

OSD, DOS, NSS reviews completed

Vietnam Policy  
Key Memoranda

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

ACTION

June 23, 1969

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

MORI/CDF  
C03322861

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Vietnamizing the War (NSSM 36)

Secretary Laird has forwarded to you the outline plan (Tab A) prepared by the Joint Chiefs for Vietnamizing the war. This plan has been coordinated with the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency. The plan covers two areas:

1. Alternatives for U.S. force reductions during the period July 1, 1969-December 31, 1969;
2. An outline for the final report on longer-term Vietnamization which you are requested to approve.

Five options for 1969 redeployments are offered in NSSM 36, ranging from withdrawals of 50 to 100,000. The first increment has already been decided at Midway and Secretary Laird recommends in his report an additional increment, with a total up to 50,000 for 1969 depending upon evaluation of the reaction to the first withdrawal. In a separate memorandum, the Secretary of State expresses a preference for an alternative involving a total of 85,000, but again depending upon further consideration after the initial withdrawal.

The longer-term plans on Vietnamization provide a series of alternatives for U.S. troop reductions with varying timetables from 18 months to 42 months, and varying ceilings for the residual American troops in South Vietnam ranging from 260,000 to 306,000. Secretary Laird feels that even a 42 month timetable with withdrawals up to 290,000 forces would probably result in interruption of pacification progress. A much faster withdrawal could result in more serious problems for pacification and allied military capabilities, as well as possible adverse effects on the GVN, in the absence of reciprocal North Vietnamese withdrawals.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

-2-

The problem now facing us is a decision on procedures for consideration of Secretary Laird's report. There are two principal options open:

1. Circulating the paper as a normal NSC document for regular NSC consideration (which has not yet been done); this would involve increased risks of leakage. *No*

2. Treating the paper in a meeting of NSC principals only; in this case my staff would prepare an issues paper for consideration of the principals only.

Secretary Laird would prefer the paper be handled on a tight-hold basis and, therefore, would probably prefer the second option. I would concur. *Yes*

RECOMMENDATION:

That NSSM 36 be considered at a meeting of NSC principals only

That NSSM 36 be circulated as a normal NSC document for regular NSC consideration \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

LS-HK-AD373 B

FILE

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

2 June 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Vietnamizing the War (NSSM 36)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have prepared an outline plan (enclosure 1) for Vietnamizing the War, with specific recommendations and alternatives for the remainder of 1969. This plan has been coordinated with the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency. As I shall indicate below, I believe we can plan tentatively to withdraw 50,000 men in 1969, with the first increment of 20,000-25,000 men to start redeployment in July. For reasons I shall outline, I believe we must keep our planning flexible and not commit now beyond the 20,000-25,000. The State Department believes the withdrawal package for 1969 should consist of 85,000 men (Alternative C below).

I indicated in my report following my trip to South Vietnam that I was disappointed in the progress made by the South Vietnamese in assuming more of the burden of the war. Nonetheless, they are improving and with the right kind of help from us, continuing improvement can be expected. There are a number of unknowns, however, affecting the rate and absolute level of improvement in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). These unknowns include, inter alia, the quality of leadership, the motivation of the armed forces, the psychological reaction of the South Vietnamese to US redeployments, and the ability of the South Vietnamese to find a stronger organizational structure. These unknowns, collectively, can be at least as important to the over-all situation in South Vietnam as the more tangible and measurable elements. With such unknowns, we must recognize the possibility that even with additional training, improved equipment, and increased combat support, the RVNAF will not be able soon to stand alone against the current North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force levels. Our timetable for withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam should take such conditions into account. We should strive for a sensitive balance between too much, too soon and too little, too late.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

2953

**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**

2

I believe this is best done by making an early announcement of the withdrawal of a modest number of troops (20,000-25,000) and then carefully weighing the situation, to include various reactions (NVN, SVN, US), before making the next move. If this announcement is made in early June, withdrawal of this initial increment could begin in July and be completed in August.

The reaction to such a move could be favorable to us in several ways:

-- The North Vietnamese would be very hard pressed to counter it. Our military position would still be strong. Together with our allies, we would have high confidence of being able to put down an enemy offensive. Such a posture should produce a most desirable and widespread psychological impact.

-- The South Vietnamese would have further opportunity to understand that we are indeed serious about Vietnamizing the war. At the same time, they would not be likely to feel that we were rejecting our commitment. A successful defense against an enemy offensive could help to condition them for succeeding incremental withdrawals.

-- Those Americans who have been most vocal against the war probably would not be silenced by this action, but important elements of the US public would be encouraged.

If this assessment of initial reactions proves to be correct, you could then decide to withdraw a second increment later in the year. A decision in early August would permit redeployment to begin in September and, depending on size and composition, be completed in October or November. If conditions were favorable, a decision on a third increment could be made in October or November for additional withdrawals to begin before the end of the year and be completed in early 1970.

### 1969 Redeployments

There are several alternatives as to the over-all size and composition of the forces which might be withdrawn from South Vietnam this year. Five of the alternative packages that I consider feasible for implementation in 1969 are:

**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~  
1969 REDEPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES - SVN a/  
 (Strength 000)

<u>Element</u>		
<u>Alternative A</u>		
50,000 troops	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units & Support	26.8
mainly combat	1 Army Division and Support	19.6
2 divisions	Air Force Elements	1.3
	Navy Elements	2.3
		50.0
 <u>Alternative B</u>		
50,000 troops	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units & Support	26.8
1 Div plus	Support Elements, All Services	23.2
support slice		50.0
 <u>Alternative B' b/</u>		
50,000 troops	Combat forces (2 Regiments/Brigades from I Corps and 2 Brigades from III/IV Corps)	22.0
4 Rgmt/Brgd	Support Elements, All Services	28.0
plus support		50.0
 <u>Alternative C (Revised)</u>		
85,000 troops	1 Marine Division	22.5
2 Divisions	1 US Army Division	18.7
plus support	Division Support Trains	25.0 <u>c/</u>
	1 Marine Air Group	1.5
	Hq & Logistics & Other Support Forces not Associated with Divisional Support	17.3
		85.0
 <u>Alternative D</u>		
100,000 troops	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units & Support	27.7
2 Divisions	1 Army Division and Support	19.6 <u>c/</u>
and Support	Support Elements, All Services	52.7
		100.0

a/ Alternatives A, B and D correspond to those in the JCS plan. Alternative C (3-1/3 Division) of the JCS plan is not recommended; a revised C has been substituted. Within each alternative the actual mix of units may vary somewhat in final implementation.

b/ Alternative B' is in Appendix C of the JCS plan.

c/ Support spaces have been removed from each Army support slice to provide support to RVNAF.

**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**

The South Vietnamese are prepared for A, B, or B'. Alternative C (Revised) probably would be acceptable if adequately explained, although both it and D exceed their expectations in terms of quantitative reductions in US strength this year.

In the United States, Alternative D, closely followed by C (Revised) probably would best mitigate pressures to curtail our involvement in the war. Alternatives A, B, or B' are probably about what the US public expect. It should be recognized that an enemy offensive which caused heavy American casualties during implementation of any alternative -- particularly C or D -- could result in seriously adverse public reaction.

Alternatives B, B', C (Revised) and D withdraw mixed packages of combat and support personnel. The JCS consider the support units should remain in Vietnam to support RVNAF and the subsequent withdrawal of additional US forces. However, in these more balanced packages, the support forces to be withdrawn will be carefully selected from among those which will have minimum impact on RVNAF effectiveness.

### Longer Term Plans

The outline plan of enclosure 1 considers tentative timetables to Vietnamize the War during the period 1970-1972. They redeploy US forces over alternative periods of time and leave residual American troops in South Vietnam ranging from 260,000 to 306,000. Although it appears feasible mechanically to withdraw up to 290,000 US forces from South Vietnam by the end of 1972, even this 42 month timetable would probably result in an interruption in pacification progress. The interruption might range from only temporary reductions to a long-term degradation. To withdraw much faster (such as by the end of 1970), in the absence of some North Vietnamese withdrawals, could result in serious setbacks to the pacification program, a significant decline in allied military capability, and the possibility of a GVN collapse.

### Recommendations

I believe we should stay as flexible as possible in our planning. I do not believe it is advisable to adopt a firm plan now to redeploy beyond the first increment of 20,000-25,000. Rather, I believe we should take the initial step, assess the situation fully, and then

**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

decide on the size and timing of the next step. In the meantime, and in concert with other agencies of the government, we will exert a major effort to expand, train, and modernize the RVNAF, and do whatever else may be required to transfer progressively to the South Vietnamese greatly increased responsibility for all aspects of the war. In summary:

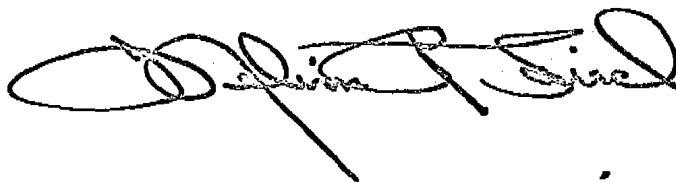
-- A first increment of about 20,000 to 25,000 troops should be withdrawn, starting in July 1969.

-- The composition of the first increment should be determined by the JCS in coordination with CINCPAC, MACV, the US Mission, and the GVN.

-- The size, composition, and timing of a second increment in 1969 should be based on a careful evaluation of the reaction to the withdrawal of the first increment.

-- Current planning should be based on not more than 50,000 troops being withdrawn in 1969, as recommended by the JCS, unless an early agreement is reached with North Vietnam on mutual withdrawals.

-- Planning should stay as flexible as possible, so that rapid and appropriate additional responses can be made to further RVNAF improvement, the negotiations situation in Paris, and the military situation in Southeast Asia.



Enclosures

1. JCS initial report on Vietnamizing the war
2. Views of SecState

5 of 5  
TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

June 2, 1969

TO : The Secretary of Defense  
FROM : The Under Secretary of State  
SUBJECT: Vietnamizing the War (NSSM 36)

The Secretary of State has reviewed the memorandum for the President which you have sent to us for coordination this morning. He is not prepared to concur in the recommendations as set forth in that paper.

It is his view that the initial decision by the President should be limited to the matter of agreeing to announce the initial slice of some 20-25,000 men to be withdrawn in the near future.

For reasons of political impact in this country, in North Viet-Nam, and on the negotiations in Paris, the Secretary believes that the withdrawal package for calendar year 1969 should consist of Alternative C (revised) which involves a total of 85,000 men to be withdrawn from South Viet-Nam. Additionally he feels that out-of-country withdrawals, not only from Thailand but from other countries in the area, should be added to this package in calendar year 1969.

He believes the President should defer for the time being his decision about announcing these further withdrawals above the 20-25,000 man slice, but he considers that the prospect of such withdrawals should be foreshadowed in the first announcement to be made, without specifying the magnitude involved.

Finally, the Secretary feels that the President should not be

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE



TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

2

required at this time to approve any particular plan as the basis for the final response to NSSM 36, affecting the longer range withdrawal plans which would take place following calendar year 1969. He feels the President should address the planning basis only after decisions have been made firm concerning the entire package contemplated for calendar year 1969.

In summary, he proposes that the President decide now only upon the announcement of the initial slice and foreshadowing of additional withdrawals to come in calendar year 1969. He wishes to see further discussion within the Administration on the remaining matters proposed in your memorandum before facing the President with a decision on all of these.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

APPENDIX A

PLANS FOR VIETNAMIZING THE WAR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Part I Summary . . . . .	1
Part II Outline Plan	
Section A - Introduction . . . . .	14
Section B - Military Aspects . . . . .	17
Section C - Civilian Aspects . . . . .	33
Section D - Initial Force Reduction Alternatives . . . . .	35

GROUP 1  
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC  
DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

PART I

1

SUMMARY

2

1. (TS) Purpose. In accordance with NSSM 36, the purpose of this initial report is to provide:

3

4

a. An outline of the final report; and

5

b. Alternatives for US force reduction during the period 1 July 1969-31 December 1969.

6

7

2. (TS) Objective. The objective of Vietnamizing the war is to transfer progressively to the Republic of Vietnam greatly increased responsibility for all aspects of the war in Vietnam and, accordingly, to reduce the US involvement, both military and civilian, assuming that current levels of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces remain in the Republic of Vietnam.

8

9

10

11

12

13

3. (TS) Concept. The concept for achieving this objective includes four principal features:

14

15

a. The current acceleration in the improvement and modernization program for the Government of Vietnam Armed Forces will enable these forces to assume progressively more of the burden of the war. The highest US national priorities for equipping and training these forces have been assumed. However, the accelerated Phase II Program, even when totally implemented, is designed to provide the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) with the capability of coping with the assumed residual Viet Cong threat, not with the current Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army Forces. Further, the fact that the South Vietnamese manpower pool cannot sustain a military force level of much over one million has an important bearing on what can be expected in the Government of Vietnam military forces.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

b. The combat role, and supporting roles to the maximum extent possible, will be transferred progressively to the RVNAF. Selected US combat support and combat service support will be provided to augment the limited capabilities of the Vietnamese. Further, the present strategy and other programs will be examined in an effort to improve RVNAF effectiveness. Four alternative timetables of 18, 24, 30, and 42 months for transferring the war effort will be developed. These timetables assume:

- (1) A starting date of 1 July 1969.
- (2) Current North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force levels.
- (3) Current projections of RVNAF force levels.
- (4) No deescalation in allied military efforts, except that resulting from phased withdrawals of US and other troop contributing countries forces which are not fully compensated for by the Republic of Vietnam.

c. As more of the combat role is assumed by the Vietnamese, the United States and troop contributing countries gradually will reorient their role to encompass reserve, support, and advisory functions only. This will lead to a phased reduction of US and troop contributing countries forces down to a level adequate only for reserve and support of the RVNAF. The reduction will be phased to permit periodic decision points for timely evaluation of RVNAF progress and the enemy situation. Since the RVNAF cannot achieve the capability of coping alone with the current threat, this phasing will allow assessment of the military and political risks accruing from reductions in allied military capability if compensating North Vietnamese Army reductions do not occur.

d. As US Forces in the Republic of Vietnam are reduced, it may be possible to reduce selected US military forces

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

located outside the Republic of Vietnam. This aspect, together with possible demobilization of augment units and reductions in the continental United States (CONUS) support base, will be examined in the final report. As the US and troop contributing countries role gradually shifts to reserve support, and advisory functions only and forces are withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam, certain programs, in which civilian involvement is significant, also will be reoriented to transfer more responsibility to the Republic of Vietnam.

4. (TS) Timetables for Vietnamizing the War

a. For each timetable, transferring the war effort will be conducted in seven phases, the first one being a preparatory phase. Phase 1 begins on 1 July 1969. The duration of subsequent phases varies among the four timetables. Table 1, below, illustrates: (1) the duration of phases for each timetable; (2) the cumulative total of US force reductions based on Vietnamizing the war; and (3) the cumulative residual US strength in the Republic of Vietnam.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TABLE 1  
TIMETABLES BY PHASE, MONTH,  
STRENGTH REDUCTIONS, AND RESIDUAL

PHASE ENDING	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Completion Date	
CUMULATIVE MONTHLY TOTALS									<u>1</u> <u>2</u>
18 Month Timetable		3	6	9	12	15	18	31 Dec 70	<u>3</u>
24 Month Timetable		3	6	12	16	20	24	30 Jun 71	<u>4</u>
30 Month Timetable		3	6	12	18	24	30	31 Dec 71	<u>5</u>
42 Month Timetable		3	6	15	24	33	42	31 Dec 72	<u>6</u>
Cumulative US Reductions <sup>1/</sup> (in thousands)	--	25	50	--	--	--	244		<u>7</u> <u>8</u>
Cumulative US Residual (in thousands)	550 <sup>2/</sup>	525	500	--	--	--	306 <sup>3/</sup>		<u>9</u> <u>10</u>

- <sup>1/</sup> Reductions in Phases 3, 4, and 5 will be included in final report. 11
- <sup>2/</sup> Authorized ceiling. 12
- <sup>3/</sup> The residual force could range from this estimate down to 260,000. 13  
14  
15

b. Table 1, above, illustrates the acceleration effect of withdrawing a particular number of personnel in Phases 1 and 2 (6 months). For example, if the decision were to withdraw 100,000 in 6 months, it would be necessary to compress one or more phases beyond two into the period of Phases 1 and 2. This would involve an accelerated transfer of the war beyond that envisaged even for the 18-month timetable and all but eliminate the utility of established "decision points."

c. As indicated in Table 1, above, the residual US strength tentatively is estimated at 306,000. It could vary downward appreciably, depending on the level of support provided to the RVNAF, the US combat forces retained for reserve, and the troop contributing countries contribution. The residual strength would consist of personnel to fulfill missions of combat support and combat service support for the RVNAF, advisors, and reserve (corps force of two and two-thirds divisions

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

including its own support). In addition, units would be 1  
 required on a temporary basis for retrograde of materiel and 2  
 roll-up activities. 3

d. Under the 18-month timetable, total annual savings of 4  
 \$4 to \$6 billion (depending upon demobilizations) would be 5  
 achieved in FY 1972. For the 42-month timetable, this same 6  
 level of savings would not be fully reflected until FY 1974. 7  
 The failure to achieve greater savings results from the con- 8  
 tinued deployment of airlift, naval, tactical air, artillery, 9  
 and logistics units in Southeast Asia as well as the continued 10  
 support of the Republic of Vietnam and other Free World Forces. 11  
 This combat heavy redeployment timetable with no reduction in 12  
 Southeast Asia support operations precludes the demobilization 13  
 of significant numbers of augment personnel.\* 14

5. (TS) Effects of Vietnamizing the War. These will be exam- 15  
 ined fully in the final report. In brief, the cumulative effect 16  
 of reducing about 244,000 US personnel would vary considerably 17  
 depending upon the length of time over which these reductions 18  
 occur, the progress achieved by the RVNAF, and the reactions of 19  
 the South Vietnamese, the US public, and the enemy. 20

a. Modernization and US support of the RVNAF could not 21  
 wholly fill the vacuum created by such a US withdrawal without 22  
 a substantially reduced threat. In addition, the shorter the 23  
 timetable for transferring responsibility and withdrawing 24  
 forces, the greater the risks would be. Further, the in- 25  
 creased demands on the RVNAF will impact on the combat units, 26  
 principally infantry, which have borne the brunt of RVNAF 27  
 attrition to date, putting maximum pressure on the leader- 28  
 ship of these units at a time when the burden may be too 29  
 great. Withdrawals would be executed by increments with 30  
 pauses between to assess past effects and future risks. 31

\* OSD estimate

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

b. Positive effects of Vietnamizing the war could include  
improving the negotiating climate; encouraging mutual with-  
drawals of North Vietnamese Army forces; stimulating RVNAF  
leaders resolve to fight while reducing their dependence on  
the United States; promoting additional US public support  
for the US effort in Vietnam; and saving US lives. The  
Vietnamese public could be led to accept the gradual approach  
if such reductions appeared to be in each instance the result  
of a joint assessment and agreement between the United States  
and the Government of Vietnam and if the public were persuaded  
that the plan considered such factors as the military situa-  
tion, the RVNAF's capabilities, and progress in Paris. How-  
ever, if the United States appeared to be operating on a rigid  
timetable that failed to take into account the political and  
military realities as they existed at the time, the impact on  
government stability and public confidence could be severe.  
Conversely, the impact on the enemy would be to strengthen his  
conviction that the United States had been defeated and that  
no concessions were required.

6. (TS) Initial Force Reductions in 1969

a. Four aspects of improvement in the capability and ef-  
fectiveness of the RVNAF provide a rationale for some US  
force reduction during 1969. First, the RVNAF Regular forces  
are expanding and displaying some increase in combat perform-  
ance. Second, modern equipment is increasing the firepower  
of Regular forces. Third, the Regional Forces and Popular  
Forces are increasing their territorial security capability  
through expansion, training, and equipping with modern weap-  
ons. Fourth, if US withdrawals in 1969 provide for increased  
US combat support and combat service support to the RVNAF,  
the RVNAF could be expected to demonstrate a level of combat

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE



TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

performance higher than that derived from the improvement and modernization program alone. It should be noted that substitution of RVNAF units for US units operating against enemy main force elements will reduce the support of the territorial forces now provided by Army of Vietnam (ARVN) Regular forces. Further, the increase in strength of the territorial forces has already been largely absorbed by the increase in population they are now securing. Vietnamese combat forces, particularly infantry, even with US combat support, cannot fully assume the portion of the security role relinquished by redeployed US Forces.

b. The initial force reduction should be used to establish a reserve located in the western Pacific to provide for a rapid reentry capability, if required.

c. Four illustrative redeployment alternatives are portrayed in Table 2, below.

TABLE 2

1969 REDEPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES - REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

<u>ALTERNATIVE</u>	<u>MAJOR ELEMENTS</u>	<u>ESTIMATED STRENGTH (in thousands)</u>	
A - 50,000 troops, mainly combat	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support 1/	26.8	21
	1 US Army Division and support	19.6	22
	US Air Force elements	1.3	23
	US Navy elements	2.3	24
		50.0	25
B - 50,000 troops, generally balanced combat and support	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support 1/	26.8	26
	Support elements, all Services	23.2	27
		50.0	28
C - 100,000 troops, mainly combat	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support 1/	27.7	29
	2 US Army Divisions (+) and Support	61.6	30
	US Navy elements	6.5	31
	US Air Force elements	4.2	32
		100.0	33

1/ Scheduled for redeployment to Japan/Okinawa to provide a reserve with a rapid reentry capability.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

D - 100,000 troops, generally balanced combat and support	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support 1/	27.7	1
	1 US Army Division and support	19.6	2
	Support elements, all Services	52.7	3
			4
		100.0	5
			6

d. There are certain advantages and disadvantages inherent in the illustrative alternatives in Table 2, above. Estimates of the effects of the four alternatives are summarized in Table 3, below.

1/ Scheduled for redeployment to Japan/Okinawa to provide a reserve with a rapid reentry capability

TABLE 3  
ESTIMATED EFFECTS OF REDEPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES - 1969

	A-50,000 Mostly Combat	B-50,000 Balanced	C-100,000 Mostly Combat	D-100,000 Balanced	
Reduction in Current US Maneuver Battalions	18%	9%	31%	18%	16 17 18 19 20 21
Reduction in Current Allied Maneuver Battalions	6%	3%	9%	6%	22 23 24
*Long-range possible degradation in pacification. (Percent changes from 82 percent of population reported in relatively secure "status" by HES, March 1969.)	5-10%	0-5%	15-20%	5-10%	25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
**Potential US lives saved (1969-1972) 2/	7,000	5,000	12,000	8,500	33 34
**Potential annualized cost saving (millions of dollars) 3/	700	500	1,400	1,200	35 36 37
**Potential annualized balance of payment saving (millions of dollars)	15.0	0.0	65.0	50.0	38 39 40 41

2/ It is possible the enemy would attempt to achieve a high US killed-in-action rate by targeting remaining US units. If so, these estimates of reduced US killed-in-action could be offset by increased losses in the units remaining in the Republic of Vietnam.

3/ Any demobilization would increase these figures.

\* OSD/CIA tentative estimates.  
\*\* OSD tentative estimates.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Alternative A, as compared to B, and Alternative C, as compared 1  
to D, could produce, over the long term, more saving in US lives 2  
(provided past experience on casualty rates holds) and allow 3  
greater initial cost reductions. In addition, Alternatives A 4  
and C would leave in the Republic of Vietnam more support forces 5  
at a time when such forces would be in demand to assist in with- 6  
drawal and in reorientation of the support base to augment lim- 7  
ited RVNAF capabilities. Moreover, these alternatives would per- 8  
mit the most rapid reentry capability. In contrast, Alternatives 9  
B and D would withdraw fewer combat forces, thus resulting in a 10  
lesser reduction in allied combat capability vis-a-vis the 11  
enemy, provided the enemy threat does not alter. In addition, 12  
the potential setbacks to pacification could be appreciably 13  
lower. However, Alternatives B and D decrease the support 14  
which could be provided to the RVNAF and would also result in a 15  
degradation of combat support and combat service support avail- 16  
able for US Forces. 17

e. Politically, within the Republic of Vietnam, Alternative B 18  
is the more preferable, followed by Alternative A, since both are 19  
within the range of what South Vietnamese public opinion has 20  
come to expect. Of the two, Alternative B would probably cause 21  
cause less apprehension since it would reduce actual combat 22  
forces the least. Either of the two 100,000-man alternatives 23  
could raise South Vietnamese apprehensions significantly, 24  
since it would be considered unexpectedly high as an initial 25  
withdrawal, militarily injudicious in the face of the prob- 26  
able continued level of enemy activity, and politically inef- 27  
fectual in the face of communist stonewalling in Paris. As 28  
between Alternatives C and D, however, Alternative D would 29  
be clearly preferable in South Vietnamese terms because the 30  
reduction of combat forces would be smaller. It should be 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

9

Part I to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

recognized throughout that the political and psychological 1  
impact in the United States of the various alternatives 2  
might be precisely the reverse of their impact in the Republic of 3  
Vietnam. The political and psychological effects in the 4  
United States of selecting Alternatives A or B over 5  
Alternatives C or D cannot be determined precisely. However, 6  
a decision to withdraw 100,000 US Forces in 1969 could create 7  
a clamor alleging "abandonment" of the Republic of Vietnam. 8

f. The final report will address withdrawals, in greater 9  
detail, from all of Southeast Asia, including tactical air 10  
forces. The possibility of such withdrawals in 1969 has 11  
been considered in this initial report as follows: 12

(1) Certain reductions in tactical air capabilities in 13  
Southeast Asia already have been programmed, and others are 14  
pending decision. Moreover, a Marine attack squadron and a 15

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

10

Part I to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Marine fighter/attack squadron are included in each with- 1  
drawal alternative in this initial report. Additional 2  
reductions after 1 July would have further serious impact on 3  
the level of tactical air support available to the RVNAF at 4  
a critical time when they would require additional air support 5  
due to increasing responsibility for the combat war. 6

(2) Air activities of out-of-country forces include B-52, 7  
carrier, and Thai-based tactical air operations against 8  
targets in the Republic of Vietnam as well as interdiction 9  
missions in Laos. These forces, particularly the B-52 force 10  
which COMUSMACV considers a unique theater reserve, provide 11  
the flexibility and striking power to permit preemption of 12  
enemy operations, destruction of his supplies, and attrition 13  
of his units, frequently without the risking of any friendly 14  
lives. Air support to the RVNAF may be the crucial element 15  
in countering enemy initiatives taken in response to US force 16  
redeployments. The interdiction campaign in Laos is increas- 17  
ingly effective in preventing the enemy from sustaining high 18  
levels of activity in the Republic of Vietnam. This is an 19  
essential condition to the continued success of the acceler- 20  
ated pacification program. Any reduction in out-of-country 21  
capability would result in significant increased risks to 22  
the remaining US/RVNAF Forces and people of the Republic of 23  
Vietnam. 24

(3) A phasedown of out-of-country US Forces in conjunction 25  
with withdrawals from the Republic of Vietnam could be 26  
interpreted as a general, unilateral withdrawal rather than 27  
an effort to turn over the bulk of the ground fighting in the 28  
Republic of Vietnam to the Vietnamese. 29

(4) The guidance which directed this study provided the 30  
assumption: "No deescalation in allied military efforts, 31  
except that resulting from phased withdrawals of US and other 32  
troop contributing countries forces which are not fully com- 33  
pensated for by the South Vietnamese." Based on the current 34  
situation, allied military efforts, including those outside 35

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

11

Part I to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

the Republic of Vietnam which have a bearing on the war in 1  
the Republic of Vietnam, should not be deescalated in 1969. 2  
In particular, current levels of effort, such as B-52 sorties 3  
and interdiction of land and sea infiltration should be 4  
continued at least through 1969. 5

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

12

Part I to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

7. (TS) Conclusions 1
- a. Vietnamizing the war will transfer progressively to the 2  
Republic of Vietnam greatly increased responsibility for all 3  
aspects of the war in Vietnam, assuming that the current North 4  
Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong threat remains in the Republic of 5  
Vietnam. Four alternative timetables (18, 24, 30, and 42 months) 6  
will be examined in the final report. 7
- b. Vietnamizing the war will lead to US force withdrawals. 8  
By restricting the US role only to reserve, combat support, 9  
combat service support, and advisors, total US withdrawals 10  
could be about 244,000. However, since modernization and 11  
US support of the RVNAF could only partially fill the vacuum 12  
created by such a withdrawal, the cumulative effect could be 13  
severe throughout the Republic of Vietnam. This will be 14  
examined in the final report. 15
- c. Some force reduction could be made in 1969. On the 16  
basis of an overall evaluation of potential effects of the 17  
four alternatives, the 50,000 alternatives (A and B) are most 18  
preferable for implementation in 1969. Of the two 100,000 19  
alternatives (C and D), Alternative D is more feasible and 20  
desirable than Alternative C, since it withdraws fewer combat 21  
forces, might cause enemy reappraisals leading to concessions 22  
in Paris, and might also better mitigate domestic pressure in 23

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

the United States. However, General Abrams and Admiral McCain 1  
 recommend strongly against an initial withdrawal of 100,000 2  
 in 1969. Additionally, Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams 3  
 have expressed to President Thieu the two increment details 4  
 of Alternative A and emphasized that, because combat and not 5  
 support troops are involved, the reduction would be consistent 6  
 with the US willingness to support the Republic of Vietnam 7  
 until a satisfactory settlement has been reached. Accord- 8  
 ingly, since the Government of Vietnam expects implementation 9  
 of Alternative A and the increase in RVNAF support associated 10  
 with it, Alternative A should be implemented if force with- 11  
 drawals are directed in 1969. 12

d. Execution of any force withdrawal in 1969 should be in 13  
 two increments, with sufficient pause between to assess re- 14  
 sults of the previous deployment and implications of a subse- 15  
 quent one. Moreover, from a strategic standpoint, the prior- 16  
 ity use for the bulk of these redeployed combat forces should 17  
 be reconstitution of reserves in the Pacific, although under 18  
 Alternatives A and C the army combat forces would be 19  
 limited in their ability to meet deployment contingencies 20  
 until essential support elements left in South Vietnam were 21  
 reconstituted. However, from a political standpoint, it may 22  
 be desirable for a majority of these forces to be redeployed 23  
 to the United States and some demobilized. 24

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE



TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

- e. Based on the current situation, allied military efforts, 1  
including those outside the Republic of Vietnam which have a 2  
bearing on the war in the Republic of Vietnam, should not be 3  
deescalated in 1969. In particular, current levels of effort, 4  
such as B-52 sorties and interdiction of land and sea infiltra- 5  
tion, should be continued at least through 1969. 6
8. (TS) Recommendations. It is recommended that: 7
- a. This initial report be approved as the basis for de- 8  
velopment of the final report. 9
- b. If force withdrawals are directed in 1969, Alternative A 10  
be implemented in two increments. 11
- c. Allied military efforts, including those outside the 12  
Republic of Vietnam, not be deescalated in 1969. 13

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

15

Part I to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

PART II - OUTLINE PLAN

SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

- 1. (TS) The objective of Vietnamizing the war is to transfer progressively to the Republic of Vietnam greatly increased responsibility for all aspects of the war in Vietnam and, accordingly, to reduce US involvement, both military and civilian, assuming that current levels of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces remain in the Republic of Vietnam.
  - 2. (TS) The concept for achieving this objective includes four principal features:
    - a. Acceleration in the improvement and modernization program for the Government of Vietnam Armed Forces will enable these forces to assume progressively more of the burden of combat operations. Acceleration in training, activation of units, and provision of modern equipment already have been initiated and are scheduled for completion by July 1972. This represents as much acceleration as is possible in terms of Vietnamese capabilities to train personnel and absorb materiel.
    - b. Additional ways to improve appreciably RVNAF effectiveness will be sought. As RVNAF units demonstrate improved effectiveness, the combat role, and supporting roles to the maximum extent possible, will be transferred progressively throughout the countryside to the RVNAF. Four alternative timetables of 18, 24, 30, and 42 months for transferring the war effort will be developed. In order to augment limited support capabilities of the RVNAF, additional

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

Section A to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

US combat support and combat service support will be provided, 1  
and current levels of military efforts such as B-52 sorties 2  
and interdiction of land and sea infiltration will continue 3  
at least through 1969. 4

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

c. As the combat role, and supporting role to the maximum extent possible, are assumed by the RVNAF, the United States and troop contributing countries gradually will alter their role to encompass reserve, support, and advisory functions only. This will lead not only to a phased reduction of US and troop contributing countries forces down to a level adequate for self-defense but also to a reorientation of the support base to augment limited RVNAF capabilities. The reduction will be phased to permit periodic decision points for timely evaluation of RVNAF progress and the enemy situation. Since the RVNAF cannot achieve the capability of coping alone with the current threat, this phasing will allow assessment of the military and political risks accruing from reductions in allied military capability, if compensating North Vietnamese Army reductions do not occur. During the withdrawals, certain equipment, which would be necessary to increase effectiveness of the RVNAF, would be turned over in accordance with Vietnamese capabilities.

d. As the US and troop contributing countries role gradually shifts to reserve, support, and advisory functions and forces are withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam, certain programs in which US civilian elements are involved also will be reoriented to transfer more responsibility to the Government of Vietnam. This transfer will be accompanied by efforts to improve internal security capabilities. This will require increased RVNAF training programs, including those in the communications and intelligence areas. Finally, after redeployment from the Republic of Vietnam, selected US Forces will be retained as reserves in the Pacific, and others will be inactivated in accordance with approved force retention levels.

Section A to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

3. (TS) The following sections of the study expand on the 1  
concept for achieving the objective of Vietnamizing the war. In 2  
this initial report, these sections are in outline form, with 3  
sufficient detail to convey the scope and general nature of the 4  
final report. This initial report, particularly its estimates 5  
of phasing and force levels, is necessarily tentative. Section B 6  
covers the military aspects, including the timetables, for Viet- 7  
namizing the war, the force residual in Vietnam, and force reduc- 8  
tions together with risks and implications of the latter. Sec- 9  
tion C discusses civilian aspects to include reductions in the 10  
civilian involvement. Section D covers in detail the initial 11  
6 months of the concept and includes several force reduction 12  
alternatives together with the risks and implications. 13

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section A to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

SECTION B - MILITARY ASPECTS OF VIETNAMIZING THE WAR

- 4. (TS) Scope. This section outlines, in general terms, the military aspects of Vietnamizing the war, including the four tentative timetables for turning over the combat role, the estimated force residual in Vietnam, and US force reductions together with risks and implications of the latter.
- 5. (TS) Assumptions. The Vietnamization concept assumes that the Government of Vietnam has the desire and possesses the ability to assume a larger share of the fighting. It also assumes that the Government of Vietnam will react positively to a reduction in US force levels. Basic assumptions are:
  - a. A starting date of 1 July 1969 for all timetables.
  - b. Current North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong force levels.
  - c. Current projection of RVNAF force levels.
  - d. No deescalation in allied military efforts except that resulting from phased withdrawals of US and other troop-contributing countries forces which are not compensated for fully by the South Vietnamese.
  - e. The highest US national priorities for the equipping and training of South Vietnamese Forces.
- 6. (TS) Concept. Based on the above assumptions and the concept outlined in Section A, four tentative timetables have been drawn up for the progressive transfer of the war effort to the

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Government of Vietnam and reduction of the US role to reserve, 1  
 combat support, and advisory missions, with alternative com- 2  
 pletion dates of 31 December 1970, 30 June 1971, 31 December 1971, 3  
 and 31 December 1972. Significant elements of this concept, 4  
 several of which are discussed in this initial outline report 5  
 (all will be addressed in the final report), are as follows: 6

a. Phased Reduction of US and Troop-Contributing Countries 7  
Military Forces. Vietnamization plans under all timing 8  
 options are divided into phases to provide for pauses to 9  
 observe and analyze RVNAF progress, the progress of the 10  
 Government of Vietnam, and enemy reaction to troop withdrawals 11  
 of earlier phases. Reduction would consist of: 12

(1) Selected US military forces in Southeast Asia 13  
 according to alternative timing options and alternative 14  
 combat heavy or balanced packages in each phase. 15

(2) Selected troop-contributing countries military 16  
 forces as agreed to by their governments. 17

(3) Demobilization of selected US military forces. 18

b. Provision of Additional US Military Combat and Logistic 19  
Support to RVNAF. The current modernization program is 20  
 designed to develop an RVNAF capable only of containing the 21  
 Viet Cong. Current levels of military efforts, such as B-52 22

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

sorties and interdiction of land and sea infiltration, will 1  
continue to be required at least through 1969. Additionally, 2  
the Vietnamization program will require US Forces to makeup 3  
RVNAF deficiencies in air mobility, artillery, tactical air, 4  
logistic, intelligence, and communications support. 5

c. Provision of US Advisory and Liaison Personnel for 6  
RVNAF. Continued advisory support to RVNAF will be required. 7  
While there may be some shifting in advisory focus from RVNAF 8  
Regular ground combat forces to territorial and internal 9



TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

security forces and support elements, the overall level of advisory effort is expected to remain at current levels. 1  
2

d. Provision of a US/Troop-Contributing Countries Reserve Force. This reserve would provide security in selected strategic areas and mobile reinforcements to RVNAF to prevent significant military losses. 3  
4  
5  
6

e. Improved RVNAF Effectiveness. Additional ways to improve appreciably RVNAF effectiveness will be sought. As RVNAF units demonstrate improved effectiveness, the combat role will be transferred progressively to those forces. 7  
8  
9  
10

f. Risks and Implications of Vietnamizing the War. Since the rate of transferring the combat role to the Government of Vietnam is governed by the completion date for each of the four timetables, the key question to be evaluated is: "Will the timetables actually Vietnamize the war assuming that the current Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army threat continues to exist?" The risks and implications which may result from these timetables are presented in outline form and are expected to be expanded for the final report. 11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19

7. (TS) Phasing Concept 20

a. Redeployment of US Forces will be accomplished in phases which provide for pauses during the Vietnamization process for observation and reanalysis of the situation. Furthermore, phasing helps to coordinate the withdrawals with anticipated developments in the South Vietnamese improvement program in an attempt to hold allied main force strength at the level believed necessary to contain an enemy offensive. 21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

b. Reduction of US Forces would be accomplished in seven phases, to include a preparatory phase and six force reduction phases. The retrograde of materiel and equipment will 29  
30  
31

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

be accomplished concurrently with the six force reduction phases. The residual force will accomplish the roll-up mission of redeploying unneeded US materiel and equipment remaining at the close of phase six. Materiel and facilities will be transferred to the Government of Vietnam and other US agencies in-country as appropriate.

c. The preparatory phase, Phase 0, would vary from 45 to 90 days in length, depending upon the type division to be withdrawn first in Phase 1 (US Marine Corps division - 45 days; US Army division - 90 days).

d. For planning purposes, the six force reduction phases, one through six, would be tailored to the 18, 24, 30, and 42 month timetables specified. However, in actual practice, the timing of the phases should be flexible. Transfer of effort to the RVNAF and reduction of US and Free World Forces should be accomplished in a deliberate step-by-step sequence, allowing adequate time for adjustments and for assessment of the impact of earlier reductions and current conditions.

e. Examples of phasing tailored to the specified timetables are shown in Table 4 below:

TABLE 4

PHASE	<u>PHASE DURATION IN MONTHS</u>						
	0	1 <sup>1/</sup>	2 <sup>1/</sup>	3	4	5	6
TIMETABLE							
18 Months		3	3	3	3	3	3
24 Months		3	3	6	4	4	4
30 Months		3	3	6	6	6	6
42 Months		3	3	9	9	9	9

<sup>1/</sup> The first two phases (1 and 2) have identical time increments for each timetable.

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

8. (TS) Reductions and Residuals

a. Table 5 shows a tentative estimate of division equivalents to be reduced by phase and those remaining in the residual force based on the requirement for the United States to assume only reserve, combat support, combat service support, and advisory roles.

TABLE 5

<u>US DIVISION EQUIVALENTS REDUCED/REMAINING</u>								
PHASE	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
REDUCTIONS	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	8
RESIDUALS	10 2/3	9 2/3	8 2/3	7 2/3	6 2/3	4 2/3	2 2/3 <sup>1/2</sup>	2 2/3 <sup>1/2</sup>

<sup>1/2</sup> Risks associated with reductions are discussed in later Sections of this report.

b. US all-service reductions and residual increments of authorized US strength in the Republic of Vietnam, based on the proposed phasing and reductions for all timetables, are tentatively estimated in Tables 6 and 7, below:

TABLE 6

<u>REDUCTION INCREMENTS OF AUTHORIZED US STRENGTH IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM<sup>1/2</sup></u> (in thousands)								
PHASES	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Combat	-	21	17	-	-	-	45	169
Combat Support	-	3	-	-	-	-	12	24
Combat Service Support	-	1	8	-	-	-	20	51
Total Phased Reductions	-	25	25	-	-	-	77	244
Cumulative Total	-	25	50	-	-	-	244	-

<sup>1/2</sup> Increments beyond Phase 2 will be in final report.

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TABLE 7

RESIDUAL INCREMENTS OF AUTHORIZED  
US STRENGTH IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM <sup>1/</sup>  
(in thousands)

PHASES	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	
Combat	230	209	192	-	-	-	61	61	<u>5</u>
Combat Support	159	156	156	-	-	-	135	135	<u>6</u>
Combat Service Support	<u>161</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>152</u>	-	-	-	<u>110</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>7</u>
Total Phased Residuals	550	525	500	-	-	-	306	306	<u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>10</u> <u>11</u>

<sup>1/</sup> Increments beyond Phase 2 will be in final report 12

c. Table 8, below, which is a summary of Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7, illustrates the general relationship of each timetable with US reductions and residuals. Table 8 illustrates the acceleration effect of withdrawing a particular number of personnel in Phases 1 and 2 (6 months). For example, if the decision were to withdraw 100,000 in 6 months, it would be necessary to compress phases beyond 2 into the period of Phases 1 and 2. 13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

TABLE 8

TIMETABLES BY PHASE, MONTH,  
STRENGTH REDUCTIONS, AND RESIDUAL

PHASE ENDING	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Completion Date	
CUMULATIVE MONTHLY TOTALS									<u>24</u> <u>25</u>
18 Month Timetable		3	6	9	12	15	18	31 Dec 70	<u>26</u> <u>27</u> <u>28</u>
24 Month Timetable		3	6	12	16	20	24	30 Jun 61	<u>29</u>
30 Month Timetable		3	6	12	18	24	30	31 Dec 71	<u>30</u>
42 Month Timetable		3	6	15	24	33	42	31 Dec 72	<u>31</u>
Cumulative US Reductions <sup>1/</sup> (in thousands)	--	25	50	--	--	--	244		<u>32</u> <u>33</u>
Cumulative US Residual (in thousands)	550 <sup>2/</sup>	525	500	--	--	--	306 <sup>3/</sup>		<u>34</u> <u>35</u>

<sup>1/</sup> Reductions in Phases 3, 4, and 5 will be included in final report. 36  
<sup>2/</sup> Authorized ceiling. 37  
<sup>3/</sup> The residual force could range from this estimate down to 260,000. 38

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

9. (TS) General Reserve Forces for Each Phase. At every 1  
 phase, forces for reserve purposes would be provided by 2  
 redeploying US Forces from Vietnam incrementally, in deliberate 3  
 steps, each preceded by a thorough analysis of consequences of 4  
 previous withdrawals and risks of succeeding deployments. The 5  
 assessment of whether or not to proceed to each following phase 6  
 would include a comprehensive analysis of the ability of the 7  
 force remaining at phase-end to carry out its assigned mission. 8

10. (TS) Establishment of a Residual US/Troop Contributing 9  
 Countries Force 10

a. The residual US/troop contributing countries force 11  
 package will consist of a corps-size force, additional combat 12  
 support and combat service support units, and a military 13  
 assistance advisory group, for a total of about 260,000 to 14  
 306,000 US personnel. This residual force package at the 15  
 completion of each timetable is estimated to provide similar 16  
 capabilities and strength. The reasons for this are twofold: 17

(1) Current North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong force levels 18  
 are assumed to remain constant throughout each of the time- 19  
 tables. Therefore, each residual force package must have 20  
 a self-sustaining capability as well as a capability to 21  
 counter the North Vietnamese Army forces. 22

(2) The exact trade-off of increased RVNAF effective- 23  
 ness and reduced US/Free World combat effort resulting 24  
 from Vietnamizing the war cannot be predicted with any 25  
 degree of accuracy. 26

b. The eventual residual force package could range from 27  
 260,000 to 306,000 US personnel. The contribution of troop 28

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

contributing countries remains undetermined. The following 1  
 is a general estimate of the residual US/troop-contributing 2  
 countries force package: 3

(1) A balanced corps-size force of 140,000 US personnel 4  
 (including 2 2/3 divisions plus support) would have a two- 5  
 fold mission. First, the force would provide territorial 6  
 security in selected strategic areas and secure adequate air 7  
 and sea lines of communication for US operations and pos- 8  
 sible reentry. Second, the corps-size force would assist 9  
 the RVNAF by providing a mobile reinforcement where inter- 10  
 vention is required to prevent significant military losses. 11  
 The detailed composition of the force will be developed in 12  
 the final report. The corps contains US and troop- 13  
 contributing countries maneuver battalions that may, at 14  
 times, engage the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army, but 15  
 the normal daily mission of finding and attacking the 16  
 enemy would be transferred to the RVNAF. The primary role 17  
 of US Forces would be reserve and support. The corps force 18  
 represents the main US hedge against the great uncertain- 19  
 ties of Vietnamizing the war; if estimates of the future 20  
 turn out to be wrong, this force would permit holding the 21  
 major ports and lines of communication long enough to 22  
 reenter or to extract residual US military and civilian 23  
 elements/personnel. Additionally, the corps-size force 24  
 would accomplish the roll-up mission of redeploying unneeded 25  
 US materiel and equipment remaining at the close of Phase 6. 26

(2) Additional combat support of the RVNAF is estimated 27  
 to require about 70,000 US personnel, since the RVNAF 28  
 improvement and modernization program was not designed to 29  
 cope with both Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces. 30

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

28

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Vietnamization of the war will require the RVNAF to com- 1  
bat both the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army Forces. 2  
Air mobility roughly equal to the air mobility of US ground 3  
forces could be provided with about 18,000 US personnel. 4  
Artillery support equivalent to that now provided for 5  
US divisions could be provided with about 18,000 US per- 6  
sonnel. Tactical air support equivalent to that now pro- 7  
vided for each US division could be provided with about 8  
27,000 US personnel. Other combat support, such as MARKET 9  
TIME, could be provided with about 7,000 US personnel. 10

(3) Combat service support of RVNAF is estimated to 11  
require about 20,000 US personnel. 12

(4) The Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam 13  
(MAAGV), would comprise approximately 39,000 US 14  
personnel and provide not only for normal MAAG functions 15  
of advice and assistance but also for other functions not 16  
normally the responsibility of a MAAG, e.g., Civil Opera- 17  
tions for Revolutionary Development Support, support for 18  
long-haul communications facilities and personnel, support 19  
for regional cryptologic operations and intelligence per- 20  
sonnel, and command and control elements for residual 21  
US personnel in the Republic of Vietnam. 22

11. (TS) Possible Risks and Implications of the Timetables 23

a. Effects on RVNAF. Vietnamization is likely to have both 24  
positive and negative effects on RVNAF. 25

(1) Positively 26

(a) If US force reductions are carefully paced, 27  
they may motivate greater RVNAF progress. 28

(b) Providing additional US combat support and 29  
combat service support to the RVNAF, as envisioned in 30

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

the Vietnamization plan, may improve the combat capability of supported units. 1  
2

(2) Negatively 3

(a) US force reduction at too quick a pace would likely cause a feeling that the United States is abandoning the Republic of Vietnam before its survival is assured and, thus, cause a deterioration in RVNAF morale and the Government of Vietnam. 4  
5  
6  
7  
8

(b) The reduction of US Forces is likely to cause a cutback in some RVNAF offensive operations as well as a shift to a defensive posture around some population centers with a resultant drop in combat operations. 9  
10  
11  
12

(c) The RVNAF can be expected to take greater casualties. In the long range, the attrition rate could likely exceed by as much as 10,000, the current program of 77,000 personnel annually. This does not consider the present average desertion rate. If this rate is not substantially reduced by 1970, the Government of Vietnam will have either to increase its eligible manpower base by increasing the draft age to 44 or assume more of a defensive role. Differences in Vietnamization timetables determine when the crossover point is reached - under the 18-month option, such a point might be reached in 1971; under the 42-month option, it would not be reached until 1972. 13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

b. Effects on Pacification and Internal Security 26

(1) It is difficult to measure the contribution to pacification made by the 963,000 Regular forces. While the main burden of the pacification effort is carried by territorial and paramilitary forces, pacification is possible only when Regular forces counter enemy main forces. 27  
28  
29  
30



TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

(2) A reduced allied Regular force capability would be partially compensated for by increases in numbers and effectiveness of RVNAF territorial and paramilitary forces and a probable gain in RVNAF combat forces. In addition, expansion of the National Police by about 20,000 over end CY 1968 levels and anticipated arming of about 400,000 Peoples Self-Defense Force will provide some increased capability.

(3) Estimates for the percent of population in a relatively secure status will be provided in the final report.\*

(4) Some expansion and qualitative improvement of local security forces, including the National Police, becomes more essential as US Forces are reduced, yet the possibility of increased RVNAF attrition and military demands for quality manpower will militate against such improvements.

c. Effects on Nation Building. Effects on nation building are known only imprecisely at this time. A significant reduction of US Forces will require more effort by the Government of Vietnam, e.g., such activities as construction and maintenance of facilities and development of ports. Yet, the capacity of the Government of Vietnam to assume these tasks will probably be more limited because of losses of foreign exchange and increased manpower requirements of the Armed Forces. Progress in many nation building economic programs, such as land reform, is directly related to the level of security in rural areas. Any lowering in levels of security would

\* OSD preliminary estimates indicate that the percent of population in a relatively secure status optimistically would be 80-90 percent; pessimistically, it might be reduced, in the long term, to 65-70 percent, assuming all additions and improvements in pacification forces are ineffective. Degradation in pacification will depend on what the Viet Cong does and on the resolve of the South Vietnamese people.

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

adversely affect progress. Vietnamization requires that the Government of Vietnam increase its political strength throughout South Vietnam. Increasing Government of Vietnam capabilities in economic and political arenas are likely to require greater US funding assistance and US civilian involvement in planning.

d. Political Effects

(1) Eighteen to 24-Month Timetables. The shorter the time-frame for the US reductions, the greater the element of uncertainty and anxiety in the South Vietnamese political climate. A rapid pace - the 18- or 24-month timetable - would risk grave political consequences in Saigon. The Thieu government might view it as a virtual abandonment by the United States. It seems virtually certain that a US withdrawal of such rapidity - in the absence of a negotiated settlement or reciprocal communist withdrawal to North Vietnam - would lead to serious instability in Saigon.

(2) Thirty to 42-Month Timetables. South Vietnamese reactions would largely depend on the battlefield experience of 1970 and 1971. If the RVNAF prove capable of filling the vacuum left by departing US combat elements (or if, for whatever reason, the communists do not initiate major challenges to RVNAF positions), US withdrawals could probably proceed on these timetables without disruptive political impact in Saigon.

(3) Effect on the Enemy. To the communists, the sort of rapid US withdrawal envisaged in the 18-month program would probably appear worthy of encouragement. Hanoi would see little need to negotiate seriously for US withdrawal at Paris and would focus efforts on exploiting

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

and softening the political situation in Saigon. A low 1  
 military posture might be adopted. On the other hand, an 2  
 obvious stretchout of the US withdrawal process would 3  
 merely confirm Hanoi's expectation regarding a permanent US 4  
 presence in the Republic of Vietnam. The strategies employed 5  
 by the communists would depend heavily on the evolving 6  
 military political situation in the south. 7

(4) Effect of a Preestablished Timetable. After Phase 8  
 2 of the timetables is completed, the Vietnamese public 9  
 possibly could be led to understand and accept the gradual 10  
 withdrawal of additional increments if such withdrawals 11  
 were explained in each instance as the result of an in- 12  
 dividual joint assessment and of agreement between the 13  
 United States and the Government of Vietnam in light of 14  
 the military situation, the RVNAP's capabilities, progress 15  
 in Paris, and other factors. But, if the impression were 16  
 to arise that the United States was operating on a pre- 17  
 established timetable, irrespective of periodic reassess- 18  
 ment of the situation, there could be highly damaging 19  
 political effects in terms of governmental stability and 20  
 the cohesion and determination of the noncommunist elements 21  
 of Vietnamese society. 22

e. Economic Effects 23

(1) Impact of Force Reduction on the South Vietnamese 24  
Economy. Reduction of US Forces in the Republic of Vietnam 25  
 will result in a reduction in US purchases of Vietnamese goods 26  
 and services with a corresponding reduction in Government 27  
 of Vietnam foreign exchange earning and other revenue 28  
 together with some freeing of Vietnamese goods and services 29  
 now used by US Forces directly and indirectly. However, 30  
 possible increased enemy control of rice production areas 31

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

and distribution network could lead to severe economic  
 disruption. US purchases of piasters accounted for 60  
 percent of the Government of Vietnam total earnings of  
 foreign exchange in 1968. Reduction in piaster expendi-  
 tures will result generally in a loss to the Government  
 of Vietnam of about \$15 million annually in foreign  
 exchange per 50,000 troops withdrawn. As significant  
 numbers of US troops are withdrawn, US overhead expendi-  
 tures on construction and maintenance of logistic facil-  
 ities will be scaled down significantly. It is currently  
 US policy to make up, through the Commodity Import Program,  
 any foreign exchange losses of the Government of Vietnam.  
 This is accomplished by transferring commodity codes from  
 the Government of Vietnam to Commodity Import Program  
 financing. If this policy were continued, the major  
 economic effects of a US withdrawal could be avoided.  
 When something like \$100 million has been transferred from  
 the Government of Vietnam to Commodity Import Program  
 licensing, US procurement requirements under this program  
 could place limitations on the feasibility of further  
 transfers. The removal of such restrictions may have to  
 be considered at that point. In addition to the balance  
 of payments effect, expenditures by the Government of  
 Vietnam may rise significantly if the Government of Vietnam  
 funded additional costs expected through increased man-  
 power requirements and tempo of RVNAF operations. This  
 would result in some inflationary pressure but could be  
 overcome by additional US budgetary support.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

(2) US Balance of Payments Effects. The estimated  
 balance of payments savings for the initial phases are  
 dependent upon the number and type of facilities that are

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

phased down and upon the final location of the forces re- 1  
 deployed. Therefore, the effects beyond the initial phases 2  
 will be determined when more complete information for the 3  
 final report is available. 4

(3) Cost Saving to the United States. The actual cost 5  
 saving for FY 1970 under each alternative will depend 6  
 upon when the redeployments occur and whether any demo- 7  
 bilization of units will follow the redeployment. The 8  
 economic impact of any demobilization is compounded by the 9  
 corresponding reduction in the CONUS training and support 10  
 base. For FY 1970, the cost reduction could range from 11  
 a low of \$250 million (Alternative B - no demobilization) 12  
 to a high of \$1,000 million (Alternative C - two division 13  
 forces and support personnel demobilized). 14

f. Logistic Effects. The in-country logistic impact of 15  
 implementing Alternative A during Phases 1 and 2 for all 16  
 timetables is minimal. Implementation of any of the other 17  
 three alternatives during this period could have an adverse 18  
 impact on the combat service support available to support 19  
 the residual forces and the RVNAF. Progression through Phase 20  
 3 and subsequent phases could be influenced significantly 21  
 by the logistic capabilities, both of RVNAF and US Forces, 22  
 at the end of each phase. All reductions must be accomplished 23  
 so that residual combat service support forces concurrently 24  
 provide for increased augmentation of the RVNAF to accommodate 25  
 their increased combat role, adequate capability to perform 26  
 retrograde of materiel, and necessary roll-up missions and 27  
 effective service support for the US residual force. The 28  
 final report will assess the logistic effects in CONUS and 29  
 the Republic of Vietnam of implementation of Phase 3 and sub- 30  
 sequent phases. 31

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

35

Section B to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

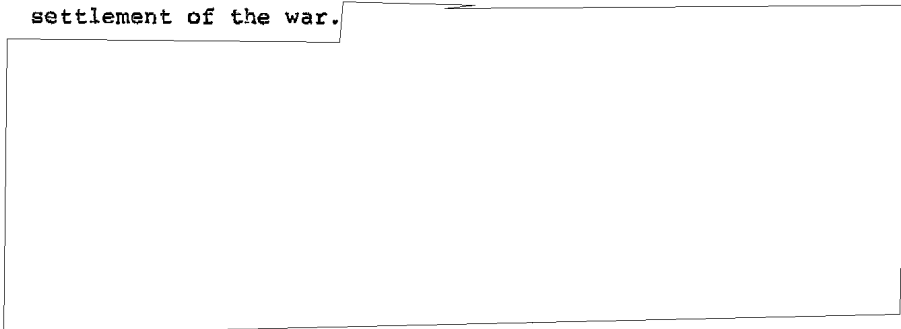
g. Effects on Troop-Contributing Countries Forces in the 1  
Republic of Vietnam. US force reduction may encourage the govern-2  
ments of troop-contributing countries to reduce their forces cor- 3  
respondingly. Accordingly, Vietnamization plans should allow 4  
for some reduction of troop contributing-countries forces. 5  
Tentative estimates of troop-contributing countries reactions 6  
are: 7

(1) Australia is prepared to accept some US reduction, 8  
with no Australian reduction. Prime Minister Gorton stated 9  
that the Australian contribution is a balanced force, and 10  
partial withdrawal would produce an imbalance. 11

(2) New Zealand is likely to follow the Australian lead. 12

(3) The future of the Philippine contribution (an 13  
engineer element with security forces totalling about 14  
2,000) is uncertain. 15

(4) Thailand has a great deal at stake in the Republic of 16  
Vietnam and will wish to see and participate in a favorable 17  
settlement of the war. 18



25X1

(5) The South Koreans may offer the prospect of an 19  
increase in the Republic of Korea Forces, if needed, when 20  
US force reductions begin. The Republic of Korea Govern- 21  
ment is interested in political, economic, and military 22  
cooperation in this part of Asia and may recommend actions 23  
that will further objectives of high participation in 24  
postwar reconstruction efforts in Vietnam. 25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

SECTION C - VIETNAMIZATION OF CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES

- 12. (TS) US Support to Government of Vietnam Civil Programs. 2  
 Vietnamization and the associated reduction of US military forces 3  
 must be coupled with an improvement in the Government of Vietnam 4  
 internal security and nation building capabilities. While some 5  
 reduction of direct US involvement in the Government of Vietnam 6  
 programs and in numbers of US civilian advisors in operational 7  
 roles can be made, it is anticipated that more US support to the 8  
 Government of Vietnam civil programs will be required. 9
- 13. (TS) Reduction Programs. Full aspects of reduction of US 10  
 and third country direct or operational involvement have not been 11  
 identified yet, but several candidate programs are: 12
  - a. Progressive turnover to the Government of Vietnam of 13  
 Revolutionary Development Cadre funding and support responsi- 14  
 bilities to be completed by end CY 1970. 15
  - b. The Government of Vietnam assumption of control of the 16  
 Provincial Reconnaissance Unit program from CIA. 17
  - c. Reduction of third-country labor force. 18
  - d. The establishment of a long-haul communications system 19  
 to be operated and maintained by the Government of Vietnam 20  
 utilizing selected resources of the existing US communications 21  
 system and such technical US military and contractor support 22  
 as is required until Vietnam can fully operate and maintain 23  
 the system. 24
- 14. (TS) Strengthening of the Government of Vietnam internal 25  
 security and nation building capabilities will be investigated as 26  
 part of the Vietnamization program. 27
  - a. In the economic and nation building field, requirements 28  
 to strengthen the Government of Vietnam management for economic, 29  
 administrative, and political programs will likely require more 30  
 US funds and advisory support. 31

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

Section C to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

b. No significant change in the  US civilians advising 1  
and supporting the Vietnamese Special Police Branch and other 2  
Vietnamese intelligence activities is expected during CY 1969 3  
or 1970. 4

c. Increased requirements for US advisory and other support 5  
for the Government of Vietnam National Police are likely. 6

25X1

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE



TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

SECTION D - INITIAL FORCE REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES

15. (TS) Four aspects of improvements in the capability and effectiveness of the RVNAF provide a rationale for some US force reduction during 1969. First, the RVNAF Regular forces are expanding and have displayed recently some increased combat effectiveness. Second, the firepower of the Regular forces is rising by delivery of modern equipment as part of the RVNAF improvement and modernization program. Third, expansion and equipment modernization of the Regional Forces and Popular Forces are increasing their capability and could free for combat missions some Army battalions now on territorial security duty. Fourth, if US withdrawals in 1969 provide for increased US combat support and combat service support to the RVNAF, its forces could be expected to demonstrate a level of combat performance higher than could be derived solely from the improvement and modernization program.

16. (TS) This section examines four force reduction alternatives involving 50,000 or 100,000 US personnel for the period 1 July-31 December 1969. The associated risks and implications are examined later in this section.

17. (TS) Four illustrative redeployment alternatives are outlined in Table 9, below.

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TABLE 9

1969 REDEPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES - SOUTH VIETNAM

<u>ALTERNATIVE</u>	<u>MAJOR ELEMENTS</u>	<u>ESTIMATED STRENGTH</u> (in thousands)	
A - 50,000 troops, mainly combat	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support <sup>1/</sup>	26.8	1
	1 US Army Division and Support	19.6	2
	US Air Force elements	1.3	3
	US Navy elements	2.3	4
		50.0	5
B - 50,000 troops, generally balanced combat support	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support <sup>1/</sup>	26.8	6
	Support elements, all Services	23.2	7
		50.0	8
			9
C - 100,000 troops, mainly combat	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support <sup>1/</sup>	27.7	10
	2 US Army Divisions (+) and Support	61.5	11
	US Navy elements	6.5	12
	US Air Force elements	4.2	13
		100.0	14
D - 100,000 troops, generally balanced combat and support	1 Marine Division, Aviation Units, and Support <sup>1/</sup>	27.7	15
	1 US Army Division and Support	19.6	16
	Support elements, all Services	52.7	17
		100.0	18
			19
<sup>1/</sup> Scheduled for redeployment to Japan/Okinawa to provide a reserve with a rapid reentry capability.			20
18. (TS) There are certain advantages and disadvantages inherent in the illustrative alternatives in Table 9, above. Estimates of the long-range effects of allied combat capability, pacification, and potential savings in lives and dollars are summarized in Table 10, below. These estimates are based on data extrapolation and, therefore, are indicative only of relative differences among the alternatives.			21
			22
			23
			24
			25
			26
			27
			28
			29
			30
			31
			32
			33

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TABLE 10

ESTIMATED EFFECTS OF REDEPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES - 1969

	A-50,000 Mostly Combat	B-50,000 Balanced	C-100,000 Mostly Combat	D-100,000 Balanced	
Reduction in Current US Maneuver Bat- talions	18%	9%	31%	18%	6 7 8
Reduction in Current Allied Maneuver Battalions	6%	3%	9%	6%	9 10 11
*Long-range possible degradation in paci- fication. (Percent changes from 82 per- cent of population re- ported in relatively secure "status" by HES, March 1969.)	5-10%	0-5%	15-20%	5-10%	12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
**Potential US lives saved (1969-1972) <u>1/</u>	7,000	5,000	12,000	8,500	20 21
**Potential annualized cost saving (mil- lions of dollars) <u>2/</u>	700	500	1,400	1,200	22 23 24
**Potential annualized balance of payments saving (millions of dollars)	15.0	0.0	65.0	50.0	25 26 27 28

1/ It is possible the enemy would attempt to achieve a high US killed-in-action rate by targeting remaining US units. If so, these estimates of reduced US killed-in-action could be offset by increased losses in the units remaining in the Republic of Vietnam.

2/ Any demobilization would increase these figures.

Table 10 highlights certain potential advantages of Alternatives A and C. These alternatives, A as compared to B and C as compared to D, could produce more savings in US lives and costs due to the larger combat force disengagement. In addition, these alternatives would leave in the Republic of Vietnam more support forces which not only would facilitate rapid reentry of combat forces, should the need arise, but also would contribute to increased capabilities of the RVNAF. In contrast, Alternatives B and D have certain potential advantages. Since they would withdraw less combat force, the reduction in allied combat capability vis-a-vis the enemy would be

\* OSD/CIA tentative estimates  
\*\* OSD tentative estimate

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

lower, provided the enemy threat does not recede. In addition, 1  
the potential setbacks to pacification could be lower. However, 2  
Alternatives B and D could create logistic problems by withdrawing 3  
large logistic forces at a time when they would be in demand not 4  
only for supporting withdrawal of combat forces but also for 5  
reorientation of the logistic structure to provide increased 6  
support for the RVNAF. 7

19. (TS) A brief assessment of the enemy and friendly situations in 8  
the Republic of Vietnam will be useful before turning to an assess- 9  
ment of the risks associated with the force reduction alternatives. 10

a. Enemy Situation. So far this year, Hanoi has fought the 11  
winter-spring campaign with a somewhat smaller force of main 12  
force regiments than it deployed during the same period last 13  
year. A force of at least two divisions and possibly an addi- 14  
tional independent regiment or two is deployed in the demili- 15  
tarized zone area in a threat posture. There are good signs 16  
that Hanoi intends to keep these forces in this position and, 17  
of course, has the option of committing a portion of them at 18  
whatever time seems most propitious. Although elements of 19  
these forces have engaged the allies during the past month, 20  
Hanoi may yet not have decided on a course of action in that 21  
sector. South of I Corps, communist forces are undoubtedly 22  
somewhat weaker now than they were before the 1969 post-Tet 23  
offensive. In addition, with the sharp reduction in infiltra- 24  
tion that has occurred in recent weeks and the poor in-country 25  
recruiting situation, enemy forces there would appear to be 26  
in a poor position to take heavy casualties during the next 27  
quarter without some further reduction in capability. However, 28

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

the enemy will retain the capability to launch attacks on the 1  
 scope and magnitude of the August 1968 and Tet 1969 offensives. 2  
 There are indications that the enemy considers that his best 3  
 chance of success lies in causing the greatest possible number 4  
 of US casualties, thereby creating a greater possible psycho- 5  
 logical impact. Additionally, effective enemy attacks against 6  
 the Government of Vietnam pacification effort and population 7  
 centers could serve to erode the effectiveness of the pacifi- 8  
 cation program and create insecurity in the populated areas. 9

b. Friendly Situation. As a result of allied operations 10  
 over the past year, enemy main forces have been kept away from 11  
 all major population centers. In addition, it has been poss- 12  
 ible to extend security and, in turn, initiate pacification 13  
 throughout more of the countryside. It has also been possible, 14  
 as a result of the increase in Regional Forces and Popular 15  
 Forces, to retain security forces in secured areas as the basis 16  
 for assuring long-term success in pacification. 17

(1) In northern I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), with rela- 18  
 tively few enemy forces, good progress has been achieved in 19  
 pacification, and effective ARVN forces exist. However, 20  
 southern I CTZ contains a large concentration of enemy 21  
 forces, and there has been relatively little progress in 22  
 pacification. Reduction of one division may be risky this 23  
 year, since there is a growing North Vietnamese military 24  
 presence in the demilitarized zone which could seriously 25  
 upset the balance of forces, if a US division were with- 26  
 drawn. 27

(2) Throughout much of II CTZ, fair progress has occurred 28  
 in pacification and in reducing the enemy threat. However, 29  
 a strong enemy threat exists in the northwest, and pacifica- 30  
 tion lags in several provinces. Therefore, the continuing 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

43

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

threat of major enemy action in the northwest highlands 1  
 militates against US force reductions in the near future. 2

(3) In III CTZ, the enemy poses the greatest threat. 3  
 Four divisions are in or near the area, plus many Viet Cong 4  
 main and local force units. At the same time, the three 5  
 ARVN divisions in III CTZ are weak. As a result, security 6  
 in III CTZ is largely dependent on US Forces. However, 7  
 reduction of one division equivalent in the southwest part 8  
 of III CTZ and northeastern IV CTZ may be manageable in late 9  
 1969, if the situation in the IV CTZ continues to improve. 10  
 Any further reduction in III CTZ in the foreseeable future 11  
 would entail serious risks. 12

(4) No North Vietnamese Army units are known to exist 13  
 in IV CTZ, but a number of Viet Cong battalions now have 14  
 a substantial number of North Vietnamese Army fillers. The 15  
 offensive against the Viet Cong and local force units has 16  
 been progressing successfully. Pacification is moving 17  
 satisfactorily in all but five provinces. 18

20. (TS) The risks associated with force reduction Alternatives 19  
 A and B (50,000), on balance, would be manageable, provided the 20  
 enemy threat does not increase, progress continues with pacifica- 21  
 tion, and there is improvement of the RVNAF. Moreover, from a 22  
 strategic standpoint, the priority use for the bulk of these 23  
 redeployed combat forces should be reconstitution of reserves 24

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

in the Pacific. However, from a political standpoint, it may 1  
be desirable for a majority to be redeployed to the United 2  
States and some demobilized. 3

a. Effect on the Military Situation. The reduction contem- 4  
plated in Alternatives A and B would cut back friendly combat 5  
capabilities in the areas involved. However, Alternative B 6  
would reduce combat capabilities less than Alternative A. 7

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

The loss in combat capability associated with Alternative A 1  
cannot be offset wholly by the anticipated expansion, moderni- 2  
zation, and improvement of the RVNAF. However, some part of 3  
the resulting gap could be filled by increased activity 4  
and effectiveness on the part of some of the ARVN units, 5  
supported by additional US combat support and combat 6  
service support units. In addition, as long as there are no 7  
further reductions, some adjustment in US in-country deploy- 8  
ments would be possible in an emergency. Moreover, the risks 9  
can be minimized by carrying out the reduction in two phases 10  
and assessing the situation carefully in the interval between 11  
phases. 12

b. Effect on Republic of Vietnam Political Situation. With- 13  
drawal of US Forces during 1969, as provided for in Alternatives 14  
A or B, probably would create no major political difficulties in 15  
the Republic of Vietnam provided that it does not appear to 16  
be part of a predetermined timetable for complete US withdrawal. 17  
Inception of some reductions, by agreement with the Government 18  
of Vietnam, would be regarded as implementation of the prin- 19  
ciple of "replacement" enunciated by President Thieu in his 20  
address to the nation on 31 December 1968 and repeated pub- 21  
licly by him on numerous occasions. The Vietnamese public, 22  
or at least its politically-aware elements, in fact expects 23  
that, as a result of US domestic political necessity and of 24  
improvements in the RVNAF, some US Forces will begin to leave 25  
during 1969. However, if the removal of US troops were to be 26  
initiated or carried out while Viet Cong/North Vietnamese 27  
Army forces were pressing heavy attacks against US/RVNAF 28  
Forces, there would be considerable trepidation in 29  
Saigon. If communist efforts were conspicuously successful 30  
in causing unusually high allied casualties, in threatening 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

46

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A



TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Saigon's defenses, or in setting back the pacification program, 1  
 a significant impact could occur on the political scene. 2

c. Effect on the Enemy. Although the enemy has been able 3  
 to rebuild the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army main forces 4  
 after each offensive, the strength of the Viet Cong local 5  
 forces has been eroded overall. The strength of the guerrilla 6  
 forces also has been reduced. This erosion at the hamlet, 7  
 village, and district level is reflected in the increasing 8  
 security which allied forces have been able to provide the 9  
 growing Government of Vietnam controlled population and may 10  
 help to explain the relatively weak attempts to disrupt pacifi- 11  
 cation during the most recent offensive. Accordingly, the 12  
 communists would adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude combined 13  
 with intensified pressures in areas where US/Government of 14  
 Vietnam Forces had been thinned out. Pressure might also be 15  
 maintained on US military installations to keep US casualty 16  
 figures up. In this case, the difference in US casualties 17  
 saved between Alternatives A and B could be negligible. 18

21. (TS) The risks and implications of the force reduction in 19  
 Alternatives C and D (100,000) are significant, although Alterna- 20  
 tive D, which withdraws less combat force, could entail less 21  
 severe risks. The effects of Alternatives C and D force reduc- 22  
 tions are discussed in the following paragraphs: 23

a. Effect on the Military Situation. Although the combat 24  
 elements in Alternative D are essentially the same as those 25  
 in Alternative A, the withdrawal of all forces in Alternative 26  
 D would have a greater effect on the military situation since 27  
 RVNAF would be denied additional support at a critical time 28  
 when it would be shouldering an increased burden of the war. 29  
 The additional ground combat forces for Alternative C would 30  
 have to come from II CTZ and the approaches to Saigon in III 31

TOP SECRET- SENSITIVE

Section D to  
 Part II to  
 Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

CTZ. In view of the enemy threat and the relative lag in  
 pacification in these areas, US force reductions could increase  
 the hazards of enemy attacks on population centers and  
 set back pacification. Redeployment of the RVNAF to  
 replace withdrawn US Forces would merely shift the hazards  
 to other CTZ. Moreover, if improvement in the RVNAF  
 fails to keep pace with the goals for 1969 and the  
 enemy threat increases qualitatively or quantitatively,  
 then the effect of US combat force reductions envisaged by  
 Alternative C would be magnified appreciably.

b. Effect on the Republic of Vietnam Political Situation.  
 Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams have expressed to President  
 Thieu the two increment details of Alternative A and emphasized  
 that, because we are reducing combat - not support - troops,  
 this move is consistent with our willingness to support the  
 Republic of Vietnam until we have reached a satisfactory  
 settlement. Therefore, a withdrawal during 1969 on the scale  
 of Alternative C or D is in excess of present Government of  
 Vietnam expectations. Politically, Alternative D would be  
 more tolerable than Alternative C. Withdrawals of this magni-  
 tude would be harder for the United States and the Government  
 of Vietnam to justify in the absence of demonstrable progress  
 at Paris or in the event of even a modest enemy offensive such  
 as that of August-September 1968. Accordingly, the Government  
 of Vietnam's political position could well deteriorate. The  
 importance of avoiding any such political deterioration  
 deserves the strongest emphasis. Substantial withdrawals  
 could be accomplished with acceptable political risks, pro-  
 vided they are approached pragmatically. This means proceeding  
 at a measured pace and on the basis of periodic joint assess-  
 ments with the Government of Vietnam. Preferably, each

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

increment should be tied to plausible demonstrations of improve- 1  
ment in RVNAF capabilities. Above all, it is necessary to 2  
avoid creating any impression that the US basic objectives in 3  
Vietnam have changed or that a certain quota of withdrawals 4  
must be achieved by any predetermined time. 5

c. Effect on the Economy of South Vietnam. The withdrawal 6  
of 100,000 personnel would have minor initial effect on the 7  
Government of Vietnam's earnings of foreign exchange or 8  
balance of payments. In 1969, the Government of Vietnam would 9  
lose roughly \$8.4 million, which is less than three percent 10  
of US purchases of piasters in 1968 and 2 percent of the 11  
Government of Vietnam's foreign exchange reserves at the end 12  
of February 1969. Provided the United States continues its 13  
Commercial Import Program at approximately its present level, 14  
the impact would be manageable, although the budgetary deficit 15  
already is at an all-time high. The deficit would increase to 16  
the extent that the Government of Vietnam assumed additional 17  
civilian or military expenditures. However, the longer term 18  
(1969-1972) loss of foreign exchange earnings could amount to 19  
\$100 million and could result in a considerable increase in 20  
inflationary pressures unless offset by an increase in 21  
economic aid. Moreover, if withdrawals led to increased 22  
enemy control of rice-producing areas and distribution net- 23  
works, severe economic disruptions could result. This risk 24  
is greater with Alternative C because of the larger combat 25  
force reduction. 26

d. Effect on the Enemy. Alternatives C and D, particularly 27  
C with its larger combat force, would ease the military situa- 28  
tion for the communists. However, in the negotiations, Hanoi 29  
relies heavily on US domestic pressures to force concessions, 30  
and there might be concern on its part that the 100,000 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

reduction had greatly reduced these pressures. Therefore, 1  
Hanoi's response would probably include a major military effort 2  
to probe and expose ARVN weaknesses, thereby shaking the 3  
Government of Vietnam's morale and reinforcing the communist 4  
contention that the only way out of the war for the United 5  
States is a negotiated settlement on communist terms. How- 6  
ever, if the communists attacks on the ARVN failed in their pur- 7  
pose, i.e., the Government of Vietnam's morale remained good, 8  
US antiwar sentiment remained quiescent, and other types of 9  
communist military pressures, such as offensives in Laos, 10  
failed to shake the Government of Vietnam and/or the United 11  
States, Hanoi might be forced into a reappraisal of the 12  
entire situation. At Paris, the communists might make some 13  
concessions. 14

e. Effect on Logistics. Reduction in logistic forces, 15  
under Alternatives B and D, would create problems by with- 16  
drawing logistic forces at a time when they are required to 17  
support the withdrawal. The reduction would also deny the 18  
RVNAF the support needed to assume the additional burden of 19  
combat resulting from US withdrawals. The RVNAF would not 20  
have reached a reasonable degree of combat support or combat 21  
service support self-sufficiency during this period (1969). 22  
Additionally, withdrawals of these logistic forces would 23  
degrade support to residual US Forces. 24

f. Effect on RVNAF. The subject of force reductions has 25  
been discussed in general terms with South Vietnamese offi- 26  
cials. They are prepared for some reduction in US Forces 27  
and expect that the reductions will be limited and carefully 28  
paced. However, the reductions envisaged by Alternatives C 29  
and D, particularly C with its large combat reduction, if 30  
undertaken over a short time span, could undermine confidence 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

50

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

and lead to despair about US assurances for the future of  
 South Vietnam. In addition, the relationships between US  
 advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts could be strained  
 and reduced in effectiveness. Moreover, there would be an  
 initial tendency, especially with Alternative C, for ARVN  
 commanders to adopt a more cautious and defensive attitude  
 and an inclination to hold fast to present positions rather  
 than to press on with pacification programs or combat opera-  
 tions.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9

g. Effect on Pacification. Both alternatives would have  
 some adverse impact on pacification programs since analysis  
 of data on pacification suggests strongly that US participa-  
 tion on a maneuver-battalion basis is a major factor in  
 achieving pacification progress when the enemy is using  
 maneuver battalions in the field.\* Alternative C could pro-  
 duce more of a setback, since it withdraws more combat forces.  
 Such a setback would undermine the stability of the central  
 government.

10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

h. Effect on Morale of US Forces. The magnitude of with-  
 drawals contemplated by Alternatives C and D could be inter-  
 preted by remaining US Forces in Vietnam and Southeast Asia as a  
 policy of abandoning the Republic of Vietnam; accordingly, they  
 might question whether their sacrifices would be in vain.  
 Morale and effectiveness could suffer from such an interpre-  
 tation.

19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

\* OSD estimates that, with the magnitude of US force reductions  
 envisioned in Alternative C, pacification could be set back  
 to a level of relative security for 60-70 percent of the  
 population. Alternatives A and D would have about the same  
 impact - a reduction of about 5 to 10 percent in relatively  
 secure category to 75 to 80 percent of the population in a  
 relatively secure category. Alternative B would have the  
 least impact.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

51

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

i. Effect on Free World Forces. Force reduction planning 1  
has not been discussed with any troop-contributing countries. 2  
However, the governments of the troop-contributing countries 3  
may decide to make at least token reductions in their forces 4  
in Vietnam. Since the majority of the Free World Forces are 5  
located in the II and III CTZ, any substantial reduction in 6  
Free World Forces or cutback in their activities would aggra- 7  
vate the risks already discussed. 8

22. (TS) It is envisaged that execution of any one of the four 9  
alternatives would be in two increments with a sufficient pause 10  
between to assess, in terms of the friendly and enemy situations, 11  
results of the previous deployment and implications of a subse- 12  
quent deployment. This assessment would permit decisions on the 13  
timing as well as tailoring of subsequent deployments. 14

23. (TS) The final report will address withdrawals, in greater 15  
detail, from all of Southeast Asia, including tactical air forces. 16  
The possibility of such withdrawals in 1969 has been considered in 17  
this initial report as follows: 18

a. Certain reductions in tactical air capabilities in South- 19  
east Asia already have been programmed, and others are pending 20  
decision. Moreover, a Marine attack squadron and a 21  
Marine fighter/attack squadron are included in each withdrawal 22  
alternative in this initial report. Additional reductions 23  
after 1 July would have further serious impact on the level of 24  
tactical air support available to the RVNAF at a critical time 25  
when they would require additional air support due to increasing 26  
responsibility for the combat war. 27

b. Air activities of out-of-country forces include B-52, 28  
carrier, and Thai-based tactical air operations against 29  
targets in the Republic of Vietnam as well as interdiction 30  
missions in Laos. These forces, particularly the B-52 force 31

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

which COMUSMACV considers a unique theater reserve, provide 1  
the flexibility and striking power to permit preemption of 2  
enemy operations, destruction of his supplies, and attrition 3  
of his units, frequently without the risking of any friendly 4  
lives. Air support to the RVNAF may be the crucial element 5  
in countering enemy initiatives taken in response to US force 6  
redeployments. The interdiction campaign in Laos is increas- 7  
ingly effective in preventing the enemy from sustaining high 8  
levels of activity in the Republic of Vietnam. This is an 9  
essential condition to the continued success of the acceler- 10  
ated pacification program. Any reduction in out-of-country 11  
capability would result in significant increased risks to 12  
the remaining US/RVNAF Forces and people of the Republic of 13  
Vietnam. 14

c. A phasedown of out-of-country US Forces in conjunction 15  
with withdrawals from the Republic of Vietnam could be 16  
interpreted as a general, unilateral withdrawal rather than 17  
an effort to turn over the bulk of the ground fighting in the 18  
Republic of Vietnam to the Vietnamese. 19

d. The guidance which directed this study provided the 20  
assumption: "No deescalation in allied military efforts, 21  
except that resulting from phased withdrawals of US and other 22  
troop contributing countries forces which are not fully com- 23  
pensated for by the South Vietnamese." Based on the current 24  
situation, allied military efforts, including those outside 25  
the Republic of Vietnam which have a bearing on the war in 26  
the Republic of Vietnam, should not be deescalated in 1969. 27  
In particular, current levels of effort, such as B-52 sorties 28  
and interdiction of land and sea infiltration should be 29  
continued at least through 1969. 30

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

Section D to  
Part II to  
Appendix A

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

APPENDIX B

DRAFT  
NOFORN

PRIORITY

FROM: SECDEF

TO: CINCPAC  
AMEMB SAIGON  
[redacted]

INFO: COMUSMACV

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE/CIA MESSAGE

TOP SECRET - NOFORN SPECAT for Amb Bunker - AmEmb Saigon,

Adm McCain - CINCPAC, [redacted] Gen Abrams - COMUSMACV

Subj: Vietnamization (C)

Refs: a. Joint State/Defense/CIA Initial Report (via courier);

b. Joint State/Defense/CIA msg, DEF 81373/301633Z Apr 69

1. (TS/NF) Reference a is the joint State/Defense/CIA initial report to be dispatched by courier. Reference b tasked COMUSMACV and CINCPAC to provide mission coordinated study on Vietnamizing the war for initial report due 1 June 1969.

2. (TS/NF) Reference a is approved as the basis for development of the final report. Authorization is granted to expand planning groups as necessary; however, planning must remain limited to those who "need to know."

3. (TS/NF) Detailed inputs are required for preparing the final report. These inputs must be keyed to reference a. In addition, your inputs must address the following points:

a. Thorough assessment of the military, political, pacification, and economic effects for each of the four timetables to include implications of percent of population under relatively secure Government of Vietnam control.

25X1

25X1

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE



TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE

b. Detailed force structure and reduction (by location and numbers). This will assist here in evaluating the effects on pacification and in determining the US balance of payments and cost implications including demobilization.	1 2 3 4
c. Preferred concept for troop-contributing countries including force levels.	5 6
d. Planned support concept and resulting detailed force package required to give RVNAF the optimum combat support and combat service support that it can effectively use.	7 8 9
e. Planned advisory concept and resulting structure.	10
f. Proposed phased reduction schedule of other Southeast Asia forces such as tactical air and supporting units.	11 12
g. Full examination and development of civilian agency program for Vietnamizing the war, to include phased civilian reduction schedule.	13 14 15
4. (TS/NF) Inputs for the final report are required here NOT LATER THAN 26 July 1969 using reference b coordinating procedures. Gp-1	16 17 18

WRITER:

Colonel J. A. Wickham, USA  
Short Range Branch, J-5  
Extensions 55988/54533

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

## APPENDIX C

ALTERNATIVE B'

1. (TS) The concept of Alternative B' is to "thin out" the combat forces country-wide in order to avoid the redeployment of a major element (3d Marine Division) in the area facing the greatest enemy capability - his ability to mass and attack across the DMZ. This thinning out process would be accomplished in increments, phased to provide assessments of impacts and risks. Forces withdrawn could be redeployed both within PACOM and back to CONUS. It should be noted that this concept is predicated upon an assessment of enemy capabilities. The enemy's capabilities are greatest in I Corps TZ.
2. (TS) Alternative B' would consist of the following redeployments:
- a. Combat forces (total 22,000)
    - (1) 2 Regiments/Brigades from I Corps.
    - (2) 2 Brigades from III/IV Corps.
    - (3) 173d Airborne Brigade redeployed within SVN as required.
  - b. Support forces, all Services (total 28,000)
3. (TS) The advantages of Alternative B' are:
- a. It avoids a major force reduction in the I Corps area opposite the enemy's greatest capability.
  - b. It precludes the necessity of re-locating major combat forces within SVN to I Corps to replace the withdrawn marine division. These relocations would be required to prevent the enemy's concentration and attack of the 1st ARVN Division, an attack which, if successful, would have a significant psychological effect upon all ARVN forces. Only local redeployments within I Corps would be required with this alternative.
  - c. It withdraws forces from areas where RVNAF and RF/PF forces are more capable of assuming increased combat participation. Most of the growth in RF/PF forces has been in the densely populated III and IV Corps areas. Incentive for assuming the increased role would be greater in these areas, than in the North.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

56

Appendix C

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

d. More forces are withdrawn from III and IV Corps where  
troop density, troop mobility and shorter operating distances  
make the impact of withdrawals less severe. 1  
2  
3

e. It reduces redeployments of major combat units from I  
Corps at a time when the dry season there can result in  
increased enemy activity. Conversely, the rainy season in the  
South inhibits enemy, as well as friendly, operations. 4  
5  
6  
7

f. Politically, this alternative provides the option of  
returning some combat forces to CONUS and is therefore  
attractive. 8  
9  
10

g. Logistically, redeployments would be spread over several  
logistical areas and would utilize several port areas, rather  
than one. Additionally, the reception of smaller sized combat  
forces at several destinations would be more manageable. 11  
12  
13  
14

4. (TS) In recognition of the enemy capability opposite I CTZ,  
a policy alternative should be kept open for the period beyond  
CY 69 which provides for an international DMZ force. This force  
could include elements from US and TCC forces to provide a deter-  
rent or defense against a possible large scale invasion from the  
North. Such a policy would clearly demonstrate the international  
character of protecting SVN from aggression while progressively  
turning the war effort to the GVN in the south. 15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE