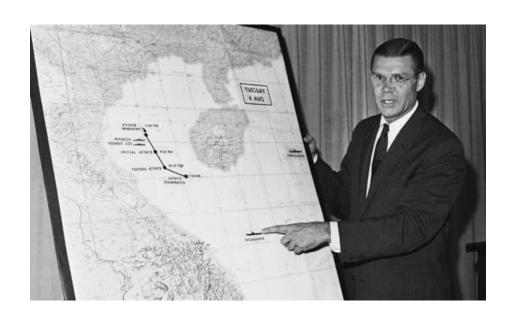
Records of the U.S. State Department

Briefing Books Relating to the Situation in Vietnam, 1961-1966

From the Records of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs



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Guide Compiled by Daniel Piper

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Cover photograph: Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in a post-midnight press briefing at the Pentagon points out action in Gulf of Tonkin, Aug. 4, 1964. Courtesy National Archives, College Park, MD.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

"My [General Taylor] recommendations, already laid before you [President Kennedy] by cable, represent the emergency program which we feel our Government should implement without delay.

Communist strategy aims to gain control of Southeast Asia by methods of subversion and guerrilla war...This strategy is well on the way to success in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, there is a double crisis in confidence: doubt that U.S. is determined to save Southeast Asia; doubt that Diem's methods can frustrate and defeat Communist purposes and methods...

Aside from the morale factor, the Vietnamese Government is caught in interlocking circles of bad tactics and bad administrative arrangements which pin their forces on the defensive in ways which permit a relatively small Viet-Cong force to create conditions of frustration and terror certain to lead to a political crisis, if a positive turning point is not soon achieved. The following recommendations are designed to achieve that favorable turn, to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in South Vietnam, and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence."

Taylor Report, 1961

This microfilm collection documents the development of America's Vietnam policy, between the Taylor Mission in 1961 and the first assessment of the situation in Vietnam since the introduction of combat troops in 1966.

This collection consists of notebooks and briefing books compiled as background memoranda, reports, transcripts of hearings, memoranda of conversation, chronologies of official State Department visits, and requests for information from officials such as Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

This collection includes primary documents on:

U.S. policy toward Indochina, 1940-1963

Commentary and assessment of the Taylor Mission Report and its recommendations Analysis of the U.S. Political-Military Country Team report on the Buddhist situation and fall of the Diem government

Establishment of LBJ's National Security Council Working Group on Vietnam Assessment and review of the Alternatives Report on the response to North Vietnamese provocations

Assessment of the U.S. role and the decision to expand the U.S. commitment
Discussion on ending the war and deployment of additional U.S. forces
Political, economic, and military information for Secretary Dean Rusk's Vietnam visit
Negotiating strategy and international actions concerning Vietnam in 1965
Assessment of the situation in Vietnam since the introduction of combat troops, May 1966
Secretary Dean Rusk's Appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February
1966

"Eyes only for Lodge and Westmoreland from the Secretary [of State Rusk]. We are sure you will have been watching the discussions in the Foreign Relations Committee and also the statement of Senator Robert Kennedy, with public reactions to it. We are sure that your own understanding of the Administration position will not have been affected by comments of critics, but it seems important here that Thieu and Ky

should be informed not only of debates and discussions, but of this Administration's position. We therefore hope that you will make sure that the essentials of the position presented by General Taylor and myself [Secretary Rusk]are fully understood by the government in Saigon. In particular it can be assured that our position on the NLF has not changed...We share the hopes and purposes of the GVN for elections with safeguards which will permit a really free choice without coercion or fraud. What we hope you can communicate to the GVN, in short, is a full understanding of both our own firmness and determination and of the real problems created by critics here who seize upon any minor difference to exploit. The government in Saigon can rely on us, and at the same time they can help us by implementing and accelerating the policy and purpose of progressive social action set forth by them in Honolulu and afterwards."

Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam, February 21, 1966

SOURCE & EDITORIAL NOTE

The documents reproduced in this publication are from Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Lot File 67D45, Entry5306, National Archives II, College Park, MD. All available documents have been filmed in their entirety and in the order that they are arranged at the Archives.

REEL INDEX

The following is a listing of the folders comprising the microfilm publication entitled *Records of the U.S. State Department: Briefing Books Relating to the Situation in Vietnam, 1961-1966 From the Records of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs.* The Reel Index lists the folder number, folder title, as well as a listing of the major subjects for each folder.

REEL 1

Folder#

[1] Top Secret—07/08/1964.

Major subjects: Roosevelt, Franklin Delano; Truman, Harry; Eisenhower, Dwight; Vietminh; Indochina; Japan; France; Treaties/agreements, international; Stalin, Joseph; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Laos; Cambodia; China, People's republic of (PRC); de Gaulle, Charles; UK; Siam; Border disputes; Vietnamese; Minh, Ho Chi; Communist containment; Dai, Bao; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Military aid/assistance, U.S.; French Union army; France; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Loans; NATO.

[2] [November 1961].

Major subjects: Military intelligence, U.S.; Diem, Ngo Dinh; Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN); Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Civil Guard; Taylor, Maxwell D.; Counter-insurgency; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Communist infiltration; Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Economy; Defoliants; Border control; Chemical weapons.

[3] Top Secret—Taylor Mission, 1961.

Major subjects: Presidential statements; China, Republic of (ROC); Constitutional law; International law; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Counter-insurgency; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Laos; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military strategy, U.S.; Political strategy, U.S.; Cambodia; Thailand; USSR; Taylor, Maxwell D.; Communist containment.

[4] Review of the Situation: Political/Military—Country Team Report. Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military situation; Viet Cong; Counterinsurgency; Military strategy, U.S.; Military aid/assistance, U.S.

[5] Top Secret—NSC Working Group; Vietnam, 1964.

Major subject: Military intelligence, U.S.; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Political strategy, U.S.; International opinion; Military strategy, U.S.; Viet Cong; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Taylor, Maxwell D.; Economic aid/assistance, international.

[6] [May-August, 1964].

Major subjects: North Atlantic Council; Political strategy, U.S.; NATO; Communist containment; Cold war; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Military strategy, U.S.; Counter-insurgency; Military intelligence, U.S.; Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Lodge, Henry Cabot.

REEL 2

Folder#

- [6] [May-August, 1964] cont.
 - *Major subjects:* Cold war; Laos; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Viet Cong; Military intelligence, U.S.; National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam; France; Military strategy, U.S.; UN; Southeast Asia; NATO; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN).
- [7] Top Secret—Alternatives Report.

Major subjects: Political strategy, U.S.; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Military commitment, U.S.; Peace negotiations; International conferences; Sino-Soviet split; Laos; Intervention strategy, U.S.; Cambodia; Thailand; Counter-insurgency; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); UN; Border control; Economic aid/assistance, international; Viet Cong.

- [8] Alternatives for Imposition of Measured Pressures—March 1, 1964.
- [9] [Notice of Withdrawal].
- [10] [June-July 1965].

Major subjects: Viet Cong; Ky, Nguyen Cao; Do, Tran Van; Cambodia; Peace negotiations; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Air strikes; Economy; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN).

- [11] Secret—Vietnam: Political Data—Volume 1: For Secretary Rusk, July 1965.

 Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Ky, Nguyen Cao; Buddhism; Roman Catholicism; Public opinion; Military, U.S.; Viet Cong; Military intelligence, U.S.; Ky, Nguyen Cao; Peace negotiations; Southeast Asia; Laos; Cambodia; Treaties/agreements, international; India; China, People's republic of (PRC); Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Air strikes; USSR; Economy; PL 480; Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Land reform.
- [12] Vietnam: Economic Data—Volume II: For Secretary Rusk, July 1965.

 Major subjects: Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Economy; Commercial Import Program (CIP); Trade; Counterinsurgency; Loans; PL 480; Economic aid/assistance, international.
- Vietnam: Military Data—Volume III: For Secretary Rusk—Top Secret, July 1965.

 Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military situation; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Viet Cong; Rural reconstruction; Military strategy, U.S.; Communist infiltration; Air strikes; Military intelligence, U.S.
- [14] Vietnam: Political Data—Volume 1: For Secretary Rusk, 10/21; FE Mr. Lakeland per conversation; VN Mr. Roberts by Hand; Mr. Merrian, 5/5-5 10/21/65; Address T_870284.

Major subjects: Ky, Nguyen Cao; Do, Tran Van; Political strategy, U.S.; Viet Cong; Military intelligence, U.S.; Public opinion; Roman Catholicism; Buddhism; Peace negotiations; Laos; USSR; Treaties/agreements, international; Vietnam, Democratic

Republic of (DRV); Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Economic aid/assistance, international; Air strikes; Exchange rate; Economy.

- [15] Secret—Vietnam: Economic Data—Volume 2: For Secretary Rusk.

 Major subjects: Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Counterinsurgency; Loans; PL 480; Commercial Import Program (CIP); Economy; Economic aid/assistance, international.
- Top Secret, Sensitive—Vietnam: Military Data—Volume 3: For Secretary Rusk.

 Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Military situation; Political strategy, U.S.;

 Communist infiltration; Military strategy, RVN; Air strikes; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Military intelligence, U.S.; Casualties; Rural reconstruction; Military strategy, U.S.; Force levels.

REEL 3

Folder#

- [17] Secret—Negotiating and International Actions Concerning Vietnam; Mr. Unger. *Major subjects:* Rusk, Dean; Do, Tran Van; Diplomatic statements, U.S.; UN; Peace negotiations; National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam; USSR; Nuclear disarmament; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Laos.
- [18] Top Secret—Vietnam Briefing Book for Ambassador Lodge, July 12, 1965; Mr. Bundy.

Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Ky, Nguyen Cao; Do, Tran Van; Roman Catholicism; Buddhism; Public opinion; Economic aid/assistance, international; Economy; Land reform; Air strikes; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Viet Cong; Peace negotiations; USSR; Military strategy, U.S.; Military intelligence, U.S.

[19] Secret—Vietnam Status Report.

Major subjects: Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Economy; Economic aid/assistance, international.

[20] Secret—Secretary's Appearance before Senate Foreign Relations Committee; February 18, 1966.

Major subjects: Peace negotiations; Communist infiltration; Viet Cong; UN; National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam; Viet Cong; Military intelligence, U.S.; Desertion rates; Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN); Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Air strikes; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Economy; Congress; Public opinion; Peace negotiations; USSR; UN; Thant, U; Minh, Ho Chi; Prisoners of War, U.S.; Military commitment, U.S.; Economic aid/assistance, international; PL 480; Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO); International law; Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); Geneva Accords, 1954; Constitutional law; Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Tonkin Gulf Resolution; Treaties/agreements,

international; Press/media; China, People's republic of (PRC); USSR; Cambodia; Laos; Thailand; Duncan, Donald.

[21] [President's Asian Trip: October-November 1966].

Major subjects: Philippines; Economic aid/assistance, U.S.; Economy; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Asia; Cambodia; Korea, Democratic People's Republic of (DPRK); China, People's Republic of (PRC); Travel restrictions, U.S.; Indonesia; Korea, Republic of (ROK); Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Malaysia; Laos; Japan; UK; France; Australia; Labor; Asia; Vietnam, Democratic Republic of (DRV); UN; National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam; Demilitarized zone; Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Economic aid/assistance, international; Prisoners of War, U.S.; Prisoners of War, VC; Viet Cong; Military commitment, U.S.; Peace negotiations; Economy; India; Philippines; Thailand.

[22] President's Asian Trip: October-November 1966; Background Paper.

Major subject: Trade; China, People's republic of (PRC); UN; China, Republic of (ROC);

Thailand; Laos; Military situation; Vietnam, Republic of (RVN); Economy.

SUBJECT INDEX

The first number after each entry refers to the reel, while the number following the colon refers to a folder number on that reel. Hence 1:1 directs the researcher to folder 1 on reel 1. Each folder is located on the reel in numerical order and introduced with a folder tab. These subjects will not necessarily be found at the beginning of the designated folder, but will be located within it. This Subject Index is best used in conjunction with the Reel index, which lists not only folder numbers, but folder titles as well.

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