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SIGMA - 67

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

JOINT WAR GAMES AGENCY
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DECEMBER 1967

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SIGMA I AND II-67

27 NOVEMBER - 7 DECEMBER 1967

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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20 December 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF SIGMA I & II-67

Subject: Final Report

Enclosed is a copy of the Final Report on the politico-military games, SIGMA I and II-67.

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Enclosure

When Enclosure is Detached, this
Page is Downgraded to UNCLASSIFIED

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SIGMA I and II-67

FINAL REPORT

Table of Contents

TITLE PAGE i

MEMORANDUM FROM THE CHAIRMAN ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS. iii

FOREWORD iv

SUMMARY

Summary of SIGMA I-67. . . . . A-1 Thru A-4
Summary of SIGMA II-67 . . . . . A-5 Thru A-8

COMMENTARY . . . . . B-1 Thru B-4

Game Participants' Comments. . . . . B-5 Thru B-9

CRITIQUE

Senior Critique, SIGMA I and II-67 . . . . . C-1 Thru C-35
Action-level Critique, SIGMA I-67. . . . . C-36 Thru C-61
Action-level Critique, SIGMA II-67 . . . . . C-62 Thru C-93

PARTICIPANTS

. . . . . D-1
. . . . . D-2 Thru D-3
. . . . . D-4 Thru D-6
. . . . . D-7
. . . . . D-8

MAPS . . . . . E-1 Thru E-2

DISTRIBUTION . . . . . F-1 Thru F-3

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SIGMA I AND II-67

FINAL REPORT

Foreword

This is the Final Report on SIGMA I and II-67, two senior-level, interagency, politico-military games conducted in the Pentagon during the period 27 November to 7 December 1967. The first volume, a Fact Book, was published prior to the game. A second volume, Game Messages, containing the initial scenarios, team messages and scenario projections, was distributed separately. This third volume includes transcripts of action and senior-level critiques, game summaries, a commentary and a list of participants.

The object of SIGMA I and II-67 was to examine some of the major issues, problems and questions associated with negotiations or solutions to the war in Southeast Asia.

In addition to this report, a film briefing of SIGMA I and II-67 is being prepared.

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SIGMA I & II-67

TWO INTERAGENCY GAMES INVOLVING NEGOTIATIONS

IN VIETNAM

Purpose and Scope: SIGMA I and II were concurrent, senior-level, politico-military games conducted between 27 November and 7 December 1967 in Pentagon facilities of the Joint War Games Agency, OJCS. Initial scenarios were based on extensive research and interviews in Washington and overseas by the Politico-Military Division, Joint War Games Agency. Scenarios included current assessments of the situation and were aimed at exploring problems of negotiating a satisfactory settlement to the conflict in Southeast Asia.

Nations Represented: Each game included a Blue (US/GVN) team, a Red (NVN/NLF) team and Control, representing all other nations, international organizations and influences. The GVN and NLF were represented by two-man groups sitting respectively with the Blue and Red teams.

SUMMARY OF GAMES

SIGMA I: SIGMA I began with a private, official statement from Hanoi on 25 January 1968 offering to negotiate if US air attacks against North Vietnam were unconditionally ended. On 2 February as Tet concluded, initial scenarios had the US respond privately that it had instituted an "unqualified cessation" of the bombing and desired to meet at a neutral capital to discuss arrangements for settling the conflict.

This game was played by a Red team bargaining cynically with the hope of obtaining either a short or long-range advantage at Blue's expense.

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On 3 February, following the Tet truce, the US resumed military operations in South Vietnam. Anticipating a cease-fire, however, Blue redeployed units to protect the population.

Red regarded wide dispersal of Blue forces as a threat to the NLF infrastructure and quickly launched a series of attacks aimed at making Blue reconsolidate.

Blue intensified bombing of infiltration routes into South Vietnam and continued intensive ground, sea and air reconnaissance including reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam, resulting in the continued loss of American aircraft.

With the bombing halt, Red moved rapidly to buildup the North and continued infiltration of men and material into South Vietnam and the Laotian and Cambodian sanctuaries with a view to renewing hostilities if peace talks proved unproductive.

An around-the-clock effort was mounted to repair North Vietnamese roads, railroads and airfields. As airfield repair was completed, MIGs were ferried back from Red Chinese sanctuaries. Both as a result of a real need and as a further bar to renewal of US bombing, Hanoi appealed to communist, neutralist and Free World Nations for assistance in rebuilding the country. An American offer to assist in reconstruction met with refusal and a demand for reparations.

Blue assumed that its allies in the Vietnam fighting would passively accept US actions. However, the Thais and Koreans demanded day-by-day consultations on the course of any negotiations plus assurances that no cease-fire would be imposed without safeguards. The South Vietnam Government messaged Hanoi that any settlement not acceptable to Saigon would be invalid, and a separate secret message was dispatched to the National Liberation Front with an offer of amnesty for individuals.

Reactions by Red China to the North Vietnamese peace moves were sharp. China delayed Soviet aid shipments transiting the country, threatened to cut off Chinese aid

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to North Vietnam and sent a senior delegation to Hanoi. The Chinese also moved two divisions and one fighter wing to the North Vietnamese border.

Control, nevertheless, moved the game to a negotiating situation. Talks began in Paris on 7 March. Parties to the negotiations were the US and the South Vietnamese Government on one side and the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front on the other. The agreed agenda was cease-fire, withdrawal, de-escalation and prisoner exchange.

In Saigon, Vietnamese Government officials were upset over failure to include problems of territorial integrity and the future status of the NLF in the talks. Thieu and the majority of South Vietnamese officials appeared to Blue to be going along with the US actions, while Ky and his supporters were suspected of supporting increasing anti-US agitation.

Despite Blue's confidence that the South Vietnamese Government would follow the US lead in negotiations, GVN players felt that extended negotiations were needed to give their government time to reinforce its political structure and to strengthen its hold over the countryside. They were prepared to sabotage the talks if they appeared to be leading to premature removal of allied forces, coalition with the NLF or, to a settlement which would adversely affect South Vietnam's territorial integrity.

At the time of the bombing halt, the Red team had wanted a cease-fire. However, following the wide redeployment of US forces, Red's attitude changed. By the beginning of negotiations Red was insisting that agreement on withdrawal of US forces must precede a cease-fire. If a US withdrawal had not started by 4 June, Hanoi planned to initiate large-scale attacks in order to raise American casualty figures thus increasing US dissatisfaction over the course of the war and the lack of progress in negotiations.

SIGMA I ended with the US prepared to resume the bombing of NVN if negotiations became unproductive and protracted. The real practicability of such a move hinged in part,

however, on domestic and Congressional opinion. US action could have been hindered by a Congressional resolution, introduced by Control, opposing military moves which might interfere with the success of peace talks. Most Blue team members felt they had the mobility and flexibility to counter a sudden communist switch to large unit offensive action.

As SIGMA I ended, it appeared to some players that North Vietnam had made significant political and military gains. The cessation of bombing in the North had enabled Hanoi to rebuild defenses and repair roads, railroads, bridges, airfields, power plants and other bomb damage. Help in the form of technicians and material was flowing into the country from communist, neutralist and Free World Nations. Hanoi felt that in addition to other benefits, the presence of large numbers of foreign technicians in the country would inhibit resumption of US bombing. Militarily, Hanoi was bringing NVA and VC forces in South Vietnam and the Laotian and Cambodian sanctuaries to full strength, rebuilding stockpiles of arms, ammunition and other material, and was prepared to step-up military action by June 1968 if peace talks became unproductive. Political gains were also felt to have been substantial. The US was tied down in negotiations and the NLF had been accepted as a participant in peace talks. In addition, the Americans had given in to Hanoi's demand that troop withdrawal appear as the first agenda item. Apparent US disregard for the views of its allies had led to serious dissension between the Americans and other participants in the Vietnam fighting and a division within the South Vietnamese Government itself. The South Vietnamese, for example, stood prepared to sabotage the peace talks. In the US, domestic opinion pressure was running strongly in favor of an early peace in Vietnam, while a Congressional resolution opposing all military action which might upset the peace talks severely limited American military flexibility. Although casualty levels were down and revolutionary development was being stressed, it appeared to some participants that the Red team had achieved most of its objectives and that it would be difficult, for the US to overcome or counter communist gains.

SIGMA II: SIGMA II also began in January 1968 with a private, official statement from Hanoi offering to negotiate

if US air attacks on North Vietnam were unconditionally ended. On 2 February, as Tet concluded, the US responded privately that it had instituted an "unqualified cessation" of the bombing and desired to meet at a neutral capital to discuss arrangements for settling the conflict.

Although Blue was unaware of the fact, Red II was playing from a scenario in which the military situation in South Vietnam had become disastrous; Soviet and Red Chinese support was beginning to flag; internal conditions in North Vietnam were becoming intolerable and previous estimates of allied losses were now adjudged to have been grossly inflated. As the leadership lost hope for a post-election change in US policies, a decision had been made to seek the best terms possible from the current administration.

Red announced that, due to cessation of bombing of NVN, the DRV was ready to proceed toward serious negotiations, and called upon the United States for an extension of the Tet cease-fire. The Blue team had considered announcing a cease-fire in South Vietnam but rejected the idea in favor of maintaining military pressure on the enemy.

Blue, therefore, ignored the truce proposal and pressed for early negotiations. US air efforts had been diverted from North to South Vietnam while search and destroy operations continued against an enemy who was becoming increasingly hard to find.

On 13 February, "experts" representing the four principal belligerents met to make arrangements for a formal conference.

The continuation of American military actions in South Vietnam caused mounting world and domestic consternation. As diplomatic discussions progressed at Rangoon, the level of US pressures was gradually reduced.

The North Vietnamese withdrew a brigade from South Vietnam while most communist forces in the South consolidated within sanctuary areas. Unlike the Reds in SIGMA I, Red II badly wanted a formal cease-fire before going to the conference table; Control had them settle for a kind of a de-facto stand-down.

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The US continued air surveillance over North Vietnam while suppressing persistent guerrilla action in the Delta. Blue also began converting CIDG units to constabulary.

In SIGMA II, following rapid agreement on the release of wounded prisoners, discussions at Rangoon quickly resolved such questions bearing on a formal conference as forum -- US/GVN, DRV/NLF; site-Rangoon; observers-USSR, UK, ROK, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines; time-1 March and focus-only SVN.

As talks continued, both Blue and Red experienced trouble in their own ranks. Elements within the GVN sought to disrupt negotiations by covert as well as overt actions, including RVN military forays into Cambodia. Within the Red team, a splinter NLF element in the Delta, trying to continue the struggle, had an "accident" imposed by Control. A clandestine dialogue was also begun between GVN and NLF dissidents as the US and RVN pushed and prodded GVN and NLF leaders into cooperation.

Control assisted in reaching agreement by emphasizing common elements rather than divergencies in team bargaining positions. Blue assumed that the GVN leadership could be induced to cooperate and Control tended to minimize GVN obstructionism.

The formal conference, therefore, began at Rangoon and agreement in principle was soon reached for the early conduct of internationally supervised elections in South Vietnam with NLF participation as a political party.

By this time, the level of military activity in South Vietnam had been drastically reduced and VC harassment and terror, except in the Delta, had diminished sharply. Allied military forces elsewhere shifted to assist in civic action and revolutionary development since the communist side was apparently not reinforcing or operating outside of sanctuary areas.

On 28 April, the Rangoon conference adjourned to allow two subcommittees to work out modalities for: NLF participation in South Vietnamese political life, a cease-fire, troop withdrawals and reductions.

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Red was willing to participate in elections under the existing GVN constitution and this was compatible with the Blue initial position. Control, nevertheless, had the subcommittee evolve a rather different electoral formula. This called for NLF participation in early, internationally supervised elections for a new Constituent Assembly. The game ended with Blue proposing to conduct nationwide registration for Constituent Assembly elections on 1 July under supervision of a seven-nation commission including countries like Indonesia, Switzerland, and Rumania. Elections were to be held on 1 August; run-off elections on 1 September; and the Assembly would convene to write a new constitution on 1 October.

The US team appeared hopeful that its demand for a majority (51%) to elect each Assembly representative would give non-communist candidates an advantage in run-offs against the NLF. The idea of one elected representative per province as a minimum, with an additional representative added for each increment of 40,000 people over 80,000 would favor urban areas and further hamper NLF activities.

From the beginning, Blue entered into negotiations with a wary eye on enemy military activities while Red did everything possible to avoid military provocation or any hint that the stand-down was being used to reinforce NLF/NVA forces in South Vietnam. Against this background, Blue indicated a willingness to begin US withdrawals "not later than six months after election of the Constitutional Assembly"; completion would be in consonance with the Manila Communique. Little difficulty was envisioned regarding withdrawal of US, Free World and NVA forces. A sticking point was VC determination not to disarm.

It is worth noting both Blue and Red strategies called for quick elections while US troops were still in country. Blue felt their presence would reassure non-communist voters; Red thought the US presence might preclude GVN efforts to "rig" the election.

Considerable discussion in both teams and Control centered on probable election results. It was widely agreed that the NLF could carry the 17 percent of the

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population living under its control in any election and could probably count on at least 7 percent of the total population who lived under government control. There was considerable doubt regarding the attitude of 16 percent of the population living in contested areas. In one assumption, projected by Control, the GVN might count on 44 percent of the vote, the NLF 33 percent, with the remaining 23 percent in doubt. It appears that the majority formula proposed by Blue offered more hope of avoiding an NLF takeover than plurality provisions in the current constitution.

Throughout the hypothetical period of the game, 2 February - 28 April 1968, the North Vietnamese took advantage of the military respite to restore shattered transport systems and to rebuild their economic base and defense systems. Port facilities were rapidly improved and anti-aircraft artillery deployed to key areas including sites along the DMZ and Laos corridor. MIG's and IL 28 aircraft were re-introduced into the country.

NVA/VC forces in SVN and the Laotian and Cambodian sanctuaries were being strengthened in preparation for a renewal of hostilities after withdrawal of US and Free World Forces. The Reds still had control of a substantial part of the population and their infrastructure was largely intact. As the game ended, Red was in a somewhat better position to renew hostilities.

Throughout this time, Blue had a relatively free hand for country building and revolutionary development. However, opinion pressures to "Stop the air attacks" and "End the war in the South had given way to "Peace is here -- Bring the boys home!"

The Blue team in SIGMA II was uncertain whether the enemy was sincere in seeking a political settlement but was willing to give them benefit of the doubt. They felt their electoral formula provided a better than even chance for installing a representative, non-communist government in South Vietnam and that this was all that could be expected within oft-stated real life US policies. Some Blue players had reservations on this and felt that any NLF participation in the South Vietnamese Government would lead to a communist takeover.

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SIGMA I & II-67

COMMENTARY

The two games followed similar lines in that preliminary discussions were carried forward quickly and formal negotiations were initiated within several weeks. In SIGMA I, fighting continued during the talks. In SIGMA II, a de-facto cease-fire evolved as diplomatic progress was achieved.

In both games, the US kept up air surveillance over North Vietnam with considerable aircraft losses and North Vietnam launched massive efforts to reconstitute transport and communication systems.

In SIGMA I the Red team continued expedited buildup in the North and infiltration of men and materiel into South Vietnam and the Laotian and Cambodian sanctuaries. The Red team in SIGMA II did not. The less belligerent attitude of the Red II was obscured, however, by activities of NLF dissidents in the Mekong Delta who wished to sabotage movement toward a negotiated settlement.

In SIGMA I the North Vietnamese were bargaining most cynically and had the least real interest in a negotiated settlement. The US team shifted from large unit search and destroy operations to a widely dispersed deployment of US, Free World and ARVN forces aimed at providing security for the population. This enticed Red into attacks which helped disclose his true intent.

The Red team in SIGMA I regarded wide dispersal of Blue forces as a very real threat to Liberation Front infrastructure and quickly launched a number of attacks aimed at making Blue consolidate. A similar deployment proposal was rejected by SIGMA II Blue seniors on the basis that this could lead to defeat of some smaller units and might provide the enemy with an opportunity to reinstitute main force operations.

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In SIGMA II, however, the action team proposal for detailed deployment was keyed to enemy acceptance of a US cease-fire in South Vietnam. Under this concept any breach of the cease-fire by the enemy might have constituted grounds for renewing hostilities in North as well as South Vietnam. There was strong minority support among the Blue I seniors for this concept.

It might be inferred, then, that a cease-fire in South Vietnam combined with rapid dispersal of allied forces for local security purposes might:

a. Provide increased opportunity for the Allies to destroy the NLF infrastructure and to further the revolutionary development effort.

b. Provide maximum assurance to anti-communist elements during a pre-election period.

c. Trigger a severe enemy response, exposing his lack of interest in achieving a settlement in good faith.

d. Improve the US "peace-seeking image".

e. Provide the US a solid position for renewing the conflict in both North and South Vietnam if the enemy renews combat operations.

The real questions, as both games ended, were how well the US and its Allies could use a respite provided by reduced hostility levels or a cease-fire in order to achieve progress in revolutionary development and nation building in South Vietnam, and how much risk would be involved in allowing the enemy enough respite for a major buildup.

Another move in SIGMA I might have been the communist side launching major attacks from Laos, Cambodia and the Demilitarized Zone a few months before the November US elections. A fourth move in SIGMA II might have seen constituent assembly elections underway in South Vietnam under international supervision with troop withdrawals in the offing. Even if the communist side were willing to risk the electoral route to power in South Vietnam, the

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problem of disarming the VC might still have been insurmountable. Some felt that this was the most crucial point confronting the two sides.

In both games there appeared to be a Blue tendency to assume that the government of South Vietnam could be brought along one way or another even on such ticklish questions as NLF participation. It was also a matter of faith that the US had sufficient leverage to keep the GVN "in line". GVN players who were selected as "experts" did not appear to agree.

Red team members in SIGMA I emphasized that most of their decisions were based on their evaluation of the situation in the United States during an election year. The existing situation in the US was a paramount consideration in each of their moves. They felt that if they could accomplish even a token withdrawal of US forces, opinion pressures would require withdrawal to continue.

A number of participants felt that, if troops were withdrawn, under no circumstances would the US ever return to South Vietnam and that the communists in such a situation could very shortly take over the country.

Some felt that the US would not be able to resume the bombing of North Vietnam or to reinitiate large-scale combat operations in the South.

Blue I participants, on the other hand, felt that US public opinion would go along with US actions. They felt that the US public would realize that the communists were not negotiating in good faith. They also felt that if the communists commenced large-scale operations in the South, the US public would support any resulting actions taken to counter-act the communists.

It was difficult for either of the Blue teams to discern from the pattern of enemy action whether the Reds really wanted meaningful negotiations or were using talks as a means to stop military operations. Because of actions taken by the enemy, such as NLF dissidence in the Delta in SIGMA II, US teams in both games were left hoping for the best while preparing for the worst.

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Many of the players, both Red and Blue, and Control members in the two games appeared to feel that the NLF had good prospects for taking over South Vietnam through internationally supervised electoral processes. This raises the question of why the communist aide has not taken this approach in real life. One answer -- the one given by the Blue team in SIGMA II -- is that they cannot be sure of winning. In SIGMA II the US was willing to accord the NLF party status in South Vietnam and leave the eventual outcome a matter for popular determination under international supervision. There was wide difference of opinion among game participants regarding the NLF's ability to prevail in honest elections.

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GAME PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

The following comments were provided by SIGMA participants after the Action-level and Senior Critiques, conducted on 7 December 1967.

* * * * *

RED I SENIOR: "...In retrospect, Blue I appeared to be more sanguine about the outlook for the GVN than the facts of life in Vietnam would warrant. The recent elections, despite VC opposition, were encouraging. But divisive regional animosities, religious enmities, civilian-military rivalries and factionalism within the military almost certainly will persist while talks are underway and the level of combat declines. At the same time, the National Liberation Front, resuscitated by declining losses in men, equipment and supplies, would seek to exploit any new crisis precipitated by the 'politicking' in Saigon. In short, the prospect of a GVN rising about special interests in the near term are less than reassuring.

"Red I, aware of the pressures to which Blue I was vulnerable, did not fully recognize the ramifications of an early cease-fire. Consider the time: it is the spring of 1968 and the eve of party conventions in America. The atmosphere is charged with expectations as negotiations continue. Hope begins to stir among wives, mothers and fathers for the return of their men before Christman, notwithstanding the more practical considerations of maintaining an adequate US military presence in Vietnam. A negotiated cease-fire in this atmosphere would exert a tremendous pressure on Blue I to quickly negotiate a settlement in Vietnam and bring our boys home. Instead of dipping a little deeper into its bag of tricks, Red I chose to bicker over an early withdrawal, leaving the cease-fire issue in limbo."

* * * * *

BLUE I PLAYER: "I believe the game showed that the overriding problem for both Blue teams was how to maintain

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and solidify US public support. Red hopes of winning out in South Vietnam centered, under the scenario, on the prospect that the American people would become disillusioned with the war and the US Administration's inability or unwillingness to achieve peace. Red did not and could not hope to win militarily, or by adroit bargaining per se. French-type pullouts under home front pressure as in Indochina in 1954 and Algeria 1962 are what Red hoped for. There was not time, during the critique, to focus in detail on this issue of US public opinion.

"But under these circumstances, could Red I have resumed strong military action in June, after having demonstrated bad faith at the conference table? What Red action could solidify US public opinion more? At the other end of the spectrum, is it realistic to assume that Blue II could turn down a prima facie reasonable Red cease-fire offer? What US Government action could cause more domestic dissent?"

RED I PLAYER: "...Blue's political liabilities at home in the time-frame of the 1968 US presidential campaign and psychological needs to diminish US casualties and to end the war, etc., require amplification. Red's military intentions to cause Blue casualties during the 1968 drawn-out or Machiavellian 'negotiations' conceivably should be met by Blue military means to impose unacceptable damage on North Vietnam if Hanoi and the NLF continued to throw 'monkey wrenches' into negotiations. The critique did not, in my view, show sufficient appreciation for the way communists negotiate and fight simultaneously! Communist strategy of 'protracted war' is accompanied by the related strategy of 'protracted negotiations'.

"Blue's general inadequate assessment of implications of political downgrading its Asian and Pacific Allies (including the GVN) betrays a woeful indifference to US future security relations in the area. In so doing Blue gave Red a future advantage in winning over Vietnamese and other Asians, especially on mainland Southeast Asia, and in achieving a long sought Moscow-Peking objective: Getting the US out of mainland Asia while weakening US influence in Island Asia!"

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BLUE II SENIOR: "Additional issues:

"1. Could US resume bombing and full-scale ground operations after a period of several months had elapsed in negotiations? Would public opinion permit it?

"2. Is action to curtail communist military base and infrastructure in SVN essential to US interests (i.e., in order to prevent communist take-over in or after elections)? If so, is it preferable to disperse US/FW/RVN units to provide hamlet security, or to demand laydown (possibly on a phased basis) of communist arms?"

BLUE II SENIOR: "...Discussions among participants at both the Policy Level and Action Level revealed rather graphically that the US is not well prepared for cease-fire in Vietnam. In order to avoid entering a cease-fire agreement that will operate to our disadvantage both in the field and at the conference table, it is absolutely necessary that detailed planning be accomplished ahead of time. In my opinion, this planning factor should be undertaken now

"Agreement to a cessation of bombing in the North must be accompanied by a VC/NVN Agreement to cease firing in the South. Anything less than this operates to the advantage of the VC/NVN and to the disadvantage of the US/RVN forces. The best that NVN can hope for is immunity at home and freedom to fight in the South. Cessation of bombing in the North is a 'blue chip' which is too high a price to pay merely to gain an opportunity to talk...

"The tenor of discussions led to the general and growing impression that, for some at least, the real purpose for US involvement in a cease-fire and negotiations is to develop a political settlement which could be used as a cover to rationalize early withdrawal of US troops. Associated with this seemed to be an inordinate concern for impact of world and domestic opinion on US options.

"SIGMA discussions at one point surfaced the question of US actions in the event of negotiations, cease-fire and a free election which the Communists won. This question met with sufficient embarrassment and doubt to suggest that it

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needs a great deal more thoughtful consideration since the potential for such a situation does exist. Deliberations related to rules for holding elections also suggested that an analysis is needed of those areas in RVN which are under positive VC control and those in a "no-man's" status to determine how much impact those areas would have on an election under varying formulas.

* * * * *

"... forces in I CTZ are especially vulnerable to changes in rules of engagement because of their proximity to the DMZ. It became evident in SIGMA play that rules of engagement associated with a cease-fire could work to the detriment of US forces if not well conceived, properly supervised and susceptible to enforcement. The actions which I would support relative to III MAF operations in the event of cease-fire are as follows:

"a. Construct viable defensive positions to contain or counterbalance threats of renewed aggression through the DMZ.

"b. Expand the Combined Action Program to the maximum to counter the expansion or resurgence of the VC infrastructure and eliminate VC infrastructure where it could be identified.

"c. Prepare the ARVN for taking over USMC positions and responsibilities upon withdrawal of USMC forces.

"d. Disarm all personnel not identified and located in specified and agreed upon sanctuaries in I CTZ...."

RED II PLAYER: "Control's analysis of the relative status of the two sides was relatively meaningless, particularly the use of charts to show positions on particular points. It might be questioned whether Control really understood the critical issues, for example the elections and the cease-fire. I could see little agreement in these critical issues as opposed to Control's evaluation that found considerable unanimity of position. Possibly, Control felt their function was to emphasize agreement rather than develop the critical disagreements. I would

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disagree with this thought and would expect a reasonable evaluation by Control of the relative status of the sides at the end of the problem.

"The disarming of the VC, their continued control of territory, and the sovereignty of GVN over all SVN is the critical issue of the deescalation/cease-fire/negotiation process. Yet, it was not even a question for the critique. This must be explored in depth in a subsequent game."

ANONYMOUS: "You showed great insight in providing for 'wild card' players on the Blue action-level teams to represent the GVN. Team play was realistic, and properly so, in its failure to appreciate the importance of GVN views and actions. If you do this again, and if you find enough qualified people, I suggest you put a GVN man on the Control team as well.

"I hope your written commentary will point out the problems we create in disregarding the GVN - brought out in both games."

[redacted]

SIGMA I & II-67

SENIOR CRITIQUE

The following comments are extracts of the Senior Critique of SIGMA I & II-67:

* * * * * * * *

DIRECTOR: General Wheeler, gentlemen. As you can see, the Blue and Red Teams are separated in an attempt to identify the opponents. The blue and red stripes you see on the tables divide the Blue teams on this side and the Red ones over here. The signs out front further identify the teams. After the two critiques that were conducted this morning, separately for SIGMA I and for SIGMA II, I feel we'll have a good opportunity for a lively meeting here this afternoon. I'd like to remind you that discussion today is TOP SECRET. The discussion will be recorded on TV but nothing said here will be attributed to any individual.

Getting into the play of the game, we had hoped that in framing the initial situations that they would take different tacks, and they did as they went along. We feel that they have surfaced some extremely thought-provoking possibilities.

Briefly, both games began with what was essentially a current assessment of the overall situation which we obtained from close coordination with all the interested agencies in Washington. We projected this in the best possible manner, we felt, into the Tet holiday with a Tet cease-fire. Added to this was an overture from Hanoi leading to a cessation of air attacks against North Vietnam. However, the motives and actions by the two Red teams were rather different in this situation.

In SIGMA I, we had a government in Hanoi bargaining cynically in the hope of obtaining either short-run or long-run advantages at Blue's expense. In SIGMA II, we created a situation where the government in Hanoi was beset by such insurmountable problems that they seriously had to try to terminate the conflict on the best possible terms they could get. So you can see how the two situations developed.

[redacted]

As usual in the games, hypothetical situations which develop can't be attributed to any specific team in most cases. What emerges is a combination of inputs from Control as well as its playing teams. I might point out and advise you here that the Control touch was a bit lighter in SIGMA I than in SIGMA II, because in SIGMA II we had to push a little to get the situation moved towards the beginning of a settlement, with North Vietnam earnestly trying for settlement.

This was done basically to try to get the game out ahead of last year's de-escalation SIGMA game which most of you may recall. We wanted to get further into the negotiation business with a view to obtaining at least an inkling or two regarding practical aspects of implementing a cease-fire or a freeze-in-place in the context of a compromise political situation. I'm sure that a number of players in SIGMA II had serious reservations about moving into the situation that prevailed at the end of the game.

This afternoon, of course, is your opportunity to discuss your positions and to respond to comments and questions from around the table.

You have in front of you a single sheet handout, "Suggested Discussion Topics". The items are not listed in order of priority and I know that there are some subjects you may wish to discuss that aren't on this list. However, in the absence of any other indication, I'll start right down the list in opening the discussion. I'd like to point out that the two game sub-directors are here with me, so I think that we can pretty well field anything that comes up. We'll kick the first one off. (The concept of deploying US/FW/RVN regular forces into small units dispersed to provide hamlet and village security).

Both Blue teams worked on the assumption that they were dealing with an adversary who had a lot of fight left in him and both were of course extremely wary of accepting a situation which involved reducing pressures against the enemy before they had major assurances and guarantees to guard against a double-cross by Red. Both Blue teams were determined to keep up their military pressure in South Vietnam in order to obtain the best possible terms they could.

It is interesting to note that in the SIGMA I game, where

the North Vietnamese bargained most cynically with no intention of really coming to the table unless they pretty much saw a settlement in their favor, Blue made a major change in the military posture, specifically the first point we propose to discuss.

The emphasis was shifted from large unit search and destroy operations to widely dispersed deployment of US/FW and ARVN forces aimed at providing security and maintaining population control throughout the country. It should be noted that a similar proposal was rejected by the SIGMA II Blue Seniors on the basis that this may lead to defeat in detail of some smaller units and might also provide the enemy the opportunity to reinstate large scale, main force offensive operations. The Red team in SIGMA I regarded the wide dispersal of Blue forces as a very real threat to the Liberation Front infrastructure, and they quickly launched a number of attacks aimed at having Blue consolidate its forces. I suggest we address this particular subject from two standpoints: First, the feasibility and desirability of deploying friendly forces along the line indicated in the Blue I strategy, in consideration for command integrity, security, emergency response, logistics and so forth. Secondly, I suggest we look at it from the Red's viewpoint and have some comments from our Vietnamese experts here on the Red teams regarding the communist capability for maintaining their infrastructure with Blue forces deployed in key hamlets. Is there anyone on Blue I who would like to address this subject?

BLUE I: I'd like to defer to _____ just as soon as I can but (laughter) I'll start out. In addition to the points already raised, we have to make clear a basic assumption under which we operated. Without this assumption, the whole thing has no meaning. The assumption under which we operated was that although the bombing had stopped, the rate of infiltration - despite the fact that it was noted to be continuing - did not indicate augmentation of enemy strength in the country. That is, the enemy was not using the occasion to build up large and powerful forces above and beyond what he had when the Tet truce period began. He was trying, we were told by Control, to maintain himself at a certain level of strength that more or less fitted in with the OB we had inherited. This is a very important consideration. We also made the thing hinge upon the way he was structuring his forces in the south. The enemy was not, at that time, collecting his forces in a

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concentrated manner for a large-scale, sudden attack. Our operations were being conducted at battalion size and lower, and the enemy was doing the same or even less. Further when we discussed the fanning out operation, it was noted that the enemy tried to contest this but did not succeed too well, and had fallen back, although there was a considerable amount of bloodshed on both sides. Finally, the enemy not only made a verbal proposal about withdrawal in the DMZ area but actually had pulled back his forces to some distance beyond the DMZ.

Thus, our picture was of an enemy with some concentration in Laos and Cambodia and a bit above the DMZ, no concentrations of large forces geared for an attack inside South Vietnam. With our own operations going on and our surveillance capability, if and when the enemy were to regroup in a form to threaten us with large-scale operations, we could learn of this and not be surprised. In this context, we decided we could advantageously enter into negotiations. The more obdurate the enemy became at the negotiating table, the more time we would have to benefit from the military posture within South Vietnam.

BLUE I: I was not present at the time that the decision was made to deploy our forces, but I'll be happy to defend the decision. In the first place, we have been conducting several highly successful operations of that type in Vietnam for more than a year. A specific example is Operation FAIRFAX which has been going on since before Christmas. In that operation, in the Saigon area, we combined US and GVN civil and military elements and conducted a highly successful pacification operation. Another example is the First Cavalry Division's operation in Bien Dien Province. There have been others around the country.

Given the situation that existed, with the NVA forces showing evidence of some considerable withdrawals into Cambodia and north of the DMZ, it would seem reasonable that you could afford to suspend major operations into his base areas. You would not discontinue seeking out the enemy, and you would be seeking primarily, I would say, the VC enemy as opposed to the NVA enemy. An operation of this type, given those circumstances, would not entail major risks in my opinion. With the mobility we now enjoy in Vietnam, we do have the capability

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to pull together a large combined arms force in almost any given locality in a relatively short period of time. Therefore, I would submit that if we are to enjoy some immunity, even though temporary, from NVA units as opposed to the VC, this tactic affords pretty good chances of success whether or not the negotiations make progress. This type operation in the long run contributes more to the kind of stability and cleaning up that is really our end objective. I think it does afford a highly desirable course of action at minimum risk.

I think there may have been some misapprehension as to just what we had in mind when we undertook this operation. We did not consider placing US forces on static security; rather we intended to adopt basically a saturation tactic, sometimes referred to as the checkerboard type operation where you assign a battalion or brigade an area and give units down to company size a sub area within that. Our units move around in the assigned areas and keep the smaller VC forces on the run. They provide an opportunity for the RD cadres, for the various types of civil para-military pacification teams, to move in and go after the infrastructure, the local guerrilla and to carry on with other pacification activities.

DIRECTOR: Blue II turned down a similar proposal. Are there any comments from that team on the proposed military deployments throughout the country?

BLUE II: Under this concept we're talking about hamlet and village security. Well, what does this mean -- security from what? Villages and hamlets for example in I Corps, where the marines are operating now and where by the way we only have about I'd say not over 51% perhaps of the population under what might be called a reasonable security as is, what do we mean when we talk about security in the village and hamlet that haven't already been screened of VC? These villages will have the infrastructure, the Viet Cong already present and present for a long period of time, years. To me the security here doesn't really mean anything at all because the villagers will be under the influence of the Viet Cong who are already living in the villages. I don't see exactly what in that particular case security means anyway. Now security for villages and hamlets that have already been secured and in which we have our combined action teams or the RD teams,

that's another matter. We want to maintain those there.

As far as expanding this sort of action, I rather doubt that the other side would permit us to do it because it would mean then of course actually a screening of the villages in order to protect the peasants from the VC living in the village and insuring a fair election. I don't understand the purpose of it all. I wish somebody would tell me how this would apply to villages and hamlets outside of our present area of control.

DIRECTOR: I believe the original proposal linked this concept with a cease-fire proposal by the Blue forces, who, concurrently with a statement saying that we would not fire unless fired upon, deployed their forces throughout the country.

BLUE II: My recollection was that we didn't really consider this concept. The idea was that in the first cycle we wanted to keep the fighting going in order to keep pressure on the Reds until we were a little clearer where they were going on negotiations. That was the main consideration involved in our discussion.

BLUE II: That might well be. On the other hand the point is that the pressure that _____ was talking about could not be obtained by the kind of action that apparently Blue I considered and which I gather the Reds thwarted, at least to a degree, by counteracting.

DIRECTOR: Perhaps we should hear from the Red team on this now.

RED I: We had several assumptions in welcoming this arrangement. In the first place, we wanted to avoid Dak To type situations. In the second place, by June of this year we would have filled up our units in the south both with men and materiel. In the third place, we felt that this kind of deployment would give us the chance of pot shotting at the Blue forces and thereby keep up the pressure on KIA and other casualties which we regard as being a weakening factor in the political situation of the US. Note also that we've been able to retain our infrastructure. This would be a further way of giving it support and also encouragement. In short, we felt that the Blue team was playing into our hands by this kind of peacemeal

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deployment, which gave us the opportunity of scoring while we played for time on the negotiations. Our main effort in negotiations was to get a commitment on withdrawal of forces, and that idea remained as the constant in our deliberations at all times.

RED I: Might I add just one more thought? We also calculated that this kind of deployment of US forces would probably optimize our military advantage should we resume full scale military activities. Blue forces would be more vulnerable to more damage. If in fact Red succeeded in having US troops withdraw altogether, that would pose no real problem for us. At least that was the assumption with which we started. I think that as the game progressed we became more and more impressed by the extent to which this kind of activity on the part of the Blue team was in fact disrupting our infrastructure. It was at this point that we began to have some doubts.

RED I: We were able to maintain our infrastructure, and to the end we felt that, with the restoration of our strength by June, this policy of Blue genuinely fed our military and political objectives both in South Vietnam and in the United States.

DIRECTORATE: We've had two views of this controversial deployment. I can give you a third one, the view of Control I. As we saw it, what was going on is as follows: Red was restraining itself because of its desire to lock the Blue into negotiations, trying to jocky Blue into an agreement on at least the first stages of a troop withdrawal. During this period of Red restraint, Blue did make advances in the countryside. Red was hurt -- but the question was: "How lasting were these advances, how vulnerable was Blue's deployment to Red counteraction which they had already indicated that they were going to start in early June" -- So I would say in summary, from Control's point of view the deployment was successful during a period of Red military restraint. It's lasting effects were undetermined by the game.

BLUE I: I would like to follow up. This was our understanding and we had no notion as to how long the deployment tactic would hold good. I should add one point I left out earlier: We would be bombing infiltration routes and we would be bombing at least the installations in-country in South Vietnam to the extent we felt we had to in terms of the

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degree of their activity as a kind of negative incentive for Red to retain restraint.

It would seem to me not a feasible assumption just to conclude that the VC would be able to retain their infrastructure and strength through June, given this kind of operation over a 5-month period during a time the whole Vietnamese communist system was undergoing some kind of political strain, as well as physical strain, of maintaining themselves in areas where they had been protected by the presence of large forces engaged in very high-level combat. For example, because the fighting had decreased in the DMZ area, we were actually free to regroup forces that had been operating on the front line. Perhaps we could put these units in villages to root out the infrastructure, and put RD teams in those places we couldn't get to while the fighting was at a very high level. Finally, our point was if we were able to keep things at a lower level of combat while extending our hold on the countryside, we could gain a negotiatory point at the table. If the fighting was to move sharply upward, it would be the enemy, not ourselves, who had done this and broken the relative balance in the situation, thus giving a diplomatic justification for adopting this tactic.

DIRECTOR: Are there any other comments on this first item?

BLUE I: It seems to me that if we could enjoy immunity from the NVA, in other words if they would for the most part withdraw to their sanctuaries for a period of 5 months, I think that very significant progress could be made in destroying the infrastructure. In my opinion the two major requirements of VC and NVA military forces for mobility which they must have are, first, a political infrastructure to gain intelligence and provide cover as they move through the country, and, secondly, pre-stocked base areas which relieve them of the requirement to carry their supplies on their backs.

In the time frame of the game, we would have pretty well cleaned out a good many base areas. The checkerboard-type activity referred to earlier would probably preclude the enemy from restocking these base areas in the interior of Vietnam. Admittedly, they could accomplish this in border areas, which I think would present no problem.

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I feel that, given the set of circumstances that were set forth in the game, this could be a highly desirable tactic and one that might well place the enemy at a real serious disadvantage when they attempted to come back in June because we could mass to meet them any day of the week.

DIRECTOR: I think that obviously this is one of those points where the Blue team feels that their tactics would carry the day and the Red team at the same time feels that they could pretty well chop Blue up. Unless there's something to be added here, I suggest we go on to the next subject. (Prospects for an NLF takeover through internationally supervised elections.)

RED I: I want to make one additional point. If you accept Blue's assumption, then in fact the Red team made two mistakes. One was to offer a cease-fire and the other one was to withdraw from the DMZ. No, maybe three mistakes, withdrawal from the DMZ, and I would add to that the decision not to mount any major force activities. It was certainly those last two which facilitated this kind of redeployment by Blue.

DIRECTOR: Turning to the SIGMA-II game, gentlemen, the second item here is discussion of the elections. I'd like to jump to it at this point because this is one of those that we didn't really get into in the past two SIGMA games. It is interesting to note that two years ago the Blue team was reluctant to get into an election situation for fear that the NLF would win. In last year's SIGMA game both sides, the Blue and the communist teams, were under the impression that they could win; each felt that they would be able to win an election if they had a period of relative peace and tranquility. I think it would be interesting to explore this subject.

DIRECTORATE: Gentlemen, as the game worked itself out, one of the most interesting aspects of the positions of both sides in SIGMA II was their views about the election. Strangely enough in a way, in the sense of being realistic enough, each side moved into negotiations process with a feeling that in the end the odds favored their own victory, that is the odds were better as far as either Red or Blue team was concerned. Both Red and Blue felt this way if they moved from the military to the political arena. Some of the specific elements of the election concept seemed especially interesting to us on Control and I think in the morning critique of more than general interest. I'm just going to cite a few of these points and

then I'm going to ask the Red and Blue teams to present their concept of the election as they saw it.

The first one that I'd like to point out is that the modalities of the election process as developed by both Red and Blue were certainly in the same ball park. If this indeed were the original or fallback position of either side, it would be hard to avoid agreement. Actually these positions were quite similar in terms of the modality. Another matter that seemed to be of special interest to us was the apparent readiness of Blue to scrap the GVN constitution. Although Blue didn't say they were going to scrap it, some of the provisions that they made in the course of their election proposals certainly would require either very major changes to the GVN constitution or indeed scrapping it altogether. On the other hand, Red very explicitly was ready to move ahead under the GVN constitution with very minor modifications to it.

Another matter that surprised us in the original messages but which was cleared up in the morning critique was the fact that Blue was reasonably confident, it would appear, that they could disarm the VC. In any case Blue did insist on or did contemplate disarming the VC. Red would have no part in being disarmed and it was quite clear as the two positions emerged in the third move that this would be not only a very important point of issue but a very difficult point to resolve. The thing that troubled us in reading Blue's final message was that Blue apparently assumed that the VC would be disarmed because in Blue's contingencies there was no preparation for the eventuality that the VC would not be disarmed. Blue this morning explained their position on this to some extent in terms of the election approach which we will give them a chance to develop in just one moment.

One especially interesting point in connection with the election was that Red, in its final move, was not only permissive with respect to the maintenance of American forces in Vietnam through the election process but indeed in its message covering the withdrawal of American forces had that withdrawal start after the election. This was a rather surprising development as far as some of us were concerned, but again explainable in terms of Red's concept of the election. Now I'll ask Blue II to describe their approach to the election, followed by Red.

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BLUE II: Our general approach to the elections was similar to our approach about the entire negotiation scenario, one of reasonable wariness. This accounted for our military posture which was quite different from that adopted by Blue I. We did not want to break our battalions into small units because we were not sure that the enemy was sincere and we wanted to maintain our offensive posture just in case. We did not have as much confidence in our military units having as much effect on the infrastructure as did Blue I.

Carrying through that thinking to our election thinking, we reasoned that any elections should be done so as to tie into our major suit, major suit being the presence of US troops. Therefore, in our election timing we had the election planned so that the withdrawal of US troops would not start within six months after the constituent assembly elections and would be completed in accordance with Article 29 of the Manila formula, which as you recall is quite elastic in its wording. Now as to the details of the election procedures in which we had tried to entail this philosophy, I'd like to call on another member of our team.

BLUE II: I believe some of us felt that the election procedures on which we would agree were probably not as close to the Red teams as might be indicated. For one, our purpose clearly was to prevent a coalition government or any break-up of the South Vietnamese government. In order to accomplish this we set up a three stage election procedure, but prior to that we made one provision, which was not really clearly discussed this morning, that we would allow the NLF no participation whatsoever in the government of South Vietnam until after the creation of a new government resulting from the deliberations of a new constituent assembly.

We never truly resolved whether our Red friends would have accepted that condition. On the assumption that they would, and then our other pre-conditions, we proposed elections on a provincial basis -- that is one representative to a new constituent assembly for each 40,000 persons on a provincial basis with a minimum of one representative from each province. We felt loading the population ratio very high would be in our favor. Probably more important, however, was our insistence that each delegate be elected by at least 51% of the people casting votes. We recognized rather clearly that there was

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a unity among the NLF that we could not supply on our side, but in such provinces where the NLF candidate would get less than a clear majority a run-off election would allow the non-NLF groups no matter how badly split to unify behind a single candidate, the second man, and elect a non-NLF delegate to the constituent assembly.

In doing our calculations we presumed from the figures given to us and some of our own knowledge that the result would be constituent assembly operating under majority rule procedures with a moderate or possibly even a sizeable non-NLF majority. We didn't carry our deliberations beyond the point of what happens after the constituent assembled. On the assumptions that we would have some role of influence there and that the picture will be rather clear at that time, the non-NLF group could construct a government and procedures for a forthcoming election which could prevent a coalition government and lead the NLF to the position of a minority party without portfolio.

DIRECTORATE: Next, the Red concept on elections.

RED II: One of our team members has agreed to describe our basic concept here, both the reasons for our role of lukewarm attitude toward elections for a constituent assembly and our very great interest in having elections for a national assembly as soon as possible.

RED II: Viewed from the insurgents point of view the overriding issue is the preservation and eventual, possibly early, expansion of the infrastructure into areas presently under the supposed military domination of the government. What we want to do, then, is to provide the infrastructure with a new power base before its military base of power dries up, as a result of a protracted cease-fire. You might make a comparison with the physicist principle to the conservation of energy--atomic energy can't be put direcly to work, it has to be converted through some other power source. You can use atomic energy to run electric dynamos or to power steam engines, and what we're doing is taking our infrastructure, the ultimate energy source, and converting it from a steam engine to the electric dynamo. The electric dynamo is a role in the politics of a parliament and a cabinet, as opposed to military forces which previously existed.

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Before the population of the areas which we have militarily dominated lose their belief in our only presence, we want to have converted our power source into politics of a new government. Consequently, we believe in the importance of the following strategy: Early elections in the presence of American troops during the cease-fire, or positions and proportional representation in a government, using the present constitution as modified by a gentleman's understanding. Now let me talk about each of these points.

It is important to have the elections early so that our domination of the population doesn't dry up. It is important that that happen early. If elections can take place while the American Army is still on the scene but not shooting, the presence of that military force must act as an apparent guarantee that the elections were honest, free, and above board. If in an area in which military units of the United States are present, we can win a majority or send delegates, then it would appear that the elections much have been honest since the American Army was there. Representatives must be placed into an immediate government and not eventually into a constituent assembly. A constituent assembly is something that will begin only presently and within which haggling and negotiation may proceed for six months to a year. If we have not prior to involving ourselves into that kind of a situation established political power, real political power in the south, then our eventual control of the population and armed forces in the country would have dried up. Therefore, we much insist upon proportional representation in the government to be set up immediately following elections to be held before American troops withdraw.

The reason why we're quite prepared to go along with the present constitution is that those provisions which would directly hurt us could be put out of action by a gentleman's agreement, and as to the further letter of the law, it is essentially irrelevant to us. Until the elections have occurred and we have presented some kind of representation in government, it would be important for us to have military forces, whether they be elements of the North Vietnamese government or elements of the Viet Cong, somewhere in the south. These forces would serve to protect our infrastructure in the meantime and might in the long term be used as a guarantee against a coup by the ARVN in South Vietnam.

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One additional point, we might very possibly by way of a superficial decision dissolve the National Liberation Front proper and establish in its place a series of regional or ethnic political parties that would supposedly campaign one independent of the other. We are quite prepared to go along with the constituent assembly; however, this could never take the place of the establishment of a real power in a government established in the very immediate future prior to the haggling and negotiations of a constituent assembly.

DIRECTOR: This leads right into the NLF capability for maintaining organization and morale and integrity during the periods of election and reduced conflict levels. What is the implication of this? Would anyone like to address this question?

BLUE I: Before we go on, there's one point that needs to be made. There's slight aura of unreality in some of our game discussions because there are two facts in the live situation which have to be considered. The first relates to the question of international supervision. What's at issue is not whether the votes are honestly counted but the degree of influence of terrorism and persuasion that goes before the voting. There is just no conceivable international body that could prevent the kind of pressure or intimidation that would be certain to go on in the rural parts of South Vietnam prior to the early election situation.

Secondly, I think we can't even in the game situation close our eyes to the fact that our adversaries have what we do not now have on our side, to wit an organizational or institutional structure so set up that a group of people can take a considered policy decision and then have it implimented nationwide throughout a carefree structure. Until such time as the non-communists develop something that begins to look like a political party and begins to look like a national organization which can compete throughout the country on a common program and platform, it seems to me that any electoral contest is almost certainly going to go in favor of our adversaries. This is something to bear in mind.

RED II: Particularly in view of one of our Red conditions which didn't get brought out, that is we are not talking about proportional representation we are talking about single member districts and simple pluralities.

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BLUE II: Well, I think that we have to answer that one to justify the position we took. First of all, you could talk about simple plurality and we could talk about 51%. That has to be settled. Obviously from our standpoint we're going to go for 51% and we're going to stick to it. We're going to have a run-off. We are not going to make the mistake of not having a run-off. The second thing is of course, you don't allow, as was very rightfully said they would want, a hasty process. We want a slow process. That's why we proposed the constituent assembly, because if you take it by stages you can play, gain and take care of the part of the answer to the next question, that is the deterioration of NLF morale and organization. Therefore, I would say that just because you want something is no reason that you've got to get it. The answer comes down to this: There is not a particular danger in election process from our standpoint provided we write the laws properly, have the proper supervision, conduct it in a properly staged manner and create an environment in which you can have political processes that work.

DIRECTORATE: One of the things that troubled us in the Blue II moves was the fairly sanguine approach the Blue team generally had with respect to some of its more troublesome GVN colleagues. Now to some extent I will admit that perhaps we did not put into the Control scenario, in as strident terms as the GVN moves indicated to us, some of Blue's positions. Nonetheless, one of the key questions is the one you raise now, 51% of the vote. And on this the Blue team has two selling jobs to do. One is to negotiate the 51% with Red. The Blue team also has to negotiate this one out with its own GVN colleagues because that's what's in the present GVN constitution, a plurality. How are you going to solve that one?

BLUE II: If GVN goes for plurality, they're going to lose more seats than if they go for majorities and they'll recognize it. They'll know exactly what they face.

DIRECTORATE: All right, but on the basis of their past experience -- in other words we'll be able to explain to them better this time than we did last time?

BLUE II: We know it, they know it, they knew exactly why they did it last time. They figured it out last time and that's why they had plurality, because they were a minority group and

they wanted to win. That's why the military government went into plurality. They were a minority group and they wanted to win, and you tell them the same thing this time: if you have a plurality vote, a minority group will win, only this time the minority will be Red's.

RED II: But you're putting the rest of the Blue's in the position of having to choose between a military government and an NLF government. Those are the two most likely candidates to end up in the realm.

BLUE II: No, I don't think that's true at all.

BLUE II: You're running on a constituency basis. How many military candidates do you think you're going to get running on a constituency basis with a constituent assembly?

BLUE II: You won't have more than ten.

BLUE II: Why did you want to point out in our discussions the other day about adding to the base of the present government by maybe having some people come back from Bangkok or out of the shadows, people like "Big" Minh who may be useful?

BLUE II: The answer to election process is who writes the laws and you have to be very careful that you don't allow the law to work against your interest.

RED II: What I'm saying is that you don't have an interest in Blue, you've got a multiplicity of interests. As Red we have an interest and we're in a much better position to bargain.

BLUE II: I think Blue has a single interest and that is to get rid of you Red's. They may have diverse ways of coming into the church but they all get there eventually, so I disagree that they don't have an interest. The only trouble is some of them are up there ringing the bells, some of them.....(LAUGHTER).

RED I: There's a balance of judgment here in the Red strategy, which I'm not sure I follow, and that is you as I understand it decided it was preferable to have the American

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military forces remain there in order to demonstrate that the votes were counted honestly rather than have the Americans withdraw and have a tremendous demoralization on the part of any follower of the South Vietnamese government. The conclusion that the VC have really won this one, it seems to me, would have mobilized all sorts of support.

RED II: In the first place we weren't thinking of prolonging the American presence at all. We realize it would take considerable time realistically to get rid of them. What we're trying to do is accomplish as much, utilizing their presence, as possible. Now, as far as the elections are concerned it was really not so much the credibility for the elections as for the guarantee of fair play. We wouldn't get clobbered physically by the GVN during the election period. We felt fairly sure the Americans would act as a police force to assure fair play.

RED II: I think it would also help in a case of another attempted ARVN coup.

BLUE II: In the light of my reading of the scenarios and this discussion, I wonder if Control desires to revise the position that the Red and Blue attitudes toward approaches to the elections are that easily reconcilable.

DIRECTORATE: No, I said the modalities and not the substance of the elections. The modalities are superficially close.

BLUE II: Which one?

DIRECTORATE: For example, supervision. Both of you agreed on international supervision in your initial fallback position.

BLUE II: That's irrelevant.

DIRECTORATE: The real issue was whether you have, and this is a sticky point, the substance, the concept of the election itself, whether you both pressed for a constituent assembly or for a national assembly, and secondly whether you have a plurality or a majority.

BLUE II: And thirdly, what government stays in power

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and supervises it and runs the show meanwhile? Who is the government in the interim or transition period? These are real questions.

BLUE II: Fourth, whether the elections are early or late.

BLUE II: Yes, and the timing. That's right, you've got to get the timing.

BLUE II: Fifth, whether we've disbanded the VC of the countryside through the election campaign. The government has access.

DIRECTORATE: I think if you look at the Red II script you'll find that in terms of being led into a discussion of the substantive election, the terms of the early modalities of the discussion, it was surprising that both of the teams were ready one way or another to accept a fair amount of supervision, some agreement on voting age, and some agreement on representation.

BLUE II: What you're saying is, as I take it, that in February 1968 given the expected military position of each side, about all that both sides can agree upon is that maybe there's something to election processes if you went into negotiations honestly. Maybe there is something in an elected process that will give you a way out, and I think that we'll all agree as well.

DIRECTORATE: The point was that if you wanted in this kind of a scenario to discuss seriously an election as part of the agenda of a political settlement, both sides would be prepared to do it. Now that's not to say that the discussion wouldn't be tough. It isn't even to say that perhaps the negotiations might break off because of the issues we've talked about. But it is to say that both sides seemed to be prepared to discuss early free elections. Evidently both sides were ready to talk about early elections. The question was what kind of an election?

RED II: It seems to me, Blue, that you've almost in a grotesque position here trying to change the rules that we communists have accepted. All we want are new elections. You say you have to have a new constitution. The old one

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you just cooked up isn't any good and you need a new one. And you have to change the modalities of the elections, too, as the old ones are not any good. We're accepting - how can you justify that?

BLUE II: If you want to accept the present constitution, go right ahead. In four years you can run for an election. That's what the constitution says.

RED II: Well, new elections using the electoral law.

BLUE II: The electoral law was drafted by the constituent assembly, to run for that government. We want to have a new constituent assembly, to draft a new law.

RED II: Is your situation at home sufficiently good that you're going to be able to last out this process?

BLUE II: What process, last out what process?

RED II: 525,000 US troops and not shooting.

BLUE II: Not getting killed is the key point. Our casualties have dropped down to practically nothing. You can have a constituent assembly election in a couple of months. You could have a constituent assembly in place and see that it's working.

RED II: No you can't. Not if Red is not going to accept the constituent assembly election prior to the establishment of a provisional assembly and a provisional government.

RED II: To have Red go into a constituent assembly, to use my simile here, would be like not switching from electric to steam power but simply disconnecting the bands.

BLUE II: I want to point out a small fact if I may. The program of the NLF says they want an election for a constituent assemoly and you're telling me the Red's don't want an election for a constituent assembly.

RED II: In addition to, not instead of.

BLUE II: The program speaks of an election for a

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constituent assembly, the drafting of a new constitution and subsequent elections. Why do you think they have that in the program? Because they don't like that constitution. Do you realize what you have to do to have another election? You would have to draft another election law and do you know who would draft it under the present constitution - the present national assembly. It's ridiculous. They can't live with the present constitution. The program, the NIE, that came out on September 1st or whatever the date was, August 27th of this year, speaks of the convening of a constituent assembly, to draft a constitution.

RED II: This is not a constitution that has years of well tried tradition and popular support behind it. It's a point open for negotiation -- I think you're stressing the overly legalistic part.

BLUE II: Everything is related to negotiations.....

RED II: Well this is simply a point on the agenda during the negotiations.

BLUE II: Yes, but we ought to have clearly in mind what to watch out for. I think one of the things we ought to watch out for is a fast election with a simple plurality.

BLUE II: I recall from our discussion a question on which we'd be interested in hearing from the Red side -- what constitutes a win in terms of an election? In other words, what's the time perspective, how much of an inroad do they feel is necessary?

RED II: We felt we had a very good chance of winning an honest election, but we were more convinced that we had a good chance of making inroads into the government to the point where we were laying the foundation, for some time in the future, after the US had moved out, to move in and take over full dominant control of the government.

BLUE II: We're prepared to give you the chance of that, because if we're going for a peaceful settlement, changing the whole nature of the competition, we should be prepared to give you that chance over a long time. But we should not be prepared to let you stack the cards to start out with.

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RED II: I think though that you've just touched on a very good point and that is that both sides may be willing to play for the long pull. There may very well be grounds for bargaining during the negotiation so that each side realizes that it will not have dominant control over the interim government pending the long pull.

RED II: The Reds will control that portion of the country where their infrastructure is in place. Their personnel in government will be used to progressively make impossible the position of their supposed coalition partners. If the bulk of the population continues to support that coalition government in which there is ultimately nothing but insurgents, by George, you've won. The insurgent process is still underway, but instead of following the strategy of the united front from below, you're doing the right strategy. The insurgent process is still in order and the communists have demonstrated themselves historically remarkably effective at the subversion of government.

BLUE II: They have not shown themselves so effective at winning elections, however.

RED II: Win means getting your people into several cabinet offices.

BLUE II: No, no, I mean really taking control of whatever the elected offices are. As a matter of fact where have they done it that way?

RED II: Well, two classic examples are the subversion of the republican cabinets in Spain in '36 and '37 and the subversion of the Czech government between '44 and '48.

BLUE II: The Czech one is not a very good example because, as I recall, they were so unsuccessful at subversion that they had to get control through a coup.

DIRECTOR: Time is drifting away on us here. Do you wish to explore this particular subject further? I heard a number of the players comment that the reduction in activity would be particularly critical to the NLF in maintaining their organizational morale and their integrity during these relatively inactive periods. Are there comments from any

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of our NLF experts on whether or not this would be actually carried out? Would they lose their people during periods of reduced activities?

RED I: We assumed, and I think there is good historical evidence for this, that the Lao Dong Party would be able to continue its control and its support among the Lao Dong Party elements of the NLF. We might lose some fringe people, those who ostensibly were brought in in order to show the NLF as a united front. But throughout the whole history of the communist movements with the possible exception of getting well creamed way back in Nazi/Soviet pact days, the apparatus has been able to retain its control over its membership. In the situation of Vietnam, Ho has demonstrated, that is my boss has demonstrated, since 1930, when he became the Secretary General of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party, that he was able to retain control over his men whether they were in Laos, Cambodia or South Vietnam. We see no reason whatsoever to change that assessment now.

BLUE I: Could I ask _____ if he picked this up in the terms of reference that we had developed? What we were not thinking of was a reduced level of conflict in general, but actually an increased level of conflict for the NLF or for the VC infrastructure, which would be bearing the burden of main thrust of American efforts during the period we developed the scenario. A legitimate question as I would phrase it would be if we were to carry out our control effort with no main line enemy forces to contend with in large-scale operations, under these conditions would the NLF/VC have a capacity to maintain a political military infrastructure in the hamlets such as the ones Blue II referred to as a reasonable example where we tried to move in and change the situation. I'm not saying it's the only problem but that's the kind of problem we would like an answer to from our point of view.

RED I: Before _____ answers, may I just interpolate this? We use the word infrastructure, which is a kind of an omnibus word, to displace or to replace the fact that we really have a cell structure and that cell structure has been impervious to basic defeat for 37 years.

RED II: Might I make a point here? You're defining

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infrastructure then as essentially the same thing as the cellular structure of the party, but there's another infrastructure and I think it's also critically important. That is that portion of the civil population who have been engaged in activities of mass organizations in areas of the country that are either contested or dominated by the insurgents. I think this question is not only one about your ability to maintain discipline within the narrower ranks of the party structure itself but in turn the enormous question of whether that larger structure is capable of sustaining its control and dominance over that portion of the total population which has been involved. I would be inclined to look at this latter point as primarily a function of the sovereignty with which you continue to rule the portions of the country that were your base areas.

BLUE I: The answer to this question depends entirely upon what's the occasion for the reduced conflict levels. The point that the earlier Blue I speaker was getting at, and I think this is the situation that our Blue Team saw evolve as the result of our actions, is that if you had enforced reduction in VC, and therefore PRP and hence NLF activity at hamlet and village level, this could be serious if prolonged over a time. One thing that an insurgent movement has got to have is some sense of momentum and forward movement and an inevitability about its success. Therefore, if you can begin to erode the structure and begin to force them at local levels to curtail their activity, then I think you can set up a psychological situation where prolonged periods of enforced inactivity would be very dilatorious so far as their morale and cohesion are concerned. This applies particularly to the less dedicated supporters, the ones who were along because they felt this was going to be the winning side.

Now there is a very good point that has to be remembered -- that is the inner core of the PRP would probably remain responsive to Party discipline for a very long period of time. Furthermore, if you go into a reduced period of activity as a result of some kind of negotiations scenario or ceasefire where it was a little bit unclear as to who was seeking it and who was going to take advantage of it, then you can see right now the lectures that can be put out to Party generals: we defeated the Americans in their special war using advisors,

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we have now defeated them in their limited war because they've been forced to sue for peace, and we are going to be able to achieve our goals through political cohesion and political organization. If you get the kind of situation where that kind of internal explanation of rationale can make any sort of sense within the Party, then I think they would take a great deal of comfort.

RED I: And Blue I underestimated the role of the June date, where we will be between now and June refilling our cadres in the south. We are not stopped from taking what I call potshots at your deployed platoons, or whatever you have throughout the thousand villages or so where you're going to put them, so there will be activity for our cadres and for our fringe elements which will incur it. And I think that, finally, you also underestimated the psychological role of our propaganda effect upon not only Vietnam but throughout the world from which we will get large measures of support. Note that England, France, Japan and Canada have already said they do not want to see the US begin again military action. They didn't say bombing, they said military action. Also, the Congress. We have a psychological or psychopolitical advantage between now and June, by which time we are in an excellent position to maintain our cellular structure as well as our infrastructure.

BLUE I: We haven't really stopped military actions so we wouldn't begin again. We'd just keep on going as we said in every element of this game. We're maintaining a fairly extensive pressure of a military nature and every aspect of operations in the south. This hasn't stopped. While stopping the bombing may help North Vietnam considerably, the NLF is undergoing merciless pressure in areas of heavy population and is suffering extensively for it over this period of months. So there are three sets of questions: under a condition of this type of pressure, what kind of reaction is there; under pressures of a continuation of the war along these lines, what kind of pressures are there; and under a cease-fire which is a third kind of situation.....

RED I: But we have not reached.....

BLUE I: No, I'm talking about a question I thought wasn't addressed to any one team or any one game, a general question.

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Under a cease-fire such as that discussed in the SIGMA-II game, how would one react? My impression on SIGMA-II, to go back to the point about who's got terror in the countryside, if the American forces are there and the enemy is losing and the election is held under American auspices, the question on elections would be "who is really running these elections and for what purpose?" Similarly, in SIGMA-I, if there is an American physical control over population over a given time, it doesn't help those people in the NLF structure in those areas to know that sometime in June maybe they'll try to overcome the disastrous operation we undertook, to slow down our operations in the south, to get you to withdraw at the negotiating table in the future. So it all depends really on what these people on the ground at that point see the situation to be, and there's a series of different situations and apparently each one, not only the team but the sub-elements in the engagement, will see them in different ways.

DIRECTORATE: In SIGMA-II there was in fact a cease-fire There was in fact a relaxation of pressure. And in SIGMA-II, Red was actually confronted with this very problem. As Red II might take a few seconds to explain, they had a great deal of trouble with elements of the VC party because of this very thing.

RED II: Yes, we very definitely did but it seems to me the overriding consideration here is not one of a reduced conflict level. The nature of the conflict has changed. Our cadres are probably even more active and they now have the smell of victory, political victory, and their morale is probably better than ever. We turned to this because morale under the military situation had disintegrated so that we could no longer continue.

DIRECTOR: I'd like to go back to the military situation in the SIGMA-I game. In this game Red felt that they had everything going their way. They had the bombing stopped. They had the US team at the negotiating table and basically, to oversimplify it, they felt they had an advantage as long as they could keep Blue at the negotiation table. They were ahead in North Vietnam and they're rebuilding their forces in the south. There seemed to be very little major concern on the Blue team about the fact that the bombing was still stopped but that they were really making no progress at the

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negotiation table. Would any of the seniors on the Blue side care to address that?

BLUE I: I might just say that there were some very strong arguments on the part of the Blue I Team. If you were going to live in a period in which you weren't bombing the north, and they would be rebuilding up there, the only logical thing to do was to have a cease-fire in the south, simultaneously. There are a lot of political and psychological reasons - the main one was that you could spread your troops around without some of the disadvantages that Red I pointed out. Then if the other side was in fact taking advantage of you, he would have to go back to war. This would not at all be an ambiguous move at that time and then we could go back to war full tilt - north and south. I would say that although that view didn't prevail there was a rather heavy military participation in favor of it on our team.

RED I: We made a concession to thwart you. I said first that our major emphasis was on withdrawal. When we sensed that you might be pecking for a cease-fire which we were not yet ready to discuss, we said, OK, withdrawal plus supervision because you have asked for, according to the script, some kind of supervisory body. And we said OK, supervision, and we dragged out of your old echoes the Geneva '54 ICC, and said we'll take ICC '54 as the supervisory body for the withdrawal. This tends to stop you from moving back to a military conflict which might hurt us.

BLUE I: See, it's a difference of understanding as to what's going to happen based on the final move.

RED I: Well, this was in move III, that's why.

RED I: I think we should point out most of our decisions and most of our moves were based on a very realistic, we thought, understanding of what was going on in the United States in this political year, and we didn't make a single move without that being a paramount consideration. Additionally, if we could accomplish even a token withdrawal we felt that the pressures would be so great that it would continue as it did after WW II and in other circumstances. We felt that under no circumstances, regardless of who won the election, would the United States ever come back in to South

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Vietnam, and with our intact infrastructure we could very shortly take over the country. And the longer range goal was a renewed Indochina. We thought we had it made.

BLUE I: On the Blue team, we did not feel those American public pressures that you seem to think were there other than what Control put in, the Congressional resolution, for instance, which we thought would never be passed. It's just not the sort of thing that is done in this situation. Congress does not tie the hands of the President, especially when it's a Congress basically dominated by the Hawks. So we felt that we were free to do a good number of things, hard things, and that public opinion would go along with us and support us. There's no reason why the American public would want to get suckered into this obvious deal that the Reds were setting up for us, going to Paris to talk clearly in bad faith. It's just too obvious to con the Americans.

DIRECTOR: BLUE II, do you have something?

BLUE II: I'd say that one of the reasons we did suffer some of the things we did is because we could never get the war restarted again. Therefore, there's no point in talking about bombing again. We won't bomb again, we won't put troops back in again. The important thing is to do what we tried to do.

BLUE I: We have two different scenarios.

BLUE II: I know, if we go into negotiations, what we said earlier, if I remember, was that before we get very far in this negotiation, let's see if we know what the dimensions of the political settlement are going to be, before we get into anything else. If we can once define the dimensions of the political settlement, which in this case was elections of a certain form and to produce certain institutions, then you can keep going and have negotiations for a long time. Once you get an understanding of the dimensions of a political settlement, that is to say who's going to control the government process, election and administrative process, through what set of institutions. Once you've decided that, then you can afford to keep going on and doing other things. Then you can begin to talk about withdrawals and phasing down, and never resuming the bombing in the north.

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RED I: But you were negotiating in reasonably good faith?

BLUE II: Oh yes.

RED I: We had no good faith whatsoever.

BLUE II: We established right away that we would negotiate in good faith.

BLUE I: I would like to ask another member of Blue I to discuss one of the points on the negotiating position that we adopted. I tried to explain why we didn't think we were getting suckered in on the ground in South Vietnam. We equally tried to cover our tracks on negotiations, public posture and diplomacy.

BLUE I: The point that Red I made, maybe that we might get hit at any time, that the North Vietnamese are building up their capability, was very much in our mind. But we felt that, as far as public opinion is concerned, we were talking not about the Hawks or Doves, but about the people in the middle. If we go in and negotiate in good faith, and the level of casualties has gone down, the pressure will be to keep the negotiations going or not to capitulate. If at this point we get hit by the North Vietnamese, we feel that the Administration would be in rather a good position, that people would rally behind the Administration. We've done all this, we've been negotiating in good faith, and now it turns out that all this has been a trick. This would be, in our opinion, a situation in which we will have increased support of Congress and public opinion.

RED I: Three months before the election?

RED I: The key element in your error is the word "if". We were aware, according to the script, that you were still carrying on what is called generally successful operations in the countryside. We said that if you were to carry on those operations we would cause casualties and we would do that by potshotting at you at a lower level of guerrilla warfare than Dak To which we would avoid. It means Dak To. Are we going to avoid that?

BLUE I: No matter what you call that, it's escalation.

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RED I: You will suffer casualties still and therefore your silent center in the United States won't be quite so silent.

BLUE I: We discontinued the bombing of North Vietnam and are now faced with the question of an obdurate negotiating partner at the table. We accepted the cease-fire as your agenda proposal, according to Control's message, and now you are refusing to talk about it, and then launch attacks. We didn't give away and hamstring ourselves, by saying the American public will prevent us from doing anything. Under these circumstances, we thought we had a public to work with whom we could convince, when we responded to this type of military action. That was the justification.

BLUE II: Could I just make a point here. It seems to me that the two groups did follow somewhat different tracks and the differences are of some interest. I gather that both Blues were concerned about the two levels involved--the one is the level of negotiation, political settlement and the like, and the other is the question of what is happening on the ground. What real situation is developing. What dangers are inherent in that.

As I get the gist of the Blue I approach, they were going to deal with a situation on the ground through the technique of disbursing small units to provide hamlet and village security, to work against the infrastructure and the like. At the level of the situation on the ground, I think that our Blue went for a different package--a cease-fire and then a requirement for phased disarming of the VC, the NLF, along with having noted the withdrawal of some of the North Vietnamese units. This requirement for disarming, it seems to me, poses an issue which is allied to your point 3 (NLF capability for maintaining organizational morale and integrity during periods of reduced conflict levels); and if I understand the position of Red II, this would have drawn us into a quite fundamental and indeed crucial head-on conflict with Red II.

What the outcome of that would be, I don't think we can be clear. We didn't want to pin our hopes on the attempt to disperse units and gain security that way. We did feel that some steps to improve the security position and avoid the

threat of terrorism, the maintenance of infrastructure and cellular structure, so that it could be employed in the future after we had withdrawn. We felt that disarming action was quite necessary. I think this is really related to point 3. I don't find it under any other point and it seems to me to be the crucial question that arose in the Blue II, Red II confrontation.

RED II: Throughout, Red II had very firmly in mind that our principal task was to preserve the infrastructure, because we could not risk that. Everything we did.....

BLUE II: And you would not permit the disarming?

RED II: On that, bear in mind we started out with a position of crisis here. And I think that the scenario that we addressed indicated to me that to have any meaningful negotiations at all there has to be a military advantage on one side or the other. In this instance we were at the distinct military disadvantage and we were willing to negotiate and get as much out of it as we could. However, midway through the scenario, because of the delays, we were able to recuperate to our 1965 strength levels. We then became adamant. We weren't going to give in for anything that didn't satisfy our total objective.

BLUE II: It would seem to me this defines pretty sharply the main issues between us. If your first objective was to secure the withdrawal of US forces, the price we would want to exact for that would be the disarming or the disbanding of the armed infrastructure in the south. I think we would be deadlocked on this. We'd go back to the position where the military background was clear.

RED II: Of course this involves the other thing of early elections. If we do get an early election, as we wanted, that new government might ask the United States to withdraw.

DIRECTORATE: In addition, I would remind you that if somebody wanted to go back to the Manila declaration, they could make a fairly strong point that if the North Vietnamese as units have withdrawn, which according to the script they have, and if violence thus subsides, which according to the scenario it had, United States forces would withdraw during

a period of six months. You are now introducing another condition for the United States withdrawal, which is realistic enough, but you will have to.....

BLUE II: Not entirely, because we are also insisting that the GVN should have access for the exercise of its law and order and civil powers for the entire country; that there will be a long period before election. There'll be an opportunity for the government to enhance its appeals. If Red tries to block this, it can do so only by force and you won't get a level of violence subsiding. If they don't block it, then we can buy this one.

RED I: You can set that out as a condition, but if you expect to arrive at a settlement on that basis you've got to recognize that you are only expecting to have a complete victory. Or you are expecting to inflict a complete defeat out of it.

BLUE II: Well, if we had negotiated with your Red team, we don't. We might with Red II.

RED II: We will see to it that the only time there's an incident is when you are probing into our territory. This isn't going to look very good in your newspapers.

BLUE II: I'm not probing. Just walking. We're just having election speeches.

DIRECTOR: I'd like to switch to another subject here, if there's no further discussion on this. That is the fact that both Blue teams seemed to have no real concern about getting the government of South Vietnam to go along with anything they came up with. It appears that that government has the capability of taking action to upset the whole negotiation table. An expedition into Cambodia, for example, to strike at those troops over there. Would anyone care to address this?

BLUE I: I'll be glad to address it. I don't think SVN has much capability to go into Cambodia or to go in areas where the NVA is concentrated without our support. They lack mobility; they lack fire support. Their structure is not such that it permits them to go to the type high speed,

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concentrated military activities we can undertake. They lack the air mobility, they lack the ground mobility except on foot, they lack heavy weapons. So I don't think it would be much of a temptation for them to make an excursion of that type.

DIRECTOR: I'm thinking not only of the military but the political end of it--the whole structure. We had some teams that operated with little cells, as you know, and I would like to get comments from them.

BLUE II: As a junior member in this room I feel honored to be before this assemblage. However, it's now 1550 and it is getting toward the end of our two hour period. The GVN has been ignored thus far in the summaries as well as it has in the game. Comment by our seniors, when we met in Blue II, was to the effect that we didn't have to worry about the GVN, they would go along. I tend to disagree. In fact I ask, in the next game, if we have another one like this, that we put at least one GVN representative on the Senior Team. We'll gum them up as well as the Action Team.

Directly, I would say GVN cannot be ignored and can take many actions which would gum up the negotiations all the way. They can move into Cambodia, as a matter of fact. They can move an airborne brigade down there by themselves and support it for a 30-day operation with the ammunition levels they have on hand. They can do many other things, and I suggest that our strategy on the Blue team as the GVN was to pre-empt the Blue team of the negotiations, simply because we felt the negotiations would not proceed in the manner which GVN would desire them to go. Therefore, to make the best of a bad situation, GVN would pre-empt the negotiations by going to the UN and declaring that we would accept the NLF into the government providing all foreigners, the NVN and the US, get out of Vietnam right now. I think the GVN is capable of such a move, in my estimation. The GVN would not necessarily go along.

If this seems to be too far out and too unrealistic for control, which it seemed to be, I would suggest two factors operative here: First, the oriental capability for committing suicide to save face is not only operative in Japan but it is also operative in Vietnam. I would say, secondly,

that the traffic in the newspapers and the magazines on reports of GVN negotiations or at least Vietnamese negotiations with "Hanoi" demonstrates many of the points which we sent to Control during that time period and which were ignored. And a third factor which can come to play here is that the southerners may unite against the northerners, which does not count out the GVN despite the fact they are northerners.

In the very first move we had them negotiating with the NLF. Due to the rules of the game, we couldn't talk directly with the NLF, but I am sure that the NLF player and myself could have reached a satisfactory agreement. We could have pre-empted everything that you gentlemen desire to do, and we would have accomplished our purposes which were to stay in power at least for the interim time period, get you out of our country and hold off the elections for at least a five year period.

RED II: I just have something very quickly, a footnote here. I was the leader of a faction that attempted to secede from the NLF and enter into private negotiations with the last speaker, Comrade X, and Control saw fit to assassinate us, in a fashion which I would protest would never happen in real life.

BLUE II: Assassination is just as much a part of.....

RED II: Oh but not by the rules they were playing.

DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, we are approaching adjournment time. As you know we promised to have you out of the room by 1600. Before turning the meeting back to our host, General Wheeler, I'd like to check with the two other game directors and see if they have anything at this time. (Nothing). I'd also like to thank those two very much for directing the SIGMA I and II games. I'd like to express the appreciation of the Joint War Games Agency not only to all the players as individuals but also to their agencies who contributed a tremendous amount of work in helping us put on the game.

As usual in these games, the Politico-Military Division of the Joint War Games Agency will prepare a film briefing, including commentary based on the discussions today and any comments that you may wish to turn in on points that you

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didn't feel were thoroughly discussed. We hope to have the final report and full documentation on the scenarios and the messages available for distribution to you early next year. If you wish to see the film summary you can see that.

I'd like to re-emphasize at this time that although we put quite a little work into these films, we consider that the key value in these politico-military games is the playing of them and in the value to the players themselves. With that I'll turn the meeting over to our host, General Wheeler.

GENERAL WHEELER: I think all of you know we have had a game of this kind centered around Southeast Asia every year since 1962. They have gone into various aspects of operations by both sides under a variety of circumstances. This year when General Kemp and his people talked to your agencies and various commands from which you have come, it became quite apparent that the subject of negotiations would be a profitable one to examine at this time.

Of course this game was not intended to deal with an unconditional surrender situation but rather with the ambiguous kind of situation we face when the Red side still had cards to play and a table on which to play them. I'm sure we have not solved anything here. I do think, however, we have had a chance to take a look at a variety of fairly plausible, potential problems and perhaps some opportunity which could be around the corner sometime in the future.

As an aside to what I've just been saying, what went on in this very interesting exchange this afternoon leads me to one question, one observation: Under what circumstances in real life is it realistic to expect a meaningful negotiation? And secondly, I'm compelled to make a somewhat cynical and perhaps superficial observation. That is, the exchanges here this afternoon led me to think that, if the Reds in real life and the Blues in real life have the same attitudes, and you might say approaches expressed here, both sides really seem to think that negotiation is more dangerous and more complex than the shooting war.

I would really like to express my appreciation to everyone for their participation. I'm particularly glad that

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Comrade X was surfaced (laughter) because I am sure he was operating somewhere in the woodwork. It was not clear, however, in the situation that I saw that he and his comrades and their aspirations and methods of doing business -- which from my observations are sometimes quite surprising -- have been taken fully into account. So thanks to the Team Captains, Game Directors and all of you.

In late January we are going to undertake EPSILON I-68. It will be played here and in Europe and will take a look at NATO's problems in a hypothetical crisis situation. Which leads me to another rather facetious thought. That is, we've got a real crisis over there, why don't we look at that?

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SIGMA I-67

ACTION-LEVEL CRITIQUE

The following comments are extracts from a transcript of the Action-level Critique of SIGMA I-67:

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DIRECTOR: I'd like to begin by calling on the Team Captains to explain what they thought they were doing. I hope your explanations are brief. Then we'll go into various aspects of the game. _____, would you like to lead off for the Reds?

RED: Essentially, our strategy was to lock Blue into negotiations with the expectation of producing political pressures on Blue, forcing them to withdraw troops from Vietnam. We felt the commitment for troop withdrawal was our primary objective and all other objectives were subordinate to that. We felt that US commitment to withdraw their forces would enable us to achieve our major objectives of Hanoi's Four Points and an one party program in South Vietnam for the National Liberation Front.

We also wanted the cessation of the bombing in the north to continue because we wanted to build up our forces in South Vietnam and to continue infiltration so that, by June, they would be up to strength again. We would then be able to move towards large-scale military actions. The main point was to make minor concessions to keep the US talking and to block the negotiations. At the same time we were concerned about Blue's tactic of breaking down smaller units and spreading out in the countryside. It was essential that we protect our infrastructure and we were willing to take whatever military measures were necessary to protect that infrastructure. In principle, we wanted to hold US and GVN casualties down but, at the same time, protect our base areas and control our infrastructure.

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In the negotiations themselves we felt we met with considerable success because participation of the National Liberation Front was accepted. This increased the prestige of the Front. Our agenda was accepted and questions of troop withdrawal and cease-fire were closely tied together. Our principal consideration was the timing. We were aiming at the American domestic scene prior to the conventions and election. We felt that this was the time to be effective. In general our supporting political, economic and military moves were aimed at intensifying the contradictions in the imperialist camp, isolating the United States, dividing the US internally, dividing the US and GVN and dividing the GVN itself. We felt that substantial progress was being made in these areas.

CONTROL: Thank you. _____, can we hear what Blue thought it was doing?

BLUE: It's amazing that North Vietnam continued to present itself at the conference table because we have a starkly and strikingly different picture of what we thought we were doing apart from what they thought they were doing. For example, they called for a cease-fire. I should say our strategy was to go into negotiations to demonstrate our good faith. We would reduce our casualties, accept the problem of our weak diplomatic and domestic political position at home and accept the problem posed by the GVN. We moved away from this in an effort to secure as much of the countryside as possible while encouraging the GVN to push forward with reforms as rapidly as possible without allowing the enemy to build up his strength in the country so as to pose a danger to us. I think we did all these things and as far as we were concerned things were moving exceedingly well. We stopped the bombing and got a galvanized GVN and all kinds of reforms which we've been pushing for years. In other words, they suddenly realized they were up against it and had better start coming through with the things we've been telling them to come through with. Second, since the large-scale engagements sharply fell off except for a few platoon operations in Cambodia and one effort in Pleiku in mid-February, with nothing since -- and it was now late March -- we could assume our own casualty rates were falling off. Third, there was no augmentation of infiltration during this period although admittedly the enemy could get his forces up to strength in accordance with his order of battle.

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We did not consider this a force large enough to threaten us anymore in than the pre-Tet period. In other words, there was no increase in his strength nor in disposition of forces in-country, to indicate that he was in a condition to launch significant attacks. Our own contingencies required us to move into an active, aggressively stronger military posture if we found he augmented his infiltration and if we found he was preparing for an attack during this period. I gathered from the Red statement that this was not done prior to June but was planned for later in June. We felt that if it was to be undertaken later they would, first, have to increase their infiltration or, at least, keep it going for quite sometime; and second, they would have to start concentrating their forces and we would be able to learn of it and redeploy to defend against it. Meanwhile, we used this opportunity to sustain Revolutionary Development in the country and establish a stronger GVN/US population control. This was to give the GVN encouragement that no one was selling them out. By undertaking large-scale, long-term economic programs, we would further indicate our determination to stay and help the country.

As to the negotiating posture, we felt we were in a good position because we accepted their agenda item D; Cease-fire. The modalities of a cease-fire (which incidentally we thought was an error) and admission of their presence in South Vietnam weakened their own international propaganda position. They were willing to talk about it and, the more they stalled on this, the more we would not have to be forthcoming on the withdrawal problem. We were never confronted with a troop withdrawal because, by notifying Congressional leaders and our non-combat Allies in NATO and SEATO, we demonstrated our good faith. We were willing to link withdrawal to a regulated cease-fire while talking about a cease-fire first. They were not willing to talk about a cease-fire so we felt that their effort to get us pressured to withdraw troops never materialized. We did, however, feel pressure on the problems raised concerning the possible isolation of the United States and the difficult military gambit involved in maintaining population control while the bombing was stopped. This gave them a long-term prospect for augmenting their forces. We thought we had ourselves pretty well covered. We were running risks but we felt we could keep an eye on

developments and adjust accordingly. We would concentrate on maintaining population control and strengthening internal GVN developments.

DIRECTOR: Well, those are remarkably different views. Maybe there never has been a game which one side felt that it was defeated. I think I should allow Red a chance to comment on Blue's remarks and, after that, I have some questions I want to raise. Did you want to say anything, _____?

RED: Well, just a few comments. We did not get any feeling, at all, that the GVN was being galvanized or was making progress in Revolutionary Development. Our reading of the material, we were given by Control, led us to believe that Thieu and Ky were having strong differences and that major divisive forces were at work within the GVN and that every aspect of the situation could be exploited. We saw the movement of US forces, out to the villages in platoon size units, as simply a US move and one that we could rectify as soon as some agreement was made concerning troop withdrawal. Furthermore, we thought that there were limits to what Blue could do in this regard. We did engage some of these units and we were maneuvering some of our main force battalions to force Blue to hold off on deploying another division to IV Corps. We were watching this very carefully but our feeling was that, from a political stance, Blue was in a very weak position. We felt that Blue would have great difficulty in continuing the bombing. We felt we had considerable flexibility in stepping up military activity in South Vietnam if this proved desirable and, indeed, we felt that Blue was going to have problems on the cease-fire issue if we made concessions such as the International Control Commission.

DIRECTOR: _____, would you like to speak for the GVN. There seem to be different views on what was happening to the GVN.

BLUE: Well, we pseudo-South Vietnamese realized early that we would have to take care of ourselves in this situation. We couldn't afford a break with the US and we would have to go along with a good deal of what the US did. We wanted to take some action to protect ourselves so, initially, we hedged our bets and staged a few non-governmental demonstrations to keep

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the US worried about us and about the reaction in South Vietnam towards negotiations. But as we moved into the second situation, we became quite scared and we felt we had two choices; either we could cut and run, as the leaders of the government in Vietnam, or we could try to salvage our country. We opted to the latter course and that led into a series of moves to straighten out several things in the country. We took all the fragmented forces such as RF, PF, CIDG and the PFF and put them into a constabulary, as recommended by the US. We did our best to clean up the graft and corruption in the country, starting with the Armed Forces and we made certain personnel changes. At least, we got a start in this area. We pushed hard on the Revolutionary Development work and on the national reconciliation work. The President of the country and some of the leaders in the Upper and Lower Houses went from province capital to province capital talking with the people to discuss their problems and views. This is the approach we took, and it began to pay off as we read the situation. As the game ended, we were pushing along these lines. We were, also, working the US just a little bit and we told our Armed Forces that their emphasis should be on civic action and on proper relations with the people. We relied on the US to provide the security and we went along joyfully with the US putting its units out so that they would bear the brunt of the fighting and would appear as colonialists, while our forces might appear as protectors of the people.

DIRECTOR: Beautiful picture, thank you. What I propose to do, if you all agree, is to conduct the critique in two sections. First, to look where the game was headed and to see if we can get any interesting insights on the various views of what the moves seem to indicate about the next few months. You have, before you, a brief final scenario projection but let's not regard that as having any particular force. I know that Control is always held in contempt anyway, so let's just accept that. After examining where the game seemed to be headed, we might go back and evaluate the main aspects of the two teams' strategies. Time permitting, there are a few secondary questions we can also discuss.

First of all, where was the game headed? I put down several questions but these are by no means the only ones that come to

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mind. Was there a chance of a cease-fire? What were the prospects of escalation at the initiative of Red or at the initiative of Blue? Then, over time, given what they might have on the ground in Vietnam and elsewhere, what changes might occur in the negotiating positions of the two sides as they felt military and political pressures? In particular, who gains most from protracted negotiations? I don't want to confine you to this list of questions but we might start on the first one if that's all right. Was there a chance of a cease-fire? Anyone care to comment?

BLUE: Well, I would offer a comment just to start things. There was considerable discussion, among the Blue action and senior-level players, that never won the day. Blue came surprisingly close to opting for a unilateral cease-fire without formal agreement, on the basis that there would be considerable psychological victory for us. We would have a cease-fire, in fact, without being all tied down through formal agreements. This would be welcomed by the American public and it would give us a clearer threshold to measure North Vietnamese sincerity. The situation that we had was very muddy so when we got to the point where our thoughts were not productive, we could say, "Well this is bad. We'll go back to bombing." A cease-fire in the south, during which time we continued pressing for Revolutionary Development-type activities, was probably hurting the other side. During this time we hoped to be gaining and, if it got to the point where the North Vietnamese had to stop it by engaging in hostilities, it would be a clear violation on their part. This would be visible to the whole world, including the American public, and would give us the basis for some sort of retaliation. Many of us didn't think that was possible, but there was growing support for it as the play of the game went along.

DIRECTOR: Why was it not accepted?

BLUE: One of the problems was that we thought certain situations prevailed. We inquired if this was an accurate assessment and we were told, by Control, that the fighting had tapered down considerably. We had fanned out and engaged in firefights but, for the most part, we held the populated areas. The scenario gave us that. Secondly, the enemy had thinned out his main force units, in-country, because he pulled some of

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them across the border into sanctuaries where one of our seniors said "That's fine. We would expect this. Let them stay there. There's less of them in SVN." Third, they hadn't engaged in very many operations, in the country itself, so the intensity of combat had scaled down sharply, moving toward a cease-fire. We wanted to maintain freedom of movement into further populated areas and maintain our freedom to attack and raid main force areas. We wanted to maintain border surveillance to determine infiltration. All of these things would have been unavailable to us had we accepted a formal cease-fire. We had most of the advantages of a cease-fire; the control of population, the freedom from immediate danger of attack, a falloff in casualties, and considerable public acceptance of all this. To announce or accept a formal cease-fire, without adequate controls, would have inhibited our policy to maintain adequate security for our forces in-country. Thus, we thought we were better off. That's the game aspect of it.

From the point of view of Control's interest and without being an advocate of our Blue position, I can't answer your question. It's a question of whether one is willing in one's own mind, to come to a cease-fire as part of a settlement in which one doesn't get everything one wants. Both sides were playing this game in realistic fashion; namely, to use every device of every development to try to get everything possible. We were never confronted, in this contest, with a requirement to decide whether to put up or shut up, in terms of reaching a genuine compromise of our own ambitions, in order to keep the thing going. Because of the other fellow's compromising position, we tried to get everything we could while having the prospect for a concession. We weren't sure he was sincerely interested in reaching an agreement, on terms other than his own, but we felt he was sincere in negotiating because; (a) he had never come to us before with a clandestine proposal and (b) he had never accepted an agenda so quickly. Even though we gave him a point, he gave us many of our points on the agenda. This was a compromise acceptable to us. He had a terrible problem with the Chinese. He wasn't doing this just for kicks because the Chinese were livid. He'd obviously been used by the Russians. The prospect of having the bombing start again, after stopping for awhile, was not a game point argument. These were indications of possible seriousness on his part, which we were going to try to meet, as much as we could, without giving anything away. The

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question would then be, "What happens if you really meet his concessions and have to start giving things away?" We never were confronted with that because he walked away from his own agenda. We never really had to deal with him except with what amounted to a gross effort on his part to get something for nothing and, of course, we wouldn't accept a cease-fire.

DIRECTOR: Why don't we get Red's reaction to Blue's contingency of a unilateral declaration of a cease-fire and then Red might want to comment on _____'s analysis of their negotiating position on a cease-fire. First, what would Red have done if the pro cease-fire advocates of Blue had declared a unilateral cease-fire?

RED: We did not want a cease-fire unless it was tied to a withdrawal. We felt that our agreement to a cease-fire, without very strong assurances as to when and how withdrawal was going to take place, would deprive us of our primary leverage in Vietnam because we were taking American casualties and keeping the war going. One of the problems in the game was that the two sides were reading the situation differently and we felt there was a much higher degree of conflict in combat than Blue's assessment. We felt that, indeed, the war was continuing and we were interested in getting Blue locked into negotiations so that Blue would have no justification for walking out. We would have turned down a unilateral proposal for de facto cease-fire without anything else tied to it. We felt it was essential to be in a position to exploit what we felt was a strong desire for peace, both in Vietnam and in the world. We wanted to keep the war going by putting the monkey on Blue's back. Blue was the main obstructor to a settlement of peace in Vietnam and we thought we were being quite reasonable about that.

RED: I think the Blue Team consistently underestimated two points. By June, we'd have had our forces in readiness, in South Vietnam, for resumption of hostilities at the level that we wanted to have them, by imposing casualties on Blue. We also thought of Blue's assignment of platoons to protect hamlets as very weak since that gave us a target of each of those platoons when and if we did go after individual casualties. The second point that the Blues consistently underestimated was the last point that Mr. _____ has just been referring to. Blue underestimated the state of world opinion and the expressed

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unwillingness of US, Western and Japanese Allies to resume the bombing. Blue, also, underestimated the role of the political conventions in its own country. Generally speaking, we were in a too advantageous position to make concessions on withdrawal.

DIRECTOR: I think we might try to wrap up the cease-fire issue a little more and then move on into your reaction to _____'s typically provocative remarks. _____ has a question.

CONTROL: You have said that you wouldn't accept a Blue unilateral cease-fire. I'd like to ask Red how much you feel you would have lost, in terms of world public opinion and support, if Blue had offered a unilateral cease-fire and Red had refused to accept it.

RED: I think we had some alternatives for dealing with that. We'd been operating on the assumption that our covert infrastructure was superior to anything that Blue had and that we could operate profitably on a fairly low level of hostilities in Vietnam. If we could get Blue to stop their air and artillery attacks, we could do many things at the village level which really count to us. Indeed, I think we would have been presented with a problem had they ceased firing and then said "We'll talk about withdrawal." My view is that we would have rejected that proposal. Do you think that's a reasonable reaction?

RED: I don't think we would have lost public opinion. As a matter of fact, the campaigns we Reds instituted all over the world, portraying us as the nationalist spirit of unified Vietnam, had taken hold. We had fuzzed distinctions between nationalism and communism and to a large extent we had succeeded in creating a confusion over it. Our propaganda campaign had been rather successful. Under the circumstances, once the US had made its move to talk about negotiations, its military operations from that time forward were necessarily inhibited.

BLUE: I think we ought to talk about this crucial point. I've asked _____ to talk about the military aspects of this program; how it could have enhanced our position and, at the

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same time, kept it secure and invulnerable to enemy attack. I would just like to address the problem of a long negotiation in which we had adopted their agenda. Even in our contingency or message, Control said we would be glad to talk about troop withdrawal and cease-fire simultaneously. In other words, one-half of one agenda item was their program of stopping the bombing. One had to make a judgment that this would have some impact on peoples' thinking -- especially when linked with a Red renewal of escalation. However camouflaged or fuzzed, this was indeed what was happening. The chances of proportionate response or diplomatic pressure in this new environment in which very little had been going on in combat for several months was real. This was a very serious change in the situation caused by the enemy and our position at that point, having stopped the bombing, was much stronger in the world diplomatic arena.

The other vital question was the whole business of the infrastructure and how strong it was under the conditions prevailing from February to May. The infrastructure had difficulties last year in terms of large scale and shorter scale US operations and required more and more NVA replacements.

DIRECTOR: Could I impose a little discipline on the agenda? I don't want to linger too long over where the game was headed. I would like to dispose of that and then go back to the arguments, both Team Captains have bored into concerning superior strategy. Am I to gather from the remarks thus far that there was no chance for a cease-fire or is that an understatement? Remember, Red was about to make a proposal to you which Blue didn't know of yet--proposed something like the ICC, coupled again with the firm agreement on withdrawal. Would that have moved you toward a cease-fire agreement or would it have been rather meaningless?

BLUE: We would not have had a cease-fire as long as we had viewed our current military operations as continuing in our favor in secured populated areas.

RED: How would they have opposed the influence of our proposal to revive one of the supervisory elements of Geneva '54 when they have been saying now for years that they're willing to go back to the principles of Geneva '54? I always

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regarded that as falling into our trap but how would Blue be able to avoid the world-wide influence of our proposal to use the ICC device to supervise withdrawals? This leads to the possibility of a cease-fire.

DIRECTOR: I conclude, gentlemen, _____ and Control disagreed, that a negotiated cease-fire was unlikely and that a unilateral cease-fire would have failed. Now, would the military situation have continued pretty much the same or was there a high probability of de-escalation?

BLUE: Well, there are two points I think we should clarify. We did change our US military strategy. We felt that the divisions that were poised in the North, responding to the DMZ threat, were no longer a problem in that area. Large unit operations had fallen off. In anticipation of termination, we felt we also should make a grab for the populated areas in South Vietnam. At the same time, we were confronted in a clash which, although we were taking casualties, we were killing more local VC than NVA forces. We were not, however, positioning US units in platoon size. This was never the intent at all. We were also given a scenario where the province chiefs and district chiefs were now responding to the Minister of the Interior which strengthened the whole territorial force guidance system in South Vietnam. We felt that it was very appropriate to use US battalions in a mesh with territorial forces. RF/PF, national police, PFF, and RD teams were moved into those newly secured areas, while we cut down on "search and destroy" and "clear and hold" operations. We thought we had been sufficiently successful by breaking up the Saigon strategic reserve into four regional areas. We really weren't too concerned with Montagnards, at that point, because we were contesting in the Delta which is really the heart of the populated area of South Vietnam. We read this as a big plus.

DIRECTOR: You didn't intend to escalate?

BLUE: No.

CONTROL: Red quite explicity did intend to.

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RED: We intended to maintain a KIA rate which would continue to embarrass Blue. By June we'd be in a position to maintain a casualty rate for them by pot shooting around the map and the total KIA rate would begin to move up once again at which point they would be in an embarrassing position.

CONTROL: What would Blue have done if confronted by this step-up of Red activity?

BLUE: We thought, in the public affairs field, that we could really sustain US public opinion to justify its major change in the war toward securing the population. This wouldn't be too difficult to put across. In the advent of mustering regimental size forces, they don't operate this way in the Delta. Very seldom do they launch that type of an operation. We definitely shifted the area of contest to the upper and lower Delta of Vietnam. Red didn't have the capability. There are no NVA forces there and Red couldn't fight us with our superior mobility. It's a very simple thing for us to re-combine units with our superior mobility and to come up with a reserve and hit any regimental or even division force if NVA could sustain one in the Delta.

RED: I think you've underestimated our ability in certain areas in South Vietnam.

BLUE: Sir, we have the North Vietnam bombing effort also concentrated in your VC base areas. The VC base areas are getting all the iron that heretofore has been delivered to North Vietnam.

RED: You're prohibited from doing this by your own rules.

BLUE: No, we're not bombing North Vietnam, we're bombing base areas in South Vietnam that are not populated.

RED: Read the consensus accompanying the resolution.

BLUE: No! We read that as escalating the war in the North. We never stopped bombing in the South. We continued our bombing in Laos and in enemy base areas in SVN as well. We kept saying that right along and no one ever called us on it.

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DIRECTOR: I think we accepted that. You might wonder about the relations between the White House and Capitol Hill. That's a good question. I noticed that in your explanation of what you would do, nothing was said about resuming bombing in North Vietnam. I think some of your moves indicated that if Red escalated on the ground you probably would renew the bombing in North Vietnam. Did you feel that you could do this or do you feel that it was politically very difficult?

BLUE: That was always our basic point -- we may eventually resume the bombing. We agreed to talk in any country in the world and finally sat down in Paris. If they continued to be intransigent, in the problem of cease-fire, we would continue to brief our combat Allies on the point that, if the enemy escalated in the South or refused to budge on the issue of cease-fire, this would probably force us to resume the bombing.

RED: The resolution, by Congress indicated that no military actions should be taken which might interfere with the success of the Paris negotiations. "No military actions" must be interpreted as both in the North and in the South.

BLUE: That was prior to your escalating the war.

RED: We hadn't escalated a bit.

BLUE: We didn't have to do a thing until you escalated in June. We're not going to bomb in the North before you escalated in the South.

RED: I think you underestimate the options that are open to us. One proposal was that, if you continued on about the cease-fire, the NLF would break off negotiations and you'd be left negotiating with the DRV. This meant that the DRV could go on negotiating all through your political affairs until November while the NLF, with the DRV support, continued to go ahead with the war, leaving you in a position where you couldn't fight the war if you escalated it in the South.

BLUE: That gave us a great deal more of freedom of action. As a matter of fact, we're doing very well in fighting the war against small platoon size NLF. It's the NVN forces that were on the border, sitting in U Minh, that we were concerned with and

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as long as they sat in U Minh and the Plain of Reeds -- that was fine. That's exactly where we wanted them.

RED: This is precisely the thing around which our strategy revolved in the situation. You're convinced you were dealing with a matter of negotiations and the war in Vietnam. We were convinced the negotiations were aimed solely at the conventions and at the election in the US. This put you in a position where you were going to be inhibited from doing anything. We figured if we could start your withdrawal between then and the elections you were finished and you couldn't ever get back in. The basic question in this thing was not what were the negotiations about but why did the DRV opt to start negotiations? This question was never approached.

BLUE: Well, we seized upon that as an opportunity to change the nature of the war if, in the course of negotiations, the DRV de-escalated its main force activities, which indeed it did, and thus we were given a different strategic position in the South. You were left with the requirement to re-escalate. We had cut our casualties, solidified our position in the South and we had a low-level war going on the way we liked it. Now the only thing you had left to do was re-open the war the way it was before and take your chances on the American reaction. It might be harder for the US Government to support it.

RED: Your estimate of your propaganda position on which you're basing so much is that the thing revolved around questions of good faith. Our estimate of the propaganda situation was that it revolved around questions of getting the war overwith under any circumstance.

RED: I'd like to make a comment on the Blue team's optimistic assessment of their accomplishments. To make it more realistic to the war situation, all this spreading out that they were going to do, was going to be difficult to accomplish in the three or four weeks they had to do it. We calculated their total strength and they wouldn't get more than another thousand or so hamlets with their spread-out tactics. That is only about 10 percent of what they have now and; that is, more than that contested right now. Their oil slick was rather spotty and it wasn't going to give them the great control they

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were looking for. In the meantime, we intended to preserve our own infrastructure and our own capability. They couldn't find us before we started to negotiate so I don't know how they were going to find us during negotiations.

RED: You've also assumed that we were going to re-escalate the way we had done before. We would try to suggest to you that such is not the case. Our military plan called for pot hotting in your spread out areas. We didn't envisage a new artillery duel over the DMZ. What we did envisage was a plan of causing you casualties in the hamlets and village areas, where you think you have some control. We could do that by second-level actions rather than full conventional engagements such as Dak To.

BLUE: I think we considered all these things. Mr. _____'s statement that our entire spread out posture would get us about a thousand more hamlets is sort of ridiculous to me. I was in a battalion in SVN and we didn't do this by putting a platoon in each hamlet. My battalion controlled 600 odd hamlets and I think it can be done with proper tactics, with our mobility and eagle flights. We increased our wearing down of the infrastructure. We believed we were making progress in that area. We welcomed the opportunity to have you take shots at us. We could fight the local guerrillas without having to worry about the North Vietnamese main forces which were sitting in Cambodia.

RED: Why do you feel there was no infiltration? We were infiltrating to rebuild our strength.

BLUE: Rebuilding your strength in Laos and Cambodia.

RED: No, no! In the south.

BLUE: As a matter of fact, we asked Control about this. You were infiltrating and there was increased activity in Cambodia. Control informed us you were infiltrating at the same rate you had prior to the cessation of the bombing. You were not increasing your forces by infiltration and if there was any increase in Cambodia, this obviously was NVN forces moving from South Vietnam across the border to be refitted.

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DIRECTOR: I think we probably all understood that there was a replacement operation going on in South Vietnam. Along with that there was some accumulation of NVA and VC personnel across the border in Cambodia. I don't think there was a serious difference on this point but maybe there was on some others. I would gather there's several differences on the merits of Blue's strategy. Red thinks you didn't achieve much increase in population control, that you didn't do much damage to Red's infrastructure and that you were vulnerable to Red's military counter actions in June. I gather that you would dispute or, at least, would qualify all of these assertions. No one has said anything yet about what the GVN was doing and whether the GVN was moving in behind this US deployment.

BLUE: We have that in here but not in writing. We have a different appraisal of the value of the strategy and its consequences.

DIRECTOR: We had quite a serious argument in Control over this group of points. There was a view that Blue's game was both vulnerable and transitory.

BLUE: I can't find it here but the second Control message said that Blue had secured its objective in gaining control over most of the population.

BLUE: We were given that at the beginning of our second move and we had to work from it. This means we had something we did not consolidate. If you can secure a larger part of the populated areas then this is generally successful. This gave us a handle in move II. Now we go into June with this situation in hand. If this strikes everyone as being unrealistic, that's fair, but it's also written there and we had to work from the script. We assumed that we could continue to make this move and the pressure on the VC morale, which we haven't discussed until now, would be enormous. The NVA was sitting in Laos and Cambodia and had pulled back from the DMZ. Those forces would come back and help us some day. We had three months to do something.

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RED: Your assumption that we were going to be sitting in Laos and Cambodia was contrary to the documents that we had All we had to do was continue covert infiltration of troop fillers and materiel to regain full combat capability of NVA/VC units by 3 June. It does not mean we would be sitting in Laos and Cambodia. We could sit in other parts of South Vietnam.

BLUE: We were bombing in their base areas in South Vietnam and in Laos.

RED: Your bombing hadn't been too successful to that time.

BLUE: Why not? You needed fillers.

RED: Sure, but we were able to put them back.

RED: If I could, I'll just make two points on this military situation and possible escalation. One, its clear that Blue's perception of what they were doing, the success they were having in low-level military activity -- that type of military activity -- differed from our perception. But I would suggest this; that if, in fact, Blue had retargeted all the aircraft for operations in South Vietnam, bombing our base areas left and right, and were pushing forward vigorously with these military operations in the rural areas, which we are contesting, mind you, this is not taking---we are not in a vacuum, we aren't putting our hands up, we're fighting them. We don't really have a problem in terms of escalation. You're maintaining the war at such a level, that we go back in, start manuevering those main force battalions and start threatening your base areas and your communications and you're right back in the problem you're in now. You're going to have to pull all these boys back. We don't think your control in these villages is going to last. It's probably going to be counterproductive when the US units pull out, so we think we can manage that. At the same time we think that you're under the gun politically. We've been protesting this strategy of yours. The Soviets have picked up this line, that you aren't negotiating in good faith, and so on. Really we are going to be quite justified when we start cranking up again, and we're going to say we tried. You're going to be in a much weaker position to continue the war thereafter.

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BLUE: You see, the Soviets had these people at a conference table and they said to the Soviets, "Look, if they're going to start the war again, because negotiations are simply a way of getting us out of the country, then we're going to have to start up the war again. We've got nothing to lose by this. You paid a lot to get these people in. You've got a lot of problems with the Chinese. You have to get these fellows to be more forthcoming and we are willing to be more forthcoming. We've got an open ended proposition here. We're willing to talk to all the elements in the agenda. There's no sense in these fellows talking back on the same point again." Publicly, the Soviets are doing one thing, but what are they doing privately? They've made an enormous effort so far privately. Why do you assume that something is going to stop in this scenario?

The trouble with the scenario is that it is so different from reality. One; the whole business of strategy that was being proposed, (we are not following that strategy today); two, the GVN becoming suddenly an effective, or galvanized, operation; and three, the Russian and Vietnamese diplomatic gamut. This was a major change in the whole situation. Now we wouldn't keep bombing those base areas but we would be prepared to bomb those base areas depending on how much fighting was going within South Vietnam. The Russians have told us time and again privately that they don't care about what goes on in the South, as long as the bombing in the North is unconditionally discontinued. We've got considerable flexibility in the level of effort we want to make in the South, contingent on the level of effort your people are making. We disagree on the effects of our having made a good grab at a big chunk of the population. We keep our capacity to respond to your escalation. We don't withdraw, we just keep up the effort.

RED: Our point is not your ability to convince the Russians of the same thing. It's your ability to convince the Americans.

BLUE: Well, the Russians aren't Hanoi. You're not alone in this. You're in a box between the Russians and the Chinese.

RED: We created an arrangement with the Chinese. We didn't tell you this. We have no problem with the Chinese. You don't know that.

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RED: We sent Truong Chinh to China on March 4

RED: Control was handling infiltration the same way they were handling the problem of the Chinese

BLUE: Why were the Chinese no problem? Because you were negotiating in good faith or because you were negotiating in bad faith? They didn't care.

CONTROL: There was a Control message on that. Truong Chinh was going to China because the North Vietnamese were having so much trouble with the Chinese.

RED: All the Chinese could do at that time was cut off aid. We could have gone elsewhere and picked up commitments that made up for their aid. They had made no military moves.

BLUE: They had deployed two battalions near the border and moved an air division down.

RED: No, we asked Control about the operations of Truong Chinh in Peking. They informed us that he was successful in allaying the suspicions of the Chinese and, though the Chinese didn't think we were smart, they would tolerate what we were doing in negotiations because they thought we were possibly going to do what they wanted us to do.

DIRECTOR: Excuse me. A message came into the operations center after hours and it was answered by the country director in the absence of the Assistant Secretary. (Laughter) He would not have answered it in those terms. However, unfortunately, Red is right in what they are saying.

BLUE: We go to the Russians and we say, "Look, where do you stand? Have you been played a sucker or not?" Once you get this far, you have a Russian and Chinese problem. You can't walk away by telling them it's our problem. It's not our problem. It's your problem.

RED: Did you get the message or the leaflet we planted informing you that the Chinese were going to intervene if they didn't get their own way? We were telling you that, so that you would worry a little.

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BLUE: We weren't worrying about the Chinese intervening in North Vietnam at all.

RED: You didn't get the message!

RED: The point is that we weren't under any real pressure from the Soviets at all. They hadn't been disagreeable or pressuring us.

BLUE: You don't feel that having to come to the table to get the bombing stopped, which _____ kept asking for, wouldn't create problems?

RED: No, because the bombing was stopped. We think it'll be extremely hard to resume the bombings so we have achieved a major objective right there which pleased the Soviets.

BLUE: When you go back, you see your strategies would lead us to escalation of some kind which might bring about an American resumption of bombing.

RED: Our strategy was to get the Americans out of South Vietnam.

BLUE: We were not leaving.

RED: Coupled with cease-fire and all the rest? We could accuse you of negotiating in bad faith.

BLUE: You wouldn't discuss agenda item one, which was your item.

BLUE: The Chinese have a curious way of supporting the North Vietnamese, according to Control at least, because they are attacking them in their newspapers. They say that the proposal for negotiations is a flop. It was initiated by US imperialists and the Soviets. Any negotiations with the imperialists is a mistake. Now, it may be that they are talking differently to Hanoi, of the North Vietnamese, but that is a curious way of supporting the North Vietnamese. That's point number one. The second point that I would like to make is that one of the main points of strategy has been to maneuver in such a way that we mend our political fences in the US. In my

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opinion, being important only to the extent that it had influence on US political opinion. We thought we had to reach the politician. To the politicians, a fairly good position on the cease-fire would be quite understandable within the US. On the proposed cease-fire, we said yes. We accepted it in principle. We had laid out a few very simple modalities. That's the position we hoped to be able to get across. Exactly how would the US attack the Administration as the scenario is written?

RED: I think that one of the other things that you underestimated is the GVN. We had planned, and we were executing, a series of small united fronts, in addition to the NLF, with the so-called peace forces, or forces that can be brought over from South Vietnam. Now, we could continue to weaken the GVN and have a popular base of operations in various sectors of the GVN.

BLUE: It's hard to understand why an outfit that had lost control of most of the population, whose forces were pulled back, who hadn't been able to establish these fronts during a time of combat, would be able to do so during a time of peace in which GVN and US forces were in a good security protection position. The GVN had undertaken considerable efforts at popular participation in a series of elections at the provincial and national level and had established a constabulary and had undertaken other reforms.

BLUE: There's a point that hasn't been brought out that ought to be and that is, the discussions here have gone on from the Blue side without giving much thought about how the Vietnamese would look at this. Blue's strategy was much that way. Blue felt that the GVN was hand in glove with them, I believe. Actually, the Vietnamese, as it had been played, were pursuing much their own course and were also trying to fight on that same political front. Vietnamese in the South were somewhat cynical about what was going to happen in extending control into the VC infrastructure. They were letting the US do this because they couldn't stop them. We had asked the Upper and Lower Houses to develop a method of rewarding villages and hamlets, establishing their own village structure according to GVN law, electing their own people, establishing law and order, and having their own self-defense

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force. We were trying to make some sort of plan, but the GVN might not agree with it. We were working on just this same front. How it would come out, I don't know, but it was not a void. That was the point I want to make.

RED: We're astonished at the degree to which you've changed in the last few months.

BLUE: This is true. The GVN activity was not, in itself, a startling new strategy. What was startling about it is that they've done it. You can debate this point but I submit that in this situation it's a very realistic analysis for them to say "What are we going to do? Are we going to cash all our assets and go back to France or are we going to be patriotic and fight for our country in a way we haven't done so far?"

RED: Now, on the GVN side, your views are as optimistic as I've ever heard. In the first place we've made some inroads in the Buddhist areas surrounding Hue. We also have a foothold in some of the dissident Cao Dai areas. I know you have not succeeded at Vung Tau. The aspirations that you had of putting the teams out into the countryside certainly haven't been a glowing success. What's more, Mr. _____ just said, a little while ago, that you grabbed control of most of the population. You're kidding yourself. All that the scenario says is that you have a larger part of the populated areas of South Vietnam and you were generally successful. A larger part doesn't say a larger part of what.

BLUE: I'm sitting here from 0900 to 1800 hours daily. I've got to believe something. I believe the white paper, that's what I believe. (Laughter)

RED: Your populated areas were incorporated into the GVN by a stroke of the pen, when they decided to count that 6 million in the cities as belonging to the GVN. You are doing the same thing with your strategy.

BLUE: No, we didn't do that. Control did it.

BLUE: I would say one other thing on the GVN side. We would try to keep the talks from continuing and if it looked

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like there might be some kind of success we would pull some unilateral actions to see if we couldn't sabotage you in any way. We were interested in talk, talk, talk while we tried our new strategy. We did not want a standdown. To this extent we were not hand in glove with you.

RED: But you're posing the GVN as if it were a solid GVN front and you overlook the fact that we have some of our boys in the Lower House or the Assembly. You're overlooking the fact that Ky hasn't yet given up on gaining power and that he may become a recalcitrant element of Blue in the GVN picture and may even be bought off. One doesn't know for certain that he isn't approachable.

BLUE: Well, since we're talking GVN and you're Red and I'm Blue and we're both Americans and probably both wrong--do you think it's a reasonable assessment that they would be frightened in this situation and might be frightened enough to undertake some of these things, difficult though it would be and in spite of the disagreements which they have?

BLUE: May I say that, in Move II, we were given some GVN moves which Blue didn't make. This indicated there was an effort of national development on the political level comparable to what we've been discussing at the other levels. For example, Big Minh was brought back to head the Ministry of Revolutionary Development, General Ky was brought back and General Truong became part of the consolidated constabulary as mentioned earlier. The Senate and House planned development for elections of province chiefs and hearings on popular needs. Various people were set up to receive complaints without charge. Now, we're told that is what's happened and we accept it in good grace.

BLUE: That came back to us, in the third situation, as something that was done and accepted and showing progress. We thought we had Control on our side.

DIRECTOR: We're supposed to wind up this critique at 1:30 p.m. I'd like to give General Kemp a chance to intervene and see if he would like to comment or raise any questions.

GENERAL KEMP: No, I don't have any comments. There is nothing I want to put my neck in front of at this time! (Laughter)

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DIRECTOR: Do you have any comments, Colonel McDonald?

COLONEL McDONALD: I just want to comment it's the first time I've ever seen Control getting off almost scot-free. I think it's a shame! (Laughter)

DIRECTOR: Well, didn't you notice that Mr. _____ laid his hand on that white paper as if he were laying it on the Bible?

BLUE: I think Red was disadvantaged at the end of the first move because of the mechanics of the thing; that is, on the first move the game began with a move on 25 January and another move something like 1 February. Then both sides were given the opportunity to do something and we made a second move and then they made a second move in which each thought he was addressing the situation as of 1 February. When the scenario was written, wrapping up the end of the first move and introducing the second move, our move was kept in its proper place, as we understood it, namely, following up the first of February. We were allowed to send our second consecutive message and their response to our first of February message apparently was really treated in the scenario as a response to our second message which they never saw and yet were responding to. Thus, this raises a problem. Would they have responded this way? Would they have given us this opportunity which they don't seem to realize was an opportunity. If you want successive moves in some cases and simultaneous moves in other cases, could you not simulate reality by allowing one of the moves to be on consecutive days. The next move could be set about the same day so that they could have met for move one and then we could have met for move one. The script could be based on their move and Move One could be broken into two parts. Perhaps, Move Two could be so broken and then other moves would be at the same time.

DIRECTOR: I think that's a good point. We did wrestle with that. I suggest you raise that with the Games Agency. I was going to suggest that each side tell the other side how they think they should have played the game. Obviously, you're very critical of one another. I'd like to ask Red. What do you think Blue should have done? What would have worried you the most?

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RED: When we said negotiate with withdrawal we would have been in a difficult position if they had said to us. "No withdrawal." Withdrawal, to us, is the sine-qua-non of these negotiations. If there was no withdrawal we would have to change our strategy. The issue of withdrawal and the qualifications of the withdrawal are the key elements in our approach to your game. I find myself thinking that I would have used typical communist maneuvers, "protracted negotiations." at that point. Protracted war and protracted negotiations are my idea of two sides of the same coin. We weren't put in that position because withdrawal remained a possibility and I think we would have been more vulnerable if that possibility was taken away from us.

DIRECTOR: Any other thoughts from Red on what Blue should have done?

RED: We think we would have been presented with some problems had Blue insisted in getting far up on the negotiation agenda and the content of the political settlement because this would have flushed out our adamant strong stand. We were just delighted to see things focus on them without any withdrawal or cease-fire, etc. because we wanted to get you going on this and we were very reluctant to get into the problems of the content of the political settlement because we felt this would pose real problems as far as the front is concerned and our people.

RED: We didn't do that, but Control did.

DIRECTOR: Mr. _____, do you agree on any of these suggestions? What do you think Red should have done?

BLUE: The only suggestion I would rebutt was not being willing to withdraw since we're committed at Manila on withdrawal after the level of violence was subsided. This was very difficult for us to play. We felt we were obliged to honor our general public positions. The two things that puzzled us the most were the circumspect nature with which the enemy handled his main forces. Pulling back into the DMZ area enabled us to free some of our forces. We wouldn't have known what to do if you vigorously kept up your field operations in South Vietnam. The other thing we couldn't

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understand at all was why you insisted on a cease-fire as item one on the agenda and then proceeded to go through some routine efforts to ruin the negotiations on the modality that you said you wanted to discuss only US withdrawals. We had a contingency fallback condition on how to handle the problem of withdrawal but you never wanted to talk about it.

RED: We could not refuse your gambit for pre-condition to the talks in the cease-fire. You had us over the barrel on that. You switched your strategy at that point and gave us the only leverage that we had in Paris.

RED: I think the problem there wasn't so much that we switched the strategy as Control did.

RED: We felt also that withdrawal was your strategy and we felt we would have been in a difficult position, politically and psychologically, if you had in fact announced that, "We offer to withdraw all of our forces, in accordance with the Manila communique, if you withdraw your forces." We would really have been under the gun! We felt we would have had to discuss the modalities at that time in the current military situation as laid out in the scenario. Protracted negotiations would have been to our advantage.

RED: You didn't hear our French allies helping us out on this public opinion poll. That's why we picked Paris. We thought of holding it back in the suburbs of Rumania or somewhere but we felt that was too restrictive to the free world press which was on our side. We decided to have the talks in Paris where we would have a certain amount of help from France so that the US would look bad with the war going on in Vietnam. Eleven thousand missions on this poor, little, old beat up country.

BLUE: Yes, but at that point, you see, in France where Parisian logic dominates, you had insisted on agenda item one and we accepted it. You refused to talk about agenda item one. I don't think it would have done you any good.

DIRECTOR: It's clear to me that both sides had perfect strategy, marred only by mistakes of Control. (Laughter) Thank you very much, gentlemen.

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SIGMA II-67

ACTION-LEVEL CRITIQUE

The following comments are extracts of the Action-Level Critique of SIGMA II-67:

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DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, I think perhaps, a good way to get into the discussion would be for a representative of each team to assess how the game progressed and finally worked out. How, in fact, your team did in the light of the objectives it announced through its message in the first move; briefly, of course. In terms of your objectives in Move I, do you think you came out alright or not, and if you had to do it over again, how would you have liked to play it? We have here, in the Control Group, some of the specific questions we would like to address to each team later in the critique. Then perhaps, representatives of the teams have some questions they would like to address to Control. Before we move into any kind of discussion, however, let us get an idea of how each team thought it did. Mr. _____, perhaps you could give us a round-up of the points of view of your team.

BLUE II: Specifically, our objectives were stated in three parts. The short range objective was to achieve an early and just settlement in South Vietnam; the intermediate objective was to assure that South Vietnam continued as an independent and viable member of the community of nations; and the long range objective was to maintain the credibility of US treaty commitments and assure a continued US presence in Southeast Asia in accordance with our long range security interests. Starting with a very neutral position, wherein we felt some concern for the sincerity of the oppositions' initiatives, we gradually became more convinced as time went on that the opposition was sincerely interested in terminating the military conflict. Since the end of the game, I notice that, in their wrap-up, they underlined their desire to terminate the military portion of the conflict. None of us were naive enough to assume, however, that this would be the end of the conflict. We reasoned that they were moving readily from one battlefield to another and that the other was one in which they were much more astute than we were but, given the great range and intensity of world opinion, as well as US domestic and political opinions and considerations, we felt that we had to move to the table at

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an early date to, at least, test the sincerity of the Red overture. As time progressed, we found this to be a reasonable position, even though our Seniors, from time to time, wiggled on the hook. Unfortunately, they could not provide many alternatives to the approach we had designed. In light of what happened, I think we achieved our objectives surprisingly well, considering the pitfalls that might have been placed in our path. We were surprised that the GVN did not "stir the pot" as much as we had expected, although as we had reasoned, their power plays were somewhat limited if we intended to use all the leverage at our disposal. Therefore, in summary, although somewhat of an oversimplification, we feel that we have attained the main points of our objectives.

DIRECTOR: I would like to get back to the GVN problem in a moment, but first let us get the overall Red position. Mr. _____, would you like to say something?

RED II: Yes, but I think at the beginning we should underline the rather desperate straits we were in. Perhaps the best way to do that is just to remember the rather gloomy assessment that Ho gave us. In giving us his instructions, Comrade Ho described the situation as disastrous. The whole communist organization, both in the North and in the South, was in the process of literally coming apart at the seams in the face of the enemy military pressure on us. Something had to be done and had to be done very, very quickly. Our instructions were to terminate the hostilities as quickly as possible and, certainly, prior to the conclusion of the American elections in November 1968. Our problem, however, was not one of changing or reducing our objectives at all. Far from it. These were our objectives. I can't ennumerate all of them, but preeminent was our hope of seizing power in South Vietnam and, ultimately, reunifying the whole country under a communist regime. This point should be kept very definitely in mind as we move on. Our problem was one of shifting gears from primary emphasis on military tactics to other means of attaining the very same objectives, and, of course, we had to do this as quickly as possible -- before the assets we had were destroyed by military pressure. It would be helpful, at this time, to run over, very briefly, what some of these assets -- very real assets -- were. In the first place, we had a unified, dedicated,

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and very skillful political and military organization. Certainly, as far as the political organization was concerned, it was the only one that can be described, in anything like those terms, in existence in South Vietnam. We couldn't let that be destroyed and we had to save as much of our military organization as possible. Afterall, our military resources were our ultimate recourse if other methods failed. Suddenly, we had world opinion on our side and we were learning how to manipulate it, more and more skillfully -- that was a very real asset. Another primary asset, we believe, from the beginning -- which was in accordance with Ho's instructions to us, as well as the way it worked out -- was a real asset. That was in the form of vulnerabilities within the United States itself or the excessive democracy, as we might describe it, compounded by the fact that this period encompassed the election campaigns. Aside from that, of course, we had some tactical problems. We needed that immediate cessation of military pressure, but we couldn't reveal, to the enemy forces, just how much pressure they were exerting. That would have been disastrous and probably our ability to manipulate world opinion wouldn't have been sufficient to matter if the enemy were really smelling blood. We had to keep them guessing to the extent possible on that matter. Another major problem we faced was internal dissensions within our own ranks. Under the pressures we were being subjected to and in view of the rather dramatic shift in tactics, there was internal dissension. That was largely in Military Regions 2 and 3, which had been those areas least affected by the enemy pressure. As things turned out, we were saved by a "deus ex machina" in the form of Control when the VC leaders of MRs 2 and 3 were conveniently killed in an aircraft accident. I want to thank you gentlemen for that. I think, however, as things worked out, that the optimism which we held from the beginning regarding our ability to gain our objectives through other means, was well founded and I suspect that our ability to change the minds of at least some of our dissenting NLF leaders in the Delta area, were probably well placed. We really only had to cope, through an airplane accident, with two of them and after that, largely because of the objective situation the way it had been developing, we did succeed in convincing the others they should observe party discipline and follow along with us.

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Another problem, which frightened us in the beginning but, tended to evaporate, was the threat of Chinese intervention. The Chinese made noises and, even more significantly, they got into contact with the leadership in Military Regions 2 and 3. As things moved along, however, we felt safer and safer and it turned out we were able to convince the Chinese that this was anything but a sell out; this was just a more expedient way of achieving the same objectives. Our last tactical problem might be described as the "ju-jitsu" problem. Certainly, a major objective was the removal of US forces from Vietnam and, indeed, from the mainland of Asia, itself. We kept this very much in mind, however, it was clear that the Americans would be around for awhile and we wanted to make the maximum use of their presence, while they remained in South Vietnam. We felt this was important in political terms. Any elections that were held would gain national credibility and acceptability if they were held while the American forces still were in Vietnam. In addition, we knew that we could use the Americans to keep the GVN in line and to insure something like freedom of elections. This would permit us to move out of our base areas and campaign -- and I use that term actively -- throughout the country. The American presence also would be very useful, in terms of our ability to manipulate the force of nationalism in South Vietnam. We would obviously be attacking the Americans. We would have the zenaphobia nationalism of the South Vientamese people on our side. While the GVN would be forced to being associated with the Americans. Thus, we would very easily make them out as anti-GVN, anti-national elements. Lastly, we were convinced by our previous record that we could use the American presence, the economic assistance and every-thing else they would be pouring into the country, for ourselves. This was a weapon really in our hands and not on the side of the enemy. As for our accomplishments, we were very pleased with ourselves on April 28th. We had moved very close to an agreement which would satisfy our basic needs -- and these basic needs really are the preservation of our infrastructure -- so close to an agreement, in fact, that we felt sure this basic protection would come out of the cease-fire agreement. The Americans just couldn't boggle, at this stage, our excellent ability, to orchestrate psychological pressures throughout the world and within Vietnam. The momentum for a peace agreement was irresistible and the sticking points which the Americans

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were unwisely making just couldn't be held at this stage. We really had momentum working for us. In addition, tensions between the GVN and the Americans were a tangible thing by that time. We didn't want, at that stage, to make them too bad. We didn't want a definite break but, to the extent that the American Government and public opinion got totally fed up with the GVN, the better off we would be. We were confident that, under the cover of the US presence, we could move into a position of even greater strength. We didn't dare run the risk -- it probably wasn't a large risk but, there was an element of risk involved -- of making an overt bid for power while the Americans were still in Vietnam. We didn't have to run the risk. Our confidence in being able to take over after the Americans were gone was, we believed, well founded and we were totally confident that, once the Americans were out, they'd never, never come back. American public opinion wouldn't permit it. Any American Government that might emerge in the November elections, just couldn't count on such a move. Our optimisim was so well justified, in fact, that many of us in the Politiburo -- we wouldn't dare voice this publicly -- were wondering just how senile Comrade Ho had become. Why hadn't we done this earlier? Why did we make the Americans force us to shift gears from this psychopathic obcession -- the struggle by force under Comrade Mao's aegis, to reunify and control Vietnam -- instead of doing it by covert subversive means long ago. We really couldn't understand why we hadn't taken this very direct path toward achieving our objectives considerably sooner.

DIRECTOR: Thank you. Before we open it up for more general discussion -- and I would hope that at that point, we will have a very generalized discussion -- I would just like to get a few words from the members of the Blue team, who were representing the GVN. Perhaps then, the late Comrade leader of MRs 2 and 3 (LAUGHTER) might care to make a comment. GVN Blue, do you feel that, either you had been adequately contained or satisfied; or did you still regard yourself as a fairly active and difficult partner? What were your prospects as they emerged?

BLUE II (GVN): I think, as was indicated by the messages we sent out to Control, that we were not at all satisfied with the way the Americans were moving us and, furthermore, we weren't very satisfied with what Control did to us in

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Move 2. As far as we were concerned, in the GVN, our objectives had been constant from the very beginning. They're in this last message which we sent to Control. We wanted to maintain the power of the inner circle of generals. We wanted to prevent the NLF from taking over the country. We wanted to maintain the flow of economic aid, and so forth. Now, the general feeling was, throughout the game, in my opinion, that the GVN could be ignored. In fact, one of our Seniors said those exact words, i.e., "We don't have to worry about the GVN, because they will go along." Our opinion was that we wouldn't go along! We wouldn't go along for the reasons I have cited as our objectives. Secondly, we wouldn't go along because we felt that we were losing so much face in having no say -- almost no say -- in what the Americans were doing that we were, literally, willing to commit suicide. In fact, that was said by one of the people assessing messages going out to Control. We were willing to commit suicide in order to gain face and this is not unusual in Oriental situations of such nature. In addition, I would point to the fact that there is a lengthy article in the current issue of Newsweek, by Francois Sully, who is a pretty well known correspondent out there, in which certain members of the Vietnamese prominence, so called, outline many of the points which we sent to Control as to what the GVN position would be. In my opinion, the whole game proceeded under the assumption that the GVN could be contained, but I, as a member of the GVN, deny this. I doubt that you could have applied the leverage which Mr. _____ speaks about to the extent that you could have made us conform to your wishes.

RED II: This is what I meant when I described US/GVN tensions as such tangible things.

DIRECTOR: I'm beginning to sense that but I think you have a problem too. Red leader of the Delta horde, do you think that your accident took care of the NLF/VC dissension in the Delta, or do you think that Comrade _____ is being too complacent?

RED II (NLF): It is my considered opinion that Blue won this game. To make a point here about Ho's senility and the fact that he fails to see the situation as we do, I would suggest two possible explanations of that. One being, that Ho, in fact, doesn't appreciate the realities

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of the situation. The other being, that there is something wrong with your assessment of the situation.

CONTROL: "Your," being.....?

RED II (NLF): I mean, the majority of the RED II team.

CONTROL: Oh, you had me worried there for a moment! (LAUGHTER)

RED II (NLF): I'm inclined to the proposition that is was not so much a game about what might happen in South Vietnam as it was a game about how Americans will mimically act if assigned roles in a situation essentially foreign to them. I think there is a great deal of realism here, a significant portion of which has to do with their consistent inclination toward fair play, both openly and honestly, in proceeding about this game. The enormities to which a well trained party member will resort to achieve his ends, I don't think are given sufficient realistic attention here. We're inclined to treat this too much like a football game, in which Control is a clean-cut referee. Enough of these general remarks. Now I want to talk specifically, about the liquidation of the aggrandizing Comrade leader of MRs 2 and 3. In a real world situation this is no solution, whatsoever, to the problem. From the point of departure, when MRs 2 and 3 seceded from the game, they did so not as two people but, as the Permanent Standing Committees, plus the Cadre Control or Orgburos of the Regional or Inter-provincial Committees of MRs 2 and 3. This would involve a body of persons, certainly, not less than thirty in number and, conceivably, more than that. Now, that group would be more conscious of the fact that such standard operating procedures as assassination are appropriate. Consequently, there would be enormous attention to problems of security and, certainly, no time would the majority of that body of key persons absent themselves from areas under their effective control. To send out two members from that body to engage in negotiations at some foreign capitol or in another portion of the country, with the consequence that those persons are assassinated, would not conceivably -- in any real life situation -- destroy the leadership of the secessionist movement. You now or other, you'd have to at least neutralize or actually, liquidate that entire body of personnel, or create fractionalization within that body, so that it

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cancels itself out. Steps of that sort, which would require extensive use of low-down, dirty tricks or stratagems of the most contemptible order, were not resorted to. I would suggest that, in any real life situation, the techniques employed to liquidate the secessionists simply cannot be defended. There is also another point, closely associated with that one. When you liquidated the secessionist movement on the insurgent side, you did not do a comparable thing to the Blue side. Namely, you kept the GVN which, in point of fact, was nothing else but a secessionist movement in Blue, as were MRs 2 and 3 a secessionist movement in Red. Those are my several observations.

RED II: Could I inject a slice of humor?

BLUE II: Can I get equal time, as well? (LAUGHTER)

DIRECTOR: Yes, you may but, I should say that I think we'll limit these developments to about ten minutes more. We must move on to some broader issues.

RED II: Well, I just want to say that I personally doubt very much whether the split-away of MRs 2 and 3 would have taken place at all, because I think they would have shared much of the same impression of the situation as the rest of us. I believe they would have gone along with Ho's directive even though they had been less subject to the military pressures than we had. The NLF split, however, did take place and, although we kept up a fairly brave front, we were very aware of our lack of any real leverage over Comrade _____, leader of MRs 2 and 3. To that extent, I rather tend to agree with his criticism of his assassination as a means of maintaining party discipline in the Delta.

BLUE II: I have one comment in connection with my distinguished colleague from Saigon. We discussed the possibility of mischief from that quarter but, based on a relatively low regard for that quarter in realistic circles, namely that they had been put there because they had been beholden to us to a very large extent, we felt that we could cope with them. The major problem, before the massive build-up of US troops, was the fear of a coup. We felt that, if we continued a massive presence of US

troops at strategic locations after the stand-down, we would be able to forestall that eventuality, thus, isolating the generals from their only power source. The people were not their power source and had never been, in my judgment. Therefore, we did feel they were a mischevious sort of a problem. We did not feel they would be a compelling problem on a long term basis.

BLUE II: May I ask a question of Red II? There is an assumption here that you would take over the GVN when the American troops leave. I'm just going to ask; does this mean that, if the elections went against you, that you would have the government seized by force? If so, you seem to go back on your own scenario. Your situation militarily, was not so good vis-a-vis the ARVN. I think we started with that assumption and I would just like to get that point clarified.

RED II: Well, there are two answers to that question. For one, the Red military position improved tremendously, given the relaxation of military pressure which permitted us to reorganize.....

BLUE II: We never stopped firing!

RED II: In effect, you did though. The pressure was so infinitely reduced that we were able to build up again. Now, you say, "if we had lost the elections." We could have lost the elections.

BLUE II: This is a very important issue to the Control Group.

DIRECTOR: Yes, it is.....

BLUE II: That's what we're faced with. It's a situation where Blue thinks it can win the elections and Red thinks it can, too. The final message left the matter open of whether it was going to be a 51% majority or a plurality.

RED II: But, who is "Blue" when you say that? You're disorganized, split, etc.

BLUE II: That's why we held out for a 51% majority. The NLF is a recognizable party.

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CONTROL: This raises, if I may, one of the questions or one of the observations Control had as we looked at the final moves on both sides. It was quite interesting to us to find that Red accepted, with minor modifications, the Constitution of the GVN. But Blue, in its development of the elections -- particularly rules of procedures -- was apparently ready to scrap the constitution, in effect, if Blue were to insist on 51% and, incidentally, that was one of the relatively few issues which Control felt were not negotiable, and we have a chart with which we can illustrate this to you if we block out the issues which are agreed upon, presumably negotiable, and quite sticky. And, certainly one of the sticky issues was this difference between plurality and majority. But if Blue, indeed, insisted on the majority, as well as some of the other things in their election proposals, then in effect, Blue was perfectly ready to scrap the constitution and, presumably, start all over again. Whereas, Red was perfectly ready to live with the constitution. I'm not suggesting that there was anything wrong with either stand, except to note that it was a rather interesting development.

RED II: We were outraged, the morning of the last meeting, when we discovered that we were prepared to hold new constituent assembly elections and have a new constitution. That was all that we had been holding out for. We could care less what constitution we were living under, but we felt that the essential thing was that the elections be held as soon as possible, and.....

CONTROL: What kind of elections?

RED II: National assembly and executive as in the presidential and vice presidential elections. We felt the constituent assembly elections just postponed this gray period before we had any real safeguards, indefinitely. We were afraid of that and wanted elections as soon as possible. That was why we were willing to accept the existing framework.

CONTROL: What about the timing of the elections? Mr. _____, of Control, had an analysis of the various psychological positions of the Blues and the Reds. He felt that the Blues would be under some disadvantage for two reasons. One great difficulty was a difference of about a year between the terminal dates of Red's withdrawal

demands and Blue's withdrawal proposals. His other point was that Blue would be under difficult circumstances, because of the difference between the timing of the elections and that Blue would have to, perforce, make the right noises about the elections. However, we did not, in our final wrap-up on Control, take the second point very seriously, after thinking about it, because in the final analysis, the difference in timing between Red's elections and Blue's elections was only thirty days.

BLUE II: There was a much more significant difference. The Reds were pushing for elections for a national government. We wanted no part of a coalition government. We went for the constituent assembly with the idea that the run-off elections would prevent the more disciplined NLF from fragmenting the three-sided vote and we felt, with the additional increments of 40,000 above the 80,000, that we would limit or at least operate against their rate of discipline. In that way we might come out with a majority in the assembly and, at that point, we would be in a position to manipulate where we would go. So we had a very significant reason.....

DIRECTOR: I understand that and I think it is a very good reason. I also think, having taken another look at Mr. _____'s assessment of the psychological advantages -- world opinion, domestic opinion, etc., of these two elections -- that it wouldn't present Blue with as much of a problem as we had originally thought because, afterall, elections are elections! The difference of thirty days just wasn't significant. Even though the two different types of elections had tremendous substantive implications, the timing and the idea of free elections was not all that important. I would like to ask Blue a few questions that occurred to Control as we read through the moves and netted them out. I must confess that we would tend to agree with the GVN Blue that the Blue team generally, was sort of giving the GVN something of a brush off. It is true that Blue made some genuflections in the direction of massaging the GVN dissenters and patting them on the head and that sort of thing. It seems to me, however, after reading some of the more strident stuff coming out of the GVN element of the Blue team, that you were living in a "fool's paradise" and that either you were in grave danger of having negotiations broken off or suspended, or of being put into a position of conducting the negotiations alone and then

[redacted]

having somehow to bring, sooner or later, a non-communist Vietnamese organization with you. I must confess, perhaps, we didn't give some of the things you had in mind sufficient weight, but what came through was a fairly sanguine approach toward the problem children you had in your family.

BLUE II: I think that was an active reflection of our opinion but the floor is open to other Blue team comments. We felt that their chips were not that heavy and not that many, since they were not in a position where they could get a good deal with the NLF in their secessionist ploys. I'm talking about the inner circle; not about Au Trong Than or Big Minh, or people like that. We just didn't feel that they had anywhere else to go outside of the very strong cluster. This of course is a questionable position.

CONTROL: You gave very short shrift to what Control thought was a fairly brilliant little ploy that we inserted about Big Minh and General Thi and some other characters getting together to explore the possibility of organizing a third force which could run a popular candidate in any succeeding elections.

BLUE II: Well, this was considered, but unfortunately it didn't get in the message. We considered that possibility as part of our political/covert political action program and it was one of the reasons we were insisting on a long period of prolonged elections, to give us the chance to develop the political institutions in Vietnam that could survive when these fellows went to the political arena. I mean institutions they would be much more able to use to their benefit. Big Minh was definitely in our mind, as were Au Trong Than and a lot of other people that we felt could realistically gain popular support in the elections. Unfortunately, we didn't include all this thinking in our message.

CONTROL: That's one point that sort of misfired; the fact that Blue did not undertake any programs to expand and solidify -- at least, the US side -- the political base in Vietnam which could be used against the South Vietnamese forces and, also, against the NLF. Whereas, you have said you were thinking of it, the messages that came to Control, from Blue, said nothing about it. However, Red immediately thought that, in time of peace, they would extend their control over so-called neutralist parties so they could

have a base to "use" in an elected government. We worried about Blue in that aspect. It seems though, as soon as the hostilities stopped, Blue sat down and thought only about negotiations.

BLUE II: This is an omission on our part but, coming from the agency I represent, I assure you we were thinking about the other. (LAUGHTER) We did consider bribery, if necessary, and that sort of thing. One of our problems, I think was knowing that the GVN was sending in its own messages. We thought we were likely to see something in the next scenario to show whether or not our analysis of the GVN situation as a weak one, might prove wrong and give us real problems. In this case, I lay part of the blame on Control, who seemed to bat these problems down before they got to Blue. Based on the scenario, we won, as far as the GVN was concerned. The GVN messages were presumably much stronger than ours were -- their own messages, anyway. There was no indication of it in the second scenario and Control didn't really project the intensity of fractional dissatisfaction among the Saigon Government and Directorate.

CONTROL: You may well be right on that.

RED II (NLF): If I might, I'd like to say a few words about winning elections and what that means. In the context of elections, whether they be for a constituent assembly or a national government or for the establishment of provincial governments. Whenever the communists are involved and whenever you are dealing with a significant, well disciplined party cadre, winning an election may be defined as "acquiring any administrative or executive offices in the resultant government." If you have done so, you have won! Winning is not simply a function of 51% of the vote, in any case whatsoever, since an election is merely a means of getting into a government, reconstituting it in one way or another as a coalition, at which point the communists begin to destroy their coalition partners while holding the ranks of the respective parties true to the coalition government, in which there are finally nothing left but communists. This is what I would like to identify as "right strategy." "Winning an election" is simply a question of whether or not you have gotten into the government. It is not just a question of whether you get 51% of the vote.

[redacted]

That is essentially irrelevant. Good communists acquire that, progressively, as they make life impossible for their coalition partners.

RED II: May I break in? In the situation, as we saw it, the Blue GVN element was totally divided into a number of individuals. There seemed to be no organized parties. We felt, therefore, that we could exercise varying degrees of influence, leverage and control over a large majority of the members of a new national assembly.

CONTROL: Yes.....

RED II (NLF): In this connection, I think if you conceive of elections in this fashion, as providing yourself with a new popular base from which to expand your control of the state, through protracted struggle; if you understand elections in this sense, then I think, if you look at the question of a military coup by the GVN, in this light, it takes on quite a different appearance. I have often thought of the proposition in this way. First, the American ability to prevent a GVN coup will decline, through time as US troop strength is reduced. Secondly, the communist objective of establishing bases within a coalition government, so that they can build the strength of the insurgent organization, presupposes that a coup will not occur. If a coup occurs, then this operational base is taken away from them. Thus, in theory then, it may be that those who have the greatest interest in preventing a coup in Vietnam are not the Americans, but the insurgent organizations. As the American ability to prevent a coup declines and as the US troops disappear, then the urgency of carrying out a coup increases, among the GVN, as the only possible alternative to the progressive take-over of government by the communists, as a result of the elections. These facts, I think must figure mightily in one's consideration. I suggest, indeed, ultimately -- in terms of 18 months or 24 months or more -- the United States might have a vested interest in encouraging a coup; not in preventing it.

BLUE II: I think, perhaps, our 51% ploy has not been fully understood here since our entire election position was not contained in the final scenario projection. The 51% applied in the election as we proposed it, on a provincial basis. In each province we visualized a number

[redacted]

of representatives to a constituent assembly. Each slot was based on very high population figures since the GVN has the population centers under its control. In addition, the 51% majority rule would require a run-off election for each position, so that the splinter of individuals in the party which we well recognize, would not be completely taken care of, but would at least minimize damage done by them, so that we would finally get, in the provinces where NLF ran very strongly, a chance to unify the various parties against the one NLF political party. Their choice would be the NLF or us, and where the GVN was not an absolute minority against the NLF, it might win. The idea from the beginning was to avoid a coalition government at all costs. The important thing, then, was an election for a constituent assembly where the great majority of representatives would be anti-NLF. This was our supposition, based on looking at voting patterns, etc.

DIRECTOR: May I suggest this; I think this election issue is a terribly important one and quite complex. For example, some of the points you make are really quite interesting and one or two are quite new, I think. One of the most interesting aspects of the Red scenario was their hope of retaining US troop presence in South Vietnam until after the elections. That seemed to me, in my innocence, to be very inconsistent with the whole communist approach toward "free elections" -- at least, in terms of some of the things I thought they had said in the past. I wonder whether it wouldn't be a useful thing, between now and this afternoon, for each side to prepare a three minute rationale covering its election approach. This might clarify why each side felt that the odds were in its favor and why, for example, a free election was acceptable to both and why, in fact, a free election could be used to the benifit of either side.

BLUE II: I would like to make just one point here. If our assumptions were correct, the NLF would not have a portfolio in that kind of government.

RED II: It wasn't a government -- just a constituent assembly.

[redacted]

BLUE II: Yes, that's true. You would not have a majority in the new constituent assembly, and if everything were majority rule from then on, you might very well end up without any portfolios.

DIRECTOR: This whole discussion, I think illustrates what I have felt for a long time. That is, serious negotiations will never occur in real life unless each party, for its own reasons, felt the odds favored its coming out of negotiations with a very substantial amount of the government. It's very interesting to see: (a) that you both think that the odds favor you; and (b) that you both have a logical rationale for your assessment of the odds. For that reason, I think you will agree that this election angle was a very useful thing to develop and that it is important to summarize the opposing positions for the Seniors this afternoon. General, do you agree?

GENERAL KEMP: Yes.....

BLUE II: I would like to make one more observation on this matter. We really didn't go into this election business with our eyes closed. We could see some of the outcomes that Red presented as distinct possibilities. We felt, however, if we could get the good guys -- a majority in the constituent assembly -- and disengage the United States from this whole process, then we had a chance to win some more in whatever form of government the constituent assembly came up with, in terms of how it structured the government. If we could not win an overwhelming majority, then exactly what Red visualized might, indeed, take place. Thus, in terms of our stated objectives, and since negotiations were moving along, and since elections were in the mill, we did not buy nation-wide elections. We bought elections to get provincial delegates who went to some sort of assembly. This was very significant.

RED II: Well, I don't think this point was ever really reconciled by Control, for the NLF/DRV thought that we must get into government by the most direct route.

CONTROL: One of the reasons, I must confess, that the matter wasn't reconciled by Control, was that we did not have a clear understanding of your opposing positions. That is why I believe it would be useful to develop the entire rationales for the Seniors later today. May I now move on to another subject?

[redacted]

RED II: I just want to say I'm less sanguine about the election outcome than our messages might indicate. I think the whole election matter remains inconclusive because, at this phase, the basic issue is still unresloved. Neither is the question of troop withdrawals, nor the matter of the ultimate timing and employment of residual forces. Further, it seems that some of us are overly optimistic of Red's chances in the election; not that I think there is any doubt that we Reds have a very substantial chance of pulling it off in our favor. I think we proceeded all along on the conviction that we would easily come to power through any political process in South Vietnam. In real life, however, I am personally convinced that the forces in Hanoi and the NLF don't share that conviction. They would lay down their arms only most reluctantly. They would abandon the basic principles of Mao's doctrine of "conquest by force" and take up the political role as a party even more reluctantly, even though they believe that they represent the only real political force in South Vietnam. They would assume a party role most reluctantly and with great caution because of previous experience with trickery and because they would be facing a system wherein an ARVN establishment of substantial force was left behind, as well as an ongoing political system, designed by the other side with ample financial backing. It seems to me, the overriding factor then, would be the psychology of victory throughout the entire country and I'm not at all convinced that the presence of American forces is a net advantage to the Reds. I think all of these points that have been brought up are very plausible, to varying degrees of course, and I would argue for retaining them. The overriding negative factor, however, may be the GVN establishment's ability to convince the people that it's here to stay.

DIRECTOR: I would like, if I may, to move on to one or two other points. Time is pressing and there is another important issue that I would like to raise at this stage of the game. One of the most difficult points to resolve and at the same time, one of the most important ones, was the whole question of disarming the VC. Actually, in the last analysis, this is a critical point in terms of reaching an agreement and what happens after an agreement is reached. It was quite clear that the Reds were not about to be disarmed. It was also quite clear that Blue was fairly optimistic about their being

disarmed; infact, I would say very optimistic on their being disarmed, and Blue tossed in a few of its regular units as a trade-off. The reason I suggest that Blue was very optimistic -- and perhaps, if I may say so, too optimistic -- was because, in the Blue contingencies, there was no mention about what would happen if, indeed, the VC were not disarmed. I wonder how Blue was going to handle that one?

BLUE II: Well our main hedge, in terms of contingencies, was the protracted presence of US troops until we saw things going the way we wanted them to.

CONTROL: You still indicated a definite terminal date, yet you'd have to keep US troops around for quite awhile to accomplish anything like you've just suggested.

BLUE II: That's again a misinterpretation of our intent. In terms of the electoral process, we had geared it as part of our hedge and tied the US troop withdrawal to that hedge. I think, if we could, that point might wait until the election briefings. We felt we had covered that point in this type of contingency.

CONTROL: Alright, but I must confess that I felt you were pretty sanguine about withdrawing US troops from Vietnam before the issue of the VC armed units was settled.

BLUE II: I'm not sure we were sanguine. Maybe a better way to say it would be that we really didn't know how we could bring it off. And if, in the real world, that's a good question for analysis, we'd be open for some questions there.

BLUE II: We did make disarming of the NVA regulars, the VC, etc., a requirement under a whole chain of events that was to start with the cease-fire and continue on to reduction of national forces and withdrawal of foreign troops.

DIRECTOR: But the Reds made the point that they weren't about to be disarmed and I agree that this is a sticky issue and one of the things that troubled me was this; it is not only a sticky issue, but also such

an important issue that I would have thought that, in your Blue contingency planning, there would be something about what would happen even if the Reds agree to disarm and did not go ahead with it, as the case would quite likely be.

RED II: I might just throw in the idea at this point that was in the back of our minds, although I don't think it ever came through in any of our messages. That is, if somehow we Reds had been forced into a position where we had to disarm -- and we weren't about to get in that position -- we had in mind that our units would just disappear. There just wouldn't be anyone to disarm. That is probably a rather realistic point to make here.

BLUE II: Some of us have just recently, been involved in real world problems along that line. That is, the United States has been trying to determine just how many arms have been distributed so far, in Vietnam, so that we can re-form the Hamlet Militia and this has taken an inordinate amount of time and these are friendly people! (LAUGHTER)

RED II: I think that we were quite heartened by the script as it evolved on this question of disarming, by the fact that we had achieved our big objective of the cease-fire without giving up any of this great bargaining position of our VC forces. We hadn't given up the territory and the VC hadn't been disarmed. They were still in control and they still resisted any civil official. Now, facing the second problem from the Blue side -- that is, the protracted retention of the American forces -- our search of this, in depth, indicated that if we could cope with this in the realm of world opinion, that we could end up with our forces still armed and in place, while the American forces eventually would have to be withdrawn. Thus, our big factor of strength would still be in place and the American forces would be gone. Of course, this is another reason we wanted the early elections.

CONTROL: As a matter of fact, you keep talking about early elections and American forces withdrawing and I was surprised that you were ready to settle for them remaining in South Vietnam so long.

[redacted]

RED II (NLF): When the American Army has been given the order, "you won't shoot," then it becomes an ally of the insurgent and, the longer that army stays in place, the easier it is for the Reds to take over the country, for such an Army is "a giant with feet of clay."

BLUE II: There was no agreement to freeze-in-place. You may recall the scenario said we would have the authority to redeploy in support of Revolutionary Development (RD). This gave us a great deal of maneuverability.

RED II (NLF): Yes, but we could fight you with politics and you could only fight us with weapons. We would have attacked you on the dimension where you were powerless to move and then, under those circumstances, we would have welcomed two years.

BLUE II: There was a cease-fire in-place, wasn't there?

BLUE II: Not a cease-fire in-place. No, no, and that's a very important point for us to reach a clear understanding on. It was not "in-place;" we had maneuverability in support of RD efforts.

RED II: Except that we resisted any intrusion upon our territory; and I mean effectively resisted.

DIRECTOR: Colonel _____, do you want to comment on our conception of the cease-fire as it emerged from the opposing Red and Blue messages?

CONTROL: Well, as you might have noticed, it was pointed out in the scenario that some of the minor points you have already discussed went by the board very fast; e.g., how we were going to administer the elections; and how we were going to supervise a cease-fire, if we ever got to one? The scenario also pointed out that disarming the VC and disbanding the VC, if that occurred, would be considered a real military victory for the Blue team since that was one key item the Reds did not want. We were sure that the Reds would never buy it! Even if it meant the VC's dissolving into the wood-work, more or less. But, by the very fact that there was nobody left to fight, this would again reflect a military victory for the Blue team.

[redacted]

DIRECTOR: Yes, but our conception of the cease-fire was, in fact, that there would be substantial Blue support in pacification activities. In fact.....

CONTROL: Yet, this was a matter which was still to be resolved, as far as negotiations went, because the Blue team said that pacification efforts would continue. That would have meant the intervention of civil officials into VC areas. On the other hand, the VC were saying, "We're going to fight intruders anytime they come in." Overriding all of this, however, was the very fact that in one instance the Reds kept saying, "We want no delineation of boundaries, as to what is NLF territory and what is GVN territory." At the same time, the Reds indicated that, if VC areas were infiltrated or were encroached upon by Blue forces, the VC were going to fight. So, there seemed to be a lack of decision, on Red's part, to indicate just what their territory was.

RED II: Well, that was founded on the fact that Red felt the VC could move into Blue areas without discovery; Blue couldn't identify the VC, necessarily, but the VC could identify Blue and shoot if Blue moved into VC areas. Thus, the Red team felt, the fuzzier this subject remained, the better.

RED II (NLF): What is ours is ours, and what is yours is negotiable! (LAUGHTER)

RED II: We heard you, Comrade Mao! (LAUGHTER)

DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, I believe we have explored that question sufficiently. Dr. _____ had another question which I think would probably be useful if it were surfaced at this time.

CONTROL: My point has really been raised already, and it relates to the GVN's role in this entire thing, beginning with the initial pledge by the US Ambassador in Prague that the United States would begin an unqualified suspension of the bombardment of North Vietnam. It seems to me this could not have been done, really, without clearing with the GVN. I mean, something like what has happened would have been seen coming and that the GVN would consider it to be a original sin; the entire scenario that is. We recall

[redacted]

the Korean situation, for example, where the South Korean Government created endless difficulties in the course of the whole period from the initial beginning of negotiations at Panmunjon. Finally, of course, the South Koreans had to be attacked, in a very specialized operation, by the Chinese. Then the ROK Government had to be reassured by a mutual security treaty with the United States. I don't see either a "stick or a carrot" of those dimensions as available, in this kind of scenario, to either side. So, it seems to me that, something would have to give. Either the United States would have to call the whole thing off at some point, or bring about the overthrow of the GVN.

BLUE II: This is the price the United States would have to pay. If it had gone this far in negotiations, given the great dimensions of opinion -- world wide and in the United States -- this was an evil we would have to face.

BLUE II (GVN): The GVN position was, first that it did not want any elections and that was pretty definite. The GVN requested 15 years prior to a plebescite in its second message and the US Blue team knocked us down to five years in our last message; that was as far as we were willing to go. The inner circle wanted to retain its power. Secondly, the GVN made specific moves which are, in reality, available to the GVN; that is, move an airborne brigade into Chao Duc to threaten Cambodia. This is an action the GVN is perfectly capable of doing and it can be done without any assistance from the United States. The ARVN has ammunition supply, sufficient airlift, and an air force. The GVN, therefore, could make an incursion into Cambodia, as we threatened to do in the second move, in order to sabotage the negotiations. Furthermore.....

DIRECTOR: I should point out, incidentally, that Control was not all together oblivious to what the GVN element of the Blue team was doing and indeed, in its scenario projection, Control pointed out that there were incursions by ARVN units into Cambodia. Those incursions were probably ignored by all players.

BLUE II (GVN): They were ignored but, I don't think they would be in the real world. The other idea of the GVN basic strategy, as we saw it, was to preempt the negotiations because the GVN could see that the negotiations

[redacted]

would not go the way the GVN wanted them to go. It was better, from several viewpoints, for the GVN to go ahead and preempt all of the negotiations to get all these foreigners out of Vietnam and try to work out something with the NLF. Of course, in the very first move, the GVN element of the Blue Team began negotiations with the NLF and continued to do so all the way through the game. We did this purposely and in the real world, I see that the GVN would do exactly that. The GVN would be negotiating with the NLF, regardless of what its public position is.

DIRECTOR: It might be interesting if we showed you our rack up of the negotiating positions that emerged from each side; either their initial position or their fall back position or, at least, as much as Control could read into the general text and moves of both sides, in the terms of key negotiating positions. Now you may not agree with us; this is a very highly structured chart and we may never want to use it again, but I think it might be interesting for you to see how these various negotiations issues fell into place. I believe you can see it without straining too hard, especially, if you recognize the power of international opinion and American domestic opinion, once negotiations seemed to be in process. One will not have to strain, too hard, to feel that what would emerge from this kind of rack up would be one way or another, a political resolution.

[redacted]

[redacted]

SIGMA II - MOVE III

NEGOTIATING POINTS

	Agreed	Negotiable	Sticky
I. Political:			
1. Constitutent Assembly:	X		
a. NLF participation	X		
b. Timing			X
2. Elections:	X		
a. Supervision	X		
b. Majority/Plurality			X
c. Timing		X	
d. Voting Age	X		
e. Registration		X	
II. Military:			
1. Cease-fire:	X		
a. Definition			X
b. Implementation			X
c. Supervision	X		
2. Disarm:			
a. NLF			X
b. GVN		X	
c. Supervision	X		
3. Withdrawal:			
a. Definition	X		
b. US/FWF	X		
c. NVA	X		
d. Timing			X
e. Supervision	X		

[redacted]

[redacted]

DIRECTOR: The question of timing of the election was regarded as a sticky point. By sticky, we mean that somebody will have to go back to the drawing board. The majority/plurality issue is another sticky point. Most of the other issues, however, were agreed upon. Those that weren't -- naturally, they were the ones we indicated as being negotiable -- seemed to be minor enough to be negotiated. Anyway, that's how the political issues seemed to stack up. On the military, we've got a few more sticky problems. Two rather difficult ones on the cease- fire. Then, of course, there's the question of disarming the NLF. By-and-large, though, there was a fair amount of agreement, without having to strain either Red or Blue's bargaining points. Does this chart seem to be a fairly faithful reproduction of Red and Blue's understanding of how these things might fall into place?

RED II: I guess so..... We felt that Control had "sold us down the river" on the agreement for the constituent assembly elections. I mean, that was not what we had in mind. That's why the Red Team, really, disregarded that point in Control's second scenario projection.

DIRECTOR: Yes, we knew that you disregarded us. (LAUGHTER)

BLUE II: Mr. Chairman, I think your first chart is misleading because we didn't even give you positions on elections for the Blue side.

DIRECTOR: I don't know, you gave us about three pages .....

BLUE II: But, that was all for the constituent assembly!

DIRECTOR: Well, that's an election.....

BLUE II: But, your chart doesn't seem to reflect Blue's thinking, in terms of your definition of an election. Now, if you're talking only about elections for a constituent assembly, then fine.

[redacted]

DIRECTOR: Alright, let's see the chart again. You're right, we didn't say which kind of election, but on these issues -- for example, the supervision -- I would have assumed that you thought about the supervision, voting age, registration and all that sort of stuff, and that didn't seem to be much of a problem.

RED II: Of course, it's also true that all X's are not equal in weight.

DIRECTOR: Quite right.

BLUE II: That brings up another point. We were rather firm in our last message that the NLF gets no role, whatsoever, in any government until after a constituent assembly forms a new government. Was there any objection to this? Any reaction?

RED II: Really, I just don't see -- if we were arguing over whether there should be a new constituent assembly and a new constitution -- how Blue could have held out for a new constitution in face of the NLF's willingness to accept, with minor modifications only, the existing constitution.

BLUE II: The Blue team didn't know that Red had agreed to accept the existing constitution.

CONTROL: We knew they had, and that was the thing that surprised us. It also resulted in some of these decisions by Control.

BLUE II: But, we were willing to run new elections under the present constitution. That was our official position!

CONTROL: No, you weren't! The present constitution requires only a plurality; Blue insisted on a 51% majority vote for election of a candidate to the assembly.

BLUE II: That's a secondary stage. In the second Blue message, as I recall, Blue said, our initial position was , "Let the NLF come in as a minor political party under this constitution and we will hold new elections." As a fallback, Blue offered a new constituent assembly. Then

[redacted]

in the next scenario, Control had accepted our fall back position. After that, we devised the election that you have been discussing.

RED II: We were very surprised.

DIRECTOR: This reinforces, I think, the need to spend a few minutes this afternoon describing the Red and Blue concepts of the election, and why you both thought you would be able to bring it off to your benefit. I think this is a very important.....

BLUE II: I'm not sure we are going to bring it off with success. It's just that we tried to devise the best safeguards and ploys to make winning the election a possibility.

RED II (NLF): The question of the constituent assembly. itself, isn't too awfully important, I think, from the insurgency point of view. The important thing is that the NLF be given a share of immediate political power.

BLUE II: This is the point I was trying to make in reference to the chart.....

RED II (NLF): In my own mind, thinking for myself, the alternative to giving the NLF a share of the portfolios in the government is the continuation of protracted rural warfare. It would be that important to me, in any case.

BLUE II: Yes, but you see, with Blue in control of the government all through the preparation of the election process; in control of police; in control of everything, Blue is in a much better position to win that election than it would have been otherwise. This was one of Blue's points when we said, "No compromise," in a sense. What that term means, I'm not exactly sure, but we.....

DIRECTOR: Let's take a look at a calculation that Control introduced into the game, on the matter of elections, which neither side seemed to pay much attention to, either. May I have the slide on the elections?

[redacted]

[redacted]

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE GVN POPULATED CONTROL ("HAMLET EVAL. SURVEY")			ESTIMATED ELECTION RESULTS IN SVN ("FRENCH ANALYSIS")		
In SVN	Before 17 Apr 1968	After 17 Apr 1968	GVN	NLF	OTHER
GVN	67%	74%	44%	7%	23%
NLF	17%	26%		26%	
OTHER	16%	0%			
TOTAL	100%	100%	44%	33%	23%

DIRECTOR: Now, the left side of this chart is based on a recent Hamlet Evaluation Survey. The right side is based on a hypothetical "French Analysis" from some calculations that were done in Control by a reasonably knowledgeable participant and we just shoved it in as something that might stimulate your thinking along these lines. In effect, on the basis of the Hamlet Evaluation Survey, it looks as if the GVN could do very well. I should explain, that, after 17 April, Control assumed the contested areas were occupied by one side or the other, thus eliminating the gray areas by dividing them up between the GVN and the NLF. That makes things look real good for the GVN. But, when you consider our "French Analysis" election results and what would happen, even in areas under GVN control, it doesn't look quite as encouraging for the GVN. In effect, what you would get would be a GVN plurality and not a majority. I guess that is what Blue was worried about.

CONTROL: The "Frenchman" used the following assumptions: In GVN-controlled areas, 60% of the people would vote for the existing GVN; 10% would vote for the NLF; and 30% would vote for the tertiary quid; that is, split among a number of other parties of dubious identification (e.g.

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neutralists, pacifists, etc., ad infinitum). On the other hand, in NLF-controlled areas, the NLF candidates could count on a 99-100% vote in their behalf. Thus, the overall result, after run-off elections between the two candidates with the largest plurality, in each election, would be as follows: 44% of the government would be re-elected from the existing GVN. 33% of the government would be elected from the NLF slate, and the remaining 23% would be from the tertiary quid.

RED II: I think the point should be made here that the NLF 33% consists of a hard, unified, disciplined 33%. What the GVN is -- the other 44% -- is totally different. It's a sprawling inchoate mass. I mean there really is no such thing as 44% voting for the GVN.

BLUE II: That 33% is actually 33% of the candidates, is it not? That sort of puts you aghast! Certainly out of the 44% and 23%, a coalition, strong enough to oppose the NLF, should emerge. After all, you're not dealing with a government that has never dealt with communists before.

RED II: You may be right.

DIRECTOR: Well, I gather the NLF would be pleased to settle for this sort of election result.

RED II (NLF): Certainly, provided it's related to issues such as troop withdrawal, disarmament, and so on .....

BLUE II: Well, Gentlemen, I think the only point we're trying to make, without asking the other side to buy it, is that we addressed ourselves to a constituent assembly. We did not address ourselves to the election of a national government.

DIRECTOR: That point is very clear to us.

RED II (NLF): There was another constituent assembly once, in Petrograd, in 1918.

CONTROL: Right.....

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BLUE II: I'm merely saying that we didn't debate it; that's what I'm trying to say.

DIRECTOR: Let's move on.

BLUE II: Dr. _____, I'd just like to throw a little light on that last comment by another member of Blue. The Blue's first position on this question, which Control reconciled with Red's first position and fall back position, and so on, was as follows: First, all bona fide South Vietnamese would be permitted to participate in the government under the present constitution. That was the initial Blue position as it was sent to Control. If you recall, the initial Red position indicated, surprisingly enough, a willingness to dissolve the NLF, provided all other parties were dissolved.

RED II: That is correct; then we would have a proliferation of new parties.

BLUE II: Right. So we feel that Control has moved Blue a little further than necessary in bringing the two positions closer together. You're really not as far apart as you think.

DIRECTOR: Yes, that's probably true.

RED II: I think I should point out that some people on our side -- namely the dissidents, that is, and I hope I don't misrepresent their position -- felt we ought to have prior commitments for positions in the government as a result of, or in proportion to, our showing in the elections; therefore, the 33% -- if it was always 33% -- wouldn't bother them. The Seniors had a somewhat different view, as did some of the members of the Action group, with the result that we ended up with a position saying we were willing to take our chances in an election structure under the present constitution which does not guarantee any sort of a proportionate representation, since the cabinet is appointed. That meant that we were relying on our ability to elect a guy that we could reach. I think that is quite a different game.

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RED II: Well, we certainly felt that it was unrealistic to sit down and say, "give us the Ministry of Interior." I mean, we just didn't think we could get it that way, so we had to choose another roundabout way of getting there!

RED II (NLF): How about Education and Agriculture?

BLUE II: How about nothing?

RED II: Then we fight!

BLUE II: Oh, good! (LAUGHTER)

DIRECTOR: This is why it was resolved by Control. We didn't want the game to generate another fight. We wanted to take a long, hard look at what really happens when, if ever, we sit down to hammer out this sort of detail at the negotiating table.

RED II: Another point that emerges here is the question of what would be the extent of public opinion pressures on specific bargaining positions after the fighting had stopped? I think there's some difference of opinion as to just how massive these pressures would be on specific electoral structures.

DIRECTOR: Mr. _____, do you have any views on that question?

BLUE II: You mean public opinion, where?

RED II: In the United States. And I'm referring to pressure on Blue, after the fighting has stopped, to give away the safeguards on an electoral process, where there was an agreement in principle on cease-fire and elections and NLF participation and so forth; in a non-war situation in an election year.

BLUE II: I think it would be some.

RED II: I'm sure there would be some, but the question is as to what the force of it would be.

BLUE II: Pressures would certainly diminish as the boys stopped getting killed.

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DIRECTOR: Gentlemen, we have nine more minutes. On the basis of this discussion, I think perhaps we may ask some of the pros, as opposed to us amateurs, their verdict and how they sentenced us and what advice, perhaps, they would have to offer us for the Senior session, this afternoon. General Kemp?

GENERAL KEMP: The only point I want to emphasize is that you should get the two three-minute presentations lined up to give your opposing Red and Blue positions on elections in Vietnam.

DIRECTOR: Well, we in SIGMA II have been running a fairly expeditious operation, and I'm in favor of adjourning. Does anyone have any further views?

CONTROL: There is one minor item, I would like to bring up, that we never really got to grips with. It is on the matter of withdrawal. As you notice on the chart there, we had an X indicating only one sticky issue and that was the timing. I'm not at all sure we agreed on definition. Mr. _____, in his assessment of the situation, talked of withdrawal and I gather, at least, that you were perhaps anticipating a withdrawal of US forces from the Southeast Asia mainland, as opposed to withdrawal from Vietnam.

RED II: No, that would be an ultimate objective and we purposely restricted the scope of negotiations to Vietnam, since it would have been unrealistic, at such an early stage, to expect to jujitsu the Jolly Blue Giant clear back across the Pacific Ocean.

DIRECTOR: Before we break, I might ask Mr. _____, who is directing SIGMA I; is there anything you've heard in this discussion and in yours that you would like to highlight at this time?

DIRECTOR: I don't believe so. The games, of course, are very different. We didn't get very far into negotiations. I don't see many cross-points in the two games.

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SIGMA I & II-67

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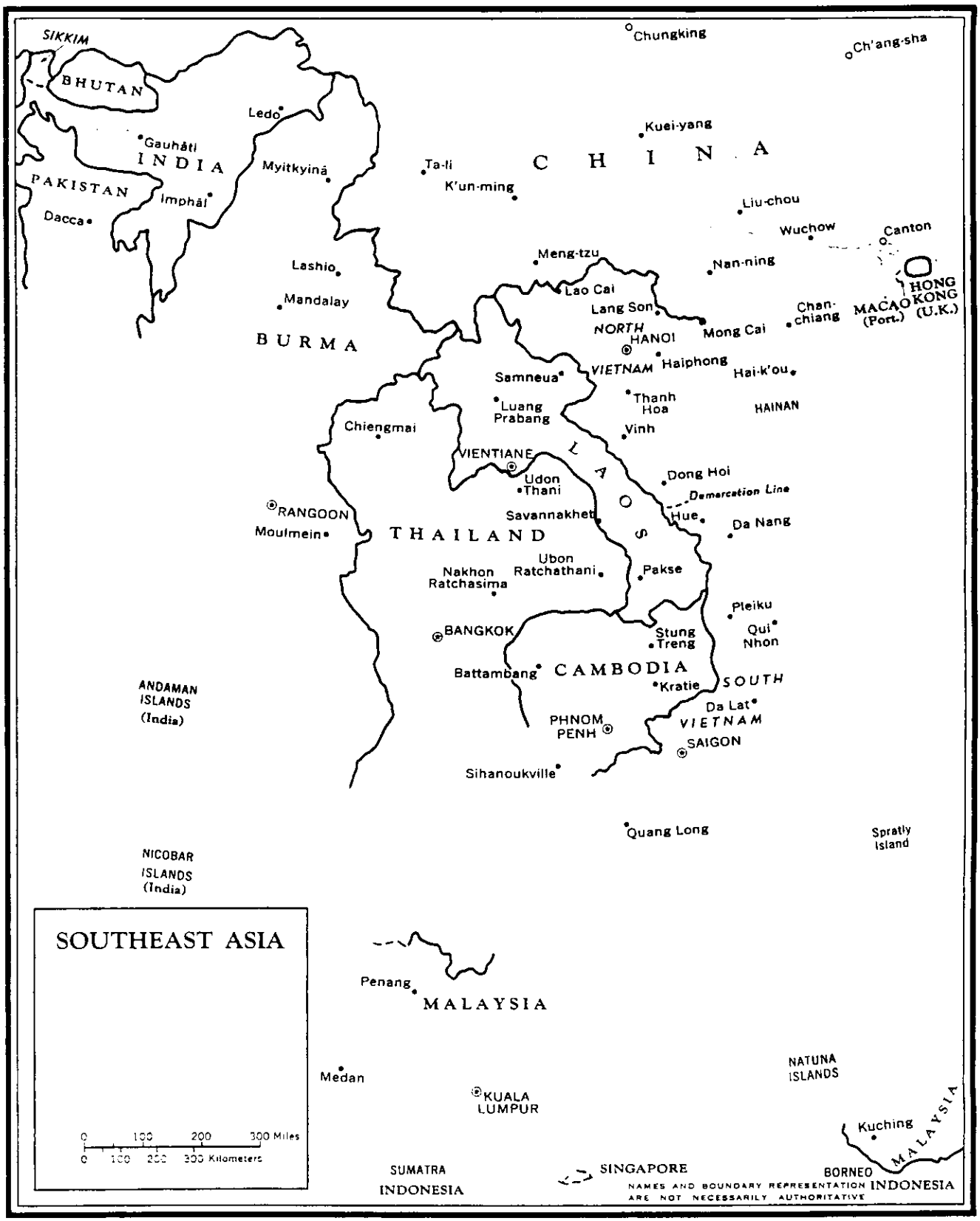
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