

*SMITH*

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*Anderson, G*

SUBJECT: *5 Power Military Conference held in June 1954*

ENCLOSURES: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) NOT XEROXED FOR SUSPENSE FILE

SECRETARIAT DISTRIBUTION/ACTION

INTERNAL ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION

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PROGRAM ANALYSIS	<u>X</u>		
<i>EXR. C&amp;T</i>	<u>X</u>		

ACTION REQUIRED

MEMO FOR HAK ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 MEMO TO PRESIDENT ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 REPLY FOR HAK SIGNATURE ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 REPLY FOR PRES SIGNATURE ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 MEMO *HAK* TO *Anderson* ..... ( X )  
 RECOMMENDATIONS ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 JOINT MEMO ..... ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  
PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

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DECLASSIFY WHEN  
ENCLOSURES ARE DETACHED

1 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

I am forwarding as an attachment to this note the meat of a 5 power (US, UK, Australia, France, New Zealand) military conference conducted in June 1954. I am aware that historical recall can be dangerous, particularly as regards changing political climates or scenarios; however, the conclusions of this study struck me as being particularly perceptive and still of value today and in planning for the future.

The complete paper including 5 studies is held by the JCS as a Final Report of the Five Power Military Conference of June 1954 (JCS 1992/337). As an initial point of clarification that is soon obvious, the "Delta" in the study is that formed by the Red River.

*George W. Anderson, Jr.*  
George W. Anderson, Jr.

Enclosure

a/s

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*Attached to Memo from Winston Lord to  
21 Sept 1970.*

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REPORT OF CONFERENCE

1. The Military Representatives of Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States met in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. from 3rd to 11th June 1954 to discuss the situation in South East Asia.
2. It was understood that the conclusions of the Conference did not in any way imply a commitment of the Governments of the respective delegations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

3. They were instructed in their terms of reference to undertake planning studies in order to recommend possible courses of action to enable an effective line of resistance to further Communist aggression or infiltration in South East Asia to be established. They would examine all possible courses of action in the light of the current situation and of the known capabilities of the anti-Communist countries concerned in South East Asia and the Western Pacific.
4. It was understood that the phrase above dealing with examination of "all possible courses of action in light of the current situation" was without limitation, and in particular was not restricted by the prior sentence dealing with "an effective line of resistance".

BACKGROUND

5. The discussions were conducted against the background of an Intelligence survey of the military situation in the South East Asia area and a French exposition of the current position in Indo-China. The Intelligence survey, prepared by delegates to the Conference, covered the present situation in Indo-China, the internal security problems of

Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Philippines and Nationalist China and the effect on them of a major Communist success in Indo-China. It also covered the possible Communist reaction to overt military intervention by the West in the Indo-China war and the Chinese military capabilities in South East Asia (Enclosure B).

6. The French exposition reviewed the situation that had faced France in the conduct of the war in Indo-China in recent years, particularly the problem of controlling the Delta with its population of five million while at the same time seeking out and destroying an enemy who were increasingly well armed and supported. The attention of the Conference was focussed on the urgency of the existing situation, the paucity of French Vietnamese resources, the deteriorating morale as a result of the fall of Dien Bien Phu and consequent exaltation of the Viet Minh and finally the great importance of Tonkin to the front line of the defense of the free world against Communism (Enclosure C).

7. The Principal Military Representatives of this Conference took cognizance of the excellent accomplishments of the Five Power Military Planners whose studies and conclusions were of great value to this Conference. It was agreed that further useful work could be accomplished by this group.

#### ORGANIZATION OF DISCUSSION

8. The organization of the Conference provided for studies to be prepared under four major headings, with the stipulation in each case that the examination would be made in the light of world wide implications and the current situation in the area, and on the assumption that necessary political arrangements had been made.

- a. The defense of Indochina against the Viet Minh in the various situations which might arise;
- b. Measures to provide internal security in selected areas of Southeast Asia;
- c. The defense of Southeast Asia (including Indochina) in the event of overt Chinese Communist aggression, including consideration of the use of nuclear weapons;
- d. The military problems in Southeast Asia in the event of a cease-fire in Indochina being agreed.

9. The studies themselves were prepared as a basis for discussion only. They were not textually agreed throughout and are attached at Enclosure D, E, F and G, only for information. The agreed conclusions arising out of the discussions have been listed under each heading at Enclosure A, Annex 1, 2, 3 and 4 and summarised below.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

##### The Present Situation

10. The retention of the Tonkin Delta is of the greatest importance to the defense of Southeast Asia as a whole. At the present time, the military situation in the Delta is critical. The Viet Minh are in a position to launch a strong offensive at any time from mid-June and by September will be able to undertake a fully coordinated offensive. Between now and September they will undoubtedly exert heavy pressure and, if by then, no reinforcements have been received a severe Franco-Vietnamese reverse is probable. This may well lead to a serious defection of Vietnamese troops.

##### Forces Required to Stabilize the Situation in the Delta

11. The stabilization of the situation and establishment of a secure base in the Delta would require outside assistance of the order of three well trained and equipped divisions and about three hundred aircraft. Owing to the limited capacity of the airfields in Indochina these aircraft would have to be provided initially by a carrier task force supported by appropriate naval units and from air forces based outside Indochina. Minesweepers may also be required.

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12. The movement and concentration of these forces will take time and a decision to reinforce the Delta must be made immediately if adequate forces are to be ready to meet the large scale Viet Minh offensive expected in September 1954.

13. The Delta will remain vulnerable until the whole of Tonkin has been secured and the Viet Minh Regular Army in Indochina has been destroyed. There can be, therefore, no guarantee that further reinforcements will not be required later. The size will depend on a number of factors including the extent of the recovery of morale throughout Indochina, the growth in size and effectiveness of the Vietnamese forces; the extent to which French Union Forces, now necessarily dispersed on police duties throughout the country, can be concentrated; and the reaction of Communist China.

14. The arrival of reinforcements from the Free Nations, other than France, would be an important factor in the restoration of Vietnamese confidence. In the opinion of the French General Staff the psychological impact of these reinforcements would be enhanced if they were drawn from the Western Powers.

Situation Should the Delta be Lost.

15. Should the Delta fall to the Viet Minh, consideration must be given to the holding of a line of recovery further south. Due to the nature of the terrain and the forces which might be available to hold it such a position is not readily to be found. The line Thakhek-Dong Hoi offers the best possibilities although it is subject to a number of limitations. It would require a force of the order of four divisions with supporting air forces to hold it, together with the forces necessary to secure complete control of southern Indochina. Provision too, would have to be made for ensuring the security of the flank resting on the Thai border. The maintenance of this force would require development of the existing logistic facilities.

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16. Under present conditions the French Union Forces in Southern Indochina are fully occupied with internal security duties and could make no contribution to the holding of this position. Therefore, unless adequate forces were extricated from the Delta, the success of this operation would depend on the timely arrival of the necessary reinforcements from outside Indochina.

War With China:

17. The danger of Chinese Communist intervention will increase with the approach of Allied forces, other than Viet Nameese forces, to the Chinese border. From the start provision must be made to meet such intervention.

18. Should war with China be precipitated by Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia, air attack should be launched immediately aimed at military targets. In the selection of these targets political considerations cannot be ignored. To achieve a maximum and lasting effect nuclear as well as conventional weapons should be used from the outset. A blockade against China should also be established.

19. It is unlikely that the land forces immediately available would be sufficient to hold the Chinese advance but a recovery line in Indochina and defensive positions in Thailand and in Burma should be considered as a means of inflicting the maximum delay on the enemy and winning the support of those peoples. The lack of natural defensive positions and the inadequacy of forces likely to be available would limit what could be achieved.

20. The final stop-line should be a defensive position on the Kra Isthmus, the essential communications being controlled by air and naval forces based on the Philippines, Malaya and Ceylon. Intermediate operations should not be allowed to prejudice the ability to hold this final position.

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TOP SECRETGlobal War:

21. Any war with China involves some risk of war with Russia although no agreement was reached at this Conference as to whether the risk was probable or merely problematical. This is an important factor to be considered when deciding to commit forces to a war with China since such a committal must not be allowed to destroy the balance necessary for the implementation of allied global strategy.

22. In the event of Global War, the overall strategy of the Allies should be generally defensive in Southeast Asia utilizing the offensive capabilities of naval and air forces as practicable. Elsewhere in the Far East the possibilities for offensive action should be exploited.

Measures to improve Internal Security in Southeast Asia:

23. The maintenance of internal security in Southeast Asia depends largely on our ability to enlist the determined support of the leaders and people of the free Southeast Asian countries in the fight against Communism. This is a political problem but if it can be solved there are certain military measures which can be taken to increase their stability and develop their strength.

24. From the military viewpoint, a vital factor in the maintenance of internal security is the existence of strong, reliable, well trained and well equipped forces including police. Therefore, the Allies should be prepared to aid in developing these forces and their ability to operate. Such action would contribute not only to internal security but also to the general defense of Southeast Asia. These measures should not be considered in isolation, but with political and economic factors, which, applied together, will contribute greatly to welfare and stability.

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TOP SECRETMilitary Problems of a Cease Fire in Indochina:

25. Both the local situation in Indochina and previous experience of truce or armistice between free and communist nations was taken into account. The conditions which would be the soundest and which would prevent a cease fire in Indochina developing quickly into a more serious situation were set down only from the military point of view.

26. Any cease fire agreement should provide for the retention by the French Union Forces of the Hanoi-Haiphong area, the communications between those two places and at least the area south of the line Thakhek-Dong Hoi.

27. There must be a guarantee by nations other than those directly involved that they will intervene if the agreement is broken and neutral observers with freedom of movement must be provided to detect and establish violations where they occur.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

28. Throughout the studies the Principal Military Representatives have been much impressed by the fact that the military measures required to enable resistance to further Communist aggression or infiltration in Southeast Asia to be effective call for firm solidarity between the Five Powers represented at this Conference. The Principal Military Representatives would also call special attention to the critical nature of the present situation in Tonkin and the urgency of decisions on the immediate problems that it presents.

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MILITARY COURSES OF ACTION IN INDOCHINA.

Consideration was given first to the defense of the Delta, the internal and external threat, the capacity of French and Vietnamese forces to resist and the military courses of action and force requirements to meet the threat. Secondly, the holding of a line of recovery was considered in the event of forced evacuation from the Delta. The conditions in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were taken account of, a possible line of recovery was selected and force availabilities were considered. The conclusions were as follows:

1. Defense of Tonkin. The military situation in the Delta is critical. The Viet Minh are in a position to launch a strong offensive at any time from mid-June and a fully coordinated offensive in September. There may therefore be heavy pressure at any time from mid-June onwards. If no reinforcements are received by September a severe reverse is probable and this may well lead to a serious defection of Vietnamese troops.
2. The stabilization of the situation in the Delta would require outside assistance of the order of three well trained divisions and about three hundred aircraft. Owing to the limited capacity of the airfields in Indochina, these aircraft would have to be provided initially by a carrier task force supported by appropriate naval units, and from air forces based outside Indochina. Minesweepers may also be required.
3. The movement and concentration of these forces will take time and a decision to reinforce the Delta must be made immediately if adequate forces are to be ready to meet the large scale Viet Minh offensive expected in September 1954.
4. The arrival of reinforcements from the Free Nations, other than France, would be an important factor in the restoration of Vietnamese confidence. In the opinion of the French General Staff, the psychological impact of those reinforcements would be enhanced if they were drawn from the Western Powers.

5. The meeting of the immediate threat to the Delta must be followed by comprehensive measures to restore the position completely and the Delta will remain vulnerable until the whole of Tonkin has been secured and the Viet Minh Regular Army in Indochina has been destroyed.
6. There can be no certainty that further reinforcements will not be required. This will depend on several factors:
- a. the recovery of morale throughout Indochina;
  - b. the growth in size and efficiency of the Vietnamese units;
  - c. the possibility of concentrating French Union forces some of whom are now inevitably dispersed throughout the whole of Indochina for police duties;
  - d. the Chinese Communist reaction.
7. The danger of Chinese Communist intervention would increase with the approach of Allied forces, particularly non-Asian, to the Chinese frontier. From the start, provision must be made in the assessment of force requirements to meet such intervention.
8. Line of Recovery. Having regard to the terrain, the forces which might be available and other relevant factors, the line Thakkek-Dong Hoi offers the most likely chance of a successful defense. This would require a force of the order of four divisions in a holding role together with the forces necessary to secure complete control of Southern Indochina. The maintenance of a force of this size would present logistic difficulties and the existing communications would have to be developed. Provision would also have to be made for the protection of the Thai flank.
9. Under present circumstances the French forces in Southern Indochina are fully employed on internal security and could not contribute to the defense of the line of recovery. Unless a successful extrication of French Union troops from the Delta was achieved, the feasibility, from a military point of view, of holding a line of recovery in Southern Indochina would depend on reinforcements being sent in time from outside Indochina.

MEASURES TO PROVIDE INTERNAL SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

An examination was made of the military measures that could be taken to provide for internal security in areas of Southeast Asia other than Indochina, on the assumption that no overt aggression by Chinese Communist forces had taken place.

It was agreed that an essential requirement was to instill into the countries of Southeast Asia a natural determination to resist Communism. They must be convinced of the effectiveness of Western political, economic and military programs although the Asian suspicion of interference would have to be taken into account. Militarily a vital factor was the establishment of effective internal security forces.

It was concluded that the following measures could be taken:

GENERAL

1. The Allies should be prepared to furnish economic and military aid whenever practicable.
2. Increased and improved facilities for overseas training and liaison visits of members of their armed services and security forces should be made available to all countries under consideration.

THAILAND

3. The military measures that could be taken are as follows:
  - a. Undertake a program to develop sufficient trained military leaders and to establish suitable training facilities for the Thai Armed Forces.
  - b. Expand the Thai Army.
  - c. Develop improved communications particularly in the North.
  - d. Develop selected air bases for operation of modern military aircraft, including the stationing there in peace of Allied personnel required to make the bases operable.
  - e. Assist the development of the Thai Volunteer Defense Corps (Home Guard) recently established under the Ministry of Interior.
  - f. Assist in training police forces.

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4. Consideration should be given to the following long-term measures which, although not strictly military in nature, might prove useful:

Exerting influence to secure the better control and, if possible, the repatriation of the Vietnamese minority and the integration of the Chinese minority in the national life.

BURMA

5. The military measures that could be taken are as follows:
- a. If requested by the Burmese Government, furnish military aid and provide assistance in training the Burmese Armed Forces.
  - b. Provide assistance to improve communications.
  - c. Develop closer liaison between Allied forces in the Far East and the Burmese Armed Forces.
  - d. Assist in training police forces.

MALAYA

6. We appreciate that the Security Forces in Malaya are adequate to deal with the present Communist terrorist threat.

INDONESIA

7. The military measures that could be taken are as follows:  
If requested by the Indonesian Government:
- a. Establish a military mission to replace the Dutch.
  - b. Provide arms and equipment for the Indonesian Armed Forces.
  - c. Develop airfields for Allied use.
  - d. Assist in training police forces.
8. Consideration should be given to the following measures which, although not strictly military in nature, might prove useful:
- a. Eradication of the Communist element in the educational system.
  - b. Support and encourage legal groups opposed to Communism.

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DEFENSE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE EVENT OF OVERT CHINESE AGGRESSION

Military action was considered for the defense of Southeast Asia including the use of nuclear weapons, within a general strategic concept of overt aggression arising either from defeat of the Viet Minh in the field or deriving from some other sequence of events. The courses of action were not considered in isolation but within the general framework of commitments elsewhere in the world and in the light of the increased possibility of global war resulting from that aggression. The conclusions were as follows:

1. In the event of global war, the over-all strategy of the Allies should be generally defensive in Southeast Asia utilizing the offensive capabilities of naval and air forces as practicable. Elsewhere in the Far East the possibilities for offensive action should be exploited.

2. A study of the courses of action open to us in the event of Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia led to the following conclusions:

a. The retention of the Tonkin Delta is vital to the defense of Southeast Asia as a whole.

b. Air attack against China offers a significant contribution to the defense of Southeast Asia and is common to all courses of action. A blockade of the China coast should also be established.

c. Air attack should be launched immediately and so conducted as to have the greatest effect on the enemy. In certain circumstances it may constitute our only means of major offensive action.

d. To implement Allied strategy air attack should be aimed at military targets, in the selection of which, however, political considerations cannot be ignored. To produce lasting and maximum effect such air attack should use nuclear as well as conventional weapons from the outset.

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g. Any war with China involves some risk of war with Russia, although no agreement was reached as to whether such risk constituted a definite probability or whether its degree was merely problematical.

f. Should aggression not be halted in the Tonkin Delta area, fighting for a recovery line in Indochina or for any defensive position in Thailand or Burma should be undertaken as a measure for imposing the maximum delay on the enemy and for maintaining support of those people. However, the lack of natural defensible positions and inadequacy of the likely available forces would limit what could be done.

g. Any fighting for them should not be allowed to prejudice our prospects of holding our final stop line which will be in the Kra Isthmus

h. In the event of the fall of Indochina, a defensive position could be maintained in the Kra Isthmus, and the essential communications could be controlled by air and naval forces based on the Philippines, Malaya and Ceylon.

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Annex 4MILITARY PROBLEMS THAT WOULD ARISE IN THE EVENT OF A CEASE-FIRE  
IN INDOCHINA BEING AGREED

After considering problems of major areas to be occupied; regrouping of forces and reinforcements; internal security, prisoners of war and interned civilians; neutral observers and guarantees of compliance, the military consequences of a cease-fire agreement were examined. The conclusions were as follows:

1. From the military point of view a cease-fire agreement should provide for the following requirements:
  - a. The retention by French Union forces of at least the area Hanoi-Haiphong and the communications between those places and the area south of the line Thakhek-Dong Hoi, with suitable narrow demilitarized zones separating the French Union and Viet Minh occupied areas.
  - b. Agreement by each side to withdraw all their regular forces from the areas under control of the other side.
  - c. Agreement to disarm and disband irregulars within a short period, after which military action would be permissible to suppress them.
  - d. Some efficient control of the build-up of forces on the Viet Minh side, and should this prove impossible, means of immediate reinforcement on the Allied side.
  - e. There should be no doubt that each side can assume full responsibility for civil administration and police in the areas it will control.
  - f. Provision should be made for the control of demilitarized zones.
  - g. There should be arrangements for the supervision of control of movements of civilians.
  - h. Neutral observers should have unrestricted movement throughout Indochina.

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Enclosure A  
Annex 4

- i. There is a military requirement for guarantees of compliance. Guarantees of Communist compliance can only be assured by a guarantee of intervention with effective force by the guaranteeing nations, including the Western Powers.
  - j. There should be arrangements for exchange of prisoners and civilians which would provide for promptness and "freedom of choice."
2. The non-acceptance of these requirements in part or in toto can only result in advantage to the Viet Minh to an extent which may completely nullify the aims of a cease-fire.
  3. Whatever the aims of a cease-fire agreement and political settlement, the military advantage now held by the Viet Minh and Chinese Communists will be consolidated. The establishment of an infringement or violation, even with neutral observers, will be extremely difficult. These observers will have to be backed up by adequate forces.

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