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11 June 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: DCI Briefing of CIA Subcommittee of Senate Armed Services,  
11 June 1965, 3 p. m.

1. The Director, accompanied by Mr. Houston, met with Senator Stennis, Acting Chairman of the CIA Subcommittee of Senate Armed Services. Also present were Senator Saltonstall, Senator Young of the CIA Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations, and Mr. William Darden, Professional Staff Member.

2. The Director opened the briefing with information on Russian assistance to North Vietnam, noting the three SAM sites around Hanoi and the possibility of two more to the east, but also noting that weather was so bad there had been no good U-2 photography of the area for a month. He said we hoped to do better when the OXCART was ready for operations on 1 October.

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4. Senator Young wanted to know what portion of the South Vietnamese were sympathetic to the Viet Cong, and the Director pointed out you must distinguish between willing support and support under the threat of death or torture. He said he had seen figures that the willing support was as little as 10 or 15 per cent. He noted that on the whole in the present circumstances he tended to be pessimistic about the South Vietnamese situation.

5. Senator Saltonstall asked if the Viet Cong casualty reports were accurate. The Director said they are conservative in that they were reports of head counts of Viet Cong killed or captured and since they took their wounded out with them these were not included. He also pointed out that due to this head count confirmation the news of South Vietnam casualties came out first and therefore had more impact. In answer to the Senator's query, he described the recent battle south of Saigon, and he also noted we had recently received

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6. Senator Saltonstall asked the number of CIA employees involved in South Vietnam and also the number of natives CIA was using, and the Director said he would provide this information. He said the Director seemed more pessimistic than General Taylor had been in the morning. The Director said he was trying to give the estimate of the situation as it appeared now but that he felt General Westmoreland's recommendations were going in the right direction and would change the picture. When asked what the planned role of the U. S. troops was now, the Director likened it to fire brigades to assist in situations which got out of hand but not to take over from the South Vietnamese.

7. Senator Stennis pointed out that in all their districts the draft call was up under the draft law which they had participated in. He wanted to know if the Americans would fight under our command. The Director said our troops were under U. S. command. Senator Stennis asked if we controlled strategy. The Director said we did so only through advisors and the advice was not always taken, but

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it was his understanding there was considerable harmony and that the South Vietnamese were pretty competent. Senator Young asked about South Vietnamese desertions, and the Director said they were presently somewhat on the increase but this situation varies and it is not now alarmingly high. He pointed out also that we get deserters from the Viet Cong and that on the whole he felt we could weather the situation with the forces that General Westmoreland was asking for.

8. Senator Stennis said he noted columnists said 150,000 American troops were going to be placed in South Vietnam, and the Director said so far as he knew not now. The Director pointed out that we were going through a series of estimates on all sorts of different postulates so as to try to suggest the outcome of various courses of action and that CIA would coordinate these estimates throughout the intelligence community. He said one result of this estimating was that we felt that North Vietnam could be devastated and yet it would continue its efforts if it still thought it was winning in South Vietnam.

9. Mr. Darden asked if Shrike missiles were effective against the North Vietnamese radar. The Director said they would be but we do not want to commit some of the highly sophisticated weapons but would depend on the more conventional weapons at present. Mr. Darden asked why the Viet Cong had not sabotaged the water supply and electricity in Saigon, and the Director said this was not as easy as it seemed and the South Vietnamese were on guard against this.

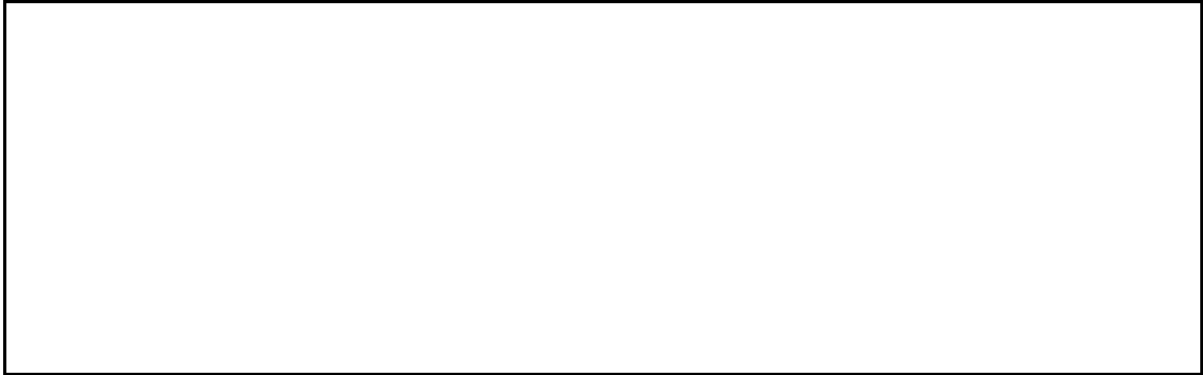
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11. Senator Stennis asked about other soft spots, and the Director briefed on Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela. Senator Stennis asked if Venezuela were not the softest situation in Latin America, and the Director pointed out that there were others that could blow up overnight, such as Guatemala. Even in Chile President Frei, [redacted] pro-United States, is having problems and found his Minister of Interior planning a Cuban solidarity meeting on 14 June and Frei had to quash it. The Director also discussed the situations in Brazil and Uruguay. Senator Saltonstall remarked that Castro seemed to have done well for himself, and the Director pointed out that these were not all Castroite maneuvers and that the three types of communists were to some extent in competition.

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12. The Director then turned to the Middle East and in talking about Yemen Senator Saltonstall asked if any British troops were present, and the Director said they had a considerable force in Aden but that they were having their own problems by nationalist infiltrations from Yemen and were, therefore, busy with their own problems. Senator Stennis noted that apparently the communists had not had much success in Turkey and Iran, and the Director said this was true and the Moslems, as such, tended to be anti-communist. Senator Stennis said he noted that Catholics were also anticommunist and yet many Catholic countries were in trouble. The Director said he had recently had a long conversation with a Catholic priest on this subject, who was much troubled by this, and noted in passing that no Episcopal country had gone communist.

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LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel

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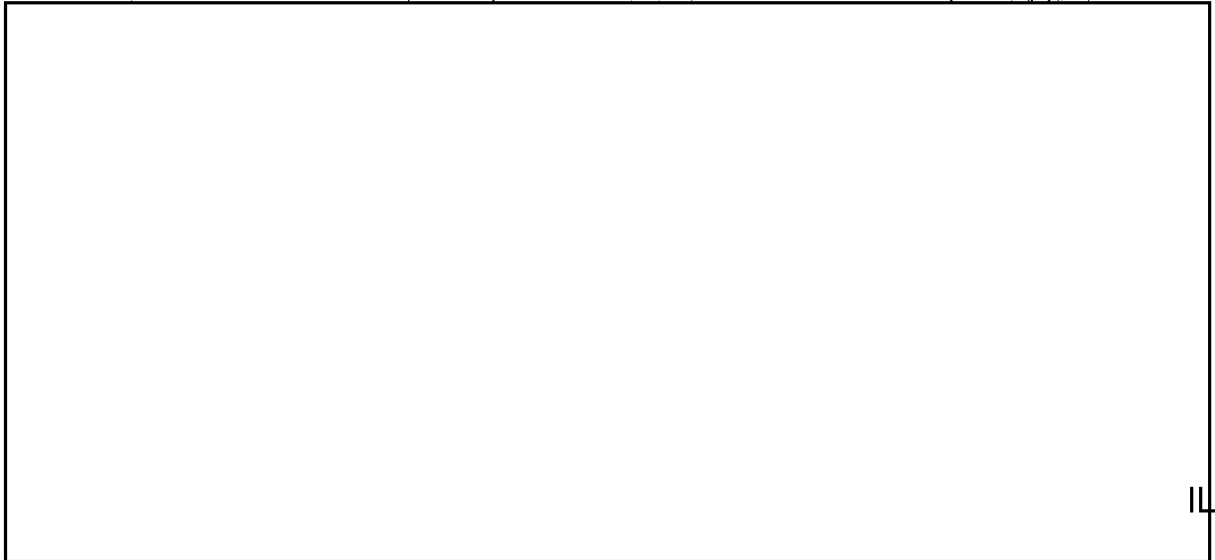
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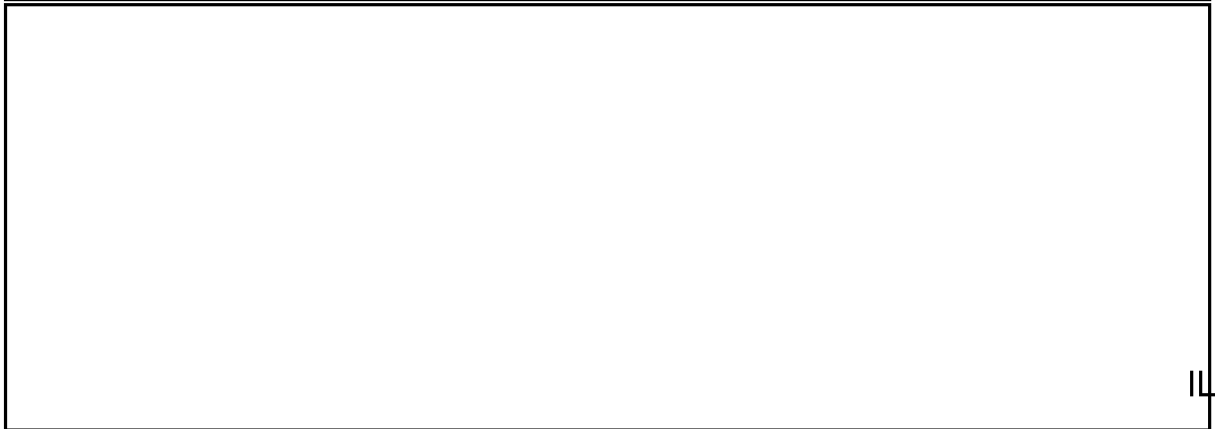
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