French believed that these attacks were diversions to draw friendly forces outside the perimeter. Between 10 and 15 October, however, concerted attacks drove in the outposts of the fortified position at Nghia Lo, which fell to the Viet Minh on 18 October. The French Command decided to fortify a strong position in the path of the enemy advance and await attack. It concentrated its forces at Na San and flew in reinforcements from the delta. After fighting a delaying action along the Black River, the French completed their concentration on 20 November.

Meanwhile, opportunity knocked for the second time on the French door. On 29 October, General Salan had launched a column from the delta northwest along the east side of the Red River. This force cut across the Viet Minh lines of communication, destroying about five hundred tons of supplies. But once astride the enemy lines of communication, the French column withdrew, burdened by a long supply line under constant harassment.

The attack on Na San began on 24 November and ended nine days later when the Viet Minh withdrew, having suffered severe casualties (over 1,500 counted dead). From the French point of view this was a successful battle. But the CINCPAC staff concluded that the battle had contributed little toward ending the war and that the defense-minded French Command had thrown away a chance to fight a decisive battle under favorable circumstances.[5] Except for the region around Na San, the Viet Minh remained in possession of the territory that was a psychological and political victory for the communists.

The autumn campaign in Tonkin convinced many American officials that unless some fairly drastic change was made in the French conduct of the war there would be a prolonged period of stalemate in Indochina during which the French–Vietnamese situation might well deteriorate. Two solutions were put forward. The first was to persuade the French to adopt and carry out an aggressive plan of campaign aimed at a decisive defeat of Viet Minh forces. The second was to persuade them to give their commanders sufficient forces, preferably by raising the number of Vietnamese regular units, so that Salan might be enticed to strike a massive blow at the enemy. During the following year both solutions were tried.

By the end of 1952, the military outlook in Indochina was dreary, and the political scene was no brighter. The government of Bao Dai had little more popular support than it had enjoyed in January and had few prospects for gaining support. Its appeal was not strengthened by the appointment in April of Letourneau as Minister

Resident; Letourneau regarded the independence of Viet Nam as already complete and opposed any major revision of the 8 March Accords.[6]

On 2 June, in an effort to obtain a government with a broader base of popular and regional representation, the cabinet of Tran Van Huu was replaced by one under Nguyen Van Tam. Unfortunately, Tam was a French citizen and an ardent French supporter, more closely identified with French policies than Huu. The new Premier's many promises were received with skepticism. He installed the Provisional National Council, ostensibly a representative assembly, but he handpicked the members. The council played no important role in Vietnamese affairs and never gained popular support. Tam did neither the Bao Dai government nor the French any good.[7]

The state of affairs in Vietnam is illustrated by the April MDAP report from Saigon.

> Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Defense declared that Government has decided not to call up the fourth increment of conscripts in order that funds and present cadres could be used in accelerating the formation of two additional regular VN divisions to make a total of six by the end of 1952. He added that the draft is in any case not a primary source of manpower for the Army in view of the fact that there are sufficient volunteers and enlistees to create a regular army of any size required, provided sufficient funds and material are provided. He referred significantly to the uselessness of training conscripts only to have them defect to, or be kidnapped by, the Viet Minh. . . .[8]

In the opinion of the Vietnamese government the national mobilization had not succeeded.

The situation in Indochina did not seem hopeless to the American Government, but the word "stalemate" appeared more frequently in reports from Saigon, in intelligence estimates, and in conversations among United States officials. American planners sought to prevent the entry of Communist China, and to strengthen friendly forces so that the stalemate could be broken.

Development of American Policy toward Indochina

This period witnessed the development of four important trends in the Indochinese war as it affected United States policy. First, Washington together with Paris and Saigon became a center of political and military strategic planning for the war. The vital military aid program was determined in the US capital and numerous consultations between American, British, and French officials were held there. Second, the United States was drawn into closer cooperation with the British and French on the problems of the area. Fearing that this might lead to a combined command or to increased American responsibility in the Indochinese conflict, the JCS protested with little success. Third, the threat of Communist Chinese intervention began to dwarf other factors in the Southeast Asian picture; the French

seemed obsessed with this danger. Finally, French resolve began to crack under the triple burden of the Indochinese war, European rearmament, and the chronic instability of its government. By no means ignored in United States planning, rapid progress of this trend was not generally foreseen.

These trends were operating on United States policy as the tripartite Chiefs of Staff conference met in Washington on 11 January. The Joint Chiefs of Staff went into it ready to discuss implementing the recommendations of the Singapore Report and to exchange views with the British and French on ways to fight the extension of communism in Southeast Asia. However, the problem that received the most attention was deterring Chinese Communist aggression, particularly in Indochina.

General Juin, the spokesman for the French delegation, assured the conferees that the French could hold their present positions in Vietnam against the Viet Minh; he was, however, alarmed about the possibility of a Communist Chinese invasion of Tonkin. He was joined by the British, who feared for Burma and Malaya should Tonkin fall. Despite intelligence reports about extensive construction and repair work on Chinese lines of communication leading into Indochina, the Joint Intelligence Committee had advised the JCS that such an invasion did not seem imminent.[9] The Joint Chiefs, however, felt that the possibility justified consideration of deterrent measures.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff took the view that Chinese Communist aggression was coordinated, and Indochina was linked to Korea. The United States Government had already been discussing with other participants in the Korean conflict a statement, to be issued on the signing of a Korean armistice, warning Peiping that a renewal of aggression in Korea would bring a United Nations reaction not necessarily confined to the peninsula. When the idea of issuing a similar warning against aggression in Southeast Asia was broached, the JCS agreed with the British and French to recommend this measure to their governments.[10]

The conference then considered what to do if such a warning was issued and then ignored by the Chinese Communists. Use of atomic bombs was mentioned, and the Joint Chiefs raised the possibilities of naval blockade of the China coast and employment of Chinese Nationalist forces. The delegates turned the problem of determining the form of retaliation over to an ad hoc committee representing the three powers, plus Australia, and New Zealand, who since September 1951 had been allied with the United States in the Tripartite Security Pact (ANZUS). The ad hoc committee was to:

> a. Determine the collective capabilities of the nations represented on the committee that could be made available for retaliation;
>
> b. Make recommendations for eventual transmission to Governments through the respective Chiefs of Staff as to what specific military measures might be taken as a collective effort against the Chinese Communists not only in threatened areas but also directly against China.[11]

General Juin was not satisfied; he wanted a commitment for air and naval support in the event the Chinese Communists should invade Tonkin before the warning was issued. General Bradley replied that this was a government decision that the United States had not yet made, altough it was evaluating the situation in Southeast Asia. The Chiefs of Staff turned to implementing the report of the Singapore Conference. The agreements reached during the remainder of the discussions may be summarized briefly. The United States delegates to the Tripartite Intelligence Conferences on Southeast Asia would attend as participating members rather than as observers. Further the United States would exchange information with the British concerning shipping and contraband bound for the communists in Southeast Asia and China. The United States refused, however, to participate in establishing a supply base for the French at Singapore or to alter the machinery of the MAAG.[12]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department realized that it would be some time before the warning contemplated at the Washington Conference could be issued. They had to wait for the ad hoc committee to complete its work, and political decision would require lengthy government consideration. They did agree that the earlier a warning was issued, the better.[13]

If, pending a political agreement, the United States Government was not free unilaterally to threaten retaliation, a less drastic warning could be given. Thus, on 28 January, Mr. John Sherman Cooper, United States delegate to the UN General Assembly, solemnly announced to the Assembly's Committee I (Political and Security):

> At this time I must, on instructions of my Government, state clearly that any... Communist aggression in Southeast Asia would, in the view of my Government, be a matter of direct and grave concern which would require the most urgent and earnest consideration by the United Nations.[14]

This statement did not commit the United States to an armed reaction against a Chinese Communist attack in Indochina. It did imply that such an attack might meet a United Nations effort similar to the defense of Korea.

On 5 February the United States representative on the ad hoc committee, Vice Admiral A. C. Davis, submitted the report of the committee to the JCS. His analysis of the report and of the discussions in the committee revealed more about the individual national positions than the report. The British and French had been unwilling to "meet the terms of reference," which required recommendations on retaliatory action against a Chinese Communist aggression by the governments of the five powers. Instead, they decided that decisive retaliatory action should not be taken and that military measures should be aimed at defending the area attacked. Both the British and French opposed the blockade of the Chinese coast advocated by the United States. Both had opposed bombing China except in direct support of operations close to that part of the border over which the Communist Chinese armies were attacking. Their opposition reflected their assumptions that blockade and bombing would be impractical and ineffectual.

The French position was based on a desire to prevent forces from being diverted outside Indochina; the French wanted all the aid and commitments they could get to deal with their immediate problem in Tonkin. The British position indicated an intention to avoid any measures that might unduly irritate Peiping or Moscow. The British wished to defend Hong Kong and Indochina, but not to take any drastic action against Communist China itself.[15] In the report of the ad hoc committee the British member said that blockade would ruin Hong Kong economically if it did not lead to its fall, while there was little doubt that bombing China would cause retaliatory action against the colony. All delegates agreed to reject "the use of Chinese Nationalist Forces in their present state of training and equipment... [as] inadvisable and unlikely to cause the Chinese Communists to desist from their aggressive action." The use of atomic weapons was not mentioned; Admiral Davis had been instructed by the JCS not to consider them.

Despite their knowledge of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's aversion to a combined command for Southeast Asia, the British and French members inserted in the report a plea for the joint implementation of agreed military measures. The United States member registered his opposition. In his analysis Admiral Davis remarked,

> ...the British and French are determined to persist in their desire to set up a form of combined command in the Southeast Asia area. In the Ad Hoc Committee report this intention is toned down... but the original draft on this point as proposed by the British, together with attendant discussion, indicates that they think any direct support operations by us should come under the French in Indochina and under the British in Hong Kong.... it seems to me that... they would like not only to determine what we shall do with our own forces in the event of our taking military action with respect to the Southeast Asia problem, but also to command our forces while these limited actions are being taken.[16]

In Admiral Davis' opinion the committee had accomplished little. He was convinced that the British and French had expressed themselves on the basis of firm national positions, and that their governments would not support the views of the United States. The time had come to "firm up some sort of Defense-State position before engaging in further argument on the strictly military level."' The work of the ad hoc committee had put the British, French, and American Chiefs of Staff no nearer to agreement on the form of retaliation against Chinese Communist aggression; their basic differences would have to be resolved before the contemplated warning could be issued. The JCS did not need to be reminded that the United States required a new policy toward Southeast Asia as a basis for negotiations. The subject of study by the NSC staff since late in 1951, such a policy was about to emerge and the Joint Chiefs decided to wait for a decision on it before further military talks with the British and French on Southeast Asia.

The initial draft of the new policy toward Southeast Asia, NSC 124, was submitted by the NSC staff on 13 February. As it applied to Indochina, it was directed

more toward countering a possible invasion by the Chinese Communists than toward helping the French and Vietnamese to win their struggle in Tonkin. The measures recommended for use in the event of overt communist aggression were tied either to the framework of the United Nations or to joint action with the British and French.[17]

In their comments on the NSC draft the JCS pointed out that the British and French had opposed the concept of military action against China other than in an area of aggression. Without military measures directed against China the local defense of Indochina would have, in the JCS' opinion, no reasonable chance of success. Unless the National Security Council could give assurance that at least the British and French would agree to such measures, the new policy should provide for unilateral action by the United States to save Southeast Asia; on this basis the Joint Chiefs could make reasonable plans and determine their costs and requirements.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted a political decision by the National Security Council on whether or not the United States Government, in order to save Southeast Asia from communism, was willing to take military actions that would, in effect, constitute war against Communist China. If the answer was yes the Joint Chiefs could estimate the costs of specific courses of action and the National Security Council could make decisions concerning them. The JCS alerted the National Security Council to the fact that preparations for measures in Southeast Asia could be made only at the expense of other programs, such as that for NATO, unless United States military production was stepped up and "forces in being" were increased.[18]

Several months of discussion and negotiations between the Departments of State and Defense and the NSC staff ensued. The National Security Council decided that the new statement of policy would give more attention to what the United States should do for Indochina in the current situation. On 25 June President Truman approved a revision of NSC 124 that, as NSC 124/2, included the first comprehensive United States policy toward Indochina.

In NSC 124/2 the United States Government defined the primary threat to Southeast Asia as deterioration of the situation in Indochina due to weakening of the French and Associated States Governments resolve or capability to continue opposing the Viet Minh rebellion. It recognized that defense of Tonkin was "critical" to the retention of Southeast Asia.

The administration's policy toward the whole of Southeast Asia envisioned propaganda, economic assistance, and trade as the means of winning the support of the peoples of the region. An allied warning to China against aggression in the region would depend on agreement on a common course of action. The nations in the region should be encouraged to join in their common defense; in Indochina, the French should be encouraged to remain in the fight. The United States should influence France and the Associated States with aid and encouragement while promoting the economic, political, and military development of the Associated States. The French should prepare for possible Chinese Communist intervention;

if that happened, the allies should seek help from the United Nations and seek an international response. The United States could provide air and naval support to the French in opposing the Chinese, as well as interdicting lines of communication. British assistance would be sought as well. If the British and French agreed, a blockade of China would begin together with hitting key Chinese targets (avoiding provoking the Soviet Union). If necessary, the United States would assist the British in evacuating Hong Kong and the French in evacuating Indochina. If no agreement could be reached, the NSC Council agreed that the United States should consider unilateral action.[19]

With presidential approval of NSC 124/2 the Joint Chiefs had a firm policy for planning which included consideration of unilateral action against a Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. On 29 August, they directed CINCPAC to make unilateral plans, which, in addition to preparing for unilateral action, would develop a United States position in the event of an agreement for allied combined planning. CINCPAC had been instructed to plan for a naval blockade of Communist China, for supporting participation of Chinese Nationalist forces in hostilities, for assisting in evacuation of the Tonkin Delta, and for military action against selected targets held by Communist China. He was now instructed:

> In order to be prepared to assist our Allies in war in defense of Indochina and approaches thereto, prepare plan for Air and Naval action against Communist Forces and for action against Chi Communist communications lines and facilities operating in support of Communist Forces.

He was to plan under three different conditions: first, that the Korean conflict was continuing and no FECOM naval forces would be available; second, that conditions in Korea would permit him to have limited naval forces from FECOM; and third, that there was an armistice in Korea and FECOM naval forces above minimum FECOM requirements could be used in Southeast Asia.[20] The plans called for in the instructions were capabilities plans, based on the forces available in the Pacific and Far Eastern areas. CINCPAC requested authority to make plans based on the requirements for the task. On 22 December the JCS instructed him to make both capabilities and requirements plans.[21]

The Five-Power Military Conference on Southeast Asia

A few days after the promulgation of NSC 124/2, United States representatives at a Tripartite Foreign Ministers Conference in London tentatively agreed to another five-power military meeting on the problem of Communist Chinese aggression in Southeast Asia. Mindful that the Five-Power Ad Hoc Committee had failed

due to the lack of agreed political assumptions, the working committee drew up a set of "provisional conclusions" which, if approved by the governments concerned, would permit the military representatives to produce a useful report. The Joint Chiefs of Staff found, however, that the "provisional conclusions" expressed chiefly British and French opposition to action against China outside the area of aggression and their desire for a combined command organization. Further, the conclusions did not fit the provisions of NSC 124/2. The JCS therefore recommended a tripartite conference of heads of state, or their representatives, and Chiefs of Staff, which could settle political and military disagreements. As a prelude, the Joint Chiefs recommended a meeting of military representatives, but only after preliminary agreement had been reached on terms of reference conforming to NSC 124/2.[22]

Once again Joint Chiefs of Staff resistance to a military meeting without agreed political guidance was overcome. At a Defense-State conference on 16 July, State Department representatives argued that a five-power military representatives conference would serve as "a step toward bringing the other powers to an acceptance of the United States concept of the solution to the problems incident to Southeast Asia" and that the terms of reference proposed by the JCS could not be made acceptable to the other four powers. The Joint Chiefs softened their position and agreed to more general terms of reference that assumed that the five powers had jointly decided to take action against Communist China in the event of further Chinese Communist aggression and that a joint warning had been issued to Peiping. The conferees were to determine the collective military capabilities that might be made available and to recommend feasible courses of action to force the Chinese Communists to cease their aggression.[23]

On 6 October, the military representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand met with the United States delegation, headed by Major General J. S. Bradley, USA, in Washington. The conferees submitted a report whose overall conclusions conformed generally to long-standing JCS positions. The representatives agreed that:

> Air, ground and naval action limited only to the areas of aggression and contiguous areas of China offers little prospect of causing Communist China to cease its aggression.
>
> The imposition of a total sea blockade, in conjunction with [such action]... might have a significant cumulative effect. This course of action offers little assurance of forcing the Chinese Communists to cease aggression.
>
> A combination of all coercive measures including the defense of the areas of aggression, interdiction of the lines of communication, a full sea blockade and air attacks on all suitable targets of military significance in China, insofar as they are within the Allied capabilities, plus such reinforcements in time and scale as may be practicable in the immediate area, offers the best prospect of causing Communist China to cease an aggression.[24]

Major General Bradley believed that these conclusions represented a step forward from positions established in the February ad hoc committee meetings, but it was apparent that agreement had been forced by the terms of reference. When the representatives had attempted to settle on the strategy against Communist China that could be undertaken with the forces available the British and French had displayed the same interests, attitudes, and fears described by Admiral Davis in February. Australia and New Zealand adhered in general to the United Kingdom position. Without agreement at a high political level, or a decided change in United States policy, further five-power military talks on Southeast Asia would serve no useful purpose.[25]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed with Bradley's opinion that further five-power military meetings were useless without agreed political guidance; they were encouraged, however, by the conference report. They recommended amending NSC 124/2 to provide for securing assent "under the auspices of the United Nations or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and any other friendly government" for undertaking the "combination of all coercive actions" in the report to stop Chinese Communist aggression and that the report be used to secure international agreement on those actions.

Turning to another item in the conference report, the Joint Chiefs told Secretary Lovett that the French should be encouraged to increase and speed the development of native armies and supporting facilities in Indochina. The five-power military representatives had concluded that the forces in Tonkin could not halt a massive Chinese attack. Under existing circumstances large-scale reinforcements that could arrive in time to stop an invading army would have to come from United States forces in the Pacific and Far East. Basing facilities for United States air and ground forces were lacking in Indochina, and commitment of these forces in that area would reduce capabilities for direct action against Communist China. The JCS solution was to build up indigenous combat forces to meet the threat; the French should be assisted and encouraged in carrying out this course of action.[26]

Like the Ad Hoc Committee Report, the Five-Power Conference Report expressed British and French desire for a staff agency to coordinate the planning of the five powers in Southeast Asia. It also contained the position of the United States delegation that CINCPAC had sufficient staff to fulfill the United States obligation to cooperate in the area. The Joint Chiefs let the issue rest until French and State Department pressure revived it.[27]

Early in December the French Government urged the United States participation in a liaison group drawn from the staffs of the British, French, and American commanders in Southeast Asia. The French projected liaison, rather than planning or operating, functions for the group. In passing the French proposal to the JCS, the State Department expressed the view that "it would be advantageous to increase the effectiveness of military liaison arrangements among the countries which have military interests or commitments in Southeast Asia."[28] The Joint

Chiefs agreed to the establishment of liaison machinery in Southeast Asia with three conditions. First, it should permit participation "on an on-call and need to know basis," not only by each of the five powers but by additional Southeast Asian countries. Second, it should allow representatives of participating nations to communicate with representatives of one or more other nations in person or through liaison officers. Coordination should be accomplished on a bilateral basis whenever possible. Finally, it should not establish a formal body; there would be no regular meetings or a permanent chair.[29] On 27 February 1953 the Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed CINCPAC to invite the principal local military commanders of the other four powers to send representatives to a meeting to discuss liaison arrangements, including coordinating national plans.[30] The Five Power Military Representatives Conference was held at Pearl Harbor in April.

The promulgation of NSC 124/2 was the most important development in United States policy toward Indochina in 1952; pursuing that policy the United States Government would become more involved in the Southeast Asian struggle against communism. However, the United States kept responsibility for the war in the hands of the French; it refused to be drawn into a combined military command in Southeast Asia; and it sidestepped participation in a purely local defense of Indochina. American representatives backed the French position on Indochina in the United Nations and in international conferences; and they assured the French Government of continued American support for France's war efforts. Furthermore, the Truman administration expanded the military aid program for Indochina and publicized its contribution to the war. When President Eisenhower entered the White House some of America's prestige rested upon French and Vietnamese success in Tonkin.

One provision of NSC 124/2, the obligation to educate the American people concerning the importance of Southeast Asia to United States security to prepare them for the courses of action contemplated by the National Security Council, was neglected during 1952. Government officials made statements on the subject; but these occasions were few in number. Study of the *New York Times* and other news media reveals no concerted effort to arouse public opinion. It may be that in an election year, with the unpopular Korean conflict at issue, the administration feared presenting the public with the prospect of another armed action. Nevertheless, the failure was important; a progress report on NSC 124/2, prepared in August 1953, noted no indication that public opinion would support a contribution to the Indochina war other than the current aid program. United States military participation would not be acceptable to the public.[31]

Development of the Aid Program during 1952

Throughout 1952 United States equipment passed in a steady stream over the docks of Saigon and Haiphong. A monthly average of approximately 21,300

measurement tons of end items were shipped, exclusive of aircraft and vessels delivered under their own power. The monetary value of this materiel was approximately $171.1 million. These deliveries brought the total of end items shipped to Indochina between June 1950 and 31 December 1952 to 539,847 measurement tons with a value of $334.7 million. As of the end of 1952 the total value of MDAP material programmed under the budgets for Fiscal Years 1950–1953 had risen to $775.7 million.[32] No breakdown of statistics on major items of equipment shipped during 1952 is available. By the end of June 1953, however, the United States had shipped to Indochina under the MDAP 1,224 tanks and combat vehicles, 20,274 transport vehicles, 120,792 small arms and machine guns, 2,847 artillery pieces, over 220 million rounds of small arms ammunition, and more than 5 million rounds of artillery ammunition. Also, 302 naval vessels and 304 naval and Air Force aircraft had been delivered.[33]

In addition to the regular MDAP end item shipments, early in 1952 the United States Government undertook a program for giving direct support to the French military budget. In the autumn of 1951 the French announced that their financial difficulties would entail a cut in dollar imports injuring their defense program and heavy industry.[34] The United States Government decided to support the French budget with $200 million by letting contracts in France, chiefly for end items to be used in Indochina; on 25 February 1952 a "memorandum of understanding" was drawn up by French and United States officials at the Lisbon meeting of the NATO Council. Under this program Indochina was to receive materiel worth $126 million, the remaining $74 million to be used in France itself; this permitted the release for Indochina of an equivalent sum from the French military budget, so that, in the French view, the entire $200 million went for the support of the war.[35]

By 31 December 1952, $127.1 million worth of Lisbon-type aid had been programmed, and $47.1 million worth had been delivered. In July the United States Government agreed to support the French Fiscal Year 1953 budget to the extent of $525 million, over half of which was MDAP funds. It is not clear what part of this sum was used for Indochina and what part for French requirements in Europe.[36]

In early March the French Government intimated that it was not satisfied with the $200 million promised at Lisbon. Without additional aid, France would have to cancel military production. In May, the Defense Minister submitted a list of heavy items that he proposed the United States finance; the cost was estimated at $623 million. The United States Government was reluctant to expend so large a sum, but did promise $186 million for the procurement of jet aircraft and ammunition. According to the MDAP Status Report for July 1952:

> The official reaction of the French to the U.S. position [was] extremely unfavorable. President Auriol . . . expressed on two occasions to the U.S. Special Representative in Europe (Ambassador William H. Draper, Jr.) his personal disappointment and said that the U.S. decision promised to create grave difficulties for France. . . . Mr. Pleven has stated that, as a result of the U.S. decision, he may have no alternative but to resign.[37]

In June 1953 French officers in Indochina admitted that because of United States aid the French taxpayer was carrying less of the burden of the war in 1953 than he had in 1952.[38]

> French complaints about lagging MDAP deliveries subsided after the first few months of 1952; during a visit to Washington in June, Letourneau expressed satisfaction with the program except in the categories of aircraft and spare parts.[39] Throughout the year these items were in short supply in Indochina, and Air Force deliveries were behind schedule; ammunition, too, was sometimes a problem.

With French complaints about shortages less strident, General Brink, and his successor, Brigadier General T. J. H. Trapnell, USA, took up the chorus. As the autumn fighting season approached, MAAG Indochina bombarded the Pentagon with requests to speed overdue deliveries. On 9 August General Trapnell sent a message to the Chief of Staff, Air Force, saying:

> Successful accomplishment of French Air Force mission of air superiority, interdiction, log opr of grd forces in Indochina is being threatened and jeopardized by lack of implementation of existing Air Force MDA programs. Generally, some C 47 maint Equip and sprares [sic] have not been dlvr under FY 50 program, 35% of line items of FY 51 consisting primarily of comm equip; acft spares and acft maint equip, 30 of 70 acft programmed under FY 52 program remain undlvr as well as the initial RG of acft spares. . . . The Army spt program curr contains no shortage items of critical nature however the Air Force program contains all above listed item.[40]

As the year wore on such messages became more frequent, and CINCPAC added his support for General Trapnell. On 27 September Secretary Lovett approved a recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff placing combat requirements for Indochina alongside requirements for Korea in first priority for allocation of equipment. In late December, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, William C. Foster, admonished the Service Secretaries:

> It has been brought to my attention, both as a result of my recent inspection trip to the Far East and by numerous communications from Department of Defense representatives and others, that the MDA Program for Indochina may not be receiving proper emphasis. Specific instances of lack of support for this Program have generally been in the area of items to support maintenance activities, spare parts and depot equipment, and in the delivery of some types of ammunition. . . .
>
> Because of the high priority assigned to the supply of materiel to Indochina, I consider that all requirements for this Program should be met on an urgent basis and that no delay in the delivery of major items of equipment, spare parts to support this equipment, and ammunition should be permitted by any of the Military Departments. . . .[41]

General Trapnell reported that, as of 1 January 1953, Army and Navy deliveries were generally in good order, but the Air Force MDAP stood as follows:[42]

Program	% Complete
FY 50	97
FY 51	67
FY 52	22
FY 53	0

The lag in deliveries was attributed in part to improper planning by the French and the MAAG in Indochina, but a good share of the responsibility was the Military Departments' for not emphasizing the program.[43] French inefficiency contributed to the constant shortage of spare parts. Poor organization, poor training, lack of personnel, lack of an inspection system, no stock control system for spare parts, and lack of an aggressive attitude in correcting malpractices hampered French maintenance activities. These factors raised the French usage of spare parts to much-too-high a level according to American standards.[44]

During his June visit, Letourneau asked for immediate shipment of aircraft already programmed and for additional aircraft, including transport, fighter, and light bomber types. Air Force officers, however, believed that the greatest French need was to improve the utilization rate of those aircraft they already had. The French were using their C–47s only thirty-five hours per month, whereas the United States standard was one hundred hours monthly; French rates for fighters and bombers were similarly low. The Air Force declined to furnish more than ten out of sixty-nine B–26s requested by the French for Fiscal Year 1953. It refused to supply ten additional C–47s until the French had justified them. It turned down a request for a squadron of C–119s because Air Force officers thought the French were not prepared to maintain them. Finally, a request for jet fighters was refused on the grounds that the French Air Forces were unopposed in Indochinese skies. The United States representatives did agree to maintain four French fighter squadrons by replacing worn-out F–6Fs with F–8Fs and by providing attrition aircraft.[45]

But these decisions were not final, even for 1952. On 14 August General Trapnell cabled that the French High Command was planning offensive operations for the fall campaign that required dropping three paratroop battalions in each operation. To carry out their plan, the French would require additional transport planes. The Department of Defense decided that the French could use fifty additional C–47s. These aircraft were in short supply in the United States, but a solution was worked out in a conference among Army, Air Force, Department of State, and Department of Defense officials. Nine C–47s were provided from France, twenty were diverted from the MDAP allotment to Belgium, and twenty-one were lent by the US Air Force for about four months on Memorandum Receipt.[46] When these

transfers were accomplished, the French were short of C–47s for crew training in France; the Department of Defense lent them four additional planes.[47]

The planned offensive in Indochina was cancelled and the fifty C–47s provided airlift in support of the Na San defense. They were used so frequently that the limited French ground crews were unable to maintain them. The French asked that 150 US Air Force mechanics be sent to Indochina for one month to perform fifty and one hundred hour checks on C–47s; both General Trapnell and Ambassador Heath backed the request. The United States sent a mobile maintenance team of about twenty-eight men from the Far East Air Force (FEAF) to perform direct maintenance on C–47s being used by the French forces. It told "all concerned" that it was only a temporary augmentation of the MAAG to train French ground crews and ensure the early return of the C–47s on loan; the men were to be withdrawn at the earliest possible date.[48]

United States participation in training of the Associated States armies was considered seriously for the first time. On 8 April the Service Secretaries recommended to Secretary Lovett a program "whereby an expanded MAAG would undertake the training and equiping of a national army capable at least of preserving internal security."[49] An offer of assistance in training was made; but as Secretary of State Acheson remarked:

> the French, always skittish over what they might regard as undue American interference, [did not take] up this offer. Certainly it is not up to the Americans to press on the French assistance along these lines.[50]

Although the MDA Program left something to be desired, the United States, by the end of 1952, had given the French in Indochina equipment for ground, naval, and air forces far superior to that in the hands of the Viet Minh. Despite the hampering of air operations by shortages of planes and spare parts, the French forces would probably not have done much better had those shortages not existed. Wedded to his barbed-wire entanglements, General Salan often used his air force as a defensive arm. More French aircraft would have meant more Viet Minh casualties at Na San and the Black River. But it is doubtful that the French could have broken the communist forces in a defensive operation.

The French Home Front Begins to Crack

Throughout 1952 France's allies were disturbed by hints of weakening in French determination to carry on the war that appeared in expressions of public opinion, in parliamentary debates, and in statements by government officials. The Frenchmen, including politicians who opposed the war, based their position chiefly on four arguments. First, they pointed to the drain on the French treasury and the

effect on France's economic condition. Second, they held that France could not afford the losses represented by the casualties in her armed forces (the French claimed 90,000, excluding Vietnamese, between 1945 and 1 October 1952).[51] Third, maintaining the bulk of the French Army in Indochina delayed both the development of French forces for NATO and the establishment of an adequate defense organization in Europe. Finally, after the conclusion of the European Defense Community (EDC) Treaty in May, they argued that the prospect of German rearmament demanded the recall to France of the forces in Indochina; otherwise Germany would become militarily strong while France remained weak in Europe. These arguments appealed to opinion on the right and on the left, to conservatives who supported the war as well as to socialists who had opposed it. Most of all, they appealed to the almost universal French fear of Germany.[52]

French socialists and communists had long urged negotiations with the Viet Minh; public opinion had given them little support. By 1952, an important part of the Radical Socialist Party favored a political agreement with Ho Chi Minh; this faction was led by a former cabinet minister, Pierre Mendes-France, who as early as 1950 had expressed his opposition to continuing the war.[53] At the Radical Socialist Congress in Bordeaux in October 1952, former Premier Edouard Daladier proclaimed that instead of wasting men and arms in Indochina, France should be defending the French Union in North Africa, an area far more important for her future.[54] The defection of a large group of Radical Socialists from the ranks of those who favored continuing the war was significant, for the Radical Socialists had participated in the several center-right coalition governments that had carried the burden of the struggle in Indochina. Their support was based in the middle class, particularly in the intellectual professions, an important factor in French public opinion. The growth of Mendes-France's following weakened the coalition governments and indicated that France's will to fight was beginning to deteriorate.

Early in 1952 the British began to regard the French internal situation as serious in its possible effects on Southeast Asia. In March the British embassy in Washington sent an unofficial aide-memoire to the State Department calling attention to recent statements of the Minister for the Associated States. Letourneau said, in reply to a question whether or not the French were prepared to enter into discussions with the Viet Minh, that France could not on principle reject any opportunity to end hostilities. He also indicated that France would not reinforce its troops in Indochina. This had followed a statement by Foreign Minister Schuman that France "would not refuse an accord which would put an end to the conflict under conditions which would be honorable for France."[55] The British felt there was reason to believe that French representatives had been in contact with the Viet Minh and might be seeking Russian mediation.

The United States Government was not alarmed. The Joint Intelligence Committee advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that while there was a possibility of an eventual French withdrawal, the British estimate that it might be imminent was exaggerated.

Reported French approaches to the communists could not be confirmed. Furthermore, the factors disturbing the British had been considered in the preparation of a National Intelligence Estimate on 3 March in which United States intelligence experts had concluded that the French effort in Indochina would continue through mid-1952; this conclusion was extended through mid-1953 in another National Intelligence Estimate of 29 August.[56]

The United States continued to accept official assurances that France would fight on in Indochina. As late as June 1953 a National Intelligence Estimate expressed the belief that the French would maintain their current troop strength (and by implication their position) in Indochina through mid-1954, albeit "without enthusiasm."[57] The French Union Forces were the bulwarks holding Southeast Asia against the communists. The Republican Party had won an electoral victory in November 1952, securing the Presidency for Dwight D. Eisenhower. The President-elect had promised to seek an end to the fighting in Korea. What changes he might propose to American policy toward Indochina were not certain, but as allied commander in Europe at the beginning of the military buildup he had dealt with the problems the war had posed for the French.

7

The Eisenhower Administration and the Navarre Plan, 1953

The Eisenhower administration made little change in American policy toward Indochina. The end of the war in Korea removed the main competitor for increased aid funds for that area. At the same time, the new administration brought in new faces. The Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, advocated exploiting American atomic power as a deterrent to communist aggression. The Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, reassessed the defense budget. The President also had the opportunity to make new appointments to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Completed by the end of the summer, this reorganization brought in Admiral Arthur W. Radford as Chairman; General Matthew B. Ridgway as Chief of Staff, US Army; Admiral Robert B. Carney as Chief of Naval Operations (succeeding Admiral William M. Fechteler, who had succeeded Admiral Forrest P. Sherman on his death in 1951); and General Nathan F. Twining as Chief of Staff, USAF.

Despite American doubts, the meetings of President Dwight D. Eisenhower with French Prime Minister Andre Mayer late in March produced a plan that came close to justifying the large amounts of money the United States was being asked to invest in it. Presented by the Minister for the Associated States, Jean Letourneau, this plan called for a major expansion of the Vietnamese National Army and a concept for its use to enable the French Union to achieve victory over the Viet Minh. Mayer's government also decided to send a new commander, General Henri Navarre, to Indochina. The Letourneau-Navarre plan, known as the Navarre Plan, embodied an aggressive effort to regain the initiative from the enemy. When a new government, under Joseph Laniel, took office in June, it appeared to be making France's last attempt to win the Indochina war.

For the United States the struggle for Southeast Asia appeared as a continuation of the fight against Communist Chinese aggression waged in Korea. With this

in mind Secretary Dulles had conveyed veiled warnings to the Chinese during the truce talks. With the armistice at the end of July, the American leaders feared that the enemy might shift efforts to Southeast Asia. Accordingly, the government intended to give major financial support to the Letourneau–Navarre plan; it sought to deter outside intervention and considered what to do should deterrence fail.

The Main Course of United States Policy

Dedicated to a fresh and comprehensive approach to America's problems abroad, the Eisenhower administration faced the fact that the aims of the United States in Southeast Asia were not susceptible to fundamental revision. Their reassessment highlighted the national interests and purposes set forth in the NSC papers that awaited the incoming officials. Indochina must be defended against Viet Minh domination. Unless the United States assumed the task, its leaders must continue to work with and through the French.

Premier Mayer came to office in January 1953 pledged to lessen the burdens of France in Indochina by seeking greater help from the Atlantic allies. The French were intent on wringing advantage from a resolution recently adopted by the North Atlantic Council. On 17 December 1952 that body had recognized that French resistance to aggression in Indochina made an essential contribution to the security of the free world and hence deserved "continuing support from the NATO governments." Arriving in Paris early in February, Secretary Dulles met a request for greater assistance "in order that France may carry out the mission devolving upon her in the common interests of the free world."[1] The Secretary of State had at hand one telling and quite legitimate reply. The American people had just installed an administration pledged to government economy; that administration had to deal with a Congress even more disposed to reduce expenditures abroad. To win authorization for additional American aid, French requests must be backed by cogent justification and convincing performance in the field.

The French could claim little military progress in Indochina. The Viet Minh initiative in October 1952 had set the pattern; the French did little more than react to each new attack. The C–47 aircraft, gathered to permit aggressive operations involving a three-battalion drop, were fully employed in supplying isolated strong points, particularly Na San.

While the French made much of the heavy losses their entrenched defenders had inflicted on the enemy, April 1953 brought dramatic evidence that the Viet Minh held the initiative. Enemy forces invaded Laos. Overrunning the two northeast provinces and surging to within ten miles of the royal Laotian capital, they posed a threat to Thailand's border. By a major exertion the French command established strong points at the Plaine des Jarres and elsewhere in the path of the

invaders. Logistical difficulties and the approach of the rainy season forced the Viet Minh to withdraw during May.

The military situation during the first part of 1953 underscored the need for new measures. At the year's beginning officials in Washington and Saigon were considering enlarging the forces in Indochina. Unalterable political conditions denied an increase in the French manpower contribution; the troops would have to be Vietnamese. On 24 February 1953, the Franco-Vietnamese Military High Committee approved placing forty thousand additional Vietnamese under arms. After training and organization into light battalions, the new forces would free veteran French and Vietnamese army units for an offensive role by replacing them in static defense posts. American officials saw a further advantage in that every increase in the Vietnamese forces deepened the identification of the native population with resistance to the Viet Minh and hastened the time when the National Army might take over the defense of its country.

Surveys conducted in Washington and by General Trapnell's MAAG organization in Saigon indicated that the United States could readily find MDAP resources to provide arms, ammunition, and unit equipment for the additional battalions.[2] The Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed the augmentation of the Vietnamese National Army, but listed other necessary measures. Pentagon officials were on guard against any French disposition to view the creation of more forces as the sole requirement for winning the war. They emphasized that aggressive use of the new battalions must be part of an integrated program using all military, political, economic, and psychological warfare resources. Trapnell warned that augmentation would be worth little unless coupled with a revitalized French training system and a shift from defensive to offensive attitudes among French military planners and commanders.[3]

United States material support for the Vietnamese Army augmentation project began during March.[4] If the French took the steps that appeared necessary, requests for additional aid were to be anticipated. American leaders were prepared to consider such requests sympathetically, but insistence that the French present a comprehensive plan for ending the Indochinese hostilities within an acceptable time period had grown. French spokesmen would have their opportunity later in March when Premier Mayer arrived in Washington. Secretary Dulles had pointedly informed the French officials of the American attitude; continued stalemate in Indochina was unacceptable. The situation required increased effort under a plan envisioning liquidation of the regular enemy forces within something like twenty-four months. Stressing the legislative limitations on United States executive action, the Secretary declared that administration spokesmen could forcefully present the need for appropriations to Congress only if they were convinced that a sound strategic plan for Indochina existed and would be energetically carried out.[5]

President Eisenhower was no less explicit during his first interview with Premier Mayer aboard the presidential yacht, USS *Williamsburg*, on 26 March. While he paid tribute to the valiant French defenders and reiterated American recognition

that Indochina was of prime significance in the free world's resistance to aggressive communism, the President demanded a plan.[6] Jean Letourneau, Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States, sketched at least the military portion of the French program. A rough cost estimate was submitted in writing; the Minister offered only his oral presentation of the strategic outline.

The Letourneau Plan relied on an expansion of the Vietnamese National Army during 1954 and 1955 to add some eighty thousand to the forty thousand personnel augmentation scheduled for the current year. This program would raise the Vietnamese ground forces to at least 250,000 in 1955. Operations would unfold in three successive steps. While the recruits were being trained, regular French and native forces would pacify the regions outside the Tonkin Delta, working generally from south to north. Later the newly formed light battalions would begin occupying the cleared areas, releasing regular units for assembly as a striking force in the delta. The last stage of the plan would see a powerful French Union army engaging and destroying the Viet Minh battle corps, compressed by the previous operations into northern Tonkin. This final drive might culminate in the spring of 1955.

The accompanying cost data displayed important gaps, but Letourneau's figures indicated that American aid was expected in providing equipment for the expanding Vietnamese armies. In addition, for 1954 and 1955 the fiscal account contained expenditures totalling more than $500 million not covered by the French or Associated States budgets. While the French did not request that the United States assume these deficits, their intentions were clear.[7]

At his final session with Premier Mayer on 28 March the President did not mask American disappointment with the Letourneau Plan, particularly the slowness of its timetable. But Mr. Eisenhower emphasized that the United States remained eager to help and would give the plan thorough study. Premier Mayer suggested that consultations between military technicians would be helpful, particularly in establishing more precisely material requirements. He invited a United States military mission to Saigon for this purpose.[8]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were reluctant to accept the Letourneau Plan as the best that could be hoped for. While they termed it "workable," the Joint Chiefs considered the plan deficient in aggressive spirit. The effort to clear rear areas before concentrating for decisive blows against the main Viet Minh forces and supply lines in the north seemed like trying to mop up the water without turning off the faucet. Early pressure against communications with Red China would be more useful than chasing guerrillas into the hills in central Annam. Further, French reliance on operations by units of battalion-size precluded the concentration of power that American military authorities wished to see. Finally, the Letourneau Plan did not match the expansion of the Vietnamese Army with an equal emphasis on training native military leaders and the prompt transfer of responsibility to their hands.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded, however, that the enlistment of larger Vietnamese forces was vital to any plan for a successful end to the Indochinese

hostilities; they found the troop augmentation phase of the program deserving of United States material support. But the JCS demanded substantial improvement in the French strategic plan. They recommended that political pressure be placed on the French to obtain clearcut commitment to modernize training methods, to expedite the transfer of responsibility to qualified native military leaders, and to seize the initiative and execute the plan with vigor, organizing where possible on a regimental and divisional basis and giving special attention to cutting the enemy supply lines.[9]

Secretary Dulles and other United States authorities disregarded the particulars but followed the spirit of the JCS recommendations. During late April conversations in Paris, the Secretary of State reemphasized the difficulties the Eisenhower administration would face in making an effective appeal to the American Congress on the basis of the Letourneau program. If the French offered a plan for an additional effort in Indochina that Eisenhower's military advisors could endorse, the prospect of gaining a sizeable appropriation would brighten. It was up to the French. "You help us to help you" was the Secretary's charge. Meanwhile, in view of critical requirements arising from the enemy invasion of Laos the United States would immediately advance $60 million in aid from appropriations anticipated for Fiscal Year 1954.[10]

Soon a new Commander in Chief for Indochina, Lieutenant General Henri Navarre, was appointed. The French pictured the relief of General Salan as a routine rotation, but it had a decidedly favorable import for the United States desire to see the Letourneau Plan recast as a more aggressive concept. Navarre arrived in Saigon during the latter half of May breathing a spirit of vigor and determination reminiscent of Marshal de Lattre.

With this encouraging sign officials in Washington readied the United States military mission to Indochina suggested by Premier Mayer in March. Heading the mission was Lieutenant General John W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, USA, Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, named on the recommendation of CINCPAC, Admiral Arthur W. Radford. General O'Daniel's task was more than gathering information. By "thorough discussion" the mission members were to influence Navarre and his subordinates to revise the Letourneau Plan along more aggressive lines. The result of its efforts would govern the mission's assessment of the adequacy of French plans and the justification for further American aid.[11]

Following intensive inspections, surveys, and discussions in Indochina from 20 June through 10 July 1953, the United States group repaired to Hawaii to write its report. The prime result of the visit was the Navarre Plan that General O'Daniel described as "a new aggressive concept for the conduct of operations in Indochina."[12] The Navarre Plan called for an immediate shift to the offensive. For the remainder of the rainy season it listed a series of local operations and increasing guerrilla warfare. Next, General Navarre planned to anticipate and disrupt the Viet Minh fall campaign by loosing an offensive in Tonkin as early as 15 September

1953. During the remainder of the fighting season he intended to operate aggressively, emphasizing attacks on the flanks and rear of the enemy and drawing support by recovering units from areas not directly involved in the battle. The High Command would also incorporate battalions into regiments and regiments into divisions, creating new supporting units as needed. Further, General Navarre pledged to develop the native armies and to transfer responsibility for the conduct of operations to their leaders.

General O'Daniel hailed the new plan as a design that would accomplish the decisive defeat of the Viet Minh by 1955. A still more favorable outlook would result if General Navarre succeeded in his quest for additional French forces that now found him in Paris. General Navarre's personal qualities and the air of confidence and energy that appeared to surround the new high command had impressed General O'Daniel greatly. Agreements providing for additional United States intelligence activity in Indochina, timely sharing of French operational plans with Trapnell's MAAG organization, and a modest beginning at American participation in improvement of the French training system deepened the impression of cooperation and receptiveness to advice. The mission chief noted that Navarre and other high officers had repeatedly invited him to return in a few months "to witness the progress we will have made." O'Daniel recommended that he lead a follow-up mission.[13]

General Navarre and his plan inspired confidence and conviction in Paris. During his July visit he induced the home authorities to adopt his concept as official policy. The Laniel government was committed to active pursuit of victory in Indochina; it backed this commitment with willingness to send out additional forces from Metropolitan France, nine infantry battalions plus supporting units.

Everything depended on increased assistance from the United States. The Laniel government could not face the political hazards of such a course without very substantial American support of the French budget. When Premier Laniel first broached the matter to Washington late in July he mentioned a figure in the neighborhood of $400 million. The sum reflected the heightened cost of the war owing to the Navarre Plan and the fact that the French military budget must be reduced. France would commit more men, but less money. Before objections could be voiced the Premier sketched the unpalatable alternative. Unless the additional funds were forthcoming, the only alternative was eventual French withdrawal from Indochina with only the method and date unsettled.[14]

The United States faced a crucial decision, yet the statement of the problem virtually dictated the answer. The Laniel government was the first in seven years that seemed prepared to make the exertion necessary to bring victory in Indochina. American officials concluded that the Laniel regime was almost certainly the last French government from which a positive approach to the Indochinese conflict could be expected. If Laniel's effort failed, mounting popular and parliamentary sentiment favoring a negotiated peace would find expression in the policy of the next cabinet. Any settlement negotiated under such conditions would spell the

eventual loss of Indochina to communism and confront United States policymakers with the decision of whether to intervene with force in Southeast Asia.[15]

Full support of the Laniel-Navarre program seemed the only course compatible with the interests of the United States. The National Security Council on 6 August 1953 agreed to recommend such a policy, providing the Department of State, the Foreign Operations Administration, and the Joint Chiefs affirmed that the French program held promise of success and could be implemented effectively.[16] Five days later the JCS advised the Secretary of Defense that "if vigorously pursued militarily in Indochina and supported politically in France" the Navarre Plan did offer sufficient promise of success to warrant American aid. But the record of French performance suggested caution in accepting declarations of intention at full value. The Joint Chiefs urged that American material and financial support be conditioned on French adherence to the plan and willingness to act upon US military advice.[17]

The new Joint Chiefs of Staff headed off Secretary Wilson's transmittal to the State Department of the views of their predecessors. Reports from General Trapnell and the service attachés in Saigon outlining the slow pace of Navarre Plan implementation convinced the new military leaders that the qualified endorsement given by the previous JCS had been too favorable. Their assessment of the plan's promise of success would no longer allow them to say, "*Accordingly*, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe . . . that the necessary support should be provided. . . . " The word would have to be "Nevertheless."[18]

General Trapnell expressed profound doubt that the French had the intention or the capability of mounting a major offensive on 15 September. Most successful of the well-publicized operations General Navarre had carried out so far had been the two-battalion paratroop raid on the enemy supply center at Lang Son in July. The MAAG Chief believed that this strike and operations in the Quan Tri and Phan Thiet areas had improved morale and helped instill an aggressive spirit; the results in terms of destroying enemy potential and wresting initiative from the Viet Minh were negligible. All three attachés concurred in the statement that the French appeared to have no plans for a general fall offensive.[19]

These views were confirmed on 1 September when General Navarre submitted a new timetable that did not support his previous vows to seize the initiative and operate aggressively. If the enemy attacked in late September or early October, the French and Associated States forces would counterattack. If no Viet Minh drive developed, the French command would launch a diversionary operation. The general offensive against the enemy battle corps was now scheduled for October 1954. It appeared that General Navarre intended to limit the 1953–1954 fighting season to limited-objective offensives to keep the enemy off balance while waiting for French reinforcements and the activation of newly trained Vietnamese units.[20]

The Joint Chiefs expressed concern over the modest progress and apparently waning enthusiasm of the French command in meetings in September 1953. But the Laniel-Navarre program offered the last chance of putting the Indochinese war

on the right track. It was hoped that the wholehearted support from the United States would overcome Navarre's hesitation in carrying forward his plan.[21]

On 1 September the French Government submitted its formal statement of the Indochina program and the request for the US assistance on which it depended. The total figure now stood at $385 million. The National Security Council on 9 September recommended that the United States grant additional assistance to France in an amount not exceeding $385 million. However, the French Government must give assurances that it would put the Navarre Plan into effect promptly and pursue it vigorously, without retreating from its NATO commitments. The French must provide a record of aid expenditures and agree to take into account the advice of American military authorities on campaign plans in Indochina. Assurance was demanded that the French would press forward with their program for granting entire independence to the three Associated States. The French must regard the $385 million as the final dollar contribution during 1954 and must recognize the right of the United States to end its aid if these understandings were not met.[22]

Presidential approval followed, and by 29 September a formal agreement incorporating these points had been worked out between French officials and the American Ambassador in Paris.[23] In giving particular attention to accounting safeguards surrounding the actual transfer of funds from one government to the other, the agreement's terms reflected American determination not to become involved again in anything resembling the Lisbon aid grant of 1952. Considerable congressional criticism had followed that earlier venture, because in making an unconditional lump sum contribution to the support of the French budget US officials had no means of checking the money's final disposition. This time the US representatives took pains to make clear they were agreeing to finance a specific action program—the Navarre Plan—up to an agreed dollar figure. Payment would proceed in installments reimbursing the French Treasury for certified expenditures as they occurred. It took until early March 1954 to work out the detailed accounting procedures the United States required.[24]

Before the Paris agreement was completed Washington officials began the exacting series of surveys, adjustments, and negotiations needed to produce the $385 million. Congress had adjourned; the job must be done by reassignment of funds in hand. Fortunately a previous decision had set aside $100 million from the current MDAP appropriation for a contingency. Large sums could be recovered by screening of the foreign assistance program, relying on a liberal interpretation of the President's authority to shift funds under the Mutual Security Act.[25]

Congressional leaders had to be told of the new commitments to France. Presidential acceptance of the NSC recommendations made an important change in the foreign assistance program that had been presented to Congress during the recent session; the program would generate large requests for appropriations during the coming year. Consultation now might assure future support, and careful explanation might lessen discontent over the difference between congressional intent and

the purposes for which some of the funds were being spent. A very large portion of the present grant was earmarked for the payment and rationing of Vietnamese troops; legislative leaders had insisted that aid dollars be spent primarily for "shot and shell." Administration spokesmen would also explain that concern for proper accounting of the funds led them to channel all the additional assistance for the Indochinese forces through the French Government. Congressional opinion had strongly favored awarding more aid directly to the three Associated States.[26]

While preparations and adjustments continued in Washington, the October reports of American observers in Indochina were mixed. Transfer of military responsibility to Vietnamese authorities had received a serious setback. Having taken over the occupation of the Bui Chu sector in the Tonkin Delta, light Vietnamese battalions experienced a severe defeat in September. Control was returned to the French command, the morale of the new national army suffered, and recriminations over the affair left considerable bitterness between the French and Vietnamese. Also General Navarre disclaimed any agreement with General O'Daniel to establish a small US intelligence team in Hanoi.[27]

In most other respects observers reported modest progress. Activation of Vietnamese units was ahead of schedule, and elements of the promised French reinforcement had begun to arrive, including one battalion transferred from Korea. Unhampered by enemy activity at the start of the fighting season, General Navarre launched Operation MOUETTE, an excursion in force southward from the delta in the direction of Thanh Hoa. While General Trapnell discounted the French claim that MOUETTE had inflicted serious loss on the enemy, he saw signs that an offensive attitude was gaining impetus at all levels of the French command.[28] Halting and deficient in spots, the Navarre Plan was in operation in October 1953.

The JCS were closely involved in the months-long US endeavor to gain French committment to an Indochina plan that held reasonable promise of success. Besides making numerous detailed decisions regarding the aid program their responsibility included planning for contingencies other than the successful conclusion to the war. Late in January 1953, the Joint Chiefs initiated a study of possible US military action to prevent the seizure of Indochina by communist forces if the French withdrew.[29]

During early April 1953, the Five-Power Conference of military commanders with responsibilities in Southeast Asia took place at Pearl Harbor. The conference report recommended establishing a formal and continuous relationship among military representatives of the five nations to coordinate the plans for the defense of Southeast Asia. With the approval of the Secretaries of State and Defense, the JCS, late in May, authorized American participation and named Admiral Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific, as the US Military Representative.[30] The new arrangement added a further dimension to the planning responsibilities assigned to CINCPAC. Completing the series of CINCPAC Operation Plans called for by the JCS directive of the previous December, Radford gave close attention to developments in

Indochina.[31] Admiral Radford had told the JCS the Viet Minh invasion of Laos made an immediate start on coordinated Southeast Asia planning imperative.[32]

Aware of Admiral Radford's grim estimates, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral W. M. Fechteler, asked for a study of what action the United States could take to prevent the spread of communist control over the area.[33] The study presented a catalogue of measures, ranged freely over possibilities, to include: US armed intervention and listed measures to improve French capabilities in Indochina. The latter included transferring at least two French divisions to Indochina, expediting revision and aggressive implementation of present campaign plans, following US suggestions for expanding and modernizing training, and improving the low rate of aircraft utilization by assigning more French Air Force personnel to Indochina and hiring civilian flight and maintenance crews. Further, the United States might insist on direct participation in training and operational planning. The JCS paper suggested speeding and increasing the American aid program and a political announcement stressing US interest in Southeast Asia and indicating concern over communist moves in the area.[34]

Plans for US military action should the French withdraw were taken up by the JCS a few weeks later.[35] Believing that the Viet Minh were not capable of driving the French out, the Joint Chiefs postulated two situations in which withdrawal might take place. Intervention by the Communist Chinese might force an evacuation, or political deterioration in France could bring a government decision to abandon the Indochina struggle. Several courses of action were identified. The United States might deploy its own and available Allied forces to Indochina to take over the French objective of "reducing Communist activity to the status of scattered guerrilla bands." Or the United States might employ enough ground forces to hold critical strong points, while providing air and naval support for operations by the Vietnamese National Army. In either case, development of the native forces would continue under strong American tutelage; the second alternative relied on the Vietnamese Army to destroy the Viet Minh. French withdrawal might not occur until the expansion of native forces had reached an advanced stage. In that event, the United States might forego the commitment of ground troops and provide air and naval support, or logistic support, for the Vietnamese operations.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that if Red Chinese aggression drove the French out there was no feasible course of military action that the United States could take in Indochina to prevent communist forces from overrunning the country. Furthermore, extension of full US and Allied counteraction to the portion of China contiguous to the Tonkin border would not halt the aggression. To succeed, the United States must apply all available coercive measures against the Chinese mainland, including naval blockade and air attack on all targets of military significance.[36]

Preventing the Far Eastern situation from reaching such a state was a prime objective of American policy. The French and British were reluctant to subscribe to a joint declaration advising Red China that further acts of aggression would lead to

retaliation that might not observe geographic limitations. Secretary Dulles found general warnings easier to arrange. Both the Franco-American communique at the close of Premier Mayer's visit in March 1953 and the public declarations of the July conference of British, French, and US Foreign Ministers cautioned the Chinese Communists not to use a Korean armistice as an opportunity for adventure in Asia.[37] On 2 September at the American Legion Convention in St. Louis Secretary Dulles delivered a pointed admonition. Repeating President Eisenhower's statement that "any armistice in Korea that merely released aggressive armies to attack elsewhere would be a fraud," the Secretary turned to the risk that "as in Korea, Red China might send its own army into Indochina."

> The Chinese Communist regime should realize that such a second aggression could not occur without grave consequences that might not be confined to Indochina. I say this soberly in the interest of peace and in hope of preventing another aggressor miscalculation.[38]

Dulles gave the Chinese rulers an oblique view of American military strategy. Where the Secretary suggested that retaliatory action might not be limited to Indochina, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that such action could not be so confined.

The French and Indochinese Political Scenes

In January 1953, the election of village councils in the pacified areas of Vietnam marked a first step toward the establishment of democratic institutions. Participation by eighty percent of the eligible voters indicated a high level of political interest and a clear rejection of the communist call for an election boycott. But the results showed no striking gain in popular support for the Vietnamese government sponsored by the French.[39]

In Cambodia, King Norodom Sihanouk dissolved the National Assembly, arrested "obstructionist" delegates, and assumed personal direction of the government. The monarch then plunged into a year-long course of unpredictable behavior including explosive press conference statements in New York, a week of self-imposed exile in Thailand, and filing numerous demands and protests in Paris—all designed to win Cambodia independence within the French Union equal to that of India within the British Commonwealth.[40]

The French continued halting progress toward meeting native demands for freedom and sovereignty. In February, the French command and Minister Letourneau entered agreements with Bao Dai that provided for development of the Vietnamese National Army in a status distinct from the French forces.[41] In May, the Mayer government gave pledges to the Cambodians aimed at the transfer of control of the

native army, relaxation of economic restrictions, and French acknowledgment of the judicial integrity of the local courts. A few weeks earlier the Paris authorities had revised French political representation in Indochina in a way that indicated more regard for the dignity and separate autonomy of the three Associated States.[42]

Any positive reaction these moves may have gained was sacrificed when the French decreed a devaluation of the Indochinese currency on 10 May 1953. Intended to end both the government scandals and the financial drain resulting from the extensive traffic in piastres, devaluation was long overdue. But French officials set the new rate of exchange with a few hours notice to local governments, disregarding pledges of prior consultation given in 1949. Monetary devaluation demonstrated how little sovereignty the French had accorded the Associated States. On 21 May the Mayer government fell; France entered a protracted cabinet crisis.[43]

In June under Joseph Laniel, the French Government turned a new face toward Indochina. Laniel declared that it was essential to end the malaise in the relations between France and the Associated States. The new Premier began a wholesale replacement of the colonial administrators who were symbols of French arrogance and repression. His ouster of Letourneau ended the curious arrangement in which the French Commissioner-General in Saigon was a member of the Paris cabinet as Minister for Relations with the Associated States.[44]

On 3 July 1953, the Laniel government invited the three Indochinese states to enter new consultations to "perfect" their independence and their sovereignty.[45] Native leaders approached with skepticism, but Foreign Minister Bidault told Secretary Dulles that the statements were in earnest. France was prepared to accept virtually any terms the native states demanded, so long as Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam agreed to continued membership in the French Union.[46] For the Secretary of State the 3 July declaration removed all basis for criticism of French policy. Since that date, he told the United Nations, "the Communist-dominated armies in Indochina have no shadow of a claim to be regarded as the champions of an independence movement."[47] This turn in French policy, coupled with the support of General Navarre evidenced by the decision to send nine battalions to Indochina, convinced Washington that the Laniel government deserved additional American aid. The sincerity of the French declaration was borne out during long and ultimately successful negotiations with the refractory Cambodians concerning the transfer of control over fiscal matters and the police, army, and judiciary. A less difficult series of exchanges with Laotian representatives culminated in October in a treaty of friendship and association that recognized Laos as "a fully independent and sovereign state" while reaffirming its membership in the French Union.[48]

In Vietnam the announcement that Bao Dai and Premier Nguyen Van Tam were departing for Paris to open negotiations with the French touched off an outburst of nationalist agitation. Early in September an unofficial "Congress of National Unity and Peace" demanded unconditional independence, domestic reforms, and the immediate election of a National Assembly. Bao Dai countered by summoning his

own National Congress, which he expected would endorse a more moderate set of terms for the Vietnamese negotiators. When it met on 12 October, Bao Dai's convention demanded that France annul the 1949 agreements and grant complete independence. Swept on by nationalist ardor, the delegates passed a declaration that Vietnam would not participate in the French Union. By nightfall Bao Dai's lieutenants had succeeded in restoring only enough control to induce the congress to add "in its present form." The resolution that the final treaty with France must be ratified by a Vietnamese National Assembly elected by universal suffrage remained.[49]

The Vietnamese resolutions aroused outrage in Paris. Even spokesmen of the political factions that most actively supported the war demanded to know what France was fighting for if not the preservation, in some form, of her empire overseas. If France was to be repaid in ingratitude and disdain by the people she sought to defend, her sacrifices in Indochina must end.[50] No disavowal issued by Bao Dai or Premier Tam could entirely repair the damage done to French popular and parliamentary support for the war. Large areas of that support had given way under war weariness. Sentiment for a negotiated settlement in Indochina had grown steadily. By October 1953 an influential portion of the Radical Socialist Party had concluded that a military solution was impossible without an unthinkably large commitment of resources; political negotiations seemed the only way out.[51]

Pierre Mendes-France emerged as the leading spokesman for this faction among the Radicals. Seeking the premiership during the five-week cabinet crisis in mid-1953, he fell 13 votes short of the necessary 314. Of the 6 candidates who presented themselves to the National Assembly, only Mendes-France received the 105 ballots of the Socialists. But the Assembly was not ready to entrust the future of the French Empire to his care. Besides the automatic opposition of the one hundred Communists and the negative votes of various factions on the right, Mendes-France encountered the massive abstentions of more than two hundred delegates of the right and center parties.[52]

The following week Georges Bidault missed the premiership by only one vote. He spoke for a large body of opinion in the Assembly when he said that the security of the Associated States must be assured "by victory if necessary, by negotiation if possible." "The only thing we cannot envisage is a retreat which would be inconsistent with the respect due to our dead, with the support we owe to our allies, and with the spirit of the achievements we have accomplished in Indochina in the past."[53] Later in June Premier Laniel came to office pledged to examine every possibility of ending the Indochinese war, including negotiation on any basis acceptable to France's allies and the Associated States.[54]

The argument for settlement by negotiation was greatly strengthened when on 27 July the United Nations command completed the armistice agreement in Korea. With pardonable exaggeration, *Time* reported that a great cry swelled across France: "Finish *la sale guerre* by negotiation—like the clever Americans in Korea."[55] Deputies cited the Korean example during the October debates in which they expressed

bitterness over the Vietnamese Congress resolutions. Edouard Daladier favored a simple declaration to the Viet Minh: "We offer you peace; will you accept it?" He could see no dishonor in this course after seven years of war, considering that the Americans had done the same thing in Korea after only three years of fighting.[56]

Premier Laniel emphasized that there was no basis for pessimism over the military prospect in Indochina and no reason to seek peace out of despair. Yet his government stood ready to undertake negotiations, with the Soviet Union, Red China, or the Viet Minh, on any basis that did not abandon Vietnam's freedom. "It is true that the war in Indochina is unpopular," said the Premier. "There is, however, something which is still more unpopular in France—namely, to betray one's friends and to fail in one's duty."[57] On 28 October the Assembly endorsed a set of resolutions that instructed the government to seek negotiations and to encourage the Associated States to take over a greater share of the military responsibility while gaining their independence within the framework of the French Union. The resolutions called for a more equitable division of the burdens of the Indochinese war among the free nations.[58]

A new attitude toward foreign assistance was apparent. American contributions had been welcomed, as lifting burdens from the French taxpayer; now there was fear that the acceptance of more aid committed France to continuing the war indefinitely. When the $385 million grant was announced late in September, *Le Monde* reviewed the prospect in an article titled "Should We Take the Money?"[59]

At the same time the French continued to reject recourse to the United Nations. During April 1953 Secretary Dulles had urged France to bring the Laotian invasion before the UN Security Council, giving the Indochinese conflict an international standing that would make it more readily subject to negotiation and settlement between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. Refusing to take the action, French authorities were "emphatic almost to the point of hysteria" in opposing a similar move by Thailand. They feared that United Nations debate might extend to other aspects of French colonial administration, particularly in North Africa. Pride in the French military tradition blocked internationalization of the war on the Korean pattern that would transfer control of operations to a United Nations command.[60]

As agreement on a Korean armistice drew near, Foreign Minister Bidault had insisted that the political conference following the truce must extend its attention to Indochina. The Korean conference must be used as an opportunity for broader discussions aimed at achieving a general Far Eastern settlement. If this UN sponsored conference could not consider a matter that France had refused to submit to the United Nations, then the French would demand that settlement of the Indochinese war be discussed with the Communist Chinese representatives outside the formal sessions.[61]

Secretary Dulles responded to the French. If the atmosphere was favorable, the conference, with a different slate of participants, might consider Indochina. In

early September the Secretary declared that the United States wanted peace in Indochina as well as in Korea.

> ... The political conference about to be held relates in the first instance to Korea. But growing out of that conference could come, if Red China wants it, an end of aggression and restoration of peace in Indochina. The United States would welcome such a development.[62]

Returning to the question of negotiation two weeks after the October debates, Premier Laniel announced "in the clearest and most categorical fashion" that the French Government did not consider that Indochina required a military solution.

> No more than the United States does France make war for the sake of war, and if an honorable solution were in view, either on the local level or on the international level, France, I repeat, like the United States in Korea, would be happy to welcome a diplomatic solution of the conflict.[63]

American authorities hoped that emphasis of the perils of negotiating from weakness registered with the French. If so, a vigorous implementation of the Navarre Plan would strengthen the French bargaining position.

Main Features of the US Aid Program

During 1953 the United States increased deliveries of arms, ammunition, and equipment to French and native forces in Indochina. Scheduled deliveries of ground force and naval materials were made with increasing regularity, and the persistent shortages of aircraft spare parts and maintenance equipment began to decline. In January 1953 the French stated that no ground unit had failed to meet its activation date because of lack of MDAP equipment. By that date, the US aid program had transformed the French Air Force in Indochina from an assortment of World War II German, French, and American aircraft into a reasonably standardized organization with modern propeller-driven planes.[64] Congressional appropriations in 1953 allowed the assignment of $312.3 million for end-item assistance to Indochina during Fiscal Year 1954, plus $30 million to be expended under the Military Support Program. In addition, Congress appropriated an unprecedented $400 million for direct financial assistance to France.[65] Special requests and accelerated procurements generated by the vicissitudes of war and the changing requirements of French military planners in Indochina did demand unusual exertion and adjustment by American officials. One of these exercises during 1953 resulted from the French request for an additional aircraft carrier.

During the March conversations in Washington, Minister Letourneau asked whether a loan of US naval vessels could be arranged. Navy Department officials

agreed to explore the possibility.[66] In May the French embassy requested loan of an aircraft carrier of the same CVL type as the *Lafayette* (formerly the USS *Langley*) and the *Arromanches* (formerly HMS *Colossus*) the French already possessed. The supporting argument was persuasive; normally, the French committed one vessel to the Indochinese operations and maintained the other in home waters, where it provided training for replacement air units. During the current year the need to send the *Arromanches* and the *Lafayette* to Toulon for overhaul would disrupt this arrangement. Training, refitting, and combat operations could proceed without interruption only if France received a third CVL by the last quarter of the year.[67] A hint that President Eisenhower was interested in the request smoothed its passage. The JCS on 11 June endorsed the loan, and Secretary Wilson instructed the Navy Department to seek enabling legislation from Congress. On 5 September the USS *Belleau Wood* was formally transferred to French authorities at San Francisco.[68]

In retrospect, the carrier transfer appears unusual in two respects. First, the loan was justified by recognizable need and by a demonstrated French capability to man and maintain the carrier; second, the request did not involve aircraft. Far more typical was the January interview of General Salan with the US Ambassador at Saigon, Donald R. Heath. The French commander said it would be ideal to have another squadron each of F–84s, B–26s, and C–47s, as well as more carrier-based aircraft. At the moment, his only specific request was for extension of the loan of the twenty-one C–47s the United States had provided in the fall of 1952. Delaying the return of these planes to the US Far East Air Force by two months or so would allow them to serve out the remaining good weather in Indochina.[69] American authorities complied by extending the loan at least until 1 April 1953, and continued the temporary duty of the US Air Force personnel assigned in December 1952 as a mobile maintenance team to service the American-owned C–47s in Indochina.[70] As the 1 April date approached, General Mark W. Clark, the US Far East Commander, reported that an urgent French requirement for C–47 aircraft would continue until mid-May; he recommended that only eight of the twenty-one planes be returned to the Far East Air Force as scheduled, leaving thirteen C–47s on loan to the French for another two months.[71] His recommendation was approved.

The Joint Chiefs did not accept Clark's suggestion that at least two C–119 aircraft be sent to Indochina. While a survey team reported that the condition of forward airstrips in Indochina would not permit C–119 aircraft to be employed in their prime role as movers of tanks and other heavy equipment, the Far East Commander saw important alternative uses for their lift capacity; he recommended that a full complement of US personnel accompany the planes to provide aircrews and maintenance support. The JCS replied on 21 April that the policy of noninvolvement of American personnel in combat operations in Indochina barred the venture.[72]

General Clark had made his recommendation in response to rising concern over the Viet Minh invasion of Laos. Within a few days the Joint Chiefs received a call from Admiral Radford; depicting the seriousness of the situation in the

strongest terms, the French were in a dispersed defensive position, open to defeat in detail and almost entirely dependent on air transportation for supplies. Admiral Radford reported that General Salan now said that he could arrange for pay on a contract basis if civilian pilots, crews, and mechanics could be recruited to operate the C–119 aircraft he desired. Radford urged that at least six of the transports be delivered immediately.[73]

Secretaries Dulles and Wilson were meeting with the French in Paris when the Laos crisis arose to dominate the discussions. Premier Mayer asked for several C–119 aircraft and suggested that US military personnel might operate them under the cover of civilian dress and credentials; the Americans offered to qualify three French crews by giving them fifteen days of training at US air bases in Germany. In Indochina the French flight personnel would man three C–119s loaned from General Clark's command with American ground crews.[74] Secretary Wilson authorized this arrangement on 28 April; the JCS raised the number of C–119s to six. State, Defense, and CIA officials sought civilian pilots and flight personnel in the Far East who could operate the planes under contract with the French Government.[75]

With NSC approval, orders went out on 1 May to train six French aircrews in C–119 procedures. The Far East Air Force would loan six aircraft with spare parts and maintenance crews to be flown initially by civilian contract pilots. French airmen from Europe would replace the civilian aircrews. Return of the thirteen C–47 aircraft on loan to the French was postponed.[76]

Between 6 May and 1 June 1953, the C–119s logged 517 combat flying hours, made 176 sorties, and carried 883 tons, an estimated one-third of the supply support given by the French Air Force to the northern operations during the period. American observers emphasized that the big planes had delivered nothing that could not have been lifted more economically by C–47s, which required one-quarter the maintenance effort. The experience confirmed that the heavy C–119s should be operated only from all-weather airstrips; their operations had brought on the collapse of the runway at Gia Lam, putting Hanoi's main airport out of commission.[77]

The French desired to retain the six C–119 aircraft indefinitely. In early July the O'Daniel mission convinced the French that the operations in Indochina did not justify the use of C–119s except in an emergency requiring the airdrop of heavy equipment. By agreement the six planes and their US maintenance crews were withdrawn to the Philippines, ready to return when a heavy drop became necessary.[78] The arrival of replacement aircraft from rehabilitation centers in Europe allowed a phasing out of the thirteen C–47s and their American ground crews. The last of the C–47s left in mid-August 1953, after almost a year of service in Indochina.[79]

The Laos emergency provided evidence of the French Air Force leaders unrealistic view of their capabilities. When French sources released publicity to the effect that all would turn right if only the United States would deliver an armada of transport planes to the eagerly waiting French pilots in Indochina, General Trapnell sent a long dispatch to his Washington superiors. The MAAG Chief had told French

authorities that their supply and maintenance facilities were inadequate to support the aircraft they had.

The French Air Ministry had set a limit of 10,000 on the personnel assigned to Indochina, a figure that included 2,500 guards and ordinary laborers. French technicians were to maintain the existing planes at an average monthly utilization rate of approximately forty hours—less than half the USAF standard. A desperation effort during the Laos emergency yielded a higher figure, but virtually abandoned maintenance and overhaul at echelons above the tactical level. Local French officials acknowledged the critical shortage of skilled mechanics, deplored the arbitrary ceiling imposed by the home authorities, and then made an urgent request for more aircraft.[80]

The Joint Chiefs told Secretary Wilson on 20 May that the shortage of airlift capacity in Indochina was due to the inadequate manning of the French supply, maintenance, and operating organizations that prevented maximum utilization of the aircraft already on hand. The French had failed to correct the deficiency. The JCS recommended that Wilson urge Secretary Dulles to stress to the French Government the need to remedy the situation. The State Department complied, but as its instructions reached the Paris embassy the cabinet of Premier Mayer resigned and France entered a five-week interregnum.[81]

There were French Air Force deficiencies that a major increase in personnel would not cure. The French supply system suffered from faulty organization, poor location of facilities, lack of periodic inspections, and the absence of modern stock control records and procedures that would allow effective planning. The US Military Assistance Advisory Group did what it could to remedy these shortcomings; in July fifty-five US Air Force specialists in supply, maintenance, armament, communications, and other logistic functions arrived. Assigned on temporary duty to French units to the squadron level, they provided instruction in American procedures in subjects ranging from corrosion control to depot organization.[82]

In August General Trapnell reported that French Air Force officials saw a solution to the French logistic support and maintenance difficulties. The French proposed that the United States ship spare parts and other materials in such massive quantities that maldistribution in Indochina would pass unnoticed; used equipment would simply be returned in exchange for new models. These proposals were rejected as too costly and because they contravened a basic purpose of US aid, which was to assist recipients in developing the ability to sustain their own military establishments.[83] General Trapnell also relayed a request that twenty-five C–47 aircraft and auxiliary equipment be provided within the next thirty days to permit the activation of a fourth transport squadron in Indochina. For logistical support the local command planned to transfer 1,000 unskilled native troops to the French Air Force, and it had the promise that 650 technicians would be sent from Metropolitan France.

The MAAG Chief did not support the French request, but he appreciated the French desire to have sufficient aircraft to mount operations involving a simultaneous drop of three paratroop battalions. The poor billeting facilities, health hazards, and other difficulties encountered by the US Air Force personnel assigned to service C–47s in Indochina led him to advise against long-term loans of planes and maintenance crews.[84]

Washington authorities accepted expansion of the C–119 arrangement worked out with the French Air Force; when the French planned an operation requiring more airlift than their own forces could provide they could call on the MAAG for assistance. On 72-hour notice from General Trapnell the Far East Air Force would loan up to twenty-two C–119 aircraft for a period not to exceed five days for each operation. The planes would be operated by French crews but maintained by American ground personnel.[85] By 1 October detailed arrangements were in place. Twelve French aircrews stationed in Indochina were undergoing C–119 refresher training. But before October had passed, the French wanted C–47s and more B–26 bombers. Trapnell nonconcurred because the shortage of technical personnel resulted in substandard maintenance and low utilization rates for the types of aircraft requested; adding more planes would compound French logistical difficulties.[86] In November the arrangement for short-term loan of C–119 transports was activated, a US officer on the scene commented that General Navarre would "use any foul up as excuse to eliminate C–119 solution in lieu of additional squadron of C–47s."[87]

During 1953 no real opportunity to influence the French training system presented itself. Early in the year a high-level committee recommended against direct American participation in the Vietnamese training program. Noting that the French would oppose any such suggestion, the committee stressed the language problem that American instructors would encounter. The Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed the same view to the Secretary of Defense in March, noting that an exchange of missions between Indochina and Korea should familiarize French officers with the methods used by the United States in training Republic of Korea (ROK) forces.[88] The results of the exchange were disappointing. French observers returned from Korea with little but a list of reasons why US training procedures could not be effectively applied in Indochina. General Trapnell labeled these findings "completely fallacious" and asserted that French authorities had simply fabricated an argument "to justify resistance to any change or modernization of 'traditional' French methods."[89]

Secretaries Dulles and Wilson reopened the subject during their visit to Paris later in April. Getting the French to observe and adopt the instructional methods successfully applied in Korea had been an objective of Mr. Dulles when he assumed office. It did not come as a surprise that the initial French reaction had been negative, but the Secretary counseled French leaders not to undervalue the results that could be achieved with proper effort. Secretary Wilson pointed to the new faith, confidence, and unity that had flowered in the ROK Army when given training and

responsibility.[90] The response was not encouraging; Minister Letourneau termed the Korean visits "very useful," but asserted that Indochina and Korea posed different problems and conditions.

During July, the O'Daniel mission surveyed the French training system and facilities; its lack of centralized control and uniform standards stood out. Many training centers were operating far under capacity at a time when greatly expanded instruction of Vietnamese recruits, officer candidates, and higher commanders was needed. The Americans recommended reorganization to impose real command supervision on the French training effort.

General Navarre agreed to follow the American MAAG concept and create a similar French organization to oversee training of the native forces. Moreover, he welcomed the assignment of three US officers to the agency; General O'Daniel declared this provided an excellent opportunity for continued American influence short of direct participation in the training program. While French officials continued to minimize the usefulness and applicability of American methods, he found a growing interest among senior commanders in visiting the Korean training centers.[91] Like other features of the Indochinese military situation, training seemed headed for improvement and expansion under the direction of General Navarre.

Conclusion

Committed to supporting Navarre's strategy, American officials and agencies faced a period of decision and increased activity as the fall campaign opened in 1953. More than one observer suggested that in Indochina the aid program needed greater flexibility than the legal and institutional structure of MDAP allowed to meet the urgent and rapidly changing requirements of an active theater of war.[92]

The American aid program appeared in good order. By 31 October 1953 obligation of the funds provided for Fiscal Year 1954 had begun and just short of seventy-five percent of the material programmed under the MDAP budgets for Fiscal Years 1950–1953 had been shipped. The monetary value of all items delivered to Indochina stood at $674 million; deliveries during the first ten months of 1953 had accounted for nearly forty-four percent of the total.[93] There were still occasional failures, such as the deficiencies in Air Force procurement, but in many lines the French received not only more material than they could effectively use but more than they could properly store.[94] The contribution of military equipment as a means of encouraging and supporting the French was being fully exploited. In September 1953 the foremost French request was not for more direct material aid but for $385 million in cash. As the campaigning season in Indochina opened late in 1953, American planners anticipated that Navarre's operations would call for increased assistance.

Courtesy of US Military History Institute Photo Archives

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 January 1954. *Left to right:* General Nathan F. Twining, Chief of Staff, USAF; Admiral Arthur W. Radford, USN, Chairman, JCS; General Matthew B. Ridgway, Chief of Staff, USA; General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commandant, USMC; and Admiral Robert B. Carney, Chief of Naval Operations, USN.

8

Dien Bien Phu, Bermuda, and Berlin, November 1953–March 1954

General Navarre's decision to occupy Dien Bien Phu achieved surprise in French and American circles as well as against the enemy. As one historian has noted: "The precise reasons behind the French decision to occupy and hold Dien Bien Phu remain obscure."[1] Whether Navarre's objective was merely to block the invasion route to Laos or to lure the Viet Minh into a decisive battle, the miscalculation of Viet Minh firepower worsened the basic weakness of the French position. President Eisenhower was far from the only observer to question placing France's best troops, the mobile reserve built up with such effort, so far from the decisive area of the war. Indeed, Navarre seems to have been unaware that a decision had been made in Paris that peripheral areas such as the Laotian frontier were not to be defended.[2]

In fact, Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap achieved a surprise of their own. Rather than leave the powerful French striking force to sit in its remote position, the Viet Minh chose to bring massive artillery to bear. Not only could the communists deploy their battteries on the heights above the French position but they were also able to protect them from air attack with antiaircraft weapons. The result was a spectacular victory that proved the decisive one of the war.[3]

Operation CASTOR, the seizure of the Dien Bien Phu position, was a new and decisive phase of France's war in Indochina, but this was not entirely clear at the time. With the French showing an interest in talks with the communist powers, pressure was building for an international conference. Secretary Dulles tried to postpone such talks, and the French needed to achieve some measurable success in combat that would give the West a stronger negotiating position. American planners

had to give thought to what would happen if the French were unable to continue the fight or if the Communist Chinese intervened directly. President Eisenhower met with Laniel and Churchill in Bermuda during December to explore these issues as well as the creation of a European army in which French strength would offset the arming of the West Germans. Early in 1954 the allied foreign ministers met with the Soviets to address such issues as a peace conference for Asia. Momentum was building for a major public airing of the Indochina problem.

The O'Daniel Report and Dien Bien Phu

By the end of 1953 the United States conditioned its aid to French Indochina on three requirements: (1) perfection of the political and economic independence of the Associated States, (2) adoption of a plan for dynamic military action, and (3) expansion and training of indigenous armies. While the first was primarily a State Department concern, the other two were of direct interest to the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had sent General O'Daniel back to Indochina with a small joint mission. After a two-week visit, O'Daniel submitted his report on 19 November 1953, the day before the first French parachute units descended on Dien Bien Phu.

O'Daniel's report optimistically announced that "clear indications of real military progress by French Union Forces since our previous visit to Indochina [in July] are evident." If General Navarre had not succeeded in wresting the initiative from the Viet Minh, he had kept the enemy off balance and established a better military situation than existed during the 1952–1953 campaign. The French command had recovered sufficient forces from static positions to establish a mobile combat reserve in the Tonkin Delta and had activated native light infantry battalions as scheduled. But there were some dark spots. The French continued to be over-cautious in the conduct of the war and less effective in using available means; progress in training native units remained unsatisfactory. Insufficient naval materiel and inadequate maintenance and logistic support for air units in Indochina were other deficiencies.

General O'Daniel concluded that "we should fully support General Navarre, in whose success we have such a large stake." However, O'Daniel's recommendations for American action to remedy French deficiencies were limited to measures acceptable to the French; they fell short of introducing large-scale American influence in the planning of operations and in the training of Vietnamese forces. Specifically, the general suggested the assignment of a small number of officers to MAAG Indochina for liaison with French headquarters and for duty with the French command training native armies. He also recommended continuing existing arrangements by which the United States provided C–119 support to the French. Later, when the French command developed sufficient maintenance

capability, the United States might furnish C–47s on a permanent basis. Finally, more naval craft could be put to good use.[4]

Not all were as sanguine as General O'Daniel about the Indochina situation. Commenting on the mission's report, Admiral Felix Stump, USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, agreed that considerable military progress had been made, but he pointed out additional flaws. Political and psychological factors remained intertwined with the purely military aspects of the problem. Not enough had been done to turn these vital factors to the advantage of the West. CINCPAC thought it very important that the highest levels of the French and United States Governments reaffirm their intention of prosecuting the war to a satisfactory conclusion. Admiral Stump also stated that complete victory was unlikely until there were sufficient native troops to garrison captured areas and until the Indochinese had been won over by anticommunist psychological warfare.[5]

The objective of Operation CASTOR was to set up a blocking position from which to interdict supply routes when the Viet Minh made their next incursion into Laos. The Dien Bien Phu basin in western Tonkin was in the region of Tai tribespeople presumed friendly to the French. Selection of the actual site was dictated by the need for an airstrip. The Japanese had created a pierced-steel-planked runway at Dien Bien Phu during their occupation. The requirements for air support received first consideration; other requirements for a well-defended position were sacrificed.[6]

Dropping by parachute, the first waves of French troops easily overcame the surprised Viet Minh garrison. Runway repair was delayed when a heavy bulldozer crashed to the ground. Succeeding waves of troops had to drop rather than land. Another bulldozer was located and dropped, and the French began organizing a strong defensive fortress to be manned by twelve battalions.[7]

More active operations led the French High Command to increase its pressure for American material support. High on General Navarre's list were the twenty-five additional C–47s. In October Major General Thomas J. H. Trapnell, USA, Chief of the US Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina, had advised against providing these planes until the French had demonstrated the capability to support and use them efficiently. However, during the November visits of General O'Daniel and Vice President Richard M. Nixon, General Navarre renewed his requests. Trapnell withdrew his objections when the American Ambassador pointed out that the planes might provide just the psychological lift needed to encourage French initiative.[8] The Vice President also saw the question as a political matter and carried it to President Eisenhower, who decided that political advantages outweighted military objections. Secretary of State Dulles informed Paris of the decision to provide twenty-five C–47s while Admiral Radford passed the word to Lieutenant General Jean E. Valluy, French representative on the NATO Standing Group.[9]

The Bermuda Conference

The President and Mr. Dulles discussed Indochina with the French Premier and Foreign Minister when the tripartite French-UK-US conference convened in Tuckers Town, Bermuda, 4–8 December 1953. The principal topics on the agenda were European security and the Soviet proposal for a four-power conference in Berlin, but the Big Three did find time for one session on the Far East.

In preparation for the conference, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the Joint Intelligence Committee to evaluate French reports indicating that Communist China might support the Viet Minh with jet aircraft. The committee could not find corroboration for French fears. It reported that although the Chinese were capable of furnishing jet or conventional aircraft support for the Viet Minh, US intelligence did not indicate an increase in this capability or an intent by the Chinese to intervene with jets in Indochina.[10]

When the conference turned to Far Eastern matters, Premier Joseph Laniel was indisposed; the French position was sketched by Foreign Minister Georges Bidault. He briefed on the military situation, acknowledging American aid and emphasizing French Union sacrifices. Although they were making every effort to establish the Associated States as truly independent nations, the French were handicapped by the lack of native leaders capable of governing the people. When the French had asked Bao Dai whether the transfer of all authority with real independence was enough, this question "had brought him to the Riviera like Galatea to the willow."

The most significant of Bidault's remarks dealt with the prospects for negotiations. France, he asserted, would not make peace except under conditions that would respect the individual liberty of the Indochinese people. However, a five-power conference, including China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union, called in a specific framework for a discussion of Southeast Asian problems, might be acceptable to France, provided the Associated States could be present. In reply Mr. Churchill praised the French efforts. President Eisenhower seconded his praise but added that the United States viewed a five-power conference "with a jaundiced eye."[11]

A major accomplishment of the Bermuda talks was drafting a reply to the Soviet Union agreeing to a four-power foreign ministers meeting at Berlin in early January 1954. Noting a Soviet proposal that the foreign ministers should discuss a five-power conference including Red China, the West agreed only that the participating governments could state their views on this topic at Berlin.[12] Bidault had made it clear that France could not turn its back on an opportunity to negotiate a settlement of the Indochinese war.

Support for the Navarre Plan

The Bermuda conversations did not resolve questions about the provision of additional American aid to Indochina. The twenty-five planes approved for transfer in late November represented a portion of total French needs. General Navarre had to produce military success in very little time, and he saw the prospect of success threatened by material shortages. He had gained the impression from highly placed American military and civilian visitors to Indochina that the United States was determined to undertake an extensive effort in providing material aid. Yet MAAG and stateside agencies were not providing the cornucopia of resources General Navarre visualized.

In mid-December General Navarre dispatched a strong letter to MAAG contrasting promise and performance. Not only had MAAG screened French requests but Washington agencies had further reduced agreed programs. The French Commander stated that the discrepancy between means in personnel and means in material threatened to necessitate a complete reexamination of his 1954 operational plan. He wanted Washington to speed deliveries of material programmed in earlier years and to inform him when he could expect 1954 items. In addition, he asked for reconsideration of the reductions applied to the 1954 program.[13]

Since the Office of Military Assistance suspected that Navarre's complaint was an attempt to establish an alibi for failure to achieve military success, it provided General Trapnell with the information for a polite but firm protest against delaying operations. End-items programmed in earlier years were on the way, and within budgetary limitations the 1954 program was being met.[14] Trapnell's answer opened the door for American consideration of French battle needs on an ad hoc, emergency basis. On 18 December the Chief of MAAG wrote General Navarre:

> I have been advised that the military requirements for Indochina have the highest MDAP priority, and that although the military departments did not expect to make deliveries of FY 54 programmed items in time for use during the current dry season, urgent action had been taken to provide items critically in need during this season.

He invited the French Staff to work with MAAG in readying lists of critical items; these lists would be sent to Washington and delivery expedited to meet operational requirements.[15] Requests went forward on this basis, and General Trapnell assured Admiral Radford during their Christmas conference in Manila that no deficiencies in the American aid program or deliveries would cause embarrassment or change in French plans in the immediate future.[16]

Perhaps one of General Navarre's concerns had been a new political crisis in Vietnam. The world learned on 27 November 1953 that Ho Chi Minh had informed the Stockholm newspaper *Expressen* of Viet Minh willingness to negotiate with France for an armistice. His terms were cessation of hostilities and real respect for

the independence of Vietnam.[17] Coincidentally, President Auriol of France announced on 27 November a liberal formula by which the Associated States could be independent, yet remain members of the French Union. By this announcement France moved to carry out the 3 July declaration and to satisfy American pressure for granting Indochina its independence.[18] The Ho interview and President Auriol's statement stirred nationalistic feelings in Vietnam. In early December Premier Nguyen Van Tam tried to capitalize on nationalistic sentiments by demanding that Bao Dai establish an anticommunist coalition government to negotiate peace with the Viet Minh and work out the terms of association with France. Having failed to win popular support, on 17 December Van Tam handed his government's resignation to the Chief of State. The resignation did not improve the situation.[19]

Against the background of more vigorous French military and political action and a Vietnamese domestic crisis, the Joint Chiefs gave considerable attention to Indochinese affairs in December 1953; they had to decide what to do about General O'Daniel's recommendations. In addition, the National Security Council Planning Board was rewriting the statement of American policy toward Southeast Asia and the JCS provided military advice on this subject.[20]

First on the agenda was a report by the Joint Strategic and Logistic Plans Committees on General O'Daniel's mission. The committees' conclusions paralleled those of the joint mission. On the asset side of the ledger they found that there was no indication of French or Vietnamese disposition to negotiate with the enemy and that there was evidence of real military progress in the implementation of the Navarre Plan. As liabilities, the committees listed four deficiencies: lack of sufficient naval small craft, and inadequacies in the training of native forces, in the operation of the joint amphibious command, and in the maintenance and supply of the French air arm.

The committees recommended the O'Daniel report as the basis for planning and seconded its principal suggestions including the assignment of two Army officers to MAAG for duty with the French training command and the assignment of four officers, one from each Service, for liaison between MAAG and the French headquarters. The committees also endorsed General O'Daniel's recommendation to continue arrangements for French use of up to twenty-two C–119s from the Far East Air Command. Finally, they suggested expedited delivery of naval craft programmed for 1954 and lending the French four LSMs (landing ship, medium) or their equivalent.[21]

The Joint Chiefs amended the committees' conclusions and recommendations to reflect Admiral Stump's comments. Qualifying remarks were added to the two more optimistic conclusions. The amended report indicated that although the French had made limited progress in carrying out the Navarre concept, the military situation had not altered significantly in their favor. To O'Daniel's opinion that the French or Vietnamese did not contemplate negotiations with the enemy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff added the thought that a seemingly plausible offer from the Viet Minh might lead to a

parley, especially in the absence of real French Union military progress. The JCS added a new conclusion: "Primary military requirements for a French Union victory in Indochina include the development of large and effective indigenous forces and the effective utilization of psychological warfare among the natives."

The JCS accepted the committees' recommendations for action and added O'Daniel's suggestion that French Union officers be invited to inspect US training methods in the Republic of Korea. The amended report became a basis for planning, and the recommendations became directives to Service Chiefs on 31 December 1953.[22]

General O'Daniel in Honolulu urged early implementation of the amended report. The French Government had authorized General Navarre to accept a few American officers for intelligence work, duty with the training command, and liaison with French services; this action offered an opportunity for the United States to influence French planning and training. Two days later O'Daniel suggested that the invitation for French Union officers to inspect Korean training installations be held until the end of the fighting season. Implementation of the recommendations went forward based on these amplifying comments.[23]

NSC 177 and Crisis Planning

While the Joint Chiefs dealt with the O'Daniel report, the Planning Board of the National Security Council revised the 18-month old statement of American objectives and courses of action in Southeast Asia to reflect the fact that in the interim the French situation in Indochina had deteriorated.[24] A major problem was assessment of the consequences of a French defeat in Indochina. In June 1952 the National Security Council had agreed that the loss of any Southeast Asian country would probably lead to the relatively swift communist domination of the whole area. But in November 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would only say: "A Viet Minh victory in Indochina would remove a significant military barrier to a Communist sweep through Southeast Asia, expose the remainder of that region to greatly increased external Communist pressures, and probably increase the capabilities of local Communists. . . ." The Deputy Director for Intelligence of the Joint Staff registered a dissenting view: "The establishment of Communist control over Indochina by military or other means would almost certainly result in the Communization of all of Southeast Asia. . . ."[25]

In Planning Board sessions Major General J. K. Gerhart, Special Assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Security Council Affairs, argued convincingly in support of the Joint Staff estimates.[26] When the Planning Board submitted its redraft at the end of December 1953, the principal change was increased emphasis on the dangers present in the Indochinese situation. The starting point was the statement that had appeared in NSC 124/2: "Communist domination, by whatever

means, of all Southeast Asia would seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, United States security interests." The redraft pointed out that the loss of Indochina would have "the most serious repercussions on US and Free World interests in Europe and elsewhere." The loss of a single country might lead to loss of the entire area, with grave economic consequences; it might seriously jeopardize US security interest in the Far East, and subject Japan to severe economic and political pressures, making it difficult for the United States to prevent Japan's eventual accommodation to communism.

Two agents could transform these threats into reality. First, there was the new, stronger, hostile, aggressive China. Chinese attack on Southeast Asia would require the diversion of American strength from other areas. However, the Chinese Communists were more likely to continue their efforts to dominate the region covertly through subversion and armed rebellion. Second was France itself. Although the Laniel government was committed to seeking the destruction of the Viet Minh forces, the Planning Board warned that a successor government might accept an improvement in the military situation short of Viet Minh defeat as the basis for serious negotiation. If the Laniel-Navarre Plan should fail, or appear doomed to failure, the French might seek to negotiate for the best possible terms, irrespective of whether these offered any assurance of preserving Indochina for the free world.

In coping with communist expansion in Asia the United States had issued its warning to China, participated with interested nations in military talks on measures which might be taken in the event of open aggression, and increased the flow of military and economic aid to France and the Associated States. The board cautioned that the United States Government should bear in mind that it was necessary to coordinate actions affecting one country with actions for the region as a whole and to accommodate those actions to the sensibilities of the governments, social classes, and minorities of Southeast Asia.

The Planning Board rephrased the general objective of the United States: "To prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the communist orbit; to persuade them that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the free world; and to assist them to develop toward stable, free governments with the will and ability to resist communism from within and without and to contribute to the strengthening of the free world."

Following the format of the June 1952 statement, the Planning Board recommended courses of action for the area as a whole. Both words and acts—in the form of technical assistance, economic aid, and the encouragement of economic cooperation—should be employed to persuade indigenous governments to cooperate with the free world. Further, it was essential that the United States encourage and support the spirit of resistance among southeast Asians to Communist Chinese aggression. The United States should continue its actions to make China aware of the grave consequences of aggression. It was necessary to promote the coordinated defense of Southeast Asia, "recognizing that the initiative in regional defense

measures must come from the governments of the area." Finally, the American people should be made aware of the importance of the region so that they would support the proposed courses of action.

The Planning Board then took up the individual countries of Southeast Asia. Actions toward Indochina were grouped under the assumptions that Communist China would not overtly intervene in the war or that it would. Should China remain a silent partner of the Viet Minh, the main targets for US action would continue to be the French and the Indochinese. The United States had to build up the independence of Indochina at the short-range expense of France while inducing the French to fight vigorously for the longer-range interests of the free world.

In the military field, the Planning Board proposed that the United States should expedite, even increase, its aid to French Union Forces to foster an aggressive military, political, and psychological offensive designed to eliminate organized Viet Minh forces by mid-1955. At the same time, American aid would help develop native forces that could eventually maintain internal security. On the diplomatic and political front the United States would assure the French that America appreciated its sacrifices and encourage and support steps by France and the Associated States in the development of a relationship based on equal sovereignty within the French Union.

Proposed actions also dealt with the possibility that France might sue for peace. To offset this contingency, the United States should influence the French Government and people against ending the war on terms inconsistent with American objectives. France should be allowed no illusions about obtaining acceptable terms before achieving a marked improvement in the military situation. It would be equally illusory to consider establishing a coalition Vietnam government with Ho Chi Minh. Drawing upon Korean experience, the Planning Board recommended that the United States flatly oppose accepting a cease-fire before opening negotiations because of the probable result—irretrievable deterioration in the French Union military position. The United States could block undesirable negotiations by insisting that the French obtain Vietnamese approval of all actions taken in response to any Viet Minh offers. If the French persisted in opening talks with Ho Chi Minh, the American Government should demand that France consult with US officials.

Turning to the assumption of Chinese intervention, the board rephrased those paragraphs of NSC 124/2 that dealt with China's entering the war; it did not significantly alter their substance. First, an appeal should be made for United Nations action against aggression; at the same time the United States would seek international support in whatever military action might be taken. America should furnish naval and air assistance to French Union ground troops, provide forces for interdicting Chinese Communist communication lines, and supply logistic support. Other military action might include a blockade of China, providing the French and British concurred; covert operations to aid guerrillas in China; utilization of Chinese Nationalist forces; assistance to the British in Hong Kong; and evacuation of

French Union personnel from the Tonkin Delta. Finally, if expanded action against China was needed, the three powers should take naval and air action against military targets in China that directly contributed to the Chinese effort in Indochina; targets near the Soviet border would not be attacked unless absolutely necessary. The United States might consider taking action against China unilaterally.[27]

The courses of action recommended by the Planning Board in NSC 177 assumed that France would continue to fight. However, the board recognized that a successor government might sue for peace. General Gerhart proposed that the board draft courses of action in the event that France gave up the struggle; the board concurred.[28] To provide the Planning Board with military advice, the Joint Strategic and Logistic Plans Committees reviewed another study of this contingency done in July 1953.[29] The committees accepted basic assumptions that: (1) the United States could take over French responsibilities at the invitation of the Associated States; (2) Korea would remain quiet so that two American divisions could be withdrawn; (3) elsewhere US commitments would remain undisturbed unless the return of French forces permitted American withdrawals from Europe; and (4) Communist China would not overtly intervene in the war. The committees reaffirmed that the successful defense of Indochina was essential. The course of action offering the greatest assurance of success was to step up the development of native troops and to deploy American and Allied forces to Indochina to reduce communist strength to scattered guerrilla bands. A second course acceptable as a temporary measure was developing native forces and deploying sufficient strength to hold critical strong points evacuated by the French. Such holding operations would require air and naval support until the native armies could conduct effective operations against the communists. The committees rejected two additional courses, requiring less extensive American intervention, as likely to result in military defeat.[30]

The Services were in general agreement with the report's conclusions. General Gerhart and the Planning Board drew upon it in drafting courses of action in the event of French withdrawal from Indochina. The board saw that French withdrawal might take two forms. First, France might seek peace unless America offered to participate in the war with military forces; two choices would be open to the United States. The American Government might do nothing or it might provide forces to keep France in the war. Even more ominous the French Government might refuse to continue the struggle even if the United States did agree to commit troops. Under these circumstances America might write off Indochina. On the other hand, it could consider the four alternative courses just evaluated by the Joint Staff. The board submitted this study in December 1953 as the Special Annex to NSC 177.[31]

Meanwhile, the military situation in Indochina had not improved. On Christmas Day 1953, the Viet Minh launched an invasion of Laos, which compelled the French to divert troops for its defense. In early January General Trapnell reported that the situation was similar to last year's campaign in which French Union Forces were widely dispersed and in defensive attitudes. The French had been surprised to find

that the Viet Minh units surrounding Dien Bien Phu were supplied with antiaircraft artillery. Only light bombers (B–26s) could be used, and Trapnell warned Washington to expect requests for additional aircraft of this type and for US personnel to maintain the C–47s, B–26s, and C–119s and to fly C–119s on missions to noncombat areas. Admiral Stump had thought General O'Daniel too optimistic, he now believed Trapnell was unduly pessimistic. He believed that "timely assistance by the US in this critical period through which General Navarre and the French Union Forces are now passing will be instrumental in bringing about ultimate victory."[32] These reports arrived in Washington at about the time the Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked to review the two Planning Board studies, NSC 177 and the Special Annex. CINCPAC's comments pointed to the need for early action as outlined in NSC 177, which assumed the French would fight if America continued its aid programs; on 6 January 1954 the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Secretary of Defense that they agreed with the Planning Board draft.[33]

General Trapnell's message emphasized planning for the possibility of French failure and withdrawal. Such plans were incorporated in the Special Annex to NSC 177, but the Joint Strategic Survey Committee had reported that this Planning Board study was not sufficiently explicit. The United States would suffer critical consequences if Indochina fell; therefore, the United States should not write off the area if the French proposed to quit in the absence of American military participation. The committee recommended that the Joint Chiefs press for a decision on whether the United States should intervene, if necessary, to preserve Indochina which would provide definitive policy as the basis for diplomatic and military plans.

The Joint Strategic Survey Committee recognized that if the French withdrew, the worldwide situation might oblige the United States to accept the loss of Indochina. Nevertheless, the American Government should be prepared to offset such a development. Therefore, the committee recommended that the Special Annex be revised to reflect the following views:

> Should the French make an arbitrary decision to withdraw from the conflict in Indochina despite all offers of United States assistance, the United States should in any event, and as a minimum urge the French to phase their withdrawal over a protracted period and to take all practicable measures to prepare the indigenous forces better to assume the responsibilities of their own defense. Additionally, the United States, preferably in conjunction with its Allies, should provide such military assistance to the indigenous forces of Indochina as is determined to be advisable and feasible in the light of conditions then prevailing, and as is consistent with United States objectives both with respect to Southeast Asia and world-wide. The level of military assistance which might be advisable and feasible cannot be predetermined, but might encompass anything from a continuation of materiel aid as a minimum to Alternative A (vigorous intervention) as a maximum.[34]

The Chief of Naval Operations wished to add the thought that if US forces were to participate in the war, they should do so in sufficient strength to insure an early and lasting military victory. Admiral Carney also sought to strengthen arguments in favor of supporting native troops while deploying American and Allied forces for operations to reduce the communists to scattered guerrilla bands. He recommended one qualification: "precautionary reservations are necessary by reason of the fact that circumstances under which the French forces withdraw, and other related strategic circumstances cannot be accurately predicted."[35]

At their meeting on 6 January 1954 the JCS considered the JSSC report and Admiral Carney's amendments but did not reach a final decision.[36] On the following day, at a meeting of the Armed Forces Policy Council, Admiral Radford indicated that the Joint Chiefs had prepared comments on the Special Annex to NSC 177, but needed more time to study the paper. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Roger M. Kyes, attacked the accuracy of the logistical requirements of the alternative courses for American intervention. He did not address the principal problem of being prepared for a French request for US intervention that the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed should be examined. Secretary Wilson supported Kyes and requested that the Special Annex be withdrawn. In addition, the Department of Defense suggested to the National Security Council that requests for military advice should be addressed to the Secretary of Defense, not to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[37]

When the National Security Council met on 8 January, President Eisenhower ordered the withdrawal and destruction of the Special Annex to NSC 177. The Council did touch upon the question of how far the United States would go to stave off French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. Admiral Radford suggested that US pilots trained to suppress antiaircraft guns could do much even in one afternoon's operations to save the situation at Dien Bien Phu. President Eisenhower did not rule out US air and naval intervention; he did oppose committing US ground troops. He favored maximum aid short of intervention, including even volunteer air operations such as the Flying Tigers had provided in China.

At Admiral Radford's suggestion, the council decided that General O'Daniel should be stationed in Indochina with sufficient authority "to expedite the flexible provision of US assistance to the French Union forces." O'Daniel would not concern himself with the Military Assistance Advisory Group, but he would be the instrument through which the United States might exercise more influence on military strategy and the training of native troops. The Council requested the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency to report on all feasible steps, short of the overt use of American forces in combat, which the United States might take to enhance the chances for success of the Laniel-Navarre Plan.[38]

Six days later the National Security Council adopted the Planning Board statement of policy toward Southeast Asia, NSC 177; it was circulated as NSC 5405 and referred to the Operations Coordinating Board for implementation.[39] It was the charter for American action in the months to come; however, the Secretary of Defense

and the Council had sidestepped the question of what the United States would do if France gave up the struggle. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked what actions were needed to improve France's position in Indochina. Their reply on 15 January repeated many of the suggestions from General O'Daniel and Admiral Stump.

Several JCS recommendations affirmed courses of action to which the United States was committed. For example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that the United States Government should emphasize vigorous French prosecution of the Navarre Plan and American measures to support French efforts. Specifically, the Services should expedite delivery of items programmed for Indochina and revise programs to meet combat needs to include additional funds for the 1954 MDAP. They also recommended reexamining national strategy toward Indochina to develop a unified effort in Southeast Asia to counter communism on a regional basis. Further, the United States might consider scaling down French commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to permit deployment of additional forces to the Orient. The JCS also recommended that France and the United States increase their political warfare activities. The Joint Chiefs responded to French requests for additional airpower by proposing that the United States provide material and financial support while France augmented her air force in Indochina with available maintenance and aircrew personnel. America should restrict its manpower contribution to certain specialists and should examine establishing unofficial volunteer air units composed of United States personnel.[40]

The Deepening Crisis

Before the Secretary of Defense acted on the JCS recommendations, the issue of assisting France again moved to the highest governmental levels. At a White House meeting on 16 January the President, Secretary Dulles, and Under Secretary W. B. Smith of the State Department; Deputy Secretary Kyes and the Director of the Office of Foreign Military Affairs, Vice Admiral A. C. Davis, USN, of the Department of Defense; and Mr. C. D. Jackson, White House adviser on Cold War strategy, discussed what the United States should do about Indochina. Under Secretary Smith opened by stating that he believed that a comprehensive plan for dealing with Southeast Asia was necessary. Deputy Secretary Kyes protested that planning for comprehensive assistance to the entire area could lead to a relaxation of the belief that Indochina should be saved at almost any cost. Siding with Mr. Kyes, President Eisenhower indicated that the United States would continue to gamble that present efforts would be effective, and emphasized that everything possible should be done to improve the situation.

The group recognized French reluctance to accept American assistance in training native soldiers and in improving the conduct of operations. To combat this reluctance, the President suggested the appointment of an American officer, such

as General James A. Van Fleet, USA, as Ambassador to the Associated States or as a member of the Ambassador's staff. After the discussion, President Eisenhower appointed the Special Committee on Indochina to develop a detailed program for securing military and political victory without United States overt participation in the war. This committee was composed of Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence, Under Secretary Smith, Mr. Kyes, Admiral Radford, and Mr. Jackson.[41]

While the Special Committee on Indochina began its work, events were moving. During the middle of January Premier Laniel formally requested additional material and United States maintenance personnel for the French air force in Indochina. This request was substantially the same as General Trapnell had forecast; the Joint Chiefs of Staff had already recommended that the United States provide aircraft but not personnel.[42] Specifically, the Premier asked for eighteen B–26s to equip the two light bomber squadrons in Indochina with twenty-five planes each. Advice from Saigon and Paris, however, indicated the French would need only ten additional B–26s to bring the two squadrons up to a total strength of fifty planes. In addition, the Premier requested twenty-five more B–26s for a third squadron. The French also wanted to continue to use the twelve US C–119s for long-distance transportation to allow the four C–47 squadrons to concentrate on operational support. France asked that the United States supply spare parts for the C–47s, B–26s and C–119s. The French Government also requested that the United States ship four hundred maintenance specialists to Indochina to service US-provided aircraft. Premier Laniel emphasized the temporary nature of this assignment and promised to replace Americans with Frenchmen.[43]

The French request underlined Washington's need for more information; Admiral Radford urged CINCPAC to speed General O'Daniel's arrival in Indochina. The general was to win the French High Command's consent to his remaining in Saigon indefinitely, and to evaluate the adequacy of the American assistance program and tabulate additional requirements. Because of French sensitivity, CINCPAC was asked to provide General O'Daniel with cover by ordering him to make an inspection tour of all MAAGs in Southeast Asia.[44]

On 21 January the National Security Council considered the French request for aid and the JCS recommendations for improving the French position. Admiral Radford observed that while some of the recommendations might be referred to the Special Committee for study; others should be put into effect immediately. The United States should expedite the shipment of undelivered items programmed during 1950–1954; change the current program as requested by MAAG Indochina; make deliveries in accordance with the changes; and, if necessary, do all this without prior approval of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In addition, funds should be found to satisfy the additional training and material requirements submitted by MAAG. The Department of Defense was already acting on these recommendations.

Admiral Radford favored the French request for B–26s, but he felt that the French could find the necessary flight and maintenance personnel for an expanded air force. If necessary, United States Air Force personnel in NATO units could temporarily replace and release French ground, maintenance, and supply personnel for service in the Far East. The United States could also train French personnel in Europe.[45]

The National Security Council agreed that Admiral Radford explore with Lieutenant General Jean E. Valluy, French representative to the NATO Standing Group in Washington, the provision of immediate aid to the French air forces. After discussing the matter with Air Force and OSD officials, Admiral Radford informed General Valluy that ten B–26s would soon be sent to Indochina and that the United States would consider providing aircraft for the third B–26 squadron when the French could furnish flight and maintenance personnel. While he assured General Valluy that spare parts would arrive as needed; it did not seem feasible for the United States to provide maintenance crews. Problems of language and accommodations, unfamiliarity with French methods, and the time factor worked against using Americans.[46] While these matters were under discussion, the French command in Saigon needed immediate help. Viet Minh forces surrounding Dien Bien Phu were expected to attack soon or to move against Luang Prabang in Laos; the High Command needed aircraft and personnel.[47] Paris instructed its military representative in Washington to seek American help again.

General Valluy announced that France had been able to locate and ship only ninety maintenance specialists. Drawing French personnel from NATO wings would not solve the immediate problem, for these technicians would still need training on American-type craft. He renewed the request that the United States provide four hundred ground crewmen. To provide additional flight crews the French Government was arranging with General Alfred M. Gruenther, USA, Commander in Chief, US European Command, for USAF units on the Continent to train French aviators in the use of B–26s.[48]

The French reported, however, that twelve B–26s would only take care of the past year's attrition; they needed ten more to bring squadron strength up to twenty-five. Admiral Radford ascertained that ten more B–26s might be transferred from the Far East Air Force to Indochina. Admiral Radford asked for assurances that Americans sent to Indochina would not be exposed to capture, General Valluy gave a categorical statement to this effect; he further stated that United States personnel could be brought home at the end of the fighting season, about 15 June.[49]

Admiral Radford brought the French request for B–26s and United States personnel to the Special Committee on Indochina. Since France apparently had no more trained mechanics for the Orient, Under Secretary Smith favored sending two hundred USAF crewmen to Indochina. According to Mr. Kyes, this action would commit the United States to such an extent that it would have to prepare for complete intervention. In reply, General Smith distinguished between mechanics and

combat troops; he did not think the United States was committed to providing the latter. He believed, however, that Indochina was so important that America should intervene with naval and air forces if necessary.

Confronted with Mr. Kyes' reservations, the Special Committee agreed that final decision should be left to the President. However, the committee did recommend that the United States should provide the ten additional B–26s (making a total of twenty-two) and could send two hundred USAF maintenance personnel to Indochina. They felt the government should defer a decision on the third light bomber squadron and on the second contingent of two hundred ground crewmen pending General O'Daniel's talks with General Navarre and French efforts to provide the additional mechanics. President Eisenhower accepted all three recommendations.[50]

The fact that the United States had agreed to send maintenance personnel to Indochina was leaked by Joseph and Stewart Alsop and that caused considerable furor in France and the United States.[51] President Eisenhower intervened personally to calm the uproar. At his press conference on 3 February, he acknowledged that USAF technicians were on their way to Indochina but implied that they would be part of the MAAG group training the French in the use of American equipment.[52]

A week later he informed newspaper correspondents that "no one could be more bitterly opposed to ever getting the United States involved in a hot war in that region than I am. Consequently, . . . every move that I authorize is calculated, so far as humans can do it, to make certain that that does not happen." He told the correspondents of French guarantees that Americans would not be exposed to capture, and the French Government repeated the guarantees. When Republican and Democratic Senators endorsed the President's remarks, officials in the Executive Branch breathed a sign of relief.[53]

In Indochina the Viet Minh divisions surrounding Dien Bien Phu had not yet attacked. Instead, General Giap withdrew some of his forces and at the end of January moved toward Luang Prabang, Laos. Further depleting their combat reserves in the Tonkin Delta, the French moved to counter the Viet Minh.[54]

The new indication that the initiative lay with the Viet Minh brought a somber report from Saigon. Indicting General Navarre's defensive concepts, the United States military attaché to Vietnam likened Dien Bien Phu to another Na San. He reported that the Viet Minh command had concentrated its battle corps in western Tonkin, but the French, with their forces dispersed throughout Indochina, were not in position to take offensive operations to destroy the enemy. Although the French Union Forces outnumbered the Viet Minh two to one and had overwhelming firepower and air transport capability, they remained on the defensive. Patrolling was the exception for French units; French Union Forces did not maintain contact with the Viet Minh army, but waited to be attacked.

In Laos, the French had failed to take the tactical initiative; instead, six Viet Minh battalions had tied down twenty French Union battalions. The attaché's opinion was that Navarre had been directed to conduct a minimum-casualty holding

operation looking to eventual negotiations. The Viet Minh seemed to be fighting a clever war of attrition with time in their favor. In conclusion, the attaché reported that "informed United States military opinion here" considered the greatest impediments to successful French action to be lack of energetic support from Paris, inadequate training of combat units and staffs, and a defensive philosophy. These defects could not be remedied by the unlimited provision of modern United States military equipment.[55]

Secretary Dulles and Mr. Nash in Berlin asked General Trapnell for his comments; he replied that Navarre had a tendency to seek "miracle" solutions instead of taking forthright and energetic action according to "universally accepted principles of war." Trapnell considered that the French had adequate supplies and equipment for large scale sustained operations, but that they had little intention of moving decisively toward the defeat of the Viet Minh battle corps.[56]

General Trapnell's comments contrasted with those of General O'Daniel, who pointed out that, bound by treaty to protect Laos, the French had to counter the Viet Minh invasion and commit their reserves. He was confident that General Navarre would carry out his planned offensive and achieve military success during the 1954–1955 season. O'Daniel arranged for the assignment of five United States liaison officers to General Navarre's headquarters to help correct French weaknesses.[57] His comments reflected General O'Daniel's satisfaction with the results of his third visit to Indochina. General Navarre had consented to short visits from O'Daniel every four to six weeks. The agreement to station the five liaison officers in Saigon was a step toward increasing American influence in French councils. Navarre had stressed his needs for supplies and equipment, but he did agree to consider United States help in psychological warfare and in training native troops.

General O'Daniel's inspection of Dien Bien Phu and the Tonkin Delta caused him to be optimistic about the immediate military situation. Although he recognized that the Viet Minh forces could make Dien Bien Phu untenable if they had medium artillery, he estimated that the French Union Forces could withstand any attack the Viet Minh was capable of launching there. The French were receiving reinforcements, and native troops were being raised and trained. General O'Daniel was confident that these additional units would permit the French Union to dominate all areas and bring the Viet Minh army to battle by the fall of 1954. One step the United States might take, provided the French and Vietnamese agreed, was to assign American reserve officers to train the natives. For O'Daniel, the future looked bright.[58]

Admiral Stump again sounded a note of caution. He did not believe the five liaison officers and occasional short visits by General O'Daniel were an adequate substitute for the continuous assignment of a high-ranking American to Indochina. While he agreed with O'Daniel that there was no immediate danger of the French Union suffering a major military reverse, he viewed the French failure to launch an offensive with grave concern.[59] Admiral Radford shared CINCPAC's concern and

was anxious to have General O'Daniel permanently assigned to Indochina. The French agreed to accept O'Daniel as head of MAAG if he would surrender one star so that he would not be senior to General Navarre, and provided that he would have the same authority and responsibility as had General Trapnell.[60]

General Navarre's terms meant that General O'Daniel would not exercise substantial influence upon French strategy and training. General Ridgway protested that a distinguished senior officer was being demoted and the United States was losing prestige in the Far East without gaining compensating advantages. At JCS instigation, France was again asked to consider increasing the scope of MAAG's authority. When France refused, the Department of Defense on 12 March announced General O'Daniel's new assignment and his change in rank.[61]

Washington was also considering another piece of the Indochinese puzzle. In December, when the Viet Minh forces invaded Laos, the Laotian Government had called for help. This appeal created a new issue for consideration by the National Security Council. On 2 February President Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea informed General John E. Hull, USA, Commander in Chief, Far East, that, if the United States desired, his country would send one division to fight the Viet Minh invaders in Laos. President Rhee felt that this act would encourage many anticommunist elements in Southeast Asia and also make manifest Korean appreciation for the aid that the United Nations had been providing since 1950. General Hull promised to take the offer up with Washington, and he advised that it be kept secret until the United States Government had replied. In spite of his advice, Korea announced its offer before Washington acted.[62] General Ridgway forwarded the Korean offer to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 16 February. He suggested that the JCS obtain approval for advising President Rhee that the United States interposed no objection to sending the division to Laos if the French approved, and that United States commitments to support ROK troops would remain unchanged.[63]

While the National Security Council did not reject the offer and the Joint Strategic Survey Committee tended to favor it, General Ridgway had second thoughts; he was concerned that the presence of ROK troops in Laos could provide the Chinese Communists with an excuse for active intervention. A similar consideration led Admiral Carney to point out that the ROK intervention would appear to the world as a manifestation of American policy.[64] Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs informed the Secretary of Defense that the United States should commend President Rhee, but tell him that the offer did not appear to be in the best interest of the free world. They reasoned that President Rhee might hope that renewed hostilities in Korea would ensue, and that it would be difficult to justify keeping American and Allied contingents in Korea while ROK troops were fighting communists in Indochina. Furthermore, it was unlikely that the French would risk courting Chinese intervention by accepting the offer. On 4 March, the National Security Council agreed that the offer should be declined. The President felt that the greatest objection was the fact that American public opinion would not stand for having United

States troops tied up in Korea while the ROK forces were fighting in Laos. His concern was stressed in the American reply rejecting the offer.[65]

On 2 March the President's Special Committee on Indochina submitted its recommendations for United States action. While it had originally considered steps short of military intervention, the group recognized that the United States might consider taking direct military action if the situation drastically deteriorated or if the French rejected a broad program of American advice and aid. But such military action had to be evaluated in relation to American Southeast Asia policy as a whole.

The Special Committee repeated the conclusions of NSC 5405 that Indochina was the keystone of the Southeast Asian arch and that the Associated States must not be allowed to fall under communist domination. To prevent such a debacle, the French had to defeat communist military and quasi-military forces and to develop native resistance to communism. The United States should help the French consistent with the United States and allied programs for the Far East. The committee felt that the United States had already taken all feasible actions to assist the French in the coming battle at Dien Bien Phu. By March 1954 the Defense Department had expended $123.6 million beyond the funds allocated in 1950–1954 appropriations for aid to Indochina; it appeared that at least another $100 million would be needed to meet French Union requirements.[66]

Little could be done to affect the tactical situation. The French staff had acknowledged that there was more American equipment in Indochina than could be put to immediate use. The Special Committee concluded that delivered and programmed American aid to Indochina plus the potential manpower of the French Union was sufficient to defeat the communists. However, the French would have to use their resources properly and stabilize the military situation to gain time to develop native resistance to communism and to organize and train effective fighting units. To date the French had not utilized Indochinese manpower effectively; the United States should persuade France and Vietnam to overcome this deficiency.

The Special Committee on Indochina incorporated in its report three JCS recommendations that had not yet been fully implemented:

1. France should augment its air force in Indochina with flight and ground-crew personnel drawn from military and/or civilian resources already available. The United States should help the French accomplish this task, explore the possibilities for establishing a volunteer air group, and make arrangements for relieving USAF technicians temporarily assigned to Indochina.
2. The United States should arrange with France for the assignment of additional Central Intelligence agents to Indochina.
3. The Department of Defense should find funds to replace the $124 million taken from other programs to meet Indochinese MDA needs.

The committee recommended that the United States obtain French acceptance of an increase in the strength of MAAG Indochina to aid French operational planning and training of native troops. The French should use more American help in

unconventional warfare, and be encouraged and assisted to increase the Foreign Legion in Indochina. The United States goal of helping the Indochinese to achieve independence should be stressed. Bao Dai and possibly the King of Cambodia should be encouraged to take a more active role in leading their countries.

Once the French agreed to increase his authority, the Special Committee recommended that the chief of the advisory group get the French High Command to develop and carry out a sound operational plan for intensified operations to win a tactical victory which could be exploited politically. Native defense groups and local civilian administrators should be used to pacify French-Vietnamese occupied areas. The French Command needed to improve its intelligence and security agencies and to expand unconventional warfare activities.

The Special Committee concluded that if these political and military reforms were carried out, the unfavorable situation in Indochina would be reversed. However, the committee also suggested that the Department of Defense be asked to develop a "concept of operations and considerations involved in the use of US armed forces in Indochina should such involvement be determined upon." A week later the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) directed the implementation of these recommendations. The Special Committee began to study military intervention and to examine the position the United States should take at the forthcoming Geneva Conference that would meet in less than two months.[67]

The Berlin Conference

While the National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrestled with contingencies, keeping France in the fight required resolving the dilemma facing the United States in the conference at Berlin; on 25 January Secretary Dulles met with his French, British, and Soviet counterparts. His task was to counter the expected Soviet demand for a five-power conference including Communist China "to consider measures for the relaxation of international tension." Admission of Communist China to a conference would be a long step toward its recognition, which the United States was anxious to avoid. The stated purpose of the Berlin Conference was to settle the German and Austrian questions; there was no reason to touch upon the Far East. Korea and Indochina were the major sources of tension in the Orient, and Communist China had shown no disposition to accept a settlement in either area that would preserve the interests of the free world.[68]

The United States Government also had to persuade France that it would be disastrous to negotiate with the communists before improving her military position in Indochina. The new statement of policy toward Southeast Asia, NSC 5405, had reaffirmed that the United States would furnish the French all aid short of actual military participation and would even consider direct military support if the Communist

Chinese intervened. America had to strengthen France's hand so that she would hold out for a settlement that protected American security interests in the Far East.

The conference began as anticipated. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov utilized his first chance to speak to propose that "a conference of the ministers of foreign affairs of France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the USSR, and the Chinese People's Republic should be called in May–June 1954 for the purpose of considering urgent measures for easing the tension in international relations."[69] Dulles succeeded in postponing discussion for some days.[70] But the conference took up the question, for the French Government had to at least appear willing to negotiate peace for Indochina. The French had an unassailable argument: the United States had agreed to an armistice in Korea and had met with the Chinese to negotiate a political settlement. Moreover, Mr. Dulles had stated that if the Korean political talks went well and "the Chinese Communists show a disposition to settle in a reasonable way such a question as Indochina, we would not just on technical grounds say no we won't talk about that."[71] Since the French seemed determined to open negotiations, the United States had to decide whether to let the French go their own way, or to attend the conference and seek to influence the terms of settlement. The latter course seemed preferable. Nevertheless, the United States wanted to avoid any implication that it recognized the People's Republic as the de jure government of China.

With these considerations in mind Secretary Dulles opposed the conference with Communist China the Soviets had proposed. Instead, he worked for an agreement that the five-power conference would be limited to settlement of the Korean and Indochinese wars, and that other powers participating in the two conflicts might be invited to attend. French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault proposed two conferences, one for each war, but the Soviet Union held out for a single meeting. The Foreign Ministers agreed to a conference that would consider the Korean problem and that Indochina would be discussed.

Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov sought to eliminate Mr. Dulles' proposed statement that no power would be recognizing Communist China by meeting with Chinese representatives, but the West supported the United States. The American language in the final communique was allowed to stand.[72] The final communique, released on 18 February 1954, announced that the five powers and other countries that had participated in Korean hostilities would meet in Geneva on 26 April to reach a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. The four Foreign Ministers agreed "that the problem of restoring peace in Indochina will also be discussed at the conference, to which representatives of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Chinese People's Republic, and other interested states will be invited."[73]

American officials expressed satisfaction with the results of the conference. Under Secretary Smith congratulated the French for resisting pressure to settle the Indochinese war on communist terms. Secretary Dulles emphasized that the

United States would not be recognizing China by sitting down with its representatives at Geneva. He told the American people of the agreement to discuss peace in Indochina at Geneva, and added that the United States had a vital interest in Indochina and would continue helping the French Union Forces counter communist aggression there.[74]

In private discussions with the Joint Chiefs, State Department officials emphasized the achievements of the United States at Berlin. They ignored the possible consequences of the Indochinese phase of Geneva and stressed that the Korean phase would be conducted as desired by the United States. The agreement to discuss Indochina was needed by the French Government to satisfy public clamor for peace.[75] Within the National Security Council, Dulles admitted that the United States had little to gain at Geneva. It was unlikely that the conference would reach an agreement for a free and united Korea. There was a danger that the French might accept a settlement in Indochina contrary to United States interests. French domestic political difficulties were so great that the United States could not dissuade the Laniel government from agreeing to the Geneva meeting.[76]

The prospects of going to Geneva to negotiate a settlement were welcomed by the French National Assembly when it debated Indochina on 5 March 1954. Some members of the opposition called on the government to accept India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's proposal for an immediate cease-fire and negotiations, but both the opposition and the government seemed pleased that the Berlin Conference had opened the door for peace. Premier Laniel, however, ruled out an early cease-fire by proposing conditions that were unacceptable to the Viet Minh. Before concluding a cease-fire, France would require: (1) total Viet Minh evacuation of Laos and Cambodia; (2) creation of a no-man's land around the Tonkin Delta and withdrawal of Viet Minh units from the delta under a controlled evacuation; (3) withdrawal of Viet Minh forces in central Vietnam to delimited zones; and (4) withdrawal or disarmament of Viet Minh troops in southern Vietnam. The Premier stated that the French Union Forces could not relax their military efforts because successful French military operations had obliged the Viet Minh to negotiate in the first place.[77]

The French wanted a forum for negotiations about Indochina; the United States had acceded to the French desire. The only method likely to bolster the French at the bargaining table was to strengthen the French Union's military position in Indochina; this would not be easy. During February the Viet Minh occupied the high ground near the French position at Dien Bien Phu. While General Navarre continued to promise a vigorous counteroffensive, the French were hemmed in by superior forces.[78]

9

Prelude to Geneva, March–May 1954

By March 1954, the situation at Dien Bien Phu began to grow desperate, and French doubts about the outcome were growing. Could American help save Dien Bien Phu? The question of intervention was large and far from simple. For the United States even to consider intervening, a host of questions had to be addressed: When and where should the United States intervene? With what? Against whom? Should nuclear weapons be employed? The question of nuclear weapons was especially sensitive, and much of the discussion took place outside of normal channels, which made it difficult in later years to determine what actually happened.[1] In any event, the French never asked for anything more than an air attack to support the garrison at Dien Bien Phu. But would that be enough, not just to save the position but to win the war? What if the Chinese Communists intervened? If they did, what action was called for? And what were the costs and benefits of using nuclear weapons in any situation? It was the job of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to address these matters. The Chiefs' discussions proved illuminating. Admiral Radford, the Chairman, worked on his own, through the Joint Staff and in personal contacts, to present arguments in favor of intervention. He was not supported by the other Chiefs.

The timing of intervention was governed by the situation at Dien Bien Phu and the plans for the Geneva Conference. Ho and Giap intended to make a strong impression at Geneva, and they timed the final assault on the fortress accordingly. The French High Command soon learned of these plans.[2] By the same token, the Americans and French feared being faced with a fait accompli at the conference. Laniel and his government expected that their nation's will to continue would be shattered by the fall of Dien Bien Phu. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were not alone in fearing the effect of French defeat on all of Southeast Asia.

The Radford-Ely Conversations

President Eisenhower's reluctance to intervene, especially with ground troops, was public knowledge. This could be seen as an invitation to consider use of airpower and nuclear weapons to avoid the fight on the ground. But the issue was more complicated. The President assured Congress that it would have a say in any action. A study by the Army Staff estimated that ground operations in Indochina would require an increase in the Army of five hundred thousand men.[3] The Eisenhower defense budget did not envision such an expense. The administration recognized the increased risk of a war with Communist China or the Soviet Union. Eisenhower discounted the danger, but he would not act without the support of NATO allies, who might take a more cautious view.

The administration's policy had been to view nuclear weapons as usable in local situations as an alternative to ground forces. Secretary Dulles believed in the value of the American nuclear deterrent. He also sensed that the West's nuclear superiority was a wasting asset, and its deterrent effect needed to be used while it lasted.[4] But the 1954 crisis highlighted the problems inherent in use of the weapons. The service staffs had studied the use of nuclear weapons in Indochina, especially in defense of Dien Bien Phu. A study prepared by the Joint Advanced Study Committee concluded that three atomic weapons could defeat the Viet Minh forces threatening the fortress.[5] However, all planners did not agree that nuclear weapons would be effective. They would increase the risk of war with the major communist powers. Disassociating the United States from their use (by using planes with French markings, for example) was unlikely to work. Use of nuclear weapons would probably create an unfavorable reaction among European allies and would alienate the Asian nations the United States was rallying to resist communism.[6]

As the Geneva Conference approached, General Giap's forces struck vital communications lines between Hanoi and Haiphong, the main French airfields in the Tonkin Delta, and the Savannakhet-Quang Tri highway in Laos. Viet Minh irregulars in southern Vietnam stepped up guerrilla operations.[7] During the night of 13–14 March the Viet Minh launched the assault on Dien Bien Phu. Concentrating on one sector at a time, General Giap sent two regiments against the northern and northeastern French positions, each held by one French Union battalion. Employing mass tactics, the Viet Minh overran the first French battalion outpost shortly after midnight; two days later the Viet Minh captured the second position. Although the French dropped two battalions of paratroops to replace personnel losses, they could not recover the two redoubts. From these positions the Viet Minh forces directly threatened the airfield upon which the fortress depended.[8]

General Paul Ely, chief of the French armed forces staff, visited Washington beginning on 20 March. General Ely had recently visited Indochina and had seen the desperate situation there. He began meeting with key officials in Washington and explaining the seriousness of the situation.[9] Admiral Radford presented the

arguments for increasing American help proposed recently by the JCS and the President's Special Committee on Indochina. The Chairman suggested forming an international volunteer air group and improving French maintenance practices. He invited the French to accept American participation in unconventional warfare activities and offered to send additional American officers to assist the French in training the Vietnamese. Admitting the need for improvements, Ely agreed to consider the American offers but declared that increasing the US personnel in Indochina would jeopardize French prestige in Indochinese eyes.[10]

General Ely was not shy about accepting American materiel; he had come with a long list of emergency requests for airplanes, naval craft, guns, small arms, ammunition, and other supplies. He asked for the third squadron of 25 B–26s and entered a new request for 12 F–8–Fs, 14 C–47s, and 24 L–20s to replace combat losses, and for 20 helicopters to evacuate wounded at Dien Bien Phu. Ely also asked for eighty US maintenance personnel to service the helicopters. While the United States believed that the real problem was French failure to make efficient use of the aircraft they had, President Eisenhower did not want to deny aid critically needed in Indochina. The Department of Defense loaned a third light bomber squadron to the French and gave them all the other aircraft requested except the C–47s and the helicopters, which were not available. Admiral Radford obtained General Ely's consent for the US Air Force to send a team to Indochina to investigate French aircraft-utilization rates. The Department of Defense also found twenty LSMs, parachutes and drop containers, arms and ammunition, and the other equipment requested by General Ely. The United States even agreed to the use of French-manned C–119s to drop napalm on Dien Bien Phu.[11]

Ely acknowledged that the Viet Minh's objective was to obtain a military victory at Dien Bien Phu that could be exploited at Geneva; he gave the French Union only a fifty-fifty chance of staving off defeat. Yet he shrugged off American suggestions that a relief column be sent overland to the besieged fortress. If the French lost, only five percent of their troops in Indochina would be captured, whereas the Viet Minh would have suffered far heavier casualties. Nevertheless, Ely admitted that a defeat at Dien Bien Phu would be a serious blow to morale in the field and at home. If the fortress fell, Foreign Minister Bidault might not hold out at Geneva for terms acceptable to the United States.[12] Apprehensive about the outcome at Dien Bien Phu and about the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention, the French Government instructed General Ely to ask what the United States would do if Chinese planes appeared over Indochina. General Ely raised this question with Secretary of State Dulles; Mr. Dulles indicated that American reaction would depend upon the circumstances. The United States certainly would not participate in the war except with the cooperation of the Indochinese.[13]

General Ely asked Admiral Radford whether American aircraft would intervene to counter Chinese planes and how American intervention might occur. He suggested that staff agreements be concluded between CINCPAC and the French

command in Indochina "with a view to limiting the air risk which characterizes the present situation."[14] Radford assured General Ely that considerable planning for limited US participation in the war had been completed and to include procedures for employing carrier aircraft in Indochina. Before the United States would commit these forces, it must have firm agreements on command and organizational arrangements, the duration of American support, and basing facilities in Indochina. Admiral Radford asked if the French Government would request American air support if the Chinese Communists intervened or if the French needed more airpower. The admiral pointed out that if such a request was likely, then "prudence dictated that the matter should be explored on a higher level in order to be ready for such emergency." Ely replied that it was obvious that France contemplated such a request to prevent defeat.

General Ely asked about American constitutional processes governing the commitment of aircraft, and he told Radford that the French Parliament would have to consent to the request for help. Radford replied that the President was committed to taking such a request up with Congress.[15] It would take time to arrange for American intervention, and it would be done at the governmental level. Next Ely asked what would America do to help the French avert a disaster at Dien Bien Phu. The Chairman stressed that the United States would have to consider the whole Far Eastern situation and the probable Communist Chinese reaction before deciding to commit its planes; he did tell the general that as many as 350 fighters operating from carriers could be brought into action within two days. It would be more difficult to bring medium bombers into the fight. General Ely concluded by saying that he was certain his government would ask for American air support if the Chinese intervened. However, Paris so feared provoking the Chinese that he would not speculate whether his government would ask for American help to save Dien Bien Phu.[16]

General Ely obtained Admiral Radford's signature on the following minute of their discussion:

> In respect to General Ely's memorandum of 23 March 1954, it was decided that it was advisable that military authorities push their planning work as far as possible so that there would be no time wasted when and if our governments decided to oppose enemy air intervention over Indo-China if it took place, and to check all planning arrangements already made under previous agreements between CINCPAC and the CINC Indo-China and send instructions to those authorities to this effect.[17]

Informed of this agreement, Admiral Stump was told that General Ely's aide was on the way to Indochina to tell General Navarre of the Ely-Radford conversations. The aide's arrival would provide CINCPAC with an opportunity to renew liaison with General Navarre.[18]

This minute was less than General Ely had hoped for. He had given Radford a version that included this paragraph: "There was complete agreement on the terms of General Ely's memorandum, dated 23 March, dealing with intervention by US aircraft in Indochina in case of an emergency, it being understood that this intervention could be either by Naval or Air Force units as the need arises, depending on the development of the situation."[19] Radford refused to initial this statement; however, General Ely left Washington believing that a request for American intervention would receive a prompt and affirmative reply.

The talks with Ely confirmed Admiral Radford's opinion that the United States faced a critical situation. The Admiral told President Eisenhower of his fear

> that the measures being taken by the French will prove to be inadequate and initiated too late to prevent a progressive deterioration of the situation. The consequences can well lead to the loss of all of S.E. Asia to Communist domination. If this is to be avoided, I consider that the U.S. must be prepared to act promptly and in force possibly to a frantic and belated request by the French for U.S. intervention.[20]

Ely returned to France apparently believing that an American air operation with B–29 medium bombers and conventional weapons to aid the garrison at Dien Bien Phu was likely as a one-time emergency measure to stave off disaster in Indochina. The Americans were preparing for such an operation, and Radford favored it. But the Chairman made it clear to the President that the air attack on the Viet Minh should be the first step in an increasing American role in the war.[21] On 7 April Radford sent Secretary Dulles the conclusions of the Joint Advanced Study Committee's report proposing the use of three nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu. On his way to Paris to confer with the allies, Dulles indicated no interest in the nuclear option.[22]

Conditions of Intervention

The Berlin communiqué had triggered military action by the Viet Minh to strengthen its hand for Geneva; the agreement also moved the United States to evaluate how much the French could lose to the Viet Minh without losing the war. In early March 1954 the Secretary of Defense asked the Joint Chiefs for their advice on this and other issues that would arise at the Geneva Conference.[23] The Chief of Naval Operations pointed out that considering minimum positions was not enough; the French might accept terms which looked reasonable but which would let the Viet Minh subvert Indochina. It was essential that the French Government stand by Premier Laniel's call for evacuation of the Viet Minh forces to delimited zones prior to a cease-fire.[24] The United States should insist that France attain a strong military situation before negotiating seriously with the Viet Minh.[25]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed with Admiral Carney and rejected the following possible settlements: (1) the status quo, (2) a cease-fire, (3) a coalition government, (4) partition, and (5) self-determination through a plebiscite. The only acceptable alternative was military victory. It would be expensive to commit the resources that victory would cost, but it would be far more costly to roll back the communist tide once it had gained momentum in Southeast Asia. The JCS recommended urging France not to abandon "aggressive prosecution of military operations until a satisfactory settlement has been achieved." The Chiefs recognized that France might accept a negotiated settlement in spite of American pressure. They believed that, if this occurred, the United States should refuse to associate itself with the terms and should seek to continue the struggle together with the Associated States and other allies. They further recommended that the National Security Council immediately consider the extent to which the United States would be willing to commit its military resources in Indochina in concert with the French, or, if the French withdrew, in concert with other allies or unilaterally.[26] These JCS views were confirmed by a subcommittee of the President's Special Committee on Indochina. The subcommittee stated that the National Security Council should examine what political pressures the United States could apply to bolster French resolve; it should study actual intervention with American "air, naval and ultimately ground forces"; and it should determine whether it was possible to develop another base of operations in Southeast Asia as a substitute for Indochina.[27]

These recommendations were punctuated by the Viet Minh capture of the two French redoubts at Dien Bien Phu on 15 March. The deteriorating military situation emphasized how much had to be done before the Geneva Conference began on 26 April. In December 1953, when the Joint Chiefs tried to place possible American intervention before the National Security Council, Deputy Secretary Kyes had quashed the Chiefs' recommendations on the grounds of logistical inaccuracies. In March, however, Mr. Wilson approved the JCS and the subcommittee recommendations and forwarded them to the Secretary of State.[28]

Secretary Dulles recognized the seriousness of the situation. Both the French military position and the political climate within France boded ill for preserving Indochina at Geneva. On 9 March Radical-Socialist Deputy Pierre Mendes-France called for stopping the Indochinese war immediately by negotiating directly with the Viet Minh; the French Government should not wait for an international conference that would prolong for some months "the massacre and anguish of [the] entire nation."[29] Although this statement represented the views of the noncommunist left, Mr. Dulles had reason to be concerned about the attitude of the French Government. The French hoped that the United States would recognize Red China or lighten the trade embargo as a quid pro quo for settlement of the wars in Korea and Indochina. Premier Laniel expected his government to fall if it returned empty-handed from Geneva. Ambassador Dillon in Paris put the question bluntly: How far

was America prepared to go to prevent further communist expansion in Southeast Asia, either by fighting or by making the concessions sought by China?[30]

Confronted by the Ambassador's question, Mr. Dulles raised the issue with the National Security Council on 25 March when he addressed the Department of Defense recommendation that the United States immediately study military intervention. Dulles pointed out that before the Geneva Conference the United States must have answers to some fundamental questions; specifically: What would the United States do if the French attempted to sacrifice the position of the free world in Indochina by accepting terms unacceptable to the United States? and What would the United States do if the French decided to get out of Indochina? The Secretary then stated that the United States had to be prepared to write off its interests in Indochina or to assume responsibility there if the French relinquished their hold.

In reply President Eisenhower listed four conditions to be met before US military intervention might take place: The Associated States would have to request assistance; the United Nations should sanction the response; other nations would have to join the United States in answering; and congressional assent must be given. Dulles thought that the United Nations might sanction assistance, but more work would have to be done before the Executive Branch presented the case for intervention to the Congress. After discussing using the Australia-New Zealand-United States pact as an instrument for united action, the National Security Council directed the Planning Board to make recommendations on "the extent to which and the circumstances and conditions under which the United States would be willing to commit its resources in support of the Associated States in the effort to prevent the loss of Indochina to the Communists, in concert with the French or in concert with others or, if necessary, unilaterally."[31]

On 31 March Admiral Radford sought the advice of the Joint Chiefs on plans for air operations to aid the French at Dien Bien Phu; they opposed such assistance. Drawing on the results of previous planning by his staff, General Ridgway emphatically warned of the increased risk of general war. General Twining noted the conditions President Eisenhower placed on any American intervention.[32]

Secretary Dulles began to prepare the American people and world opinion for possible US intervention in Indochina. After listing the ways in which the Chinese Communists were aiding the Viet Minh, the Secretary clarified the American position:

> Under the conditions of today, the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole free community. The United States feels that that possibility should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action. This might involve serious risks. But these risks are far less than those that will face us a few years from now if we dare not be resolute today.[33]

Supported by Admiral Radford and Mr. Kyes, Dulles sounded out congressional leaders on the conditions to be met before Congress would sanction American participation in the war. Above all else the congressmen stipulated that the United States should intervene only as a member of an international coalition. In addition, Congress would want assurances that France was granting full independence to the Associated States, that it had developed an effective training program for native troops, and that it would not withdraw its forces but would prosecute an aggressive plan for military action.[34]

Secretary Dulles' call for united action did not deter the Viet Minh from pressing their advantage at Dien Bien Phu. At the end of March, General Giap's troops assaulted the main bastions of the fortress. By 3 April they had reduced the French stronghold to a triangle with sides of about 2,500 yards and had captured the northern side of the airfield, making it extremely difficult for the French to reinforce and supply the fortress.[35]

The critical situation brought emergency requests for American help. Could the United States airlift two battalions of paratroopers from North Africa to Indochina? Would the United States provide some carrier planes to be flown by French naval aviators? Could the United States furnish eighteen C–47s to transport a reserve paratroop battalion from Hanoi to Dien Bien Phu? And could six more C–119s be loaned to the French Air Force? These requests were met after President Eisenhower stressed the need to give the French all possible assistance short of outright intervention.[36]

In Paris, General Ely had been coordinating possible American intervention; he dispatched an aide to Navarre in Indochina. The operation was now called VAUTOUR (VULTURE). Navarre informed General Earle E. Partridge, USAF, commanding Far East Air Forces, of the plan. Partridge sent Brigadier General Joseph D. C. Caldera, head of FEAF Bomber Command, to Indochina. Caldera had about one hundred B–29s and envisioned launching a mission from Clark Air Base in the Philippines to hit targets around Dien Bien Phu. Due to the possibility of bad weather and the nearness of the targets to the French lines, the fact that the French had no equipment to support short-range navigation (shoran) posed problems. Therefore, Caldera thought that carrier-based fighter-bombers would be better suited for the mission.[37]

The French Make Their Request

Late on 4 April, Prime Minister Laniel and Foreign Minister Bidault told Ambassador Dillon that "immediate armed intervention of US carrier aircraft at Dien Bien Phu is now necessary to save the situation." Two considerations spurred the French request. First, fresh Viet Minh troops were entering the battle faster than the French could reinforce the garrison with paratroops. Second, General Ely had told his government that Admiral Radford had promised to do his best to obtain

American help if Dien Bien Phu required US naval air support. According to the French leaders the Chinese Communists had, in all but name, already intervened in the battle. Admitting that American naval air support might bring Chinese Communist air attacks against the Tonkin Delta, Laniel said that his government was ready to accept the risk. Emphasizing that speedy American intervention was essential, Bidault observed that the Geneva Conference would be won or lost at Dien Bien Phu.[38]

After conferring with the President, Secretary Dulles told the French Government that the United States could not commit belligerent acts in Indochina before reaching a full political understanding on the formation of a coalition with France and other countries, particularly the British Commonwealth. He pointed out again that the President must consult with Congress before going to war. The United States was presently giving all aid short of active belligerency and was preparing the public and Congress for intervention.[39] The French Cabinet received the American reply with good grace but continued to believe that a relatively small commitment of airpower would save the day. Therefore, the French asked the United States to provide ten to twenty B–29s to be flown by French pilots from US bases in the Philippines. Ambassador Dillon seconded the request, pointing out that if America failed to help and Dien Bien Phu were lost, the disaster would strengthen the ministers in the Government who wished for peace at any price.[40] Yet both political and military logic ran counter to using B–29s at Dien Bien Phu. It would take time and finesse to obtain Philippine consent for using their territory as a base for French operations against Asians. It would take more time than was available to train experienced pilots to operate B–29s; moreover, medium bombers were not suitable for use against troops in foxholes. Informing General Valluy of the reasons for not loaning the B–29s, Admiral Radford offered additional fighter-bombers, which the French gratefully accepted. Later, General Ely claimed that the request for B–29s had been generated by politicians, not by soldiers and airmen.[41]

The French Government requested B–29s on the same day that the National Security Council met to consider a Planning Board report recommendating that "the United States should now reach a decision whether or not to intervene with combat forces, if that is necessary to save Indochina from Communist control, and, tentatively, [on] the form and conditions of any such intervention," and that "the timing for communication to the French of such [a] decision, or for its implementation, should be decided in the light of future developments." If the United States planned to intervene, the board suggested these actions: (1) obtain congressional approval for intervention, (2) initiate military and mobilization planning, (3) make and publicize moves to ready US air and naval forces for action on short notice, (4) make it clear that no acceptable settlement could be reached without far greater communist concessions, (5) explore with the British Commonwealth and with Asian nations the formation of a regional coalition, and (6) exert maximum diplomatic pressure on

France and the Associated States to resolve the question of the future status of Indochina and prepare the French and Indochinese for inviting the United States and other nations to participate in the war.[42]

The National Security Council discussed the report, but it "postponed decision on the recommendation" that the United States should determine now whether or not to intervene. President Eisenhower reiterated his opposition to unilateral American intervention and stated that congressional approval would have to be won and, as a minimum, the Associated States would have to request American participation in the struggle.

Secretary Dulles reported his conversations with congressional leaders, and indicated that discussions with ambassadors of major US allies indicated that there was little disposition among the allies to take a strong stand on Indochina. The Secretary rejected the recommendation that the United States decide whether to intervene; instead discussion focused on the tangential issue of the Southeast Asian coalition. Some, including the President, believed that bringing the coalition into existence would strengthen the bargaining position of the West at Geneva and make intervention unnecessary. Such a coalition could bolster the ability of other countries in Southeast Asia to resist communism and prevent the loss of the entire area should Indochina fall. Both Secretary of Defense Wilson and Admiral Radford opposed the partition of Indochina and pointed out the likely psychological impact on France of the loss of Dien Bien Phu, but the National Security Council decided to direct US efforts prior to the Geneva Conference toward organizing an alliance composed initially of ten nations: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippine Islands. In addition, the National Security Council agreed to attempt to win British support for American objectives in the Far East and to press the French to accelerate granting independence to the Associated States. President Eisenhower directed the Department of Defense to obtain congressional approval for increasing the number of US maintenance technicians in Indochina and for extending the tour of duty of personnel already there. If Congress approved these steps, the United States could send the French additional aircraft for use against the Viet Minh.[43]

The National Security Council's action allowed the Department of Defense to intensify its efforts in assisting the French to save Dien Bien Phu by providing material aid, yet there was little more material aid that would help. The Air Force inspection team and General Trapnell both reported that French utilization of American aircraft was limited by lack of flight crews and inadequate base facilities, not shortage of aircraft or maintenance deficiencies. Maintenance problems had largely been solved by the effective work of US Air Force technicians. Trapnell found the B–26 situation the most critical. The French had thirty-four flight crews to fly forty-three operational aircraft; additional B–26s would hardly alleviate this imbalance. The French Air Force did have crews for the naval Corsairs that the United States had

agreed to provide, and it could use American maintenance personnel to keep these planes flying. The Navy ordered a few of its ratings to Indochina to service the twenty-five carrier planes.[44]

The critical situation in Indochina induced General Navarre to agree to use the American officers on his staff and to accept some twenty-five to fifty US personnel to help train native forces.[45] However, some actions by French military authorities did little to improve Franco-American relations. Admiral Radford had stayed up all night to obtain approval for airlifting paratroops from North Africa to Indochina, but after the arrangements were completed, the French announced that the troops would not be ready to leave for almost two weeks. In addition, the French navy sent the aircraft carrier *Belleau Wood*, which had been loaned to France, to the Far East with a cargo of planes for sale to the Indian Government. The carrier would arrive off Indochina at a crucial time without aircraft. Finally, General Ely persisted in misinterpreting his March conversations with Admiral Radford. On 7 April he complained that:

> The diplomatic exchanges of views stemming from the conditional answer made by the US Government to our request for emergency intervention of the US Air Forces [sic] in support of our forces at Dien Bien Phu cause me to fear that this intervention would be subject to time lag which would be too long.
>
> ...I... wish that requested emergency intervention should not remain subordinated to political exchanges of views which will not fail to take a lot of time, in view of the fact that they must be conducted with several other governments.[46]

Admiral Radford replied that he and the Secretary of State had made it absolutely clear

> the decision to employ U.S. forces in combat was one that could only be made at the highest governmental level and in the light of constitutional processes and congressional action. I did state that no such participation by U.S. forces was possible without a formal request by the French Government, and that I was certain that such a request, if made, would receive prompt and thorough consideration by the United States Government.
>
> Events connected with the request have proved my prediction to be true. The Secretary of State is moving with great urgency to cope with the situation. It is receiving the continuing attention at the highest levels of the United States Government. Meanwhile, every possible effort is being made to take all action, short of actual intervention by US armed forces, to assist in the defense of Dien Bien Phu until international arrangements involving the nations who are so directly affected, can be completed.[47]

The Secretary of State attempted to bolster sagging French morale by pointing out to Foreign Minister Bidault that if Dien Bien Phu were lost, France would not have lost the war. He again explained that the United States could not become a belligerent until the American people had been prepared for such a step. Dulles' efforts were only partially successful. Recognizing the realities of American politics, the

French Government could not overlook French political considerations. Bidault replied that if Dien Bien Phu fell "it would be most unlikely that either [the] Associated States or France would be willing to continue [the] war even with full American military support."[48]

Secretary Dulles was also laboring to build the ten-nation Southeast Asian security coalition. The French were in sympathy with the idea, but they did not agree that such an alliance would induce the communists to lighten their terms for settling the war. They saw that the coalition would not be formed in time to save Dien Bien Phu.[49] Dulles resorted to personal diplomacy; he flew to Europe on 10 April "to consult with the British and French Governments about some of the very real problems that are involved in creating the obviously desirable united front to resist Communist aggression in Southeast Asia." His purpose was not to extend the fighting, but to end it. Dulles would not prevent the Geneva Conference from arriving at a peaceful settlement; he wanted to create the unity needed to assure a peaceful settlement.[50]

The Secretary's trip was reasonably successful. From London Dulles and British Foreign Minister Eden announced that "we are ready to take part, with the other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defense, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security and freedom of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific." A day later the Secretary and Foreign Minister Bidault issued a similar joint declaration. During early April the Department of State obtained Thai and Philippine acceptance in principle of the idea of a regional defense organization.[51]

Shortly after Mr. Dulles returned to Washington, however, the British reneged on their agreement to form the regional defense organization before Geneva. Eden later explained that Commonwealth politics dictated the change in British policy. The Colombo Powers, including three Commonwealth members (India, Pakistan, and Ceylon), were to convene on 26 April. Mr. Eden believed it "most undesirable" for Britain to give any public indication of membership in a program for united action until the Colombo Conference had ended. The establishment of the working group of ten nations, which did not include the three Asian Commonwealth members, would produce criticism that Mr. Eden felt would be "most unhelpful" at Geneva. Privately Dulles attributed the British reversal to fear that intervention would bring overt Chinese participation in Indochina and lead to World War III.[52]

Although the State Department could not arrange united action, the first prerequisite for American intervention, the Department of Defense continued planning and preparations. CINCPAC's representative arrived in Saigon to confer with General Navarre on plans for American air support. A few days later the Department of Defense moved a carrier task force, including the *Essex* and the *Boxer*, into the South China Sea between Indochina and the Philippines. The JCS planning

machinery recommended policies for guiding CINCPAC, CINCFE, and COMSAC (Commander, Strategic Air Command) in preparing operational plans for meeting possible Chinese Communist aggression in Indochina or Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff on 23 April accepted the outline plan for Indochina that assumed that the French Union would continue to supply ground troops while the United States furnished air and naval support.[53]

Although the Joint Chiefs had repeatedly approved limited American intervention in Indochina if circumstances required, in early April 1954 General Ridgway suggested a broader course of action. Returning to a 1952 position of the Joint Chiefs, he recommended that the United States concentrate its strength against Communist China, the source of Viet Minh military power. If the United States decided to use armed force to hold Indochina, it should line up allied support and warn the communists that it would neutralize the sources of Viet Minh strength. It should initiate mobilization and other supporting measures after enlisting allied military support. Ridgway pointed out that there were few decisive targets in Indochina. American intervention might result in local successes, but it would "constitute a dangerous diversion of limited US military capabilities, and could commit our armed forces in a non-decisive theater to the attainment of non-decisive local objectives."

The other Chiefs of Staff did not immediately accept General Ridgway's analysis; the JCS noted Ridgway's views and forwarded them to the Secretary of Defense. After the fall of Dien Bien Phu and the deterioration of the French position at Geneva, the Joint Chiefs came back to General Ridgway's proposal.[54]

Supporters of intervention needed to gauge the degree of public support for such a step. Vice President Richard M. Nixon took action. Asked what the country should do if the French withdrew from Indochina, Mr. Nixon replied:

> that there was no reason why the French could not stay on and win, but on the assumption they did withdraw—an assumption he did not accept—Indochina would become Communist in a month.
>
> The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia. It was hoped that the United States would not have to send troops there, but if this Government could not avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces.

Public reaction to Nixon's statement was unfavorable. Mr. Nixon had to counter the impression that the administration was bent on war. He said, "The aim of the United States is to hold Indochina without war involving the United States, if we can," and "The purpose of our policy is to avoid sending our boys to Indochina or anywhere else to fight."[55]

Mr. Dulles and Admiral Radford Go to Paris

With public opinion and the Congress unready for unilateral American action and the British unwilling to internationalize the war, the only course was to use moral suasion to keep the French from giving in at Geneva. There was still hope that the situation could be saved since the Viet Minh had adopted "nibbling" tactics at Dien Bien Phu, progressively reducing the perimeter, but not overwhelming the defenders.[56]

Hoping to salvage the Southeast Asian coalition and establish a French bargaining position, Secretary Dulles left for Paris and Geneva on 20 April. Three days later Admiral Radford journeyed to Paris and London to discuss the military situation with the French and British. Before he left, Radford met with members of the Joint Chiefs and the State Department. He warned of what could follow the fall of Dien Bien Phu. It would be difficult to evacuate French civilians; the French would abandon their Vietnamese allies.[57]

The French Government believed it would have to negotiate when the enemy took Dien Bien Phu. According to Bidault and Ely the situation at the fortress was hopeless short of "massive air intervention, which the US would have to supply." Recalling that Mr. Dulles thought US participation impracticable without British cooperation, Bidault belittled the help that the United Kingdom would give and urged that the American Government give the "most serious consideration to armed intervention promptly as the only way to save the situation." Turning to the idea of a Southeast Asia defense coalition, the Secretary of State argued "that this was essential to give some cards to work with at Geneva so as to have a chance of obtaining acceptable peace." If Dien Bien Phu were lost, Bidault answered, the French people would regard the coalition as a trick to keep them fighting; they would probably want to pull out of Southeast Asia.[58]

Growing more distraught, Navarre told the American chargé d'affaires in Saigon that he needed airpower and US ground forces.[59] He informed his government that if American air intervention did not arrive promptly he would have to conclude a cease-fire throughout Indochina. Bidault passed General Navarre's warning to Secretary Dulles. Admitting that US help might come too late to save Dien Bien Phu, the Foreign Minister pleaded for intervention; with Americans at their side the French would feel honor-bound to go on fighting. In a formal reply Mr. Dulles reminded the French that the required congressional authorization would be predicated on a coalition. As things stood, B–29 operations were "out of the question." Dulles told Eisenhower that "Bidault gives the impression of a man close to the breaking point... obviously exhausted and is confused and rambling in his talk." Dulles' military advisers told him that air intervention would no longer save Dien Bien Phu; the real question was what to do next. He advised the French to "react vigorously to temporary setbacks and to surmount them. That can be done in relation to the present situation if our nations and people have the

resolution and the will. We believe that you can count upon us, and we hope that we can count on you."[60] General Ely renewed the discussion of America's role with Admiral Radford; the general asked for intervention. Admitting that American airpower could have no direct bearing on the outcome at Dien Bien Phu, Ely said its effect would be psychological; it would keep the Laniel government in office and France in the war. Radford replied that the Secretary of State had stated the US position. Reporting the Ely-Radford talk, Ambassador Dillon commented that American failure to intervene would prompt the dissolution of the Laniel government. Its replacement would be a cabinet pledged both to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh and to withdraw from Indochina; it would probably not accept US intervention.[61]

Ambassador Dillon did not persuade the Secretary of State of the need for intervention. Since the security of the United States was not directly threatened, Dulles opposed the President committing forces by executive action. He believed that intervention was not in the long-range interests of the country. Since a successor French government might repudiate American help, he advised against taking a step that would gravely strain relations with the British, Australians, and New Zealanders. He preferred dealing with a successor government to intervening unilaterally.[62]

The Americans were not successful in winning British agreement to establish the Southeast Asia coalition in time to affect the Geneva negotiations. Mr. Eden repeated that Britain could not work to draft terms of reference until the Colombo Conference had met. If the coalition were formed, he doubted that Britain would agree to fight to save Indochina. Eden did recognize that if the French lost Indochina, the communists would threaten Burma and Malaya. He was prepared to recommend that a secret group composed of American, British, Australian, New Zealand, and Thai military representatives consider actions for strengthening Thailand. Dulles suggested that this idea be held in abeyance until a clearer picture of French actions emerged and persuaded Eden to consult further with the British Cabinet.[63]

The British would only agree to hold secret military talks with the United States. They remained opposed to intervening in Indochina or to establishing a coalition for intervention. Her Majesty's Government based its position on an estimate by the British Chiefs of Staff that airpower alone would not save Dien Bien Phu and that the only way to cope with the situation was to commit a strong force in the Tonkin Delta to "work outward concentrically consolidating their position as they go with loyal natives." Such an operation would involve lots of time and considerable forces.[64] Admiral Radford discussed this estimate with the British Chiefs of Staff and with Prime Minister Churchill. British military leaders agreed with the American view of the probable serious consequences that would follow the loss of Indochina. After hearing the admiral's views, the British Chiefs continued to be apprehensive of Chinese entry if the allies intervened. Moreover, they were thinking of large-scale ground operations. Their principal concern was holding Malaya. The Prime Minister also concentrated on British interests. Britain had given India

independence, how could the English people be asked to save Indochina for the French Empire?[65]

Following his conversation with Admiral Radford, the Prime Minister stated the British position in the House of Commons.

> Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to give any undertakings about United Kingdom military action in Indochina in advance of the results of Geneva. Her Majesty's Government have not entered into any new political or military commitments. My Right Honorable friend [Eden] has, of course, made it clear to his colleagues at Geneva that if settlements are reached at Geneva, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to play their full part in supporting them in order to promote a stable peace in the Far East.[66]

Meeting with Eden and Dulles on 26 April, Radford said that he doubted that an air intervention could save Dien Bien Phu; Dulles considered it impossible constitutionally. In Radford's view, however, an announcement of American intervention could prevent French collapse. The Communist Chinese would not resort to war, and in any case "acceptance of risk is necessary in order to avoid being nibbled to death."[67]

Confronted with the British statement, Mr. Dulles and the National Security Council turned to establishing a regional coalition without the United Kingdom.[68] The Secretary of State conferred with the Foreign Ministers of Australia and New Zealand under the terms of the ANZUS pact. He stressed the necessity for a common stand by all countries in Southeast Asia. While they did not make any commitments, the Australians were willing to hold talks immediately; they preferred that the discussions take place within the Five-Power Staff Agency, of which Britain was a member. New Zealand was also willing to begin the talks immediately. Neither country objected to including Thailand.[69]

With the Americans preparing for talks with the Dominions, the British Foreign Minister reversed his field. Eden told Mr. Dulles that he was ready to recommend that "Her Majesty's Government should take part at once with the United States, France, Australia, and New Zealand in an examination by the Five Power staff agency of the Indochina and Southeast Asia situation, both now and subsequent to the Geneva conference, . . . including the implications of any Geneva settlement." The British, however, would remain opposed to intervention. Dulles believed the staff talks were an avenue of hope and that they would have a good effect at the conference and on public opinion.[70]

On 29 April the National Security Council discussed plans for a regional security organization for Southeast Asia and reviewed with the Planning Board the possible use of nuclear weapons in Indochina. The meeting was inconclusive; it remained uncertain whether one weapon would be enough to save Dien Bien Phu. Also uncertain was whether the French could use a nuclear weapon if it were turned over to them, and whether such action would be legal. President

Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon privately agreed that naval fighter-bombers using napalm and high explosive would probably work better. Eisenhower finally concluded that nuclear weapons could not be used and that the public would not support the use of American troops.[71]

Staff talks, air strikes, threats, all became irrelevant when the French Union defenders of Dien Bien Phu surrendered on 7 May. The Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference began the next day. The French had said for weeks that the fall of the fortress would make negotiations inevitable and the British were prepared to accept a cease-fire. President Eisenhower's conditions for intervention had not been met. Radford had made his case for intervention but other views, including those of the rest of the Chiefs, were the ones that finally prevailed.

10

Geneva and the End of Intervention

Dulles had helped to persuade Laniel that the loss of Dien Bien Phu did not mean the end of the war. But the Prime Minister judged that the survival of his government depended on negotiating an end to the fighting. If Laniel were to fall, according to Dulles, "the government will be taken over by defeatists."[1] Radford spoke for those who were convinced that the United States needed to be prepared to fight to prevent all of Southeast Asia from falling to the communists. While viewing the matter seriously, the other Joint Chiefs did not challenge President Eisenhower's unwillingness to commit troops. Now that the situation was critical, the Chiefs offered proposals concerning strategy; in particular, how to save what was left. A regional security organization for Southeast Asia would provide a context for military intervention by the United States and a means of saving the situation after a cease-fire. Eisenhower shared the Joint Chiefs' concern based on experience in Korea, that cease-fire talks with the communists carried great danger, but at Geneva, the French made their first offer.

French Armistice Proposal and US Reaction

Meeting on 8 May, the National Security Council decided that the United States ought not to support any proposal for a cease-fire in advance of an acceptable armistice agreement under international controls. Although the council felt that the United States could agree to the initiation of negotiations for an armistice, it urged France and the Associated States to continue to oppose the Viet Minh. To strengthen the position of France and the Associated States during the negotiations, the United States would continue its aid program and its efforts

to organize a Southeast Asian regional grouping to prevent further communist expansion in that area.[2]

Secretary Dulles told the National Security Council that he intended to indicate to the French Government the United States' willingness to discuss the conditions under which the Indochinese conflict might be internationalized. The French knew that American intervention depended upon fulfilling three conditions: real independence for the Associated States, an aggressive military plan, and an effective program for the training of native troops. In explaining the administration's position on intervention to leading members of Congress on 5 May, Dulles stated that these prerequisites had not been met; therefore, conditions did not exist for a successful conclusion of the war. Intervention was not advisable; the United States would not intervene unless other interested nations joined.[3]

American intervention was the only ace the two partners had. The original French armistice proposals at Geneva were conditioned by uncertainty about American intentions, while American support depended upon the nature of the proposals. Four days before the conference, M. de Margerie, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Under Secretary of State Smith that the French had not advised the United States of their ideas about possible armistice proposals because they had not been able to agree among themselves. He said that the French Government realized the near impossibility of preventing the communists from profiting by a cease-fire or armistice arrangement, but that it was necessary to seek the course with fewest bad consequences. De Margerie hoped that the French proposals would receive American support, but Under Secretary Smith replied that United States policy still was that anything short of prosecution of the Navarre Plan to victory was not good enough. De Margerie observed that was a "large order" but the United States would not be "too unhappy" over the French proposals. He added that, in any case, the United States was not in a good position to object unless prepared to intervene militarily.[4]

The French proposals, not yet authorized by the Cabinet, were better than expected. The Laniel government took the line that the problem of Vietnam was purely Vietnamese, with no question of partition, and that it was a military struggle for control of the government. Laos and Cambodia were categorized as victims of external aggression. According to the Berlin Agreement, the Geneva Conference was to establish peace in all three countries. To this end, there should be a supervised cease-fire, guaranteed by military and administrative controls, which would take effect only when such guarantees had been embodied in armistice conventions, which might be different for all three states, and when control machinery was in place. Controls would be based upon Premier Laniel's March 5 conditions. When the cease-fire occurred, regular troops would regroup in delimited areas and all other forces would be disarmed. The international control machinery would require a considerable number of personnel. After peace had been established, political and economic problems could be examined.[5]

According to the French delegate, the French assumed the Soviets would propose an immediate cease-fire, to be followed by a political settlement based on coalition and immediate elections. Such a proposal would force the West into opposing the cease-fire. In spite of the strong desire of the French public for a cease-fire, the government would defend its proposal on the ground that its conditions were essential for the safety of the troops. Achieving those conditions would delay any cease-fire for a long time, if not indefinitely. The French delegate stated there was no firm position on the issue of "United Nations" supervision. Subsequent discussion, however, indicated that the French opposed the use of UN machinery fearing that it would establish a precedent that could be used against them in North Africa and elsewhere. The British shared this view.[6] One of the proponents of a cease-fire was General Navarre. High Commissioner De Jean vigorously opposed a cease-fire and recommended that Foreign Minister Bidault ignore Navarre. The American chargé d'affaires in Saigon observed that it was the irony of war that the general wished to surrender, while the diplomat wished to forge ahead.[7]

The draft French terms were not an outright request for a cease-fire, but the United States delegate cabled that "unless or until we have firm support in the United States for some other solution we are not in a position in Geneva to prevent the French from making such a proposal, which is far below a successful prosecution of the Navarre plan." He doubted that the French would remain firm in negotiations for satisfactory controls and believed that they would slide rapidly toward a communist counter-proposal of immediate cease-fire without controls. Important in blocking French capitulation would be the degree to which the United States could increase communist uncertainty about the possibility of American intervention. Success in organizing some form of Southeast Asian coalition would also bolster the French.[8]

The Joint Chiefs thought the French proposal would be regarded by the people of Asia as a communist victory, particularly in the light of the military situation. In their view, an armistice under the proposed conditions would lead to a political stalemate and progressive deterioration of the French-Vietnamese military position resulting in the loss of Indochina. Even if the communists agreed to undertake negotiations pursuant to the French proposals, the negotiations could be expected to result either in rapid capitulation of the French to obtain a cease-fire or in a protracted debate characterized by communist adherence to an inflexible position on important issues and by substantial French concessions. Experience in Korea indicated that the communists would flagrantly evade, circumvent, and violate any agreement in order to subjugate all of Indochina regardless of the military and administrative controls embodied in the armistice. If the communists agreed to international control, their practices would render it impotent, as in Korea. The JCS were skeptical that the communists would agree to refrain from new military operations during the course of negotiations. It was likely that they

would intensify operations to improve their bargaining position; the French would seek to avoid casualties.

If the United States associated itself with the initial French terms, it would likely be confronted later with the alternative of supporting the French in weakened positions or of extricating itself. The Chiefs agreed that it was no longer realistic to insist that the French continue to prosecute the Navarre Plan, but they adhered to the view that a satisfactory settlement was impossible without substantial improvement in the French military situation. Without a settlement that would assure the political and territorial integrity of the Associated States, any armistice would lead to eventual loss of the area to the communists. In light of the current situation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed the United States should adopt this minimum position:

> ... The United States will not associate itself with any French proposal directed toward cease-fire in advance of a satisfactory political settlement. The United States urges the French Government to propose that negotiations for a political settlement be initiated at once. During the course of such negotiations, French Union Forces should continue to oppose the forces of the Viet Minh with all means at their disposal in order to reinforce the French negotiating position. In the meantime, as a means of strengthening the French hand, the United States will intensify its efforts to organize and promptly activate a Southeast Asian coalition for the purpose of preventing further expansion of Communist power in Southeast Asia. If the French Government persists in its intention of entering armistice negotiations or accedes to immediate cease-fire negotiations, the United States will disassociate itself from such negotiations in order to maintain maximum freedom of action in taking whatever measures may be feasible for opposing extension of Communist control into Southeast Asia.[9]

To clarify the United States' refusal to associate itself with a cease-fire in advance of a political settlement, the President inserted the phrase "because of the proof given in Korea that the Communists will not be bound militarily by the terms of an armistice." He added a clause stating that the United States would continue its aid program to the French.[10] The Joint Chiefs' recommendations were at the heart of the National Security Council position taken on 8 May.

The uncompromising JCS position contained internal contradictions that carried over into the National Security Council position. While, as General Ridgway pointed out, the United States had to support some French proposal, no position was acceptable that would lead to the loss of Indochina. But it was almost inevitable that a settlement based on either partition or coalition government could have no other result. An agreement assuring the political and territorial integrity of the Associated States would be highly desirable, but no such settlement had been proposed. Ridgway believed that the French would reject an American attempt to force them to propose a political settlement that did not take into account the realities of the military situation. In that event, the Joint

Chiefs' position, if followed, would oblige the United States to disassociate itself from France prior to any discussions on Indochina which would jeopardize the Franco-American alliance, accelerate French settlement for a cease-fire, and open the way for new aggression in Southeast Asia.

General Ridgway thought that the United States should support a proposal similar to Premier Laniel's conditions because they held out the greatest hope of France continuing the war. Laniel's conditions were: (a) total evacuation of Laos and Cambodia by the Viet Minh; (b) evacuation of the Tonkin Delta by the Viet Minh, and creation of a no-man's land around the periphery; (c) withdrawal of Viet Minh troops from central Vietnam to specified and restricted areas; (d) disarmament or evacuation of Viet Minh forces in south Vietnam; and (e) measures of security and control to prevent buildup of enemy forces during armistice discussions. If the French began to negotiate without these guarantees, the United States should not be a party to the talks. Ridgway was convinced that the French would endorse continuing the struggle only after it had been demonstrated that an honorable settlement was impossible.[11]

The American attitude did not help the French Government, which was fighting desperately to negotiate at Geneva, instead of trying to reach an agreement with the Viet Minh immediately. Wits in Paris prognosticated that the Assembly would allow the government "to keep its head above water but not show its neck." According to the embassy, "its neck emerged" when it won a vote of confidence by a better margin than expected. But the government's victory was subject to an implicit caveat: should it fail to find a solution at Geneva along the lines indicated by Laniel on 5 March, it would face almost insurmountable pressure to reach an immediate settlement with the Viet Minh on terms presumably considerably less than Laniel's conditions.[12]

The French tabled their proposal on the opening day of the Indochinese conference:

I—For Viet Nam:

1. The grouping of regular units in zones of assembly, to be determined by the conference on the basis of proposals from the commanders-in-chief.
2. The disarmament of elements which do not belong either to the Army or to forces in charge of maintaining order.
3. The immediate liberation of war prisoners and civilian internees.
4. The control of the execution of these clauses by international commissions.
5. Cessation of hostilities with the signing of this agreement.

The re-assembly of troops and the disarmament cited above, provided for in the five points, would begin, at the latest, [number of days] after the signing of the accord.

II—For Cambodia and Laos:

1. Evacuation of all regular and irregular Viet Minh forces which have invaded the countries.
2. The disarmament of elements which do not belong either to the Army or to forces in charge of maintaining order.
3. The immediate liberation of war prisoners and civilian internees.
4. The control of the execution of these clauses by international commissions.

III

These agreements shall be guaranteed by the States participating in the Geneva Conference. Any violation would call for immediate consultation among these States with a view to taking appropriate measures individually or collectively.[13]

The American delegate pointed out that the proposal was an armistice, not a cease-fire, because it provided for cessation of hostilities only after the first four conditions of Section I had been complied with. He drew attention to a major loophole: as assembly and disarming of troops would follow, rather than precede, cessation of hostilities, it was possible to make a simple cease-fire out of a paper armistice agreement. He noted that the French had retained the good bargaining position offered by the distinction between Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia. Under Secretary Smith reported that the French had not thought through their proposal. Their thinking on regrouping, for instance, was that the framework would be established by the conference, and that commanders in the field would work out the details, which would then be submitted to the conference for approval. "There was no answer to Allen's remark that Eden did not wish to spend the next two years in Geneva," stated the Under Secretary. Even more serious was the possibility that on-the-spot technical conversations between the combatants could substitute for formal agreements and circumvent the conference.

The French had no definite idea on the composition of control commissions, other than their not necessarily having to be of the same nationalities as the guarantors mentioned in paragraph III. But the Laniel government did appear to show less opposition to United Nations' control and selection of commissions. On the question of guarantees, the American delegate showed the most reservation. He stressed the need for clarification and for careful consideration of this point lest it oblige the United States to underwrite a settlement that, at best, would be highly unstable. But the American response to this part of the proposal would have an important bearing on French firmness in negotiating the other conditions of an armistice.

Recognizing the amorphous state of the proposals, and their risks to the United States, the Under Secretary of State felt there was more to lose than gain by not supporting them at this stage of the negotiations. Among other things, the United

States would probably be in a better position to win Britain, Australia, and New Zealand over to a more active role in a Southeast Asian defense.[14]

The Joint Strategic Survey Committee observed that there were no provisions or safeguards for United States security interests involved in the acceptance of any armistice with the communists that were not preceded by a satisfactory political settlement. In the absence of strong and positive action by the Western Powers, an armistice would almost certainly lead to the subjugation of Indochina and, eventually, to the loss of all Southeast Asia to the communists. In view of the decision of the United States to concur in the initiation of negotiations, the committee interposed no further objections, providing the French incorporated provisions for international control machinery, to be established, in place, and ready to function prior to actual cease-fire, and a provision that representatives of the international control commission be guaranteed unrestricted movement in, and free access to, all Indochina.[15]

The recommendations of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee headed the list of principles furnished the American delegate to guide him in evaluating proposals offered to the conference. These principles were considered basic to an acceptable settlement of the Indochinese question:

1. The establishment of international control machinery in place and ready to function prior to an actual cease-fire.
2. Representatives of the international control commission should be guaranteed unrestricted movement in, and free access to, all of Indochina.
3. Such a commission should have sufficient military personnel and logistic support to discharge its responsibllities in connection with the armistice terms.
4. Provision for UN assumption of responsibility for supervision of the international control commission. (Some other form of effective international control might well be a satisfactory substitute for UN supervision.)
5. Measures to provide for the security of troops and populations, and guarantees against abuses of the cease-fire by either party.
6. Provisions for the humane and orderly liberation of prisoners of war and internees.
7. Evacuation of Viet Minh forces from Laos and Cambodia.
8. Provision for the examination of political and economic problems following an armistice agreement.
9. No provisions in the armistice of a political nature, such as for early elections or for troop withdrawals that would clearly lead to a communist take-over.[16]

By acquiescing in armistice negotiations, the United States abandoned the demand for a political settlement first; it was a self-inflicted defeat. The United States had taken an extreme stand by insisting that the French hold out for a political settlement before considering an armistice. On 6 May, Admiral Davis had cabled, "General Smith requests I make clear to you his conviction that it is now certain French will not take any negotiating position, even initially, as strong as

persistence in Navarre plan."[17] Since the Berlin Conference, it had become apparent that the French people would not support an all-out effort to win the war if negotiations failed.

In addition to the specific principles governing armistice negotiations, the Under Secretary of State, as head of the United States delegation, was provided with a set of basic instructions, approved by the President. Under Secretary Smith was instructed to deal with delegates of the Chinese Communist regime, or any other regime not recognized diplomatically by the United States, only as a regime with which it was necessary to deal on a de facto basis to end aggression and to obtain peace. The position of the United States in the Indochinese phase of the conference was that of an interested nation, neither a belligerent nor a principal in the negotiation. The United States was to assist in arriving at decisions that would help the nations of that area to enjoy territorial integrity and political independence under stable and free governments, with the opportunity to expand their economies, to realize their legitimate national aspirations, and to develop security through individual and collective defense against aggression.

The United States was not prepared to give its approval to any cease-fire, armistice, or other settlement that would subvert the existing lawful governments of the three Associated States, permanently impair their territorial integrity or place in jeopardy the forces of the French Union in Indochina. If continued participation in the conference appeared likely to involve the United States in a result inconsistent with this policy, the American delegate was instructed to recommend withdrawal or limitation of the United States' role to that of observer.[18] These instructions had been cleared with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.[19]

The United States delegate was "to support in general terms French initiative looking toward an armistice agreement incorporating effective and adequate safeguards and under international supervision." He was to remind the French of the American objective of assuring the independence and freedom of the Associated States. Finally, he was to make it clear that the United States would reserve its position until more was known about the nature of the settlement and the obligations of its guarantors.[20]

Conditions for American Intervention

United action would be essential to the success of any American intervention. Secretary Dulles was attempting to bring together the powers with an interest in Southeast Asia in a regional security group. Military talks with the British and French as well as Australians and New Zealanders were the first step, but the British and French were showing extreme reluctance to support any such effort. Laniel now insisted that French requests for American air intervention at Dien Bien

Phu had been strictly informal. Dulles described Churchill as "scared to death" of Soviet nuclear weapons and the British as unwilling to risk a larger war brought on by American intervention. Radford continued to argue that Southeast Asia could not be held after the fall of Indochina, as the countries in the region were vulnerable to subversion as well as invasion. Under the circumstances, a general war was worth the risk and Radford doubted that war would result from a stronger American stand. Eisenhower was "strongly opposed to any assumption that it was necessary to have a war with China."[21]

Token intervention seemed unlikely to be effective, but the National Security Council continued to consider options. Meeting on 6 May, it explored an American volunteer group for Indochina, possibly equipped with three squadrons of F-86 Sabrejets. Eisenhower suggested that they include multi-engine pilots so that bombers could be made available to the force. The council did agree that the United States should take part in the five-power military talks as a step toward a regional security organization in Southeast Asia.[22]

Dulles feared that a proposal to internationalize the war would be rejected if it was raised before the French were convinced that their only choice was between intervention and what amounted to surrender. Moreover, the British would be more likely to support, or acquiesce in, intervention once Geneva had offered no solution. The Australian Government would almost certainly not take a position until after the elections at the end of May. Nevertheless, it appeared desirable for Premier Laniel to know the American conditions because of their influence on French military decisions in Indochina and political decisions in Geneva. Accordingly, Mr. Dulles told Ambassador Dillon that the President would ask Congress for authority to use the armed forces of the United States in the Indochinese area to support friendly and recognized governments against aggression or armed subversion fomented from without, providing he could state that the following conditions had been, or would be, met:

> (a) That US military participation had been formally requested by France and three Associated States;
>
> (b) That Thailand, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and United Kingdom also had received similar invitations and that we were satisfied that first two would also accept at once; that next two would probably accept following Australian elections, if US invokes ANZUS Treaty; and that UK would either participate or be acquiescent;
>
> (c) That some aspect of matter would be presented to UN promptly, such as by request from Laos, Cambodia, or Thailand for peace observation commission;
>
> (d) That France guarantees to Associated States complete independence, including an unqualified option to withdraw from French Union at any time;
>
> (e) France would undertake not to withdraw its forces from Indochina during period of united action so that forces from the US—principally air and sea—and others would be supplementary and not in substitution;

> (f) That agreement was reached on training of native troops and on command structure for united action.

Because of the uncertain tenure of any French government, the United States required that all of these conditions be accepted by the French Cabinet and authorized or endorsed by the French National Assembly. Once it had agreed to intervene, the United States would be committed and would rely upon any successor French Government to adhere to the conditions. The conditions were "absolutely indispensable as a basis for our [United States] action."[23] Dulles authorized the oral communication of these views to Premier Laniel unless, in the opinion of the Ambassador, it would result in the immediate resignation of the French Government or hasten its capitulation at Geneva.[24]

Premier Laniel and Maurice Schumann appeared pleased by clarification of the United States position, according to the Ambassador. They were particularly impressed and gratified by the indication that participation by the United Kingdom was no longer a prerequisite to action by the United States. They pointed out that France had no control over compliance by Thailand, Australia, or any other country, with the conditions stipulated for them, and asked to be kept informed of United States progress.

The one serious French objection was to the condition that France publicly accord to the Associated States the right to withdraw from the French Union; they stressed that even the Viet Minh looked toward the possibility of joining the French Union.[25] When Dillon reported that this point might discourage even the strongest supporters of continued French action, Dulles replied:

> ... [I] firmly believe that it is essential [to] remove any taint of colonialism in order to attract vital Asian support and forestall opposition by other Asian and Middle Eastern countries ... you should emphasize this concern of ours and our belief that the only way to achieve these results would be through provision of this right of withdrawal.[26]

Laniel and Schumann observed that French public opinion would never understand why such a statement was necessary when it had never been requested by any of the three Associated States.[27] The French were concerned that North Africa might see the French Union as something to be left easily.

For Ambassador Dillon the matter of independence had been taken care of by the pending treaties between France and Vietnam, but the situation was obscured and complicated by a state of war. Much of the difficulty was caused by the presence of a large French expeditionary corps in Vietnam, by a French supreme military commander, and by the absence of a powerful Vietnamese national army. Solution of the problem appeared to be the creation of a real national army. The Ambassador recalled that Korea had become a demonstrably free and independent nation as its own army was built up. Therefore, the United States should press for a

publicized agreement with France giving the United States prime responsibility for training and equipping the Vietnamese army. There were many advantages: Vietnamese independence would no longer be questioned; doubts about the ability of the French military command to accomplish the task would be circumvented; and the French would be able to withdraw the Expeditionary Corps after the end of hostilities. The French withdrawal would also probably have a salutary effect upon the Chinese Communists.[28]

Recognizing the virtues of Dillon's solution, Mr. Dulles rejoined that, "We cannot wait for the abolition of all deep-rooted abuses and extra-territorial privileges in times like these." He continued to explore obtaining a public, preferably international, declaration on the subject of Vietnamese independence, and to press for prompt signature of the draft treaties between France and Vietnam.[29] Both Ambassador Dillon and Under Secretary Smith were anxious to see the basic treaties signed. Until then they occupied an uncomfortable position at Geneva. Moreover, it was probable that, following signature, Bao Dai would return promptly to Vietnam and attempt to assume national leadership.[30]

Premier Laniel and Buu Loc initialled the Franco-Vietnamese treaties of independence and association on 4 June.[31] Mr. Dulles cabled the American Ambassador to inform the French that "initialling" the treaties did not meet the United States condition concerning independence.[32] Schumann explained that this initialling was far more important than the usual initialling of a treaty. Schumann gave assurances that the French were ready to sign, but the Americans learned from the Vietnamese chargé d'affaires that conclusion and signature of the related convention, to which treaty signature was subordinated, had bogged down.[33] The treaties had not been signed by the end of the Geneva Conference, and Bao Dai remained in France.

If the French wanted to use the possibility of United States intervention primarily as a card to play at Geneva, it was to their advantage to not reach a firm decision until the conference had run its course. While the United States was anxious to bolster the French position, the impression was growing that Laniel might be using the US conditions to create an alibi for himself or his successor. Capitulation could be blamed on the United States for having presented unacceptable terms. This suspicion was shared by American representatives at the conference but there was good reason to believe the French were as confused about the intentions of the United States as the Americans were about France's.[34]

French Attempts to Secure Unconditional Intervention

The French turned immediately to a detailed consideration of the military support they would receive following intervention, instead of first complying with

the political prerequisites upon which intervention depended. Their action created the impression that they were attempting to maneuver the United States into a position where it could be accused of haggling over minutiae instead of coming to their aid. Once in that position, the United States would have had to enter the war under conditions more suitable to the French or bear the blame for capitulation.

On the other hand, it was evident that the French military thought there had already been an agreement to the US conditions and they could not understand why the United States did not proceed with its commitments. For instance, based on the statement of the United States that it would commit principally air and sea forces if it intervened, the French asked for twenty thousand Marines, and then raised the request to six divisions. When Ambassador Bonnet reported there were not six Marine divisions in existence, Paris replied that there had to be some kind of contribution. And "then they piled it on," commented a State Department representative.[35] Schumann was "excited and dismayed" when told that Admiral Radford had said there was no question of using Marines in Indochina which, according to the French Ambassador, conflicted with what the French Government had understood to be the intentions of the United States.

This incident that coincided with other cases of serious misunderstanding underlined General Smith's cable from Geneva that "the US position is not understood here."[36] The Secretary of State told the French Ambassador that the US position had been clear from the start, and that the United States was not willing to make an advance commitment the French could use for political maneuvering or for negotiating at Geneva since it would represent a permanent option on United States intervention. The American stand was "all or nothing." Ambassador Bonnet expressed surprise that the United States thought the French Government had not made up its mind to internationalize the war as he considered the request had already been made.[37] At the same time, Under Secretary Smith was explaining to Bidault and Chauvel that the President could not ask Congress to sanction intervention until the basic conditions had been fulfilled by France.[38]

In apprising Premier Laniel of the US conditions a month earlier, Ambassador Dillon had made it clear that they represented high-level thinking in Washington and did not constitute a commitment by the United States Government. Nevertheless, Laniel requested definite assurance, preferably in writing, that American aviation would immediately come to the aid of French forces in the delta if they were attacked by MIGs.[39] In March, General Ely and Admiral Radford had arranged the preparation of plans to cover the eventuality of Chinese air attack, so as to waste no time if an attack came and the United States decided to intervene. Apparently on the basis of those arrangements, Premier Laniel, Maurice Schumann, General Ely, and other high French officials began to speak as though the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had made a commitment of immediate United States retaliation in the event of overt Communist Chinese aggression. The French leaders did seem to realize that any action would require political approval, but they wanted to

be sure that assistance would come rapidly. On 1 June their inquiries were brought to President Eisenhower, who expressed himself very strongly on the subject. He said that the United States would not intervene in China on any basis except united action. Eisenhower would not be responsible for going into China alone unless a joint congressional resolution ordered him to do so. United action was a condition for both a regional grouping for the defense of Southeast Asia and intervention in response to overt Chinese aggression.[40]

On the day after the President had stated his position General Valluy asked Admiral Radford if the President could obtain some sort of "blank check" from the Congress, so that US aid could be provided in a minimum of time. He also asked if the French could count on US assistance, which might involve the landing of Marines, if the French were forced to evacuate Hanoi and withdraw to the Haiphong redoubt. Admiral Radford did not directly answer either question. He stated that US intelligence did not indicate the Chinese Communists were making any preparations for air intervention and repeated the US policy of united action. Valluy was not satisfied. He likened the French situation to that of a man on a sinking ship. Seven or eight destroyers at a distance were little help; what he needed was an airplane to come and rescue him.

Admiral Radford replied that the matter was beyond his control, as it involved a political decision of grave importance. Concerning the Marines, he reminded General Valluy that any landing could only be pursuant to a political decision to intervene, which in turn depended upon fulfillment of the conditions already sent to the French Government. In the event of intervention, the United States force contribution would consist of "principally sea and air forces," although that would not necessarily rule out the use of Marines.

Turning to a survey of other resources, Admiral Radford broached the question of possible use of Korean or Nationalist Chinese troops. General Valluy was sure the latter would be highly unwelcome in Indochina, where the Chinese occupation had not yet been forgotten.[41] The Joint Chiefs believed that the introduction of Chinese Nationalist troops would be inadvisable because it would provide excellent justification for Communist Chinese intervention. Despite their final recommendation that President Rhee's offer of three divisions and essential corps troops be held in abeyance, the JCS gave serious consideration to the employment of Korean troops. In addition to their fighting qualities, American equipment, organization and training, and relative proximity to Indochina, there were the psychological advantages deriving from the use of Asian troops in an Asian war. However, Korean troops would have to be accompanied by American advisers. The presence of Americans, no matter how few in number, could be construed as an act of overt intervention.[42] Toward the end of June, the Joint Chiefs of Staff further studied Rhee's offer; they again recommended that no action be taken on it. Their views were influenced by the fall of the Laniel government, the election of Mendes-France on a peace platform, and the

progress of the Geneva Conference. Furthermore, the reaction of the French Government to the suggestion had been adverse.[43]

When Radford first brought Rhee's offer up with General Valluy, the General said the French had never thought of using Korean troops and that he would have to think it over. He reported to General Ely, however, that Admiral Radford had insisted on the utility of Korean troops and that he claimed the United States could transport all three divisions from Korea to Indochina in one week.[44]

The discussions between Admiral Radford and General Valluy were preliminary conversations in anticipation of bilateral staff talks under cover of the Five-Power Military Conference in session in Washington. General Valluy briefed Admiral Radford on the military situation in Indochina following the fall of Dien Bien Phu. He based his gloomy report on the observations of Generals Ely and Salan after their visit to the theater of operations in May. Dien Bien Phu had left its mark on both civilians and military, particularly in the Tonkin Delta. The troops were tired and their morale low. Effectiveness of the military commands had markedly decreased; there was controversy between Generals Navarre and Cogny and between their staffs; there was no close agreement between higher headquarters and commanders of the mobile groups; there was conflict between General Navarre and the French Air Force; there were differences among the Air Force commanders and their staffs. French and Vietnamese troops had lost confidence in one another. Mobilization measures instituted by Bao Dai were a failure. The Vietnamese Government was discredited. In Cochinchina there was conflict between the Vietnamese troops and the population of the area.

General Valluy admitted that Viet Minh losses at Dien Bien Phu had been considerably less than the French had hoped. The Viet Minh battle corps was still effective; within ten days their divisions would reach attack positions around the Tonkin Delta. There were prospects of a hard battle for Hanoi toward the end of June. Extraordinary measures were required. The French were regrouping their forces to place the Vietnamese in the static defense of the perimeter, while using French troops as mobile groups. The Viet Minh were capitalizing on the delicacy of the regrouping operation to deal hard blows at some of the Vietnamese units.

The mobile forces were being positioned to hold the area of the delta along the Hanoi-Haiphong axis; there were six "task forces" available in the area. The French hoped to build this force to nine or ten mobile groups. While each group theoretically consisted of five thousand men, it was actually maintained at a strength of between three and four thousand. Each group corresponded roughly to a US regimental combat team with less service and signal support. Although the French intended to hold the Tonkin redoubt at all costs, they were not assured of success. General Valluy claimed the enemy was building to a strength of one hundred battalions with high morale, and with the civilian population leaning more and more in their favor. The French also feared possible intervention by the Chinese Communist Air Force.

General Ely had returned to Paris to beg for reinforcements. France planned to send two more parachute battalions to Indochina during the summer, and a mobile group of Algerian troops was being prepared for shipment. Four additional battalions of colonial troops in North Africa had been alerted for movement in July, September, and October. Three new divisions were being activated in France. Each division, of twelve to thirteen thousand men, would be composed of conscripts and cadres from "couverture" divisions then in Germany. General Valluy did not hide the fact that provision of the cadres would "shatter" the NATO divisions, nor that sending conscripts to Indochina would present the French Government with a severe political problem.[45]

Admiral Radford had been advised by General Gruenther of the plan to form the new divisions.[46] What General Valluy did not mention was that the United States was going to be asked to equip them. Later, at a meeting between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of State, it was agreed that the United States ought to do everything possible to help the French, but that the initial cost of $310 million plus $250 million annually for maintenance, and the effect on NATO, called for a careful examination of the idea before any commitment should be made.[47]

The State Department was anxious to give the French an agreement in principle, to maintain their will to continue the struggle in Indochina. Moreover, creation of the new divisions would bear on the forthcoming European Defense Community (EDC) debates, as an example of the flexibility of the European situation and by demonstrating the ability of the French to withdraw troops to cope with urgent situations in the French Union.[48] The JCS recommended that, if a formal request were entered by the French, the United States should agree in principle to equip the three additional divisions. The Joint Chiefs believed that the French should exhibit determination to implement the plan in time to deploy experienced French Union troops from elsewhere in Indochina to the Tonkin Delta to prevent its loss. The French also ought to implement their conscription decree immediately and accelerate the training of conscripts. The Joint Chiefs wanted the United States to establish an emergency fund to assure reimbursement to the service concerned of the cost of the initial equipment, the cost of a year's maintenance in combat, and the cost of a year's ammunition. The same fund would also be used for the replacement of critical major items taken from US Army mobilization reserves and stocks earmarked for other programs. The rate of production of ammunition would have to be increased immediately. Fiscal Year 1955 Army and/or MDAP funding programs would have to be increased for replacement of equipment and ammunition of the divisions in combat and for establishing a production rate to support the units.[49]

Records do not reveal the receipt of a formal French request of the type specified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The United States did concur in a request by the French Minister of Defense to permit movement of the 11th French Infantry Division to Indochina with Tables of Organization and Equipment (TO&E).[50] The issue became academic with the settlement arranged at the Geneva Conference. French

military desire for American participation was the real topic of interest behind the Radford-Valluy talks. On 4 June, three days before his last talk with Admiral Radford, General Valluy gave the Five-Power Military Conference his evaluation of the situation in Indochina.

General Valluy stated that if the Tonkin were lost, the military line would not be reestablished anywhere. The Laos bottleneck or the eighteenth parallel had the tactical characteristics that should permit reestablishment of a line, but there would be no forces to man that line. Valluy meant that there were no southern Vietnamese who could oppose northern Vietnamese. Ho Chi Minh's objective was to secure Tonkin either by negotiation at Geneva or by assault on Hanoi. And his chances of success were good.

"It has been said at this Conference," recalled General Valluy, "that if Tonkin is lost, we will fight in the south." "However," he asserted, "the French will not fight nor will Viet Nam." The decisive point was this: if the other conferees did not underwrite the battle for Tonkin, they would in the future fight in Saigon and Bangkok without French assistance. If Tonkin were lost, no Vietnamese would fight against another Vietnamese, and the whole of Vietnam would become communist.[51]

Chargé McClintock in Saigon cabled that "General Valluy's appreciation of the situation . . . is exceedingly good—in fact almost too good." It was McClintock's impression that Valluy had made his statement under instructions; he was probably looking as much at the French Parliament as at the Tonkin Delta. General Ely had twice, in McClintock's presence, stated that it was his keenest desire for the United States to enter the war. McClintock believed that the purpose of General Valluy's statement was either to bring the United States into the conflict or, to prepare an excuse for an armistice the French would then request of the Viet Minh.[52]

General Valluy's presentation of the French plight in Indochina was one of a series of incidents around 9 June that led to emphatic restatement of the United States basic position; the answer was the same: fulfill the preliminary conditions and the United States will intervene. The Joint Chiefs had already drawn up or were finishing plans to cover almost every contingency.

US Military Plans for Intervention

On 20 May, in discussions with the French, the Department of State had specified that, if intervention were to be undertaken, France would have to agree not to withdraw its forces from Indochina during the period of united action. The US forces, principally air and sea and other, would be supplementary and not substitutes. Agreements would also have to be reached on the training of native troops and on the command structure for united action. In formulating a Department of Defense position on command structure and on the size and composition of United States force contributions, the JCS were guided by: the limited availability of US

forces for military action in Indochina; the current numerical advantage of French Union forces over the enemy (approximately 5 to 3); the undesirability of basing large numbers of US troops in Indochina; the need for an expanded and intensified training program; the difficulty of superimposing US air forces upon existing facilities in Indochina; the implications of a Communist Chinese reaction to United States intervention; and, finally, the fact that atomic weapons would be used when it was to military advantage.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff the command structure must permit the United States to influence future strategy in Indochina; they suggested a Military Representatives Committee, with a steering group along the lines of NATO. The group would be patterned after the US Joint Staff and would be composed primarily of American and French officers. The committee would draw its membership from those nations contributing the principal forces of the coalition.

The Joint Chiefs believed that the Allied Commander in Chief should be French with an American deputy and a US air adviser. The deputy should provide liaison with the French and would coordinate US activities with the overall operations. The Joint Chiefs knew of the complete subordination of the French Air Force to the Army; the air adviser would see that United States air power was not misused. The JCS were convinced that the best military course for victory in Indochina lay in the development of effective native armed forces. A commitment by the French, and firm requests from the governments of the Associated States for the training and development of those forces were prerequisites for United States participation.

Recommended United States force contributions would be limited to a fast carrier task force and supporting elements and to US Air Force units operating from existing bases outside Indochina. Committing larger naval forces or basing substantial air forces in Indochina would reduce readiness to meet Communist Chinese reaction elsewhere in the Far East. From the point of view of the United States, Indochina was devoid of decisive military objectives and the allocation of more than token armed forces to that area would be a diversion of United States capabilities. This observation coincided with the Joint Chiefs' belief—that the real solution lay in the neutralization of Communist China. The principal sources of Viet Minh support were "outside Indochina," and the destruction or neutralization of those outside sources would reduce French military problems in Indochina.[53]

If the Chinese Communists intervened overtly in the Indochinese struggle, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's strategic concept and plan of operations called for destroying effective communist forces and their means of support in the Indochinese action, as well as reducing Communist China's capability for further aggression, to create conditions for the forces of the Associated States to assume responsibility for the defense of Indochina. This meant offensive air operations, employing atomic weapons, as well as other weapons, against military targets in China proper, Hainan, and other islands being used by the Communists in direct support of their operations or to threaten the security of the Allied forces. Simultaneously, French

Union forces, augmented by US naval and air units, would exploit whatever success had been achieved by the massive air operations. If this did not suffice to assure victory, the attack against China would have to be stepped up to an enlarged, highly selective, atomic offensive, in addition to attacks with other weapons. These attacks would be accompanied by a blockade of the China coast. The Joint Chiefs also considered establishing a blockade from the start, and increasing it as required. Hainan would be seized or neutralized, and Chinese Nationalist operations against the Chinese mainland would begin.

American forces engaged in these operations would be under the command of the Commander in Chief, Pacific, who would insure the coordination of operations in Southeast Asia, including ground-air coordination between French Union Forces and US naval and air forces. He would also conduct air operations against military targets in Indochina and against those in China that directly supported Communist Chinese aggression. The Commander, Strategic Air Command, would support CINCPAC and would conduct air operations as directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reduce the Communist Chinese war-making capability.

The Joint Chiefs recommended that their strategy be accompanied by an appropriate degree of mobilization to provide for the greater risk of a general war. Action would have to be taken to strengthen America's allies. However, due to the mobilization requirements of US forces, such aid would be limited to allies who could directly support the United States strategic concept of a general war. Initially, there would be no requirement for materiel and equipment above current MDAP for France and allied forces in Indochina. Within six months, MDAP would be increased to take care of three new ROK-type native divisions, and further expanded as new divisions were developed.[54]

If the Communist Chinese did not enter the war openly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended a restricted plan of operations that assumed that the USSR would not enter the conflict openly, but that it would defend Soviet-controlled areas and might covertly supply air and naval forces. The plan further assumed that hostilities in Korea would not resume; that French Union Forces would resist in Indochina with US military assistance; and that atomic weapons might be used by both sides.

Granted those assumptions, the JCS believed that, regardless of the nationality of the forces engaged, the major courses of action in Indochina would remain relatively unchanged. Enemy supply lines would be interdicted, while friendly forces regrouped in the north to conduct coordinated offensive operations. Territory taken from the enemy would be pacified. Coordinated ground, air, and naval operations would be undertaken in central Vietnam and north Laos to destroy the enemy forces there. Finally, operations in South Vietnam and Cambodia would complete destruction of the enemy. Psychological and unconventional warfare operations would be carried out. Basic to all these activities were recruiting, training, and equipping regular and guerrilla indigenous forces.

Initial operations would defend vital areas until forces were available for an attack out of Tonkin to destroy the Viet Minh military forces. Viet Minh lines of communications would be interdicted, supply depots destroyed, and their troops prevented from escaping across the Chinese, Thai, and Burmese borders. Increased Vietnamese support would be developed to assure internal security and effective local leadership in liberated areas.[55]

The JCS offered a concrete course of action should the United States intervene, but the plan had other implications. In the State Department there were doubts that use of nuclear weapons would compensate for the lack of ground forces, while the negative effects of their use on opinion among the allies and in Southeast Asia were considerable.[56] Dulles was more concerned that the implication that no defensive line in Southeast Asia could be held would torpedo any effort at unified action. The British envisioned trying to hold such a line, and the Asian nations would react unfavorably to being abandoned. In talks on regional defense, the JCS position would have to be kept out of the discussion.[57]

After a careful estimate of the military situation in the Tonkin Delta, the Joint Chiefs concluded that the French probably would not be able to hold Hanoi; but it was within their military capabilities to hold along the Sept Pagodes-Hai Duong-Ninh Giang line for at least sixty days. The Chiefs could see no reason why the French could not hold the Haiphong redoubt for the foreseeable future, except for deterioration of their will to fight.

In the face of the rapidly crumbling military situation, support by United States air and naval forces limited to action within the boundaries of Indochina, would not in the JCS view insure decisive military results. Benefit to the French would be mainly psychological. For the United States it would probably mean that involvement would continue and expand ultimately requiring additional naval and air forces and extensive ground forces to prevent the loss of Indochina. Eventually, this could lead to full United States responsibility for the war.

Again the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned that involvement in Indochina increased the risk of a general war. If the United States Government decided to intervene, the armed forces should be placed in a state of readiness to meet such an eventuality. Decisions would have to be made on mobilization and logistic, fiscal, and other supporting measures. Although there were no logistic problems that would prevent commitment of the forces envisaged, large-scale diversion of forces, equipment, and supplies from the Far East or the United States would necessitate replacement of units and personnel and increases in production. For a time, there would be a drain on logistic reserves. Construction of air bases, port and storage facilities, roads, railroads, and communications systems in Indochina would be required. A major supply base in south Indochina and at least one advanced base near Haiphong would be needed to support United States ground forces. Lift capabilities of Military Air Transport Service (MATS) and Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS) would have to be expanded and logistical pipelines,

separate from Korea's, would have to be established. A major increase in the armed forces would be required including an expanded draft and recall of some National Guard and Reserve units.[58]

Training of Native Troops

Every American plan for intervention stressed the importance of building up native armies. Training of indigenous forces appeared in the basic political, as well as military, conditions for intervention presented to France by the United States. Originally, the United States did not intend to conduct the training itself. The language barrier alone would have sufficed to stifle the idea. But the French displayed no more ability than desire to produce an efficient native fighting force; the Americans became impatient. As early as April 1952, the Service Secretaries suggested, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, that an expanded MAAG train and equip a national army capable at least of preserving internal security, while developing Indochinese political self-reliance and independence.[59] Nevertheless, almost a year later the Joint Chiefs said that "in view of their experience and the language difficulties involved, . . . the French are better qualified to conduct the training of the indigenous forces than United States personnel would be." They did suggest that the French might learn from American experience in Korea.[60] More time passed without results. Reluctantly the Americans concluded they would have to do the job themselves. They sounded the French out about increased United States assistance in training the Vietnamese army, but they did not expect the French to receive the suggestion favorably.

Less than two months before the fall of Dien Bien Phu, General Ely admitted to Admiral Radford that he had been embarrassed by press reports that he was amenable to such assistance. The reason for his opposition was that increased numbers of Americans in Indochina would jeopardize French prestige and would undermine native confidence in the French High Command. In spite of arguments to the contrary, General Ely would only agree to consider the matter very informally.[61] General Navarre threatened to "turn in his suit" if the Americans gained an active part in the training of native troops.[62] Ho Chi Minh would prove more persuasive than the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The harder the Viet Minh surged against the Tonkin perimeter, the more virtue General Ely began to see in American offers of instructor personnel. By July, he had changed his original opinion and complained that "the United States was late once more."[63]

General O'Daniel's permanent assignment to Indochina in April 1954 marked the beginning of intensive attempts to persuade the French to request American assistance in training native forces. As their military situation worsened, the French gave ground before American concepts. Effective assistance, however, meant assuming responsibility for all phases of training. Committed on that scale, the United States

would share the blame if the war turned out badly. Responsibility without some control over combat employment of native troops and a voice in strategy and operational planning would be unacceptable. The French anticipated this eventuality which accounted for much of their reluctance to ask for American help. By the time American arguments and the military situation led the French to request assistance, the United States was no longer willing to provide it unless the French complied with the other conditions upon which full intervention was contingent.

General O'Daniel tackled his job with enthusiasm and optimism. By the middle of May, General Ely said that he accepted the concept of American training for the Vietnamese army and agreed that United States advisers should be placed in Vietnamese units—"The sooner you get into this war, the better we will like it." On the other hand, he did not agree to General O'Daniel's insistence on creating light divisions (rather than battalions), and he emphasized strongly that command would remain in French hands with no US participation in operational planning.[64] O'Daniel indicated that he thought it possible to create nine Vietnamese and three Cambodian divisions by October. The American chargé d'affaires sounded a note of caution:

> I have the greatest admiration for General O'Daniel's faith, tenacity, and bull-dog courage. I fear, however, he may be over sanguine as to possibilities of making an effective Vietnamese fighting force in 6 months time. Irrespective of General O'Daniel's abundant military virtues, there are many obstacles in his path. Not least of these is complete apathy of Vietnamese populace coupled with increasing tendency of fence-sitters to go over to enemy, absolute breakdown of mobilization plan, internecine rivalries between few men capable of showing leadership, and lack of leadership from Bao Dai and his Ministers. I do not say the job cannot be done but that we should take a close look at its dimensions before we come in.[65]

The assistant military attaché in Saigon also had reservations. General Ely insisted that there be French officers in the training groups. It was doubtful that these officers would be much more than roadblocks. The attaché suggested that French agreement to the training proposal might get the United States into a position where it would share more of the blame, as the French had apparently decided to give up Indochina.[66]

Undaunted, General O'Daniel pushed on with his mission, and by 24 May he was able to present Secretary Wilson with a revised training plan. The plan called for readying nine divisions in the south and two in the north by 1 December. The divisions would be reduced strength (approximately twelve thousand men), less heavy equipment. They would be under overall French command but the United States would have a major voice in their employment and would have staff representation similar to the Van Fleet solution in Greece. The plan was feasible only if the United States were given a free hand with full Vietnamese support.[67] Concurring with the plan the Commander in Chief, Pacific, pointed out that O'Daniel's hands would be tied if he attempted to arrive at other than preliminary arrangements before firm

agreements had been concluded at the governmental level. The programs for Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam would have to be completely under US control (although under French overall command) to ensure full support of the indigenous authorities. Admiral Stump added "Nor will present French apathy toward these forces be improved should control of training remain in French hands."[68]

General Ely now favored forming native troops into divisional units, although he still felt an American division was not the answer. He also agreed that American advisers should be placed at various levels within a division. On the question of United States participation in operational planning, he felt the need for clarification. At that time, the United States could not share responsibility for planning operations; the commander must be a Frenchman. Providing an agreement was reached on intervention, US officers would be integrated into French planning staffs. General Ely was prepared to discuss the details involved in such integration. His basic position was that questions relating to training were only one part of an overall plan to fix the conditions and nature of United States intervention. They would become pertinent once an agreement to intervene had been achieved which would only take place if the Geneva Conference failed.[69]

General Ely's position was diametrically opposite to that of the United States Government. Nevertheless, he summoned General O'Daniel and requested the United States to organize and supervise the training of Vietnamese divisions, and to do the same for all other Vietnamese training. This request was transmitted to Washington by O'Daniel on 9 June.[70] On the same day there arrived in Washington a cable from Ely which said:

> I have not yet made a survey of the military situation, especially in Tonkin. However, it seems to me that the decisions I will have to take regarding the operations will rest on the US intentions, in the present situation, as well as those they anticipate in the future.
>
> Therefore, I would very much like to have, either in Paris, where I expect to be possibly on the 19th June, or here in Saigon, as soon as possible, an exchange of view with a qualified representative of Adm RADFORD, in order to know what I can expect on the part of the USA.[71]

These two messages, the mix-up over the use of Marines, and other incidents indicating the French were ignoring the manner in which the United States had conditioned its offer of intervention precipitated the crisis of 9 June. Both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department felt it was time to call a halt until the French realized it was "all or nothing." While Mr. Dulles spoke with Ambassador Bonnet, Admiral Radford told General Valluy that he could not respond to General Ely's request. The official position communicated to Ambassador Dillon in Paris was:

> Prior to French decision to request internationalization, we consider undesirable to start yet another series conversations which would inevitably provoke on French side all kinds hopes and interpretations with regard basic

> issue US intervention which would only cause further confusion. In other words, it is our feeling that we should not be eased into a series of piecemeal commitments resulting from collateral military conversations in the absence of an understanding with the Fr Gov based on our general proposal /Paris 4023/ described in TEDUL 54.
>
> With regard to US training Vietnam troops, we feel that situation VN has degenerated to point where any commitments at this time to send over US instructors in near future might expose us to being faced with situation in which it would be contrary to our interests to have to fulfill such commitment. Our position accordingly is that we do not (repeat not) wish to consider US training mission or program separately from over-all operational plans on assumption conditions fulfilled for US participation was Indochina.[72]

General O'Daniel was informed that any agreement on training would have to be made at a governmental level.[73] However, General Ely had already promised to give him the request for aid in writing. But when it arrived, it turned out to be a statement of agreed principles, not a request for aid, and it came by way of Buu Loc, Vietnamese Prime Minister. Commenting on the unexpected channel of communication, O'Daniel said:

> Ely gave Bu Loc the copy of the ltr knowing that I had no authority to act. He either misunderstood what I wanted, which is possible, or he may in disappointment failure obtain tng assistance desire show Vietnamese he is trying obtain aid for them and undesiring be placed in asking position himself had suggested Bu Loc ask for tng assistance by US.[74]

The decision to defer the training program was a drastic one. General O'Daniel protested: "To wait for a package agreement is sound theoretically but time is running out and no matter what the package deal may be, if action here is delayed any longer nothing short of actual UN-US troop intervention will have a chance of saving the situation."[75] Under Secretary Smith pointed out that negotiations at Geneva were reaching a stage where any indication of US support strengthened the French position. French military discussions with the Viet Minh at Geneva had made no progress, and Smith thought commitment of a training mission might lend the French negotiators some support. As it looked as though a settlement would result in partition, a national army would be needed to protect what was left of Vietnam; a training mission would be needed.[76]

Ambassador Dillon remarked that the French had always considered training a separate problem. Therefore, if the United States was no longer interested in helping with the training of the Vietnamese army except within the framework of united action in Indochina, the Ambassador felt that the French should be informed. He also assumed that the State Department had considered the fundamental psychological importance of the decision. The French Government would probably consider that it meant the definite and final write-off of Indochina by the United States and might use it as an excuse for accepting the Viet Minh's terms. Opponents

of the United States in France might describe the decision as a forceful attempt to influence the French to request internationalization of the war. Last, but not least, there was the question of Vietnamese morale.[77]

In replying to Dillon, Secretary of State Dulles noted that the Ambassador had reported that General Ely had stated that the question of United States training of native forces was but one part of an overall plan for intervention. But in protesting the dropping of training, the Ambassador had asserted the French had always considered training as a problem separate from possible united action. Mr. Dulles continued:

> At the same time, Ely's position seems clear that the French have been opposed to giving US responsibility for training unless US agreed to intervention. It may be that in effort to draw US into conflict without having US conditions on intervention met, French military may now seek US training in advance of US commitment to intervene with own combat forces. . . . we are resolved not to get drawn into training program when due to deteriorating conditions and lack of overall program to reverse situation training program has virtually no chance of success. If French are not going to agree to only kind of armistice which now seems possible at Geneva, but are going to fight for more than protection of expeditionary corps, possibility may exist for development of some program to reverse present downhill trend. But this seems unfortunately most unlikely to us.
>
> Under present circumstances, and particularly in view of three points you make in Emtel 4812, believe you should clarify US position only if you are forced to do so and should in interim reply to French that we are in agreement with Ely's position expressed in Emtel 4462.[78]

Mr. Dulles' opinion was that the United States should at that time try to avoid either a formal refusal to train the Vietnamese or a massive commitment of some two to three thousand MAAG personnel. Such a commitment would carry strong political overtones and might raise congressional complications. The French "want and in effect have an option on our intervention," said Mr. Dulles, "but they do not want to exercise it and the date of expiry of our option is fast running out."[79]

Time was running out in Indochina. General O'Daniel entered plea after plea for a reversal of the decision on training. While the Army Chief of Staff told General O'Daniel he must comply with his orders not to negotiate a training agreement, General Ridgway absolved the armed forces of blame for the delay. In Washington it was apparent that the French military were laboring under the misapprehension that governmental agreements had been reached and that the United States military were responsible for the delay. Ridgway wanted O'Daniel to make it clear to the French in Indochina that the delays did not indicate that the United States was pulling back.[80]

General O'Daniel on 26 June appealed directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for permission to go ahead with the training of six divisions. He sketched his outline plan for accomplishing the task and asked that it be passed along to "the highest authority."[81] The Chairman informed him that positive action was not practical at

that time in view of the obscure situation, but his message had been passed to the highest authority. Thus, at least temporarily, the effort of the United States to build up the indigenous forces of the Associated States came to an end. As a cease-fire became increasingly likely, attention began to turn defending the rest of Southeast Asia after the end of fighting in Indochina.

11

Toward a New Alliance

As the talks at Geneva took their course, American planners continued to look toward intervention. Far East Command envisioned strikes in Manchuria and North China in the event of communist aggression in Korea, while CINCPAC would attack targets in South China if the Communist Chinese intervened in Indochina. The Strategic Air Command would hit targets in China if war spread. Radford continued to doubt that a line could be held in Southeast Asia; Dulles's proposal to strengthen Thailand seemed questionable to him.[1] But the National Security Council had given the green light to the military talks at Singapore involving the United States, United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand. Admiral Carney was to represent the United States in these discussions.

At the same time, the Viet Minh terms had failed to arouse the French public to determined resistance. On 12 June, after staving off previous hostile resolutions in the Assembly, Laniel's government fell. Within a week Pierre Mendes-France assumed leadership, pledged to obtain a ceasefire in a month. Long a critic of the war effort, the new Prime Minister was barely able to win a majority of the noncommunist votes, but he had more support than the numbers revealed.[2] American plans for a longer-term strategy were now essential.

United States Strategy in the Far East

In the strategy of the United States for developing military strength in the Far East, fostering the growth of the military forces of the Associated States and other noncommunist countries was second only to building up the military potential of Japan, Korea, and Nationalist China. America's objective in the East was to develop the purpose and capability of the noncommunist countries to act collectively and effectively in opposing the threat of communism. Once this objective had been

achieved, the United States might bring about the establishment of a comprehensive regional security arrangement of these countries associated with the United States, the United Kingdom, and possibly France. The united action of the coalition could reduce the power and influence of the Soviet Union in the Far East, primarily through the containment and curtailment of Communist China's power.

This strategy had not existed in April when the National Security Council called upon the Department of Defense to determine means for strengthening the military position of the United States in the Far East; the Joint Chiefs of Staff replied that:

> Since the United States military objectives and programs with respect to a specific country or region stem from approved United States policy as it affects such country or region, the development of United States military objectives toward the Far East should, in the usual course, be within the context of an overall United States policy respecting that area. Although the United States policy toward Communist China does set forth certain general objectives to be sought in the Far East vis-à-vis that country, *the United States has not formulated a comprehensive policy in which the Far East is reviewed as a strategic entity* and which would provide definitive direction for the development of a position of military strength in the Far East. Rather, our present policy addresses itself to the individual countries within the area or, a, in the case of Southeast Asia, to a segment of the area. . . . Taken in the aggregate, expressions of policy [toward individual countries] make it clear that the United States, from the standpoint of its security interests, attaches major importance to the Far East area and would be prepared to react with military force against an armed aggression by the USSR or Communist China in that region.[3]

The JCS proceeded from the premise that the Far East was one area requiring one strategy; in this they drew upon the experience of World War II. The Cold War and decolonization, however, had created a completely different set of conditions. Time would show that Far Eastern policy could not fit into a single mold. The Viet Minh's appeal lay in the power of nationalism, not communism.

The policy of the Joint Chiefs was political and psychological. Development of native armies was a means to join the entire noncommunist Orient into a solid bloc, based upon the economic interdependence of the various regions within the area. Recognizing the magnitude of the undertaking, the JCS advocated forming a grand coalition out of units that the United States would be able to knit together by bilateral and multilateral treaties.

The security treaties with Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand fit the pattern, but this was only a beginning. The impending crisis in Indochina sharpened the desire to hasten the process. Secretary Dulles hoped that the knowledge that multilateral talks on mutual defense were being pursued might moderate communist demands at Geneva. Stressing the necessity for a common stand by the countries in the area, Dulles reminded the Foreign Ministers of Australia

and New Zealand that no agreement on the Indochinese phase of the conference existed among the Western Powers.[4]

Great Britain had indicated willingness to participate in a five-power discussion of the subject. There was, however, serious disagreement over the manner in which the talks should be conducted. The British wished to use the Five-Power Staff Agency and widen the discussions to include political and economic problems. Moreover, the British proposal was couched in terms that involved underwriting the Geneva settlement before it was arrived at.[5]

The United States had no intention of committing itself to defending a settlement that might be against its own national interests. The Five-Power Staff Agency was not a satisfactory substitute for a broad political coalition that included the Southeast Asian nations to be defended. The Staff Agency was composed entirely of Western nations, and the United States could not agree to a "white man's party" to determine the problems of Asian nations.[6]

Accordingly, the United States announced that it would participate in an examination of the military situation in Southeast Asia to explore, through secret and existing channels in Washington, how the United States, Great Britain, France, New Zealand, and Australia might assist the countries of Southeast Asia to defend themselves. The United States stressed that this examination was supplementary to efforts to organize a regional grouping; it was neither a substitute for, nor the nucleus of, such a grouping.[7]

The British accepted the American view that their two countries should move on parallel lines; they were prepared to start immediately with the military staff talks.[8] There were valid reasons for British reluctance: Her Majesty's Government was being pressured by Nehru to back his neutralist proposal for Geneva; the British public was alarmed by the H-bomb; and there was a widespread feeling in Britain that the Geneva Conference was going to settle all the problems of Asia. Staff examinations by a constituted agency was common prudence, according to Under-Secretary of State Smith. If Geneva succeeded, the talks would not be important but, if Geneva failed, there would be criticism that staff examinations and long-range planning should have been under way.[9]

The United States faced its own dilemmas. On the one hand, there was the desire to establish a collective defense for Southeast Asia as quickly as possible. On the other hand, there was the desire to avoid planning during the Geneva Conference, because it would imply that the Associated States had been written off. The United States needed to move rapidly toward the creation of a coalition to cover the possible loss of Indochina, while avoiding the impression that the Associated States had been given up as lost.[10]

Secretary Dulles thought of forming a Southeast Asian security community that probably would not include Vietnam but that might embrace Laos and Cambodia. Chargé d'Affaires McClintock, in Saigon, firmly dissented. "Most regrettably," he wrote, "there is no human resource in Cambodia nor Laos on which to

build a bulwark against Communist infiltration or aggression. Furthermore in the case of Cambodia, there is no geographic barrier against such aggression. Furthermore, once the communists have possession of the complex of modern airfields in Vietnam, there is no barrier to the successful use of airpower against all of Southeast Asia."[11]

In discussing regional grouping with Mr. Dulles, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff discovered that the Secretary envisaged making Thailand a position that the communists could not take either by military action or subversion without triggering coalition action against Communist China. He was even considering putting token US military forces into Thailand to make any incident of communist aggression absolutely clear. By coincidence, the United States Ambassador to Thailand on the same day cabled a suggestion to deploy one F-84G wing to that country to strengthen its defenses. The Joint Chiefs rejected the suggestion as a fruitless dispersion of air power. One of the molders of American strategy had referred to Thailand as "the last place in the world" where the United States wanted to become involved with a military operation.[12] Admiral Radford remarked that the Thais could not be depended upon. He observed that the Chinese Communists already had a nucleus for a Thai government, that Thai leadership was at best uncertain, that their recent history showed they would jump to the other side quickly, and that Ambassador Donovan had no confidence in their ability to hold Thailand if Indochina fell.

Admiral Radford believed that there was not much likelihood of an incident in Thailand; it was more probable that Thailand, Malaya, and Indonesia would be undermined by subversion. Such would probably be the fate of Laos and Cambodia. The Chairman believed that, once Indochina was settled, there would be no opportunity to cope with another Chinese military adventure until the communists were ready for the "big show." Radford pointed out that the United States had not decided what to do about countries that the communists took over by legal means. The possibility of legal assumption of power by the Communist Party existed in many lands; the United States position versus the communists in the Far East would become worse with the passage of time. From the military standpoint, there were advantages in carrying the action to Communist China itself, but everyone recognized the political disadvantages of such a solution.[13]

Mr. Dulles faced political disadvantages of a different sort in trying to unite Asian and European powers for concerted action. The issue of colonialism and fear of Communist China deterred most of the Colombo nations. While Nehru failed to dominate the conference of Prime Ministers at Colombo in early May, he succeeded in vitiating any support the conference might have had for the stand of the Western Powers at Geneva. The Colombo conferees recommended that, if Geneva stopped the war, the United Kingdom, USSR, China, and the United States should agree to prevent resumption of hostilities. Notably, the Colombo conference gave

no indication of the intentions of the five South Asian powers as a group or individually concerning future policy toward the Indochinese crisis.[14]

The Colombo powers and other countries in South and Southeast Asia were apprehensive that western attempts to solve the Indochinese problem might lead to World War III. They showed increasing resentment and frustration that such a development might be thrust upon them without an opportunity to express themselves or take collective action. Therefore, they indicated their willingness to help in carrying out an agreed settlement; Dulles was eager to enlist their services. As the nations most immediately threatened, he believed they should make their contribution to a settlement. Their participation would mitigate their fears, nurture their self-confidence, increase their prestige, educate them about communist intentions, and eventually make them receptive to cooperation with the United States and other western nations. The Secretary hoped for a more reasonable Chinese attitude at Geneva if the Colombo powers could be organized.[15] But by the end of the Geneva Conference, Dulles had discovered otherwise; nor was there any indication that the Five-Power Staff Agency talks in Washington had affected the tactics or demands of the communists at Geneva.

The five-power military conference lasted from 3 June to 11 June. The conferees agreed that the situation in Indochina was critical, that retention of the Tonkin Delta was of the greatest importance to the defense of Southeast Asia and that stabilization of the situation in the Delta would require outside assistance on the order of three divisions and three hundred aircraft. The French representative indicated that "the psychological impact of those reinforcements would be enhanced if they were drawn from the Western Powers." All five representatives concluded that "the arrival of reinforcements from the Free Nations, other than France, would be an important factor in the restoration of Vietnamese confidence." The conclusions of the conferees did not imply a commitment of the governments; none of the governments moved to provide the reinforcements that their military representatives concluded were necessary.

The conference also studied what would occur should the Tonkin Delta be lost to the Viet Minh. The conferees recognized: (a) the necessity of considering the establishment of a recovery line in the south; (b) the fact that land forces immediately available would not be sufficient to hold a Chinese advance and that defensive positions in Thailand and Burma should be considered as well as the recovery line in Indochina; and (c) the fact that internal security in Southeast Asia depended upon the support of the people there. The final conclusion related to a possible cease-fire and called for a guarantee by nations other than those directly involved that they would intervene if the agreement were broken.[16] The United States later ignored this conclusion by refusing to do more than "respect" the cease-fire agreement. Following United States military thinking the conference concluded that overall Allied strategy in Southeast Asia should be defensive in the

event of a global war and that nuclear attacks and blockade should be employed in any war against China.[17]

After studying the conclusions of the military representatives at the conference, the Army Chief of Staff recommended that the Joint Chiefs not accept these conclusions because they did not conform precisely, in either language or scope, with approved positions of the JCS. His recommendation was not accepted.[18]

Consistent with their thinking over a long period of time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 21 May, informed the Secretary of Defense that they considered a static defense for Southeast Asia unsound from a military viewpoint. There were two basic concepts for defense of the area: the static, or Korea, type; or an offensive against the source of communist military power being applied in Southeast Asia. So long as Burma and Thailand were not under communist control, the geography of the area rendered Malaya secure from external threat. Should Burma and Thailand be lost prior to an Allied decision to hold a line in Southeast Asia, the defensive position would have to be established in Malaya. A study of the force requirements and logistic implications of this concept revealed extensive and damaging weaknesses; it was estimated that it would take a minimum of twelve months to build up the base complex and facilities required to support the forces involved. Those forces would remain for an extended period, and the commitment of manpower and material to maintain them would be unacceptable in terms of the overall strategic situation. The presence of large numbers of United States, Commonwealth, and French troops would provide the communists with excellent material for anti-Western propaganda. Finally, execution of a static defense plan would result in maldeployment and loss of flexibility in the employment of US forces. The capability of supporting existing war plans logistically would be seriously jeopardized. The United States should, therefore, adopt the concept of offensive action against Communist China, rather than that of reacting at the point of attack.[19]

Movement toward Agreement at Geneva

On 11 May the Viet Minh presented a victor's terms for a cease-fire in Indochina. They called for French recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and its Laotian and Cambodian allies. French troops should withdraw from Indochina under a separate agreement. Free elections would follow. The DRV would consider joining the French Union. Assurances were offered to protect French nationals and interests in the region. Mixed commissions would supervise implementation of the actual cease-fire.[20] When asked whether the Viet Minh armistice proposal was acceptable to the United States, Mr. Dulles replied that it was unacceptable in its totality. It followed the pattern applied to Germany, Austria, and Korea: to compel withdrawal of the forces that sustain free society and to set up a system under which the communists could take the whole area.[21]

Under Secretary Smith believed that the proposals would result in a rapid turnover to the communists. Linking the cease-fire to the other measures was tantamount to rejecting the French proposal, yet because the Viet Minh proposal mentioned conclusion of an agreement on general political questions prior to cessation of hostilities, they could not be accused of demanding an immediate, unconditional cease-fire. There was no provision for international control; elections "without interference" followed the pattern in Korea. The Viet Minh proposals were designed to appeal to the French public; references to the French Union and arrangements for retention of French economic and cultural interests were obviously designed to win French support. In fact, the communists might seriously envisage a communist state within the French Union. The entire proposal made it clear that the DRV would determine the question of association with the French Union. It was obvious that the Viet Minh would organize the elections, win them quickly, and convert Vietnam into a communist state.[22]

Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos tabled armistice proposals of their own, to which very little serious attention was paid. The Vietnamese proposed that the Viet Minh dissolve their government and army under terms of a general amnesty. Viet Minh soldiers could be integrated into the Vietnamese army and internationally supervised elections, at an unspecified date in the future, would solve the political questions. The Vietnamese were concerned primarily with avoiding loss of territory or any settlement endangering their position as the legal and effective government of Vietnam. The French objective was to terminate hostilities with more or less satisfactory guarantees.[23]

Despite the fall of Dien Bien Phu and the French public's growing awareness of the general deterioration of the position in Indochina, a political crisis took another month to develop.[24] Mendes-France continued to attack the Laniel government.[25] By the time Mendes-France assumed the leadership, Ambassador Dillon felt that the French bargaining position was so weak that the fall of the Laniel government would not make much difference.[26] Pierre Mendes-France accepted the premiership under a four-week "contract" to bring about an honorable settlement of the Indochinese war. In spite of assertions that he would not accept a peace that was a surrender to the Viet Minh, nor accept a disguised capitulation, Mendes-France was, from the start, identified with peace-at-any-price.

The change in government cannot be regarded as advantageous to the United States. It was a foregone conclusion that the new government would not take as strong a stand at Geneva as had Bidault. Moreover, the new government opposed ex-High Commissioner de Jean's coming to Geneva as an adviser. De Jean's removal in Indochina was depicted by Mr. McClintock as a serious blow to US policy in that area. "Not only has he been the most courageous French official here," said Mr. McClintock, "but also the only one with a clear-eyed view of what stakes we are fighting for, not only in Southeast Asia but likewise in Europe against international Communism." The new Minister of Associated States was reported to be

new to the problem; Mendes-France was poorly informed. Finally, the composition of the new Cabinet showed an even more far-reaching break in continuity of French governments since the war than had been expected as it lacked "continuity men" such as Bidault, Pleven, and Marie. New ministers, such as Koenig in Defense, boded trouble for the United States. Koenig was expected to support army opposition to EDC, which Pleven had suppressed.[27]

However, there was little that any French government could do at Geneva. It quickly became evident that the negotiators were edging closer and closer toward a partitioning of Vietnam. While the Viet Minh paid lip service to international supervision of the armistice, the French were in no position to secure controls that would guarantee effective supervision.

Final US Position toward Settlement

On 26 June the United States and the United Kingdom received the following aide-memoire from the French Government:

> ... Following his conversation with Mr. Chou En-Lai, the head of the French Government has instructed M. Chauvel to approach M. Pham Van Dong with a view to carrying on with him directly negotiations to ascertain whether a basis can be found, in his opinion, for a territorial settlement in Vietnam or not.
>
> The objective of the French Government is to arrive at a regrouping which will assure the State of Vietnam a territory as solid as possible.
>
> It is difficult to predict the result of this negotiation in which the French authorities must face two sorts of difficulties: on the one hand it will be most difficult to obtain concessions from the Viet Minh in the north; and on the other hand the negotiations risk causing, if the agreement is concluded, dangerous reactions by the Vietnamese Government whose citizens are serving at the present time under the orders of the French command, comprising a major portion thereof.

The message noted that the communists were afraid of the conflict spreading. The French Government felt it would be very useful if the British and American Governments were to issue a final communiqué, which stated that a serious aggravation of international relations would result if a reasonable settlement were not reached at Geneva. The French also hoped they could count on the United States to dissuade the Vietnamese from refusing an agreement. The United States was not to do anything that might encourage a Vietnamese outburst.[28]

The British and American Governments drafted an answer hoping to stiffen the French position. The two governments informed the French that they would be willing to respect an agreement that:

1. preserves the integrity and independence of Laos and Cambodia and assures the withdrawal of Vietminh forces therefrom;

2. preserves at least the southern half of Vietnam, and if possible an enclave in the Delta; in this connection we would be unwilling to see the line of division of responsibility drawn further south than a line running generally west from Dong Hoi;

3. does not impose on Laos, Cambodia or retained Vietnam any restrictions materially impairing their capacity to maintain stable non-Communist regimes; and especially restrictions impairing their right to maintain adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers;

4. does not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control;

5. does not exclude the possibility of the ultimate unification of Vietnam by peaceful means;

6. provides for the peaceful and humane transfer, under international supervision, of those people desiring to be moved from one zone to another of Vietnam; and

7. provides effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.[29]

Besides pointing out that the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the joint statement seemed to contradict each other, the French inquired about the meaning of "respect," which struck them as a very weak and unclear word.[30] Secretary Dulles explained that even an agreement that met all seven points could not guarantee that Indochina would not one day pass into communist hands. The apparent contradiction was an attempt to get the best conditions possible. "Respecting" the agreement meant that the United States would not oppose a settlement that conformed to the seven points; it did not mean that the settlement would be guaranteed or supported in public. "Respect" also meant that the United States would not seek to upset the settlement by force.[31] Dulles added that Mendes-France should not believe that merely observing the seven points would elicit a statement that the United States would respect the agreement, unless the Associated States agreed to the settlement.[32]

In a personal message to Mendes-France, Secretary Dulles gave an analysis of the United States position, and of the Geneva Conference:

... We doubt very much that the Communists will in fact accept this seven-point position unless they realize that the alternative is some common action upon which we have all agreed. So far, there is no such alternative.

Under these circumstances, we greatly fear that the seven-points which constitute a minimum as far as the US is concerned will constitute merely an optimum solution so far as your Government and perhaps the US are concerned, and that an armistice might be concluded on terms substantially less favorable than those we could respect.

We gather that there is already considerable French thinking in terms of the acceptability of departures from certain of the seven-points. For example: Allowing Communist forces to remain in Northern Laos; accepting a Vietnam

> line of military demarcation considerably south of Donghoi; neutralizing and demilitarizing Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam so as to impair their capacity to maintain stable, non-Communist regimes; accepting elections so early and so ill-prepared and ill supervised as to risk the loss of the entire area to Communism; accepting international supervision by a body which cannot be effective because it includes a Communist state which has veto power.
>
> These are but illustrations of a whittling-away process, each stroke of which may in itself seem unessential, but which cumulatively could produce a result quite different from that envisaged by the seven-points. . . .[33]

The possibility of the United States disassociating itself from the final stages of the conference deeply disturbed Mendes-France; Secretary Dulles found it necessary to confer with him in Paris on 13 July. The immediate problem for the French Premier was the United States' refusal to renew its representation at the conference on the ministerial level. The five Foreign Ministers had recessed on 19 June to leave working out of armistice details to the military negotiators. Reduced in size and concept, the American delegation assumed an advisory or observer role; with its basic instructions withdrawn, it functioned on an ad hoc basis, to be more responsive to "realities as we see them, not only at Geneva but also in US and Indochina."[34]

Mendes-France pointed out that this would be the first time since the war that the United States had not been represented at a level equal to that of other powers at an important conference. He felt certain it would have catastrophic effects in the Far East and Europe. Since there would be no one to take a strong personal position with Molotov, the communists would increase pressure to deepen the rift between the Western Powers. If the Secretary were present, the United States would in effect have a veto on the decisions of the conference.[35] Dulles was more impressed by the probably disastrous effect of a dramatic last moment exit from the conference. After consulting with President Eisenhower, he met with Mendes-France in Paris and reached an agreed Franco-American position on Indochina:

> 1. France and the Associated States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are recognized to be those which, on the non-Communist side, are primarily interested in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference. The United States is interested primarily as a friendly nation which desires to assist, where desired, in arriving at a just settlement, but who will not seek, or be expected, to impose its views in any way upon those primarily interested.
>
> 2. The attached seven-points constitute a result which France believes to be obtainable by negotiation at Geneva and which would be acceptable to France and, France believes, to the Associated States. The United States, while recognizing the right of those primarily interested to accept different terms, will itself be prepared to respect terms conforming to the attached. The United States will not be asked or expected by France to respect terms which in its opinion differ materially from the attached and it may publicly disassociate itself from such differing terms.

3. If the settlement is one which the United States is prepared to "respect," its position will be expressed unilaterally or in association only with non-Communist states in terms which apply to the situation the principles of non-use of forces which are embodied in Article 2 (4) & (6) of the Charter of the United Nations.

4. The United States is prepared to seek, with other interested nations, a collective defense association designed to preserve, against direct and indirect aggression, the integrity of the non-Communist areas of Southeast Asia following any settlement.

5. If there is no settlement, the United States and French Governments will consult together on the measures to be taken. This will not preclude the United States, if it so desires, bringing the matter before the United Nations as involving a threat to peace as dealt with by Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

6. France reaffirms the principle of independence for the Associated States in equal and voluntary association as members of the French Union.[36]

The seven points were those of the British-American reply to the French aide-memoire. Following the position paper, Dulles and Mendes-France exchanged letters; the French Premier refuted the pro-abstention arguments. "In a situation as difficult as this," he wrote, "only the unity of the western diplomatic front, supported by the immense potential which we have in common, can bring about the very military and strategic unity which we should seek eventually to establish in that part of the world. It is in this spirit that the French Government envisages, aside from the assurances which the conference itself could furnish, the establishment of a collective guarantee by virtue of which the signatories would declare themselves prepared to intervene if, in Indochina, one of the three states was a victim of aggression."[37] Whether or not Mendes-France changed Mr. Dulles' mind, the decision to participate at the ministerial level was made following talks with Britain's Anthony Eden and consultation with President Eisenhower.[38] Under Secretary of State Smith left for Geneva on 16 July.

The United States performed another service for France. On 7 July a new Vietnamese government was formed in Saigon. Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, an uncompromising nationalist, had not held office since resigning from Bao Dai's service in 1933. Living in Europe, he had accepted Bao Dai's call to go to Saigon.[39] Ambassador Heath was to tell Diem of the planned partition of Vietnam and of the futility of resisting the settlement. Heath was to inform the Premier that President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles, in conference with Prime Minister Churchill and Mr. Eden, had made clear their strong opposition to a settlement leading to permanent division of Vietnam and advise Diem of the seven-point British-American note to France. Speaking in Mr. Dulles' name, he was to state that "while we recognize that settlement along these lines imposes hardships on Vietnam, we fear that deteriorating military situation and separate negotiations in progress with Vietminh and Chinese Communists could lead to something still worse."[40] The United States had established that the French were not keeping the Vietnamese informed. Besides

averting a violent reaction by the disappointed Vietnamese, the United States sought to place its relations with Diem on a more realistic and confidential basis.[41]

The 26 June aide-memoire from the French asked that the final communiqué from the British-American conversations in Washington state that the issuing governments would take a serious view of unacceptable communist demands at Geneva. President Eisenhower and Sir Winston Churchill obliged by inserting a statement that, "We are both convinced that if at Geneva the French Government is confronted with demands which prevent an acceptable agreement regarding Indochina, the international situation will be seriously aggravated."[42]

Anglo-American Discussions

The Anglo-American discussions in Washington from 25 to 29 June between President Eisenhower, Mr. Dulles, Prime Minister Churchill, and Mr. Eden covered Indochina and the Geneva Conference. Preoccupied with the need to establish a firm front in Southeast Asia, Churchill favored a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and a Middle East Treaty Organization to match NATO.[43] The Americans were less convinced that the answer was a NATO-type entente. The main reason for these high-level talks was that divergence between American and British policies in a number of spheres was reaching serious proportions. "Sometimes it is awfully difficult," said Mr. Attlee, "to understand what the American line is, as between what members of the Government say and what Senators say, and sometimes what generals and admirals say."[44]

As a follow-up to the Eisenhower-Churchill meeting, a United States-United Kingdom Study Group on Southeast Asia was established. By 16 July some of the main points were beginning to emerge. The British view was that a collective security arrangement for Southeast Asia should be considered in two contexts: (1) on the basis of a settlement in Indochina, and (2) on the basis of no settlement. In the event of a settlement that posed no immediate military problem, the British preferred an arrangement designed to bring in as many states as possible, including the Colombo powers. If there were no settlement at Geneva, the British agreed to the immediate establishment of an organization to meet the military threat. The British had no intention of pressing forward with any security organization until the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference had ended. The United Kingdom believed that the principal issue in dealing with Southeast Asia after an Indochinese settlement would be large-scale economic assistance; there was little doubt who the chief contributor would be.

On a number of occasions, the British representative referred to military force to repel overt communist aggression, but his attitude about countering subversion and infiltration remained vague. The Americans pointed out that the principal danger in the future would probably be infiltration and subversion, and that the security

organization should be in a position to deal with the situation. The organization should be established immediately, to deal with the adverse military and political consequences of an unsatisfactory settlement at Geneva.[45] If a pact was signed, there would be a time lag of six to twelve months for ratification by the various countries; therefore, the need for some kind of interim machinery. The Americans believed that it was too early to set up machinery like NATO. Instead, they were considering the idea of an interim council. By making the American Ambassador the US representative and supplementing his staff with political and military advisers, day-to-day business could be conducted without large staffs. The biggest problem remained deciding the nature of the basic treaty organization.

Bedell Smith, echoing the Joint Chiefs of Staff position, argued strongly for viewing the matter in the light of the whole Far East, not just Southeast Asia. Any organization sponsored by the United States should include Japan, the Philippines, and other Asian allies. The United States military was skeptical about including India believing that India, would wreck more military plans than she aided. Obstructionism could be especially effective in the organization the British favored: a council including all participants; an economic and political council, with as many members as possible; and a military organization.[46]

On the military organization the British were reported to be thinking of proposing that the entire command structure in the Pacific, including Southeast Asia, be American. When the British asked the Colombo powers about their attitude toward the proposed organization, Indonesia replied that its position was one of strict neutrality. Burma also protested neutrality, but let it be known that it was not adverse to the idea. Ceylon took a similar stand. The Indian attitude was assumed to be negative.

Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff had pressed hard for a Southeast Asian security organization that could be tied to other Far Eastern alliances with the United States, the military sounded a note of caution after the signing of the Geneva settlement. The situation had changed radically. In April, it had been assumed that the power of Vietnam would be a factor. But now it appeared that there was talk of a military defensive arrangement for which there were no military forces. Except for the British police in Malaya, and negligible Thai and Burmese forces, the only military power available was in Korea and Formosa.

The armed forces wished to subject the undertaking to very close scrutiny. With limited funds for MDAP and defense programs, commitment of huge sums of money in Southeast Asia would mean cutting somewhere else, without generating any real strength. Thailand planned for an eighty-one thousand man force, which would cost the United States $400 million. Adequate for internal security, this force would contribute nothing to mutual defense. The Burmese had a similar plan. Military aggression would not be counteracted by the United States in Thailand; it would be cut off in China. Aid and materiel sent to Thailand would weaken the places where the United States might have to fight.

Consideration had to be given to the type of defense the countries of Southeast Asia would be asked to support. A NATO-type of defense was out of the question; each country could not be guaranteed one hundred percent protection, which would require building up the armed forces of each country, a task of dubious military value. Military aid programs were a heavy expense for the United States and were beginning to get out of hand.[47]

One of the hazards of aiding weak or indefensible nations was the possibility of aiding the enemy instead. Indochina was a case in point. In April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the National Security Council that shipments of military materiel should be suspended if fighting halted before a controlled armistice could be put into effect and that an attempt should be made to recover or destroy equipment already in Indochina.[48] They pointed out that the United States would be justified, despite the fact that the French held title to the equipment, in insisting upon its return if no longer employed in the defense of Indochina. They recommended that in the event of partition units suited to guerrilla operations should not be disarmed.[49] Directed to plan for salvaging or destroying American materiel, CINCPAC assigned the operation to MAAG Indochina.[50]

When the diplomats at Geneva formally agreed on 21 July to partition Vietnam, the Defense Department suspended shipments of materiel to Indochina and diverted shipments en route to Indochina to Japan and Title III countries.[51] Within two days France gave her assurance that American equipment would be evacuated to South Vietnam, but CINCPAC and the MAAG continued to work on measures to safeguard the materiel. The MAAG was directed not to press plans for recovery and destruction until France had determined her course of action in Indochina.[52] Since the French were evacuating equipment and personnel to South Vietnam, American concern focused on US Air Force personnel and B-26 and C-119 aircraft on loan to the French Air Force.

The Commander, Far East Air Force (COMFEAF), had been concerned about the safety of the American Air Force mechanics in Indochina. Early in July he stated that the French C-47 capability could meet operational requirements and recommended that sixteen C-119s and support personnel be withdrawn by 10 July; General O'Daniel recommended that half of the C-119s and Air Force mechanics be withdrawn on 10 July and the remainder later. The Joint Chiefs supported O'Daniel, and eight C-119s with maintenance crews were retained in Indochina.[53]

General Ely protested that C-119s were needed for the redeployment from the delta to South Vietnam. O'Daniel reported that General Ely interpreted the United States action as an expression of displeasure with French agreement to a cease-fire. To dispel this impression, General O'Daniel advised that the B-26s be withdrawn on 11 August and the C-119s within thirty days thereafter to permit the French to use the planes during the peak of the redeployment.[54] COMFEAF was directed to withdraw the B-26s on 11 August and the C-119s on 1 September. The American maintenance personnel were to be withdrawn when no longer needed.[55]

After Geneva, the United States adopted an interim policy on aid to the Associated States and to the French in Indochina. Only common-use items directly alleviating suffering, preventing disease, and assisting in the evacuation of military forces and refugees from North Vietnam were programmed for Indochina. Each case was to be considered on its own merits.[56]

The Americans intended to use the materiel rescued from northern Vietnam to help equip the native forces of the Associated States. Those states, along with the other noncommunist nations in the area, were to build up their forces for internal security leaving the main fighting to the United States and its more powerful allies. Corollary to that idea was the concept that the significant fighting would take place elsewhere. United States strategists wished to avoid becoming deeply involved in Southeast Asia. They opposed the British, who preferred a NATO type of security organization with its implications of limited area defense. Such an organization was greatly to the benefit of the British, if the United States paid for it.

US Unilateral Declaration on Geneva

The Anglo-American study group accomplished its second purpose more quickly. It had been charged with preparing recommendations on "the terms on which our two countries [Great Britain and the United States] might be willing to be associated with an agreement which might be reached in Geneva."[57] The task of the study group was to find a satisfactory solution to the question of a declaration in the event of a settlement. The policy of Great Britain was much more flexible than that of the United States in this respect. Although both countries had subscribed to the seven criteria for an acceptable settlement, the United Kingdom had been willing to associate itself with terms falling considerably short of these criteria. Moreover, Great Britain preferred a multilateral declaration including Australia, New Zealand, and, if possible, India and other interested nations. Nor did Britain exclude the possibility of the declaration bearing communist signatures. The United States made it plain that it would not participate in any declaration that included Communist China and that it would not compromise with the seven-point statement.[58] President Eisenhower announced that the United States had not been a party to, nor was it bound by, the decisions taken by the conference, and that the United States was issuing a statement that it was not prepared to join in the conference declaration.[59] Instead, Under Secretary Smith presented the following unilateral declaration on 21 July:

> The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations takes note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954 between (a) the Franco-Laotian Command and the Command of

> the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam; (b) the Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam; (c) Franco-Vietnamese Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21, 1954 declares with regard to the aforesaid agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.
>
> In connection with the statement in the declaration concerning free elections in Viet-Nam my Government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954, as follows:
>
> "In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly."
>
> With respect to the statement made by the representative of the State of Viet-Nam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.
>
> We share the hope that the agreements will permit Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future.[60]

Secretary Dulles, in a statement two days after the conference, maintained that one of the lessons of Geneva was that resistance to communism needs popular support, and that this meant the people should feel they are defending their own national institutions. One of the good aspects of Geneva, claimed Mr. Dulles, was that it advanced the independent status of the Associated States. The President of France assured him that French representatives in Vietnam had been instructed to complete by 30 July projects for the transfer of authority that would give the independence France had promised.[61] Both Mr. Dulles and President Eisenhower admitted that the Geneva settlement contained undesirable features. The President observed that a great deal would depend upon how they worked out.[62] It was not long before the Planning Board produced an estimate of how they probably would work out, and what it would mean to the United States.

The board pointed out that, regardless of the fate of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the communists had secured possession of a position from which military and nonmilitary pressures could be mounted against adjacent noncommunist areas. The board predicted that the loss of prestige in Asia suffered by the United States, as backer of France and the Bao Dai government, would raise doubts about United States leadership and about the ability of the United States to check future communist expansion in Asia. United States prestige would be associated with subsequent

developments in Southeast Asia. The communists had increased their military and political prestige and their capacity for extending communist influence without resorting to armed attack. They were in a better position to exploit the instability of the free countries of Asia.

The Planning Board also noted that the communists were in a better position for propaganda attacks on the United States. Having adopted an appearance of moderation at Geneva, and having taken credit for the end of hostilities in Indochina, they could accuse the United States of extremism, belligerency, and opposition to co-existence, thus accentuating their peace propaganda and peace program in Asia to allay fears of communist expansionist policies. The communists had an opportunity to alienate the United States from its Asian friends and allies, while establishing closer ties with the free nations of Asia.

One very alarming feature of the loss of Southeast Asia, the board warned, was that it would imperil the retention of Japan. High Commissioner de Jean of Indochina, once the French Ambassador to Tokyo, had predicted in May that a communist victory would so enhance the prestige of Communist China that the whole balance of power in the Pacific would be affected, and that the Japanese would tend toward rapprochement with a new and powerful Peiping.[63]

The situation was serious, yet, in the words of the Department of Defense representative at Geneva, it was no better or no worse than could be expected "under existing circumstances wherein French unable and/or unwilling pursue war to military conclusion, and in light of United States decision apparently made some time ago that it would not intervene militarily to save Indochina from Communist encroachment. . . ."[64]

12

Conclusion

By the time the Geneva agreements ended France's war against the Viet Minh, the outlines of the United States political and military commitment to Indochina were set. The Truman and then the Eisenhower administrations had decided that stopping Communism in Indochina, especially in Vietnam, was essential to the success of containment in the Far East. Occupied during much of the period with the war in Korea, the United States relied on France to hold the line in Indochina. It sought to keep the French in the fight through a rapidly expanding program of military and financial assistance. At the same time, American officials pressed the French to adopt a more aggressive battlefield strategy and to organize and equip effective indigenous armed forces to aid in the struggle against the Viet Minh. To the latter end, the Americans, believing that the French could not defeat Communism with old-fashioned colonialism, urged their ally to create genuinely independent national governments capable of rallying the Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians to the anti-communist cause. Strongly wedded by economic, bureaucratic, and emotional ties to its colonial regime, France repeatedly pressed the United States for more assistance while putting off real political change. Consequently, while the assistance programs enhanced French military capabilities, the French moved too little and too late to establish non-communist national governments and armies.

As France's situation in Vietnam deteriorated during 1953 and 1954, the Eisenhower administration was forced to consider direct military intervention to save the beleaguered garrison of Dien Bien Phu and possibly to take a larger general role in the fighting. Contingency plans for Dien Bien Phu contemplated American air strikes, not a serious possibility, against the Viet Minh forces. President Eisenhower, however, set stringent political and military conditions for intervention. He demanded that the French allow the United States an authoritative voice in planning and directing military operations and grant unqualified independence to the associated Indochinese states. Eisenhower would intervene only with support of

the American Congress and in association with Great Britain and France. None of these conditions was met. In the end, Dien Bien Phu fell and the United States reconciled itself to partition of Vietnam under the Geneva agreements. Following the Geneva accords, the United States turned to building a collective defense organization for Southeast Asia. It also took a direct hand in training and equipping the armed forces of the new anti-communist state of South Vietnam, gradually supplanting France as South Vietnam's principal foreign sponsor.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff subscribed to the view that a Communist takeover of Vietnam would undermine the US strategic position in the Far East. They regularly endorsed military aid to the French and sought to assist in the training and equipping of indigenous armed forces. Yet they approached with caution direct American military engagement in the Indochina conflict. Any such engagement, especially of ground troops, would divert scarce resources from higher priority tasks, such as the war in Korea and the NATO buildup in Europe, to a costly and likely indecisive campaign. In the context of planning for a general war with the Soviet bloc, the Joint Chiefs considered Indochina to be without significant strategic objectives and urged that the United States avoid any commitment to fight there. In their view, defense of Indochina, whether in a limited or general war, should be the responsibility of America's allies and of indigenous forces.

When they did discuss American military intervention, the JCS consistently emphasized themes that would recur as US involvement in Indochina deepened. The Joint Chiefs preferred to leave the ground fighting to other nations. At various times, they considered employing Chinese Nationalist and South Korean divisions to reinforce or replace the French. Consistently, they advocated building up local Indochinese anti-communist military strength. In their rare discussions of American ground intervention, they envisioned a campaign against the Viet Minh battle corps, aimed at breaking the large units up into guerrilla bands that presumably could be dealt with by allied troops.

The Joint Chiefs clearly preferred to counter Communist aggression in Indochina with American sea and air power. Besides strikes in direct support of allied troops in combat, they advocated air attacks on enemy bases and lines of communication in the People's Republic of China, the ultimate source of Communist strength. Their contingency plans for defeating an overt Chinese attack on Southeast Asia—a possibility always in their minds—called for an extensive air atomic assault on Chinese targets combined with a naval blockade of the mainland and perhaps a Chinese Nationalist invasion from Taiwan. As the Vietnam situation unfolded after 1954, discussion of nuclear weapons, the Nationalists, and attacking China would fade away; but the Chiefs' preference for decisive air and naval pressure on the source of aggression over indecisive local ground operations would remain a constant in the policy debate.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, like other US officials, believed that they understood the reasons for France's defeat in Indochina. They considered French military

strategy to have been overly defensive, lacking in the dash and determination required to press home perceived advantages in numbers, mobility, and firepower. On the political side, the French had refused until too late to take the actions that would have given Bao Dai's regime credibility as a rallying point for non-communist Vietnamese nationalists. Without a strong indigenous government, the French had failed to develop effective local armed forces to control and pacify the country. If these errors could be rectified and a workable collective Southeast Asia defense organization established, American officials were confident that they could preserve South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos for the free world.

They would have their chance to try. On 8 September 1954 at Manila, the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan signed the treaty creating the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The three states of former French Indochina—South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos – were barred from joining by the Geneva agreement, but they were included under SEATO's protection. Secretary Dulles had his regional security agreement. At the same time, the Americans believed that they had found their Vietnamese anti-communist leader in Ngo Dinh Diem, Bao Dai's premier. With American support, Diem consolidated his control over South Vietnam. Bao Dai faded from the scene and Diem became President of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), bolstered by American economic and military aid. Except for North Vietnam, Southeast Asia remained outside the communist orbit. The worst fears of the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not materialize.

By the early 1960s, however, the North Vietnamese were actively seeking to complete the task of unifying Vietnam under communist rule. As the threat to the RVN grew, the United States engaged ever more deeply in the struggle, initially with an expanding program of military advice and support and ultimately with direct commitment of ground, air, and naval forces. American military leaders would have the chance to apply the lessons the French supposedly had failed to learn.

Appendix 1

Summary of the Aid Program

Between the outbreak of the Indochinese war in 1946 and the close of the Geneva Conference in the summer of 1954, France spent a total of $7 billion to prosecute the war. The American contribution to the French war effort, begun in the spring of 1950 with an allocation of $15 million, had mounted to a total of $2.7 billion by July 1954. Almost half of this amount was spent in Fiscal Year 1954 alone. After the Pau Conference in December 1950 the Associated States began providing financial support to the extent of their abilities, and by the end of the fighting had expended $250 million. Thus the financial cost of the Indochinese war from 1946 to 1954 amounted to almost $10 billion.[1]

Throughout the course of the war the United States administered several types of aid programs that contributed directly or indirectly to combating the Viet Minh. The most important in terms of results was the program of military assistance. French Union Forces fighting in Indochina received under MDAP large quantities of military end-items, components, and spare parts. The Defense Department programmed this material for Indochina, and the United States bore the cost not only of the equipment itself but also of delivery and distribution. The cumulative program for Fiscal Years 1950–1953 amounted to $773 million. The Fiscal Year 1954 program, with its supplemental allocations necessitated by the Dien Bien Phu crisis, totaled $535 million. Thus under the Fiscal Years 1950–1954 MDAP's Material Program an aggregate of $1.3 billion was made available to the Defense Department to program equipment for Indochina.[2]

Closely approaching the military assistance expenditure was the total of $1.29 billion made available to France in financial support (Direct Forces Support Program). This program began with the grant of $200 million made to France at Lisbon in February 1952, and hence it has generally been defined as Lisbon-type aid. The main vehicle for expenditure in financial support was the Offshore Procurement Program (OSP). By purchasing items in France for Indochina the United States helped alleviate the French dollar shortage, underwrote military expenditures that otherwise would have seriously damaged the French budget, and enabled France to meet her NATO obligations more readily. The United States appropriated $500 million in Lisbon-type grants in Fiscal Years 1952–1953 and subsequently agreed to support the French budget to the extent of $785 million in Fiscal Year 1954.

The Fiscal Year 1954 program, however, was interrupted by the Geneva settlement. Processing of OSP contracts was suspended in August until the problem

could be reexamined. At this point $200 million had already been covered by contract, $300 million was in the pipeline, and an unencumbered balance of $285 million remained.[3]

In 1953 the Military Support Program (MSP or Milsup) was initiated. Funds allocated to this account were used to provide so-called "common-use" items inadmissible under MDAP screening criteria. Examples of this kind of aid were roads, transport facilities, communications centers, water supply systems, and machine tools that contributed directly to the war effort but could not be classified as military equipment. An initial sum of $30 million was set aside for use in Fiscal Year 1953, and the total Fiscal Year 1953–1954 MSP expenditure amounted to $75 million.

Under the Defense Support Program (DSP) almost the same purposes were accomplished. Funds appropriated for economic aid to the Associated States were administered under DSP and in Fiscal Years 1951–1954 totaled $95 million. Expenditure of DSP funds was supervised by the Military Support Activity (MSA), and its successor the Foreign Operations Activity (FOA), through STEM in Indochina. DSP was designed to help stabilize the economies of the Associated States, but in so doing it assisted greatly in supporting the military effort. Examples of STEM projects were power developments, introduction of advanced agricultural techniques, and expansion and improvement of transportation networks.

The monetary contribution of the United States to the war against the Viet Minh over the four-year period aggregated $2.753 billion and may be summarized as follows:

Military Assistance: $1,308 million
Financial Support of French Budget: $1,285 million
Military Support Program: $75 million
Defense Support Program: $95 million
Total Cost to US of Indochina War: $2,763 million

Perhaps a better conception of the magnitude of American help to France and the Associated States can be obtained from a survey of equipment actually delivered in the four years during which MDAP operated in Indochina. When the United States entered the picture in 1950 French Union Forces were indifferently armed with largely obsolescent World War II equipment. Long and hard usage in the humid climate of Indochina, together with improper and inadequate maintenance, had made much of this equipment nearly unserviceable. Between 1950 and 1954 the French and native troops were almost completely reequipped with modern weapons and vehicles.

During this period French Union ground troops received under MDAP 1,880 tanks and combat vehicles, 30,887 motor transport vehicles, 361,522 small arms and machine guns, and 5,045 artillery pieces. Spare parts and maintenance apparatus for these items were likewise supplied. The United States also furnished a continuing supply of ammunition and during the four-year period shipped over 500 million

rounds of small arms ammunition and over 10 million artillery shells. The French Navy received 438 vessels, mostly small patrol craft and landing ships, together with 70 naval aircraft. Two World War II aircraft carriers (CVI) were transferred to the French Navy for Indochina service. The French air force, flying a few worn-out World War II planes in 1950, was developed into a comparatively strong, modern air force. A total of 394 Hellcat fighters, B–26 bombers, and C–47 cargo planes were transported to the French Air Force in Indochina. By July 1954 over one and a half million measurement tons of military end-items had been dispatched to Indochina, not including aircraft and vessels delivered under their own power. Seventy-two percent of the material was lifted by American commercial shipping.[4]

The Fiscal Years 1950–1952 programs alone provided equipment for three French infantry divisions, six Vietnamese divisions, and four Laotian and five Cambodian infantry battalions. By the middle of 1952 the French Air Force had made important gains in the process of expansion and modernization. It already operated four fighter squadrons equipped with F8F and F6F naval fighter planes, two light bombardment squadrons flying B–26 bombers, and three squadrons of transport planes. The latter as yet had not been completely modernized and consisted of mixed C–47 and German JU–52 transports.[5]

By the spring of 1954, however, the French Army in Indochina consisted of fifty infantry battalions, eighteen antiaircraft artillery (AAA) battalions, and four armored battalions largely equipped by the United States. The new and growing Vietnamese native army had twenty-nine infantry battalions, twenty-seven light infantry battalions, and two AAA battalions almost entirely equipped through MDAP. The French Air Force now possessed 140 F8F fighters, fifty-five B–26 bombers, 106 C–47 cargo planes, and 164 M0500 light liaison planes for observation and medical evacuation, all furnished through American aid. The French naval air arm operated sixteen F8F fighters, twelve SB2C Helldivers, twenty-five Corsair fighters, eight Privateers for reconnaissance work, and nine Grumman Goose scout planes. Added to this were twenty-four C–119 cargo planes and twenty-five B–26 bombers loaned by the American Far East Air Force (FEAF) during the defense of Dien Bien Phu. Almost three hundred USAF maintenance personnel were temporarily assigned to Indochina to provide maintenance support for the C–119s, C–47s, and B–26s.[6]

Conclusions on Aid Program

Despite the great quantity of arms the United States provided from 1950 through 1954, the aid program never functioned entirely to the satisfaction of either France or the United States. Defense Department officials recognized a basic fallacy in the use of MDAP to support an active war. Combat operations require a smooth flow of material and the immediate availability of equipment to meet unforeseen contingencies. MDAP simply could not meet these requirements. It had

been designed to build up the defensive forces of free world nations over a long period of time and was never intended to supply armies engaged in actual fighting.

Supply procedures called for the French to submit requisitions to MAAG for screening. MAAG officials eliminated all items not meeting JCS screening criteria and considered the remainder in light of their own knowledge of whether the French actually needed the items, whether they could employ them efficiently, and whether they could maintain them properly. MAAG then forwarded the revised list to Washington for screening by the military services. The services further revised the list on the basis of funds available for Indochina support. By the time the material had been programmed, procured, and delivered to Indochina, the need may have passed and some other type of equipment might be in urgent demand to meet the current situation.

Defense authorities concerned with the Indochina program recognized this fault. In presenting the Fiscal Year 1955 Indochina program to Congress, OMA officials repeatedly stressed the fact that MDAP was being used to support a war, a purpose for which it was never intended.[7] The Joint Chiefs of Staff studied the problem in January 1954 and concluded: "The furnishing of material and other types of aid to France through the medium of MDAP has proved to be too time-consuming and cumbersome because of all the criteria and administrative procedures involved. Experience indicates that MDAP is not adaptable to or effective in providing support to our Allies during an active war." The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that a special fund for Indochina be placed under the direct supervision of the Secretary of Defense. Within this framework, they declared, "criteria and procedures can be developed to satisfy the particular needs involved in supporting the French effort in the war."[8] Sentiment in favor of a solution of this type was growing, but the Geneva settlement in July made further discussion pointless.

Despite the drawbacks inherent in employment of MDAP in wartime, the program undoubtedly would have operated more smoothly had the French command and staff functioned efficiently. The High Command, however, was burdened by pre-World War II staff thinking and a cumbersome logistics apparatus that resulted in waste of material and unrealistic equipment requests. MAAG officers found that the French supply organization lacked an efficient and centralized stock control system and hence had no provision for lateral redistribution. The French would submit requisitions for a given item on the basis of a shortage existing at one installation. Investigation would reveal an oversupply of the same item at another installation. These operating procedures placed a heavy burden on the American logistics system.[9]

The whole problem was concisely summarized in February 1954 by the Army attaché in Saigon:

> Fact possibly not apparent to those who do not have daily contact with French military here is that their staff thinking and procedure is vintage 1935–1939. Although Navarre demands that his requirements (for United States

logistical support) be filled without further screening fact that his staff not capable of accurately generating and evaluating these requirements. Acceptance these requests without detailed screening by United States military supply agencies would result waste millions of dollars.

Staff action are often uncoordinated and there is no rpt no evidence of detailed long range planning. Striking example of this is the continuing request for additional aircraft without making a coordinated effort to obtain maximum utilization of those already available. French seem to unconsciously feel that the arrival of large quantities of new type equipment... will somehow allow them to conduct operations without commitment of manpower. In their planning they completely overlook requirements for operation, maintenance and storage of these items.[10]

Often MAAG's refusal to approve certain French requests was based upon the fact, known to MAAG but rarely recognized by the French, that the desired items could not be properly maintained or utilized with existing facilities and personnel. The French were wasteful and haphazard in their maintenance practices and were sensitive to criticism and offers of technical advice. Although MAAG was charged with insuring proper care of equipment supplied by the United States, French commanders barely concealed their reluctance to accept MAAG inspection, and they carefully controlled the conditions under which MAAG officers were permitted to examine their units. The French Air Force was a particularly consistent offender. Rarely did American inspectors find proper maintenance of aircraft or utilization rates approaching those of the USAF. As an OMA official told Congressmen, "The problem of supporting French units in Indochina with U.S. equipment is not concerned so much with procurement and delivery of equipment as it is with the ability of the French to support it after it is placed in their hands...."[11]

Further complicating the situation was a lack of coordination between the French High Command in Indochina and the General Staff in Paris. Never throughout the war did Paris support the armies in Indochina properly, and successive French commanders found it impossible to get personnel from Metropolitan France in sufficient numbers to maintain American material received. Further, authorities in Paris frequently submitted requests through diplomatic channels or the Paris MAAG for material that French Union Forces could not use or support and, indeed, did not want.

The use of MDAP to support a war, together with inefficient French staff and supply practices, inevitably resulted in what came to be known as "crash basis supply," a type of operation that reached its peak during the Dien Bien Phu crisis. Equipment vitally needed for projected combat operations became the subject of urgent requests for immediate delivery. American programming, procurement, and shipping agencies were consequently placed under an intolerable strain, and it was frequently necessary to divert funds from the programs of other countries to the Indochina program in order to meet the increased financial demands. The occasional inability of

the United States to comply with these requests led to criticism by the French that the United States was not properly supporting the war effort.

Another problem that developed, partly from American difficulty in meeting recurring crash basis requests, was that of out-of-channel communications. When the United States did not produce needed equipment promptly, or when MAAG eliminated items particularly desired, the French resorted to channels other than MAAG to obtain results. The situation was aggravated by high American officials leading the French to expect more than MAAG or the Defense Department felt could be efficiently used. When an item deemed essential was deleted from a program, the French protested through diplomatic channels. These agencies were entirely unacquainted with the merits of the argument and basis for the MAAG decision, but they generally transmitted the protest anyhow. The United States repeatedly asked France to confine MDAP business to liaison with MAAG, but the French discovered that they normally got what they wanted by using improper channels and continued to do so throughout the war.

These various factors combined to interfere with an expeditious flow of material throughout the four years during which the French received American aid in Indochina. The demands for American aid arising from the Dien Bien Phu battle brought the whole problem into focus. It demonstrated the need for a thorough modernization of French supply organization, a more cooperative and understanding French attitude toward MAAG, and an American aid structure geared to the specific situation in Indochina. The Geneva Accords in July 1954, however, obviated the need for such a reappraisal.

Appendix 2

Text of NSC 64/1, 21 December 1950

The proposal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff listed both short-term and long–term objectives for the United States in Indochina, of which the short–term aims were the most significant for this history. These objectives were the following:

Short-term Objectives

a. The United States should take action, as a matter of urgency, by all means practicable short of the actual employment of United States military forces, to deny Indochina to communism.

b. As long as the present situation exists, the United States should continue to insure that the primary responsibility for the restoration of peace and security in Indochina rests with the French.

c. The United States should seek to develop its military assistance program for Indochina based on an over-all military plan prepared by the French, concurred in by the Associated States of Indochina, and acceptable to the United States.

(1) Both the plan and the program should be developed and implemented as a matter of urgency. It should be clearly understood, however, that United States acceptance of the plan is limited to the logistical support which the United States may agree to furnish. The aid provided under the program should be furnished to the French in Indochina and to the Associated States. The allocation of United States military assistance as between the French and the national armies of Indochina should be approved by the French and United States authorities in Indochina.

(2) Popular support of the Government by the Indochinese people is essential to a favorable settlement of the security problem of Indochina. Therefore, as a condition to the provision of those further increases in military assistance to Indochina necessary for the implementation of an agreed over-all military plan, the United States Government should obtain assurances from the French Government that:

(a) A program providing for the eventual self-government of Indochina either within or outside of the French Union will be developed, made public, and implementation initiated at once in order to strengthen the national spirit of the Indochinese in opposition to communism.

(b) National armies of the Associated States of Indochina will be organized as a matter of urgency. While it is doubtful that the build-up of

these armies can be accomplished in time to contribute significantly to the present military situation, the direct political and psychological benefits to be derived from this course would be great and would thus result in immediate, although indirect, military benefits.

(c) Pending the formation and training of Indochinese national armies as effective units, and as an interim emergency measure, France will dispatch sufficient additional armed forces to Indochina to insure that the restoration of peace and internal security in that country will be accomplished in accordance with the timetable of the over-all military plan for Indochina.

(d) France will change its political and military concepts in Indochina to:

i. Eliminate its policy of "colonialism."

ii. Provide proper tutelage to the Associated States.

iii. Insure that a suitable military command structure, unhampered by political interference, is established to conduct effective and appropriate military operations. The effective implementation of these changes will require competent and efficient political and military leaders who will be able to cope with the conditions in that country.

(3) At an appropriate time the United States should institute checks to satisfy itself that the conditions set forth in subparagraph c-(2) above are being fulfilled.

d. The United States should exert all practicable political and diplomatic measures required to obtain the recognition of the Associated States by the other non-communist states of Southeast and South Asia.

e. In the event of overt attack by organized Chinese Communist forces against Indochina, the United States should not permit itself to become engaged in a general war with Communist China but should, in concert with the United Kingdom, support France and the Associated States by all means short of the actual employment of United States military forces. This support should include appropriate expansion of the present military assistance program and endeavors to induce States in the neighborhood of Indochina to commit armed forces to resist the aggression.

f. The United States should immediately reconsider its policy toward Indochina whenever it appears that the French Government may abandon its military position in that country or plans to refer the problem of Indochina to the United Nations. Unless the situation throughout the world generally, and Indochina specifically, changes materially, the United States should seek to dissuade the French from referring the Indochina question to the United Nations.

g. Inasmuch as the United States-sponsored resolution, "Uniting for Peace," has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and should a situation develop in Indochina in a manner similar to that in Korea in which United Nations forces were required, the United States would then probably be morally

obligated to contribute its armed forces designated for service on behalf of the United Nations. It is, therefore, in the interests of the United States to take such action in Indochina as would forestall the need for the General Assembly to invoke the provisions of the resolution, "Uniting for Peace."

Long-term Objectives

a. United States security interests demand that this government, by all means short of the actual employment of United States military forces, seek to prevent the further spread of communism in Southeast Asia generally and, in particular, in French Indochina.

b. The United States should seek to insure the establishment of such conditions in Indochina that no foreign armed forces will be required for the maintenance of internal security.

c. The United States should continue to press the French to carry out in letter and in spirit the program referred to in paragraph 4-c-(2)-(a) above, providing for the eventual self-government of Indochina either within or outside of the French Union.

d. The United States should continue to favor the entry of the three Associated States of Indochina into the United Nations.

e. The United States should encourage the establishment of an appropriate form of regional security arrangement embracing Indochina and the other countries of Southeast Asia under Articles 51 and 52 of the United Nations Charter.[1]

Appendix 3

Text of NSC 124/2, 25 June 1952
(partial)

7. With respect to Southeast Asia, the United States should:

a. Strengthen propaganda and cultural activities, as appropriate, in relation to the area to foster increased alignment of the people with the free world.

b. Continue, as appropriate, programs of economic and technical assistance designed to strengthen the indigenous noncommunist governments of the area.

c. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to restore and expand their commerce with each other and with the rest of the free world, and stimulate the flow of the raw material resources of the area to the free world.

d. Seek agreement with other nations, including at least France, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, for a joint warning to Communist China regarding the grave consequences of Chinese aggression against Southeast Asia, the issuance of such a warning to be contingent upon the prior agreement of France and the UK to participate in the courses of action set forth in paragraphs 10 c, 12, . . . and such others as are determined as a result of prior trilateral consultation, in the event such a warning is ignored.

e. Seek UK and French agreement in principle that a naval blockade of Communist China should be included in the minimum courses of action set forth in paragraph 10 c below.

f. Continue to encourage and support closer cooperation among the countries of Southeast Asia, and between those countries and the United States, Great Britain, France, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, South Asia and Japan.

g. Strengthen, as appropriate, covert operations designed to assist in the achievement of US objectives in Southeast Asia.

h. Continue activities and operations designed to encourage the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia to organize and activate anti-communist groups and activities within their own communities. . . .

i. Take measures to promote the coordinated defense of the area, and encourage and support the spirit of resistance among the peoples of Southeast Asia to Chinese Communist aggression and to the encroachments of local communists.

j. Make clear to the American people the importance of Southeast Asia to the security of the United States so that they may be prepared for any of the courses of action proposed herein.

8. With respect to Indochina the United States should:

a. Continue to promote international support for the three Associated States.

b. Continue to assure the French that the US regards the French effort in Indochina as one of great strategic importance in the general international interest rather than in the purely French interest, and as essential to the security of the free world, not only in the Far East but in the Middle East and Europe as well.

c. Continue to assure the French that we are cognizant of the sacrifices entailed for France in carrying out her effort in Indochina and that, without overlooking the principle that France has the primary responsibility in Indochina, we will recommend to the Congress appropriate military, economic and financial aid to France and the Associated States

d. Continue to cultivate friendly and increasingly cooperative relations with the Governments of France and the Associated States at all levels with a view to maintaining and, if possible, increasing the degree of influence the US can bring to bear on the policies and actions of the French and Indochinese authorities to the end of directing the course of events toward the objectives we seek. Our influence with the French and Associated States should be designed to further those constructive political, economic and social measures which will tend to increase the stability of the Associated States and thus make it possible for the French to reduce the degree of their participation in the military, economic and political affairs of the Associated States.

e. Specifically we should use our influence with France and the Associated States to promote positive political, military, economic and social policies, among which the following are considered essential elements:

(1) Continued recognition and carrying out by France of its primary responsibility for the defense of Indochina.

(2) Further steps by France and the Associated States toward the evolutionary development of the Associated States.

(3) Such reorganization of French administration and representation in Indochina as will be conducive to an increased feeling of responsibility on the part of the Associated States.

(4) Intensive efforts to develop the armies of the Associated States, including independent logistical and administrative services.

(5) The development of more effective and stable Governments in the Associated States.

(6) Land reform, agrarian and industrial credit, sound rice marketing systems, labor development, foreign trade and capital formation.

(7) An aggressive military, political, and psychological program to defeat or seriously reduce the Viet Minh forces.

(8) US-French cooperation in publicizing progressive developments in the foregoing policies in Indochina.

9. In the absence of large-scale Chinese Communist intervention in Indochina, the United States should:

a. Provide increased aid on a high priority basis for the French Union forces without relieving French authorities of their basic military responsibility for the defense of the Associated States in order to:

(1) Assist in developing indigenous armed forces which will eventually be capable of maintaining internal security without assistance from French units.

(2) Assist the French Union forces to maintain progress in the restoration of internal security against the Viet Minh.

(3) Assist the forces of France and the Associated States to defend Indochina against Chinese Communist aggression.

b. In view of the immediate urgency of the situation, involving possible large-scale Chinese Communist intervention, and in order that the United States may be prepared to take whatever action may be appropriate in such circumstances, make the plans necessary to carry out the courses of action indicated in paragraph 10 below.

c. In the event that information and circumstances point to the conclusion that France is no longer prepared to carry the burden in Indochina, or if France presses for an increased sharing of the responsibility for Indochina, whether in the UN or directly with the US Government, oppose a French withdrawal and consult with the French and British concerning further measures to be taken to safeguard the area from communist domination.

10. In the event that it is determined, in consultation with France, that Chinese Communist forces (including volunteers) have overtly intervened in the conflict in Indochina, or are covertly participating to such an extent as to jeopardize retention of the Tonkin Delta area by French Union forces, the United States should take the following measures to assist these forces in preventing the loss of Indochina, to repel the aggression and to restore peace and security in Indochina:

a. Support a request by France or the Associated States for immediate action by the United Nations which would include a UN resolution declaring that Communist China has committed an aggression, recommending that member states take whatever action may be necessary, without geographic limitation, to assist France and the Associated States in meeting the aggression.

b. Whether or not UN action is immediately forthcoming, seek the maximum possible international support for, and participation in, the minimum courses of military action agreed upon by the parties to the joint warning. These minimum courses of action are set forth in subparagraph c immediately below.

c. Carry out the following minimum courses of military action, either under the auspices of the UN or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments:

(1) A resolute defense of Indochina itself to which the United States would provide such air and naval assistance as might be practicable.

(2) Interdiction of Chinese Communist communication lines including those in China.

(3) The United States would expect to provide the major forces for task (2) above; but would expect the UK and France to provide at least token forces therefor and to render such other assistance as is normal between allies, and France to carry the burden of providing, in conjunction with the Associated States, the ground forces for the defense of Indochina.

11. In addition to the courses of action set forth in paragraph 10 above, the United States should take the following military actions as appropriate to the situation:

a. If agreement is reached pursuant to paragraph 7-e, establishment in conjunction with the UK and France of a naval blockade of Communist China.

b. Intensification of covert operations to aid anti-communist guerrilla forces operating against Communist China and to interfere with and disrupt Chinese Communist lines of communication and military supply areas.

c. Utilization, as desirable and feasible, of anti-communist Chinese forces, including Chinese Nationalist forces in military operations in Southeast Asia, Korea, or China proper.

d. Assistance to the British to cover an evacuation from Hong Kong, if required.

e. Evacuation of French Union civil and military personnel from the Tonkin Delta, if required.

12. If, subsequent to aggression against Indochina and execution of the minimum necessary courses of action listed in paragraph 10-c above, the United States determines jointly with the UK and France that expanded military action against Communist China is rendered necessary by the situation, the United States should take air and naval action in conjunction with at least France and the UK against all suitable military targets in China, avoiding insofar as practicable those targets in areas near the boundaries of the USSR in order not to increase the risk of direct Soviet involvement.

13. In the event the concurrence of the United Kingdom and France to expanded military action against Communist China is not obtained, the United State should consider taking unilateral action.

Appendix 4

The Initial Viet Minh Terms at Geneva

1. Recognition by France of the sovereignty and independence of Vietnam throughout the territory of Vietnam and also of the sovereignty and independence of Chmer and Pathet Lao.

2. Conclusion of an agreement on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of Vietnam, Chmer and Pathet Lao within the time-limits to be agreed upon between the belligerents. Pending the withdrawal of troops the dislocation of French troops in Vietnam shall be agreed upon, particular attention being paid to limit to the minimum the number of their dislocation points. Provision shall be made that the French troops should not interfere in the affairs of local administration in the areas of their dislocation.

3. Holding of free general elections in Vietnam, Chmer and Pathet Lao. Convening of advisory conferences of the representatives of the governments of both sides in Vietnam, Chmer and Pathet Lao, in each of the states separately and under conditions securing freedom of activity for patriotic parties, groups and social organizations in the preparation and the holding of free general elections to establish a unified government in each country; while interference from outside should not be permitted. Local commissions will be set up to supervise the preparation for and the carrying out of the elections.

Prior to the establishment of unified governments in each of the above-mentioned states, the governments of both sides will respectively carry out their administrative functions in the districts which will be under their administration after the settlement has been carried out in accordance with the agreement on the termination of hostilities.

4. The statement by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the readiness of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to examine the question of the entry of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam into the French Union in conformity with the principle of free will and on the conditions of this entry. Corresponding statements should be made by the governments of Chmer and Pathet Lao.

5. The recognition by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as well as by Chmer and Pathet Lao of the economic and cultural interests of France existing in these countries.

After the establishment of unified governments in Vietnam, Chmer, Pathet Lao the economic and cultural relations of these states with France should be subject to the settlement in conformity with the principles of equality and mutual interests. Pending the establishment of the unified governments in the three states the economic and cultural relations of Indochina with France will temporarily remain without a change such as they exist now. However in the areas where communications and trade ties have been broken off they can be reestablished on the basis of understanding between both sides.

The citizens of both sides will enjoy the privileged status to be determined later, in matters pertaining to domicile, movement and business activities on the territory of the other side.

6. The belligerent sides undertake not to prosecute persons who collaborated with the other side during the war.

7. Carrying out mutual exchange of prisoners of war.

8. Implementation of measures referred to in paragraphs 1-7, should be preceded by the cessation of hostilities in Indochina and by the conclusion to this end of appropriate agreements between France and each of the three states which should provide for:

a. Complete and simultaneous cease-fire throughout the whole of the Indochina territory by all armed forces of the belligerent sides:

Ground, naval and air. Both sides in each of the three states of Indochina for the purpose of strengthening the armistice will carry out a necessary settlement of territories and of the areas occupied by them, and it should also be provided that both sides should not hinder each other during the passage, for the purpose of the above mentioned settlement, by the troops of the other side over the territory occupied by the other side.

b. Complete termination of transportation into Indochina from abroad of new ground, naval and air units or personnel, or any kind of arms and ammunition;

c. To set up control over the implementation of the terms of agreement on the cessation of hostilities and to establish for this purpose in each of the three states mixed commissions composed of the representatives of the belligerent sides.

Appendix 5

Text of Final Declaration—Geneva Conference
(unofficial translation)

Final declaration, dated July 21, 1954, of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America took part.

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam and organizing international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the ending of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements on the cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and of Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam prohibiting the introduction into Viet-Nam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their resolution not to request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel, or in instructors except for the purpose of effective defense of their territory and, in the case of Laos, to the extent defined by the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

5. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam to the effect that no military base at the disposition of a foreign state may be established in the regrouping zones of the two parties, the latter having the obligation to see that the zones allotted to them shall not constitute part of any military alliance and shall not be utilized for the resumption of hostilities or in the service of an aggressive policy. The Conference also takes note of the declarations of the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to the effect that they will not join in any agreement with other states if this agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the charter of the United Nations or, in the case of Laos, with the principles of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos or, so long as their security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian or Laotian territory for the military forces of foreign powers.

6. The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Viet-Nam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Viet-Nam.

7. The Conference declares that, so far as Viet-Nam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity, and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot.

In order to insure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the member states of the International Supervisory Commission referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from April 20, 1955, onwards.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to insure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow everyone in Viet-Nam to decide freely in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the northern and southern zones of Viet-Nam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any individual or collective reprisals against persons who have collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war, or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, at the request of the governments concerned and within a period which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the reestablishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity, and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states, and to refrain from any interference in the internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to insure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam are respected.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAA	antiaircraft artillery
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific Command
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CIA	Central Intelligence Committee
Comintern	(Communist International)
COMFEAF	Commander, Far East Air Force
COMSAC	Commander, Strategic Air Command
CVI	aircraft carriers
DIC	Colonial Infantry Division
DRV	Democratic Republic of Viet Nam
DSP	Defense Support Program
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
EDC	European Defense Community
FEAF	Far East Air Force
FECOM	Far East Command
FMACC	Foreign Military Assistance Coordinating Committee
FOA	Foreign Operations Activity
ICP	Indochinese Communist Party
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JSP	Joint Staff Planners
JSSC	Joint Strategic Survey Committee
JWPC	Joint War Plans Committee
LCM	landing craft, mechanized
LCVP	landing craft, vehicle, personnel
LSM	landing ship, medium
LST	landing ship, tank
LSSL	Landing Ship, Support, Large

MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
MDAP	Mutual Defense Assistance Program
Milsup	Military Support Program
MRP	Mouvement Populaire Republicaine
MSA	Military Support Activity
MSP	Military Support Program
MSTS	Military Sea Transport Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OCB	Operations Coordinating Board
OMA	Office of Military Assistance
OSP	Offshore Procurement Program
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
ROK	Republic of Korea
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SEAAPC	Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
shoran	short-range navigation
STEM	Special Technical and Economic Mission
SWNCC	State, War, Navy Coordinating Committee
TO&E	Tables of Organization & Equipment
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VNQDD	Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang

Principal Civilian and Military Officers

President and Commander in Chief	
Harry S. Truman	12 Apr 45–20 Jan 53
Dwight D. Eisenhower	20 Jan 53–20 Jan 61
Secretary of State	
George C. Marshall	21 Jan 47–20 Jan 49
Dean G. Acheson	21 Jan 49–20 Jan 53
John F. Dulles	21 Jan 53–22 Apr 59
Secretary of Defense	
James V. Forrestal	17 Sep 47–28 Mar 49
Louis A. Johnson	28 Mar 49–19 Sep 50
George C. Marshall	21 Sep 50–12 Sep 51
Robert A. Lovett	17 Sep 51–20 Jan 53
Charles E. Wilson	28 Jan 53–08 Oct 57
Deputy Secretary of Defense	
Stephen T. Early	02 May 49–30 Sep 50
Robert A. Lovett	04 Oct 50–16 Sep 51
William C. Foster	24 Sep 51–20 Jan 53
Roger M. Keyes	04 Feb 53–01 May 54
Robert B. Anderson	03 May 54–04 Aug 55
Secretary of the Army	
Kenneth C. Royall	18 Sep 47–27 Apr 49
Gordon Gray	20 Jun 49–12 Apr 50
Frank Pace, Jr.	12 Apr 50–20 Jan 53
Robert T. Stevens	04 Feb 53–20 Jul 55
Secretary of the Navy	
John L. Sullivan	18 Sep 47–24 May 49
Francis P. Mathews	25 May 49–30 Jul 51
Dan A. Kimball	31 Jul 51–03 Feb 53
Robert B. Anderson	04 Feb 53–02 May 54
Charles S. Thomas	03 May 54–31 Mar 57
Secretary of the Air Force	
W. Stuart Symington	18 Sep 47–24 Apr 50
Thomas K. Finletter	24 Apr 50–20 Jan 53
Harold E. Talbott	04 Feb 53–13 Aug 55

Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief

Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy	20 Jul 42–21 Mar 49

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

General of the Army Omar N. Bradley	16 Aug 49–15 Aug 53
Admiral Arthur W. Radford	15 Aug 53–15 Aug 57

Chief of Staff, US Army

General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower	19 Nov 45–07 Feb 48
General Omar N. Bradley	07 Feb 48–16 Aug 49
General J. Lawton Collins	16 Aug 49–15 Aug 53
General Matthew B. Ridgway	15 Aug 53–30 Jun 55

Chief of Naval Operations

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz	15 Dec 45–15 Dec 47
Admiral Louis E. Denfeld	15 Dec 47–02 Nov 49
Admiral Forrest P. Sherman	02 Nov 49–22 Jul 51
Admiral William M. Fechteler	16 Aug 51–16 Aug 53
Admiral Robert B. Carney	17 Aug 53–17 Aug 55

Chief of Staff, US Air Force

General Carl Spaatz	26 Sep 47–29 Apr 48
General Hoyt S. Vandenberg	30 Apr 48–29 Jun 53
General Nathan F. Twining	30 Jun 53–30 Jun 57

Commandant, US Marine Corps

General Alexander A. Vandegrift	01 Jan 44–31 Dec 47
General Clifton B. Cates	01 Jan 48–31 Dec 51
General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr.	01 Jan 52–31 Dec 55

Commander in Chief, Far East Command

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur	01 Jan47–11 Apr 51
General Matthew B. Ridgway, USA	11 Apr 51– 09 May 52
General Mark W. Clark, USA	09 May 52–05 Oct 53
General John E. Hull, USA	05 Oct 53 –01 Apr 55

Commander in Chief, Pacific Command

Admiral John H. Towers	01 Jan 47–28 Feb 47
Admiral Louis E. Denfeld	28 Feb 47–12 Jan 48
Admiral DeWitt C. Ramsey	12 Jan 48–30 Apr 49
Admiral Arthur W. Radford	30 Apr 49–10 Jul 53
Admiral Felix B. Stump	10 Jul 53–31 Jul 58

Chief, US Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Indochina

Brigadier General Francis G. Brink, USA	Oct 50–Aug 52
Major General Thomas J. H. Trapnell, USA	Aug 52–Apr 54
Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel, USA	Apr 54–Nov 55

Notes

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26. Ibid.

27. JCS 547, 25 Oct 43; JCS 561, 2 Nov 43; JCS 547/2, 8 Nov 43; Memo, Leahy to Pres, "Rearmament of French Forces," 9 Nov 43, all in CCS 370 France (10–6–43) sec. 1; Mns, JCS 121st Mtg, 2 Nov 43, item 11; Mns, JCS 122d Mtg, 9 Nov 43, item 1; Mns, Mtg, JCS w/Pres, 15 Nov 43, item 3; Vigneras.

28. The committee structure of the Joint Staff had several components. These included the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC), the senior advisory body to the JCS; the Joint Staff Planners (JSP), charged with preparing war plans; the permanent working staff of the JSP, called the Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC); and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

29. See note above.

30. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 23–28.

31. CCS 644, 5 Aug 44; Rpt by CadC, "French Participation in the War against Japan," 17 Dec 44; CCS 644/8, 5 Jan 44; JCS 1013, 22 Aug 44; JCS 1013/1, 28 Aug 44; CCS 644/1, 30 Aug 44; Msg, CG USAFCT (Wedemeyer) to Marshall, CFBX 26367, CM–IN–14501, 15 Nov 44; Msg, JCS to Sultan & Wedemeyer, WARX 66178, CM–OUT–66178, 21 Nov 44; Memo, Pres to Leahy, 17 Nov 44, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44), sec. 1; Mns, JCS 170th Mtg, 29 Aug 44, item 4; Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol II, pp. 1598.

32. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 24–28.

33. Ibid., pp. 30, 46–47.

34. JPS 599/D, 19 Jan 45, CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 2; JCS 1200/6, 15 Feb 45; Memo, JCS Secy to SecWar & SecNav, 22 Feb 45; SWNCC 35/4, 15 Mar 45; SWNCC 35/2/D, 14 Mar 45; CCS 644/16, 13 Mar 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 3.

35. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 46–49.

36. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 85–87; Philippe DeVillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam de 1940–1952* (Paris, 1952), p. 121; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 29–30.

37. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 31–34; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 46–49; DeVillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam*, pp. 125–128.

38. SWNCC 35/4, 15 Mar 45; SWNCC 35/2/D, 14 Mar 45; CCS 644/16, 13 Mar 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 3.

39. Memo, McFarland to Marshall, King, Arnold, "French liaison in Southeast Asia," 13 Mar 45; Memo, Leahy to Marshall, King, Arnold, McFarland, 15 Mar 45; Memo, Col. McCarthy to Leahy, 16 Mar 45, in ibid.; Msg, Wedemeyer to Chennault, WARX 55402, MAPLE 52, 19 Mar 45, Msg File "MAPLE" 06104–2–E, Vol. III, DRB AGO.

40. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 31–34, 46–47.

41. Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 21.

42. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 87–90.

43. Quoted in Spector, *Advice and Support*, p. 41; see also pp. 39–40.

44. Ibid., pp. 41–43.

45. Jean Sainteny, *Histoire d'une paix manquee* (Paris: Fayard, 1967), p. 57.

46. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 95ff.

47. Ibid, p. 104; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 55–56.

48. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 42–43.

49. Ibid., pp. 43–45; Mns, SWNCC 16th Mtg, 13 Apr 45, item 3; JCS 1200/13, 27 Apr 45; 1200/14, 28 Apr 45, dec atchd; Memo, SWNCC Secy to Mr. Bard & Mr. Lovett, 4 May 45; SWNCC 35/11, 25 May 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 5; Doc B–1, Msg, Stettinius to Grew, EOC–1608, 8 May 45, in *Doc Hist of US Policy Toward Indochina.*

50. Quoted in Spector, *Advice and Support*, p. 45.

51. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 48–50.

52. JCS 1013/6, 2 Jun 45; Msg, MacArthur to Marshall, C–17621, CM–IN–1646, 2 Jun 45; JCS 1013/7, 4 Jul 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 5; Mns, JCS 195th mtg, 16 Jul 45, item 4; CCS 895, 16 Jul 45; CCS 895/1, 18 Jul 45; CCS 895/2, 19 Jul 45; Memo, CCS Secys to Ch. Fr. Mil. Miss., 19 Jul 45; CCS 895/3, 6 Aug 45; Memo, CCS Species to Ch. Fr. Mil. Miss. in US, 13 Sep 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 6. This same plan made the 38th parallel the line between Soviet and American occupation forces in Korea.

53. Doc B–3, Msg, Acheson to AmEmb Chungking, 1622, 5 Oct 45, in *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*; JCS 1475, 17 Aug 45, CCS 387 Japan (2–7–45) sec. 2: CCS 903, Memo from Ch. Fr. Naval Miss. in US, "French Participation in Surrender of Japanese Forces in Indochina," 16 Aug 45; CCS 903/1, 19 Aug 45; CCS 903/2, 6 Sep 45; Memo, CCS Species to Ch. Fr. Mil. Miss. in US, 7 Sep 45, all in CCS 370 (4–25–45); CCS 644/35, 28 Aug 45; CCS 644/36, 11 Sep 45; Memo, Cornwallis-Jones to McFarland, "Transportation of French Forces from China to Tonkin," 13 Sep 45, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 6.

54. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 67–68; Jacques-Philippe de Hautecloque was a French officer who rallied to de Gaulle under the assumed name of Leclerc. He commanded the Fighting French division that entered Paris with the Americans in August 1944.

55. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 51–54, 56–58.

56. Ibid., pp. 53–64, 69–72.

57. Ibid., p. 61; see also pp. 62–64.

58. Ibid., pp. 71–72.

59. Ibid., pp. 64–68; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 117–121. Dewey was promoted posthumously to lieutenant colonel.

60. Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 29–30; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 67–68; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 118–122.

61. CCS 930, 15 Oct 45; Memo, Cornwall-Jones to McFarland, 19 Nov 45; SM–4593, 5 Dec 45; CCS 930/2, 12 Mar 46; Msg, CGIBC to War Dept, CRA 6078, CM–IN–3751, 17 Mar 45, all in CDCS 323.361 (6–19–43) sec. 2. SWNCC 177, 23 Aug 45; JCS 1494, 29 Aug 45, both in CCS 092 Thailand (1–4–45) sec. 1. JCS 1494/1, 4 Sep 45; JCS 1494/2, 14 Sep 45; JCS 1494/3, 17 Oct 45, same file sec. 2.

62. See note above.

63. CCS 644/38, 21 Dec 45; JCS 1200/16, 17 Jan 46; SWNCC 35/13/D, 29 Jan 46, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 6. CCS 644/39, 1 Feb 46; CCS 644/40, 22 Feb 46; JCS 1200/17, 26 Feb 46; CCS 644/41, 27 Feb 46, same file, sec. 7.

64. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 52–53; Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 33; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 116–117.

65. SWN–4017, Memo SWNCC Secy to JCS Secy, "Relief of Chinese Forces in Northern Indo-China by French Forces," 14 Mar 46, w/encls; JCS 1200/18, 21 Mar 46; CCS 951/1, 3 Apr 46; Memo, CCS Species to French MA, "Relief by French Forces of Chinese Troops Occupying North Indo-China," 3 Apr 46; CCS 951/3, Memo by RECCS, "Transfer of Responsibility to the French Authorities for Disarmament and Repatriation of Japanese from French Indo-China," 8 May 46, all in CCS 370 France (8–5–44) sec. 7. Spector, *Advice and Support*, p. 52.

66. Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 42–43, 72; Sainteny, *Histoire d'une paix manquee*.

67. *Statesman's Yearbook, 1951*, pp. 978–979.

68. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 122–125; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 78–80.

69. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 125–127; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 78–81.

70. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 127–134; Spector, *Advice and Support*, pp. 80–83; Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 40; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 180–182.

Chapter 2. Stalemate and US Noninvolvement

1. SD OIR No. 3708, pp. 86–89.
2. (S) SD OIR No. 4303, pp. 10–11.
3. Ibid., pp. 13–14.
4. (S) War Dept, Intel Div, WDGS, *Intelligence Review*, No. 65, 15 May 47, pp. 51, 54–56.
5. *New York Times*, 8 Feb 47, p. 6.
6. *New York Herald-Tribune*, 10 Mar 47, p. 3.
7. Ramadier's government fell in November 1947, to be succeeded by one headed by Robert Schumann. Succeeding Prime Ministers were Andre Marie, July 1948; Henri Queille, September 1948; and Georges Bidault, who headed the government from October 1949 to July 1950.
8. *Journal Officiel, Assem Nat*, pp. 869–871.
9. Ibid., p. 905.
10. Ibid., p. 29 (translated by author).
11. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 199–200.
12. Ibid., p. 209.
13. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 43–44.
14. Ibid., p. 44.
15. *New York Times*, 27 Feb 47, p. 4.
16. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 43.
17. DeVillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam*, pp. 389–390 (translated by author).
18. *Journal Officiel, Assem Nat*, p. 1569.
19. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 209–211.
20. Ibid., pp. 209, 217.
21. DeVillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam*, p. 399 (translated by author).
22. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 44–45.
23. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 214.
24. Ibid., pp. 212–213.
25. (S) War Dept, Intel Div, WDGS, *Intelligence Review*, No. 83, 18 Sep 47, pp. 13–15.
26. Ibid.
27. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 207.
28. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 47.
29. Ibid.
30. William C. Bullitt, "The Saddest War," *Life Magazine*, 29 Dec 47, pp. 64–66.
31. (S) Dept Army, Intel Div, GSUSA, *Intelligence Review*, No. 97, 1 Jan 48, p. 26.
32. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 47.
33. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 215.
34. Ibid., p. 216.
35. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 49.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 50.
38. State Dept, "Outline of Basic Treaty Relationships Between France and the Associated States of Indochina," IR No. 5758, 9 Jan 52, pp. 1–2.
39. *Journal Officiel, Assem Nat*, 14 Mar 53 (translated by author).
40. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 51.
41. Ibid.

42. DeVillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam*, p. 422.

43. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 51.

44. Ibid., p. 52.

45. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 222, 224, 228–230.

46. Ibid., p. 223.

47. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 52–53.

48. (S) Dept Army, Intel Div, GSUSA, *Intelligence Review*, No. 155, 17 Feb 49, pp. 85–86.

49. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 53.

50. (S) Dept Army, Intel Div, GSUSA, *Intelligence Review*, No. 155, 17 Feb 49, pp. 85–86.

51. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 53.

52. Ibid., p. 54; *Accords Franco-Vietnamians du 8-Mars 1949* (Imprimerie Francaisa d'Outre-Mar, Saigon), in Dept State Library.

53. W. L. Briggs, "Vietnam Wins Independence," *New Republic*, 4 Jul 49, p. 13.

54. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 54.

55. (S) Doc B–24, Msg, Marshall to AmEmb Paris, 431, 3 Feb 47, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*; (TS) SWNCC 360/3, Note by Secys, "Policies, Procedures and Costs of Assistance by the United States to Foreign Countries," 3 Oct 47, CCS 092 (8–22–46) sec. 7.

56. (C) Doc B–19, Msg, Byrnes to AmEmb Paris, 6586, 24 Dec 46; (UNK) Doc B–23, Memo, John C. Vincent to Acheson, "French Indochina," 8 Jan 47. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of Pol Toward Indochina*.

57. (S) Doc B–20, Msg, Byrnes to AmCon Hanoi (IC), 25, 31 Dec 46; (S) Doc B–21, Msg, Byrnes to AmEmb Paris, 75, 8 Jan 47; (S) Doc B–22, Msg, Byrnes to AmEmb Paris, 74, 8 Jan 47; (UNK) Doc B–23, Memo, John C. Vincent to Acheson, "French Indochina," 8 Jan 47; (S) Doc B–24, Msg, Marshall to AmEmb Paris, 431, 3 Feb 47; (S) Doc B–25, Msg, Marshall to AmEmb Paris, 1737, 13 May 47; (UNK) Doc B–26, Msg, Marshall to AmEmb Paris, 3433, 11 Sep 47; (S) Doc B–27, Msg, Caffery to SecState, 3715, 12 Sep 47. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 47.

58. (TS) Doc B–28, Msg, Caffery to SecState, 3621, 10 Jul 48; (TS) Doc B–29, Msg, Marshall to AmEmb Paris, 2637, 14 Jul 48; (S) Doc B–30, Caffery to SecState, 5129, 1 Oct 48. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*.

59. (S) Doc B–32, Acheson to AmCon Saigon (IC), 77, 10 May 49, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*.

Chapter 3. Origins of American Involvement, June 1949–1950

1. NSC 51, State Dept, "United States Policy Toward Southeast Asia," 29 Mar 49, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48), sec. 1.

2. It was Dwight D. Eisenhower, with his gift for the homely metaphor, who made the same argument in terms of a row of dominos that would fall in sequence once started, hence the "domino theory."

3. (TS) JIC 529/1, 16 Aug 50, same file, sec. 5.

4. Ibid.

5. (TS) Memo by State Dept, "Military Information re Indochina, Thailand and Indonesia," 12 Apr 50, same file, sec. 3.

6. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 247–250.

7. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 58.

8. (S) NIS 43, *Indochina*, chap. 5, "Political," sec. 51, "The Constitutional System," pp. 51–15—51–21.

9. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 57.

10. Ibid., pp. 55–57; (S) NIS 43, *Indochina*, chap. V, "Political," sec. 51, "The Constitutional System," pp. 51–6—51–15.

11. (S) Doc B–32, Msg, Acheson to AmConsul Saigon, 77, 10 May 49; (S) Doc B–33, Msg, Acheson to AmConsul Saigon, 112, 29 Jun 49. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

12. (S) Doc B–34, Memo of Conv, "Discussion of Various Far Eastern Problems," 14 Sep 49; (TS) Doc–B–35, Msg, J. E. Webb, Actg SecState, to AmConsul Saigon, 162, 28 Sep 49. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

13. (S) Doc B–38, Msg, J. W. Butterworth, Asst SecState (FEA) to Philip Jessup, USAmb-at-Large, Saigon, 25, 20 Jan 50, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

14. State Dept *Bulletin*, 13 Feb 50, p. 244.

15. (U) Doc B–41, State Dept Press Rel No. 104, 1 Feb 50, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

16. (TS) NSC 48, 10 Jun 49, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 1.

17. *New York Times*, 25 Aug 49, 9 Sep 49, 11 Sep 49, 13 Sep 49; State Dept *Bulletin*, 24 Oct 49, p. 605.

18. (TS) JCS 1721/42, 17 Dec 49, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec. 7, pt. 6.

19. (TS) NSC 48/1, 23 Dec 49, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 2.

20. (TS) JCS 1992/7, 29 Dec 49, same file.

21. (TS) Encl B, NSC 48/2, 30 Dec 49, to (TS) JCS 1992/8, 5 Jan 50, same file, sec. 3.

22. (U) State Dept *Bulletin*, 23 Jan 50, pp. 111–118, and 27 Mar 50, pp. 467–472.

23. (TS) JCS 1721/43, 16 Jan 50, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec. 7, pt. 7.

24. (TS) NSC 64, 27 Feb 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 3. (TS) Memo, ExecSecy NSC to NSC, "The position of the United States with respect to Indochina," 24 Apr 50, same file, sec. 4.

25. (S) App B, Aide-Memoire, Washington, 15 Feb 50, to (TS) JCS 1992/10, 10 Mar 50, same file.

26. (S) Doc B–44, Msg, USAmb Paris to SecState, 837, 22 Feb 50, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

27. (TS) App A, Memo for Pres, "Allocation of Funds to Provide Military Assistance to Thailand and Indochina under Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act," 9 Mar 50, (TS) Ann B to App A, "Military Assistance for Indochina," 9 Mar 50, and (TS) App B, Ltr, Pres to SecState, 10 Mar 50, to (TS) JCS 1721/48, 29 Mar 50, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec. 7, pt. 8.

28. *New York Times*, 19 Feb 50; "Matters Considered by Regional Conference of US Envoys in Bangkok," State Dept *Bulletin*, 27 Mar 50, p. 502.

29. (TS) "Oral Report of Ambassador-at-Large Philip C. Jessup upon his Return from the Far East," 23 Mar 50, in State Dept files; "Administration of Economic Aid to Southeast Asia," State Dept *Bulletin*, 29 May 50, p. 869.

30. "Economic Aid Program for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia," State Dept *Bulletin*, 12 Jun 50, pp. 977–978.

31. *New York Times*, 4 May 50.

32. (S) Doc B–45, Msg, Acheson to AmEmb Paris, 1363, 29 Mar 50, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

33. (S) App C, State Dept, Memo of Conv, "Indochina," 16 Feb 50, to (TS) JCS 1992/10, 10 Mar 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 3.

34. (S) Memo, Dean Rusk, Asst SecState (FEA), to Maj Gen J. H. Burns, Asst to SecDef (FMA&MA), 20 Mar 50, same file.

35. (S) Msg, Gullion to Acheson, 190, 18 Mar 50, CM–IN–14886, 21 Mar 50, same file.

36. (S) Msg, Gullion to Acheson, 204, 25 Mar 50, CM–IN–15891, 27 Mar 50, same file.

37. (S) Informal Trans [Fr], Aide-Memoire, 11 Apr 50, same file, sec. 4.

38. (TS) JCS 1992/11, 29 Mar 50, same file, sec. 3; (TS) JCS 1721/49, 7 Apr 50, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec. 7, pt. 8.

39. (TS) Msg, Gullion to Acheson, UNN 3 May 50, CM–IN–1262, 5 May 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 4.

40. (S) Msg, SecState to USAmb Paris, 1800, 24 Apr 50, CM–IN–19886, 25 Apr 50, same file.

41. (TS) FM D A–2/4a, State Dept Position Paper, "May Foreign Ministers Meeting, Southern Asia," 5 May 50; (S) Encl B, FM D C–3a, State Dept Position Paper, "May Foreign Ministers Meeting, Indochina," 25 Apr 50, to (S) JCS 1992/16, 30 Apr 50. Both in same file.

42. (TS) Encl A, Dft Memo, JCS to SecDef, to (TS) JCS 1992/15, 30 Apr 50; (S) Encl B, FM D C–3a, State Dept, "May Foreign Ministers Meeting, Indochina," 25 Apr 50, to (S) JCS 1992/16, 30 Apr 50. Both in same file. (TS) JCS 1992/11, 29 Mar 50, same file, sec. 3.

43. (S) Doc B–47, Mns (FR), Acheson-Schuman Conversations, 8 May 50, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. (TS) Encl, Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Mutual Defense Assistance Program Implementation for Southeast Asia," 6 Jun 50, to (TS) JCS 1992/18, 8 Jun 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec. 4.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. (S) Memo, SecDef to JCS, "MDAP Implementation for Southeast Asia," 14 Jun 50, same file, sec. 5.

50. (TS) Encl, Dft Memo, JCS to SecDef, to (TS) JCS 1721/55, 12 Jun 50, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec. 7, pt. 10.

51. (TS) JIC 529/1, 16 Aug 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48).

52. Ibid.

Chapter 4. Impact of War in Korea, June 1950–January 1951

1. State Dept *Bulletin*, 3 Jul 50, p. 5.

2. (S) Memo, Lemnitzer to Burns, "Monthly Status Report—Mutual Defense Assistance Program (to include 31 July 1950)," 5 Aug 50 (hereinafter: MDAP Status Rpt for month of), in Records and Control Office, OASD (ISA).

3. (S) MDAP Status Rpt for month of July 1950, 5 Aug 50; (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology.

4. (S) MDAP Status Rpt for month of October 1950, 31 Oct 50; (TS) JCS 1992/44, 26 Dec 50, CCS 452 China (4–3–45) sec 7 pt 12.

5. (TS) FMACC D–33/6, "Report on Indochina," 24 Aug 50 (hereinafter: Erskine Rpt), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP.

6. It is a commonplace among historians of the Third Republic that while cabinets and legislatures may come and go, the French Government, embodied in the corps of permanent civil servants, remains the same. The power of the army in French Government, and even its ability to operate in opposition to the government, is illustrated by l'affaire Boulanger, l'affaire Dreyfus, and the activities of General Mangin in the Rhineland after World War I. It must also be remembered that in regard to colonial affairs the traditions of such men as Marshal Lyautey are still strong in the army.

7. (TS) Erskine Rpt.

8. (TS) JCS 1992/22, 25 Aug 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 5.

9. (TS) Memo, Col Kenneth R. Kreps, USAF, Actg Exec-Secy OSD to JCS, "Military Assistance to Indo-China," 6 Sep 50; (TS) JCS 1992/32, 16 Oct 50; same file, sec 6.

10. (S) Memo, Kreps to JCS, "Mutual Defense Assistance to Indochina," 12 Oct 50; (TS) Memo, Dir, JS to SecDef, same subj, 13 Oct 50; (TS) Memo, Lemnitzer to John H. Ohly, Actg Dir MDA, State Dept, "Military Assistance to Indo-China," 16 Oct 50; same file.

11. (TS) JCS 1992/32, 16 Oct 50, same file.

12. (S) Memo, Lemnitzer to MG R. E. Duff, USA, DepAsst CS, G–3 Army, Capt Howard Orem, USN, Dir Int Aff, DepNav, and Col M. W. Brewster, USAF, P&O Div, DepAF, "Military Assistance to Indo-China," 23 Oct 50, same file, sec 7; (S) MDAP Status Rpt for month of October 1950, 31 Oct 50.

13. (S) Msg, CSA, WAR–95099, to CINCFE, CM–OUT–95099, 26 Oct 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 7; (S) MDAP Status Rpt for month of November 1950, 7 Dec 50; (S) MDAP Status Rpt for month of December 1950, 12 Jan 51.

14. (U) Note handed to State Dept by FrEmb, 14 Oct 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 6; (TS) Memo by CSA, "Possible Future Action in Indochina," 18 Oct 50, same file, sec 7.

15. *Journal officiel de la Republique francaise, Debats Parlementairess Assemblee nationale*, 22 Nov 50, pp. 7998–8050.

16. *Notes et Etudes*, "Conventions inter-etats," No. 1,425, 24 Jan 51; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 274–281.

17. (S) Msg, Edmund A. Gullion, SpecAsst, MDAP, Saigon, to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 3 (October 1950)," 1 Dec 50, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II A, bk I, Case 31; (S) CIA, NIE–5, 29 Dec 50, p. 2.

18. (S) Msg, Donald Heath, NIACT–1157, to SecState, 1 Jan 51, DA–IN–6870, 4 Jan 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 9.

19. (S) Msg, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 1 (August 1950)," 20 Sep 50; (S) Msg, Gullion to SecState, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 2 (September 1950)," 6 Nov 50; (S) Msg, Gullion to SecState, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 3 (October 1950)," 1 Dec 50. All in G–3 091 China, sec II A, bk I, Case 31.

20. (S) Msg, Gullion to SecState, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 3 (October 1950)," 1 Dec 50, same file.

21. (C) Lt Col S. Fred Cummings, USA (Logistics Officer, Army Sec, MAAG Indochina from Nov 51 to Nov 52), interviewed by Capt W. W. Hoare, Jr., USA, Hist Div, 1 Nov 54, Memo in JCS HS files.

22. Ibid.; (C) Maj H. L. St.-Onge, USA, and Maj Edwin J. Nelson, USA, both at various times adjutants of MAAG Indochina and aides to Brig Gen Francis G. Brink (first CG of MAAG Indochina), interviewed by Capt W. W. Hoare, Jr., USA, Hist Div, 27 Oct 54, Memo on file in JCS HS.

23. (S) Msg, Heath to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly General Report for the Month of January 1951," 23 May 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II A, bk I, Case 31.

24. (TS) Memo, Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Lord Tedder to Gen Omar N. Bradley, 9 Nov 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 8.

25. State Dept, "Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina-Agreement between the United States of America and Cambodia, France, Laos, and Viet Nam," Treaties and Other International Acts Series 2447 (GPO, Washington, DC), p. 4.

26. (TS) JCS 1924/14, 5 Jul 50, CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45) sec 45.

27. (TS) JCS 1924/26, 14 Aug 50, same file, sec 48; (TS) NSC 73/4, 25 Aug 50, same file, sec 49.

28. (S) State Dept SFM D–7/1c, "September Foreign Ministers Meeting—Indochina," 28 Aug 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 6.

29. (S) Memo, Bradley to Louis Johnson, "Indochina," 7 Sep 50, same file.

30. (S) FMN Min–4, "Minutes of the Fourth Meeting held in the Waldorf-Astoria," 14 Sep 50; (TS) Memo of Conv, New York, bet Robert Schuman, Foreign Minister of France, and Secretary of State Dean Acheson, (12 Sep 50). Both in State Dept files.

31. (TS) JCS 1992/29, 7 Oct 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 6.

32. (TS) Memo by CSA, "Possible Future Action in Indochina," 18 Oct 50, same file, sec 7.

33. (TS) SEAAPC, SEAC D–21, Rev 1, "Proposed Statement of US Policy on Indo-China for NSC Consideration," 11 Oct 50, same file, sec 6.

34. Ibid.

Chapter 5. The De Lattre Episode, 1951

1. NSC 48/5, 17 May 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48), sec 14.

2. Rene Pleven, who had succeeded Bidault in July 1950, and who was himself to be replaced by Henri Queuille in March 1951. Pleven would return as Prime Minister in August 1951.

3. (S) Rpt, Heath to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly General Report for the Month of January 1951," 23 May 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

4. Ibid.; (S) Rpt, Heath to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly General Report for the Month of February 1951," 23 May 51, same file; *New York Times*, 23 Jan 51.

5. (S) Rpt, Heath to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly General Report for the Month of January 1951," 23 May 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II–A, bk I, DRB AGO. *New York Times*, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 24 Apr, 5 Jun, 7 Jun, 8 Jun, 10 Jun 51.

6. (S) Msg, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 14 (November 1951)," 8 Jan 52; (S) Msg, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 15 (December 1951)," 21 Mar 52. Both in G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

7. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for Indo-China for the Month of March 1951," 19 May 51, same file, sec II–A, bk I.

8. (TS) State Dept, Pleven D–I/1, "Negotiating Papers for Truman-Pleven Talks—Jan 29–30—U. S. Aid to Indochina," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 10.

9. (TS) SM–143–51, 16 Jan 51, same file; (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 64–65.

10. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for Indochina for the Month of March 1951," 19 May 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

11. Ibid.; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for May 1951," 22 Jun 51, same file.

12. (S) Rpt, Heath to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly General Report for the Month of February 1951," 23 May 51, same file.

13. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for April 1951," 21 May 51, same file, bk II.

14. Ibid.

15. (S) JIC 529/10, 10 Jan 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 22 BP pt 3; (TS) JIC 529/9, 2 Jan 52, same file, sec 22; (TS) JIC 529/4, 20 Jun 51, same file, sec 15; (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, in OMA files.

16. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for August 1951," 13 Nov 51, G–3 092 Indo China, sec II–A, bk III, DRB AGO.

17. Ibid.; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 16 (January 1952)," 24 Mar 52, same file, sec I–A, bk I; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 19 (April 1952)," 23 May 52, same file.

18. Ibid., (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for October, 1951," 11 Dec 51, same file, sec I.

19. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 65.

20. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 14 (November 1951)," 8 Jan 52; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 15 (December 1951)," 21 Mar 52. Both in G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 67–68.

24. *Foreign Report*, 6 Sep 51, pp. 7–8, Economist Newspaper Ltd., London.

25. (S) Memo, RAdm A. C. Davis, Dir JS, to SecDef, "Proposed Military Talks Regarding Defense of Indochina," 10 Jan 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 10; (S) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, same subj, 8 Dec 50, same file, sec 9.

26. Ibid.; (S) Memo, Marshall to JCS, 9 Feb 51, same file, sec 11.

27. (TS) JCS 1992/77, 10 May 51, same file, sec 13.

28. (TS) Rpt of Singapore Conf, 19 May 51, same file, BP pt 2.

29. (S) NSC 105, 23 Feb 51, CCS 337 (1–19–51); (TS) Doc C–24, Msg, Acheson to AmLegation Saigon, 30 Jan 51, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. (S) Ltr, Juin to Marshall, 26 Dec 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 10; (S) CIA NIE–5, "Indochina: Current Situation and Probable Developments," 29 Dec 50.

33. (TS) JCS 1992/49, 15 Jan 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 10; (TS) Msg, JCS 86957 to CINCPAC, 28 Mar 51, same file, sec 12.

34. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "United States Policy Toward Indochina," 14 Sep 51, same file, sec 17.

35. (TS) JCS 1992/93, 11 Sep 51, same file.

36. (S) Memo of Conv bet French delegation headed by Gen de Lattre and Defense officials headed by SecDef Robert A. Lovett and Gen Collins, 20 Sep 51, in OMA files.

37. Ibid.; (S) Doc C–33, "Extracts from memorandum of conversation among Acheson, Schuman, and de Lattre, Sept 14, 1951," in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*; (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Combat Operations in Indochina," 19 Nov 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 19.

38. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for October 1951," 11 Dec 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I, DRB AGO.

39. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "Tripartite Military Staff Talks on Southeast Asia Held at Singapore 15–18 May 1951 (Action on Conference Report)," 30 Aug 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 17. (S) Ltr, Brit Jt Services Mission to Secy JCS, "Military Staff Talks on South East Asia," 24 Sep 51; (TS) JCS 1992/102, 9 Oct 51; (S) Ltr, Brit Jt Services Mission to Secy JCS, "Tripartite Military Staff Talks on South East Asia," 15 Oct 51; (TS) JCS 1992/105, 24 Oct 51; (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 85523, 30 Oct 51. All in same file, sec 18.

40. (TS) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS, "Tripartite Intelligence Conference held at Saigon, 9 and 10 November 1951," 15 Jan 52, same file, sec 23; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for October, 1951," 11 Dec 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I, DRB AGO.

41. (TS) Memo, Kreps to JCS, "Proposed Tripartite Discussions on the Defense of Southeast Asia," 8 Nov 51, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 19.

42. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "Proposed Tripartite Discussions on the Defense of Southeast Asia," 12 Nov 51, same file.

43. (TS) Memo, Bradley to Maj Gen C. P. Cabell, USAF, Dir JS, 6 Dec 51, same file.

44. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "Conference with French and British on Southeast Asia," 28 Dec 51, same file, sec 21. See chap. 10, below, for the account of the Washington Conference.

45. Ibid.

46. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for June 1951," 24 Jul 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec II–A, bk II, DRB AGO; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for October, 1951," 11 Dec 51, same file, sec I. The figures given in this study relative to the amounts and value of MDAP material delivered to Indochina are only approximate and not always trustworthy. They are obtained from summaries and the periodic reports of various agencies concerned with the administration of the program, and the data given by one office sometimes differ from those of another. Furthermore, discrepancies are to be found within single reports, so that at the present a true, detailed account of the aid program is unavailable.

47. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for May 1951," 22 Jun 51, same file, sec II–A, bk I; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for June 1951," 24 Jul 51, same file, bk II.

48. (TS) JCS 2099/138, 30 Oct 51, CCS 092 (8–22–46) sec 61.

49. (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, p. 48, in OMA files.

50. Ibid.; (S) MDAP Status Reports for Months of November and December 1951.

51. (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, p. 48, in OMA files; (S) MDAP Status Report for Month of January 1952.

52. (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, p. 48, in OMA files; (S) MDAP Status Report for Month of February 1952.

53. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for April 1951," 21 May 51, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I, DRB AGO; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report for June 1951," 24 Jul 51, same file, sec II–A, bk II.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. (TS) Doc C–34, Mns, 2nd Mtg, Dep State with de Lattre, 17 Sep 51, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

57. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 15 (December 1951)," 21 Mar 52. G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I.

58. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State Dept, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 16 (January 1952)," 24 Mar 52, same file.

Chapter 6. The Truman Administration's Struggle, 1952

1. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 19 (April 1952)," 23 May 52, G–3 091 Indo China sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

2. (S) CIA NIE–35/2, "Probable Developments in Indochina Through Mid–1953," 29 Aug 52, p. 3; (S) Rpt, Gullion to State, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 16 (January 1952)," 24 Mar 52, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

3. (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, in OMA files; (TS) Ann B to CINCPAC Staff Study, "Evaluation of Military Operations in Indochina," 18 Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP pt 9.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. (S) CIA NIE 35/2, "Probably Developments in Indochina Through Mid-1953," 29 Aug 52. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 19 (April 1952)," 23 May 52, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

7. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 21 (June 1952)," 31 Jul 52, same file; (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 70–71; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 281–291.

8. (S) Rpt, Gullion to State, "MDAP Monthly Report No. 19 (April 1952)," 23 May 52, G–3 091 Indo China, sec I–A, bk I, DRB AGO.

9. (S) JIC 529/10, 9 Jan 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP pt 3.

10. (TS) Notes recorded by Secy and DepSecy JCS at the US–UK–FR CsofS Tri Talks on Southeast Asia (hereinafter: *Notes on the Washington Conf*), 11 Jan 52, same file, sec 22.

11. (TS) "Terms of Reference to the Ad Hoc Committee," 11 Jan 52, same file.

12. (TS) *Notes on the Washington Conf.*

13. (TS) Summary of notes recorded by DepSecy JCS at State-Defense Meeting held on 16 and 23 Jan 52, in DepSecy, JCS files.

14. State Dept *Bulletin*, No. 659, 11 Feb 52, p. 224.

15. (TS) Memo, Davis to JCS, "Report of the Five Power Ad Hoc Committee on Southeast Asia," 5 Feb 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 24.

16. Ibid.; (TS) Rpt by Ad Hoc Cmte on South East Asia, 5 Feb 52, same file.

17. (TS) NSC 124, 13 Feb 52, same file.

18. (TS) Memo, Vandenberg to SecDef, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Communist Aggression in Southeast Asia," 3 Mar 52, same file, sec 25.

19. (TS) NSC 124/2, 25 Jun 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 31. See Appendix 3.

20. (TS) Msg, JCS 917321 to CINCPAC, 29 Aug 52, same file, sec 34.

21. (TS) JCS 1992/188, 31 Oct 52, same file, sec 35; (TS) Msg, JCS 927061 to CINCPAC, 22 Dec 52, same file, sec 370.

22. (TS) JCS 1992/171, 10 Jul 52, same file, sec 32.

23. (TS) JCS 1992/174, 26 Jul 52, same file, sec 33.

24. (TS) Rpt of the Five Power Mil Conf on South East Asia, 17 Oct 52, same file, sec 34.

25. (TS) Memo, Maj Gen J.S. Bradley to JCS, "Report of the Five Power Military Representatives Conference on Southeast Asia," 23 Oct 52, same file.

26. (TS) JCS 1992/191, 13 Nov 52, same file, sec 35.

27. Ibid.

28. (TS) Ltr, Matthews to Cabell, 9 Dec 52, same file, sec 36.

29. (TS) Memo, Cabell to SecDef, "Machinery for Implementing Five-Power Coordinations of Plans," 11 Dec 52, same file.

30. (TS) Msg, JCS 932447 to CINCPAC, 27 Feb 53, same file, sec 38.

31. (TS) Memo, Actg SecState and Actg SecDef to Exec Secy NSC, "Progress Report on NSC 124/2—United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Southeast Asia," 5 Aug 53, same file, sec 44.

32. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of January 1953.

33. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of July 1953.

34. (TS) JCS 2099/171, 13 Feb 52, CCS 092 (8–22–46) sec 68.

35. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of March 1952; (C) Msg, USEmb Paris to SecState, 3697, 29 Dec 52, in OMA files, Indochina 2a (1952). Of the $126 million for Indochina, $23 million was spent in the United States for items that France could not supply.

36. (S) MDAP Monthly Status Reports for the Months of November 1952 and January 1953.

37. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of July 1952.

38. (TS) Navarre Briefing Doc, Jun 53, in OMA files.

39. (S) Memo for Rec by Ch, Liaison Div, OMA, "Conferences with Minister Letourneau and Members of His Staff, 16–17 June 1952," nd, in OMA files, Indochina 2a (1952).

40. (S) Msg, Trapnell MG 3824 A, to CSUSAF, DA–IN170843, 9 Aug 52, same file.

41. (S) Memo, Foster to SecA, SecNav, and SecAF, "Indochina Mutual Defense Assistance Program," nd, same file.

42. (S) Memo, Trapnell to Dir OMA, "Field Estimate of current and future effectiveness of the French Union Forces in Indochina," 22 Jan 53; same file, sec 2 (1953).

43. (S) Memo, DepAsst to SecDef for ISA to DepSecDef, "Indochina MDA Program," 16 Dec 52, same file, sec 2a (1952).

44. (S) Memo, Trapnell to Dir OMA, "Field Estimate of current and future effectiveness of the French Union Forces in Indochina," 22 Jan 53, same file, sec 2 (1953); (S) Memo for Rec by Ch, Liaison Div, OMA, "Conferences with Minister Letourneau and Members of His Staff, 16–17 June 1952," nd, same file, sec 2a (1952), (C) Interview Cummings, 1 Nov 54, in JCS HS files.

45. (S) Memo for Rec by Ch, Liaison Div, OMA, "Conferences with Minister Letourneau and Members of His Staff, 16–17 June 1952," nd, in OMA files, Indochina 2a (1952).

46. (TS) Memo, Foster to JCS, "Requirement for Additional Transport Aircraft in Indo-China," 12 Sep 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 34.

47. (TS) Msg, AFOMS–OP to Ch MAAG, France, AF–OUT9100, 25 Nov 52, in OMA files, Indochina 2a (1952).

48. (TS) Doc C–54, Msg, Heath, 1149 to SecState, 5 Dec 52, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*; (TS) Memo, SecAF to SecDef, 7 Jan 53, in OMA file "Indochina Maintenance Support Exercise"; (TS) Msg, OSD to Ch MAAG Indochina, DEF 927097, 22 Dec 52, in OMA files, Indochina 2a(1952).

49. (TS) Memo, SecA, SecNav, and Actg SecAF to SecDef, "Draft State Department Paper on Indochina dated 27 March 1952," 8 Apr 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 28.

50. (TS) Doc C–52, Summary Mns, "Ministerial Talks in London, June 1952," 14 Jul 52, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.*

51. (NATO S) Summary Record of NATO Council Mtg, Paris, 16 Dec 52, in JCS records.

52. *The Economist* (London), 5 Jan 52, p. 30; 5 Apr 52, pp. 4–6; 21 Jun 52, pp. 821–822. *New York Times*, 2 Jul 52, p. 4; 31 Jul 52, p. 1; 19 Oct 52, p. 2.

53. *Journal Officiel, Assem Nat*, 18 Oct 50, pp. 7003–7004.

54. *L'Information Radicale-Socialiste*, quoted in Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 309.

55. (TS) Copy of Unofficial Aide Memoire on "Indochina" handed by member of Brit Emb to Asst SecState for Far Eastern Affairs, 15 Mar 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 26; *New York Times*, 7 Jan 52, p. 4.

56. (TS) Encl B to SM–762–52, Memo, Lalor to JCS, "Indochina," 22 Mar 52, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 26; (S) NIE 35/1, "Probable Developments in Indochina through mid-1952," 3 Mar 52; (S) NIE 35/2, "Probable Developments in Indochina through mid-1953," 29 Aug 52.

57. NIE 91, "Probable Developments in Indochina through Mid-1954," 4 Jun 53.

Chapter 7. The Eisenhower Administration and the Navarre Plan, 1953

1. (U) Doc C–55, "Resolution on Indo-China Adopted by the North Atlantic Council on 17th December, 1952," and (TS) Doc D–4, Account of SecState Conversations in Paris, 2 Feb 53, sent Saigon as A–117, 5 Mar 53. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*, 1940–1953. For quotation from French Gov't Communique, 2 Feb 53, see *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (London), vol. IX, 1952–1954, p. 12740A (hereinafter: *Keesing*). For Mayer statement on assuming office, see ibid., p. 12674A.

2. (TS) "Report by the Ad Hoc Committee [Farrell Cmte] to the Assistant to the Secretary for International Security Affairs on Forty Additional Vietnam Battalions," nd, Encl to (TS) Memo, Kyes, Actg SecDef, to SecArmy, Navy, and Air Force, "Forty Additional Vietnam Battalions," 19 Feb 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 37. App A to the Farrell Cmte Rpt was (TS) Ltr, Trapnell to Collins, 20 Dec 52, which had precipitated the study.

3. (TS) Memo, Collins to SecDef, "Broadening the Participation of the United States in the Indochina Operation," 13 Mar 53," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 38. (TS) "French Strategic Concept of Operations in Indochina with General Discussion of Current and Long-Range Plans," Tab A to (TS) OSD ISA staff study, "Conversations with M. Letourneau, 1000, 27 March 1953, nd, "Washington Talks March '53, Indochina-Letourneau," Alden files, OMA.

(TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to DEPTAR for DJS MG 4482A, 17 Dec 52, DA–IN–218456, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–40) sec 36.

4. (TS) Memo, Maj Gen G. C. Stewart, Dir OMA, to Asst SecDef ISA, "Augmentation of Vietnam Army," 23 Mar 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

5. (S) Doc D–5, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 4907, 19 Mar 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina*, 1940–1953.

6. (S) "Notes made by Assistant Secretary Frank C. Nash of Initial Meeting with the French (Mayer) Delegation," nd, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA. (TS) Doc D–7, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 4992, 26 Mar 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

7. (TS) JCS 1992/214, 10 Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 39. (TS) "Rough Cost Estimates submitted by Letourneau Group in Washington on 30 March 1953 for Indo-China Effort 1953–55," nd, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA. (TS) Doc D–12 Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Saigon, 1967, 7 Apr 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

8. (S) Doc D–10, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 5040, 30 Mar 53, in same file.

9. (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Proposed French Strategic Plan for the Successful Conclusion of the War in Indochina," 21 Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 40.

10. (S) Doc D–13, "Bipartite U. S.–French Conversations, First Session–April 22, 1953," in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.* Meanwhile the Joint Chiefs restated their reservations about the Letourneau Plan with new emphasis at a meeting with USecState W. B. Smith, who relayed their expressions to Paris; (TS) Doc D–14, Msg, Smith to AmEmb Paris, TOPSEC 9, 24 Apr 53, same file. For account of the second bipartite session in Paris, 26 Apr 53, see (S) Msgs, Amb Dillon, Paris 5672 to SecState, 26 Apr 53, "Indochinese Problems (Fall Offensive 1953–54)," Alden files, OMA.

11. (TS) Memo for Rec, Col E. H. J. Carnes, DSecy JCS, "Joint Political-Military Mission to Indochina," 29 May 53. (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Terms of Reference for Military Mission to Indo-China," 10 Jun 53. Both in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 42. (TS) Memo, SecDef to JCS, "Terms of Reference for Military Mission to Indochina," 12 Jun 53, same file, sec 43.

12. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC sgd O'Daniel to CINCPAC, 301148Z Jun 53, readdressed by CINCPAC to CNO as 030401Z Jul 53, same file. (TS) "Report of the U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina, 15 July 1953," same file, BP pt 9.

13. (TS) "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina, 15 July 1953," same file.

14. (TS) Doc D–36, Msg, Amb Dillon, Paris, 370 to Sec State, 29 Jul 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

15. (TS) Rpt by State Dept, "Further United States Support for France and the Associated States of Indochina," Encl to (TS) Memo, Exec Secy NSC to NSC, same subj, 5 Aug 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 44.

16. NSC Action No. 874, set forth in (TS) "Record of Actions by the National Security Council at its One Hundred and Fifty Eighth Meeting, August 6, 1953," CCS 334 NSC (9–25–47) sec 11.

17. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "The Navarre Concept for Operations in Indochina," 11 Aug 53, CCS 092 (6–25–48) sec 44.

18. (TS) Memo, Radford to SecDef, "The Navarre Concept for Operations in Indochina." 28 Aug 53, same file sec 45.

19. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC, MG 1442A to CINCPAC, 24 Aug 53, DA–IN–299535, "Navarre Letter—Actions Taken," vol I, Alden files, OMA.

20. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC, MG 1488A to CINCPAC, 1 Sep 53, DA–IN–1796 (2 Sep 53), "Indochinese Problems (Fall Offensive 1953–54)," Alden files, OMA.

21. (TS) Notes, State-JCS Mtg, 4 Sep 53, files D Secy JCS. (TS) State Dept Memo, R. B. Knight to MacArthur, "Comments on Supplementary French Material on the Navarre Plan,"

3 Sep 53, Encl to (TS) Memo, Secy JCS to Twining, Ridgway, and Carney, 3 Sep 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 45.

22. (TS) Rpt by State Dept, "Assistance for Indochina," Encl to (TS) Memo, Exec Secy NSC to NSC, "Further United States Support for France and the Associated States of Indochina 8 Sep 53, same file. NSC Action No. 897, set forth in (TS) "Record of Actions by the National Security Council at its One Hundred and Sixty First Meeting, September 9, 1953," CCS 334 NSC (9–25–47) sec 12.

23. (S) Doc D–46, "US-French Supplementary Aid Agreement on Indochina," and (U) Doc D–47, State Dept Press Release No. 529, "Joint Communique Issued by the Governments of the United States and France," 30 Sep 53, both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

24. (TS) Doc D–42, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 868, 9 Sep 53, in same file. Some of the sharpest criticism of Lisbon type aid appeared in the report of a survey team, sponsored by Senator Styles Bridges, that the Senate Appropriations Cmte had sent to Paris. News accounts of the report carried the heading "Senate Study Asserts France is Substituting Aid for Taxes"; *New York Times*, 13 Jul 53, pp. 1, 18. After a strong attempt during 1953, OMA/OSD officials gave up the attempt to identify and account for end-items purchased with Lisbon funds and shipped to Indochina by the French; (C) MR by R. N. Lind, nd [Jan 54?], "Indochinese Problems (Fall Offensive 1953–54)," Alden files, OMA.

25. (TS) MR by Col J. G. Anding, "Indochinese Special Program," 4 Sep 53, "Indochinese Problems (Fall Offensive 1953–54)," Alden files, OMA. Means of financing the grant and the need for clearing with congressional leaders were discussed in Ann B to (TS) Rpt by State Dept, "Assistance for Indochina," Encl to (TS) Memo, Exec Secy NSC to NSC, "Further United States Support for France and the Associated States of Indochina," 8 Sep 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 45.

26. Ibid. (C) Memo, N. E. Halaby, DepAsst SecDef (ISA) to Stassen, Dir FOA, "Consultations with Senator Homer Ferguson in Detroit," 14 Sep 53, "Indochina Problems (Fall Offensive, 1953–54)," Alden files, OMA.

27. (TS) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1766A, to CINCPAC, DA–IN17890, 31 Oct 53. (C) Msg, USARMA Saigon, OAEMA MC 299–53, to CSUSA for G–2 DA–IN–16870, 23 Oct 53. Both in "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 80–81.

28. (TS) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1609A, to CINCPAC, DA–IN9615, 1 Oct 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 46. (TS) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1766A, to CINCPAC, DA–IN–17890, 31 Oct 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

29. (TS) Memo, Secy JCS to JSPC, "Possible Military Courses of Action in Indochina," 23 Jan 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 37.

30. (S) JCS 1992/218, 29 Apr 53. (S) Rpt, "Conference of Representatives from the Principal Military Authorities Representing Australia, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States in the Southeast Asia Area, Pearl Harbor, 6–10 April 1953," nd. Both in same file, sec 40. (TS) Memo, Fechteler to SecDef, "Implementation of Measures for Coordination of Five-Power Southeast Asia Plans," 6 May 53; (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 939436, 21 May 53. Both in same file sec 41.

31. (TS) Msg, NCS 927061 to CINCPAC, 22 Dec 52, same file, sec 37. For CINCPAC Operation Plan Nos. 40–53, 4053A, and 44–53, all issued during Jun 53, see CCS 381 (4–16–49) BP pt 2.

32. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO and JCS, 032130Z May 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 41.

33. (TS) Memo, Fechteler to JCS, "Current Situation Southeast Asia," 5 May 53, same file. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO, 271130Z Apr 53, same file, sec 40. ADM Radford had just completed a visit to Indochina.

34. (TS) JCS 1992/220, 8 May 53, same file, sec 41.

35. (TS) JCS 1992/227, 22 Jun 53, amended by Dec On, 2 Jul 53, same file, sec 43.

36. Ibid. (TS) JCS 1992/187, 28 Oct 52, same file, sec 34.

37. (U) Doc D–9, State Dept Press Release No. 160, "Communique on United States-France Talks," 28 Mar 53, and (TS) Doc D–32, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 158, 14 Jul 53. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.* (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p.79.

38. (U) Doc D–39, State Dept Press Release No. 469, "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Before the American Legion. . . , September 2, 1953," 1 Sep 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

39. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 289–291. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 74.

40. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 74. *New York Times*, 19 Apr 53, p. 1; 15 Jun 53, p. 1; 21 Jun 53, p. 1.

41. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology. p. 75. *New York Times*, 26 Feb 53, p. 3.

42. *New York Times*, 10 May 53, p. 1; 23 Apr 53, p. 4. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, pp. 77–78.

43. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 300–301. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 78.

44. *Keesing*, p. 12995B. *New York Times*, 2 Jul 53, p. 3.

45. *New York Times*, 4 Jul 53, p. 3. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 79.

46. (TS) Doc D–33, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 180, 15 Jul 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

47. (U) Doc D–44, State Dept Press Release No. 505, "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Made in General Debate of the United Nations Assembly. . . September 17, 1953," 17 Sep 53; (U) Doc D–35, State Dept Press Release No. 387, "Report to the Nation by the Honorable John Foster Dulles. . . , July 17, 1953," 17 Jul 53. Immediately following the declaration, the US Government sent an expression of its "great pleasure and satisfaction at realistic and forward-looking steps by new French Government in approach to Indochina problem"; (S) Doc D–30, Msg, Smith to AmEmb Paris, 64, 4 Jul 53. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

48. *New York Times*, 18 Oct 53, p. 1; 23 Oct 53, p. 1. For text of the Franco-Laotian treaty see *Keesing*, pp. 13230B–13231A.

49. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 304–305. *Keesing*, p. 13229AB.

50. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 305–306. *New York Times*, 21 Oct 53, p. 2; 22 Oct 53, p. 3.

51. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, pp. 307–309.

52. *New York Times*, 5 Jun 53, p. 1. *Keesing*, pp. 12933AB, 12994AB.

53. *Keesing*, p. 12994B.

54. Ibid., pp. 12995B–12996A.

55. *Time*, 15 Mar 54, p. 25.

56. *Keesing*, p. 13231B. *New York Times*, 24 Oct 53, p. 3.

57. *Keesing*, pp. 13231B–13232A.

58. *New York Times*, 28 Oct 53, p. 2.

59. Ibid., 1 Oct 53, p. 9.

60. (S) Doc D–21, Dulles, Memo of Conv [with Mayer and Bidault], 27 Apr 53; (S) Doc D–24, Msg, Amb Dillon, Paris 5766, to SecState, 3 May 53; (S) Doc D–27, Memo of Conv [between State Dept officials and Amb Bonnet], "Thailand Appeal to SC regarding Threat to Thailand from Vietminh Invasion," 22 May 53; (S) Doc D–28, Msg, Dulles 2297, to AmEmb Bangkok, 1 Jun 53. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

61. (TS) Doc D–33, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Paris, 180, 15 Jul 53; (C) Doc D–34, "Text of the French Memorandum," nd; [14 Jul 53]; (C) Doc D–37, French Emb, "Aide–Memoire," 31 Jul 53. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina 1940–1953.*

62. (U) Doc D–39, State Dept Press Release No. 469, "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Before the American Legion. . . , September 2, 1953," 1 Sep 53. SecState amplified his remarks at a press conference the next day; (U) Doc D–41, State Dept Press Release No. 475, "Restoration of Peace in Indochina," 3 Sep 53. Both in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

63. Laniel address before the Council of the Republic, 12 Nov 53, translation quoted in Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 312. A less polished translation of the same remarks appeared in *New York Times*, 13 Nov 53, p. 1.

64. (S) Hq MAAG IC, "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 23 Jan 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files OMA.

65. (S) "Implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program for Indochina (Jan–June 1954)," Ann B to (TS) OCB "Progress Report on NSC 5405," 14 Jul 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 75.

66. (C) MR by Cdr W. C. Wells, "Temporary Loan of an Aircraft Carrier to France," 7 Jun 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

67. (C) Fr Emb Note No. 307 to State Dept, 23 May 53, Ann to (C) JCS 1992/225, Memo by SecDef, "Temporary Loan of an Aircraft Carrier to France," 10 Jun 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 42.

68. (C) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Temporary Loan of an Aircraft Carrier to France," 11 Jun 53, same file. (C) Memo, SecDef to SecNav, same subj, 19 Jun 53. In a telephone call to SecNav on 29 May 53, Actg SecState W. B. Smith "indicated to him that the President desired favorable action on the French request"; (C) MR by Cdr W. C. Wells, same subj, 7 Jun 53. Both in "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA. *New York Times*, 6 Sep 53, p. 18.

69. (S) Msg, Amb Heath, Saigon 1511, to SecState, 29 Jan 53, DA–IN–232451 (30 Jan 53), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 37.

70. (UNK) OMA staff study, "Supply Action-French Forces Indochina," 28 Apr 54, "Navarre Letter—Actions Taken," vol II, Alden files, OMA. (TS) Memo, SecAF to SecDef, 7 Jan 53, "Indochina Maintenance Support Exercise," Alden files, OMA.

71. (TS) Msg, CINCFE C61640, to DEPTAR for Collins, DA–IN–251110, 26 Mar 53, and (TS) Msg, CINCFE C61719, to DEPTAR for G–3, DA–IN–253811, 3 Apr 53, Ann C and D to (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Proposed French Strategic Plan for the Successful Conclusion of the War in Indochina," 21 Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 40. The disposition of C–47s suggested by Gen Clark coincided with a plan already submitted by the French; (S) Dept of French Air Force paper, "Reinforcement of Transport Aircraft in Indo-China," 27 Mar 53, encl to (TS) Memo, Maj Gen Thomas E. De Shazo, Ch MAAG France to Nash, 23 Apr 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

72. (TS) Msg, CINCFE C61640, to DEPTAR for Collins, DA–IN–251110, 26 Mar 53, and (TS) Msg, CINCFE C61982, to DEPTAR for G–3, DA–IN–258870, 18 Apr 53, Ann C and E to (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Proposed French Strategic Plan for the Successful Conclusion of the War in Indochina," 21 Apr 53. (TS) Dft Msg, CSUSA to CINCFE, encl to (TS) Memo for Rec, Secy JCS, 21 Apr 53. Both in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 40. (TS) MR by Lt Col V. W. Alden, 6 Apr 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

73. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO, 2711R0Z Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 40.

74. (TS) Doc D–19, Memo of Conv, "Secretary's Meeting with M. Mayer, French Prime Minister. . . ," 26 Apr 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.* (TS) Msg, Amb Dillon, Paris, 5708, to SecState, 28 Apr 53, "Additional Transport A/C for French Indochina (C–119)," Alden files, OMA.

75. (TS) Msg, SecDef to ADMINO SECDEF (Wilson to Kyes), 282012Z Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 40. (S) Doc D–23, Memo, Walter S. Robertson to SecState, "Flying

Boxcars (C–119's) for Indochina," 28 Apr 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

76. (TS) Memo, DepAsst SecDef (ISA) to Dir OMA, "Situation in Indo-China," 1 May 53. (TS) Msg, CSAF TS 2938, to CINCUSAFE, 1 May 53. (TS) Msg, CSAF TS 2937, to CGFEAF, 1 May 53. All in "Additional Transport A/C for French Indochina (C–119)," Alden files, OMA. (TS) Msg, OSD to CH MAAG IC, DEF 937911, 1 May 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 41.

77. (S) Msg, Sturm, Hanoi, 802, to SecState, 3 Jun 53; (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1014A, to DEPTAR for G–3, 11 Jun 53, DA–IN–276684 (12 Jun 53). Both in "Additional Transport A/C for French Indochina (C–119)," Alden files, OMA. (TS) "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina, 15 July 1953," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP pt 9.

78. (TS) Msg, COMFEAF TS 4054, to HQ USAF for AFOOP, VC 0433 D/O, 30 Jun 53; (TS) Msg, COMFEAF TS 417S, to HQ USAF for AFOOP, VC 0453 D/O, 9 Jul 53. Both in "Additional Transport A/C for French Indochina (C–119)," Alden files, OMA.

79. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1452D, to CSAF and COMFEAF, CAF–IN–97794, 26 Aug 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

80. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 72MA, to OSD for Stewart, 1 May 53, DA–IN–263746 (2 May 53). See also (S) Msg, USAIRA Saigon AFC–31–53, to CSAF, CAF–IN–98999, 29 Apr 53. Both in "Additional Transport A/C for French Indochina (C–119)," Alden files, OMA. Gen Trapnell used the same arguments when opposing a French plan for creating a separate Vietnamese Air Force; (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 910D, to OSD for Stewart, DA–IN–271079, 25 May 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files OMA.

81. (TS) Memo, Bradley to SecDef, "Aid to French Airlift Capability in Indochina," 20 May 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 41. (S) Doc D–26, Msg, Smith to AmEmb Paris, 5693, 21 May 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

82. (TS) "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina, 15 July 1953," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP pt 9. *New York Times*, 18 Jul 53, p. 2. (S) "Air Force Section, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indo-China, Briefing (classified) for 14 November 1953," in "Indochina Background Book," Alden files, OMA.

83. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1463A, to OSD/OMA, CSUSAF, and CNO, 27 Aug 53, DA–IN–593 C (28 Aug 53), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 45.

84. Ibid. Concurrently the French advanced the same request in Washington; (TS) MR by Lt Col V. W. Alden, "French Request for Twenty-Five C–47 Aircraft for Indochina," 28 Aug 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

85. (S) Msg, HQ USAF AFOOP–OC–T 55078, to CH MAAG IC and COMFEAF, 17 Sep 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 46.

86. (TS) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1609A to CINCPAC, DA–IN9615, 1 Oct 53, same file. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC, MG 1713D, to CSUSAF, DA–IN–15700, 23 Oct 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files OMA.

87. (TS) Msg, CH MAAG IC MG 1823A, sgd McCarty to COMFEAF, DA–IN–21074, 13 Nov 53, same file.

88. (TS) "Report by the Ad Hoc Committee to the Assistant to the Secretary for International Security Affairs on Forty Additional Vietnam Battalions," nd, Encl to (TS) Memo, Kyes, Actg SecDef to SecA, SecNav, and SecAF, "Forty Additional Vietnam Battalions," 19 Feb 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 37. (TS) Memo, Collins to SecDef, "Broadening the Participation of the United States in the Indochina Operation," 13 March 53, same file, sec 38.

89. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC MG 619A, to ACofS G–3 and CINCFE, DA–IN–257701, 15 Apr 53, Ann A to (TS) Memo, JCS to SecDef, "Proposed French Strategic Plan for the Successful Conclusion of the War in Indochina," 21 Apr 53, same file, sec 40.

90. (S) Doc D–13, "Bipartite U. S.-French Conversations, First Session–April 22, 1953." For previous indications of SecState interest in getting the French to study and adopt Korean training methods see (TS) Doc D–2, Msg, Dulles to AmEmb Saigon, 1644, 10 Feb 53, and

(TS) Doc D–4, Account of SecState conversations in London, 4 Feb 53, sent Saigon as A–117, 5 Mar 53. All in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1953.*

91. (TS) "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina, 15 July 1953," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) BP pt. 9.

92. (S) HQ MAAG IC "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 23 Jan 53, "Indochina 1953," Alden files, OMA.

93. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of November 1953.

94. (S) Msg, CH MAAG IC MG 1755A, to OSD for Stewart, 30 Oct 53, DA–IN–17762 (31 Oct 53), "Indochina Operating Files," Alden files, OMA. (TS) "Summary of the French Situation Report Prepared by the Staff of French Expeditionary Forces, Far East, for General Navarre (30 Jun 53)," in "Navarre Letter—Actions Taken," vol I, Alden files, OMA.

Chapter 8. Dien Bien Phu, Bermuda, and Berlin November 1953–March 1954

1. Spector, *Advice & Support*, p. 182.

2. Ibid.; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953–1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 350–351, also 339; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 165–166.

3. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 169–170; Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 186–190.

4. (TS) O'Daniel, "Progress Report on Military Situation in Indochina as of 19 November 1953," CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 50 BP pt 10. For a résumé of the report see (TS) Msg, CGUSARPAC, O'Daniel to JCS, RJ 68496, 190707Z Nov 53, DA–IN–22712, same file, sec 50, and (TS) App to Encl A to (TS) JCS 1992/260, Rpt by JSPC, "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina," 17 Dec 53, same file, sec 52.

5. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO, 020135Z Dec 53, DA–IN25651, same file, sec 51.

6. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 350–351, also 339; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 169–170; *Spector, Advice & Support*, pp. 186–190.

7. Ibid. See also (S dg C) Msg, USARMA Saigon to CSA for G–2, OARMA MC 319–53, 231330Z Nov 53, DA–IN–23791 (24 Nov 53), CCS 092 Asia (2–25–48) sec 50, and (S) Mns, QUINTEL Mtg, 1 Dec 53, App to Encl to (S) JCS 1992/276, Memo by CNO, "Report on the Sixth QUINPART Intelligence Meeting," 11 Feb 54, same file, sec 57.

8. (S) Msg, Heath to SecState, OSD, 846, 132250Z Nov 53, DA–IN–21426 (14 Nov 53), same file, sec 49.

9. (S) Doc D–50, Msg, SecState to AmEmb Paris, 1930, Saigon, 920, 6:17 p.m., 23 Nov 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina.* (S) CM–40–53, Memo by CJCS to JCS, "Additional C–47 Aircraft for French Forces Indo-China," 25 Nov 53.

10. (TS) JCS 1992/254, 25 Nov 53, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 50. (TS) Memo, CJCS for JCS to SecDef, "Support of Viet Minh Forces in Indochina by Chinese Communist Jet Aircraft," 1 Dec 53, same file, sec 51.

11. (S) Mns, 5th Plen Tri Mtg of Heads of Government, Bermuda, 5:30 p.m., 7 Dec 53, CCS 337 (4–19–50) BP pt 2.

12. (U) Tri US–UK–Fr Note to USSR, 8 Dec 53, State Dept *Bulletin*, 21 Dec 53, pp. 852–853.

13. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to OSD for OMA for Stewart, MG 1988–B, 091500Z Dec 53, DA–IN–27610 (10 Dec 53), "Navarre Letter, Actions Taken," vol I, Alden files, OMA.

14. (S) Memo, Col J. G. Anding, Actg Dir OMA, to Asst SecDef (ISA), "Indochina FY 1954 M3AP," c. 11 Dec 54; (s) Msg, OSD sgd Ruffner to Ch MAAG IC, DEF 954347, 142329Z Dec 53; (S) Msg, OSD sgd Nash to Ch MAAG IC, DEF 954441, 162145Z Dec 53. All in "Navarre Letter, Actions Taken," vol I, Alden files, OMA.

15. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to SecDef for OMA for Nash, MG 2057 B, 180907Z Dec 53, DA–IN–29482 (18 Dec 53), same file.

16. (S) Msg, CJCS to OSD for Nash, 250935Z Dec 53, DA–IN–31007 (29 Dec 53), same file.

17. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 83.

18. (U) "Summary of statement of President Auriol on Free Association of States within the French Union," Tab D to State Dept (S) Bermuda Conf preparation paper, BM D–10d, "Indochina," 2 Dec 53, CCS 337 (4–19–50) sec 10.

19. *New York Times*, 17 Dec 53, pp. 1 and 3; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, p. 306. The crisis was not resolved until 11 Jan 54 when Bao Dai appointed his cousin, Prince Buu Loc, Prime Minister.

20. (TS) JCS 1992/256, 3 Dec 53, (TS) Memo, Maj Gen J. K. Gerhart to DJS, Lt Gen F. F. Everest, "Review of U. S. Policy Toward Southeast Asia," 9 Dec 53; (TS) DM–72–53, to JCS, 14 Dec 53. All in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 51.

21. (TS) JCS 1992/260, 17 Dec 53, same file, sec 52.

22. (TS) Memo by CSA, "Report of U. S. Joint Military Mission to Indochina," [Army ditto], c. 30 Dec 53, same file. (TS) JCS 1992/264, 30 Dec 53, same file, sec 53. (TS) JCS 1992/260, Dec On, 31 Dec 53, same file, sec 52.

23. (S) Msg, CGUSARPAC O'Daniel to CSA, RJ 68589, 262125Z Dec 53, DA–IN–30757 (26 Dec 53); (S) Msg, CGUSARPAC to SecDef for Nash, RJ 68591, 262242Z Dec 53, DA–IN–30971 (29 Dec 53). Both in same file, sec 53.

24. (TS) NSC 124/2, 25 Jun 52 (circ to JCS as Encl to (TS) JCS 1992/168, 2 Jul 52), same file, sec 32.

25. (TS) SE–52, CIA Sp Est, "Probable Consequences in Non-Communist Asia of Certain Possible Developments in Indochina Before Mid-1954," 10 Nov 53, p. 1, JIG files.

26. (TS) Lt Col J. W. Vogt, Office of the Spec Asst to JCS for NSC Affairs, 4 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) "An Account of the Events and Decisions Leading to the Loss of North Indochina," prepared for the record by the Office of the SpecAsst to JCS for NSC Affairs, interviewed by Samuel A. Tucker, 1st Draft, 25 Oct 54, pp. 26–27. (Hereinafter cited as Gerhart "Account.")

27. (TS) NSC 177, 30 Dec 53, Encl to (TS) JCS 1992/265, 4 Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 53.

28. (TS) Vogt, interviewed by Samuel A. Tucker, 4 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) Gerhart "Account," p. 31.

29. (TS) Memo, Gerhart to DJC, "Review of U. S. Policy Toward Southeast Asia," 9 Dec 53; (TS) DM–72–53, to JCS, same subj, 14 Dec 53. Both in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 51. (TS) JCS 1992/227, 22 Jun 53, amended by Dec On, 2 Jul 53, same file, sec 43.

30. (TS) JCS 1992/262, 24 Dec 53, same file, sec

31. Since the Special Annex was subsequently withdrawn and destroyed, no copy exists in JCS files. The above material was drawn from the author's interview with Lt Col Vogt, 4 Jan 55, JCS HS files, and from (TS) JCS 1992/267 4 Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 53. See also (TS) Gerhart "Account," p. 33.

32. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology, p. 84. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to CINCPAC, MG 8 A, 020730Z Jan 54, DA–IN–31633 (2 Jan 54); (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to DA, MG 9 A, 020926Z Jan 54, DA–IN–31639 (2 Jan 54); (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO, 040139Z Jan 54. All in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 53.

33. (TS) Memo, CJCS for JCS to SecDef, "NSC 177 United States Courses of Action with Respect to Southeast Asia," 6 Jan 54, same file, sec 54.

34. (TS) JCS 1992/267, 4 Jan 54, same file, sec 53.

35. (TS) JCS 1992/268, 5 Jan 54, same file, sec 54.

36. The (TS) Gerhart "Account," p. 34, indicates that the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 6 January 1954 approved a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense calling for immediate decision on

whether or not the United States would intervene in Indochina if necessary to prevent the French from seeking to conclude the struggle on terms likely to result in the loss of the area to the communists. Furthermore, this memorandum rejected as an unacceptable course of action the alternative of refusing to commit US forces to the French military effort. However, official records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff available to the Historical Section do not indicate that this memorandum was formally adopted.

37. (TS) AFPC Advice of Action, "U. S. Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Southeast Asia (NSC 177)," 11 Jan 54. (TS) Vogt, Interview 4 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) Gerhart "Account," p. 35.

38. (TS) NSC Action 1005, 8 Jan 54, CCS 334 NSC (9–25–47) sec 13. (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 955317, 082226Z Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 54. (TS) Gerhart "Account," pp. 36–38.

39. (TS) NSC Action 1011–a, 14 Jan 54.

40. (TS) Memo, DJS for JCS to SecDef, "Steps which the United States Might Take to Assist in Achieving Success of the Navarre Plan," 15 Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 54.

41. (TS) Memo, C. D. Jackson to A. Dulles, Kyes, Radford, & Smith, "Indo-China and Southeast Asia," 18 Jan 54; (TS) Uniden Memo (Gen G. B. Erskine to Radford), "Proposed Procedure for Implementation of the President's Decision Regarding Indo-China," 18 Jan 54. (TS) Uniden Memo for Rec, "Meeting at White House—16 January 1954," nd, "Navarre Letter, Actions Taken," vol I, Alden file, OMA.

42. See above p. 125.

43. (TS) Msg, Achilles (AmEmb Paris) to SecState, 2668, 2 p.m., 19 Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 55. (TS) Msg, Achilles to SecState, 2663, 11 a.m., 19 Jan 54. See also: (S) Msg, Heath (Saigon) to SecState, 5151, 9 a.m., 3 Jan 54, DA–IN–31713 (3 Jan 54); (TS) Msg, Achilles to SecState, 2629, 2 p.m., 15 Jan 54; (TS) Msg, Achilles to SecState, 2642, 1 p.m., 16 Jan 54.

44. (TS) Msg, CJCS to CINCPAC, JCS 955862, 202345Z Jan 54.

45. (TS) Dft Statement by Radford to NSC, "Report on 'steps which the U. S. might take to assist in achieving the success of the Navarre Plan' in Indochina," 20 Jan 54. (TS)Vogt Interview, 14 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files.

46. (TS) Memo for Rec, Capt G. W. Anderson, 21 Jan 54.

47. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to OSD/OMA, MG 146 A, 210350Z Jan 54, DA–IN–34719–C, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 55. (TS) Msg, USAmb Saigon to SecState, NIACT 1307, 4 p.m., 23 Jan 54, same file, sec 56.

48. (TS) Memo, Valluy to Radford, "U. S. Military Aid to Indochina," DFM(54) 16, 26 Jan 54. (TS) Msg, USNMR Paris sgd Gruenther to CSA, ALO 189, 011610Z Feb 54, DA–IN–36621, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 56.

49. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, 26 Jan 54; (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, 27 Jan 54.

50. (TS) Memo for Rec, Brig Gen C. H. Bonesteel, III, OSD, "Meeting of the President's Special Committee on Indochina, 29 January 1954," 30 Jan 54. (S) Memo, DepSecDef to SecAF, 29 Jan 54, circ as Encl B to (TS) JCS 1992/340, 21 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 72. (TS) Msg, Hq USAP to COMFEAF & Ch MAAG IC, AFOOP–OC–C TS 7323, 302339Z Jan 54; "Navarre Letter, Actions Taken," vol I, Alden files, OMA.

51. Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "Where is Dien Bien Phu?" *Washington Post* and *Times Herald*, 27 Jan 54. (S) Msg, Achilles (Paris) to SecState, 2758, 1 p.m., 27 Jan 54. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, 27 Jan 54; (U) Ltr, Sen John Stennis to Radford, 1 Feb 54.

52. Unofficial Transcript of Eisenhower News Conference, 3 Feb 54, *New York Times*, 4 Feb 54. *Congressional Record*, vol 100, no. 3, p. 1470. (UNK) Memo for File, Radford, 27 May 54.

53. *New York Times*, 10 Feb 54, p. 2; 11 Feb 54, pp. 1, 6, 16; 4 May 54, p. 4.

54. (S) Msg, Heath (Saigon) to SecState, 1360, 31 Jan 54, DA–IN–36566, CCS 383.21 Korea (3–19–54) sec 145. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology. (S) D/A, G–2, Background Paper GI–D–33 "History of Indochina War," 7 Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–405) sec 62.

55. (S) Msg, USARMA VN to CSUSA for G–2, MC 39–54, 032355Z Feb 54, DA–IN–37222 (4 Feb 54), same file, sec 57.

56. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to DA, MG 318A, 090950Z Feb 54, DA–IN–38234 (10 Feb 54), same file.

57. (S) Gen O'Daniel's comments on cable MC 39–54.

58. (TS) Msg, ALUSNA Saigon [O'Daniel] to CINCPAC, readdressed CINCPAC to CNO, 280815Z Jan 54; (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC [O'Daniel] to CINCPAC readdressed CINCPAC to CNO/JCS, MG 250A, 020130Z Feb 54. Both in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 56. (TS) Rpt of US Sp Mission to IndoChina, 5 Feb 54, same file/ BP pt 10. (TS) Encl C to (TS) JCS 1992/300, 27 Apr 54, same file, sec 64.

59. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO/JCS, 042114Z Feb 54; (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CNO/JCS, 072308Z Feb 54. Both in same file, sec 57.

60. (TS) Mns Mtg of Sp Cmte (Indochina), 9 Feb 54. (C) Memo, Ely to Radford, 13 Feb 54. (S) Msg, Heath (Saigon) to SecState, 1501, 5 p.m., 21 Feb 54, CCS 092 Asia.

61. (TS) JCS 1992/284, Memo, CSA to JCS, 4 Mar 54; (TS) Memo, CJCS for JCS to SecDef, "Reappraisal of General O'Daniel's Status with Respect to Indochina," 5 Mar 54; (C) Msg, OSD sgd Davis to CINCPAC DEF 958261, 122158Z Mar 54. All in same file, sec 59. *New York Times*, 13 Mar 54.

62. (TS) Msg, CINCFE to JCS & CSA, C66980, 021000Z Feb 54, DA–IN–6799 (2 Feb 54); (S) Msg, CINCFE to JCS & CSA, KCG 2–4, 05100Z Feb 54, DA–IN–37583 (6 Feb 54); (S) Msg, Amb Briggs (Seoul) to SecState, 759, 101045Z Feb 54, DA–IN–38292 (10 Feb 54). All in CCS 383.21 Korea (3–19–45) sec 145. *New York Times*, 12 Feb 54, p. 1.

63. (TS) JCS 1776/432, 16 Feb 54, CCS 383.21 Korea (3–19–45) sec 145.

64. (TS) NSC Rec of Action 1043 a, 17 Feb 54. (TS) JCS 1776/433, 17 Feb 54; (TS) JCS 1776/434, 19 Feb 54; (TS) JCS 1776/435, 19 Feb 54. All in CCS 383.21 Korea (3–19–45) sec 145.

65. (TS) JCS 1776/437, 24 Feb 54; (TS) Memo, CJCS for JCS to SecDef, "Consideration of the ROK Offer to Send a Division to Indochina," 1 Mar 54. Both in same file, sec 146. (TS) JCS 1776/444, 5 Mar 54, same file, sec 147; (TS) NSC Rec of Action 1054 b, 4 Mar 54.

66. (S) Memo, Asst SecDef (ISA) to DepSecDef, "Developments in U. S. Military Assistance for the French and Associated State [sic] Forces in Indochina," 8 Jan 54, I–10134. (C) Memo, Dir OFMA Davis for AsstSecDef (ISA) to DepSecDef, "Implementation of Indochina MDA Programs to Assist in Achieving Success of the Navarre Plan," 2 Mar 54.

67. (TS) JCS 1992/290; 24 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 60. (TS) Memo for Rec, Gen G. B. Erskine, Dir of Sp Opns, OSD, "Terms of Reference for Subcommittee on Indo-China, Related Southeast Asian Matters, and the Geneva Conference," 4 Mar 54.

68. (U) Unofficial Trans of Soviet Note, 26 Dec 53; (U) Tri US–UK–Fr Note to USSR, 1 Jan 54; (U) Unofficial Trans of Soviet Note, 4 Jan 54 All atchd to State Dept Background Paper BER D–8/50, 12 Jan 54, CCS 337 (4–19–50) BP pt 2A. (S) State Dept Paper, PREP D–1/2, "Revision of Tactics Section (pages 1 and 2) of Report of Tri–partite Working Group, Paris, October 21–November 2," 12 Dec 53; (S) State Dept Psn Paper, BER D–1/2, "Tripartite Draft Re Anticipated Soviet Request for Five-Power Conference Including Communist China," 15 Jan 54. Both in CCS 337 (4–19–50) BP pt 2. (S) State Dept Rebuttal Paper, D–8/17a, "Indochina," 11 Jan 54, same file, BP pt 2A. (S) State Dept Talking Paper, PTB D–3/2, "Bilateral Discussion in Berlin with the French, Indochina," 19 Jan 54, same file, BP pt 3.

69. State Dept. *Foreign Ministers Meeting* (Washington, GPO, 1954), pp. 13–24, 220.

70. Ibid., pp. 24–54.

71. (U) DOC D–41, State Dept Press Release No. 475, 3 Sep 53, in (TS) *Doc Hist of US Pol Toward Indochina, 1940–1963.* (UNK) Dept, 177, 18 Feb 54, as summarized in App to (TS) JCS 1992/286, 11 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 59. Article IV of the Korean Armistice Agreement, signed 27 Jul 53, read as follows: "In order to insure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question the military commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three (3) months after the armistice agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc." State Dept *Bulletin*, 3 Aug 53, p. 139.

72. (TS) Mns 1st–6th Restricted Sessions of Foreign Ministers Mtg, 8–18 Feb 54, in State Dept HD files.

73. "Quadripartite Communique, Issued at Berlin, February 18 [1954]," State Dept, *Foreign Ministers Meeting*, p. 217.

74. Smith, "Progress Toward Solving Current International Problems," (Address before Chicago World Trade Conference, 23 Feb 54), State Dept *Bulletin*, 8 Mar 54, pp. 358–360. Dulles, "Report on Berlin," (Radio-TV Address, 24 Feb 54), ibid., pp. 343–347.

75. (TS) Summary of Notes Recorded by DepSecy, JCS at JCS-State Mtg, 26 Feb 54.

76. (TS) Vogt Interview, 14 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) "An Account of the Events and Decisions Leading to the Loss of North Indochina," prepared for the record by the Office of the SpecAsst to JCS for NSC Affairs, 1st dft, 25 Oct 54, p. 44.

77. (S) Msg, Amb Dillon (Paris) to SecState, 3238, 6 p.m., 6 Mar 54. (U) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3240, 6 Mar 54, DA–IN–868537, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 59.

78. Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 186–189; Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, pp. 168–169.

Chapter 9. Prelude to Geneva, March–May 1954

1. Much more research is necessary on this question. In particular, the story of Operation VAUTOUR (VULTURE) remains unclear. The account here draws on Spector, *Advice & Support*, as well as the documentation in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter referred to as *FRUS*), but these leave some questions unanswered.

2. Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, p. 169.

3. Spector, *Advice & Support*, p. 195.

4. Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 194–195; Memorandum of Conversation, Deputy FE (Drumright), 2 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1215–1217.

5. Memo, MacArthur to SecState, 7 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1270–1272.

6. Memo, MacArthur to SecState, 7 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1270–1272; Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 200–201.

7. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology.

8. (S) Geneva Conf Background Paper, Indochina Chronology; Harrison, "Dien Bien Phu," pp. 270–286; (S) Uniden Intel Briefing, "Current Military Situation, 21 March 1954."

9. Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 191–194. Spector dates Ely's arrival on 1 March. This is clearly an error.

10. (TS) Aide Memoire, Radford to Ely, 8 Nov 54. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Conversation with General Ely, Chairman, French Chiefs of Staff, on 22 March," 22 Mar 54. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Discussions with General Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff on Indo-China in the Afternoon of 24 March," 24 Mar 54. (TS) Memo of Conv, Dir CI Cabell, Ely, et al., 23 Mar 54. (TS) Notes of JCS-State Mtg, 26 Mar 54.

11. (TS) Memo, Ely to Radford, 22 Mar 54; (TS) Memo, Ely to Radford 24 Mar 54; (TS) Memo, Anderson to Col Brohon [Gen Ely's aide], "French requests for equipment for French forces in Indo-China," 24 Mar 54; (S) Memo, SecDef to SecAF, "Transfer of Additional B–26 Aircraft to Indo-China," 25 Mar 54; (TS) CM–74–54, Memo, Radford to President's Special Committee on Indochina, "Discussions with General Paul Ely," 29 Mar 54. (TS) Notes of JCS-State Mtg, 26 Mar 54.

12. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Conversation with General Valluy, French Military Mission to the U. S., on 19 March," 19 Mar 54; (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Conversations with General Paul Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff, on the subject of Indo-China," 21 Mar 54; (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Discussions with General Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff, on Indo-China in the afternoon of 24 March," 24 Mar 54. (TS) CM–74–54, CJCS to President's Special Committee on Indochina; "Discussions with General Paul Ely," 29 Mar 54.

13. (TS) Memo of Conv, SecState, Radford, Ely, et al., 23 Mar 54.

14. (TS) Memo, Ely to Radford, 23 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 60.

15. On 10 March 1954 President Eisenhower had replied to a question about American activities in Indochina as follows: "There is going to be no involvement of America in war unless it is a result of the Constitutional process that is placed upon Congress to declare it." *New York Times*, 11 Mar 54, p. 14; 4 May 54, p. 4.

16. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Discussions with General Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff, on Indo-China in the afternoon of 24 March," 24 Mar 54.

17. (TS) Mns of Mtg between Radford and Ely, Friday, 25 Mar 54, sgd "Arthur Radford" and "P. Ely."

18. (TS) Msg, CNO to CINCPAC, 312313Z Mar 54.

19. (UNK) Dft Mns, Mtg of Radford and Ely, 26 Mar 54.

20. (TS) Memo, Radford to Pres, "Discussions with General Ely Relative to the Situation in Indo-China," 24 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia-(6–25–48) sec 60.

21. Spector, *Advice & Support*, p. 194.

22. Memo, MacArthur to SecState, 7 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1270–1272.

23. (TS) JCS 1992/285, Memo by SecDef, "Preparation of Department of Defense Views Regarding Negotiations on Indochina for the Forthcoming Geneva Conference," 8 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 59.

24. See chap. 8, p. 135–136.

25. (TS) JCS 1992/286, 11 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 60.

26. (TS) JCS 1992/287, 11 Mar 54 (as amended by Dec On, 12 Mar 54), same file, sec 59.

27. (TS) Memo, Gen G. B. Erskine to Sp Cmte, "Military Implications of the U. S. Position on Indo-China in Geneva," w/encl, same subj, 17 Mar 54, OSD 092.31, Admin Secy, OSD files.

28. (TS) Ltr, SecDef to SecState, 23 Mar 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 60.

29. (U) Msg, Amb Dillon (Paris) to SecState, 3312, 11 Mar 54.

30. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3294, 9 p.m. 10 Mar 54; (S) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3313, 7 p.m., 11 Mar 54; (S) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3315, 8 p.m., 11 Mar 54.

31. (TS) NSC Rec of Action 1074–a, 25 Mar 54. (TS) Gerhart "Account," pp. 44–46.

32. Robert J. Watson, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vol. V, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953–1954* (Washington: Office of Joint History, 1998), p. 253.

33. (U) J. F. Dulles, "The Threat of a Red Asia" (address to Overseas Press Club, 29 Mar 54), State Dept *Bulletin*, 12 Apr 54, p. 540.

34. (TS) Msg, SecState to USecState (Geneva), TEDUL 37, 9:35 p.m., 6 May 54. (TS) Vogt Interview, 26 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) Gerhart "Account," pp. 51–52.

35. (S dg C) Msg, USARMA Saigon to CSUSA for G–2, MC 106–54, 291030Z Mar 54, DA–IN–48138 (30 Mar 54), CCS 0.92 Asia (6–25–48) sec 61. Harrison, "Dien Bien Phu," pp. 270–286.

36. (TS) Msg, Dillon (Paris) to SecState, NIACT 3692, 030002Z Apr 54, DA–IN–49168, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 61. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3693, 8 p.m., 2 Apr 54. (UNK) Memo, CJCS to Pres, 2 Apr 54. (S) Msg, CINCFE to JCS CX67593, 020300Z Apr 54, DA–IN–48943 (2 Apr 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 61. (S) Msg, CINCFE to JCS, CS 67604, 030319Z Apr 54, DA–IN–49215 (3 Apr 54); (S) Msg, CNO to CINCPACFLT, 051951Z–Apr 54. Both in same file, sec 62. (TS) Msg, CJCS to CHMAAG IC (Trapnell), JCS 959547, 071700 Apr 54.

37. Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: The Advisory Years to 1965* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1981), pp. 22–25; Spector, *Advice & Support*, pp. 204–206; Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, pp. 165–166n. As VULTURE appears to have been the name adopted in Saigon for the plan, Radford's later assertions that he was unaware of the name can be understood.

38. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 3710, 1 a.m., 5 Apr 54.

39. (TS) Msg, SecState to Dillon, 3482, 9:29 a.m., 5 Apr 54.

40. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 3729, 8 p.m., 5 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 373S, 1 p.m., 6 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 3740 4 p.m., 6 Apr 54.

41. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, [Conv with Gen Valluy, 7 Apr 54], 7 Apr 54; (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, [Conversation with Col Brohon, 9 Apr 54], 9 Apr 54. (TS) Msg, CJCS to CH MAAG IC, JCS 959547, 071700 Apr 54. (TS) Msg CNO to CINCPACFLT, 071709Z Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 62. (TS) Msg, SecState to AmAmb Paris, 3534, 8:25 p.m., 7 Apr 54.

42. (TS) NSC Plng Bd Rpt, "NSC Action No. 1074–a," 5 Apr 54, CCS 334 NSC (9–25–47) sec 14.

43. (TS) NSC Rec of Action 1086, 6 Apr 54. (TS) Vogt Interview, 26 Jan 55, memo in JCS HS files. (TS) Gerhart "Account," pp. 51–54.

44. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC to CJCS, MG 968A, 091015Z Apr 54, DA IN–50634 (9 Apr 54); (TS) Msg, COMFEAF to CSUSAF V–VC0173, 120721Z Apr 54, TS: 8374 (12 Apr); (TS) CM–84–54, Memo, CJCS to SecDef, 12 Apr 54.

45. (TS) Memo, CJCS to SecState, "Conversations with Col Brohon, Assistant to General Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff," 10 Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 62. (TS) Msg, CJCS to CINCPAC for Gen O'Daniel, JCS 959753, 101700Z Apr 54.

46. (S) Msg, SecState to Paris, 3541, to Saigon, 1886, 1:35 p.m., 8 Apr 54. (TS) Msg, Ely to Valluy for Radford, c. 7 Apr 54, incorporated in (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, 7 Apr 54.

47. Ltr, Radford to Ely, 12 Apr 54. Eisenhower was critical of Radford's apparently unauthorized statements to Ely, which encouraged him to expect an American intervention, but Ely does not appear to have needed much encouragement. Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War*, pp. 106–107.

48. (TS) Msg, SecState to Amb Paris, NIACT 3512, 7 p.m., 6 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 3756, 11 a.m., 7 Apr 54.

49. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 3774, 7 p.m., 7 Apr 54.

50. Dulles, "Consultations with United Kingdom, France regarding Southeast Asia," White House press release, 10 Apr 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 19 Apr 54, p. 590.

51. "US–UK–French Discussions on Indochina and Southeast Asia," State Dept press releases 194, 197, and Statement by Secy Dulles at Syracuse, 15 Apr 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 26 Apr 54, pp. 622–623.

52. (TS) Msg, SecState (Paris) to ActgSecState, DULTE 3, 8 p.m., 22 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, SecState (Geneva) to ActgSecState, DULTE 7, 2 p.m., 26 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, SecState to USecState (Geneva), TEDUL 37, 9:35 p.m., 6 May 54.

53. (TS) Msg, CINCPACFLT to CNO, 020202Z Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 61. *New York Times*, 16 Apr 54 p. 2. (TS) JCS 1776/462, 22 Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 63.

54. (TS) JCS 1992/296, 26 Apr 54, and Dec On, 26 Apr 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 62. (TS) Memo, CJCS for JCS to SecDef, "Indochina," 22 Apr 54, same file, sec 63. For a discussion of later development of General Ridgway's ideas, see chap. 10.

55. *New York Times*, 4 May 54, p. 4. J. Parker (State Dept press officer), "U. S. Policy Toward Indochina," 17 Apr 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 26 Apr 54, pp. 623–624.

56. Harrison, "Dien Bien Phu," pp. 270–286.

57. Substance of Discussions, State-JCS Mtg, 23 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII/1, pp. 1367–1369.

58. (TS) Msg, SecState to ActgSecState, DULTE 2, 2 p.m , 22 Apr 54.

59. (TS) Msg, McClintock to SecState, 2098, 241200Z Apr 54, DA–IN–53702 (24 Apr 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 63.

60. SecState to DeptState, 23 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII/1, p 1374; Msgs, SecState to ActSecState, DULTE 9, 6 p.m., 23 Apr 54; DULTE 10, 2400, 23 Apr 54; DULTE 1, 2400, 24 Apr 54. Bidault was later to assert that Dulles offered the French atomic weapons, but Dulles forcefully denied this. See Msgs, Amb France (Dillon) to SecState, 9 Aug 54; SecState to AmEmb France, 9 Aug 54; Amb France (Dillon) to DeptState, 10 Aug 54, all in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1927–1928. Radford stated that he indicated to Pleven at about this time that he was unfamiliar with the name VULTURE. Memo for File, Radford, 24 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1396–1397.

61. (TS) "Resume of Conversations with French and British Representatives by Admiral Radford, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Paris and London, 24–26 April 1954 on the Subject of Indochina," 28 Apr 54. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, NIACT 4060, 251600Z Apr 54, DA–IN–53954 (25 Apr 54), CCS 210.482 (3–18–48) sec 4.

62. (TS) Msg, SecState to ActgSecState, DULTE 3, 8 p.m., 25 Apr 54.

63. (TS) Msg, SecState to ActgSecState, DULTE 3, 8 p.m., 22 Apr 54; (S) Msg, SecState to ActgSecState, SECTO 6, 11 a.m., 23 Apr 54; (TS) Msg, SecState to Actg SecState, DULTE 10, 2400, 23 Apr 54.

64. (TS) Msgs, SecState to ActgSecState, DULTE 18, 11 p.m., 24 Apr 54; DULTE 5, 2400, 25 Apr 54; DULTE 7, 2 p.m., 26 Apr 54.

65. (TS) "Resume of Conversations with French and British Representatives by Admiral Radford, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Paris and London, 24–26 April on the Subject of Indochina," 28 Apr 54; (UNK) Memo for [Adm Radford], 27 Apr 54; (TS) COS(54) 47th Mtg, Mns of mtg of BCOS and CJCS [with additions and amendments by Capt Anderson], 26 Apr 54.

66. Quoted in (TS) Msg, SecState DULTE 51, to ActgSec State, 7 p.m., 5 May 54.

67. Memcon, AsstSecStateEur (Merchant), 26 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1386–1391.

68. (TS) Msg, SecState DULTE 21, to ActgSecState, 10 a.m., 29 Apr 54. (TS) NSC Rec of Action 1104 b, 29 Apr 54.

69. (S) Msg, SecState SECTO 73 to Actg SecState, 10 a.m., 3 May 54.

70. (TS) Msg, SecState to DULTE 51 to Actg SecState, 7 p.m., 5 May 54.

71. Memo, Cutler (NSC) to Smith UnderSecState, 30 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1445–1448. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 153–154. Congress had amended the Atomic Energy Act in 1952 to set severe limits on sharing nuclear technology with foreign countries.

Chapter 10. Geneva and the End of Intervention

1. Msg, SecState to DeptState, 23 Apr 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp 1374–1375.

2. (TS) Rec of Act, NSC, 196th Mtg, 8 May 54, 1110, "Position of the US with Regard to the French-Proposal for Negotiating an Armistice in Indochina."

3. (TS) Msg, Dulles TEDUL 37 to Smith, 6 May 54.

4. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 89 to SecState, 4 May 54.

5. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 106 to SecState, 5 May 54; SECTO 132, 7 May 54.

6. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 106 to SecState, 5 May 54.

7. (TS) Msg, McClintock NIACT 2242 to SecState, 6 May 54.

8. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 110 to Sec State, 5 May 54.

9. (TS) JCS 1992/308, 6 May 54 (as amended by Dec On, 7 May 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–40) sec 64.

10. (TS) JCS 1992/323, 24 May 54, same file, sec 68.

11. (TS) Memo, CSUSA to JCS, "Minimum French Negotiating Position for Indochina Which French Will Support," (8 May 54?), same file, sec 65. For Laniel Conditions, also (U) Msg, Dillon 3240 to SecState, 6 Mar 54.

12. (C) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 4248, 6 May 54, DA–IN–58003 (13 May 54). (S) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 4258, 7 May 54, DA–IN–56901 (8 May 54).

13. State Dept *Bulletin*, 24 May 54, "French Proposal of 8 May" (unofficial translation), p. 784.

14. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 155 to SecState, 9 May 54. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 157 to SecState, 9 May 54.

15. (TS) Memo, Col Thackston for JSSC to JCS, "Negotiations with Respect to Indochina," 8 May 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 65. Official records do not indicate that JCS approved these JSSC recommendations. However, their substance seems to have been provided to, and accepted by, the Department of State.

16. (S) Msg, SecState TOSEC–152 to AmCon (Geneva), 13 May 54, DA–IN–58225 (14 May 54).

17. (TS) Msg, Adm Davis (Geneva) to OASD(ISA), 060905Z May 54, DA–IN 56296 (6 May 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 64.

18. (C) Msg, SecState TOSEC 138 to USecState, 12 May 54.

19. (C) Msg, Dulles TOSEC 137 to USecState, 12 May 54, DA–IN–57085 (13 May 54).

20. (S) Msg, SecState TEDUL 49 to USecState, 9 May 54.

21. Memo of Conversation with President, by SecState, 25 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XII, pp. 512–513; Memo of Conf at White House, 5 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1466–1470.

22. Memorandum of Discussion, 195th Mtg NSC, 6 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XII, pp. 452–459.

23. (TS) Msg, SecState to Paris, rptd Geneva as TEDUL 54 (approved by Pres), 11 May 54.

24. (TS) Msg, SecState 4071 to Dillon, 14 May 54.

25. (TS) Msg, Dillon NIACT 4383 to SecState, 14 May 54.

26. (TS) Msg, SecState NIACT 4064 to AmEmb (Paris), 13 day 54.

27. (TS) Msg, Dillon NIACT 4383 to SecState, 14 May 54.

28. (TS) Dillon 4402 to SecState, 17 May 54.

29. (TS) Msg, SecState 4272 to Dillon, 26 May 54.

30. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 109 to SecState, 25 May 54.

31. (C) Msg, Dillon 4723 to SecState, 4 Jun 54.

32. (TS) Msg, SecState 4398 to Dillon, 4 Jun 54.

33. (TS) Msg, Joyce, Paris 4765, to SecState, 9 Jun 54.

34. (TS) Msg, SecState to Amb, Paris, and USecState, 4117, TEDUL 78, 17 May 54; (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 162 to SecState, 9 Jun 54.

35. (TS) Notes of JCS–State Mtg, 9 Jun 54.

36. (TS) Msg, Dillon 4343 to SecState, 13 May 54.

37. (TS) Msg, SecState TEDUL 178 to USecState, 9 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 71.

38. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 165 to SecState, 10 Jun 54.

39. (TS) Msg, Dillon NIACT 4383 to SecState, 14 May 54.

40. (TS) Memo of Conv, Pres with SpAsst Cutler, 1 Jun 54.

41. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, 3 Jun 54.

42. (TS) JCS 1992/339, 15 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 72.

43. (TS) Memo, CJCS to JCS to SecDef, "ROK Forces for Employment in Indochina," 1 Jul 54, same file, sec 73.

44. (TS) Msg, McClintock 2770 to SecState, 14 Jun 54. (TS) Memo for Rec, RADM G. W. Anderson, Exec to CJCS, 3 Jun 54.

45. (TS) Memo for Rec, RADM G. W. Anderson, Exec to CJCS, 2 Jun 54.

46. (TS) Msg, Gruenther exclv for Radford, ALO 481, 011715Z Jun 54, DA–IN–62357.

47. (TS) Notes of JCS–State Dept Mtg, 11 Jun 54.

48. (TS) Ltr, Dep USecState Murphy to Dep SecDef Anderson, 8 Jun 54, App B to Encl to JCS 1992/341, 21 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 72.

49. (TS) JCS 1992/345, 22 Jun 54, as amended by Dec On, 24 Jun 54, same file.

50. (TS) Memo for COL Forney, NATO Standing Gp, by LTC C. F. Heasty, 12 Jul 54; (TS) Msg, Jt SD/DD to AmEmb, Paris, MAAG and CINCEUR (note on msg: msg essentially as this dispatched 16 Jun 54). Both in Alden file, OMA.

51. (TS) Msg, SecState TEDUL 171 to AmCon, Geneva, 7 Jun 54.

52. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 161 to SecState, 9 Jun 54. (TS) Msg, McClintock 2714 to SecState, 10 Jun 54.

53. (TS) Memo for SecDef, CJCS for JCS, 20 May 54, Encl to JCS 1992/316, 18 May 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 66.

54. (TS) JCS 1992/321, 20 May 54, as amended by Dec On, 26 May 54, same file, sec 67.

55. (TS) JCS 1992/325, 24 May 54, as amended by Dec On, 2 Jun 54, same file, sec 68.

56. Memo, Dir PPS (Bowie) to SecState, 27 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1624–1627.

57. Memo, Drumright to MacArthur, 24 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XIII, pp. 1606–1607; Memo of Conversation with the President, by SecState, 25 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XII, pp. 512–513; Memo of Conversation, Cutler, 28 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XII, pp 521–528.

58. (TS) JCS 1992/334, 7 Jun 54 (as amended by Dec On, 23 Jun 54), same file, sec 71.

59. (TS) Memo, Secys Pace, Kimball, Gilpatric to SecDef, "Draft State Department Paper on Indochina dated 27 March 1952," 8 Apr 54, same file, sec 23.

60. (TS) Dec On JCS 1992/202, 3 Mar 53, same file, sec 38.

61. (TS) Memo for Rec, Anderson, "Discussions with General Ely, Chairman of the French Chiefs of Staff on IndoChina in the afternoon of 24 March," 24 Mar 54.

62. (TS) Msg, Lacy (Manila) 2670 to SecState, 25 May 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 68.

63. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1566A to CSUSA, 010205Z Jun 54, DA–IN–62459 (2 Jun 54), same file, sec 69.

64. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1447A to CSUSA, 191201Z May 54, DA–IN–59456 (19 May 54), same file, sec 67; (S) Msg, McClintock 2468 to SecState, 19 May 54.

65. (TS) Msg, McClintock 2299 to SecState, 9 May 54.

66. (TS) Msg, Asst USARMA Saigon NR 1788 to G–2, 20 Jun 54.

67. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CN0, 230909Z May 54; (TS) Msg, Lacy, Manila 2670 to SecState, 25 May 54. Both in CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 68.

68. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CM0, 022358Z Jun 54, same file, sec 70.

69. (TS) Msg, Dillon and Trapnell 4613 to SecState and JCS, 312000Z May 54, DA–IN–62247 (31 May 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 69. (TS) Msg, Dillon 4662 to SecState, 2 Jun 54.

70. (S) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1651 DA to CSUSA, 091515Z Jun 54, DA–IN–64188 (9 Jun 54), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 71.

70. (TS) Msg, Ely to [Valluy?], Saigon, 9 Jun 54.

71. (TS) Msg, Murphy TCSEC 392 to AmEmb (Paris), 10 Jun 54.

72. (TS) Notes of JCS–State Mtg, 11 Jun 54.

73. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1951A to DA, 200915Z Jun 54, DA–IN–66760, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 72.

74. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1691 to CSUSA, 130601Z Jun 54. DA–IN–65099 (13 Jun), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 71.

75. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 17 to SecState, 12 Jun 54.

76. (TS) Msg, Dillon 4812 to SecState, 11 Jun 54.

77. (TS) Msg, SecState 4551, TEDUL 191, to Amb (Paris), 12 Jun 54.

78. (TS) Msg, SecState TEDUL 197 to AmCon (Geneva), 14 Jun 54.

79. (TS) Msg, CSUSA to Ch MAAG IC, DA–IN–963165, 162246Z Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 72.

80. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG IC MG 1824A to JCS, 260930Z Jun 54, DA–IM–68393 (26 Jun), CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 73; (TS) Msg, CJCS JCS 963796 to Ch MAAG IC, 302300Z Jun 54.

Chapter 11. Toward a New Alliance

1. Memo of Conv, Cutler, 28 May 54, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. XII, pp 521–528.

2. Alexander Werth, *France*, 1940–1955 (New York: Henry Holt, 1956), pp. 674–677.

3. (TS) JCS 1776/452, 9 Apr 54, CCS 383.21 Korea (3–19–45) sec 149. Underlining added.

4. (S) Msg, Dulles, Geneva SECTO 73 to Actg SecState, 3 May 54.

5. (TS) Msg, DULTE 51 to SecState, 5 May 54.

6. (TS) JCS 1992/324, with Encl, Memo from SpecAsst to Pres Cutler, 7 May, 24 May 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 68.

7. (TS) Rec of Acts by NSC at 196th Mtg, 8 May 54. (TS) Gerhart "Account," pp. 63–64.

8. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 66 to SecState, 13 May 54.

9. (TS) Msg, Smith DULTE 53 to SecState, 7 May 54.

10. (TS) Msg, Dulles TEDUL 48 to Smith, 9 May 54.

11. (TS) Msg, McClintock 2374 to SecState, 13 May 54.

12. (TS) Memo for Rec, CJCS, 10 May 54. (TS) Msg, Donovan (Bangkok) 2242 to SecState, 10 May 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 65; (TS) Notes on JCS–State Mtg, 23 Jul 54.

13. (TS) Memo for Rec, CJCS, 10 May 54.

14. (S) Msg, SecState TOSEC 79 to AmCon Geneva, 5 May 54, DA–IN–56239 (6 May).

15. (S) Msg, Dulles (Murphy) TOSEC 240 to AmCon Geneva, 22 May 54.

16. (TS) Rpt of the Five Power Military Conference, 11 Jun 54, Encl to (TS) JCS 1992/337, 14 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (5–25–58) BP pt 11.

17. (TS) Encl B to (TS) JCS 1992/350, 3 Jul 54, same file, sec 74.

18. (TS) Memo, CSUSA to JCS, "Final Report of the Five Power Military Representatives Conference of June 1954," c. 9 Jul 54, same file, sec 75. Actually, it was not necessary to approve or disapprove, because the conclusions of the representatives did not imply commitment by their respective governments.

19. (TS) Dec On JCS 1992/312, 21 May 54, same file, sec 65.

20. (U) Msg, Smith SECTO 162 to SecState, 110525Z May 54, DA–IN–894542 (11 May). See Appendix 4.

21. (U) "US Policy in Southeast Asia," news conference statements by Dulles, press releases 241, 244, 245, 11 May 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 24 May 54, pp 781–782.

22. (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 174 to SecState, 120830Z May 54, DA–IM–57072 (12 May).

23. (U) Msg, Smith SECTO 190 to SecState, 130530Z May 54, DA–IM–895604 (12 May); (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 163 to SecState, 111030Z May 54, DA–IM–57368 (11 May); (S) Msg, Smith SECTO 197 to SecState, 132350Z May 54, DA–IM–58186 (14 May).

24. (TS) Msg, Dillon to SecState, 13 May 54.

25. (S) Msg, Dillon 4735 to SecState, 5 Jun 54.

26. (C) Msg, Dillon 4833 to SecState, 14 Jun 54.

27. (S) Msg, Johnson SECTO 498 to SecState, 21 Jun 54; (C) Msg, Dillon 4972 to SecState, 21 Jun 54 DA–IN–67069 (22 Jun); (TS) Msg, Johnson SECTO 534 to SecState, 26 Jun 54; (TS) Msg, McClintock 2676 to SecState, 6 Jun 54; (C) Msg, Dillon 4909 to SecState, 18 Jun 54.

28. (TS) Msg, Dulles 4852 to Amb (Paris), 29 Jun 54.

29. (S) Msg, Dulles 4853 to Amb (Paris), 28 Jun 54.

30. (S) Msg, Dillon 50 to SecState, 6 Jul 54.

31. (S) Msg, Dulles 77 to Amb (Paris), 7 Jul 54.

32. (S) Msg, Dulles to Amb (Paris), no. unk, 8 Jul 54.

33. (TS) Msg, Dulles 127 to Amb (Paris), 10 Jul 54.

34. (TS) Msg, SecState, TOSEC 480 to AmCon (Geneva), 25 Jun 54.

35. (TS) Msg, Dillon 134 to SecState, 11 Jul 54.

36. (S) Agreed Fr-US position paper on IC, following mtg Sec Dulles and Mendes–France, included in (S) Msg, Dulles (Paris) 179 to SecState, 14 July 54.

37. (S) Ltr, Mendes-France to Dulles, in (S) Msg, Dulles (Paris) 179 to SecState, 14 Jul 54; (S) Ltr, Dulles to Mendes-France, in (S) Msg, Dulles (Paris) 179 to SecState.

38. Speech of Mendes-France to Nat Assem, 22 Jul 54, in *Journal Officiel, Assem Nat*, p. 3536.

38. Spector, *Advice & Support*, p. 224.

39. (S) Msg, SecState TOSEC 529 to AmCon (Geneva), 10 Jul 54.

40. Ibid.

41. Eisenhower & Churchill, "Anglo-American Discussions on International Situation," White House press release of 28 Jun 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 12 Jul 54, p. 49.

42. (TS) Notes of JCS-State Mtg, 25 Jun 54.

43. (C) Msg, Butterworth (London) 5939 to SecState, 24 Jun 54.

44. (TS) JCS 1992/358, 16 Jul 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 75.

45. (TS) Notes of JCS–State Mtg, 23 Jul 54, (TS) JCS 1992/358, 16 Jul 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 75; (TS) Notes of JCS–SD Mtg, 9 Jul 54. (TS) Ann "Policy with Respect to the Colombo Powers," to Memo, CSUSA, "JCS Positions in Connection with the Meeting between President Eisenhower & Prime Minister Churchill, CCS 337 (7–23–48) sec 5.

46. (TS) Notes of JCS–SD Mtg, 23 Jul 54.

47. (TS) JCS 1992/301, 28 Apr 54 [as amended by Dec On, 30 Apr 54], CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 64; (TS) JCS 1992/302, 29 Apr 54, same file; (TS) Note to Holder of JCS 1992/301, 17 May 54, same file.

48. (TS) JCS 1992/336, 8 Jun 54 [as amended by Dec On, 16 Jun 54], same file, sec 71.

49. (TS) Msg, JCS 963958 to CINCPAC, 021338Z Jul 54, same file, sec 74; (TS) Msg, AMINO, CINCPAC 6871 to MATS Andrews AFB, COMSTS, CINCFE, 070255Z Jul 54, same file.

50. (C) Msg, Dulles 261 to AmAmb (Paris), 21 Jul 54.

51. (S) Encl, Memo, Asst SecDef, ISA to USecys Army, Navy, AF, "Suspension of Shipments of Military Aid to Indochina," 2 Aug 54, to (S) JCS 1992/373, 6 Aug 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 77A.

52. (S) JCS 1992/352, 7 Jul 54, same file, sec 74.

53. (TS) Msg, Ch MAAG Indochina MG 2079A to CINCPAC, 200835Z Jul 54, DA–IM–75488, same file, sec 76.

54. (TS) JCS 1992/337, 6 Aug 54, same file, sec 77A.

55. (S) Memo, AsstSecDef, ISA to USecys Army, Navy, AF, "Suspension of Shipments of Military Aid to Indochina," 2 Aug 54, Encl to (S) JCS 1992/373, 6 Aug 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 77A.

56. (S) Msg, Dulles 125 to Paris, Geneva 530, 10 Jul 54.

57. (TS) JCS 1992/358, 16 Jul 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 75.

58. Statement by President, White House Press Release, 21 Jul 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 2 Aug 54, p. 163.

59. "US Declaration on Indochina," USecState W. B. Smith, 21 Jul 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 2 Aug 54, pp. 162–163.

60. Statement by Secy Dulles, 23 Jul 54, Press Release 400, State Dept *Bulletin*, 2 Aug 54, p. 163.

61. Statement by President, White House press release, 21 Jul 54, State Dept *Bulletin*, 2 Aug 54, p. 163.

62. (TS) NSC 5429, "Review of US Policy in the Far East, 4 Aug 54, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 77A; (S) Msg, McClintock 2356 to SecState, 12 May 54.

63. (TS) Msg, Lt. Col. J. E. Dwan to OSD, c. 21 Jul 54, quoted in (TS) Gerhart "Account," p. 71.

Appendix 1. Summary of the Aid Program

1. (TS) "Congressional Presentation FY 1955 Indochina MDA Material Program," sec, "Questions and Answers," Alden Files, OMA.

2. The summary figures used in this section are based primarily upon (TS) "Congressional Presentation FY 1955 Indochina MDA Material Program," sec, "Questions and Answers," Alden Files, OMA. Since the "Congressional Presentation" was prepared early in 1954, some of the figures for that year are only tentative; others are rounded off in such a manner that the cumulative effect is not in the interest of close accuracy. The sums given in the present study are computed from several sources but do not differ materially from the summary figures given in the Alden Files. Throughout the course of the aid story, the figures given by various sources reveal serious conflict. Great difficulty was encountered in attempting to reconcile these differing views to obtain an accurate year-by-year record of allocations, as distinct from general summaries. Other sources used in arriving at the totals in this study follow: (TS) Encl, Memo, SecDef to Secys Army, AF, Nav, "Adjustment of FY 1953 Programs for Indochina, Formosa, and France," 7 Mar 52, to (TS) JCS 2099/179, 11 Mar 52, CCS 092 (8-22-46) sec 70; (TS) NSC 148, 6 Apr 53, CCS 092 Asia (6-25-48) sec 40; (C) App, "Estimated Expenditures in Connection with U. S. Courses of Action in Southeast Asia," to (TS) NSC 5405, 16 Jan 54, same file, sec 55; (C) JCS 2099/369, 21 Apr 54, CCS 092 (8-22-46) sec 110; (S) GI D-30a, "Geneva Conference, April 1954, Indochinese Phase - Background Paper, Summary of US Aid Program for Indochina," 25 Mar 54 CCS 092 Asia (6-25-48) sec 60.

3. (S) Memo, MG G. C. Stewart, Dir OMA, to Radford, "Status of the $705 million FY 1954 Direct Forces Support Program for Indochina," 24 Sep 54.

4. (S) MDAP Status Report for the Month of July 1954.

5. (S) Memo for Rec, "Status of Major Items as of 31 December 1951 Based on Preliminary Data. Indo-China," nd (c. Feb 52), Indo-China 2a (1952), Alden Files, OMA; (TS) Encl, Ltr, Col J. S. Driscol, USAF, to LTG L. C. Craigie, DCS/D, USAF, 9 Oct 52, same file.

6. (TS) Encl B, Intel Data, "The Current French Capability of Holding Hanoi and the Tonkin Delta with Forces Available to Them," to (TS) JCS 1992/334, 7 Jun 54, CCS 092 Asia (6-25-48) sec 71.

7. (TS) "Congressional Presentation FY 1955 Indochina MDA Material Program," Sec, "Questions and Answers," Alden Files, OMA.

8. (TS) Encl B to (TS) JCS 1992/270, 12 Jan 54, CCS 092 Asia (6-25-48) sec 54.

9. (TS) Congressional Presentation FY 1955 Indochina MDA Material Program," Sec, "Questions and Answers," Alden Files, OMA.

10. (S) Msg, USARMA Saigon Vietnam MG 39-54, to CSUSA for G-2, 032355Z Feb 54, DA-IN-37222 (4 Feb 54), CCS 092 Asia (6-25-48) sec 57.

11. (TS) Congressional Presentation FY 1955 Indochina MDA Material Program," Sec, "Questions and Answers," Alden Files, OMA.

Appendix 2

1. (TS) NSC 64/1, 21 Dec 50, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) sec 9.

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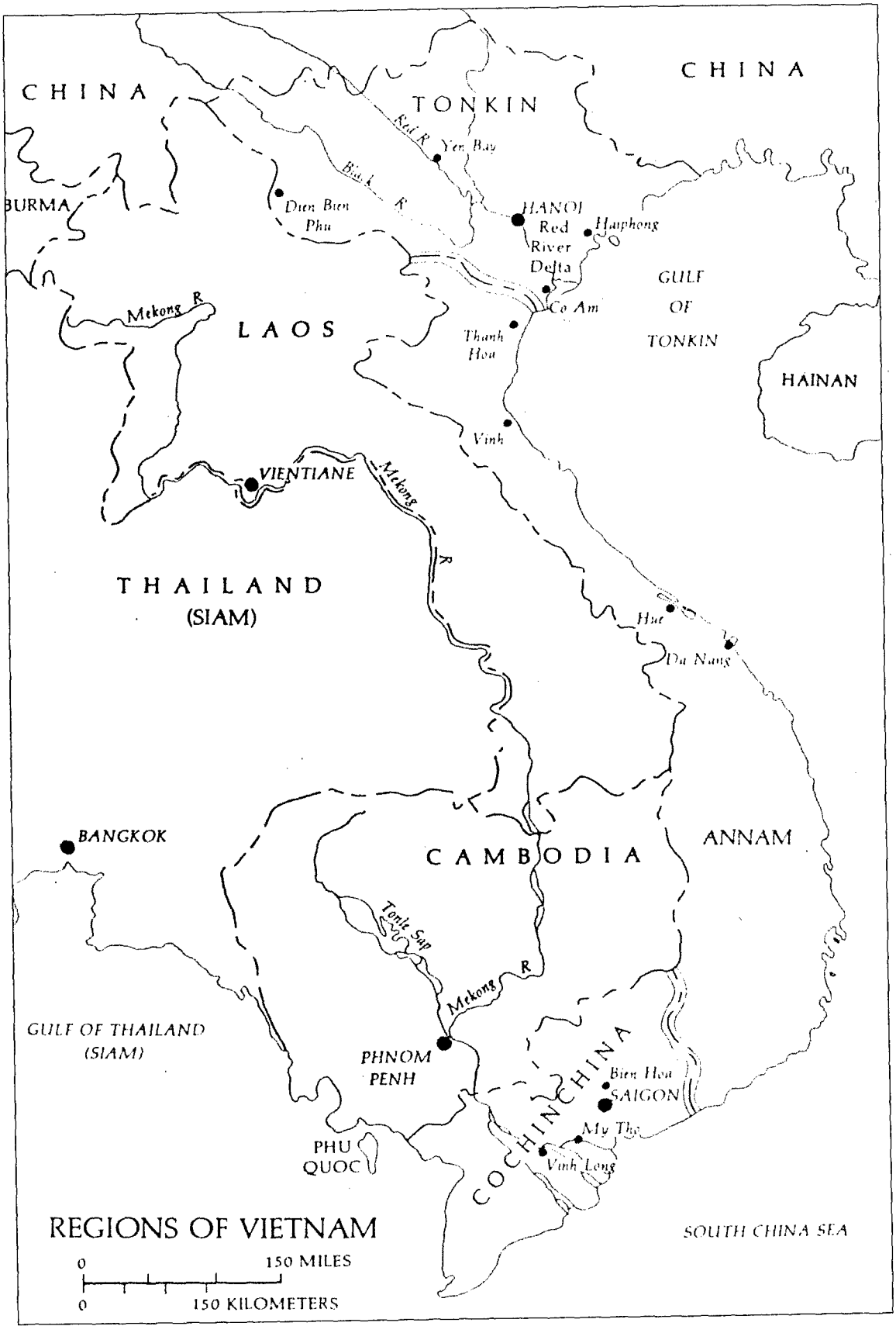
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Red R.
Yen Bay
Black R.
BURMA
Dien Bien Phu
HANOI
Red River Delta
Haiphong
GULF OF TONKIN
Mekong R.
LAOS
Thanh Hoa
Ce Am
HAINAN
Vinh
VIENTIANE
Mekong R.
THAILAND (SIAM)
Hue
Da Nang
BANGKOK
CAMBODIA
ANNAM
Tonle Sap
Mekong R.
GULF OF THAILAND (SIAM)
PHNOM PENH
Bien Hoa
SAIGON
COCHINCHINA
My Tho
PHU QUOC
Vinh Long
REGIONS OF VIETNAM
SOUTH CHINA SEA
0
150 MILES
0
150 KILOMETERS