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4 February 68

MEMORANDUM FOR: AMBASSADOR KOMER

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON SIDE MATTERS

1. Since my departure for Washington in December there have been some radical alterations in the SIDE Program. Some are still incomplete because of funding uncertainties and the recent conceptual change for detention centers advocated by General LOAN, but this memorandum describes the principal decisions taken and the present course of the program.
2. The funding outlook changed from a condition of no piasters expected until March to one in which adequate piaster funding is now in sight to start both the prison and detention construction.
3. It appears that our dollar needs will be relatively small if this piaster promise comes true. I am awaiting funding decisions now which will indicate the precise amount of piasters that SIDE can expect. When this information is received an application will be prepared to obtain the balance needed from DOD.
4. From a concept developed in my absence for 500 masonry spaces at Tan-Hiep and 2000 at Con-Son we have now proceeded to a target of 4000 masonry spaces at Con-Son, 500 at Tan-Hiep, and blueprints for 2000 prefabricated spaces at Con-Son to be implemented only in case of need.
5. From a concept of seven detention center sites in III and IV Corps areas we have moved toward the General LOAN scheme which is still to be approved by General VIEN.

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6. On 19 December 1967 our plans were directed toward building sufficient facilities in which to house all detainees and prisoners by 30 June, 1968. The SIDE Plan for prefabricated construction was 8000 spaces and this was supplemented by an estimated 3,360 spaces to be built in II Corps with prison labor. With this program we hoped to be able to house the excess prisoners predicted for 30 June 68 (9,245 per SIDE Planning Estimate 1-67 of 11 November 1967).

7. The latest prison population figure of 32,000 in January and the detainees swept up in battles in the last few days are of such magnitude that a new estimate of excess prisoners by 30 June 68 is indicated. As of today SIDE estimates an excess of 11,500 on 30 June 68, an excess of 14,000 by 31 December 68.

8. Our present prison construction program with masonry should produce 7860 spaces by 31 December 68. 3,360 of these should be completed with prison labor sometime this spring. In fact, if there is a sudden demand for a detention facility it would be possible to complete An Khe on short notice to 3,240 spaces.

9. Our program of the moment is short of plans for the 31 December goal by 6,140 spaces. If I am not able to incorporate such a capacity within General LOAN's detention system I will recommend additional prison construction in the needed amount.

10. I make no recommendations at this time. The situation is in a state of flux. I will keep you posted on significant developments.

RANDOLPH BERKELEY
SIDE PROGRAM MANAGER

Copy to: Mr. Evan Parker
Chief, PSD

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