

~~SAVA 73-101~~

14 June 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William E. Colby

SUBJECT : Breakfast Notes

1. Outlined below are several points you might want to raise, discuss or allude to during your 15 June 1973 breakfast with Dr. Kissinger.

2. Overflight Ground Rules. Despite General Scowcroft's 13 June assurances, I am still concerned that one bit of fall-out from the most recent round of negotiations may be curtailment (or, at worst, elimination) of the intelligence community's present authorization to fly imagery [redacted] collection flights over Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Appended to this memo is a note (prepared by [redacted] on the specific consequences any such ground rule curtailment would produce. This subject is a matter of direct concern to me since I am still Chairman of WSAG Working Group C (Intelligence) and, as such, responsible to Henry and the President for the adequacy of the community's overall Indochina coverage.

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3. [redacted]

[redacted] No one, least of all I, is contesting his -- or, even more, the President's -- entire right to make any policy decision deemed to be in the net national interest. Any decision that severely curtails our present collection capabilities, however, should not be backed into, sprung as a surprise, or made without frontally facing and weighing the trade-offs involved. If there is any thought of curtailing the current ground rules re use of Laotian, Cambodian and/or South Vietnamese airspace -- plus flights over international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin -- the President will be ill-served indeed if the community is not able to give him before any such decision is made a precise and specific explanation of its cost in terms of our reduced capabilities to meet what we have been told are the President's intelligence requirements.

4. Propaganda and Psychological Warfare in Indochina.

Another area where the ground rules need clarification is that of our political and psychological warfare efforts in Indochina. At times past (particularly when negotiations were in process or a new plateau therein, e.g. an agreement, had just been achieved), Henry's position on this topic has tended to be delphically ambivalent (even for him). Our "guidance" has been on the order of "hang your clothes on the hickory limb, but don't go near the water." What we need to know is how vigorous and/or aggressive the White House wants us to be. We can (and will) preach the virtues of peace and reconciliation, the question is the extent to which -- through unilateral action and/or discreet encouragement of GVN efforts -- we should needle the North Vietnamese for any of their lapses from virtue, stimulate debate and friction within and among various components of the Communist structure (North and South), and burr away imaginatively at the zest for continued struggle of the DRV's population and the Party's and army's rank and file. We will, of course, attempt anything our political masters want tried, and eschew any tactics or themes they want left alone.

5. We are not pushing or peddling anything. It is the case, however, that our policy-level superiors often seem bemused by the delusion that the North Vietnamese respond positively to gracious gestures, whereas in fact the Party usually regards them as signs of weakness. Also, our masters often seem reluctant to approve propaganda or psychological warfare gambits that might irritate our adversaries -- something a successful or worthwhile gambit invariably does. For example, the most devastating leaflet we could drop would be one containing a picture of Chairman Mao and President Nixon in friendly conversation. When the GVN did just that (with telling effect) last year, however, the White House was furious. Every time we have floated this idea, it has been shot down in flames. The concern or rationale seems to be that such a gambit might make the Chinese mad and complicate burgeoning detente. The Chinese, of course, do not share similar inhibitions and are past masters (often successful ones to boot) at the art of sweet and sour politics. I think we are much too diffident or timid in this arena, but -- as stated above -- we are not peddling anything. All we need is direction, guidelines and indications as to the limits of permissibility, but we do need those rather badly.


6. Substantive Matters. Our OCI colleagues prepared some briefing notes for you which they sent us in draft. Rather than engage in heated debate, we simply suggested that they skip the interpretative argument and give you early on the morning of the fifteenth a factual resume of what had -- or had not -- happened in South Vietnam through midnight (our time) on the

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fourteenth, i.e. the implementation hour for the "new" cease fire. As you know, there are sharp internal splits within the Agency on Communist priorities and probable near-term intentions. My OCI and ONE colleagues -- whose views I respect even when I cannot subscribe to them -- are convinced that in the foreseeable future Hanoi plans to concentrate primarily (almost exclusively) on political action/competition, employing military force only for defensive purposes. I am far less persuaded that the sizeable military machine the Communists now have in South Vietnam was developed and strengthened (in flagrant violation of the 27 January Agreement) purely or even primarily for defense.

7. I do agree that in the short run -- after the new cease fire's implementation hour -- the Communists, for a time, are unlikely to essay any significant offensive activity until they test the political winds and temperature. Interpretative judgments in this arena, however, are very tricky matters to offer to Henry, particularly at this moment -- especially when several of the key variables (e.g. matters on which there may have been private debate or even tacit agreement at Paris) are unknowns to us but may be knowns (or partial knowns) to him. The most useful substantive support I think your colleagues can give you in this area (at least for your breakfast conversation) is the best possible update on the facts. You will know how far you care to venture into the interpretative thicket, and your credentials for playing that game are as good as anyone else's (including Henry's).

8. NSC Support. If the mood seems right and an opportune moment arises, you might want to take Henry's temperature on the matter of the Agency's support to him and his staff. As you well know, he is a complex individual whose preferences and desires are multi-faceted. Some of the ideas and concepts we have considered as possible devices for improving our support to his efforts might be welcomed by him, or his reaction to them might be strongly negative. For example, a centralization and concentration of our efforts which would (at least theoretically) improve their efficiency might be warmly received -- or might be regarded as a potential threat. (Henry may not want any one office to be aware of all the various requests he and his staff are levying on the Agency.) To do our own planning, we need a feel for his preferences and a cordial, private breakfast could well be an ideal occasion at which to float some trial balloons.

  
George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

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