MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. George Carver, SAVA

SUBJECT: MACV Press Briefing on Enemy Order of Battle

1. This memorandum is in response to your request for comments on the draft MACV press briefing on enemy order of battle.

2. I have reviewed the draft statement and, as seen from this Office, I must rank it as one of the greatest snow jobs since Potemkin constructed his village. I would therefore recommend most strongly that CIA not be associated either directly or indirectly with the briefing.

3. This briefing and similar fictions that MACV proposes to present in the near future present a series of vulnerable intelligence judgments that cannot be substantiated at this time and promise almost certainly to lead to even graver credibility problems than the current debate over orders of battle. I would make several specific comments about the subject briefing.

4. The tone of the briefing is unwarranted. It is at odds with the general tone of the current draft of NIE 14.3 and implies a coincidence of views between MACV and CIA that simply does not exist. The draft briefing also implies a certitude and precision about OB estimates that are completely unwarranted. The NIE is much more forthright about the many uncertainties associated with the OB estimates.

5. The draft NIE 14.3 states specifically that, with the exception of regular forces, we have underestimated the strength of enemy forces. The press briefing implies that we have overestimated guerrilla forces.
6. The draft briefing fails to present the vital modifier of "at least" in setting administrative support forces at 35,000-40,000. NIE 14.3 not only says "at least 35,000-40,000" but acknowledges that they could be considerably higher.

7. The draft briefing states that previous estimates of guerrillas included too much when they settled on figures of 100,000-120,000. NIE 14.3 states, correctly, I believe, that we have previously underestimated these forces. The draft briefing then pours salt in the wounds by saying the number of guerrillas is 70,000-90,000 but closer to 70,000 than 90,000. This statement is nonsense and a blatant departure from the language agreed to by your team at Saigon.

8. The truly impossible aspect of the MACV briefing is its unbelievably cavalier and shocking consignment of the thousands of militia and self-defense forces into the realm of fellow-travelers or sympathizers. This is not a violation of the Saigon agreement, it is a complete and wanton scuttling of the whole exercise.

9. In view of the above, I repeat that the Agency should not become a partner in MACV's briefings. MACV's unilateral departures from the Saigon agreements give us all the justification we need to go straight again.

[S]

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Acting Deputy Director
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