SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS TO THE REPORT BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, JULY 9, 1970, LEE H. HAMILTON

You find in Vietnam evidence to support the point of view you had when you arrived. The complexity and the variety of the scene is such that the "hawk" and the "dove" will each observe, investigate and leave, assured of the wisdom of the view he had when he arrived.

Thus, I make no claim to an objective report. I add this supplemental view to the report filed by the Select Committee Chairman simply to pass on to my colleagues several of my observations about this unhappy land which has in recent years been too much with us.

CAMBODIA

The Cambodian venture has relieved the enemy pressure in the III and IV Corps areas. In each of these areas, the number of enemy-initiated incidents is sharply down. So far as I could determine, there has been little impact from Cambodia felt in I and II Corps.

Almost everyone with whom we talked in Vietnam, including critics of the war, readily admitted that the enemy caches discovered have been significant. The Cambodian venture disrupted the supply and communication lines of the enemy, caused much equipment to be captured, relieved the pressure in the South, increased the confidence of the South Vietnamese, and provided a breathing space of uncertain duration for many provinces.

It did not, however, accomplish all its objectives. The Communist headquarters was not found and negotiations were not advanced.

The final judgment on the crucial question of whether the Cambodian venture will speed U.S. disengagement must await political developments.

Apart from the rapid progress the enemy has made in extending control over large areas of Cambodia since the United States incursion into Cambodia, serious questions remain in my mind about the impact of the U.S. move, among them, these:
- Has it hindered a negotiated settlement because Hanoi's suspicion is deepened that the U.S. does not intend to leave, and Saigon, in its new found military confidence, is more resistant to negotiation?
- If it has been such an outstanding success, why cannot the schedule of troop withdrawals announced before the venture be accelerated?
- If South Vietnamese troops have difficulty making their homeland secure, will they be spread too thin to take on the burden of defending Cambodia? The more area there is to defend, the more advantage to the practitioners of guerrilla warfare.
- To what extent is the United States now "committed" to Cambodia? As small weapons are supplied, air strikes continued, and economic assistance planned, the risk is that the United States is being drawn into another unpromising commitment and caught in a whole new set of problems.
---What is the danger of an outbreak between the South Vietnamese and the Cambodians, long-standing enemies?

---Has the United States, by going into Cambodia, proved itself unpredictable and able to strike at the enemy, or has the U.S. domestic upheaval over Cambodia signaled to Hanoi that the President's options in Southeast Asia do not permit escalation?

---Could the undoubted beneficial results of the Cambodian venture been achieved without the high political cost at home, if South Vietnamese troops had been exclusively used to search the sanctuaries?

These questions will be debated endlessly. Suffice it to say they cause me serious enough doubt to discount the euphoric rhetoric of success that has come from high places.

At every turn we were told that the enemy can take all of Cambodia, if he wants it, and nothing short of massive United States intervention could stop him. If he does not want it, and the weight of opinion, at least for the moment, apparently is that he does not, current levels of American and South Vietnamese assistance are sufficient to enable a non-Communist government to survive. The fragility of the Lon Nol government confronts the United States with some very hard options.

My own view is that the United States should not introduce troops into Cambodia, and should avoid massive aid or other steps leading to a new and continuing involvement. The vital interests of the United States are not directly threatened in Cambodia.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

The Thieu government is in firm control politically. However, I saw little evidence that he is popular and little indication of a serious challenge to him.

Politics in South Vietnam is controlled by a military oligarchy. President Thieu appoints the province chiefs and the district chiefs, and almost all of them are military personnel. President Thieu controls the military, or vice versa, and it is difficult to determine which is the case.

We should not deceive ourselves about the nature of the South Vietnamese government. It is not a democracy, and we should not pretend that it is. There has been much arbitrary use of power.

Truong Dinh Dzu, who finished second to Thieu in the Presidential race, was sentenced to five years in prison for advocating a coalition government. A military court has sentenced Thich Thien Minh, a leader of a Buddhist faction, to ten years at hard labor for concealing weapons and illegal documents. Thieu has demanded that the parliamentary immunity of two deputies be revoked because of Communist activities, and his handling of these cases has been severely criticized.

My suspicion is that this arbitrariness will probably not abate, and might even get worse as the economic and political pressures become more acute.

Corruption has not been eliminated from the South Vietnamese government and there is very little prospect that it will be. Several American province and district advisers pointed out to me that a district chief, for example, simply cannot live on his salary and it is expected that he will "cheat" here and there.

The political and economic problems of the Thieu government are
very severe and the prospect is for no relief. At the moment inflation is severe and the people of Saigon are as much concerned about it as about anything else.

In recent months the opposition to the government from militant Buddhists, students who feel they have no future, veterans who feel they have been shabbily treated, numerous politicians and several newspaper editors has become much more vociferous. However, none of these groups has been able to develop a formidable, united challenge to the present government.

One of the political pressures building up on the South Vietnamese government is the density of population. Saigon, for example, now has an estimated 2.2 million people and the resulting density is approximately twice that of Tokyo. The urban problems that result create enormous political and social unrest.

All these matters create an explosive political situation.

There are some encouraging signs that a representative government can be developed. One official spoke to me about the astonishing interest in the provincial elections. I visited several political meetings occurring in the provinces and they are not dissimilar to those I attend in the United States. Candidates spoke and urged the local populace to vote for them in the election. The high percentage of voter turnout in local elections should be appraised carefully. Pressure is exerted to turn out, and the elections tend only to ratify existing authority. It might even be a sign of maturity in the democratic process if the percentage of voters dropped.

But this democracy, rudimentary although it may be, has in it the seeds of promise.

The political developments, then, are a mixed bag. Democracy is struggling to be born and I would like to believe it will prevail, but no one can make that assurance.

**ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN)**

I was continually impressed with the importance of the role, actual and potential, of the ARVN. They must bear the burden of local defense and security, but beyond that they are the primary available instrument of political, economic, and social reconstruction.

There has been improvement in the ARVN forces. Their confidence after Cambodia almost approaches a state of euphoria.

Although American military officials generally are pleased with their progress and have high praise for the performance of several units, they observe that in certain critical areas—for example, in helicopter capability—the ARVN is far short of proficiency.

**PACIFICATION**

Pacification has had its ups and downs, but in 1969 rapid progress was made.

Although there has been some slowing in the rate of progress in recent months, the general feeling, especially in the III and IV Corps areas, is that pacification will continue to improve. Virtually everyone with whom I talked, American and Vietnamese alike, felt the program is better organized and is generating real progress. My own travels in three of the four Corps areas by jeep and helicopter, often without the presence of security guards, is evidence of this progress.
The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) has measured progress in pacification since 1967. It was frequently criticized for presenting an overly optimistic view, and in early 1970 was revised to reduce the optimistic bias.

Most officials think it is a useful device. President Thieu, for example, uses it to put pressure on his province chiefs, because he regards it as a definite measure of their performance.

Several key American officials suggested that one of the most heartening signs in Vietnam is the continual improvement in the quality of the province chiefs. The province chief is, of course, an absolutely crucial local figure. I met with several province chiefs and discussed their problems at some length. I was impressed with their grasp of local problems, their sense of urgency for development and nation-building. My impressions tend to confirm the observations of the American officials.

I found among the Vietnamese people both respect and fear for the Viet Cong. They respect their discipline, but they fear their brutality, their heavy taxes and the fact that they draft their sons, who are often never heard from again. More and more, the indication is that the South Vietnamese dislike the Viet Cong and see that they do not tell the truth about the government of South Vietnam or the United States. More and more, South Vietnamese believe that if the Viet Cong would go away they could lead better lives. This is a healthy and encouraging development.

We must continue to push South Vietnam hard in the area of land reform, local self-government and the protection of basic human rights. We cannot expect too much. Vietnam just is not the kind of a country where democracy is going to operate without problems.

It is critical that the government’s land reform program, now announced, be implemented successfully. It would transfer ownership of 2.5 to 3 million acres of land to peasants who now cultivate it, and would affect 800,000 families. It could do more than any single thing to stabilize government control in the countryside. The land reform program constitutes a basic factor in the peasant’s attitude toward the war.

**THE UNITED STATES ROLE IN VIETNAM AND IN ASIA**

The United States must consider Vietnam in the context of Asian policy. I believe we should downgrade United States interest in Southeast Asia, and certainly subordinate it to our interest in Japan. We should be interested in the long range development of the nations of Southeast Asia, but our immediate, vital interests are limited.

I came away from Vietnam with a keen appreciation of what we cannot do. In a word, we cannot build a nation for the South Vietnamese. By the expenditure of enormous resources, we have given South Vietnam a chance to survive, and that’s probably the best we can do. Their severe political and economic problems can only be solved by them. We can do our best to assist them through economic and technological aid, but as much as we would like to, we cannot assure their security, their prosperity or their democracy.

A key to our future Asian policy is to recognize our limitations in bringing about development in Asia. I was impressed by the amazing visibility of the American presence in Vietnam, Thailand, Okinawa
and Japan. It is bound to be, and is, a point of friction. Our policy should be to adopt a lower profile or posture than has been the case in the past.

The United States should do all it can to encourage and support an Asian collective security system, and supply economic and technical assistance, but we should be most reluctant to commit American troops. We must look to the nations that are threatened to provide the manpower.

An important step in the future of the United States in Asia is to end in an orderly way our involvement in Vietnam. This will be a task calling for the utmost skill. The nervousness of friendly Asian leaders about the U.S. role in Asia is apparent. They genuinely fear that the United States will desert them. They accept the fact of U.S. disengagement reluctantly. One of the things I tried to do in my conversations with South Vietnamese citizens was to persuade them that the United States is withdrawing and moving out. Although they invariably nodded their heads in assent, I wondered whether they actually believed it with the still-massive American presence all around them.

We are in a better shape in Vietnam than we have ever been before, and after five years of major combat, we have done about all we can do. We ought to accelerate withdrawal if at all possible, being careful to protect the United States position in world affairs, to insure the safety of United States forces and to encourage the safe return of American prisoners of war.

CON SON PRISON

I commend my two colleagues for their investigation of Con Son Island prison, and I share their shock at the inhuman conditions they found. American officials should take immediate steps to advise the Saigon government that we will not support a system which tolerates that kind of treatment of persons.

The gravity of their disclosure extends beyond humanitarian considerations. United States policy in Vietnam depends upon the stability of the South Vietnamese government. The conditions at Con Son raise fundamental questions about the nature of that government and its capacity to deal with dissent and opposition, and to make the kind of political adjustments necessary to keep the country from exploding.

MISCELLANEOUS

1) Appreciation for United States Personnel

My observations would be incomplete without a word of appreciation to United States military and civilian personnel. They are not the policymakers, and should not be held responsible for the errors of policy. I was impressed again and again with their competence and dedication. Many of them serve voluntarily at great personal sacrifice and all of us owe them a debt of gratitude.

2) Negotiations

Vietnamization, despite its success in several respects, has clearly failed thus far to spur serious negotiations in Paris. I didn’t speak to any American or South Vietnamese official who brought up the subject of negotiations.
3) **Prisoners of War**

The American prisoners of war create a special problem. Pressure should be kept up by the Congress to push at every conceivable opportunity for the identification of all prisoners, the establishment of regular communication between them and their families, the prompt repatriation of the seriously sick and wounded, the observation and inspection of prisoner of war camps by impartial observers, and their eventual release.

4) **Physical Appearance**

I was impressed by the relatively untouched physical appearance of South Vietnam. There were, in places, many craters left from bombings. There also was evidence of Rome plows which had cut through the jungle, clearing it. (One American general commented that the Rome plow was, next to the helicopter, the most important piece of equipment in Vietnam.) In several instances, cattle were grazing where the plows had been through. In some few areas there was defoliation, but it was quickly coming back. Some instances of defoliation have undoubtedly been unwise and I would strongly oppose it in certain areas, for example, near the rubber plantations. But over all, the impression is one of the fertility of the land, which is everywhere apparent, and heightens the tragedy of the country because of the loss of potential productivity.

5) **Reconciliation**

I was often struck with the thought that someone must get on with the task of reconciliation of the North and South. This war will end some day, if only because the people wear out. These people have suffered so greatly. Private groups and governments must begin now to work at the immensely difficult task of reconciliation. These efforts must concentrate on the overwhelming human problems. If progress can be made with them, the larger political and social problems may become more manageable.

6) **People of South Vietnam**

I was greatly moved by the incredible hardships the people of South Vietnam have endured. They have had staggering casualties, and many of them lead sub-human lives today.

I admire the very special strengths of the South Vietnamese which have made them remarkably resilient to tragedy.

I could not help but reflect on their future, and I cannot see any real relief. It seems to me they are set for an unrelenting struggle for long years ahead.

**OUTLOOK**

I return less optimistic than many of our officials. North Vietnam is a highly organized, patient, disciplined society and South Vietnam is a highly inefficient, fragmented society. The United States can, and indeed has, given the South Vietnamese a chance to survive. As the United States withdraws from South Vietnam, we must be very firm—even tough—with the South Vietnamese in order to give them an opportunity to survive.

LEE H. HAMILTON.
ADDITIONAL OR SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS OF NEAL SMITH
TO THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON U.S.
INVOLVEMENT IN S.E. ASIA, JULY 9, 1970

On Monday, the consensus or summary report of the Select Committee on our involvement in Southeast Asia was filed. Under the procedure agreed upon and in order to get a summary to the Members of the House of Representatives as fast as possible, Members of the Committee worked for about 20 hours on the way back from South Vietnam going through paragraph by paragraph and developing that summary report so that it could be filed as soon as possible. Additional material and more detailed summaries of our individual viewpoints were to be made soon and filed as additional or supplemental opinions and views. They are not necessarily inconsistent with the summary filed Monday but much more detailed and in some instances may be different. In some instances they portray in detail the part of the responsibility that the individual Member had a better opportunity to observe.

We broke up into teams each day—fanning out all directions so that we could cover the maximum amount of territory and see a greater number of people; therefore, obviously no one Member saw everything that is covered in the report. Obviously no one can become fully informed on Southeast Asia in either 2 weeks or 2 years, however, using the procedure we used and having full access to any and all information and areas gave twelve of us an opportunity to be exposed to more information and see more in two weeks and simultaneously than most people have seen after living there for years. Many people who have lived there several years, have still only seen one particular area of the country or had an opportunity to observe only one group or echelon of people; but they were helpful to me in forming an overall opinion.

On Monday, the 2 Members who were assigned to go to Con Son Island, Congressmen Hawkins and Anderson, gave an extended account of what they saw even before the summary report had been filed, and that was quite properly the way to handle it under the procedure agreed upon. I gave several interviews concerning Cambodia with which I was more intimately acquainted. Through the summary report filed on Monday and the various additional and more detailed accounts like this one filed by each Member, Members of the House should be able to secure some of the additional information we all need to vote upon matters which face this Congress this Session.

The principal information the House expected us to secure relates to withdrawal of U.S. forces from Southeast Asia. The President and Congress are agreed upon this policy but there is a dispute as to the rate of withdrawal. To my personal surprise, we found that President Thieu had in 1968 informed U.S. representatives that he wanted to start a planned withdrawal of U.S. military personnel. Since 413,000
U.S. soldiers are still in South Vietnam and an additional 40,000 in Thailand, under the resolution which sent us to Southeast Asia, our principal focus was upon questions relating to withdrawal and included questioning various military commanders why they should not withdraw at a faster rate, considering the problems raised and evaluating the answers given. We found that they had been told to answer any and all questions including the most sensitive relating to future plans and the orders under which they operate and they were also instructed to facilitate our going anywhere we requested. Thus, upon short notice or no notice, we proceeded to secure information and view the various operations.

As a result of these interviews, visiting various bases, reviewing sensitive information on enemy activity, and other information, the consensus of the committee was that the withdrawal could be faster than is now scheduled but of course, not all would necessarily arrive at the same proposed timetable.

There is great risk in going out on a limb and advancing opinions and conclusions as to a withdrawal timetable and attempting to summarize anything like the situation in South Vietnam because so much depends upon a totally unknown quantity: to wit, the extent of the input that North Vietnam and the Communist world is prepared to expend. However, with the full acknowledgment that I am no expert on Southeast Asia, and that no one can be sure such opinions will stand the test of time, I believe I should express such opinions and so, based upon what I saw and heard, for whatever they are worth, they are as follows:

(1) The security problem in the Southern half of South Vietnam, which contains 70 per cent of the people and 90 per cent of the resources of the nation, is quite different than that in the Northern mountainous part of South Vietnam and will probably remain quite different for many years in the future. It would be exceedingly difficult and costly for the North Vietnamese to try to supply troops in this area from supply lines from the North. It would take a huge number of people to do so and they could be detected and interdicted as they cross open or inhabited territory which divides the North from South. Thus almost 100 per cent of the supplies for this area have been coming through the Port of Sihanoukville and Cambodia for at least 5 years. The fall of Sihanouk and the loss of the supply route from the Port of Sihanoukville across Cambodia together with the U.S. and the South Vietnamese capturing the arsenal located in the southern half of the sanctuary area, as it relates to the Southern half of South Vietnam resulted in at least a temporary setback for the North Vietnamese and considerably enhanced our ability to effect an orderly withdrawal of U.S. troops with safety. Whether this remains a permanent important advantage depends upon whether the North Vietnamese are able to bring down the Government of Cambodia and also reestablish a supply route from the Port of Sihanoukville across Cambodia. If they are unable to do so, it will be very difficult for them to supply a substantial offensive in the southern half of South Vietnam. This part of the country is reasonably secure. In the big Delta (IV Corps area) we have reduced troops strength to about 23,000 and the South Vietnamese have almost all of the military responsibility.

(2) Due to the large amount of North Vietnamese supplies now in Laos and the supply lines reaching to the Port of Haiphong, I doubt
that the loss of supplies in the Northern portion of the sanctuaries could be considered a permanent setback of any major proportion for the North Vietnamese as it relates to their capacity to supply their troops in the Northern part of South Vietnam. Except for some populated areas on the coast, it will be difficult to ever provide security in this relatively unpopulated wooded area. The North Vietnamese supply activity in this area from the Port of Haiphong and therefore effectively cutting supplies in this area could probably not be accomplished without closing the Port of Haiphong.

(3) Prior to the action in the sanctuaries in Cambodia, our military commanders underestimated the ability of the South Vietnamese Army, and as a matter of hindsight, I believe the South Vietnamese Army could have handled the action in the sanctuaries without our ground combat troops.

(4) For psychological reasons, some think such U.S. combat troops should be withdrawn over a period of several months, even if they are in a substantially dormant posture; but I believe the necessity for using our ground combat troops in South Vietnam for other than surveillance around our camps and in emergency situations that might develop could be and should be terminated and that, barring some much increased input by the North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese Army can handle the situation without our combat troops in the areas containing 90 percent of the people of South Vietnam.

(5) While our commanders are preparing for withdrawal of ground combat troops, I don't believe they have yet taken seriously enough or received the indication that they should replace ground support units with all reasonably diligent speed. I believe there could be a faster withdrawal and phasing out of our personnel in the ground support units such as artillery and transportation so that most, if not all, of the balance of this type of responsibility has been transferred to the South Vietnamese within a few months.

(6) Although it would represent a reduction of about one year in the schedule widely proposed, I believe the transfer of the Air Force personnel responsibilities can be completed by October 1972. This will allow for the minimum leadtime required to train additional pilots and maintenance personnel (including teaching them English first) and turning over responsibilities and vacating facilities.

(7) Although it does not involve great risk to life and limb of our soldiers, one of the most difficult problems to solve from a time standpoint is the logistics problem. We have billions of dollars worth of equipment, hardware and facilities over there and it cannot be withdrawn prior to the withdrawal of the troops that they supply without risk to those troops. Also, the supply depots obviously could not be fully transferred until the Air Force transfer mentioned above has been completed. Supplying the last of the Air Force personnel, awaiting arrival of the supplies now in the pipeline from San Francisco to Saigon, unloading it, putting it into inventory, mothballing the repairable used items to be returned, determining where the material will go, securing shipping for that going to Okinawa, Guam, the United States or elsewhere, and making an orderly transfer of that which is to be left in Vietnam, together with removing portions of facilities and equipment from some bases and turning over the facilities we will leave, cannot be accomplished in a responsible manner (or without some kind of a scandal or terrible waste occurring)
in anything less than 2 years and it might require a few months longer. 
However, the number of people necessary for this logistics operation 
after next year would only be a small portion of our present total 
force over there.

(8) In view of the above conclusions, I don’t believe it is any 
longer necessary to send additional draftees and short-term enlistees 
to combat assignments in Vietnam on an involuntary basis.

(9) Korea has 50,000 very high quality troops in Vietnam. Most 
of them are ground troops and unless they begin a withdrawal program 
(which they do not now have scheduled), they may, within a few 
months, have more such troops in South Vietnam than the U.S. 
Judging from our observation of them and their reputation, these 
troops are of such quality that when they do return to Korea, surely 
the U.S. troops strength in Korea could be reduced.

(10) The Thais want to and we should program a greater reliance 
upon Thai pilots and personnel to replace U.S. Air Force personnel in 
Thailand. As stated by Foreign Minister Thanot, it would make the 
allies less vulnerable to North Vietnamese propaganda if Asians were 
doing the flying over Asia.

(11) As stated in the summary report, I think the new land reform 
program which is to be financed with American funds is full of prob­
lems which are almost impossible to solve and at least will require 
substantial time to complete in a manner that will not result in paying 
the wrong people and even backfiring in some instances. I don’t 
believe land reform is nearly as important as a program to move 
families to some of the millions of acres of unused rich land. A few 
sheets of tin and a 6-months supply of rice at a total cost of less than 
$100 can be a one-shot form of aid which provides permanent benefits 
to a family, reduces the social problems in the over-populated cities, 
reduces the inflationary pressure on housing costs, helps provide com­
modities for export and would do more good than proposals which 
would make a family permanently dependent for part of their cost of 
living.

(12) People in Vietnam who were in Japan following World War 
II and in Korea following that war, believe South Vietnam, with its 
tremendous natural resources, has a greater potential for recovery 
than either Japan or Korea had. The high import tax on such items 
as motorized bicycles, television sets and radio sets, together with the 
tremendous demand for them should provide an opportunity for in­
country production of such articles. Foreign investment (which I 
understand Japanese, West German, and possible American investors 
are interested in) would seem to provide the best opportunity for 
quick employment for those who do not want to return to farming. 
Perhaps some of the military installations being vacated by the U.S. 
could be used for a combination of housing and factory facilities.

(13) Although there is surely less repression in South Vietnam than 
in most Asian countries, I think there is repression. Although this is 
a new attempt at constitutional government with individual rights in a 
part of the world unaccustomed to such a government, in a country 
where most people are not interested in any central government as 
long as it doesn’t bother them, and the attempt to move toward less 
repression is being made in time of all-out war which is when most 
countries move toward more repression, I believe they need to give 
additional, immediate and constant attention to correcting repressive 
activities. I think this would gain more local support.
With a shortage of qualified teachers and a public education system which has only been in existence a few years, educational television could aid greatly in teaching the young children the three R's. Many villages at least have one TV set at a central location, there are no programs on the TV station most of the day and people and children both regard watching TV as a prize attraction. At least this possibility for a cheap per child cost of basic educational enhancement should be fully considered and encouraged right away.

I believe as many as 60 percent of the people of South Vietnam do not have much interest in a central government or any governmental activity above the village level. This 60 percent are people who have built their life around the family, the hamlet, and at most the village. They would not of their own free will engage in overt activity to oppose any government that provides security and leaves them alone and they have no interest in a United North and South Vietnam. The opponents of the present Thieu Government are divided into some 40 groups or parties, each of which would like to be in control but most of which do not want anyone to take Thieu's place unless it is them.

With a large second choice support and no opposing group with a large first choice support, the Thieu Government is heavily favored by most everyone in next year's election unless there is a substantial change.

I believe it will be a long time before the country of South Vietnam composed mostly of people whose governmental interest is at the village level will develop a two party system based on issues and a strong interest in a national central government.

Neal Smith.
Since there has been quite a bit of controversy concerning the penal institution at Con Son Island, it might be beneficial for the following elaboration on the events surrounding the discovery to be included as a part of the complete report.

During the first part of our trip, several committee members expressed a desire to inspect the prisoner of war camp on Phu Quoc Island, where North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers are held. This request was later changed to involve the Con Son Prison for felons and "political prisoners", rather than Phu Quoc. All arrangements for the trip were made with the knowledge of the chairman and in keeping with his stated goals of assisting all committee members to go anywhere they felt would result in relevant information for the final report.

When the two committee members returned from Con Son Island late in the afternoon on Thursday, July 2, they reported to the chairman their findings. Immediately following this, he relayed by telephone the substance of their comments to Ambassador Berger, who gave him every assurance an investigation would be started as soon as possible. He also reported to Ambassador Berger the names of five South Vietnamese civilians whom the two Members felt might be subject to reprisals as a result of their visit. Later that night, one of the committee members discussed the matter with the Chairman of the Interior Committee of the House in the South Vietnam National Assembly. The Interior Committee exercises jurisdiction over the penal institutions in South Vietnam.

The following morning prior to departure for the United States, the Chairman also discussed the matter with Ambassador Bunker in private. He informed him that he knew about the two Members visiting Con Son Island and that he would investigate this most serious matter.

Upon returning to the States, the Chairman talked with Mr. Arndt in the office of Dr. John A. Hannah, Administrator of the Agency for International Development. At this time he requested a report on the situation at Con Son Island.

During the flight back to the United States, the extent to which the Con Son Island situation should be mentioned in the summary portion of the Committee report was discussed at some length. It was the consensus of the committee members that this section of the report should be written as it finally appeared. This was with the understanding that the two committee members who did visit Con Son Island would discuss the situation in more detail in their supplemental views.

It was the feeling of the majority of the committee members that to discuss in great detail the conditions found in only one section of only one South Vietnamese prison might have dangerous implications.
as far as North Vietnamese treatment of American prisoners of war was concerned. It was further felt that the North Vietnamese might seize upon the treatment of South Vietnamese "political prisoners" as a propaganda tool and as a basis for their inhumane treatment of American POWs. A deep and abiding concern for the plight of captive U.S. servicemen pervaded the final decision of the committee.

It should be noted that the two committee members who visited Con Son Island made public their findings almost 24 hours before a former staff member staged a press conference on the situation. Regrettably and unfortunately, the press found it more desirable to give coverage and validity to one of eight staff members than they did to two Members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

E. Ross Adair,
G. V. Montgomery, M.C.
Although I was one of the sponsors of the resolution creating a “Select Committee on United States Involvement in Southeast Asia,” and one of those voting for that resolution as it passed the House on June 15, last, I had not sought assignment to that committee. This was largely because I had certain reservations about what such a committee could really accomplish, certain doubts about whether such a committee, when appointed, could be truly representative of the wide differences of opinion so apparent both in Congress and in the Nation relative to what our role in Southeast Asia should be, and certain fears that such a committee, like other “fact-finding” commissions before it, would not be able, despite the best of intentions, to take a fully-free, independent and objective look at our situation in South Vietnam and other pertinent parts of Southeast Asia.

However, when I was asked by the Minority Leader to serve on the committee I felt obligated to do so—and to do so to the best of my ability—while still recognizing the inherent shortcomings in any such effort.

It was a challenging assignment, and turned out to be a fascinating and personally valuable experience—an experience which, much after the nature of my own military service in World War II, I would not want to have missed but would not particularly care to repeat.

Each member of the Committee, I believe it can be said, entered upon his duties in as objective a manner as possible; being willing to work, and to work hard, at those duties, and being hopeful, as well, that despite all the ambiguities and contradictions we knew we were to encounter we might still return with something of value to report to the House, and to the Nation.

I am proud of the way our committee—and all of its members—worked at our assignment. Our Chairman, “Sonny” Montgomery, was a tireless, but fair leader; and each individual Committee member had a free hand to do or suggest, whatever he felt might be an effective means by which to advance our overall efforts. To a large extent, then, each of us charted his own course in Vietnam (and elsewhere in Southeast Asia)—sometimes singly, and sometimes as a “team” member—fanning out so as to cover, in a way I believe no other such study commission has attempted, more aspects of the United States involvement in those areas than any of us had originally contemplated. We therefore have, individually and collectively, a uniquely large portfolio of notes and information that—though each of us might draw different conclusions therefrom—ought to be of considerable value to this House.
Also, by virtue of the method of operation we adopted, the information we have rests, in my judgment, on a sounder and more-objective basis for analysis than comparable information heretofore brought back by other such study commissions. This was possible because we deliberately avoided publicity which might hamper our attempts at fact-finding, and we also avoided situations whereby a stage might be set for us to find only such "facts" as someone desired us to have. On most occasions, then, our drop-ins on civilian and military personnel at American posts were just that: Drop-ins, with little or no advance notice. Similarly, we postponed the large, formal briefings such a group could inevitably expect—and also needed somewhere along the way—until after we had spent a good many hours out "in the field," so to speak, discussing matters with the subordinates of those higher-ups who would eventually brief us, and plumbing in an "one-on-one" basis for the personal opinions of diverse individuals, so that when those formal briefings came, there could be a real dialogue, rather than the usual "one-way street."

I thoroughly approved of this manner of operation, but criticism of our efforts, perhaps inevitable, has already come. One such critic has declared that we had "too many military briefings." Whether we did or not is a matter of opinion—but, in light of the fact that we are, as a Nation, deeply involved militarily in Vietnam and indirectly in other parts of Southeast Asia, a substantial number of military briefings was unavoidable. In any event, as a glance at the listing of individual or "team" contacts made by the committee will show (which summary, I understand, will be made an appendix to this report in its final form), the military briefings were more than outnumbered by the contacts we developed on a more personal basis with a great number of individuals with dramatically divergent viewpoints.

But, however this may be, the larger problem we encountered—and the area in which I, for one, believe we are subject to valid criticism—was in attempting to convert our notes and our individual observations to suitable report form. In that connection, the report we have submitted is—I regret to say—woefully inadequate. This is the fault of no one in particular. It lies, instead, in the decision of a majority of us—which decision I questioned—to try to put our "report" together on the return plane trip home. Our accumulated fatigue—both mental and physical—contributed to the obvious difficulties inherent in such a situation. At best, what we could have hoped to do—and what I believed we were attempting to do—was to work, again individually and as teams, at rough drafts of the various sections or titles to be included in our final report. It was my further understanding that these drafts were to be put together for us by our staff people over the weekend following our arrival back in Washington, and later taken up by us, meeting in regular committee fashion, to see if we could then put them in final—and proper—report form. Instead of that, the so-called final "report" was filed for us on Monday afternoon, July 6th. At that time, so far as I know, few if any members of the committee other than the Chairman had seen the "report" in its entirety.

It is therefore inaccurate to state—I again regret to say—as is stated in the introduction to the report as filed, that it "... represents a consensus of the views of the committee."
At best, under the circumstances, the report can represent only a rough consensus of the views of some of the members of the committee. I regret this because our failure to reach for a broader consensus among ourselves can only frustrate our desire to be of substantial service to our colleagues. Perhaps, such a consensus would have been impossible to attain in any event, but we ought at least to have tried since any report of this nature automatically loses much of its effectiveness when it is accompanied by a plethora of individual or supplemental views such as these I now feel constrained to add to it.

THE ECONOMY OF SOUTH VIETNAM

In general, I approve of the matters and conclusions as set forth in the report under this heading.

Several times, different sources advised us that, in their opinion, the urgent economic problems faced by the government of South Vietnam constituted a far greater danger to its survival than any current military threat.

This economic crisis—centered around galloping inflation—has its greatest impact in Saigon and the other urban areas of South Vietnam. In the “countryside,” many day-to-day transactions are conducted by traditional methods of barter, rather than for cash, and “black-market” operations of the sort so prevalent in and around Saigon are rare.

This contrast points out an important distinction: In considering the overall problems of South Vietnam, it is quite readily apparent that Saigon is one part thereof, and the “countryside” quite another.

It is possible that our committee spent too much time examining the problems of the “countryside,” and too little attempting to understand the true nature of Saigon’s internal difficulties, many of which relate back to the overwhelming presence the United States has so long maintained there. Our authorities in Saigon are wisely attempting to gradually reduce that “presence,” and committee members who had been to South Vietnam before commented favorably on the vastly reduced numbers of American “GI’s” seen nowadays on Saigon’s streets. In another section of our committee’s report—on which I shall have no further comment—it is suggested that American civilian personnel (including the personnel of contractors) in South Vietnam should also be reduced. Since most of these American civilians are in and around Saigon, again, and the numbers of them are all too apparent, I heartily concur in that recommendation.

In any event, before I left for Vietnam one of our other colleagues, not named as a member of our committee but a fairly recent visitor to Vietnam, asked me to inquire as to whether or not it was possible that, under existing programs, the present government of South Vietnam might “win” the countryside while “losing” Saigon. It would now be my observation that this is altogether possible, given the rather apparent success of the pacification programs in the rural areas alongside the growing dissatisfactions and political unrest now capturing daily headlines in Saigon’s newspapers. But I left Saigon with the definite impression that the Thieu-Ky government has decided to take a calculated risk in this connection—giving priority, wisely or no, to an acceleration of the more rurally-oriented pacification programs, while hoping in the meantime to ride out the gathering political storms centered in Saigon and the nation’s lesser metropolitan areas.
I would consider this to involve a rather substantial risk—and, certainly, not one that we should discount in attempting to look at South Vietnam’s immediate political future. For the fact must be stated plainly: South Vietnam’s economic problems, and the social unrest caused thereby, are already severe and getting worse. Furthermore, those problems cannot help but be accentuated by the gradual American withdrawal. Strong measures need to be taken by the Thieu regime if these aggravated conditions are to be mastered, and Ambassador Bunker and his staff need to work as cooperatively as possible with that government—or its successor government—to ease the economic pains of our withdrawal. It will not be easy, and I am not particularly sanguine about South Vietnam’s ability to find its way through to a state of “economic health,” as our report puts it—but I am not prepared to say it cannot be done.

PACIFICATION

As a member of the select committee, I was particularly interested in this subject; I worked on this section of the report as filed and, since most of what I submitted in this regard was accepted by the other members, only a few additional comments are now needed.

I would like to preface those by saying that one of the more productive days I spent in Vietnam was when John Paul Vann, DEPCORDS in the IV Corps (the Delta) section of South Vietnam, allowed me to accompany him on a routine inspection trip by automobile—and without military escort—from Can Tho, where we had spent the previous night, down Route 4 some 160 miles to the little city of Ca Mau, in An Xuyen Province.

Vann is an extremely interesting and knowledgeable man—regarded by some as the “Billy Mitchell” of the Vietnam war, for it was he who resigned his army commission some years ago to protest the Army’s strategy of trying to fight a war of insurgency with a sledgehammer instead of a scalpel, only to return to Vietnam to take an active role in shaping the “pacification” program. As we drove down Route 4, he spoke at length of the Delta’s war history. According to Vann, 2 million of the Delta’s 7 million people were under VC control 2 years ago, as compared to only an estimated 167,000 now. Even a year ago, no American in his right mind would have attempted the trip we were making, even in daytime, without a heavy armed guard. Vann himself was ambushed and wounded by the VC while travelling by motor-bike down Route 4 only nine months ago. Matters have steadily improved until now—as I saw with my own eyes—most of the residents of the Delta were living quite normal lives.

This progress towards securing the countryside is all the more remarkable because of the fact that “Vietnamization”—pacification’s corollary—is virtually complete in the Delta, our ground combat forces having been pulled out of action there nearly a year ago. Some 22,000 U.S. military personnel still remain in the Delta—once the heartland of the Communists’ entire efforts to take over the country—but they are performing strictly a support and logistical function. With Vann, I stopped at several local units of CORDS (Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support), as we moved freely in and out of small cities and villages, as well as provincial capitals, along the way. I made a point of talking with as many of the
military and civilian “advisers” in these units as possible on a “one-on-one” basis—out of Vann’s hearing—and was impressed (as I was at numerous similar stops on subsequent days in other parts of South Vietnam) with their sense of dedication to, and satisfaction with, the job they were performing. I particularly recall a young second lieutenant with whom I talked in one small district town (in Bac Lieu Province, I believe) who, when asked by me if he thought the pacification program was worthwhile and had a chance of success, replied, “Yes, Sir; very much so. We’re making peace here, Sir—not war.”

Perhaps we are, finally, “making peace” in South Vietnam in this fashion. Surely, this shift away from a “body-count” objective and towards the objective of trying to win the “hearts and minds” of the countryside’s residents—through the several facets of the pacification program—is a far sounder policy than the “big war” strategy we once pursued, with its inherent if unspoken concept of somehow thereby winning a “military victory” in and for South Vietnam.

However, whether or not “peace through pacification” is an attainable goal or just another illusion among the many from which we have suffered throughout our tragic experiences in South Vietnam, is still largely an unanswerable question. I tend to think, now, that—given enough time, and given the full support of the South Vietnamese government as well as of its people—a peace of sorts can be brought in this fashion to the people of South Vietnam.

But it will take additional time—and will cost additional lives—and perhaps more patience on the part of the American people than a majority of us are willing to give to the difficult task of trying to put back together a little nation that we have come close to destroying in our former attempt at “saving” it.

Pacification rests on a tenuous foundation, of course, but on a sounder one than we have previously attempted; a program whose level of success will, by any system of measurement, continue to go up and down since we still face a highly-mercurial situation in Vietnam. But it is also a program that—should the presently-favorable climate for it in Vietnam somehow hold—just might succeed.

VIETNAMIZATION

But pacification is only half of our policy for disengagement from the conflict in Vietnam—the other half being “Vietnamization.”

For someone who believes, as I have for some time, that we have done just about all we can, militarily speaking, for the people of South Vietnam in their long struggle for self-determination—and for someone who believes, as I also have for some time, that we should now leave them to their own devices and determination, an in-depth study of our progress at “Vietnamization” of the sort we attempted could only produce mixed emotions, at best.

As the committee report suggests, that process is certainly “progressing,” and it would appear that, as the report also states, “... all levels of our military command are planning to meet (the currently-announced) withdrawal schedules.”

The committee did not seek a consensus—which might have been impossible to achieve—as to whether or not the Vietnamization process could, and should, be accelerated. Instead, it contented itself,
in the report, with merely noting that: "As far as ground troops are concerned, America should continue its withdrawal program at least as fast as is now scheduled."

At the risk of putting words in others' mouths, I believe that several of us left Vietnam convinced that this withdrawal program, at least in the area of ground combat, could and should be accelerated. I, for one, fall into that category. There is no question in my mind but that the military situation in South Vietnam today is better for both the U.S. and the South Vietnamese than at any time since American units first entered the war in the summer of 1965. In addition, the South Vietnamese fighting units have undoubtedly gained new self-confidence as a result of their role in the Cambodian-sanctuary operation. The only thing that would appear to prevent us from capitalizing on these facts is the new uncertainty brought into the picture by the external threat now to Cambodia, itself. Irrespective of this uncertainty, however, I believe it would be useful for purposes of encouraging the South Vietnamese people, and particularly their political community to finally pull themselves together, if we were to announce as soon as practicable further troop reductions beyond those already now scheduled to take place before next May 1st.

There is a risk in this, of course, just as there has always been with regard to our decision to withdraw from combat and turn this war over to those who, alone—albeit with our logistical help—can win it. But I think we should certainly aim more precisely at being out of all ground combat (except insofar as remaining U.S. units might have to defend themselves) within a year from now; and I also think that we should aim to phase out the balance of our military support activities, except perhaps for a residual group of advisers and logistical aides, within two years from now, rather than the three or four years some of our military people projected for us.

In this connection, I was especially impressed with our Navy's procedures for turning their "in-country" mission over to the South Vietnamese navy. These procedures are described in the report under this title. Admittedly, the Navy may have faced an easier Vietnamization problem than either the Army or the Air Force, but the Navy's program is now 80 percent complete and will be fully completed by December of this year, with the exception of larger combat ships and the completion of training of SVN navy personnel to take over maintenance and operational procedures. Navy, thus, is now nearly out of the "combat business" in Vietnam, as evidence of which stands the fact that only some 20 percent of the over 225 assault craft taking part in the Mekong portion of the recent Cambodian operation were USN vessels. Surely, there is something here that both our Army and Air Force people might endeavor to copy.

There are still other ways by which the process of Vietnamization could, I think, be accelerated. One of the things I shall always remember about my ride down Route 4 to Ca Mau is seeing U.S. Army Engineer units, and personnel, working on repairing and rebuilding portions of that heavily-travelled highway in the noon-day heat and humidity while South Vietnamese natives lay in their hammocks—during their customary "siesta" time—on the front porches of their homes along that road. There are many paradoxical things about this war that future historians will puzzle over—including the fact that we were drafting young Americans to fight and die in
it long before the nation we sought to help had instituted its own system of military conscription. But it is equally paradoxical for us to draft young Americans to spend a year of their lives in Vietnam working with pick, shovel and rake at building roads for the South Vietnamese—who are by no means a lazy people. I can well understand why our Engineers cannot turn heavy road-building machinery, complicated to operate, over to untrained South Vietnamese. But there is no reason why we cannot hire South Vietnamese, who need the jobs anyway, to take over the manual labor that our people—here and elsewhere in Vietnam—are doing, and thus reduce our need for continuing to send draftees to work, if not to fight, in Vietnam.

One final word about the Vietnamization process: It could well be that we have so “Americanized” the South Vietnamese Army that it cannot, at any foreseeable time, be maintained by the people of South Vietnam. The question needs to be asked: “Have we so re-made ARVN in our own Army’s capable but elephantine image, with its long logistical tail and its expensive array of equipment, as to make it impossible for the South Vietnamese to carry on ‘their’ war, if need be, in a way compatible with Vietnamese capabilities and resources?”

The question is worth pondering, and it is one that deeply concerns the responsible senior staff officers of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff with whom I talked. They realize they simply cannot afford to continue to fight, after we have gone, in the same ways we have, even with such material and economic assistance as they hope we may still provide.

Unless, then, we are prepared to commit ourselves to a support function in South Vietnam longer than I think we are, and if disengagement on our part is intended to be something more than a simple abandonment of the responsibilities we assumed, wisely or not, for South Vietnam, some redefinition of “Vietnamization” along these lines ought to be attempted.

It would also be helpful for us to better understand the Vietnamese attitude towards this program. As best I could determine, most of them accept it as being both inevitable and irreversible. But several of them reminded me that, while the program portends the end of the war for us, it also assumes that “their” war will go on. So, in trying to decide if “Vietnamization” has a good chance of success as “Pacification” now seems to have, we ought also to attempt some broader redefinition of what we really mean by “Vietnamization.”

The most disturbing finding of all I made in Vietnam was the fact that both sides now seem to be digging in for a protracted war and I think all will agree that the Vietnamese, both North and South, have for far too long suffered under the burden of war. Can we call “Vietnamization” a success if, in the end, it merely prolongs that suffering?

Personally, I do not think so—and this is why I asked President Thieu, when we had our audience with him, if he did not think it was time to make some “new initiatives” towards peace. His reply was the more or less standard one to the effect that his government was ready to negotiate with the other side, on anything, at anytime, but that all such overtures thus far made have fallen on deaf ears. Since that time, Secretary of State Rogers has had his own audience with President Thieu, and President Nixon has named David K. E. Bruce to head the United States delegation at the near-comatose Paris
peace talks. What all this may portend, no one can say, but one of the more interesting discussions I had in Saigon was with Mr. Tran Van Tuyen, a local attorney, a member of the Vietnamese delegation to the 1954 Geneva Conference and later a 3-year political prisoner under the Diem regime, who told me: "If 'Vietnamization' is only a war strategy and not at the same time a peace-seeking method, it is also a myth among the many that have marked the American involvement in Vietnam, and the biggest myth of all."

CAMBODIA

The committee report comments at length on the overall Cambodian situation, but in very general terms, and refers but briefly to "the evident success of the sanctuary clearing operation"—something which I believe individual committee members have separately termed an "outstanding success."

For my part, I am perfectly willing to accept as fact the committee's conclusion that the sanctuary operation was, strictly speaking, a "success." Surely, it has bought time within which both the Pacification and Vietnamization programs can go forward and, almost equally surely, it will result in substantial savings in American lives. This latter thought was uppermost in the minds of those American boys who took part in this operation as I discussed it with them at two different locations just inside the Cambodian border. None of them, it deserves to be noted, had any doubts about the necessity and justification for the effort they were making.

I did not expect to find otherwise, but this is as good a point as any to make one other observation: Whether this war is right or wrong for the United States, and regardless of the concerns so often expressed at home these days about the motivation and moral fibre of our younger generation, this war will stand as a testament to the fortitude and courage of those young Americans who have fought in it. They have done so often against their wishes, and yet they have been willing to perform to the best of their ability whatever mean, difficult and dangerous task was assigned to them—in the face of vast uncertainties at home about their mission.

Through their sacrifices, we have learned (or should have learned) in Vietnam some lessons about revolutionary warfare and about the limitations of our own power. One can accept the Cambodian-sanctuary operation as being consistent with what we have thus learned, and one can welcome its short-term military benefits; but, at the same time, we need to understand that those benefits which may now permit us a faster rate of disengagement from Vietnam have also unintentionally created a climate in Cambodia, itself, that could lead to an even-greater involvement on our part in the tangled affairs of Southeast Asia.

The Cambodian situation, when we looked at it, was too fluid a one for immediate prescription. All of us who visited Phnom Penh came away filled with concern for Cambodia's future, and with feelings of deep sympathy for the Cambodian people. I am sure we all wanted to help them in some way—and I believe we should, to a limited extent. But, if the lessons so dearly bought for us in Vietnam are to mean anything, we must remember that we cannot go on trying to prop up governments unable to defend themselves, or people unwilling to fight for their own freedoms; and we must try to keep
Cambodia in proper perspective by recognizing the fact that we have nothing remotely resembling a "vital" interest in its future except insofar as keeping it out of enemy hands serves our purposes in Vietnam.

If this sounds unduly harsh, I regret it—but relief for the beleaguered Cambodians must come from some other source than direct U.S. assistance. It was to drive that point home that some of us talked with Dr. Thanat Khornan, Thailand's distinguished Foreign Minister, at Bangkok, while others of us flew to Djakarta and Singapore to pursue—as the United States must pursue—whatever possibility for restoring peace and security to Cambodia may yet come from the so-called "Djakarta Conference" of last May 16th and 17th. In neither instance could we find reason for optimism—a subject on which I understand the Hon. Hastings Keith (a member of our committee) is submitting separate views in which I express my interest.

There are numerous other matters to which I would also like to address myself, including the findings made by two members of our committee at the Con Son Island prison—which matter has since become one of unfortunate controversy. But I have sought to confine myself, in these supplementary remarks, to the main factors as I saw them that help define our current situation in Southeast Asia and, however dimly, our future there.

Since my return from this extended inspection trip, I have often been asked if anything I heard or saw during its course had caused me to change my views.

The answer—as best I can find one—is "No," though in saying that I recognize full well that most of us now only see Vietnam through more or less thick veils of preconceived ideas that tend to obscure the true facts for us.

Besides which, at the "press-conference-in-reverse" we had with American newsmen in Saigon, one of them said a "fact-finding" commission such as ours could find in Vietnam whatever "facts" it wanted to confirm whatever it already believed.

I suspect that is true. I have tried to guard against any such tendency, and I now submit these views to my colleagues for such value as they may have to them, with the assurance that they are as objective as I can make them.

HOWARD W. ROBISON.
SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS OF CONGRESSMAN ORVAL HANSEN

I am in general agreement with the observations and conclusions contained in the Committee report. In these supplemental views, however, I would like to record some personal impressions and to indicate a few of the considerations that I believe should underlie future U.S. policy in Southeast Asia.

That we have made many mistakes from the beginning of our involvement in South Vietnam is hardly open to question. Dwelling on past mistakes can serve no useful purpose, however, except to the extent that past errors can serve as a guide to future action. Suffice it to note here that there are encouraging signs that we are learning from our mistakes and that we are now helping to lay a more solid foundation on which the South Vietnamese people can build their own future to the extent that they have the will to do so.

The signs of progress on many fronts since my previous visit to South Vietnam in August of 1969 are clear. The country is far more secure now than it was at that time. This greater security from hostile enemy action has been a stimulus to expanded agricultural production and increased commercial activity generally. There are also encouraging signs of progress in the development of viable political processes and institutions at the local level.

The elements of ultimate success are present in South Vietnam. Whether that success is achieved, however, will depend much more on what the South Vietnamese are willing to do for themselves than on what the United States will do for them. Any assistance we furnish should be on terms and under conditions that will stimulate the maximum self-help effort by the South Vietnamese people and their government.

The present Vietnamization (or as I prefer to describe it, de-Americanization) policy should be continued and accelerated if at all possible. I am persuaded that the previous and announced timetable for withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam is not too fast and that every effort should be made to reduce the American military presence in South Vietnam at a more rapid rate. At the earliest possible date, hopefully not later than next spring, the responsibility for all ground combat operations should be shifted to the South Vietnamese armed forces.

The de-Americanization policy should also embrace U.S. civilian personnel in South Vietnam to the end that our civilian presence in the country is also steadily reduced.

On the basis of my somewhat limited contacts with government officials and others in all of the countries of Southeast Asia I visited, I fully endorse the so-called Nixon Doctrine as the correct policy for the United States to pursue in Southeast Asia.

The countries of Southeast Asia face many common problems and share many common opportunities. For the most part, they are richly
endowed with natural resources that are largely undeveloped. Many of the resources in the area that can produce significant economic benefits are shared by several countries. A prime example is the Mekong River.

The future of the countries of Southeast Asia will depend in large measure on their willingness to work together in developing effective regional arrangements to promote economic growth and political cooperation and to provide for the defense of the area.

In applying the Nixon Doctrine to Southeast Asia, greater emphasis should be given to the development of plans and programs which involve regional cooperation. Any U.S. assistance should incorporate all possible incentives to the development of strong economic, political and defense ties among the nations in the region. In the long run, in the absence of the clearly demonstrated willingness by the nations of the area not only to help themselves, but to work together, U.S. assistance will be of little lasting value.

Orval Hansen.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., 10 July 1970.

Hon. G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery,
Chairman, Select Committee on United States Involvement In Southeast Asia, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Chairman: I am transmitting herewith my supplemental views to accompany the Select Committee's report as submitted on July 6, 1970.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve with you and my colleagues on this Committee for the past several weeks. I sincerely hope that our efforts will assist the Congress in its deliberations on the proper course for United States policy in Southeast Asia.

Sincerely,

Hastings Keith,
Member of Congress.

(77)

INTRODUCTION

Nearly six years ago the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was adopted by both Houses of Congress. It made possible the commitment of U.S. combat forces in significant numbers on the Asian mainland. The very brief and inadequate debate at the time failed to bring out what such a course of action would mean to us as a nation in the years to come.

Now, after the irreplaceable loss of over 40,000 American lives, the drain of more than $100 billion from our treasury, the impact of unbearable inflation, and the resultant strain on our social and political fabrics, we are once again debating a course of action in this part of the world. This time, however, the Congress and the public are much more informed and involved.

Upon learning that a House select committee would conduct the first in-depth, on the spot examination of all the aspects of our Southeast Asian involvement, I asked to be considered for service on such a committee. I did not want to experience again another debate such as that on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution—a debate in which I was unable to participate fully or to vote adequately due to the lack of sufficient knowledge of the facts.

In recent years Congressional rules and customs have inhibited extensive foreign policy debate. The situation now appears to be changing. Congress is at last getting involved in foreign policy—and it is beginning to discuss its details in full. Complete and factual information on our overall military posture and national foreign policy strategy is essential if Congress is to vote intelligently on these matters of grave national and international concern.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Although subscribing in general to the “consensus” expressed in the basic report signed by the chairman of the Select Committee, the following personal observations—distilled with careful consideration from the notes made on the trip—should be presented to my colleagues and my constituents:

1) The United States must continue to withdraw its troops from Southeast Asia, as speedily as possible. Nothing I saw or heard indicated the need to slow down this process, or to change the concept and execution of orderly disengagement.
2) The United States must continue to provide moderate, but realistic levels of economic assistance and supplies of military equipment to South Vietnam and the other Southeast Asian countries. In return, South Vietnam and these other countries must continue to demonstrate progress toward development as democratic and independent nations with the capacity to protect their peoples and merit their support. It is one thing for our Southeast Asian allies to make a commitment to work for these goals, but quite another thing for them to achieve these goals.

3) The Thieu government is becoming increasingly effective and responsive despite some corrupt and inhumane practices. One such example of this is the Con Son prison situation brought to light by two of my colleagues. Such shocking activity cannot be condoned by the United States and is, of course, personally, deplorable to me. The continuation of this part of their prison system simply is not acceptable. I am certain that Ambassador Bunker and the U.S. AID officials are pursuing the matter with South Vietnamese officials, and I am positive that action will be taken. On balance, South Vietnam is nevertheless on its way to becoming a democratic nation.

4) Despite some mistakes in the past, we are making visible progress in assisting South Vietnam to repel aggression and subversion. The Vietnamese are on their way to becoming an independent nation.

5) From the strategic and tactical viewpoint, the Cambodian operation was a success. However, I doubt that another such invasion can or should be made in light of the April 30th invasion's impact domestically. Further, no American combat troops, support troops, air power or financing of 3rd nation troops should be committed in support of the Cambodian government, without explicit Congressional authorization.

6) If the nations of Southeast Asia, are to enjoy an independent and progressive future, it can best be achieved through regional cooperation.

7) Indonesia must play a major role in the future development of security and economic progress in Southeast Asia. Thailand also must be significantly involved, and Singapore will play a more influential economic role than the size of her population and land area might suggest.

8) To date, the Phillipines and Japan have not contributed their fair share toward bringing about a peaceful and progressive resolution of the situation in Southeast Asia. It would seem that the United States contribution to their own freedom and economic independence would warrant a greater economic and financial commitment on their part in aiding other countries seeking to join the community of free nations.

9) Due to the inability and/or unwillingness of the other Southeast Asian nations to contribute combat troops for her assistance, Cambodia must provide the troops and the principal resources for her own defense. In the longrun, developments in Cambodia will have to result from the effectiveness and responsiveness of the Cambodian government.

10) Despite the fact that Asian leaders accept the Nixon Doctrine and despite the fact that much of the Doctrine is workable and is a reflection of historical as well as current U.S. foreign policy, there is a
major gap in the realistic applicability of its logic: a regional defense organization is from five to ten years away, but the United States combat forces will and should be out of the area long before such a defense organization becomes effective. This gap must be resolved in another fashion if the Nixon Doctrine is to work.

11) In my visits to many villages and hamlets throughout Southeast Asia I found much evidence of malnutrition. More extensive use of soybean and fish protein concentrates would help alleviate this condition. Malnutrition greatly limits the ability of individuals to help work toward and develop democratic institutions. The need for such protein aids will once again be brought to the attention of the proper government authorities. This is yet another reason to liberalize our policies affecting processing and marketing of fish protein concentrates.

THE NIXON DOCTRINE

It seems to me that the most important conclusion drawn from the trip is related to the feasibility of applying the Nixon Doctrine; this was expressed first at Guam, and was incorporated in the President's report to the Congress on February 18, 1970. It played a major part in his June 30th report on Cambodia.

The Administration's position is based upon the United States:

1) keeping all of its treaty commitments.
2) providing a shield against threats by a nuclear power to the freedom of a nation allied with us or a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security and the security of the region as a whole, and
3) providing military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate in cases involving other types of aggression.

However, the United States looks to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing manpower for its defense. This basic policy of the present Administration is consistent with the national policy expressed in the United States Public Law as the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, amended through 1969.

But, underlying the announced United States policy of assisting threatened nations is the U.S. global policy of collective defense on a regional basis. Our objective in Southeast Asia, as the President stated in Bangkok on July 28, 1969, is a “community of independent Asian countries, each maintaining its own traditions and yet each developing through mutual cooperation.” In his June 20 Report on the Cambodian Operations, the President reaffirmed the basic principle of “our support for regional defense efforts,” as a necessary element in bringing peace to Southeast Asia.

Following discussions with the Leaders in Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore, the Southeast Asian nations I visited, I found that they do believe in the appropriateness of the overall Nixon Doctrine. As one Foreign Minister said, “The Nixon Doctrine is what you should have been doing all along.” It was pointed out specifically and vigorously by the Southeast Asian leaders that (with the one exception of the Republic of Vietnam and then only at a time when its very survival was threatened) no Southeast Asian nation has asked for U.S. combat troops. They did not expect to ask for our men in the future.
The Southeast Asian nations do, collectively, have the manpower available to provide for their defense. However, it appears to me that there is now—and will continue to be for some time—the need for material, technical and economic assistance, as was pointed out by the President on June 30. Without such help the Southeast Asian nations, either alone or collectively, cannot meet the threats to their national and regional security now posed by externally supported communist aggression and subversion. In particular, the Southeast Asian nations feel in common that they are too small and too weak economically and militarily, either by themselves or collectively, to cope with the colossus to the north. The weight of Communist China hangs over the whole area, and will continue to do so.

For future national and regional development of the Southeast Asian region, to include the mainland and insular areas, I found hope in the several existing regional organizations for economic, cultural and political cooperation, particularly the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. However, despite the many political, economic and cultural organizations, there exists no military organization which could furnish an alternative scope for regional security development.

I found cause for concern in two such security matters:

1) The current expansion of the conflict in Laos and Cambodia endangers continued regional development through the Mekong Delta project, thus far the most promising joint cooperative venture in the economic and political field. Indeed, there is some concern that the communist intruders could seize an opportunity for developmental leadership through local and regional initiatives in this area.

2) Owing to internal and international political and economic factors, as well as to priority emphasis on economic and socio-political development, there now seems to be very little evidence of willingness for neighboring non-communist nations of the Southeast Asian region to commit combat troops either on a token basis (by other than Thailand) or in significant numbers (by any nation) to help resolve the present difficult military situation in Cambodia or Laos.

This reluctance persists even in the face of United States offers of material assistance, and the other nations' recognition of the threat to themselves of a greater communist takeover in Cambodia and Laos. There appears to be common agreement among them as to the real threat to their national security imposed by the Laos and Cambodia situation. Their concern is expressed through political initiatives such as Foreign Minister Malik's convening of the Djakarta Conference, and the subsequent visit to other world leaders by committees named by that Conference.

My discussion with Southeast Asian leaders makes clear to me that, despite the urgency of the present situation, it is not feasible for us to expect Southeast Asia regional security arrangements to be made effective for the next five or ten years. Yet right now, the United States, in execution of the Nixon Doctrine and in return to a national policy in effect since the Eisenhower era, is irreversibly redeploying its troops in an orderly and firm progression. Hence, it could be construed by pessimists, there now is a gap developing in the present Administration's policy and planning relative to the realities of the Southeast Asian nations' internal and regional defense capabilities. Such a gap could negate in practice the full application of the Nixon Doctrine.
Therefore, some might say, there should be a more realistic approach to obtaining security in Southeast Asia before the House can support with more funds the continued execution of the Nixon Doctrine. But, I believe that the answer lies in applying the fundamental basis of the Nixon Doctrine. The nation that is threatened by other than a nuclear power must provide the manpower for its own defense; we may assist that nation with material and economic assistance, but not manpower, if our national interest is at stake. In the case of South Vietnam we have made the mistake, in 1965 through 1967, of putting in an overwhelming number of American soldiers. We virtually forced the Vietnamese to take a sideline seat to watch U.S. soldiers defend their nation. Only recently have "Vietnamization" and our application of the Nixon Doctrine to Vietnam begun to rectify that grievous error.

Now, in the case of Cambodia, the very inability or unwillingness of their Southeast Asian neighbors to commit troops to Cambodia's defense may well become the basis for her eventual real independence and greater strength. By being forced to stand alone in furnishing soldiers for her internal defense, Cambodia in the long run will have a stronger and more viable internal security situation. Though at first she may have to give ground, and though the going may be rough and bloody, she probably will grow more surely and steadily!

I cannot forget the ruggedly effective independence of the Indonesians, so apparent during my discussions with Mr. Malik and with the other highly capable officials and citizens of that now independent nation. I attribute much of this independence to their having achieved that independence through their own efforts.

An application of the Nixon Doctrine that, in the early years to come, sets aside the concept of regional military defense efforts (while the nations help one another economically) is a tough but realistic approach in the long run. After all, our own United States government does not yet have an adequately effective system for managing our assistance efforts on a regional basis. More importantly, the lessons of Southeast Asian history as well as the lessons we should have learned from earlier years of the Vietnam war make clear that by keeping troops of would-be allies out of other nations, and by thus forcing the burden of defense on the nation's own men and their leaders, a far more solid basis for internal independence can be developed. Such an effort may seem to take longer, and may well be bloodier—at first; but, the results will be more lasting.

JAPAN AND INDONESIA

The Republic of Japan has become the world's third largest economic power in the short space of 25 years. Today, any traveller through Southeast Asia is struck by the predominance of Japanese made consumer items such as cars, buses, radios and other consumer goods. And today, as for the past 25 years, Japan operates under the umbrella of American protection.

One of the most startling facts gleaned from the examination of figures on foreign aid to Vietnam is that Japan ranks only sixth in amount of aid given to the Republic of Vietnam, falling not only behind the United States, but behind Germany, France, Australia, and Canada. This is so despite the fact that it is reaping the greatest
share of economic benefits from the purchasing power made possible by American dollars in the form of U.S. aid.

Clearly, as our military forces are withdrawn, the need will increase for economic assistance in Vietnam. And, just as clearly, Japan has the capacity for providing such additional assistance. Yet although Japan continues to exploit the favorable trade conditions brought about by the present economic situation in Vietnam, she does so without bearing a fair share of economic assistance to that beleaguered country. (Japan is participating with the U.S. in funding long-term programs in Indonesia with many millions of dollars—but these are on a loan basis and not the aid program that Vietnam requires.)

Without a doubt, Japan has one of the greatest stakes in the preservation of pro-free world governments on the Southeast Asian mainland. And, without a doubt, its political, economic, and social stability depends on a continued alignment with majority of the non-communist nations in that part of the world. Its defense needs are provided for by the treaty with the United States.

It is, therefore, my considered belief that the Japanese government should greatly expend its economic aid and financial assistance to the government of South Vietnam, and also to other democratic governments of Southeast Asia. I would further recommend that the executive branch of the U.S., and particularly the State Department, do everything in its power to encourage such an expansion of economic and financial aid on the part of the Japanese government.

Likewise, Indonesia has a tremendous stake in the preservation of non-communist governments on the Southeast Asian mainland. Unlike Japan, however, their political, social and economic situation does not now permit massive involvement in the struggle against communist aggression.

As the Select Committee's report quite clearly pointed out Indonesia can provide the much needed leadership toward regional planning and development. This was demonstrated by the recent initiative of Foreign Minister Malik detailed in the full report. Therefore, I would recommend that we continue and expand our support of the Asian and World Banks' programs as part of an overall Southeast Asian effort. It is in this way we can best promote economic and political stability in those countries which do not at the moment face a direct Communist threat. In this manner, when total regional cooperation becomes feasible, those countries who will take a leadership role in such a situation will be better prepared to bear the burden. Singapore and Malaysia similarly fall into this category.

LAND REFORM

I disagree with the report's short and skeptical comments on the Saigon Government's land reform program. From all that I saw on the trip, and have learned since then, it appears to me that land reform is one of the most promising present programs of the Thieu government.

When the French were ousted in the early 1950's, large portions of Vietnamese lands were in the hands of absentee landlords. Additionally, in the case of rubber plantations, the absentees often were French neo-colonialists whose interests in Vietnam was for the most part monetary, and who contributed little to the nation-building process.
President Diem, recognizing the inhibiting effect of such a situation, first adopted a program to limit maximum land holdings to 100 hectares per landlord. Later, more land was distributed to former tenants who became owner-operators of their farms. In rural areas, however, the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong frequently were the more effective land reformers. The landlords had fled from them and, accordingly, rents were largely eliminated or ignored. However, the Viet Cong's heavy taxes later eliminated the benefits of private ownership by the peasant.

The Thieu Government, against strong opposition in the legislature, has recognized the importance of and acted upon land reform. Based on the premise that land ownership is the greatest desire of people in the rural areas, the present program promises the double benefits of bettering the lot of a significant number of South Vietnamese while simultaneously fostering their interest in the survival of that democratic government which granted them the right to own the land on which they work.

President Thieu's Land Reform Act of 1970 grants title, free of charge, to the current tenant or squatter on all ricelands in the country, with the landlords to be reimbursed by the government. Within three years, as many as one million farm families became landowners of nearly 3 million acres of rice lands. With security of tenure and an initial absence of rents or taxes, these new owners will have a real incentive to improve their farms and adopt better farming techniques. Most important, a potent issue will have been seized by the government, eliminating the old Vietcong argument: "We gave you your land, now give us your son."

If the government continues to carry out this program effectively over the next few years, there should develop a more solid rural base for democratic institutions. Our government is encouraging and assisting the South Vietnamese government in implementing this revolutionary and far-reaching program. I am convinced that an expanded land reform program will speed Vietnamization of the war and make possible our withdrawal at a faster rate.

In this regard, legislation providing assistance to South Vietnam in carrying out its land reform program has been introduced and referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee. I am in accord with the philosophy which prompted introduction of this legislation, and urge the Committee to act promptly on it.

Although the U.S. clearly cannot and will not be the policeman for our world, this does not mean we can leave that world to its own devices. We can and must assist our friends. But, we must not subvert their independence and, obviously, should not do their job for them (as we did for a while in Vietnam). To do this would not only bankrupt us, but would destroy their integrity and their pride as a nation.

The United States nuclear shield is not enough, and conventional military force, as we now know, is often inappropriate. Regional cooperation is essential, and yet even that can be inadequate if the present and potential great powers in world politics compete amongst themselves in the manner so prevalent in this world today.
We in the Congress will have to assess the new departures in the Administration's proposed policies and programs. These will require new legislation, based upon new understandings which can be acquired on trips such as the Select Committee's visit to Southeast Asia.

This trip, like other "fact-finding" commissions before it, has added greatly to our knowledge of world problems and how they relate to our people and to those who live in the countries which we visited. It has been imposed upon, and to some extent detracted from, an already extraordinarily busy Congress—a Congress concerned with inflation in our economy, with hospital care, with the solvency of railroads, with postal reform, with the misbehaving stock market and with numerous other national problems. But, the war in Vietnam affects all of these things today. And, the longrun stability of Southeast Asia is directly related to the future well-being and stability of my constituency in Southeastern Massachusetts.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the House for the honor and responsibility accorded and assigned to me when I was named to this committee. All of the committee members worked hard; and hopefully, our reports will shed light on the major problems which, upon exposure, will be better understood and accordingly dealt with more effectively.
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STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE, JUNE 16, 1970, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Jerry Holloway, Chief, East Asia Division, introduced his colleagues and gave a preface to the briefing. The State Department briefing was given by four different staff personnel on each of four countries. Generally, the briefings were an "over-view," somewhat short, with specific items brought out in questioning by the Congressmen present.

VIETNAM: Mr. Dick Teare

There will be some events that will occur while you are there. On Sunday, June 28, elections will be held in all 44 provinces. These will be for 544 seats as provincial and municipal councilmen. The elections are contested in most provinces. These are the preliminaries to elections for the House and Senate this fall. Many running are opposed to the Thieu-Ky government.

Other events may be demonstrations by students. Actually, there are several groups demonstrating. This, in fact, shows a relative stability, E. E., that they can now afford the "luxury" of protest. This may be a questionable hypothesis.

Much of Vietnam is now preoccupied with the situation in Cambodia.

The economic situation is probably the most serious problem in Vietnam—a 50% increase in inflation in the last several months. The defense budget went up, more army troops, etc. help account for this.

CAMBODIA: Mr. Jerry Bennett

(He gave a general, historical background to 1965.) Concerning sanctuaries, in 1967, the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) started supplying weapons through Cambodia from Sihanoukville and from the North. This continued as Sihanouk attempted to play all sides. Theory: He permitted this because he felt that the VC would win soon and he would be faced with an all-Communist Vietnam. He hoped his gestures would be rewarded with a respect for Cambodian neutrality.

In May 1969, Sihanouk placed embargo on all NVA shipments through Cambodia but lifted this in the fall. In early March 1970, Sihanouk left Cambodia with a sizeable group of his close advisors to muster support from other governments for his country's neutrality and to get Moscow and Peking to help him secure the withdrawal of the NVA forces, by then numbering about 40,000.

The coup came while Sihanouk was in Moscow, on March 18. The NVA response to the ouster of Sihanouk was as follows: 1.) sanctuaries were strengthened; 2.) riots were incited to overthrow the Lon Nol government; these failed.; 3.) on April 5, the NVA switched to direct military action against Cambodian troops.

The situation today is as follows: Cambodia under Lon Nol controls Phnom Penh, central Cambodia and southwest Cambodia. The question
was raised about whether we invaded or were invited into Cambodia. State representatives answered that we were not invited.

LAOS: Mr. Frank Burnet

Our position has been since 1962 to honor the Geneva Accords of that year concerning Laos. The NVA has never honored the Accords and has been constantly increasing its strength in Laos. Our entire effort has been limited to defensive “aid” type as follows: 1.) no U.S. combat troops are in Laos; 2.) we will not go into Laos with combat troops; 3.) we have 1,040 U.S. personnel in Laos; 4.) we are supplying equipment and training; 5.) we are providing air interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail; 6.) we are also furnishing air support missions when asked for by the Royal Laotian Government (RLG).

Two things to keep in mind are: Laos could become another Vietnam; accordingly, we must guard our involvement there.

Two areas of turmoil in Laos are in the 1.) Panhandle (southern and central)—a mostly military struggle, and 2.) North—mostly a political struggle with some military overtones.

The pattern of war in Laos compared to Vietnam is as follows: The war is small, in restricted areas. Here, NVA controls the lowlands, except along the Mekong, RLG troops control the highlands. Saravane has fallen to the NVA but is now being retaken.

In questioning, the point was raised quite strongly, with general Committee support, that the purpose of this group is to find facts and misleading statements by State Department briefers do a disservice. The remark that we have no “combat personnel” in Laos is misleading when in the next statement it is evident that 1,040 U.S. personnel are there. Just because they may not be in “combat,” their funds come from the same place.

When asked where we should go in Laos, State replied that Vientiane and points north would be best. At this point, one member raised the question of our failure to implement the Geneva accords of 1954. Mr. Teare gave a detailed analysis of the Geneva Agreements. Basically, there were four different agreements: 1.) the agreement on ending hostilities in Vietnam signed by the French Union and Viet Minh; 2.) agreements on ending hostilities in Laos signed by the French Union and Viet Minh; 3.) agreement on ending hostilities in Cambodia “initialed” by Viet Minh and Royal Cambodian Government. 4.) There was a final declaration of the conference: By agreement between Foreign Ministers Eden of Great Britain and Molotov of Russia, the conference voiced approval of this declaration, rather than signing it. Seven of the nine countries involved expressed approval; the U.S. and the State of Vietnam (South Vietnam) did not endorse the declaration. However, Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith issued the U.S. declaration that the U.S. would “refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb” the agreements. Our position on the “free election in Vietnam” clause of the Geneva Declaration was to “seek unity through free elections supervised by the UN.

One member requested that State furnish copies of Secretary Dulles’ statements after the Geneva Conference.
THAILAND: Mr. Alf Bergsen

This briefing was very short. Mainly, the Thai government is very stable, very strong and has support of the vast majority of its people. Our ties with Thailand are very old, going back to our treaties with Siam in the 1800s. We have treaty ties now as we are both members of SEATO, signed in 1954.

Questions were raised concerning the Thai “Black Panther” Division of troops in Vietnam. Specifically, didn’t the U.S. payment of $200 million for the troops make them “mercenaries?” State replied that the Thai government sent troops willingly but their budget could not handle this. Our payment was a replacement, or aid, to their budget. One member made the point that this seemed quite expensive. State did not think this was much, considering the number of troops.

Mr. Bergsen, in closing, suggested strongly that if we do go to Thailand, we should first check with State officials. This ended the briefing. Mr. Holloway agreed to send over more materials. He again reiterated that State was standing by to offer any assistance they could.
General Gavin was introduced by Congressman Hastings Keith who outlined the General's background and his involvement in our Southeast Asian policy. Gen. Gavin started with a few brief remarks about his appearances before previous Congressional committees. He appeared before 17 committees in 1957 and 1958. He said that he retired from the Army during that time out of the conviction that our policy of "massive retaliation" was irresponsible. He said that he was here out of conviction and that he was very much in sympathy with the "young people" of the U.S. He said that 10 years ago, in an article, he had predicted that our society would be torn apart by our involvement in Vietnam. Gen. Gavin then gave a brief breakdown of the social and political groupings in South Vietnam. He also gave a brief history of the various wars that have engulfed this area. Shortly after World War I, Ho Chi Minh began his movement and throughout World War II we supported him. After World War II he thought he would be the head of state of Vietnam.

Gen. Gavin then moved on to the Geneva Accords of 1954. He said that the Geneva Agreements should be looked at in the light of events that were taking place in Vietnam. Specifically, France knew that she would fail at Dien Bien Phu. Gen. Gavin was in Geneva at the time covering these meetings. At the 17th parallel, about which we hear so much as the DMZ, was a temporary demarcation line which supposedly would no longer exist after elections in 1956.

Our involvement in Vietnam goes back quite far. In 1950 we gave $150 million to Vietnam through the French. (Gen. Gavin spoke briefly about the connection between Cardinal Spellman and Diem. He told how Diem was a very close friend of Cardinal Spellman who introduced Diem to all of the important government figures in the early 1950s. Cardinal Spellman was, said Gavin, "big on the prosecution of the war.")

General Westmoreland could have been given the job that Eisenhower was given in World War II, that is: 1.) destroy the armies of Giap and 2.) seize and occupy Hanoi. This action would have required from two to two and a half million men. There would have been great dangers in this, however. To accomplish these two things, it would have been necessary to seal up Haiphong Harbor. The Navy said to do this would require the seizing of Hainan Island. This action could have brought war with the Chinese and reopen the Korean Front.

Or Westmoreland could have been given the job of sealing up the country of South Vietnam and securing it. This could have been done with one to one and a half million men. The job that Westmoreland was given was to provide law, order and stability in which a viable government could come into being.
Gen. Gavin felt that the U.S. troops were great and that they were doing a superb job. So the last time he went over he had to look for something else to explain our seeming failure to accomplish our goals. After seeing how well we were doing militarily, he came back convinced more than ever that we were wrong. (Gen. Gavin suggested that we read his article “Modern Military Strategy” which he had given before the National War College.)

What was wrong? He felt that there was no overall strategy to guide us in our dealings in Vietnam and elsewhere. He defined strategy as the overall involvement of the nation's resources throughout the world. Strategy involves those measures that a nation takes short of war to insure victory in war. Strategy has to do with: domestic conditions, the economy and technology. These three can be called the concept of strategy. Gen. Gavin felt that this concept is beyond question now. Weapons are no longer strategic but are tactical.

Concerning domestic conditions, we are spending $30 billion a year in Vietnam but our domestic conditions are going downhill. The same is true of our economy. And the same is true of our technology where we are cutting back on what were once our greatest achievements. Accordingly, our tactics in Vietnam have been good but our strategy is "lousy." Gen. Gavin said that we were losing the Middle East because of our involvement in Southeast Asia and that we must get out of Southeast Asia as soon as possible. It is his feeling that Russia and China don't want us out of Vietnam. But we must get out as soon as possible.

Q: Everybody wants out of Vietnam. The question is how do we get out and still protect those who rely upon us?
A: I have an uneasy feeling that many people in the White House and the Pentagon don't understand the concept of strategy. The French were in Algeria for over 100 years. They had to give up land, buildings, factories, etc., yet they removed themselves quickly and they are a better nation for it. So we must get out soon. There will be great pressures but these must be subordinated to our overall strategy.

Q: Assuming we do get out, what happens then?
A: The real secret of getting out is what I have long proposed. That is, to withdraw into certain secure and defensible areas in South Vietnam. These are known as "enclaves." We should withdraw to these enclaves, negotiate for holding these certain areas just as the French did in Algeria, holding on to these areas for a time while withdrawing.

Q: How does this differ from Vietnamization?
A: Vietnamization means staying there until the Thieu-Ky government is stable, until the whole country is stable and self-supporting. The enclave theory would not purport to do this.

Q: How long do you estimate to be the shortest period in which we could get out?
A: Most people say that it would take three to five years. It is evident that we can't just pull off and run but I feel the fastest that it can be done is one to one and a half years.

Q: You said that we should negotiate with North Vietnam for these enclaves while we are withdrawing. What makes you think they will negotiate this?
A: I believe they will negotiate on this basis. They have never been asked.

Q: It was my understanding that Averill Harriman and others who have appeared before the House of Foreign Affairs said they have offered to negotiate on anything but the North Vietnamese have turned down all proposals.

A: I question seriously if the specific proposal for withdrawal to the enclaves pending total withdrawal has ever been asked.

Q: Would we still use Vietnamization during the period we hold the enclaves?

A: Probably, yes, but in a very limited amount.

Q: From your comments, I assume that after we leave, the Communists would take over.

A: No, I did not say that nor do I mean to imply that. I don't know what will happen when we leave but the main point is we cannot solve all of their problems. We must think first of our overall strategy.

Q: President Nixon has said we will have 80% of our ground combat troops out by mid-1971. Do you agree with this?

A: If he does this, then we are in complete agreement. Referring back to what type of government would come into being, I found that in 1967 Vietnam wanted peace so badly they did not care who was in charge. They may still feel this way. I am not worried about what type of government takes over.

Q: What about a blood bath? How many do you estimate could be killed?

A: I don’t know. It might be zero and it might be more. Regardless of what it is, we can do nothing about it. Again, we must think of our overall strategy.

Q: Does South Vietnam have potential for growth and a good economy?

A: Yes, it has the greatest rice bowl potential in the world but at the present there is no industry.
SELECT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE WITH MAJ. GEN. EDWARD G. LANDSDALE, USAF, RET. JUNE 17, 1970, WASHINGTON, D.C.

General Lansdale said in opening that he would talk about what we might look at in South Vietnam. There is one basic assumption and that is that we are going to be out at sometime and we hope that South Vietnam will be able to take care of itself by then. How fast we get out depends on how the country progresses.

First of all, he thought we should look at the institutions that will help the South Vietnamese take over and run their country. That is, look at their basic ones, such as the constitution, to see if it is being followed; their legislature, to see how it is functioning; and their defense forces, to see how they are progressing. We should meet both houses of the assembly and get a feeling from them and also give them a feeling of what Americans are thinking. We should also meet with some of the appointed officials in the Thieu government.

President Thieu is trying to get his own political party going. He is using a type of "ward boss" system to do the organizing. The persons who can tell you how he is doing are those who are for him and those who are against him. Specifically, see Tran Van Lam, the Foreign Minister, who used to be in the Senate. He is an old politician, pro-Thieu, and can give you the inner workings of the politics. Another man to see is Senator Hien who is the leader of the pro-Thieu Catholic bloc. He is a graduate of the University of Idaho and the word now is that Hien, who is young and U.S.-oriented, is figuring out how to "rig" the elections in favor of Thieu. These two will give the official word on how the "in" party is doing.

For the loyal opposition, you should see Senator Tran Van Don, a former general who is opposed to Thieu and is very popular. He got the highest number of votes of anyone running in the last election. For a real negative view of how the U.S. and South Vietnam have bungled, talked to Senator (Thuc).

As far as the constitution goes, it is basically a set of rules on how to run their affairs. It was written by the South Vietnamese. Basically, it has sound precepts, but you must find out if it is being honored by those in the government and in the military. For instance, ask if the officers in the military have to take an oath to uphold the constitution. They never used to. In the constitution there is a provision which, in effect, keeps the city and country people divided. We should check into this.

An Xuyen province, in the very southern tip of South Vietnam, is the most peaceful. See if people in other provinces are ready to start electing their own provincial and district chiefs, now appointed. They are now a direct link to Thieu.

It would be wise to check into communications. Getting the word to those in the countryside is a continuing contest between Hanoi radio and Saigon radio. One plus on our side is that we have TV which could be a good potential device, but the South Vietnamese don't use it.
properly. The USIA has a good man there, Charles Mertz, who can give a frank opinion of what is going on in the field of communication.

Q: In your opinion, what will happen when we get out?
A: I don’t know. I feel that Thieu will now start getting the military to support him as a very strong president, much like a benevolent dictator. However, many Vietnamese will not like this and will be vulnerable to the NLF and will probably try to overthrow Thieu. As for the blood bath, the number of victims is questionable. Some say 100,000, others say a million.

Q: What can we do to prevent this? Anything?
A: No. The attitude of the Vietnamese Army and their generals and colonels is weakening the very structure that should be strong. They appear to want to keep Thieu in office and keep him strong. However, they are not interested in making the system work. The Army is looking out for itself and this is a definite weak point. The Vietnamese in the recent past have been told they are doing a good job, but it is time to start moving even more rapidly. There are 43 or more political parties. This is ridiculous. They could be consolidated into far fewer.

Q: Is the build-up the South Vietnamese Army got by going into Cambodia a false build-up?
A: It was definitely an upswing but the Army has to change its ways. This was a real scavenging army that went into Cambodia. They stole everything. However, they do the same to their own people and this won’t hold up among the NLF.

Q: How long will we be involved? Do the South Vietnamese understand our impatience to get out?
A: Some South Vietnamese understand this, but most do not. We should definitely let them know this.

Q: What about Thieu broadening the base of his government?
A: Most of those on the outside want to be top dog but have no idea what to do once on top. They want the fancy car, the large house, the servants, etc., but they have no idea of leadership.

We should talk to someone close to the two large religious sects in Tay Ninh province. The Cao Dai and the Hao Hao. These two could give valuable information as to what is happening on the other side of the border in Cambodia. They have been smuggling across the border for years and can tell you much of what is happening in Cambodia. Specifically, talk to Cal Mehlert who served with the Cao Dai and is fluent in Vietnamese.

Q: How or what should be asked to see how pacification is progressing?
A: See how safe the villages are. You have to dig very deep to verify this, to see if the villages are safe at night.

Q: Is there some talk about turning pacification over to the military. Is this correct?
A: It has really been a military function for a long time since they have always had to protect the villages to make them safe. Specifically, on this point, talk to Col. Nguyen Be and Maj. Jean Sauvageot, both of whom are good friends.
GENERAL LANSDALE'S SUGGESTED CONTACTS IN VIETNAM

Sen. Hien—Leader of pro-Thieu Catholic Bloc
Tran Van Lam—Foreign Minister, former leader in Senate, pro-Thieu
Tran Van Don—Senator, former General, Southern leader in opposition to Thieu—close to Duong Van “Big” Minh, former General and highly popular Southerner
Senator Dan Van Sung—an independent Northerner, but close to General Don, publisher of leading Vietnamese newspaper

For thoughtful, independent views:
Vo Van Hai—former executive secretary to President Diem, now an instructor at University of Saigon and University of Dalat. Exceptionally well informed politically. Fluent in English
Ton That Thien—editor of Viet Nam Guardian, English language daily. Intensely patriotic, bluntly honest and well informed
Cal Mehlert—Prov. reports of Political Section in Embassy. Good lead to Hoa Hao and Cao Dai leaders, including those available in Saigon. Fluent in Vietnamese
Ev Bumgardner—Special Assistant to Bill Colby at CORDS, fluent in Vietnamese, keeps tabs on what is happening in villages all over Vietnam
Mark Huss—reachable via CORDS, knows the pacification program as only a long-time, close-in observer can. Served with RAF in World War II
Nguyen Be and Jean Savaugeot at Vung Tau (beach resort)
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING TO THE
SELECT COMMITTEE, JUNE 18, 1970, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The briefing was broken into three sections: Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.

VIETNAM

There is a total of 1,650 persons in the Agency for International Development (AID) in Vietnam. Last fiscal year, there was a total of $365 million in AID money and $220 million in commodities. Inflation in Vietnam is the greatest concern. Inflation has been 30 to 40 percent and now is up to 45 to 50 percent. The rural people are relatively more prosperous than the city people.

There are three sources of funds to meet their balance of payments:
1.) AID commodities, $220 million;
2.) P.L. 480 Food: $100 million;
3.) money from the U.S. Defense Department, $350 million.

The economy is potentially prosperous as good agricultural people are industrious and intelligent. However, on the negative side, there are over one million men in arms out of a population of 17 million. This has two effects: loss of production and budget deficit problems. As U.S. troops are cut down, money from the defense side (No. 3 above) will go down.

Land reform: Land reform goes back to the 1950's when the government expropriated all land holders of 100 hectares or more and distributed about 10,000 hectares. The new program: all rice paddies will be given to the tillers and they are being encouraged to expedite this. This should provide a political advantage for the government.

THAILAND

AID in Thailand amounts to about $30 million a year. We are helping counterinsurgency efforts, especially with their internal security programs. The other national effort is economy—to try to tie all the nation's areas together with roads. Before this economic effort, when one spoke of Thailand, one in essence meant Bangkok because it was the only part that was important to the economy, but now the whole country is being tied together under the Regional Area Development Project.

LAOS

Here we have a $47 million annual program. One of the most important programs is aiding the refugees, 250,000 to 260,000 of them, who AID helps to house and clothe. The level of refugees is up 100,000 above a year ago at this time. The other level of AID effort is budgetary support by which inflation has been kept down. We provide dollars for the basis of their foreign imports, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is involved in this. There is a road building program going on and some small programs in education and agricul-
ture. As far as national activities, we are encouraging Laotian participation in the Mekong and we are furnishing studies for a dam at Vientiane which, if built, will have far-reaching effects on irrigation and flood control.

CAMBODIA

There is, or has been, no AID since 1963, so naturally there is no staff there.

Q and A: In response to questioning, AID said that there are some CIA people in Laos who are identified as working for AID. Dr. Hannah let this be known recently.

Q: What about the Commodity Import Program (CIP)?
A: There has been a lot of graft involved with CIP in Vietnam, but we feel we have it pretty well cleaned up.

Q: What about the reports that the Vietnamese receive wheat from AID and turn around and trade it for rice?
A: Yes, we have heard that many don’t like bulgur wheat, and there is some selling of that commodity in the marketplace.

Q: What kind of internal security program is AID providing in Thailand?
A: Training of police, establishing police communications, police intelligence, etc.

Q: What is the size of the AID staff in Indonesia?
A: 80-odd in the mission.

Q: Describe the AID program in the Philippines.
A: The AID program in the Philippines amounts to eight or nine million dollars a year, including aspects of family planning.

Q: In South Vietnam, hasn’t the population been increasing despite the war?
A: Yes, and in Thailand there is an increase of about 3.2 percent annually, one of the highest in the world.

Q: How many American fathers are leaving how many children in South Vietnam?
A: You must ask the military for that answer.

Q: Is the new government in Cambodia cranking up any moves for land reform?
A: No. We would be surprised if this happens.

CONFERENCE BETWEEN SELECT COMMITTEE AND STAFF MEMBERS AND NEWSMAN, MR. SAM JAFFE, JUNE 19, 1970, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Staff Members, joined by Committee Members Montgomery, Adair and Smith, met with former ABC newscaster and reporter, Mr. Sam Jaffe. The purpose of the meeting was to try to obtain the names of sources in Saigon independent of the official U.S. Establishment that could give the Committee some independent views on the current situation in Indochina. Mr. Jaffe was most cooperative and indicated that this was the first time that Congressmen had attempted to take this approach. Among others that Mr. Jaffe suggested would be knowledgeable, responsible and independent sources were the following: Robert Shaplen of the New Yorker magazine, especially on South Vietnam; Bernard Kalb of the New York Times, especially on Cambodia; Jack Lawrence of CBS, on South Vietnam; Tammy Arbuckle
who writes for the Washington Star and other newspapers, on Laos; Jack Foise of the Los Angeles Times who has special expertise on Thailand; and, if he happened to be in Southeast Asia at the time, Stanley Karnow, Washington Post columnist based in Hong Kong.

Mr. Jaffe emphasized that these newsmen might or might not be available, depending on whether they were at the front in Vietnam or elsewhere covering the war in Indochina. He did indicate that these men would furnish a good starting point for newsmen.

Mr. Jaffe made the following suggestions as to persons to talk with while in Southeast Asia. He suggested that the Committee try to talk with Vietnamese editors in Saigon, those of both the English-language and their vernacular newspapers, some of whom are former members of the Viet Minh who have long since become disillusioned with that side.

Mr. Jaffe suggested that we try to talk with Buddhist leaders, especially Tich Tri Quang in Hue, as well as Roman Catholics, such as their bishop in Saigon, lower ranking members and lay brothers. In this connection, Mr. Jaffe suggested that the Committee ask the Roman Catholics about the "blood-bath" theory that has been aired recently, as in the case of Mr. Craig Hosmer's recent RAND study. Some Roman Catholics deny that there would be a blood-bath in the event of precipitate American withdrawal or possible VC-NVA takeover. When asked why, Mr. Jaffe said that many of the Roman Catholics in the South told him that they still have relatives and coreligionists in the North, that there are about 700,000 Roman Catholics living in North Vietnam, and that this seemed to refute the idea of such a blood-bath.

He also suggested that the Committee try to talk with Vietnamese University students in Saigon and elsewhere. He was asked if there are any responsible student groups, to which he replied that not only are there separate Roman Catholic- and Buddhist-oriented student associations, but also that there is a Saigon University student association. Mr. Jaffe feels that the leaders of all of these groups are responsible. He pointed out that there was one student-frequented coffee house on Tu Do Street, Le Givral, and also La Pagode. Mr. Jaffe commented that no Congressmen to his knowledge had attempted to talk to representatives of such groups as mentioned above and that this would be a welcome initiative and precedent.

He further suggested that if possible while in Phnom Penh, the group should try to gain an audience with the Queen Mother, Prince Sihanouk's mother, who is apparently under a genteel house arrest in the palace.

He suggested further that to get the feel of the economy of Vietnam that it was essential to go see the black market in Saigon.

Finally, he suggested the name of a television specialist with the USIS in Saigon, Charlie Mertz, who could give knowledgeable information on the situation of USG/GVN programs.