

51. National Security Decision Memorandum 9¹

Washington, April 1, 1969.

TO

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness

SUBJECT

Vietnam

As a result of the National Security Council meeting on March 28, 1969,² I have made the following decisions on the issues listed below:

The Issue of De-escalation

1. There will be no de-escalation except as an outgrowth of mutual troop withdrawal.
2. The U.S. side will not initiate any de-escalation proposals in the Paris negotiations.
3. If the DRV raise the issue of de-escalation, the U.S. side will listen but only discuss it in the context of mutual withdrawal.

The Issue of U.S. Forces Subject to Withdrawal

On the definition of U.S. Forces subject to withdrawal, I have decided that we should be prepared to withdraw all combat forces from South Vietnam if Hanoi meets specific conditions of a mutual withdrawal agreement. These conditions should include provisions for:

1. Verification and supervision of withdrawal.
2. The withdrawal of North Vietnamese Forces from Laos and Cambodia, as well as from South Vietnam.
3. Guarantees to maintain the agreement.

The Issue of a Timetable for Completion of U.S. Withdrawal

There will be no public repudiation of the former U.S. position that we would complete our withdrawal within six months of the completion of Hanoi's withdrawal. This position will be adopted with the recognition that, in practice, the U.S. will be in a position to control

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 363, Subject Files, NSDM. Top Secret; Sensitive. General Wheeler also received a copy. Nixon's initials appear at the end of the memorandum.

² See Document 49.

the timing of the completion of our withdrawal, since we can determine if Hanoi has fully met the conditions of the mutual withdrawal agreement. The key point will not be the timetable but rather getting Hanoi to comply with the conditions for withdrawal.

The draft papers considered by the National Security Council on March 28, 1969, are approved with modifications reflecting the above decisions.³

I have also directed that the following studies be undertaken for which appropriate NSSMs will be forthcoming:

1. Specific plan timetable for Vietnamizing the war.
2. Phased withdrawal under conditions of:
 - a. Mutual withdrawal, or
 - b. Vietnamizing the war.
3. Verification for mutual withdrawal.
4. Detailed political settlement for SVN.
5. International guarantees for above.

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³ See footnote 3, Document 47.

52. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 3, 1969.

SUBJECT

Vietnam Problem

I. The Problem in Paris

In trying to settle the Vietnam war, we can follow two routes: (1) through the Paris talks, (2) through some extraordinary procedures. The Paris route is certainly the more convenient and presents fewer administration problems. However, to be successful, the following conditions must be met by the Paris route:

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1319, Unfiled Material, 1969, Box 3 of 19. Top Secret; Sensitive.