

in each. Viet Cong strategy may be directed at "liberating" an area in which a "government" could be installed.

4. Although vast majority of Viet Cong troops are of local origin, the infiltration of Viet Cong cadres from North Viet-Nam via Laos, the demilitarized zone, and by sea appears to be increasing. However, there is little evidence of major supplies from outside sources, most arms apparently being captured or stolen from GVN forces or from the French during the Indo-China war.

On Laos, the situation summary showed no such pessimism. But, overall the absence of bad news from Laos only added to the worry about South Vietnam. For the paper reported:

There probably have been some Viet Minh withdrawals from northern Laos but Viet Minh movement into Southern Laos bordering on South Vietnam has increased. Thus it appears enemy may be accepting stalemate for time being within Laos and giving priority to stepping up offensive action against South Vietnam.

Two final items are worth bearing in mind in trying to see the Vietnamese problem as it might have appeared to the White House in the fall of 1961. First, this warning of the effect of U.S. policy in Vietnam, from the August 15 NIE quoted earlier:

International Attitudes. In providing the GVN a maximum of encouragement and extensive support in its struggle against the Communists, the US will inevitably become identified with the GVN's success or failure. The US will be under heavy pressure from other members of the non-Communist world, many of whom view the Vietnam struggle in differing terms. For example, the neighboring countries, such as Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Nationalist China, have all to some extent viewed developments in Laos as a gauge of US willingness and ability to help an anti-Communist Asian government stand against a Communist "national liberation" campaign. They will almost certainly look upon the struggle for Vietnam as a critical test of such US willingness and ability. All of them, including the neutrals, would probably suffer demoralization and loss of confidence in their prospects for maintaining their independence if the Communists were to gain control of South Vietnam. This loss of confidence might even extend to India.

Second, a couple of newspaper quotes may serve as a reminder of the extent to which the Kennedy Administration had been under a constant sense of foreign policy crisis throughout its first year, with every evidence of more to come. In late September, in a review piece on Congressional appraisals of Kennedy's first year, Russell Baker comments that not even Congress seems much interested in debate about Kennedy's effectiveness in pushing through legislation:

What makes it particularly irrelevant this autumn is that Congress itself has been far more concerned ever since January with the President's performance as guardian of the national security than with how he came out as chief warrior for a legislative program.

From Laos to Cuba to Vienna to Berlin to the Soviet nuclear testing

site at Semipalatinsk to New York's East River, crisis after crisis has fallen across the White House with a rapidity and gravity that has absorbed Mr. Kennedy's energy since his inauguration and reduced the Congressional program to secondary importance.

And a couple of days later, James Reston, describing the imminent risk of a nuclear crisis over Berlin, reported:

Specifically, Khrushchev told one of Mr. Kennedy's political emissaries that once Khrushchev signs a separate peace treaty with the Communist East Germans, not only all of the West's rights in Berlin will cease, but all traffic to Berlin will cease until the West negotiates new rights of access with the East German regime.

Khrushchev was questioned minutely on this key point. His reply was unequivocal: Not one truck, or barge, or train, or plane would leave from West Germany for West Berlin after the separate peace treaty until the new arrangements with the East Germans were negotiated.

Now, this is not precisely the same as Mr. Gromyko's bland assurances. This is blockade, and blockade is an act of war. Washington has made clear that it is not going to get stirred up if the East Germans merely replace the Russians on the borders between East and West Germany and approve the flow of adequate supplies. But Mr. Khrushchev did not support this procedure, and went on to threaten that any effort to break his blockade by force would lead to war.

Since Khrushchev had repeatedly pledged to sign the East German treaty by the end of the year, the showdown was not far off.

V. THE FALL DECISIONS-I

A. THE DECISION TO SEND TAYLOR

As of early October, there were several proposals for more active intervention in Southeast Asia on the table. One was the JCS-favored plan to intervene on the ground in Laos to seize and hold major portions of the country, principally to protect the borders of South Vietnam and Thailand. A second plan (referred to in a staff paper as the "Rostow proposal") would have put a SEATO force of about 25,000 men into Vietnam to try to mount a guard on the Vietnam/Laos border between the DMZ and Cambodia. Finally, there were various schemes, dating from the Task Force review, for putting a U.S. force into the highlands, or at DaNang with or without a nominal mission of training South Vietnamese troops.

Except for the Rostow proposal all these plans pre-dated the spurt of Viet Cong activity in September and Diem's subsequent request for a treaty. The record does not tell when and why the Rostow proposal was drawn up. It was probably a direct response to Diem's request, but it may have been simply a part of the on-going Laos contingency planning. In any event, Rostow's proposal was submitted to the JCS for comment October 5. On the 9th, the JCS responded with a counter-proposal for a substantial (initially about 20,000 men, but expected to grow) commitment of U.S. forces in Vietnam, centered on Pleiku in the highlands.

In hindsight, the JCS reasoning in rejecting the Rostow proposal looks unchallengeable. The JCS stated:

- a. SEATO forces will be deployed over a border of several hundred miles, and will be attacked piecemeal or by-passed at the Viet Cong's own choice.
- b. It may reduce but cannot stop infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and material.
- c. It deploys SEATO forces in the weakest defense points should DRV or CHICOM forces intervene.
- d. It compounds the problems of communications and logistical support.

The Chiefs also argued against an alternative border proposal to put the SEATO force along the 17th parallel. Their first preference, very emphatically, was to go into Laos:

As stated in your [Gilpatric's] memorandum, the proposed concept set forth must be analyzed in the total context of the defense of Southeast Asia. Any concept which deals with the defense of Southeast Asia that does not include all or a substantial portion of Laos is, from a military standpoint, unsound. To concede the majority of northern and central Laos would leave three-quarters of the border of Thailand exposed and thus invite an expansion of communist military action. To concede southern Laos would open the flanks of both Thailand and South Vietnam as well as expose Cambodia. Any attempt to combat insurgency in South Vietnam, while holding areas in Laos essential to the defense of Thailand and South Vietnam and, at the same time, putting troops in Thailand, would require an effort on the part of the United States alone on the order of magnitude of at least three divisions plus supporting units. This would require an additional two divisions from the United States.

What is needed is not the spreading out of our forces throughout Southeast Asia, but rather a concentrated effort in Laos where a firm stand can be taken saving all or substantially all of Laos which would, at the same time, protect Thailand and protect the borders of South Vietnam.

But, if the Laos plan was "politically unacceptable at this time," the Chiefs "provided" (but did not explicitly recommend) "a possible limited interim course of action" which could . . .

provide a degree of assistance to the Government of South Vietnam to regain control of its own territory, and could free certain South Vietnamese forces for offensive actions against the Viet Cong. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that implementation of this limited course of action would not provide for the defense of Thailand or Laos, nor contribute substantially or permanently to solution of the overall problem of defense of Southeast Asia, they consider the Plan preferable to either of the two military possibilities described in referenced memorandum.

The following day, there appeared a new paper called "Concept of Intervention in Vietnam." The paper, according to a pencilled note on the available copy, was drafted mainly by Alexis Johnson, who was then a Deputy Under Secretary of State. We know from a note William Bundy (then principal Deputy to Paul Nitze, who was then Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA) sent to McNamara

that a "talking paper" by Johnson was to be discussed at a meeting that included, at least, Rusk and McNamara on the afternoon of the 10th. But we do not know whether the draft we have available is the "talking paper" or a revision put together later in the day, after the meeting.

The proposal ("an effort to arrest and hopefully reverse the deteriorating situation in Vietnam") was a blend of Rostow's border force and the Chief's "possible limited interim course of action." Johnson's paper listed both the Rostow mission of the force (attempt to close the border) and that of the Chiefs (win control of the central highlands); otherwise the paper followed the JCS plan. What probably happened, considering the haste with which the paper must have been drafted, was that Johnson simply blended the two proposals together and assumed the fine points could be worked out later. For if the paper is somewhat confusing on the immediate military proposal, it is clear on the long-run thinking that underlays the proposal. And this long-run thinking made the immediate military mission relatively inconsequential, since as with the earlier combat-troops-for-training proposals, it was pretty clear that the main idea was to get some American combat troops into Vietnam, with the nominal excuse for doing so quite secondary.

The plan was described under the heading "Initial Phase." A subsequent section, titled "Anticipated Later Phases" states:

This initial action cannot be taken without accepting as our real and ultimate objective the defeat of the Viet Cong, and making Vietnam secure in the hands of an anti-Communist government. Thus supplemental military action must be envisaged at the earliest stage that is politically feasible. The ultimate force requirements cannot be estimated with any precision. JCS are now considering. Three divisions would be a guess . . .

Earlier the paper, in a similar vein, had remarked:

While a satisfactory political settlement in Laos would considerably reduce Viet Minh infiltration through Laos into South Vietnam, it would not entirely eliminate it. While such a reduction would materially assist the GVN in meeting the Viet Cong threat, there is no assurance that, even under these circumstances, the GVN will in the foreseeable future be able to defeat the Viet Cong. Under these circumstances, although the need of South Vietnam for outside assistance such as proposed in this plan would probably still be very strong, it would be much more difficult to find a political base upon which to execute this plan.

This judgment was probably influenced by a special NIE issued October 5th, which stated that 80-90% of the estimated 17,000 VC had been locally recruited, and that there was little evidence that the VC relied on external supplies.

The relation of this paper to Diem's request for treaty can only be guessed at. The paper never mentions Diem, or any South Vietnamese request for further assistance. But the paper supplemented one published about a week or so earlier (probably prior to Diem's request) titled "Limited Holding Actions in Southeast Asia." This earlier paper discussed various steps short of major troop deployments.

The impression is that both papers were part of contingency planning (short of major intervention in Laos) for saving something in Southeast Asia should the Laos negotiations continue to drag on with no satisfactory resolution. Thus al-

though the timing of the Vietnam paper was surely influenced and probably triggered by Diem's request for a treaty, it looks essentially like a suggestion (but not a formal recommendation) to the President that if he is unwilling to intervene to try to save Laos, he should at least take strong and unambiguous action to make sure that Vietnam would not also be lost. In this interpretation it is easy to make sense of the emphasis on a deteriorating situation in Vietnam, and the implied warning that it might be best to set this plan in motion before a settlement is reached in Laos, when it seemed relatively easy to provide a politically plausible basis for the action.

(In a recent column, Joseph Alsop quoted Averill Harriman as telling him that Kennedy had told Harriman to get whatever settlement he could on Laos, but that the U.S. really intended to make its stand in Vietnam.)

At the end of the Vietnam paper there is a list of "Specific Actions to be Taken Now" which goes no further [on Vietnam] than to list:

Use of U.S. naval aircraft and ships to assist GVN in interdiction of sea traffic, to assist self defense of GVN. This is to some extent camouflagable.

If necessity arises, use of U.S. military aircraft for logistic support, including troop lift within Laos and South Vietnam.

Further, there is a long list of pros and cons, with no judgment stated on the balance.

This (and other statements to be cited below) suggests, again, that the paper was prepared for a discussion on Southeast Asia planning in the NSC, rather than in response to a request for a set of recommendations.

Three other points need to be mentioned:

1. The paper, although nominally presenting a SEATO plan, explicitly assumes that "planning would have to be on the basis of proceeding with whichever SEATO Allies would participate."

2. The paper warns (in the balance of the paragraph quoted earlier) that the ultimate force requirements would "much depend" on the capabilities and leadership of the SEATO forces . . . and above all on whether the effort leads to much more better fighting by Diem's forces. They alone can win in the end.

3. Very clearly foreshadowing the Taylor mission (and perhaps indicating a White House hand in the drafting) the paper states:

The viability of this plan would be dependent on the degree to which it could and would also result in the GVN accelerating political and military action in its own defense. A judgment on this can only be reached after thorough exploration on the spot with the country team and the GVN.

Finally, here is the list of pros and cons presented (but not evaluated) in the paper.

Cons

1. The plan would not in itself solve the underlying problem of ridding SVN of communist guerrillas.

2. It would not seal off the borders of SVN except for the limited area of operations.

3. It breaks the Geneva Accords and puts responsibility on the U.S. for rationalizing the action before the U.N. and the world.

4. It raises questions of U.S. troop relationships with the Vietnamese peasants, montagnards, GVN and its army.

5. The use of SEATO forces in SVN distorts Plan Five [for major intervention in Laos] although these forces are not a net subtraction.

6. The risk of being regarded as interlopers à la the French must be considered.

7. Communist change of tactics back to small-scale operations might leave this force in a stagnant position.

Pros

1. The effect on GVN morale of SEATO engagement in their struggle could be most heartening.

2. It could prevent the Viet Cong move to the next stage of battalion-size, formal organization to challenge the ARVN.

3. The relatively sophisticated SEATO arms, air power, communications and intelligence might spark a real transformation in ARVN tactics and action.

4. Capitalizing on U.S. intelligence sources now unavailable to the GVN could lead to effective attacks on Viet Cong nerve centers of command and communications.

5. The SEATO force commitment could be used to get from Diem a package of actions McGarr feels are needed to step up the GVN effort [mainly the familiar items of clarifying the chain of command and establishing an overall plan].

6. Introducing SEATO forces would give us for the first time some bargaining position with the Russians for a settlement in Vietnam.

7. If we go into South Vietnam now with SEATO, the costs would be much less than if we wait and go in later, or lose SVN.

The available record shows three other papers prepared prior to the NSC meeting, October 11, at which this paper was considered:

1. A special NIE commented on the plan in terms that were a lot less than encouraging:

In the situation assumed, we believe that the DRV would seek at first to test the seriousness and effectiveness of the SEATO effort by subjecting the SEATO forces and their lines of communication to harassment, ambush, and guerrilla attack. The Communists would probably estimate that by using their Viet Cong apparatus in South Vietnam, and by committing experienced guerrilla forces from North Vietnam in guerrilla operations in territory long familiar to them, and by exploiting the opportunities offered by the sizable junk traffic in coastal waters, they could severely harass the SEATO land forces and penetrate the SEATO blockade. The Communists would expect worthwhile political and psychological rewards from successful harassment and guerrilla operations against SEATO forces, including lowered GVN morale and increased tensions among the SEATO members.

While seeking to test the SEATO forces, the DRV would probably not relax its Viet Cong campaign against the GVN to any significant extent. Meanwhile, Communist strength in south Laos would probably be increased by forces from North Vietnam to guard against an effort to partition Laos or an attack against the Pathet Lao forces. The Soviet airlift

would probably be increased with a heavier flow of military supply into south Laos, and the Communists would probably intensify their efforts to establish a secure route for motor traffic into the south. The establishment of a coalition government in Laos under Souvanna Phouma probably would not significantly reduce Communist infiltration of men and equipment from North to South Vietnam through Laos.

If the Seato action appeared to be proving effective in reducing the present scale of infiltration the Communist probably would increase their use of the mountain trail system through Cambodia. This is a longer and more difficult route but its use could keep at least minimum support flowing to the Viet Cong. At the same time, in order to reduce the apparent success of the SEATO action, they could intensify small unit attacks, assassinations, and local terrorism in South Vietnam; they could also commit more DRV irregular personnel for the harassment of the SEATO forces. In any event, the SEATO commitment in South Vietnam would probably have to be continued over a prolonged period. It might be part of Communist tactics to play upon possible SEATO weariness over maintaining substantial forces and accepting losses, in South Vietnam over a long period of time . . .

The reaction to the assumed SEATO action among concerned non-Communist governments would vary widely. The Asian members of SEATO would find renewed confidence in the organization and the US, if the plan were to go well. If, on the other hand, the SEATO action were to become costly, prolonged, or to involve heavy casualties, the Asian members would soon become disenchanted and look to the US to "do something" to lessen the burden and to solve the problem. The UK and France would be likely to oppose the assumed SEATO action, and their reluctance to participate could be overcome only with great difficulty, if at all.

In this instance, and as we will see, later, the Intelligence Community's estimates of the likely results of U.S. moves are conspicuously more pessimistic (and more realistic) than the other staff papers presented to the President. This SNIE was based on an assumption that the SEATO force would total about 25,000 men. It is hard to imagine a more sharp contrast than between this paper, which foresees no serious impact on the insurgency from proposed intervention, and Supplemental Note 2, to be quoted next.

2. "Supplemental Note 2" to the paper, issued the day of the NSC meeting, contained, among other comments, a JCS estimate of the size of the American force needed "to clean up the Viet Cong threat." It reads:

Wider Military Implications. As the basic paper indicates, the likelihood of massive DRV and Chicom intervention cannot be estimated with precision. The SNIE covers only the initial phase when action might be limited to 20-25,000 men. At later stages, when the JCS estimate that 40,000 US forces will be needed to clean up the Viet Cong threat, the chances of such massive intervention might well become substantial, with the Soviets finding it a good opportunity to tie down major US forces in a long action, perhaps as part of a multi-prong action involving Berlin and such additional areas as Korea and Iran.

Because of this possibility of major Bloc intervention, the maximum possible force needs must be frankly faced. Assuming present estimates of about 40,000 US forces for the stated military objective in South Vietnam,

plus 128,000 US forces for meeting North Vietnam and Chicom intervention, the drain on US-based reserve forces could be on the order of 3 or 4 divisions and other forces as well. The impact on naval capabilities for blockade plans (to meet Berlin) would also be major. In light of present Berlin contingency plans, and combat attrition, including scarce items of equipment, the initiation of the Vietnam action in itself should dictate a step up in the present mobilization, possibly of major proportions.

3. Finally, there is the following memo from William Bundy (then acting Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA) to McNamara. It is of interest because it is the only piece of paper available for this period that gives anyone's candid recommendations to his boss, as opposed to the more formal staff papers:

Even if the decision at tomorrow's meeting is only preliminary—to explore with Diem and the British, Australians, and New Zealanders would be my guess—it is clearly of the greatest possible importance. Above all, action must proceed fast.

For what one man's feel is worth, mine—based on very close touch with Indochina in the 1954 war and civil war afterwards till Diem took hold—is that it is really now or never if we are to arrest the gains being made by the Viet Cong. Walt Rostow made the point yesterday that the Viet Cong are about to move, by every indication, from the small unit basis to a moderate battalion-size basis. Intelligence also suggests that they may try to set up a "provisional government" like Xieng Khuang (though less legitimate appearing) in the very Kontum area into which the present initial plan would move SEATO forces. If the Viet Cong movement "blooms" in this way, it will almost certainly attract all the back-the-winner sentiment that understandably prevails in such cases and that beat the French in early 1954 and came within an ace of beating Diem in early 1955.

An early and hard-hitting operation has a good chance (70% would be my guess) of arresting things and giving Diem a chance to do better and clean up. Even if we follow up hard, on the lines the JCS are working out after yesterday's meeting, however, the chances are not much better that we will in fact be able to clean up the situation. It all depends on Diem's effectiveness, which is very problematical. The 30% chance is that we would wind up like the French in 1954; white men can't win this kind of fight.

On a 70-30 basis, I would myself favor going in. But if we let, say, a month go by before we move, the odds will slide (both short-term shock effect and long-term chance) down to 60-40, 50-50 and so on. Laos under a Souvanna Phouma deal is more likely than not to go sour, and will more and more make things difficult in South Viet-Nam, which again underscores the element of time.

Minutes of the NSC meeting of October 11 were not available for this study. But we have the following Gilpatric memorandum for the record. (The JUNGLE JIM squadron—12 planes—was an Air Force unit specially trained for counterinsurgency warfare. Short of engaging in combat itself, presumably it would be used to train Vietnamese pilots):

At this morning's meeting with the President the following course of action was agreed upon with relation to South Vietnam:

1961 OCT 9 13 34



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
OFF SECY OF DEFENSE WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

JCSM-716-61

9 OCT 1961

11

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Concept of Use of SEATO Forces in
South Vietnam (C)

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 5 October 1961, subject as above. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the proposed concept for the use of SEATO forces in South Vietnam and the suggested two principal military possibilities for its implementation.

2. It is their opinion that the use of SEATO forces at the greatest possible number of entry points along the whole South Vietnam border, but excluding that part of the 17th parallel now held by the South Vietnamese Army itself, is not feasible for the following reasons:

a. SEATO forces will be deployed over a border of several hundred miles and will be attacked piecemeal or by-passed at the Viet Cong's own choice.

b. It may reduce but cannot stop infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and material.

c. It deploys SEATO forces in the weakest defense points should DRV or CRICOM forces intervene.

d. It compounds the problems of communications and logistical support.

3. Further, the alternative possibility of using SEATO forces to cover solely the 17th parallel, although considered feasible to a limited extent, is militarily unsound in view of the following considerations:

a. The 17th parallel is not a main avenue of approach being used by the Viet Cong.

b. North Vietnam may interpret such SEATO action as preparation for aggression against them, thus promoting the possibility of communist harassment and destruction of friendly combat and logistic forces concentrated near the parallel, if not escalation.

4. As stated in your memorandum, the proposed concept set forth must be analyzed in the total context of the defense of Southeast Asia. Any concept which deals with the defense of Southeast Asia that does not include all or a substantial portion of Laos is, from a military standpoint, unsound. To concede the majority of northern and central Laos would leave three quarters of the border of Thailand exposed and thus invite an expansion of communist military action. To concede southern Laos would open the flanks of both Thailand and South Vietnam as well as expose Cambodia. Any attempt to combat insurgency in South Vietnam, while holding areas in Laos essential to the defense of Thailand and South Vietnam and, at the same time, putting troops in Thailand, would require an effort on the part of the United States alone on the order of magnitude of at least three divisions plus supporting units. This would require an additional two divisions from the United States.

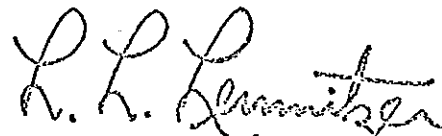
5. What is needed is not the spreading out of our forces throughout Southeast Asia but rather a concentrated effort in Laos where a firm stand can be taken saving all or substantially all of Laos which would, at the same time, protect Thailand and protect the borders of South Vietnam.

6. The over-all objective could best be served by the implementation of _____ or a variation thereof, now. This would accomplish the objective of assisting to secure the border of South Vietnam against the infiltration of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong thus freeing Vietnamese forces to conduct more effective offensive operations

in South Vietnam. In addition, this action would stem further communist gains in Laos and, at the same time, give concrete evidence of US determination to stand firm against further communist advances world-wide.

7. If implementation of _____ or a variation thereof, is considered a politically unacceptable course of action at this time, there is provided herewith a possible limited interim course of action. This course of action, covered in the Appendices hereto, could provide a degree of assistance to the Government of South Vietnam to regain control of its own territory, and could free certain South Vietnamese forces for offensive actions against the Viet Cong. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that implementation of this limited course of action would not provide for the defense of Thailand or Laos, nor contribute substantially or permanently to solution of the over-all problem of defense of Southeast Asia, they consider the Plan preferable to either of the two military possibilities described in referenced memorandum.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:


L. L. LEMNITZER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

1. To enable the Government of South Vietnam to regain full control of its own territory and to eliminate the Viet Cong threat.

2. To defend Thailand and South Vietnam, holding Laos or areas thereof to the extent required as being essential to the defense of Thailand and South Vietnam.

MILITARY OBJECTIVES

1. To assist by the use of SEATO forces in securing the borders of South Vietnam to the maximum extent possible against the infiltration of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong.

2. To assist the Government of South Vietnam to regain full control of its own territory and to eliminate the Viet Cong threat by freeing South Vietnam forces for offensive action against the Viet Cong.

3. To defend Thailand and South Vietnam, holding Laos or areas thereof essential to such defense.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Forces available will be the British Commonwealth Brigade, Pakistan, Philippine, and US forces and a limited amount of Thai forces.

2. The United States will provide for stationing in Thailand one US Brigade Task Force Team as suggested to Foreign Minister Thanat by Deputy Undersecretary of State Johnson.

3. South Vietnamese forces released by SEATO forces will conduct effective offensive operations against the Viet Cong.

4. Maximum possible use of SEATO forces will be made to establish an effective communications network in as wide an area as possible and to serve as a means for introducing new techniques into the South Vietnamese Army.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. SEATO ground and air forces will deploy to South Vietnam to assist in protecting the South Vietnam-Laos border, exclusive of that part of the 17th parallel now held in force by I Corps of the South Vietnamese Army (I Corps Tactical Area), southward to the Cambodian border.

2. SEATO ground forces of approximately one division strength (11,000) initially will deploy to the high plateau region of the Pleiku area. Securing this region with SEATO forces will free South Vietnamese forces to conduct effective offensive operations elsewhere. Further deployments to assist in interrupting the flow of personnel and material in support of the Viet Cong into South Vietnam will be at the discretion of the SEATO Field Force Commander in light of the existing tactical situation. The SEATO force will further assist South Vietnamese forces by the provision of air, communications and logistic support.

3. The additional command and control communications electronics requirements for the support of this concept are set forth in Appendix B to Enclosure B.

COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS

Command arrangements for this concept would be as now provided for in _____ except that the United States would have the responsibilities of the Appointed Nation. In addition, coordination between the SEATO forces and the Government of South Vietnam would be required.

FORCE INVOLVEMENT

1. The forces involved in support of this concept would include those forces now committed to support _____ less both the Thai commitment and the US commitment to the Central Reserve. This force would be composed of approximately 9600 combat forces, of which about 5000 would be US. Headquarters units, air component, logistic and other support units would total about 13,200. This would provide a total force of about 22,800.

2. SEATO forces in South Vietnam would be approximately as follows:

a. Headquarters		700
b. Ground Component		
Philippines	200	
Commonwealth	4400	
United States	5000	
	<hr/>	9600
c. Air Component		
Commonwealth	200	
United States	850	
	<hr/>	1050

d. Reserve Component		
Pakistan		1400
e. Base Area Command		
(Hq & Hq Det)	100	
Psy War Units	150	
Common Service Log. Support Units	3800	
Log. Units In Support of National Forces	6000	
		<hr/> 10,050
	Grand Total	<hr/> 22,800

3. There are no US Navy forces assigned to the SEATO force. SEVENTH FLEET forces consisting of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces would operate in direct support of SEATO operations as required. Other units of the SEVENTH FLEET including patrol aircraft are available to assist the South Vietnamese Navy Coastal Patrol Force, as requested, in operations against Viet Cong sea infiltration.

4. The source of US forces to support this concept would be from those forces now assigned to the Pacific Command. Our military posture is such that the employment of the SEATO forces would not adversely affect our capability to conduct planned operations in Europe relating to Berlin.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. SEATO forces may take whatever action is, in the opinion of the Commander, necessary to insure the security of the force itself.

2. Offensive actions by SEATO forces against the Viet Cong will be limited normally to those necessary to destroy such Viet Cong forces as pose a threat to either:

a. The borders of South Vietnam, or

b. The security of the SEATO force itself. Such offensive action envisages the possibility of reasonably limited projection of SEATO air and/or ground forces beyond the borders of South Vietnam into Laos.

3. Aerial reconnaissance by the SEATO Air Component will normally be confined to Laos and South Vietnam.

4. SEATO forces will be permitted to retaliate immediately against North Vietnam overt military intervention by launching air strikes against military targets in that country.

Bloc overt aggression to counter the movement of SEATO forces into South Vietnam is considered unlikely. The most probable course of action by the communists would be continued use of insurgents and infiltration. However, if the Bloc did decide to act overtly to counter the introduction of SEATO forces into the area, this action would probably follow, in general, the pattern set forth below:

GROUND ACTIONS

a. Basically an infantry invasion of South Vietnam and Laos and deployed in strength and direction as follows:

(1) Five divisions on the North/South Vietnam border to Saigon along the coastal route via Dong Ha - Tourane - Binh Dinh.

(2) One division (light) to Vientiane via Xieng - Khouang - Paksane.

(3) One division (light) to Thakhek and Savannekhet via Mugia Pass and Keo Neua Pass.

(4) A follow-up force of up to six divisions moving as follows:

(a) Two divisions to Saigon or Bangkok via Lao Bao Pass - down the lower Mekong Valley along Route 13 to Saigon or across the Mekong River to Bangkok.

(b) Two divisions to Bangkok via Routes 7, 8 and 13 through Laos into Thailand and on to Bangkok.

(c) Two divisions to be held in reserve along the North/South Vietnam border to be available to put additional momentum along the coastal route, or to effect a subsidiary effort in the Kontum-Pleiku Plateau.

b. A secondary effort, or threat thereof, by about nine Chinese Communists divisions into Burma and Northern Thailand, which could be supported as follows:

(1) Three divisions, one lightly equipped, to northern Thailand via northwest Burma.

(2) Six divisions toward Rangoon along the Burma Road and via Myitkyina to Mandalay, then south in the internal transport system of Burma.

c. There would probably be a build-up in North Vietnam and possibly a build-up along the China-Burma border before any invasion was initiated. The invasion would probably be on the broadest possible front employing lightly equipped troops to infiltrate between defending forces and thereby minimizing the effects of nuclear weapons against deployed ground troops. These infiltrating forces would be supported by columns advancing quickly down main routes. Battalion-size or smaller airborne units might be used, chiefly to seize and hold key features such as bridges, airfields, critical road junctions. The communists would exploit to the fullest their ability to infiltrate through the most difficult country and would not necessarily be tied to the highways and roads. Large numbers of porters and pack animals would be available and jungle trails would be used to a great extent, though this would restrict the speed of attack and the weight of equipment that could be used.

AIR ACTIONS

a. The Chinese Communists maintain, on a routine basis, approximately 250 jet fighters in South China. These and other aircraft, including jet light bombers, could be rapidly deployed to bases in North Vietnam and South China to conduct air operations in support of the Communist objective. In the event of a ground invasion of the magnitude suggested above, it is well within the CHICOM's capability to neutralize the air bases and port facilities in Thailand and South Vietnam in an attempt to deny their use by SEATO forces. Such an operation could precede or accompany the invasion of ground forces.

REACTION TO CONTINGENCIES

1. If North Vietnamese forces overtly intervened, the SEATO force would have to be increased from the equivalent of approximately one division at the initiation of the SEATO Plan to twelve divisions, seven Regimental Combat Teams and five battalions. In addition, the SEATO force would have air and naval superiority. Such a force is considered adequate to defeat the North Vietnamese forces.

2. US force contribution to the enlarged SEATO force required to combat such DRV action would include two Army divisions, one Marine division/wing team and five USAF tactical squadrons deployed in Thailand and South Vietnam. The US forces would be increased from 14,000 to a total of approximately 129,000, not including Navy forces. One division for this force must come from the continental United States. This could require the call up of one division plus other appropriate forces to maintain the US strategic reserve.

3. The mission of the enlarged SEATO force would be to defend Laos and South Vietnam against attack by forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and to inflict a quick and decisive defeat on the military forces of the DRV. The general concept is to hold the enemy as far forward as possible, destroy his forces, his lines of communication, and those installations directly supporting his war making capability. When appropriate, SEATO forces would mount a general offensive against the enemy. They would have a capability of conducting amphibious assault operations in North Vietnam in case the military situation so dictated.

4. If the Chinese Communists intervene, whether by regular or "volunteer" forces, political authorization for essential military actions must be anticipated since prompt counteractions would be required. There would be issues whether to attack selected targets in South China with conventional weapons and whether to initiate use of nuclear weapons against targets in direct support of Chinese operations in Laos.

5. In this event the SEATO force would be increased to fifteen divisions and eight RCTs (278,000) deployed in the defense of Southeast Asia.

6. The US contribution to this force would be three ground divisions deployed in Thailand and South Vietnam and one Marine Division/Wing Team, prepared for amphibious assault operations against North Vietnam as the military situation dictated. Two divisions and additional air forces would have to come from the continental United States. This could require the call up of two additional divisions plus other appropriate forces to maintain the US strategic reserve.

7. The mission of the SEATO force would be expanded to defend Southeast Asia against attack by Chinese Communist forces and those of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The general concept of operation would be to launch air and naval attacks, to delay the enemy's advance with local forces and interdict his lines of communications with air and naval forces, while conducting an unremitting air and naval offensive to destroy the enemy's war-making capacity.

APPENDIX D

COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPORT OF SEATO
FORCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM (C)

1. Long Haul Gateway Communications.

a. Long haul gateway communications now supporting the Southeast Asia area will require expansion and augmentation as follows:

(1) Establish Saigon-Okinawa voice and record communications system.

(2) Establish Saigon-SEATO Force Headquarters voice and record communications.

(3) Expand Saigon-Bangkok system to provide voice and record channels.

b. Provision of the above communications will involve the following actions:

(1) Saigon-Okinawa Sideband System - Expedite completion of the sideband equipment now in the process of installation at Saigon. Okinawa installation has been completed. To fulfill this requirement pending completion of the present installation now in progress at Saigon, it would be necessary to move by air one mobile AN/TSC-16 radio equipment (contingency package) with operating personnel from Clark Air Base to Saigon. Operating personnel would be furnished initially from DCS STARCOM Station Clark AB.

(2) Saigon-SEATO Force Headquarters - Move by air two complete mobile radio relay equipments (4 terminals, 4 relays with associated carrier, channel derivation switching and terminal equipments) with operating personnel from the US to Saigon. Mission will be to establish voice and record communications between DCS station Saigon and SEATO Force Headquarters.

(3) Saigon-Bangkok Expansion - Move by air two mobile AN/TSC-20 radio equipments (contingency packages) with operating teams from the US, one to Saigon and one to Bangkok.

2. SEATO Force Communications-Electronics to component Forces Headquarters, Subordinate Field Forces and National Forces Headquarters will be provided by CINCPAC, and National Forces initially, utilizing resources currently available augmented by three mobile AN/TSC-20 equipments with operating teams air lifted from the US to locations designated by CINCPAC.