

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

July 9, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE FILES

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting,
June 29, 1971

State Dept. review completed

OSD Review Completed

MORI C05099502

Ambassador Sullivan began by discussing the Pentagon Papers. He said that we should be prepared for a Supreme Court ruling against the Government. Mr. Bennett said that some Supreme Court watchers felt that the delay in the announcement of any ruling by the Supreme Court so far indicated that it might rule at least partially in favor of the Government. Sullivan said that in any event the State Department would be taking steps to repair the damage with foreign embassies. He said that it would also be wise to watch Congressional reaction now that the Congress had two copies of the study. It is possible, Sullivan said, that the Congress might begin to propose standards of declassification, not only for the study, but for all information within the Executive Branch.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Sullivan then referred to a cable from Paris which reported on Le Duc Tho's press interview which he gave upon his arrival at the airport. The cable indicated that Le Duc Tho's statements were rather negative; the press, however, was reporting that Tho seemed to be quite positive and forthcoming. Sullivan said that he would query Paris for more details on the press interview. Sullivan also remarked that there was a general feeling that Tho's return presaged another gambit by the other side. Madame Binh, rather than Tho himself, would be likely to announce any new proposal.

Sullivan asked Mr. Constant for some background on Colonel Hackworth's recent criticisms of U. S. military operations in Vietnam. Sullivan referred to a current press story indicating that Hackworth might be in store for some disciplinary action. Mr. Constant replied that there was no such move underway within the Army. Despite Hackworth's public criticisms, Constant said that General Abrams had asked to see Hackworth before he left Vietnam in order to get a personal reading on Hackworth's opinions.

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Sullivan reported briefly on his consultations with Froment Meurice, Asian Affairs Director in the French Foreign Ministry. Sullivan said that as expected, Froment Meurice was urging the U.S. to set a withdrawal date.

Sullivan then announced that he would be seeing Tran Van Don later in the day. Sullivan said that Don had asked for a private appointment, but that he (Sullivan) was not sure whether this was a good idea. Mr. Carver strongly urged Sullivan to have a third person present when he saw Don. Carver noted that Don was apt to say almost anything about his "private-meeting" with Sullivan; if a third party were present, Don might be somewhat more inhibited.

Sullivan then turned to the remaining items on the SRG agenda relating to the Vietnam assessment. After some discussion, the group concluded that the SRG had yet to conclude its work on the improvement and modernization of the RVNAF, and to consider papers on the economy, the Phoenix program, and cross-border operations.

Mr. Constant announced that Congressman Leggett had asked DOD to reply to a lengthy list of allied atrocities which had been devised and distributed by the PRG. Mr. Constant complained that the request entailed a great deal of work, especially by MACV; he implied that there was some resistance within DOD to the idea of responding at all. Sullivan strongly recommended that DOD respond to Congressman Leggett and that the request be forwarded to the field. Otherwise, Sullivan noted, DOD would be liable to charges of callousness for having rejected the list out of hand.

Mr. Constant asked Sullivan about the memorandum from Secretary Rogers to the President dealing with herbicide operations. The memorandum was supposed to have been coordinated with Secretary Laird but DOD had not yet seen it. Sullivan replied that the memorandum had been prepared and that he was unaware of any problem; he said that he would inquire as to its status. General Karhohs announced that DOD was considering the idea of helping provide the GVN with its own herbicide capability. He expected that some sort-of plan to this effect would materialize shortly.

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