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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TS-HK-D222C

ACTION
May 11, 1970

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Laurence E. Lynn, Jr. *jel*

SUBJECT: Viet Cong Military Proselyting

At your request I have prepared a memorandum for the President on Viet Cong military proselyting and penetrations within the GVN and RVNAF.

I believe that the enemy's subversive effort represents a serious allied vulnerability in South Vietnam:

-- [redacted] plans for the recent operations into Cambodia were known to the enemy at least two days in advance of the ARVN Parrot's Beak operation and at least a day before the U.S. operation in the Fishhook.

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-- It is an accepted fact that ARVN rarely mounts a major operation without the enemy knowing the full details beforehand. Not so widely recognized but of great importance is the role played by VC military proselyting cadre in degrading ARVN performance. These

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cadre encourage defections and promote indifferent performance by ARVN soldiers by promising favorable treatment for those who sympathize with the VC cause.

These enemy proselyting activities represent a serious drag on Vietnamization. Unless the GVN develops the capabilities to cope with this effort, GVN and ARVN performance will probably not reach the level required to prosecute the war without a large U.S. involvement.

In the President's memorandum I have briefly described the nature of these VC subversive activities. The memorandum informs the President that you have asked CIA Director Helms for a full report on the enemy's proselyting effort and GVN activities to counter it.

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend that you:

- sign the memorandum for the President at Tab A,
- sign the memorandum for Director Helms at Tab B.

Enclosures

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MEMORANDUM

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

(Signed) HK

SUBJECT: Viet Cong Military Proselyting

The Significance of Enemy Proselyting

A key but rarely discussed aspect of the enemy's activities in Vietnam is his military proselyting effort. Enemy proselyting activities are designed to:

- obtain intelligence,
- degrade GVN and ARVN performance,
- prepare for political competition with the GVN in the event of a ceasefire or through GVN elections.

VC military proselyting organizations have an estimated 20,000 members, including about 10,000 regular party members. They account for about 25 percent of the strength of the Viet Cong infrastructure.

In addition to this formal bureaucracy, the Viet Cong proselyters have recruited a large network of about 5,000 subversives within the GVN. Another 15,000 VC agents are in the Vietnamese armed forces, a third of whom are officers or NCO's.

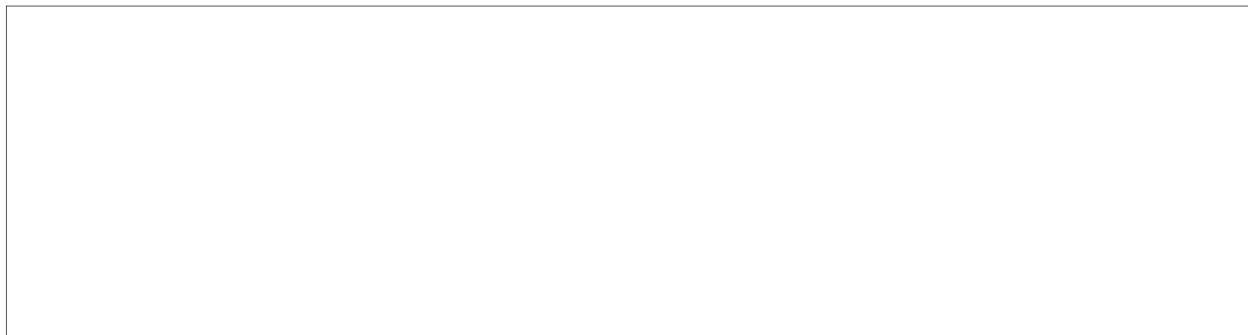
[redacted] a major increase in VC proselyting penetration activities. This shift could be read as the prelude to political struggle, i.e. ceasefire, or merely as another tactic to counter Vietnamization.

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In either case it is of the utmost importance that the GVN take measures to cope with this threat.

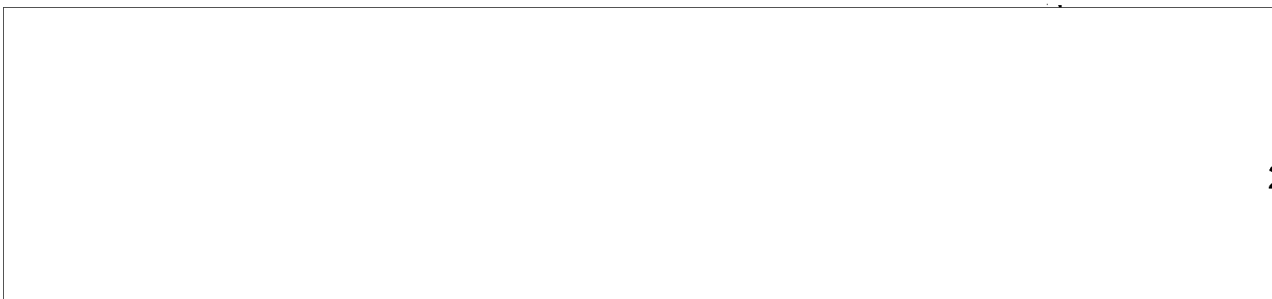


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-- It is an accepted fact that ARVN rarely mounts a major operation without the enemy knowing the full details beforehand. Not so widely recognized is the role played by VC proselyters in degrading ARVN performance by encouraging desertions and sympathetic performance by GVN/ARVN personnel. Thus these enemy activities are a real threat to Vietnamization.

The GVN Response

GVN awareness of the problem of proselyting and penetrations within RVNAF has grown and its effectiveness at dealing with the problem has also increased:



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However, much remains to be done and the GVN is still faced with several intractable problems that hamper its efforts:



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In sum, while the GVN is making some progress in improving the effectiveness of its security forces, there is no reason to believe that they have made significant inroads into the existing networks of VC agents, except in Saigon, or that these networks cannot be increased in size and quality.

Conclusion

Enemy proselyting activities and the absence of a determined GVN effort to counter them represents a serious if not crippling drag on Vietnamization.

I have sent a memorandum to CIA Director Helms asking him to investigate the seriousness of this problem and the sufficiency of present GVN actions to counter it. I have also sought his views on any actions we might take to help improve the GVN's countermeasures. His response is expected by June 1, 1970 at which time I will forward recommendations to you on possible U.S. course of action to improve the situation.

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MEMORANDUM FOR

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Viet Cong Military Proselyting and Penetration Activities

Through the work of the Central Intelligence Agency, I have become aware of the Viet Cong Military Proselyting and Penetration effort in South Vietnam. I understand the Viet Cong have recently increased their proselyting effort and that this could have an important effect on Vietnamization or on any political settlement.

I have informed the President of the scope and nature of these enemy activities. I would like to inform him further on such matters as:

-- your assessment of the extent and significance, particularly for the Vietnamization program, of these activities,

-- the nature and effectiveness of current GVN measures to cope with this threat,

-- alternative courses of action we might take to improve the GVN's capability to counter enemy proselyting and penetration activities.

Your analysis of the foregoing considerations is necessary for a complete assessment of the situation. Please forward your results to me by June 1, 1970.

(Signed) HENRY A. KISSINGER

Henry A. Kissinger

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