

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

By hah Date 02/13/07

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/NODIS~~

July 3, 1971

National Security Decision Memorandum 118

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Improvements in South Vietnamese Forces

I have carefully reviewed the assessment of the military situation in Vietnam in 1972 undertaken by the Senior Review Group and the Department of Defense paper, forwarded by Deputy Secretary Packard's June 18, 1971 memorandum, summarizing the alternatives that emerged from this assessment.

I have decided that the U.S. will provide support for RVNAF forces in FY 1972 in accordance with alternative 2 as described in the Department of Defense paper and as recommended by the Secretary of Defense.

Specifically the Department of Defense and the U.S. Mission to South Vietnam should take actions immediately to accomplish the following:

-- Take special measures, including training and promotion programs and urging the removal of incompetent commanders, to improve South Vietnamese military leadership and morale. A program to provide incentive (dislocation or combat) pay to RVNAF units in combat in isolated areas should be implemented.

-- Increase manning levels in RVNAF combat and other key units to 90 percent.

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-- Strengthen RVNAF forces in Military Regions 1 and 2 by such measures as the addition of another division in MR 1 and a division headquarters with appropriate support in MR 2.

Alternative 2 should be negotiated and implemented, particularly in regard to the strengthening of RVNAF forces in MRs 1 and 2, in a manner that does not provide the GVN with perverse incentives with regard to the security of MRs 3 and 4. Should the GVN request U.S. support for additions to RVNAF beyond 1.1 million men in FY 72 and in the judgment of the U.S. Mission the alternative of adding to RVNAF forces by removing or demobilizing units in MRs 3 and 4 involves excessive risks to the security of these areas, the U.S. is willing to consider an increase beyond 1.1 million men. U.S. support for any such increase would be contingent on demonstration by the GVN that such increases would not jeopardize the attainment of manning levels of 90 percent in combat and other key units.

The Secretary of Defense will be in charge of implementing these actions in coordination with the Secretary of State and the U. S. Mission to South Vietnam. He should report to me by September 1, 1971, the actions that have been taken to implement these decisions.



cc: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Director, Central Intelligence Agency