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30 March 1965

Dear Mr. President:

Attached is a copy of my memorandum for the record of my talk with General Eisenhower on Sunday afternoon. I extended your greetings and he responded in the warmest and friendliest manner.

With respect to his very strong feeling concerning the absolute necessity of the people of South Vietnam supporting their government's efforts, the General intended to call you on Monday and express his views directly to you. However, he has been suffering from a virus and his secretary called me on Monday morning and told me his doctors had urged him to spend a few days off the telephone and away from work in the interests of a quick recovery from the flu, and therefore he would not call you.

Respectfully yours,

/s/

John A. McCone

Attachment

*✓*  
The President, *copy*  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

JAM/mfb

Orig w/orig of atch - addressee

lcc - DCI White House file w/cy atch

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*Vietnam*

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT:** Discussion with General Eisenhower at his residence at Palm Desert, about 7:00 p.m., Sunday, March 28, 1965

1. I reviewed in considerable detail the reactions to our program of consistent bombing of North Vietnam. I noted the reactions in South Vietnam at the military and political levels, in friendly Far Eastern countries, in Hanoi, in Peiping and in Moscow. In doing so I used the briefing paper I read at the NSC meeting on Friday, 26 March.

2. General Eisenhower had been fully briefed on our operations as General Goodpaster had seen him two days earlier (this I did not know). He expressed approval of the operations and felt they should be continued on a regular and dynamic basis. He made no recommendations concerning bombing of industrial targets, harbors, population centers, etc. Gen. Eisenhower noted that there was no apparent reaction from the North Vietnam leaders as yet. He also noted the slackening of Viet Cong activities in the past 10 days and I said this could be the result of the bombings, but more probably was a cyclical matter of the type we had witnessed before.

3. Gen. Eisenhower then spoke at length of the necessity of creating an attitude among the people of South Vietnam at all levels and in all parts of the country, cities, towns, villages, hamlets, rural areas, etc., to the effect that this war is their war and must be won with their assistance. If the people do not support the government in this effort, the government will fail and we will fail with it, in Gen. Eisenhower's opinion. If, on the other hand, the people are behind the efforts of the government and the military, then the Viet Cong can be ferreted out and destroyed; also warnings will be received of impending strikes such as those made on U.S. installations.

4. Gen. Eisenhower was very positive that this work involves political and civic action and cannot be done by the military -- it must be done by the civilian agencies. He expressed himself as feeling (and I do not know the source of his information, although he has talked to me along this line on many occasions) that we are not conducting an aggressive information service, that we are not reaching the mass of people by radio, by speakers in town meetings, by leaflets and other forms of printed propaganda, and by doing a great number of things which will let the people know that the government is interested in them and their welfare and thus encouraging their support of the government.

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5. General Eisenhower was particularly critical of USIA, indicating he had been in touch with a member, or members, of the USIA Advisory Committee who had expressed great dissatisfaction over the conduct of our information program. The General had few facts to support this position but he does feel strongly on the subject.

6. In summary, the thrust of General Eisenhower's recommendations were to get a dynamic program going at once, designed to make the people feel their responsibilities toward the government, understand the horror of Viet Cong/Communist control and participate actively in their own defense of their own country.

7. Following this discussion, I briefed General Eisenhower on the most recent developments in the Congo, Indonesia and Cyprus.

**JOHN A. McCONE**  
Director

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