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**DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE**

Intelligence Memorandum

Manpower Considerations And Hanoi's Strategic Options

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
10 May 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Manpower Considerations
And Hanoi's Strategic Options

Introduction

1. This memorandum presents additional analysis requested by the Senior Review Group on the manpower implications of alternative US troop withdrawal rates.

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2. The analysis considers Communist manpower requirements to support seven alternative strategies, ranging from a continuation of the protracted warfare with its occasional highpoints which was typical of 1970, to a sustained general offensive throughout South Vietnam and Cambodia. We focus specifically on how US withdrawals might affect Communist manpower from three points of view:

- (a) the aggregate combat force required to sustain each alternative strategy,
- (b) the changes which US force withdrawals have on friendly/enemy force ratios,
- (c) the effect on enemy casualty rates.

3. In addition to measuring these three effects, the analysis also presents estimates of enemy force

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requirements and friendly/enemy force ratios at quarterly intervals during the period.

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The Analysis

4. [redacted] we estimated in our basic analysis that the Communist forces could maintain the protracted warfare of 1970 with its existing force of 115,000 combat troops. We also presented estimates of the force augmentation required to support six alternative offensive campaigns, assuming that the NVA force requirements to implement each strategy would be roughly equivalent to the average maintained during 1968 and without reference to US withdrawals. The analysis also estimated the same requirements assuming US forces were drawn down to a residual force of 43,400 in mid-1972.* The force augmentations required in either situation are shown below:

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Force Requirements (Thousand Men)</u>	
	<u>Basic Analysis</u>	<u>US Withdrawals</u>
Case I (1970 Protracted Warfare)	115	--
Case II (MR 1)	135	115
Case III (MR 2)	125	129
Case IV (MR 1 & 2)	145	129
Case V (Cambodia)	135	135
Case VI (MR 1/Cambodia)	155	135
Case VII (GVN/Cambodia)	175	143

* An intermediate variant whereby the US residual force is 153,000 in mid-1972 is not considered in this analysis.

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Time-Phasing of Alternative Withdrawal Rates

5. In this section the analysis refines our measurement of the impact of friendly troops by time-phasing our analysis to determine enemy force requirements between now and mid-1972. We assume that by mid-1972 the United States will have a force residual on the order of 50,000 troops. We also consider the effect of the withdrawal of one Korean division from MR 2, as well as ARVN redeployments during the period. The analysis is done in two alternative ways:

(a) friendly force withdrawals and ARVN redeployments are made on a straight line basis, and

(b) the force withdrawals are made on a plausible case consistent with maintaining a stronger US presence over as much of the period as possible but still coming close to meeting a mid-1972 target of approximately 50,000 troops.

Alternative A

6. The time-phasing of enemy force requirements for each strategy when withdrawals are made on a straight-line projection are shown in Table 1.* In this case there are no US combat forces by mid-1972.

7. Table 1 shows among other things that the impact of US force withdrawals has a quick effect on enemy force requirements. By the middle of the 1971-72 dry season, for example, the force augmentation required to implement the maximum strategy -- an offensive throughout South Vietnam and Cambodia -- would be reduced by about 50%, from 60,000 in our basic analysis to less than 35,000.

8. The question of the withdrawal of Korean troops is also of interest. The withdrawal of a Korean division reduces the manpower augmentation requirement for the maximum strategy by mid-1972

* *The supporting data showing Allied maneuver deployments are shown in Table 2.*

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Table 1
Enemy Combat Force Requirements -- Alternative A a/

	Thousand Men					
	Basic Analysis	Jun 71	Sep 71	Dec 71	Mar 72	Jun 72
Case I (1970 Protracted Warfare)	115					
Case II (MR 1)	135	132	128	124	120	115
Case III (MR 2)	125	125 (126)	124 (127)	124 (128)	124 (129)	123 (129)
Case IV (MR 1 & 2)	145	142 (143)	137 (140)	133 (137)	129 (134)	123 (129)
Case V (Cambodia)	135	135	135	135	135	135
Case VI (MR 1/Cambodia)	155	152	148	144	140	135
Case VII (GVN/Cambodia)	175	169 (170)	158 (161)	150 (154)	144 (149)	137 (143)

a. The figures in parentheses indicate enemy force requirements if a Korean division is not withdrawn.

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Table 2
Allied Maneuver Deployments -- Alternative A

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Jun 71</u>	<u>Sep 71</u>	<u>Dec 71</u>	<u>Mar 72</u>	<u>Jun 72</u>
<u>MR 1</u>	<u>62,700</u>	<u>59,600</u>	<u>55,100</u>	<u>50,600</u>	<u>46,000</u>	<u>41,500</u>
US	23,500	20,100	15,100	10,100	5,000	0
RVNAF	35,700	36,000	36,500	37,000	37,500	38,000
ROK	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
<u>MR 2 a/</u>	<u>37,700</u>	<u>37,500</u> <u>(38,500)</u>	<u>37,100</u> <u>(39,600)</u>	<u>36,800</u> <u>(40,800)</u>	<u>36,400</u> <u>(41,900)</u>	<u>36,000</u> <u>(43,000)</u>
US	4,300	3,700	2,800	1,900	1,000	0
RVNAF	19,400	20,800	22,800	24,900	26,900	29,000
ROK	14,000	13,000	11,500	10,000	8,500	7,000
<u>MR 3 b/</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>38,400</u>	<u>32,900</u>	<u>29,700</u>	<u>24,200</u>	<u>21,000</u>
US	4,000	3,400	2,600	1,700	900	0
RVNAF	31,500	30,000	27,800	25,500	23,300	21,000
Thai & Aus	5,000	5,000	2,500	2,500	0	0
<u>MR 4</u>	<u>26,000</u>	<u>25,300</u>	<u>24,200</u>	<u>23,100</u>	<u>22,100</u>	<u>21,000</u>
US	--	--	--	--	--	--
RVNAF	26,000	25,300	24,200	23,100	22,100	21,000

a. Figures in parentheses indicate Allied maneuver deployments if a Korean division is not withdrawn.
b. Figures include 15,000 RVNAF troops assumed to be committed to operations in Cambodia throughout the period.

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from 28,000 to only 22,000 troops. The Korean withdrawal also impacts significantly in the event of enemy strategies focused on MR 2 (Cases III and IV). In both cases the required manpower augmentation by mid-1972 is reduced to only 8,000 troops. More to the point the Korean withdrawal offsets the advantages gained by ARVN redeployment. In our previous analysis the substantial redeployment of ARVN forces meant that the Communists, even in the face of US withdrawals, would have to increase the size of their force by some 10,000 combat troops to mount an offensive strategy in MR 2 by mid-1972. With a Korean withdrawal the same offensive capabilities could be achieved with 2,000 less enemy troops.

Alternative B

9. In Alternative B we examined a redeployment scheme that would have the US residual force down to 64,600 troops including 2,600 combat forces in MR 2. The effect of this alternative on the force augmentations required for each strategy is shown in Table 3.

10. This alternative scheme does not produce any significant changes in our estimates of enemy force requirements, causing them to increase only on the order of 3,000-4,000 troops as of mid-1972. Most of this added requirement is felt in MR 2 because of the continued presence of some 2,600 US maneuver troops, thus making Cases III and IV somewhat more difficult to achieve from the manpower point of view.

11. Redeployments under Alternative B have the apparent advantage of maintaining a greater US maneuver force presence which is spread more uniformly throughout the country during the more critical months of the 1971-72 dry season. It should be noted, however, that although Alterna-

Table 3
Enemy Combat Force Requirements -- Alternative B a/

	Thousand Men					
	Basic Analysis	Jun 71	Sep 71	Dec 71	Mar 72	Jun 72
Case I (1970 Protracted Warfare)	115					
Case II (MR 1)	135	130	127	120	118	115
Case III (MR 2)	125	124 (125)	124 (126)	125 (128)	125 (130)	126 (132)
Case IV (MR 1 & 2)	145	139 (140)	136 (138)	130 (133)	128 (133)	126 (132)
Case V (Cambodia)	135	135	135	135	135	135
Case VI (MR 1/Cambodia)	155	150	147	140	138	135
Case VII (GVN/Cambodia)	175	166 (167)	158 (160)	148 (151)	143 (148)	140 (146)

a. The figures in parentheses indicate enemy force requirements if a Korean division is not withdrawn.

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Table 4
Allied Maneuver Deployments -- Alternative B

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Jun 71</u>	<u>Sep 71</u>	<u>Dec 71</u>	<u>Mar 72</u>	<u>Jun 72</u>
<u>MR 1</u>	<u>62,700</u>	<u>57,200</u>	<u>53,600</u>	<u>45,300</u>	<u>43,400</u>	<u>41,500</u>
US	23,500	17,700	13,600	4,800	2,400	0
RVNAF	35,700	36,000	36,500	37,000	37,500	38,000
ROK	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
<u>MR 2 a/</u>	<u>37,700</u>	<u>36,400</u> <u>(37,400)</u>	<u>36,900</u> <u>(39,400)</u>	<u>37,500</u> <u>(41,500)</u>	<u>38,000</u> <u>(43,500)</u>	<u>38,600</u> <u>(45,600)</u>
US	4,300	2,600	2,600	2,600	2,600	2,600
RVNAF	19,400	20,800	22,800	24,900	26,900	29,000
ROK	14,000	13,000	11,500	10,000	8,500	7,000
<u>MR 3 b/</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>38,300</u>	<u>33,600</u>	<u>31,300</u>	<u>26,600</u>	<u>21,000</u>
US	4,000	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	0
RVNAF	31,500	30,000	27,800	25,500	23,300	21,000
Thai & Aus	5,000	5,000	2,500	2,500	0	0
<u>MR 4</u>	<u>26,000</u>	<u>25,300</u>	<u>24,200</u>	<u>23,100</u>	<u>22,100</u>	<u>21,000</u>
US	--	--	--	--	--	--
RVNAF	26,000	25,300	24,200	23,100	22,100	21,000

a. Figures in parentheses indicate Allied maneuver deployments if a Korean division is not withdrawn.

b. Figures include 15,000 RVNAF troops assumed to be committed to operations in Cambodia throughout the period.

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Impact of Withdrawals on Friendly/Enemy
Force Ratios

12. [] we pointed out that US withdrawals would produce unfavorable changes in the existing balance between friendly and enemy combat forces in all regions but MR 2.

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13. In Table 5 we show the quarterly changes in ratios of friendly to enemy forces between now and mid-1972, assuming that the withdrawals of friendly forces were made under Alternative A (the straight line projection). We have arrayed the data in two ways, the first including maneuver forces only; the second including RF/PF forces. The ratios using maneuver forces only are presented as being more relevant to the type of main force combat envisioned in the strategies calling for sustained offensive activities. The ratios including RF/PF forces are probably more pertinent in assessing the balance of forces under conditions of protracted warfare with its low levels of combat activity.

14. In either case the balance between friendly and enemy forces moves generally in favor of the Communists as Allied forces are withdrawn from South Vietnam. The situation in MR 2 is particularly sensitive to the presence of ROK forces. In our original memorandum the balance between friendly and enemy forces moved steadily in favor of friendly forces in MR 2. In the current analysis the withdrawal of one ROK division from MR 2 means that the balance in MR 2 becomes a standoff.

15. The sharp and unfavorable decline in the balance of forces in MR 3 is due principally to the assumption that a sizable number of ARVN troops -- 15,000 -- will continue to be deployed in Cambodia throughout the period. The unfavorable balance could be easily reversed as shown in Table 5, if ARVN forces were returned to MR 3. In this case, it would not be until near the end of the first quarter of 1972 that the favorable balance in MR 3 would begin to fall below the current favorable balance.

16. Table 5 also shows a particularly unfavorable situation in MR 1 where even with the inclusion

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Table 5

Ratio of Friendly to Enemy Forces

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Jun 71</u>	<u>Sep 71</u>	<u>Dec 71</u>	<u>Mar 72</u>	<u>Jun 72</u>
<u>Maneuver Forces Only a/</u>						
MR 1	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.2
MR 2 b/	1.6	1.6 (1.7)	1.6 (1.7)	1.6 (1.8)	1.6 (1.8)	1.6 (1.9)
MR 3 c/	1.5	1.4 (2.3)	1.1 (1.9)	0.9 (1.7)	0.5 (1.4)	0.4 (1.2)
MR 4	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4
<u>Including RF/PF</u>						
MR 1	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.0	2.9
MR 2 b/	5.5	5.4 (5.5)	5.4 (5.5)	5.4 (5.6)	5.4 (5.6)	5.4 (5.7)
MR 3 c/	6.3	6.1 (7.0)	5.8 (6.7)	5.6 (6.5)	5.3 (6.2)	5.1 (6.0)
MR 4	11.8	11.8	11.7	11.6	11.5	11.5

a. Relates only friendly maneuver forces to enemy main and local combat and combat support forces.

b. Figures in parentheses indicate the ratio if a Korean division is not withdrawn.

c. Figures in parentheses indicate the ratio if the 15,000 RVNAF troops are recalled from Cambodia.

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of RF/PF forces the ratios are lowest. This may become increasingly critical in view of the fact that the Communists have their heaviest concentration of forces in MR 1, and that is also the area where logistic and manpower constraints on offensive options are minimal.

Effect of Withdrawals on Enemy Manpower Requirements

17. Given a situation in which the Allied presence is so drastically reduced by mid-1972, it seems likely that enemy casualties will decrease from their current levels and that the manpower requirements needed to support each strategy may be significantly lower than our original estimates. The extent of the decline in enemy casualties will, of course, depend on a number of variables, including the level and types of air interdiction programs; the relative effectiveness of US, third-country, and ARVN forces in inflicting enemy casualties; and, of course, the extent of enemy offensive activity.

18. If the air interdiction program continues at an average monthly level of 10,000 tactical sorties and 1,000 B-52 sorties, we would not expect any significant change in enemy casualties attributable to air interdiction.

19. The influence of other variables such as the relative effectiveness of US and ARVN forces in inflicting casualties is more difficult to measure, but some preliminary judgments are possible. In Table 6, we show the number of enemy killed in action (KIA) attributable to US, ARVN, and third country forces.

20. The table shows clearly that the share of enemy KIA attributable to US forces has declined markedly from 61% of the total during the first quarter of 1969 to 16% during the last quarter of 1970. The South Vietnamese share in the same periods increased from 33% to 80%. It should be noted, however, that an unknown share of the KIA attributable to South Vietnamese forces is due to US tactical air support.

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Table 6
 Enemy Troops Killed in Action Attributable to Friendly Forces

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Attributable To</u>							
		<u>US</u>		<u>ARVN</u>		<u>RF/PF</u>		<u>Third Country</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>
1969									
1st Qtr	43,931	26,884	61	10,146	23	4,426	10	2,475	6
2nd Qtr	49,660	29,778	60	12,330	25	4,353	9	3,199	6
3rd Qtr	34,013	18,587	55	6,797	20	5,838	17	2,791	8
4th Qtr	32,042	15,489	48	9,395	29	5,804	18	1,354	4
1970									
1st Qtr	27,241	11,399	42	8,290	30	6,084	22	1,468	5
2nd Qtr	41,435	12,447	30	21,074	51	6,500	16	1,414	3
3rd Qtr	20,177	5,378	27	8,802	44	5,017	25	910	5
4th Qtr	18,397	2,983	16	8,547	46	6,197	34	670	4

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21. Table 6 also shows that US and ARVN forces have rather consistently accounted for about 75% of enemy KIA, with the share attributable to RF/PF and third country forces remaining rather constant. As a measure of the relative efficiency of US and ARVN maneuver forces, we have examined the KIA figures in terms of the number of enemy KIA inflicted per 1,000 maneuver troops, as shown below:

	<u>Enemy KIA per 1,000 Maneuver Troops</u>	
<u>1969</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>ARVN</u>
1st Quarter	292	96
2nd Quarter	324	117
3rd Quarter	219	65
4th Quarter	200	89
<u>1970</u>		
1st Quarter	153	78
2nd Quarter	193	197
3rd Quarter	93	82
4th Quarter	67	76

22. This tabulation shows that as US forces have withdrawn, ARVN and US forces had by the second quarter of 1970 approached parity in terms of the number of enemy KIA per 1,000 maneuver forces. On the assumption that this parity can be maintained and that the enemy maintains his current posture, it is possible to make highly tentative estimates of the extent to which enemy casualties and hence enemy manpower requirements will decline by June 1972.

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24. A reduction of 30% in enemy manpower requirements would loosen the manpower constraints on Hanoi's choice of offensive strategies. This is particularly true in terms of reducing strains on the NVA training capabilities and avoiding, with the exception of Case VII, drawdowns on manpower reserves.