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Immediate Release

SCHOLARS AND UNITED STATES

OFFICIALS EXAMINE POLITICAL

DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

Racine, Wisconsin -- A group of thirty leading scholars and United States government specialists discussed the development of political and social forces in war-torn South Vietnam at Wingspread, conference center of The Johnson Foundation, May 14 and 15, 1967.

Among the participants in the off-the-record discussions was Vu Van Thai, former South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States.

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Looking to the future of South Vietnam, the specialists and government representatives examined the influence of elite groups in Vietnamese politics, social forces and political institutions, rural political development and forces of political change in South Vietnam. The two-day meeting was convened by the Council of Vietnamese Studies of the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, which is under the auspices of The Asia Society and the Agency for International Development (AID). The conference was carried out with the cooperation of The Johnson Foundation.

Under the chairmanship of Robert Miller, specialist on Vietnam in the State Department, one conference panel examined the interaction between social forces and political institutions. The panel included: Ithiel De Sola Pool of the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Milton Sacks of Brandeis University; Robert Johnson, of the Policy Planning Council of the Department of State; and Robert Tilman of Yale University.

Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University served as conference chairman and also presided during a discussion of rural political development in South Vietnam, with papers presented by John Donnell and Charles Joiner, of Temple University, and Edward Mitchell, of The Rand Corporation. A member of the staff of the World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), J. Price Gittinger, and Professor John Montgomery, of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, also participated in this

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In another session, the role of elite groups in Vietnam was discussed by a panel under the chairmanship of Wesley Fishel, of Michigan State University. Professor Fishel also serves as an advisor to the United States government.

The implications for research of United States involvement in Vietnamese policy-making was discussed in an evening session by Kenneth Young, Chairman of the Asia Society, and formerly United States Ambassador to Thailand.

During the final session of the conference, the forces for political change in South Vietnam were discussed by John Bennett of the Agency for International Development and Ambassador Vu Van Thai. A complete list of participants in the meetings is attached.

At the conclusion of the conference, Leslie Paffrath, President of The Johnson Foundation, noted that "This conference on the political development of Vietnam has been an appropriate continuation of the broad-focus concern of the Foundation's Trustees over recent years for Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and China. This concern has been not only for the military aspects of United States involvement in South Vietnam, but for the economic, political and social development of Southeast Asia. Earlier conferences supported by The Johnson Foundation included a Wingspread Briefing on Vietnam in March, 1964, and a symposium, "Prospects for Southeast Asia," held in September, 1965.

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"The Trustees of The Johnson Foundation place a high priority on support for deliberations between officials of the United States government and independent specialists. The Wingspread conference just completed was of this order, and the topic of Vietnam's future could not be more timely."

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM

May 14 - 15, 1967

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