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65-3402

15 June 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: DDCI

SUBJECT : Estimates on South Vietnam

1. In general I am in agreement with the estimates but would make the following additional comments.

a. Nowhere is any mention made of SVN war weariness. Isn't this an increasing possibility--that is, that they might decide to stop fighting--as they take a consistent beating? The war weariness must be mounting as the slaughter increases. Also, as the situation worsens and American advisers are more insistent, won't resentment and non-cooperation increase? In my opinion, the SVN have little compunction about switching sides.

b. It seems unanimous that if China is hit or threatened she will come in. In my view, NVN can be practically flattened with only limited impairment of the war effort and she will not invite the Chinese in nor will they come in. It was a grass roots improvised war from the start and can return to that. There has been a singular lack of ability in the south to stop the flow of men and material. There will have to be a major long-term reversal of the war in the South before the North worries.

c. VC intelligence is appallingly good. They hold the initiative and choose the battlefields. This will have to be reversed before the tide of the war changes.

d. Where do all the SVN who are captured or desert to the VC ultimately go? How many have ever been recaptured or recovered? We never hear of a VC-PW camp being liberated. Aren't they being reoriented and put into VC battalions?

2. Where will we be a year from now?

a. It will depend 80 to 90 per cent on what happens in the South.

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- b. US will not act to bring the Chinese in.
- c. US will not use A-bomb--public won't permit it.
- d. NVN will negotiate only when they feel the military phase in the South cannot be successful, and then they will ask for a cease-fire and return to subversion.
- e. US-SVN can win the war in the South if:
 - (1) The borders are sealed--why mop up the floor with the faucet still on;
 - (2) SVN intelligence is built up;
 - (3) SVN population is purged and controlled; and
 - (4) guerrillas are fought by guerrillas.

/P/
Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director

LBK:rr:15 June 65

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