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26 November 1964

Problems of Courses of Action -- South Vietnam

(b)(3)

1. Stability of the Huong Government.

I believe Saigon agitations of the last several days are more serious than we thought a few days ago, apparently grow in seriousness each day and could possibly force change in government at any time. Amb. Taylor's Telex report of his meeting with Huong, et al, is painfully reminiscent of similar meetings with Diem and Minh and Khanh before the fall of their respective governments.

I therefore believe the insecurity of the base and the prospect of the Huong government being replaced by a government less determined to fight the VC, less sympathetic with United States objectives in SEA and less interested in carrying the war to the north should be considered as a possibility.

2. Reprisals for each act taken by the US/GVN against the north must be anticipated. The attack on the De SOTO patrol (Gulf of Tonkin incident) was a reprisal for SVN maritime operations. The attack on the Bien Hoa airfield (1 November 1964) was very possibly a reprisal for maritime operations conducted on dates in here

Reprisals on either a large scale (Bien Huo attack) or a small scale such as assassinations of senior U.S. or GVN officials, capturing of hostages, etc., could have a very serious effect, extremely difficult to anticipate.

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3. The U.S. public generally, and most certainly world opinion, both in friendly and antagonistic nations, will revile the U.S. military action against the north except for that action limited to supply routes and installations. Certainly an attack such as anticipated in JCS Action B or the more severe levels of Action C (operations 8 through 11), would bring severe criticism because these actions would result in damaging or sinking ships of friendly nations, depriving friendly nations of trading activities they consider legitimate, the injuring or killing of inestimable numbers of civilians located in or adjacent to the "94 target list" and finally condemnation for the lodgement of US/SVN forces on the sovereign territory of NVN. The effect of such violent criticism on the success of the venture; on the determination of the United States to continue on its course of action and on the psychology of the NVN; would be that public opinion would force us to desist -- all must be weighed carefully in considering Option C. In my opinion the reaction within the United States and among friendly nations to Option B would be one of anger, sorrow and disgust.

4. An attack by the United States on a recognized Communist state, North Vietnam, would in my opinion cause the Communist World to temporarily at least patch up their differences and present a unified front. Soviet-ChiCom ideological differences would not "disappear", but they would be temporarily submerged in the interests of pursuing what they would construe "greater purpose" of World Communism. Many Communist leaders in many states would begin to doubt the legitimacy of the coexistence arguments and veer towards ChiCom violent antagonistic attitudes, minorities throughout the Free World would use U.S. military action against a Communist state as a strong rallying point. Subsequent events such as ChiCom entry into the fray and Soviet unwillingness to commit itself, thus risking nuclear war with the U.S., might destroy the initial unifying trend, however this is a situation that cannot be accurately appraised at the present time.

The above random thoughts lead me to the conclusion that:

1. No course of action should be taken against the north unless there is a determined effort to improve conditions within SVN, coupled with a plan of action and a proper organization, both SVN and U.S., to implement the plan.

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2. Actions against the north should be limited to reconnaissance and strikes clearly identified with infiltration and supply operations which involve depots, lines of communication, etc.

3. There should be no approval of further or more extended military operations against the north such as the bombing of the 94 target list, mining harbors, etc.

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OPERATION PLAN 34A

Operations 30 July - 1 November 1964

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type Operation</u>	<u>Mission</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>
30 July 64	Marops/Bomb.	Hon Me Island	Successful
30 July 64	Marops/Bomb.	Hon Ngu Island	Successful
<u>2 Aug 64</u>	FIRST TONKIN GULF INCIDENT		
3 Aug 64	Marops/Bomb.	Vinh Son Radar	Successful
3 Aug 64	Marops/Bomb.	Ron Security Post	Successful
<u>4 Aug 64</u>	SECOND TONKIN GULF INCIDENT		
5 Aug 64	Air Strike	Vinh-Ben Thuy POL Depot	Successful. 90%
5 Aug 64	Air Strike	Hon Gay Port	Successful
5 Aug 64	Air Strike	Loc Chao Estuary PT Boats	Successful
5 Aug 64	Air Strike	Quang Khe PT Base	Successful
3 Oct 64	Recon/Probe	Cape Vinh Son	No reaction
10 Oct 64	Recon/Probe	Cape Vinh Son	No reaction
15 Oct 64	Junk capture	Quang Khe	No junks found
28 Oct 64	Marops/Bomb.	Cape Mui Dao	Successful
28 Oct 64	Marops/Bomb.	Cape Vinh Son	Successful
31 Oct 64	BIEN HOA AIR BASE ATTACK		