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#73 notes	Notes from 10/30/68 - 10:10 a.m. Foreign Policy meeting [Sanitized NLJ 87-38] Secret 7 pp.	10/30/68	A
#79 notes	Handwritten notes from 10/30/68 meeting Secret 1 p.	10/30/68	A
#79a notes	Handwritten notes from 10/30/68 meeting Secret 11 pp.	10/30/68	A
#80 notes	Handwritten notes from 10/30/68 meeting Secret 4 pp.	10/30/68	A
#81 notes	Handwritten notes from 10/30/68 meeting Secret 6 pp.	10/30/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 4

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FOREIGN POLICY MEETING
CABINET ROOM

OCTOBER 30, 1968
10:10 a.m.

Those Present:

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
Walt Rostow
General Wheeler
Harry McPherson
George Christian
Tom Johnson

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NOTES ON FOREIGN POLICY MEETING
OCTOBER 30, 1968

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING:

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
Walt Rostow
General Wheeler
Harry McPherson
George Christian
Tom Johnson

SANITIZED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NIJ 87-38
By mg, NARA, Date 5-18-89

Secretary Rusk: We're waiting for a flash from Saigon.

The President: I'm concerned about not getting the South Vietnamese aboard but they bought one day, three days, and we were hesitant to extend that for their sake. But if they're agreeable, we'll go longer. Some set of circumstances might intervene to hurt them. [REDACTED]

It's important that the GVN will be present.

- that the DMZ will be respected,
- that cities must be protected,
- that psychological campaign be mounted,
- that our elections have nothing to do with it.

We could have made a deal in April but we didn't because we didn't get the above. Our military commanders say we ought to do this. We're losing nothing by bombing halt.

10:15 a.m.

The President: It is a pure question of when you all are agreed on statement.

Thieu plans to talk at 7:00 p.m. Washington time.

What does Bus say?

General Wheeler: We can issue orders at midday -- stop bombing by midnight.

The President: Can we agree on how to best communicate with Australia,

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Thailand?

Walt Rostow: We can even employ a special ambassador to hold their hand.

Secretary Rusk: Harriman must employ more tact and diplomacy with our allies.

The President: I like the 6th as meeting time. What if we announce at 7:00 tonight. 7 Wednesday to 7 on the 6th is 168 hours.

12 o'clock bombing halt. I would like to speak at 9:30 p.m.

Secretary Clifford: In television speech, we must answer to American people the question "Why now?" What can we say about the DMZ and the cities?

Walt Rostow: In consultations with President Thieu. We must surface on background the DMZ and the cities.

Harry McPherson: The President has said all along he would not stop the bombing if it threatened our men. Nixon signed on to this. So did the Platform committee. We must sign on to this.

The President: April - July - August: give time sequence to what happened.

Secretary Clifford: We didn't reach an understanding until Sunday. It is important to state this. Talks will not continue unless cities aren't attacked and the DMZ not violated.

Secretary Rusk: In mid-October they agreed to seat the GVN. In the past weekend these issues came into focus.

Flash message has been on the way for 45 minutes.

The President: [REDACTED]

Secretary Rusk: There is a conflict. What do we say about the DMZ and the cities?

The President: Say nothing about it. Get AP and UPI to watch DMZ and the cities.

Secretary Rusk: Averell and Cy would not want to say anything about it.

William Bundy: Let it leak.

The President: You could say "it is obvious." I have felt since September that we are willing and anxious to take any step which would lower the tempo of the war, which would get productive discussions, and that they would not take advantage of our restraint. I talked to General Abrams.

I have reason to believe we can have productive talks. I signed on Monday. General Abrams is for it.

Productive talks on November 6.

Abrams, JCS said a military disadvantage would not result.

Harry McPherson: We need to say DMZ and Cities to answer questions about the JCS and Abrams' position.

Secretary Clifford: Backgrounders will have a lot to do with the flavor of the stories. The President refused for five and one-half months to stop the bombing. What have they done different now than before.

We have one clear understanding: GVN present at conference table.

But the President has been placing concern on the DMZ and the Cities. What agreement do you have on this?

We must say we have made it clear they can't violate DMZ or attack cities -- if so, we will take appropriate action. I would like to say there is a 'clear understanding. "

General Wheeler: We know they understand if they violate cities and the DMZ we are required to respond.

Secretary Rusk: The message does not give "green light." FM called in Bunker -- gave him a very negative answer in a letter to the President.

The President: What do we say in backgrounders:

1. GVN in talks.
2. Can't allow DMZ and Cities.

Secretary Rusk: Keep an eye on DMZ and Cities.

Secretary Clifford: I want to go as far as you will let me.

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-- not violate cities and DMZ.

Secretary Rusk: There is no contract. There is a clear understanding.

Secretary Clifford: Prompt military action would be required if the DMZ and the cities are violated.

The President: We do not have a contract with North Vietnam.

Secretary Clifford: We have an agreement with North Vietnam on the GVN. We must say we have an understanding on GVN and DMZ.

Secretary Clifford: What about a flat statement of understanding.

Harry McPherson: Tom Johnson has suggested "we have said that the DMZ and the Cities be respected."

Secretary Rusk: What about orders to troops.

The President: I would be for giving them at 12:00 noon for 12:00 midnight halt.

Walt Rostow: Letter you write to Thieu will be important.

The President: Let's go to Korea and advise them.

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11:35 a.m. -- Ben Read enters.

I asked Bunker about 10:00 p.m. announcement. He said he would like to work on them and get Thieu to reconvene the Council.

Thieu is standing by at the Palace. He is expecting you to announce your decision. I asked Bunker if he knew of Thieu's speech. He said it asked LBJ for more assurances from DRV.

(The President read attachments A and B.)

Secretary Rusk: We are working against no deadline.

11:44 a.m.

Secretary Rusk: Tell Hanoi to withdraw secret minute. Put it to Thieu.

Walt Rostow: Give him what assurances ~~as~~ we can.

Secretary Clifford: What can we expect from Saigon.

The President: I want the meeting on the 6th. He has a speech at 7:00 a.m. I don't want to speak after him. He'll make some points on this.

His 7:00 o'clock speech troubles me.

Ben Read: Bunker thought they could telescope it to six days.

Secretary Rusk: We must bring Thieu along. There could be massive demonstrations against the embassy; the South Vietnamese Army could sit on ~~his~~^{its} hands.

We will be asked why the GVN blew its stack.

The President: The closer you get to the elections, the more troubles you have.

Secretary Rusk: Let's drag this fellow along. We must have him aboard.

The President: Will Thieu lobby our Allies?

What are your thoughts, Bus?

General Wheeler: It makes no difference to me. We can do it either time.

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SET

The President: We should do it at 7:00 p.m.

General Wheeler: It also would give Abrams a chance to work on Thieu.

The President: Would you favor a delay?

General Wheeler: Yes, under these conditions. I can swallow my disgust for practical reasons.

Bill Bundy: I would give Bunker another day. There will be two dissenters: The Thais and the Koreans.

Walt Rostow: You might propose an early meeting of the troop contributors.

Bill Bundy: That's a good idea.

The President: Say we will stop unilaterally, tomorrow.

Be prepared to stop at 12 or 7.

Secretary Clifford: We have known before how Thieu would react. Now they have been asked would you rather have three months of Johnson or four years of Nixon. Their whole approach is delay. This message is "horseshit." This message is thoroughly insulting.

Secretary Rusk: This is not this surprising. Hanoi has tried to get us to resolve this before we start process of talks. So have the South Vietnamese. Both sides are pushing for key concession.

Harry McPherson: If Thieu speaks tomorrow, if he talks to T.C.C.'s saying it is bum deal in Paris, and we come along and stop it, it is meaningless. If we do it first -- say that we have a deal which gives the GVN the right to sit at the table, that's good. If South Vietnam pisses it away, then it's all on their back.

Secretary Rusk: We must have simultaneous statements. Thieu must delay.

Secretary Clifford: I think it is calculated, planned program to delay, to get through November 5.

If he makes the kind of speech I believe he will make, he will try to get you to change your mind.

If you are going to follow the right course, you must do it before Thieu does.

If Thieu broke with us, he could never get it back on the track.

I don't think additional time will benefit Bunker.

The President: Give Bunker and Abrams up to 7 tomorrow night to deal with Thieu -- also Ambassadors to deal with T.C.C. (Troop Contributing Countires) and to deal with Paris.

If Thieu won't make complaints through Bunker rather than through other people and the press, I would be inclined to go ahead.

We can't follow Thieu's speech. Our own people will want to know if Bunker and Abrams are aboard.

General Wheeler: Dean will check with Bunker. Every hour that goes by lessens my confidence that we can do anything by 12:00 p.m. tonight.

The President: Talk to Paris.

Ben Read: They agreed to tear up secret minute.

The President: Tell Bunker we are ready to go tonight.

1. We are ready to get rid of secret minute.
2. Get 168 hours till next Wednesday.
3. Try to get Thieu's speech moved back.



(A) BUNKER CABLE
Department of State

TELEGRAM

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1968 OCT 30 AM 10:54
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DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS 84-369
by DCI, NARA Date 5-23-90

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO CALL AT PALACE AT 2030 HOURS TONIGHT, AND BERGER A I CONFERRED WITH HIM AND PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT DUC FOR 30 MINUTES. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT AND CONVEYED THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND CONFERRED WITH THE HEADS OF THE UPPER AND LOWER HOUSE.
2. THE CONCLUSION WAS REACHED THAT WHEREAS THE US AND THE GVN "DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF, IT WAS A CONTRADICTION FOR US TO ACCEPT THE NLF INTO A CONFERENCE." THE GVN WOULD BE SUBJECT TO HEAVY CRITICISM FROM EVERY SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE ARMY, PARLIAMENT, AND ALL RELIGIOUS GROUPS. IF NORTH VIET-NAM WILL GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WILL BE NO SEPARATE DELEGATION FROM THE NLF THE GVN WILL JOIN US IN A CESSATION ANNOUNCEMENT AND IN A MEETING. IF THERE IS NOT RPT NOT ASSURANCE, THE GVN WILL NOT PARTICIPATE.
3. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN SAID HE WISHED TO GIVE ME A COPY OF A LETTER FROM THIEU TO THE PRESIDENT, THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH WOULD BE SENT IN FORMAL STYLE. I READ THE LETTER AND FOUND IT REPETITIVE OF THE ARGUMENTS WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE LAST FEW DAYS, AND UNFORTUNATE IN EVERY RESPECT. INDEED ONE PARAGRAPH SOUGHT TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT BY DEALING WITH THE NLF WE WOULD BE FORCING THEM TO MOVE TOWARD A COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM.
4. I TOLD THE FORMIN I THOUGHT THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE GVN WAS TRAGIC, THE LETTER UNFORTUNATE, AND THE PARTICULAR PARAGRAPH UNACCEPTABLE SINCE OUR POSITION ON COALITION WAS WELL KNOWN AND THIS WAS A GROSS MISREPRESENTATION. I SAID PRESIDENT THIEU WAS FREE TO WRITE WHAT HE WISHED, BUT HE MIGHT SERIOUSLY RECONSIDER WHETHER HE WISHED SUCH A STATEMENT TO BE MADE. THE FORMIN TOOK THE LETTERBACK AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THIEU.

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-2- SAOGM 41542, OCTOBER 30

5. THE FORMIN SAID THEY COULD MAKE NO MORE CONCESSIONS "WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE REGIME." FINALLY, ANY DECISION TO HALT THE BOMBING WOULD NEED TO ALLOW A SEVEN DAYS INTERVAL BEFORE THE MEETINGS COULD BE HELD.

6. I SAID I HAD SPOKEN AT LENGTH TO PRESIDENT THIEU TODAY, SO THAT HE WAS AWARE OF OUR POSITION THAT WE CANNOT ORGANIZE THE OTHER SIDE IN THESE MEETINGS. HE WAS ALSO AWARE THAT WE WERE FACING A SITUATION OF "UTMOST GRAVITY" IN OUR RELATIONS.

7. I ASKED IF PRES THIEU WOULD BE AVAILABLE DURING THE NIGHT AND TOMORROW. I SAID I COULD NOT ANTICIPATE WHAT DECISION PRES JOHNSON WOULD MAKE TO THIS DECISION AND REPLY OF PRES THIEU AND HIS GOVERNMENT. 0 923:34, PRES THIEU MUST BE AWARE FROM WHAT I SAID TO HIM TODAY AND EARLIER THAT PRES JOHNSON MAY DECIDE UNILATERALLY TO STOP BOMBING, AND THAT PRES THIEU MAY BE SO INFORMED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW HOURS.

8. THE FORMIN WAS VISIBLY SHAKEN. HE ASKED IF THAT DECISION WOULD "MEAN WE WOULD ALSO GO FORWARD WITH MEETINGS WITHOUT THE GVN.". I SAID I ASSUMED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE IN OUR QUEST FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, AND THE GVN WOULD BE FREE TO JOIN OR NOT AS THEY CHOOSE. I SAID I REGARDED THIS DECISION OF THE GVN NOT TO GO FORWARD WITH US AS SAD AND TRAGIC.

9. THE FORMIN AND MR DUC SAID HEY WOULD SEND OVER SHORTLY THE LETTER FROM PRES THIEU, EITHER IN ITS PRESENT OR MODIFIED FORM. ON ARRIVAL I WILL TRANSMIT TEXT.

10. THE CONVERSATION ENDED WITH MY SAYING TO THE FOREIGN MIN THAT IF PRES JOHNSON DECIDED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE BOMBING CESSATION, WHICH IS MOST LIKELY, IT WOULD REQUIRE HIM, AS I TOLD PRES THIEU THIS MORNING, TO INFORM THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AS TO THE REASONS WHY THE GVN WAS NOT PREPARED TO GO FORWARD WITH US.

11. COMMENT: I WILL NOT DWELL ON THE REASONS FOR THIS DECISION. THEY MUST BE AWARE THAT THE PRES WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ELECT TO MOVE UNILATERALLY, WITH THE MOST DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES TO OUR RELATIONSHIP AND TO THEMSELVES. BUT THEY MAY BE GAMBLING THAT WE WILL NOT, OR THAT WE WILL DELAY FOR SEVERAL DAYS OR WEEKS.

12. IF THE PRESIDENT DECIDES TO MOVE, I URGE MOST STRONGLY THAT WE GIVE THEM UNTIL 2400 HOURS OCTOBER 31 SAIGON TIME TO REEXAMINE THEIR POSITION BEFORE WE ANNOUNCE UNILATERALLY, AND THAT WE AGREE TO THE WEEK'S INTERVAL FOR THE MEETING. I ALSO MOST STRONGLY URGE THAT WE REFUSE HANOI'S REQUEST TO INSERT IN THE AGREED SECRET MINUTE THE REFERENCE TO THE FOUR REPRESENTATIVES AT THE MEETING. PUBLICIZED BY HANOI THIS WOULD BE UTTERLY DAMAGING TO OUR POSITION HERE, AND BE REGARDED AS EVIDENCE OF OUR PERFITRY. I SEE NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD ACCOMMODATE HANOI IN THIS MATTER.

BUNKER

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Department of State

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1968 OCT 30 AM 10:54
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Authority NLS 84-369
By DCB, NARA, Date 5-23-90

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-2- SAOGM 41542, OCTOBER 30

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BUNKER

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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 51543

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REF: SAIGON 41542

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OCT 30, 1968
11:15AM

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Authority MLJ 84-366

By DLH NARA, Date 5-23-90

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER FROM PRESIDENT THIEU TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON REFERRED TO IN MY PREVIOUS MESSAGE. WE HAVE INSERTED PARA NUMBER FOR EACH CROSS REFERENCE. PARAS 13 AND 14 ARE REWRITES OF PARA WE FOUND OFFENSIVE IN ORIGINAL VERSION (SEE PARA 3 REFTEL). THEY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT MODIFIED TO REDUCE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE FORCING COALITION ON THEM.

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

1. IN REPLY TO YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 29TH, I COMPLETELY SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT WE HAVE GONE FAR IN GATHERING STRENGTH SINCE THE COMMUNIST TET ATTACKS. THIS IS DUE TO OUR COMMON EFFORTS AND IN PARTICULAR TO YOUR HELP. I ALSO FULLY AGREE THAT WE MUST FULLY MAINTAIN ALL MILITARY PRESSURE WHICH WE CAN SUMMON AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSIVE FORCES, CONCURRENTLY WITH A MAJOR POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFORT IN THE DAYS AND MONTHS AHEAD.
2. WITH RELATION TO OUR CURRENT EFFORTS FOR AN HONORABLE AND SECURE PEACE, I WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT I AM VERY ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE WITH YOU TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RECENT HONOLULU CONFERENCE.
3. ON THIS IMPORTANT PROBLEM, TO DISPEL MISUNDERSTANDINGS, I WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THESE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2- SAOGPM 51543, OCTOBER 30, SECTION ONE OF THREE

4. FIRST, YOUR POSITION AND OURS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THAT NORTH VIET-NAM SHOULD TAKE RECIPROCAL ACTIONS IN ANSWER TO OUR DEESCALATORY MEASURES, AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING OF NORTH VIET-NAM. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND YOUR WISH NOT TO MENTION PUBLICLY THE CONDITIONS ACCEPTED BY HANOI TO HELP IT TO SAVE, WE DEEM IT INDISPENSABLE THAT THE CONDITIONS ACCEPTED BY HANOI BE MADE CLEAR BY UNEQUIVOCAL ASSURANCES BY HANOI AT LEAST IN PRIVATE. ONLY FIRM ASSURANCES BY HANOI COULD CONSTITUTE SOLID GROUNDS FOR SERIOUS TALKS.

5. IN THIS MATTER, WE FEEL IT NECESSARY TO HAVE A CLAR-CUT AGREEMENT WITH HANOI ON THE BASIC GROUND RULES FOR THE FORTH-COMING EXPANDED CONFERENCE BEFORE THE CONFERENCE STARTS, SO THAT IF HANOI LATER VIOLATES THESE RULES, IT WILL BE CLEAR TO EVERYONE AS TO WHO WILL HAVE TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FAILURE OF THE CONFERENCE.

6. SECOND, AMONG THE CONDITIONS TO BE EXPLICITLY ACCEPTED BY HANOI PRIOR TO THE HOLDING OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE, IS THE UNEQUIVOCAL ACCEPTANCE BY HANOI TO HOLD DIRECT AND SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM.

7. WITH REGARD TO SUCH TALKS, YOU KNOW THAT WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE HANOI COMMUNIST REGIME AND THAT THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM HAS FOR MANY YEARS REFUSED TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HANOI DICTATORSHIP, AND TURNED DOWN THE HANOI REGIME'S REPEATED DEMANDS FOR CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES OF THE TWO ZONES NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE 17TH PARALLEL.

8. RECENTLY, IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE, WE HAVE MADE A CONCESSION AND MADE IT KNOWN THAT WE ARE WILLING TO MEET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HANOI TO DISCUSS THE RESTORATION OF PEACE AND THE PENDING PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO ZONES NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE DEMARCATION LINE CREATED BY THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENT.

9. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AN ACCEPTANCE BY HANOI TO CONDUCT DIRECT TALKS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS A CONCESSION BY HANOI TO US, WHICH SHOULD JUSTIFY FURTHER CONCESSIONS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM, QUITE THE CONTRARY.

10. THIRD, THE POSITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM ON THE SO-CALLED NLF IS WELL KNOWN, AND HAS BEEN STRONGLY STATED MANY TIMES: THE NLF IS SIMPLY THE CREATION AND A TOOL OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST AGGRESSORS. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY YOUR GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS PRESENTED AMPLE AND INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE TO THAT EFFECT. BUNKER
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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION COPY

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Oct 30, 1968

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Authority NLJ 84-369

By DCM NARA, Date 5-23-90

11. HANOI CREATED THE SO-CALLED "NLF" WITH THE HOPE OF USING IT AS A TROJAN HORSE FOR A COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, WHEN AND IF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM IS FORCED TO ACCEPT THE FORMULA OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH ITS PARTICIPATION.

12. THROUGH TRAGIC EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST, THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ARE SO COMPLETELY CONVINCED OF THESE FACTS THAT ANY PROSPECT OF RECOGNITION OF THE "NLF", EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT, IS CONSIDERED AS A SURE SIGN OF SURRENDER TO THE COMMUNISTS. THIS WILL PROMPTLY AND INEVITABLY CREATE THE DEMORALIZATION OF THE WHOLE NATION, AND THE COLLAPSE OF OUR ENTIRE DEFENSE EFFORTS. THE REGULAR ARMED FORCES, THE REGIONAL AND POPULAR FORCES, THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT CADRES, THE CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHERS, WILL CONSIDER IT TO BE UTTERLY FUTILE TO MAKE FURTHER EFFORTS AND SACRIFICES FOR A GOAL DOOMED IN ADVANCE. CONVERSELY, THE MORALE OF ENEMY TROOPS AND CADRES WILL IMMEDIATELY RAISE, PUTTING AN END TO THE PRESENT UPWARD TREND OF COMMUNIST RETURNEES WHO LEFT IN GROWING NUMBERS THE COMMUNIST RANKS TO JOIN US. STREET DEMONSTRATIONS WILL IMMEDIATELY RESUME IN SAIGON AND OTHER CITIES, MORE VIOLENT THAN EVER, LEADING TO THE MOST CHAOTIC POLITICAL UNSTABILITY.

13. A PROCESS OF DESINTEGRATION, UNDOING OUR IMMENSE EFFORTS IN THE RECENT YEARS, WILL START AS SOON AS THERE IS A SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM HAS TO ACCEPT THE COALITION FORMULA WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

14. IF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM IS TO ACCEPT TO SIT AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH THE NLF AS A SEPARATE DELEGATION FROM NORTH VIET-NAM, AND ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM, THIS

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WILL SURELY INTERPRETED AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD AN UNAVOIDABLE COALITION FORMULA.

15. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE STATED SO FREQUENTLY THAT THE "NLF" CAN AT MOST BE INCLUDED IN THE DELEGATION OF NORTH VIET-NAM AT THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. ANYTHING MORE THAN THAT WILL INVOLVE CONSIDERABLE RISKS FOR OUR CAUSE, WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS.

16. FOURTH, IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, THE QUESTION OF PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE POSSIBLE PRESENCE OF THE "NLF" TO THE CONFERENCE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. IT WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR US TO CONSIDER IT AS A PART OF THE DELEGATION OF NORTH VIET-NAM. IT IS INDISPENSABLE THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF A SEPARATE ENTITY AT THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

17 GIVEN THE COMMUNIST PROPENSITY TO RUSES AND STRATAGEMS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROBLEM, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT NO PRECAUTIONS ARE SUPERFLUOUS IN THIS REGARD, AND THAT IT IS INDISPENSABLE THAT THESE PRECAUTIONS BE TAKEN AND THE RULES OF PROCEDURE BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE ITSELF IS FORMALLY ACCEPTED AND ANNOUNCED, BECAUSE THEY RELATE INTIMATELY TO A MATTER OF SUBSTANCE OF VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE.

18. FIFTH, THE BASIC PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THE RESOTRATION OF PEACE IN FREEDOM. THE CONVENING OF A PEACE CONFERENCE IS ONLY A MODALITY TOWARD THAT END. THEREFORE, WE DEEM IT VERY IMPORTANT TO SECURE IN ADVANCE THE CONDITIONS WHICH CAN PROVIDE REASONABLE CHANCES FOR A SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND HONORABLE PEACE. OTHERWISE, THE CONFERENCE WILL SIMPLY CREATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS AMONG PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE, BUT FINALLY WILL ENGENDER ONLY FRUSTRATIONS, OR ADVERSE RESULTS.

BUNKER
BT

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Department of State

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TELEGRAM

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NODIS/HARVAN/PLUS

19. IN CONCLUDING, MR PRESIDENT, MAY I SAY THAT, THANKS TO THE NOBLE HELP AND SOLIDARITY OF THE UNITED STATES, WE ARE GROWING STRONGER WHILE THE ENEMY IS BECOMING WEAKER EVERY DAY. BUT WE HAVE NOT BECOME STRONG TO THE POINT WHERE WE

AN TAKE CONSIDERABLE

RISKS ON BASIC ISSUES.

20. AS YOU HAVE POINTED OUT, THE ENEMY HAS SUFFERED ONE TACTICAL DEFEAT AFTER ANOTHER, AND OUR FIGHTING MEN HAVE BROUGHT VICTORY WITHIN OUR GRASP.

21. WE NOW BEGIN TO SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. I AM NOW MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT, BY MAINTAINING OUR CLOSE AND CONFIDENT COOPERATION, OUR DETERMINATION AND OUR VIGILANCE, WE ARE BRINGING NEARER EVERY DAY THE PROSPECTS OF PEACE IN FREEDOM FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA AND LONG LASTING STABILITY TO THE WORLD.

22. IN THESE PERSPECTIVES, MR. PRESIDENT, HISTORY WILL RECORDS THAT THANKS TO YOUR STATEMANSHIP AND DETERMINATION, THE ALLIED NATIONS HAVE GLORIOUSLY MET A MOMENTOUS COMMUNIST CHALLENGE IN VIET-NAM, AND ASSURED FREEDOM FOR MANY GENERATIONS TO COME. SINCERELY,

BUNKER

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Authority NLS 84-389

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By PLS NARA, Date 5-23-90

October 31 78

My Fellow Citizens:

I have asked to speak to you this evening to inform you of important developments in the search for peace in Vietnam.

As you know, we have been engaged in discussions with North Vietnamese representatives in Paris since last April. The discussions began shortly after I announced ^{on MARCH 31} that the United States -- in an effort to get talks started on a settlement of the war -- had stopped the bombing of North Vietnam in the area where 90% of its people live.

Our representatives in Paris -- Ambassador Harriman and Ambassador Vance -- have insisted throughout these discussions that the legitimate Government of South Vietnam must take its place in any serious negotiations affecting the future of their country.

They made it clear to the representatives of North Vietnam that we would stop the bombing of North Vietnamese territory entirely, when that would lead to prompt and productive talks

-- talks in which the Government of South Vietnam ^{is free to} participate

~~Our Ambassadors~~

~~They~~ also stressed that we could not stop the bombing so long as doing so would jeopardize the safety of our ^{Low + Allies} troops, and ~~those of~~ ^{the NVN not take advantage of these talks by} our allies. This required that the de-militarized zone between North and South Vietnam be respected ^{escalating their actions}

For months, there was no movement in the talks. They were deadlocked.

Then, about six weeks ago, they entered a new and critical phase.

As an agreement began to take shape, I conducted a series of intensive discussions with our allies, and with the senior military and diplomatic officers of our own government, on the prospects for peace.

Last weekend the essential understanding we had been seeking with the North Vietnamese on the critical issues between us was reached.

And today -- jointly with President Thieu of the Republic of Vietnam -- I have ordered that all air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of _____, Washington time.

President Thieu and I have reached this decision on the basis of developments in the Paris talks,

-- and in the belief that this action can lead to progress toward a peaceful settlement of the war.

I have already informed the three Presidential candidates, and the Congressional leaders of both Parties, of these developments.

The decision I am announcing today is entirely consistent with statements I have made in the past on a bombing cessation.

On August 19th I said:

"This Administration does not intend to move further until it has good reason to believe that the other side intends seriously to join us in de-escalating the war and moving seriously toward peace."

On September 10th I said that

"the bombing will not stop until we are confident that it will not lead to an increase in American casualties."

The decision is also fully and unanimously supported by the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and our senior officials in South Vietnam, Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams.

President Thieu, who has been thoroughly and consistently informed of all developments at the conference table, joins in the decision. The governments of other nations fighting with us in Vietnam -- the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand -- also concur.

A session of the Paris talks will be convened this _____, November ____, at which representatives of the Government of South Vietnam will be present. We are informed by the representatives of the Hanoi government that representatives of the National Liberation Front will also be present. Their participation in no way involves recognition. Yet it conforms to our consistent position that their views could be heard in the course of making peace in Vietnam.

What we now expect -- what we have a right to expect -- are prompt, serious, and intensive negotiations in an atmosphere conducive to progress.

We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where cities are being shelled + DMZ is being abused.

We have reached the stage where productive talks may begin. We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take ^{military} advantage of them. ~~we have enough to expect that~~ ~~the de-militarized zone,~~
~~-- or to launch new attacks against the urban centers of~~
~~South Vietnam~~

such expectations

I must caution you, my fellow citizens, that understandings of this kind are never fool-proof. Even formal treaties are not fool-proof.

But in the light of the progress made in recent weeks, and considering the unanimous military and diplomatic advice rendered me, I have decided that we should take this step now -- to see if an early peace is possible. The over-riding consideration that governs us at this hour is the chance to save human lives -- the lives of men on both sides of the conflict. That chance -- that hope -- we cannot forego.

We could be misled -- and we are prepared for that contingency. We pray God it does not occur.

It should be clear to all of us that the new phase of negotiations which will open on November 2 does not mean that a stable peace has come to Southeast Asia. There may well be hard fighting ahead. Certainly there will be hard negotiating. Many difficult and critically important issues face the negotiators:

-- There must be a speedy withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam -- and our implementation, under verified conditions, of the commitment we made at Manila in 1966.

-- A way must be found to bring those who are now fighting with the Viet Cong into the peaceful life of South Vietnam -- on the principles of national reconciliation, and participation in political activities by all who agree to renounce force and abide by the Constitution of South Vietnam.

-- Peace must come to Laos as well as to Vietnam. The foreign forces now in Laos must be withdrawn.

-- There must be -- in short -- a settlement that is compatible with the principles of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962, under conditions which -- this time -- guarantee that those agreements will be effectively monitored.

As you can see, hard problems lie ahead. With good will, they can be solved. We know that negotiations can move swiftly when the common intent of the negotiators is peace.

The world should know that the American people still remember the protracted Korean negotiations of 1951 to 1953 -- and that they do not intend to accept deliberate delay and procrastination.

How has it come about that now -- on October 29th -- we have stopped the bombardment of North Vietnam?

I can tell you that I would have given all I possess if conditions had permitted me to stop it many months ago; -- if there had been sufficient movement in the Paris talks to enable me to say, "Now it can be stopped."

But I did not control the timing of events during the past few months. The decisions of men in Hanoi -- which very likely reflected conditions in South Vietnam and throughout the world -- determined when and whether it would be possible for us to stop the bombing altogether.

We could not retract our insistence on the participation of the Government of South Vietnam in the substantive talks. For though we have been allied with South Vietnam in this struggle for many years, we have never assumed or demanded the role of determining the future of their country. The very principle for which we are engaged there -- the principle of self-determination -- requires that the South Vietnamese speak for themselves at the Paris talks.

It was made just as clear to North Vietnam that a total bombing halt must not risk the lives of our men and those of our allies.

Until now, there was no understanding on these points. The events of which I spoke last March, when I said

"Whether a complete bombing halt becomes possible in the future will be determined by events . . ."

-- had not occurred.

Now they have. And though I cannot tell you precisely why, I do know that a series of other hopeful events has occurred this year in South Vietnam and elsewhere:

-- the steady strengthening of the constitutional government in South Vietnam;

-- the expansion of South Vietnam's armed forces, to the point where a million men are now under arms;

-- the superb performance of our own men, under the great leadership of General Westmoreland and General Abrams;

-- and the influence of some of North Vietnam's allies and ours.

Perhaps some, or all of these factors played a part in bringing about progress in the talks. And when at last progress came, I believe that my responsibilities to the brave men who bear the burden of battle there -- and my duty to seek an honorable settlement of the war -- required me to recognize it and act upon it at once.

So have I done.

There have been many long days of waiting for this agreement -- days that began in hope, only to end in frustration.

Constancy to our national purpose -- which is to seek the basis for a durable peace in Southeast Asia -- sustained me in those hours when it seemed there would be no progress in the talks.

Now that progress has come, I know that your prayers are joined with mine -- and with those of all humanity -- that the action I announce tonight will be a major step toward a firm and honorable peace in Southeast Asia.

What is required of us in these new circumstances is exactly that steady perseverance that has brought us to this hopeful prospect:

-- a perseverance here at home to match that of our men in Vietnam.

So in the days ahead, I ask you not only for your prayers -- but for your persevering support of those who search for peace.

Thank you, and good evening.