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#53 agenda	for Tuesday Luncheon 1 p. Secret	open 5-6-83 NLS 82-206 9/17/68	A
#53a cable	Paris 20872 section 1 2 p. Secret	open 3-1-85 NLS 85-07 9/15/68	A
#53b cable	Paris 20872 section 2 3 p. Secret	open 3-1-85 NLS 85-07 9/15/68	A
#53c cable	Paris 20872 section 3 3 p. Secret	open 3-1-85 NLS 85-07 9/15/68	A
#53d cable	Paris 20872 section 4 3 p. Secret	open 3-1-85 NLS 85-07 9/15/68	A
#53e memo	Rostow for the President 1 p. Secret	open 5-6-83 NLS 82-206 9/16/68	A
#53f cable	Saigon 37824 Secret 2 p. Secret	open 3-1-85 NLS 85-07 9/16/68	A

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Lunch Meeting With the President
Tuesday, September 17, 1968 - 1:30 pm

AGENDA

1. Paris Talks. (Sec. Rusk; Amb. Harriman)

- Hanoi intentions
- Where we now stand
- Next steps

At Tab A is Vance's report of Sunday morning's private session.

2. Military Situation, Prospects, and Appropriate U.S. Strategy.
 (Sec. Clifford; Gen Wheeler)

See Tab B for Thieu's appreciation.

3. Gene Black in Cambodia. (Sec. Rusk)

Report: Cambodians totally negative. See Tab C.

4. Pueblo. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

5. Spanish Base Negotiations. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

6. Czechoslovak Situation. (Sec. Rusk; Mr. Helms)

Situation report.

7. Block in Senate Foreign Relations Committee. (Sec. Rusk)

A quorum hard to come by. What, if anything, should we urge Sen. Sparkman to do in the face of the hold up of NPT, IDA, and military sales legislation, in view of Gore's position.

8. Other.

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W. M. Rostow

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NODIS/HARVAN/PLUS

DELTO 732

FROM HARRIMAN AND VANCE

1. WE HAD OUR THIRD MEETING WITH LE DUC THO AND XUAN THUY MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 15. THE SAMZ PEOPLE WERE PRESENT ON BOTH SIDES. THE MEETING LASTED 2 HOURS AND 40 MINUTES, INCLUDING A 20 MINUTE TEA BREAK.
2. AFTER EXPRESSIONS OF CONDOLENCE ON THEIR PART FOR REASONS FOR GOVERNOR HARRIMAN'S RETURN TO US, HE SAID THAT HE WAS GOING BACK TO THE US TODAY TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL AND EXPECTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VISIT BY GOING TO WASHINGTON TO CONSULT. WE SAID THAT WE HAD STUDIED WITH INTEREST LE DUC THO'S REMARKS OF SEPTEMBER 12 AND WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME REMARKS AND COMMENTS ON THEM. WE SAID AT THE OUTSET WE WISHED TO UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT, AS WE HAD POINTED OUT IN THE LAST MEETING, WE WERE NOT LOOKING FOR A RED CARPET OR A CAMOUFLAGED SURRENDER. WE ARE LOOKING FOR SUBSTANCE--A JUST AND HONORABLE SETTLEMENT. WE STATED WE WISHED TO DEVOTE THE BALANCE OF OUR COMMENTS TODAY TO SOME CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECTS OF THO'S REMARKS AND WOULD MAKE SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS ON OUR SIDE.
3. WE SAID WE WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THO'S STATEMENT THAT THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE SHOULD BE SETTLED BY THOSE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WITHOUT FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND THAT PENDING REUNIFICATION THE MILITARY PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954 SHOULD BE STRICTLY RESPECTED.

WE SAID THAT THESE STATEMENTS WERE CONSISTENT WITH OUR VIEWS AND UNDERLINE THE NEED FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ALL

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EXTERNAL FORCES FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM. WE COMMENTED THAT THO HAD SAID THAT WITHDRAWAL OF ALL US FORCES WAS A CRUCIAL ISSUE. ON OUR PART, WE BELIEVED THAT WITHDRAWAL OF ALL EXTERNAL FORCES IS THE CRUCIAL ISSUE AND SO INDICATED AT OUR LAST MEETING. THUS, THERE APPEARS TO BE COMMON GROUND ON WHICH WE MAY BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION WE HAD INDICATED AT OUR LAST MEETING WE WOULD HAVE FURTHER COMMENT ON THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES. WE SAID WE WISHED TO MAKE A STATEMENT OF POLICY ON THIS MATTER WHICH WAS IMPORTANT AND NEW.

6. WE SAID: US AND FREE WORLD FORCES WILL BE WITHDRAWN AS NORTH VIET-NAM WITHDRAWS ITS FORCES, INCLUDING ALL PERSONNEL INFILTRATING FROM THE NORTH. WITHDRAWALS WILL BEGIN SIMULTANEOUSLY AND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ANY US FORCES REMAINING AFTER COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES WILL LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT LATER THAN 6 MONTHS THEREAFTER. WHEN WITHDRAWAL WAS COMPLETED, NO FURTHER TROOPS FROM EITHER SIDE WOULD BE INTRODUCED. THE PHRASE "WHEN THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE THUS SUBSIDES" IS DESCRIPTIVE OF THE CONDITION WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM WITHDRAWAL OF EXTERNAL FORCES AND DOES NOT REFER TO VIOLENCE THAT MAY OCCUR AMONG SOUTH VIETNAMESE AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES. MODALITIES AND TIMING OF MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AND AGREED BETWEEN US.

7. THO AND THUY WERE VERY INTERESTED IN THIS STATEMENT OF POLICY AND INTERRUPTED SEVERAL TIMES FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARIFICATION. THEY QUESTIONED WHY WE PROPOSED THAT ALL EXTERNAL TROOPS MUST BE WITHDRAWN SIMULTANEOUSLY BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, PROVIDED THAT SOME US TROOPS COULD REMAIN UNTIL 6 MONTHS AFTER ALL NORTHVIETNAMESE HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN. WE REPLIED WE HAD MANY MORE TROOPS THAN THEY, HAD A LONG WAY TO GO, AND MANY INSTALLATIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE EVACUATED. THO SAID, WITH A SMILE, THAT WE HAVE MANY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND WE COULD LEAVE MORE QUICKLY THAN THEY COULD. WE REPLIED IN LIKE VEIN THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO PROVIDE THEM WITH MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO TAKE THEIR FORCES HOME QUICKLY. WE THEN POINTED OUT THAT THESE WERE MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED BUT THE IMPORTANT POINT WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE SIMULTANEOUS WITHDRAWAL TO START AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE SAID THIS STATEMENT IS A NEW STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF PEACE AND SHOULD RESOLVE ANY QUESTION THEY MIGHT HAVE REGARDING THE GOODWILL OF THE US AND OUR SERIOUS INTENTIONS.

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NODIS/HARVAN/PLUS

DELTO 732

8. WE SAID THAT BOTH OF US HAD SPOKEN OF CESSATION OF BOMBING AS A FURTHER STEP TOWARDS PEACE. WE HAD SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD DISCUSS THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO STOP ALL BOMBARDMENT. AT THE VANCE/LAU TALKS THERE HAD BEEN DISCUSSION OF FACTORS THAT WOULD BE RELEVANT TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING. ONE WHICH WE CONSIDER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS RECENTLY EMPHASIZED AGAIN IS THE QUESTION OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE DMZ AREA.

9. WE SAID THE US HAS PROPOSED RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DMZ, THAT IS, MILITARY ACTIVITY IN, THROUGH, OR ACROSS THE DMZ, AND THE MASSING OF TROOPS NORTH OF THE DMZ, SHOULD CEASE. WE HAD PROPOSED THAT WE REACH AN UNDERSTANDING ON DETAILED PROCEDURES FOR INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF THE RESTORATION OF THE DMZ. WE SAID WE ARE WILLING TO DEFER UNTIL AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING DISCUSSION OF SUCH DETAILED PROCEDURES IF THE PRINCIPLE OF CESSATION OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE DMZ IS UNDERSTOOD AND WILL BE OBSERVED.

10. WE COMMENTED THAT WHEN VANCE AND LAU DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT, LAU HAD SAID THAT IF WE WOULD ACT, THE DRV WOULD "KNOW WHAT TO DO." HE FURTHER SAID THAT IF THE US WOULD STOP BOMBING AND STOP ITS ACTIONS IN THE DMZ, WE WOULD THEN "SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN." HE SAID THAT "REALITY WOULD GIVE US THE REPLY." WE SAID WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY FURTHER COMMENT THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE ON THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION AND THE APPARENTLY SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS MADE BY LAU. THO SAID HE WISHED TO RESERVE HIS COMMENTS UNTIL WE HAD FINISHED EVERYTHING WE HAD TO SAY.

11. WE SAID THAT WE HAD MADE IT CLEAR AT OUR LAST

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MEETING THAT THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF SVN IS FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO DECIDE, AND THAT NEITHER HANOI NOR WASHINGTON SHOULD DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WHICH DEAL WITH THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE SOUTH. FOR THIS REASON WE HAVE PROPOSED INCLUSION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GVN ON OUR SIDE, AND HAVE INDICATED WE WOULD BE READY TO HAVE THE DRV INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NLF, OR THE ALLIANCE, OR ANY OTHER GROUP, ON ITS SIDE. WE ADDED THAT --AS WE HAD INDICATED -- SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD NOT PRECLUDE A CONTINUATION OF PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS SUCH AS THESE ON MATTERS OF CONCERN ON THE MATTERS WE HAD RAISED TODAY.

12. THO SAID THAT ON MANY POINTS WE HAD DIFFERENT VIEWS BECAUSE US IS THE AGGRESSOR AND THE DRV IS THE VICTIM, AND BECAUSE THE US IS IMPERIALIST AND THE DRV IS COMMUNIST. HE SAID THERE WAS NOTHING STRANGE IN THESE DIFFERENCES, BUT THEY WERE POINTS OF REALITY WHICH NO PERSON OF CONSCIENCE COULD DENY AND THAT HE WOULD ADDRESS HIS REMARKS TO THESE DIFFERENCES. THE FIRST QUESTION IS WHO IS THE AGGRESSOR IN VIET-NAM. THIS IS A BASIC QUESTION, THE ESSENCE OF WHICH MUST BE REALIZED BEFORE WE CAN REACH A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. HE THEN GAVE THE USUAL HISTORICAL EXPOSITION TO SHOW THAT THE US WAS THE AGGRESSOR AND NVN THE VICTIM. HE SAID THE US WAS CONFUSED ABOUT NATIONALISM IN VN AND THAT THE PEOPLE WE WERE SUPPORTING WERE TRAITORS WHO HAD SOLD THEIR COUNTRY AND WERE NOT TRUE NATIONALISTS. HE DENIED THAT THE LIBERATION FORCES WERE SUFFERING DEFEAT, SAYING THEY HAD STOOD UP AGAINST US AND GAINED THE ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT OF THE WORLD. HE DENIED THAT THEY HAD ABANDONED THEIR OPERATIONS IN RURAL AREAS TO ATTACK THE CITIES. HE SAID THAT IN THE PAST THEY HAD NOT ATTACKED THE CITIES BECAUSE THE SITUATION WAS NOT RIGHT. NOW THEY WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT NOT ONLY IN THE RURAL AREAS BUT IN THE CITIES AS WELL. THE FACT THAT THEY HAD NOT OCCUPIED ANY CITIES WAS NOT A DEFEAT BECAUSE THE WAR CAN BE WON WITHOUT DESTROYING THE ENEMY OR CAPTURING CITIES. THIS WAS TRUE WHEN THEY DEFEATED THE FRENCH COLONIALISTS.

13. THEY SPOKE TO THO WHO THEN APPEARED TO ABANDON THE LAST SEVERAL PAGES OF HIS PREPARED REMARKS, AND SAID HE ~~WOULD~~ ADDRESS HIMSELF NOW TO THE VIEWS WE HAD EXPRESSED TODAY. THEY HAD EXAMINED THE VIEWS WE HAD EXPRESSED WITH GREAT INTEREST, WE HAD RAISED MANY

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QUESTIONS BUT THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AFTER WE HAVE STOPPED THE BOMBING SO THAT TOGETHER WE COULD FIND A CORRECT SOLUTION. HE SAID THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT RESPECT FOR THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENTS WHICH CONTAIN MANY CONCRETE PROVISIONS. HE SAID THERE ARE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THESE PROVISIONS WHICH CAN BE DISCUSSED AFTER A CESSATION OF BOMBING, AND THAT BOTH SIDES CAN RAISE THESE PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

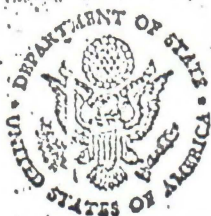
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14. AS TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF EXTERNAL TROOPS, THEY HAVE PUT FORWARD THE POSITION THAT SINCE THE US WAGED AGGRESSION, THE US AND SATELLITE TROOPS MUST WITHDRAW FROM SVN. WE, HOWEVER, PUT THE PROBLEM IN ANOTHER WAY. THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING. HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL SIX MONTHS LATER, BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT LATER.

15. AS TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING, THO SAID THAT THE DRV DEMANDS THE UNCONDITIONAL CESSATION OF BOMBING AND ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR WITHOUT RECIPROCITY AND WE HAD ACCEPTED (SIC) THIS. AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING WE COULD SHIFT TO PHASE 2. AT THAT POINT WE COULD RAISE THE ITEMS WHICH INTEREST US. THESE ITEMS COULD BE THE ONES WE RAISED THE OTHER DAY OR TODAY. FOR THEIR PART, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD RAISE ITEMS ALSO. THE TWO SIDES WOULD THEN DISCUSS AND ELABORATE AN AGENDA. THOSE QUESTIONS WHICH CAN BE DISCUSSED FIRST COULD BE TAKEN UP IMMEDIATELY AND THE REMAINING ITEMS COULD BE DISCUSSED IN ORDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGENDA AGREED UPON. WE SHALL THEN DISCUSS AND FIND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT FOR THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM IN PHASE 2 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGENDA WHICH WE SHALL HAVE DISCUSSED AND AGREED UPON.

16. THO SAID THAT WHAT LAU HAD SAID TO VANCE ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER CESSATION OF BOMBING IS PRECISELY THAT. IT THEREFORE MEANS THAT THE POSITIVE PROPOSALS THAT THE DRV HAD MADE ARE EVIDENCE OF THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE IN FINDING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. WE SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT AT ALL OF THE DRV'S GOOD

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WILL AND SERIOUS INTENT. HE SAID, "THEY MEAN WHAT THEY SAY."

17. AS TO THE LAST ITEM WE HAD RAISED ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM IN THE CONFERENCE, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN US. AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING WE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS QUESTION ALSO, JUST LIKE OTHER QUESTIONS.

18. HE THEN SUMMED UP BY SAYING THE US MUST UNCONDITIONALLY CEASE THE BOMBING AND ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR AGAINST NVN. THE US COULD THEN RAISE ALL ITS ITEMS. FROM THEIR SIDE THE DRV WILL RAISE ALL ITS ITEMS. THERE WILL THEN BE A DISCUSSION OF AN AGENDA. WE WOULD THEN DETERMINE THE ITEMS TO DISCUSS FIRST, AND THOSE WOULD BE DISCUSSED IMMEDIATELY. OTHER ITEMS WOULD FOLLOW IN TURN BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY OF THEM. THIS IS A POSITIVE PROPOSITION BECAUSE THE DRV WOULD POSITIVELY DISCUSS THEM IF WE WOULD STOP THE BOMBING. IF WE WANTED TO MEET THE NEXT DAY FOLLOWING A CESSATION OF BOMBING AND DISCUSS THE ITEMS, THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS THEM WITH SERIOUS INTENT AND GOOD WILL. HE REPEATED AND EMPHASIZED "SERIOUS INTENT AND GOOD WILL" A NUMBER OF TIMES.

19. AT THIS POINT WE TOOK TEA BREAK.

20. AFTER THE TEA BREAK, WE BEGAN BY SAYING WE WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY ON POINT. THO HAD SAID WE BOTH AGREED TO A STOPPING OF BOMBING. THAT OF COURSE WAS NOT CORRECT. WE ACCEPTED THAT A CESSATION OF BOMBING COULD FURTHER THE OBJECTIVE OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, BUT THAT WE NEEDED TO DETERMINE THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY OUR STOPPING THE BOMBARDMENT.

21. IN PREVIOUS TALKS BETWEEN VANCE AND LAU AND TODAY, WE HAD POINTED OUT MATTERS WHICH WERE MOST IMPORTANT IN MOVING TOWARDS PEACE. WE HAD MENTIONED TWO TODAY, BUT THERE WERE OTHER MATTERS WHICH VANCE HAD MENTIONED WHICH WOULD COME ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS IN PHASE 2.

22. WE THEN SAID WE WOULD LIKE TO SUMMARIZE OUR IMPRESSIONS. BASED ON WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BETWEEN MEMBERS OF OUR RESPECTIVE DELEGATIONS, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IF THE BOMBARDMENT WERE STOPPED THE DRV WOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO IN AND AROUND THE DMZ. IN OTHER WORDS, SINCE THE DRV WISHED TO MOVE TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, AS THEY HAVE SAID, THEIR ACTIONS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH MOVING TOWARD PEACE. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAD SAID REALITY WOULD SPEAK FOR ITSELF AND THAT REALITY WOULD

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CREATE CONDITIONS FAVORABLE TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IF THE BOMBARDMENT WERE STOPPED AND WE RESPECTED THE DMZ, THEY WOULD RESPECT THE DMZ.

23. THO REPLIED THAT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THESE CONVERSATIONS IN BOTH OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE MEETINGS, THEY HAVE REPEATED THAT THEY HAD COME WITH SERIOUS INTENT AND GOODWILL IN ORDER TO REACH A POLITICAL AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE VIET-NAM PROBLEM. THEY ASKED THE SAME OF US. THE CESSATION OF BOMBING IS THE CRUCIAL POINT WHICH WILL OPEN THE WAY TO GO FURTHER AND FIND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THEIR DEMAND WAS LEGITIMATE. HE THEN REPEATED THAT AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING WE COULD GO ON TO RAISE ANY ITEMS ON EITHER SIDE AND AGREE UPON AN AGENDA AND THE ORDER IN WHICH THE ITEMS WOULD BE DISCUSSED.

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24. AT THIS POINT, THUY ADDED HIS COMMENTS. HE SAID THE VIEWS THEY EXPRESSED TODAY HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT OUR VIEWS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DRV HAD ADDED SOMETHING NEW IN ORDER TO SPEED UP PROGRESS. WE HAD RAISED PHASE 1 - PHASE 2, AND THEIR VIEWS EXPRESSED TODAY WERE EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAD TAKEN THIS PROPOSAL INTO ACCOUNT. WHAT IS NEW IN THEIR PROPOSAL TODAY IS THAT AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING THERE WOULD BE DISCUSSIONS TO AGREE UPON AN AGENDA AND ON THAT AGENDA COULD BE ALL THE PROBLEMS WE RAISED AND ALL THE PROBLEMS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD RAISE. WE WOULD THEN CHOOSE THE ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED FIRST AND THE ITEMS TO FOLLOW. THUY SAID THAT THEY WERE PROPOSING A MORE POSITIVE STEP AND IT WAS UP TO THE US TO DECIDE THE PERIOD OF TIME BETWEEN THE CESSATION OF BOMBING AND THE BEGINNING OF DISCUSSIONS. THE DRV IS PREPARED TO BEGIN DISCUSSION THE DAY AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING. THIS IS EVIDENCE OF THEIR SERIOUS INTENT AND GOODWILL AND A POSITIVE STEP TOWARD A SETTLEMENT.

25. WE SAID THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING ON WHAT WE HAD SAID ABOUT THE DMZ AND WE WANTED TO CORRECT IT. ONE OF THE IMPORTANT MATTERS WHICH WE HAD RAISED THIS MORNING WAS THE QUESTION OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE DMZ AREA. WE THEN REPEATED OUR POSITION ON THE DMZ AS SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 9 ABOVE.

26. THUY THEN SAID, "DOES THIS MEAN THAT MILITARY ACTIONS WOULD STOP BEFORE THE CESSATION OF BOMBING?" WE REPLIED, "NO. THE MILITARY ACTIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY AND DISCUSSION OF INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION COULD FOLLOW." WE THEN REPEATED THE STATEMENT WHICH LAU HAD MADE TO VANCE IN THIS REGARD. THUY SAID THAT THERE WAS ONE PRINCIPLE TO COME BACK TO AND

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THAT WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO RECIPROCITY. IF THERE IS ANYTHING RELATED TO RECIPROCITY, THEN THEY REJECT IT. THO SAID THAT THERE MAY SOMETIMES BE A MISUNDERSTANDING, AS THERE WAS ABOUT A STATEMENT THAT HE HAD MADE IN JUNE. ALTHOUGH WE HAD QUOTED LAU'S WORDS CORRECTLY, LAU DID NOT SAY WHAT THEY WOULD DO AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE. AS THO HAD SAID THIS MORNING, THEY HAD GOODWILL AND SERIOUS INTENT TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE VET-NAM PROBLEM. THEY DEMANDED A CESSATION OF BOMBING AFTER WHICH WE COULD RAISE ANY MATTER WE WISHED AND THEY COULD RAISE ANY MATTER THEY WISHED, THUS MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF SERIOUS TALK TO FIND A SETTLEMENT. THO SAID IF THE US PROPOSES A CESSATION OF BOMBING, TO BE CONDITIONAL TO A DISCUSSION OF ANY PARTICULAR ITEM, OR IF WE WOULD STOP THE BOMBING AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PARTICULAR ACTIONS, THAT WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO RECIPROCITY. WHEREAS, WHAT HE HAD PROPOSED THIS MORNING WAS THAT ONCE WE HAVE STOPPED THE BOMBING WE WOULD SIT TOGETHER AND WE WOULD THEN SEE WHAT A SERIOUS ATTITUDE AND GOODWILL THEY HAD.

27. WE SAID THAT WE WERE GAINING THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TALKS CAN'T BE SERIOUS UNLESS CERTAIN THINGS HAPPENED. THO REPLIED THAT IF WE WOULD STOP THE BOMBING, SERIOUS TALKS CAN BEGIN. WE ANSWERED THAT WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF CONCERN TO US IS THAT IF WE DID STOP THE BOMBING AND THEN THEIR TROOPS WOULD DRIVE THROUGH THE DMZ, THAT THIS WOULD BE THE END OF SERIOUS TALKS. AS A RESULT OF THE SERIES OF PRIVATE TALKS, WE BOTH UNDERSTOOD BETTER WHAT SERIOUS TALKS MEAN TO EACH OTHER AND WE WERE SURE THEY UNDERSTOOD THE KIND OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE. IF SERIOUS TALKS STARTED AND BROKE OFF, IT WOULD BE A SET BACK WHICH WE ASSUME NEITHER OF US WANTED. WE HAD GAINED THE IMPRESSION-- ALMOST THE CONCLUSION-- THAT IF SERIOUS TALKS START THEY WANT THEM TO BE PRODUCTIVE, WITH GIVE-AND-TAKE ON BOTH SIDES. BUT CERTAIN THINGS ARE QUITE OBVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL FROM OUR VIEWPOINT, AND WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTOOD THEM

28. THO TOOK NO EXCEPTION TO WHAT WE HAD SAID AND STATED THAT HE HAD A FEW WORDS HE WANTED TO ADD. HE SAID THAT FOUR MONTHS OF OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE TALKS, INCLUDING THE VANCE/LAU MEETINGS AND THESE HERE, HAVE BROUGHT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S VIEWS FOR FINDING A SETTLEMENT. OUR VIEWS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY EXAMINED BY THEM AND THEY HOPED WE WOULD CAREFULLY EXAMINE THEIRS. GRADUALLY, BY TALKING WE WOULD UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S

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GOODWILL. THO SAID HE IS CONVINCED THAT BY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE TALKS WE WILL FIND A SETTLEMENT FOR THE FUTURE, AND THIS IS WHAT THEY WISHED.

29. WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN NEXT FRIDAY AT 9:30 A.M. AND ADJOURNED.

30. COMMENT: WE NOTE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MADE TODAY BY THO WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN MADE BEFORE IN THE SAME WAY.

A. THO AND THUY STATED THEIR READINESS TO BEGIN SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS THE DAY AFTER CESSATION OF BOMBING (SEE PARAS 10 AND 24).

B. NUMEROUS REFERENCES BY THO TO SERIOUS INTENT AND GOODWILL FOR FINDING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. IN PARA 24 ABOVE AND AGAIN IN PARA 28, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE RELATED THIS SERIOUS INTENT AND GOODWILL TO PROPOSALS WE HAVE MADE. IN PARA 26, THO SAID THAT AFTER A CESSATION OF BOMBING, WE WOULD THEN SEE WHAT A SERIOUS ATTITUDE AND GOODWILL THEY HAD.

C. IN PARA 27 ABOVE, WE STATED OUR VIEWS OF WHAT WAS NECESSARY FOR SERIOUS TALKS TO CONTINUE AND THE DANGER OF THEIR BREAKING OFF. IN PARA 28 ABOVE, THO TOOK NO EXCEPTION TO WHAT WE HAD TO SAY. HE STATED THAT OUR OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE TALKS HAVE BROUGHT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S VIEWS. HE CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS AT THIS POINT BY SAYING THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT BY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE TALKS WE WILL FIND A SETTLEMENT AND THAT THIS WAS WHAT THEY WISHED.

D. IN PARA 7 ABOVE, THEY ASKED IN DETAIL ABOUT THE SIX-MONTH PROVISION AND FOR THE FIRST TIME APPEARED TO IMPLICITLY ACCEPT DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION OF MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL.

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INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Monday, September 16, 1968 -- 8:15 pm

Mr. President:

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You will wish to read this thoughtful assessment by Thieu of the enemy's current strategy.

He has decided that the enemy does not have the capacity for a major attack on Saigon and the other cities; but will revert to the older strategy of trying to expand his hold in the countryside.

He does not believe that this is a long-term strategy but designed to lead up to a position where the enemy will have some bargaining power when the enemy proposes a cease-fire in place.

Therefore, he believes that, while protecting the cities, we should throw more of our resources into extending security and control in the countryside and try to raise our present level of control from the present level of perhaps 66% of the total population to 75-80% secure.

Interestingly enough, we discussed this possible shift in U.S. and GVN priorities at the last meeting of Nick Katzenbach's Vietnam group with Bus Wheeler. Bus said that Abrams' present strategy would automatically move in this direction as the third wave gave way to protracted harassing operations.

You may wish to discuss this with Clark and Bus.

W. Rostow
W. Rostow

Saigon 37824

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TELEGRAM

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PARIS FOR VIETNAM MISSION

SUBJECT: THIEU'S ANALYSIS OF ENEMY STRATEGY

1. PRESIDENT THIEU GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ENEMY STRATEGY DURING OUR SEPTEMBER 13 CONSULATION MEETING:

A. HE FEELS THE ENEMY IS NOW REVERTING TO HIS NORMAL TACTIC OF ATTEMPTING TO OCCUPY MORE AND MORE TERRITORY AND OF CONCENTRATING ON THE RURAL AREAS. HE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE HIS ATTEMPTS TO PENETRATE SOME CITY WHICH IS NOT WELL DEFENDED.

HIS OBJECTIVE IS TO OCCUPY A CITY LIKE TAY NINH FOR A SHORT TIME FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES, NOT TO HOLD IT FOR A LONG TIME. THE ENEMY PLANS, THROUGH PRESSURE ON THE CITIES, TO HOLD ALLIED TROOPS NEAR THE URBAN AREAS, LEAVING HIM FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE COUNTRYSIDE.

B. THIS IS THE ONLY STRATEGY OPEN TO THE ENEMY WITH THE MEANS

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HE NOW HAS: ~~IT IS ALL THAT IS WITHIN HIS CAPABILITIES FOR THE NEXT 5-6 MONTHS. THE ENEMY IS LIKE A CARD PLAYER DECIDING HOW BEST TO USE HIS REMAINING MONEY. HE WILL CONTINUE TO BLUFF IN PARIS, MAINTAINING THAT HE IS WINNING THE WAR, WHILE TRYING TO EXERT SOME MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE GROUND IN VIETNAM.~~

C. THE ENEMY HOPES TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN MILITARY PRESSURE DURING THE ~~FOUR MONTHS REMAINING UNTIL THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND TO EXTEND HIS CONTROL OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE DURING THIS PERIOD. THIS, HANOI BELIEVES, WILL ENABLE THEM TO MAKE THE WORLD THINK THAT THEY ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP UP THE MILITARY STRUGGLE. IT WILL PUT THEM THROUGH THEIR OCCUPATION OF MORE AND MORE VILLAGES, IN A POSITION TO PROPOSE A CEASE-FIRE IN PLACE, AND PERHAPS THEN TO ASK FOR ELECTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM IN THE BELIEF THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE COMMUNISTS WOULD VOTE FOR THEM.~~

2. THIEU SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE CABINET, IN THE COURSE OF ITS REVIEW OF PACIFICATION ON SEPTEMBER 12, THAT ~~THE GVN OBJECTIVE FOR THE NEXT YEAR MUST BE TO CONSOLIDATE ITS CONTROL OF THE SECURE AREAS IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE THE POPULATION OF THESE AREAS, SOME 75-80 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, MORE SECURITY AND A GOOD ADMINISTRATION. THIS WOULD INVOLVE MORE EMPHASIS ON PACIFICATION THAN ON DEVELOPMENT AND MORE EMPHASIS ON THE SECURE THAN ON THE CONTESTED AREAS. IT WOULD MEAN THAT SOME 75-80 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE SECURITY AND AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION.~~

3. I COMMENTED THAT THIS SEEMED TO ME A SOUND APPROACH AND PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF THE COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN TO SET UP AN ADMINISTRATIVE NETWORK IN MANY AREAS PARALLEL TO THAT OF THE GVN. BUNKER

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

INFORMATION

WASHINGTON

Monday, September 16, 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Gene Black's trip to Cambodia

Results were nil. ~~Sihanouk did not receive Black. Otherwise, Black~~ received VIP treatment, met with the Prime Minister and the Acting Foreign Minister, and had a thorough review of the problems. Cambodian positions are:

~~VC/NVA use of Cambodian territory - The Cambodian Government does not intend to do substantially more than it is now doing on the problem.~~

Cambodians are more concerned over it than U.S. They do not sanction any VC/NVA presence. U.S. claims notwithstanding, there are no permanent Communist installations in Cambodia, and Communist groups which enter from time to time are pushed out quickly. Cambodians are grateful for and use the information we give them on Communist presence, but it would be an infringement of their sovereignty to report to us on results. The International Control Commission functions satisfactorily from the Cambodian point of view.

~~LCU 1577 - This violation of Cambodian waters will be handled according to Cambodian law~~ Payment of an indemnity for some border incident could lead to a release of the American soldiers without loss of face by either side.

~~Border Declaration - Cambodians very much want it, and it could be followed immediately by restoration of diplomatic relations.~~ Cambodians assume that our giving border declaration would solve the problem of U.S. violations of Cambodia's border, for we would follow border guarantee by exercising effective control of our forces in the area. ~~Sihanouk could not receive Black for that would be inconsistent with his policy of receiving only representatives of countries which have satisfactorily guaranteed Cambodia's borders.~~

~~Black set forth our positions with equal firmness,~~ but no apparent results.

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Despite the unyielding position expressed by the Cambodians in regard to Communist use of their soil, Black's trip ~~probably served to underline~~ the gravity with which we view this issue. However, it is not clear that they will -- or can -- do much about it.

State is examining ~~a couple of new approaches to the problem of getting the eleven American soldiers released.~~ We will come back to you on this if it appears to have any promise. A State advisor accompanying Black managed to visit the prisoners. ~~They are in excellent shape and good spirits, are well-treated and complain only about boredom with their routine of athletics and reading.~~

Walt Rostow

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