

6. Menon, perhaps inadvisably, has informed Polish delegation of plan but has not repeat not provided them with any text. Polish delegation tried vainly to head off move then said they could not repeat not discuss question without instructions from Warsaw. Menon says he is determined to proceed and wants majority draft to present to a (group corrupt).

7. Menon did not repeat not (group corrupt) directly but from his remarks it can be assumed this belated but gratifying development stems from Indian fear of collapse of Geneva Conference and desire to impress Americans particularly with Commission's willingness on majority basis at least to deal with subversive problem. Other influences (supporting this?) action may have been American proposals to increase military and other aid for South Vietnam despite Geneva Agreement, also Delhi's cognizance of recent press attacks on Commission and Gopala Menon himself. Indians at Geneva may also wish to test Soviet good faith.

8. We would be grateful for your immediate comments.

[C. J.] WOODSWORTH

733.

DEA/50052-A-13-40

*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
pour le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET. CANADIAN EYES ONLY.

[Ottawa], May 31, 1961

SOUTH VIETNAM – U.S.A. PROPOSAL TO INCREASE STRENGTH
OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP (MAAG)

It is apparent that the Americans and the South Vietnamese are determined to go ahead with their intention to increase the strength of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Vietnam. We entirely agree as to the seriousness of the situation in South Vietnam which has led them to this decision. Since our telegram Y-277 (copy attached)³⁵ was prepared, we have been considering what action we could best take in order to be as co-operative as possible and to give the Americans what assistance we can.

2. The fact of the matter is that if the United States and the South Vietnamese Government decide to handle this increase as they did the last, i.e., by informing the International Commission of their intentions, there would be little or nothing that we could do, regardless of our sympathies, to help in obtaining a favourable decision in the Commission or in preventing the creation of a fine propaganda weapon for the other side. I might add that the North Vietnamese have already mounted an extensive propaganda attack on the basis of published reports of Mr. Lyndon Johnson's talks in Saigon. In short, whatever the intrinsic merits of the United States action, we believe that if the Commission were to be formally seized of the question at the present time, the result could hardly fail to be a finding by the Commission that a serious breach of the Geneva Agreements had been committed, with possibly adverse effects on the United States position in Southeast Asia. Faced with this probability, it would seem that the most useful course for us to take now would be to try to avoid a situation in which the Commission is forced to take a decision regarding an increase in MAAG.

3. The last time this question came up in the commission, the outcome of the discussion was a letter (approved by a Canadian-Indian majority) to the South Vietnamese Government noting that Government's intentions, and reiterating the Commission's requirements regarding

³⁵ Voir/See document 726.