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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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June 3, 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. McNamara
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. Walt Rostow

SUBJECT: Cold War Strategy

Some time ago I asked Major General Lansdale to spell out for me a concept, which we had discussed together, for a review of U.S. cold war strategy. The attached paper is the result, and I think you will find it worth reading.

Signed
ROSWELL L. GILPATRICK
Deputy Secretary of Defense

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

MEMORANDUM

By Maj. Gen. Lansdale *La*

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Subject: A High-Level Look at the Cold War

What precise strategy will give the U.S. the win it seeks in the cold war?

After two and a half years of valiant effort by the Kennedy Administration, as well as with hindsight of the fifteen years of prior international strife since the cessation of World War II hostilities, the U.S. now has experience in depth to draw upon for a mature reappraisal and projection of U.S. strategy in the cold war. Such a reappraisal and projection, if done with calm wisdom and fortitude, should result in a clearly realistic blueprint of where we have been, where we are now, and where we should be going, in relation to both Moscow and Peking. This strategic blueprint would provide guidance for tactical or shorter-range actions, including practical definition of immediate U.S. objectives, and for the most effective and economic use of U.S. resources in the proper "mix" for sound teamwork.

I. CONCEPT

The reappraisal and projection of U.S. strategy in the cold war could be undertaken best by men who have had great responsibilities in U.S. actions and who will be free enough of other demands to give this subject the thorough and reflective thought required. The concept is to have a small group of senior Americans appointed by the President to undertake this work, at the White House level, for several months. It is suggested that the group would work under the guidance of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs and be supported by a working group selected from top staff levels of U.S. department and agencies. (I hope that I would have the privilege of being the Secretary of Defense's staff representative to support this effort.)

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II. TOPICS FOR STUDY

While it is expected that the senior group would make its own outline of study, the following topics are noted for consideration:

Our Communist Opponents. We need to know, with considerable precision, the strategic blueprint being followed by the Communists -- their exact, phased objectives, the mechanism employed to reach those objectives, and the relative time-table being followed. (It is probable that the group will find the U. S. intelligence community unable to provide ready information in the depth required; this should lead to sharper definition of U. S. collection needs, as an imperative task.)

In such a study, penetrating questions will be raised. What are the critical points to the Communists in their strategy, in their assimilation of a foreign people when they are most vulnerable (conversely, were there times when a small but determined U. S. action could have upset Communist moves in Tibet, Cuba, and Laos, for example)? Is there merit (for possible U. S. emulation in our own way) in training of selected foreigners for political action, such as that given at the Lenin and Sun Yat Sen Schools? What precise role do the Communists assign their diplomats and to international agreements?

These broader questions could be highlighted by pinpointing on one or more critical areas, illustratively. For example, how is Communist strategy progressing in Venezuela? If large U. S. resources are applied, directly and indirectly, to the elimination of a handful of Communist guerrillas in the hills, does this really hurt the Communist effort or is it merely a side-play, draining our resources? Are there a handful of key Communists and key planned moves which are more realistic targets for the U. S., which require the skilled work of a handful of Americans instead of a large and expensive U. S. mission and program? Is much the same true of Vietnam, of Brazil?

Is it feasible to maintain a Communist order of battle, country by country, including the duty assignments of key individuals and biographic data indicating their capabilities and weaknesses? If this is feasible and can be studied in conjunction with an analysis

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of the Communist strategy, country by country, would this not permit far more realistic guidance to the U. S. in devising U. S. programs and in selecting the right U. S. personnel for carrying out those programs successfully? Even at this late date, U. S. Country Teams abroad are all too unwitting of exactly who are their opposite numbers. Deep in the American character is the will to win, particularly when the contest is understood and the opponents clearly identified. How can U. S. Country Teams really pitch in to win when they don't realize fully that they are on a battleground and have real, live opponents who are working hard to defeat the U. S. effort?

Economics. We also need to know, with similar precision, the probable Communist strategy in the economic field. Is there a point of maximum U. S. vulnerability in the outflow of gold for which the Communists are awaiting, to saturate the world economy with the gold amassed by the Soviets and apparently held in reserve for just such a strategic play? What would be the effects on the world position of the U. S. ? What would we have to do to remedy this? To prepare for such an event? What would be the best U. S. mechanism to monitor international Communist economic moves and, more importantly, to ensure the inclusion of correct economic measures in U. S. strategy and tactics?

Shouldn't the international commodity market also be placed under the purview of such a U. S. mechanism? It is noted that the political/economic action theory of the faculty at the Lenin School in Moscow is based, where applicable -- such as in Latin America, on the vulnerability of a nation's economic over-dependence on one single item: Venezuelan oil, Brazilian coffee, Bolivian tin, etc. A drop in world price, a manipulation in the commodity market, can create an ideal climate favoring Communist political, psychological, and paramilitary actions in a specific target nation.

As necessity impels the U. S. to embark upon vital fiscal programs abroad, such as underwriting Vietnam's war or insisting upon monetary reforms in Brazil and Colombia, how can such programs be best controlled: to give the U. S. policy decision level an exact fix on progress and status, to clearly define cut-off points, to assess realistically the political effects on local resources needed to reach long-range U. S. goals (for example, the effects upon small business which is integral to building a middle class, which in turn is an integral need for the political base we must have to reach the U. S. objective), and to establish parameters which give the U. S. sufficient room for tactical maneuver?

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Philosophy of Operations. By this time, the U.S. has built up a large and complex body of practices in its cold war operations. The huge budgets and the equally huge effort required to flex the effort of mammoth organizations from an accustomed groove into a dynamic action on a newly discerned target evokes the thought that it might be high time we reconsidered how we use what we have in this struggle. Simply because we have the reassurance of dedicated leadership and the comfort of numbers going through vigorous activities, can we be truly certain that we are fighting the right war in Vietnam the right way? Is it truly and fundamentally a sophisticated shooting war for us, with great dependence upon material means and need for control organizations extending all the way back into Washington?

One of the great truths which the U.S. should heed, as it designs its cold war operations, was confided to me once in Vientiane by General Sananikone. We were discussing U.S. help in building a road in Laos. He commented: "I hope you won't build this road for us, but instead show us how to do it. In turn, I hope we have the wisdom not to have just some Lao Army engineers or a civil works group from the capital city build this road. The people out in the provinces must participate, voluntarily -- when we make it plain to them how they will benefit. Once the people are involved, by their own will, the road becomes theirs. They will make sure that it is kept repaired. Every village will take pride in it."

This basic truth, of course, applies to more than building a road. If the phrase "teaching political principles" were substituted for "teaching road building," for example, a glimpse of how broad this thought actually is would be gained. A handful of Americans applied this rule and helped stabilize the independence of Vietnam in 1954-56 (now looked back upon as "the good old days," although the threat of disaster and the complexity of problems were at least equal to today's, if not more so). A handful of Americans (literally, since they could be counted on the fingers of one hand) applied this same rule in the Huk campaign in the Philippines, by making sound use of the credit or influential repute they had inherited as Americans from generations of Americans who had proceeded them in the Philippines; as this handful of Americans was true to the best of their inheritance, deeply-rooted memories of U.S. motives were awakened in the Filipinos and they responded.

What do the people in a foreign nation really hope, in their innermost beliefs, to get in the way of help from the United States? They must have some ideal pictured in their mind's eye -- and it must be quite different from the picture their forefathers had of the English adventures of the Pax Britannica, the conquistadores of the Pax Hispanica, or the legionaries of the Pax Romana.

Are we seen as unselfish believers in the rule of law and in representative government, or as naive or rashly impolitic nouveau riche who are viewed with jealousy or with the suspicion that our hidden motives are short-term and self-serving? How much do we hinder our own effectiveness by self righteousness, by imposition of complex rules and organizations, by emphasis on the pragmatic at the expense of the spirit, by over-riding the need for empathy?

Are we treating each nation, where we are heavily committed, as a nation where our touch is so wisely deft and so wisely helpful that we can afford to let go in the foreseeable future -- and rightly expect it to continue growing strong in a way to ensure that our children can live in peace and honor with its children? Is our true aim to create such a brotherhood of nations or only to defeat the Communists?

The Human Factor. Let us describe a "cold war battle" as the defeat of a serious Communist attempt to conquer one nation, by means other than traditional war; the defeat usually will be marked by tacit Communist acknowledgment, through ceasing the immediate attempt and switching to a less visible strategy with a longer-range time-table. Then let us ask, which Americans can win the described "cold war battle"?

It is possible that, if such Americans can be truly identified and then employed with executive genius, the U. S. will have found its most priceless instrument for bringing about a decisive change in the outcome of the cold war favorable to the highest U. S. interests. Such a possibility certainly indicates the value of giving extraordinary consideration to the feasibility of doing this.

The problem is far more complex than appears on the surface. Essentially it entails the picking of an elite, moving individuals in this elite outside the customary career patterns which are so firmly

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established in U.S. departments and agencies, and then placing them on the battleground in such a way that their effectiveness wouldn't be dulled or seriously hampered by elements of the usual U.S. institutional approach. Candidly, this would cross the immediate self-interest of much and of many in the U.S. government.

There are subtleties in the criteria for the selection of such persons which seem to be outside the intricate mechanisms we have established in the art of personnel management. The statement is made based on long personal experience in seeking an exact means of selecting such persons. The only true criteria found yet is: If he proves to be the right person by his performance on the battleground, then he's the right person. It's a bit like Ramon Magsaysay's question when selecting his officers for promotion: "How many Huks has he killed?"; our question is: "What battle did he win?" In other words, the Americans who can win in this half-hidden struggle are still rather rare and probably will need to be hand-picked by someone with both trusted judgment and experience in winning cold war battles. The initial number might be as small as 10, the maximum possibly not even 100.

After the selection of such an elite group, means will have to be devised to employ and deploy them correctly. It would be preferable that they be volunteers. They should be protected from career penalties in their parent service (whether it be the Military Services, the Foreign Service, [redacted] so that they could perform this specialized duty and not fall behind their contemporaries who serve in normal duty capacities which are customary requisites for promotion. Tours of duty should be for the "duration" rather than for arbitrary time periods of rotation. (George Washington, plagued as he was with the arbitrary tours of Continental militia, would understand why you don't pull a man who can win off the battleground just because a time period is up.)

One method of deployment, for consideration, would be to form the elite into teams, so that a complete U.S. Country Team composed of such persons could be sent to a critical area at one time, replacing the regular institutionally aligned U.S. Country Team, with simple orders to win the U.S. goals there. When it had won the goals, it would return home for deployment elsewhere, as a team or split into cadres

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upon which several teams of elite could be built. It would leave behind, as an inheritance for the regular U.S. Country Team which had replaced it, a blueprint of the follow-up actions required to assure full progress being made on reaping the benefits offered by the victory.

While the above "human factors" have dealt mostly with the Executive Branch of the U.S. government, consideration also should be given to the human resource potential in the Legislative Branch of the U.S. government. A win in the cold war is heavily dependent upon the correct political action; often, this political action requires an "instinct for the political jugular" and the practice of sound ward-level politics. The inclusion of a few seasoned politicians, hand-picked in similar manner to the rest of the elite, would add priceless political know-how right on the battleground where it would be most helpful to the highest interests of the U.S. Inclusion in such an elite group might be a most fitting next step for unusually skilled political veterans who are active and alert, but ready for service to the country beyond the demands of periodic electoral campaigns.

School for Action. Just before he passed away in the Spring of 1963, Joseph Z. Kornfedder was urging that the U.S. found a "School for Political Action" to satisfy what he felt to be the most desperately urgent need of the U.S. in the cold war: the creation of skilled free world leadership for political action capable of completely defeating Communism. Since this urging has the testamentary weight of a dying man who had renounced Communism after high-level training and service in Communist political action internationally, it is offered as a topic worthy of consideration by a Presidential group.

Such a school, ideally, would permit the free world to have a continuing fresh input of younger men moving up into leadership who would further strengthen our political concept of individual liberty, bring the free world nations into ever more stable relationships, and contribute significantly to the defeat of Communism. Whether this ideal is attainable is a major point for thought. Who would instruct? Would the program of instruction encourage chauvinistic actions of expediency with long-range penalties? How would the students be selected? These are a few of the questions which arise.

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As peripheral considerations, drawn from personal experience, there are the needs for an adequate political text-book and for assuring the livelihood of dedicated patriots who serve their country at the expense of self. These deserve attention, as worth doing even if a formal school or system is never created. As caveats, two examples might serve. A suggestion (to the proper place in the U.S. government) that a modern case history text of democratic leadership in the free world, for use at leadership levels as a sort of U.S. version of "The Prince," could evoke only a tired, old, institutional, hack response in trying to produce it. As for assuring the livelihood of dedicated patriots, the spirit of man's freedom demands something more than a pension type of subsidy; the conscientious American who undertakes to get younger foreign patriots to serve their country selflessly in the best interests of the free world will discover that he has taken on lifetime responsibilities.

It is possible that other courses of action would produce much the same results as a formal, single school. The elite envisioned in the topic, "The Human Factor," above, would be undertaking considerable on-the-job education of U.S. and foreign officials as part of its winning on the battleground. It is possible that this role can be enlarged. Some present and past studies on the larger subject of the education or training of foreign personnel in the U.S. should contain clues on the means of getting a really sharp focus on practical, realistic training for action (in the sense meant by Kornfedder) within the present large U.S. programmed ventures. However, it should be borne in mind that trainees will be competing eventually against persons trained in the Lenin and Sun Yat Sen Schools; standards and discipline will have to be exceptionally high.

Forward Motion. There is much that goes against the grain of the American character in the way we have been fighting the cold war. Perhaps the hardest of all on us is the defensive role we adopted with the containment policy, in which we have tried to hold onto free territory against cunning and continuous aggression without once ever striking back into the Communist heartland with a telling blow. We are forever the nice little boy told to stay on our side of the street and not cross over and punch the bully who has hit us with rocks, mud, and taunts.

Here then is a basic piece of thinking to be done, as wise Americans examine our strategy. How best can we hit back, tellingly? Shouldn't we?

In this basic piece of thinking, it would be well to examine the whole gamut of the use of force, ours as well as our allies' supported by us. The range of examination should run from the more obvious actions on into the more imaginative actions. They all need surfacing, a hard look, and reflective thought. The more obvious actions are seen as including everything from the concept of a pre-emptive strike on down to armed raids into Communist areas of immediate threat to us (such as Cuba and North Vietnam). The more imaginative actions would be such operations as generating raids on Soviet nuclear stockpiles by Free Russian partisans or initiating a massive sabotage campaign in Eastern European satellites. In the middle of the spectrum of force would be actions against Communist China.

Then, hard thinking should be devoted to the crux of the matter: How do we truly defeat the Communists and emerge as a nation stronger than ever? As a nation born in a revolution based on principles long cherished by men through the centuries, would we not be deeply true to ourselves to use these same revolutionary principles to cause the overthrow of despots in Moscow and Peking and satellite capitals by their own citizenry? If this could be done, wouldn't we emerge stronger than ever as a nation and open the way for the world brotherhood which is the deep yearning in our national character?

Personal experience in defense of nations resisting Communist aggression taught me that the principles of the American Revolution, the promise in our Declaration of Independence, and the Rights of Man expressed in the first Ten Amendments of our Constitution are far more movingly dynamic to mankind than are the doctrines of Communism -- and will be so chosen when there is a fighting chance to make the choice. A strategy based on this almost untapped U.S. national strength, a strength of the spirit dominant over the material, deserves the finest thinking we can muster.

A strategy based on American Revolutionary principles would call for moves causing Communist citizenry to break with the old and start constructing anew. The moves would have the strongest, almost instinctive, backing of not only the U.S. public but by people throughout the free world. For example, an opening move might well be to re-introduce the Holy Bible into the Soviet Union, where copies are non-existent even in churches and monasteries, let alone being unavailable to the public. The next move might well be to pick up the free world ends of the long ties reaching back behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains, the ethnic groups -- such as our immigrant communities of Russians, Ukrainians, Eastern Europeans, and Chinese -- and give

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them a more dynamic role in the introduction of ideas into the Communist heartland: the rights of man, truly representative and responsive government, free enterprise -- so that we speak with the voice of the people, not the government, to the people.

The existence of similar ethnic ties in Asia, with tribal groups, cries for more initiative on our part, instead of our partial moves defending against skilled Chinese Communist use of these minorities. Is there some way to use the organizing genius with tribal groups of a Li Mi or of establishing a tribal center of our own, a 20th Century, politically-alert version of the Carlisle Indian School, in Southeast Asia? Here are tremendous human potentials for seizing the initiative.

The strategy of undertaking the political offensive, of course, needs far deeper consideration than indicated in the sketches of opening moves noted above. These sketches were included merely to indicate how "natural" and "right" it would feel to Americans to start attacking the Communist system where it is vulnerable. The strategy should consider not only the vulnerable points for political-psychological moves into the Communist heartland, but also consider the strong points of the U. S. heritage there -- the legend remaining from such activities as the Hoover Relief Mission in the Soviet Union and our myriad social endeavors in China -- and make full use of these strong points. Reflective thought will show that much more of the American spirit and integrity came through than the mere image of a rich uncle doling out a few presents.

The end objective of such a strategy would be the moment when the people of Moscow or Peking, much more than the people of Budapest or East Berlin or Hanoi, would say of their own will and in their own way: "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

Is it not time to draw upon the great strength which gave us birth as a nation to provide the way to defeat the greatest enemy we have faced?

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The National Will. In other wars remembered by living Americans, the United States declared war through the U.S. Congress exercising its power under Article I of the Constitution. This concentrated the will, energies, resources, and genius of the American people into winning the war, paramount above all other issues. Isn't it rational to assume that much of the diffusion of U.S. effort has come about through the lack of our declaring cold war, through the U.S. Congress, and under the Constitution?

The Communist enemy has declared himself. We have never answered him with the single voice of all our citizenry ... as we have our enemies in the past.

This difficult problem needs to be faced squarely by the proposed Presidential board. Admittedly, the subtle and not-so-subtle threats to our national security implicit in Communist moves are of a nature beyond that envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Yet they did endow us with a system capable of expressing the peoples' intent, strongly and clearly enough to unify the national will in times of great danger. We need to be wise enough now to find the way to do this. It might take the form of declaring our national aims in the cold war, identifying the character of precisely what it is that we find of utmost danger to us and the world, defining the boundaries over which such an enemy dare not step, and clarifying just whom we will help in this struggle, with the "how" and the "why" spelled out. Or, perhaps it might take some other form. But, the way needs to be found -- and taken.

Once this step is taken, the Branches of the U.S. Government and our citizenry will be committed to the spirited teamwork in winning the goal which is the only true way the American people know how to fight -- banded together and all out. The President will find the character of his leadership role firming up into a decisiveness, with the broad and dedicated support of the country, impossible to take up to now in the cold war -- yet a decisiveness vital to the cause of freedom for mankind, now. Thus, again, the way needs to be found -- and taken.

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