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1968 NOV 6 19 54

39
WHITE HOUSE
SIGNAL ROOM
168 NOV 8 PM 2:59

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OO WIE13
DE WIE 4270

FROM: WALT ROSTOW
TO : THE PRESIDENT
CITE: CAP82720

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NIJ 91-508
By 1-8 NARA, Date 1-11-93

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS

HEREWITH BUNKER'S COOL AND THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT MADE THIEU DRAW BACK AT LAST MINUTE.

BEGIN TEXT.

SUBJ: THIEU'S DECISION.

1. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SET DOWN MY THOUGHTS ON WHAT TRANSPIRED HERE THAT LED THIEU TO MAKE HIS DECISION NOT TO GO WITH US INTO THE PARIS TALKS. THESE THOUGHTS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY BASED ON EVIDENCE AND SOLID IMPRESSIONS, EXCEPT FOR KY'S MOTIVATIONS, WHERE WHAT WE SAY IS SOMEWHAT SPECULATIVE. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE THE EVIDENCE. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO START EVALUATING THIS PERFORMANCE, WHICH CAME SO UNEXPECTEDLY, SO THAT WE WILL KNOW BETTER HOW TO DEAL WITH ITS CONSEQUENCES, AS WELL AS WITH THIEU AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE.
2. THE KEY ISSUE ON WHICH EVERYTHING TURNED WAS THE NLF STATUS IN THE TALKS. DURING THE LAST DAYS NOTHING WE COULD SAY, NO ASSURANCE WE COULD GIVE, WAS ABLE TO SHAKE THIEU FROM THE POSITION THAT HANOI HAD TO BE MADE TO AGREE THAT THE NLF WAS PART OF ITS DELEGATION, ELSE HE WOULD NOT COME INTO THE TALKS. THIS CAME AS A SURPRISE SINCE AT SEVERAL POINTS UNTIL THE VERY LAST DAY WE THOUGHT WE HAD THE FULLEST UNDERSTANDING OF, AND HIS AGREEMENT TO, THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA AND HOW IT WOULD BE APPLIED. A SECOND BUT LESS PERSISTENT THEME, BUT ONE WHICH HAS BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY EMPHASIZED, WAS THAT HANOI HAD TO SAY IT AGREES TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE GVN.
3. IF AT ANY POINT PRIOR TO THE LAST CRUCIAL DAYS THIEU HAD GIVEN US ANY INKLING THAT HE WOULD BREAK AGREEMENTS REACHED, OR THAT HE WOULD REOPEN THE FORMULA, OR WANTED STRONGER GURANTEES THAN THOSE WE HAD GIVEN HIM, WE MIGHT HAVE HAD TIME TO OVERCOME HIS OPPOSITION BY WORKING FURTHER ON THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, ADDING PERHAPS EVEN STRONGER ASSURANCES THAT THE GVN WILL DEAL WITH ALL DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTERS, A REASSURANCE THAT WE WILL NOT PRESS THEM INTO COALITION, ETC. BUT HE DID NOT BECOME UTTERLY INTRANSIGENT UNTIL TOWARD THE END.

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4. THE SUDDEN TURN OF THE FINAL 48 HOURS OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THIEU PROMPTS THE INITIAL QUESTIONS: DID THIEU DELIBERATELY MISLEAD US EARLIER? DID HE HOLD BACK HIS REAL (AND EXTREME) POSITION UNTIL THE VERY END TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS ON THE CENTRAL NLF POINT? SUCH A TACTIC WOULD HAVE BEEN BASED ON THE TWIN ASSUMPTIONS OF OUR ANXIETY TO MOVE INTO TALKS IMMEDIATELY AND OF OUR NOT DARING TO MOVE WITHOUT THE GVN. THIEU WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT WITH RESPECT TO OUR ANXIETY TO MOVE, BUT WRONG ABOUT OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE WITHOUT HIM DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS. IN ANY CASE, WE BELIEVE IT UNLIKELY THAT THIEU WAS DELIBERATELY MISLEADING US; HE WAS, HOWEVER, MISREADING US.

5. OUR OWN ELECTIONS AND A POSSIBLE NIXON VICTORY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THIEU'S APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM AND REFLECTS ANOTHER MISCALCULATION. HE ASSUMED, AND WE COULD NOT PERSUADE HIM OTHERWISE, THAT OUR HASTE REFLECTS A POLITICAL MOTIVE, NAMELY, TO ASSIST HUMPHREY. HE REASONED THAT A NIXON VICTORY WAS PROBABLE AND WOULD BE, ON BALANCE, MORE IN THE GVN'S INTEREST. THUS, IF HE COULD PREVENT OUR DECISION TO CEASE THE BOMBING UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION, PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MIGHT EASE. HE WOULD THEN HAVE A NEW "BALL GAME". THIEU MAY EVEN EXPECT THAT NIXON WOULD FOLLOW A "HAWKISH" POLICY, POSSIBLY EVEN THREATEN TO RESUME FULL BOMBING OF THE NORTH TO FORCE HANOI TO CAPITULATE OR, AT LEAST COME TO THE CONFERENCE IN A WEAKER BARGAINING POSITION. WE DO NOT SAY THAT THIS FACTOR WAS DECISIVE, YET WE DO NOT DOUBT THAT IT WAS A MAJOR FACTOR IN HIS INTRANSIGENCE.

6. BUT WE MUST GIVE STRONG WEIGHT TO ADDITIONAL AND MORE SUBSTANTIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THIEU'S FINAL TURNING AWAY FROM THE BOMBING HALT AND SERIOUS TALKS. THERE ARE TWO MUTUALLY REINFORCING ELEMENTS HERE: ONE REFLECTS A SENSE OF GATHERING SUCCESS IN THE WAR, AND THE OTHER REFLECTS FEAR AND SUSPICION OF US:

A. THIEU FELT STRONGLY THAT THE TIMING OF THE BOMBING HALT AND SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WAS NOT PROPITIOUS. WE WERE PROPOSING TO DO THIS--AND INVITING THE PROBABILITY OF AN IMMEDIATE SUBSEQUENT PROPOSAL FROM THE ENEMY FOR A CEASE-FIRE--JUST AT THE MOMENT WHEN WE WERE GIRDLING TO FOLLOW UP RECENT MILITARY SUCCESSES WITH A CONCERTED AGGRESSIVE DRIVE AGAINST THE VIET CONG'S CONTROL OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. WHY RUSH TO A SOLUTION AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, WHICH INEVITABLY MEANS COMPROMISE, WHEN MORE AND MORE REPORTS WERE COMING IN THAT THE ENEMY WAS WEAKENED AND DISCOURAGED, WHEN THE SMELL OF VICTORY WAS IN THE AIR?

B. THIEU'S SUSPICION OF, OR AT LEAST LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN, OUR MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS REGARDING THE TALKS, WAS ALSO AT WORK. WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED HIS BELIEF THAT THE TIMING OF CESSATION WAS A PLOY RELATED TO OUR ELECTIONS. MUCH MORE SERIOUS IS THE FACT THAT CONSCIOUS AS HE IS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S DETERMINATION TO WIND UP THE FIGHTING AND WITHDRAW, HE ALMOST CERTAINLY FEARS THAT ONCE WE HAVE HIM AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE WE WOULD LEAD HIM STEP BY STEP INTO A CEASE FIRE, AND THEN PRESS ON HIM A COALITION, IF THAT IS THE PRICE WE HAVE TO PAY FOR A SETTLEMENT. WE

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KNOW NOW THAT AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT WAS IN HIS HANDS THAT THE NLF INTENDED TO PRESS QUICKLY FOR A CEASE-FIRE AND COALITION AND THIS REINFORCED HIS ANXIETY AND FEARS. THE LAOS SETTLEMENT, AND HARRIMAN'S ASSOCIATION WITH IT WAS ALSO IN HIS MIND. CERTAIN AS HE WAS OF A NIXON VICTORY, HE SAW IN THAT VICTORY THE REPLACEMENT OF HARRIMAN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE LAM TELEGRAM MISREPRESENTING HARRIMAN COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME.

C. I WOULD RATE SUSPICION OF US AND FEAR OF WHAT NEGOTIATIONS WILL LEAD TO AS THE SECOND MAJOR FACTOR IN CAUSING HIM TO BACK AWAY AT THE FATEFUL HOUR OF DECISION. IT IS AN ATTITUDE WE SHALL HAVE TO KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT OF OUR THINKING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

7. I THINK ALL THE ELEMENTS OF PARAS 4-6 WERE PRESENT IN THIEU'S THINKING, BUT IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION TO WHAT EXTENT EACH ONE ENTERED HIS CALCULATIONS. THERE WERE TIMES DURING THE LAST 48 HOURS WHEN HE SEEMED CLEARLY TO MOVE WITH NO SENSE OF URGENCY, REPEATING THE SAME ARGUMENT IN A SCORE OF DIFFERENT GUISES, INSTEAD OF SEEKING A WAY OUT. HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE ARMY AND THE COUNTRY WOULD "DISINTEGRATE" BECAUSE THE OTHER SIDE CLAIMED TO HAVE TWO DELEGATIONS, HOWEVER ILLOGICAL THIS MAY SEEM TO US, BECAUSE IT MADE NO ALLOWANCE FOR HIS AND OUR ABILITY TO COMBAT HANOI'S PROPAGANDA WITH OUR OWN, WAS REAL CONCERN OF HIS AS WELL AS THE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE PRIME MINISTER REPEATED THIS SAME CONCERN YESTERDAY. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS CONCERN SEEMS TO US TO BE GREATLY EXAGGERATED BUT, IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF EMOTION AND SUSPICION, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THIS ARGUMENT BY AN OBJECTIVE WEIGHING OF ITS VALIDITY. THE ARGUMENT ALSO BETRAYS A DEEP SENSE OF INSECURITY AND FEAR OF COMING TO A QUICK DECISION THAT INVOLVED SOME ELEMENTS OF A DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRITICISM.

8. THIS BRINGS US TO THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF THIEU'S STYLE AND THE MATTER OF "FACE". THIEU DOES NOT GENERALLY MAKE QUICK DECISIONS. HE TENDS TO DELAY THE BIG DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE FEELS INSECURE. THE OVERREACTION TO THE COUP SCARE OF OCTOBER 8 PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF THAT PERSISTING SENSE OF INSECURITY. IN THIS CONTEXT WE CONFRONTED THIEU WITH THE BIGGEST DECISION OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. WE PUT HIM UNDER TREMENDOUS TIME PRESSURE AND UNDER BONDS OF SECRECY PREVENTING ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES. HE WAS UNABLE TO PREPARE AND EDUCATE THEM FOR THE PLUNGE. ALTHOUGH HE WAS ON CLEAR NOTICE THAT WE WOULD MOVE QUICKLY ONCE WE HAD HANOI'S AGREEMENT THIEU HIMSELF WAS MENTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE FACT THAT ON THE DAY AFTER WE HAD OBTAINED AGREEMENT ON A JOINT DECLARATION, WE WOULD COME TO HIM WITH THE NEWS THAT THE BOMBING WOULD STOP THE NEXT FOLLOWING DAY AND NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN THREE DAYS LATER. MOREOVER, VIETNAMESE, WE SHOULD REMEMBER, ARE NOT AS EFFICIENT AS WE IN LINING UP THEIR POLITICAL FORCES. MAKING CONTINGENCY PLANS AND WAITING WITH "EXECUTE" MESSAGES, THEY REQUIRE SOME TIME TO THRASH THINGS OUT AND LINE PEOPLE UP AND TALK MATTERS OVER. THEY ARE PERHAPS NOT ALONE IN THIS. IF WE HAD BEEN LESS CONCERNED WITH AVOIDING DISCUSSION WITH HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES, PERHAPS THIEU MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT HIS PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHER OPINION LEADERS ALONG. AS IT TURNED OUT, THE PRESSURE

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ALSO ULTIMATELY INVOLVED THE EVER PRESENT QUESTION OF FACE, SO IMPORTANT IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. I DO NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE THIS POINT BUT MERELY ADD IT TO THE LIST OF FACTORS. STANDING UP TO THE AMERICANS, RESISTING THEIR IMPOSED DEADLINES, DEMONSTRATING VIETNAMESE SOVEREIGNTY BECAME, IF NOT AN END IN ITSELF, AT LEAST A WELCOME BY PRODUCT OF THE AFFAIR. I DEAL WITH THIS PHENOMENON IN MORE DETAIL IN PARAGRAPH 14 BELOW.

9. I HAVE NOT THUS FAR MENTIONED KY'S ROLE. IT IS A DIFFICULT ONE TO ASSESS AND ONE IS TEMPTED TO RAISE PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS. WE MUST ASSUME THAT SOME OF THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH PASSED THROUGH THIEU'S MIND ALSO PASSED THROUGH KY'S. KY IS FAR MORE SUSPICIOUS OF US THAN THIEU. HE IS FAR MORE RECKLESS. AND HE SETS GREAT STORE BY A NIXON VICTORY. HE ASKED US SEVERAL TIMES, "WHAT'S THE GREAT HURRY?" YET TOLD US HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO PERSUADE THIEU AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO GO WITH US. BUT DID HE?

10. OUR EARLY REPORTS OF THE FIRST NSC MEETING SHOW HIM TAKING A HARD LINE, WHICH LATER BECAME EQUIVOCAL. ONE, AND PROBABLY TWO FACTORS WERE AT WORK:

A. WE THINK KY WAS PRETTY CERTAIN WE WOULD NOT DARE TO MOVE UNILATERALLY, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO REASON TO MAKE THIS MISCALCULATION. AND IF WE DID NOT MOVE, THEN PRESEIDENT-ELECT NIXON WOULD COME IN TO THE PICTURE ON THE SIDE OF TOUGHNESS. HE THEREFORE ACTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO REINFORCE THIEU'S HESITATIONS AND THE SERIOUS DOUBTS OF THOSE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, INSTEAD OF COUNTERACTING THEM.

B. BUT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A SECOND FACTOR. THE SUSPICION INEVITABLY ARISES THAT HE SAW IN THIEU'S STAND AN OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY THIEU AS A RESULT OF THIEU'S BREAK WITH THE US. IF THIS WAS INDEED HIS PLAN, THEN HE CERTAINLY MISCALCULATED, FOR IN THE SHORT RUN THIEU'S DEFIANCE OF US HAS VASTLY INCREASED THIEU'S STATURE IN THE COUNTRY. FROM THE START KY TOOK THE POSITION WITH US THAT IN PRINCIPLE THEY ARE OPPOSED TO THE NLF PRESENCE, BUT THAT ONE MUST BE REALISTIC AND FACE THE FACT THAT THEY WILL BE PRESENT. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY SAID HE CAN HANDLE HANOI AND THE NLF; HE HAS NO FEAR OF TALKING WITH THE ENEMY; HE CAN BARGAIN AND DEAL WITH THEM AND HE CAN MAKE CONCESSIONS, FOR HE IS KNOWN AS A HAWK AND IS TRUSTED. HE WAS READY AND ANXIOUS TO GO TO PARIS. YET IN OUR MEETINGS WITH HIM AND THIEU HIS INTERVENTIONS WERE NEITHER HELPFUL NOR CONSTRUCTIVE.

C. WAS IT BECAUSE HE WANTED THIEU TO BOX HIMSELF IN ON THIS ISSUE? WAS IT BECAUSE HE SENSED THAT WHILE THE INITIAL EMOTIONAL REACTION MAY SUPPORT THIEU, THERE WILL BE MANY WHO WILL LATER COME TO THINK THAT THIEU HAS MADE A COLOSSAL MISTAKE IN FAILING TO GO WITH US IN PURSUIT OF A SETTLEMENT, AND THAT THIEU WILL BE DISCREDITED AND FORCED TO RESIGN IN FAVOR OF KY? WE DO NOT KNOW, AND WE TEND NOT TO BELIEVE THAT KY'S AMBITION WOULD CARRY HIM TO SUCH LENGTHS. STILL, WE WILL BE ON THE ALERT FOR RUMORS EMANATING FROM KY AND HIS ENTOURAGE CONDEMNING THIEU FOR HIS REFUSAL TO JOIN THE TALKS AND HIS BREAK WITH THE US AT A TIME WHEN KY WAS QUITE WILLING TO GO TO THE TALKS AND DEAL WITH THE NLF OR ANYONE ELSE.

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11. DOES THIEU REALIZE THE FULL MAGNITUDE OF THE COMPLICATIONS HE HAS CREATED FOR HIMSELF AND FOR US, AND THE WAY HE HAS ISOLATED HIMSELF FROM FOREIGN SUPPORT? WE THINK THE ANSWER IS A QUALIFIED YES. THIEU THINKS CLEARLY, AND SAID AT ONE POINT HE KNOWS HE WILL BE VILIFIED AND CASTIGATED IN US AND IN WORLD OPINION IF HE DOES NOT JOIN THE TALKS. DOES HE REALIZE THAT IF HE PERSISTS IN HIS ABSENCE HE MAY DRIVE THE US TO NEGOTIATE UNILATERALLY? THIS I MADE CLEAR TO HIM, ALTHOUGH I DID NOT PRESS IT.

12. HE MUST CERTAINLY HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, AND HE RECEIVED FROM US AMPLE INDICATIONS OF HOW AMERICAN OPINION COULD REACT AND WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. BUT HE MAY SEE US TRAPPED HERE, OR STILL SEE IN NIXON'S POSSIBLE ELECTION HOPE OF EVENTUAL RELIEF FROM THESE PRESSURES. OR HE MAY BE GAMBLING THAT HANOI WILL COME TO HIS RESCUE BY ATTACKS ON THE CITIES AND ACROSS THE DMZ. ALTERNATIVELY, HE MUST REALIZE THAT HE CANNOT HOLD OUT INDEFINITELY, AND IS BUYING DOMESTIC POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR A FUTURE MOVE TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE, AT THE COST OF A SHORT-RUN ALIENATION OF THE US AND HIS FOREIGN FRIENDS. A RISKY AND SHORTSIGHTED COURSE, BUT ONE HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT NECESSARY.

13. WHAT WILL THIEU DO NEXT? HE HAS MADE HIS SPEECHES TO THE LEGISLATURE AND TO THE NATION. AND WHILE HE WENT FAR OUT IN HIS CONDITIONS, HE STOPPED JUST SHORT OF USING THE PRECISE WORDS ON WHICH HE BARGAINED WITH US, "HANOI MUST ADMIT THAT THE NLF IS PART OF ITS DELEGATION AND MUST ADMIT THAT IT WILL TALK TO US." HE IS ALSO KEEPING A LID ON ANTI-US DEMONSTRATIONS.

14. MANY VIETNAMESE HAVE OBSERVED AFTER HIS ASSEMBLY SPEECH OF NOVEMBER 1, THIEU "HAS REALLY BECOME OUR PRESIDENT." SOME HAVE SAID, "HE IS GREATER THAN DIEM." IT WAS PROFOUND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE ASSEMBLY AND FOR THE COUNTRY AT LARGE. THIEU SHED THE IMAGE OF THE AMERICAN-APPOINTED, AMERICAN-SUPPORTED CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND BECAME A LEADER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. BY CATERING TO A RELATIVELY LOW DENOMINATOR OF NATIONALISM, HE HAS ACQUIRED THE AURA OF A COURAGEOUS PATRIOT WHO IS STANDING UP TO THE FOREIGNER. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IF HE MOVES WISELY AND FIRMLY THIEU HAS PERHAPS NOW ACQUIRED A FREEDOM OF ACTION AND AN IMAGE OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE MATTER OF GVN PARTICIPATION THAT HE DID NOT HAVE BEFORE. HE IS NOW BETTER ABLE TO ACCEPT A FACE-SAVING FORMULA THAT WOULD PERMIT HIM TO CLAIM THAT HIS CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET. AND HE MAY NOW BE BETTER ABLE TO HANDLE THE MAN IN VIET-NAM AGAINST WHOM HE HARBORS THE DEEPEST SUSPICIONS--KY.

15. CAN THIEU BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE COURSE -- AND HOPEFULLY SOON? WE THINK THIS MAY BE POSSIBLE. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IS THAT THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS NIXON, WILL HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR TO HIM THAT GVN ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO A CONTINUATION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC SUPPORT OF OUR VIET-NAM POLICY. A ICC SUMMIT CONFERENCE THEREAFTER WITH A CAREFULLY WORKED OUT AND AGREED JOINT COMMUNIQUE BEFOREHAND COULD BE THE VEHICLE FOR BRINGING HIM TO PARIS WITH A MINIMUM LOSS OF FACE. THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS OF LEADERS HERE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT KY IS PICKING HIS DELEGATION.

PRESERVATION COPY

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16. AS FOOTNOTE TO THE ABOVE, THE THREE ROCKET ATTACKS ON SAIGON DURING THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 31/NOVEMBER 1, WHILE WE WERE IN SESSION WITH HIM, WHILE NOT A MAJOR FACTOR IN HIS INFLEXIBILITY DURING THESE CRUCIAL HOURS, CERTAINLY MADE HIM MORE STUBBORN. "HE SAID, "YOU SAY THEY ARE READY FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. BUT LOOK WHAT THEY ARE DOING TONIGHT."
BUNKER END TEXT

DTG: 061545Z NOV 1968

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PRESERVATION COPY

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[6]

Wednesday, November 6, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Papers for General Abrams' Distinguished Service Medal

Attached are two documents for your signature to complete your presentation of the Distinguished Service Medal to General Creighton W. Abrams.

- a. a certificate
- b. a citation.

When both are signed, the documents can be returned to me. Along with the medal which has now been properly engraved, they will be forwarded to General Abrams in Saigon.

W. W. Rostow

BKS:amc

SECRET/HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS

November 6, 1968

Pres file
41

**FROM WALT ROSTOW
FOR THE PRESIDENT**

**Herewith Bunker's cool and thoughtful analysis of factors that
made Thieu draw back at last minute.**

BEGIN TEXT.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 769 91-508

By sg/isp, NARA, Date 3-26-83



Department of State

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MLG 91-508

By us/ajp, NARA, Date 3-26-93

41a/1
TELEGRAM
ACTION COPY

DE RUMJIR 42066/1 3110935
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 060915Z NOV 68 ZFF-6
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3935
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2770
STATE GR NC
BT

~~SECRET~~

1 5 2 60
NOVEMBER 6, 1968
5:10 A.M.

W. J. Taylor

*For the President
From West Postow
Hansen Bunker
cool and thoughtful
analysis of factors
that made Thieu
draw back at last
minute. B. J.*

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 42066

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER

PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

SUBJ: THIEU'S DECISION.

1. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SET DOWN MY THOUGHTS ON WHAT TRANSPIRED HERE THAT LED THIEU TO MAKE HIS DECISION NOT TO GO WITH US INTO THE PARIS TALKS. THESE THOUGHTS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY BASED ON EVIDENCE AND SOLID IMPRESSIONS, EXCEPT FOR KY'S MOTIVATIONS, WHERE WHAT WE SAY IS SOMEWHAT SPECULATIVE. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE THE EVIDENCE. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO START EVALUATING THIS PERFORMANCE, WHICH CAME SO UNEXPECTEDLY, SO THAT WE WILL KNOW BETTER HOW TO DEAL WITH ITS CONSEQUENCES, AS WELL AS WITH THIEU AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE.
2. THE KEY ISSUE ON WHICH EVERYTHING TURNED WAS THE NLF STATUS IN THE TALKS. DURING THE LAST DAYS NOTHING WE COULD SAY, NO ASSURANCE WE COULD GIVE, WAS ABLE TO SHAKE THIEU FROM THE POSITION THAT HANOI HAD TO BE MADE TO AGREE THAT THE NLF WAS PART OF ITS DELEGATION, ELSE HE WOULD NOT COME INTO THE TALKS. THIS CAME AS A SURPRISE SINCE AT SEVERAL POINTS UNTIL THE VERY LAST DAY WE THOUGHT WE HAD THE FULLEST UNDERSTANDING OF, AND HIS AGREEMENT TO, THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA AND HOW IT WOULD BE APPLIED. A SECOND BUT LESS PERSISTENT THEME, BUT ONE WHICH HAS BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY EMPHASIZED, WAS THAT HANOI HAD TO SAY IT AGREES TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE GVN.
3. IF AT ANY POINT PRIOR TO THE LAST CRUCIAL DAYS THIEU HAD GIVEN US ANY INKLING THAT HE WOULD BREAK AGREEMENTS REACHED, OR THAT HE WOULD REOPEN THE FORMULA, OR WANTED STRONGER GUARANTEES THAN THOSE WE HAD GIVEN HIM, WE MIGHT HAVE HAD TIME TO OVERCOME HIS OPPOSITION BY WORKING FURTHER ON THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, ADDING PERHAPS EVEN STRONGER ASSURANCES THAT THE GVN WILL DEAL WITH ALL DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTERS, A REASSURANCE THAT WE WILL NOT PRESS THEM INTO COALITION, ETC. BUT HE DID NOT BECOME UTTERLY INTRANSIGENT UNTIL TOWARD THE END.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2- SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 42066, NOVEMBER 6. NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

4. THE SUDDEN TURN OF THE FINAL 48 HOURS OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THIEU PROMPTS THE INITIAL QUESTIONS: DID THIEU DELIBERATELY MISLEAD US EARLIER? DID HE HOLD BACK HIS REAL (AND EXTREME) POSITION UNTIL THE VERY END TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS ON THE CENTRAL NLF POINT? SUCH A TACTIC WOULD HAVE BEEN BASED ON THE TWIN ASSUMPTIONS OF OUR ANXIETY TO MOVE INTO TALKS IMMEDIATELY AND OF OUR NOT DARING TO MOVE WITHOUT THE GVN. THIEU WAS, OF COURSE, CORRECT WITH RESPECT TO OUR ANXIETY TO MOVE, BUT WRONG ABOUT OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE WITHOUT HIM DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS. IN ANY CASE, WE BELIEVE IT UNLIKELY THAT THIEU WAS DELIBERATELY MISLEADING US; HE WAS, HOWEVER, MISREADING US.

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BUNKER
BT

~~SECRET~~



Department of State

TELEGRAM
ACTION COPY

01524

OO RUFNCR
DE RUMJIR 42066/2 3110935
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 060915Z NOV 68 ZFF-6
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3936
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2771
STATE GRNC

NOVEMBER 6, 1968
5:20 A.M.

BT
~~SECRET~~ SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 42066

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER
PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

A. THIEU FELT STRONGLY THAT THE TIMING OF THE BOMBING HALT AND SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WAS NOT PROPITIOUS. WE WERE PROPOSING TO DO THIS--AND INVITING THE PROBABILITY OF AN IMMEDIATE SUBSEQUENT PROPOSAL FROM THE ENEMY FOR A CEASE-FIRE--JUST AT THE MOMENT WHEN WE WERE GIRDING TO FOLLOW UP RECENT MILITARY SUCCESSES WITH A CONCERTED AGGRESSIVE DRIVE AGAINST THE VIET CONG'S CONTROL OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. WHY RUSH TO A SOLUTION AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, WHICH INEVITABLY MEANS COMPROMISE, WHEN MORE AND MORE REPORTS WERE COMING IN THAT THE ENEMY WAS WEAKENED AND DISCOURAGED, WHEN THE SMELL OF VICTORY WAS IN THE AIR?

B. THIEU'S SUSPICION OF, OR AT LEAST LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN, OUR MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS REGARDING THE TALKS, WAS ALSO AT WORK. WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED HIS BELIEF THAT THE TIMING OF CESSATION WAS A PLOY RELATED TO OUR ELECTIONS. MUCH MORE SERIOUS IS THE FACT THAT CONSCIOUS AS HE IS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S DETERMINATION TO WIND UP THE FIGHTING AND WITHDRAW, HE ALMOST CERTAINLY FEARS THAT ONCE WE HAVE HIM AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE WE WOULD LEAD HIM STEP BY STEP INTO A CEASE FIRE, AND THEN PRESS ON HIM A COALITION, IF THAT IS THE PRICE WE HAVE TO PAY FOR A SETTLEMENT. WE KNOW NOW THAT AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT WAS IN HIS HANDS THAT THE NLF INTENDED TO PRESS QUICKLY FOR A CEASE-FIRE AND COALITION AND THIS REINFORCED HIS ANXIETY AND FEARS. THE LAOS SETTLEMENT, AND HARRIMAN'S ASSOCIATION WITH IT WAS ALSO IN HIS MIND. CERTAIN AS HE WAS OF A NIXON VICTORY, HE SAW IN THAT VICTORY THE REPLACEMENT OF HARRIMAN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE LAM TELEGRAM MISREPRESENTING HARRIMAN COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME.

~~SECRET~~

-2- SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 42066, NOVEMBER 6. NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

C. I WOULD RATE SUSPICION OF US AND FEAR OF WHAT NEGOTIATIONS WILL LEAD TO AS THE SECOND MAJOR FACTOR IN CAUSING HIM TO BACK AWAY AT THE FATEFUL HOUR OF DECISION. IT IS AN ATTITUDE WE SHALL HAVE TO KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT OF OUR THINKING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

7. I THINK ALL THE ELEMENTS OF PARAS 4-6 WERE PRESENT IN THIEU'S THINKING, BUT IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION TO WHAT EXTENT EACH ONE ENTERED HIS CALCULATIONS. THERE WERE TIMES DURING THE LAST 48 HOURS WHEN HE SEEMED CLEARLY TO MOVE WITH NO SENSE OF URGENCY, REPEATING THE SAME ARGUMENT IN A SCORE OF DIFFERENT GUISES, INSTEAD OF SEEKING A WAY OUT. HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE ARMY AND THE COUNTRY WOULD "DISINTEGRATE" BECAUSE THE OTHER SIDE CLAIMED TO HAVE TWO DELEGATIONS, HOWEVER ILLOGICAL THIS MAY SEEM TO US, BECAUSE IT MADE NO ALLOWANCE FOR HIS AND OUR ABILITY TO COMBAT HANOI'S PROPAGANDA WITH OUR OWN, WAS A REAL CONCERN OF HIS AS WELL AS THE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE PRIME MINISTER REPEATED THIS SAME CONCERN YESTERDAY. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS CONCERN SEEMS TO US TO BE GREATLY EXAGGERATED BUT, IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF EMOTION AND SUSPICION, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THIS ARGUMENT BY AN OBJECTIVE WEIGHING OF ITS VALIDITY. THE ARGUMENT ALSO BETRAYS A DEEP SENSE OF INSECURITY AND FEAR OF COMING TO A QUICK DECISION THAT INVOLVED SOME ELEMENTS OF A DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRITICISM.

8. THIS BRINGS US TO THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF THIEU'S STYLE AND THE MATTER OF "FACE." THIEU DOES NOT GENERALLY MAKE QUICK DECISIONS. HE TENDS TO DELAY THE BIG DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE FEELS INSECURE. THE OVERREACTION TO THE COUP SCARE OF OCTOBER 8 PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF THAT PERSISTING SENSE OF INSECURITY. IN THIS CONTEXT WE CONFRONTED THIEU WITH THE BIGGEST DECISION OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. WE PUT HIM UNDER TREMENDOUS TIME PRESSURE AND UNDER BONDS OF SECRECY PREVENTING ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES. HE WAS UNABLE TO PREPARE AND EDUCATE THEM FOR THE PLUNGE. ALTHOUGH HE WAS ON CLEAR NOTICE THAT WE WOULD MOVE QUICKLY ONCE WE HAD HANOI'S AGREEMENT, THIEU HIMSELF WAS MENTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE FACT THAT ON THE DAY AFTER WE HAD OBTAINED AGREEMENT ON A JOINT DECLARATION, WE WOULD COME TO HIM WITH THE NEWS THAT THE BOMBING WOULD STOP THE NEXT FOLLOWING DAY AND NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN THREE DAYS LATER. MOREOVER, VIETNAMESE, WE SHOULD REMEMBER, ARE NOT AS EFFICIENT AS WE IN LINING UP THEIR POLITICAL FORCES. MAKING CONTINGENCY PLANS AND WAITING WITH "EXECUTE" MESSAGES. THEY REQUIRE SOME TIME TO THRASH THINGS OUT AND LINE PEOPLE UP AND TALK MATTERS OVER. THEY ARE PERHAPS NOT ALONG IN THIS. IF WE HAD BEEN LESS CONCERNED WITH AVOIDING DISCUSSION WITH HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES, PERHAPS THIEU MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT HIS PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHER OPINION LEADERS ALONG. AS IT TURNED OUT, THE PRESSURE

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3- SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 42066, NOVEMBER 6. NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

ALSO ULTIMATELY INVOLVED THE EVER PRESENT QUESTION OF FACE, SO IMPORTANT IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. I DO NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE THIS POINT BUT MERELY ADD IT TO THE LIST OF FACTORS. STANDING UP TO THE AMERICANS, RESISTING THEIR IMPOSED DEADLINES, DEMONSTRATING VIETNAMESE SOVEREIGNTY BECAME, IF NOT AN END IN ITSELF, AT LEAST A WELCOME BY PRODUCT OF THE AFFAIR. I DEAL WITH THIS PHENOMENON IN MORE DETAIL IN PARAGRAPH 14 BELOW.

9. I HAVE NOT THUS FAR MENTIONED KY'S ROLE. IT IS A DIFFICULT ONE TO ASSESS AND ONE IS TEMPTED TO RAISE PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS. WE MUST ASSUME THAT SOME OF THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH PASSED THROUGH THIEU'S MIND ALSO PASSED THROUGH KY'S. KY IS FAR MORE SUSPICIOUS OF US THAN THIEU. HE IS FAR MORE RECKLESS. AND HE SETS GREAT STORE BY A NIXON VICTORY. HE ASKED US SEVERAL TIMES, "WHAT'S THE GREAT HURRY?" YET TOLD US HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO PERSUADE THIEU AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO GO WITH US. BUT DID HE?

10. OUR EARLY REPORTS OF THE FIRST NSC MEETING SHOW HIM TAKING A HARD LINE, WHICH LATER BECAME EQUIVOCAL. ONE, AND PROBABLY TWO FACTORS WERE AT WORK:

A. WE THINK KY WAS PRETTY CERTAIN WE WOULD NOT DARE TO MOVE UNILATERALLY, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO REASON TO MAKE THIS MISCALCULATION. AND IF WE DID NOT MOVE, THEN PRESIDENT-ELECT NIXON WOULD COME IN TO THE PICTURE ON THE SIDE OF TOUGHNESS. HE THEREFORE ACTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO REINFORCE THIEU'S HESITATIONS AND THE SERIOUS DOUBTS OF THOSE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, INSTEAD OF COUNTERACTING THEM.

BUNKER

BT

~~SECRET~~



Department of State
**TELEGRAM
ACTION COPY**

~~SECRET~~

01525

NOVEMBER 6, 1968
5:25 A.M.

DE RUMJIR 42066/3 3117935
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 060915Z NOV 68 ZFF-6
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3937
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2772
STATE GRNC
BT

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 42066

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER

PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

B. BUT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A SECOND FACTOR. THE SUSPICION INEVITABLY ARISES THAT HE SAW IN THIEU'S STAND AN OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY THIEU AS A RESULT OF THIEU'S BREAK WITH THE US. IF THIS WAS INDEED HIS PLAN, THEN HE CERTAINLY MISCALCULATED, FOR IN THE SHORT RUN THIEU'S DEFIANCE OF US HAS VASTLY INCREASED THIEU'S STATURE IN THE COUNTRY. FROM THE START KY TOOK THE POSITION WITH US THAT IN PRINCIPLE THEY ARE OPPOSED TO THE NLF PRESENCE, BUT THAT ONE MUST BE REALISTIC AND FACE THE FACT THAT THEY WILL BE PRESENT. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY SAID HE CAN HANDLE HANOI AND THE NLF; HE HAS NO FEAR OF TALKING WITH THE ENEMY; HE CAN BARGAIN AND DEAL WITH THEM AND HE CAN MAKE CONCESSIONS, FOR HE IS KNOWN AS A HAWK AND IS TRUSTED. HE WAS READY AND ANXIOUS TO GO TO PARIS. YET IN OUR MEETINGS WITH HIM AND THIEU HIS INTERVENTIONS WERE NEITHER HELPFUL NOR CONSTRUCTIVE.

C. WAS IT BECAUSE HE WANTED THIEU TO BOX HIMSELF IN ON THIS ISSUE? WAS IT BECAUSE HE SENSED THAT WHILE THE INITIAL EMOTIONAL REACTION MAY SUPPORT THIEU, THERE WILL BE MANY WHO WILL LATER COME TO THINK THAT THIEU HAS MADE A COLOSSAL MISTAKE IN FAILING TO GO WITH US IN PURSUIT OF A SETTLEMENT, AND THAT THIEU WILL BE DISCREDITED AND FORCED TO RESIGN IN FAVOR OF KY? WE DO NOT KNOW, AND WE TEND NOT TO BELIEVE THAT KY'S AMBITION WOULD CARRY HIM TO SUCH LENGTHS. STILL, WE WILL BE ON THE ALERT FOR RUMORS EMANATING FROM KY AND HIS ENTOURAGE CONDEMNING THIEU FOR HIS REFUSAL TO JOIN THE TALKS AND HIS BREAK WITH THE US AT A TIME WHEN KY WAS QUITE WILLING TO GO TO THE TALKS AND DEAL WITH THE NLF OR ANYONE ELSE.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

2- SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 42066, NOVEMBER 6. NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

11. DOES THIEU REALIZE THE FULL MAGNITUDE OF THE COMPLICATIONS HE HAS CREATED FOR HIMSELF AND FOR US, AND THE WAY HE HAS ISOLATED HIMSELF FROM FOREIGN SUPPORT? WE THINK THE ANSWER IS A QUALIFIED YES. THIEU THINKS CLEARLY, AND SAID AT ONE POINT HE KNOWS HE WILL BE VILIFIED AND CASTIGATED IN US AND IN WORLD OPINION IF HE DOES NOT JOIN THE TALKS. DOES HE REALIZE THAT IF HE PERSISTS IN HIS ABSENCE HE MAY DRIVE THE US TO NEGOTIATE UNILATERALLY? THIS I MADE CLEAR TO HIM, ALTHOUGH I DID NOT PRESS IT.

12. HE MUST CERTAINLY HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, AND HE RECEIVED FROM US AMPLE INDICATIONS OF HOW AMERICAN OPINION COULD REACT AND WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. BUT HE MAY SEE US TRAPPED HERE, OR STILL SEE IN NIXON'S POSSIBLE ELECTION HOPE OF EVENTUAL RELIEF FROM THESE PRESSURES. OR HE MAY BE GAMBLING THAT HANOI WILL COME TO HIS RESCUE BY ATTACKS ON THE CITIES AND ACROSS THE DMZ. ALTERNATIVELY, HE MUST REALIZE THAT HE CANNOT HOLD OUT INDEFINITELY, AND IS BUYING DOMESTIC POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR A FUTURE MOVE TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE, AT THE COST OF A SHORT-RUN ALIENATION OF THE US AND HIS FOREIGN FRIENDS. A RISKY AND SHORTSIGHTED COURSE, BUT ONE HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT NECESSARY.

13. WHAT WILL THIEU DO NEXT? HE HAS MADE HIS SPEECHES TO THE LEGISLATURE AND TO THE NATION. AND WHILE HE WENT FAR OUT IN HIS CONDITIONS, HE STOPPED JUST SHORT OF USING THE PRECISE WORDS ON WHICH HE BARGAINED WITH US, "HANOI MUST ADMIT THAT THE NLF IS PART OF ITS DELEGATION AND MUST ADMIT THAT IT WILL TALK TO US." HE IS ALSO KEEPING A LID ON ANTI-US DEMONSTRATIONS.

14. MANY VIETNAMESE HAVE OBSERVED AFTER HIS ASSEMBLY SPEECH OF NOVEMBER 1, THIEU "HAS REALLY BECOME OUR PRESIDENT." SOME HAVE SAID, "HE IS GREATER THAN DIEM." IT WAS PROFOUND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE ASSEMBLY AND FOR THE COUNTRY AT LARGE. THIEU SHED THE IMAGE OF THE AMERICAN-APPOINTED, AMERICAN-SUPPORTED CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND BECAME A LEADER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. BY CATERING TO A RELATIVELY LOW DENOMINATOR OF NATIONALISM, HE HAS ACQUIRED THE AURA OF A COURAGEOUS PATRIOT WHO IS STANDING UP TO THE FOREIGNER. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IF HE MOVES WISELY AND FIRMLY THIEU HAS PERHAPS NOW ACQUIRED A FREEDOM OF ACTION AND AN IMAGE OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE MATTER OF GVN PARTICIPATION THAT HE DID NOT HAVE BEFORE. HE IS NOW BETTER ABLE TO ACCEPT A FACE-SAVING FORMULA THAT WOULD PERMIT HIM TO CLAIM THAT HIS CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET. AND HE MAY NOW BE BETTER ABLE TO HANDLE THE MAN IN VIET-NAM AGAINST WHOM HE HARBORS THE DEEPEST SUSPICIONS--KY.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3- SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 42066, NOVEMBER 6. NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBIE PLUS

15. CAN THIEU BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE COURSE -- AND HOPEFULLY SOON? WE THINK THIS MAY BE POSSIBLE. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IS THAT THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS NIXON, WILL HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR TO HIM THAT GVN ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO A CONTINUATION OF AMERICAN PUBLIC SUPPORT OF OUR VIET-NAM POLICY. A TCC SUMMIT CONFERENCE THEREAFTER WITH A CAREFULLY WORKED OUT AND AGREED JOINT COMMUNIQUE BEFOREHAND COULD BE THE VEHICLE FOR BRINGING HIM TO PARIS WITH A MINIMUM LOSS OF FACE. THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS OF LEADERS HERE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT KY IS PICKING HIS DELEGATION.

16. AS FOOTNOTE TO THE ABOVE, THE THREE ROCKET ATTACKS ON SAIGON DURING THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 31/NOVEMBER 1, WHILE WE WERE IN SESSION WITH HIM, WHILE NOT A MAJOR FACTOR IN HIS INFLEXIBILITY DURING THESE CRUCIAL HOURS, CERTAINLY MADE HIM MORE STUBBORN. "HE SAID, "YOU SAY THEY ARE READY FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. BUT LOOK WHAT THEY ARE DOING TONIGHT.

BUNKER

END TEXT

BT

ACTION

Pres file

~~SECRET/HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS~~

Wednesday, November 6, 1968
6:30 p. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith the draft letter to
Park, which you requested.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET/HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS~~

WWRostow:rln

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 3-26-93

~~SECRET~~
Classification

[told you on October 15, President Thieu had in fact concurred fully in]
the proposal that was subsequently made to the North Vietnamese representa-
tives, and that proposal, in turn, became the basis of my action on
October 31. The differences that arose at the last minute concern matters
whose importance to the Republic of Vietnam has always been clear to us,
and you can be sure that we shall take every possible step to meet their
reasonable needs. This is particularly true of their legitimate concern
that we should make clear our common view of the so-called National
Liberation Front -- which you yourself accurately state in your letter.

As for the question of a coalition government, you can be equally
confident that the United States Government will continue to hold the
clear and emphatic views we always held on this subject as I have stated
them last December 5 and on many other occasions.

Ambassador Porter will keep you advised of the situation, and I have
every hope we shall be able to work out the remaining problems and to go
forward in a complete spirit of unity.

I take the occasion to emphasize that, even as we make this major effort
to move toward peace in Vietnam and count on your continued support and
understanding in that effort, we are continuing to watch closely the
pressures being exerted by the North Korean regime against your government
[and country. I much admire the increasing effectiveness of your armed]

~~SECRET~~
Classification

~~SECRET~~

Classification

forces and security organization in dealing with these pressures, and
Ambassador Porter is keeping ^{me} ~~my~~ closely informed.

Sincerely,

(Signed) LBJ END TEXT

GP-1

END

~~SECRET~~

Classification

ACTION

Wednesday, November 6, 1968

6:20 pm

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Purchase of New Zealand lamb

Pres file

During your conversation with Prime Minister Holyoake on October 9 you told him we would look into the possibility of purchasing up to \$500,000 of New Zealand lamb for resale through U.S. commissaries abroad.

Holyoake now wishes to make a statement to that effect to his Parliament. Our Department of Defense wishes to make a more or less simultaneous announcement here. You are therefore asked to approve the following press announcement for routine release by the Defense Department:

"When New Zealand Prime Minister Keith Holyoake paid an official visit to Washington October 9 and 10, he and President Johnson agreed that additional measures would be taken to ensure that New Zealand producers and manufacturers have every reasonable opportunity to participate in United States Government overseas procurement activities. In this connection, it was agreed that we would discuss the purchase of up to \$500,000 worth of New Zealand lamb for resale through U.S. military commissaries overseas. They also agreed to discuss the overhaul in New Zealand of U.S. vehicles and aircraft employed in the Antarctic by the U.S. Navy in Operation DEEPFREEZE."

I recommend you approve the release.

Approve _____
Disapprove _____
Call me _____

W. W. Rostow

MWright:wpt

44

1968 NOV 6 22 44

EEA 739
DD WTE 10
BE WTE 4282

FROM WALT ROSTON
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82731

Profile

1968 NOV 6 PM 5:50
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

SECRET

SUBJECT: DIGEST OF STATE DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 6, 1968

NEAR EAST

WAR ON FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

A JAR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL INFORMED MINISTER BERGUS THAT, IN A DOCUMENT TO BE HANDED JARRING, THE JAR WILL REJECT THE IDEA OF SOME KIND OF TERRITORIAL "GUARANTEE" OF FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE STRAITS OF TIRAN. FOREIGN MINISTER RIAD FEELS THIS WOULD CREATE A PRECEDENT FOR A PERMANENT ISRAELI PRESENCE AT THE SUEZ CANAL.

ISRAELI REPLY TO JORDAN

AMBASSADOR SYMMES PASSED ISRAEL'S REPLY TO KING HUSSEIN'S APPEAL. SYMMES STRESSED OUR CONCERN WITH INCIDENTS SUCH AS THOSE AT EILAT AND BEIT SHEAN, WHICH PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE KING'S ENEMIES AND HARDEN ISRAELI ATTITUDES.

CYPRUS TALKS PROGRESS

GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER PIPINELIS TOLD AMBASSADOR TALBOT HE THINKS THE DEPARTURE OF FORMER CYPRIOT INTERIOR MINISTER GEORKADJIS MAY HELP THE PROGRESS OF THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS. PIPINELIS COMMENTED THAT THE MOST RECENT MEETING BETWEEN COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES WAS MORE ENCOURAGING THAN EXPECTED.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5

NLJ-0198-42-1-11

By LICA NAR, Date 12-8-2017

PRESERVATION COPY

EAST ASIA

NORTH VIETNAM PROTEST

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOVEMBER 5 PROTESTED AGAINST CONTINUED U.S. RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER NORTH VIETNAM. EMBASSY SAIGON BELIEVES IT SIGNIFICANT THAT HANOI HAS DECIDED TO CALL THE RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS "ACTS OF ENCRDACHMENT," THIS BEING CONSISTENT WITH ITS POSITION THAT THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT PROCEED UNLESS THE U.S. STOPPED ALL "ACTS OF WAR" AGAINST THE NORTH.

AFRICA

NIGHT FLIGHTS TO BIAFRA

THE SWISS AMBASSADOR HAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR MATHEWS HE HAS RECEIVED ORAL ASSURANCES FROM THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT THAT ICRC NIGHT FLIGHTS FROM FERNANDO PO COULD CONTINUE PENDING AN AGREEMENT ON DAYLIGHT FLIGHTS.

EUROPE

FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS DISCUSSED

THE BRITISH MINISTER TOLD EMBASSY PARIS THAT THE FRENCH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, IN DE GAULLE'S PRESENCE, TWO WEEKS AGO DEBATED U.S.-FRENCH RELATIONS. REPORTEDLY, MOST MINISTERS SPOKE FOR BETTER RELATIONS WHILE DE GAULLE SEEMED TO PREFER THE OPTION OF ARMED NEUTRALITY OUTSIDE THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.

~~SECRET~~

DTG: 062207Z NOV 68

PRESERVATION COPY

SENT
WHCA

45

VZROZOE A 738
OO WTR 17
DE WTR 4331

1968 NOV 6 22 23

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82730

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
68 NOV 6 PM 5:38

Pres file

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

A REASSURING ABRAMS REPORT COVERING DIRECTLY SAME GROUND AS WHEELER MEMO I FORWARDED THIS MORNING.

1. THIS MORNING I ATTENDED THE THIRD QUARTER REVIEW OF THE 1968 COMBINED CAMPAIGN PLAN AT DA NANG. I THINK THAT SEVERAL OF THE CLOSING STATEMENTS MADE THERE WERE VERY SIGNIFICANT, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE ATTENDANCE, AND MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU.

2. AS USUAL, GENERAL LAM, I CORPS COMMANDER, WAS HOST WITH CUSHMAN COLLABORATING. ATTENDANCE INCLUDED COMMANDERS AND SENIOR STAFF FROM I CORPS AS WELL AS SAIGON (JCS, MACV AND USARV), NUMBERING JUST AT 100 IN ALL. STILWELL, PLUS ALL ARVN AND U.S. DIVISION COMMANDERS AND PROVINCE CHIEFS IN I CORPS, PLUS THE ROK MARINE BRIGADE COMMANDER, WERE THERE. LTG LA, DEPUTY TO GENERAL VIEN, CHIEF OF JCS, ATTENDED IN HIS BEHALF.

3. AT THE END OF A TWO HOUR REVIEW OF GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT, WHICH SHOWED A LOT OF SOLID PROGRESS ACROSS THE BOARD UNDER THE HEADINGS OF INTELLIGENCE, OPERATIONS AND PACIFICATION, THERE WERE STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE SHIFT OF EMPHASIS AND EFFORT TO ATTACK THE LOCAL FORCES, GUERRILLAS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE, AS WELL AS ACCELERATE PACIFICATION. AS LAST PART OF STAFF PRESENTATION ON PACIFICATION, THE BRIEFING OFFICER (VIETNAMESE, I CORPS) WENT ON TO LAY OUT WITH MAPS AND CHARTS THE ACCELERATED PACIFICATION PROGRAM BETWEEN NOW AND TET. HE COVERED THE HAMLETS TO BE SECURED, THE RF AND PF TO BE UTILIZED, THE ATTACK ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND MADE CLEAR THE COMMAND EMPHASIS TO BE DIRECTED TO THIS.

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 4-15-93

DECLASSIFIED
Authority Group 4
By rg/imp, NARA, Date 4-15-93

PRESERVATION COPY

21

4. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY CUSHMAN, WHO TRACED ACTIONS HE AND GENERAL LAM HAD STARTED AS LONG AGO AS JUNE CALLING FOR INTENSIFIED EFFORT IN THIS "OTHER WAR." CUSHMAN WOUND UP WITH A STRONG CALL TO PUSH ACTION FURTHER AND PASTER IN THIS FIELD. I THEN FOLLOWED, REVIEWING THE ENEMY'S ALL OUT MILITARY EFFORT WHICH HE BEGAN PREPARING FOR IN JULY 1967, AND WHICH WAS DEFEATED AT TET, IN MAY, AND FINALLY IN AUGUST-SEPTEMBER. I POINTED OUT THE IMPRESSIVE SUCCESS WE HAVE ATTAINED ON THE BATTLEFIELD, AND THE GREATLY INCREASED STRENGTH AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARVN FORCES, AND CONGRATULATED ALL PRESENT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REFLECTED IN THESE ACHIEVEMENTS. I CALLED ON THEM TO APPLY THE SAME SKILL AND DETERMINATION TO THE PHASE OF THE WAR WE ARE NOW FACING, CENTERING ON LOCAL FORCES, GUERRILLAS AND INFRASTRUCTURE WHILE KEEPING THE BIG UNITS IN HAND. I EMPHASIZED THAT IN THE NEW SITUATION FOLLOWING THE BOMBING HALT IN NVN, WE WILL CONTINUE FULL SCALE OPERATIONS IN SVN AND LADS, INCLUDING A MASSIVE INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN IN THE LATTER AREA. I WOUND UP WITH THE PRESIDENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ME TO "POUR IT ON, GO AFTER THE ENEMY AND NEVER LET HIM GO." THESE REMARKS WERE RECEIVED WITH APPLAUSE.

5. GENERAL LA, REPRESENTATIVE OF GENERAL VIEN, THEN SPOKE. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HIS REMARKS REFLECTED A CABINET MEETING HELD BY PRESIDENT THIEU YESTERDAY. HE STARTED OUT BY REFERRING TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING, THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE CLAIMS OF HANOI AND THE DANGEROUS POLITICAL SITUATION AND STRESSED THAT VIETNAMESE OFFICERS SHOULD WORK WITH THE DR TROOPS SO THAT THEY WILL NOT BECOME DISCOURAGED AND DESERT BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION. HOWEVER, AFTER THIS RATHER FEARFUL BEGINNING HE THEN WENT ON WITH A FINE SET OF ACTION REQUIREMENTS TO GET ON WITH THE JOB. THESE WERE:

- A. COMPLETE THE 1000 HAMLET PROGRAM.
- B. COMPLETE THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR 1968.
- C. CONCENTRATE ALL EFFORTS TO DESTROY ENEMY UNITS, ESPECIALLY INFRASTRUCTURE.
- D. MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AT ALL LEVELS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND ALLIED FORCES ESPECIALLY THE AMERICANS.

THESE REMARKS ALSO RECEIVED APPLAUSE.

6. AFTER THE MEETING WAS OVER ANDY TALKED TO HIM AT SOME LENGTH. HE EXPRESSED STRONG AGREEMENT WITH THE ACTIONS LA HAD CALLED FOR. HE THEN SAID THAT THESE SHOULD BE BASED ON CONFIDENCE, AND NOT ON FEAR OR A SENSE OF INSECURITY. HE POINTED OUT THAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS AT ARMS, THAT THE ENEMY HAS BEEN DEFEATED AND HIS STRENGTH HAS BEEN BROKEN, AND THAT WE CAN AND MUST COMPLETE THE REST OF THE JOB. HE ADDED THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE NO THOUGHT THAT, AFTER HAVING HAD 30,000 YOUNG AMERICANS KILLED HERE, ANYONE IS GOING TO CAST AWAY WHAT THEY DIED FOR. LA EXPRESSED FULL AGREEMENT.

7. WHILE THERE IS STILL OBVIOUSLY SOME JITTERINESS, IT WAS QUITE EVIDENT THAT, ON THE MILITARY SIDE, THE ATTITUDE OF THE VIETNAMESE IS ONE OF ACHIEVEMENT, CONFIDENCE, AND DEDICATION TO THE JOB THAT LIES AHEAD. I FOUND IT A MOST IMPRESSIVE SESSION.

DTG 062140Z NOVEMBER 1968

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION COPY

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46

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV 6 22 14

68 NOV 6 PM 5:10
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

VZCZCESA737
OO WTE13
DE WTE 4280

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE WH82729

UNCLAS

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

FOLLOWING, FOR YOUR APPROVAL, ARE (1) A PROPOSED GREETING TO THE NEW PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE MALDIVE ISLANDS, AND (2) A MESSAGE TO KING ZAHIR OF AFGHANISTAN ON THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS REIGN.

Pres file

THE MALDIVE MESSAGE IS ROUTINE. INAUGURATION TAKES PLACE NOVEMBER 11, BUT WE NEED YOUR DECISION TO GIVE TIME FOR UNCERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THESE TINY ISLANDS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

STATE RECOMMENDS THE AFGHAN MESSAGE TO TAKE SPECIAL NOTE OF THE KING'S PROGRESSIVE ROLE IN SPURRING PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ZAHIR, LIKE MAHENDRA OF NEPAL, IS A BUILDER AND MODERNIZER WHO DESERVES OUR ENCOURAGEMENT. THIS PRAISE FROM YOU ON HIS ROYAL ANNIVERSARY SHOULD BE VERY WELL RECEIVED.

I RECOMMEND YOU APPROVE BOTH MESSAGES.

(1) PROPOSED MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT NASIR OF THE MALDIVE ISLANDS:

PRESERVATION COPY

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

AMERICA SENDS WARM GREETINGS TO YOU AND THE MALDIVIAN PEOPLE ON YOUR INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT. WE KNOW THIS DAY IS DOUBLY JOYOUS BECAUSE IT ALSO MARKS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC FOR YOUR ISLAND NATION.

THE THREE YEARS SINCE YOUR INDEPENDENCE HAVE BROUGHT OUR TWO COUNTRIES CLOSE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THIS FRIENDSHIP WILL GROW EVEN STRONGER IN THE FUTURE.

SINCERELY,

END TEXT

(2) PROPOSED MESSAGE TO KING ZAHIR OF AFGHANISTAN.

BEGIN TEXT:

YOUR MAJESTY:

ALL AMERICANS JOIN ME IN SENDING YOU GOOD WISHES ON THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR WISE AND PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP. UNDER YOUR MAJESTY'S REIGN, AFGHANISTAN HAS BEEN STEADFAST IN HER HISTORIC DEDICATION TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. BUT YOU HAVE ALSO KNOWN THAT CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ARE THE KEYS TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL YOUR PEOPLE.

THE UNITED STATES IS PROUD OF THE CLOSE TIES BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE SAME FRUITFUL COOPERATION IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

WARM WISHES FOR YOUR CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH AND SUCCESS.

SINCERELY,

END TEXT

DTG 052130Z NOVEMBER 1963

PRESERVATION COPY

47

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

68 NOV 6 PM 5:11
EYES ONLY
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

1968 NOV 6 22 02

EEA736
OO VTE 10
DE VTE 4279

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAPS2728

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ EYES ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT -- EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

AFTER CHECKING WITH CHARLIE MURPHY -- AT SEC. RUSK'S SUGGESTION -- I FORWARD THIS MEMO FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

CHARLIE'S COMMENT IS: THIS IS THE KIND OF ARRANGEMENT HE BELIEVES WE SHOULD FOSTER.

QUOTE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

CUTTING ACROSS THE MORE FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSITION AND BEARING IN MIND OUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER TRANSITIONS, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS FOR USE WITH THE PRESIDENT-ELECT:

1. THE PRESIDENT-ELECT SHOULD BE INVITED TO DESIGNATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE. HOPEFULLY SUCH A PERSON WOULD BE GENERALLY ABREAST OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. WHETHER SUCH A PERSON IS CONTEMPLATED AS THE 55TH SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD BE, OF COURSE, FOR THE PRESIDENT ELECT TO DETERMINE.

Pre file

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING. CANCELLED PER E.O. 12358, SEC. 1.3 AND ARCHIVIST'S MEMO OF MAR. 16, 1993.

PRESERVATION COPY

BY ON 9-26-97

2. THE SECRETARY OF STATE WILL PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE ON THE 7TH FLOOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT. THIS COULD BE IN ADDITION TO ANY OFFICE SPACE PROVIDED BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE PRESIDENT-ELECT IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING OR ELSEWHERE.

3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD IMMEDIATELY MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT ALL SIGNIFICANT CABLES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS INVOLVING THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS. IT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND HIS REPRESENTATIVE WOULD FULLY RESPECT THE CLASSIFIED CHARACTER OF MUCH OF THE INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE. IN ADDITION, SYSTEMATIC BRIEFINGS COULD BE ARRANGED BY THE VARIOUS OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN ORDER THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, AND THE PRESIDENT-ELECT HIMSELF, COULD BEGIN TO BUILD THE FULL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEMS THEY WILL INHERIT ON JANUARY 20TH.

4. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT WOULD BE INVITED TO COMMENT, ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, ON MANY MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANCE WHICH ARE PENDING FOR DECISION. IT IS UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE WILL CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES UNTIL JANUARY 20TH. THIS MEANS THAT THEY WILL TAKE INTO FULL ACCOUNT ANY COMMENTS MADE BY THE PRESIDENT-ELECT OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE BUT WILL NOT NECESSARILY FEEL THEMSELVES BOUND BY SUCH ADVICE.

5. THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE WILL WISH TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT MAKING COMMITMENTS EXTENDING INTO THE PERIOD OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT WITHOUT FULL CONSULTATION.

END QUOTE

DTG: 062128Z NOV 68

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

EYES ONLY

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

~~EYES ONLY~~

48

EEA732
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4274

1968 NOV 6 17 40

FROM WALT ROSTON
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP 82724

68 NOV 8 PM 12:48
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
See file

~~SECRET~~ LITERALLY EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

JUST TO SEE WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE, FOLLOWING IS A DRAFT LETTER FROM NIXON TO THIEU WHICH WE MIGHT SOLICIT FROM HIM AFTER:

- A PRIVATE TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT;
- A DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY BRIEFING.

IT WOULD BE BEST IF HE WERE VERY TOUGH IN A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION AND DID NOT GO BEYOND WHAT HE SAID ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION IN PUBLIC; NAMELY, HIS VIEW THAT THE TALKS SHOULD PROCEED AND HE WOULD DO WHATEVER THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE THOUGHT HELPFUL.

I ASSUME WE SHALL TRY TO DISCOURAGE THE VISIT OF EMISSARIES -- OR NIXON -- TO SAIGON.

I HAVE, OF COURSE, NOT PUT THIS DRAFT TO ANYONE ELSE YET.

DRAFT -- NOVEMBER 6, 1968

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 91-508
By *mg*, NARA, Date 1-11-93

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION COPY

DEAR PRESIDENT THIEU:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND SECRETARY RUSK HAVE NOW BRIEFED ME IN THE GREATEST DETAIL ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS OVER RECENT MONTHS AND ON THE CONSULTATIONS AND THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND ITS CONSTITUTIONAL LEADERS. THIS REVIEW INCLUDED ESPECIALLY THE DISCUSSIONS AND AGREEMENTS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT FROM OCTOBER 15 THROUGH THE NEGOTIATION OF THE DRAFT JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON OCTOBER 28 AND THE SUBSEQUENT WITHDRAWAL OF YOUR GOVERNMENT FROM THAT AGREEMENT.

IN THE LIGHT OF THIS KNOWLEDGE, I WISH TO URGE YOU, WITH ALL THE EMPHASIS I CAN, QUICKLY TO RESOLVE WHATEVER PROBLEMS MAY REMAIN IN GETTING YOUR DELEGATION TO PARIS AND FINDING WAYS, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, TO COME TO GRIPS PROMPTLY WITH THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ON WHICH A PEACE SETTLEMENT DEPENDS.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I FULLY SHARE PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S CONCERN THAT ANY FURTHER DELAY ON THIS MATTER COULD ENDANGER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM IN THE UNITED STATES AND THUS ENDANGER THE STRUGGLE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND FOR A STABLE AND HONORABLE PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

AS YOU KNOW, I SHARE PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S VIEW THAT IN THE PARIS TALKS THERE WILL BE, FROM OUR SIDE, NO RECOGNITION OF THE NLF AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY; AND THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO IMPDSE ON SOUTH VIETNAM A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE NLF.

I HAVE ALSO REVIEWED WITH PRESIDENT JOHNSON, THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN VIETNAM, INCLUDING REPORTS FROM GENERAL ABRAMS IN THE FIELD. IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT, IF WE PROCEED WITH PRESENT MILITARY PLANS, THERE IS NO REASON THAT WE CANNOT MOVE FORWARD IN PARIS FROM A POSITION OF NEGOTIATING STRENGTH.

BUT, I WOULD EMPHASIZE AGAIN, THIS REQUIRES AN APPEARANCE IN PARIS OF A GVN DELEGATION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, READY TO GO TO WORK SERIOUSLY IN THE SEARCH FOR AN EARLY AND HONORABLE PEACE. IN SHORT, I CAN SEE NO GAIN AND POTENTIALLY MUCH LOSS FROM ANY EFFORTS BY YOUR GOVERNMENT TO POSTPONE DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PARIS TALKS UNTIL JANUARY 20, 1969.

RICHARD M. NIXON

~~EYES ONLY~~

~~SECRET~~
DTG: 061626Z NOV 1968

PRESERVATION COPY

50

EEA727
OO WIE18
DE WIE 4272

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV 6 16 19

Profile
68 NOV 8 AM 11:24
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

FROM WALT ROSTOV
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE WH82722

UNCLAS

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

THE STATE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS THAT YOU SEND THE FOLLOWING SOVIET NATIONAL DAY CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PODGORNYY.

THE TEXT IS SHORTER AND MORE FORMAL THAN LAST YEAR'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE AND IS SIMILAR TO THAT SENT IN 1963. THE MESSAGE READS:

"ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, I CONVEY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES TO THE PEOPLES OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON "

DTG: 061600Z NOV 1968

PRESERVATION COPY

Wednesday, November 6, 1968 - 10:35 AM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From file

On July 25, 1966 you invited King Baudouin of Belgium to observe a manned space flight launching at Cape Kennedy and to follow it from the Houston Space Control Center. So far it has not been possible to schedule such a visit.

Secretary Rusk would like to renew the invitation to the King on your behalf for the Apollo VIII launching tentatively scheduled for December 21. Rusk will be calling on the King in Brussels during the course of the NATO Ministerial Meeting November 14 - 16.

This would not be a state visit. The King might ask to see you for a brief courtesy call on his way to the launching.

W. W. Rostow

Approve having Secretary Rusk
renew invitation _____

Disapprove _____

Call me _____

WWR
JKN:
ERF:mm

52

November 6, 1968

FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM WALT ROSTOW

Pres file

The State Department recommends that you send the following Soviet National Day congratulatory message to Podgorny.

The text is shorter and more formal than last year's 50th anniversary message and is similar to that sent in 1963. The message reads:

"On behalf of the people of the United States, I convey greetings and best wishes to the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the occasion of their national holiday.

Lyndon B. Johnson

~~SECRET~~

53

1968 NOV 6 16 55

68 NOV 6 PM 12:04
SITUATION ROOM
WHITE HOUSE

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 91-508

By WJG, NARA, Date 1-11-93

EEA729
OO WIE10
DE WIE 4269

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82719

Pres file

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH A VAGUE BUNKER-KY DINNER DISCUSSION IN WHICH OPERATIONAL POINT BECOMES CLEAR: THIEU AND KY MUST BE DISABUSED OF THE IDEA THEY CAN STALL MODALITIES FOR THEIR COMING TO TALKS UNTIL JANUARY 20.

SAIGON 42065

1. KY AND I TALKED FOR AN HOUR AFTER DINNER LAST NIGHT. BERGER ALSO PRESENT.

2. I OPENED BY ASKING IF HE HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING OUT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. HE SAID HE THOUGHT A TALK WITH THIEU WAS IN ORDER. I ASKED IF I SHOULD CALL THIEU OR WAIT UNTIL HE WANTS TO SEE ME. HE SAID I SHOULD INITIATE THE CALL.

3. HE THEN SAID, "THIEU HAS PUT HIMSELF IN A BOX, AND THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO HELP HIM GET OUT". (I REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON THE CAVALIER WAY IN WHICH HE PUT THE WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY ON THIEU, FOR HE HIMSELF PLAYED A CRUCIAL PART IN THIEU'S FINAL DECISION). KY WENT ON THAT HE HAD BEEN TALKING TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND WAS FORMULATING A WAY THROUGH. IT MIGHT, HE SAID, TAKE AS LONG AS "TWO MONTHS" TO ACCOMPLISH THE TURNAROUND. (THE TWO MONTHS WAS A WAY OF SAYING HE HAD JANUARY 20TH IN MIND.)

4. HE THEN DEVELOPED HIS "FORMULATION," WHICH WAS VAGUE IN THE EXTREME, BUT WENT ABOUT AS FOLLOWS:

A. WE KNOW WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE NLF. I HAVE NO HESITATION OR FEAR IN DOING SO. BUT WE CAN ONLY DEAL WITH THE NLF AT A CERTAIN POINT.

B. WE HAVE GOT TO HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING FOR THIS. (QUESTIONS PRODUCED NO DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL SETTING, OTHER THAN "I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY," AND HE QUICKLY BRUSHED THIS ASIDE IN FAVOR OF, "WHAT WE NEED IS A TWO-PHASE TALK.")

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

[.]

C. "FIRST WE TALK WITH HANOI. WE GET THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE 17TH PARALLEL AS A DIVISION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WE GET HANOI TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM. THEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT OTHER THINGS: TRADE; EVENTUAL UNIFICATION, ANYTHING.

D. "WHEN WE HAVE THIS, WE CAN TALK TO THE NLF. THE NLF WANT COALITION. MAYBE WE CAN GIVE THEM SOME MINISTRIES. NOT AT THE BEGINNING. PERHAPS THERE WILL NEED TO BE A NEW ELECTION FIRST. WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF THEM IN AN ELECTION. WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF THEM ONCE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PULL OUT THEIR FORCES. BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS AGREEMENT WITH HANOI IN THE FIRST STAGE".

E. IN AN EFFORT TO GET A LITTLE MORE CLARITY AND PRECISION FROM HIM, I SAID, "ARE YOU SAYING IN EFFECT THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT BE DIVIDED INTO TWO COMPARTMENTS? FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A) THE US AND THE DRV MIGHT TALK ABOUT MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL, AND B) THAT YOU AND THE NLF MIGHT TALK ABOUT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE TAKING IN SOME MEMBERS OF THE NLF INTO THE GOVERNMENT AND HOLDING GENERAL ELECTIONS?" HE REPLIED, "YES, SOMETHING OF THAT SORT".

5. I ASKED IF THE GVN COULD PUT WHATEVER HE HAD IN MIND IN WRITING SO WE COULD EXAMINE IT. HE SAID THIS IS WHAT THEY INTENDED. I SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT ANY PROPOSAL OF THEIRS NOT BE MADE PUBLIC, BECAUSE WE CANNOT SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC. HE NODDED VAGUELY.

6. I DID NOT ATTEMPT TO DISCUSSION OF HIS PROPOSAL BECAUSE IT WAS SO VAGUE, BUT ASKED INSTEAD HOW DO WE GET FROM WHERE WE ARE NOW INTO TALKS, LEADING TO THE KIND OF DISCUSSIONS HE HAD IN MIND. ALL HE SAID WAS THAT THEY HAD TO JOIN THE TALKS BUT THIS WOULD TAKE A LITTLE TIME. THERE WERE CERTAIN MATTERS TO WORK OUT. PERHAPS THEY COULD JOIN THE PRELIMINARY TALKS TO WORK THESE OUT. I ASKED WHAT THEY WERE. HE SAID, "PROCEDURES AND THINGS LIKE THAT".

7. I SAID THE US HAD WORKED SIX MONTHS TO GET HANOI INTO THESE TALKS ON AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS. WE THOUGHT WE HAD THE AGREEMENT OF HIS GOVERNMENT FOR THAT BASIS. AT THE LAST MOMENT THEY REFUSED TO COME. WE UNDERSTAND THEIR DIFFICULTIES, BUT THEY MUST UNDERSTAND ANOTHER PROBLEM, WHICH OVERRIDES EVERYTHING. THIS WAR IS UNPOPULAR WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR VIETNAM POLICY, THEY MUST BE SATISFIED THAT WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO BRING THIS WAR TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. WE NOW HAVE THAT CHANCE. WE ARE IN A STRONG MILITARY AND NEGOTIATING POSITION. IF THE GVN DELAYS COMING INTO THE TALKS IT WILL NOT BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE US, AND IT WILL HAVE THE MOST PROFOUND IMPACT ON AMERICAN OPINION AND AMERICAN SUPPORT OF THE WAR. THESE THINGS SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD HERE. OUR FURTHER SUPPORT OF THE WAR AND THE FUTURE OF SOUTH VIETNAM DEPENDS IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS ON WHAT AMERICAN OPINION IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT. I SAID THIS FACTOR WILL OPERATE ON WHOEVER IS ELECTED TOMORROW.

~~SECRET~~

8. KY SAID THIS WAS WELL UNDERSTOOD HERE. HE REMARKED THAT IF WE HAD NOT BEEN IN SUCH A HURRY, WE COULD HAVE COME TO AN AGREEMENT. "WE ASKED FOR A LITTLE MORE TIME, AND I AM SURE THAT IF WE HAD HAD ANOTHER 24 HOURS WE COULD HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT".

9. COMMENT: EARLIER IN THE DAY, AN ASSOCIATE OF KY'S PASSED IN WHAT HE SAID KY WOULD TALK ABOUT (SEE FVS 17, 910, NOVEMBER 5).

A. KY MADE NO SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AN INTERNATIONAL GENEVA-STYLE CONFERENCE AS THE FIRST STAGE, BUT LIMITED HIMSELF TO "WE HAVE GOT TO HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING FOR THIS" (PARA 4B ABOVE).

B. THE PROPOSAL IS SO VAGUE AND HAS SUCH OBVIOUS GAPS THAT I HARDLY NEED TO POINT THESE OUT IN THIS MESSAGE. WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO COME INTO PRELIMINARY TALKS (PARA 6 ABOVE).

C. THE CONVERSATION REAFFIRMS MY VIEW THAT KY IS IN NO HURRY-- A VIEW WHICH CAN ONLY BE DISABUSED WHEN THE PRESIDENT ELECT MAKES CLEAR THAT HE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO LEND THEMSELVES TO DELAY. WE HAVE NOT REACHED THE POINT OF HAVING TO THREATEN THEM THAT WE ARE GOING ON WITHOUT THEM, AND I STILL BELIEVE THE ICC CONFERENCE MAY BE THE MOST RAPID AND BEST MEANS OF SAVING FACE.

DTG: 061520Z NOV 68

~~SECRET~~

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PRODUCTION COPY

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MLJ 00-231 (25)

By JCL/EB NARA, Date 8-17-04

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SENT
WHCA

~~SECRET~~
EYES ONLY 54

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82723

1968 NOV 6 17 04

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE LITERALLY EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH TWO FURTHER REPORTS.

Free file
68 NOV 6 8 PM 12:00
WHITE HOUSE ROOM

1. ON NOVEMBER FIVE, INSTANT, MRS. ANNA CHENNAULT VISITED HER VOTING PRECINCT, THE INVESTMENT BUILDING AT FIFTEENTH AND K STREETS, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C., AND THEREAFTER JOURNEYED TO NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK.

AS OF SEVEN FORTY-FIVE P.M. INSTANT, CHENNAULT WAS NOT REGISTERED AT WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL, NEW YORK, NEW YORK. INQUIRY UNDER SUITABLE PRETEXT DETERMINED THAT CHENNAULT WAS IN HOTEL IN SUITE IN AREA OF NIXON PARTY AWAITING TO DESCEND BALLROOM.

2. ON NOVEMBER FIVE, LAST, A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST, ADVISED THAT VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR BUI DIEM, WASHINGTON, D. C. CONSULTED MRS. BARBARA PHILLIPS AND MR. RUFUS PHILLIPS (BOTH PHONETIC), NOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED WITH REFERENCE TO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE U. S. DIEM STATED HE WAS KEEPING HIS FINGERS CROSSED DUE TO HIS EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT. DIEM ADDED THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH THIS TEST (THE ELECTIONS) BECAUSE EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IT (THE QUESTION OF VIETNAM) SHOULD GO THROUGH THIS TEST. PHILLIPS AGREED STATING IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO HAVE THE TEST PLACED IN THE CORRECT PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK. DIEM STATED THAT IT SEEMS THAT VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY KNOWS THAT THE INCLINATIONS FROM SAIGON, AT LEAST FROM THE POLITICIANS OUTSIDE, IS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE NIXON AND NOT FOR HUMPHREY; AND SHOULD HE (HUMPHREY) WIN IT WOULD BE RATHER DIFFICULT FOR THE VIETNAMESE OVER THERE. PHILLIPS OPENED THAT "SOMEBODY" JUST WROTE HUMPHREY'S SPEECH AND HUMPHREY READ IT WITHOUT THINKING. DIEM STATED THAT IN SPITE OF HIS RESPECT FOR HUMPHREY THAT HE (DIEM) HAD TO SIDE WITH THOSE PEOPLE WHO GAVE THE VIETNAMESE THE MAXIMUM OF CONDITIONS.

RUFUS PHILLIPS IS POSSIBLE IDENTICAL WITH RUFUS COLFAX PHILLIPS III, PRESIDENT OF AIRWAYS ENGINEERING CORPORATION, ONE TWO FIVE ZERO CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N. W., BORN AUGUST TEN, NINETEEN TWENTY NINE AT MIDDLETOWN, OHIO, MARRIED TO BARBARA ELEANORA PHILLIPS, BORN JUNE SIXTEEN, NINETEEN THIRTY-FOUR AT SANTIAGO, CHILE, BOTH RESIDEING AT SIX FIVE TWO ZERO RIDGE STREET, MC LEAN, VIRGINIA. PHILLIPS REPORTEDLY TRAVELED ABROAD IN NINETEED SIXTYSIX AND NINETEEN SIXTYSEVEN AS CONSULTANT ON VIETNAM MATTERS.

~~SECRET~~

DTG 061626Z NOV 68

PRESERVATION COPY

NOV 11 1968

SENT
WHCA

55

1968 NOV 6 17 13

~~SECRET~~

68 NOV 6 PM 12:19

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

Profile

EEA 731
OO WTE 10
DE WTE 4275

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82725

~~SECRET~~

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH GORTON RECOVERS HIS COOL AND BACKS THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE EFFECTIVELY.

BEGIN TEXT.

1. EARLY LAST EVENING BEFORE PM GAVE HIS SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT THE GORTONS HAD MRS. CROOK AND ME OVER TO LODGE FOR DRINKS. BOTH OF THEM WERE VERY CORDIAL. GORTON SHOWED ME TEXT OF SPEECH HE WAS GOING TO DELIVER AND HE WAS OBVIOUSLY PROUD OF ITS LOGIC, FIRMNESS AND FLAIR, UPON WHICH I COMMENTED FAVORABLY.

2. ALP LEADERS, STARTING WITH WHITLAM, GAVE GORTON AND LIBERAL GOVT HEAVY BATTERING IN 2-HOUR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE LAST NIGHT, BUT TODAY'S PRESS HIGHLIGHTED GORTON'S REMARKS RATHER THAN WHITLAM'S. ALTHOUGH IN HIS SPEECH GORTON WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT PREDICTING SUCCESS PRESIDENT'S PEACE INITIATIVE, NEVERTHELESS HIS SUPPORT OF US ACTION WAS FIRM. HIS URGING SAIGON TO ATTEND PARIS TALKS PUTS HIM SQUARELY WITH US IN THIS EFFORT GET PARIS TALKS INTO GEAR.

3. I THINK GORTON'S SPEECH WAS HELPFUL TO US AND I BELIEVE A TELEGRAPHIC LETTER TO GORTON FROM PRESIDENT OR RUSK SAYING, "GOOD SPEECH: THANKS FOR THE STOUT SUPPORT," WOULD BE WELL DESERVED GESTURE WHICH COULD HELP CEMENT RELATIONS.
CROOK END TEXT

~~SECRET~~

DTG: 061648Z NOV 68

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NLJ 06-271
By *isl*, NARA, Date 11-9-06

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

November 6, 1968

Pres. Lee

56

**FROM WALT ROSTOW
FOR THE PRESIDENT**

**Herewith Gorton recovers his cool and backs the President's
initiative effectively.**

BEGIN TEXT. (Canberra 9028)

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NLJ 06-271
By isl, NARA, Date 11-9-06



Department of State

TELEGRAM

56a

~~SECRET~~ 269

PAGE 01 CANBER 09028 060247Z

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ACTION SS 70

INFO CIAE 00, /070 W

R: 060120Z NOV 68
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3100

~~SECRET~~ CANBERRA 9028

NOFORN

FOR BUNDY FROM AMBASSADOR

SUBJ: GORTON'S SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT ON US BOMBING HALT

REF: CANBERRA 9022

*For the President
From Walt Rostow
President Gorton
revised his word
and includes the
President's
initiative
signature*
Rostow

1. EARLY LAST EVENING BEFORE PM GAVE HIS SPEECH (REFTEL) IN PARLIAMENT THE GORTONS HAD MRS. CROOK AND ME OVER TO LODGE FOR DRINKS. BOTH OF THEM WERE VERY CORDIAL. GORTON SHOWED ME TEXT OF SPEECH HE WAS GOING TO DELIVER AND HE WAS OBVIOUSLY PROUD OF ITS LOGIC, FIRMNESS AND FLAIR, UPON WHICH I COMMENTED FAVORABLY.
 2. ALP LEADERS, STARTING WITH WHITLAM, GAVE GORTON AND LIBERAL GOVT HEAVY BATTERING IN 2-HOUR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE LAST NIGHT, BUT TODAY'S PRESS HIGHLIGHTED GORTON'S REMARKS RATHER THAN WHITLAM'S. ALTHOUGH IN HIS SPEECH GORTON WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT PREDICTING SUCCESS PRESIDENT'S PEACE INITIATIVE, NEVERTHELESS HIS SUPPORT OF US ACTION WAS FIRM. HIS URGING SAIGON TO ATTEND PARIS TALKS PUTS HIM SQUARELY WITH US IN THIS EFFORT GET PARIS TALKS INTO GEAR.
 3. I THINK GORTON'S SPEECH WAS HELPFUL TO US AND I BELIEVE A TELEGRAPHIC LETTER TO GORTON FROM PRESIDENT OR RUSK SAYING, "GOOD SPEECH; THANKS FOR THE STOUT SUPPORT," WOULD BE WELL DESERVED GESTURE WHICH COULD HELP CEMENT RELATIONS.
- CROOK
END TEXT

~~NOTE: HANDLED LINDIS PER 3790~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NJ 06-271
By *ial*, NARA, Date 11-9-06

~~SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL

EEA707
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4246

SENT
WHCA

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
INFO GEORGE CHRISTIAN
CITE CAP82699

1968 NOV 5 21 37

Disc file
DECLASSIFIED
Authority State Guidelines 7-2197
By rs, NARA, Date 9-26-97

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

HEREWITH A TRANSCRIPT OF BUNKER'S BACKGROUNDER OF NOVEMBER 4 ON EVENTS OF LAST SEVERAL WEEKS.

1. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF OPENING STATEMENT AND PARAPHRASING OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AT BACKGROUND BRIEFING HELD BY AMBASSADOR FOR EIGHTEEN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS, NOVEMBER 4, 1800 HOURS. ATTRIBUTION IS TO BE "INFORMED SOURCE" OF "KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE." NO ATTRIBUTION TO AMERICANS.

2. THE AMBASSADOR: UNFORTUNATELY I HAVEN'T BEEN AS COMMUNICATIVE AS USUAL DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS, BUT I AM GLAD THAT I CAN BE NOW, AT ANY RATE, BECAUSE I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENTS OF THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. I KNOW THAT A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT VERSIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE PRESS. SOME I THINK INVOLVED SOME SERIOUS INACCURACIES. CONSEQUENTLY I THINK IT IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE FACTS AS THEY OCCURRED, IN ORDER TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

3. FIRST, I WANT CLEAR THAT NOTHING OCCURRED WHICH WILL IN ANY WAY AFFECT OUR VERY STRONG, VIGOROUS SUPPORT OF THE GVN AND THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. THIS SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE AND ON PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S INSTRUCTIONS I HAVE ASSURED PRESIDENT THIEU OF THIS. WE PROPOSED TO CONTINUE WITH OUR PROGRAMS HERE ON EVERY SIDE WITH ENERGY AND VIGOR. WE DO NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY LETUP IN ANY WAY.

4. AT THE OUTSET I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT WE HAVE HELD REGULAR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GVN ON POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI FOR THE PAST MONTHS. IN FACT, EVER SINCE THE TALKS BEGAN ON THE 13TH OF MAY IN PARIS, WE HAVE MET QUITE REGULARLY WITH THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISOR. WE HAVE GONE INTO VERY CONSIDERABLE DETAIL OVER THE PROBLEMS WE FELT WOULD ARISE AND THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS GOT TO A SUBSTANTIVE STATE. AND WE DISCUSSED OUR CONCEPTION OF HOW FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT DEVELOP.

5. FIRST, LET ME OUTLINE THE BASIS FOR OUR UNDERSTANDING WITH HANOI. ON AUGUST 19, YOU RECALL, THE PRESIDENT SAID, "THIS ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT INTEND TO MOVE FURTHER UNTIL IT HAS GOOD REASONS TO BELIEVE THAT THE OTHER SIDE INTENDS SERIOUSLY TO JOIN US IN DE-ESCALATING THE WAR AND MOVING SERIOUSLY TOWARD PEACE." FOR ITS PART, HANOI INSISTED ON "UNCONDITIONAL" CESSATION OF ALL ACTS OF WAR AGAINST ITS TERRITORY. AS YOU REMEMBER IN ALL THE MEETINGS IN PARIS THEY KEPT CONTINUALLY COMING BACK TO US, THAT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THIS WAS THE ONLY BASIS ON WHICH TALKS COULD MAKE ANY PROGRESS. THEY ALSO VERY CONSISTENTLY DERIDED THE GOVERNMENT HERE AS A PUPPET OF THE UNITED STATES AND FOR A LONG TIME THERE SEEMED VERY LITTLE PROSPECT OF AGREEING TO NEGOTIATIONS AT WHICH THE GVN WOULD BE REPRESENTED.

6. THE QUESTION IS THEN HOW DID WE GET AGREEMENT? WE GOT IT IN EFFECT BY GETTING "GOOD REASONS TO BELIEVE" CERTAIN THINGS WOULD FOLLOW CESSATION WITHOUT CALLING THEM "CONDITIONS". WE MADE IT CLEAR TO HANOI THAT BY DEFINITION "SERIOUS TALKS" MEANT GVN PARTICIPATION. WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER REASSURANCES THAT WE WANTED, WE MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT A CESSATION OF BOMBING WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY ABUSES OF THE DMZ, OR BY VC AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS ON CITIES OR SUCH POPULATED AREAS AS PROVINCIAL CAPITALS SIMPLY COULD NOT BE SUSTAINED.

7. IT WAS EARLY IN OCTOBER THAT WE GOT FIRST INDICATIONS FROM HANOI THAT THIS KIND OF UNDERSTANDING MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. WE WERE ASSURED BY WASHINGTON THAT FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT HERE WAS INTENDED AND WOULD BE HELD BEFORE ANY ACTION WAS TAKEN.

8. WE HAD LONG CONSIDERED THAT SUCH A MOVE BY HANOI WOULD BE LIKELY AT SOME TIME AND HAD DISCUSSED IT MANY TIMES WITH THE GVN. WE INTERPRETED THE EXCHANGE WITH HANOI AS A FAIRLY CLEAR INDICATION THAT HANOI WAS READY FOR A TACTICAL SHIFT FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE. IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAS DEVELOPED SINCE, I SHOULD ALSO EXPLAIN HOW WE PROPOSED DEALING WITH THE GVN AND NLF PARTICIPATION. HANOI OF COURSE WANTED A "FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE", GIVING THE NLF THE MAXIMUM INTERNATIONAL STANDING. WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, INSISTED ON WHAT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" FORMULA, UNDER WHICH EACH SIDE COMPOSES OR ORGANIZES ITSELF AND LOOKS AT THE OTHER SIDE IN ANY WAY IT WISHES. THIS HANOI FINALLY AGREED TO. AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. WE MADE THAT CLEAR MANY TIMES. WE HAVE SAID ALL ALONG THAT THEY WERE AN INSTRUMENT ORGANIZED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF NORTH VIET-NAM, WHICH WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE, AND DO NOT REGARD THEM AS INDEPENDENT. WE HAVE ALSO SAID, OF COURSE, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY WITH HAVING THEIR VIEWS HEARD AT TALKS THAT MIGHT DEVELOP. SO FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW THERE WOULD BE THE GOVERNMENT OF HANOI AND WHOEVER THEY WISH TO BRING ALONG, WHILE WE ON OUR SIDE HAVE TWO SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZED ALMOST UNIVERSALLY IN THE WORLD. HANOI WOULD OF COURSE LOOK AT IT QUITE DIFFERENTLY.

9. WE HAVE BEEN OVER THIS FORMULA MANY TIMES WITH THE GVN. WE HAVE HELD REGULAR CONSULTATIONS ON POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI FOR MANY MONTHS BEFORE THIS BREAKTHROUGH CAME. IT HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GVN IN THE COURSE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS AS THE ONLY WAY, PRACTICALLY SPEAKING, THAT WE COULD HOPE TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE OTHER SIDE. I THINK VICE PRESIDENT KY SAID ONCE THAT AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE WE OUGHT NOT TALK WITH THEM, BUT AS REALISTS AND PRACTICAL MEN WE HAVE TO.

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10. WE WERE INSTRUCTED AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT THIEU'S CONCURRENCE IN APPROACHING THE DRV WITH A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL FOR HALTING THE BOMBING ON THE BASIS OF THE UNDERSTANDING I HAVE OUTLINED. WE WENT THROUGH THIS WITH HIM VERY CAREFULLY, IN GREAT DETAIL, AND HE GAVE HIS CLEAR CONCURRENCE TO OUR GOING AHEAD. IN THE INTEREST OF SECURITY, WE ASKED HIM NOT TO TALK TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT IT AS YET. WE THOUGHT AT THIS STAGE OF THESE VERY DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS WE SHOULD HOLD THIS VERY CLOSE AND DEAL ONLY WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE TROOP-CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES.

11. A FEW DAYS LATER, HOWEVER, WE WERE ABLE TO SUGGEST TO PRESIDENT THIEU THAT HE MIGHT BRING A FEW ADDITIONAL TOP OFFICIALS-- NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP, --THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY AND THE LOWER HOUSE-- INTO THE PICTURE, AND OUR EMBASSIES IN THE TROOP-CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES WERE INSTRUCTED ALSO TO INFORM THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE HOST GOVERNMENTS.

12. FOLLOWING HIS FIRST MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, AND THE ASSEMBLY HEADS, PRES THIEU BEGAN TO RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT A NUMBER OF PROCEDURAL MATTERS WHICH REQUIRED A NUMBER OF SESSIONS TO IRON OUT, WHICH WERE IRONED OUT. MEANWHILE, WE WORKED OUT THE LANGUAGE OF A JOINT STATEMENT ON CESSATION AND THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING, WHICH THEY AGREED TO.

13. WHILE THIS WAS GOING ON HERE, TOUGH SESSIONS WITH HANOI DELEGATION WERE ALSO GOING ON IN PARIS. THERE WAS A PROBLEM ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE MEETING TO FOLLOW THE BOMBING CESSATION. THEY WANTED A COMMUNIQUE IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES WOULD ACCEPT THE CONCEPT THAT THE BOMBING HALT WAS "UNCONDITIONAL." WE HELD THE LINE FIRMLY ON THESE FRONTS.

14. THEN ON SUNDAY, OCT 27TH, A BREAKTHROUGH CAME IN PARIS. HANOI INDICATED A READINESS TO MOVE TOWARD THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SOUGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, I.E., THERE WOULD BE A BOMBING CESSATION, THE GVN COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE TALKS WHICH WOULD FOLLOW, AND HANOI UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE REQUIRED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DMZ AND THE CITIES IF THE BOMBING HALT WAS TO BE MAINTAINED, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT LABEL THEM PUBLICLY AS "CONDITIONS." WE WERE INSTRUCTED THEN TO BEGIN DISCUSSING WITH THE GVN THE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL WHICH WITH SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS, ULTIMATELY RESULTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BOMBING HALT. ONE OF THE THINGS THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT ASKED FOR WAS MORE TIME TO GET READY BETWEEN THE CESSATION AND THE MEETING AND THIS WE ARRANGED. DURING THE WEEK WE HELD A SERIES OF LONG MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER WHICH TOWARD THE END LITERALLY WENT AROUND THE CLOCK. THE TROUBLE, WHICH AROSE ONLY DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS, WAS THAT THEY NOW WANTED ASSURANCES, NOT FROM US, BUT FROM HANOI, THAT THE NLF WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE A SEPARATE ENTITY AT THE TALKS. NOW, WE HAD GIVEN THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT EVERY POSSIBLE ASSURANCE THAT WE WOULD NOT OURSELVES RECOGNIZE THE NLF AND THAT AS FAR AS WE WERE CONCERNED, THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOT A "FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE," WHICH OBVIOUSLY HANOI WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THEM APPEAR; BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO ATTEMPT TO GET A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT FROM HANOI OF THE KIND THAT THE GVN WANTED US TO OBTAIN.

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WE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT WE WOULD STATE PUBLICLY THAT WE DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF AS AN ENTITY INDEPENDENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF NORTH VIETNAM. THIS WAS INCLUDED IN THE JOINT STATEMENT TO WHICH THEY HAD AGREED. SINCE WE HAD MADE THE INITIAL PROPOSALS TO HANOI, WITH THE FULL AGREEMENT OF THE GVN AND THE TROOP-CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES, WE HAD TO GO AHEAD WHEN THEY ACCEPTED OUR CONDITIONS. WE TRIED UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE OF COURSE TO BRING THE GVN AROUND, BUT WE COULD NOT. THEN AS YOU KNOW, PRESIDENT THIEU ON SATURDAY MADE HIS POSITION PUBLIC, I.E. THAT HANOI MUST SAY IT IS READY TO TALK DIRECTLY AND SERIOUSLY WITH THE GVN, AND THAT THEY MUST NOT TRY TO BRING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT INTO THE TALKS AS A SEPARATE DELEGATION. AND HE ADDED THAT SUBSTANTIVE TALKS MUST NOT SIMPLY BE A CONTINUATION OF THE PARIS TALKS BUT MUST START ANEW AND BE TOTALLY SEPARATE FROM THOSE TALKS.

15. WELL THAT IS WHERE WE STAND NOW. WE ARE CURRENTLY TRYING TO WORK OUT WITH THE GVN A BASIS ON WHICH WE CAN PROCEED. WE OF COURSE BELIEVE THEY AND WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF HAD THEY GONE AHEAD ON THE BASIS OF OUR EARLIER UNDERSTANDING. BUT THEY DIDN'T, AND WE MUST NOW TRY TO GO ON FROM HERE. IT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION, AND IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE. BUT OBVIOUSLY WE FELT FROM THE BEGINNING IT COULD NEVER BE EASY TO END A CONFLICT SUCH AS THIS ONE.

16. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THIS MATTER WILL BE WORKED OUT. I THINK IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES - THE GVN AND OURSELVES - THAT IT SHOULD BE. I'D LIKE TO EMPHASIZE, TOO, AS PRESIDENT JOHNSON, HIMSELF, HAS DONE THAT THE HALTING OF THE BOMBING IS BY NO MEANS TO BE REGARDED AS THE END OF THE WAR. THERE MAY WELL BE A LOT OF FIGHTING AS WELL AS A VERY TOUGH POLITICAL STRUGGLE AHEAD. WELL THERE ARE THE ESSENTIAL POINTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS WHICH I DID WANT TO PUT BEFORE YOU BECAUSE I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT. AS FAR AS POLICY GOES AS I SAID THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF MADE THE STATEMENT IN HIS SPEECH CONCERNING THE NON-RECOGNITION OF THE FRONT, AND THERE IS NO ISSUE BETWEEN US ON THE QUESTION OF COALITION. WE MADE IT CLEAR MANY TIMES THAT LIKE THE GVN WE ARE OPPOSED TO THE IMPOSITION OF ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT ON SVN. I ALSO MADE IT CLEAR WE CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT HANOI WON'T ENGAGE IN ANY PROPAGANDA; IN FACT, WE HAVE SAID JUST THE OPPOSITE. WE HAVE TO OUT-PROPAGANDA THEM. BUT WE MADE OUR POSITION ON THE FRONT AND ON COALITION CRYSTAL CLEAR, I THINK, A GOOD MANY TIMES TO THE GOVERNMENT HERE. THESE ARE THE ESSENTIAL FACTS. ANY QUESTIONS.

17. Q. AS YOU SAY WE ARE GOING INTO EXTREMELY DELICATE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS, IS IT YOUR ASSESSMENT THAT WE HAVE HELPED THE GVN IN THAT PERIOD BY GOING TO PARIS WITHOUT THEM AND IF NOT, WHY WAS IT NECESSARY AFTER TWO WEEKS OF NEGOTIATIONS TO MAKE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT ON NOVEMBER 17?

18. BUNKER: BECAUSE WE OURSELVES HAD MADE THIS PROPOSAL TO HANOI; THIS IS SOMETHING WE HAD BEEN INSISTING ON FOR A LONG TIME AND ONCE THEY AGREED TO IT, WE HAD TO GO AHEAD. WE COULDN'T BACK OUT. WE HAD BEEN INSISTING FOR MONTHS THAT THIS IS WHAT THEY HAD TO DO AND THEY HAD BEEN SAYING "NO".

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19. Q. DID YOU SET THE NOVEMBER 1 DATE EARLIER?

20. BUNKER: NO. WE SAID IN EFFECT, THAT WE WILL NOT GO INTO NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS THE GVN PARTICIPATES AND WE MADE CLEAR THIS UNDERSTANDING WHICH I'VE DESCRIBED. WE SAID ALSO THAT THE MEETING MUST TAKE PLACE PROMPTLY AFTER A CESSATION OF THE BOMBING. NOW, THEY ACCEPTED OUR TERMS WHICH THEY HAD RESISTED FOR A LONG TIME, AND WE COULD NOT BACK OUT. IT WAS NOT THEIR PROPOSITION, IT WAS OURS.

21. Q: ON OCTOBER 27, YOU SAID THERE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. I SAID THAT SHORTLY AFTER THAT YOU RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WITH THE GVN. HAD WE NOT DISCUSSED SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WITH THEM EARLIER?

22. BUNKER: THE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS DISCUSSED AFTER OCT 27 WERE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THE EARLIER ONES WHICH PRESIDENT THIEU HAD APPROVED.

23. Q. YOU SAID THAT AFTER THE GVN HAD EARLIER ASSENTED TO THE PROPOSAL, PRESIDENT THIEU HELD A MEETING WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THEN THERE WAS A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE. WHY DO YOU THINK THIS CHANGE CAME ABOUT?

24. BUNKER: THERE WERE ACTUALLY TWO DRAFTS AGREED TO. THE FIRST WAS AGREED TO BY THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL RAISED SOME POINTS. WE THEN HAD INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS, AND WE REDRAFTED THE PROPOSAL. THEY AGREED TO IT. THEN THESE OTHER QUESTIONS AROSE, PERHAPS LARGELY DUE TO APPREHENSION ON THE PART OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE "GUT ISSUE" WAS THE QUESTION OF THE NLF -- AS TO HOW THEY WOULD APPEAR, AND HOW THEY WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE MEETINGS.

25. DID THE GVN BEGIN TO HEDGE AFTER THE FIRST PROPOSAL WAS AGREED UPON BY YOU OR WAS IT AFTER THE PROPOSAL WAS AGREED UPON BY HANOI?

26. BUNKER: IT WAS AFTER THEY HAD AGREED UPON THE LANGUAGE OF THE PROPOSAL, THAT THEY HAD APPREHENSIONS AND BEGAN TO HEDGE ON IT. AS I SAID IT WAS AFTER THIS "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" FORMULA HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH THEM, AND THEY HAD APPROVED, THAT THEY BEGAN TO HAVE APPREHENSIONS.

27. Q. HAD VICE PRESIDENT KY AND THE OTHER OFFICIALS WHO HAD PARTICIPATED GENERALLY ACCEPTED THE FORMULA?

28. BUNKER: WE DID NOT HAVE SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS. WE HELD THEM JOINTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER.

29. Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES AROSE AT 12:30 ON THURSDAY MORNING WHEN THE GVN RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM LAM IN PARIS: THAT HE WAS VERY EXERCISED, THAT HE HAD GOTTEN A DIFFERENT IMPRESSION FROM HARRIMAN THAN THE ONE YOU HAD BEEN GIVING TO OFFICIALS IN SAIGON. AND FROM THAT POINT ON THINGS BEGAN TO DETERIORATE RAPIDLY.

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30. BUNKER: PERHAPS LAM WAS NOT AS KNOWLEDGEABLE AS MR. HARRIMAN. I THINK FRANKLY THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHAT MR. HARRIMAN HAD SAID, BECAUSE WE CLEARED THAT UP SUBSEQUENTLY WITH THEM. MR. HARRIMAN MADE THE STATEMENT TO HIM THAT THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HARRIMAN AND BUNKER. AND HE CONFIRMED ENTIRELY WHAT I HAD SAID TO THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. I THINK IT WAS PARTLY A DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATIONS, AND FRANKLY THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ARE NOT THE BEST. AND I THINK LAM HIMSELF HAS NOT BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED AS TO OUR DISCUSSIONS HERE.

31. Q. THE VIETNAMESE ARE SAYING THAT HARRIMAN HAD TOLD LAM THERE WERE NO GUARANTEES GAINED FROM THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WHEREAS YOU WERE SAYING THERE WERE GUARANTEES. IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THERE COULD BE MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS.

32. BUNKER: THERE NEVER A QUESTION OF GUARANTEES. I NEVER USED THE WORD "GUARANTEE." IT WAS A QUESTION OF UNDERSTANDING. WE MADE THAT CLEAR FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

33. Q. THEN THESE THREE CONDITIONS WHICH WE THINK WE HAVE FROM HANOI ARE ON THE BASIS OF NO GUARANTEES OR...

34. BUNKER: I HAVE EXPLAINED TO YOU JUST HOW THEY ARE. WE MADE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR WHAT WE WOULD EXPECT AND THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE EXPECT.

35. Q. JUST WHAT IS THE "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" FORMULA?

36. BUNKER: OUR POSITION IS THIS: THAT ON OUR SIDE THERE WOULD BE TWO DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING TWO SOVERIGN GOVERNMENTS AND SO FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED ON THE OTHER SIDE THERE WOULD BE A DELEGATION WHICH WE WOULD TREAT AS THE OTHER SIDE. WE WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE FRONT AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY.

37. Q. I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THAT DIFFERS FROM WHAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS STANDING FOR. AREN'T THEY OBJECTING TO THE NLF AS A SEPARATE DELEGATION?

38. BUNKER: YES, THEY ARE OBJECTING TO THE NLF AS A SEPARATE DELEGATION. WE'VE SAID THEY CAN ORGANIZE AS THEY PLEASE AND WE DON'T HAVE TO RECOGNIZE IT.

39. Q. PRESIDENT THIEU IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE 19TH SAID WE DON'T CARE WHO IS IN THE HANOI DELEGATION AS LONG AS NOBODY SAYS THEY ARE THE NLF.

40. BUNKER: THAT'S RIGHT.

41. Q. ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY SAID, AND THAT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY AT VARIANCE WITH OUR STAND?

42. BUNKER: WE'VE SAID THEY CAN ORGANIZE THEIR SIDE AS THEY PLEASE. THEY CAN CLAIM ANYTHING FOR IT; WE DON'T HAVE TO RECOGNIZE IT. BUT WE SAID WE CANNOT DICTATE TO HANOI HOW THEY ORGANIZE THEIR SIDE.

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43. Q. PRESIDENT JOHNSON IN HIS ANNOUNCEMENT SAID THE NLF WOULD BE PRESENT AND THAT STIRRED THEM UP HERE...

44. BUNKER: THEY HAVE KNOWN THAT RIGHT ALONG, THEY HAVE KNOWN THAT FOR SIX MONTHS.

45. Q. BUT, THE PRESIDENT DID SAY "HANOI AND THE NLF"; HE DIDN'T SAY "HANOI AND ITS DELEGATION..."

46. BUNKER: WELL THAT WAS NO SECRET TO THEM. WE HAVE NEVER SAID THE NLF WOULD BE INCOGNITO. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US. THAT IS WHY THEY (THE GVN) ARE NOT IN PARIS.

47. Q. THIS SEEMS TO BE A PROBLEM THAT IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO SOLUTION. DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT THIEU...

48. BUNKER: NO. I HAVEN'T AN APPOINTMENT AT THE PRESENT TIME. AS I SAID, I THINK WE CAN WORK IT OUT.

49. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME THAT YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH WASHINGTON BEFORE PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S SPEECH? AND DID HE KNOW HOW CLOSE YOU WERE TO AGREEMENT DURING THE NIGHT?

50. I WAS IN TOUCH WITH WASHINGTON PRETTY CONSTANTLY. WE WERE HOPEFUL RIGHT UP TO THE END.

51. Q. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR SUPPORT TO THE GVN. WHEN DID SUCH INSTRUCTIONS ARRIVE AND WHEN DID YOU CONVEY THEM TO PRESIDENT THIEU?

52. BUNKER: I CONVEYED THEM TO HIM JUST AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ANNOUNCING THE CESSATION.

53. Q. SOME VIETNAMESE THINK MR. NIXON WILL BE VICTORIOUS. DO YOU THINK THIS HAS PLAYED A PART IN THE ATTITUDE THE VIETNAMESE ARE TAKING?

54. BUNKER: I DON'T KNOW. I WILL LET YOU FORM THAT OPINION.

55. Q. DID PRESIDENT THIEU GIVE YOU ANY INDICATION ON WHAT HE WAS GOING TO SAY IN HIS SPEECH NOVEMBER 1?

56. BUNKER: HE INDICATED HE WAS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING, YES.

57. Q. WHAT WAS THE LAST POSITION OF PRESIDENT THIEU, AS YOU UNDERSTOOD IT, BEFORE HE GAVE THE SPEECH? DID HE INDICATE THAT THEY WOULDN'T GO TO PARIS, OR DID HE INDICATE THAT HE MIGHT CHANGE HIS MIND?

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58. BUNKER: HE INDICATED, OBVIOUSLY, THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO GO ALONG WITH A JOINT STATEMENT. THAT WAS THE FINAL WIND UP OF OUR NEGOTIATION DURING THE LAST NIGHT, BECAUSE OF THIS PARTICULAR POINT ABOUT THE FRONT.

59. Q. CAN YOU SAY JUST WHY THEY WERE SUDDENLY APPREHENSIVE?

60. BUNKER: I DON'T KNOW. ONE THING WAS JUST MENTIONED. THERE MAY BE OTHERS TOO.

61. Q. IN THESE LONG SERIES OF MEETINGS YOU SAY WE FELT THAT WE HAD GVN AGREEMENT. DID WE EVER GET A SPECIFIC "I AGREE" TO THESE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS?

62. BUNKER: YES, I MENTIONED THAT WE DID GET A CLEAR AGREEMENT FROM PRESIDENT THIEU TO MAKE THIS PROPOSAL TO HANOI IN THE MIDDLE OF OCTOBER.

63. Q. WHAT DATE DID THIS HAPPEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE PALACE?

64. BUNKER: THIS WAS THE BEGINNING, BEFORE THE VERY INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE. THIS WAS THE FIRST MOVE. WE WANTED TO GET THE PRESIDENT'S ASSENT TO GO AHEAD, AND WE DID...

65. Q. NOW AT THAT POINT DIDN'T PRESIDENT THIEU FEEL THAT A GREAT DEAL MORE TALKING WOULD BE REQUIRED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND HANOI?

66. BUNKER: NOT NECESSARILY SO.

67. Q. WAS THERE ANY REASON NOT TO CARRY ON THE TALKS ANOTHER DAY OR TWO, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT THE GVN WOULD NOT GO TO PARIS?

68. BUNKER: NO. BECAUSE THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN POSTPONED. WE HAD ALREADY INTIMATED THAT WE WERE READY TO GO AHEAD.

69. Q. DID WE HAVE AN ULTIMATUM FROM HANOI?

70. BUNKER: WE DID NOT HAVE AN ULTIMATUM, NO. WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING. AS I HAVE TRIED TO EXPLAIN, WE MADE THE DEMANDS UPON THEM. AND HAVING MADE THE DEMANDS UPON THEM, WHEN THEY ASSENTED TO THEM, WE COULD NOT BACK DOWN. WE COULD NOT BACK OUT, AND WE COULD NOT KEEP DRAGGING OUR FEET.

71. AMBASSADOR BERGER: WE THOUGHT THE GVN WAS WITH US.

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72. AMBASSADOR BUNKER: YES, WE HAD EVERY INDICATIONS THAT THE GVN WAS WITH US.

73. Q. WHEN DID WE FIND OUT THE GVN WAS NOT WITH US?

74. BUNKER: AT THE VERY END.

75. Q. THE LAST NIGHT?

76. BUNKER: THE LAST TWO NIGHTS.

77. Q. THERE ARE SOME RUMORS AROUND TOWN THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAS DECLINED TO SEE YOU.

78. BUNKER: HE HASN'T DECLINED TO SEE ME, BECAUSE I HAVEN'T ASKED TO SEE HIM.

79. Q. WHAT IS THE PRESENT POSITION? YOU ARE NOT PRESENTLY NEGOTIATING? ARE WE WAITING FOR HANOI AND WASHINGTON TO WORK OUT SOMETHING SO WE CAN GO BACK TO THE GVN?

80. BUNKER: WELL, THERE HAVE GOT TO BE SOME TALKS GOING ON... THERE HAVE GOT TO BE ARRANGEMENTS ABOUT PROCEDURES, AND SO FORTH. I DON'T KNOW JUST WHEN WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS AGAIN WITH THE GVN.

81. Q. THERE ARE RUMORS HERE THAT THERE WAS NOT COMPLETE AGREEMENT BETWEEN PARIS, AND THE WHITE HOUSE, AND YOU ON EXACTLY WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE TERMS OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NLF AND HANOI?

82. BUNKER: NO. THAT IS NOT TRUE. THERE WAS COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING.

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 91-508
By WJG, NARA, Date 1-11-93

SENT
WHCA

~~EYES ONLY~~

68 NOV 6 AM 11:40

58
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

1968 NOV 6 16 31

EEA728
OO VTE10
DE VTE 4271

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82721

Pres. file

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH PORTER ANALYZES PARK'S FRAME OF MIND AND SUGGESTS LINES FOR A REPLY TO HIS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT.

BEGIN TEXT

FOLLOWING COMMENTARY WAS IN PREPARATION AT TIME RECEIPT OF REFTEL. IT REPRESENTS ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PARK'S RETICENCE. YOU HAVE NOTED HE SOMEWHAT MORE FORTHCOMING IN HIS COMMENTS TO ME THAN HE WAS IN FRAMING REPLY TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

1. EVERY MOVE WE MAKE IN VIETNAM TO BRING ENEMY TO NEGOTIATE IS EXAMINED BY PARK AND GOVT IN CONTEXT OF PROBLEMS POSED BY NORTH KOREA AND HE IS WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE PRECEDENTS CREATED. HE IS CURRENTLY IRKED BY NORTH KOREAN PRESSURE ALONG DMZ, AND MOST RECENT INFILTRATIONS ALONG COAST LINE WILL ADD TO HIS SENSE OF FRUSTRATION.
2. HE IS OF COURSE AWARE THAT IF I HAD NOT INFORMED PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN I DID OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF CESSATION OF BOMBING, HE WOULD HAVE LEARNED OF IT AFTER THE FACT. ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO EXPLAIN THAT NOTIFICATION OF ACTUAL DECISION WELL IN ADVANCE NOT RPT NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN POSITION SINCE OCTOBER 15 MESSAGE TO HIM, AND NOT DESIRABLE BECAUSE OF SECURITY PROBLEMS INVOLVED, HE DOES NOT LIKE LATE NOTIFICATION. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT IF HE OR HIS GOVT HAD RECEIVED NEWS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.
3. I RECOMMEND THAT YOU TAKE HIS SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S PEACE EFFORTS AT FACE VALUE AND REPLY WITH THANKS. ALSO THAT YOU APPRECIATE HIS ADVICE TO KEEP WORKING TO RESTORE BALANCE WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND THAT YOU ARE DOING JUST THAT. THEN, I SUGGEST YOU INJECT INTO REPLY TO HIM SOME COMMENT TO EFFECT THAT THOUGH WE ARE MAKING MAJOR EFFORT TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN VIETNAM AND ARE COUNTING ON HIS CONTINUED UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT, YOU ARE KEEPING SHARP EYE ON CURRENT NK PRESSURES ON ROK AND THAT YOU HAVE INSTRUCTED ME TO KEEP YOU CLOSELY INFORMED.

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4. ANSWER TO PARA TWO IS AFFIRMATIVE. I AM REASONABLY CONFIDENT IN THAT RESPECT, BUT PRESIDENTIAL REPLY IN SENSE OF PARA 3 ABOVE WILL HELP. I AM KEEPING CONSTANTLY BEFORE ROK TOP LEVELS STATE OF US PUBLIC OPINION ON PEACE TALKS AND CESSATION OF BOMBING, AND THEY ARE TOO CONSCIOUS OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS, I BELIEVE, TO PROVIDE THIEU WITH SATISFACTION ALONG LINES HE MIGHT CURRENTLY DESIRE. IN FACT, IF AT SOME FUTURE DATE YOU ENDEAVOR TO BRING ICC INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON THIEU, PARK MIGHT NOT BE AS RELUCTANT AS SOME OTHERS TO DO SO, THOUGH OF COURSE HE WOULD WANT PLENTY OF COMPANY IN SUCH AN ENTERPRISE.
END TEXT

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SECRET/HARVARD D 'BLE PLUS

Number 6, 1968

Pres file

59

FROM WALT ROSTOW
FOR THE PRESIDENT

Herewith Porter analyzes Park's frame of mind and suggests
lines for a reply to his letter to the President.

BEGIN TEXT.

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By 18, NARA, Date 3-26-93



Department of State

TELEGRAM

SECRET

594 (1)

OO RUEHC
DE RUALOS 10895E 3110220
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 060200Z NOV 68 ZFFA
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3529
STATE GRNC

CONTROL: 1459Q
RECD: NOV 5, 1968
10:30 P.M.

BT
SECRET SEUL 10895
NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS
REF: STATE 266802

*Further
President
from West Point
Newitt's letter
analyzed Park's frame of mind and
suggested lines for a
reply to his letter to
the President*

FOLLOWING COMMENTARY WAS IN PREPARATION AT TIME RECEIPT OF REFTEL. IT REPRESENTS ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PARK'S RETICENCE. YOU HAVE NOTED HE SOMEWHAT MORE FORTHCOMING IN HIS COMMENTS TO ME THAN HE WAS IN FRAMING REPLY TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

1. EVERY MOVE WE MAKE IN VIETNAM TO BRING ENEMY TO NEGOTIATE IS EXAMINED BY PARK AND GOVT IN CONTEXT OF PROBLEMS POSED BY NORTH KOREA AND HE IS WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE PRECEDENTS CREATED. HE IS CURRENTLY IRKED BY NORTH KOREAN PRESSURE ALONG DMZ, AND MOST RECENT INFILTRATIONS ALONG COAST LINE WILL ADD TO HIS SENSE OF FRUSTRATION.
2. HE IS OF COURSE AWARE THAT IF I HAD NOT INFORMED PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN I DID OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF CESSATION OF BOMBING, HE WOULD HAVE LEARNED OF IT AFTER THE FACT. ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO EXPLAIN THAT NOTIFICATION OF ACTUAL DECISION WELL IN ADVANCE NOT RPT NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN POSITION SINCE OCTOBER 15 MESSAGE TO HIM, AND NOT DESIRABLE BECAUSE OF SECURITY PROBLEMS INVOLVED, HE DOES NOT LIKE LATE NOTIFICATION. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT IF HE OR HIS GOVT HAD RECEIVED NEWS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.
3. I RECOMMEND THAT YOU TAKE HIS SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S PEACE EFFORTS AT FACE VALUE AND REPLY WITH THANKS. ALSO THAT YOU APPRECIATE HIS ADVICE TO KEEP WORKING TO RESTORE BALANCE WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND THAT YOU ARE DOING JUST THAT. THEN, I SUGGEST YOU INJECT INTO REPLY TO HIM SOME COMMENT TO EFFECT THAT THOUGH WE ARE MAKING MAJOR EFFORT TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN VIETNAM AND ARE COUNTING ON HIS CONTINUED UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT, YOU ARE KEEPING SHARP EYE ON CURRENT NK PRESSURES ON ROK AND THAT YOU HAVE INSTRUCTED ME TO KEEP YOU CLOSELY INFORMED.

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 716 9 91-508
By: Kap, NARA, Date 3-26-93

~~SECRET~~

-2- SEOUL 10895, NOV 5

4. ANSWER TO PARA TWO IS AFFIRMATIVE. I AM REASONABLY CONFIDENT IN THAT RESPECT, BUT PRESIDENTIAL REPLY IN SENSE OF PARA 3 ABOVE WILL HELP. I AM KEEPING CONSTANTLY BEFORE ROK TOP LEVELS STATE OF US PUBLIC OPINION ON PEACE TALKS AND CESSATION OF BOMBING, AND THEY ARE TOO CONSCIOUS OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS, I BELIEVE, TO PROVIDE THIEU WITH SATISFACTION ALONG LINES HE MIGHT CURRENTLY DESIRE. IN FACT, IF AT SOME FUTURE DATE YOU ENDEAVOR TO BRING TCC INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON THIEU, PARK MIGHT NOT BE AS RELUCTANT AS SOME OTHERS TO DO SO, THOUGH OF COURSE HE WOULD WANT PLENTY OF COMPANY IN SUCH AN ENTERPRISE. END TEXT

GP-3 PORTER
BT

~~SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV 6 14 00

VZCZCEEA 722
OO WTE 10
DE WTE 4262

FROM: WALT ROSTOW
TO : THE PRESIDENT
CITE: CAPS2714

Pres file

68 NOV 6 AM 9:12

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

~~TOP SECRET~~

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH ABRAMS REPORTS MILITARY RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE REMAIN GOOD.

1. IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL IMPASSE BETWEEN THE US GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM REGARDING THE PARIS TALKS, I QUERIED GENERAL ABRAMS AS TO WHETHER THERE HAS BEEN ANY DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OUR FORCES AND VIETNAMESE FORCES AND TO ASCERTAIN IF THERE HAS BEEN ANY APPARENT RELUCTANCE TO CONTINUE THE HIGH LEVEL OF FIELD OPERATIONS WHICH HAS MARKED THE RVNAF EFFORTS IN RECENT MONTHS.

2. GENERAL ABRAMS HAS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:

"WE HAVE BEEN KEENLY ALERT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF DEVISIVE INFLUENCES WHICH MIGHT CAUSE SOME LAGGING IN RVNAF EFFORTS OR WORSE A DETERIORATION OF THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE LAND. COMMANDERS AND ADVISORS HAVE BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING ALERTED TO REPORT ANY INDICATIONS TO ME. THERE HAVE BEEN NONE. JCS HAS ISSUED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE DMZ FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES IDENTICAL TO OURS. ON THIS SUBJECT LAM AND CUSHMAN AND STILLWELL AND TRUONG ARE IN BED TOGETHER. FURTHERMORE LAM SEES THE TASK AND THE OPPORTUNITIES AT THIS STAGE PRECISELY AS WE DO.

"SUNDAY WE HAD ALL DEP CORDS AND ALL PROVINCE SENIOR ADVISORS IN FOR A FAREWELL LUNCH FOR BOB KOMER. THEY REPORT NO PROBLEMS AND THAT THE PACIFICATION OFFENSIVE IS OFF TO A GOOD START -- NO FEET DRAGGING. MONDAY WE HAD IN ALL SENIOR COMMANDERS AND THEIR DEP CORDS. AMBASSADOR BUNKER GAVE A BRILLIANT RUN DOWN OF HOW WE GOT WHERE WE ARE, WHAT IT MEANS, AND OUR PROBLEMS WITH SVN -- CANDID AND POSITIVE. WE THEN REVIEWED THE SITUATION AND CALLED UPON THE COMMANDERS FOR THEIR VIEWS INCLUDING THE REACTIONS OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS. IN SUMMARIZING I

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Sec. 5.3

On March 5, 1999

By Ag, NARA, Date 9-26-97

DECLASSIFIED

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By Y, NARA, Date 9-26-97

READ A FEW LINES FROM THE LETTER OF GUIDANCE THE PRESIDENT GAVE ME WHEN I LEFT THE WHITE HOUSE. THE ESSENCE OF THIS LETTER IS 'POUR IT ON AND KEEP POURING IT ON.' ANDY AND I ARE ON A PROGRAM OF GETTING AROUND THE COUNTRY TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE POSSIBLY CAN--US AND VIETNAMESE ENCOURAGING, PUSHING, PULLING, LISTENING AND SMELLING.

"THE SITUATION AT THE MOMENT BOTH WITH THE MILITARY AND THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS IS HEALTHY. I WILL PROMPTLY REPORT CHANGE".

3. I WILL ADVISE YOU PROMPTLY OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS REGARD.

SIGNED: EARLE G. WHEELER

DTG: 061313Z NOVEMBER 1968

PRESERVATION COPY

~~TOP SECRET~~

SENT
WHCA

61

NOV 6 14 14

VZCZCEEA723
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4264

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82715

Presfile

68 NOV 8 AM 9:33

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS-CBS 21
By us, NARS, Date 10-9-84

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH A REPORT ON RECENT TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS IN THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE.

1. NO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUCKS ENTERING THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE FROM NORTH VIETNAM HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE EARLY DAYS FOLLOWING THE BOMBING HALT, BUT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO TAKE MEASURES TO REPAIR THEIR LOGISTICS NETWORK.

2. A ROADWATCH TEAM STATIONED NEAR THE MU GIA PASS REPORTS THAT TRUCKS ENTERING THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE ON 1, AND 2 NOVEMBER CONTINUED AT THE AVERAGE OF 19 TRUCKS A DAY MAINTAINED DURING OCTOBER. ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT YET BEEN REFLECTED IN ROADWATCH REPORTING, A 52-TRUCK CONVOY WAS SPOTTED HEADING SOUTH TOWARD THE PASS IN 4 NOVEMBER PHOTOGRAPHY, HOWEVER, ELECTRONIC SENSORS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF ROUTES SOME DISTANCE SOUTH OF MU GIA PASS INDICATE A HIGHER LEVEL OF TRAFFIC DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF NOVEMBER, BUT THIS REFLECTS LOCAL TRAFFIC AS WELL AS TRUCKS ENTERING FROM NORTH VIETNAM.

3. ELECTRONIC SENSORS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY ALSO INDICATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A HIGH LEVEL OF TRAFFIC IN THE PART OF NORTH VIETNAM ADJACENT TO THE EASTERN END OF THE DMZ DURING 1, AND 2 NOVEMBER, AN APPARENT INCREASE OVER THE DAILY AVERAGES FOR OCTOBER. HOWEVER, A DAY OR TWO OF SENSOR READINGS SHOULD NOT BE USED TO FORECAST TRENDS, BECAUSE THE ACTIVITY WHICH THEY REFLECT TENDS TO FLUCTUATE SHARPLY FROM DAY TO DAY, AND SENSOR REPORTS FAIL TO PROVIDE DATA ON THE DIRECTION OF MOVEMENTS. THESE CAUTIONS ARE PARTICULARLY VALID FOR THIS PERIOD BECAUSE A LARGE NUMBER OF SENSORS WERE EMPLACED IN THE AREA IN QUESTION IN THE LATTER PART OF OCTOBER.

4. PHOTOGRAPHY ALSO INDICATES THAT THE ENEMY IS REPAIRING DAMAGED PORTIONS OF THE ROADNET IN BOTH NORTH VIETNAM AND IN LAOS. ADDITIONAL BULLDOZERS HAVE BEEN PRESSED INTO SERVICE AT THE BAN LABOY FORD ON ROUTE 912, AND IN NORTH VIETNAM THE ENEMY HAS EVIDENTLY REPAIRED DAMAGED PORTIONS OF ROUTE 137 AND 15 WHICH CROSS INTO LAOS. THE COMMUNISTS' ABILITY TO MOVE GREATLY INCREASED NUMBER OF TRUCKS INTO LAOS WILL BE ENHANCED ONCE THESE REPAIRS ARE COMPLETED. THE ENEMY APPARENTLY IS ALSO MOVING SOME ADDITIONAL ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY UNITS INTO THE LAOS PANHANDLE TO COUNTER WHAT IS PROBABLY EXPECTED TO BE STEPPED-UP US AIR STRIKES. THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BOMBING CESSATION WILL BE COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT A SUBSTANTIAL UPSWING IN TRUCK TRAFFIC INTO LAOS IS NORMAL AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR.

DTG 061327Z NOV 68

~~TOP SECRET~~

62

1968 NOV 6 14 42

Free file

8 9 NOV 6 AM 9:41
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

EEA724
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4266

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82717

~~SECRET SENSITIVE~~

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

[REDACTED] THIEU'S SPECIAL CABINET MEETING 25X1
ON CURRENT CRISIS WITH THE U.S.

QUOTE

1. PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU TOLD A SPECIAL CABINET MEETING ON 5 NOVEMBER HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT (GVN) WILL COME TO AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT OF ITS DIFFERENCES WITH THE AMERICANS SOON. HE SAID THAT A U. S. WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM WAS THE WORST EVENTUALITY THE GVN MIGHT HAVE TO FACE. IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN, THIEU VOWED TO FIGHT FOR AS MUCH TERRITORY AS POSSIBLE AND TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE EVEN IF THE GVN WERE FORCED TO AGREE TEMPORARILY TO A COALITION GOVERNMENT. A GREAT DEAL WOULD THEN DEPEND, THIEU SAID, ON HOW MUCH TERRITORY THE GVN MIGHT CONTROL EFFECTIVELY. THIEU SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT THE WORST TO HAPPEN.

25X1/ [REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] HE GOT THE IMPRESSION THIEU WOULD PROPOSE SOMETHING TO THE AMERICANS SOON AND THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS IN FACT "READY TO GO TO PARIS," ALTHOUGH HE WOULD REQUIRE A LITTLE MORE TIME.) 25X1

2. THIEU ADMONISHED ALL THOSE PRESENT TO KEEP A COOL HEAD DURING THESE DIFFICULT DAYS WHICH HE EXPECTS WILL PASS VERY QUICKLY. IN THE MEANTIME, HE EXPECTS THE NORMAL CLOSE WORKING RELATIONS BETWEEN GVN AND U. S. AGENCIES TO CONTINUE. THE CURRENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, HE SAID, ARE OF A HIGH-LEVEL NATURE BUT THE GVN HAS BY NO MEANS TURNED ANTI-AMERICAN. THE WAR HAS TO GO ON AS BEFORE AND SO DO THE WORK OF THE GVN AND ITS CO-OPERATION WITH THE U. S. GOVERNMENT. THIEU OBSERVED HE HAD HEARD OF SOME PERSONS WHO HAD SOUGHT TO PROFIT FROM WHAT THEY ERRONEOUSLY CONSIDERED AN ANTI-U. S. POSTURE ON THE PART OF THE GVN. HE URGED HIS MINISTERS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS TO PUT DOWN ALL SUCH ATTEMPTS WITHOUT DELAY.

SANTITIZED
Authority NLJ 019-042-1-5
By CP, NARA, Date 1/21/02

~~SECRET~~

3. THIEU GAVE A BRIEF RECAPITULATION OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO THE PRESENT CRISIS. HE DID NOT GO INTO TECHNICAL DETAILS BUT SAID THE QUESTION OF DEALING WITH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV) IN PARIS AS A SEPARATE ENTITY IS A LIFE-AND-DEATH MATTER FOR THE GVN, ESPECIALLY IF THE GVN WERE FORCED TO DEAL WITH THE NFLSV AS AN ENTITY AT SHORT NOTICE AND WITHOUT SUFFICIENT TIME FOR PROPER PREPARATION. IN SUCH EVENT, ALL DEALINGS WITH THE NFLSV AS A SEPARATE ENTITY WOULD HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE MORALE OF ARVN AND, ESPECIALLY, OF THE POPULAR FORCES IN THE PROVINCES. THIEU SAID THAT UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS THE VIET CONG THROUGHOUT THE SVN COUNTRYSIDE WOULD BE ABLE TO PROPOSE TO MEMBERS OF ARVN AND THE POPULAR FORCES THAT THEY MIGHT DO WELL TO SEEK AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE VC HERE IN SVN SINCE THE GVN WAS SITTING DOWN IN PARIS WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES. THIS, THIEU SAID, WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE A VERY PERSUASIVE LINE AND ONE THAT WOULD CERTAINLY WRECK ARVN MORALE UNLESS THE GVN HAD HAD SUFFICIENT TIME TO INDOCTRINATE ITS PERSONNEL AGAINST IT.

4. THE EXTRAORDINARY AND ENLARGED CABINET MEETING MET IN INDEPENDENCE PALACE FROM 1620 TO 1800 HOURS. IN ADDITION TO VICE PRESIDENT KY AND ALL CABINET MINISTERS, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF SENIOR GVN OFFICIALS AND STAFF MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE WERE PRESENT.

END QUOTE

DTG 061350Z NOV 68

~~SECRET~~

63

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

1968 NOV 6 ~~7~~ NOV 6 AM 10:30

VZCZCEEA725
OO WTE18
DE WTE 4265

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82716

Pres file

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH THE AUSTRALIANS LEAN ON SAIGON AND HAVE A RELATIVELY RATIONAL DISCUSSION WITH THANH.

STATE 266993 (TODEL 1481)

AUSTRALIANS (PROTECT) HAVE PASSED US COPY OF AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR HARRY'S NOV. 4 CONVERSATION WITH THANH.

BEGIN TEXT. I SAW TRAN CHANH THANH THIS AFTERNOON, 4TH NOVEMBER. I SAID THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN STUDYING THE SITUATION RESULTING FROM THE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON, THE CESSATION OF THE BOMBING, AND OF THE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT THIEU TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

2. I SAID YOU APPRECIATED THE CONCERN OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET-NAM THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE UNDER APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS BUT FELT THAT IT WAS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE GVN TO BE PRESENT. AT LEAST THE SITUATION COULD BE TURNED INTO ADVANTAGE. ALREADY HANOI HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE GVN MUST PARTICIPATE. THEY HAD ADMITTED THIS IN THEIR COMMUNIQUE. I SUGGESTED THAT THE CESSATION OF BOMBING HAD CREATED A NEW SITUATION. UNTIL THE AMERICANS HAD REACHED THEIR DECISION IT WAS POSSIBLE TO ARGUE THAT THE CESSATION OF BOMBING SHOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL HANOI HAD GIVEN THEM MORE ADEQUATE ASSURANCES. THE ONLY QUESTION NOW WAS WHETHER ON BALANCE IT WAS PREFERABLE FOR THE GVN TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS OR NOT. THE AUSTRALIAN VIEW WAS THAT ON BALANCE IT WAS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE GVN TO ATTEND.

3. I SAID THAT AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND WE WOULD APPRECIATE AN ELABORATION AND A CLARIFICATION OF THE THREE CONDITIONS WHICH HAD BEEN POSED BY PRESIDENT THIEU.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
NLJ 04-58
By io, NARA, Date 9-23-04

~~SECRET~~

PRELIMINARY

(1)

4. AS REGARDS THE FIRST CONDITION -- THAT HANOI MUST GIVE AN ASSURANCE THAT IT IS READY TO ENTER INTO DIRECT AND SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM -- I SAID I ASSUMED THAT DIRECT TALKS WOULD STILL INCLUDE THE UNITED STATES. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT HANOI HAD ALREADY AGREED TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE GVN.

5. THANH CONFIRMED THAT THE GVN, IN SPEAKING OF "DIRECT" DID NOT MEAN "BILATERAL". WHAT CONCERNED THEM WAS THAT THE TALKS SO FAR HAD BEEN INDIRECT, THROUGH THE UNITED STATES. THEY HAD NOT KNOWN AT FIRST HAND WHAT HANOI WAS SAYING. THEY DID NOT WANT TO GET INTO THE POSITION AGAIN WHERE HANOI WOULD SPEAK ONLY TO THE UNITED STATES, EVEN IF THEY WERE PRESENT.

6. I SAID IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE DELEGATION OF THE GVN SHOULD SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE OTHER SIDE, WHICH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE GVN WOULD BE HANOI. I BELIEVED IT HAD ALSO BEEN AGREED THAT THE GVN COULD BE THE FIRST TO SPEAK.

7. THANH SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SURE THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH THEY HAD THOUGHT WERE AGREED WITH THE UNITED STATES IN SAIGON, HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE NEGOTIATING DELEGATION IN PARIS. IN ANY EVENT, AS FAR AS THEY KNEW THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT WITH HANOI ON SUCH PROCEDURES.

8. I ASKED WHETHER WHAT THE GVN WANTED IN THIS CONTEXT WAS TO HAVE THEIR REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPATE WITH VANCE IN THE DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURE WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF HANOI.

9. THANH SAID THAT THEIR OBJECTIVE WAS TO GET THE PROCEDURES AGREED IN ADVANCE AND TO HAVE THE ASSURANCE DIRECT FROM HANOI THAT THEY WOULD TALK DIRECTLY TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM AND WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES EXCLUSIVELY TO THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION.

10. REFERRING TO THE SECOND GVN CONDITION, I ASKED WHAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAD MEANT BY THE TALKS CONSTITUTING A COMPLETELY NEW PHASE. I SAID I ASSUMED THAT THE GVN HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE NEGOTIATIONS BEING HELD IN PARIS.

11. THANH SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS MUST NOT SIMPLY BE ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF EXPLORATORY TALKS. THAT WAS WHY THEY WERE NOT READY TO ATTEND THE "NEXT REGULAR MEETING" ON 6TH NOVEMBER. THEY THOUGHT THAT WOULD MAKE IT TOO EASY FOR THE COMMUNISTS TO CLAIM THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF "THE SAIGON REGIME" HAD BEEN ADDED TO THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION. THEY THEREFORE WANTED THE NEGOTIATIONS TO BE A COMPLETELY NEW PHASE IN WHICH THE GVN WOULD NOT HAVE A SUBORDINATE ROLE BUT WOULD BE NEGOTIATING IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

12. I ASKED HOW THE GVN THOUGHT IT COULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT A NEW PHASE HAD BEGUN. WAS IT THEIR THOUGHT THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN INTERVAL BETWEEN THE ENDING OF THE EXPLORATORY TALKS AND THE BEGINNING OF NEGOTIATIONS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO DELAY SIMPLY TO MAKE A FORMAL DISTINCTION. IN ANY EVENT, HOW DID THE GVN PROPOSE TO SETTLE QUESTIONS OF PROCEDURE. IF THEY WENT ALONG WITH VANCE, HANOI WOULD WANT A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NLF ALSO PRESENT.

13. THANH SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT MATTER SO MUCH IF A NLF REPRESENTATIVE WERE PRESENT ALONG WITH HANOI TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS OF PROCEDURE, PROVIDED THAT SUCH A MEETING WAS SECRET. THEN THERE WOULD BE NO JOURNALISTS OR PHOTOGRAPHERS PRESENT AND IT COULD ALWAYS BE DENIED THAT AN ACTUAL MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE.

14. THANH STRESSED THAT THEIR PRINCIPAL AND OVERRIDING CONCERN WAS THAT THE NLF SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY AND THAT THE AGENDA SHOULD NOT BE SUCH AS TO LEAD TO DISCUSSION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. THAT WAS WHY THEY WERE SO INSISTENT THAT THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO TALK DIRECTLY TO HANOI ABOUT THE LIMITS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF VIET-NAM. HE SAID THAT THE GVN WOULD WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS FRIENDS AS TO HOW THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED. THE GVN DID NOT WANT TO FIND ITSELF IN THE SAME POSITION AS LAOS HAD DONE. THE LAOS SETTLEMENT HAD COMMITTED HALF THE COUNTRY TO BECOME COMMUNIST.

15. I SUGGESTED THAT THE GVN WAS NOT IN THE SAME POSITION AS LAOS. THE GVN WAS UNITED UNDER ITS PRESIDENT, AND THE SUPPORT OF A POPULARLY-ELECTED PARLIAMENT, AND HAD AT ITS DISPOSAL AN ARMY OF 800,000. I HAD BEEN IMPRESSED, OBSERVING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WITH THE UNITY AND DETERMINATION OF THE GVN. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE GVN COULD ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONFIDENCE.

16. THANH COMMENTED ONLY THAT IF THE GVN MADE ANY CONCESSION WHICH SEEMED LIKE A STEP TOWARDS A COALITION GOVERNMENT, ITS UNITY WOULD BE LOST.

17. REFERRING TO THE BOMBING OF MY THO AND OTHER PROVINCIAL CENTRES SINCE THE CESSATION OF AMERICAN BOMBARDMENT NORTH OF THE DMZ, THANH SAID THAT THE GVN WANTED MORE TIME TO BE SURE THAT HANOI WAS IN FACT DE-ESCALATING THE WAR BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO TAKE ANY FURTHER STEPS.

18. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY INDICATION THAT HANOI HAD VIOLATED THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE SINCE THE BOMBING STOPPED, THANH SAID THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY ACTUAL VIOLATION BUT IT WAS THOUGHT THERE MIGHT STILL BE NVA FORCES IN THE ZONE WHICH COULD BE ACTIVATED AT ANY TIME.

19. THANH CONCLUDED BY REPEATING THAT HE WOULD WELCOME ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW THEY COULD GET INTO DIRECT NEGOTIATION WITH HANOI. END TEXT

DTG: 061329Z NOV 68

~~SECRET~~

PRECEDENCE

[3]

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV. 6 15 50

EEA726
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4268

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82718

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NJ 91-508
By , NARA, Date 1-11-93

Profile

64
68 NOV 6 AM 10:56
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 6, 1968

HEREWITH BUNKER'S PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON HOW TO MOVE WITH THIEU IN THE WAKE OF THE ELECTION.

SAIGON 42029

1. I PLAN TO SEE THIEU TOMORROW, AFTER WE KNOW THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS, AND I WILL AGAIN TRY TO DISSUADE HIM FROM MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH WOULD COMPLICATE OUR FINDING A SOLUTION.

2. MEANWHILE, THERE IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD DO TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, WHICH WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL HERE, AND THAT IS TO NAIL THE MIS-STATEMENTS COMING OUT OF HANOI AND PARIS THAT WE HAVE AGREED TO A "FOUR-SIDED" CONFERENCE. SUCH A RECTIFICATION COULD SET THE STAGE FOR THE KIND OF JOINT STATEMENT THAT YOU HAVE IN MIND.

3. I AGREE WITH THE IDEA IN PARAGRAPH 3 THAT WE WORK FOR EITHER A GVN STATEMENT THAT WE COULD ENDORSE OR A JOINT STATEMENT WITH THE GVN WHICH THEY COULD PRESENT A SOLUTION TO THEIR DILEMMA. PRESUMABLY SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- A. NO RECOGNITION OF THE NLF.
- B. NO COALITION GOVERNMENT.
- C. WE CONSIDER THE OTHER SIDE ONE DELEGATION.
- D. THE GVN WILL NEGOTIATE ON ALL MATTERS CONCERNING SOUTH VIET NAM.

4. WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER DEVICES THAT HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK, I HAVE THESE COMMENTS:

- A. MAKING THE GVN CHAIRMAN OF A JOINT DELEGATION WAS DEALT WITH IN SAIGON 41932.

PRESERVATION COPY

B. THE IDEA OF THE LIEN MINH SITTING OPPOSITE THE NLF WOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS SERIOUS EITHER HERE OR ELSEWHERE.

C. EASING THE GVN INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS BY GETTING THEM TO SIT DOWN WITH THE OTHER SIDE IN PROCEDURAL DISCUSSIONS, AS SUGGESTED IN STATE 267314. WHILE AS INDICATED PREVIOUSLY I BELIEVE THE GVN SHOULD BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO ATTEND IF THEY WISH, I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THEY WON'T COME UNTIL SOMEWAY HAS BEEN FOUND TO OVERCOME THEIR WORRIES ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE NLF.

5. I THUS COME OUT IN FAVOR OF WHAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS IN MIND IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR MESSAGE BUT NOT IMMEDIATELY THE STATEMENT TO BE WORKED OUT WITH THIEU AND NOT WITH SOMEONE OF LESSER AUTHORITY. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT TIMING WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT AND THAT THE STAGE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY SET.

6. THE BEST STAGE-SETTER WOULD BE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT. SHOULD THE ELECTION GO TO THE HOUSE, THERE WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO BE TWO SEPARATE MESSAGES BUT I ASSUME THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE. I THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE FIRST DISABUSE THE PREVAILING MISCONCEPTION HERE THAT THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION MIGHT TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GVN GOING TO THE PARIS TALKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

DTG 061510Z NOV 68

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

65

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MLG 91-498
By ng/jw, NARA, Date 3-26-93

68 NOV 5 PM 7:13
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

EEA714
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4250

1968 NOV 6 00 05

FROM WALT W ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82702

free file

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS
FOR THE PRESIDENT EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

HEREWITH A BUNKER-HUONG INTERVIEW.

SAIGON 41961

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HUONG THIS MORNING, ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR. THE CONVERSATION LASTED ONE HOUR AND 45 MINUTES. I WENT OVER THE WHOLE GROUND INCLUDING THE GENESIS OF THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA AND OUR PAST AGREEMENTS WITH THE GVN, LAYING HEAVY STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE FOR THEM TO GET THEMSELVES OUT OF THE BOX THAT THEY HAVE PUT THEMSELVES IN. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, HUONG SAID, "I AM AN OLD MAN AND THEREFORE IN FAVOR OF MODERATION. I TAKE ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CAN GIVE HIM ONLY ADVICE. I TRY TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER, AND I UNDERSTAND WE MUST NOT REFUSE CATEGORICALLY BUT MUST MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE COUNTER-PROPOSALS."

2. I STARTED BY INFORMING HUONG THAT ON NOVEMBER 1, AFTER WE HAD FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, I WENT TO SEE PRESIDENT THIEU TO CONVEY A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO THE EFFECT THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE DISHEARTENED OR DISCOURAGED, THAT WE INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH OUR VIETNAMESE FRIENDS, THAT THE GVN WILL HAVE OUR STRONG SUPPORT, AND THAT WE MUST NARROW AND ELIMINATE WHATEVER GAP THERE MAY BE BETWEEN US. I ADDED THAT TODAY I WAS ADDRESSING A MESSAGE TO ALL AMERICANS IN VIET NAM CALLING FOR CONTINUED CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR VIETNAMESE ALLIES AND COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT THIEU'S SPEECH IN A NON-CONTENTIOUS MANNER. I ADDED THAT WHEN PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAD CALLED GENERAL ABRAMS HOME FOR CONSULTATION HE HAD ALSO GIVEN HIM EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS TO COOPERATE TO THE UTMOST WITH THE VIETNAMESE FORCES TO PUSH OUR MILITARY ADVANTAGE.

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PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

3. I NEXT WENT OVER THE HISTORY OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER, EMPHASIZING THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONSULTATION EVER SINCE MAY WHEN THE TALKS IN PARIS HAD STARTED. I WENT INTO SOME DETAIL ON THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA, EXPLAINING THAT WE NEVER ENVISAGED RECOGNIZING THE NLF BUT THAT WE CANNOT PREVENT HANOI FROM MAKING ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THEIR OWN SIDE OF THE TABLE. I STRESSED THAT WE HAD GIVEN FULL SATISFACTION TO THE VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATORS ON THESE MATTERS AND THAT WE HAD THOUGHT WE HAD THEIR AGREEMENT. I ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT HAD NOT EVEN BEEN DISCUSSED IN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GVN BECAUSE IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING; OUR POSITION ON THIS MATTER WAS FIRMLY EXPLAINED AT HONOLULU AND CONTINUES UNCHANGED.

4. I SAID THAT I WAS SPEAKING TO THE PRIME MINISTER AS A FRIEND AND THAT I THOUGHT IT BEST TO BE COMPLETELY FRANK, AS ONE SHOULD BE WITH FRIENDS. IF WE DID NOT FIND A WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT IMPASSE, IF RIGID POSITIONS ARE TAKEN AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS ARE MADE, THIS WOULD HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT EFFECT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. I SAID QUITE FRANKLY THE WAR IS NOT POPULAR IN THE US BUT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS UNSWERVINGLY HELD TO HIS COURSE AND HAS SUPPORTED THE GVN IN OUR COMMON CAUSE. WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE TALKS IN PARIS PEOPLE WERE STARTING TO SEE SOME HOPE FOR AN EVENTUAL SOLUTION. WE BELIEVE HANOI HAS MADE CONCESSIONS IN VIEW OF THE TERRIBLE DEFEATS THEY HAVE SUFFERED THIS YEAR.

5. AMERICAN OPINION, I CONTINUED, WOULD SIMPLY NOT UNDERSTAND THE FAILURE OF THE GVN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TALKS WHICH THEY SEE AS CONTAINING THE HOPE OF PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. I SAID, AS I HAD SAID TO PRESIDENT THIEU, THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL STAND WITH THE GVN ON MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE BUT WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE FAILURE OF THE GVN TO PARTICIPATE BECAUSE OF PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND BECAUSE OF CERTAIN CLAIMS WHICH HANOI MAY MAKE WHICH NEITHER OF US CREDITS IN ANY WAY.

6. ALL THIS, I SAID, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS. WHOEVER IS ELECTED PRESIDENT WILL WISH THE TALKS TO CONTINUE. I REMINDED HUONG THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON WILL BE PRESIDENT UNTIL JANUARY 20 AND I GAVE HIM THE TEXT OF WHAT MR. NIXON HAD SAID ON "MEET THE PRESS" ON NOVEMBER 3 ABOUT THE BOMBING HALT NOT BEING POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, HIS STANDING WITH THE PRESIDENT WITH REGARD TO GETTING THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS OFF DEAD CENTER, AND HIS DESIRE TO GET THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE. THE PRIME MINISTER INTERJECTED THAT HE HAD NEVER THOUGHT THE ELECTIONS TO BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND THAT HE RECOGNIZED THAT ANY AMERICAN PRESIDENT WILL ACT IN THE AMERICAN INTEREST.

7. I SAID, "WE WILL SUPPORT YOU IN PARIS. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT THAT WE CANNOT THINK OF ANY STRONGER GUARANTEES FOR YOU THAN THE SUPPORT OF THE MOST POWERFUL NATION ON EARTH." HOWEVER, I ADDED, WE CANNOT SUPPORT YOU IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN CONGRESS COMMENCE TO BELIEVE THAT YOU STAND IN THE WAY OF AN HONEST SEARCH FOR PEACE. WE SIMPLY CANNOT GET WHAT PRESIDENT THIEU SEEMS TO WANT US TO GET, NAMELY SOME GUARANTEES THAT THE COMMUNISTS MUST REFRAIN FROM MAKING

PRESERVATION COPY

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23

~~SECRET~~

PROPAGANDA. I SAID OUR SIDE HAS A BETTER STORY TO TELL AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO OUTDO THEM WITH OUR PROPAGANDA. I SAID THIS IS A CRITICAL TIME, A TIME FOR COOL HEADS TO PREVAIL, AND TO WORK OUT OUR DIFFERENCES WITHOUT EMOTION AND IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

8. PRIME MINISTER HUONG REPLIED THAT THIS CONVERSATION WAS PLACING HIM IN A RATHER DELICATE AND EMBARRASSING POSITION. HE COULD HAVE AVOIDED IT ALTOGETHER ON THE GROUND THAT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION THE PRESIDENT CONDUCTS THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE PRIME MINISTER IS ONLY HIS FIRST MINISTER AND AS SUCH AN EXECUTANT OF POLICY. HE SAID, "YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED BY THE COMMUNISTS FOR SUCH A LONG TIME, WE ARE LIKE THE CAT THAT HAS BEEN SCALDED BY HOT WATER AND NOW FEARS EVEN THE COLD WATER. WE DO NOT ACCEPT AFFIRMATIONS AND ASSURANCES, WHAT WE NEED ARE GUARANTEES."

9. CONSEQUENTLY, THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED, ANY INDIRECT ASSURANCES WE GET FROM THE COMMUNISTS ARE SUSPECT. "WHAT WE ASK ARE GUARANTEES. PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS SAID THE ENEMY WILL DE-ESCALATE, BUT WHERE ARE THE CONCRETE BENEFITS OF SUCH DE-ESCALATION? THE COMMUNISTS ARE CONTINUING TO MORTAR AND ROCKET OUR CITIES. TWENTY LOCALITIES HAVE BEEN HIT SINCE THE BOMBING STOPPED." THE COMMUNISTS ARE SHOUTING VICTORY, HUONG SAID, AND THEY CLAIM THAT YOU STOPPED THE BOMBING UNCONDITIONALLY. HO CHI MINH IS CALLING ON HIS PEOPLE TO DRIVE THE AMERICANS OUT OF VIET-NAM, AND XUAN THUY SAYS IF THE GVN DOESN'T COME TO PARIS, THAT IS AN AMERICAN PROBLEM. HUONG ASKED, HOW CAN WE COME TO PARIS UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES?

10. CONTINUING TO SET FORTH THE GOVERNMENT LINE, HUONG SAID "IF WE SIT DOWN WITH THE NLF AS A SEPARATE ENTITY, THE GVN WILL COLLAPSE AND WE WILL HAVE DISINTEGRATION IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. YOU HAVE SAID WE ARE WELL ON THE WAY TO VICTORY. I AGREE. THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO CUT THE GROUND FROM UNDER OURSELVES. UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THE COMMUNISTS ARE BEGINNING TO RAISE THEIR HEADS, WE HAVE REPORTS OF BONZES BECOMING ACTIVE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. HOW WILL THE PRESIDENT BE ABLE TO STAND UP TO SUCH A TIDE FAVORABLE TO THE COMMUNISTS?" (MEANING OF THESE REMARKS WAS AMBIGUOUS, COULD HAVE MEANT THAT GVN MUST REPAIR THE REACH WITH THE U.S., OR THAT U.S. MUST NOT PERSIST IN PUTTING GVN IN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION).

11. THEN HUONG SHIFTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT LINE TO A MORE PERSONAL ONE. HE SAID: "THIS IS A PRIVATE DISCUSSION BETWEEN YOU AND ME, AS FRIENDS. I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY ANYTHING WHEN THE PRESIDENT HAS SPOKEN. THE PRESIDENT WILL ISSUE A MANIFESTO ON HOW TO MOVE TO PEACE, AND I THINK THIS SHOULD BE SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE. (LATER, IN REFERRING TO THE SAME IDEA, HE SAID, "THE PRESIDENT WILL MAKE COUNTER-PROPOSALS IN A FEW DAYS, AND NATURALLY THESE WILL BE IN THE MANIFESTO," AND HE ADDED HIS PERSONAL COMMENT THAT "IT ISN'T A MATTER OF CATEGORICAL REFUSAL, BUT WE MUST MAKE REALISTIC, CONSTRUCTIVE COUNTER-PROPOSALS IN SUCH A MANNER THAT WE ARE NOT ACCUSED OF TORPEDOING THE NEGOTIATIONS".)

[3]

PROLIFERATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

12. I SAID I APPRECIATED THE PRIME MINISTER'S WILLINGNESS TO TALK WITH ME, COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD THE LIMITS OF HIS POSITION, BUT HIS VIEWS WERE OFTEN SOUGHT BY THE PRESIDENT AND I KNEW HIM TO HAVE INFLUENCE WITH HIM. IN ANY CASE, I THOUGHT IT ONLY FAIR AS A FRIEND TO SHARE MY PREOCCUPATIONS WITH HIM. I ESPECIALLY WANTED TO IMPRESS UPON HIM MY FEARS WITH REGARD TO AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. I UNDERSTOOD HIS FEELINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE COMMUNISTS, ALTHOUGH IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ONE SHOULD BE JUST AS SUSPICIOUS TOWARD THEIR GUARANTEES AS ONE IS TOWARD THEIR AFFIRMATIONS OR ASSURANCES. I SAID THE BEST GUARANTEE THE GVN CAN HAVE WAS THE STRONG AND FIRM SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE. I THEN SAID THAT HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE LACK OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF DE-ESCALATION MADE IT NECESSARY FOR ME TO GIVE HIM SOME BACKGROUND ON HOW WE ARRIVED AT THE STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON "HAS REASON TO BELIEVE"; I WENT OVER THE ENTIRE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WITH HIM, CONCLUDING THAT WHEN HANOI ACCEPTED OUR CONDITIONS (EVEN THOUGH THEY WEREN'T CALLED CONDITIONS), WHICH WE HAD PUT TO THEM WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE GVN AND THE ICC'S, WE HAD TO MOVE.

13. I THEN SAID THAT SINCE WE WERE TALKING AS FRIENDS THERE WAS ONE MORE THING I NEEDED TO TELL HIM IN THE GREATEST CONFIDENCE. WE WERE DISTRESSED BY PRESS STATEMENTS THAT WE HAD ACTED UNILATERALLY AND THAT I HAD "HANDLED A TEXT TO THIEU WHICH HE REFUSED TO SIGN." THE FACT WAS THAT WE HAD THE AGREEMENT OF BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT TO A JOINT DECLARATION, THAT THEY SUBSEQUENTLY CAME TO US (AFTER THE FIRST SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING) WITH SUGGESTED CHANGES, THAT WE ACCEPTED THEIR CHANGES, THAT WE AGAIN HAD AN AGREEMENT, BUT THAT THE MATTER WAS REOPENED ONLY TWO DAYS BEFORE THE BOMBING HALT WHICH WE POSTPONED AT THEIR REQUEST) WHEN AN IMPOSSIBLE CONDITION WAS PUT TO US, NAMELY THAT WE GET HANOI TO OBLIGATE ITSELF THAT IT WOULD NOT MAKE PROPAGANDA ABOUT THE NLF.

14. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS BECOMING VISIBLY UNCOMFORTABLE. HE SAID THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAD MADE CERTAIN SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. THEN HE SAID, "MY OWN WISHES AND PREFERENCES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MATTER. I AM AN EXECUTANT OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY. I CAN MAKE SUGGESTIONS, BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE TO ACCEPT THEM,"; AND IT WAS THEN THAT HE MADE THE REMARKS ABOUT BEING AN OLD MAN AND IN FAVOR OF MODERATION. I MADE QUITE CLEAR THAT HUONG UNDERSTOOD THAT IN EFFECT WE HAD OBTAINED FROM HANOI WHAT WE HAD AGREED WITH THE GVN TO OBTAIN FROM THEM, SO THAT THE ACCUSATION OF UNILATERAL ACTION WAS INAPPROPRIATE, AND THAT WE HAD ACTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH THE GVN AT EVERY STEP; AND THEN I TOOK MY DEPARTURE, WITH HUONG PROTESTING HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES AND FOR ME PERSONALLY.

DTG 052250Z NOVEMBER 1968

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

[4]

~~SECRET~~

66

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV 6 00 22

1968 NOV 5 PM 1:30
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

EEA 716
OO WTE 10
DE WTE 4255

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO JIM JONES FOR THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82707

~~SECRET~~ LITERALLY EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

HEREWITH A BACK-CHANNEL DRAFT TO BUNKER FROM ME, AS INSTRUCTED
VIA JIM JONES.

"YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT EASILY ENTER
INTO RELATIONS OF CONFIDENCE NOR DOES HE EASILY WITHDRAW
CONFIDENCE ONCE GIVEN.

THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES HE ESTABLISHED WITH THIEU AND KY A
BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE OVER THESE DIFFICULT YEARS.

YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW -- AND THEY SHOULD KNOW -- THAT THE
PRESIDENT'S CONFIDENCE IN THEM IS DEEPLY SHAKEN -- VERY DEEPLY
SHAKEN.

SPECIFICALLY, THE PRESIDENT IS IN NO MOOD FOR REASSURANCES
TO THEM.

IF A VIABLE RELATION IS TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED, IT IS THEIR
TASK, ~~AND THEY SHOULD GET ABOUT IT PROMPTLY -- VERY PROMPTLY.~~

~~YOU WILL KNOW BEST HOW TO CONVEY THIS MESSAGE WITHOUT ANY
AMBIGUITY."~~

DTG: 060007Z NOV 68

DECLASSIFIED

Authority 7129 91-498
By rs/jw, NARA, Date 2-19-98

PRESERVATION COPY

~~SECRET~~

67

Wednesday, November 6, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Papers for General Abrams' Distinguished Service Medal

Attached are two documents for your signature to complete your presentation of the Distinguished Service Medal to General Creighton W. Abrams.

- a. a certificate
- b. a citation.

When both are signed, the documents can be returned to me. Along with the medal which has now been properly engraved, they will be forwarded to General Abrams in Saigon.

W. W. Rostow

BKS:amc

SECRET

EYES ONLY

SENT
WHCA

1968 NOV 5 23 17

EEA710
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4249

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT (EYES ONLY)
CITE CAP82701

68
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
NOV 5 PM 6:25

Per file

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

CLEARLY HOLYOAKE HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL.

1. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER HOLYOAKE THIS AFTERNOON IN A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE VIETNAM BOMBING HALT.
2. I EXTENDED THE THANKS OF SECRETARY RUSK FOR HOLYOAKE'S PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING WITH RESPECT TO THE TIME DELAY ON THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT. HE SAID HE FULLY APPRECIATED THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE THIEU SITUATION.
3. HOLYOAKE TOLD ME OF HIS BEING ADVISED OF THE CESSATION PROGRAM WHILE IN WASHINGTON. HE SAID HE SUBSEQUENTLY URGED ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSAL IN PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH PARK IN SEOUL AND THIEU AND KY IN SAIGON. HE SAID PARK WAS LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC AND KY QUITE DIFFICULT. THIEU RESPONDED MOST FAVORABLY.
4. FOLLOWING PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BOMBING HALT, HOLYOAKE SAID THAT HE LEARNED FROM THE NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY IN SAIGON THAT THIEU MIGHT DELCARE THE REFUSAL OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO JOIN IN THE PARIS TALKS. HE SAID HE "FIRED OFF" A WIRE TO THIEU URGING "HE GET BEHIND PRESIDENT JOHNSON." EXTERNAL AFFAIRS LATER ADVISED ME THAT HOLYOAKE MESSAGE WAS GIVEN TO THIEU ABOUT TWO HOURS BEFORE THIEU'S STATEMENT ON PARIS.
5. HOLYOAKE SAID THAT IN THE NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE OF TOMORROWN NIGHT (NOVEMBER 6) HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THIEU'S PARIS POSITION NOR ON ANY STATEMENT OF VIETNAMESE SPOKESMEN OF EITHER NORTH OR SOUTH. HOLYOAKE HAS THUS FAR REFUSED TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE THIEU STATEMENT.

DTG: 052250Z NOV 68

SECRET

EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5

NLJ-019A-42-1-13

NAR, Date 12-08-2017

By LUZ

ACTION

69

Tuesday, November 5, 1968 - 4:45pm

MR. PRESIDENT:

Attached is a suggested message of congratulations to Austrian President Jonas on the fiftieth anniversary of the Austrian Republic -- November 12.

Pres file

This is a good opportunity to express our friendship for Austria. A message from you would be particularly appreciated at the present time, when Austrians are nervous about Russian moves and intentions.

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By MT, NARA, Date 9-9-97

W. W. Rostow

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Call me _____

JKN
JKN:mm

CONFIDENTIAL

69a

SUGGESTED MESSAGE TO AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT

On this grand occasion -- the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Austria -- I join all Americans in extending warm congratulations and sincere best wishes to you and to the people of Austria. May the years ahead bring continued progress and prosperity to your nation and a continuation of the close and friendly relations which have so long existed between our two countries.

Lyndon B. Johnson



JKN:mmm

~~SECRET~~

Number 5, 1968

Pres file

70

FROM WALT ROSTOW
FOR THE PRESIDENT

Herewith two similar CIA reports on Thieu-Ky thinking on how to
get off the limb. Well worth reading.

BEGIN TEXT first report.

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 3-26-93

700

SANITIZED

SANITIZED

ROUTINE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

IN 27275

PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

STATE/INR DIA NMCC/MC (SECDEF JCS ARMY NAVY AIR) CIA/NMCC NIC NSA SDO ONE CRS
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[REDACTED]

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.

[REDACTED] 042002Z CITE [REDACTED] 1.3(a)(1)

DIST 4 NOVEMBER 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 3 NOVEMBER 1968
SUBJECT POSSIBILITY THAT SOUTH VIETNAM WILL AGREE TO GO TO PARIS FOR "PRELIMINARY CONTACTS" RATHER THAN FULL-SCALE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

*For the President
From Walt
Rostow.*

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON [REDACTED]

*Here with
two similar
CIA reports
on Thieu
try thinking
on how to
get off the
limb.
Well worth
reading.*

SOURCE [REDACTED]

SUMMARY: VICE PRESIDENT KY HAS INDICATED THAT HE, PRESIDENT THIEU AND OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT (GVN) OFFICIALS WISH TO PATCH UP THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE U.S. AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. ONE SOLUTION MAY BE FOR THE GVN TO SEND A DELEGATION TO PARIS FOR "PRELIMINARY TALKS" RATHER THAN

[REDACTED]

SANITIZED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 91-496

[REDACTED] 37-ju, NARA, Date: 11-93

(classification)

(dissem controls)

FULL-SCALE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE PRELIMINARY NATURE OF THE TALKS WOULD BE ANNOUNCED BY THE U.S. AND THE GVN, WHILE NORTH VIETNAM (DRV) WOULD MERELY HAVE TO REFRAIN FROM CONTRARY COMMENT. THIS WOULD PROVIDE THE FACE-SAVING DEVICE THE GVN NEEDS. SUCH TALKS COULD END IN A STALEMATE, OR THE DRV COULD AGREE TO KEEP NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV) REPRESENTATIVES AS INCONSPICUOUS MEMBERS OF THE DRV DELEGATION, OR THE GVN COULD CONCEDE THAT THE NFLSV SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. SUCH A CONCESSION, IF MADE BY THE GVN ITSELF, COULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, WHO COULD NOT ACCEPT THE SAME SOLUTION SEEMINGLY IMPOSED BY THE U.S. IF DIRECT TALKS MUST BE HELD WITH THE NFLSV, THE GVN WOULD PREFER THAT THEY BE HELD IN SAIGON. AS OF 3 NOVEMBER, KY STILL HOPED TO HEAD A GVN DELEGATION TO PARIS AND IS RECRUITING THE PERSONS HE WANTS AS DELEGATION MEMBERS. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMENTS OF VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY, AND OF ASSOCIATES OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, SUGGEST THAT THIEU, KY AND OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) LEADERS WANT

(Classification)

(dissem controls)

TO PATCH UP THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE AMERICANS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KY HAS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GVN'S AVOIDING ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT EXACERBATE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

2. KY'S RECENT STATEMENTS SUGGEST THAT THE GVN SHOULD BE WILLING TO SEND A DELEGATION TO PARIS EVEN IF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV) WERE PRESENT AS A SEPARATE ENTITY, PROVIDED THE TALKS WERE CLEARLY LABELED AS ONLY "PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS." IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT IF THE U.S. AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTS SAID THAT THIS WAS THE CASE; NORTH VIETNAM (DRV) WOULD NEED ONLY TO REFRAIN FROM CONTRARY COMMENT. THIEU IS STILL OPPOSED TO DEALING WITH THE NFLSV AS A SEPARATE ENTITY IN FULL-SCALE PEACE TALKS AND ON THIS POINT HE CAN COUNT ON KY'S FULL AND CONTINUING SUPPORT. HOWEVER, IF THE DRV WOULD AGREE TO DIRECT PRELIMINARY TALKS WITH GVN REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWO PARTIES MIGHT BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE.

3. CALLING THE INITIAL CONTACTS "PRELIMINARY" WOULD BE THE FACE-SAVING DEVICE WHICH THE GVN BADLY NEEDS IF IT IS TO REAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE VOCAL VIETNAMESE PUBLIC. THESE

(classification)

(dissem controls)

SEPARATE ENTITY, WHEREAS TALKS WITH THE NFLSV IN SAIGON COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT TREATING WITH INSURGENTS.

1.3(a)(4)

5. KY IS CONTINUING QUIETLY TO RECRUIT A CONTINGENCY DELEGATION FOR PARIS AND BELIEVES HE COULD HAVE IT READY WITHIN A WEEK. FORMER IV CORPS COMMANDER LIEUTANANT GENERAL NGUYEN DUC THANG HAS AGREED TO SERVE ON A KY-LED DELEGATION AND SENATOR DAN VAN SUNG HAS AGREED TENTATIVELY, AS HAVE VUONG VAN BAC, VIETNAM PRESS DIRECTOR NGUYEN NGOC LINH AND KY'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT DANG DUC KHOI. TWO OTHERS KY WANTS AND HAS BEEN PROMISED ARE NGUYEN NHAN, FORMER COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE GVN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WHO WAS RECENTLY DRAFTED INTO THE ARVN, AND PHUNG NHAT MINH, AN INFORMATION SPECIALIST IN THE GVN EMBASSY IN AUSTRALIA. KY, WHO WAS OFFERED THE POST OF DELEGATION CHIEF BY THIEU AT NOON ON 29 OCTOBER AND ACCEPTED, STILL PLANNED AS OF 3 NOVEMBER TO HEAD THE DELEGATION, AT LEAST IN THE INITIAL STAGES. KY BELIEVES THAT HIS PRESENCE DURING THE PROPOSED PRELIMINARY TALKS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT.

1.3(a)(4)

1.3(c)(2)

(classification)

(dissem controls)

VUONG VAN BAC, A MEMBER OF THE GVN OBSERVER DELEGATION IN PARIS WHO IS CURRENTLY IN SAIGON ON A VISIT, SAID ON 3 NOVEMBER HE IS CONVINCED THAT DESPITE THE TONE OF THIEU'S SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THIEU WILL REVERSE HIMSELF AND SEND SOME SORT OF DELEGATION TO PARIS. BAC REASONED THAT THEIU TOOK A NEGATIVE STAND FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS AND THAT, HAVING MADE HIS POINT, HE WILL SEND A DELEGATION. NOT TO DO SO WOULD, IN BAC'S OPINION, BE "CATASTROPHIC." BAC SAID HE PLANNED TO MAKE THIS POINT TO FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN CHANH THANH AND WOULD ALSO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE THIEU IF HE CAN GET TO SEE HIM.)

. [REDACTED] DISSEM STATE (AMBASSADOR BUNKER, DEPUTY AMBASSADOR BERGER, POLITICAL COUNSELOR) USMACV (GENERAL BRAMS, AMBASSADOR KOMER, MAJOR GENERAL DAVIDSON) 7TH AIR FORCE (GENERAL BROWN) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SANITIZED

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

• PRIORITY

Intelligence Information Cable

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051334Z

CITE

DIST. 5 NOVEMBER 1968

1.3(a)(4)

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 4 NOVEMBER 1968

SUBJECT PEACE PROPOSAL OFFERED BY VICE PRESIDENT KY AND APPROVED BY PRESIDENT THIEU AND OTHER NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AT 4 NOVEMBER 1968 MEETING

Reston

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON

SOURCE

1. MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE NATIONAL SECURITY

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 1.4
NLJ 91-496

By *fw* NARA, Date 11-93

(classification)

(dissem controls)

COUNCIL, INCLUDING PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, ENDORSED AT THEIR 4 NOVEMBER 1968 MEETING A PROPOSAL OFFERED BY VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY. THE PROPOSAL, WHICH WAS THE ONLY ONE RAISED AT THE SESSION, CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING ESSENTIAL POINTS:

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) IS WILLING TO SEND A DELEGATION TO PARIS NOW IF IT IS MADE CLEAR THAT THE TALKS ARE "PRELIMINARY" AND NOT FULL-SCALE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. A STATEMENT BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE GVN TO THIS EFFECT WOULD PROBABLY BE SUFFICIENT AS LONG AS NORTH VIETNAM (DRV) REMAINED SILENT.

B. DURING THE PRELIMINARY TALKS, THE GVN WILL TRY TO RESOLVE BY DIRECT TALKS WITH DRV REPRESENTATIVES THE QUESTION OF THE "SEPARATE ENTITY" STATUS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV). IF NO ACCOMMODATION IS REACHED, THE GVN WOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE PARIS TALKS.

C. THE GVN WOULD THEN PROPOSE A THREE-STAGE SERIES OF NEGOTIATIONS TO END THE WAR:

(1) FIRST STAGE: CALLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ALONG THE LINES OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. PARTICIPANTS WOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KEY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IN 27789

[REDACTED]

7.31.68

PAGE 3 OF 4 PAGES

[REDACTED]

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(classification)

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CONTENDING GOVERNMENTS, OTHER GOVERNMENTS FRIENDLY TO THEIR POSITIONS, AND A CERTAIN NUMBER OF NEUTRALS. (THE GVN RECOGNIZES THAT THE NFLSV WOULD BE REPRESENTED.) THE PURPOSE WOULD BE TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF REESTABLISHING THE STATUS QUO ANTE BELLUM, NAMELY, SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT STATES IN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM; RESPECT FOR A BOUNDARY AT THE 17TH PARALEL; WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE DRV AND U.S.; AND APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES BACKED BY SUFFICIENT MILITARY FORCE. (SOURCE COMMENT: KY BELIEVES AGREEMENT MIGHT BE REACHED ALLOWING THE U.S. TO PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE.)

(2) SECOND STAGE: DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE DRV AND GVN, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RESOLVING CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENTS. A POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THESE TALKS MIGHT BE A MUTUAL NON-AGGRESSION TREATY AND AN AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT.

(3) THIRD STAGE: RESOLUTION OF THE NFLSV PROBLEM. THE GVN WOULD PRESENT THE DRV WITH TWO ALTERNATIVES. FIRST, IF THE DRV ACKNOWLEDGED THE NFLSV TO BE ITS TOOL

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IN 27789

PAGE 4 OF 4 PAGES

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AND BRAINCHILD, THE GVN WOULD ASK TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE DRV ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE NFLSV. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DRV INSISTED THE NFLSV IS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION OF SOUTHERN NATIONALISTS, THE GVN WOULD TAKE THE POSITION THAT IT SHOULD NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE NFLSV, WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS TAKING PLACE IN SAIGON AND HAVING THE APPEARANCE OF A SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT DEALING WITH INSURGENTS.

2. KY EMPHASIZED TO THE MEETING THAT NOW THAT THE GVN HAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED ITS DISSOCIATION FROM THE AMERICAN POSITION IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE GVN COME UP WITH CONSTRUCTIVE AND WORKABLE PROPOSALS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] KY HOPES TO DISCUSS HIS PROPOSAL WITH AMBASSADOR BAKER SOON.

3. [REDACTED] DISSEM: STATE (AMBASSADOR BUNKER, DEPUTY AMBASSADOR BERGER, POLITICAL COUNSELOR USMACV (GENERAL ABRAMS, AMBASSADOR KOMER, MAJOR GENERAL DAVIDSON) 7TH AIR FORCE (GENERAL STOWN) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF [REDACTED])

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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1968 NOV 5 18 10

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WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
188 NOV 5 PM 1:14

file

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FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82697

SECRET HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

YOU WILL WISH TO READ THIS LETTER TO YOU FROM PARK. IT SUGGESTS THE DESIRABILITY OF AN EARLY TROOP CONTRIBUTORS CONFERENCE. IN MY JUDGMENT, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE A CONFERENCE AFTER RATHER THAN BEFORE SAIGON IS SQUARED AWAY FOR THE PARIS TALKS; BUT YOU WILL WISH TO WEIGH THAT QUESTION.

SEOUL 10890

REF: STATE 264734

QUOTE

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

DEAR PRESIDENT JOHNSON,

I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH APPRECIATION THE RECEIPT OF YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 31, WHICH AMBASSADOR PORTER HANDED TO ME ON NOVEMBER 2 UPON MY RETURN FROM AN INSPECTION TOUR OF LOCAL AREAS, IN WHICH YOU INFORMED ME OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE BOMBING HALT AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM. I UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE I WAS OUT OF TOWN, AMBASSADOR PORTER ON NOVEMBER 1 INFORMED PRIME MINISTER CHUNG OF THE GIST OF THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER.

FIRST OF ALL, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY RESPECTS TO YOU FOR YOUR UNTIRING EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT AN HONORABLE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE CONFLICT AND TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND SECURITY OF ASIA AND OF THE ENTIRE WORLD.

AS YOU MAY PROBABLY HAVE RECEIVED A REPORT ON MY CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR PORTER, WHEN HE CAME TO ME AND EXPLAINED IN DETAIL ON THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 15 ABOUT YOUR PLAN TO HALT THE BOMBING AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM, I REMARKED THAT WE HAD TO REMAIN EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS SINCE WE WERE DEALING WITH THE COMMUNISTS, AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR RESUMING THE BOMBING IN CASE THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, WITHOUT TAKING CORRESPONDING RECIPROCAL ACTIONS, ABUSES THE BOMBING HALT TO THEIR MILITARY ADVANTAGE. AT THE SAME TIME, I TOLD THE

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5
NLJ-0198-42-1-2
By 441x NARJ. Date 12-06-2017

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AMBASSADOR THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE ALLOW THE SO-CALLED NLF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AS A SEPARATE ENTITY AS DISTINCT FROM NORTH VIETNAM. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE SO-CALLED NLF AT THE CONFERENCE EVEN AS A PART OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION WAS QUITE DISTASTEFUL.

WITH THESE COMMENTS, I TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT NOW THAT I WAS TOLD PRESIDENT THIEU HAD ALREADY AGREED TO IT, I DID NOT OPPOSE YOUR EXCELLENCY'S PLAN FOR THE BOMBING HALT.

AS FULLY EXPLAINED IN YOUR LETTER, IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS WERE BEING MADE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CONCERNING THE PLAN FOR THE BOMBING HALT AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY SUCH HALT AND THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAD REACHED FULL AGREEMENT ON SUCH PROBLEMS WHILE IT WAS SO EXPECTED. SINCE AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON YOUR DECISION OF BOMBING HALT WAS MADE AT 10 A.M. NOVEMBER 1 (SEOUL TIME), HOWEVER, THE REPORT FROM MY AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON AND THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM SO FAR IMPRESSED US THAT THERE STILL REMAINED CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

I WISH TO RECALL THAT WE, THE LEADERS OF THE SEVEN NATIONS CONTRIBUTING TROOPS TO VIETNAM, MET IN MANILA IN OCTOBER 1966, RENEWED OUR RESOLVE TO CONTINUE TO COMBINE OUR FORCES IN FIRM UNITY UNTIL THE DAY WHEN OUR COMMON GOAL OF BRINGING ABOUT AN HONORABLE PEACE IN THAT COUNTRY SHALL HAVE BEEN ATTAINED. IN VIEW OF THIS SPIRIT OF THE MANILA SUMMIT CONFERENCE, IT IS TO BE REGRETTED THAT THE DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM SHOULD APPEAR TO BE COMING INTO THE OPEN, ALTHOUGH I DO NOT KNOW FOR SURE HOW THESE REPORTS ON THE DIFFERENCES CAME ABOUT.

UNDOUBTEDLY, DIFFICULT AND ONEROUS TASKS LIE AHEAD OF US. I BELIEVE THAT THE UNITY AMONG THE FREE NATIONS TAKING PART IN THE VIETNAMESE WAR, THE HARMONY AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IN PARTICULAR, ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ATTAINING OUR COMMON GOAL OF BRINGING ABOUT THE GENUINE FREEDOM AND SECURE AND LASTING PEACE IN VIETNAM TO WHICH WE ARE ALL COMMITTED. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WILL BE RESOLVED IN A MOST AMICABLE MANNER AT AN EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

PARTICULARLY, IN VIEW OF THE SPIRIT OF THE MANILA SUMMIT SHOULD BE SETTLED IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THE WISHES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARE UPHOLD AND RESPECTED, IT IS CONSIDERED MOST URGENT TO iron OUT THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, THUS BRINGING ABOUT AN ACCORD OF OPINION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

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I AM NOT FULLY INFORMED OF WHAT THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE OF SUCH DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IS. HOWEVER, SINCE THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE BOMBING HALT AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS PRIMARILY HAS DIRECT BEARING ON THE INTERESTS AND SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS EXPECTED TO MAKE CLEAR ITS POSITION ON THE QUESTIONS WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WORRY ABOUT AND TO GIVE ASSURANCES TO LET THEM BE RELIEVED OF SUCH WORRIES.

I AM OF THE VIEW THAT SUCH DIFFERENCES OF OPINION COULD THUS BEST BE RESOLVED.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE QUESTION OF THE SO-CALLED NLF.

AS POINTED OUT BY YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE SO-CALLED NLF IS NOTHING BUT AN INSTRUMENT OF NORTH VIETNAM BENT UPON AGGRESSION, AND THERE IS NO REASON WHATSOEVER TO VIEW THE SO-CALLED NLF AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. IF THE ALLIED NATIONS SHOULD ALLOW THE SO-CALLED NLF TO COME TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE WITHOUT FIRST MAKING THIS POINT EMPHATICALLY CLEAR, THE SO-CALLED NLF WOULD CERTAINLY SEEK TO ACT AS A SEPARATE ENTITY EVENTUALLY ALTHOUGH IT MAY ASSUME A RATHER AMBIGUOUS ATTITUDE AT FIRST, THUS PROMOTING THEIR SCHEME TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT OF THEIR OWN DESIGN AS A FIRST STEP IN WHAT THEY CALL THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE CONFLICT. CONSEQUENTLY, WE WOULD BE PLACED AT A GREAT DISADVANTAGE, CONTRARY TO OUR OWN WISHES.

SHOULD WE, DRIVEN BY THE PEACE SLOGAN SIMPLY ADVOCATED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE POSITION, PURSUE A MAKESHIFT PEACE HASTILY, IT WOULD ONLY HELP NORTH VIETNAM RESUME THEIR AGGRESSION THEREBY BRINGING ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF ENDANGERING THE SECURE DURABLE PEACE. BOTH OF US SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SUCH A CASE.

REAFFIRMING OUR COMMON RESOLVE TO MAKE CONTINUOUS EFFORTS WITH A COURAGE AND A STEADFASTNESS AND A PERSEVERENCE, AS WAS STATED BY YOUR EXCELLENCY, I WISH YOU ALL THE SUCCESS IN YOUR EFFORTS TOWARD PEACE.

SINCERELY YOURS, /S/ PARK CHUNG HEE PRESIDENT

UNQUOTE

JTG 051644Z NOV 68

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PRESERVATION COPY

72

ACTION

Tuesday, November 5, 1968

Pres file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Letter to You from Prime Minister Sato on Bombing Halt, and Suggested Reply

At Tab A is a letter to you of November 2 from Prime Minister Sato, warmly praising your decision to halt the bombing of North Vietnam.

At Tab B is a suggested reply, expressing appreciation for Sato's support and the importance of his continued support in the difficult days ahead.

I recommend that you sign the suggested reply.

W. W. Rostow

Attachments

AJenkins:mm

72a

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I deeply appreciated the warm words of support in your letter of November 2 for my decision to halt the bombing of North Viet-Nam. I am convinced that this action can lead to progress toward an honorable peace in Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia. This goal of peace remains my firm resolve.

As we look ahead, we must expect, however, very hard negotiating and quite possibly very hard fighting. Your continued support will be particularly important in sustaining us through these difficult days ahead and in convincing North Viet-Nam to move swiftly to peace through prompt and productive negotiations.

With my best personal wishes,

Sincerely,

His Excellency
Eisaku Sato
Prime Minister of Japan
Tokyo

LBJ:State:AJenkins:mm:11/5/68

726

Tokyo
November 2, 1968

Dear Mr. President:

The announcement you have just made to cease all air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam is a result of one of the hardest decisions that a statesman would ever have to face.

On behalf of the people and Government of Japan, I wish to express the hope that your new initiative will lead to an honorable and just peace in this part of the world.

I am moved with admiration at your resolve to dedicate the remaining months in the office of the President of the United States to the cause of peace and national self-determination. The magnificent spirit you display will long be remembered by the people of Asia.

Please accept, Mr. President, my best wishes for your continued success and good health in the exercise of your awesome responsibilities in the present day world.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NLJ 96-91
By DP/SP, NARA, Date 9-18-97

Sincerely

Eisaku Sato
Prime Minister of Japan

~~SECRET~~

73

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1968 NOV 5 17 41 08

Profile NOV 5 1968

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM
NOV 5 12:58

FROM: WALT ROSTOW
TO : THE PRESIDENT
CITE: CAP92696

~~SECRET~~ HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 5, 1968

HEREWITH CY'S FRUSTRATING MEETING THIS MORNING IN PARIS ON PROCEDURES.

1. VANCE HAD A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH LAU ON PROCEDURES THIS MORNING IN PARIS
2. LAU SAID THAT THUY AND MRS. BINH WERE PREPARED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE NEW WIDER DISCUSSIONS TOMORROW, WHETHER OR NOT THE GVN WAS REPRESENTED.
3. VANCE REPLIED THAT THE GVN WOULD NOT BE REPRESENTED IN PARIS TOMORROW AND THAT WE WOULD LET THE DRV KNOW WHEN OUR SIDE WAS PREPARED FOR THE FIRST MEETING WITH WIDER PARTICIPATION. WE COULD NOT AGREE TO MEET IN THE NEW FORMAT UNTIL THERE WERE AGREED PROCEDURES FOR GOING FORWARD. VANCE PROPOSED A BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE DRV TOMORROW FOR FURTHER PROCEDURAL DISCUSSIONS, AND HE FURTHER PROPOSED THAT THE FACT OF TODAY'S MEETING AND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS BE MADE KNOWN PUBLICLY WITHOUT DISCLOSURE OF CONTENT.
4. LAU REJECTED A PROPOSAL FOR A US/DRV MEETING TOMORROW AND REPEATED HIS VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE A THREE DELEGATION MEETING ON THE 6TH. THERE WAS A PROLONGED ARGUMENT ABOUT THE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE US AND THE DRV ON THE "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" APPROACH AND THE DRV "FOUR DELEGATION" APPROACH. LAU SAID NO MATTER WHAT WE CALLED IT THERE WOULD BE REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUR DIFFERENT PARTIES PRESENT IN THE NEW PHASE OF THE TALKS AND THEIR SIDE WOULD BE ORGANIZED AS TWO SEPARATE DELEGATIONS. ON SPECIFIC POINTS OF PROCEDURE THE FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED.
 - (A) THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THE FIRST MEETING WITH WIDER PARTICIPATION WOULD DISCUSS RULES OF PROCEDURE.

PRESERVATION

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 712991-500
By rs/imp, NARA, Date 3-26-83

~~SECRET~~

- (B) ON THE ORDER OF SPEAKING THE TWO SIDES WILL ALTERNATE AND NEITHER SIDE PLACED IMPORTANCE ON WHO SPEAKS FIRST.
- (C) THE PRESENT LANGUAGE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES WILL CONTINUE IN THE NEXT STAGE.
- (D) ON PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS THE US PROPOSED CONTINUATION OF THE TALKS IN THE SAME ROOM WITH THE SAME NUMBER (9 OR 10) ON EACH SIDE AND THE ACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS TO BE WORKED OUT THROUGH THE FRENCH. THE DRV AGREED TO WORK THROUGH THE FRENCH BUT PREFERRED A LARGER ROOM AND 12 ON THEIR SIDE "BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE TWO DELEGATIONS".
- (E) THERE WAS SHARP DISAGREEMENT ON PRESS COVERAGE AT THE FIRST BROADER MEETING.

5. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING VANCE AGAIN SUGGESTED MEETING TOMORROW ON A BILATERAL BASIS TO DISCUSS PROCEDURES FOR THE FIRST WIDER MEETING. LAU WOULD NOT AGREE BUT TOOK NOTE OF VANCE'S PROPOSAL AND IT WAS LEFT THAT IF EITHER SIDE HAD SOMETHING NEW TO DISCUSS IT WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH THE OTHER.

6. COMMENT

VANCE AND HARRIMAN INTEND TO MAKE PUBLIC THE FACT OF TODAY'S MEETING. THEY DO NOT EXPECT THE DRV TO AGREE TO A BILATERAL MEETING TOMORROW, BUT HARRIMAN AND VANCE ARE THINKING OF PROPOSING PROCEDURAL POINTS TO THE DRV, SUCH AS AGREEING AD REFERENDUM ON 12 TO A SIDE, WHICH MIGHT PERMIT THE HOLDING OF A BILATERAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 6.

DTG: 051639Z NOVEMBER 1968

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines
By , NARA, Date 2-19-98

1968 NOV 5 05 22

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OO WTE10
DE WTE 4235

FROM WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM (WOTRING)
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82689

Pres file

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MR. ROSTOW THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO READ THE FOLLOWING
MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER.

SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATION IN SAIGON

1. A PARADE OF VIETNAMESE (PERHAPS AS MANY AS 2,000) PASSED AMERICAN EMBASSY BETWEEN APPROX 9:15 AND 9:30 AM THIS MORNING, NOVEMBER 5, ON WAY TO THONG NHUT THEATER. MOST WERE RIDING IN TRI-LAMBRETTAS, AND PARADE WAS ORDERLY.
2. PARADERS CARRIED VN FLAGS, AND BANNERS WITH INSCRIPTIONS WHICH INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING: "DETERMINED TO DEFEND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY", "CONDEMN DECISION OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON", "OPPOSE EVERY FORM OF COALLITION WITH COMMUNISTS", AND "TAN BINH HAMLET, HO NAI VILLAGE".
3. WE HAVE REPORTS FROM BIEN HOA THAT PEOPLE (PERHAPS AS MANY AS 10,000) WILL COME IN TO SAIGON FROM GIA DINK/BIEN HOA/HO NAI THIS MORNING FOR A MASS MEETING AND PERHAPS DEMONSTRATIONS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, THIS MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT NOON AT THE CATHEDRAL (TWO BLOCKS FROM EMBASSY), AND WILL BE ADDRESSED BY PRESIDENT THIEU.
4. DIRECTOR GENERAL NATIONAL POLICE CO. TRAN VAN HAI TOLD MISSION CONTACT HE DOES NOT EXPECT VIOLENCE, AND INTENDS TO PREVENT IT.
5. EMBOFF MET SENATOR NGUYEN GIA HIEN OUTSIDE THONG NHUT THEATER BEFORE MEETING STARTED, AND HIEN SAID NO DEMONSTRATIONS ARE PLANNED. HOWEVER, SEVERAL GSF CADRE ON SCENE COMMENTED SEPARATELY THAT ONCE MEETING IS OVER, THERE COULD BE A SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATION.

BUNKER

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DTG: 050452Z NOV 68

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1968 NOV 5 00 57

~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

EEA696
JO WTE18
DE WIE 4224

FROM: WALT ROSTOW
TO : THE PRESIDENT
CITE: CAP82680

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MLG 91-498
By g/jw, NARA, Date 3-26-93

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE EYES ONLY

THIS COMPLETES THE RECORD YOU REQUESTED:

INDICATIONS OF GVN RESERVATIONS OR DISSENT TO US COURSE OF ACTION

1. BUNKER/THIEU MEETING OCTOBER 16 (SAIGON 40379)

...THIEU SAID THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE NLF APPEARING WITH THEIR FLAG, BEING TREATED AS A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT OF ENTITY FROM HANOI, SEATING ARRANGEMENTS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT HANOI AND THE U.S. WERE OPPOSITES, THAT THE NLF AND SAIGON WERE OPPOSITES, ETC. I SAID WE WERE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE EFFORTS WHICH HANOI AND THE NLF WILL MAKE TO ESTABLISH THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE NLF. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE FELT THE ONLY FORMULA WAS "OUR SIDE, YOUR SIDE." AS FOR THE TACTICS WHICH HANOI AND NLF MIGHT USE TO FURTHER THEIR EFFORTS, I THOUGHT THE BEST THING WAS TO LEAVE THIS TO OUR TWO DELEGATIONS TO HANDLE BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE CONSCIOUS OF THE PROBLEMS...

2. HERZ/THANH MEETING OCTOBER 18 (SAIGON 40627)

FOREIGN MINISTER THANH CALLED IN POLITICAL COUNSELOR OCTOBER 18 TO INFORM HIM THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAS SENT INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADORS DIEM IN WASHINGTON AND LAM IN PARIS TO "REAFFIRM" THAT IF THE NLF PARTICIPATES IN PARIS NEGOTIATIONS "AS A SEPARATE ENTITY" THE GVN WILL NOT PARTICIPATE. THE PRESIDENT, THANH SAID, CONSIDERS THAT PARTICIPATION OF THE GVN IN NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BRING "NO ADVANTAGE" UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES...

...THANH THEREUPON SAID THE GVN UNDERSTANDS THAT THE OTHER SIDE WILL "PRETEND" THAT THE NLF IS A SEPARATE ENTITY BUT THEY WANT ASSURANCES THAT THE US WILL NOT TREAT THEM AS SUCH. HE POINTED TO THE PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH ON THE HONOLULU COMMUNIQUE WHICH HAD SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD "INVOLVE DIRECTLY NORTH VIET NAM AND SOUTH VIET NAM..."

3. BERGER CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRESIDENT KY (SAIGON 40702)

...BERGER THEN REFERRED TO THE ATTEMPTS HERE TO REOPEN THE DISCUSSION OF NLF PARTICIPATION WHICH WE THOUGHT HAD BEEN SETTLED IN OUR JOINT NEGOTIATIONS MEETING ON THE BASIS OF OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA. BERGER QUOTED THE VICE PRESIDENT'S OWN REMARKS AT THE SIXTH JOINT MEETING THAT THE GVN OPPOSED THE NLF PARTICIPATION IN PRINCIPLE, BUT AS REALISTS THEY HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE NLF WOULD ATTEND THE MEETINGS.

THE VICE PRESIDENT ATTEMPTED TO ARGUE THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO ATTEND THE MEETING IF THE NLF APPEARED WITH FLAGS OR OTHERWISE SEEMED TO INDICATE THEY WERE A FULL-FLEDGED MEMBER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. BERGER SAID WE WERE DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF THE TACTICS THAT HANOI AND THE NLF MIGHT USE TO ENHANCE ITS STATUS. THERE WERE WAYS OF HANDLING SOME OF THESE, FOR EXAMPLE WE DID NOT HAVE TO AGREE TO HAVE FLAGS, NAME PLATES, AND SO ON. THESE MATTERS COULD BE TAKEN CARE OF BY OUR DELEGATES IN PARIS...

...KY THEN RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE "OTHER CONDITIONS", ASKING WHAT WE WOULD DO IF THE DMZ WERE VIOLATED AFTER BOMBING STOPPED, OR THE CITIES ATTACKED. BERGER SAID OUR POSITION WAS VERY CLEAR: THE NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT GO ON IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN. WE ARE NOT MAKING THESE CONDITIONS BUT HANOI WAS INFORMED AND UNDERSTANDS WHAT OUR POSITION WILL BE.

KY SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD NOT BE SATISFACTORY TO MANY OF THE CRITICS. BERGER SAID, "IF IT IS SATISFACTORY TO YOU, MR. VICE PRESIDENT, AND TO PRESIDENT THIEU, IT WILL BE SATISFACTORY TO EVERYONE ELSE. ARE YOU SATISFIED? IF YOU AND THE PRESIDENT ARE UNITED, THAT IS ALL THAT MATTERS HERE."

KY THEN SAID THAT IS THE TROUBLE, "WE ARE NOT UNITED", AND WENT OFF INTO A DISCOURSE ABOUT THIEU'S UNWILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH HIM.

BERGER LED THE VICE PRESIDENT BACK TO THE MAIN SUBJECT, AS TO WHETHER KY WAS GOING TO SEE THIEU IN SUPPORT OF WHAT WE PROPOSED. THE VICE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS GOING TO SEE THIEU, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT PROMISE US THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT OUR POSITION.

BERGER SAID HE REGRETTED THIS VERY MUCH, AND ASKED IF THIS IS WHAT KY WISHED HIM TO REPORT BACK TO AMB BUNKER. KY THEN SAID, "NO, BUT YOU CAN SAY THAT I WILL TALK TO THIEU AND I WILL SEE IF WE CAN COME TO A UNDERSTANDING, BUT I DO NOT PROMISE THAT WE CAN..."

4. OCTOBER 20 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU.

...THIEU LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, MAKING NOTES. HE THEN REPLIED AS FOLLOWS, "WE ARE NOT AGAINST A BOMBING HALT. A YEAR AGO IN MY SPEECH TO THE LEGISLATURE I MADE MANY CONDITIONS, BUT I HAVE SINCE REALIZED THEY CANNOT BE FULFILLED, AND IT IS IMPRACTICAL FOR US TO ASK TOO MUCH. IN MY OCTOBER 7 SPEECH TO THE LEGISLATURE I HAVE DEESCALATED OUR CONDITIONS. BUT THE THREE CONDITIONS IN THE PROPOSAL

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ARE NOT ENOUGH." HE SAID WHEN HE TOLD THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE SPEAKERS OF THE TWO HOUSES OF THE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WERE IN TRAIN, HE FOUND THEY DID NOT REGARD GVN PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS AS A VICTORY. IT WAS THEIR RIGHT. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID THE NSC MEMBERS "ALL AGREED AND ACCEPTED THE PRESENCE OF NLF MEMBERS AT THE TALKS. WHAT THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT IS THE NLF PRESENCE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. THAT IS THE PROBLEM."

...THIEU THEN WENT ON: "AFTER THE NSC MEETING WORD WENT OUT THAT IF I AND THE PRIME MINISTER ACCEPTED THESE TERMS, THAT IS TO GO INTO A MEETING WITHOUT THE NLF STATUS CLARIFIED, THERE COULD BE A VIOLENT REACTION HERE. THERE WERE RUMORS OF DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, RUMORS THAT KY HAD ORDERED PILOTS TO BOMB THE PALACE IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN, RUMORS OF ASSASSINATION, AND SO ON. WE HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IF THE NLF ARE MEMBERS OF THE HANOI DELEGATION, AND THAT IS UNDERSTOOD. WE KNOW THAT OUR FAILURE TO ATTEND THE MEETING, OR IF WE QUIT THE MEETING AFTER WE ARRIVE, ON THIS ISSUE, WILL INVITE THE ANTI-PATHY OF THE U.S., THE WHOLE WORLD, THE POPE AND EVERYONE. THEREFORE IT IS BETTER TO WORK THIS OUT IN ADVANCE."

...THIEU ENDED BY SAYING, "IT IS EASY FOR YOU, THE UNITED STATES, A POWERFUL COUNTRY, TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NLF ON AN UNDEFINED BASIS, BUT IT IS NOT EASY FOR US AS A SMALLER COUNTRY. I DO NOT THINK I AM STRONG ENOUGH TO MOVE; THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE HERE WITH TOO MANY AMBITIONS WHO WOULD USE THIS AS A PRETEXT TO MAKE TROUBLE. I AM A SOLDIER AND I AM PREPARED FOR WHATEVER HAPPENS, BUT I MUST RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUS DISTURBANCES AND INSTABILITY THAT COULD FOLLOW IF THIS SHOULD BECOME AN ISSUE IN THIS COUNTRY. MOREOVER, THERE IS A FEAR THAT YOU WILL ABANDON US, AS THE FRENCH DID IN 1954."

5. BUNKER'S DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" FORMULA, OCTOBER 21 (SAIGON 48768).

IN PRESENTING HIS PAPER (SAIGON 48788) ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT, THANH SAID "WE THINK IT IS NECESSARY TO ARRIVE AT A PREVIOUS AGREEMENT WITH NORTH VIET-NAM BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING AFTER A DECISION TO STOP THE BOMBING." HE SAID THAT WHILE THESE QUESTIONS INVOLVE PROCEDURE, THE GVN PLACES IMPORTANCE UPON THEM "BECAUSE THEY DERIVE FROM A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE, THAT NEITHER WE NOR THE USG HAVE RECOGNIZED THE NLF AS A GOVERNMENT OR AS A DE FACTO AUTHORITY, NOR EVEN AS DISTINCT POLITICAL ENTITY." HE POINTED OUT THAT GOVERNOR HARRIMAN HAD SAID THAT WE DON'T EVEN CONSIDER THEM TO BE A POLITICAL PARTY. HE THEN SET FORTH THE POSITIONS ORALLY, SUBSTANTIALLY ALONG THE LINE OF THE TEXT THAT WE HAVE TRANSMITTED.

...THANH REPLIED THAT IN THE GVN VIEWS THESE WERE NOT MATTERS OF PROCEDURE BUT GO TO THE HEART OF WHAT THE WAR IS ABOUT. THE GVN HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THE NLF IS

A WEAPON OF THE DRV, AND IF IT CONCEDES ANYTHING ON THAT ISSUE IT WOULD ENABLE THE OTHER SIDE TO CLAIM THAT THIS IS NOT AN INTERNATIONAL WAR BUT AN INTERNAL WAR IN WHICH THE GVN DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO CALL FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. THE DRV POSITION THAT THIS IS A CIVIL WAR IS THE BASIS ON WHICH THEY DENOUNCE BOTH ALLIED "INTERVENTION" AND THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH. TO CONCEDE A SEPARATE EXISTENCE TO THE NLF WOULD THUS REMOVE THE BASIS FOR AN ALLIED PRESENCE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

...THANH SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT IF HANOI COME THROUGH WITH ACCEPTANCE OF OUR CONDITIONS, THE BOMBING MIGHT BE STOPPED AND SOME SECRET SESSIONS HELD WITH THE OTHER SIDE TO IRON OUT THE PROCEDURAL POINTS BEFORE A REGULAR SESSION IS HELD. IN OTHER WORDS, HE PERSONALLY DID NOT SEE THAT THE QUESTIONS THAT HE HAD RAISED NEED BE AN OBSTACLE TO A BOMBING CESSATION. THANH SAID "WE DO NOT QUESTION THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA, BUT OUR UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN THAT ON OUR SIDE THERE WOULD BE TWO DELEGATIONS AND ON THE OTHER SIDE ONLY ONE." HE CLAIMED THAT AT OUR VARIOUS CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WITH THIEU IT HAD NEVER BEEN IMPLIED THAT THE OTHER SIDE MIGHT CLAIM TO BE MORE THAT ONE DELEGATION. I SAID OUR RECORDS OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS ARE VERY CLEAR. WE NEVER FOR A MOMENT CONTEMPLATED THAT THERE WOULD BE TWO DELEGATIONS ON ONE SIDE AND ONLY ONE ON THE OTHER. THE ESSENCE OF THE FORMULA IS THAT EACH SIDE DECIDES HOW IT WILL ORGANIZE ITSELF AND WE DON'T CARE WHOM HANOI BRINGS ALONG.

THANH SAID "BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT ARE VERY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT MAY HAPPEN HERE IF THE NLF IS GIVEN THE APPEARANCE OF A SEPARATE ENTITY. THERE MAY BE DEMONSTRATIONS OF POLITICAL GROUPS, THE MORALE OF OUR TROOPS WOULD SUFFER, ETC. WE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN THIS MATTER, IN DEVISING SOME PROCEDURES TO AVOID GIVING THE NLF SEPARATE STATUS." I SAID THE GVN COULD MAKE A STRONG AND POSITIVE PRONOUNCEMENT REJECTING ANY SUCH STATUS. AS FOR DISORDERS, I SAID MAYBE I HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE STRENGTH OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT THAN MR. THANH HAS. ONLY IF IT ACTS APPREHENSIVELY WILL IT BECOME WEAK. IF IT ACTS CONFIDENTLY, EVERYONE WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THE ENEMY IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS BEEN FORCED TO MAKE IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS.

6. BUNKER'S TALK WITH PRESIDENT THIEU OCTOBER 22 (SAIGON 40884)

HERZ TALKED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON ON PROCEDURAL DETAILS (SEE SEPTEL), AND BERGER AND I TALKED FOR AN HOUR WITH THIEU. I THINK I AM SAFE IN SAYING THAT WE ARE MAKING GOOD PROGRESS GETTING RID OF THE UNDERBRUSH, AND DEFINING AND NARROWING THE ISSUE WHICH WORRIES THEM.

THIEU SENT ME MESSAGE THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WHEN HE AGREED TO THE PROPOSED JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR A CESSATION, "IT WAS ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE NLF WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY...."

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...THIEU THEN SAID THAT WHAT HE WOULD LIKE IN ADVANCE OF THE TALKS IS AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN U.S. AND HANOI THAT HANOI WILL TALK SERIOUSLY TO THE GVN. IF THAT ASSURANCE WAS OBTAINED HE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE NLF PRESENCE. HAS HANOI ACCEPTED TO TALK TO SAIGON, HE ASKED REPEATEDLY....

7. BUNKER MEETING WITH THIEU AND KY OCTOBER 23; FULL ACCOUNT (SAIGON 41044)

...THIEU SAID THE GVN HAS A MAJOR PROBLEM AND WISHES TO WORK WITH U.S. IN TRYING TO SOLVE IT. FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW THE BOMBING HALT IS NOT A VERY IMPORTANT MATTER. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS TO CONVINCE THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO AN END TO THE WAR AND THAT HANOI WILL BE OBLIGED TO TALK WITH SAIGON. HIS PRINCIPAL WORRY, THIEU SAID, IS THAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND IF THE GVN SITS DOWN AT THE SAME TABLE WITH THE NLF. THEY WOULD REACT WITH A WAVE OF FEAR AND DESPAIR WHICH COULD RESULT IN MASS DESERTIONS FROM THE RF AND PF, A PRECIPITOUS DROP IN THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM, AND THE STALLING OF THE PACIFICATION OFFENSIVE, AND IN THE CITIES: PANIC SALES, COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA, DEMONSTRATIONS AND COUNTER-DEMONSTRATIONS BY CATHOLICS AND THE BUDDHISTS, AND PERHAPS MUTINY (NOT A COUP) AMONG SOME OF THE ARMED FORCES. AT ANY RATE, THE MORALE OF THE PEOPLE WOULD SUFFER A GRAVE BLOW....

...THIEU THEN DEVELOPED THE IDEAS THAT THE U.S. SHOULD OBTAIN FROM THE DRV SOME UNDERTAKING THAT HANOI WAS "SINCERE" IN WISHING TO TALK WITH SAIGON; THAT THERE MUST ALSO BE ASSURANCES THAT HANOI WOULD RESORT TO NO TRICKS OR PROPAGANDA OR JOCKEYING TO PUT THE NLF IN SOME SPECIAL POSITION; AND, FINALLY, THAT WE MUST WORK OUT THE PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS SO THAT THE OTHER SIDE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CLAIM THAT WE WERE CONFERRING SOME IMPROVED STATUS ON THE NLF....

KY THEREUPON SAID THE GVN WAS NOT UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THE RISK OF GOING INTO NEGOTIATIONS, ALL THEY WERE ASKING WAS SOME HELP IN EXPLAINING TO THEIR OWN PEOPLE THAT THEY WERE NOT BEING FORCED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE NLF. I SAID, "IT IS YOUR LEADERSHIP, MR. VICE PRESIDENT, THAT CAN SWING YOUR PEOPLE." KY SAID THE LEADERSHIP IS THERE BUT THEY WERE UP AGAINST A PROBLEM OF DEEP PUBLIC SUSPICION. I REFERRED TO THE JOINT STATEMENT ON WHICH WE HAD AGREED AND WHICH WOULD SHOW WHY WE WERE STOPPING THE BOMBING AND SITTING DOWN WITH THE OTHER SIDE. KY THEN SAID IT MIGHT BE SUFFICIENT TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT IF THE GVN SAID "WE ARE GOING TO PARIS TO TALK WITH HANOI", THE DRV WOULD AT LEAST NOT CONTRADICT THEM AND CLAIM THAT THE GVN WAS BEING FORCED TO GO TO PARIS TO TALK WITH THE NLF.

KY FINALLY SAID THE GVN WAS REALLY ASKING US TO HELP THEM "SAVE FACE". WE SAID IT IS HANOI AND THE NLF WHOSE FACE NEEDS SAVING, NOT THE GVN WHICH WILL BE LEADING FROM STRENGTH....

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...THIEU RECAPITULATED THE THREE POINTS (PARAGRAPH 4. ABOVE, AND PARAGRAPH 2 REFTEL), ADDING "WE HAVE TO BE SURE THAT WE GET THOSE THINGS BEFORE WE CAN GO INTO THE CONFERENCE." I REPLIED ALONG THE LINES SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 3 REFTEL. THIEU SAID THEY NEEDED AGREEMENT WITH HANOI ON THE PROCEDURAL MATTERS BEFORE THEY COULD GO INTO TALKS, BUT TOWARD THE END OF THE DISCUSSION HE WAS LESS CATEGORICAL ABOUT THIS THAN BEFORE....

8. BERGER/THANH MEETING OCTOBER 24 (SAIGON 41093)

BERGER AND HERZ MET WITH THANH THIS MORNING AND WENT OVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS. THE DISCUSSION QUICKLY DISPOSED OF FLAGS AND NAME PLATES, NAME FOR THE CONFERENCE, ORDER OF ENTRANCE, CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DELEGATION, OPENING STATEMENT, AND REFERENCES TO THE OTHER SIDE. ALTHOUGH WE HAD MADE CLEAR THAT IDEAS ADVANCED BY U.S. (SAIGON 40885) HAD BEEN TENTATIVE, AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION, WE DO HAVE AN AGREEMENT AD REFERENDUM ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED IN PARIS 82740. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME REMAINING PROBLEMS.

ALTHOUGH IT IS MORE THAN A PROCEDURAL MATTER, THE FOMMIL REITERATED THAT THE GVN EXPECTS U.S. TO "OBTAIN THAT NORTH VIETNAM WILL MAKE IT KNOWN THAT IT ACCEPTS TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, OR AT LEAST NOT TO DENY OUR ASSERTION TO THAT EFFECT." WE REFERRED TO THE AGREED JOINT STATEMENT IN WHICH THE TWO PRESIDENTS WOULD SAY THAT "THEY HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT NORTH VIETNAM INTENDS SERIOUSLY TO JOIN THEM IN DEESCALATING THE WAR AND IN ENTERING INTO SERIOUS TALKS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT."

...ONE POSSIBLE STICKING POINT WAS THAT THANH WISHED IT TO BE UNDERSTOOD THE "QUESTION OF INTERNAL POLITICS OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CANNOT BE RAISED BY EITHER SIDE AT THE CONFERENCE." WE EXPLAINED THAT OUR POSITION HAS BEEN ALL ALONG THAT EACH SIDE MUST BE FREE TO BRING UP ANYTHING IT LIKES. THANH SAID THE GVN WOULD NOT BRING UP INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF NORTH VIETNAM AND WOULD CATEGORICALLY REFUSE TO DISCUSS ITS OWN INTERNAL MATTERS AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE....

...FINALLY, THANH WANTED ASSURANCES THAT ANY AGREEMENT COMING OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT BE SIGNED BY THE NLF....

9. BUNKER MEETING WITH THIEU AND KY AGAIN MORNING OCTOBER 25 (SAIGON 41180)

WE MET WITH THIEU AND KY AGAIN MORNING OCTOBER 25, WITH SAME PARTICIPANTS AS AT LAST MEETING, TO DISCUSS THE WAYS IN WHICH WE ARE MEETING THE PROBLEMS THAT HAD BEEN RAISED AT OUR LAST MEETING. I EXPLAINED THAT OUR THREE-POINT MEMORANDUM (BASED ON REF A) IS CLEAR AND EXPLICIT AND SHOULD RESOLVE ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THERE BEING SERIOUS TALKS BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE DRVN, ABOUT OUR NOT PUTTING UP

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WITH TRICKS AT THE CONFERENCE, AND ABOUT NON-RECOGNITION OF THE NLF. I MENTIONED THAT IN ADDITION PRESIDENT JOHNSON CONTEMPLATES MAKING A STATEMENT ON THE LATTER SUBJECT. I ALSO NOTED THAT AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING WITH THANH, A MEETING OF MINDS WAS ACHIEVED ON MOST PROCEDURAL MATTERS.

THIEU WENT OVER THE SAME ARGUMENTS HE HAD MADE AT THE LAST MEETING (REF C), STILL LOOKING FOR SOME PUBLIC SIGN FROM HANOI THAT THEY WOULD SHOW GOOD WILL AND NEGOTIATE FAIRLY AND DIRECTLY WITH THE GVN. THEN HE CAME TO HIS MAIN POINT. THE VICE PRESIDENT, HE SAID, HAD PROPOSED AN ADDITION TO THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH WOULD MAKE IT CLEARER THAT THE NLF WOULD NOT BE A SEPARATE ENTITY. KY READ THE ADDITION TO US, WHICH WOULD READ "FOLLOWING THE CESSATION OF BOMBING, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NORTH VIET-NAM WILL OPEN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH A VIEW TO SECURING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT." THIS, KY SAID, WOULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE PRESENT LAST PARAGRAPH.

I POINTED THAT THE SAME IDEA IS CONTAINED IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE AGREED JOINT STATEMENT, AND I ASSUMED THAT THE GVN DIDN'T HAVE IN MIND IGNORING THE ROLE THE U.S. WOULD PLAY IN NEGOTIATIONS. OUT OF THE ENSUING DISCUSSION CAME THE FIRST PROPOSAL, WHICH I AGREED TO TRANSMIT TO WASHINGTON WITH MY ENDORSEMENT, THAT IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT WE INSERT THE WORDS "AND DIRECT" SO THAT, WITH SLIGHT GRAMMATICAL ADJUSTMENT, THE CLAUSE WOULD READ "...BELIEVE THAT NORTH VIET-NAM INTENDS SERIOUSLY TO JOIN THEM IN DEESCALATING THE WAR AND TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS AND DIRECT TALKS WITH..." I BELIEVE THIS MINOR AMENDMENT SHOULD CAUSE US NO DIFFICULTY.

THEN, HOWEVER, THE GVN SIDE PROPOSED A SUBSTITUTE LAST PARAGRAPH WHICH MIGHT CAUSE US GREAT DIFFICULTY. THEY PROPOSED SAYING: "THE FIRST MEETING OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM AND THE UNITED STATES WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTH VIET-NAM WILL BE CONVENED IN PARIS AT (TIME AND DATE)." I SAID THIS WOULD BE MOST UNWISE. INEVITABLY WE WOULD BE ASKED RIGHT AWAY IF THE NLF WOULD BE THERE, AND WE WOULD HAVE TO SAY YES. THE GVN WAS TRYING TO ESTABLISH THE CONFERENCE AS A THREE-POWER CONFERENCE, THE DRVN IS TRYING TO ESTABLISH IT AS A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE, WHEREAS THE WHOLE IDEA OF THE "OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE" FORMULA IS TO LET EACH SIDE ORGANIZE ITSELF AS IT LIKES. OUR OWN POSITION ON THE NLF WOULD BE MADE CLEAR.

AT THIS POINT I THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO READ TO THIEU AND KY THE PROPOSED TEXT OF WHAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT SAY ABOUT OUR NON-RECOGNITION OF THE NLF (PARA 5 STATE 259838 AS AMENDED IN SAIGON 40973). I SAID BOTH OF US WOULD THUS BE MAKING OUR POSITION CLEAR, BUT CALLING ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER IN THE JOINT STATEMENT WOULD BE AGAINST OUR INTEREST. KY COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT IF WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE THE POINT ABOUT NON-RECOGNITION SEPARATELY, WHY SHOULDN'T

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WE DO SO JOINTLY? (THE IMPLICATION HERE AS PERHAPS THAT THE PARAGRAPH IN QUESTION, INSTEAD OF BEING IN OUR OWN PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT, SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE JOINT STATEMENT.) THIEU SAID INCLUSION OF SUCH LANGUAGE IN THE JOINT STATEMENT WOULD GO A LONG WAY TO CALM POPULAR FEARS THAT THE GVN WOULD BE SENDING A DELEGATION TO PARIS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE NLF. I SAID THE GVN SHOULD TRUST US AS THEY HAVE TRUSTED US UP TO NOW. WE HAVE MERITED THAT TRUST AND THEY SHOULD NOT ACT AS IF THEY DOUBTED OUR REPEATEDLY STATED POSITION, WHICH WOULD BE REITERATED YET ANOTHER TIME, THAT WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF BUT REGARD IT AS A TOOL OF HANOI.

THIEU SAID THERE IS NOT PROBLEM OF TRUST BUT THE GVN HAS A PROBLEM WITH THE MORALE OF ITS TROOPS AND CIVIL POPULATION ETC. (SAME ARGUMENTS AS IN REF D.) KY WAXED ESPECIALLY ELOQUENT, SAYING THAT "IF WE SIT DOWN WITH THE NLF AS EQUALS, THE WHOLE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE REGIME IS FINISHED." I SPOKE ALONG THE SAME LINES AS AT THE LAST MEETING THOUGH PERHAPS WITH A LITTLE LESS PATIENCE POINTING OUT THAT NO RECOGNITION IS INVOLVED AND THAT THEY ARE A LOT STRONGER THAN THEY SEEM TO THINK THEY ARE. I FINALLY SAID IF THEY INSIST ON A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH IN THE JOINT STATEMENT ALONG THE LINES OF PARAGRAPH 4 ABOVE, I WOULD PUT IT UP TO WASHINGTON. (THE REST OF THE MEETING DEALT WITH PROCEDURAL MATTERS, REPORTED IN SEPTEL.)

10. BUNKER/THIEU MEETING OCTOBER 29 (SAIGON 41436)

THIEU FEELS HE MUST TALK TO VICE PRESIDENT KY AND WILL DO SOONEST. HE HOPES TO HAVE ANSWER BY 2200 HOURS LOCAL, AND WILL CALL ME. I TOLD HIM WE WILL ASK FOR IMMEDIATE MEETING WITH HIM AND KY WHEN WE HEAR FROM HIM.

THIEU FINDS NOV 2 "TOO SOON" AND "TOO FAST" FOR FIRST MEETING. HE WILL SEND KY TO PARIS TO SERVE AS ADVISOR TO FIRST MEETING OR MEETINGS, AND IT WILL TAKE SEVERAL DAYS TO PULL DELEGATION TOGETHER AND GIVE THEM INSTRUCTIONS.

HE SAID WHY NOT PUT FIRST MEETING OFF A FEW DAYS. I ASKED HIM HOW LONG. HE SAID HE WISHED TO CONSULT WITH KY.

THIEU ASKED WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO ANNOUNCE CESSATION AS EARLY AS TOMORROW. I SAID WE HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR SIX MONTHS TO GET SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS GOING, AND NOW HAVE THAT COMMITMENT AND A FIRM DATE GIVEN US BY HANOI. THERE IS NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD DELAY ANY FURTHER.

YOU MAY BE SURE I ARGUED CASE FOR IMMEDIATE DECISION BY THIEU WITHOUT CONSULTING ANYONE, AND CASE FOR THE DATES AND TIMES SPECIFIED. THIEU SAID HE COULD NOT MAKE THAT DECISION HIMSELF AND HE WOULD GIVE ME HIS VIEWS ON CESSATION AND MEETING DATES THIS EVENING....

11. BUNKER MEETING WITH THIEU AND KY OCTOBER 29 (SAIGON 41449)

...BOTH THIEU AND KY ARGUED THAT THEY NEED MORE TIME TO PREPARE FOR FIRST MEETING MENTIONING WEEK OR TEN DAYS DELAY TO PREPARE THEIR DELEGATION, THEIR LEADERSHIP, AND THEIR PEOPLE. WE SAID THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THEY AGAIN EXPRESSED FEARS THEY WOULD BE INSULTED AT FIRST MEETING AND BE CALLED PUPPETS, ETC.

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WE ARGUED WITH THEM AT LENGTH. I SAID PRESIDENT WANTED TO GO TOGETHER WITH THEM, WAS THEIR BEST FRIEND, AND HAD STOOD BY THEM FOR YEARS EVEN AT A HEAVY COST TO HIMSELF AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE PRESIDENT FELT HE HAD TO PROCEED AND WANTED THEIR COOPERATION. THE URGENCIES WERE SUCH THAT PRESIDENT MIGHT HAVE TO ANNOUNCE TOMORROW. THEY SAID THEY REALIZED URGENCIES BUT THEY WISHED TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

I TOLD THIEU I HAD TO HAVE AN ANSWER, TONIGHT, AND HE SAID HE WOULD CALL ME WHEN COUNCIL FINISHED ITS DELIBERATIONS.

COMMENT: I THINK THEY ARE NOT ORGANIZED IN SPITE OF OUR URGINGS OVER LONG PERIOD OF TIME. I THINK TOO THAT WE HAVE PUT THIEU UNDER SUCH CONSTRAINTS OF SECRECY WHICH HE HAS OBSERVED, THAT HE FEELS HE NEEDS MORE TIME TO BRING THEM AND OTHERS ALONG. I THINK THAT THEY CAN BE BROUGHT AROUND TO A JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT TOMORROW OR NEXT DAY, IF WE COULD OFFER THEM SHORT POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING DATE. (THIS WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY ARE NOT PLAYING IN AMERICAN POLITICS.)

12. BUNKER/THANK MEETING OCTOBER 29 (SAIGON 41450)

...THANH SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD CONFERRED WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE OUR MEETING. IT WAS THEIR OPINION THAT IN THE LIGHT OF ARTICLE 39 OF THE CONSTITUTION THE PRESIDENT MUST CONSULT ALSO WITH THE LEADERS OF PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND WITH THE BUREAUS OF THE TWO HOUSES AND IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD DETERMINE THAT A PLENARY SESSION IS NECESSARY TO GIVE THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

THANH ALSO SAID PRESIDENT THIEU HAD RECEIVED A DISTURBING TELEGRAM FROM AMB. LAM TO THE EFFECT THAT AMB. HARRINAN HAD SAID THAT "THE US IS NOT OPPOSED TO A DELEGATION FROM THE NLF DISTINCT FROM HANOI" AND THAT "THE US CANNOT FORCE HANOI TO GIVE ADVANCE ASSURANCES THAT THEY WILL NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE GVN." THIS SEEMED AT VARIANCE WITH THE THREE-POINT MEMORANDUM WE HAD GIVEN THE GVN AND WITH THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WE HAD WORKED OUT TOGETHER.

FOR THESE REASONS, AND FOR THE REASONS THAT HAVE BEEN STATED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT, THE GVN NEEDS "MATERIALLY MORE TIME" TO SETTLE THESE MATTERS AND TO PREPARE A DELEGATION BEFORE THEY CAN AGREE TO A DATE FOR THE BOMBING HALT AND INCEPTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, THANH RAISED ANOTHER POINT. HE SAID PRESIDENT THIEU HAD MADE IT CLEAR IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO BUI DIEM THAT THE GVN CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT TO SETTLE THE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS WITH HANOI BEFORE THEY GO INTO THE FIRST MEETING, IN ORDER TO AVOID AN UNDIGNIFIED WRANGLE OVER PROCEDURE AT THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION.....

FINALLY THANH SAID "THE PRESIDENT WISHES TO COOPERATE BUT HE NEEDS MORE TIME". READING FROM NOTES OF THE MEETING IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE THAT HAD PRECEDED OURS WITH THANH, DUC SAID "THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID HE IS VERY ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE. HE IS ANXIOUS TO BE HELPFUL, BUT HE HAS TO TAKE

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INTO CONSIDERATION THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE CONSTITUTION AND THE HYPER-SENSITIVITY OF THE ISSUE OF THE STATUS OF THE NLF. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IT MENTIONED TO PRESIDENT THAT IF WE GO INTO TALKS WITHOUT NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS THERE WILL BE A PROGRESSIVE DISINTEGRATION." HE DOESN'T KNOW WHETHER THESE CONCERN HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO WASHINGTON." I SAID THEY HAVE INDEED BEEN REPORTED TO WASHINGTON AND WE HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO MEET THEM.

13. BUNKER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU OCTOBER 30 (SAIGON 41521).

I OPENED BY SAYING I HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO DELIVER AN ORAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, AND THEN TRANSMITTED THE WHOLE OF THE MESSAGE ALMOST VERBATIM.

THIEU REACTED EMOTIONALLY AND DISJOINTEDLY, "YOU ARE POWERFUL. YOU CAN SAY TO SMALL NATIONS WHAT YOU WANT. WE UNDERSTAND AMERICA'S SACRIFICE FOR VIET-NAM. ALL VIETNAMESE KNOW OUR LIFE DEPENDS ON US SUPPORT. BUT YOU CANNOT FORCE US TO DO ANYTHING AGAINST OUR INTEREST. THIS NEGOTIATION IS NOT A LIFE OR DEATH MATTER FOR THE US BUT IT IS FOR VIET-NAM. I INTEND TO MAKE A SPEECH TO MY PEOPLE AND I WILL EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE, AND THAT OF MY GOVERNMENT AND MY PEOPLE, FOR WHAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS DONE FOR US."

HE THEN SAID THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF OUR AGREEMENT FOR A MEETING WERE NOT SECONDARY BUT CRUCIAL. HE REFERRED TO DIFFERENCES IN WHAT WAS SAID HERE AND IN PARIS AND THEN DEFINED THE TWO ISSUES WHICH WERE CRUCIAL:

A. WE MUST GET FROM HANOI AN AGREEMENT BEFOREHAND AND THEY WILL NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE GVN.

B. WE MUST ALSO GET THEIR AGREEMENT THAT THE NLF IS NOT A SEPARATE DELEGATION.

THIEU KEPT CIRCLING AROUND THE PROBLEM. I FINALLY TOLD HIM POINT BLANK THAT SINCE WE CANNOT GET THESE ASSURANCES, IF HE INSISTS ON MAKING HIS AGREEMENT CONDITIONAL ON SUCH ASSURANCES, WE SHALL HAVE TO GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS. I WARNED HIM OF THE CONSEQUENCES IF HE FORCED US INTO THIS POSITION. I THEN ASKED HIM IF HE WAS OR WAS NOT PREPARED TO GO WITH PRESIDENT JOHNSON ON THE TWO DATES.

THIEU SAID HE NEEDED A WEEK BETWEEN THE JOINT CESSATION ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE FIRST MEETING, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS "AGREEMENT BETWEEN US ON THE ASSURANCES HE NEEDS FROM HANOI," WHICH WILL PERMIT HIM TO JOIN THE CESSATION ANNOUNCEMENT. I REPEATED IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO GET THESE ASSURANCES HE HAD ASKED FOR. I ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD LET ME KNOW TODAY IF HE IS PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH THE OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER 4 DATES. HE SAID NOVEMBER 4 WAS UNREASONABLE, AND HE WOULD NEED A WEEK FROM THE TIME WE AGREE ON CESSATION. IF IT WAS UP TO HIM HE COULD SAY YES TOMORROW'S DATE FOR THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT ON CESSATION WITH A MEETING A WEEK LATER, BUT HE HAD TO CONSULT HIS COLLEAGUES. HE HAD TO CONVINCE THEM AND BRING THEM ALONG, NOT ONLY THE

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VICE PRESIDENT BUT THE OTHERS, OTHERWISE HE WOULD BE VILIFIED AND ISOLATED.

14. HERZ/THANH MEETING, OCTOBER 30 (SAIGON 41528).

THANH THEN SAID THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE SEPARATE STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENTS WERE ONE-SHOT AFFAIRS, BUT THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE THAT THE US WOULD KEEP AT THE GVN'S SIDE IN REBUTTING EVERY ATTEMPT OF HANOI TO PICTURE THE NLF AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. POLITICAL COUNSELOR POINTED TO OUR ASSURANCES AND SAID THE GVN SEEMS CONSISTENTLY TO UNDERESTIMATE AND UNDERUTILIZE ITS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. TO HAVE FORCED HANOI TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GVN COULD BE PICTURED AS A CAVE-IN BY HANOI OF MOMENTOUS PROPORTIONS, AND A CAMPAIGN ALONG THOSE LINES IF PROPERLY HANDLED COULD LEAD TO THE POSSIBLE DISINTEGRATION OF THE VC IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

THANH SAID, "THIS IS THE TROUBLE; WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO PREPARE SUCH THINGS." HERZ SAID WE WOULD BE GLAD TO COOPERATE IN THE IMMEDIATE LAUNCHING OF SUCH A PSYWAR CAMPAIGN.

15. THIEU'S OCTOBER 30 REPLY TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S LETTER OF OCTOBER 29 (SAIGON 41543).

THIEU'S OCTOBER 30 REPLY TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S LETTER OF OCTOBER 29 1) ASKS THAT DRV EXPLICITLY AGREE TO HOLD DIRECT AND SERIOUS TALKS WITH GVN, 2) INSISTS NLF "AT MOST" BE INCLUDED IN DRV DELEGATION, 3) ASSERTS IT IS "INDISPENSABLE" THAT RULES OF PROCEDURE BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE ACCEPTANCE OF CONFERENCE, SO THAT NLF DOES NOT HAVE APPEARANCE OF SEPARATE ENTITY AND 4) STATES THAT IF SATISFACTORY ADVANCE CONDITIONS ARE NOT OBTAINED, THE CONFERENCE WILL SIMPLY CREATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS BUT FINALLY WILL ENGENDER FRUSTRATIONS OR ADVERSE RESULTS. (SAIGON 41543).

16. SITREP AS OF 0500 OCTOBER 31 (SAIGON TIME).

BUNKER HAD THREE MEETINGS ON THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 31 (SAIGON TIME):

1. THIEU (FORTY MINUTES). BUNKER PUT THE CASE IN THE MOST FORCEFUL, SYMPATHETIC BUT UNRELENTING TERMS. BUNKER CANNOT TELL US WHAT THIEU'S DECISION WILL BE; HE WAS OBVIOUSLY ROCKED, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR THIEU TO GIVE A CONSIDERED VIEW. THIEU SAID HE WOULD CALL A MEETING THAT AFTERNOON OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE TWO HEADS OF PARLIAMENT. THIEU ASKED BUNKER TO EXPLAIN TO THANH THE US POSITION ON A) THE GVN TAKING THE LEAD ON MATTERS CONCERNING IT, B) OUR OFFER TO HAVE PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH HANOI BEFORE THE FIRM MEETING, C) "THE QUESTION OF THE OTHER SIDE." (SAIGON 41586)

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2. THANK (AT 1100). BUNKER WENT OVER HIS INSTRUCTIONS, ANSWERED THREE QUESTIONS (ON GVN TAKING THE LEAD, HOW WE WOULD DEAL WITH INTERNAL SVN MATTERS AT A CONFERENCE IN VIEW OF GVN POSITION THEY WOULD REFUSE TO DISCUSS THESE, WHETHER WE COULD DISCUSS PROCEDURES WITH THE DRV BEFORE DIRECT TALKS BEGIN), READ THE KEY SENTENCE ON THE NLF FROM THE PRESIDENT'S TALK TO THE NATION, AND WENT OVER THE TIME SCHEDULE. BUNKER STRESSED 1) OUR HOPE TO HAVE THE GVN WITH US, BUT OUR DETERMINATION TO GO AHEAD WITHOUT THEM IF NECESSARY, 2) THE IMPERATIVE NEED FOR TIGHT SECURITY. (SAIGON 41618).

3. KY (AT 1145 FOR ALMOST AN HOUR). KY RECOGNIZED THAT IF THE GVN AGREED TO TALK WITH HANOI THE NLF WILL HAVE TO BE PRESENT, AND THERE WILL HAVE TO BE CONCESSIONS. HE WOULD USE HIS INFLUENCE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING TO PERSUADE THE COUNCIL OF THE NECESSITY FOR MOVING TOGETHER WITH THE U.S. ON THE BASIS OF KY'S STATESMANLIKE PRESENTATION, BUNKER BELIEVES THERE IS A BETTER THAN 50-50 CHANCE THE NSC WILL GO ALONG WITH US. (SAIGON 41589)

17. SEVEN HOUR SESSION WITH THIEU, KY AND THANK
OCTOBER 31/NOVEMBER 1 (SAIGON 41681).

AFTER MARATHON SESSION, THIEU SAYS HE IS READY TO GO FORWARD WITH JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT PROVIDING CERTAIN CHANGES ARE MADE IN JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT. MEETING WAS PAINFUL, REPETITIOUS OF OLD ARGUMENTS, AND PUNCTUATED BY FITS OF ANGER AT BEING RUSHED AND PUT UNDER THE GUN.

18. BUNKER/THIEU MEETING NOVEMBER (SAIGON 41688).

BUNKER INFORMS THIEU PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED HE MUST GO AHEAD AND WOULD MAKE NATIONWIDE SPEECH. THIEU MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS:

"I CANNOT GUESS WHETHER WE WILL ACHIEVE THE RESULT WE HOPED FOR. OUR FIRM PURPOSE IS TO HAVE SERIOUS TALKS DIRECTLY WITH HANOI TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND PROGRESS. THE MOST LEGAL RIGHT OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS NOT TO ACCEPT SERIOUS TALKS WITH HANOI WITH THE NLF AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY.

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"I NEVER DOUBTED THE SINCERITY OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND THE US GOVERNMENT NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE NLF AND ITS PROMISE TO SUPPORT US IN THE TALKS. WE HAVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS HERE. IF WE HAD GONE INTO THESE TALKS WITH THE NLF IT WOULD HAVE MEANT THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE NATION. THE STATE MUST HAVE STABILITY, NOT TROUBLE, NOT INSTABILITY; THAT IS OUR GRAVEST CONCERN.

"I AM SORRY I CANNOT JOIN THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE SPEECH OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON BEFORE I MAKE ANY SPEECH TO THE NATION. PLEASE ASSURE PRESIDENT JOHNSON THAT I WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THE GREATEST GRATITUDE TO HIM AND THE US GOVERNMENT. I THINK WE HAVE TO AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS NOW OF THE SITUATION AFTER WE SEE HOW WE COULD PROCEED TO FIND THE WAY TO PEACE WITH HANOI."

TO THIS I REPLIED I HOPE WE WILL FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION WITH THE NLF, AND THAT IS WHY WE PROPOSED THE OUR SIDE/YOUR SIDE FORMULA. IT IS A FACT OF LIFE. THE NLF IS NOT RECOGNIZED BY YOU OR US, AND OUR WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO FIND A WAY AROUND THIS PROBLEM SO AS TO GET ON WITH SERIOUS PEACE TALKS. THAT IS WHAT WE WILL TRY TO DO IN THE PERIOD WHICH LIES AHEAD.

19. BUNKER'S ABORTIVE EFFORT TO SEE THIEU BEFORE HIS ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT (SAIGON 41746).

THIEU REFUSES TO SEE BUNKER DESPITE LATTER'S URGENT MESSAGES AND EFFORTS TO REACH HIM BY TELEPHONE. BUNKER GIVES THANH TALKING PAPER CONVEYING SUBSTANCE OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S LETTER.

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EEA695
OO WTE10
DE WTE 4229

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP92684

Pres file

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MON
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1:05
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

~~SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

NOVEMBER 4, 1968

SEC. RUSK, AFTER CLEARANCE WITH SEC. CLIFFORD, IS DISPATCHING THE FOLLOWING CABLE FOR URGENT COMMENT BY HARRIMAN, VANCE, AND BUNKER. IT IS GOING OUT FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT WITH AN EXPLICIT NOTATION THAT IT IS ONLY FOR COMMENT AND THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT YET APPROVED THE DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS IT CONTAINS.

QUOTE

1. WE HAVE WEIGHED CAREFULLY THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN PARIS 23331, SAIGON 41853, AND PARIS 23348. OUR BASIC CONCLUSIONS ARE THAT:

A. THERE MUST BE NO WIDER MEETING IN PARIS ON NOV. 6 NOR SHOULD WE NOW SET A FIRM DATE OF NOV. 13.

B. WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GO FORWARD WITH BILATERAL TALKS IN PARIS ON PROCEDURES FOR A WIDER MEETING, DURING THE WEEK. THIS WOULD BE DESIGNED TO OPEN THE WAY FOR A WIDER MEETING ON NOV. 13.

C. WE SHOULD PREPARE REPEAT PREPARE FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF AGREEING TO A WIDER MEETING ON NOV. 13 OR SHORTLY THEREAFTER, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE GVN MAY STILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE READY TO ATTEND, BUT THAT WE MAY WISH TO GO AHEAD NONETHELESS AND SHOW THEM THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN SUBJECTS WE CAN DISCUSS WITHOUT THEM, FOR EXAMPLE, MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL AND DE-ESCALATION IN THE DMZ.

D. MEANWHILE, SAIGON SHOULD BE TAKING EVERY POSSIBLE MEASURE TO BRING THE GVN AROUND.

THESE CENTRAL CONCLUSIONS ARE REFLECTED IN THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW. THEY REFLECT OUR CONSIDERED VIEWS, BUT ARE OF COURSE SUBJECT TO PARIS AND SAIGON COMMENT.

2. PARIS HAS SCHEDULED (AT LAU'S REQUEST) THE NEXT VANCE/LAU MEETING AT 1000 PARIS TIME ON TUESDAY. WE PLAN NOW THAT AT THIS MEETING VANCE WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. WE ARE NOT REPEAT NOT READY FOR A WIDER MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6.

PRESERVATION COPY

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By *AS/tek*, NARA, Date *3-26-93*

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *719 91-500*
By *AS/tek*, NARA, Date *3-26-93*

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B. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON PROCEDURES ARE ESSENTIAL, AND NOTE THAT WE HAVE NEVER AGREED WITH THE DRV THAT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN THE WIDER MEETING ITSELF, OR SHOULD BE THE FIRST ITEM DISCUSSED. INDEED, THE PROCEDURAL AGREEMENT REACHED LAST MAY EXPRESSLY PROVIDES THAT THOSE GROUND RULES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL WE AND THE DRV AGREE TO CHANGE THEM. (THIS LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY -- DEPENDING ON HOW THE GVN COMES AROUND -- OF RATIFICATION OR CONFIRMATION OF THE PROCEDURES IN A WIDER MEETING.)

C. BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROCEDURES FOR A WIDER MEETING SHOULD AIM TO WORK OUT AGREED PROCEDURES SO THAT THE FIRST WIDER MEETING COULD TAKE PLACE IN THE WEEK ON NOV. 11 - 16. AT THE SAME TIME, WE CANNOT COMMIT OURSELVES TO A DATE FOR SUCH A WIDER MEETING UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN DISCUSSION AND AT LEAST PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT ON THE ESSENTIAL PROCEDURES.

D. ACCORDINGLY, WE RENEW OUR STRONG VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE A BILATERAL MEETING ON NOV. 6 AND FURTHER BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS, AS NECESSARY. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH BILATERAL MEETINGS TO TAKE UP THE QUESTION OF DE-ESCALATION ON EITHER SIDE IN THE DMZ AREA AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ASSURE THIS.

IN SHORT, WE PLAN THAT A MEETING ON TUESDAY SHOULD DEFINITELY KNOCK DOWN ANY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY OTHER THAN A BILATERAL ON PROCEDURES.

3. ON THE TASK OF PREPARING FOR A POSSIBLE WIDER MEETING WITHOUT THE GVN, WE WOULD LIKE PARIS RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE, INCLUDING HOW WE SHOULD HANDLE THE PRESENCE OF AN NLF REPRESENTATIVE AND THE TOPICS WE WOULD PLAN TO RAISE. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE YOUR JUDGMENT ON WHETHER HANOI WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A MEETING WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE GVN, OR WHAT TACTICS YOU THINK HANOI MIGHT EMPLOY IF WE WERE TO APPEAR AT SUCH A MEETING WITHOUT THE GVN. THIS IS A MATTER REQUIRING LESS URGENT COMMENT THAN THE INSTRUCTIONS ABOVE, HOWEVER.

4. MEANWHILE, SAIGON SHOULD BE ACTING ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

A. AS YOU DEEM MOST EFFECTIVE, THE WORD SHOULD BE GOING OUT TO ALL INFLUENTIAL QUARTERS THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WILL NOT REPEAT NOT SUPPORT A SITUATION IN WHICH TALKS ARE DELAYED FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT TIME BY GVN INSISTENCE ON ALL OF THE ASSURANCES THIEU HAS MENTIONED, THAT HANOI WILL FORMALLY AGREE TO TALK TO THE GVN AND THAT THE OTHER SIDE WILL FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE NLF WILL BE ONLY A PART OF THE HANOI DELEGATION. WE HERE ARE ALREADY ASSEMBLING EDITORIAL COMMENT THAT CAN BE USED AS AMMUNITION IN SUPPORT OF THIS ARGUMENT.

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B. ALSO AS YOU DEEM MOST EFFECTIVE, YOU SHOULD START TO GET ACROSS THE IDEA THAT, IF THE GVN REFUSES TO ATTEND ON ITS PRESENT GROUNDS, THE US ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TO PROCEED WITH THE WIDER MEETINGS AT WHICH IT WILL DISCUSS APPROPRIATE ISSUES WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE GVN.

C. ON BOTH SCORES, YOU SHOULD BE GETTING ACROSS THE IDEA THAT THIS IS A MATTER OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AS A WHOLE, AND HAS LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH WHO IS ELECTED PRESIDENT TOMORROW. YOU SHOULD ALSO BE GETTING IT ACROSS THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, UNDER OUR SYSTEM, HAS DECISIVE RESPONSIBILITY UNTIL JANUARY 20. (WE INFER THAT SOME SOUTH VIETNAMESE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS RATHER BASIC POINT.)

5. IN SHORT, YOU SHOULD BE MOVING TO SHORTEN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHATEVER FACE-SAVING PERIOD THE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ELEMENTS IN THE GVN REGARD AS NECESSARY. (WE HAVE NOTED THIEU'S ASSISTANT, HUONG, COMMENTING THAT TWO WEEKS WOULD DO IT. WE WANT TO MAKE THIS LESS.)

6. IN LAYING OUT THIS COURSE OF ACTION, WE HAVE IN MIND SAIGON'S SUGGESTION (SAIGON 41738) THAT WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT MAY BECOME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BRINGING THE GVN AROUND, AFTER THE ELECTION. WE SHARE BUNKER'S JUDGMENT THAT THIS COULD BE OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE. OBVIOUSLY, IT CANNOT BE DONE IN THE NEXT 48 HOURS, AT LEAST.

7. FINALLY, WE WOULD LIKE SAIGON AND PARIS COMMENT -- ON A LESS URGENT BASIS BUT HOPEFULLY IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS -- ON THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE VARIATIONS:

A. AN OFFER TO CEMENT THE GVN'S "LEADING ROLE" BY EXPLICITLY MAKING THE GVN THE "CHAIRMAN" OF OUR SIDE. WOULD THIS INVITE HANOI TO MAKE THE NLF "CHAIRMAN" ON THE OTHER SIDE? OR WOULD HANOI EMPHASIZE NLF INDEPENDENCE BY RETAINING "TWO DELEGATES"? DOES IT UNDULY TIE OUR HANDS INTO THE FUTURE? WOULD IT HELP?

B. IF THE GVN IS UNWILLING TO COME TO A WIDER MEETING, OUR ATTENDING WITH PRIVATE SVN REPRESENTATION -- FROM THE LIEN MINH PERHAPS -- AS A WAY SHOWING HOW WE REGARD THE NLF BEING PRESENT ON HANOI'S SIDE.

WE EMPHASIZE THAT THESE ARE BOTH IDEAS TO PROBE THE POSSIBILITIES AND WE WOULD WELCOME ANY IDEAS FROM PARIS AND SAIGON.

END QUOTE

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OO WTE 10
DE WTE 4236

FROM WALT ROSTOV
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82690

SENT
WHCA

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1968 NOV 5 06 41

~~SECRET~~ LITERALLY EYES ONLY

THE MATERIAL IN BUNKER'S AND HARRIMAN'S RESPONSE
TO THE OUTGOING DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE OF INTEREST
TO YOU.

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

FROM AMB BUNKER

SAIGON 41932

PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

REF: STATE 266372

Free file
DECLASSIFIED

Authority 71c g 91500

By ag/isp, NARA, Date 3-26-93

1. AGREE WITH STRATEGY IN PARAGRAPH 1, AND WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR TACTICS IN PARAGRAPH 2 REFTEL.
2. RE PARAGRAPH 3 WE ARE BUSY GETTING THE WORD OUT TO SELECTED CONTACTS ALONG EXACTLY THE LINES SKETCHED OUT IN SUB-PARAGRAPH A. WE HAVE NOT YET MOVED TO TACTIC IN SUB-PARAGRAPH B (THAT WE WILL HAVE TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY) BUT WE ARE LAYING HEAVY STRESS ON ON POINT C. (AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION REGARDLESS OF WHO IS ELECTED PRESIDENT) AND WILL BE STEPPING IT UP.
3. I HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER HUONG THIS MORNING. POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAS CONFERRED WITH CHAIRMAN LOWER HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (AT LATTER'S REQUEST) BEFORE LOWER HOUSE DEBATE MONDAY MORNING. TONIGHT KY AND HIS WIFE WILL BE COMING FOR DINNER IN RESPONSE TO INVITATION I HAD SENT THEM LAST WEEK AND WHICH THEY ACCEPTED YESTERDAY. POLITICAL COUNSELOR WILL HAVE PARTY WITH SELECTED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS TOMMORROW. OSTENSIBLY TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS, AND HEAVY STRESS WILL BE LAID ON THE POINTS SET FORTH PARAGRAPH 4C REFTEL.
4. IN THIS CONNECTION WE ASSUME WASHINGTON IS PREPARING IN ADVANCE A CAREFULLY WORKED-OUT WRITTEN MESSAGE THAT THE PRESIDENT ELECT MIGHT SEND HERE, ALONG THE LINES OF PARAGRAPH 5 SAIGON 41738.
5. WE HAVE A PRELIMINARY COMMENT ON THE IDEA ON PARAGRAPH 7 A REFTEL. IT SEEMS TO US THAT IF WE MAKE THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM THE "CHAIRMAN" OF OUR SIDE, WE WILL BE GIVING HANOI A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT TO THE FORE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE PRICIPAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE DRV AND THE U.S., NAMELY U.S. "AGGRESSION", AGAINST NORTH VIET-NAM, HAS BEEN DISPOSED OF BY THE "UNCONDITIONAL" BOMBING HALLI AND THAT OTHER MATTERS ARE FOR THE GVN AND NLF TO TALK ABOUT. OTHER COMMENTS ON PARAGRAPH 7 WILL FOLLOW.

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FROM AMB HARRIMAN

PARIS 23393

DELTO 931

REF: STATE 266372

FROM HARRIMAN AND VANCE

1. IN VIEW OF FACT LAU HAS REQUESTED TOMORROW'S MEETING WE INTEND TO ASK HIM TO SPEAK FIRST AND HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY, DEPENDING ON WHAT LAU SAYS, WE WILL BE PREPARED TO PROCEED PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN PARA. 2 REFTEL WITH EXCEPTION NOTED BELOW IN PARA. 2.

2. THE STATEMENT IN PARA. 2(B) OF REFTEL "WE HAVE NEVER AGREED WITH DRV THAT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN WIDER MEETING, OR SHOULD BE THE FIRST ITEM DISCUSSED" IS NOT CORRECT. WHEN WE WERE PRESSING FOR A PROMPT MEETING WE PROPOSED REPEATEDLY AND THE DRV AGREED THAT THE SUBJECT OF THE FIRST WIDER MEETING WOULD BE THE WORKING OUT OF PROCEDURES AND THE DISCUSSIONS OF AGENDA.. (SEE FOR EXAMPLE PARIS 22466, PARA, 26 AND PARIS 22742, PARAS. 33 AND 50.)

3. ARE WE CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT IF WE CANNOT GET AGREEMENT BILATERAL MEETING ON NOV. 6 AT THE MAJESTIC TO DISCUSS PROCEDURES THAT WE CAN TELL DRV WE WILL CONTINUE TO DISCUSS WITH THEM IN PRIVATE MEETINGS THE QUESTION OF PROCEDURE AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE FIRST WIDER MEETING PENDING THE FIXING OF A DATE FOR THAT MEETING. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PUBLIC OPINION WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION OF CONTINUING MOVEMENT. THE FACT THAT PRIVATE BILATERAL DISCUSSION ON PROCEDURES ARE GOING ON, WHICH WE WOULD ANNOUNCE, WOULD HELP MEET THIS REQUIREMENT.

FROM AMB HARRIMAN

PARIS 23394

DELTO 932

FROM HARRIMAN AND VANCE

REF: PARIS 23393, DELTO 931

1. IF DEPARTMENT GIVES US THE AUTHORITY TO DISCUSS PROCEDURAL MATTERS IN PRIVATE MEETING WITH LAU, AS REQUESTED IN PARA, 3 REFTEL, WE WOULD REQUIRE AUTHORITY TO USE OUR JUDGMENT OR ELSE GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON HOW TO APPROACH THE QUESTION RELATED TO PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST WIDER MEETING. IN ANY EVENT, WE WOULD NEED SUCH GUIDANCE IF LAU WERE TO AGREE TO BILATERAL MEETINGS AT THE MAJESTIC FOR DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURE FOR THE FIRST MEETING. HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THIS GUIDANCE FOR USE IN TOMORROW'S MEETING FOR DISCUSSION AT OUR DISCRETION AS WE SEEK TO DRAW OUT LAU'S VIEWS ON THE DETAILS OF PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS.

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2. WE BELIEVE THE FIRST WIDER MEETING SHOULD TREAT ONLY WITH THE DRAWING UP OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE. WE WOULD PROPOSE TO DO THIS BY FOLLOWING THE SAME COURSE OF ACTION AS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS. THAT IS, WE WOULD PROPOSE TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH SIDE WITH SUCH ADVISERS AS NECESSARY TO MEET IN THE PRESENT MEETING ROOM AT THE MAJESTIC. EACH SIDE WOULD SIT IN THE SAME PLACES AT THE OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE ROOM AS WE PRESENTLY SIT. DRV COULD ORGANIZE ITS SIDE AS THEY WISH.

3. THERE WILL BE NO FLAGS OR NAMEPLATES ON THE TABLES. THERE WILL BE NO PRESS OR PHOTOGRAPHERS PERMITTED AS WAS THE CASE IN MAY.

4. WITH RESPECT TO ORDER OF SPEAKING, EACH SIDE WILL ALTERNATE AND WE CAN EITHER LET THEM SPEAK FIRST AT THE FIRST SESSION, AS WE DID IN MAY, OR WE CAN FLIP A COIN.

5. OUR PROPOSALS ABOVE ARE FULLY CONSISTENT WITH THE "OUR SIDE-YOUR SIDE" FORMULA AND ARE DESIGNED TO LIMIT TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE THE EFFORTS OF THE DRV AND THE NLF TO EXPLOIT THE FIRST MEETINGS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES.

FROM AMB HARRIMAN

PARIS 23395

DELTO 933

FROM HARRIMAN AND VANCE

REF: STATE 266372, TODEL 1473

1. OUR COMMENTS ON PARA. 7 IN REFTEL ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2. PARA. 7A - TO MAKE GVN "CHAIRMAN" OF OUR SIDE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY ENCOURAGE OTHER SIDE TO DO SAME FOR LIBERATION FRONT, THUS FURTHER ENHANCING ITS STATUS. ADDITIONALLY, IT WOULD GREATLY COMPLICATE OUR WORKING RELATIONS WITH SAIGON DELEGATION WHICH PROMISE TO BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH AS IT IS. SUGGESTION THEREFORE WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE.

3. PARA. 7B - WE PROPOSED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF RVN WOULD BE ON OUR SIDE TO WHICH DRV AGREED. ANY ATTEMPT TO BRING IN OTHERS WOULD VIOLATE OUR AGREEMENT. THE LIEN MINH OR ANY SUCH GROUP CANNOT IN ANY WAY BE SAID TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RVN.

NODIS/HARVAN/ DOUBLE PLUS

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FM WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
TO AMEMB SAIGON
ZEN

25X1A

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED] EYES ONLY CAP82688
LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND GENERAL ABRAMS
FROM WALT ROSTOW

Pres file
68 NOV 4 PM 9 51
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

IF IT IS THE CASE WOULD YOU PROMPTLY REPEAT PROMPTLY MAKE
AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS THE FACT THAT:

-- THE DMZ HAS BEEN QUIET AND OUR FACT OF LIFE ABOUT THE DMZ
HAS THUS FAR BEEN RESPECTED; AND

-- US CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN LOW SINCE THE BOMBING CESSATION HAS
GONE INTO EFFECT.

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NNNN

~~TOP SECRET~~

SANTITIZED
Authority NLJ 019-042-1-6
By [Signature], NARA, Date 11/2/02

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