

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION
May 13, 1971SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

K. Wayne Smith *KWS*

SUBJECT:

Vietnam Assessment

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This memorandum reviews the status of the Vietnam assessment studies and summarizes the results of CIA's memorandum revising their earlier estimate of the manpower requirements for alternative enemy strategies.

Status of Studies

In your April 15th and April 28th memoranda (at Tab A), you laid on a comprehensive list of study requirements. In addition, in your April 1st memorandum, you requested a separate assessment, due May 1, 1971, which to my knowledge has not yet been received.

There has been good progress on the studies to date, and by the end of next week (May 21st) all of the studies except the one sought on air interdictions will be ready for SRG consideration:

- Best, Worst, and Most Probable 1972 Enemy Strategies
Analysis of manpower and logistics requirements completed by CIA with CIA revisions requested at last meeting at Tab B and reviewed in detail below. JCS estimate, also requested at last SRG meeting, will be completed early next week.
- Projected MR Main Force Surpluses and Deficits
Completed and considered at last meeting.
- Cambodia MR Study
DOD team back. Report due and expected early next week.

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- RVNAF Improvement Packages
My best information is that this report is all but completed and will be available early next week.

- Ceasefire Study
Study completed and being considered by VSSG Working Group on Friday, May 14th. Paper looks good and can be considered at any time.

- Economic Stabilization Projections
Paper completed. To be considered by VSSG Working Group on Friday. Ready for SRG next week. We need to use this paper to: (a) address the possible implications of the 20% to 30% inflation expected in the next twelve months and possible policy measures to cope with the situation, and (b) force State, AID and the Mission to come to grips with the development problem.

- Air Interdiction
To my knowledge DOD has not produced such a paper.

- North Vietnam's Potential to Continue War
This paper will be available on Monday or Tuesday.

The foregoing tasks were to be completed under VSSG auspices.

In addition the Vietnam Ad Hoc Group was assigned studies on the political situation, T.C.C (ROK) forces, regional cooperation, and police and anti-VCI programs. Dick Kennedy and John Holdridge are handling these.

CIA's Manpower Revisions

Basic Analysis - as requested, CIA revised its earlier manpower estimates to reflect the impact of U.S. redeployments. What we have are a series of estimates that represent CIA's step-wise movement to the one that takes into account all the factors. These are shown in the three columns in the table below:

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Force (Infiltration) Requirements
Thousand Men

	<u>Basic Analysis Based on 1968 Requirements</u>	<u>US Withdrawals to 43,400 mid-72 w/ ROTC Remaining</u>	<u>US Withdrawals and 30% Decrease in KIA</u>
	(1)	(2)	(3)
<u>Strategy/Offensive</u>			
Protracted War	115		
MR 1	135	115	80
MR 2	125	129	90
MRs 1 and 2	145	129	90
Cambodia	135	135	94
MR 1/Cambodia	155	135	94
GVN/Cambodia	175	143	100

The first column has no meaning. Based on 1968 data it is simply a building block in the analysis.

The second column estimates the requirements on the assumptions that: (a) the U.S. force level reaches 43,400 by mid-72 and (b) the ROKs remain.

The last column takes into account the effect of U.S. redeployments on enemy KIA. Although CIA did not calculate this column, it did estimate (p. 13) that U.S. redeployments would cause KIA to drop 30%. Our interpretations of this finding, which we confirmed with CIA, is that it should be reflected in the manpower requirements estimates, causing them to drop by 30%.

Issues and Questions

- (1) The first issue is whether CIA can come up with one table that considers all the factors as they are likely to play out. In your talking points you ask CIA if they should not have cranked in the 30% decline in KIA into their estimates.
- (2) These new estimates, with a peak requirement of 100,000 are surprisingly low. You should ask CIA how they account for South Laos, which was not a factor in 1968. Of the 87,000 infiltrated in the 1970-71 dry season over 28,000 were destined

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for South Laos. Is CIA really saying that next year, considering U.S. troop withdrawals, the infiltration of 100,000, only 13,000 more than this year will give Hanoi the capability to mount a countrywide offensive?

- (3) What do these estimates imply about success or failure? Are these ten day offensive spurts that end in defeat for Hanoi? What do we mean by offensive? Will it succeed?
- (4) How do these requirements estimates compare with Hanoi's manpower pool and capability to infiltrate men without drawing it down further? Does 100,000 draw it down or does 150,000?
- (5) CIA's force ratio analysis is very rudimentary. On page 10 we have calculations on the force ratios, but no where in the paper is there a definition of the enemy threat. The earlier DOD/NSC analysis specified three levels of threat: (a) that posed by NVA/VC forces currently in SVN, (b) that posed by NVA/VC forces now in SVN plus combat forces in South Laos and the DMZ, and (c) that posed by forces in SVN plus all dual threat forces in Laos and Cambodia. The entire force ratio business is botched by CIA. We are better off using the earlier DOD/NSC paper (at Tab C).
- (6) The CIA data on p. 13 provides an interesting view of the effectiveness of U.S. versus ARVN forces. We see that enemy KIA per 1,000 maneuver troops has dropped for U.S. troops from over 250 in 1969 to less than 100 in the last half of 1970. Meanwhile, ARVN's performance, as measured by this standard, has stayed near 100. This means: (a) ARVN is doing as well in this department as U.S. units, and (b) neither U.S. or ARVN maneuver units are killing very many enemy troops. This cannot be attributed to the enemy's strategy which has not changed over the 1969-70 period.
- (7) It is instructive to note that the field judgments on ROK forces (see cable at Tab D) assume "continued protracted war" (p. 2). No wonder they conclude we don't need the ROK's. Is MACV fighting the same war Washington is fighting?

Your talking points are provided separately.

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