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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

2 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable William H. Sullivan
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs

SUBJECT : Suggested Additions to Draft NSSM 94 Paper

1. Appended for your consideration are my two proposed inputs to the draft paper responding to NSSM 94. As indicated, the first comes at the end of the present introduction; the second after paragraph one of Section D. If my argument is bought, we may have to do further surgery on the remainder of Section D, but this is a matter we can discuss in more detail at our 3 June meeting.

2. I am sending copies of this memorandum and its two attachments to our colleagues enumerated below.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

DCI/SAVA:GACarver:taw:2June1970

Copies to: [redacted] 25X1

Distribution:
Orig. - Addressee w/atts & copies as stated
1 - VAS Chrono w/o atts
1 - GAC Chrono w/o atts
1 - Diplomatic Initiatives on Indochina w/atts

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Suggested add-on to page 3 (Introduction)

The pursuit of the aims outlined above will not be easy, and any realistic discussion of serious diplomatic initiatives developed to achieve them must take cognizance of certain intractable givens in the problem. One of these givens, and perhaps the most intractable, is the fact that the Vietnamese Communists are not interested in or willing to think about negotiations, cease-fires, de-escalation of the fighting or even the withdrawal of U.S. troops as ends in themselves. For four decades the Vietnamese Communist Party has had the objective of acquiring political control over all of Vietnam plus some form of party-oriented hegemony over Laos and Cambodia. The Party's immediate objective is the acquisition of political power in South Vietnam. In the present climate, the Politburo leadership is not likely to negotiate seriously or respond to diplomatic initiatives of any nature unless it believes that doing so may help further the achievement of this basic objective. Therefore the mechanics of possible U.S. initiatives or the channels used to implement them, in Hanoi's eyes, will be far less important than the substance of our political position thus conveyed.

If Hanoi estimates, on the basis of any such overtures, that we may be ready to give the Communists a solid share of political power in South Vietnam, along with fairly strong security guarantees for their apparatus and their followers, Hanoi may be responsive.

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But if Hanoi estimates that we wish only to discuss substance that Hanoi considers tantamount to surrender -- e.g., acquiescence & ~~acquisition~~ in Vietnamization or the continued existence of the Saigon government -- Hanoi is not likely to be receptive. Under these circumstances Hanoi would almost certainly opt not to respond positively but, instead, to continue the struggle by one means or another on the assumption that Communist prospects for prevailing on the battlefield will improve as the U.S. curtails its troop strength and level of involvement.

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Insert after paragraph 1 in Section D:

2. When weighing the advantages, disadvantages and probable outcome of various initiatives, however, the cautionary note sounded in this paper's introduction should not be forgotten. At the present time and in the present climate the prospects for successful international negotiations on Indochina are very dim, primarily because of the gulf between the objectives of the two major protaganists. On the one hand, Hanoi seeks to bring down the present government in Saigon, to install a successor regime more amenable to the Communists, and eventually to bring the entire country under Communist control. Hanoi might be willing to accept some interim political arrangements in South Vietnam which do not require the prior overthrow and dismantlement of the present government, but so far the Communists have refused to concede that the GVN even has a role in a political settlement. In effect, Hanoi has insisted that dismemberment of the GVN is a "non-negotiable" pre-condition to even serious talk of settlement.

3. On the other hand, the Communists see little inclination on the U.S./GVN side to negotiate about the political issues they consider fundamental. So far as Hanoi is concerned, allied proposals to date are all aimed at perpetuating a staunchly anti-Communist regime in South Vietnam that has a free hand to continue killing Communists. Until some means are found to bridge this gap between

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the objectives of the two sides, there is little hope that international negotiations, regardless of their format or the participants, will be successful in achieving a settlement of the war.

4. There are also two time-linked considerations germane to the subjects treated in this paper. First, Hanoi is almost certain to be coldly unresponsive to any negotiation or conference overtures floated in the immediate or near term future. In Hanoi's eyes, major considerations of face and image would inevitably be involved. Hanoi would reckon (probably correctly) that any North Vietnamese acceptance of a negotiation or conference overture -- however abstractly tempting -- that was tendered soon after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Cambodia would be widely regarded in South Vietnam, and the world at large, as an admission of Vietnamese Communist weakness and a vindication of the thesis that Hanoi was vulnerable to military pressure.

5. Secondly, Hanoi's present hard nosed position on the whole subject of negotiated settlement is rooted in the assumption or calculation that, despite current adversity, Communist prospects in South Vietnam are going to improve over time, particularly as the U.S. curtails the size of its forces and extent of its direct involvement in the struggle. Thus Hanoi is presently prepared to wait us out on the battlefield (estimating its staying power as greater than ours) unless or until we give clear signs of readiness to give Hanoi the essence of what it wants at the conference table. Over time, this key

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calculation is of course subject to modification, but the considerations capable of dictating such modification will have to lie in Hanoi's own reading of the course of events and the evidence derived therefrom. This calculation or assumption will almost certainly be reviewed -- though not necessarily revised -- when Hanoi nets out the gains and losses to its position and long term prospects in light of the U.S. venture into the Cambodian sanctuaries. (Hanoi will frame such an evaluation in light of its, not our, calculus, but it will unquestionably put considerations such as a major loss of essential stockpiles in the minus column and ones such as the sharp rise in vocal opposition to the war within the U.S. in the plus column.) Hanoi may well come to the point where it considers the respite that could be afored by a cease-fire or some less than optimum negotiated settlement would outweigh the theoretical long term advantages of continued struggle. But Hanoi has not reached that point yet, nor does it appear likely to do so in the reasonably near future.

6. Thus, we must consider the possibility that an international conference simply cannot be arranged at the present time. /Pick up text from old paragraph 2, renumbering paragraphs that follow./

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