



SECRET

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT DIEM AND DEPUTY SECRETARY QUARLES  
10 May 1957, 1040 to 1210 Room 3E924, The Pentagon

Present were: President Ngo Dinh Diem  
General Tran Van Don, Staff Chief of the General Staff  
Vietnamese Ambassador Tran Van Chuong  
Nguyen Huu Chau, Secretary of State for the Interior and to the Presidency  
Rear Admiral D. L. McDonald, Aide to President Ngo Dinh Diem  
Deputy Secretary Donald A. Quarles  
General Nathan F. Twining  
Mr. Mansfield D. Sprague, Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)  
Lt. General Alonzo P. Fox, USA  
US Ambassador to Viet-Nam Elbridge Durbrow  
Assistant Secretary of State Robertson  
Mr. Kenneth Young, Dept. of State  
Mr. Sedgewick (Interpreter)  
Captain B. A. Robbins, Jr., USN

Secretary Quarles opened the meeting by explaining that instead of a briefing for President Ngo as had originally been scheduled, it was felt that this might be considered presumptuous in view of the President's knowledge of Southeast Asia, and therefore the President was invited to express his views on the situation.

President Ngo proceeded to sketch out his thoughts on the strategic problem of Viet-Nam, the military situation and its requirements. He views Viet-Nam as a bridgehead, which in case of conflict would receive support and assistance from SEATO. Viet-Nam is endangered by two things; subversive elements under Communist direction and aggression by invasion. This latter may take the form of invasion at the 17th parallel, or over the high plateau and then down through Laos to cut off the capital from the west, or a combination of both. The invasion route across the 17th parallel would cut off a large percentage of the population and not enough would be left to raise additional forces for resistance. The interior line

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