

DECLASSIFIED

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NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

By GA Date 01/20/07

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

April 10, 1969

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National Security Study Memorandum 36

TO: The Secretary of State
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Vietnamizing the War

The President has directed the preparation of a specific timetable for Vietnamizing the war. He has asked that the Secretary of Defense be responsible for the overall planning and implementation of this process, in coordination with the Secretary of State and the Director of Central Intelligence.

The plan should cover all aspects of US military, para-military, and civilian involvement in Vietnam, including combat and combat support forces, advisory personnel, and all forms of equipment. The plan can draw on current studies, including those for T-Day planning and RVNAF modernization and improvement. However, this timetable will be directed toward the progressive transfer to the South Vietnamese of the fighting effort with the US and other TCCs increasingly in support roles, assuming that the war continues and that North Vietnamese as well as Vietcong forces are in South Vietnam.

Assumptions for this timetable will include:

- a starting date of July 1, 1969;
- current North Vietnamese and Vietcong force levels, (i. e., we are not able to achieve mutual withdrawals); these levels should be continually adjusted in future months to ongoing intelligence estimates;
- current projections of RVNAF force levels;

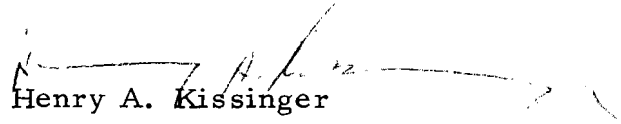
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- no deescalation in allied military efforts, except that resulting from phased withdrawals of US and other TCC forces which are not fully compensated for by the South Vietnamese;
- the highest national priorities for the equipping and training of South Vietnamese forces.

Based on these assumptions, timetables should be drawn up for the transfer of the combat role to the GVN and restriction of the US role to combat support and advisory missions only, with alternative completion dates of December 31, 1970, June 30, 1971, December 31, 1971, and December 31, 1972. For each alternative schedule the plan should identify the degradation in combat capability, if any, which would result, and the implications for the per cent of population under relatively secure GVN control. Each schedule should also estimate the budget and BOP implications.

Continual study, refinement and reevaluation of these problems will be necessary as the Vietnamization process proceeds. The President has requested by June 1 an initial overall report outline, as well as specific recommendations, with alternatives, for the first six months (July 1 to December 31, 1969), and a complete report by September 1. Further studies, recommendations, and progress reports will be requested subsequently.


Henry A. Kissinger

cc: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff