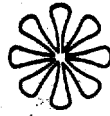


TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE



UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

1945 - 1967

VIETNAM TASK FORCE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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Set 9 OF 15

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SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT

Negotiations, 1967 - 1968

HISTORY OF CONTACTS

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VIETNAM NEGOTIATIONS, 1967-1968

This book contains statements and messages exchanged between the U.S. and the DRV on negotiations, primarily in the form of closely held private communications. It is in three parts:

--The Setting: A description of the intermediaries and the attitude of the DRV.

--Conditions for "Talks": Conditions for meeting laid down by the two sides.

--Settlement Terms: Proposals made by the two sides on a final settlement of the war.

1. Troop Withdrawals
2. Free Elections
3. Who Represents SVN in the Government and in Negotiations
4. Reunification
5. International Guarantees and Inspection
6. Cease-Fire

The last two sections each contain a summary, followed by the references cited in chronological order.

THE SETTING

I. INTRODUCTION

Since mid-1964, there was a halting but gradual diplomatic movement by both NVN and the U.S. toward a negotiated settlement. Hanoi had been insisting previously on U.S. withdrawal from SVN, acceptance of the Four Points as the only correct solution, the NLF as the sole legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people, and a permanent as well as unconditional cessation of U.S. action against NVN, prior to beginning either talks or negotiations. In other words, Hanoi was demanding that the U.S. make all the requisite concessions before the two sides even sat down at the table. By mid-1967, it seemed clear that the only condition for talks was the cessation of U.S. bombardment and all other acts of war against NVN. While the U.S. repeatedly maintained the position of either "unconditional discussions" at any time, or de-escalation, or both, it too gradually modified its stand. By the end of 1967, the U.S. no longer pressed for a virtually immediate withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces or for "assurances that infiltration has stopped." The San Antonio formula was a recognition that the war in the South might continue at about the present rate, even if negotiations were in process.

Diplomatic differences were narrowed to the point where though there will be real disputes at the bargaining table, initial contacts leading to negotiations could readily begin. All these diplomatic moves served as a quiet backdrop to the war in Vietnam itself. The fighting in South Vietnam stepped up as both sides increased their force levels and ambitions. The U.S. bombardment of North Vietnam escalated as new targets were struck throughout 1967.

II. THE INTERMEDIARIES

From the close of SUNFLOWER in September 1967 until President Johnson's dramatic speech of March 31, 1968, diplomatic activity to bring the opposing sides to the conference table was carried on essentially through five different and sometimes overlapping channels!

First, there was the Rumanian track (to become "PACKERS" in December 1967) which extended from October 1966 through February 1968. Periods of intensity in this track were January 1967, October and

November 1967, and December 1967 through January 1968. Private exchanges in this track were being confirmed by public statements on both sides.

Second, the Government of Sweden ("ASPEN") played a continuing though minor role from November 1966 through February 1968. Swedish-DRV contacts were intense in November of 1966, February 1967, with contacts occurring throughout the whole 1967-68 timeframe.

Third, there were infrequent and low-key contacts between the Norwegians and the DRV ("OHIO") which lasted from June 1967 through to March of 1968. There was not much activity in OHIO, since we preferred to use other channels, but the key messages in this channel were passed in June 1967 and March 1968.

Fourth, there was a contact in Paris ("PENNSYLVANIA"), with great intensity and frequency of exchanges in September and October of 1967. Private exchanges in this track were being confirmed by public statements.

Fifth, the Italian-DRV track ("KILLY") was seemingly being considered a prime channel by both sides in February and the beginning of March 1968. This was the last contact prior to President Johnson's speech of March 31, 1968.

The difference in the quality of reporting and intermediation in these tracks is, in retrospect, quite pronounced. Since very few written messages were exchanged, we were continually relying on the ear, predilections and prejudices of the intermediary. Since all the intermediaries, in one way or another, had a definite interest in the success of their role as well as in bringing the opposing sides to the conference table, all transmissions from them have to be viewed with some skepticism. All of their efforts seem to focus on one issue--the cessation of U.S. bombing. It must be assumed that in addition to good offices and good will, all of these intermediaries wanted us to stop the bombing. Since Hanoi was apparently representing to them that nothing else could occur unless the bombings were stopped, they tended to take this declaration as a given. All were, in one way or another, wary of the spread of the war, international tensions, and especially of the impact of the war on their domestic policies.

The Rumanians constantly pressured us on the bombing issue. At one time, they were claiming they had received the "signal" from Hanoi in response to Goldberg's UN speech in the fall of 1966. (Goldberg had stated that Hanoi only needed to give "an indication as to what it would do in response to a prior cessation of bombing by the U.S.") Later, they admitted that they had received no specific "signal." The

Rumanians were quite frank about admitting that they were only interested in the stopping of the U.S. bombing. They accepted that the two sides were now far apart, but argued that once they sat down at the table "then the other nations desirous of seeing an end to conflict would try to push the two sides together." Terms of final settlement, they believed, should not be discussed before the bombings stopped since it would only drive the parties further apart. The Rumanians were also saying that they did not blame either party for the Vietnam situation, and that they were only interested in a peaceful settlement.

It seems from hindsight that the Rumanians were very poor reporters: they did not pick up distinctions such as talks, negotiations, and settlement terms; and they repeatedly claimed that the DRV wanted to talk directly with us; and, after all signs pointed in the opposite direction, they were still representing Hanoi's demand for a U.S. bombing cessation as both unconditional and permanent. It is likely that Hanoi did not take the Rumanians seriously. Despite these indications about the Rumanians, two GOR envoys were used by the U.S. to transmit and receive messages during the crucial December 1967 through February 1968 period. Ambassador Suu (in Killy) laughed when d'Orlandi suggested that serious exchanges were taking place through the Rumanians.

The Swedes were more active over time than any other intermediary-- and produced the least amount of information. The important point to note about the Swedish role was that the Swedes seemed to have more ready and frequent access to the DRV (both in Hanoi and in Warsaw) than any other nation. The Swedes were unabashedly anxious to be the successful go-between. On May 9, 1967 they even went so far as to say that they would "take responsibility for a position which [they] felt convinced about." In other words, they were willing to be a broker as well as a message carrier.

The whole Swedish role was very much dominated by their domestic politics: there were frequent press leaks on GOS-DRV contacts; Vietnam policy was frequently and vituperatively discussed in the Swedish Parliament; the Russell War Crimes Tribunal began to hold its hearings in July 1967; and the GOS kept hinting about establishing consular relations with Hanoi. Swedish GVN relations began to strain, and in the spring and summer of 1967, Sweden reduced the level of its diplomatic representation in Saigon. Finally, on November 4, 1967, the GOS publicly denounced U.S.-Vietnam policy.

The U.S., because of the above, never put much stock in the Swedish messages, and this track never became an important one.

The Norwegian role was not treated with great importance by Washington, and the track was never a very active one. Nevertheless, in retrospect, the exchanges between the DRV Ambassador and Peking (Loan) and

the Norwegian Ambassador in Peking (Algard) were probably the most reliable of all. Algard seems to have been a careful note-taker, and his messages look like he was using Hanoi turns of phrases. Many of the points made by Algard were subsequently borne out by other contacts and by public DRV statements.

Because Norway, unlike Sweden, was not visibly more friendly to the DRV than to the U.S., Hanoi did not seem really comfortable in activating this channel into a major one. On November 2, 1967, Loan hinted to Algard that Norway's role was "not neutral" and that Norway was "indirectly involved." Norwegian domestic politics were, like those in Sweden, vehemently anti-American on the Vietnam issue, but this never seemed to get in the way of objective Norwegian Government reporting. Unlike the Swedes, the Norwegians did not press us hard on the bombing issue.

The exchanges among the PENNSYLVANIA participants (two unofficial Frenchmen, Mai Van Bo and Henry Kissinger) seemed to have been handled with great care and accuracy. While the two Frenchmen, Marcovich and Aubrac, were clearly committed to getting the U.S. to stop the bombing, there is no evidence that their reporting, or message carrying, was adversely affected. Kissinger for the U.S. handled the play with consummate skill, clarifying points and making interpretations that could lead to a continuing dialogue. Both Hanoi and Washington treated this channel as a major one, and yet little was accomplished except the clarification of the U.S. "no advantage" formula. This clarification was to be lost in subsequent reformulations of the U.S. position on "no advantage."

The Italians were old hands at playing the role of intermediary. Their role in MARIGOLD had been respected by both sides. They were not pushy about interposing themselves between Hanoi and Washington and always stood ready to break off contacts if the U.S. so desired. It is important to remember that in Killy the North Vietnamese sought out d'Orlandi (according to d'Orlandi) and not the reverse. The Killy contacts were between d'Orlandi and the DRV Ambassador in Prague, Suu. It is also important to remember that d'Orlandi had a very special view about the role of intermediation. Unlike all the other go-betweens who were interested almost solely in a cessation of U.S. bombing, d'Orlandi's approach was to focus on terms of final settlement. Only when the future of South Vietnam could be foreseen, d'Orlandi argued, would the two sides sit down and genuinely and seriously negotiate.

III. NORTH VIETNAMESE STRATEGY

It has always been clear that insofar as Hanoi is interested in negotiations, it is only as another way of achieving its objectives. Since the earliest months of 1966, party leaders in Hanoi have been preparing their people for a "fight and negotiate policy." Captured documents have reaffirmed the prevalence of this policy.

Hanoi frames its strategy in terms of two stages: "decisive victory" and "final victory." "Decisive victory" is defined in terms of breaking the U.S. will to persist -- namely, when the course of war in the South reaches a "deadlock." The U.S. recognition of this "deadlock" and its willingness to negotiate on Hanoi's terms then would be tested at the bargaining table. Moreover, when negotiations are in process, Hanoi says that it would create "another front" with which to "disintegrate" South Vietnamese armed forces and exacerbate "contradictions" within the Saigon Government and between U.S. and Saigon. "Final victory" could come when all Vietnam was effectively under Hanoi's control.

Seen in this light, Hanoi's failure to assure military reciprocity for a bombing cessation in advance of talks could be (a) a matter of principle, as they assert, or (b) a question of strategy -- that is, a test of U.S. will to persist, or (c) simply a tactic, a way of concealing their willingness to retreat until convinced that the U.S. has made its best offer.

Hanoi's designing of the three stages of bargaining (talks, negotiations, settlement) can be viewed as part of this same fabric. Each stage is so constructed that it depends on the successful completion of the preceding stage. Hanoi recognizes its own morale problem and does not want to risk creating expectations of a settlement until it is pretty sure that the settlement will accord with its objectives.

THE U.S. AND DRV CONDITIONS FOR "TALKS" CONVERGE

As of SUNFLOWER (February, 1967), the DRV position on conditions for "talks" with the U.S. had been conveyed as follows:

(1) Publicly, Trinh had said, "It is only after the unconditional cessation of US bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV that there could be talks between the DRV and the US." (Trinh interview with Burchett of 1/28/67, as broadcast in English by Radio Hanoi.)

(2) Privately, in writing, the DRV said, "The unconditional cessation of bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV being materialized, the DRV could then exchange views with the US concerning the place or date for contact between the two parties as the USG proposed in its message handed over on January 10, 1967." (DRV Aide-Memoire given us in Moscow, 1/27/67, in Hanoi's "unofficial translation" into English. This replied to our Aide-Memoire suggesting exchanges on "the possibilities of achieving a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese dispute.")

(3) Kosygin privately told the British (they said) on 2/6/67, that he had been in direct contact with Hanoi and could confirm that Hanoi would talk if the bombing stopped. He repeated this in essence to Thompson in Moscow on 2/18/67. (See London 6316, 2/7/67, and Moscow 3562, 2/18/67.)

Our position was that we would enter talks without conditions, or we would stop the bombing in return for some reciprocal act of military restraint but that we would not stop bombing simply in exchange for talks.

After SUNFLOWER, the two sides bounced varying formulations back and forth, eventually inching toward each other. The U.S. position remained essentially unchanged until August 25, 1967, when the San Antonio formulation was privately passed to the DRV. The meaning of this proposal seems to have been obscure to Hanoi. Several later messages passed in clarification varied among themselves, and the DRV persisted in seeing "conditions" attached to the San Antonio formula, making it unacceptable by Hanoi's lights. The U.S. was probing to see if Hanoi understood our "assumption"; and this probing was apparently interpreted by the DRV as asking advance assurance that the "no advantage" would in fact be taken, a condition. By the end of KILLY (3/1/68), however, when d'Orlandi (as he reported) warned that "if bombing stopped and talks began, assaulting Khe Sanh, invading or trying to detach the two northern provinces of SVN, launching a second wave of attacks against one or more cities or creating a sensation with something else like an assault on Camp Carroll, would sink the whole thing," DRV Ambassador Su gave his "personal" view: "From the moment the two sides meet, it was obvious no such thing could happen." (Rome 4590, 3/4/68.)

At this point Hanoi probably felt it had replied affirmatively and officially to the "prompt" and "productive" conditions. (In public statements, the DRV had indicated that talks could begin "as soon as" the bombing and all other acts of war stopped, and that the subject of the talks would be "questions related to a settlement of the Vietnam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam....also questions which could be raised by either side.") Assuming Su was accurately reported, it had also gone part of the way on "no advantage," though not so far as to acknowledge it had troops in the South or to give us an official pledge against which we could allege violations, resume bombing or break off talks.

In early April, Hanoi indicated its representative at the contact would have ambassadorial rank and would be empowered to agree on a date, place and level for "formal talks" after the bombing cessation. In the event, the DRV representative Xuan Thuy, has ministerial rank and his proposed contact with us in Paris has been described by Hanoi (in English) as "formal talks."

What follow are the major statements, public and private, made by the two sides since SUNFLOWER.

CHRONOLOGY

DRV (6/14/67). The DRV Ambassador to Peking, Ngo, told the Norwegian Ambassador there that the cessation of U.S. bombing is the only condition for their coming to the conference table.

OSLO 4531 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 14 June 1967:

"2. Following is my informal rendition of Algard's report, transposed from first to third person:

"3. Ambassador Mgo underlined strongly North Vietnamese Govt disposed toward negotiations. At same time they were deeply mistrustful of Americans' intentions in Vietnam. Steady escalation and sending of new troops indicated Americans had intention of staying permanently in Vietnam.

"4. Mgo underlined North Vietnamese Govt imposed only one condition for negotiations, namely that bombing of North Vietnam be stopped. Clearly having in mind the Chinese, he went to lengths to underline that speeches from other quarters which imposed other conditions including full American withdrawal from South Vietnam did not RPT not reflect North Vietnam Govt's thought. On North Vietnamese side one gave decisive weight to stop in bombing because this was viewed as respect for North Vietnamese sovereignty and such a respect was an absolute condition for coming to conference table, but was also the only condition. When they had come to conference table, North Vietnam position would be very flexible. 'We are,' said Ambassador Mgo, 'ready for very far reaching compromises to get an end to the war.' Ambassador Algard noted that recently one had impression that North Vietnamese side was cooler toward negotiations. Ambassador Mgo denied this strongly. He said that formerly when North Vietnam showed an interest in negotiations Americans had taken such interest as a sign of weakness and with results of stronger escalation. This was background against which one must judge some recent speeches on North Vietnamese side. Provided there would be a stop in bombing, North Vietnam was ready at any time for negotiations and far reaching compromises.

U.S. (6/20/67). The U.S. repeated that it required "at least some private assurance of appropriate reciprocal action by North Vietnam."

State 213389 to Oslo (SECRET-EXDIS), 20 June 1967:

"2.c. Expressed concern that U.S. intends to stay permanently in Vietnam is of interest. We assume GON is fully aware

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of our repeated statements of intent to withdraw and most specifically the precise wording used in the Manila Communique, which you should furnish them.

"d. Discussion of cessation of bombing of only condition for talks fits with other private readings as well as Trinh-Burchett interview and appears to us highly plausible.

"c. USG accepts that 'cessation' of the bombing of the North and military action against the North is only NVN condition for holding talks. NVN has referred to cessation being on 'unconditional' basis: What is meant by this? (Purpose here is to clarify whether there may be any distinction between usual NVN statements that bombing must be stopped 'indefinitively and unconditionally' --which we have construed to mean permanently -- and occasional other statements that stoppage of bombing must merely be 'unconditional.' We ourselves have assumed that no difference is intended between these two formulations, but direct inquiry could be useful in nailing this down.)

"d. Assuming that NVN condition calls for, in effect, permanent cessation of bombing, USG position remains as it has been stated throughout and particularly by Ambassador Goldberg in September 1966 at UN and by Secretary Rusk in January. U.S. view is that cessation of bombing, without at least some private assurance of appropriate reciprocal military action by NVN, would create situation of major military advantage to NVN and would not be conducive to fruitful talks. USG has put forward several general suggestions for timing and nature of NVN reciprocal actions, and President's letter to Ho contained one specific proposal that added the element of stopping of reinforcement by USG in the South. Canadian proposal of April called for link between cessation of bombing and restoring demilitarized status of DMZ under effective supervision, but Hanoi rejected this. What is present Hanoi view on these proposals, or do they have any other suggestion to make?

DRV (7/27/67). Pham Van Dong told Aubrac and Marcovich (PENNSYLVANIA) that the DRV would settle for a de facto stoppage, though it preferred a public statement.

"Now I shall talk to you about negotiations and solutions. We have been fighting for our independence for four thousand years. We have defeated the Mongols three times. The United States Army, strong as it is, is not as terrifying as Genghis Khan. We fight to have peace at home; we have no wider aims. We have made

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clear our position in our four points and in the interview of January 28, 1967. Pham Van Dong did not explain what this interview was; Aubrac and Marcovich did not know, nor do I. We are ready to talk at any time provided that actions against the North are unconditionally ended. I want to repeat what I said yesterday: we are willing to settle for a defacto stoppage." Marcovich interrupted to ask whether he correctly understood that no public acknowledgment of an end of bombing was needed. Pham Van Dong replied that he would prefer a public statement, but would settle for a de facto cessation. There was disagreement between Aubrac and Marcovich about the meaning of de facto cessation. Aubrac thought that a bombing pause could be followed within a few days by an invitation to negotiate; Marcovich was of the view that Hanoi might want a more formal--though secret--assurance.

U.S. (8/25/67). The "no advantage" formulation was passed to the DRV via Kissinger and Mai Van Bo in Paris. (PENNSYLVANIA)

Messrs A and M met with Bo in Paris to inquire why their visas had not been received. Bo told them it was too dangerous to visit Hanoi due to the bombing. M and A then informed Bo they had assurances in that respect, without identifying the nature of the assurances, which would be effective until September 4.

Messrs M and A then presented the US message as set forth below to Bo for the first time. He read it with interest and observed that it was "clearly significant". Bo queried them about the significance of para. 2 of the message. He was informed that it expressed US doubt that the existence of US/DRV discussions could be kept secret if bombing ended, and Bo recognized that this would be a problem. Bo was impressed and was told that the message was authorized by top levels of the USG. M and A gave Bo a written description of their contacts with Kissinger. Bo agreed to cable the message to Hanoi and to report their desires to visit Hanoi

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to discuss the message. Bo believed a reply should be available by August 29.

The English text of the message given to Bo in both French and English is as follows:

"The United States is willing to stop the aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam with the understanding that this will lead promptly to productive discussions between representatives of the United States and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam looking toward a resolution of the issues between them. While discussions proceed either with public knowledge or secretly, the United States would assume that the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation. Any such move on the part of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would obviously be inconsistent with the movement toward resolution of the issues between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam which the discussions are intended to achieve.

The United States is prepared to enter into discussions either openly or secretly. It would seem, however, that a total cessation of the bombing is inconsistent with keeping secret the fact that discussions are taking place. Accordingly, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam may prefer to consider the alternative of a cutback in the magnitude or scope of the bombing while secret discussions are in progress.

The United States is ready to have immediate private contact with the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam to explore the above approach or any suggestions the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam might wish to propose in the same direction."

DRV (9/11/67). A number of new, sensitive DRV targets were struck on August 21-22, 1967, but restrikes and strikes near Hanoi were suspended on August 24 as a gesture of goodwill. The DRV reacted negatively, however, to both the gesture and the "no advantage" proposal, terming them threatening, conditional, etc., in line with the general DRV objective of removing the bombing as a bargaining blue chip for the U.S.
(PENNSYLVANIA)

In response to a phone request from Bo at 6:00 p.m. (Paris time), Sunday, September 10, Marcovich called on Bo at 9:30 a.m. After

an exchange of pleasantries. Bo handed to M the following text of Hanoi's official reply to the August 25 message:

"The essence of the American propositions is the stopping of the bombing under conditions. The American bombing of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam is illegal. The United States any should put an end to the bombing and cannot pose conditions.

"The American message has been communicated after an escalation of the attacks against Hanoi and under the threat (menace) of continuation of the attacks against Hanoi. It is clear that this constitutes an ultimatum to the Vietnamese people.

"The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam energetically rejects the American propositions.

"The position of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam is that the United States should cease definitely and without conditions the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. It should withdraw American troops and satellites from South Viet-Nam, recognize the National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam and let the Vietnamese people themselves regulate their internal affairs. It is only after the unconditional stopping by the United States of the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, that it would be possible to engage in conversations."

(unofficial translation)

Bo told M to give the text to Kissinger and added that "as soon as there is a reply" M should communicate with Bo at any time of day or night. When M urged Bo to meet Kissinger,

Bo said "give the message to Kissinger and when the reply is here we shall see about meeting". In commenting on the text of the DRV message Bo made the following statement:

"The bombing of Hanoi at the same time as the sending of the (August 21) message constitutes a pressure. Stopping of the bombing along with the threat of a renewal has the character of an ultimatum." (Paris 3097).

U.S. (9/16/67). We protested that the DRV must have misunderstood the 8/25/67 message, as it contained neither conditions nor threats. We merely wished to confirm that a bombing cessation would lead promptly to productive discussions leading to peace. We did not ask the DRV to reply to the "no advantage" assumption. (PENNSYLVANIA)

M and A met with Bo for over an hour, starting at noon. A, who did most of the talking at the meeting with Bo and kept the notes, reported on the meeting. Bo greeted A and M affably and offered them drinks. Bo said Ho had charged him with inquiring about the health of A's family. A then handed to Bo in a sealed envelope French and English texts of the following US message:

September 13, 1967

"The USG believes that the September 11 message from the DRV may be based on a misunderstanding of the American proposal of August 25. The American proposal contained neither conditions nor threats and should not be rejected on these grounds.

"It has been the understanding of the USG that the DRV would be willing promptly to engage in productive discussions leading to peace when there was a cessation of aerial and naval bombardment. The USG sought to confirm this fact in its proposal which the DRV has in front of it.

"As a demonstration of its good faith and in order to create the best atmosphere for the consideration of its proposal the US voluntarily undertook not to bomb Hanoi from August 25 onward - the day on which its proposal was submitted to Hanoi. This restraint has been maintained without time limit even though activities by opposing forces in the south have in fact been stepped up since August 25.

"The August 25 proposal of the USG remains open." (END OF MESSAGE)

A told Bo he did not know the content of the message but described it as "conciliatory", a word which Bo made him write down. Bo did not open the envelope in M and A's presence.

A asked Bo about the significance of the AFP September 14 Hanoi story (State 38031), quoting "reliable sources" as indicating that talks would start three or four weeks after a bombing cessation, and A showed Bo Paris press stories based on the AFP report. Bo replied that the three-to four-week interval between the end of bombing and the beginning of negotiations was "an invention of journalists". He noted that Pham Van Dong's statement had given no ground for the time period mentioned in the newspapers.

U.S. (9/25/67). We ask Hanoi to confirm our understanding of U.S./DRV differences: We are willing to stop bombing if Hanoi confirms that this will lead promptly to productive negotiations; Hanoi has implied, but not confirmed, that this would be the result. (PENNSYLVANIA)

M called on Bo at 8:30 a.m. and read to Bo the following five point message from Kissinger:

"(1) I will transmit to the appropriate Washington officials later today the message you (Bo) gave M yesterday. (2) I see no point in trading charges and countercharges about past activities. In fact Washington has offered to stop bombing based on the assumption it would lead to prompt, productive talks. That offer remains open. It was made sincerely. If accepted, there will be no need to discuss escalation or bombing problems. (3) The exchange indicates that Washington and Hanoi have great difficulty understanding each other's thought processes. This makes direct US/DRV contact essential. Intermediaries, no matter how trustworthy, are not satisfactory substitutes. (4) American military actions during the past month reflect in part the extreme secrecy with which Washington has handled this exchange. The USG has considered it unwise to change decisions made prior to the report of M and A's trip to Hanoi, except in regard to bombing Hanoi itself, because it wanted to keep the circle of awareness of this exchange as small as possible to avoid premature public debate. (5) The difference in the positions of the two governments could be summarized as follows: Washington has indicated its readiness to stop bombing and has only asked to confirm its understanding of Hanoi's view that this would lead promptly to productive negotiations. Hanoi has implied that an end of bombing would in fact have this result. If this is indeed the view of both governments, the remaining obstacles to direct talks can be

overcome. I am certain that the above correctly reflects US views. Could Bo confirm that it also reflects the view of Hanoi."

M said Bo's response to the foregoing message was favorable. M then questioned Bo about

U.S. (9/29/67). The President speaks at San Antonio, publicly confirming the "no advantage" formulation and noting that it had been given repeatedly to Hanoi.

"As we have told Hanoi time and time again, the heart of the matter is this: The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Vietnam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation." (President's remarks in San Antonio before the National Legislative Conference.)

DRV (10/2/67). Marcovich, after taking careful notes on Mai Van Bo's comments, described Trinh's 1/28/67 statement as a "solemn engagement to talk after the unconditional end of the bombing." Two days later, Bo denied using the term "solemn engagement," to which Marcovich took strong exception. (PENNSYLVANIA)

M following the meeting and after a flight to Rome where he discussed the message in detail with A from Rome ... mailed it by special delivery air-post to Kissinger in Boston late on October 2. The text of the note received by Kissinger follows:

"The position of the RDVN remains always the same. If the United States really wished to talk, let them stop first without conditions the bombardment of the territory of the RDVN.

"Starting from that position there are several eventualities:

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(a) A public declaration by the Government of the United States about the cessation. This declaration could take place either before or after the cessation.

(b) An official declaration but non-public preceding the cessation of the bombardment. This declaration could be communicated by the channel K/A-M (officieusement)-not quite officially, and after this indication it can be transmitted officially by an accredited person.

(c) An end of bombardment without preceding official declaration followed by an official but not public communication of the Government of the United States.

"Eventuality (a) would represent a public declaration replying to that made on the 28th of January by M. Trinh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RDVN, which constitutes a solemn engagement to talk after the unconditional end of bombing. This public declaration would be followed by the transmission of an official text by an accredited person.

U.S. (10/8/67). We offered to set a date for stopping the bombing and a date and place for beginning discussions if the DRV indicated it would enter promptly into productive discussions on U.S./DRV issues.

M and A called on Bo at 9:00 a.m. Paris time and spent 1½ hours with him. As in the past Bo was cordial to his visitors throughout the meeting.

M and A handed the written portion of the message from Kissinger to Bo, which Bo read closely. M and A then read to Bo Kissinger's four "oral points," and Bo wrote them down carefully in his own notes. (M and A did not leave with Bo the "oral" part of the message.) The written message and oral points are as follows:

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"M should tell B that K would be authorized to deliver to B in writing the following message whenever B is prepared to meet with him officially or unofficially:

'The United States Government understands the position of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to be as follows: That upon the cessation by the United States of all forms of bombardment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, without expression of condition, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would enter promptly into productive discussions with the United States. The purpose of these discussions would be to resolve the issues between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

'Assuming the correctness of this understanding of the position of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the United States Government is prepared, in accordance with its proposal of August 25, to transmit in advance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam the precise date upon which bombardment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would cease and to suggest a date and a place for the commencement of discussions.'

"In addition M should convey to B the following oral points from K:

"1. K believes that this understanding is consistent with B's statements of October 4, as reported by M, and with the proposal of the United States Government of August 25.

"2. When B meets with K, K would also be prepared to state the precise date on which the cessation of bombardment would occur

and to give the suggestions of the United States with respect to the date and site of the discussions following the cessation of bombardment, and K would be authorized to receive the views of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with respect to these and other modalities.

"3. K noted that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had not commented on observations by the United States Government on August 25 with respect to secrecy of the fact of discussions between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States Government.

"4. K observed that officials of the United States Government had taken note of a reduction of military activities in the vicinity of the demilitarized zone. Undoubtedly, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had noted the absence in recent weeks of aerial bombardment in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi."

Bo told M to tell Kissinger how much Bo appreciated K's personal efforts. Bo then dictated to M and A the following short message of acknowledgment to K:

"M and A have passed the note from K to B. In case B will have a reply to make, he will make it through this channel."

U.S. (10/12/67). The San Antonio formula was explained to the Swedes. "No advantage" was not a "condition" but a "self-evident description" of what would constitute good faith. They were asked to find out if Hanoi would agree to a degree of restraint that would compromise a no advantage situation in return for stopping the bombing.

STATE 54361 to Amembassy Stockholm (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), 12 October 1967.

"4. During this conversation the Secretary made a number of observations on the main points raised by the Foreign Minister's paper. We would have nothing to add to his comments at this time beyond reaffirming the importance of eliciting any additional details on Foreign Minister Trinh's remark to Ambassador Petri in June that

Hanoi 'understood' the importance the United States attaches to reciprocal action on the part of North Vietnamese in connection with a halt in the bombing. We note Ambassador Petri's view that some concrete act of reciprocity can be expected after the cessation of the bombing, even if Foreign Minister Trinh gave no precise indication that Hanoi was considering taking such a step; and we would of course always be keenly interested in any new evidence which Ambassador Petri might obtain from North Vietnamese officials which would bear out his view.

"5. Since the Secretary's conversation with Foreign Minister Nilsson, President Johnson in his speech of September 29 has set forth our willingness immediately to stop aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. As the Foreign Minister will have seen from this speech, as well as from Ambassador Goldberg's September 21 speech at the United Nations, we are interested in two points -- whether there would be productive discussions, and whether we could reasonably assume that Hanoi would not take advantage of a bombing stoppage. The latter point has not been posed as a 'condition,' but rather as a self-evident description of a state of affairs that would evidence good faith on both sides. Foreign Minister Nilsson may note that the desired 'no advantage' situation would require restraint from Hanoi, but this might fall short of total cessation of arms dispatch and infiltration to South Viet-Nam. If Hanoi were prepared to consider such a cessation, a balanced arrangement, not only stopping the bombing but also cessation of reinforcement by United States and others; would be possible. But there remains the possibility that Hanoi might be prepared to agree to some lesser restraint, in return for stopping the bombing only, that could comprise an effective 'no disadvantage' situation.

"6. If Ambassador Petri could elicit any precise information on Hanoi's position concerning these points during his forthcoming visit to Hanoi, this could be of the greatest importance. As the Secretary remarked at the conclusion of the conversation, we would hope that we could be informed in advance of the timing of Ambassador Petri's next visit to Hanoi so that we might consider whether we could submit any additional points to make during his discussions with North Vietnamese officials."

RUSK (drafted by Isham)

Declassified and Approved For Release 2014/02/27 : CIA-RDP80R01720R001200090001-5

DRV (10/17/67). Through the PENNSYLVANIA channel, Bo gave us a written message changing the verb "could" (Trinh's 1/28/67 interview) to "can." He also indicated the DRV took "productive" to mean that the U.S. insisted on discussing SVN in U.S./DRV exchanges.

"M" saw Bo, expressed hope to keep the channel open, and handed "M" the following message:

"Actually the U.S. has been following a policy of escalation of an extremely serious nature. In these conditions the U.S. proposals of peace are double-faced. At a time when the U.S. is pursuing a policy of escalation we cannot receive Kissinger, nor comment on the American proposals transmitted through this channel.

"The position of the Government of the DRV is perfectly clear: it is only when the U.S. has ended without condition the bombardment that discussions can take place."

"M and Bo discussed what 'the conditions' were in the U.S. proposal. M said he thought that the U.S. meant that we wanted a guarantee of serious discussions when we used the word 'productive.' Bo said the DRV thought that by use of the word 'productive' we meant that we wanted to talk about objectives in the South also, since discussions could not be fully productive without this subject being considered.

DRV (10/20/67). Burchett reported the DRV would offer nothing "except talks" for a cessation of the bombardment. He stressed the distinction between "talks" and "negotiations," without making clear what the difference would be. He quoted Trinh as saying the talks would be "meaningful," but whether they would be "fruitful" or "productive" would depend on the U.S.

The following article by Wilfred Burchett was read in Washington on this date:

"Hanoi, North Vietnam AP - There is no possibility of any talks or even contacts between Hanoi and the U.S. government unless the bombardment and other acts of war against North Vietnam are definitively halted.

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"This is the position stated to me during conversations in the last few days with Premier Pham Van Dong, Nguyen Duy Trinh, foreign minister and deputy premier, and other high-ranking government and party leaders.

"Hanoi is in no mood for concessions or bargaining and there is an absolute refusal to offer anything -- except talks -- for a cessation of the bombardment. The word stressed is 'talks,' not negotiations.

"During an informal talk, however, Trinh repeated that his statement to this correspondent last January 28 -- that talks could start if the bombing was halted -- still held good. He said there could be 'meaningful' talks. Whether they would be 'fruitful' or 'productive' depended on the United States.

U.S. (11/3/67). The Russians were told that we would stop the bombing if they could tell us that the DRV would stop its infiltration.

MemCon, dated Nov 3, 1967 (approved in S: 11/8/67) (SECRET/NODIS)

Part II of IV

Subject: Vietnam

Participants:

U.S.

The Secretary

Foy D. Kohler, Deputy Undersecretary

John M. Leddy, Assistant Secretary for EUR

Malcolm Toon, Country Director, SOV

USSR

V. V. Kuznetsov, First Deputy Foreign Minister

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador

Yuri N. Chernyakov, Minister-Counselor, Soviet Embassy

Igor D. Bubnov, Counselor, Soviet Embassy

"THE SECRETARY said we had no problem with this at all. The Soviets, however, must be perfectly clear on one fundamental point. We will continue to oppose the spread of world revolution by force. With regard to Vietnam the Secretary saw no need for a conflict of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was important that the Soviets recognize that we have a vital interest in what happens in South Vietnam, just as we recognize that the Soviets have an interest as to what happens in North Vietnam. We are prepared to stop the bombing now if the Soviet Union can tell us that the North Vietnamese will stop its infiltration."

U.S. (11/23/67). The Swedes were given illustrations of DRV actions that would run counter to the "no advantage" assumption. They were asked to seek clarification from the DRV.

"7. The third point relates to the understanding of a 'no advantage' situation, as described in the President's San Antonio speech and in my October 6 message to you in connection with a bombing cessation and the start of talks. One way to clarify this is in terms of questions that I emphasize are illustrative of examples only. What would happen with respect to the flow of supplies and men into South Viet-Nam and to positions directly threatening South Viet-Nam? For example, if following a cessation or limitation of bombing, there was a marked increase in the flow of trucks southward; if a new North Vietnamese regiment were to appear; or if we saw a massive increase in the flow of supplies just to the north of the DMZ, we would be negatively impressed. Similarly, to take another example, we would want to know what would happen with respect to the three North Vietnamese Divisions now in the area of the Demilitarized Zone which have been employed as part of offensive operations against our forces south of the DMZ. Would artillery located north of the demarcation line be employed against our forces? And, if so, would we be expected not to bomb these artillery positions?

"8. These questions are, of course, not easy ones to answer. Nevertheless, we believe they are central to an accurate understanding of what is involved on both sides. We would be grateful for any clarification that you might be able to obtain through your contacts with North Vietnamese representatives on these matters."

U.S. (12/27/67). The Russians gave their understanding of San Antonio as requiring Hanoi to agree in advance to a de-escalation of the conflict before the bombing would stop. Harriman corrected them, drawing attention to the DMZ as a special problem, however.

MemCon, Dated December 27, 1967 (SECRET/NODIS)

TIME: 12:45 to 3:45

PLACE: 3038 N Street

Participants: Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin
Ambassador at Large W. Averell Harriman

" (3) I stated that the San Antonio formula was certainly a reasonable one and went as far as the US Government could be expected to go. I asked whether his Government could inform us why it had been rejected by Hanoi and also whether the Soviet Union had a practical alternative suggestion. He asked some detailed questions regarding the San Antonio formula. I repeated what I had told him in my last conversation. 'Productive discussions' did not, as Hanoi had interpreted it, mean a guarantee of favorable conclusion, but considering our Korean experience, we wanted assurance that talks would be serious and in good faith and in an attempt to find an agreement. He told me that his Government had gained the impression that the President's statement 'we would, of course, assume that while discussions proceed North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation' meant that Hanoi would have to agree in advance to a de-escalation of the conflict. I stated that this was not true. 'Taking advantage' meant what it said, namely, that Hanoi would not use the advantage of no bombing to send more supplies and reinforcements to the South than were now getting through. I also referred to the DMZ as a special problem. They were using artillery, and our bombing of the gun positions and other bases just north of the DMZ was a tactical operation which would have to continue unless there was mutual restraint in that area which we thought would be the best solution.

"Dobrynin said that he would inform his Government, but underlined that both his Government and Hanoi believed that Hanoi had interpreted the San Antonio formula, taken in connection with other statements, to mean that Hanoi would have to agree in advance to some sort of de-escalation of its operations if we were to stop the bombing."

. . . .
 DRV (12/29/67). Trinh, speaking publicly, changes the verb from "could" to "will" talk.

. On December 29, Trinh spoke at a Mongolian reception. The substance of his talk was broadcast by Hanoi VNA in English on January 1. He stated in part:

"The stand of the Vietnamese people is quite clear. That is the four-point stand of the DRV Government and the political program of the NFLSV. That is the basis for the settlement of the Vietnam question.

"The U.S. Government has unceasingly claimed that it wants to talk with Hanoi but has received no response. If the U.S. Government truly wants to talk, it must, as was made clear in our statement on 28 January 1967, first of all stop unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. After the United States has ended unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, the DRV will hold talks with the United States on questions concerned."

DRV (1/4/68). The Swedes were told of DRV concern that "no advantage" would "leave our brothers in the South unprotected."

STOCKHOLM 662 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
January 4, 1968. Ref: Stockholm 649.

"3. Oberg saw Charge Vu Bach Mai (Oberg's spelling) Dec 21 and handed over paper described Para 2A. Paper had been translated into French; illustrative examples Para 7 State 73693 were also given in English.

"4. NVN Charge raised three points which Oberg on instructions refused to discuss saying that Swedes had this paper from US aide and that Swedes not competent go beyond what was in paper.

"5. Three points NVN Charge raised were:

A. Did Swedes have any suggestions on how to describe bombing pause?

B. On question of flow of material in no-advantage situation Charge said 'we cannot leave our brothers in the South unprotected.' It was not clear to Oberg whether he was referring to NLF in South Vietnam or to supplies to NVN troops north of DMZ. (Oberg commented that in his contacts NVN representatives never referred presence NVN troops in South Vietnam.)

C. On question seriousness of negotiations Charge said this was unclear to him. In any negotiation both sides started from positions widely apart and with quite different aims. In such cases there would be different interpretation of 'serious or productive.'"

DRV (1/5/68). The Rumanians reported that Trinh made clear to them that the condition for talks was an "unconditional" but not "permanent" bombing cessation. They also claimed that the DRV would not insist on U.S. acceptance of the 4 Points as the basis for negotiations; each side would come with its own views.

"Material in quotation marks was read slowly and carefully by Macoyescu.

"Here is the answer to the question that you asked Mr. Harriman. From this point on there is a passage which in the text is in quotation marks.

'We affirm the following. If the USG really wants discussions with the Government of the DRV it should first unconditionally cease bombing and any other act of war against the DRV. After the unconditional cessation of all bombing and of any other U.S. act of war against the DRV and at the end of an appropriate period of time the government of the DRV will enter into serious discussions with the USG.'

"While he was reading this paragraph I stopped him and told him comrade Minister when I mentioned cessation I said final and unconditional. Trinh looked at me and reread the sentence. I said I mentioned 'final and unconditional cessation.' He reread the sentence again. I interrupted for the third time. May I understand you are no longer speaking of final cessation. His answer was that publicly we may continue to mention it but with a view to negotiations. What I have said is our position.

"I asked him whether the Government of Romania is authorized to pass this communication to the USG. He said yes. He repeated it but he said to retain spirit of the message."

Harriman said that the Trinh public statement was much the same as the M & I message, but that the M & I statement placed more emphasis on the acceptance of the four points as a basis of negotiations. M said that he did not establish any connection between his visit to Washington, unknown to Hanoi, and the Trinh public statement. Harriman argued that

"there must be some connection." M responded that he did not believe there was a contradiction between the two messages:

"In the public statement it says the basis for negotiations is the four points, but in private conversation they say we will come with this basis but the U.S. side, we expect, will come with its own point of view. They especially said this."

Harriman then questioned whether it was the DRV view that discussions will be fruitful only if we accept their four points. M responded:

"That is not the impression I gained from my discussions. They will come with their claims but would have to negotiate on what the U.S. puts forth. They said this specifically."

With respect to the timing of discussions, M said that Trinh stated there could be no contacts "as long as U.S. acts of war continue, ... but as soon as bombing and other acts of aggression against North Vietnamese cease, we are prepared to receive anybody...." Trinh added: "We shall consider these contacts as normal diplomatic activities. The American representative will be received by our diplomats at their suggestion."

Harriman questioned further on the timing, specifically as to the meaning of "after a suitable length of time." Here, M retreated to the DRV text--"the appropriate and necessary period of time." M explained this as a period in which

"they will try to test (I don't know by what means) the sincerity of your intentions--your wish to have discussions. I could not deduce the period, but I do not think it will be too long. If an understanding is reached that you stop, at a certain established period, discussions, not negotiations, will take place."

* * *

M then read from a document:

"As long as the US acts of war go on we cannot have any contacts with them. As soon as they cease the bombings and discontinue the acts of aggression we shall be prepared to receive any person, even a representative of the United States, who may wish to make known to us the American point of view or to get informed on our viewpoint. We shall regard these future contacts as normal diplomatic activity. The American representatives will be received by our representatives at the former's suggestion."

* * *

"1. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam has communicated to the United States Government this statement of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam position:

'If the United States Government really wants discussions with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam it should first unconditionally cease bombing and any other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the unconditional cessation of all bombing and of any other United States act of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and at the end of an appropriate period of time the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will enter into serious discussions with the United States Government.'

* * *

DRV (1/16/68). Bo says that talks would begin "after a suitable time following" the halt of attacks, and that the two parties would then meet to agree on the level and scope of their talks.

QUES 2: THE HALTING OF THE BOMBING IS CLEAR. BUT WHAT DOES "THE CESSATION OF ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAME" MEAN TO YOU?

ANS: (THE CESSATION) OF ANY MILITARY ACTION THAT VIOLATES THE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE TERRITORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAME.

QUES 3: IN WHAT WAY MUST THE AMERICAN GOV'T ANNOUNCE THE END OF THE BOMBING?

ANS: THE US GOV'T MAY ANNOUNCE THIS UNCONDITIONAL HALTING OF THE BOMBING AND OF ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR THROUGH A DECLARATION OR IT MAY MAKE USE OF ANY OTHER PROCEDURE CAPABLE OF ESTABLISHING ITS REALITY.

QUES 4: HOW MUCH TIME WILL ELAPSE BETWEEN THE END OF THE BOMBING AND THE OPENING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS?

ANS: THE TALKS WILL BEGIN AFTER A SUITABLE TIME FOLLOWING THE UNCONDITIONAL HALTING OF THE BOMBING AND OF ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR AGAINST THE DRVN.

QUES 5: AT WHAT LEVEL IN YOUR OPINION, ARE THESE NEGOTIATIONS TO BE HELD AND WITH WHAT QUESTIONS ARE THEY TO DEAL?

ANS: FOLLOW THE UNCONDITIONAL CESSATION OF BOMBING AND OF ALL OTHER ACTS OF WAR AGAINST THE DRVN, THE TWO PARTIES WILL MEET IN ORDER TO REACH AGREEMENT ON SUCH QUESTIONS.

(Emphasis Added)

U.S. (1/25/68). Clifford defined the "no advantage" assumption to the Senate Armed Services Committee as assuming the enemy "will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, men, to SVN."

"SENATOR (STROM) THURMOND: When you spoke of negotiating, in that case you would be willing to have a cessation of bombing. I presume that that would contemplate that they would stop their military activities, too, if we would be expected to have a cessation of bombing.

"A. No, that is not what I said. I do not expect them to stop their military activities. I would expect to follow the language of the President when he said that if they would agree to start negotiations promptly and not take advantage of the pause in the bombing.

"Q. What do you mean by taking advantage if they continue their military activities?

"A. Their military activity will continue in South Vietnam, I assume, until there is a cease fire agreed upon. I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, men, to South Vietnam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces during that period. So what I am suggesting is, in the language of the President, that he would insist that they not take advantage of the suspension of the bombing.

"Q. How would you keep them from taking advantage if we had a cessation of bombing?

"A. There is no way to keep them from taking advantage. If they state they are going to refrain from taking advantage, and then refuse to do so, then they have not met their agreement, and the conditions for the negotiations have failed.

"Q. And then, if they did violate that, you would favor then resuming bombing, I would presume.

"A. I would assume we would have no alternative. If they did not meet their obligations or we do not meet our obligations, then I assume there is absolutely no sense in negotiating. It would be a useless task. To negotiate there has to be good faith if any result is to be achieved and if, during the negotiations, bad faith is evidenced then there is no need to negotiate."

DRV (2/8/68). Trinh defined the questions to be raised in "talks" as "questions related to a settlement of the Vietnam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam. They are also other questions which could be raised by either side." This blurred, possibly erased, the distinction that may have existed earlier between "talks" and "negotiations." He also said talks would begin "as soon as" the U.S. "proved" it had stopped attacks.

"Question: In your 29 December 1967 speech, you stated in part: After the unconditional cessation of the bombings and all other

acts of war against the DRV, the DRV will hold talks with the United States on relevant problems. What do you mean by relevant problems?

"Answer: They are questions related to a settlement of the Vietnam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam. They are also other questions which could be raised by either side.

"Question: It has been subsequently clarified that the talks can begin after an appropriate time following the unconditional cessation of the bombings and all other acts of war against the DRV. Could you clarify further the meaning of appropriate time?

"Answer: The talks will begin as soon as the United States has proved that it has really stopped unconditionally the bombings and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam."

U.S. (2/17/68). The Swedes were asked to explain the San Antonio formula to the DRV. "Productive" was defined as "serious exchanges" in which either side could raise "any matter." Attention was called to the Tet offensive, as casting doubt on Hanoi's intentions, but it was not labeled a breach of "no advantage."

"The U.S., consistent with President Johnson's statement of April 7, 1965, remains willing to enter into talks without preconditions at any time.

"The U.S. position on the cessation of the bombardment of North Viet-Nam is set forth in President Johnson's September 29, 1967 speech in San Antonio. As the President said:

'The U.S. is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.'

"The U.S. is not assuming that North Viet-Nam will cease its support to its forces in the South. On the contrary, as Secretary of Defense designate Clark Clifford testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we assume that until a cease fire is agreed on, Hanoi will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, men and munitions.'

"In setting forth its assumption, the U.S. is not setting a condition but attempting to make clear to North Viet-Nam that any cessation of U.S. bombing followed by actions by Hanoi taking advantage of the cessation (such as an increase by Hanoi of its infiltration of men and supplies or attacks in the area of the DMZ) would constitute such bad faith on Hanoi's part as to make continued U.S. forbearance impossible. If Hanoi, by taking advantage, forces the U.S. to resume bombing the possibilities of a negotiated solution would drastically recede. Under such circumstances calls for intensified U.S. military action would increase and the possibility of another halt in the bombing would be low. The U.S. is trying to ascertain whether Hanoi appreciates this vital fact and fully understands the importance the U.S. attaches to the no-advantage assumption.

"At San Antonio the President, in addition to setting forth his assumption, stated his readiness to stop the bombing when such action would lead 'promptly to productive discussions.' 'Productive discussions' are serious exchanges in which either side will be able to put forward for full consideration in good faith its position on any matter. 'Prompt' of course refers to a willingness by Hanoi to begin discussions with the U.S. immediately after cessation of bombing.

"It is worth noting that Hanoi is unwilling to give a clear response to questions as to the length of time between a U.S. bombing cessation and the beginning of talks. If Hanoi were serious in desiring talks then surely its response would have been one of unequivocal readiness to begin immediately.

"The U.S. evaluation of Hanoi's current position takes into account Hanoi's actions as well as its words. The unprecedented offensive against most of South Viet-Nam's urban centers, which Hanoi treacherously launched in the midst of the traditional Tet holidays, causing widespread civilian casualties and suffering, was made notwithstanding the fact that we were still exploring with Hanoi its position through diplomatic channels, and that we had exercised restraint in bombing targets in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong. In this context, we cannot but weigh Hanoi's words with great skepticism and caution. These actions carry a harsh political message.

"The U.S. favors every effort to obtain clarification of Hanoi's position. We shall continue to evaluate all information and to pursue every possible avenue which promises to bring us closer to the resolution of this conflict through serious negotiations."

(State 117383)

U.S. (2/20/68). The Norwegians were asked to convey the same message as the Swedes.

"The US, consistent with President Johnson's statement of April 7, 1965, remains willing to enter into talks with/out - amended State 118719/ preconditions at any time.

"The US position on the cessation of the bombardment of North Viet-Nam was set forth in President Johnson's September 29, 1967 speech in San Antonio. As the President said:

'The US is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.'

"The US is not assuming that North Viet-Nam will cease its support to its forces in the South. On the contrary, as Secretary of Defense designate Clark Clifford testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we assume that until a cease-fire is agreed on, Hanoi will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, men and munitions.'

"In setting forth its assumption, the US is not setting a condition but attempting to make clear to North Viet-Nam that any cessation of US bombing followed by actions by Hanoi taking advantage of the cessation (such as an increase by Hanoi of its infiltration of men and supplies or attacks in the area of the DMZ) would constitute such bad faith on Hanoi's part as to make continued US forbearance impossible. If Hanoi, by taking advantage, forces the US to resume bombing, the possibilities of a negotiated solution would drastically recede. Under such circumstances, calls for intensified US military action would increase and the possibility of another halt in the bombing would be low. The US is trying to ascertain whether Hanoi appreciates this vital fact and fully understands the importance the US attaches to the no-advantage assumption.

"At San Antonio the President, in addition to setting forth his assumption, stated his readiness to stop the bombing when such action would lead 'promptly to productive discussions.' 'Productive discussions' are serious exchanges in which either side will be able to put forward for full consideration in good

faith its position on any matter. 'Prompt' of course refers to a willingness by Hanoi to begin discussions with the US immediately after cessation of bombing.

"It is worth noting that Hanoi is unwilling to give a clear response to questions as to the length of time between a US bombing cessation and the beginning of talks. If Hanoi were serious in desiring talks then surely its response would have been one of unequivocal readiness to begin immediately.

"The US evaluation of Hanoi's current position takes into account Hanoi's actions as well as its words. The unprecedented offensive against most of South Viet-Nam's urban centers, which Hanoi treacherously launched in the midst of the traditional Tet holidays, causing widespread civilian casualties and suffering, was made notwithstanding the fact that we were still exploring with Hanoi its position through diplomatic channels, and that we had exercised restraint in bombing targets in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong. In this context, we cannot but weigh Hanoi's words with great skepticism and caution. These actions carry a harsh political message.

"The US favors every effort to obtain clarification of Hanoi's position. We shall continue to evaluate all information and to pursue every possible avenue which promises to bring us closer to the resolution of this conflict through serious negotiations."

(State 118092)

DRV (2/24/68). "All other acts of war" was defined to mean that "no airplanes were permitted to fly over DRV territory."

"Mr. Chan repeated the statement of his Foreign Minister of January 1967 and of the 29th of December 1967. He thus repeated that negotiations would begin as soon as the United States had proved that it has stopped all bombardments and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He specified 'all other acts of war' to mean that no airplanes were permitted to fly over DRV territory and no naval vessels were to have their guns or other weapons directed against DRV territory after that had been done, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would negotiate with the United States about relevant questions. The Ambassador in this connection

also referred to Foreign Minister Trinh's statement of the 8th of February 1968, to the effect that the Vietnam conflict had to be solved on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Agreements and that negotiations could begin as soon as the United States had shown that it would stop the bombardments of North Vietnam and all other actions of war against the DRV. He mentioned a delay of some three weeks 'or less'."

(STOCKHOLM 901)

DRV (3/1/68). DRV Ambassador Su told d'Orlandi that his "personal view" was there would be no assault on Khe Sanh, etc., etc., once the two sides had begun to talk.

D'Orlandi met with Meloy and Davidson to report on his March 1 meeting in Prague with Ambassador Su. D'Orlandi asked Su if he were ready to answer the question concerning the period of delay between the stopping of the bombing and the first U.S.-Hanoi meetings? Su responded rather lamely that he thought this contact had come to an end and, therefore, he was not able to supply a precise answer. "He could state that the matter of a date would be no problem. The real problem was San Antonio."

D'Orlandi said that he had dictated to Su the first portion of the Davidson MemCon of the February 28 meeting to the North Vietnamese, but the North Vietnamese did not comment on this.

The most important point that Su made in these talks was with respect to "no advantage." Although he said he was speaking personally, it is highly doubtful that he would have said the following without specific instructions:

"...D'Orlandi then told Su that if bombing stopped and talks began, assaulting Khe Sanh, invading or trying to detach the two northern provinces of South Viet-Nam, launching a second wave of attacks against one or more cities or creating a sensation with something else like an assault on Camp Carroll, would sink the whole thing. Su replied that, speaking personally and not on instructions, such thing would be out, that from the moment the two sides meet it was obvious no such thing could happen. (I questioned d'Orlandi about this remark of Su's and d'Orlandi replied that while he took no notes he is certain this is the sense of what Su said.) D'Orlandi told Su that whatever he or Su thought of the effect of bombing, it is a fact that the US Government and US public opinion considers bombing of the North a most important weapon and that no President could give away such a weapon while something terrible was happening either in the DMZ or the South. Su did not respond to this comment. D'Orlandi also remarked that it might be necessary for him to go to Hanoi to receive assurances directly from the top and again Su did not reply."

DRV (3/10/68). Trinh gave Norwegian Ambassador Algard to understand that the DRV did not require the U.S. to accept its 4 Points "beforehand" (apparently before negotiations) though the DRV would insist on them as the "foundation for a political resolution of the conflict" at the talks.

OSLO 3570 - Summary of Ambassador Algard's visit to Hanoi, March 3-10:

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"7. The Foreign Minister underlined also that the North Vietnamese 4-point program must be the foundation for a political resolution of the conflict. Apart from what concerned the stopping of the bombing and cessation of the acts of war against North Vietnam, he did not set matters forth in such a way that the United States beforehand must accept the entire 4-point program. He did not say anything on the point of time for American withdrawal but said that was a question which must be handled at the conference table. Nor would he say anything on how the reunification problem would be settled nor how long it would take but he repeated that first there must be a political solution in South Vietnam and referred to the NLF program which assumed a separate South Vietnamese state for the immediate future. Insofar as it concerned a political solution for South Vietnam, the Foreign Minister repeated the North Vietnamese position that this was a question which must be discussed with the NLF and that Hanoi cannot speak on behalf of South Vietnam. He underlined very strongly that recent events in South Vietnam had shown that the regime in Saigon was totally without political basis but at the same time events made clear that there was a possibility of cooperation between the NLF and other political groups. However he did not go into detail on this point." (Emphasis added)

.....

DRV (4/8/68). Trinh, in his interview with Collingwood, repeated DRV attacks on reciprocal restraint as the condition for a complete bombing halt. He specified that the DRV representative at the contact to complete the bombing halt would have Ambassadorial rank and would be prepared to reach agreement on "the date, place and level of the formal talks" between the DRV and U.S.

"Question: President Johnson said that 'even this limited bombing of the north could come to an early end if our restraint is matched by restraint in Hanoi.' Would your government be willing to make such a move?"

"Answer: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is an independent and sovereign country some 10,000 miles away from the United States, and has done no harm whatsoever to it. The unwarranted U.S. bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is an impudent act of aggression. The United States must bring it to an end.

"To ask for 'reciprocity' as a condition, or 'restraint' as a price, is nothing but a trick to blur the distinction between the aggressor and the victim of aggression. The United States has shown no 'restraint' in using its huge war machine against a small country, and still demands that we should show 'restraint' and should not exercise our sacred rights to defend our fatherland. This is pure nonsense."

.....

"Question: In its 3 April statement, your government declared 'its readiness to appoint its representative to contact a U.S. representative with a view to determining with the American side the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam so that the talks may start.' Mr. Minister, what will be the rank of your representative? When and where will he make contact with the U.S. representative? When and where will the formal talks between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States start, and at what level?

Answer: A representative with ambassadorial rank of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is ready to make contact with a representative of the U.S. Government in Phnom Penh or in another place to be mutually agreed upon. In the course of this contact, the American side will specify the date when the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will become effective; then the two sides will reach agreement on the date, place, and level of the formal talks between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States."

.....

• DRV (5/3/68). The DRV appointed Xuan Thuy as its representative to enter "formal talks" with the US in Paris.

"... the DRV Government is of the view that the formal talks between Hanoi and Washington should be held immediately. The DRV Government has decided to appoint Minister Xuan Thuy as its representative to enter into formal talks with the U.S. Government's representative, to determine with the U.S. side the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV, and then hold talks on other problems of concern to the two sides."

SETTLEMENT TERMS

1. Mutual Withdrawal

Summary

The U.S. position on withdrawal of forces is clear and, yet, leaves us with a great deal of flexibility. We have said in the 14 Points (1/3/66) that "we want no U.S. bases in Southeast Asia," and that "we do not desire to retain U.S. troops in South Vietnam after peace is assured." In other words, the U.S. is on record as being committed against keeping its forces in South Vietnam when peace is restored. The U.S. record is also clear in insisting on mutual withdrawal of forces. In the 4 Points which were passed to the DRV in Rangoon (PINYA 2/16/66), we stated that discussions should consider "appropriate means, including agreed stages, for the withdrawal of military and quasi-military personnel and weapons introduced into South Vietnam or North Vietnam from one area to the other or into either area from any other outside source...and the regrouping and redeployment of indigenous forces." U.S. flexibility on withdrawal is built into its "until peace" qualification. In the Manila Declaration (10/25/66), we stated that allied forces "shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, if the other side withdraws its forces to the north, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled."

The DRV has always given the principle of U.S. withdrawal top billing. Pham Van Dong directly told us (PENNSYLVANIA 7/25/67) that the end of the war means "a withdrawal of U.S. forces." In the 4 Points, for example, Hanoi states: "The US Government must withdraw from South Vietnam US troops, military personnel, and weapons of all kinds, dismantle all US military bases there, and cancel its military alliance with South Vietnam." Hanoi has, however, displayed increasing flexibility on the timing of U.S. withdrawal. Recent statements indicate that they would be prepared for us to stay until a political settlement in the south had been achieved. Hanoi's hooker on this issue is similar to those other matters on which it has evinced flexibility (reunification and free elections), namely, that this is an issue of secondary importance compared to the crunch point on who governs in the south. Tactically, then, Hanoi is likely to present an initial hard front on this matter and then "give in" in order to gain concessions on the central issue of power in the south.

NVA presence in South Vietnam

Hanoi has repeatedly denied the presence of regular PAVN forces or even North Vietnamese volunteers in South Vietnam. These public denials are important to Hanoi for several reasons: the denials reaffirm their propoganda about the war being essentially a South Vietnamese affair fought by the South Vietnamese themselves, that is a

civil war. The denials may also have been tied to their anti-U.S. bombing campaign, allowing them to maintain that the U.S. was committing aggression against the north without the north committing aggression against the south. Also, at this time, Hanoi has an interest in not making itself out to be a liar for all these years. As far as we know, they have even been telling the Russians that they do not have regular forces in the south. In other words, this fiction has assumed propaganda and leverage value which Hanoi will not give up easily.

While Hanoi's public record on this issue has been consistent, there have been two private slips in which they were on the verge of admission. The first occasion was in the XYZ contacts when Bo did not deny DRV troop presence in South Vietnam (8/18/65) or even that the 325th NVA division was in South Vietnam--although he claimed that "it was not then engaged in military operations" (9/3/65). After the XYZ contacts had ended, Bo said there were no regular troops in Saigon, but northern volunteers might have joined the Viet Cong (11/27/65). The second occasion of near truth telling came during the MARIGOLD contacts. Lewandowski asked us (11/14/66), regarding the offer at Manila concerning the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam on the condition that the troops of North Vietnam would withdraw, and, he said, "North Vietnam, of course, doesn't admit that they are there at all...." Later in the 10-Point MARIGOLD formulation (11/30/66), the 8th Point read: "In this regard the US is prepared to accept DRV modalities on the cessation of bombing and not require the DRV to admit infiltration into South Vietnam."

Would the DRV withdraw?

When played off against the public statements of denial, these private statements provide a hint as to how the DRV might handle this issue. The fiction of no presence will be maintained, but it will not be allowed to stand in the way of actual North Vietnamese troop withdrawals should the conditions be appropriate. In all likelihood, however, these withdrawals will be de facto, unannounced, unilaterally made -- and not necessarily back into North Vietnam itself. The more likely stopping place on their way home from South Vietnam would be the Laotian Panhandle. The furthest Hanoi ever went on dealing with this issue was again in the XYZ contacts. Because Bo did not deny NVA troop presence in South Vietnam, he was able to agree with the principle that troop withdrawals would have to be mutual, balanced and phased (8/15/65). Bo reaffirmed his agreement to this principle (8/18/65), but then denied any such agreements (9/3/65).

What emerges is the link between North Vietnamese troop withdrawals and their control of the south. When Lewandowski asked us about the Manila withdrawal formula (11/14/66), the tie was clear: "...does this condition mean the U.S. withdrawal depends on control by the present South Vietnamese government of territories not now under the control of Saigon?" Hanoi will ask us this question again, and depending upon our answer will decide to withdraw or not.

Timing -- the DRV view on the timing of U.S. withdrawal.

As the DRV began to play out its diplomatic hand over the last two years, it has become increasingly flexible on when it would like the U.S. to leave. Bo told us that U.S. withdrawal was a "technical problem" (11/16/65). Lewandowski said that they could take place according to a "reasonable guarantee" (6/27/66). Loan told Algard (OHIO, 8/16/67) that the timing "was not a decisive question." In this connection, Lewandowski pointed out the agreement on withdrawal of French troops as an example. He added that the Americans "would have to accept the political situation in South Vietnam as it is, as De Gaulle did in Algeria." All this does not mean that Hanoi will leave the issue open to principle. One of Lewandowski's 10 Points (MARGOLD, 11/30/66) stated: "The U.S. does not desire permanent or long-term military presence in South Vietnam." The most forthcoming of all DRV statements on this issue was the one made by Phan Van Dong (PENNSYLVANIA, 7/25/67): "Some US troops would have to stay [in South Vietnam] until the end of political settlement." This probably means that the U.S. forces would be allowed to linger on as long as they did not interfere with the process of political settlement. Indeed, the continued presence of U.S. troops in South Vietnam during this period could add legitimacy to the new government.

Non-Intervention

The DRV also wants to get some guarantee in principle that the U.S. will refrain from intervening in Vietnam after a political settlement has taken place. In the 4 Points, Hanoi states that the U.S. "must end its policy of intervention and aggression in South Vietnam," and that during the period pending reunification, the two zones must refrain from entering into any military alliances with foreign countries and there must be no foreign military bases, troops, or foreign military personnel in their respective territory.

2. Self-Determination for SVN: Free Elections?Summary

The main parties to the war agreed early on the principle of self-determination for the people of SVN. It is endorsed, inter alia, in the first NLF program (2/11/61), President Johnson's Johns-Hopkins speech (4/7/65), the DRV's 4 Points (4/8/65) and the GVN's 4 Points (6/22/65). The Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF) is for it, too (4/26/68). But the different sides have different ideas about how the people of SVN should express their will. The U.S. and the GVN prefer the electoral processes of the current Constitution, whereas the DRV and NLF want to scrap that Constitution and set up a new electoral authority. The ANDPF has not stated a formal position on the Constitution, but is clearly opposed to the GVN as the country's electoral authority. Everyone no doubt suspects that the outcome of elections will be determined by who runs them. Thus to a large extent, the war is now being fought over who shall run future elections, making the apparent agreement on "self-determination" illusory. In addition, while both sides have expressed themselves favorably about elections, neither is irrevocably committed to elections as the only means of self-determination.

* * *

The 4 Points (4/8/65) call only for self-determination "in accordance with the program of the NLF without any foreign interference." When these Points were first published, the NLF program (issued 2/11/61) called for overthrowing Diem and substituting a coalition government as one phase, apparently the first, in bringing about "progressive democracy," including a new constitution and elections.

Later in 1965, Mai Van Bo stressed self-determination as the "one basic premise" that would permit all other problems to be solved (XYZ, 7/16/65), but he subsequently amended this to say that self-determination through elections would only be possible after U.S. military withdrawal (XYZ, 1/27/66). As he explained, "How can elections be held in a country over which no authority is exercised?" (XYZ, 5/6/66) He was probably not worried about the mechanics of holding elections. More likely, he felt the electoral authority would determine the outcome.

These stands were repeated by Trinh (to the Swedes), who said he wanted a coalition government and general elections (ASPEN, 11/11/66).

When Lewandowski was probing us on settlement terms (MARIGOLD, 11/14/66), he asked, "In case of a cease-fire, would the US be prepared to withdraw from the combat areas and not interfere in the creation of a new government in Vietnam?" He also wanted to know if the Manila withdrawal provisions depended on GVN control of areas not then under its control and whether we would declare our willingness to accept the Geneva and ICC machinery in "bringing peace to Vietnam," perhaps including inspection of an election.

He was no doubt searching for a formula under which NLF authority could be exercised prior to U.S. withdrawal. When he formulated his 10 Points (MARIGOLD, 11/30/66), he indicated our willingness to "accept the participation of 'all' in elections and the supervision of these elections by an appropriate international body." If, as the Poles and Russians claimed, the DRV was willing to enter discussions on this basis, they may have been willing to see elections of this sort before U.S. withdrawal. Who would run the elections, and how, would be subject to negotiation--as, therefore, in DRV eyes would be the probable outcome.

When the new NLF Program was issued, just after the election of Thieu, Ky and the lower house, it lists first the goal of abolishing the "puppet administration," the "puppet national assembly," and their constitution. It called for "free general elections," for a new national assembly that would work out a new constitution, and for the establishment of a "national union democratic government." While it does not specify the order in which things are supposed to happen, it is clear enough that abolishing the GVN and its constitution would have to come before new elections, etc. In the list of objectives, new elections and the new constitution also come before establishing the coalition government. Perhaps this hints that the issue is negotiable (9/5/67).

However, at the end of February 1968, the DRV position expressed to Fanfani by Ambassador Su was: Hanoi wanted "absolutely free general elections. To insure liberty of vote, it was necessary to constitute a government with very broadly based participation" (KILLY, 2/23/68).

The ANDPF Program attacks the GVN as a "lackey administration," calls for setting up a coalition government and speaks of the future political regime in SVN as a "republic" with "just and honest elections." Again the sequence is not crisply specified, but the program seems to call for setting up the coalition government as a condition necessary to "winning back national sovereignty." This would make it a condition for ending the war--something to be negotiated or won on the battlefield, rather than the outcome of an electoral process (4/25/68).

3. The Legitimate Representative of SVN: GVN or NLF?

Summary

As noted in the previous section, elections as an impartial way of deciding who shall govern SVN may not solve the problem. The composition of the government may have to be negotiated or decided in battle. A prime war aim of the communists is establishing legitimacy for the NLF, while undercutting that of the GVN. The GVN is fighting to bolster its authority, while destroying that of the NLF. Thus "who shall govern SVN" is what the war is all about, and "who shall represent SVN" in negotiations is one round in the battle.

As opposed to the principle of "self-determination," the issue of who shall represent SVN--at the conference or in Saigon--is one on which almost no agreement has been reached between the U.S. and DRV. Essentially, each side has insisted on the legitimacy of its party in SVN, denied the legitimacy of the other's, but offered a way for individuals from the other's party to enter political life by "reconciling" themselves. The communists are probably prepared to go beyond this, accepting three "political tendencies" (right, neutral and left) as theoretically co-equal, in exchange for our agreeing that a new government be formed by the "tendencies"--after the model of the 1962 Agreements on Laos.

* * *

The DRV and NLF.

From the outset, the communists' carrot has been their willingness to see "non-communists" included in the government or at the conference table. The unpalatable part has been their insistence on a role for the NLF and no role for the GVN as an institution.

In June 1964, Pham Van Dong insisted to Seaborn, "The Laos pattern of 1962 should serve as a guide for SVN." There should be a coalition, including the NLF. When Seaborn said the NLF might dominate, Dong said only, "There is no reason to have such fears."

In his statement embodying the 4 Points, Pham Van Dong said the NLF was "more and more recognized by...world opinion as the sole genuine representative of the SVN people" (4/8/65). The following January, Ho Chi Minh said, "If the US really wants peace it must recognize the NLF as the sole genuine representative..." (1/24/66). This public stance was softened in various private communications passed subsequently, but never to the extent of conceding legitimacy to the GVN.

The DRV rebutted the U.S. 14 Points (Rangoon, 1/31/66) by rejecting the legitimacy of the GVN: asking the NLF to "lay down its arms and ask amnesty" amounted to maintaining a "puppet regime" in Saigon.

In Lewandowski's first overtures (MARIGOLD, 6/29/66), he represented the communists as asking only that the NLF "take part" in negotiations--"they are not to have any monopoly"--and said that Hanoi did "not want to interfere with the SVN Government," though "we would like someone other than Ky." Later he suggested a coalition government made up mainly of "sensible SVN politicians" with men "on the fringe" from the "right" and the left, "the so-called NLF," in one or two "unimportant ministries" each (MARIGOLD 9/18/66). This too is after the Laos pattern. (Souvanna's neutralists with 11 ministries, Boun Oum with 4 and Souphanouvong with 4.)

Much the same proposition came to us through the Swedes (ASPEN, 11/11/66).

Burchett, claiming to reflect the views of senior DRV and NLF officials, reported that Ky and Thieu would not be acceptable in a coalition, but "some members of their cabinet or...previous Saigon governments" might be. The communists considered "negotiations between Hanoi and the Ky government" as "an impossibility." Ky and his top supporters were expected to emigrate (2/10/67).

In July 1967, Pham Van Dong repeated that the coalition could be "broad" and could include members "du gouvernement fantoche et cadres d'armee fantoche." He said the NLF need not participate in negotiations--as long as the issues do not concern SVN (PENNSYLVANIA, 7/25/67).

The latter point was repeated through the Norwegians in August (OHIO, 8/16/67). But in the end, the Americans would "have to accept the political situation in SVN as it is, as de Gaulle did in Algeria." "The question of representation was of great importance" (OHIO, 8/16/67). Later, the Norwegians were asked to find out if the U.S. was "willing to accept the liberation front as a political factor" (OHIO, 8/21/67). The Norwegians took this to mean as a "factor in preliminary talks, actual negotiations (and) in a post-settlement situation." They also conveyed to us the DRV's desire for a "non-communist" coalition government in SVN. (The DRV indicated to them that it considered the NLF "non-communist" too.) Their interlocutor's "tone gave the impression" that members of the GVN would be acceptable, although this was not made explicit; the North Vietnamese did concede that the GVN "was a political factor in SVN (9/8/67). This too is in the pattern of the Laos settlement, in which representation at the conference finally devolved upon three political "tendencies" (right, neutral and left), which ultimately became the three elements of a coalition government.

Last February, DRV Ambassador Su told the Italians that there should be a "very broadly based" government, "excluding only 'war criminals' (undefined)" (KILLY, 2/23/68).

As late as March, the Norwegians were told again that a political solution for SVN "was a question which must be discussed with the NLF and Hanoi cannot speak on behalf of SVN."

The ANDPF Program denounces the GVN as a "lackey administration" and says the NLF "cannot be excluded from the settlement of all problems in SVN. We advocate contacts with the NLF...." But it offers, apparently acting alone, "to discuss these problems with the US government" (4/25/68). This is possibly intended as a face saving way for the U.S. to begin negotiations with the communists without according status to the NLF. The ANDPF may also offer the "neutralist" political tendency from which a solution after the Laos pattern could be fashioned: NLF members on the left; ANDPF in the middle; selected GVN members on the right.

The GVN

Throughout, the GVN has insisted upon its sole right to speak for SVN. Its 4 Points state, "the Hanoi Communist regime must dissolve all the puppet organizations it has formed in SVN under the names of 'Front for the Liberation of the South,' 'Liberation Radio' and the 'Peoples Revolutionary Party' (6/22/65). Thieu's current position is that the GVN and Hanoi are the parties to the war. If there are to be negotiations, they should be the protagonists with no role for the NLF. His prime objective is clearly to win recognition for his government from Hanoi, without our according any further status to the NLF. Although the present GVN constitution excludes communists and "pro-communist neutralists" from the electoral process, Thieu has accepted the principle of "one man-one vote," and agreed to meet with individuals who leave the NLF, but he would not accept the NLF itself as a "political entity" (Bunker's Meet the Press interview, 11/19/67).

The U.S.

Our position has been consistently that the NLF had no role "as of right" in SVN and that we would not guarantee a role for it before elections, because to do so would be contrary to free determination. Individual members of the NLF, however, could participate in the political process in SVN (XYZ, 9/8/65; Rangoon, 2/16/66). Should the DRV decide to negotiate, "the Viet Cong would not have difficulty being represented and having their views presented" (U.S. 14 Points, 1/3/66; Goldberg, 2/10/67). We drew attention to the internationally recognized status of the GVN and argued that the GVN's National Reconciliation Program offered a route by which individual members of the NLF could participate in the "normal political processes of SVN" under GVN auspices (Manila Communique, 10/25/66; Goldberg, 2/10/67).

Several episodes may have suggested to the DRV some elements of "give" in our position: Gullion's instructions stated, "At most, the future of the NLF should be a matter for discussion, not something settled in principle before negotiations begin" (XYZ, 8/15/65). Lewandowski's 10 Points, accepted by us "subject to important differences of interpretation" said, "the present status quo in SVN would be changed in order to take into account the interests of the parties presently opposing the policy of the US in SVN" (MARIGOLD, 11/30/66). Goldberg (11/2/67) told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S. "would not stand in the way of groups, including the NLF," being invited to appear before the UN Security Council. The U.S. privately indicated to the UN Secretariat that visas would be issued for such a group if certain clarifications were obtained; the latter, however, were apparently not forthcoming and no visas were actually issued. In his March 31 speech, President Johnson said, "there may come a time when South Vietnamese-- on both sides--are able to work out a way to settle their own differences by free political choice rather than by war."

4. Reunification

Summary

The U.S. position on reunification of Vietnam can be separated into what we have been saying publicly and what we really want. Publicly, the U.S. 14 Points (1/3/66) state:

"10. The question of reunification of Vietnam should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision;

"11. The countries of Southeast Asia can be nonaligned or neutral if that be their option;"

The U.S. position is perhaps more accurately stated in the Manila Communique (10/25/66):

"The Government and people of South Vietnam deplore the partition of Vietnam into North and South. But this partition brought about by the Geneva Agreements of 1954, however unfortunate and regrettable, will be respected until, by the free choice of all Vietnamese, reunification is achieved."

President Johnson has gone even further (4/7/65) when he said that "our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack." Our preference is clearly for the continued separate existence of South Vietnam, but the impression of our public statements has been that we favor reunification through free Vietnam-wide elections after aggression has ceased.

The North Vietnamese position appears forthcoming and appears similar to the impressions of our own public statements. They have indicated that they would not press for reunification, that reunification could be determined well in the future by free decision of all the Vietnamese people, and that the interim state in South Vietnam would be non-socialist and neutral. Hanoi can afford to make their reunification position look appealing because it is really a secondary issue. Their position is and they will press for a political solution in South Vietnam favorable to them, and then let the issue of reunification take care of itself -- in a time period when U.S. interests will not be humiliated.

What is the DRV position?

There are several statements in the 4 Points which bear on this issue: (a) "The USG must...dismantle all U.S. military bases [in SVN], and cancel its military alliance with SVN"; (b) "Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, while Vietnam is still temporarily divided

into two zones...."; and (c) "The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference."

In June 1964, Pham Van Dong told Blair Seaborn that reunification is a "drame national, fundamental." He added, somewhat inconsistently, that neutrality for SVN, and by implication reunification, would be something for the people of SVN to decide; he did not "prejudge" the outcome. More recently (PENNSYLVANIA 7/25/67), Pham Van Dong said that Hanoi goals for South Vietnam were "independence, democracy, peace, and neutrality."

What do these general statements add up to in operational terms? When?

On the timing of reunification, the DRV has given a range of statements including, "no hurry" (XYZ 7/16/65), "indefinite postponement" (OHIO 8/16/67), "until South Vietnam is ready," "10 or 20 years" (Burchett 2/11/67). But, as the Swedes informed us (ASPEN 11/11/66), Trinh said to them that it is necessary to create such conditions as will permit a move in the direction of reunification. In other words, reunification, according to the DRV need not occur at any specific or early time, but that it will happen at some future point must be assured by present decisions. These decisions basically seem to revolve around a political settlement in South Vietnam. As Loan told Algard (OHIO 3/3/67), "first there must be a political solution in South Vietnam." At first glance, Hanoi's position on reunification looks like a compromise. Indeed, Hanoi has been playing it up as a compromise, indicating that postponement of reunification is at variance with the 1954 Geneva Accords which called for reunification within two years of settlement, i.e., 1956. The hooker, of course, is that the realization of reunification in the future is merely a corollary of other points, mainly control of the government in the south, and need not be fought for in its own terms.

How and by Whom?

Lewandowski (MARIGOLD 11/14/66) spoke of reunification by free determination, adding that this could take the form of either a referendum or an election. While he did not spell out this issue, apparently a referendum would be a Vietnam-wide single issue vote on reunification. By elections, he could have meant that reunification would be decided on a government to government basis (the DRV with the new South Vietnam government), each government having been chosen by "free elections." In support of the latter method, Pham Van Dong stated (PENNSYLVANIA 7/25/67): "Once the war in the South is settled, we shall discuss with the South and find the best means." Additionally, and to confuse the issue further, virtually all the DRV statements on this issue stress that reunification is to come through free determination "by the people in both zones" (the 4 Points). This is the wording of the 1954 Geneva Accords, and it means that the people of South Vietnam alone will not decide the matter, that the people in the north must have their say as well. By this country-wide vote formula, it is likely that even a solid majority vote in SVN against reunification would be overtaken by the near unanimous vote for reunification in North Vietnam.

A final and related qualifier is that the free decision on reunification must be without foreign interference. Presumably, this is to convey the DRV belief that no outsiders can or should be present in Vietnam when the decision on reunification is being made.

Nature of interim state in South Vietnam?

The DRV has used three elements to define what the Government of South Vietnam would look like pending reunification. First, Hanoi has described it as neutral in the "Cambodian manner" (MARIGOLD 9/18/66). This implies independence, but more reliance on Asian and particularly Asian communist influences. Cambodian neutrality is not noted for being sympathetic to the U.S., nor is it noted for knuckling under to China or North Vietnam. Cambodia has also renounced SEATO protection. Hanoi has also described this government as being "non-socialist." After talking with the DRV leadership, Burchett (2/11/67) said that Hanoi thought of itself as a "socialist country and a member of the socialist world but without military alliances or foreign military bases, militarily but not politically neutral," and thought of the south as "non-socialist and neutral militarily, politically, and diplomatically." In a very revealing statement (PENNSYLVANIA 7/25/67), Pham Van Dong said: "Some people think we want to impose socialism on the south. We are convinced that the NLF will not make such an error." It is important to recall, however, that the communists consider the NLF to be "non-communist," a front of diverse political groupings. The third element has been the implication that there need be no change in the foreign affairs of the interim South Vietnam government (MARIGOLD 6/27/66). Such a statement would imply that South Vietnam could continue under western alliance protection and that the government would be able to receive aid from all countries. This element, reported only in the first MARIGOLD contact, is in contradiction with the first element emphasizing neutrality. Except, perhaps, for the aid provision, it is probably nothing more than a come-on.

What do these statements add up to?

They seem to mean that Hanoi understands that the U.S. has a definite stake in South Vietnam, and that even in the future would not take happily to the appearance (or the reality?) of South Vietnam being absorbed into the communist bloc. When Pham Van Dong said that "the NLF will not make such an error," he probably meant that they understood the importance in U.S. eyes of appearances. The DRV must get its way, but it is saying that it will not do so in a way that will threaten western interests.

Relation of interim South Vietnam government to DRV?

Burchett (2/11/67) even gives us a glimpse of how Hanoi views relations between the two interim zones or governments. He says: "For regulating north-south relations, there would be a type of general assembly, presumably nominated by the respective parliaments to handle questions important to both zones, such as, trade, post and telegraph, inter-zonal

travel, including sports and cultural exchanges. The assembly, in fact, would have some resemblance to the inter-German council, an idea being tried out by the West German social democrats as a means to handle current practical problems between East and West Germany. This idea goes back as far as 1955, when the DRV introduced the proposal for the Fatherland Front.

5. INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES AND INSPECTION

This has always been a very real and important issue to the U.S. and the GVN on the one hand, and kind of a non-issue to Hanoi on the other hand. In the four points which we handed to the DRV in Rangoon (PINTA 2/16/66), we stated: "Strict compliance with the military provisions of the Geneva Accords must be achieved in accordance with schedules and appropriate safeguards to be agreed upon in the said discussions or negotiations." Later, in the Manila Communique (10/25/66), it was stated that: "The people of South Vietnam, mindful of their experience since 1954, insist that any negotiations leading to the end of hostilities incorporate effective international guarantees. They are open-minded as such guarantees can be applied and made effective."

There are four DRV statements on this subject:

First, Pham Van Dong has stated (SEABORNE 6/18/64) that "as far as the ICC is concerned, we are very glad to have you here. But don't put too many items on the agenda, don't give yourself too much work to do."

Second, Lewandowski asked us (MARIGOLD 11/14/66): "In the case of a cease-fire and negotiations, would the U.S. be ready to use the Geneva Agreement and the machinery of the International Commission in bringing peace to Vietnam, and if so, would the U.S. publicly declare its intention to this effect?"

Third, in Lewandowski's ten points (MARIGOLD 11/30/66), the fifth point states: "The U.S. is willing to accept the participation of 'all' elections and the supervision of these elections by an appropriate international body."

Fourth, Su told d'Orlandi (KEELY 2/23/68): "Both parties felt that problem of guaranteeing an agreement was increasing to decisive importance." According to d'Orlandi, Su seemed to categorically exclude the UN as a guaranteeing agency and Fanfani and Su agreed that the ICC was not in a position to guarantee anything.

These statements do not add up to much, but they are suggestive of the DRV's willingness to compromise on a point that they know is important to the U.S. -- as in the case of many other issues, so long as it does not detract from the central issue of who controls the government in the South. Hanoi's opposition to the UN is wellknown and of long standing, and they would probably object to UN supervision. The problem of North Vietnam and Communist China not being members of the UN would seem to preclude the UN's playing a role. Similarly, the DRV has evinced no affection for the ICC. However, the DRV has over

the years continued to report violations of the Geneva Accords to the ICC, and because of the importance which the DRV attaches to the Geneva Accords, would not likely take a stand against a future ICC role. In all probability, nevertheless, Hanoi would not itself propose the ICC. It is also doubtful that they would accept an enlarged and strengthened ICC proposed by us. The possibility remains of an all-Asian supervisory body established on an ad hoc basis to deal with Vietnam, but we have no evidence that Hanoi would be receptive to this.

As long as the DRV feels assured that their control in the South is becoming a reality or is a reality, they are not likely to quarrel seriously over inspection and guarantee machinery.

6. CEASE-FIRE

Although Hanoi has repeatedly stated, and we have assumed all along, that the DRV will adopt a fighting-while-negotiating strategy, there is some chance that they will take the initiative in proposing a cease-fire once negotiations are underway.

We have had two hints on this possibility. The first came from Lewandowski (MARICOLD 11/14/66), when he asked the following questions:

"In case of a cease-fire, would the United States be prepared to withdraw from the combat areas and not to interfere in the creation of a new government in Viet-Nam? The question of how the new government of Viet-Nam will be formed will certainly arise.

"In case of a cease-fire, would the United States undertake not to interfere in peaceful progress toward unification of Viet-Nam if the people so wish, whether by referendum or by election?"

"In the case of a cease-fire and negotiations, would the United States be ready to use the Geneva Agreement and the machinery of the International Commission in bringing peace to Viet-Nam, and if so, would the United States publicly declare its intention to this effect?"

The second indication came from the very reliable Algard Ioan exchanges (OHIO 2/10/68). Ioan said that "Hanoi presupposed (assumed) that the military operations be stopped while negotiations are being conducted"

Hanoi's interest in a cease-fire does not mean that they would be interested in a genuine cease-fire. More likely, as in the case of Laos, they will pursue a strategy of negotiate-cessate fire-fight-cessate fire-fight, breaking the ground rules whenever they believe it appropriate.

Hanoi's possible interest in a cease-fire has a readily determinable purpose. If agreed to by us, it would give the NLF unchallenged authority in the areas it now controls. Such civil administration arrangements as may be made (as in the period following the 1954 Geneva Accords) would allow the NLF to develop local coalition governments.

The U.S. is on record publicly as favoring a cease-fire. The U.S. Fourteen Points, for example, state: "A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions."

President Johnson has made repeated and unqualified statements about our willingness to accept a cease-fire.

SEABORN MISSION TO HANOI, JUNE 18, 1964

(EXCERPTS)

Seaborn Report on Initial Visit to Hanoi:
Call on PM Pham Van Dong

.....

"7. Pham Van Dong opened remarks by saying we must learn to coexist and to find solution to problem which has wracked Indochina for 25 years. But just solution is only way to provide stability. What just solution means in DRVN is, as President Ho Chi Minh has explained (A) USA withdrawal (B) peace and neutrality for SVN in Cambodian pattern in accordance with programme of Liberation Front which must participate in determination of Vietnam as result of negotiation when SVN ready for negotiation."

.....

"10. In separate tel without 'Bacon' restrictions I shall report in greater detail PM's comments on Laos situation. Essence of his remarks was (A) only viable solution was return to status quo ante April coup d'etat and Govt. of National Coalition as per Geneva Accord of 1962 (B) necessity of convening 14 nation conference to achieve this result and (C) essentiality of no RPT no American interference in Laos. He said DRVN was very worried by step-up of USA military activities in Laos and complained of USA overflights of DRVN territory and of commando raids across border. He denied that PAVN had sent QTE units UNQTE across border to aid Pathet Lao but did not RPT not specifically deny my earlier statement that USA was aware DRVN were helping Pathet Lao and Viet Cong with men, arms and material."

.....

"14. I said I was interested to hear from him that as a condition for restoring peace SVN should become neutral as a first step prior to reunification. He stopped me and said he had not RPT not referred to neutrality as a first step only. Whether SVN would continue neutral would depend upon people of SVN. He did not RPT not prejudge. As for Liberation Front I said I realized it represents a certain force in SVN, though not RPT not in my view all people as the propaganda asserted nor even majority. He did not RPT not demur at this downgrading. I said I appreciated that the Front would have to participate should a coalition ever emerge. My fear however was that coalition would soon be taken over by Front as had happened in other countries and that other rep elements would suffer or be ousted. PM merely said there was no RPT no reason to have such fears."

"15. I then asked whether PM appreciated fully that USA's continued acceptance of obligations towards allies in SVN had implications which extended far beyond Southeast Asia and related to USA determination to

resist guerrilla subversion in Asia, Africa and Latin-America? EM laughed and said he did indeed appreciate it. A USA defeat in SVN would in all probability start a chain reaction which would extend much farther, but USA should understand that principles and stakes involved were just as high for Liberation Front in SVN and its supporters and this helped to explain their determination to continue to struggle regardless of sacrifice."

.....

SEABORN MISSION TO HANOI, JUNE 18, 1964

(EXCERPTS)

Remarks of Prime Minister Pham Van Dong
to J.B. Seaborn, Hanoi, June 18, 1964

.....

"President Ho Chi Minh has explained what we mean by a just solution. First it requires an American withdrawal from Indochina. Secondly it means that the affairs of the South must be arranged by the people of the South. It must provide for the participation of the Liberation Front. No other group represents the broad wishes of the people. The programme of the Front is the best one possible. There must be peace and neutrality for South Vietnam, neutrality in the Cambodian manner. Thirdly, a just solution means re-unification of the country. This is a 'drame, national, fondamental'. But we want peaceful reunification, without military pressures. We want negotiation 'round a table. There must be sincere satisfaction with the arrangement for it to be viable. We are in no hurry. We are willing to talk but we shall wait till SVN is ready. We are a divided people, without even personal links across the dividing line.

"The United States must show good will, but it is not easy for the USA to do so. Meanwhile the war intensifies. USA aid may increase in all areas, not only for the SVN army but in terms of USA army personnel as well. I suffer to see the war go on, develop, intensify. Yet our people are determined to struggle. It is impossible, quite impossible (excuse me for saying this) for you Westerners to understand the force of the people's will to resist and to continue. The struggle of the people exceeds the imagination. It has astonished us too.

"Since the fall of the Ngo brothers, it has been a 'cascade'. The prospect for the USA and its friends in SVN is 'sans issu'. Reinforcing the Khanh army doesn't count. The people have had enough. The SVN mercenaries have sacrificed themselves without honour. The Americans are not loves, for they commit atrocities. How can the people suffer such exactions and terror?"

.....

"Let me stress, insofar as the internal situation in SVN is concerned, the realistic nature of the Liberation Front's programme. It is impossible to have a representative government which excludes

the Front. The idea of a government of national coalition 'fait boule de neige' in the South. The Laos pattern of 1962 should serve as a guide for SVN.

"As for Laos, we are not reassured by the USA role. We must return to the '62 Geneva Accord. The present government of Laos is 'fantoche'. Souvanna Phouma, who is no better than a prisoner of the military, has acted like a coward. His present government provides no solution.

"We do not send units to the Pathet Lao. We do not demand more than a return to the situation which existed prior to the April coup. But there must be no American interference in Laos. There are daily incursions of our air space across the Laotian border by overflights of military aircraft and by commande units bent on sabotage."

.

"A new conference of the fourteen parties is necessary. Restoration of peace and neutrality for Laos are impossible otherwise. There is little utility in the Polish proposal. Only the 14-nation conference is competent to deal with the Laos situation.

"To return to Vietnam, it is a question of a 'guerre a outrance', which the USA won't win in any event, or neutrality. He had not (as I had suggested) referred to neutrality as a first step only. Whether SVN would continue neutral would depend upon the people of SVN. He did not prejudge the issue.

"The DRVN realize that the 'loss' of SVN for the Americans would set off (what was the atomic expression?) a chain reaction which would extend much further. The USA is in a difficult position, because Khanh's troops will no longer fight. If the war gets worse, we shall suffer greatly but we shall win. If we win in the South, the people of the world will turn against the USA. Our people will therefore accept the sacrifice, whatever they may be. But the DRVN will not enter the war.

"If the war were pushed to the North, 'nous sommes un pays socialiste, vous savez et le peuple se dressera'. But we shall not force the USA, we shall not provoke the USA.

"As far as the ICC is concerned, we are very glad to have you here. But don't put too many items on the agenda, don't give yourself too much work to do."

PRESIDENT JOHNSON, "PATTERN FOR PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,"

April 7, 1965

(EXCERPTS)

.....

"Our objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves--only that the people of South Viet-Nam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way. We will do everything necessary to reach that objective, and we will do only what is absolutely necessary."

.....

"These are the essentials of any final settlement.

"We will never be second in the search for such a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam.

"There may be many ways to this kind of peace: in discussion or negotiation with the governments concerned; in large groups or in small ones; in the reaffirmation of old agreements or their strengthening with new ones.

"We have stated this position over and over again 50 times and more to friend and foe alike. And we remain ready with this purpose for unconditional discussions.

"And until that bright and necessary day of peace we will try to keep conflict from spreading. We have no desire to see thousands die in battle--Asians or Americans. We have no desire to devastate that which the people of North Viet-Nam have built with toil and sacrifice. We will use our power with restraint and with all the wisdom that we can command.

"But we will use it."

.....

"The first step is for the countries of Southeast Asia to associate themselves in a greatly expanded cooperative effort for development. We would hope that North Viet-Nam would take its place in the common effort just as soon as peaceful cooperation is possible."

.....

"For our part I will ask the Congress to join in a billion-dollar American investment in this effort as soon as it is underway. And I would hope that all other industrialized countries, including the Soviet Union, will join in this effort to replace despair with hope and terror

EXTRACT FROM PHAM VAN DONG SPEECH

April 8, 1965

DRV FOUR POINTS

.....
"...The unswerving policy of the DRV Government is to respect strictly the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam and to implement correctly their basic provisions as embodied in the following points:

"1. Recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people-- peace, independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity. According to the Geneva agreements, the U.S. Government must withdraw from South Vietnam U.S. troops, military personnel, and weapons of all kinds, dismantle all U.S. military bases there, and cancel its military alliance with South Vietnam. It must end its policy of intervention and aggression in South Vietnam. According to the Geneva agreements, the U.S. Government must stop its acts of war against North Vietnam and completely cease all encroachments on the territory and sovereignty of the DRV.

"2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, while Vietnam is still temporarily divided into two zones the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam must be strictly respected. The two zones must refrain from entering into any military alliance with foreign countries and there must be no foreign military bases, troops, or military personnel in their respective territory.

"3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves in accordance with the program of the NFLSV without any foreign interference.

"4. The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference.

"This stand of the DRV Government unquestionably enjoys the approval and support of all peace and justice-loving governments and peoples in the world. The government of the DRV is of the view that the stand expounded here is the basis for the soundest political settlement of the Vietnam problem.

"If this basis is recognized, favorable conditions will be created for the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam people, and it will be possible to consider the reconvening of an international conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva conference on Vietnam."

.....
"The NFLSV, the mobilizer and organizer of the patriotic forces in South Vietnam, the leader which has taken the people to ever greater victories, is now controlling three-fourths of the territory and two-thirds of the population of South Vietnam. It has ever higher international prestige and position, and is being more and more recognized by foreign countries and world public opinion as the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people."

EXTRACT OF SPEECH BY SOUTH VIETNAM
FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN DO
June 22, 1965

TRAN VAN DO'S FOUR POINTS

1. Since the present war in Viet-Nam was provoked by Communist aggression and subversion, first of all, it is important that subversive and military activities undertaken, directed and supported by outside forces against the independence and liberty of the people of South Viet-Nam must cease. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the two parts-- principles declared in the Geneva Accords of 1954 as well as by international morality -- must be respected. Consequently, the Hanoi Communist regime must dissolve all the puppet organizations it has formed in South Viet-Nam under the names of "Front for the Liberation of the South," "Liberation Radio" and the "People's Revolutionary Party." Also it must withdraw from South Viet-Nam troops, political and military cadres it had illegally introduced into South Viet-Nam.

2. South Viet-Nam must be left alone, to choose and shape for itself its own destiny in accordance with established democratic processes without any intervention of whatever form and whatever source. Obviously these could be realized only when the aggression initiated by the Hanoi regime is ended and its intimidation campaign against the South Vietnamese people decisively suppressed.

3. Only when aggression has ceased, and only then, it will be possible for the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and for nations which provide it with assistance, to withhold defensive military measures on the territory of South Viet-Nam and outside its borders. Such measures are presently necessary for defending the territory of South Viet-Nam against Communist aggression. Besides, the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam is ready to ask these friendly countries to withdraw their military forces from South-Vietnam. However, it shall reserve its right to take all measures to restore order and law on the entire territory of South-Viet-Nam and to assure security for the people of South Viet-Nam as well as the right to call again for foreign assistance in case of renewed aggression or renewed threat of aggression.

4. Finally, the independence and liberty of the Vietnamese people must be effectively guaranteed.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON, "PRESS CONFERENCE,"
July 28, 1965

(EXCERPTS)

.....
"What are our goals in that war-stained land?"

"First, we intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power. They are not easily convinced...."

.....
"Second, once the Communists know, as we know, that a violent solution is impossible, then a peaceful solution is inevitable.

"We are ready now, as we have always been, to move from the battlefield to the conference table. I have stated publicly and many times, again and again, America's willingness to begin unconditional discussions with any government at any place at any time...."

.....
"...we do not seek the destruction of any government, nor do we covet a foot of any territory, but we insist and we will always insist that the people of South Vietnam shall have the right of choice, the right to shape their own destiny in free elections in the south, or throughout all Vietnam under international supervision, and they shall not have any government imposed upon them by force and terror so long as we can prevent it."

- U.S.-DRV CONTACTS ("XYZ" FOUR POINTS),
August 6, 1965

The following was given to Mai Van Bo on August 6, 1965:

"Point I - The basic rights of the Vietnamese people to peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity are recognized as set forth in the Geneva Accords of 1954. Obtaining compliance with the essential principles in the Accords is an appropriate subject for immediate, international discussions without preconditions and subsequent negotiations. Such discussions and negotiations should consider, among other things, appropriate means, including agreed stages, for the withdrawal of foreign military and quasi-military personnel and weapons from South and North Viet-Nam; the dismantling of foreign military bases in both areas; the cancellation of military alliances in contravention of the Accords; and the regrouping and redeployment of indigenous forces.

"Point II - Strict compliance with the military provisions of the Geneva Accords must be achieved in accordance with schedules and appropriate safeguards to be agreed upon in the said discussions and subsequent negotiations.

"Point III - The internal affairs of South and North Viet-Nam must be settled by the South and North Vietnamese peoples themselves in conformity with the principles of self-determination without any foreign interference.

"Point IV - The issue of reunification of Viet-Nam must be decided peacefully, on the basis of free determination by the peoples of South and North Viet-Nam without foreign interference."

U.S.-DRV CONTACTS ("XYZ" FOUR POINTS)

Mai Van Bo Statements During "XYZ" Contacts

During these contacts, Bo did not deny DRV troop presence in SVN (8/18/65), or even that the 325th NVA Division was in SVN, but claimed it was not then engaged in military operations (9/3/65). After the XYZ contact had ended, Bo said there were no regular northern troops in SVN but that northern volunteers might have joined the Viet Cong (1/27/66).

Because Bo did not deny NVA troop presence in SVN, he was able to agree with the principle that troop withdrawal would have to be mutual, balanced, and phased (8/18/65). Bo reaffirmed his agreement to this principle on 8/18/65, but then denied any such agreements on 9/3/65.

On the timing of U.S. troop withdrawals, Bo, at first, said that this would be a "technical problem, as easily solved as with the French in 1954," and that "it could take place over 2 or 3 years" (7/16/65). Bo also said that the final settlement should see troop withdrawals completed (8/18/65). At the end of these contacts, Bo was insisting that U.S. troops must leave before elections were held (9/3/65).

After the contacts were over, Bo told a French journalist: "It contemplates three stages--in the first stage, the U.S. would agree on the principle of their departure before the South Vietnamese settled by themselves their problems, which cannot be resolved so long as a foreign army is on their national territory. The second stage is that of negotiation. The third is departure." (5/6/66)

With respect to self-determination, Bo had said to Duntov that this was "the one basic premise" needed for a solution to the Vietnam problem (7/16/65). Later, Bo seemed to be arguing that the Vietnamese will be left to solve their problems through elections only after the Americans have left (1/27/65). Much later, Bo told a French journalist (5/6/66): "How can elections be held in a country over which no authority is exercised?" Did he mean the exercise of authority is decisive in the electoral process? No doubt. In which case, the question of who should organize the elections--the NLF with DRV help, or the GVN with U.S. help--would be the real issue.

The U.S. position throughout the contacts was that the NLF had no role "as of right" in South Vietnam (9/8/65) and would not guarantee a role for it before elections because to do so would be contrary to "free determination." Individual members of the NLF could participate in the political process. At most, the future of the NLF should be

a matter for discussion, not something settled in principle before negotiations began (8/15/65). In the event of a cease-fire, it was the U.S. intention to insist on the GVN's right to operate throughout SVN (9/1/65).

With respect to reunification, both the U.S. and Bo agreed (8/6/65) that it come about "on the basis of free determination." Bo said that the DRV was in a hurry to see reunification accomplished (7/16/65).

UNITED STATES FOURTEEN POINTS

January 3, 1966

1. The Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 are an adequate basis for peace in Southeast Asia;
2. We would welcome a conference on Southeast Asia or any part thereof;
3. We would welcome "negotiations without pre-conditions" as the 17 nations put it;
4. We would welcome unconditional discussions as President Johnson put it;
5. A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions;
6. Hanoi's four points could be discussed along with other points which others might wish to propose;
7. We want no U.S. bases in Southeast Asia;
8. We do not desire to retain U.S. troops in South Vietnam after peace is assured;
9. We support free elections in South Viet-Nam to give the South Vietnamese a government of their own choice;
10. The question of reunification of Vietnam should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision;
11. The countries of Southeast Asia can be non-aligned or neutral if that be their option;
12. We would much prefer to use our resources for the economic reconstruction of Southeast Asia than in war. If there is peace, North Viet-Nam could participate in a regional effort to which we would be prepared to contribute at least one billion dollars;
13. The President has said "The Viet Cong would not have difficulty being represented and having their views represented if for a moment Hanoi decided she wanted to cease aggression. I don't think that would be an insurmountable problem."
14. We have said publicly and privately that we could stop the bombing of North Vietnam as a step toward peace although there has not been the slightest hint or suggestion from the other side as to what they would do if the bombing stopped.

DRV AIDE MEMOIRE, "PINHA-RANGOON,"
January 31, 1966

RANGOON 392

"Text of Aide memoire referred to in Embtel 391 as follows: Quote I am forwarding to you the statement attached herewith made by the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam dated January 4, 1966 regarding the so-called 'Peace-efforts' made recently by the United States.

"With regards to the 14 points and the subsequent statements of the United States Government I hold that the American authorities still refuse to recognise the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese and people namely peace independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as stipulated by the 1954 Geneva agreements of Vietnam.

"The United States Government states that withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam will be effected only under American terms, that means the United States refuses to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam.

"The United States Government states that it seeks no military bases in South East Asian countries but on the other hand says it has to fulfil its commitments with the S.E.A.T.O. Bloc.

"The United States Government says it respects the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people on condition that the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation lay down arms and be granted amnesty -- that means the United States tries to maintain a puppet regime in power countering the South Vietnamese people, does not recognize the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation as the sole genuine representative of the entire South Vietnamese people and will not engage in negotiations with the Front. The United States Government refuses to accept Point 3 of the 4-point stand of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, that amounts to American rejection of all the four points.

"Concerning the 4-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. . I beg to quote the above-said statement of the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam: 'A political settlement of the Vietnam problem can be envisaged only when the United States Government has accepted the 4-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, has proved this by actual deeds, has stopped unconditionally and for good its air raids and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

"I am ready to listen to what the Ambassador may wish to expound on the United States position."

.....

MARIGOLD TEN POINTS AND RELATED CABLES,
September-December, 1966

Saigon 6280 (to SecState), S/Nodis, 18 September 1966

"1. D'Orlandi had a meeting with Lewandowski Friday night. It started as a social affair on D'Orlandi's invitation and on Lewandowski's initiative became a discussion of the war. According to Orlandi, Lewandowski said the following:

.....

"5. If the Americans ever really cared, they should especially concentrate on Pham Van Dong's fourth point concerning 'who is to speak for South Vietnam.' This does not mean that Hanoi would be trying to ram the Viet Cong down our throats. We could consider the setting up of a coalition government the bulk of which would be made up of 'sensible South Vietnamese politicians.' To preserve appearances you could have 'on the fringe' men from the 'right' in one or two 'unimportant ministries' and from on the 'left' fill one or two 'unimportant ministries with the so-called NLF.'

"6. D'Orlandi -- this is unthinkable. If this is what you want to talk about, it is better for us to stop the talks.

"7. Lewandowski asked whether D'Orlandi realized that what he meant to say was that this would be the last step not the first.

"8. D'Orlandi said: What would be the ultimate goal? If it is to have the Viet Cong in the Government of Viet Nam, I won't even submit such a proposal to Ambassador Lodge.

"9. Lewandowski said that is not at all what he meant to put to D'Orlandi. Plainly, the ultimate aim would be: 'to make of South Vietnam a second Cambodia.'

"10. D'Orlandi said that makes more sense, it is at least worth talking about.

"11. Lewandowski said: 'But I don't believe the Americans really wish to talk. They are trying to do two things at once: military escalation grouped with political proposals. You can't do both. So long as they won't make up their minds, we can't do anything. We must wait until November.'"

.....

LODGE

TEXT OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE MANILA SUMMIT CONFERENCE, MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES¹

INTRODUCTION

1. In response to an invitation from the President of the Republic of the Philippines, after consultations with the President of the Republic of Korea and the Prime Ministers of Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam, the leaders of seven nations in the Asian and Pacific region held a summit conference in Manila on October 24 and 25, 1966, to consider the conflict in South Vietnam and to review their wider purposes in Asia and the Pacific. The participants were Prime Minister Harold Holt of Australia, President Park Chung Hee of the Republic of Korea, Prime Minister Keith Holyoake of New Zealand, President Ferdinand E. Marcos of the Philippines, Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn of Thailand, President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States of America, and Chairman Nguyen Van Thieu and Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky of the Republic of Vietnam.

BASIC POLICY

2. The nations represented at this conference are united in their determination that the freedom of South Vietnam be secured, in their resolve for peace, and in their deep concern for the future of Asia and the Pacific. Some of us are now close to the actual danger, while others have learned to know its significance through bitter past experience. This conference symbolizes our common purposes and high hopes.

3. We are united in our determination that the South Vietnamese people shall not be conquered by aggressive force and shall enjoy the inherent right to choose their own way of life and their own form of government. We shall continue our military and all other efforts, as firmly and as long as may be necessary, in close consultation among ourselves until the aggression is ended.

4. At the same time our united purpose is peace--peace in South Vietnam and in the rest of Asia and the Pacific. Our common commitment is to the defense of the South Vietnamese people. Our sole demand on the leaders of North Vietnam is that they abandon their aggression. We are prepared to pursue any avenue which could lead to a secure and just peace, whether through discussion and negotiation or through reciprocal actions by both sides to reduce the violence.

5. We are united in looking to a peaceful and prosperous future for all of Asia and the Pacific. We have therefore set forth in a separate declaration a statement of the principles that guide for common actions in this wider sphere.

6. Actions taken in pursuance of the policies herein stated shall be in accordance with our respective constitutional processes.

PROGRESS AND PROGRAMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE MILITARY EFFORT

7. The Government of Vietnam described the significant military progress being made against aggression. It noted with particular gratitude the substantial contribution being made by free world forces.

¹ White House press release dated Oct. 25, 1966.

8. Nonetheless, the leaders noted that the movement of forces from North Vietnam continues at a high rate and that firm military action and free world support continue to be required to meet the threat. The necessity for such military action and support must depend for its size and duration on the intensity and duration of the Communist aggression itself.

9. In their discussion, the leaders reviewed the problem of prisoners of war. The participants observed that Hanoi has consistently refused to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in the application of the Geneva Conventions, and called on Hanoi to do so. They reaffirmed their determination to comply fully with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the Protection of War Victims, and welcomed the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies on October 8, 1966, calling for compliance with the Geneva Conventions in the Vietnam conflict, full support for the International Committee of the Red Cross, and immediate action to repatriate seriously sick and wounded prisoners of war. They agreed to work toward the fulfillment of this resolution, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and indicated their willingness to meet under the auspices of the ICRC or in any appropriate forum to discuss the immediate exchange of prisoners.

PACIFICATION AND REVOLUTION DEVELOPMENT

10. The participating governments concentrated particular attention on the accelerating efforts of the Governments of Vietnam to forge a social revolution of hope and progress. Even as the conflict continues, the effort goes forward to overcome the tyranny of poverty, disease, illiteracy and social injustice.

11. The Vietnamese leaders stated their intent to train and assign a substantial share of the armed forces to clear-and-hold actions in order to provide a shield behind which a new society can be built.

12. In the field of Revolutionary Development, measures along the lines developed in the past year and a half will be expanded and intensified. The training of Revolutionary Development cadres will be improved. More electricity and good water will be provided. More and better schools will be built and staffed. Refugees will be taught new skills. Health and medical facilities will be expanded.

13. The Vietnamese Government declared that it is working out a series of measures to modernize agriculture and to assure the cultivator the fruits of his labors. Land reform and tenure provisions will be granted top priority. Agricultural credit will be expanded. Crops will be improved and diversified.

14. The Vietnamese leaders emphasized that underlying these measures to build confidence and cooperation among the people there must be popular conviction that honesty, efficiency and social justice form solid cornerstones of the Vietnamese Government's programs.

15. This is a program each of the conferring governments has reason to applaud recognizing that it opens a brighter hope for the people of Vietnam. Each pledged its continuing assistance according to its means, whether in funds or skilled technicians or equipment. They noted also the help in non-military fields being given by other countries and expressed the hope that his help will be substantially increased.

ECONOMIC STABILITY AND PROGRESS

16. The Conference was told of the success of the Government of Vietnam in controlling the inflation which, if unchecked, could undercut all efforts to bring a more fulfilling life to the Vietnamese people. However, the Vietnamese leaders reaffirmed that only by constant effort could inflation be kept under control. They described their intention to enforce a vigorous stabilization program, to control spending, increase revenues, and seek to promote savings in order to hold the 1967 inflationary gap to the minimum practicable level. They also plan to take further measures to insure maximum utilization of the Port of Saigon, so that imports urgently needed to fuel the military effort and buttress the civil economy can flow rapidly into Vietnam.

17. Looking to the long-term future of their richly endowed country, the Vietnamese representatives described their views and plans for the building of an expanded postwar economy.

18. Military installations where appropriate will be converted to this purpose, and plans for this will be included.

19. The conferring nations reaffirmed their continuing support for Vietnamese efforts to achieve economic stability and progress. Thailand specifically noted its readiness to extend substantial new credit assistance for the purchase of rice and the other nations present reported a number of plans for the supply of food or other actions related to the economic situation. At the same time the participants agreed to appeal to other nations and to international organizations committed to the full and free development of every nation, for further assistance to the Republic of Vietnam.

20. The representatives of Vietnam noted that, even as the Conference met, steps were being taken to establish a new constitutional system for the Republic of Vietnam through the work of the Constituent Assembly, chosen by so large a proportion of the electorate last month.

21. The Vietnamese representatives stated their expectation that work on the Constitution would go forward rapidly and could be completed before the deadline of March 1967. The Constitution will then be promulgated and elections will be held within six months to select a representative government.

22. The Vietnamese Government believes that the democratic process must be strengthened at the local as well as the national level. The Government of Vietnam announced that to this end it will begin holding village and hamlet elections at the beginning of 1967.

23. The Government of Vietnam announced that it is preparing a program of National Reconciliation. It declared its determination to open all doors to those Vietnamese who have been misled or coerced into casting their lot with the Viet Cong. The Government seeks to bring them back to participate as free men in national life under amnesty and other measures. Former enemies are asked only to lay down their weapons and bring their skills to the service of the South Vietnamese people.

24. The other participating nations welcomed the stated expectation of the Vietnamese representatives that work on the Constitution will proceed on schedule, and concurred in the conviction of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam that building representative, constitutional government and opening the way for national reconciliation are indispensable to the future of a free Vietnam.

THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

25. The participants devoted a major share of their deliberations to peace objectives and the search for a peaceful settlement in South Vietnam. They reviewed in detail the many efforts for peace that have been undertaken, by themselves and other nations, and the actions of the United Nations and of His Holiness the Pope. It was clearly understood that the settlement of the war in Vietnam depends on the readiness and willingness of the parties concerned to explore and work out together a just and reasonable solution. They noted that Hanoi still showed no sign of taking any step toward peace, either by action or by entering into discussions or negotiations. Nevertheless, the participants agreed that the search for peace must continue.

26. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam declared that the Vietnamese people, having suffered the ravages of war for more than two decades, were second to none in their desire for peace. It welcomes any initiative that will lead to an end to hostilities, preserves the independence of South Vietnam and protects the right to choose their own way of life.

27. So that their aspirations and position would be clear to their allies at Manila and friends everywhere, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam solemnly stated its views as to the essential elements of peace in Vietnam:

(1) Cessation of aggression.--At issue in Vietnam is a struggle for the preservation of values which people everywhere have cherished since the dawn of history: the independence of peoples and the freedom of individuals. The people of South Vietnam ask only that the aggression that threatens their independence and the externally supported terror that threatens their freedom be halted. No self-respecting people can ask for less. No peace-loving nation should ask for more.

(2) Preservation of the territorial integrity of South Vietnam.--The people of South Vietnam are defending their own territory against those seeking to obtain by force and terror what they have been unable to accomplish by peaceful means. While sympathizing with the plight of their brothers in the North and while disdaining the regime in the North, the South Vietnamese people have no desire to threaten or harm the people of the North or invade their country.

(3) Reunification of Vietnam.--The Government and people of South Vietnam deplore the partition of Vietnam into North and South. But this partition brought about by the Geneva Agreements of 1954 however unfortunate and regrettable, will be respected until by the free choice of all Vietnamese, reunification is achieved.

(4) Resolution of internal problems.--The people of South Vietnam seek to resolve their own internal differences and to this end are prepared to engage in a program of national reconciliation. When the aggression has stopped, the people of South Vietnam will move more rapidly toward reconciliation of all elements in the society and will move forward, through the democratic process, toward human dignity, prosperity and lasting peace.

(5) Removal of allied military forces.--The people of South Vietnam will ask their allies to remove their forces and evacuate their installations as the military and subversive forces of North Vietnam are withdrawn, infiltration ceases, and the level of violence thus subsides.

(6) Effective guarantees.--The people of South Vietnam, mindful of their experience since 1954 insist that any negotiations leading to the end of hostilities incorporate effective international guarantees. They are openminded as such guarantees can be applied and made effective.

28. The other participating governments reviewed and endorsed these as essential elements of peace and agreed they would act on this basis in close consultation among themselves in regard to settlement of the conflict.

29. In particular, they declared that Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled.

CONTINUING CONSULTATION AMONG THE PARTICIPATING NATIONS

30. All the participants agreed that the value of a meeting among the seven nations had been abundantly demonstrated by the candid and thorough discussions held. It was further agreed that, in addition to the close consultation already maintained through diplomatic channels, there should be regular meetings among their Ambassadors in Saigon in association with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Meetings of their Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government will also be held as required.

31. At the close of the meeting, all the visiting participants expressed their deep gratitude to President Marcos and to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for offering Manila as the conference site, and expressed their appreciation for the highly efficient arrangements.

SWEDISH-DRV CONTACTS (ASPEN)

(Excerpts from Rusk-Nilsson MemCon, November 11, 1966)

"II. The Swedish Ambassador in Peking, Mr. Petri, recently visited Hanoi and had a conversation with the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam, Mr. Trinh.

"a) Mr. Trinh strongly emphasized that the North Vietnamese Government aimed at a political solution of the Vietnamese conflict, not a military one. Mr. Trinh said that two conditions must be fulfilled in order to bring about a climate for negotiations, which could lead to a political solution.

1. The bombing of North Vietnam must be put to an end, without any conditions and definitely.
2. The FNL must be accepted by the US Government as one of the spokesmen for the South Vietnamese people and, as Mr. Trinh expressed it, the most valid one.

"If both these conditions were fulfilled and the US Government thus took what he called 'an appropriate attitude' then, Mr. Trinh said, 'we know what we will have to do'.

"It should be added that, in this connection, the question of a timetable for the withdrawal of US troops was not raised.

"b) As to the possibility of a final settlement of the Vietnamese conflict, Mr. Trinh said that - in addition to the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops - both the Hanoi Government and the FNL had the following requests:

1. The creation of a national coalition government founded on a very broad basis and including all political and religious groupings as well as all social classes genuinely desiring to achieve national independence.
2. General elections in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy.
3. Although no immediate reunification was envisaged, it was necessary to create such conditions in South Vietnam as to permit a move in the direction of a future reunification of North and South Vietnam.

"Mr. Trinh reiterated that if the US Government gave proof of goodwill, they would find that 'the Vietnamese side knew what they had to do'."

MARIGOLD TEN POINTS AND RELATED CABLES,
September-December, 1966

Saigon 10856 (to SecState), TS/Nodis, 14 November 1966

"1. I met Levandowski at D'Orlandi's apartment at 3:00 p.m. Saigon time.

"2. ...on the eve of his visit to Hanoi.... He had four questions, as follows:

a. 'Regarding the offer at Manila concerning the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Viet-Nam on the condition that the troops of North Viet-Nam would withdraw (and, he said, North Viet-Nam, of course, doesn't admit that they are there at all), does this condition mean the United States withdrawal depends on control by the present South Vietnamese Government of territories not now under the control of Saigon?'

b. 'In case of a cease-fire⁶, would the United States be prepared to withdraw from the combat areas and not to interfere in the creation of a new government in Viet-Nam? The question of how the new government of Viet-Nam will be formed will certainly arise.'

c. 'In case of a cease-fire, would the United States undertake not to interfere in peaceful progress toward unification of Viet-Nam if the people so wish, whether by referendum or by election?'

d. 'In the case of a cease-fire and negotiations, would the United States be ready to use the Geneva Agreement and the machinery of the International Commission in bringing peace to Viet-Nam, and if so, would the United States publicly declare its intention to this effect?'

"3. I said that there were questions which I would have to refer to the U.S. Government, and that I would do so and provide answers as soon as I could."

LODGE

MARGOLD TEN POINTS AND RELATED CABLES,
September-December, 1966

Saigon 12247, TS/Nodis, 30 November 1966

"Lewandowski summarized the 10 points to Lodge as follows:

"(1) The U.S. is interested in a peaceful solution through negotiations.

"(2) Negotiations should not be interpreted as a way to negotiated surrender by those opposing the U.S. in Vietnam. A political negotiation would be aimed at finding an acceptable solution to all the problems, having in mind that the present status quo in SVN must be changed in order to take into account the interests of the parties presently opposing the policy of the U.S. in South Vietnam.

"(3) The U.S. does not desire a permanent or a long-term military presence in SVN.

"(4) The U.S. is willing to discuss all problems with respect to the settlement.

"(5) The U.S. is willing to accept the participation of 'all' in elections and the supervision of these elections by an appropriate international body.

"(6) The U.S. believes that reunification should be settled by the Vietnamese themselves after peace and proper representative organs are established in SVN.

"(7) The U.S. is prepared to abide by a neutral South Vietnam.

"(8) The U.S. is prepared to stop bombing 'if this will facilitate such a peaceful solution.' In this regard the U.S. is prepared to accept DRV modalities on the cessation and not require the DRV to admit infiltration into SVN.

"(9) The U.S. will not agree to 'reunification under military pressure.'

"(10) The U.S. 'will not declare now or in the future its acceptance of North Vietnam's 4 or 5 points.'

"Lewandowski asked if these 10 points were a proper formulation of the U.S. position. Lodge said that they seemed to be in order, but that the matter was of such sensitivity and importance that he would have to

refer the points back to Washington for approval. Lodge added, however, that he saw two difficulties right off. First, he suggested changing Point 2 to read 'would' instead of 'must.' Second, he questioned the phraseology in Point 8 -- 'if this would facilitate such a peaceful solution.'

"Lewandowski insisted that his statement was a serious proposition based on conversations with the 'most respectable government sources in Hanoi.' Later Lewandowski admitted that Pham Van Dong was the source and that he had the 'Presidium behind him.'

"Lewandowski stated: 'I am authorized to say that if the U.S. are really of the views which I have presented, it would be advisable to confirm them directly by conversation with the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Warsaw.'

"Lewandowski said that there was a vital need to move quickly because (1) there was a danger of a leak and that secrecy was essential for Hanoi; and (2) that delays would give those 'working against a solution' time to 'put down the clamps on talks.'"

ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG, UNITED
STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT A SPECIAL CONVOCATION AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY,
WASHINGTON, D.C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1967 [Excerpts] ¹

Our effort to open the door to peace in Vietnam has been continuous. In recent weeks public attention has been focused on this effort by an unusual number of statements, reports and events: pronouncements by the governments involved, appeals by world leaders including Pope Paul and Secretary General Thant, new stories and interviews with various personalities--and the perplexing events in Mainland China. Right now we are in the midst of another pause in the fighting, the Lunar New Year Truce. Thus this may be a good moment to assess the present status of our efforts for peace.

In such an assessment, a responsible official, must in all that he says in public, avoid damaging the hopes for progress through private diplomacy. But in a free society he must also accept the inescapable responsibility to keep the public adequately informed. It is difficult to deal on both levels at once but it is essential to do so as well as we can.

Let me begin, then, by recalling the basic American peace aims in Vietnam. These aims have been stated many times by President Johnson and other responsible spokesmen of the United States. They have been stated over a span of two years, but the ebb and flow of the military situation during that time has not made them any less valid as guidelines for peace negotiations. We do not subscribe to the false notion that a strong military position obviates the desirability of seeking peace through negotiations. Today, therefore, I wish to review the essence of these American aims.

The United States seeks a political solution in Vietnam. We do not seek the unconditional surrender of our adversaries. We seek a settlement whose terms will result not from dictation, but from genuine negotiations--a settlement whose terms will not sacrifice the vital interest of any party. In the words of the Manila Communique: "The settlement of the war in Vietnam depends on the readiness and willingness of the parties concerned to explore and work out together a just and reasonable solution." As President Johnson said a week

¹ U.S. mission to the United Nations press release No. 13, dated Feb. 10, 1967.

ago here in Washington: Such a solution "will involve . . . concessions on both parts."

We are not engaged in a "holy war" against communism. We do not seek an American sphere of influence in Asia; nor a permanent American "presence" of any kind--military or otherwise--in Vietnam; nor the imposition of a military alliance on South Vietnam.

We do not seek to do any injury to Mainland China nor to threaten any of its legitimate interests.

We seek to assure to the people of South Vietnam the affirmative exercise of the right of self-determination--the right to decide their own political destiny free of external interference and force and through democratic processes. In keeping with the announced South Vietnamese Government's policy of national reconciliation, we do not seek to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future. We are prepared to accept the results of that decision whatever it may be. We support the early consummation of a democratic constitutional system in South Vietnam, and welcome the progress being made to this end.

As regards North Vietnam, we have no designs on its territory, and we do not seek to overthrow its government whatever its ideology. We are prepared fully to respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to enter into specific undertakings to that end.

We believe the reunification of Vietnam should be decided upon through a free choice by the peoples of both the North and the South without any outside interference; and the results of that choice also will have our full support.

Finally, when peace is restored we are willing to make a major commitment of money, talent and resources to a multilateral cooperative effort to bring to all of Southeast Asia, including North Vietnam, the benefits of economic and social reconstruction and development which that area so sorely needs.

These, then, are the peace aims of the United States. They parallel the objectives stated by the South Vietnamese Government at Manila. Our aims are strictly limited and we sincerely believe they contain nothing inconsistent with the interests of any party. Our public pronouncements of them--both in Washington and at the United Nations--are solemn commitments by the United States.

Our adversaries--have also placed their aims and objectives on the public record over the past two years. The major statement of these aims is the well-known four points of Hanoi, which I will summarize without departing too much from their own terminology.

The first point calls for recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people: peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. It also calls for the cessation of all acts of war against the North; the ending of United States intervention in the South; the withdrawal of all United States troops, military personnel and weapons of all kinds, the dismantling of American bases and the cancellation of what they term the United States "Military Alliance" with South Vietnam.

The United States would not find any essential difficulty with a reasonable interpretation of any of the terms included in this point. Our chief concern is what it does not include: namely, that North Vietnam also cease its intervention in the South, end all of its acts of war against the South, and withdraw its forces from the South.

Such a requirement is obviously essential to the "peace" to which this first point refers.

The second point relates to the military clauses of the Geneva agreements. It provides that, pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, both the North and the South must refrain from joining any military alliance; and that there should be no foreign bases, troops of military personnel in their respective territories.

Here again, the only real difficulty is the omission of any obligation on the North to withdraw its military forces from the South--although the Geneva Accords which established the demarcation line in Vietnam forbids military interference of any sort by one side in the affairs of the other, and even goes so far as to forbid civilians to cross the demilitarized zone.

The third point calls for the settlement of the South's internal affairs "in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam." This point, of course, was not a part of the Geneva Accords at all. It introduces a new element which I shall discuss later in this analysis.

The fourth point calls for the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, to be settled by the people of both zones without any foreign interference. We have no difficulty with this point as was indicated in my speech to the General Assembly on September 22.

There has apparently been added a fifth point--put forward and repeatedly endorsed by both Hanoi and the National Liberation Front since the enunciation of the four points in April 1965. This fifth point was stated by Ho Chi Minh in January 1966 when he said that if the United States really wants peace, it must recognize the National Liberation Front as the "sole genuine representative" of the people of South Vietnam, and engage in negotiation with it. This, like the third of the "Four Points," introduces a new element which was not part of the Geneva Accords.

Now, from this brief summation of our aims and those declared by Hanoi, it is clear that there are areas of agreement and areas of disagreement. Recent public statements by Hanoi have been helpful in certain aspects, but how great the disagreements are is still uncertain because the stated aims of Hanoi still contain a number of ambiguities. I would like to discuss some of these ambiguities because they relate to very consequential matters.

There is ambiguity, for example, on the role of the National Liberation Front in peace negotiations. I have already noted the statement of Ho Chi Minh and other spokesmen for our adversaries who have said that we must recognize the Front as "the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people, and negotiate with it." If this means that we are asked to cease our recognition of the Government in Saigon and deal only with the Front, insistence on this point would imperil the search for peace. For the Front has not been chosen by any democratic process to represent the people of South Vietnam. Nor has the Front been recognized by the world community. It is pertinent to recall that more than 60 nations recognize the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon, whereas none recognizes the National Liberation Front as a government.

On the other hand, some public statements seem to call for the National Liberation Front to be given a place or voice at the negotiating table. If this were the position of our adversaries, the prospects

would be brighter; for President Johnson, as long ago as July 1965, said that "the Viet Cong would not have difficulty in being represented and in having their views presented if Hanoi for a moment decides that it wants to cease aggression." He added that this did not seem to him to be "an insurmountable problem," and that "I think that could be worked out."

A further ambiguity relates to the role of the National Liberation Front in the future political life of South Vietnam. Hanoi asks that the affairs of South Vietnam be settled "in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front." Our adversaries, in their various comments on this point, take no notice of the internationally recognized Government of South Vietnam or of the steps which the South Vietnamese leaders have taken, and have currently under way, and the institutions they are now creating, for the purpose of providing their country with a constitutional and representative government.

Nor would their statements seem to leave any place for the South Vietnamese who have participated in and promoted such steps. Such an interpretation would pose serious obstacles to a settlement.

However, some claim that what the National Liberation Front really seeks is no more than the opportunity to advance its program peacefully along with other elements and groupings in the South in a free political environment.

We have already made it clear that we do not wish to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future and that we support a policy of national reconciliation endorsed by the South Vietnamese Government in the Manila Communique. Indeed, as Secretary Rusk said in an interview last week, if the Viet Cong were to lay down their arms, ways could be found to permit them to take part in the normal political processes in South Vietnam.

Further ambiguities arise concerning the question of foreign troops in South Vietnam. What does Hanoi mean by "foreign troops?" They clearly include in this term the forces of the United States and other countries aiding the South, but they have never admitted the presence of their own forces in the South. Of course, a one-sided withdrawal by our side would not lead to an acceptable peace. All external forces must withdraw, those of Hanoi as well as ours, if peace is to be achieved.

There is ambiguity also in Hanoi's position on the timing of the withdrawal of external forces. Do our adversaries consider withdrawal of forces as a precondition to negotiations, as some of their statements imply? If so, this again would raise a serious obstacle to progress. But if they look on withdrawal of forces as a provision to be incorporated in a settlement this clearly could be worked out. The United States and its allies are already on record in the Manila Communique that their forces "will be withdrawn . . . as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled." Further, we have indicated our willingness to join in a phased and supervised withdrawal of forces by both sides.

Next, there is ambiguity in Hanoi's position on the cessation of bombing of North Vietnam. At times their public statements have demanded that the bombing be ended unconditionally, without any

reference to a possible response from their side. On the other hand quite recently a spokesman of Hanoi said that "if, after the definitive and unconditional cessation of the bombardments, the American Government proposes to enter into contact with the [North Vietnamese] Government. . . . this proposal will be examined and studied." And just this week we have seen a further statement, in an interview by the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister, that cessation of the bombings "could lead to talks between North Vietnam and the U.S." Many of their statements, insisting that the bombing cease have also contained other expressions, such as that the American military presence in South Vietnam be completely withdrawn and that the "Four Points" of Hanoi must be recognized and accepted as "the" basis--or possibly as "a" basis--for settlement of the conflict. This creates an additional ambiguity as to whether Hanoi means to add still other prenegotiating conditions.

The position of the United States on this bombing question has been stated by a number of Administration spokesmen, including me at the United Nations. The United States remains prepared to take the first step and order a cessation of all bombing of North Vietnam the moment we are assured, privately or otherwise, that this step will be answered promptly by a tangible response toward peace from North Vietnam. In his letter of February 8 to His Holiness, Pope Paul, President Johnson said:

. . . I know you would not expect us to reduce military action unless the other side is willing to do likewise. We are prepared to discuss the balanced reduction in military activity, the cessation of hostilities or any practical arrangements which could lead to these results. We shall continue our efforts for a peaceful and honorable settlement until they are crowned with success.

Some analysts contend that our terms of settlement should be more precisely defined. But it is very difficult to be more precise in advance of negotiation and particularly in light of the substantive ambiguities on the other side. But whatever questions may be raised, they should and can best be resolved in discussions between the parties who have the power to resolve them. For our part, we stand ready to negotiate in good faith unconditionally to resolve all outstanding questions.

The United States approach to negotiations is flexible. We and our allies do not ask our adversaries to accept, as a pre-condition to discussions or negotiations, any point of ours to which they may have objections. Nor do we rule out the discussion of any points of theirs, however difficult they might appear to us. We are willing to discuss and negotiate not only our own points but Hanoi's four points and points emanating from any other sources, including the Secretary General of the United Nations.

It remains to be seen whether our adversaries share this concept of negotiations. As I have already pointed out, their various public declarations of peace aims have often been coupled with statements that the goals they put forward must, for example, be "accepted" or "recognized" as the "sole basis" or "the most correct basis" or "the only sound basis" or "the basis for the most correct political solution."

Such statements contain still further ambiguity--in one sense the most fundamental of all, since it relates to the concept of negotiation itself. Do these statements mean that Hanoi is willing to enter negotiations only if there is an assurance in advance that the outcome will be on their terms and will, in effect, simply ratify the goals they have already stated? Such an attitude would not be conducive to peace and would make the outlook for a settlement bleak indeed.

If, on the other hand, North Vietnam were to say that their points are not pre-conditions to discussions or negotiations, then the prospects should be more promising.

Our negotiating approach would permit each side to seek clarification of the other side's position. It does not require the acceptance in advance of any points, least of all those whose meaning may be in need of clarification. We do not ask that of Hanoi--and progress toward a settlement will be facilitated if Hanoi does not ask it of us.

In this situation, how can we best move toward a settlement?

One essential early step is to analyze the positions of all parties in order to ascertain whether there is some element or some kernel common to all. Many students of the subject have pointed to one fact which may prove to be such a kernel--namely, the fact that both sides have pointed to the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 as an acceptable basis for a peaceful settlement.

But I must add quickly that this does not necessarily indicate a real meeting of the minds, because of doubts that all sides interpret the Geneva Agreements in the same light. Hanoi has said that the essence of the Geneva Agreements is contained in its "four points." But the four points would not put Hanoi under any restraint or obligations in its hostile activities against the South, which the Geneva Accords explicitly prohibit. Besides, as I already pointed out, these points insist that the South's future be regulated in accordance with the program of a group which was not referred to in the Geneva Accords and did not even exist when they were written, and in any case, if the Geneva Accords were to serve as a basis for settlement, it would obviously be necessary to revitalize the international machinery which they provided for supervision--which is presently operating under severe limitations; to incorporate effective international guarantees; and to update other provisions of the Accords which on their face are clearly out of date.

Despite these problems of interpretation, it can be said that if the meaning of the Geneva Agreements were accepted as a matter for genuine negotiations, then the constant reference to these agreements by both sides would be more than a verbal similarity; it would be a significant and hopeful sign of the prospects for settlement.

From all this analysis, there emerges one basic and practical question, and it is this: How are all these apparent obstacles to a settlement to be overcome?

The first and essential pre-requisite is the will to resolve them--not by unconditional surrender or by the dictation of terms, but through a process of mutual accommodation whereby nobody's vital interests are injured, which would be a political solution. Speaking for the United States Government, I affirm without reservation the willingness of the United States to seek and find a political solution.

The next question, then, is by what procedures such a political settlement can be reached. One well-tested and time-proven way is the conference table. President Johnson has repeatedly stated our readiness to join in a conference in Geneva, in Asia, or in any other suitable place. We remain prepared today to go to the conference table as soon as, and wherever, our adversaries are prepared to join us.

There is also a second procedure by which to pursue a political settlement: namely, private negotiations--either by direct contact or through an intermediary. There is much to be said for this private method, for in a situation as grave as this, with its complex historical background and its present political cross currents, it would be exceedingly difficult to negotiate in a goldfish bowl.

I therefore affirm that the United States Government stands ready to take this route also toward a political settlement. And we give our assurance that the secrecy and security of such private explorations would be safeguarded on our side. Of course we do not and should not ask that freedom of expression be curtailed in the slightest degree. Nevertheless--as that conspicuous champion of free expression, Dr. Erwin D. Canham, recently reminded us--no one's credibility ought to suffer because of what is better left unsaid under such circumstances.

Let me quickly add that at this juncture I do not want to raise any false hopes by this remark. I am simply stating a principle which is inherent in the concept of the secrecy and security of private explorations.

Such then is my analysis of the problems involved and the methods to be employed in seeking a negotiated solution of the Vietnamese conflict. Nor should we overlook the possibility that negotiations private or public, might be preceded or facilitated by the process of mutual de-escalation or a scaling down of the conflict without a formally negotiated ceasefire. This, of course, would be welcome on our part.

It is altogether possible, too, that there will be no negotiations culminating in a formal agreement; that our adversaries will sooner or later find the burden of the war too exhausting and that the conflict will gradually come to an end.

Perhaps this will indeed prove to be the outcome. But our most respected military authorities have cautioned us not to expect that this will happen quickly, and that we must face the possibility of a long struggle. Surely, if there is any contribution that diplomacy can make to hastening a just and honorable end of this struggle, we cannot in all conscience spare any effort or any labor, day or night, to make that contribution--no matter how difficult and frustrating the effort may be, or how many false starts and failures and new beginnings it may entail.

As students of history know, one obstacle to a negotiated end of any war can be psychological. The frame of mind appropriate to fighting and the frame of mind appropriate to peacemaking are by nature very different. And yet a stage inevitably comes when both these seemingly contradictory efforts must go on side by side.

Many citizens, viewing this complex dual process, are likely to be confused and distressed by what seems like an inconsistency in their leaders' policies. Some complain that the talk of peace suggests a weakening of our resolve and of our will to win. Simultaneously others complain that the continued military effort suggests an attempt to bring the adversary to his knees, to break his will--and thus casts doubt on the sincerity of our will to peace.

The great difficulty of achieving peace should serve to remind us that there are substantial conflicting interests at stake which stubbornly resist solution; that peace cannot be bought at any price, nor can real conflicts of purpose be waved away with a magic wand. By the same token, the ferocity of war should not be an incitement to hatred but rather a stern discipline--a reminder of the imperative duty to define responsibly the limited interests for which our soldiers fight and which a peace settlement must protect.

The effort to make such a responsible definition, and to carry it through the process of peace negotiations, is "piled high with difficulty." A genuine meeting of the minds may never be wholly achieved. It is unlikely that terms of settlement for this stubborn conflict can be found which would be wholly pleasing to either side. But it is in our highest national interest that an acceptable, livable solution should be found.

Let no one suppose that patriotism, which is so inspiringly displayed on the battlefield, is not also present at the negotiating table. All our recent Presidents have testified to our country's dedication to negotiation as a means of peacefully bridging difference.

President Eisenhower said in 1955, on the eve of the first Summit Conference with the Soviet leadership:

We shall work with all others so that peaceful and reasonable negotiations may replace the clash of the battlefield.

President Kennedy, in his Inaugural Address, said:

Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

An President Johnson has summed up the true value of negotiation as follows:

To negotiate is not to admit failure. It is to show good sense. We believe that collective bargaining is working as long as parties stay in negotiation. Only when bargaining breaks off do we speak of failure. And so also in foreign policy. There, too, the rule of law and the resort to the bargaining table are the hallmarks of success.

An to these words the President added specifically:

This rule applies without qualification to Vietnam. We shall count it a mark of success when all the parties to that dispute are around a conference table. We Americans are experienced in bargaining; we have nothing to fear from negotiation. And we Americans know the nature of a fair bargain; none need fear negotiating with us.

I am sure all three of these Presidents would agree today that the effort to discover through negotiation, the common ground on which to build a just and honorable peace, is worthy of our most sincere and dedicated efforts.

WRITER GIVES PLANS OF HANOI AND VIETCONG FOR
FUTURE VIETNAM¹

The Associated Press asked Wilfred Burchett, an Australian Communist writer, to report the strategy of Hanoi and the Vietcong as he had been able to discern it in his trips to Vietnam. Burchett has often been a Communist spokesman in Korea, Vietnam and Germany.

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Feb. 10 (AP)--How Hanoi and the Vietcong view a future Vietnam which might emerge out of any negotiated settlement was revealed in a series of talks I recently had with top Vietnamese leaders of North Vietnam plus Liberation Front (Vietcong) representatives in Hanoi and talks last August with the Front's president, Nguyen Huu Tho, whom I met for the fourth time in his jungle headquarters in South Vietnam.

The general idea is that Vietnam as such must be an independent country without any foreign presence. Reunification is a long-range project realizable only in the far distant future, which Vietnamese leaders in the North and Liberation Front leaders in the South privately agree may be 10 to 20 years away.

Meantime, the North would remain a Socialist country and a member of the Socialist world but without military alliances or foreign military bases, militarily but not politically neutral. The South would be non-Socialist and neutral militarily, politically and diplomatically.

The seeds for all this are provided for in North Vietnam's four-point plan enunciated by Premier Pham Van Dong in April, 1965, and acceptance of which until very recently had been thought in Washington to be a precondition for talks.

But in Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh's replies to my questions, in which he said talks could start if bombings stopped, it was made clear that acceptance of the four points was not posed as a precondition, and far less was withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Vietnam made a prior condition, as seems to have been thought over a long period in Washington.

The formula used by Foreign Minister Trinh was that the "four-point stand and correct attitude the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam enjoy were sure of even stronger approval and support from all peace--and justice--loving peoples and governments the world."

That this is not being posed as a precondition is one of the most important of the clarifications in the Foreign Minister's statement.

But if Washington took a long, hard look at the four points one top Vietnamese official said, it would find they entail important concessions compared to the Geneva agreements.

The latter provided reunification by 1956, with the assumption that the pro-Communist Vietminh would rule over the whole country.

¹ From the Washington Post, by Wilfred Burchett, Feb. 11, 1967.

The four points, which neatly dovetail into the five-point plan of the National Liberation Front, were specifically formulated, according to the same official, to facilitate American disengagement. While the plan contains nothing contrary to the Geneva agreements, it makes an important concession the indefinite postponement of reunification, halts the spread of communism south of the 17th Parallel, and accepts certain restrictions on the sovereignty of the North.

✓The Geneva agreements of July 21, 1954, which partitioned Vietnam along the 17th Parallel, provided for unification elections by July 20, 1956. However, the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in South Vietnam spurned any such vote.

✓Pham Van Dong's four points of April, 1965, included: (1) Withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from South Vietnam and an end to all acts of war against the North; (2) No foreign military alliances for either North or South; (3) Settlements of South Vietnam's internal affairs in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front; (4) peaceful reunification without foreign interference.✓

What type of regime could the North and the Liberation Front accept in the South? The Liberation Front considers it is in a strong enough position militarily and politically to have a "decisive place and voice" in any settlement of the Southern half of the problem.

In fact, as the Front's President Nguyen Huu Tho told me last August, he envisages that a "broad coalition government of national union" could be formed which, while excluding personalities like Generals Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu, the present Premier and President respectively, would not exclude some members of their cabinet or others who served in previous Saigon governments far back, even including that of Diem.

Such a government must be irrevocably committed to an autonomous South Vietnam independent and neutral. But explicit in the Liberation Front and the North's five and four points is that independence means withdrawal of all U.S. forces and the dismantling of bases.

✓U.S. officials in Washington examined with interest the Communist viewpoint as reported by Burchett, John Hightower of the Associated Press reported.

✓The officials said Communist acceptance of the idea of a long-term non-Communist regime in the South was an interesting indication of flexibility, Hightower reported.

✓The plan for a coalition government in the South was also viewed with interest, but the United States was pictured as being unwilling to accept any such coalition that included "a decisive place and voice" for the National Liberation Front. The U.S. view is said to be that participation in South Vietnamese political life by individual Vietcong leaders who would be loyal to an independent government would be acceptable, but not participation by the NLF as an organization.✓

The Front's leaders, including those of the Marxist Revolutionary Party, insist that although they would carry out the distribution of land--this has already been done in areas administered by the Front--they do not intend the collectivization of land or the socialization of industry and commerce. They would accept aid from the West and East, protect existing foreign interests, and would accept foreign

investments to help rebuild and develop the country when this did not infringe national sovereignty.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Nhan Dan (The People)--which is North Vietnam's Pravada--commenting on the Foreign Minister's statement on the possibilities of talks, seven times mentioned the term "peace and independence" as defining the Vietnamese main aims, but not a single mention of socialism. This fact is noted by foreign diplomats in Hanoi. This certainly does not imply any intention of abandoning socialism in the North, but does mean that the emphasis is on national aims, which do not foresee a Socialist regime for the South. And "socialism for the north, Democracy in the South" was the title of speech by Le Duan, secretary of the North's Communist Party, early in January.

A few months ago a bureau of the National Liberation Front was established in Hanoi--housed in the repainted, refurnished former American consulate.

Unlike other diplomatic missions it is not accredited to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but in careful political distinctions is called the "representation of the National front for the liberation of South Vietnam in North Vietnam."

The desired implication of this, as carefully explained by gray-haired NLF central committee member Nguyen Van Tien, who has the "representation," is that it is a "concrete image of reunification" with the clear implication of South and North enjoying equal status.

When I asked if there was not a contradiction between the North's stated aims of "defending the North, liberating the South and reunifying the country," the Front's program of independence and neutrality, and his own statement that reunification is nearing, he said "no" and then gave the clearest exposition of how the North and South--as represented by the Liberation Front--viewed the future of North and South relations if the war ended and the Front was the dominant element of a government in the South.

His views are summed up as follows:

North and South Vietnam remain autonomous in internal and foreign affairs. The North would remain Socialist and a member of the Socialist bloc. The South would be neutral, unallied to any blocs. Each would have its own foreign ministries and own diplomatic representatives abroad. The Front already has over a dozen de facto embassies abroad.

For regulating North-South relations, there would be a type of general assembly, presumably nominated by the respective parliaments to handle questions important to both zones such as trade, post and telegraphs, interzonal travel, including sports and cultural exchanges. The assembly in fact would have some resemblance to the inter-German council, an idea being toyed with by the West German Social Democrats as a means to handle current practical problems between East and West Germany.

The question of negotiations between Hanoi and the Ky government in Saigon is seen as an impossibility. The latter is considered as representing no national interests or any section of the population and would die a natural death the moment serious negotiations started.

It is assumed Ky and a handful of his top supporters would make suitable dispositions, as so many of their predecessors did, for a comfortable exile. But it is also considered that national reconciliation is entirely possible with personalities and groups less engaged, if they

are prepared to take a clear stand on the question of complete national independence. On that belief everyone is adamant. Ho Chi Minh told a group, including myself, "the United States is offering us the choice of colonial slavery or victory. Obviously we fight till the end."

Another personality, in replying to a question whether North Vietnam is prepared to offer anything in exchange for an American withdrawal, shrugged his shoulders, laughed and said:

"What do they want?"

"Do they want us to invite into the North 400,000 Chinese, 40,000 North Koreans and a few thousand Cubans and then propose their withdrawal as a counterpart for withdrawal of the United States and her Allies from the South? Is that what they are after?"

NORWEGIAN-DRV CONTACTS (OHIO)

OSLO 4531 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 14 June 1967:

.....

"4. Loan underlined North Vietnamese Govt imposed only one condition for negotiations, namely that bombing of North Vietnam be stopped. Clearly having in mind the Chinese, he went to lengths to underline that speeches from other quarters which imposed other conditions including full American withdrawal from South Vietnam did not RPT not reflect North Vietnam Govt's thought. On North Vietnamese side one gave decisive weight to stop in bombing because this was viewed as respect for North Vietnamese sovereignty and such a respect was an absolute condition for coming to conference table, but was also the only condition. When they had come to conference table, North Vietnam position would be very flexible. 'We are,' said Ambassador Loan 'ready for very far reaching compromises to get an end to the war.' Ambassador Algard noted that recently one had impression that North Vietnamese side was cooler toward negotiations. Ambassador Loan denied this strongly. He said that formerly when North Vietnam showed an interest in negotiations Americans had taken such interest as a sign of weakness and with results of stronger escalation. This was background against which one must judge some recent speeches on North Vietnamese side. Provided there would be a stop in bombing, North Vietnam was ready at any time for negotiations and far reaching compromises."

.....

KISSINGER-BO CONTACTS (PENNSYLVANIA)July - October 1967

Second Meeting with Pham Van Dong. July 25, 1967. Present: Aubrac, Marcovich, Pham Van Dong, Tach, note-taker.

"Pham Van Dong resumed. 'Ending the war for us has two meanings: 1) An end of bombing which is permanent and unconditional; 2) A withdrawal of United States forces. We like the formula of President de Gaulle.' Marcovich interrupted to say that it was not realistic. Pham Van Dong agreed and said that he realized that some U.S. troops would have to stay until the end of the process of political settlement. He added: 'We do not want to humiliate the U.S. Lenin did not like war but fought when necessary. As Lenin we are Communists.'

"Now let me speak of U.S. policy and the NLF. We should have had unification in 1956. The period 1956-59 was a political fight. It saw the mutual assistance pact between the U.S. and Saigon and the introduction of U.S. staffs. This led to the formation of the NLF. The second period, 1960-64, saw a disintegration of the U.S. position to which the U.S. responded by 'special' war. [I suppose he meant 'special forces' war.] In 1965, the United States started a 'limited' war which lasts until today. At the same time the NLF has expanded its activities from the country into the cities and from inside Vietnam to the outside. Our position is: North Vietnam is socialist and wants to remain so. As for the South, our goals are national independence, democracy, peace and neutrality. Some people think we want to impose Socialism on the South. We are convinced that the NLF will not make such an error. The NLF envisages a broad coalition government, including all significant groups and religions without consideration of past activities including members du gouvernement fantoche et cadres d'armée fantoche. [He repeated the underlined words.] The essential thing is to forget the past.

"As for unification, we recognize that the important first step is a political settlement of the South. We agree not to push things toward unification. Once the war in the South is settled, we shall discuss with the South and find the best means. Our people are magnificent.

"Peace would have been easy for the U.S. three years ago. But with every year the political situation worsens. We do not like secret negotiations, but we recognize their necessity in this situation. As long as the issues do not concern South Vietnam, the NLF need not participate. However, we do not believe that the United States is ready for a settlement.' Then turning to Aubrac he asked: 'Que veulent les Américains?'"

These statements were confirmed by Bo on October 9, 1967--after persistent requests by the U.S. through M & A for confirmation. Bo said: "He who does not say 'no' agrees."

NORWEGIAN-DRV CONTACTS (OHIO)

OSLO 664 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 16 August 1967

.....

"....Amb Loan then discussed the assumptions for the starting of negotiations and repeated the position that an absolute, but the only, condition for negotiations was a cessation of the bombing by Americans. He again pointed out that this was a question which involved the sovereignty of North Vietnam. It would be to admit the existence of a state of war if North Vietnam accepted to QUOTE respond UNQUOTE in the form of a corresponding reduction of forces. In this connection I stated that it was probably not RPT not certain that an official declaration by North Vietnam on the extent of a possible QUOTE response UNQUOTE was assumed. A confidential communication indicating what the North Vietnamese intended to undertake might be sufficient. Amb Loan said that unsuccessful negotiations would be worse than no RPT no negotiations at all. The opening of negotiations would create a wave of optimism throughout the world, and a possible breakdown might lead to consequences which would be difficult to foresee. It therefore appeared desirable to assure, prior to the starting of negotiations, that they would yield results. The possibilities for a favorable result would thus have to be clarified to a certain degree in advance. If negotiations were started, the North Vietnamese attitude would be flexible, as the Amb had stated previously, and the North Vietnamese were prepared to enter into far-reaching compromises. But as he did not RPT not possess exact information, he was not RPT not in a position to indicate in concrete terms where this willingness to compromise would express itself on the North Vietnamese side. He did, however, mention the North Vietnamese attitude with regard to the demarcation line during the Geneva negotiations as an example of North Vietnamese readiness to compromise. Furthermore, he said, North Vietnam had already made known a very significant concession, based on a realistic evaluation of the situation. The Geneva agreement stipulated that Vietnam should be unified within two years. Our objective today, he said, is considerably lower. The question of unification is postponed to an indefinite point of time in the future. North Vietnam is today ready to accept a separate South Vietnamese state which is neutral and based on a coalition govt. Such a govt could have connections both with East and West and accept assistance from countries that might wish to give such assistance. The Amb stated that the time of the withdrawal of the American troops was not RPT not a decisive question. In this connection he pointed to the agreement on the withdrawal of the French troops. However, the question of representation was of great importance. On this point the Americans would have to accept the political situation in South Vietnam as it is, as de Gaulle did in Algeria. North Vietnam could not RPT not negotiate on behalf of the South Vietnamese. Amb Loan finally said that he appreciated the contact established with the Norwegian Embassy, and that he would like it to be maintained...."

NORWEGIAN-DRV CONTACTS (OHIO)

OSLO 722 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 21 August 1967:

.....

"2. ...Loan asked if Algard willing to accept invitation to Hanoi. Algard promised early reply. Loan gave no RPT no direct reaction to our previous communication. He again underlined the question of the cessation of bombing, national sovereignty and dignity, but at the same time test the sincere will of the Americans to negotiate. However, interested in concrete information about what is meant by U.S. QUOTE flexible as to form and nature of some corresponding restraint UNQUOTE in above mentioned telegram, Point B. Loan said American recognition national self-determination decisive point. Concretely he asked us find out if USA willing to base possible negotiations on this principle and willing accept liberation front as political factor...."

NORWEGIAN-DRV CONTACTS (OHIO)

OSLO 1063 - Meeting on Friday, September 8

.....

"5. [Cooper] sought clarification of Loan's comments on the role of the NLF, specifically whether 'political factor' meant as a factor in preliminary talks, actual negotiations, or in a post-settlement situation. Algard said his impression was that Loan meant all three stages. I then elaborated on the extent to which we recognized the NLF as a political factor in a post-settlement situation and/or the ways they might participate in negotiations. We cannot recognize them as a government or as the sole representative for the people of Vietnam. In the last analysis, we believe the NLF question should be resolved in South Vietnam by the various elements there. We will be prepared to accept anything which the Government of South Vietnam is ready to accept. It will be troublesome if in the preliminary negotiations the NLF must participate in every stage. We need clarification on this point. Algard said he was not quite sure, but he had the impression that the North Vietnamese divided the problem into questions affecting relations between Hanoi and the U.S. on the one hand, and South Vietnamese problems on the other. Loan had stressed that Hanoi could not speak for the NLF on matters affecting South Vietnam. Algard said Loan had not been more specific on this point."

"7. On the question of 'non-communist South Vietnam,' I said that, if indeed Loan had said they would accept a non-communist South Vietnam and had said so under instructions, this was probably the first time this formula had been used. Algard said Loan had stressed that Hanoi was willing to accept a non-communist government which was a neutral government, and which would have relations with both East and West and received aid from both sides. Subsequently, at a reception on the day before Algard left, Loan had said that Hanoi recognized the fact that they had to live for some years to come in a Vietnam which would have two different social and political situations.

"8. Loan had not explained what he meant by a 'coalition government' and, in fact, used the terms 'coalition government' and 'non-communist government' almost interchangeably without giving an indication as to the possible structure of the government, political grouping, etc. He had not stated that they would accept representatives of the present South Vietnamese Government, but his tone gave the impression that they would. In fact, Loan had said he deeply disliked the South Vietnamese Government but, nevertheless, it was 'a political factor' in South Vietnam. (Algard cautioned that in considering the term 'non-communist government' Loan has indicated from time to time he does not consider the NLF communist.) Loan told Algard he envisages a government with communist participation

but which is not communist-controlled. Loan had repeated his remarks about a non-communist government directly to Algard in French at a subsequent casual meeting, again using the phrase 'non-communist.'

"9. I raised the question concerning Loan's comment that the matter of the U.S. withdrawal was not decisive. Algard said Loan had referred to the Geneva Agreement in this context using the example of the withdrawal of French troops which, he said, had been no problem."

RUMANIAN-DRV CONTACTS (PACKERS),
December 16, 1967

January 5, 1968 - Harriman-Macovescu Memorandum of Conversation:

The following statements were made by Trinh:

"The basis for settlement of the Vietnamese issue is provided by the four points of April 8, 1965; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently issued its January 28, 1967 statement. This is our position of principles on which no concession is possible."

.....

"We are not against discussions but any discussions should take place according to principle. As soon as discussion engaged in, our attitude will be serious and responsible but it depends on attitude of the U.S. whether such discussions are fruitful."

NORWEGIAN-DRV CONTACTS (OHIO)

OSLO 3275 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 10 February 1968:

.....
"2.[Loan] said that Hanoi presupposed (assumed) that the
military operations be stopped while negotiations are being con-
ducted...."

.....

ITALIAN-DRV CONTACTS (KILLY)

February-March, 1968

February 23, 1968 - Excerpts from Meeting of D'Orlandi-Su.

"....Both parties felt that problem of guaranteeing an agreement was increasing to decisive importance. Su seemed to categorically exclude the UN as a guaranteeing agency and Fanfani and Su agreed that the ICC was not in position to guarantee anything."

.....

"(J) Su stated that declared and also real aim of Hanoi was to have absolutely free general elections. To insure liberty of vote, it was necessary to constitute a government with very broadly based participation excluding only 'war criminals' (undefined). There was discussion of various South Vietnamese personalities as possible members of a Government. Su would raise a name and d'Orlandi would comment. Su generally did not reveal his opinion but Ky was obviously unacceptable to him."

.....

OSLO 3570 - Summary of Ambassador Algard's visit to Hanoi, March 3-10:

"7. The Foreign Minister underlined also that the North Vietnamese 4-point program must be the foundation for a political resolution of the conflict. Apart from what concerned the stopping of the bombing and cessation of the acts of war against North Vietnam, he did not set matters forth in such a way that the United States beforehand must accept the entire 4-point program. He did not say anything on the point of time for American withdrawal but said that was a question which must be handled at the conference table. Nor would he say anything on how the reunification problem would be settled nor how long it would take but he repeated that first there must be a political solution in South Vietnam and referred to the NLF program which assumed a separate South Vietnamese state for the immediate future. Insofar as it concerned a political solution for South Vietnam, the Foreign Minister repeated the North Vietnamese position that this was a question which must be discussed with the NLF and that Hanoi cannot speak on behalf of South Vietnam. He underlined very strongly that recent events in South Vietnam had shown that the regime in Saigon was totally without political basis but at the same time events made clear that there was a possibility of cooperation between the NLF and other political groups. However he did not go into detail on this point."

OIHO

TS - NODIS

NORWEGIAN-NORTH VIETNAMESE CONTACTS, JUNE 1967 - FEBRUARY 1968

June 1-15, 1967 - Meeting No. 1

OHIO began, in effect, with a transmission by Ambassador Tibbetts of a conversation in Peking on 1 June between Ambassador Ole Algard, Norwegian Ambassador to Peking, and the North Vietnamese Ambassador to Peking, Ngo Loan. Norwegian Foreign Minister Lyng gave the substance of the Algard-Loan conversation to Tibbetts. Despite some very interesting and important statements made by Loan, this cable and subsequent cables for several months were EXDIS and were not given a code name.

Loan stressed four points to Algard: (1) NVN fear that the U.S. intended to stay permanently in Vietnam; (2) that Hanoi had only one condition for negotiations (sic), namely the cessation of U.S. bombing; (3) that when Hanoi came to the conference table, it "would be very flexible," and is "ready for very far-reaching compromises to get an end to the war"; and (4) that Hanoi felt it was able to cope with almost any U.S. military activity with its own resources -- except for direct occupation of all North Vietnam.

Algard expressed concern about North Vietnamese treatment of U.S. prisoners. Loan said that formal recognition of these men as anything but "war criminals" would "legalize American participation in the war."

OSLO 4531 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 14 June 1967:

"2. Following is my informal rendition Algard's report, transposed from first to third person:

"3. Ambassador Mgo underlined strongly North Vietnamese Govt disposed toward negotiations. At same time they were deeply mistrustful of Americans' intentions in Vietnam. Steady escalation and sending of new troops indicated Americans had intention of staying permanently in Vietnam.

"4. Mgo underlined North Vietnamese Govt imposed only one condition for negotiations, namely that bombing of North Vietnam be stopped. Clearly having in mind the Chinese, he went to lengths to underline that speeches from other quarters which imposed other conditions including full American withdrawal from South Vietnam did not RPT not reflect North Vietnam Govt's thought. On North Vietnamese side one gave decisive weight to stop in bombing because this was viewed as respect for North Vietnamese sovereignty and such a respect was an absolute condition for coming to conference table, but was also the only condition. When they had come to conference table, North Vietnam position would be very flexible. 'We are,' said Ambassador Mgo, 'ready for very far reaching compromises to get an end to the war.' Ambassador Algard noted that recently one had impression that North Vietnamese side was cooler toward negotiations. Ambassador Mgo denied this strongly. He said that formerly when North

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Vietnam showed an interest in negotiations Americans had taken such interest as a sign of weakness and with results of stronger escalation. This was background against which one must judge some recent speeches on North Vietnamese side. Provided there would be a stop in bombing, North Vietnam was ready at any time for negotiations and far reaching compromises.

"6. Amb Mgo said he hoped developments would not RPT not take such form that North Vietnam must ask for foreign, and in first instance Chinese, help. That was one thing that they would do their utmost to avoid. To question under what conditions would North Vietnamese Govt feel forced to ask for help, he said that beforehand one could not RPT not determine fixed criteria. He said however that an American invasion of North Vietnam in itself would not RPT not necessitate foreign help. North Vietnam had an army of 400 thousand men which would be capable of mastering such a situation. Amb Algard had impression that only danger of direct occupation of all North Vietnam would force North Vietnamese Govt to ask foreign help. It was plain Amb Mgo considered it very important to clarify North Vietnamese position on question of foreign help."

TIBBETTS.

June 20, 1967

State responded with an expression of interest and a desire to have the Norwegians continue the contact. Noting the four major points in the first Algard-Loan conversation, and admitting that Loan's statement that bombing was the only condition for talks, was "highly plausible," State suggested Algard react as follows: (1) ascertain the authority with which Loan spoke; (2) stress the Manila Communique in general terms in response to Loan's fear of the U.S. intending to stay permanently in Vietnam; (3) ascertain whether North Vietnam was insisting on a permanent bombing cessation; (4) stress the U.S. view that the bombing cessation must be accompanied by "at least some private assurance of appropriate reciprocal action by North Vietnam"; (5) indicate that the Geneva Accords of 1954 could be a basis for settlement and try to probe Loan on the compromises envisaged by NVN.

State 213389 to Oslo (SECRET-EXDIS), 20 June 1967:

"2.c. Expressed concern that U.S. intends to stay permanently in Vietnam is of interest. We assume GON is fully aware of our repeated statements of intent to withdraw and most specifically the precise wording used in the Manila Communique, which you should furnish them.

"d. Discussion of cessation of bombing as only condition for talks fits with other private readings as well as Trinh-Burchett interview and appears to us highly plausible.

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"e. Key passage appears to us to be reference to NVN position being 'very flexible' and NVN being 'ready for very far-reaching compromises.'

"f. Statements on NVN view of U Thant likewise seem plausible, although GON may be interested that we had strong indications NVN was displeased with U Thant's latest initiative being launched after NVN had apparently given negative reaction in Rangoon meeting.

"g. References to NVN reluctance to seek Chinese help are highly interesting. We are not repeat not ourselves sanguine that NVN would not call for Chinese help in event of U.S. invasion, but report of Loan position remains extremely interesting as indicating depth of NVN reluctance.

"h. We are particularly appreciative of Algard remarks on U.S. prisoners in NVN, which we believe hit exactly right note.

"3. On basis of this evaluation, we believe it would be extremely useful for Algard to have further conversation with Loan. This could be through special meeting or chance encounter, and we would see no problem with special meeting, since we surmise Loan remarks were intended to elicit some reaction and that NVN would have assumed that we would be informed.

"4. Points we suggest Algard make would be as follows:

"a. Earlier conversation reported to USG, and GON has reviewed U.S. views on matters stated. Both GON and U.S. assume that Loan was speaking with authority. (This could be so put as to elicit any contrary indication.)

"b. From conversations with USG, GON is clear that USG fully understands NVN concern as to whether USG intends to stay permanently in Vietnam. From discussions with USG over long period, GON is convinced that USG is totally sincere in repeated statements that it would seek no permanent military presence or bases in Vietnam once settlement is reached, and that USG and other nations assisting SVN meant just what they said in Manila Communique. (We would prefer that this portion of message be left in this general form. It is possible that Loan would pick up elements of Manila statement, such as requirement of withdrawal of both 'military and subversive' forces. If this question should arise, Algard might say that it is GON understanding that U.S. is referring to regular NVN military forces but also to personnel originally from South who accepted move to NVN in 1954 and were thereafter sent back to South. Algard might say that he would be glad to get further clarification on this point if desired.)

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"c. USG accepts that 'cessation' of the bombing of the North and military action against the North is only NVN condition for holding talks. NVN has referred to cessation being on 'unconditional' basis: What is meant by this? (Purpose here is to clarify whether there may be any distinction between usual NVN statements that bombing must be stopped 'indefinitively and unconditionally' -- which we have construed to mean permanently -- and occasional other statements that stoppage of bombing must merely be 'unconditional.' We ourselves have assumed that no difference is intended between these two formulations, but direct inquiry could be useful in nailing this down.)

"d. Assuming that NVN condition calls for, in effect, permanent cessation of bombing, USG position remains as it has been stated throughout and particularly by Ambassador Goldberg in September 1966 at UN and by Secretary Rusk in January. U.S. view is that cessation of bombing, without at least some private assurance of appropriate reciprocal military action by NVN, would create situation of major military advantage to NVN and would not be conducive to fruitful talks. USG has put forward several general suggestions for timing and nature of NVN reciprocal actions, and President's letter to Ho contained one specific proposal that added the element of stopping of reinforcement by USG in the South. Canadian proposal of April called for link between cessation of bombing and restoring demilitarized status of DMZ under effective supervision, but Hanoi rejected this. What is present Hanoi view on these proposals, or do they have any other suggestion to make?

"e. USG naturally particularly interested in Loan remark that NVN would be flexible and prepared for compromises. Basic USG position is that settlement could be based on Geneva Accords of 1954, and USG would be prepared an any time to talk directly or indirectly about all the elements of such a settlement, including any aspects NVN wished to discuss. If Loan could at least indicate areas in which NVN envisages 'compromises,' this might be helpful in furthering better understanding of positions. Would the areas of possible compromise include the timing and sequence of actions related to withdrawal of forces on both sides, for example? Would they relate to position of NLF in the South? USG has consistently taken position that NLF cannot possibly be regarded as 'sole legitimate representative' of SVN and has also made clear that it cannot accept third of Hanoi four points, for which it finds no warrant in Geneva Accords of 1954? Is Hanoi suggesting its position on these points is now flexible? (Purpose of this inquiry is of course to feel out the key question of what Loan had in mind. If we knew the area Loan was referring to, a most fruitful exchange of views might then become possible, and we would of course be

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prepared to discuss these issues in depth with GON.) In this connection, USG has made it clear to GON that it too is prepared to discuss realistic compromises, viewing the matter of an ultimate settlement from the standpoint of the Geneva Accords of 1954. USG has repeatedly noted NVN statements likewise expressing approval of Geneva Accords of 1954, and areas of common ground of compromise might well be found within this framework.

"f. We would leave it to Algard whether to raise the subject of prisoners again. We would have nothing to add to his excellent presentation, and it may be that he should merely say that his previous remarks reflected GON view, and that he would be interested in anything Loan might have to say to him on this subject. (We think representations on prisoners can be more effective coming, as they did in first conversation, from viewpoint of GON itself, and that USG support might if anything be less helpful in explicit form.)

"g. We would not repeat not suggest Algard try to reflect any USG views on conditions of NVN calling for Chinese help. If this topic should come up, Algard might express clear GON understanding that USG has repeatedly said it does not threaten NVN territory or regime and has no objective other than permitting SVN to determine its own future without external interference."
KATZENBACH (Drafted by W.P. Bundy)

June 29, 1967

Tibbetts reported that after his first conversation with Algard, Loan had left for Hanoi, and that he was not expected to return to Peking until August. Algard was going back to Oslo for further instructions.

August 5-16, 1967 - Meeting No. 2

The second meeting between Algard and Loan carried both dialogue and substance forward. Algard made it plain that he was informed of U.S. views, and Loan said that he would report to Hanoi. Loan did add, however, that he was prepared to comment "from a personal nature." This may indicate that Loan's standing in party circles is quite high and secure.

After reiterating the two main points of the first meeting (bombing pause is the only condition for talks and flexibility and compromise once talks begin), Loan made several interesting observations. He said that every time NVN "had previously shown willingness to negotiate, it had been misunderstood in the U.S. and seen as a weakness. The consequence...each time being a new escalation on the American side." In this respect, he noted that

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world opinion was against the U.S. and that negro riots in the U.S. were part of this overall picture.

Loan emphasized a very new element in Hanoi's thinking. He said that "unsuccessful negotiations would be worse than no repeat no negotiations at all...It therefore appeared desirable to assure, prior to the starting of negotiations, that they would yield results." As a sign of Hanoi's flexibility in this regard, Loan gave examples of compromise: (1) reunification could be "postponed to an indefinite point of time in the future"; (2) "NVN is today ready to accept a separate South Vietnamese state which is neutral and based on a coalition government"; and (3) that the timing of the withdrawal of U.S. troops is not a decisive issue.

There was some question as to whether Loan used the phrase "non-communist" when describing this South Vietnamese state. It subsequently turned out that he had.

Loan expressed a desire to maintain the contact.

OSLO 664 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 16 August 1967 (Section 1 of 2):

"3.When North Vietnam had previously shown willingness to negotiate, it had been misunderstood in the U.S. and seen as a sign of weakness. The consequence had each time been a new escalation on the American side. It was obvious that North Vietnam did wish to reach a peaceful solution, but the military situation was from the North Vietnamese viewpoint very favorable, and there was no RPT no reason for North Vietnam to let itself be forced into negotiations. QUOTE Sooner or later we will win this war UNQUOTE, he said. QUOTE We know how to fight, and UNQUOTE, he added with a smile, QUOTE We are not RPT not any Middle Eastern nation UNQUOTE. He also pointed out that the American position was weakened by the pressure of world opinion on the U.S. and by the internal problems of the Americans, particularly the recent race riots which he considered had a direct connection with the resistance of the American negroes against the war in Vietnam. In this connection he recalled that the French did not RPT not lose Vietnam at Dien Bien Phu, but in Paris. However, even if North Vietnam did not RPT not feel herself under pressure, militarily or otherwise, to enter into negotiations, it was of course realized that it would be of benefit to end the war, and he underlined that the previous declarations on willingness to negotiate, provided that the bombing be stopped, remained valid."

Section 2:

"....Amb Ngo then discussed the assumptions for the starting of negotiations and repeated the position that an absolute, but the only, condition for negotiations was a cessation of the bombing by Americans. He again pointed out that this was a

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question which involved the sovereignty of North Vietnam. It would be to admit the existence of a state of war if North Vietnam accepted to QUOTE respond UNQUOTE in the form of a corresponding reduction of forces. In this connection I stated that it was probably not RPT not certain that an official declaration by North Vietnam on the extent of a possible QUOTE response UNQUOTE was assumed. A confidential communication indicating what the North Vietnamese intended to undertake might be sufficient. Amb Ngo said that unsuccessful negotiations would be worse than no RPT no negotiations at all. The opening of negotiations would create a wave of optimism throughout the world, and a possible breakdown might lead to consequences which would be difficult to foresee. It therefore appeared desirable to assure, prior to the starting of negotiations, that they would yield results. The possibilities for a favorable result would thus have to be clarified to a certain degree in advance. If negotiations were started, the North Vietnamese attitude would be flexible, as the Amb had stated previously, and the North Vietnamese were prepared to enter into far-reaching compromises. But as he did not RPT not possess exact information, he was not RPT not in a position to indicate in concrete terms where this willingness to compromise would express itself on the North Vietnamese side. He did, however, mention the North Vietnamese attitude with regard to the demarcation line during the Geneva negotiations as an example of North Vietnamese readiness to compromise. Furthermore, he said, North Vietnam had already made known a very significant concession, based on a realistic evaluation of the situation. The Geneva agreement stipulated that Vietnam should be unified within two years. Our objective today, he said, is considerably lower. The question of unification is postponed to an indefinite point of time in the future. North Vietnam is today ready to accept a separate South Vietnamese state which is neutral and based on a coalition govt. Such a govt could have connections both with East and West and accept assistance from countries that might wish to give such assistance. The Amb stated that the time of the withdrawal of the American troops was not RPT not a decisive question. In this connection he pointed to the agreement on the withdrawal of the French troops. However, the question of representation was of great importance. On this point the Americans would have to accept the political situation in South Vietnam as it is, as de Gaulle did in Algeria. North Vietnam could not RPT not negotiate on behalf of the South Vietnamese. Amb Ngo finally said that he appreciated the contact established with the Norwegian Embassy, and that he would like it to be maintained....."

TIBBETTS.

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August 18, 1967

State responded matter-of-factly to the second meeting between Algard and Loan. While there seemed to be many provocative statements made by Loan, State's analysis said that except for the point about talking in advance of negotiations in order to assure that the negotiations are successful, everything else was old hat. Further explanation on this talks-negotiations point was needed.

State also began to grapple with the thorny problem of North Vietnamese reciprocity for U.S. bombing pause. The cable said that the U.S. was "flexible as to the form and nature of some corresponding restraint." In other words, Hanoi need not make a formal declaration of reciprocity. A bone was thrown in to the effect that we would discuss at a very early stage recognition of North Vietnamese sovereignty.

State 23083 to Oslo (SECRET-EXDIS), 18 August 1967

"1. We have read with greatest interest Ambassador Algard's full report of his August 5 conversation with North Vietnamese Ambassador Loan. For most part, views expressed by Loan do not represent substantive change from known Hanoi positions, e.g. seeming flexibility on such matters as timing of U.S. withdrawal and reunification coupled with unbudging insistence that U.S. accept NLF-type coalition and apparently recognize and negotiate with NLF on Algerian parallel. This of course goes to heart of matter, whether NLF is to be permitted dominant role in south, and Loan's comments add nothing to what we already know on this score.

"2. Nevertheless, one passage of report we find of considerable interest, namely, Loan's conclusion that if 'negotiations' were begun and broke down, this might lead to consequences which would be difficult to foresee, and that it would therefore appear desirable to assure in advance that negotiations would yield results. Loan's subsequent statement that 'the possibilities for a favorable result would thus have to be clarified to a certain degree in advance' represents perhaps clearest indication that we have had thus far that Hanoi might be interested in preliminary secret, private discussions in order to explore outline of possible settlement.

"3. We think it important to clarify this point without waiting for response from Hanoi to Loan's report of August 5 conversation. (We note Loan's expression of doubt on August 15 that he would receive any reaction.) We would therefore propose that Algard be instructed to contact Loan right away and take following line:

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(A) Norwegian government has noted Loan's observation that unsuccessful negotiations would be worse than no negotiations at all and that it is desirable to explore in advance all possibilities to that negotiations could yield results. The Norwegian government has reason to believe that the USG is prepared to consider practical means to avoid this difficulty, if in fact it arises, and to explore all possibilities that exist for favorable outcome of negotiations. Norwegian government would be interested in learning Ambassador Loan's views on this.

(B) In this connection, with respect to Ambassador Loan's comment that cessation of bombing was question involving sovereignty of North Vietnam, and that if North Vietnam agreed to responsive action it would have to admit existence of a state of war with U.S. Norwegian government believes that this issue does not in view of USG represent insuperable obstacle. USG has never sought any formal declaration by North Vietnamese government as to what it might do in response to bombing cessation and has always made clear that it was flexible as to form and nature of some corresponding restraint. On this point also Norwegian government believes USG could furnish assurances as to recognition of North Vietnam sovereignty and that this question should be subject for preliminary secret discussions mentioned above."

RUSK (Drafted by E. Isham)

In Oslo 693, Tibbetts clarified Loan's "non-communist" statement. Tibbetts reported: "Algard said Loan had spoken of a separate South Vietnamese state which would be neutral in foreign affairs and of which coalition govt would be non-communist and that Loan clearly assumed such govt would not repeat not be communist dominated, even though it would have Viet Cong participation."

State responded on the same day in 23631, saying that "We have heard the same noise before," but would be interested in seeing if Algard could elicit "specifics on safeguards against eventual communist domination."

August 21, 1967 - Meeting No. 3

Loan invited Algard to come to Hanoi for further discussions. The Norwegians recommended Algard's accepting the invitation. Loan also showed interest in what the U.S. meant by being "flexible" on "some corresponding restraint."

OSLO 722 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 21 August 1967:

"2. ...Loan asked if Algard willing to accept invitation to Hanoi. Algard promised early reply. Ngo gave no RPT no direct

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reaction to our previous communication. He again underlined the question of the cessation of bombing, national sovereignty and dignity, but at the same time test the sincere will of the Americans to negotiate. However, interested in concrete information about what is meant by QUOTE flexible as to form and nature of some corresponding restraint UNQUOTE in above mentioned telegram, Point B. He said American recognition national self-determination decisive point. Concretely he asked us find out if USA willing to base possible negotiations on this principle and willing accept liberation front as political factor. Repeated that Hanoi accepts non-communist coalition govt neutral in foreign affairs. Grateful early reply invitation Hanoi. Desirable consultations in Oslo before possible trip. UNQUOTE. "

TIBBETTS.

August 22 - September 15, 1967

Ambassador Algard returned to Oslo from Peking, and on September 8 and 13 met with Chester Cooper to receive further instructions. In this meeting the Norwegians stressed that they "would not in any sense serve as a mediator." Cooper queried Algard on a number of points. First, Algard said that it was his impression that Loan intended the NLF role as a "political factor" in all stages of negotiations. Cooper said that it would be troublesome to have the NLF represented at the preliminary negotiations. Algard said that he had the impression that Loan divided the negotiations into questions "affecting relations between Hanoi and the U.S. on the one hand and South Vietnamese problems on the other." Secondly, on the "non-communist issue," Algard said that Loan stressed Hanoi's recognition of the need to live with two different social and political situations "for some years to come." Third, Loan said that the present GVN was "a political factor" in SVN, implying that there would have to be dealings with it.

Cooper indicated to Algard that we would be "prepared to indicate near the beginning of negotiations and in detail our conception of the final settlement."

There was much discussion about obtaining a visa to Hanoi for Algard, and general acceptance that some considerable delay would be entailed.

State Memorandum from S/AH - Chester L. Cooper for S/S - Benjamin H. Read, dated September 15, 1967, Subject: Report on Conversations in Oslo with Mr. Jacobsen of the Norwegian Foreign Office and Ambassador Algard, Norwegian Ambassador to Peking:

"A. Meeting on Friday, September 8 (sent as Oslo 1063)

"5. I sought clarification of Loan's comments on the role of the NLF, specifically whether 'political factor' meant

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as a factor in preliminary talks, actual negotiations, or in a post-settlement situation. Algard said his impression was that Loan meant all three stages. I then elaborated on the extent to which we recognized the NLF as a political factor in a post-settlement situation and/or the ways they might participate in negotiations. We cannot recognize them as a government or as the sole representative for the people of Vietnam. In the last analysis, we believe the NLF question should be resolved in South Vietnam by the various elements there. We will be prepared to accept anything which the Government of South Vietnam is ready to accept. It will be troublesome if in the preliminary negotiations the NLF must participate in every stage. We need clarification on this point. Algard said he was not quite sure, but he had the impression that the North Vietnamese divided the problem into questions affecting relations between Hanoi and the U.S. on the one hand, and South Vietnamese problems on the other. Loan had stressed that Hanoi could not speak for the NLF on matters affecting South Vietnam. Algard said Loan had not been more specific on this point.

"7. On the question of 'non-communist South Vietnam,' I said that, if indeed Loan had said they would accept a non-communist South Vietnam and had said so under instructions, this was probably the first time this formula had been used. Algard said Loan had stressed that Hanoi was willing to accept a non-communist government which was a neutral government, and which would have relations with both East and West and received aid from both sides. Subsequently, at a reception on the day before Algard left, Loan had said that Hanoi recognized the fact that they had to live for some years to come in a Vietnam which would have two different social and political situations.

"8. Loan had not explained what he meant by a 'coalition government' and, in fact, used the terms 'coalition government' and 'non-communist government' almost interchangeably without giving an indication as to the possible structure of the government, political grouping, etc. He had not stated that they would accept representatives of the present South Vietnamese Government, but his tone gave the impression that they would. In fact, Loan had said he deeply disliked the South Vietnamese Government but, nevertheless, it was 'a political factor' in South Vietnam. (Algard cautioned that in considering the term 'non-communist government' Loan has indicated from time to time he does not consider the NLF communist.) Loan told Algard he envisages a government with communist participation but which is not communist-controlled. Loan had repeated his remarks about a non-communist government directly to Algard in French at a subsequent casual meeting, again using the phrase 'non-communist.'

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"9. I raised the question concerning Loan's comment that the matter of the U.S. withdrawal was not decisive. Algard said Loan had referred to the Geneva Agreement in this context using the example of the withdrawal of French troops which, he said, had been no problem.

"10. I asked about the statement Loan had made to the effect that if negotiations failed it would be worse than no negotiations at all. Algard said this had been a rather sudden statement by Loan who had not elaborated further.

"11. I said we had thought it might be useful to have a type of pre-negotiation negotiation which would create the setting and mood and clear away some of the problems; Jacobsen said this would give them no trouble. Algard said it would depend on where the preliminaries ended.

"14. In response to questions, I dealt at some length on our recognition of the problem of 'face' for North Vietnam. I said we can go fairly far, but there are North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam (we have North Vietnamese prisoners as well as documentary evidence); they must get out and their departure must be monitored. This would be a matter for the negotiations phase rather than for Algard to deal with. We are very flexible as to how the negotiations should proceed, whether in secret or public view, and also flexible as to level and, within limits of security and communications, place. The problem of withdrawing military forces is extremely complicated and will present great difficulties for the North Vietnamese if they refuse to acknowledge their presence in South Vietnam. But so long as they get out and we are sure they get out, Hanoi can deal with its 'face' problem.

"15. Algard said it seemed that we were thinking of two phases, the first to establish the conditions of negotiations, the second the negotiations themselves; his mission would be in the first phase. I said that we are prepared to indicate near the beginning of negotiations and in detail our conception of the final settlement. In effect, we are prepared to settle first and negotiate later. Hanoi knows pretty much already from our public statements what we will agree to, including our willingness to accept self-determination within South Vietnam and for Vietnam as a whole. We are ready to have the people of South Vietnam decide the extent to which the NLF participates in its government.

"B. Meeting on Wednesday, September 13 (sent as Oslo 1087)

"7. Algard said his Swedish colleague in Peking is convinced that there is a marked divergence between Hanoi and the NLF,

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to which I replied that there may, of course, be natural differences of view between North and South and long-time combatants as opposed to more recent reinforcements, but this did not change the basic factor of North Vietnamese control. Algard said that in Peking the Viet Cong representative apparently had very few contacts with the Vietnamese Embassy which could, of course, be part of the pretense."

State 35015 sent on 9 September indicated that further study was required of the Norwegian conversations. State also indicated some concern about Cooper's remarks to Algard with respect to his impending trip being "construed as an insurance related to our bombing of Hanoi." Tibbetts responded in Oslo 1079 of 11 September that the insurances given Algard were vague and that there was no problem with respect to commitments on U.S. bombing while Algard would be in Hanoi.

State responded to both Oslo conversations with instructions to hold off on the "immediate pursuit of OHIO channel" since USG was now in "indirect channel of communication to Hanoi." Responding to Cooper's suggestion on rejecting the MARIGOLD ten points, State suggested, instead, confining Algard's future comments to the North Vietnamese to points previously made by Loan and to the reciprocity issue.

STATE 36328 to AmEmbassy Oslo (SECRET-NODIS), 12 September 1967,
Ref: State 35015; Oslo 1063, 1087:

"1. As you can surmise, developments in another area have caused us to hold off in giving you instructions on message that Algard might take. Weighing delay and possible GON feeling that we have lost interest, we now believe you should inform them in utmost confidence that indirect channel of communication to Hanoi opened up following Algard's last contact, and that we are now pursuing certain inquiries through that channel. Response is so far negative, but we are continuing to probe, and therefore frankly feel immediate pursuit of Ohio channel could be embarrassing to Algard and ourselves. Please request Algard to notify us as soon as he has heard from his post in Peking re travel permit to Hanoi, and advise him that we will then give him most meaningful, timely message we can then devise in light of all developments up to point of his departure.

"2. In conveying this message, you might add that, since Hanoi is of course aware of the indirect channel currently in use, it would be our best guess that they will hold off in giving Algard his visa. In short, they will probably be playing a waiting game just as we are.

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"3. You should make clear that this reflects no decline whatever in our interest in developing the Algard channel. As sophisticated diplomats, they must realize that this kind of duplication of channels can arise in a situation of this sort, and that it then becomes unwise to attempt duplicate channel. At same time, other channel is tenuous and may break down, and this among other factors prevents us from describing to GON what exactly is being discussed.

"4. FYI. Provisionally we are negative on injecting the Polish Ten Points, which Hanoi has never taken up in any way. We are more inclined to think that any useful message through Algard will confine itself to the subjects, other than reciprocal action for bombing, on which he has had faintly interesting comments from Loan. But we are holding our fire completely until we see how the next few days develop. End FYI."

Tibbetts responded in Oslo 1132 of 13 September, saying that the Norwegians understood the sensitivity and would wait for further instructions from Washington.

Oslo 1366 of 28 September and Oslo 1407 of 30 September dealt with the problem of Algard's returning to his post in Peking. It was learned that Ambassador Loan had departed Peking for Hanoi on 7 September and had returned to Peking probably around 29 September. Loan had not as yet given any indication regarding the authorization of Algard's visit to Hanoi, nor did he give any sign of interest on substantive matters. In the meantime, a Norwegian journalist indicated that he suspected Algard's return to Peking might have something to do with North Vietnamese contacts and a Vietnam peace settlement.

3 - 17 October 1967

State (47603) responded to Oslo 1366 and 1407 on 3 October. The gist of the message was that USG desired that Algard stay on in Norway until at least the end of that week, giving "further time both to see whether Hanoi follows up in providing visa, and to permit us to weigh other indications of Hanoi's attitude that might emerge following President's speech of September 29 and other developments.

Bovey replied in Oslo 1457 on 3 October that there would be no difficulty in Algard remaining at least to the end of the week. Some problems were also raised with respect to communications between Oslo and Peking. It was decided that communications were not adequate for rapidity or security.

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On 5 October, Bovey sent Oslo 1503 which repeated that there were no further developments on the Algard trip to Hanoi, and that Algard felt he should not delay his return to Peking. Algard's intention was to leave Oslo on 19 October unless he hears otherwise regarding authorization to visit Hanoi. In this same cable, Bovey reported that the Norwegian Charge in Peking passed the following message: "During absence Loan in September NVN Embassy Peking had stated that Hanoi still interested in contact and Algard did not RPT not think this was merely casual remark." Algard explained Hanoi's inaction regarding his visit in terms of increased U.S. bombing in NVN.

On 9 October in Oslo 1567, Bovey reported the following message from Norwegian Charge in Peking:

"2. Begin text -- Ambassador Ngo emphasized in a long conversation today that a visit to Hanoi for the time being is not RPT not in question, because of the American escalation. The North Vietnamese Ambassador stressed in particular that Hanoi views with distrust all American peace proposals and that Hanoi cannot RPT not be forced to negotiate. A visit can be possible only after cessation of the bombing. The Amb indicated that further contact in Peking would be unwise for all parties, and mentioned possible contact Hanoi-Washington via the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. End text."

Algard, therefore, decided to depart for his post on 12 October.

On 10 October, State 51536 reported that U.S. still regarded an Algard trip to Hanoi as constructive, and that "we are interested in obtaining elaboration of mention by Loan of possible contact Hanoi-Washington via Soviets as well as other aspects of Loan's remarks to Charge." Bovey responded in Oslo 1597 on 11 October that State 51536 had been received and executed.

October 18, 1967

On 16 October, Algard transmitted further details on conversation between Norwegian Charge and Loan.

OSLO 1739 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 18 October 1967,
Ref: Oslo 1567 and 1597

"2. Begin Msg - Amb Ngo used the expression QUOTE insecure to both parties UNQUOTE regarding a continuation of exchange of views in Peking. The reference to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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was clearly intended to give a hint to alternative possibilities for contact. The general tenor of Amb Ngo's statement gave the impression, on the other hand, that Hanoi for the time being is not RPT not very interested in making contact. End Msg."

November 2, 1967

The Norwegians handed Bovey a further elaboration of recent despatches from Peking. One point that emerged clearly was Loan's questioning of Norway's role as a middleman in negotiations, implying that the Norwegians were really bartering for the Americans. Loan also gave the Norwegians to understand that Hanoi would not negotiate under present circumstances, especially the U.S. bombings. Loan added that Peking was an "insecure" place for contacts, and that Moscow would be more desirable.

OSLO 1903 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 2 November 1967,
Ref: Oslo 1739

"1. FonOff (SecGen Boye and Desk Sandegren) handed me evening Nov one translation of (A) despatch dated Oct 18 from Amb Algard in Peking and (B) enclosure thereto which is Norwegian Charge's fuller report of his talk with Loan Oct 10, mentioned reftel.

A. QUOTE enclosed is a note of the 11th October, 1967, on the conversation between Secretary of Embassy Tangeraas and the Amb of North Vietnam the 10th Oct, 1967, in Peking. Amb Ngo's remarks seem to indicate not RPT not only that a harder attitude on the question of peace negotiations in general is evident in Hanoi, but also that the desirability of using Norway as a middle-man has been reconsidered. While Ngo as late as the 19th August expressed full confidence in the Norwegian government in this matter, it is now being said that Norway is QUOTE indirectly involved END QUOTE. The Amb also used, in a different context, the term QUOTE American satellite countries UNQUOTE, but it was not RPT not clear whether this referred to Norway as well....Observers in Peking agree that the North Vietnamese attitude towards negotiations for peace has hardened, while at the same time believing that a struggle concerning the future line in this question presently is taking place within the party leadership in Hanoi. It is being pointed out that the intensification of the American bombing attacks probably has strengthened the more extremist group, led by Le Duan and Truong Chinh. In the summer the impression was that this group was in a weaker position, as a consequence of the death of General Thanh UNQUOTE.

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B. QUOTE Having received the Ministry's instructions the 6th October, I immediately contacted Ngo, who, however, did not RPT not receive me until the 10th October. I began by asking if there was anything new with regard to the time for the planned visit of Amb Algard to Hanoi. I said that we would appreciate it if we could receive a reaction if possible within the next day, as Mr. Algard planned to return to Peking the 14th Oct if the visit only could take place later. I emphasized that Algard was ready to postpone his departure if a visit could take place in the near future. Ngo replied that the situation in Vietnam had totally changed in the course of the last few months, since he last saw Mr. Algard. The reason was the American bombing of North Vietnam and the general escalation of the war. He underlined that Hanoi is stronger militarily and that American losses constantly increase. The frequent peace feelers from the American side via American QUOTE satellite countries UNQUOTE is now being viewed with suspicion and considered as attempts to lure Hanoi into a trap. Ngo stressed that because of this a visit by Mr. Algard was not RPT not desirable for the time being. If a visit had taken place not it could do more harm than good as far as a future solution was concerned. Ngo asked if I knew the contents of Mr. Algard's instructions and he appeared very interested in this. I replied that I was not RPT not informed of the contents and that I assumed they would be ready only immediately before the visit takes place. I emphasized that Algard, for this reason, later would have to return to Oslo for consultations if the visit did not RPT not take place in the immediate future. Ngo then said that US has no RPT no business at all being in Vietnam and that one should rather attempt to influence Washington to initiate cessation of the bombing and a military de-escalation, which can lead to a solution, than constantly to exert pressure on Hanoi. To this I replied that the Norwegian Govt was interested, indeed that negotiations would start, which of course did not RPT not presume that a solution should tax unilaterally the interests of Hanoi. Ngo answered that he was aware of the Norwegian position on the Vietnam question, but he added that Norway was not RPT not neutral, but QUOTE indirectly involved UNQUOTE....When I was about to leave, Mr. Ngo said that further exchange of opinions in Peking was QUOTE insecure for both parties UNQUOTE and that Hanoi had, in other places, contacts able to convey messages, if further contact is desired. He mentioned the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow as one of these contacts."

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November 14, 1967

In Oslo 2033, Tibbetts reported that Norwegian politics might complicate and compromise the OHIO track. It seemed that in a recent visit of Prime Minister Lyng to Poland, he and Rapacki exchanged information about negotiations contacts. Lyng claimed that Rapacki had told him "in great detail about the Polish effort 'on U.S. behalf' to open contact in December 1966." In reply, Lyng said that the Norwegians had also unsuccessfully tried to open contact. Jacobsen brought to Lyng's attention, in the meantime, that "Algard channel not RPT not so dead as FonMin seemed to believe, since on November 9, the day Lyng left for Poland, a message had been received from Algard stating that Loan had expressed interest in continuing discreet contacts with Algard (as well as telling Algard he had been satisfied with Mr. Lyng's speech in the UN)." Tibbetts feared that Lyng might be tempted to use the Norwegian contact as "a possible easy way out of domestic difficulty over foreign policy." Tibbetts asked State authorization to tell Lyng that "we consider this channel too important to create prejudice against it." On 14 November in State 69391, State concurred in Tibbett's request. On 16 November in Oslo 2120, Tibbetts said: "Estimates are that government will survive debate with narrow margin despite pigheadedness of some liberals. So maybe Lyng will relax for time being."

December 14, 1967

Loan sought out Algard on two occasions in early November. Loan's message was simple -- American escalation meant that there was no purpose in Hanoi negotiating at this time.

OSLO 2501 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 14 December 1967,
Ref: Oslo 2083:

"1. There follows text fuller report received by FonOff by pouch from Amb Algard Peking re further contacts with NVN Amb Loan (Ngo). This report, which is dated Nov 10, expands info already given by under Secy Jacobsen (para four reftel.) to Amb Tibbetts Nov 14. QUOTE Some time after my return to Peking I met Amb Ngo at a reception and had an opportunity to exchange a few words with him. The Ambassador regretted that my trip to Hanoi could not RPT not take place, and he maintained that the American escalation of the air war the last few months had confirmed that the distrust of the North Vietnamese with regard to the intentions of the Americans was justified. There was for Hanoi no RPT no purpose in negotiating under these circumstances.

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Amb Ngo approached me during the reception at the Soviet Embassy Nov 7. He let it be understood that he rather wished that our contacts continue, in a discreet manner, that is, that we exchange points of view when meeting accidentally at receptions and similar occasions. Without stating it directly, he let me understand that there would be other days after this one and that our contacts then could prove to be useful.
UNQUOTE

"2. In conveying this report Desk Officer Sandegren called my attention to phrasing which indicates that Loan appears to have taken initiative on both occasions and that on second he seems to have sought Algard out.

"3. Norwegian FonOff regards second Loan approach Nov 7 and implications of last sentence, however deviously conveyed, as hopeful indication NVN desire not RPT not to close down circuit entirely. Sandegren said expression QUOTE days after this one UNQUOTE implies in Norwegian that better days may lie ahead."

BOVEY

January 4, 1958

OSLO 2727 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 4 January 1968,
Ref: Oslo 2501:

"1. Ansteensen called me on January 4 to give me the following translation of a cable sent by GON Amb to Peking January 3, 1968.

"2. QUOTE A representative of the Embassy of North Vietnam yesterday (January 2) said to Ambassador Algard that the Foreign Minister's speech on December 29, 1967 contained 'new elements.' He declined to make further comments, but would send the complete text as soon as it was received in Peking, 'as it will be of interest to the Norwegian Government.' Letter follows. UNQUOTE"

TIBBETTS

January 9, 1968

OSLO 2789 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 9 January 1968,
Ref: Oslo 2727:

TS - NODIS

"1. Ansteensen gave me January 9 following two texts: First text is translation of pouched report dated January 4 from Ambassador Algard in Peking amplifying report sent by cable reftel:

'At a Cuban reception on 2nd inst. a younger staff member of the North Vietnamese Embassy approached me and asked if I had heard that the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Trinh had made an important speech on December 29, 1967, in the Mongolian Embassy in Hanoi. I replied that I had heard over the radio the Agence France Presse report on the speech, but, as far as I understood, some uncertainty was prevailing as to whether the French correspondent had understood the speech correctly. The said staff member stated that the North Vietnamese Embassy not yet had received the full text of the Foreign Minister's speech. Nevertheless, he could say that the speech contained QUOTE new elements UNQUOTE He declined to make further comments, but would send me the complete text as soon as it was received in Peking, QUOTE as it certainly will be of interest to the Norwegian Government UNQUOTE.

"2. Second text is the translation of a cable received by Foreign Office from Ambassador Algard in Peking dated January 3:

'The said representative of the North Vietnamese Embassy confirms that AFP's (Agence France Presse) account of the Foreign Minister's speech is accurate. North Vietnam is prepared to undertake genuine talks as soon as the bombing ceases. The word QUOTE permanent UNQUOTE has consciously been omitted. He expressed disappointment with the fact that so far there had been no American reaction. He saw this as a demonstration of lack of will to negotiate.

'East European sources are confident that there is now RPT now a genuine North Vietnamese will to negotiate. They refer to the fact that China, due to her internal situation, is not RPT not in a position to exert decisive influence on Hanoi. East European sources likewise distrust the American intentions.'

February 10, 1968

Loan once again invited Algard to come to Hanoi, and he also indicated a desire to send an NVN representative to Norway. Loan also introduced a very new element into the play: "that Hanoi presupposed (assumed) that

TS - NODIS

the military operations be stopped while negotiations are being conducted."

OSLO 3275 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 10 February 1968,
Ref: Oslo 2930:

"1. Boye and Ansteensen called me in morning February 10 and passed me following message from Algard in Peking received late February 9 in Oslo:

"2. QUOTE Ambassador Ngo who has just returned from Hanoi today (February 9) conveyed a message from the Foreign Minister that Algard would be welcome Hanoi whenever convenient. He emphasized that the visit should take place at earliest possible time. Amb Ngo also requested that a Vietnamese representative, presumably an ambassador in Eastern Europe, should visit Norway. Algard asked for further details concerning the character of this visit and emphasized that Norway is only interested to assist in establishing possible contact between the combatant parties. Ngo promised details and stated that the visit was not RPT not intended as propaganda. Ngo emphasized that last week's events had not RPT not changed Hanoi's desire for negotiations and that the Foreign Minister's statement of Dec 29, 1967 was still valid. He said that Hanoi presupposed (assumed) that the military operations be stopped while negotiations are being conducted. Cable soonest whether in principle North Vietnamese representative welcome in Oslo. Suggest I leave Peking February 14 for consultations Oslo. UNQUOTE

"3. Boye said with respect to foregoing that if US Govt feels Norwegian Foreign Service can be of any help in establishing contacts with Hanoi, they are prepared to do so but, of course, GON does not RPT not want to mess up anything which may be in progress. If USG considers it desirable, GON prepared to ask Algard to come to Oslo for consultations with a US rep either from Embassy or from Washington in middle of February. Algard could then be asked to proceed to Hanoi as soon as possible although GON will have to think hard as to what would be appropriate cover story for such visit at this time. As regards proposal for arranging a journey to Oslo for some North Vietnamese rep, further info will be passed on to USG as soon as received from Norwegian Embassy Peking as indicated Algard's tel, but in meantime GON would appreciate any views and comments USG might have on this subject. Norwegians standing by for earliest possible reply from Washington."

TIBBETTS

February 19, 1968

The Norwegians informed Tibbetts that the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow might be planning a trip to Norway as well. (OSLO 3394)

February 20, 1968

In the event of the North Vietnamese Ambassador's visit to Oslo, State sent the following explanation of "no advantage" for use by the Norwegians. The explanation of "no advantage" stressed our desire "to ascertain whether Hanoi appreciates the consequences of taking advantage and understands the importance the U.S. attaches to the 'no advantage' assumption."

"The US, consistent with President Johnson's statement of April 7, 1965, remains willing to enter into talks with/out - amended State 118719/ preconditions at any time.

"The US position on the cessation of the bombardment of North Viet-Nam was set forth in President Johnson's September 29, 1967 speech in San Antonio. As the President said:

'The US is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.'

"The US is not assuming that North Viet-Nam will cease its support to its forces in the South. On the contrary, as Secretary of Defense designate Clark Clifford testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we assume that until a ceasefire is agreed on, Hanoi 'will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, men and munitions.'

"In setting forth its assumption, the US is not setting a condition but attempting to make clear to North Viet-Nam that any cessation of US bombing followed by actions by Hanoi taking advantage of the cessation (such as an increase by Hanoi of its infiltration of men and supplies or attacks in the area of the DMZ) would constitute such bad faith on Hanoi's part as to make continued US forbearance impossible. If Hanoi, by taking advantage, forces the US to resume bombing, the possibilities of a negotiated solution would drastically recede. Under such circumstances, calls for intensified US military action would increase and the possibility of another halt in the bombing would be low. The US is trying to ascertain whether Hanoi appreciates this vital fact and fully understands the importance the US attaches to the no-advantage assumption.

"At San Antonio the President, in addition to setting forth his assumption, stated his readiness to stop the bombing when such action would lead 'promptly to productive discussions.' 'Productive discussions' are serious exchanges in which either side will be able to put forward for full consideration in good faith its position on any matter. 'Prompt' of course refers to a willingness by Hanoi to begin discussions with the US immediately after cessation of bombing.

"It is worth noting that Hanoi is unwilling to give a clear response to questions as to the length of time between a US bombing cessation and the beginning of talks. If Hanoi were serious in desiring talks then surely its response would have been one of unequivocal readiness to begin immediately.

"The US evaluation of Hanoi's current position takes into account Hanoi's actions as well as its words. The unprecedented offensive against most of South Viet-Nam's urban centers, which Hanoi treacherously launched in the midst of the traditional Tet holidays, causing widespread civilian casualties and suffering, was made notwithstanding the fact that we were still exploring with Hanoi its position through diplomatic channels, and that we had exercised restraint in bombing targets in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong. In this context, we cannot but weigh Hanoi's words with great skepticism and caution. These actions carry a harsh political message.

"The US favors every effort to obtain clarification of Hanoi's position. We shall continue to evaluate all information and to pursue every possible avenue which promises to bring us closer to the resolution of this conflict through serious negotiations."

(State 118092)

February 23, 1968

The Norwegians reported that they had heard nothing further about the North Vietnamese Ambassador's visit to Oslo. A Swedish radio report said that he was returning to Moscow from Stockholm. (OSLO 3446)

February 24, 1968

Boye and Ansteensen informed Tibbetts that on February 23 Loan again approached Algard concerning the latter's visit to Hanoi and suggested the date of February 29. (OSLO 3464)

March 1, 1968

Jacobsen informed Tibbets that Algard had left for Hanoi by plane on February 29. The U.S. had not been consulted prior to Algard's departure. Jacobsen offered domestic politics as the explanation of the need for the Algard trip. (OSLO 3570)

April 5, 1968

Following is a summary of Ambassador Algard's visit to Hanoi, March 3-10:

"5. Foreign Minister Trinh reiterated that his speeches of December 29 and February 2 still were valid. He considered these speeches to be an answer to the repeated American demand for a clarification whether the North Vietnamese would be willing to have negotiations if the bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam should be stopped. It was now up to the Americans to take the next step but because of the reaction up to now the Foreign Minister concluded the United States was not interested in negotiations.

"6. The Foreign Minister discussed the San Antonio formula and said it could not be accepted even in the somewhat diluted form which the new Defense Minister Clifford had given in his meeting with the Senate. The North Vietnamese insist that there must be a distinction between the attacker and the attacked and acceptance of any form of reciprocity would be inconsistent with North Vietnam's sovereignty. I remarked in this connection that in and for itself it was understandable that the Americans would view with disquiet a situation where negotiations could result in a serious change in the military positions of strength. Even if the North Vietnamese side could not accept any form of reciprocity, I said I assumed they already had laid out what policy they would follow in practice when it concerned the question of suspending acts of war under eventual negotiations. The Foreign Minister answered that would depend on the Americans' position. Negotiations must not lead to a change in the relative positions of strength to the advantage of the Americans. He was not willing to develop this point further.

"7. The Foreign Minister underlined also that the North Vietnamese 4-point program must be the foundation for a political resolution of the conflict. Apart from what concerned the stopping of the bombing and cessation of the acts of war against North Vietnam, he did not set matters forth in such a way that the United States beforehand must accept the entire 4-point program.

He did not say anything on the point of time for American withdrawal but said that was a question which must be handled at the conference table. Nor would he say anything on how the reunification problem would be settled nor how long it would take but he repeated that first there must be a political solution in South Vietnam and referred to the NLF program which assumed a separate South Vietnamese state for the immediate future. Insofar as it concerned a political solution for South Vietnam, the Foreign Minister repeated the North Vietnamese position that this was a question which must be discussed with the NLF and that Hanoi cannot speak on behalf of South Vietnam. He underlined very strongly that recent events in South Vietnam had shown that the regime in Saigon was totally without political basis but at the same time events made clear that there was a possibility of cooperation between the NLF and other political groups. However he did not go into detail on this point.

"8. Both Foreign Minister Trinh and his civil servants underlined that Hanoi desired a political solution of the conflict. At the same time they asserted that if the Americans did not want negotiations, Hanoi was in a position to continue the war indefinitely and they were convinced that eventually they would gain a military victory.

"9.It was clear that Hanoi because of the military advances in the South now felt that politically their position had been strengthened." (OSLO 4120, Sections 1 & 2 of 2)

April 5, 1968

Algard sent a second report on his visit to Hanoi. This one discussed the leadership in North Vietnam.

"Labels 'Hawk-Dove' are said to be no longer valid within the top leadership. Up until late autumn of 1967 it was said -- but without identification of individuals concerned -- that inside top leadership there were two lines of thought about continuing the war. Today it appears such is not the case. The reason is said to be both the American escalation of last autumn and the military victories in the South. The common denominator now believed to predominate is supposed to be nearer the Hawk standpoint than the Dove's." (OSLO 4127)

April 5, 1968

Algard met with Loan in Peking.

"Loan said even though still fearing American initiative was political maneuver with eye on world opinion and internal situation USA, and even though strong bombing still continuing,

Hanoi in any event had chosen to treat it as genuine peace initiative and depart from fundamental position not rpt not to negotiate so long as bombing proceeded. He strongly emphasized Hanoi ready for real negotiations if USA really desires them. Hanoi's latest reaction was proof of will to negotiate and to compromise." (OSLO 4133)

ASPEN

SWEDISH - NORTH VIETNAMESE CONTACTS, OCTOBER, 1966 - 1968

November 11, 1966

The first exchange in the Aspen track came on 11 November in a meeting between Secretary Rusk and Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Nilsson. Nilsson informed Rusk of Swedish contacts with the DRV in Warsaw and in Hanoi. Both contacts with the DRV dealt with "creating a climate favorable to negotiations." The DRV contact in Warsaw called for: (1) "an unconditional and unlimited stop of the bombing of Vietnamese territory, North as well as South Vietnam;" (2) "the FNL must be regarded as a legitimate party to negotiations." He added that "no military actions should be undertaken in the DMZ" and a "process of evacuation of allied forces should be begun." The Hanoi contact, also talking about a climate for negotiations, listed two conditions that appeared a little softer than the Warsaw counterpart: (1) "the bombing of North Vietnam must be put to an end, without any conditions and definitely;" (2) "recognition of the FNL 'as one of the spokesmen for' the South Vietnamese people;" in addition, the Hanoi contact, Mr. Trinh, described additional matters for "a final settlement": coalition government, general elections, and eventual steps toward reunification.

In response, Secretary Rusk indicated that "we could not impose a coalition government on the south." He also said that: DRV insistence on a permanent end to the bombing represented "an increased demand on their part and we must have something in exchange for a permanent cessation." As a way out of the reciprocity dilemma, Secretary Rusk suggested a process of deescalation by mutual example rather than final agreement. Rusk also recognized the difficulty of proceeding with bargaining at initial stages because "Hanoi was hesitant about discussing the first step until they saw how the negotiations would end."

Department of State Memorandum of Conversation (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), dated November 11, 1966, Subject: Swedish Diplomatic contacts with North Viet-Nam. Participants - United States: Secretary Rusk; Leonard Unger (Dep Asst Secy); David McKillop (EUR/SCAN); Heyward Isham (EA/VN). Sweden: Minister of Foreign Affairs Torsten Nilsson; R. Hichens-Bergstrom (Dir of Political Affairs, Foreign Ministry); Hubert de Besche (Ambassador to United States); J. C. S. Oberg (First Secretary, Pol. Div., Ministry of For. Affairs).

"After preliminary exchange of greetings, Foreign Minister Nilsson read a report of two recent conversations between Swedish diplomats and representatives of North Viet-Nam which took place in Warsaw and Hanoi (The text of this paper is attached).

(TEXT)

"The Swedish Government has, since 1965, on its own initiative, been in contact, in various places, with representatives of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and also with representatives of the Hanoi Government. Those contacts have been kept secret and they have been taken for the only purpose of obtaining general information on the views of the 'other side' in Vietnam.

"I. Some weeks ago a representative of the Swedish Foreign Ministry met in Warsaw a senior member of the North Vietnamese Embassy there. During their conversation the North Vietnamese diplomat made some remarks which seemed to differ somewhat from the official statements issued earlier by the Hanoi Government regarding the possibilities of creating a climate favourable to negotiations.

"According to the North Vietnamese diplomat, the US Government must give 'tangible proofs' of its willingness to negotiate. In reply to a question asked by the Swedish diplomat what such proofs should amount to, the North Vietnamese answered that such proofs should, first of all, be: an unconditional and unlimited stop of the bombing of Vietnamese territory, North as well as South Vietnam. Furthermore: no military actions should be undertaken in the demilitarized zone and a process of evacuation of allied forces should be begun. Finally: the FNL must be regarded as a legitimate party to negotiations.

"The North Vietnamese diplomat said that his remarks could be transmitted to the US Government, while adding that the official North Vietnamese standpoint on the question of negotiations was made clear in Premier Pham Van Dong's speech of April 8, 1965, i.e. the so-called four points. The North Vietnamese diplomat also mentioned that his Government appreciated this contact with Sweden. He hoped that this channel would remain available.

"II. The Swedish Ambassador in Peking, Mr. Petri, recently visited Hanoi and had a conversation with the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam, Mr. Trinh.

"a) Mr. Trinh strongly emphasized that the North Vietnamese Government aimed at a political solution of the Vietnamese conflict, not a military one. Mr. Trinh said that two conditions must be fulfilled in order to bring about a climate for negotiations, which could lead

to a political solution.

1. The bombing of North Vietnam must be put to an end, without any conditions and definitely.
2. The FNL must be accepted by the US Government as one of the spokesmen for the South Vietnamese people and, as Mr. Trinh expressed it, the most valid one.

"If both these conditions were fulfilled and the US Government thus took what he called 'an appropriate attitude' then, Mr. Trinh said, 'we know what we will have to do'.

"It should be added that, in this connection, the question of a time-table for the withdrawal of US troops was not raised.

"b) As to the possibility of a final settlement of the Vietnamese conflict, Mr. Trinh said that - in addition to the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops - both the Hanoi Government and the FNL had the following requests:

1. The creation of a national coalition government founded on a very broad basis and including all political and religious groupings as well as all social classes genuinely desiring to achieve national independence.
2. General elections in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy.
3. Although no immediate reunification was envisaged, it was necessary to create such conditions in South Vietnam as to permit a move in the direction of a future reunification of North and South Vietnam.

"Mr. Trinh reiterated that if the US Government gave proof of goodwill, they would find that 'the Vietnamese side knew what they had to do'.

"What characterized the two talks referred to was, in the view of the Swedish participants, the moderate tone in which the views of the North Vietnamese side were conveyed."
(END TEXT)

Having read the paper, the Foreign Minister summarized the salient points of what DRV Foreign Minister Trinh had told Ambassador Petri in Hanoi: North Viet-Nam preferred a political to a military solution and was interested in a climate favoring

a political settlement provided certain conditions were fulfilled; withdrawal was not specifically mentioned; the National Liberation Front was described as one of the spokesmen for the South Viet-Nam people although the most valid one. Regarding the possibility of reaching a final settlement, the NLF and Hanoi supported the formation of a National Coalition Government in South Viet-Nam founded on a broad basis including all political and religious groupings as well as all social classes generally desiring to achieve national independence. Moreover, conditions should be created permitting moving in the direction of future re-unification....

"....The Secretary went on to note that there were one or two positive and one or two negative elements in what had been told to the Swedish representatives. On the positive side, Hanoi's interest in a political rather than a military solution represented a small step forward.

"....After all this, Trinh had sent him an invitation to come see him; Petri had not asked to be received by Trinh. While there was no discussion of conveying Trinh's remarks to the United States, neither did Trinh say Petri could not do so and he emphasized the importance of maintaining secrecy. The Swedes interpreted Trinh's attitude as a tacit indication that his remarks could be conveyed to the United States.

"The Secretary, continuing his commentary on Trinh's remarks said the missing element was what Hanoi would in fact do on the military side. At least 19 regular North Vietnamese regiments were in the South and three North Vietnamese divisions were in the DMZ and north of it. They could attack our Marines at any moment. If we committed ourselves to stop bombing permanently, we must know what would happen on the ground militarily. We could not possibly make a commitment on the ground unless we knew what Hanoi would do with those 19 regiments. Trinh had used the phrase, 'We know what we will have to do' in the event their conditions were accepted. The Secretary said we would want to know what that phrase means.'

"....Ambassador Petri had observed to Trinh that if the two conditions were fulfilled, the North should follow suit. Bergstrom did not indicate whether there had been any comment to his remark.

"The Secretary said that Hanoi had denied, even to the Soviets, that they had troops in the South. However, we must have corresponding action on the ground; we could not be children in this matter. As to the role of the Front, we knew who their leaders were including North Vietnamese Generals in the South using a variety of names. The Liberation Front is Hanoi. Some

southern individuals with other associations were included in the Front, but they had no influence. When Trinh said the Front was the most valid spokesman for the South Vietnamese people and that the situation must be consistent with moving toward reunification, he was expressing Hanoi's political objective of permanently unifying the country on a Communist basis. We were prepared to have South Viet-Nam decide on a solution through elections but so far Hanoi was not prepared to do so. The Secretary said we could not impose a coalition government on the South; we could not turn our men around and start them shooting in the other direction to impose a coalition government. If the South Vietnamese people were to decide on this it was up to them and we would abide by the result, but a coalition would not be imposed by our arms and our power....

"....The Secretary added that the other side had made clear we must end the bombing permanently, since they insisted that a suspension would imply an ultimatum. This represented an increased demand on their part and we must have something in exchange for a permanent cessation.

"The Swedish Foreign Minister noted that they had contacts with the Front or Hanoi in Algiers, Warsaw, Moscow and Hanoi as well as Peking. The Secretary noted that the only serious interlocutor was Hanoi - not the Front. The Secretary said that we did not discount the importance of any third party channels. In past crises, we never knew which channel would be important. In this case, we did not know whether Hanoi would say something important through the Swedes rather than through someone else....

"The Secretary went on to say that the Eastern European countries would probably be interested in settling for the status quo ante at the 17th Parallel but on account of Peking, were unable to move forward. We are prepared, he said, to accept the Communist world's interest in North Viet-Nam if they are prepared to accept our interest in the South. Until Hanoi abandoned its objective of seizing South Viet-Nam, there could be no peace. It was as simple as that....The Secretary continued that two things were vital: (1) Hanoi must abandon its attempt to seize South Viet-Nam by force, and (2) the people of South Viet-Nam must have a chance to decide what government they want and to express their views on reunification without being subjected to force by the North....We had suspended bombing in the DMZ to see if there would be any response, but there was none and the ICC had been denied access to the area under the North. Nevertheless the Trinh statement could be important if we had more precision.

"Ambassador Unger called attention to the reference by the North Vietnamese in Warsaw to 'no military action being undertaken in the demilitarized zone'. He suggested, and the Secretary agreed, that this was also a point on which the Swedes might make further

soundings in Hanoi. We were certainly ready to see the zone truly demilitarized and would welcome an end to violations of it by North Viet-Nam.

"The Foreign Minister mentioned possible differences of opinion between the Front and Hanoi and pointed out that all elements of the Front were not Communists. The Secretary responded there was no problem about contact with the Front; the South Vietnamese were able to communicate with its representatives. South Viet-Nam could take care of the indigenous problem through reconciliation and bringing the dissidents back into the body politic. United States troops had only entered when North Viet-Nam regulars had come down. If the Swedes were in the same position, they would not accept a coalition government thus imposed on them.

"...The Secretary noted three channels to Hanoi: the direct one through which little was said because of Hanoi's fear of Peking; the channel through Moscow to which we attach importance because of Moscow's attitudes and influence -- but here again Hanoi was probably afraid of Peking; and finally a channel through a third party, which could be Sweden. But, he continued, this represented perhaps 50% of the question; the other 50% was the possibility of resolving the problem by defacto action on the ground in the pattern of the Greek insurrection and the Quemoy-Matsu crisis. Ho Chi Minh might prefer to pull back troops rather than enter negotiations, calculating that Americans might go home and could not come back, although, the Secretary said, we can get back faster than they can. We would be prepared to try this route. There need be no confessions that they have 19 regiments in the South.

"In response to an analysis by the Foreign Minister of Hanoi's problem, the Secretary noted that we had reports from Eastern European sources that confirmed this precisely: Hanoi feared the effect of negotiations on the morale of the Viet Cong and Hanoi's present leaders feared that they could not survive a failure to achieve their objectives. However, the Secretary said on this we cannot help them; they are in places they have no right to be.

"Further, on the point of gradual de-escalation, the Secretary said that since January we had made clear our interest in responding to actions on the ground -- what we call a process of 'mutual example' -- without evoking thus far any interest on Hanoi's part. If Trinh's phrase pointed in the direction of positive Hanoi response, this could be important.

"As to Trinh's own alignment in the regime as between hawks and doves, Mr. Bergstrom commented that the French considered

him pro-Chinese but that Ambassador Petri did not have that impression.

"The Foreign Minister asked whether it would be necessary to specify how long we would halt the bombing. The Secretary said that under our system the press and Congress would force us to answer this question. A permanent bombing halt would require a very important reciprocal action. Ambassador Unger commented that Trinh's remarks implied some readiness to discuss now not only conditions for negotiation but also the terms of an eventual settlement. The Secretary agreed that Hanoi was hesitant about discussing the first step until they saw how the negotiations would end. He indicated that another reason for keeping further inquiries on the basis of a Swedish-DRV dialogue was to avoid having to bring Saigon into the picture, which we were disinclined to do at this stage.

"The Secretary suggested as a technical point it might not be wise to pursue the dialogue with Hanoi through other capitals. In order to protect Trinh's position if there are divisions within the leadership it was important not to have communications from abroad available to too wide a group in Hanoi. Foreign Minister Nilsson agreed with this suggestion. The Secretary emphasized the importance of examining very carefully all indications bearing on Hanoi's position but as he had told the press on another occasion, we could only negotiate with those who could stop the fighting. If we entered into too great detail on our conditions for settlement, the other side would just put that in their pockets and then propose to split the difference. We were not worried about real southern insurgents -- 16,000 of them had defected this year -- but the Northern Generals must go home. We would even be prepared to give them a villa on the Riviera!....

"....Responding to a final question from the Foreign Minister about Hanoi's difficulty of believing that the United States could abandon such expensive United States bases, the Secretary pointed out that the United States' capacity in this regard should not be underestimated. We had built roads in India, over the hump, and Alaska during the war which we had never used, and we had demobilized 100 divisions after World War II. In the last five years we had closed 600 bases. As the President had said, we had no intention of leaving our soldiers in South Viet-Nam as tourists.

"Following the general conversation, Ambassador Unger privately mentioned to Minister Nilsson and Mr. Bergstrom our concern over reports that Ambassador Petri had spoken rather openly about his contacts in Hanoi. They agreed and said that recently they had twice communicated with Petri and instructed him to treat this subject with maximum discretion."

November 18, 1966

As a result of the Rusk-Nilsson meeting, State cabled Stockholm on "points for clarification."

STATE 88128 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
18 November 1966.

"1.

"2.

'1. What does the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister intend that his government would do when he says 'We know what we will have to do' /i.e., if US stops bombing of NVN/? Mr. Trinh named two conditions which the United States must fulfill to bring about a climate for negotiations. It is understood of course that if those conditions were fulfilled, negotiations could promptly be undertaken, but since the fulfillment of those conditions would represent significant steps for the United States, what would be the reciprocal actions by North Viet-Nam? It is encouraging to know that the North Vietnamese apparently recognize this reciprocity but it is essential, if their position is to be accurately evaluated, to know what it is that they recognize they 'will have to do'.

'2. What is the significance of the FNL being characterized, as Mr. Trinh puts it, as 'the most valid' spokesman for the South Vietnamese people? What is this intended to convey concerning the status of the FNL vis-a-vis other spokesmen?

'3. With reference to the question of reunification, Mr. Trinh referred to the necessity of creating conditions in South Viet-Nam 'to permit a move in the direction of a future reunification'. The conditions in South Viet-Nam as Mr. Trinh himself implied would grow out of general elections held in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy. Would Mr. Trinh not envisage that the question of unification would be resolved at that time in accordance with the mandate given a new government by the people through those general elections?

'4. If Mr. Trinh should mention the point raised by the North Vietnamese representative in Warsaw, namely that no military actions should be taken in the demilitarized zone', Mr. Trinh might be asked whether this is intended to be in effect a proposal for the strict observance of the Geneva Accords in the demilitarized zone north and south of the demarcation line with the full functioning of the ICC throughout the zone."

"6. There was some substantive discussion of the issues which might arise in Petri's next conversations in Hanoi, it being understood that this exchange was between the Swedes and ourselves

and not for discussion in Hanoi. Unger mentioned Goldberg formula's reference to private and other assurances about a response to bombing cessation and illustrated the kinds of de-escalatory actions by Hanoi which we would take to be appropriate responses, such as a cessation of infiltration, a reduction of the level of military activity and/or terror in South Viet-Nam or some troop withdrawal from South to North. In response to further Swedish probing as to what would come next after these first steps toward de-escalation and their mention of a possible ceasefire, Unger said it was not possible without knowing more of Hanoi's views, to carry the process farther. We would hope that once a beginning has been made it would be possible to establish some mode of communication with Hanoi to arrive at some understanding of the next phases of de-escalation, although it was not to be ruled out that this might proceed by mutual example. He also made clear our recognition of the problem of face for Hanoi and our readiness to consider ways to meet with problem. With reference to the fourth point in the "Points for Clarification" Unger emphasized that we were suggesting this be raised only if the North Vietnamese themselves refer to the DMZ problem. He added that it would always have to be understood that any arrangements that might conceivably be worked out for the DMZ would have to provide for a reasonably reliable means of detecting and dealing with violations; we could not agree to putting American and Vietnamese forces in jeopardy exposed to surprise action by the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong."

RUSK (Drafted by Unger)

November 28 thru December 21, 1966

On 28 November, Parsons cabled State, in Stockholm 641, saying that "Swedes will not repeat not be ready talk with me before mid-week at earliest."

On 29 November, responding to State 88128 with Stockholm 652, Parsons said that in amplifying aide memoire "there was no doubt at all in Petri's mind that Trinh meant and expected what he had said would be passed on to US." Petri also wanted to qualify that when Trinh used the phrase "most valid spokesman" with respect to NLF, that these were not Trinh's precise words, but the meaning. Petri also emphasized that he could not draw Trinh out on meaning of his "we know what we will have to do" statement. Also, on 29 November, in Stockholm 653, Petri confirmed the contents of the memo transmitted to Secretary Rusk on 11 November. The intention was that Petri return to Hanoi by way of Peking about 10 December.

On 30 November, in Stockholm 659, Parsons added a piece to the previous conversation with Petri in Stockholm 652. This was that: "also, Petri had not repeat not put in his reports, Trinh had shown 'good deal of understanding' that problem of face existed also for US."

On 3 December, State (STATE 96326) queried about cryptographic facilities for Petri, and worried about public speculation on Petri's "frequent visits to Hanoi." State added: "This will also bear on question of when we bring GVN into picture, something we do not contemplate for present."

On 5 December Bergstrom and Parsons met once again.

STOCKHOLM 681 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
December 6, 1966. Ref: State 96236.

"3. As Swedes feel there is no denying they have been in touch with us at Fon Minister level, formula arrived at in Petri's instructions is for him to describe what he tells Trinh as 'impressions', perhaps 'general impressions' formed by Nilsson in Washington. Precise formulation has to be left to Petri's discretion. However, he is enjoined to be most careful not to say he is speaking at our request or conveying message from us. Bergstrom says Petri will also take 'great care not to affect any American interest in a negative way.'

"4. On substance, primary point of interest for Petri to emphasize is that Nilsson felt we were interested in finding road to political solution and that this road not closed. Petri is not to volunteer any suggestions or attribute any to us. However, he will try hard to ascertain what response there would be from Hanoi's side if US should--as mentioned in first of our points--stop bombing North Viet-Nam. Here again exact formulation will depend on Petri's judgment in light circumstances of talk, but I was assured he will try to cover points on which we need more information.

"5. If Petri concludes Trinh does not want to react at time, he is not to press but merely say that he would be at Trinh's disposal at any time."

PARSONS

On 9 December, in Stockholm 702, Parsons reported that Oberg, Foreign Ministry Officer in Charge of Asian Affairs, indicated that the British Embassy was probing for information once again. On 10 December, in Stockholm 707, Parsons reported that Trinh was at a Communist Party meeting in Budapest and was not expected in Hanoi until the 19th. It was agreed that Petri should wait for Trinh to return to Hanoi rather than intercepting him en route. On 10 December, in State 100645, State agreed on holding the line against British probes and on waiting for the Trinh return to Hanoi. On 21 December, in Stockholm 739, Parsons reported that Bergstrom had informed him that Petri had not yet been granted an entrance visa to Hanoi. Petri could not explain the delay.

January 11, 1967

On 11 January, in State 116773, State wanted Bergstrom to query Petri on the latter's assessment of recent Hanoi efforts to increase pressures for unilateral bombing halt. State also wanted to know if Petri felt there was any connection in the delay in obtaining his visa and recent U.S. bombings.

January 13, 1967

Word had been received from Petri that Hanoi wanted him to come to North Vietnam as soon as possible. Because of the delay, the GOS had decided on its own to reactivate its Warsaw channel.

Bergstrom questioned Parsons on whether a declaration on Hanoi's part to negotiate would lead to a U.S. bombing stop.

STOCKHOLM 822 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
January 13, 1967. Ref: State 116773.

"4. Late on 12th word came from Petri that North Vietnamese wanted him come to Hanoi by January 16. He had replied in accord his instructions on giving Stockholm adequate lead-time that he could not make it before 19th. This response has today been approved here.

"5. In meantime, not having heard from Hanoi, GOS decided reactivate Warsaw channel which they had earlier avoided so as not to cross wires. (Response to my query why was so vague as to lead me believe second and third rationales paragraph 3 above weighed more with Swedes than Bergstrom admitted.) Bergstrom said Oberg of Ministry had this week been sent Warsaw renew his contact with North Vietnamese representative there. (This is first disclosure to us of this previously tightly held channel to DRV and it is interesting to note Swede is regular ForMinistry official.)

"6. Oberg's instructions signed out by Nilsson were to pave way for Bergstrom himself proceed Warsaw about 16th to explore situation. Now that Petri has his visa, Ministry today has hastily instructed Oberg not to make contact in Warsaw, but it is not yet known whether he had already done so. In any event Bergstrom will not now go there next week."

"8. One question which Bergstrom put to me for referral Washington was whether a firm, or at any rate more precise, declaration on Hanoi's part of its willingness to negotiate could lead to a bombing stop. On this point, I described

Department's impressions of Dong's prepared statement to Salisbury. Bergstrom is of course thoroughly familiar with Hanoi's obvious tactics in seeking obtain unilateral cessation of bombing but there is lingering disposition to hope Dong statement is significant."

PARSONS

January 17, 1967

Bergstrom reported on an Oberg contact in Warsaw. The North Vietnamese contact told Oberg: (1) "'A final and unconditional cessation of the bombing was an absolute and indispensable prerequisite in order to pave the way for negotiations. As soon as the bombings had ceased, the North Vietnamese GOVT was prepared to take all peace offers from the American Government under consideration;'" (2) The four points were not a precondition for negotiations but only a foundation for negotiations; (3) the NLF problem could be disposed of "through recognition on the part of the Americans of the right of the Front to take place at the negotiation table;" (4) Reunification was an internal matter to be settled "after the restoration of the peace."

STOCKHOLM 831 (CC) to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
January 17, 1967. Ref: State 118951.

"3. Oberg (knowledge of his identity as source should not rpt not be revealed) has reported from Warsaw (para 5 Stockholm 822). His visit there required no special rationale as North Vietnamese reps had agreed he would take contact from time to time. As this visit was pre-arranged, Hanoi rep had had time to inform his principals and in Oberg's opinion had been carefully briefed by them. At outset Oberg's contact, who was second-ranking man in Hanoi representation, said door was always open to Oberg and then proceeded to give following as Hanoi's position. Text in sub-paragraph below is Bergstrom's translation from Oberg's Swedish message except where Oberg incorporated Hanoi reps exact words in French:

'A final and unconditional cessation of the bombing was an absolute and indispensable prerequisite in order to pave the way for negotiations. As soon as the bombings had ceased, the North Vietnamese Govt was prepared to take all peace offers from the American Government under consideration ('pret a considerer toutes offres de paix de la part des Americaines quelles que soient'). A bomb-stop was essential. On the other hand, the four points of Hanoi were no 'precondition' for negotiations but only 'une base a la negotiation'. The contents of the four points could always be discussed at the negotiation table.'
(Comment by Oberg: 'Contact man gave the impression of

being authorized to express himself in the way he did.) The question of FNL could be solved, for instance, through recognition on the part of the American side of the right of the Front to take place at the negotiation table. The question of reunification was an internal matter, which could be solved later on between North and South Viet-Nam after the restoration of peace.' (Comment by Oberg: 'Generally speaking, the contact-man this time gave the impression of considerable flexibility as to Hanoi's position in regard to the contents of a possible negotiation if only a climate could be created which rendered negots possible.')

"4. Although Hanoi rep in Warsaw was aware of Nilsson's visit to U.S. in November, he did not rpt not ask Oberg about any talks with U.S. officials and latter did not rpt not refer to Nilsson's talks with Secretary and Vice Pres in any way.

"5. Oberg also explained to DRV man that when he had proposed Bergstrom also visit Warsaw to meet Hanoi reps, GOS had not rpt not known that Petri was about to visit Hanoi. Now that this visit was to take place (which was obviously already known to Warsaw Hanoi rep), there seemed no need for Bergstrom visit Warsaw now....

"6. Oberg's report has been repeated to Petri in Peking, with comment that GOS will be interested to learn if Trinh parallels exactly Warsaw Hanoi reps statement to Oberg."

PARSONS

January 20, 1967

In Stockholm 847, Parsons reported that "Oberg found FNL rep [in Warsaw] both knowledgeable and intelligent. There was 'mutual briefing' on previous Swedish contacts with FNL reps at Algiers and Moscow...." State queried on the same day (State 122506) on more information about Swedish-NLF contacts in Algiers and Moscow.

January 26, 1967

In Stockholm 868, Parsons reported that a Social Democratic afternoon tabloid had revealed from authoritative sources that: "Ambassador Petri during his talks with the Hanoi Government and the FNL 'is naturally also seeking to send sentiments and views' concerning the proposals for peace negotiations."

January 27, 1967

In Stockholm 870, Parsons cabled that Petri had returned to his post in Peking and had only sent a brief telegram on his Hanoi talks. In the meantime, Parsons noted press publicity continued and was probably designed "to serve democratic political needs of social democrats."

February 2, 1967

In Stockholm 907, Parsons indicated that the Swedes seem to be getting "a bit nervous about their Aspen role now." Bergstrom did not want to wind up "looking foolish." Bergstrom also indicated that Petri's report was not sufficiently precise and that the Foreign Ministry was waiting for a full written report before passing it on to the U.S. Bergstrom did say that the brief telegram from Petri contained "nothing spectacular." Bergstrom added, however, that "there were one or two possible signs."

Bergstrom avoided answering questions about Swedish contacts with the NLF. Bergstrom's remarks, however, indicated some sympathy for the NLF. Along this same line, Bergstrom threw out the thought that Sweden might be interested in establishing consular relations with Hanoi, but then back tracked when pressed on this point.

"4. When I asked Bergstrom substance and timing of Swedish-NLF contacts in Algiers and in Moscow, he replied that his memory not sure enough to attempt answer without having records available. He agreed without much enthusiasm to revert to this later. In the meantime all he could recall was that contact in Algiers began about August 1965, at time when many people looked toward NLF as perhaps authoritative source for bringing war to end. (Under circumstances I did not challenge this to me strange statement.) Now however it was more apparent that Hanoi was focal point and so there was less interest in NLF contacts. Wachtmeister, new Ambassador in Algiers, had seen NLF representative, but not with any prescribed mission.

"5. Given frequent de facto contacts in Hanoi and need for channel to handle Swedish medical and other relief assistance to North Viet-Nam, Bergstrom 'would be tempted' to recommend establishment consular relations were it not for 'German problem'. I said if this happened, he might also have an 'American problem' on his hands. He then backtracked, saying that he had no thought of recommending this to Minister...."

PARSONS

February 7, 1967

Still not having passed on the substance of exchanges in Hanoi and Warsaw, the Swedes suddenly asked "if appropriate American could be available at Stockholm or possibly Warsaw in utmost secrecy to talk with Hanoi representative during TET talks while bombing suspended."

STOCKHOLM 926 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 7, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 910.

"1. After having met with Foreign Minister Nilsson on reports from Petri in Peking and Oberg again in Warsaw Belfrage and Bergstrom sent for me ten p.m. Stockholm time Seventh. While emphasizing their information was difficult to evaluate perhaps insubstantial, they inclined to believe Hanoi had moved quite a bit towards real desire for 'contact' (as distinct from negotiations) with American official qualified to talk.

"2. As possibility of 'contact' apparently linked to TET truce which limited, so they understood, to four days beginning February 8, it was of utmost urgency to know if appropriate American could be available Stockholm or possibly Warsaw in utmost secrecy to talk with Hanoi representative during TET truce while bombing suspended. Bergstrom is proceeding Warsaw Thursday the ninth to explore situation further and also so as to be in position relay any American reaction to information which he and Belfrage gave me tonight and which I am reporting in message to follow this one.

"3. I can not evaluate how seriously we should take this but there is no doubt Swedes privy to Petri and Oberg reports think Hanoi may be in earnest provided there is face saving formula. Whether Hanoi is in earnest about (1) seeking peace, (2) prolonging TET bomb pause or (3) searching for basis on which to negotiate, Swedes could not say. However, they prepared send Bergstrom to Warsaw anyway and first point on which they hope to have immediate answer is whether we can get someone here or to Warsaw during TET truce. If so they think they will be in position to find out if Hanoi could and would also authorize someone (probably their Warsaw Ambassador) to be available for contact during truce.. . ."

PARSONS

That same evening, the Swedes finally passed on Petri's report and the report of Oberg's recent and unreported crash mission to Warsaw.

While admitting that the Petri-Trinh talks "did not yield much," the Swedes felt there were some encouraging signs. Most important in their

TOP SECRET

minds was the indication from the Warsaw contact that the North Vietnamese "was apparently willing to have a direct contact with U.S. even without knowing how long bombing was suspended (so long as this not announced)." The Swedes apparently felt that this position in Hanoi was a sufficient response to the President's policy of talking "whenever we can get other side to do so."

Petri's contacts with Trinh in Hanoi did not yield much by way of clarifying the four State queries (the four queries in State 88128 of 18 November 1966). Trinh talked about the FNL being "a spokesman" or "the spokesman."

STOCKHOLM 927 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 7, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 926.

"2. In Hanoi, Petri-Trinh talks 'did not yield much.' Trinh was bitter about alleged intensification of war since October and emphasized unconditional bomb stop was prerequisite to anything else. There could be no preconditions to bombstop. This was closest Petri got to answer to point 1 set forth in State 88128 for clarification of meaning Trinh's cryptic remark 'we know what we will have to do.'

"3. Trinh encouraged Petri to think Swedish effort for peace was laudable. He did so with apparent but not explicit recognition Swedes had been in touch with Washington. On Point 2 Trinh said merely FNL could be 'a spokesman' or 'the spokesman' for South Vietnamese people. Petri did not raise Point 3 on reunification. He thought answer to query in final sentence was 'yes' but that it would have been useless to press Trinh on this. Point 4 on DMZ which contingent on mention by Trinh did not come up.

"4. After Petri returned to Peking about January 25th Hanoi charge there sought him out and drew his attention to Trinh's statement to Australian journalist Burchett that talks could take place as soon as bombing stopped. Petri told Charge's US wanted some indication first that Vietnamese willing deescalate war. Hanoi Charge replied such request from Americans would appear to make bomb stop conditional and would therefore be unacceptable.

"5. When this word reached Ministry some days ago Foreign Minister decided send Oberg back to Warsaw. On taking contact Oberg was received not by subordinate as before but by North Vietnamese Ambassador, a change which Swedes though significant. Oberg told his superiors on returning to Stockholm this evening that it was clear Warsaw Ambassador was fully briefed on Petri's recent visit to Hanoi as he had been on earlier one. He said he told Ambassador that since he had been received at higher level his principals would be willing to send Bergstrom to Warsaw. Ambassador replied in French this would be 'suitable.' Accordingly Foreign Minister has told Bergstrom proceed (as reported Stockholm 926).

"6. Crux of Oberg's talk in Warsaw was possibility that TET stand down in military operations might provide opportunity for contacts between Hanoi and USA organized by and in presence of Swedes. Place not mentioned but Swedes assumed Warsaw, Stockholm, even third capital possible. Oberg got impression that if bombing was in suspense even for an unspecified period, Hanoi would want to have contact with us. However, if we announced bombing would stop for four days only, Hanoi would not agree to contact. (Thus possibility if any may be foreclosed). It was clear to Oberg that it was intended that this message should reach us.

"7. In thinking foregoing over Swedes said they impressed that (1) Hanoi has moved Warsaw contact to a higher level and (2) Hanoi Warsaw Ambassador evidently interested in American contact if face can be saved all around. When I remarked it did not appear Hanoi had met our view that some signal must first be given as to what Hanoi would do if we stopped bombing Swedes replied that was true but on other hand Hanoi was apparently willing to have a direct contact with us even without knowing how long bombing was suspended (so long as this not announced). Maybe, Swedes conceded, Hanoi only maneuvering to get bombing stopped by diplomatic maneuver but they thought Hanoi's situation might have become such, especially given China situation, that their desire for contact with us was genuine. This is what led Swedes to ask if when Bergstrom met Hanoi Ambassador in Warsaw he could say US was also prepared to send representative to make contact in utmost secrecy.

"8. In this context Belfrage cautiously observed Hanoi has never told Swedes it would be willing to talk with us if bomb stop not explicitly unconditional; it has merely shown some signs of interest in talking if we did not put an explicit date on resumption of bombing. Belfrage concluded that he understood President had said that our policy was to talk whenever we could get other side to do so. I reminded him of distinction between 'unconditional discussions' on one hand and some prior private or public indication of what Hanoi would do if we stopped bombing on other hand (State 130520 Circular)."

PARSONS

February 8, 1967

State wanted clarification on statement from Warsaw contact suggesting a desire for preliminary contact during TET and the statement to Petri that unconditional bombing was a prerequisite to anything else. State also wished Bergstrom to explore military reciprocity. On the point of the readiness of the U.S. representative, State said that the U.S. would be prepared to respond to "talks without conditions."

STATE 133671 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 8, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 926, 927.

"1. It is not clear on the basis of information reported reftels precisely what DRV Ambassador in Warsaw told Swedes which gave them impression that Hanoi might have real desire for contact with American official qualified to talk during Tet truce period. As reported by Swedes, Hanoi would not agree to contact if we announced bombing would stop for four days only, and we have already announced (and presume Hanoi aware of it) that duration of Tet truce would be for 96 hours, with implication bombing could resume thereafter. Nevertheless we certainly wish to leave no possibility unexplored and, while recognizing domestic political pressures which may lead Swedes to grasp at straws, we accept as you do their good faith in passing this information along. We therefore suggest you convey following to Foreign Ministry, bearing in mind we are not sanguine anything can in fact be worked out in connection Tet truce and we do not wish to seem to be urging Warsaw trip on Bergstrom:

a. We are most grateful for these recent reports of Swedish conversations with DRV representatives in Hanoi and Warsaw. We think Bergstrom visit and talk with DRV Ambassador could be useful in clarifying DRV position. Among points on which he could seek further precision are relationship between DRV Ambassador's statements to Oberg suggesting desire for preliminary contact with US representatives during four-day Tet truce and DRV Foreign Minister's statement to Ambassador Petri that unconditional bombing halt was prerequisite to anything else. Bergstrom could emphasize his conviction that US remains prepared for secret discussions at any time, without conditions, and such discussions might cover whole range to topics relevant to peaceful settlement.

b. In connection with finding mutually acceptable basis for initiating preliminary talks, Bergstrom could express opinion that some reciprocal restraint to indicate that neither side intended to use the occasion of the talks for military advantage would provide tangible evidence of good faith of all parties in prospects for negotiated settlement.

c. As to Swede's specific question whether appropriate American official could be available Stockholm or possibly Warsaw in utmost secrecy to talk with Hanoi representative during Tet truce, US would be prepared to respond immediately and positively to any serious indication of Hanoi interest in having talks without conditions.

d. Bergstrom should know that decision on duration of Tet truce and arrangements for carrying it out were made some time ago. If press stories refer to 96 hour period because of information given out earlier pursuant to these decisions and arrangements, Hanoi would have no basis for charging that US had disregarded suggestion made February 8 to Swedes in Warsaw. That suggestion was known in Washington well after our position

on duration truce had been made public in Saigon. We trust Bergstrom will bear this fully in mind in case DRV Ambassador takes that line."

RUSK

February 9, 1967

The Swedes indicated that although they had nothing tangible to go on, they wished to pursue the contacts. They were pegging what optimism they had on the DRV statement to the effect that Hanoi will talk if the bombing stopped unconditionally.

STOCKHOLM 934 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 9, 1967. Ref: State 133671.

"2. Bergstrom had time only to say that Swedish impression based on admittedly tenuous evidence but, as described 927, sufficiently impressive to lead them to actions which they have taken, namely, report to me and sending Oberg back to Warsaw eight to make appointment for Bergstrom there ninth (which is to be at 9 P.M. Feb 9), Warsaw time, presumably to allow Ambassador time obtain further instructions from Hanoi). He added possibly there has been wishful thinking by Petri and Oberg, but nevertheless Swedes felt they should act as they have.

"3. Belfrage in accordance his usual caution began by saying that only formal statement DRV Reps have made to Swedes on talks is to stress their willingness if unconditional bomb stop. He too said evidence tenuous, but they were encouraged by progression from Trinh's opening attitude in Hanoi Jan 23 which was harsh and terse to point reached in Warsaw sixth when Amb 'jumped at' proposal meet with Bergstrom. Belfrage said initially on 23rd Trinh said in effect 'since our Oct talk whatever you said to Americans led them to intensify bombing and war'. Later he was somewhat mollified and in end Petri was launched by Vice Minister and urged to come back again. Then came North Vietnamese Charge's unsolicited approach to Petri in Peking which struck Swedes as possibly more a sign of interest in talks than in propagandizing them with Burchett article. Finally, as Petri's contacts inconclusive, the decided send Oberg to Warsaw where higher level and interest in pursuing subject brought Swedes to present position.

"4. Belfrage asked if Bergstrom definitely could say American could come during Tet truce or after and I referred him text para C REFTEL adding that trouble to get talks was not repeat not with US but Hanoi. I also reiterated per para B Bergstrom could emphasize his conviction U.S. prepared for secret discussion at anytime without conditions. We then had some discussion of mechanics and agreed that if Bergstrom receives impression tonight that leads him to take responsibility of urging an American should come at once, Bergstrom

should via Ministry send me flash report to this effect. I added that if he were to urge without firm assurance that a DRV Rep would duly be made available to talk, I personally thought Washington would, if willing at all, have to opt for Stockholm where American visitors presence could probably be kept secret...."

PARSONS

Belfrage indicated that we should be prepared for sudden contact.

STOCKHOLM 935 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 9, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 934.

"1. Belfrage telephoned me in guarded terms message received six P.M. local time Feb. 9 from Warsaw where Bergstrom has already had meeting with DRV representative.

"2. He said message said DRV showed interest and expected give reaction February 10. Oberg will remain to receive reply while Bergstrom returns here morning of 10th. It obvious DRV rep is consulting Hanoi.

"3. Impression gained was that if reply is affirmative, Warsaw is likely be favored over Stockholm as locale. However, this, like nature of reply itself, 'very doubtful' and Belfrage cautioned against optimism. However, he thought we would be well-advised have 'someone on starting line' as idea had been certainly not repeat not turned down."

PARSONS.

February 11, 1967

Bergstrom returned from Warsaw, leaving Oberg in case a follow-up was needed. Parsons got the impression that Bergstrom had not fully communicated the U.S. position.

STOCKHOLM 940 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 11, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 935; State 133671.

"2. Bergstrom confirmed DRV ambassador took his approach seriously and said he would communicate at once to Hanoi. Ambassador had Deputy with him who intervened from time to time with usual Hanoi line but Ambassador himself did not indulge in arguments and was matter-of-fact.

"3. Bergstrom said he stressed point set forth in Para C State ref tel and also closely related point in last sentence Para A. Thus he believes it entirely clear to Hanoi reps that US would respond positively at once if

there were Hanoi desire for 'contact.' Bergstrom said he stressed idea of 'contact' rather than negotiation...."

"5. Bergstrom said that while he had well in mind substance Para D State reftel, question of charge of bad faith did not come up and so this never seemed germane to his discussion with DRV Ambassador. As Bergstrom also remarked that he did not emphasize all the other points in reference message, I suspect he touched only lightly on substance Para B State reftel on reciprocal restraints during truce which must have been over 40 hours old, by time of his talk...."

PARSONS

February 12, 1967

STOCKHOLM 941 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 12, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 940.

"1. Oberg called Bergstrom from Warsaw February 12 to report that when he went to say goodbye at DRV embassy he was urged to stay although apparently with no promise of an answer. Bergstrom on own authority authorized Oberg remain Warsaw until February 13.

"2. Bergstrom also authorized Oberg to tell DRV Embassy that Americans had asked 'if there was any news.' Bergstrom had cleared this gambit with Nilsson but not repeat not with me.

"3. Bergstrom aware risks in international phone call from Warsaw but he believes caution plus pre-arranged signals have masked game."

PARSONS

February 13, 1967

STOCKHOLM 944 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 13, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 941.

"1. About noon 13th Bergstrom told me Oberg in Warsaw has had no reply yet from DRV.

"2. GOS has authorized Oberg remain over Tuesday.

"3. FonMinister has also authorized him to tell DRV Ambassador that should latter wish to see Bergstrom again, Minister would be willing to make him available."

PARSONS

STOCKHOLM 948 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 13, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 944; State 133671.

"1. In talks with Bergstrom over week end and again today we went over several points connected with his Warsaw visit reported Stockholm 940.

A. He showed me his record of briefing he had received from me before leaving for Warsaw early 9th (Stockholm 934) which was based on State reftel. From this I am satisfied there could have been no misunderstanding of US position by Swedes on this first occasion when, as Bergstrom pointed out, Swedes could acknowledge they were authorized to transmit our views.

B. Bergstrom thought it best in Warsaw not to emphasize 96 hour Tet truce period in connection Para C State reftel.

C. Contrary to my earlier understanding he did, however, remind DRV ambassador in accordance Para D that sequence of events was such that press references to already settled 96 hour period could provide no basis for any Hanoi charges of bad faith in regard to February 6 suggestions to Swedes in Warsaw. I am quite sure he did this on his own initiative rather than because DRV Ambassador took any such line.

D. As I suspected, Bergstrom did not discuss Para B State Reftel (reciprocal military restraint during any preliminary US-DRV talks) because he felt it would merely touch off standard DRV recriminations."

....

PARSONS

February 15, 1967

STOCKHOLM 961 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 15, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 948.

"1. Belfrage and Bergstrom remained behind when FonMin Nilsson left after lunch at residence Feb 15 to discuss possible future contacts between Swedes and DRV Embassy Warsaw.

"2. Swedish position is now that Oberg instructed remain Warsaw until morning Feb 17 when he is to tell DRV Embassy he must return Stockholm for personal reasons but that Bergstrom or he available return Warsaw on short notice should DRV ask.

"3. After probing without success for any information from us on Kosygin-Wilson activity re Viet-Nam, Bergstrom then outlined Swedes' estimate present situation:

A) Swedish contacts with DRV apparently independent of other channels US may have available;

B) Because Bergstrom did not repeat not mention 'bomb stop' or 'bomb pause' at any time in his talks with DJH, Swedes do not consider that either end Tet cease-fire or resumption US bombing DRV has estopped their channel from further possible use;

C) Swedes therefore feel free make offer availability set forth para 2 above;

D) In addition, Swedes would want feel free at some time in future to return to DRV in Warsaw saying that Swedish appreciation US position such that Swedes on own initiative (not on our behalf) would ask if DRV has anything to say, and

E) Swedes would at that time ask if DRV still interested preliminary contact with us on general lines originally set forth Stockholm 926.

"4. I replied that 3 D and 3 E went beyond my current instructions in so far as availability US official is concerned.

"5. In giving detailed account atmospheric of his talk with DRV Ambassador, Bergstrom raised point of whether or not DRV were under necessity checking with FNL before replying to Swedes. Questioning of Bergstrom elicited that Swedes see problem that DRV may be interested in US-DRV contact without prejudice to FNL political position or FNL political and military activity South Viet-Nam. Belfrage at this point offered that he would think such contact would be 'of interest' to us.

"6. I replied that Secretary's statements seemed clear that we want to talk to Hanoi and added we considered FNL not independent Hanoi.

"7. Only other operational problem arose earlier in lunch when Nilsson pointed out that he must face foreign affairs council Feb 16 when he expects to be asked specifically what GOS has done to get peace in Viet-Nam and when question may well be put in terms of what Petri has done in Hanoi. Despite some constitutional risks in not being frank, Nilsson proposes disclose nothing of Aspen operation. I reiterated our position that strict secrecy has been and continues essential in order not damage any possible prospective channel for peace."

....

PARSONS

February 16, 1967

State indicated no objection to the Swedes renewing their offer of availability to return to Warsaw on short notice should the DRV ask. State, however, had a number of problems on substance.

STATE 138786 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 16, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 961.

"...In connection with question raised paragraph 1. b. State reftel (reciprocal restraint during preliminary talks as tangible evidence of good faith), you should explain to Bergstrom that this observation was not restricted to effort to arrange talks during Tet truce, but has general applicability as means of creating favorable atmosphere for holding of talks. On the other hand agreement on reciprocal restraints is not intended by us to be a precondition to talks.

"(c) We wish to avoid linking any US/DRV contacts with explicit or implicit understanding, as suggested by Swedes, that DRV would be speaking for itself, not for NLF. As you correctly pointed out, it is our position that Hanoi is ultimate center of power and decision-making relative to settlement; should Hanoi decide to have unconditional bilateral talks with US, including discussions of matters which nominally fall within purview of Front, this would be problem for Hanoi to handle. It should be noted that Hanoi in its campaign to exchange permanent bombing halt for indication of vague bilateral talks has itself not mentioned participation or role of Front. We see no reason to introduce this subject gratuitously.

"(d) We remain interested in keeping Swedish channel open and are grateful for efforts of Swedes thus far in probing Hanoi's intentions. Continued secrecy is of course mandatory if this channel is to have continued usefulness. We trust Swedes will not jeopardize their potential role as mediators by any considerations of temporary political advantage."

KATZENBACH

February 18, 1967

STOCKHOLM 970 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
February 18, 1967. Ref: State 138786.

"1. At Noon 17th I briefed Bergstrom on contents reftel.

"2. On Para C, Bergstrom seemed at first to interpret this as indicating we would not object to Swedes volunteering to DRV Ambassador that NLF could come independently to talks with us.

I said that from final two sentences of Para C, it was quite clear Swedes should not do so on our behalf. He then asked if we would object in event Hanoi Amb should take initiative in seeking to bring FNL rep with him to any talks which it might be possible to arrange. I replied that in my opinion we would not object should DRV in effect sponsor FNL rep as participant."

....

PARSONS

February 22 thru March 8, 1967

State (STATE 142081) approved the line the American Embassy was taking in Stockholm on clarifying NLF participation and on discouraging another Swedish effort to communicate with the DRV in Warsaw. State believed that the DRV was stalling. On February 23, in Stockholm 994, Parsons reported that on leaving Warsaw on the 17th Oberg had already made a firm appointment for himself for March 1. If the DRV representative at the March 1 meeting raised the subject of a Bergstrom visit, Oberg was to be non-committal. On March 8, in Stockholm 1045, Parsons reported that Oberg was returning from Warsaw and that "nothing important transpired" in the contact.

March 11, 1967

STOCKHOLM 1069 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
March 11, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1045.

"1. Late Tenth Bergstrom reported:

A. Oberg's trip Warsaw March 1-3 had been undertaken despite some doubts as to wisdom of going at all and with strict instructions to listen and not exert any Swedish pressure at all.

B. Oberg gained impression Hanoi Rep under similar wraps. In any event no real dialogue developed.

C. Hanoi rep asked if Bergstrom was in Warsaw.

D. Both Hanoi rep and Oberg were reluctant to refer to contacts during Tet truce.

E. Hanoi rep asked for briefing on Swedish internal political situation on which he showed himself knowledgeable. He also asked especially about Riksdag discussion on possible recognition of DRV. (Nilsson discouraged this).

....

G. Hanoi rep extremely bitter in word and manner at resumption US bombing plus mining coastal waters, naval and trans DMZ shelling. He said this prime example us bad faith just when Trinh through Burchett had paved way for entering on talks with US.

H. It was agreed keep channel open for future and Hanoi rep professed great gratitude for Swedish efforts.

.....
"4. Bergstrom commented bit ruefully on report Italian Foreign Minister had publicly claimed he had had private channel to Hanoi too. He added that when he visits Rome next week he would be careful in any discussion with Italians if Vietnam came up. He wondered if Italians had had valid channel. I said I didn't know."

.....
PARSONS

March 18, 1967

STATE 158220 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), March 18, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1069).

"1. At next appropriate occasion you should express our appreciation for latest word on Swedes Warsaw talks, noting continuing importance of keeping contact secret notwithstanding sterility of latest phase since one can never foretell when this channel might usefully be reactivated...."

RUSK (drafted by Isham).

April 13, 1967

STOCKHOLM 1187 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), April 13, 1967.

"1. During call on SecGen Belfrage 13th, I asked if there had been any ASPEN developments. He said no, but he has accepted invitation Polish Vice Minister Winiewicz to visit Warsaw May 8-13. Ministry now considering whether Belfrage should attempt contact Hanoi ambassador just to see if latter has anything to say and how he says it.

"2. Later FonMin Nilsson volunteered that if US has any proposal to make through Swedish channel, GOS remains ready to pass it along to Hanoi representative."

.

PARSONS

April 14, 1967

STOCKHOLM 1199 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
April 14, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1187.

.

"2. Bergstrom said that it now probably that Belfrage would be asked to contact Hanoi representative in Warsaw next month and, if so, it would be useful to have 'something tangible in his baggage'....

"3. Bergstrom said GOS would probably send Petri to Hanoi again in May or June to learn what he could.

"4. Continuing in speculative vein, Bergstrom said that Nilsson thought there was only one card left for Swedes to play. On own responsibility they might say privately to Hanoi they were convinced from their contacts with Americans that 'if Hanoi would do thus and so, Swedes confident such and such would happen on American side'. GOS, however, could not come up with any specifics on 'thus and so' and 'such and such'. They therefore uncertain if or how they could proceed, but they did feel Hanoi had some confidence their good faith. Minister himself might find it possible to seek meeting with Trinh. Bergstrom then said it would be useful to know if we saw any possible opening or had any ideas on such a give-and-take process for which Swedes would in effect be guarantors of genuineness of proposals."

.

PARSONS

April 18, 1967

STOCKHOLM 1219 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
April 18, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1199.

"1. During discussion at residence April 16 about Foreign Minister's announced intention reduce level Swedish

diplomatic representation in Saigon, Bergstrom commented on anomaly of fact that this announcement made only 24 hours after he had talked April 14 with Ambassador Parsons about possible next steps in Swedish Warsaw initiative on Foreign Minister's instructions. He left impression that Foreign Minister's statement or at least its timing had taken professionals in Ministry by surprise.

"2. In follow-up talk April 17, Bergstrom speculated that one possible effect of Swedish action might be to increase Hanoi's receptivity to Swedish efforts promote peace negotiations, Bergstrom commented that now 'Hanoi may listen to us more' (Stockholm 1207). In this connection, Foreign Minister quoted in Svenska Dagbladet April 18 as saying in reply question: 'We have not offered to appear as mediator but rather to negotiate contacts which could lead to mediation.'"

. . . .

CAMERON.

April 22, 1967

With some Swedish pressure for a new U.S. move on negotiations, State responded to the effect that the U.S. stands on the President's letter to Ho, the President's Nashville speech and Secretary Rusk's 9 February press conference.

State also showed dismay at the fact that the GOS could not renew accreditation of its ambassador to the GVN.

STATE 180598 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), April 22, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1187, 1199.

"1. We are not sanguine about possibility of giving Belfrage something 'tangible in his baggage' for his visit to Warsaw next month. Hanoi does not now seem interested in discussing tangibles, as witness its treatment of offer contained in President's February 8 letter to Ho, and seems unwilling to consider any offer short of US acceptance of the Trinh-Burchett formula. Swedes are of course familiar with our position on that formula (President's Nashville speech, Rusk February 9 press conference).

....

"3. In meantime, we cannot refrain from expressing our disappointment over apparent GOS decision not to renew accreditation to GVN of Swedish Ambassador Thailand after

present incumbent departs. Our views on this development are contained in separate message but in your discretion may be drawn upon in this channel. In particular, considering Stockholm's 1219 just received, you should convey our skepticism over Bergstrom's remark that now 'Hanoi may listen to us more.' Any increased Hanoi receptivity to Swedes as a result of this action in our judgment is likely to be marginal. In fact, if Swedes should appear over-eager to sell GVN short, Hanoi's most likely reaction would be to toughen its position regarding Swedish mediatory efforts, not to moderate it."

Excerpts from RUSK NEWS CONFERENCE on Vietnam, February 9, 1967, as recorded by The New York Times.

"There's been a good deal of discussion in recent days about the prospects for peace in Vietnam.

"President Johnson has pressed for peace in Southeast Asia in capitals all over the world, over and over again.

"We've made it clear that we want no bases in Southeast Asia, and do not wish to retain United States troops in Vietnam after peace is assured.

"We have affirmed our full support for free elections in South Vietnam, to give the South Vietnamese a government of their own choice, and have stated that the question of reunification should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision.

"We have emphasized that we would much prefer to use our resources for the economic reconstruction of Southeast Asia rather than war and that peace could permit North Vietnam to participate in a regional effort to which we would be prepared to contribute at least one billion dollars.

"On the military side, we have on two occasions stopped the bombing of North Vietnam.

"In May, 1965, a pause was limited to five and a half days, because it was rejected by the principal Communist capitals during the first three days.

"At the beginning of 1966, there was a cessation for 37 days--a period much longer than had been indicated might produce some constructive results.

"It elicited no response other than the continuation of the movement of men and arms into the south, and an assertion that Vietnam must be settled on Communist terms.

"We must know the military consequences of such a military action on our part. They must not expect us to stop our military action by bombing while they continue their military action by invasion. No one has been able or willing to give us any information on this subject.

"We've been trying in every way known to us to invite and to engage in such talks.

"Unfortunately, I cannot report to you today any tangible forward movement in this direction.

"But all channels remain open and are being utilized.

"Our objective in Vietnam is and always has been a limited one. A South Vietnam able to determine its own future without external interference. I need hardly repeat that this and this alone is our objective, but for the benefit of members of the press who may not be fully familiar with all our statements, I am today making available points we made last year under 14 different headings annotated to reflect developments in 1966.

"These are, and remain, not in any sense preconditions for discussions but rather statements of the elements which we believe could produce peace in Vietnam.

"Let me say quietly and sincerely to all capitals on the other side, let good sense take charge for all of us in this situation. Recognize the necessity for elementary reciprocity."

QUESTIONS

"Q. Mr. Secretary, you mentioned the 14 points that were put out a year ago. Would you say that the atmosphere or the climate for peace negotiations has improved in any way since that time, particularly since the conflict in China has become so intense?

"A. It's hard to judge atmosphere, because what we really must count upon is specific, tangible indications of a readiness to move toward peace.

"So what the atmosphere really will amount to turns upon whether we can in fact engage the other side at points where

we and they, together, can move this matter toward the conference table or toward a peaceful settlement.

"Q. Mr. Secretary, you have talked about the need to recognize the principle of elementary reciprocity. Since so much of the current discussion seems to hang on this, sir, could you give us some idea of whether by this you mean a specific promise to negotiate if we stop the bombing or specific military action?

"A. Well, I have pointed out in my statement that we cannot stop our military actions involving the bombing while they continue their military actions of invasion.

"I think some elementary reciprocity is required and common fairness would require that if there is an interest toward peace that both sides help move toward it because you can't stop this war simply by stopping a half of it.

"Q. Here's another question, Mr. Secretary. Are there any contacts or discussions of any kind going on to extend that four-day cease-fire in the seven-day cease-fire they say they're going to honor?

"A. Well, Prime Minister Ky has indicated some time ago that he would be prepared to discuss with the North Vietnam authorities the question of that cease-fire.

"This is something which can be discussed, which can be looked into, but I could not give you any details today as to whether or not there are discussions pointing in that direction. There are some difficult operational questions about that.

"Q. Mr. Secretary, a year ago, you recall, we offered to maintain our bombing pause if the other side would only come to talk. In fact we sent convoys around the world looking for some signal from Hanoi of a willingness to talk. Why is it that now we are unwilling to make such an offer during the current pause?

"A. Well let me point out that the other side is not talking about a pause. The other side is demanding an unconditional and permanent cessation of the bombing.

"Now that is a very significant military step for us to take; and unless it is accompanied by military action on their part, it would create a situation in which they would be safe and secure and comfortable while sitting there

sending their men and their arms down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and across the 17th parallel to attack South Vietnam.

"Q. Is it the shift in position on Hanoi's side in the terms for the bombing cessation that has caused the shift in our position?

"A. Well, there's no shift in our position. In the sense that we are prepared to take up political questions through political channels. We are prepared to deal with military matters as military matters. And we are prepared to discuss with the other side what action each side might take of a military character that would move this matter toward peace."

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Secretary Rusk said that the Communist side is waging a "systematic campaign" to bring about a permanent cessation of U.S. bombing "without any corresponding military action on their side." He rejected the January 28 Trinh formulation that stopping the bombing could lead to talks. The U.S., he declared, is not prepared to end the bombing in exchange for some "formless" possibility of talks. Before the U.S. will take such a step, he emphasized, "we must know the military consequences."

March 15, 1967

President Johnson's Nashville Speech.

The central element of this speech was the President's statement that "reciprocity must be the fundamental principle of any reduction in hostilities."

"Our Position Today," by Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States, Delivered before the Tennessee Legislature, Nashville, Tennessee, March 15, 1967.

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"Now this brings me to final point: the peaceful and just world that we all seek.

"We have just lived through another flurry of rumors of 'peace feelers.' Our years of dealing with this problem have taught us that peace will not come easily.

"The problem is a very simple one: It takes two to negotiate at a peace table, and Hanoi has just simply refused to consider coming to a peace table.

"I don't believe that our own position on peace negotiations can be stated any more clearly than I have stated it many times in the past--or that the distinguished Secretary of State, Mr. Rusk, or Ambassador Goldberg, or any number of other officials have stated it in every forum that we could find. But I do want to repeat to you this afternoon and through you to the people of America the essentials now lest there be any doubts:

"The United States representatives are ready at any time for discussions of the Vietnam problem or any related matter, with any government or governments, if there is any reason to believe that these discussions will in any way seriously advance the cause of peace.

"We are prepared to go more than halfway and to use any avenue possible to encourage such discussions, and we have done that at every opportunity.

"We believe that the Geneva accords of 1954 and 1962 could serve as the central elements of a peaceful settlement. These accords provide in essence that both South and North Vietnam should be free from external interference, while at the same time they would be free independently to determine their positions on the question of reunification.

"We also stand ready to advance toward a reduction of hostilities without prior agreement. The road to peace could go from deeds to discussions, or it could start with discussions and go to deeds.

"We are ready to take either route. We are ready to move on both of them.

"But reciprocity must be the fundamental principle of any reduction in hostilities. The United States cannot and will not reduce its activities unless and until there is some reduction on the other side. To follow any other rule would be to violate the trust that we undertake when we ask a man to risk his life for his country.

"We will negotiate a reduction of the bombing whenever the Government of North Vietnam is ready, and there are almost innumerable avenues of communication by which the Government of North Vietnam can make their readiness known.

"To this date and this hour there has been no sign of that readiness. Yet we must and we will keep on trying.

"As I speak to you today, Secretary Rusk and our representatives throughout the world are on a constant alert. Hundreds and hundreds of quiet diplomatic conversations free from the glare of front-page headlines, of the klieg lights-- these conversations are being held and they will be held on the possibilities of bringing peace to Vietnam.

"Governor Averell Harriman, with 25 years of experience in trouble-shooting on the most difficult international problems that America has ever had, is carrying out my instructions that every possible lead, however slight it may first appear, from any source, public or private, shall be followed up.

"So let me conclude by saying this: I so much wish that it were within my power to assure that all those in Hanoi could hear one simple message--America is committed to the defense of South Vietnam until an honorable peace can be negotiated."

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April 25-26, 1967

In Stockholm 1266, Cameron cabled that he had given Bergstrom the text of the Secretary's press conference and the President's Nashville speech. On April 26, Cameron cabled (Stockholm 1273) that Bergstrom and Oberg "seem more inclined than earlier to accept possibility that Swedish action on its representation in Saigon now followed by lack of effective action on 'Russell tribunal' would cause Hanoi toughen its position and make their efforts establish useful contacts more difficult." The Swedes, nevertheless, placed increased importance on Belfrage's May visit to Warsaw and said that "it now even more essential for Sweden to make every effort explore possibilities 'on other side.'"

May 9, 1967

Nilsson-Quang Thu (NVN Ambassador, Bucharest) Conversation.

Nothing new in this contact. Thu merely reemphasized the January 28 Trinh position and Ho's letter to the President. The Swedes, however, showed a strong disposition, as they have done before, to playing very active role in bringing the two sides together.

STOCKHOLM 1358 (CC) to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
May 9, 1967.

.....
"3. Thu said he had read encouraging reports of Russell Tribunal meeting Stockholm and that he appreciated GOS attitude toward Viet-Nam issue. This attitude not only expressed in press but had been shown by Petri talk in Hanoi with Trinh and Bergstrom's talks in Warsaw.

"4. Nilsson explained Swedish desire explore if in some way Sweden could help produce contact between warring parties.

"5. Thu stated NVN position is based on Trinh-Burchett four points and Ho Chi Minh correspondence with President. It would be, he said, simple to organize a contact if US would without conditions finally and definitely stop its bombing of North Viet-Nam. US would gain prestige in eyes of world. (At this point, Bergstrom said his notes were not clear, but he believed Thu said "We don't want the Chinese".) In any event, Thu concluded that West must understand that after centuries of fighting invaders, such as Chinese and French, Vietnamese people will in the end win however big military effort US makes.

"6. Nilsson said he did not believe in military solution but in a political solution which must start somewhere. Thu said it must start with bombing stop. Nilsson said he understood this, but asked was a contact or a dialogue in present situation at all 'thinkable' if North Viet-Nam did not give any sign, even the smallest, which US could seize upon? If Sweden could be of any use, Nilsson concluded, it would be at disposal both parties.

"7. Nilsson then explained that theoretically speaking he could conceive of situation under certain circumstances where Sweden might even take responsibility for a position which it felt convinced about. For instance, if Sweden were convinced of it, GOS might say that if the South would do one thing, the North would do another.

"8. Thu concluded that he appreciated Nilsson good will and he would carefully and immediately report talk.

"9. Bergstrom also told us that Belfrage trip Warsaw put off for another ten days or so."

CAMERON

May 10 thru May 18, 1967

On 10 May, in Stockholm 1372, Cameron cabled that there may be a serious problem of maintaining the secrecy of the Swedish contacts in Warsaw. Swedes

public position on this was to be that the "GOS wanted to be informed of Hanoi's position on war in Vietnam." The North Vietnamese Embassy in Warsaw was evincing some alarm about publicity. The reporter who had the story was told that publication "would severely limit possibility for Sweden to be helpful in contributing to peace...."

As an interest aside, Bergstrom asked Cameron, without pressing it, what he could tell him about the Lewandowski affair. The Hightower story had recently broken.

On 12 May (Stockholm 1382), Cameron reported that Swedes had been successful in at least temporarily halting the publication of the story.

On 17 May, in Stockholm 1405, Oberg reported that the only matter of substance raised in his talk with his North Vietnam contact on May 9-11 was with respect to the 20 April U.S. bombing of Haiphong. The North Vietnamese contact said this represented a "new stage in war." According to Oberg, Belfrage planned to follow up his Bucharest talk when he arrived in Warsaw. On 18 May, State responded (STATE 197584) that the Swedes should continue these contacts, divorced from domestic political considerations, and that they should continue to explore and clarify Hanoi's attitudes.

May 27, 1967

Belfrage-North Vietnam Ambassador, Warsaw Conversation, May 18, 1967.

Nothing new emerged from this contact. The North Vietnamese Ambassador resisted any thought of reciprocal action from Hanoi. The Swedes warned of an intensification of the war.

STOCKHOLM 1463 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
May 27, 1967.

"1. Foreign Ministry Secretary General Belfrage asked DCM to come see him late afternoon May 26. Bergstrom also present most of talk.

"2. Belfrage said he wanted give us run-down on his talk with NVN Ambassador in Warsaw May 18 which Belfrage said had taken place in friendly, quiet atmosphere. Because nothing new had come out of this conversation he had not called us earlier.

"3. Belfrage said he told NVN Ambassador that he came with no message. He explained that GOS appreciated opportunity maintain contacts with Hanoi through NVN Ambassador.

"4. According Belfrage, NVN Ambassador had repeated well known Hanoi position. NVN Ambassador said U.S. bombing in north must cease before there could be 'contacts, talks or negotiations.' NVN Ambassador commented that U.S. talks peace but intensifies the war. He alleged U.S. not sincere about negotiations and

cited President's letter to Ho as evidence. NVN Ambassador asserted it not reasonable for U.S. to ask reciprocal action from Hanoi; aggressor and victim could not be treated alike. He told Belfrage NVN would resist all aggression.

"5. Belfrage said NVN Ambassador seemed particularly interested in possible effect of increasingly critical international opinion on U.S. policy in Viet-Nam. Belfrage acknowledged to him that perhaps international opinion was becoming more critical of U.S. Viet-Nam policy. However, he said it was Swedish assessment that effect of this development on U.S. policy determination should not be overemphasized. Belfrage said he made this point several times. He told NVN Ambassador Swedes thought that very large U.S. majority was behind President Johnson's policy. He also told NVN Ambassador that since there seemed to be a deadlock in U.S. and NVN positions on negotiations, it was Swedish impression that intensification of the war could be expected."

. . . .

"10. Belfrage said he had also discussed the Viet-Nam war with Rapacki and Winiewicz. Poles emphasized necessity for U.S. to stop bombing in North before talks could take place. Poles also speculated that Hanoi did not understand realities U.S. political situation. According Belfrage, Poles said they feared that escalation of war might bring in Chinese. Bergstrom injected at this point that Yugoslav Foreign Minister currently on visit to Sweden had doubted Chinese intervention unless China itself was touched."

HEATH.

June 20, 1967

STOCKHOLM 1518 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
June 20, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1463

"1. Oberg (Far East Desk ForMinistry) informed us June 20 that Petri departing Peking for Hanoi June 21 or 22. He will remain Hanoi until June 27, probably then returning directly to Peking prior to home leave in Sweden from early July until September.

"2. Petri had originally requested NVN visa May 29, explaining he wanted be able bring back latest information

to Stockholm. He was told June 15 that he could not be received until 'late July.' On June 19 he was told by NVN Embassy Peking that he was 'welcome at any time, in fact right now.'

"3. FonMinistry instructed Petri June 20 that there was nothing new to say to NVN after Warsaw and Bucharest conversations, but Petri was to listen to anything NVN wished to say or to have him report. These instructions in accord Petri's own estimate that present time not ripe for any initiative, according Oberg."

. . . .
HEATH

June 23, 1967

STATE 215754 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), June 23, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 1518.

"2. FYI. NVN Ambassador in Peking recently approached Norwegian Ambassador stressing Hanoi's readiness for 'compromises' if negotiations began on basis bombing halt. NVN Ambassador said he would be making similar approach to Swedish and Danish colleagues. Without revealing source you might have opportunity to ascertain whether Petri was in fact approached along these lines."

KATZENBACH

July 6, 1967

PARIS 244 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, MARIA THREE), July 6, 1967.

"3. [Petri] met the Soviet Ambassador to Hanoi, Mr. Tcherbakov, with whom he has some personal ties. He said that he obtained from him some interesting revelations regarding the respective influence of the Soviet Union and China in North Vietnam. While carefully maintaining a balance between the two communist giants, North Vietnam relies above all on the Soviet Union. Since Mr. Kosygin's visit in 1965, the Soviet Union has promised and furnished important, massive assistance on a steady basis. The increased prestige gained by the Soviet Union because of this assistance has, according to Mr. Tcherbakov, even helped the USSR to gain the support of the North Korean Communist Party which has, since then, drawn progressively further away from China. This

prestige continues to exist among the North Vietnamese leaders despite the 'Chinese Clan' within the Workers' Party. Sooner or later the Soviet Union wants to eliminate any kind of North Vietnamese dependence on China, even if this can only be achieved at the price of establishing a 'national communism' (in North Vietnam). I transmit these statements with the usual reservations.

"4. Whatever influence the Soviet Union and China might have, the DRV will under no condition accept the dictation of decisions by these countries in its present conflict with the US. Mr. Petri drew this conclusion as result of his contacts with North Vietnamese leaders."

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BOHLEN

July 12, 1967

STOCKHOLM 063 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
July 12, 1967. Ref: State 215754

"1. Oberg (Far Eastern Desk FonMinistry and currently aide to FonMinister) gave Plocouns run-down on four Petri dispatches from Peking on evening July 11 at meeting set by Oberg. Despatches dated between June 28 and July 1 and received in Stockholm morning July 10....

"2. First despatch covered visit to Hanoi which ended June 27. Petri met DRV FonMinister Trinh and Deputy Huang Van Lo (phonetic). At separate interviews both told Petri that January statement to Burchett remained DRV position on negotiations, i.e., bombing of North and 'other acts of war' must be stopped before talks could begin. Trinh added that Ho letter to President remained 'road to peace.'

"3. Trinh expressed appreciation of Bucharest talks (Stockholm 1358) and of Belfrage's 'good' talk in Warsaw (Stockholm 1463). Trinh also said Russell proceedings in Stockholm were 'appreciated' by DRV; Petri reported he made no comment on this last.

"4. Petri told Trinh that he understood that January statement to Burchett was still valid, and Petri added that when bombing stopped, it was important that DRV take some 'practical step' which could be 'noticed in Washington.' Trinh did not comment but said he 'understood this way of

thinking.' Trinh concluded that DRV interested in keeping open channel to Swedes. Petri who was under instructions to 'keep a formal line' reciprocated GOS interest in conversations with DRV.

"5. Petri's evaluation of foregoing is 'there is no change.'"

.....

HEATH

July 13, 1967

STATE 6375 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS), July 13, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 065.

"1. Would appreciate your clarifying as soon as possible with Oberg following points on his conversation with North Vietnamese representatives at Stockholm Viet-Nam Conference:

a. Did Nguyen Minh Vy employ term bombing 'pause' rather than 'cessation', and if so was his use of this term consistent throughout conversation? If he blurred distinction between temporary pause and permanent unconditional cessation as stipulated by DRV Foreign Minister Trinh January 28, does Oberg think this was by accident or design?

b. In saying that unconditional bombing stop is not necessary and all that was needed was 'proof of good faith', did Vy in Oberg's judgment mean to imply that proof of good faith could take forms other than unconditional bombing stop?

c. What was date of Oberg's conversations, and did he see two reps separately or together? Why did he discount significance of their comments?

d. Does Oberg know whether DRV or Front delegates took similar line with other foreign contacts in Stockholm inasmuch as our reports indicate uniformly hard line characterized their statements?

e. Does Oberg have any confirmation of reports he cited that conference had been threatened with a split between NLF and DRV reps on conditions for negotiations?"

.....

RUSK

July 14, 1967

STATE 7393 to Amembassy STOCKHOLM (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
July 14, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 063.

"1. We note that Petri makes no particular mention in his recent dispatches of having had conversations with North Vietnamese Ambassador Loan. From other sources we understand Loan was anxious to talk with all Scandinavian representatives in Peking....Knowing Petri's reputation for thorough and meticulous reporting and his good contacts with many Communist representatives in Peking, we are somewhat surprised that by now we have not had some reports from him on Loan."

RUSK (drafted by Isham)

July 15, 1967

Oberg-Vy Conversation.

Oberg clarified Vy's remark to the effect that the word "pause" was used intentionally throughout the conversation. The North Vietnamese also told Oberg that negotiations could begin "very soon after a bombing pause" and that the duration of the pause need not be announced by the U.S. in advance. Oberg also reported that rumors of differences between the NLF and the DRV were being bandied about town.

STOCKHOLM 071 to SecState (SECRET, EXDIS), July 15, 1967.
Ref: State 6375.

"1. Oberg gave us July 14 following clarification his July 11 remarks:

A) Vy began by quoting Trinh-Burchett January 28 conversation using term 'permanent unconditional cessation'. Then Vy switched to term 'pause' and used latter term throughout conversation. Oberg thinks term 'pause' intentional. Oanh said negotiations could begin 'very soon after bombing pause' and duration of pause need not be announced in advance.

B) Oberg has no indication that say 'US act of good faith' other then bombing stop would be acceptable to DRV.

C) Date of interview July 11. Vy and Oanh were together. Oberg feels that their comments were not expressing a change in policy but in 'nuance' (his word) which might be more personal than official. He does not take their statements

to be a signal.

D) Oberg knows of no similar conversation with other foreign contacts.

E) Oberg has no confirmation of split but heard around town of disagreement between NLF and DVN over preconditions for negotiations with FNL taking harder line."

.
"3. Vy and Oanh expressed fear US will bomb Red River Delta dams during rainy season causing 1 to 1.5 million dead plus additional 500 thousand refugees. Bombing would be blamed on mistake but would really be by design because US has run out of military targets in NVN. Even such losses would not weaken NVN resolve. Oberg said he had spoken to General 'Big' Minh a few years ago who had cited same figures. Oberg passed Vy-Oanh prediction to Swedish Foreign Minister Nilsson who made no comment."

HEATH

July 18, 1967

STOCKHOLM 083 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
July 18, 1967. Ref: State 7393.

"Oberg told Embassy officer July 18 that he was not aware any recent conversations between DRV Ambassador Loan and Swedish Ambassador Petri. In next few days Oberg will have opportunity check this point with Petri who is in Sweden on leave. Oberg will then get in touch with us."

HEATH

July 20, 1967

STOCKHOLM 094 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
July 20, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 083.

"Oberg told us July 19 that DRV Ambassador Loan made a courtesy call on Petri on June 1, but according Petri nothing repeat nothing of interest was discussed. Petri told Oberg that Loan called upon Norwegian and Danish Ambassadors about the same time."

HEATH.

August 1, 1967

The Swedes began to push two lines of thought: (1) that the DRV had softened its position on talks and was now demanding a public U.S. statement that the bombing cessation be unconditional; (2) that Hanoi was no longer using intractable language on the issue of reciprocity, but was stating that they "understand" the U.S. position.

STOCKHOLM 116 to SecState (TOP SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
August 1, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 094.

"1. In a call August 1 on Oberg at Foreign Ministry about another matter, Oberg raised subject of Viet-Nam. He said that in recent talks with Petri (who is in Sweden on leave) an attempt had been made to assess significance Petri's last talks in Hanoi. Oberg said Swedes think they have detected that North Vietnamese may have shifted their position somewhat concerning preconditions for 'talks' which might lead to negotiations. Oberg was imprecise in explaining this shift and he turned aside repeated efforts to clarify his language.

"2. Oberg said that Swedes do not believe that DRV demands public statement by U.S. that a bombing stop is unconditional for such a stop to lead to 'talks.' The U.S. could let Hanoi know this privately.

"3. In respect to U.S. demand for DRV reciprocity for bombing stop, the DRV position has softened somewhat, he said. Whenever Swedes explained U.S. demand for reciprocity from DRV in the past, Hanoi answered 'why should we reciprocate, we are not bombing Washington.' In recent talks, however, North Vietnamese told Petri they 'understand' U.S. position on reciprocity. Oberg said Swedes interpret this to mean that DRV might be prepared take reciprocal action in a way U.S. would understand but not in a way which would cause DRV lose face publicly."

.
HEATH

September 27, 1967

Rusk-Nilsson Conversation. Memorandum of Conversation (Sent USUN 1046), Subject: The Secretary and Swedish Foreign Minister Nilsson's Discussion Regarding Vietnam, Wednesday, September 27, 1967, 3:30 P.M. USUN. Participants: U.S.: The Secretary, Mr. Glitman (notetaker), Mr. Clement (Interpreter); Foreign: Foreign Minister Nilsson, Ambassador deBesche, Mr. Bergstrom (Director General for Political Affairs, MFA), Mr. Oberg (Chef de Cabinet)

"Mr. Nilsson called at his request. He said he preferred to open the conversation by reading the attached paper concerning recent Swedish contacts with Hanoi, because the subject was important and required precision.

ATTACHMENT QUOTE.

- I. Since we last met a year ago, the Swedish Government has been in contact with the North Vietnamese Government through new visits to Hanoi made by the Swedish Ambassador in Peking, Mr. Lennart Petri, as well as through frequent meetings in Warsaw between Swedish diplomats sent from Stockholm and representatives of the North Vietnamese Embassy there. Earlier this year, in connection with an official visit to Romania, I myself had a conversation with the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Bucharest about the whole Vietnam issue. These contacts have been of an informative character and have mainly aimed at keeping the Swedish Government continuously informed about Hanoi's views on the conflict in Vietnam.
- II. In Hanoi, as well as in Warsaw, representatives of the North Vietnamese Government have referred to the interview of January 28 this year, granted by the North Vietnamese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nguyen Duy Trinh, to the Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, where Mr. Trinh said that talks could take place between North Vietnam and the United States provided the bombing of North Vietnamese territory and all other acts of war against North Vietnam are ended unconditionally and definitely.

In Warsaw, on September 7, the North Vietnamese Ambassador told a Swedish diplomat that "North Vietnam desired to start talks with the United States." He added "that such contact could take place as soon as the bombing of the North had

stopped and the North Vietnamese Government had been convinced that the cessation of the bombing was unconditional and definite." The Ambassador added that "this he could assure without consulting his Government."

During Ambassador Petri's latest visit to Hanoi in June this year, the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Mr. Trinh confirmed that "North Vietnam was prepared to begin talks with the United States if the bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam were stopped, but not previously."

On his return to Peking a few weeks ago, Ambassador Petri got in touch with the North Vietnamese Charge d'Affaires there. Yesterday, the North Vietnamese Charge d'Affaires in Peking said to Ambassador Petri, acting upon instruction, that the declaration of Foreign Minister Trinh of January 28 was still valid: preparedness for talks but only after unconditional and definite cessation of American acts of war against North Vietnam. He added that the United States claimed they desired peace and negotiations but were, instead, increasing the escalation of the war.

III. Although, of course, there can be no certainty in matters of this kind, it is my feeling that the North Vietnamese Government is, in fact, seriously interested to engage in talks with the U.S. Government. Therefore, a cessation of the bombing might be a decisive step towards a negotiated solution of the conflict in Vietnam. I am fully aware that the U.S. Government has always requested some form of assurance that a cessation of the bombing be followed by some reciprocal move from the other side. Mr. Trinh said in Hanoi to our Ambassador that he understood the importance the U.S. Government attaches to the question of reciprocity. Even if no precise reciprocal step has been indicated during Ambassador Petri's talks in Hanoi, his view is that some concrete act of reciprocity can be expected after the cessation of the bombing.

IV. After his last visit to Hanoi, Ambassador Petri has a general impression that Hanoi is expecting an intensification of the war from the American side and prepares for a lengthy war.

V. It is my intention to instruct Ambassador Petri to make a new visit to Hanoi. I would, of course, highly appreciate any information or clarification as regards the situation in Vietnam that you would care to give me.

ATTACHMENT END QUOTE

"Following Nilsson's presentation the Secretary said he had been particularly interested in the sentence which stated that North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Trinh had told Swedish Ambassador Petri that Hanoi understood the importance the U.S. attaches to reciprocal action on the part of North VietNam in connection with a halt in the bombing. He asked whether Mr. Nilsson could provide any further details on this point.

"Mr. Nilsson said he had already asked Ambassador Petri for more details but Petri had replied he did not believe he could obtain specific details. However, Petri said he was absolutely convinced Hanoi would take reciprocal steps if the US stopped the bombing.

"The Secretary said the US also has contacts with Hanoi and it is the U.S. impression that reciprocal action would not follow upon a cessation of the bombing. Indeed, the U.S. has never succeeded in obtaining a specific statement regarding what steps Hanoi would take if the U.S. stopped the bombing. Moreover, captured North Vietnamese documents talk of a fighting/negotiating strategy. The U.S. could not accept an arrangement under which it stopped the bombing and negotiated while North VietNam negotiated and continued fighting.

"The question of reciprocity is vital. The U.S. had said it would take the first step but it could not accept a permanent and unconditional cessation of the bombing without knowing what steps Hanoi would take. Hanoi, he added, in response to Mr. Nilsson's question, had indicated a halt in the bombing must be accompanied by a clear statement that it was permanent.

"No one, the Secretary said, has been able to tell us what Hanoi would do if we stopped bombing. Indeed, the U.S. has not found anyone who can even tell us if their view would change should we take this step. Would Sweden, he asked support us if we stopped bombing and Hanoi continued the war?

"Sweden is a small country Mr. Nilsson replied. However, Sweden would ask Hanoi to begin negotiations and to

take reciprocal action of the U.S. stopped bombing. Sweden wants to see the war ended because it is disturbed that the U.S. has suffered a loss of good will in Scandinavia and because it is concerned over the deterioration in relations between the U.S. and the USSR caused by the war.

"No one wants peace more than President Johnson the Secretary replied, but the U.S. cannot purchase a temporary improvement in relations by abandoning its commitments. The issue involves more than VietNam for it also embraces Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Korea. The fundamental point in the matter, he continued is that the U.S. maintains the same standard of fidelity in the Pacific as it does in NATO. We have no master race theory which permits us to be loyal in Europe and disloyal in Asia.

"The alternative to the maintenance of our commitment, the Secretary said, is isolationism. The same senators who oppose U.S. involvement in VietNam also oppose U.S. presence in Europe and interest in the Middle East.

"The Secretary said he appreciated Sweden's interest in attempting to bring an end to the VietNam war. The Swedish paper merited a considered written reply. His comment during the discussion regarding the points raised in the paper should not, therefore, be taken as definitive and repeated to Hanoi. The Secretary said he would have to consult with the President but he hoped he could respond before Mr. Nilsson returned to Sweden on October 7.

"The Secretary also suggested the Swedish Government provide the U.S. with three or four days advance notification of Ambassador Petri's next trip to Hanoi, since the U.S. might be able to provide the Ambassador with some useful information. Mr. Nilsson said Ambassador Petri's next visit to Hanoi would probably take place in October or November. The Swedish Government would give the exact date to the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm. Mr. Nilsson noted that Hanoi had shown an interest in using the Swedish channel for communicating with the U.S. and said he hoped Sweden could continue to play a useful role in this regard.

"The conversation ended on the same note of cordiality which had marked its entire course."

October 12, 1967

On 6 October, Secretary Rusk approved a response to the conversation in the form of a written message delivered to Nilsson before his departure on 7 October. The key element in this written message was an elaboration

and explanation of the meaning of the San Antonio formula. The message made clear that "no advantage" has "not been posed as a 'condition,' but rather as a self-evident description of the state of affairs that would evidence good faith in both sides." "No advantage...would require restraint from Hanoi, but this might fall short of total cessation of arms dispatch and infiltration into South Vietnam." It should be noted that this interpretation of "no advantage" was not the same as the one given to the Rumanians on 1 November. This latter transmission talked about "not increasing," and added the no "attack of forces from north of the DMZ." The "no advantage" message to the Swedes was one in a series of many different explanations of the San Antonio speech.

STATE 54361 to Amembassy Stockholm (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
12 October 1967.

"4. During this conversation the Secretary made a number of observations on the main points raised by the Foreign Minister's paper. We would have nothing to add to his comments at this time beyond reaffirming the importance of eliciting any additional details on Foreign Minister Trinh's remark to Ambassador Petri in June that Hanoi 'understood' the importance the United States attaches to reciprocal action on the part of North Vietnamese in connection with a halt in the bombing. We note Ambassador Petri's view that some concrete act of reciprocity can be expected after the cessation of the bombing, even if Foreign Minister Trinh gave no precise indication that Hanoi was considering taking such a step, and we would of course always be keenly interested in any new evidence which Ambassador Petri might obtain from North Vietnamese officials which would bear out his view.

"5. Since the Secretary's conversation with Foreign Minister Nilsson, President Johnson in his speech of September 29 has set forth our willingness immediately to stop aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. As the Foreign Minister will have seen from this speech, as well as from Ambassador Goldberg's September 21 speech at the United Nations, we are interested in two points -- whether there would be productive discussions, and whether we could reasonably assume that Hanoi would not take advantage of a bombing stoppage. The latter point has not been posed as a 'condition,' but rather as a self-evident description of a state of affairs that would evidence good faith on both sides. Foreign Minister Nilsson may note that the desired 'no advantage' situation would require restraint from Hanoi, but this might fall short of total cessation of arms dispatch and infiltration to South Viet-Nam. If Hanoi were prepared to consider such a cessation, a balanced arrangement, not only

stopping the bombing but also cessation of reinforcement by United States and others, would be possible. But there remains the possibility that Hanoi might be prepared to agree to some lesser restraint, in return for stopping the bombing only, that could comprise an effective 'no disadvantage' situation.

"6. If Ambassador Petri could elicit any precise information on Hanoi's position concerning these points during his forthcoming visit to Hanoi, this could be of the greatest importance. As the Secretary remarked at the conclusion of the conversation, we would hope that we could be informed in advance of the timing of Ambassador Petri's next visit to Hanoi so that we might consider whether we could submit any additional points to make during his discussions with North Vietnamese officials."

RUSK (drafted by Isham)

October 26, 1967

STOCKHOLM 423 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
October 26, 1967. Ref: State 54361.

"1. At lunch at my residence October 26 Nilsson and Bergstrom told me that latter had returned from Warsaw October 23. In Warsaw Bergstrom had seen North Vietnamese Ambassador and had conveyed to him summary of Swedish presentation to Secretary Rusk (State 54361) and summary substantive points of Secretary's reply (State 54184). In addition Bergstrom gave summary Swedish impressions US attitudes.

"2. Bergstrom said dominant impression he got from North Vietnamese in Warsaw was that they wanted to find face saving formula which will allow them to come to negotiating table.

"3. Bergstrom said North Vietnamese Ambassador showed definite interest in clarification of 'no disadvantage' situation. In one and a half hour conversation North Vietnamese Ambassador returned continually to this point. Bergstrom said he felt diffident about attempting an explication of this point and therefore did not go very far."

"6. Nilsson said Petri would probably be going to Hanoi this fall. Foreign Minister promised let us know in advance."

HEATH

November 4, 1967

A Bergstrom-Heath conversation on three successive days did much to cloud the Swedish role. Bergstrom tried to argue that recent Swedish government denunciations of US policy in Vietnam did not impair the Swedish negotiating role, but, in fact, strengthened it. He tried to explain recent GOS actions as Sweden's way of extricating sinking U.S. prestige in the world over Vietnam and avoiding further U.S. escalation along the Chinese border. He added that his government "are convinced NVN interested in negotiations or at least talks preliminary to negotiations." On instructions, Bergstrom pressed very hard for a Nilsson interview with President Johnson. He warded this effort off strongly.

STOCKHOLM 456 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN), 3 Sections, November 3, 1967 (rec'd 0332 4 Nov 67). Ref: Stockholm 423.

Section 1

"3. Bergstrom then repeated his impression of keen North Vietnamese interest in clarification 'no disadvantage' situation as evidenced NVN Ambassador in Warsaw (Stockholm 423). Bergstrom said FonMin Nilsson would therefore like to discuss clarification with Secretary.

"4. Nilsson was thinking in terms of going back to UN soon for week or ten days, ostensibly for UN reasons but really to go from there to Washington, if appointment could be arranged with Secretary...."

"6. At November 1 meeting....Bergstrom then said that he, FonMin and PriMin had reviewed November 1 history of their contacts with NVN (i.e. Aspen history) and agreed latest Warsaw conversation most hopeful. They are convinced NVN interested in negotiations or at least talks preliminary to negotiations. Therefore Nilsson was requesting appointment with Secretary (through de Besche) and he repeatedly said PriMin would like me to personally arrange for Nilsson an appointment with President for two reasons:

- A) This would convince North Vietnamese that they were receiving latest US position from highest authority;
- B) The President might make a more liberal clarification of US conditions than Secretary Rusk.

"7. Upon inquiry as to timing of proposed visit, he insisted it must be prior to their Poland and Moscow visits. I replied I must be frank--while the decision obviously was not mine, I personally felt that for President Johnson so soon after PriMin, FonMin and party's bitter denunciations

of USA and PriMin's public association of Swedish Government with North Viet-Nam (NLF) seemed to me incompatible and possibly could be used either for their political advantage and our resulting disadvantage in their 'balancing act' of on the one hand catering to our enemies by abusing us and immediately thereafter proving to our friends in Sweden and the world that they must be all right after all because their FonMin had been received by our President at White House...."

Section 2

"11. Next morning November 2 Bergstrom called and said he had just reported our latest conversation and they decided not to rush things but would now have de Besche see if Secretary were available in 'next several weeks' for discussion with Nilsson. On other matter (i.e., Presidential appointment) they thought I should wait and they would call me when they had appointment with Secretary. He indicated concern Secretary not think 'they were trying to go round State to President.'

"12. This morning, Nov 3, Bergstrom telephoned again and said 'they' had talked with de Besche again last night, that Secretary Rusk had kindly agreed to see FonMin Nilsson on date not yet determined probably around Nov 13 or 14, that Bergstrom and Nilsson were leaving for UN Tuesday, Nov 7, returning in time for the Polish and Moscow trips, that upon reflection they had concluded it best for FonMin to request directly of Secretary Rusk that he arrange appointment with President Johnson, and that therefore my further helpfulness in that regard would not be needed...."

Section 3

"13. Comment: A) I have strong doubts about meaningful response from North Vietnamese through Ambassador in Warsaw. (B) I am also aware that while Swedes profess to want to keep (1) their criticism of us on Viet-Nam and (2) their negotiation efforts in separate watertight compartments, this would not be possible in case of high level Washington visits.... (C) I am also somewhat concerned over vagueness of exact NVN 'interest' in these 'clarifications.'"

"16. However, I assume Department does not want to allow any possibility for peace in Viet-Nam to go unexplored and therefore I recommend that if possible the Secretary agree to see Nilsson and offer him such clarifications as may be possible...."

"17. I think we should not seek to involve the President in this exercise at this time...."

HEATH

November 7, 1967

STATE 66424 to Amembassy Stockholm (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
November 7, 1967. Ref: Stockholm 423, 456.

"1. We think that you took exactly right line in speaking frankly to Bergstrom....You should know that de Besche, under instructions, told us and White House that you had recommended to Nilsson that he call on the President. This distortion your views did not succeed. Appointment will not rpt not be made. However, Secretary will receive Minister at 12:15, November 15."

RUSK (drafted by Isham)

November 21, 1967

STOCKHOLM 511 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
November 21, 1967.

"1. Oberg reports he is going to Warsaw November 24, as Bergstrom apparently told Assistant Secretary Bundy November 18.

"2. Oberg, Bergstrom and Nilsson due in Moscow November 26."

HEATH

November 23, 1967

FonMin Nilsson met with Secretary Rusk on 16 November. He recapitulated recent contacts in Warsaw, adding that the North Vietnam Ambassador had remarked that a "new element" may have been introduced if the President's "no advantage" formula indicated that the U.S. was dropping its demand for reciprocity.

In this cable, which is a response to the Nilsson memorandum, U.S. set out three basic elements for getting talks started: (1) "any contact at any time without any conditions"; (2) "contacts accompanied only by a modest and unpublicized reduction in the level of areas of bombing"; (3) the San Antonio formula

In this message, State also inquired into three general areas of Hanoi's position: (1) the public description of a bombing cessation; (2) the nature of the talks that would follow; (3) Hanoi's understanding of "no advantage." Illustrative examples of "no advantage" were given, and special emphasis was addressed to the DMZ situation. It seemed clear

that State was asking two things: (1) Did Hanoi understand what the U.S. meant by "no advantage?" and (2) What would Hanoi do to demonstrate that understanding?

STATE 73693 to Amembassy Stockholm (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
November 23, 1967.

"1. During November 16 meeting with Secretary, Nilsson presented memorandum recapitulating what Swedes had already told you about October 22 discussions in Warsaw between Bergstrom and North Vietnamese Ambassador. Nilsson added no new details except for North Vietnamese Ambassador's remark that 'new element' might have been introduced if formulation on 'no advantage' indicated elimination of reciprocity. In addition, Nilsson passed on subsequent comment by North Vietnamese Embassy Warsaw official on October 28 who said intensification of bombing in Hanoi area had affected general atmosphere in negative way, while at same time stating that what was said during October 22 conversation 'continued to be relevant.'"

"3. Please convey following message to Nilsson from Secretary: BEGIN TEXT....The observations which follow will summarize what Mr. Bundy, with my approval, told Ambassador Bergstrom on November 18.

"4. There are three basic elements in our position with respect to getting talks started. Consistent with the President's statement of April 7, 1965, we are prepared to have any contact at any time without any conditions. Second, we are prepared to consider at any time possible contacts accompanied only by a modest and unpublicized reduction in the level or areas of bombing. We would be impressed by some corresponding action on the other side, but this is not to be understood as imposing a condition. Third, there is the President's San Antonio proposal to which I referred in my message of October 6. In addition, there are three points which call for clarification.

"5. First, how is a cessation of bombing to be described publicly, and what is to be the private understanding of this term? On the basis of Hanoi's position as formulated in the January 28, 1967 interview of Foreign Minister Trinh with Wilfred Burchett, we are bound to interpret Hanoi's terms as requiring that the cessation be permanent and be characterized as permanent. It would be useful to know whether this is what Hanoi means or whether there is some other condition attached.

"6. The second point turns on the nature of any talks that might take place following such a cessation, however defined. What degree of assurance would there be that talks would actually take place? How soon would they take place following a bombing cessation? How serious or productive would they be? Our own viewpoint on these questions is clear: We would expect our representatives to sit down somewhere for hard discussions of the main issues covering all points the other side wished to discuss.

"7. The third point relates to the understanding of a 'no advantage' situation, as described in the President's San Antonio speech and in my October 6 message to you in connection with a bombing cessation and the start of talks. One way to clarify this is in terms of questions that I emphasize are illustrative of examples only. What would happen with respect to the flow of supplies and men into South Viet-Nam and to positions directly threatening South Viet-Nam? For example, if following a cessation or limitation of bombing, there was a marked increase in the flow of trucks southward; if a new North Vietnamese regiment were to appear; or if we saw a massive increase in the flow of supplies just to the north of the DMZ, we would be negatively impressed. Similarly, to take another example, we would want to know what would happen with respect to the three North Vietnamese Divisions now in the area of the Demilitarized Zone which have been employed as part of offensive operations against our forces south of the DMZ. Would artillery located north of the demarcation line be employed against our forces? And, if so, would we be expected not to bomb these artillery positions?

"8. These questions are, of course, not easy ones to answer. Nevertheless, we believe they are central to an accurate understanding of what is involved on both sides. We would be grateful for any clarification that you might be able to obtain through your contacts with North Vietnamese representatives on these matters."

(Drafted by Isham)

December 9, 1967

Oberg indicated to Cameron that the "Swedes would probably back us if Hanoi failed respond bombing halt, although Oberg talked in terms 6-8 weeks grace period for Hanoi response." Oberg told us this, and that he would be going to Warsaw to meet the DRV Ambassador in a week's time.

STOCKHOLM 585 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
December 9, 1967.

"1. Oberg (FonMin's aide) told EmbOff Dec. 8 he leaving for Paris Dec. 10 Council Europe Ministerial Meeting and from there going Warsaw Dec. 15 or 16 to meet DRV Ambassador who is now in Hanoi.

"2. Oberg plans give DRV Ambassador verbatim examples no-advantage situations outlined Secretary's reply to Nilsson paper (State 73693).

"3. Oberg summed up Swedish view DRV attitudes:
A) DRV expects levelling Hanoi, Haiphong; bombing dikes and invasion NVN; plans made for movement government from Hanoi.
B) DRV really has no expectations US elections will change anything;
C) Swedes still see split between DRV and NFL, with specific point being absence reunification plank in NFL's new programs first phase.

"4. In Moscow (reported Stockholm 580 and being amplified in follow-up telegram) Soviets were persistent in stressing Hanoi's independence.

"5. Oberg repeated point made para 2 D) Stockholm 580 that Swedes would publicly back us if Hanoi failed respond bombing halt, although Oberg talked in terms of 6-8 weeks grace period for Hanoi response.

"6. Petri not rpt not planning go Hanoi in immediate future unless something worthwhile develops...."

CAMERON

December 11, 1967

STOCKHOLM 590 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
Ref: Stockholm 511.

"To complete record, Oberg (FonMin's aide) told EmbOff Dec 8 that his meeting with DRV Ambassador in Warsaw Nov 24 was 'routine contact.' DRV Ambassador did re-state his interest in 'no advantage situation.' Oberg did not have Secretary's reply to Nilsson's paper (State 73693) giving examples of 'no advantage situation' at that time."

CAMERON

January 3, 1968

Bundy-de Besche Conversation.

De Besche indicated to Bundy that the North Vietnamese Charge said he would promptly pass the illustrative examples of "no advantage" to Hanoi. He also asked for Bundy's interpretation of the 29 December 1967 Trinh statement. Bundy indicated there was in fact a change from "could" to "will," that there might be a change in talking about the bombing cause as unconditional rather than permanent, but that this was not clear, and that Trinh was still silent on "no advantage," and Trinh's emphasis on the 4 points and the NLF program still indicated hard line.

STATE 93140 to Amembassy Stockholm (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
January 3, 1967.

"2.Nilsson has instructed Oberg to travel to Warsaw (probably January 4) to obtain exact text of statement from North Vietnamese. Foreign Office queried whether US desired to transmit any questions at this time or otherwise seek clarification of Trinh statement.

"3. In reply Bundy said that while we were obviously interested in obtaining any clarification of what might underly Trinh statement, choice of available channels and timing of their use required greatest possible care and precision in order to avoid creating confusion. Moreover, it would in any event be difficult to frame careful and precise questions in short time remaining before Oberg's departure for Warsaw. At this juncture, Bundy said, we would not therefore there be inclined to ask GOS to put any specific questions to North Vietnamese which could be construed as coming from us. Bundy said he would check this with Secretary and be in touch with de Besche; this position was later confirmed and de Besche informed. Bundy noted that the Swedish Government could of course seek any clarification on its own behalf. De Besche accepted this and promised to keep us informed.

"4. In response to de Besche's request for interpretation of latest Trinh statement, Bundy commented:

(a) use of verb 'will' in context of talks was plainly a change from previous Trinh formulation of 'could';

(b) use of term 'unconditionally' rather than 'permanently' or 'definitively' could be construed as a more gentle formulation, although it was not yet possible to draw any clear conclusions on this point, particularly because of the reference in the latest statement to the January 28, 1967 Trinh interview which with accompanying Hanoi commentary posed condition of permanent cessation;

(c) Trinh remained silent on issue of mutual restraint or 'no advantage', although Bundy noted one would not necessarily expect this to be covered by public statement; and

(d) Hanoi's basic hard line reflected in Trinh's emphasis on Hanoi's Four Points and NLF political program as the basis for Viet-Nam solution.

"5. In short, Bundy commented that questions contained in Secretary's memorandum to Nilsson remained highly relevant.

"6. Foregoing drafted before receipt of Stockholm 662. Oberg's detailed report of conversation with North Vietnamese Charge is most useful and it appears clear that Foreign Office is not yet providing de Besche with as much detail as Oberg is conveying directly to us in Stockholm.

"7. We would in any event prefer that Oberg or his superiors be authoritative source of such reporting."

RUSK (drafted by Isham)

January 4, 1968

Report on Oberg-Warsaw Talk of December 21-22, 1967.

Before describing his conversation in Warsaw, Oberg said that verbatim examples of "no advantage" situations as outlined in State 73693 have been given to the DRV Ambassador without comment. Oberg also noted that during Nilsson's recent visit to Moscow, the Soviets were no longer urging the Swedes to play an intermediary role. The Swedes inferred from this that the Soviets were pessimistic about chances for peace.

In response to illustrative examples of "no advantage" the DRV Charge made three points. (1) How would the bombing pause be described? (2) "We cannot leave our brothers in the South unprotected;" (3) What would productivity and seriousness of negotiations mean? His second point indicated that either he had not understood the "no advantage" formula or that he was referring to the NLF rather than NVN troops.

STOCKHOLM 662 to SecState (SECRET, NODIS, ASPEN),
January 4, 1968. Ref: Stockholm 649.

"3. Oberg saw Charge Vu Bach Mai (Oberg's spelling) Dec 21 and handed over paper described Para 2A. Paper had been translated into French; illustrative examples Para 7 State 73693 were also given in English.

"4. NVN Charge raised three points which Oberg on instructions refused to discuss saying that Swedes had this paper from US aide and that Swedes not competent go beyond what was in paper.

"5. Three points NVN Charge raised were:

A. Did Swedes have any suggestions on how to describe bombing pause?

B. On question of flow of material in no-advantage situation Charge said 'we cannot leave our brothers in the South unprotected.' It was not clear to Oberg whether he was referring to NLF in South Vietnam or to supplies to NVN troops north of DMZ. (Oberg commented that in his contacts NVN representatives never referred presence NVN troops in South Vietnam.)

C. On question seriousness of negotiations Charge said this was unclear to him. In any negotiation both sides started from positions widely apart and with quite different aims. In such cases there would be different interpretation of 'serious or productive.'"

"7. Oberg's general impression aside from fact that paper had been well received was that Charge seemed much more relaxed than Ambassador and much less dogmatic. He also seemed much better informed on conditions in US and seems to have no illusions that election year would make any difference or that American domestic differences over Vietnam would seriously influence policy.

"8. In Jan 2 conversation Oberg did not mention any further Swedish move at this time presumably because Foreign Ministry thinks NVN may comment on paper. However, Oberg called Jan 3 to say he was returning to Warsaw Jan 4 on Foreign Minister's instructions to attempt to get clarification and text Trinh statement on Hanoi radio. De Besche being instructed inform Department of this and to say that Swedes do not consider it connected to Aspen operation."

CAMERON.

February 16, 1968

The Swedes informed Heath that they were expecting a visit from the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow. The North Vietnamese Ambassador was scheduled to arrive in Stockholm on February 20. (STOCKHOLM 877)

February 17, 1968

The Swedes were given the same private statement of the U.S. position as had been given to the Norwegians to use in their talks with the North Vietnamese Ambassador to Moscow.

"The U.S., consistent with President Johnson's statement of April 7, 1965, remains willing to enter into talks without preconditions at any time.

"The U.S. position on the cessation of the bombardment of North Viet-Nam is set forth in President Johnson's September 29, 1967 speech in San Antonio. As the President said:

'The U.S. is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.'

"The U.S. is not assuming that North Viet-Nam will cease its support to its forces in the South. On the contrary, as Secretary of Defense designate Clark Clifford testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we assume that until a cease fire is agreed on, Hanoi 'will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, men and munitions.'

"In setting forth its assumption, the U.S. is not setting a condition but attempting to make clear to North Viet-Nam that any cessation of U.S. bombing followed by actions by Hanoi taking advantage of the cessation (such as an increase by Hanoi of its infiltration of men and supplies or attacks in the area of the DMZ) would constitute such bad faith on Hanoi's part as to make continued U.S. forbearance impossible. If Hanoi, by taking advantage, forces the U.S. to resume bombing the possibilities of a negotiated solution would drastically recede. Under such circumstances calls for intensified U.S. military action would increase and the possibility of another halt in the bombing would be low. The U.S. is trying to ascertain whether Hanoi appreciates this vital fact and fully understands the importance the U.S. attaches to the no-advantage assumption.

"At San Antonio the President, in addition to setting forth his assumption, stated his readiness to stop the bombing when such action would lead 'promptly to productive discussions.' 'Productive discussions' are serious exchanges in which either side will be able to put forward for full consideration in good faith its position on any matter. 'Prompt' of course refers to a willingness by Hanoi to begin discussions with the U.S. immediately after cessation of bombing.

"It is worth noting that Hanoi is unwilling to give a clear response to questions as to the length of time between a U.S. bombing cessation and the beginning of talks. If Hanoi were serious in desiring talks then surely its response would have been one of unequivocal readiness to begin immediately.

"The U.S. evaluation of Hanoi's current position takes into account Hanoi's actions as well as its words. The unprecedented offensive against most of South Viet-Nam's urban centers, which Hanoi treacherously launched in the midst of the traditional Tet holidays, causing widespread civilian casualties and suffering, was made notwithstanding the fact that we were still exploring with Hanoi its position through diplomatic channels, and that we had exercised restraint in bombing targets in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong. In this context, we cannot but weigh Hanoi's words with great skepticism and caution. These actions carry a harsh political message.

"The U.S. favors every effort to obtain clarification of Hanoi's position. We shall continue to evaluate all information and to pursue every possible avenue which promises to bring us closer to the resolution of this conflict through serious negotiations."

(State 117383)

February 20, 1968

Petri suggested that he visit Hanoi on February 22 and his Foreign Ministry had given approval. The Swedes said there was nothing special about the date or the visit, merely that "it was time for him to go to Hanoi again." Cameron suggested that the Swedes defer the Petri/Oberg trip to Hanoi until after the North Vietnamese Stockholm visit. (STOCKHOLM 883).

February 23, 1968

Foreign Office Political Director Wachtmeister told Heath that he believed the North Vietnamese Ambassador's "main purpose for Stockholm visit was to impress Swedes with North Vietnam's 'self-confidence' in its position." (STOCKHOLM 896)

February 24, 1968

Foreign Minister Nilsson sent Heath a "short account" of his talks with the North Vietnamese Ambassador. The Ambassador, Mr. Chan, elaborated on the Trinh statement of December 29.

"Mr. Chan repeated the statement of his Foreign Minister of January 1967 and of the 29th of December 1967. He thus repeated that negotiations would begin as soon as the United States had proved that it has stopped all bombardments and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He specified 'all other acts of war' to mean that no airplanes were permitted to fly over DRV territory and no naval vessels were to have their guns or other weapons directed against DRV territory after that had been done, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would negotiate with the United States about relevant questions. The Ambassador in this connection also referred to Foreign Minister Trinh's statement of the 8th of February 1968, to the effect that the Vietnam conflict had to be solved on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Agreements and that negotiations could begin as soon as the United States had shown that it would stop the bombardments of North Vietnam and all other actions of war against the DRV. He mentioned a delay of some three weeks 'or less'."

(STOCKHOLM 901)

PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE

August 2, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

EYES ONLY PARTICIPANTS

FROM: S/AH - Chester L. Cooper

SUBJECT: Visit to Hanoi by Two Unofficial
French Representatives

Early in June a small group of Pugwash participants met in Paris to discuss the situation in the Middle East and Vietnam. Representatives of the group came from the Soviet Union, the UK, France and the US. The American participants were Kissinger, Doty (Harvard), and Feld (MIT). As an outgrowth of this discussion, one of the French participants, Marcovich of the Pasteur Institute, and Kissinger (with the knowledge and endorsement of the Soviet participant) agreed that it would be useful for Marcovich to proceed to Hanoi for the purpose of sounding out the North Vietnamese on their views toward negotiations, and to present unofficially the Phase A - Phase B formula which had been discussed in general terms at the Pugwash session. Marcovich was to be joined by a M. Aubrac, an official of FAO who knew Ho Chi Minh personally (Ho had stayed in Aubrac's home during the 1946 negotiations with the French). De Gaulle was made aware of the trip and interposed no objection on the condition that the two Frenchmen were acting "unofficially".

Marcovich and Aubrac arrived in Hanoi by way of Phnom Penh on July 21. They left Hanoi on July 26 and returned to Paris via Phnom Penh. Kissinger saw them "within hours of their return to Paris".

During their stay in Hanoi Marcovich and Aubrac had two conversations with Pham Van Dong and one with Ho Chi Minh. They were also shown a hospital, some damaged dikes and other evidence of American "aggression". They were given a bamboo surgical kit (which they said was developed to meet the

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shortage of steel surgical instruments), a propaganda film on American bombing and some pellets from "anti-personnel bombs". (Arrangements are being made to get these to us.)

Attached are Kissinger's notes describing the sessions between the two Frenchmen and the Vietnamese officials. The material preceding the notes of the conversations (pages 1 - 11 of Kissinger's notes) is a lengthy background discussion and a chronology of the trip.

Several interesting points emerge from the conversation with Pham Van Dong.

1. Dong's reiteration of the offer to negotiate soon after a bombing cessation and, in particular, his statement that the cessation need only be a "de facto" one. (pp 12 and 15)
2. Dong's statement to the effect that they would be prepared to negotiate secretly with the U.S. on matters directly affecting North Vietnam and that the NLF need not be present. (p 17). In subsequent sessions in which the political problems of South Vietnam were to be discussed the NLF would have to be present. (p.13).
3. Dong's recognition that, "some U.S. forces would have to stay until the end of the process of political settlement". (p. 16).
4. Dong's statement that the NLF envisaged a "broad coalition government" which would include members of the present GVN. (p. 17)
5. Dong's statement that Hanoi would not "push things toward unification" until after there was a political settlement. (p. 17)
6. Dong's sense of optimism about the eventual outcome. (p.15)

The conversation with Ho is more interesting in terms of color and mood than in terms of substance.

An analysis of these conversations and some possible follow-up actions will be the principal matter for discussion on Thursday, August 3, in Governor Harriman's office. It is hoped that participants will have an opportunity to read the attached before the meeting.

CLC
Chester L. Cooper

ATTACHMENT: As stated

cc: Mr. Rostow
Gov. Harriman
Mr. Sisco
Mr. Warnke
Mr. Habib
Mr. Read

III. CONVERSATIONS WITH PHAM VAN DONG AND HO

- A. Meeting with Pham Van Dong, July 24, 9 a.m.
- B. Meeting with President Ho, Afternoon, July 24.
- C. Second Meeting with Pham Van Dong.

NOTE: These conversations are drawn from reports by Aubrac and Marcovich within hours of their return to Paris. Quotations are direct quotes as they appeared in Aubrac's notes made during the meeting. The conversations are reported in the order in which they occurred.

- A. Meeting with Pham Van Dong, July 24, 9 a.m. Present Aubrac, Marcovich, Pham Van Dong, Tach (Minister of Health), note-taker.

Pham Van Dong opened the meeting by saying that he was happy to see Aubrac and Marcovich. The visas had been given on the basis of Aubrac's reputation, therefore, it was up to Aubrac to present his ideas. Aubrac then described the background of the trip to Hanoi as sketched in Part I. He said that he would report to me and I would report to the U.S. government. Marcovich continued by outlining as a private idea the two-part proposal: 1) an end to U.S. bombing, 2) coupled with an assurance by North Vietnam that "le taux des approvisionnement ne serait pas accru a la faveur de cette arrete." Aubrac interrupted to say that the control problem would have to be solved and Hanoi should make proposals. Pham Van Dong replied that he had been wondering when that issue would be raised. Marcovich said that part of the control might be through overflights for reconnaissance purposes. Pham Van Dong said: "This is our country. We cannot discuss the problem in this manner." Pham Van Dong added: "We want an unconditional end of bombing and if that happens, there will be no further obstacle to negotiations." Aubrac asked what he meant by unconditional. Pham Van Dong replied that North Vietnam could not negotiate while being bombed. Aubrac asked whether Pham Van Dong wanted an official declaration that the bombing had stopped, or would he be satisfied with a de facto end of bombing. Pham Van Dong replied that a de facto cessation would be acceptable. Aubrac asked whether there should be some delay between the end of bombing and the beginning of negotiations.

Pham Van Dong replied: "This is not a problem."
Aubrac asked what channels should be used. Pham Van Dong replied: "This is not a problem but it should be someone authorized by both parties." He then went on to say initial negotiations could be on those matters affecting the U.S. and North Vietnam as principals. When issues affecting South Vietnam were raised, the NLF would have to be present. [Aubrac and Marcovich had the impression that the scenario envisaged by Pham Van Dong involved an end of U.S. bombing to be followed within a matter of days by the opening of negotiations under acceptable auspices.]

Pham Van Dong then said that he thought that the next escalatory step would be a bombing of the dikes. All preparations had been made to mitigate the consequences, but the human suffering would be severe. He asked Marcovich and Aubrac to help influence world opinion against such a step. Aubrac replied that their usefulness depended on not joining any propaganda effort. However, they might talk to the papal mission in Paris about the problem.

Pham Van Dong then closed the meeting with a little speech: "You see, dear friends, that the problem is very complicated. You may think your travels are useless. In fact you have given us much to think about. I will see you again and we will talk again."

Aubrac and Marcovich were struck by Pham Van Dong's insistence on the complexity of the problem, as well as by the fact that in neither conversation did he mention Communist China.

Tach remained behind. He joined Aubrac and Marcovich at lunch and told them that the two-step bombing proposal should be discussed officially rather than informally.

B. Meeting with President Ho, Afternoon, July 24.
Present: Ho, Aubrac, Pham Van Dong, Tach and note-taker.

Aubrac said that what struck him immediately was how old Ho had become. He was dressed in a Chinese gown and walked with the aid of a cane. However, his intelligence was unimpaired; his eyes still had their

old sparkle. He seemed to enjoy playing the role of a grandfather-figure, not concerned with details. Aubrac had brought as a gift a little colored stone egg. Ho gave three presents in return: silk for Aubrac's daughter, some books and a ring made of metal from the 2000th U.S. plane claimed to have been shot down over Vietnam. He remembered the first names of all of Aubrac's three children. After speaking about Aubrac's family for about 15 minutes, Aubrac said: "Mr. President do you know why I have come?" Ho answered "Yes." Aubrac asked whether he had any comments. Ho replied by saying that he did not like the phrase "peace in Vietnam." It gave an impression of moral equivalence between the United States and North Vietnam; in fact the U.S. is the aggressor and must be condemned. Ho praised De Gaulle for understanding this distinction. Moreover the details of negotiations were in the hands of Pham Van Dong. Ho then added: "Remember, many people have tried to fool me and have failed. I know you don't want to fool me." He then turned the conversation back to family matters. He expressed regret that Aubrac had sold the house where he had stayed twenty-one years ago. "Where shall I live when I next come to Paris?" He then asked whether he would be welcome in Paris, but avoided the question of whether he wanted an invitation.

He terminated the conversation after fifty minutes and was escorted from the room by Tach. Pham Van Dong walked with Aubrac to his car. He said that "we try to spare President Ho as many details as we can. He is an old man; we want him to live to see his country unified." He told Aubrac that he was thinking about their conversation of the morning. He moved up the next day's appointment by an hour to allow more time before Aubrac's and Marcovich's departure in the evening.

C. Second Meeting with Pham Van Dong. Present: Aubrac, Marcovich, Pham Van Dong, Tach, note-taker.

The meeting consisted of a talk by Pham Van Dong speaking from notes. Aubrac reported that the talk went something like this: "Dear friends. Our conversation yesterday was very useful. If you want to understand the problem in Vietnam, I advise you to read the book by Morris West called The Ambassador. Neither Aubrac

nor Marcovich knew of the existence of this book.] We are facing a problem which is at the same time very simple, very complex and of great importance for the world. It is simple because it concerns the freedom of a people. It is complex because many considerations are involved. It is of great importance because it has involved so many peoples. We have come to the opinion that the U.S. government is trying to solve the problem within its present limits. [Aubrac and Marcovich took this to mean that Pham Van Dong was convinced that the U.S. was not in Vietnam as a prelude to an attack on China.] We also think that the U.S. government is trying to get a clear picture of the present position. Our view is this: U.S. power is enormous and the U.S. government wants to win the war. President Johnson is suffering from a pain and this pain is called South Vietnam. We agree that the situation on the battlefield is decisive; the game is being played in South Vietnam. From the newspapers we see that some people want to confine the war to the South. However, the White House and Pentagon seem determined to continue the war against the North. Therefore we think that attacks on the North are likely to increase. We have made provisions for attacks on our dikes; we are ready to accept war on our soil. Our military potential is growing because of aid from the USSR and other Socialist countries. [Aubrac and Marcovich pointed out that this was the only time a Communist country was mentioned by name in the two conversations extending over five hours. Aubrac and Marcovich also felt that Pham Van Dong was eager to give the impression that the situation was under control.]

As for the situation on the battlefield, it is improving all the time. The dry season was good and the wet season will be better. The Marines are in difficulty. The United States is forced to replace its well-trained troops by ever-younger soldiers. We fight only when we choose; we economize on our resources; we fight only for political purposes.

For example, news from Saigon suggests that Ky is considering moving his capital because it is no longer safe. This is true. We could easily step up our actions inside the city. But we take only those actions which have political meaning and which economize human lives.

"Now I shall talk to you about negotiations and solutions. We have been fighting for our independence for four thousand years. We have defeated the Mongols three times. The United States Army, strong as it is, is not as terrifying as Genghis Khan. We fight to have peace at home; we have no wider aims. We have made clear our position in our four points and in the interview of January 28, 1967. [Pham Van Dong did not explain what this interview was; Aubrac and Marcovich did not know, nor do I.] We are ready to talk at any time provided that actions against the North are unconditionally ended. I want to repeat what I said yesterday: we are willing to settle for a de facto stoppage." Marcovich interrupted to ask whether he correctly understood that no public acknowledgment of an end of bombing was needed. Pham Van Dong replied that he would prefer a public statement, but would settle for a de facto cessation. [There was disagreement between Aubrac and Marcovich about the meaning of de facto cessation. Aubrac thought that a bombing pause could be followed within a few days by an invitation to negotiate; Marcovich was of the view that Hanoi might want a more formal--though secret--assurance.]

Pham Van Dong resumed, "Ending the war for us has two meanings: 1) An end of bombing which is permanent and unconditional; 2) A withdrawal of United States forces. We like the formula of President de Gaulle." Marcovich interrupted to say that it was not realistic. Pham Van Dong agreed and said that he realized that some U.S. troops would have to stay until the end of the process of political settlement. He added: "We do not want to humiliate the U.S. Lenin did not like war but fought when necessary. As Lenin we are Communists."

"Now let me speak of U.S. policy and the NLF. We should have had unification in 1956. The period 1956-59 was a political fight. It saw the mutual assistance pact between the U.S. and Saigon and the introduction of U.S. staffs. This led to the formation of the NLF. The second period, 1960-64, saw a disintegration of the U.S. position to which the U.S. responded by 'special' war. [I suppose he meant "special forces" war.] In 1965, the United States started a 'limited' war which lasts until today. At the same time the NLF has expanded its activities from the country into the cities and from inside Vietnam to the outside. Our position is: North

Vietnam is socialist and wants to remain so. As for the South, our goals are national independence, democracy, peace and neutrality. Some people think we want to impose Socialism on the South. We are convinced that the NLF will not make such an error. The NLF envisages a broad coalition government, including all significant groups and religions without consideration of past activities including members du gouvernement fantoche et cadres d'armée fantoche. [He repeated the underlined words.] The essential thing is to forget the past.

"As for unification, we recognize that the important first step is a political settlement of the South. We agree not to push things toward unification. Once the war in the South is settled, we shall discuss with the South and find the best means. Our people are magnificent.

"Peace would have been easy for the U.S. three years ago. But with every year the political situation worsens. [We do not like secret negotiations, but we recognize their necessity in this situation.] As long as the issues do not concern South Vietnam, the NLF need not participate. However, we do not believe that the United States is ready for a settlement." Then turning to Aubrac he asked: "Que veulent les Americains?"

Aubrac answered that he had been convinced by me that the U.S. wanted an honorable settlement and that an end to bombing could be envisaged provided it was not used as a breathing space to step up the war in the South. This led to a discussion of the meaning of the term reinforcement. Pham Van Dong again stressed that an end of bombing would lead to negotiations. Marcovich said that if negotiations go on any length of time, the problem of reinforcement is serious. Pham Van Dong replied: "If the Americans stop bombing and we understand that they are willing to talk there is no question of delay."

Pham Van Dong then told Aubrac and Marcovich that they could communicate with him through Bo or Sung in Paris. Aubrac and Marcovich said that they would inform him of the U.S. reaction.

On August 11, 1967, the President approved the following message and asked that Dr. Henry Kissinger use M and A to convey it to Pham Van Dong:

"The United States is willing to stop the aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam if this will lead promptly to productive discussions between representatives of the U.S. and the DRV looking toward a resolution of the issues between them. We would assume that, while discussions proceed either with public knowledge or secretly, the DRV would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation. Any such move on their part would obviously be inconsistent with the movement toward resolution of the issues between the U.S. and the DRV which the negotiations are intended to achieve."

Dr. Kissinger was given the following additional instructions:

"You should say further to Messrs. Marcovich and Aubrac that the United States is prepared to negotiate either openly or secretly. It would seem, however, that a total cessation of the bombing is inconsistent with keeping secret the fact that negotiations are taking place. Accordingly, the DRV may prefer to consider the alternative of a cutback in the magnitude or scope of the bombing while secret negotiations are in progress.

"The U.S. is ready to have immediate private contact with the DRV to explore the above approach or any suggestions the DRV might wish to propose in the same direction."

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Revised and supplemented after review by Kissinger September 8, 1967.

August 17, 1967 - Pursuant to USG instructions, Henry Kissinger met for 5 hours with Messrs. Aubrac and Marcovich (hereinafter A and M) in Paris at the latter's house. Kissinger repeated Washington's understanding of M and A's conversations in Hanoi on July 24 and 25, and M and A confirmed these interpretations with the already reported difference between them that A thought that an end to bombing would be enough to start US/DRV talks, while M thought some secret communications between US and DRV might be necessary before talks started. Mr. Kissinger followed his instructions and handed A and M the message which he requested them to take to Hanoi. In answer to a question Kissinger stated that the message reflected the views of the Secretaries of State and Defense and had been approved by President Johnson. During the discussion Kissinger made the following points:

- (1) The phrase "take advantage" refers to "any increase in the movement of men and supplies into the south";
- (2) The phrase "productive" discussions indicated the determination to avoid extended Korean-type negotiations during unabated military operations;
- (3) The bombing pause might make it impossible to keep the fact of negotiations secret for more than three weeks at the outside, though we could of course guarantee secrecy as to their substance. Therefore it might be desirable to conduct preliminary talks while tonnage, geographic or sorty limitations or reductions in the bombing occurred, with a complete end of the bombing when final negotiations took place. But the choice of secret or open talks was up to Hanoi; and
- (4) The decision to add new targets was made before information of A and M's Hanoi discussions had reached Washington and in the absence of

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meaningful negotiations the intensity of violence was likely to continue to rise. Debate of specific escalation was futile since the offer included stopping bombing all together.

A and M suggested substituting another phrase for the word "if" in the first sentence of the message. They said that they were persuaded that a trip to Hanoi would be useful and proceeded to discuss mechanics of travel. At the end of the conversation A and M asked whether some restriction would be placed on the bombing of Hanoi for reasons of personal safety and to show good faith. See Kissinger memcon.

August 17, 1967 -

Kissinger cabled the Department suggesting elimination of the word "if" in the first paragraph of the message and its replacement by "with the understanding that" and this authority was granted Paris 1997, 2017 and 2034, 2074; State 2312 and 22969. Other minor changes in French text were agreed to in the same messages.

August 17, 1967 -

M and A requested an appointment with DRV Rep Sung, which was granted on 20 minutes notice. Sung was cordial and said he had been instructed to transmit messages from A and M to Hanoi. When M and A requested visas for Hanoi, however, Sung said he had no instructions concerning visas and would refer the requests to Hanoi.

August 18, 1967 -

Mr. Kissinger met with M and A at M's house in the morning, and the latter reported on their meeting with Sung on the evening of August 17. Kissinger told A and M that Washington accepted their language change and a further minor modification was suggested. The rest of the conversation concerned technical problems of visas, travel costs and A's scheduled two-weeks leave. A code was agreed to between Mr. Kissinger and A and M to cover certain likely requests for clarification or debriefing. A and M. stated they had not talked to the Elyses or to

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anyone else and Mr. Kissinger urged continuing secrecy.

August 18, 1967 - Mr. Kissinger met with M and A in the afternoon to introduce Mr. Chester Cooper in case he should have to pick up the contact in the future and to give a greater formality to the message. See Kissinger memcon.

August 18, 1967 - M and A sent their first message to Hanoi requesting visas to travel to the DRV during the week of August 20.

August 19, 1967 - Mr. Kissinger met Messrs M and A for the fourth time the morning of August 19 at the Pont Royal Hotel. Mr. Cooper was present part of the time. As instructed by Secretary McNamara Mr. Kissinger told M and A "that effective August 24 there would be a noticeable change in the bombing pattern in the vicinity of Hanoi to guarantee their personal safety and as a token of our good will." There was no mention of exact distances. Mr. Kissinger said these orders were "generally good for 10 days." When M and A asked whether this was an ultimatum, Kissinger replied that we would hardly talk of an ultimatum when we had offered to end bombing altogether.

August 19, 1967 - During the early evening of August 19 Mr. Kissinger met again with Messrs. M and A at the Pont Royal Hotel. After further discussion between Mr. Kissinger and Secretary McNamara, Mr. Kissinger said that he wished to make clear that the restrictions on bombing in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi would end September 4.. M and A indicated that they were well impressed with US seriousness and considered the US offer very meaningful. They stated they thought it essential to take the text of the message to Hanoi themselves and present it with background information. They reviewed a cable which they had prepared to send to Hanoi through the DRV Mission in Paris if Hanoi rejected their visa applications or if no answer had been received by August 22.

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August 21, 1967 - M phoned Kissinger in Paris on the evening of August 21 to tell him of Hanoi's refusal of their visa application. Mr. Kissinger told them to pass the message which he had discussed with them on August 19 to Hanoi through the Paris DRV Mission if the answer to their first telegram remains negative. See Kissinger mem con.

August 21, 1967 - Messrs. M and A gave the DRV Mission the second message urgently requesting visas to travel to Hanoi with an important message. See Kissinger phcn conversations with Messrs M and A.

August 22, 1967 - Mr. Cooper informed the Department that A and M got a turn down on their initial visa request and had sent an urgent appeal by telegram.

August 25, 1967 - Messrs A and M met with Bo in Paris to inquire why their visas had not been received. Bo told them it was too dangerous to visit Hanoi due to the bombing. M and A then informed Bo they had assurances in that respect, without identifying the nature of the assurances, which would be effective until September 4.

Messrs M and A then presented the US message as set forth below to Bo for the first time. He read it with interest and observed that it was "clearly significant". Bo queried them about the significance of para. 2 of the message. He was informed that it expressed US doubt that the existence of US/DRV discussions could be kept secret if bombing ended, and Bo recognized that this would be a problem. Bo was impressed and was told that the message was authorized by top levels of the USG. M and A gave Bo a written description of their contacts with Kissinger. Bo agreed to cable the message to Hanoi and to report their desires to visit Hanoi to discuss the message. Bo believed a reply should be available by August 29.

The English text of the message given to Bo in both French and English is as follows:

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"The United States is willing to stop the aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam with the understanding that this will lead promptly to productive discussions between representatives of the United States and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam looking toward a resolution of the issues between them. While discussions proceed either with public knowledge or secretly, the United States would assume that the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation. Any such move on the part of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam would obviously be inconsistent with the movement toward resolution of the issues between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam which the discussions are intended to achieve.

The United States is prepared to enter into discussions either openly or secretly. It would seem, however, that a total cessation of the bombing is inconsistent with keeping secret the fact that discussions are taking place. Accordingly, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam may prefer to consider the alternative of a cutback in the magnitude or scope of the bombing while secret discussions are in progress.

The United States is ready to have immediate private contact with the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam to explore the above approach or any suggestions the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam might wish to propose in the same direction."

According to M and A, Bo's cable to Hanoi, after transmitting the above message in English and French texts, noted that texts were confirmed by Cooper and that both Kissinger and Cooper had stated they were prepared at a very high level of the USG and approved by the President. A message sent to Hanoi also included the following points which had been made by Kissinger according to M and A:

(a) The US is handling this problem confidentially and requests Hanoi to do likewise;

(b) The US is particularly interested in the possibility that the DRV envisages direct secret discussions;

(c) The attacks on the dikes were accidental;

(d) The US requested message to be brought to the attention of Pham Van Dong as soon as possible;

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(e) The US is ready to submit the information in the message directly and secretly by special representative. Vientiane, Moscow or Paris were suggested as possible sites; and

(f) The US would continue to utilize the Kissinger-A/M channel if Hanoi wished.

In addition, M and A said that the August 25 message stated that "for personal assurances of safety and to establish authenticity, bombing attacks in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi" would stop for ten days, beginning August 24. Finally, M and A urged that they be permitted to come to Hanoi as requested by Kissinger, to provide additional information.

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August 29, 1967 - Bo told Messrs. M and A that he had not received a response but expected a reply on August 30.

August 30, 1967 - Bo told M and A that there had been a "technical break in communications with Hanoi" but Bo expected a reply by COB August 30 and he assured M and A that their message was being taken very seriously.

August 31, 1967 - Aubrac visited Bo, who told him that he still had no answer to the August 25 message, but he had heard from Hanoi rejecting M and A's August 21 appeal of the turn down of their visa applications. Bo stated that his government noted unfavorably that the receipt of the August 21 message coincided with the escalation of bombing of the North with Hanoi as its objective. Under these conditions it is impossible for the DRV to grant visas to permit M and A to carry the August 25 message to Hanoi. When Aubrac told Bo of his intent to return to Rome on September 2, Bo asked him to stay in Paris until September 5, particularly since M was out of town for a short while.

September 1, 1967 - M returned to Paris.

September 2, 1967 - M and A visited Bo who repeated his comments of August 31. A indicated that M's return should permit A to leave for Rome on September 3 but Bo asked him to stay until September 5 since a message from Hanoi could arrive at any time. Bo asked M to make sure that nothing "happened to Hanoi in the next few days." Bo said he would talk to M and A again on September 4.

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- September 3, 1967 - M and A saw Bo after receiving information from Mr. Kissinger that the bombing pattern around Hanoi would remain in effect three days longer. They told Bo that the bombing pattern around Hanoi was extended for another 72 hours through September 7. Bo received this information "icily", but asked M and A again not to leave town because Bo still had not received an answer.
- September 4, 1967 - Bo told M and A that he still had no answer from Hanoi. Bo indicated that an answer would have been simple if it hadn't been for US bombing actions on August 21, 22 and 23. Bo told M and A to come back on September 6. A told Bo that he planned to go to Rome and Bo raised no objections.
- September 5, 1967 - Aubrac returned to Rome.
- September 6, 1967 - Bo told M he still had no answer and again referred to the fact that M and A's second cable urgently requesting visas arrived in Hanoi on a day when the city was hit particularly hard.
- September 7, 1967 - After conversations with Mr. Kissinger and A and a phone call from A with Bo, M called on Bo after receiving an appointment 15 minutes after it was requested. M told Bo the USG was "standing by - waiting for an answer". M said the atmosphere during the conversation was friendly and relaxed and Bo said several times that he hoped M and A's efforts would work out better than past efforts by others. When Bo was informed (incorrectly) that Kissinger would be in Paris on the weekend of September 16, Bo said on his own initiative that he would ask the DRV immediately for authority to see Kissinger. When M said he did not know whether Kissinger would be authorized to see Bo and suggested that Bo might want to see someone less close to the USG, such as Bernie Feld, Bo rejected the suggestion and said he

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September 7, 1967 - wanted to have authority to see Kissinger
(cont'd) so that a direct conversation between Bo and Kissinger would be possible. Bo said he still had no answer from the DRV to the USG message. Bo again cautioned "strictest secrecy" regarding the contact and M gave him this assurance.

When M told Kissinger of the preceding conversation, Kissinger asked M to call Bo to inform him that Kissinger would be in Paris on September 9 to correct the information he had given him earlier. M reported back that he had called Bo later on the afternoon of September 7 to correct the dates of Kissinger's Paris visit.

September 7-8, 1967 - Kissinger came to Washington to discuss his meeting with M this coming weekend at Paris and possible meetings with Bo. Mr. Kissinger left Boston on evening flight for Paris on September 8.

At 11:00 a.m. EDT on September 8, Kissinger phoned A in Rome from Washington to ask A to return to Paris while K was there.

September 8, 1967 - M visited Bo and told Bo of Kissinger's request today that A return to Paris. M told Bo that A and M vouched for K, but if Bo wanted additional reassurances Millienshikov (Vice Chairman of the Soviet Academy of Science and President of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Republic) could come to Paris to verify the origin of the mission. Bo rejected this proposal and said the existing M/A-K channel was satisfactory. Bo cautioned about the great need for secrecy. In response to Bo's question, M said K planned to be in Paris for about 10 days. Bo said if there were

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September 8, 1967 -- no bombing of Hanoi "something could well
(Cont'd) happen" during that period (Paris 3070).

September 9, 1967 -- Kissinger arrived in Paris in the morning,
just before Aubrac who returned from Rome
at K's request. After a conversation between
K, M and A (Paris 3070) A called Bo to
arrange an appointment for A and M, which was
set for 4:00 p.m. Paris time. At the meeting
with Bo, the latter told A and M he had been
instructed by Hanoi to keep in close touch
with A and M, and Bo was available to A and
M at any time. M told Bo that Kissinger had
been in touch with senior USG officials,
later identified as the President, Secretary
Rusk and Secretary McNamara, who were "growing
impatient with the absence of any response from
Hanoi". Bo asked if Walt Rostow had cleared
the message and A and M had not heard his
name mentioned by Kissinger. M reported that
Washington did not know whether the (August 25)
message had ever been received in Hanoi. To
this, Bo replied that his government accepted
the message as "absolutely authentic" and "it
was being studied now in the light of developing
conditions". Bo added that A and M must
recognize the DRV situation is quite complex.
M urged Bo to meet Kissinger and Bo replied
that he had not yet received authorization to
talk to Kissinger, but that he was in effect
talking to Kissinger now through A and M. In
response to a question, A told Bo that Kissinger
had indicated a desire to discuss some matters
with Bo privately without the presence of A
and M, and A recommended^a private meeting,
although M urged that M and A be present. Bo

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(Cont'd)

was noncommittal but said if a meeting with Kissinger was arranged through any other channel he would let M and A know. Bo then said "what I really want to know is whether the (August 25) message is still valid". A and M assured him that it was but repeated Kissinger's statement about US restiveness with respect to the long delay in Hanoi's response. M and A told Bo they were personally convinced by Kissinger that the August 21-23 bombings were unrelated to the August 25 message. Bo asked about the "McNamara line" (barrier) and said Hanoi viewed it as "political action to make the separation of brothers permanent". M viewed it as "an alternative to bombing". Bo hoped A would not return to Rome and again stressed secrecy. (After checking with K, A returned to Rome to be on call.)

September 11, 1967

- In response to a phone request from Bo at 6:00 p.m. (Paris time), Sunday, September 10, Marcovich called on Bo at 9:30 a.m. After an exchange of pleasantries Bo handed to M the following text of Hanoi's official reply to the August 25 message:

"The essence of the American propositions is the stopping of the bombing under conditions. The American bombing of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam is illegal. The United States any should put an end to the bombing and cannot pose conditions.

"The American message has been communicated after an escalation of the attacks against Hanoi and under the threat (menace) of continuation of the attacks against Hanoi. It is clear that this constitutes an ultimatum to the Vietnamese people.

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"The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam energetically rejects the American propositions.

"The position of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam is that the United States should cease definitely and without conditions the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. It should withdraw American troops and satellites from South Viet-Nam, recognize the National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam and let the Vietnamese people themselves regulate their internal affairs. It is only after the unconditional stopping by the United States of the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, that it would be possible to engage in conversations."

(unofficial translation)

Bo told M to give the text to Kissinger and added that "as soon as there is a reply" M should communicate with Bo at any time of day or night. When M urged Bo to meet Kissinger, Bo said "give the message to Kissinger and when the reply is here we shall see about meeting". In commenting on the text of the DRV message Bo made the following statement:

"The bombing of Hanoi at the same time as the sending of the (August 21) message constitutes a pressure. Stopping of the bombing along with the threat of a renewal has the character of an ultimatum." (Paris 3097).

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September 13, 1967 - M met for 35 minutes with Bo on short notice at noon. Pursuant to revised Departmental instructions to Kissinger (State 35967 and 36554) which K discussed with M in part at breakfast on September 13 (Paris 3242), M handed Bo the following message from K in a sealed envelope:

"I have a reply from the USG to the Hanoi message which was received on Monday (September 11). I have also been given a commentary on this message. Because of the importance of the United States reply and because the commentary refers to other discussions with Hanoi which we have promised not to reveal I have been instructed to deliver it personally. I am available for a meeting at any time and any place which is convenient to Mr. Mai Van Bo."

Bo asked M whether he had seen the message from K. M said he had not, and Bo did not show the message to M. In response to M's urging that Bo see K, Bo said "because of the continued threat of bombing Hanoi which has the character of an ultimatum, a direct meeting with Kissinger cannot take place." M asked what assurances Hanoi wanted. Bo replied that this was a US problem. M asked whether contacts through the M/A channel should continue and Bo replied "definitely yes. We consider that we wish to continue talking through this channel." Bo said he would accept any communication open or sealed through this channel, specifically including any such message from Kissinger. Bo reiterated "We want to keep this channel open". In reply to a question Bo said that as long as M was in Paris he saw no need for A to return from Rome.

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Bo then turned to the (September 11) bombing of Haiphong. He said that bombing within one kilometer of the center of town in effect meant attacking populated areas. He did not establish any relationship between the bombing of Haiphong and the sending of any message in the M/A channel. Bo emphasized to M Pham Van Dong's view that the DRV would continue fighting no matter how badly it was bombed - even if Hanoi was totally destroyed. He referred M to the Schoenbrun September 10 television program as evidence of Hanoi's determination to continue fighting (Paris 3288 and 3257).

September 14, 1967 - M saw Bo at noon. In accordance with instructions to Kissinger (State 36927 approving Paris 3257) which Kissinger discussed with him on the morning of September 14 (Paris 3329), M handed Bo the following message from K in a sealed envelope:

"Hanoi's attitude with respect to the kind of restraint we have employed in this channel is baffling. If we bomb near Hanoi we are accused of bringing pressure. If we voluntarily and without any suggestion from Hanoi impose a restraint on our actions and keep this up without time limit we are accused of an ultimatum. In fact, the American proposal contained neither threats nor conditions and should not be rejected on these grounds".

Bo did not open it but said he would study it later. He asked whether it contained the principal message, and M said K had asked for instructions about whether the principal message could be transmitted through A and M. Bo asked whether M was sure there was a message and Bo said he was certain there was and that K would receive instructions soon. M then read to Bo from his handwritten notes containing the following official explanation:

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"The enclosed paper contains Washington's view about the significance of the restraint in the Hanoi area and the unconditional nature of our message of August 25."

M then gave Bo Kissinger's "personal" explanation as follows:

"The enclosed declaration in my judgment erases the possibility of any charge that we are proceeding by ultimatum."

Thenas arranged with Kissinger (Paris 3329), M gave Bo the following "official" comment from Kissinger:

"Washington^e does not consider the attacks of September 11 as escalation. The attacks closest to the center of Haiphong were in an area which had been attacked three times previously, most recently on June 26. Mr. Kissinger is prepared to give more detailed clarifications".

M then added Kissinger's "personal" comment:

"(A) Bo should remember that the number of officials aware of the current exchange of views is very small. This makes it very difficult to reverse decisions taken prior repeat prior to the decision to send the message of August 25 and maintain secrecy.
(B) It seems more useful to seek a solution to the present situation than to debate about how we got there. Hanoi should remember that the U.S. message of August 25 offered to end the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV in circumstances which the United States Government considers not to involve conditions but which rather repeat statements made by Hanoi. If Bo wants clarification, I stand ready to give it."

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M also gave Bo Kissinger's concluding "personal" comment:

"The present exchanges can be useful if they enable both sides to gain a clearer understanding of the issues before them. I must point out, however, the concern expressed to me by high officials in Washington that too often these communications are one-way streets."

M agreed to Bo's request that he leave his notes containing the above comments for Bo to study and Bo would return them on the morning of September 15.

M mentioned that at some point the Elysee would have to be informed but Bo replied "The fewer people know about this the better." M again said he hoped Bo and Kissinger would be in direct contact soon (Paris 3383; 3329; and (French text) - 3415).

September 16, 1967 -

Kissinger met for about two hours with M and A, immediately after A's return from Rome on the morning of September 16. K told M and A he was authorized to give them the sealed message from Washington for delivery later in the day to Bo and turned over the message to them. K cautioned M and A not to tie the continuation of their channel to K's presence in Paris but suggested that they ask Bo about Bo's views on how to continue the channel thereafter. K reminded M and A that the US is prepared to talk on an official level at any mutually convenient place. M and A indicated their willingness to continue on the present basis and reluctantly agreed to hand sealed envelopes for delivery to

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Kissinger to an Embassy officer (later specified as Wallner) after K left Paris, although they indicated a preference for communicating with K by ordinary mail or telephone.

K urged M and A not to permit Bo to gain any misimpression that he had a future assurance from the USG against bombing in the Hanoi area and M and A promised to leave no ambiguity on this point. Kissinger asked M and A to make the points with Bo that (a) the US has consistently attempted to phrase its proposals in conciliatory and realistic language, but the replies from Hanoi have not been responsive and have not addressed key elements of the US proposals; and (b) the failure of Hanoi to deal with US proposals and the interjection of outside elements, such as specific military actions, have raised doubts in the minds of US officials about the willingness of Hanoi to enter into productive discussions (Paris 3492).

September 16, 1967 - M and A met with Bo for over an hour, starting at noon. A, who did most of the talking at the meeting with Bo and kept the notes, reported on the meeting. Bo greeted A and M affably and offered them drinks. Bo said Ho had charged him with inquiring about the health of A's family. A then handed to Bo in a sealed envelope French and English texts of the following US message:

September 13, 1967

"The USG believes that the September 11 message from the DRV may be based on a misunderstanding of the American proposal of

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August 25. The American proposal contained neither conditions nor threats and should not be rejected on these grounds.

"It has been the understanding of the USG that the DRV would be willing promptly to engage in productive discussions leading to peace when there was a cessation of aerial and naval bombardment. The USG sought to confirm this fact in its proposal which the DRV has in front of it.

"As a demonstration of its good faith and in order to create the best atmosphere for the consideration of its proposal the US voluntarily undertook not to bomb Hanoi from August 25 onward - the day on which its proposal was submitted to Hanoi. This restraint has been maintained without time limit even though activities by opposing forces in the south have in fact been stepped up since August 25.

"The August 25 proposal of the USG remains open." (END OF MESSAGE)

A told Bo he did not know the content of the message but described it as "conciliatory", a word which Bo made him write down. Bo did not open the envelope in M and A's presence.

A asked Bo about the significance of the AFP September 14 Hanoi story (State 38031), quoting "reliable sources" as indicating that talks would start three or four weeks after a bombing cessation, and A showed Bo Paris press stories based on the AFP report. Bo replied that the three-to four-week interval between the end of bombing and the beginning of negotiations was "an invention of journalists". He noted that Pham Van Dong's statement had given no ground for the time period mentioned in the newspapers.

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A asked Bo whether there was any utility in the continuation of the M and A channel and wondered whether they should now withdraw. Bo replied that M and A had been received as friends and they were "not at the end of the tether" because of the continued validity of the channel. Bo said: "We trust you and you trust Kissinger. What you have been doing is useful ... You see you have produced results. There was a message to us from the USG which we accepted. We replied, to be sure, negatively. This week we have had two brief communications and today a formal message, so you are being useful." Bo again referred back to the fact that their visa request had been turned down because it had been made concurrent with the bombardment of Hanoi and to have let them come to Hanoi at that time "would have discredited us and ultimately you".

M again urged Bo to see K, and Bo asked a number of questions about K's plans for the coming week. When M suggested he could arrange coffee for K and Bo at a private residence, Bo said "Let me think about how best to arrange a meeting and I will let you know. I will call you as I called you last week."

When M mentioned reporting to the Elysee if the present effort failed, Bo said again that the M and A channel is "not at the end of its usefulness. I see no need to bring anyone else in. Complicated matters may take some time to mature and become more complicated if too many people intervene."

When M asked whether Dzu, runner-up in the SVN Presidential campaign, would be acceptable to the NLF in a more broadly based government, Bo said that Dzu was a "heel", however, and there were many reasonable people in the south,

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including high-ranking military officers." When A asked about Thieu, Bo replied that he did not understand a man who got himself elected "on the basis of inviting foreigners to bomb his compatriats", but A was struck by the relative mildness of his comment.

When asked about the political situation in the US, M and A said that the main lines of American foreign policy would not change no matter who won in 1968, unless it was Reagan - in which case "there would be a greater possibility of escalation than of peace overtures." Bo seemed surprised.

Bo returned M's handwritten notes of a meeting of September 14 and said they had been useful but he had studied them sufficiently.
(Paris 3501)

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- September 18, 1967 - Aubrac called on Bo for five minutes on the way to the airport on the morning of September 18. (A is leaving for Rome and will be back on September 20.) At K's request, A told Bo that Hanoi's response need not be confined to any one particular channel. A suggested the following possibilities: (a) a personal meeting between Bo and K; (b) a message in a sealed envelope via A and M to K; (c) an open message via A and M, as Hanoi's note of September 11; (d) a message to be given to a US official in Paris or elsewhere; (e) any other channel that seemed appropriate to Hanoi. Bo replied: "There will be (sic) answer. Things may seem to move slowly. In fact, they are moving at their 'normal' speed for exchanges of this kind". (Paris 3536)
- September 20, 1967 - George Brown received message dated September 19 from Secretary Rusk informing him of the texts of the US messages of August 25 and September 13 and the DRV message of September 11. Brown will pass on information to Prime Minister Wilson only. (State 39656; London 2126)
- September 20, 1967 - A returned to Paris from Rome and phoned Bo to suggest jokingly that Bo have dinner with K. Bo laughed and said he was still without instructions. (Paris 3765)
- September 21, 1967 - A and M met with Bo for an hour-and-a-half starting at noon. M read to Bo the following message from K, which he left with Bo at Bo's request:

"I am leaving Friday evening to give a speech in Hannover Sunday. I plan to return to the US on Sunday. If before Saturday evening you know that there will be a reply from Hanoi either Sunday or

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Monday, please inform M and I shall return via Paris.

"Washington is still standing by for an answer to its message of September 13.

"We have noted your interest in the A & M channel and we are ready to continue it.

"I remain available at Cambridge to receive message either directly or through A & M. If desirable, I could come to Paris to receive messages directly or through A & M either in sealed envelope or openly.

"Alternatively, Washington is ready to send an official to receive any message either directly or through A & M in a sealed envelope or not."

In response to a question M told Bo that the text of the message had been agreed by K. Bo replied, according to A's notes: "This channel is very convenient for us. If I have a reply before Saturday evening (9/21) I shall call you (M). I shall also be in touch with you afterwards as soon as I hear something but you should be aware of the mood Hanoi has expressed in our Foreign Ministry statement of September 19". (Ed.: the DRV ForMin statement was a detailed complaint about US bombing in the area immediately above the 17th parallel.) Bo also mentioned the bombardment of Haiphong, but briefly and without conviction according to A.

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When M urged Bo to see K, Bo replied that he could see private Americans at his discretion, but he could not see any American who spoke for the USG or reported directly to the USG without Hanoi authorization, which he had not received. Bo added that Hanoi is reluctant to talk under duress with any officially connected American. Bo said "the Americans are playing a double game-on the one hand they are offering us peace; on the other they increase their bombing." At the same time Bo repeated his desire to keep the Pennsylvania channel open and said "he will accept a communication at any time. He will be in touch as soon as he has anything to say...we want you (A and M) and Kissinger to continue."

M showed Bo the text of the draft report (Paris 3804) he intended to give the Elysee if the channel failed or was publicized and told Bo of K's desire to delete the text of the US and DRV messages; a point which Bo agreed upon. Bo said if the report was given to the Elysee, it should be made clear that it was not done at Bo's request or instigation. (Paris 3803; Paris 3765)

September 22, 1967 - M saw Bo and gave him the following message:

"Washington is still waiting for an answer to its message of September 13. The offer of August 25 as further explained in the message of September 13, remains open. At present Washington has nothing further to say." (Paris 3908)

When M delivered this note, Bo saw him only briefly because he was tied up with Columnist Joe Kraft. Bo said that he still had no instructions and if he had something he would get back in touch with M. (Kissinger/Read 9/24 telecon)

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September 23, 1967

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OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Bo called M at 1300 and asked M to come over. M met with Bo for more than an hour starting at 1800. Bo read the following message to M, which M took down in his own notes and read back to Bo to check for accuracy:

- "1. The whole world knows that the US has pursued a constant policy of escalation against North Vietnam.
- "2. After Hanoi was bombed, US planes hit Campha and Haiphong. As regards Haiphong, US planes have bombed it several times in a row and very violently attacked the DMZ and Vinh Linh Province.
- "3. As a result every one agrees that the bombing has been intensified in recent weeks.
- "4. Washington's explanation about the bombing of Haiphong cannot be received.
- "5. These are the circumstances under which you have suggested contacts with Kissinger. I accept your expression of confidence in Kissinger, but at the moment when US is increasing its escalation, it was not possible for me to see him.
- "6. Turning to more general topics, I have spoken to you of the two-faced policy of the US.
- "7. What has happened has confirmed me in that opinion, for the attitude of the US exhibits all kinds of contradictions. It is possible to highlight this by a few examples:

(a) Together with the message of August 25, Kissinger has let me

know through you as intermediaries that the US has stopped bombing of Hanoi for 10 days; then for 72 hours, and now the US tells us that the bombing of Hanoi is suspended without time limit. What do you think of the assertion that the USG of its own free will has suspended the bombing without setting a time limit?

(b) In fact what has happened is the stopping of bombing of Hanoi but the intensification of bombing elsewhere as in Campha, Haiphong and Vinh Linh Province, where the bombing has the character of extermination and systematic destruction.

(c) To say that by stopping of bombing of Hanoi the US has wanted to create better atmosphere is not true.

"8. With respect to the August 25 message, the essence of the US position is to offer to stop bombing with conditions. In a message delivered by sealed envelope the US has replied that the offer is without conditions while asserting that the message of August 25 is still valid.

"9. As far as you and A are concerned, I have received you any time you have requested. I listen to you. I accept messages from you. I transmit them. I report fully to Hanoi. I call you when I have something to say. I believe that this demonstrates our good will sufficiently. However, as I have pointed out earlier, we have no illusions about American policy. What do you think of all this?" (end of message)

When Bo asked M for his reactions, M said that:

(a) M would state his own personal view that each US message had been accompanied by deescalation. With respect to Haiphong, M said he knew only what K had told him, which was confirmed by the press reports--that US attacks had concentrated on communication links, not on systematic ^{destruction} of the town itself. Nevertheless, M agreed that American actions had made discussions more complicated.

(b) M thought that the US suspension of bombing of Hanoi, first for ten days, then 72 hours, then without time limit, reflected contradictions in American approach to the channel.

(c) M asked whether a reversion by the US to the "level of bombing in early August" would permit initiation of discussions. On the last point Bo replied that his Prime Minister had "already answered that question".

Finally, M asked Bo to ascertain from Hanoi whether M and A had correctly understood Pham Van Dong's remark to M and A in July, which M read to Bo from A's notes. (The portion of the exchange is found on pages 12-13 and 16 of the Kissinger memorandum of August 1, 1967 in which Dong is reported to have indicated that delay following a de facto cessation would not be a problem and that talks should be conducted by persons authorized by both sides.) Bo said that Dong's reported statements to A and M differed from the public position of his government, and Bo would send the exchange to Hanoi to ask if it were a true representation or Dong's position.

Bo again enjoined them to use greatest secrecy.
(Source: Kissinger/Read 9/24 telecon)

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September 25, 1967

M called on Bo at 8:30 a.m. and read to Bo the following five point message from Kissinger:

"(1) I will transmit to the appropriate Washington officials later today the message you (Bo) gave M yesterday. (2) I see no point in trading charges and countercharges about past activities. In fact Washington has offered to stop bombing based on the assumption it would lead to prompt, productive talks. That offer remains open. It was made sincerely. If accepted, there will be no need to discuss escalation or bombing problems. (3) The exchange indicates that Washington and Hanoi have great difficulty understanding each other's thought processes. This makes direct US/DRV contact essential. Intermediaries, no matter how trustworthy, are not satisfactory substitutes. (4) American military actions during the past month reflect in part the extreme secrecy with which Washington has handled this exchange. The USG has considered it unwise to change decisions made prior to the report of M and A's trip to Hanoi, except in regard to bombing Hanoi itself, because it wanted to keep the circle of awareness of this exchange as small as possible to avoid premature public debate. (5) The difference in the positions of the two governments could be summarized as follows: Washington has indicated its readiness to stop bombing and has only asked to confirm its understanding of Hanoi's view that this would lead promptly to productive negotiations. Hanoi has implied that an end of bombing would in fact have this result. If this is indeed the view of both governments, the remaining obstacles to direct talks can be overcome. I am certain that the above correctly reflects US views. Could Bo confirm that it also reflects the view of Hanoi."

M said Bo's response to the foregoing message was favorable. M then questioned Bo about

what Bo had meant in their conversation of September 23 when Bo had said that his Prime Minister had already answered M's question about whether US/DRV talks would be possible if the US cut back to the level of bombing of early August. Bo replied that the DRV Prime Minister had made clear publicly that there could be no formal discussions between the US and the DRV as long as any level of bombing continued in the North. Bo added, however, that preliminary discussions between Bo and Kissinger might not fall under such prohibition, and Bo said that he would let M know in a few days whether such preliminary discussions would be possible.

(Source: Kissinger/Read 9/25 telecon)

September 30, 1967 -

M and A called on Bo at 9:00 a.m. on September 30 and spent two hours with him. The atmosphere was friendly and cordial throughout and Bo gave them tea.

M and A told Bo that they had been in touch with K, and K had had further discussions with his Washington friends. M and A noted that K and the USG had put a proposal and questions to the DRV through the Bo channel to which there had been no substantive responses. The US August 25th offer without conditions remained open. M and A noted that K's Washington friends were interested in learning whether Bo had received an answer to the point Bo had raised on September 25 about the possibility of "preliminary discussions."

Bo replied that he had an answer to the latter point. Bo said that he could not talk directly to a US validated individual even in a preliminary way because "too much had happened since July." (M and A got the impression from Bo that he feared that "preliminary discussions" would simply be a ruse on our part to get into substantive talks with the DRV while the bombing continued.)

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When Bo referred again to the "conditions" contained in the US position, M and A asked him to point out what conditions he was referring to. Bo said in the first paragraph of the US August 25 proposal the words "with the understanding that" really amounted to a condition on our part, as did the words "productive" and "prompt". He indicated there were other complications with the proposal.

M and A referred to the forthcoming sentences in President Johnson's September 29 speech which repeated US willingness to stop the bombing "when this will lead promptly to productive discussions" on the assumption that the DRV would "not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation" during the discussions. Bo said he had not had a chance to study the President's speech, but he was glad that they had brought this portion of the speech to his attention, because the French press headlines made the US position sound conditional.

They discussed the Viet-Nam statements in the U.N. debate to date, and Bo said the DRV was highly displeased with George Brown's speech but pleased with the French and Canadian statements in New York. Bo added jocularly that he "claimed some credit" for the French position. Since M and A did not know the content of the French or Canadian positions and Bo did not elaborate, there was no discussion about what features of the GOC or GOF positions Bo was referring to.

Bo expressed the thought that the "present political trend" in the US was favorable to the DRV.

At one stage of the discussion M and A found the opportunity to underscore the point that the US had made no commitments regarding its future actions.

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A asked whether Bo had received an answer to the September 23 inquiry regarding the accuracy of A's notes of his discussion in Hanoi with Pham Van Dong on the point that there would be "no question of a delay" between the end of bombing and talks both sides "knew how to meet each other." A again vouched for the care and accuracy of the notes of his conversation with Dong. Bo said he had not had an answer to this inquiry which he had made on September 23, but he expected an answer early next week. Bo did say that if there was a halt in the bombing "Kissinger should put on his hat and come to Paris immediately." When A and M asked for clarification of the conflicting reports of the DRV position regarding the delay between a bombing halt and talks as reflected in September 26 AFP column and a September 28 Le Monde article, Bo said he hoped that the answer he would get from Hanoi to the question regarding the Dong/M and A July exchange would clarify this issue.

M and Bo arranged to meet again on Wednesday, October 4. Bo repeated the point he had made before: he was available at any time to M and A to talk to them, meet with them, discuss matters with them, and report to Hanoi on their discussions. He said he would advise them as soon as he had received anything from his government.

October 2, 1967 -

On his own initiative M went to see Bo on the afternoon of October 2 and spent an hour and a half with him. M said that he had sought the appointment to pass on information received from K that morning that indicated growing impatience in Washington and the feeling on the part of K's Washington colleagues that they had received almost nothing from Hanoi through the M and A channel. It was decided that a message should be sent to Kissinger, and M stated that he took elaborate notes on which to base the message, which was put together in final form

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by M following the meeting and after a flight to Rome where he discussed the message in detail with A from Rome they mailed it by special delivery air-post to Kissinger in Boston late on October 2. The text of the note received by Kissinger follows:

"The position of the RDVN remains always the same. If the United States really wished to talk, let them stop first without conditions the bombardment of the territory of the RDVN.

"Starting from that position there are several eventualities:

(a) A public declaration by the Government of the United States about the cessation. This declaration could take place either before or after the cessation.

(b) An official declaration but non-public preceding the cessation of the bombardment. This declaration could be communicated by the channel K/A-M (officieusement)-not quite officially, and after this indication it can be transmitted officially by an accredited person.

(c) An end of bombardment without preceding official declaration followed by an official but not public communication of the Government of the United States.

"Eventuality (a) would represent a public declaration replying to that made on the 28th of January by M. Trinh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RDVN, which constitutes a solemn engagement to talk after the unconditional end of bombing. This public declaration would be followed by the transmission of an official text by an accredited person.

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"Eventualities (b) and (c) reflect the propositions of M and A as they result from their understanding of their conversation in July in Hanoi with the Prime Minister. A confirmation is expected soon." (End of message)

As explained by letter from M, point (a) in the above message was written entirely by Bo as well as the preamble. Points (b) and (c) were written on M's suggestion but practically controlled and re-read phrase by phrase by Bo. The point about the non-public declaration was also discussed at length. M and Bo also discussed the word "officieuse" and agreed that it was a term applying to a person mandated by the Government of the United States. According to M, Bo said "on several occasions" that Trinh's February 28 speech constituted a "solemn engagement" by the DRV before world opinion, and a public declaration by the US would be a reply having the same character of commitment.

Bo told M to be sure to report to Bo immediately by phone what Kissinger's reactions to the message were. (Sources: M's October 2 letter to K; Kissinger/Read 10/4, 1 p.m.; telecon.)

October 4, 1967 (p.m.) - At K's request M took the "message" received in the mail by Kissinger to Bo on the afternoon of October 4 to seek confirmation of paragraph (b). Bo read the document and then said that he had still not received word from Hanoi about the accuracy of M and A's understanding of his July talk with Pham Van Dong, so Bo could not comment at this time on the formulation of eventualities (b) and (c).

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Bo did confirm the accuracy of the opening paragraph of the communication, the formulation of eventuality (a) and the paragraph of description of eventuality (a), except Bo said he had not used the words "solemn engagement". M took strong exception with Bo, saying that M's own notes and clear recollection of their October 3 conversation on this point were very clear. M said to Bo that if he (M) was capable of such misunderstanding M's usefulness was at an end. Bo energetically denied that M's utility was at an end and expressed the view that the channel was of definite continuing utility. Bo and M discussed what phrase should be used in place of "solemn engagement" without reaching a firm conclusion. (Source: Kissinger/Read 10/4, 1:00 p.m. telecon)

October 4, 1967 (later p.m.)

- After a full discussion with K, M called Bo to say that K's reaction to the last M/Bo conversation was that Bo's backing away from the phrase "solemn engagement" would be viewed in Washington as a serious substantive change. He also passed on K's view that it would have been better to receive no communication than one in which a key point had been retracted. Bo instructed M to come over and see Bo immediately. (Source: Kissinger/Read 10/4, 4:00 p.m., telecon)

October 4, 1967 (late evening)

- M visited Bo and spent an hour and a half with him at approximately 2230-2400 Paris time. M told Bo of K's views of the serious reactions in Washington to the change of the text which K had received this morning, and he asked Bo to review that text again with him. Again Bo confirmed the accuracy of the opening paragraph of the earlier text and the accuracy of the statement of the first eventuality ("A public declaration by the Government of the United States about the cessation. This declaration could take place either before or after the cessation.") Bo said since he had not heard from Hanoi about the M and A conversation there in July, he could not comment on the other two eventualities which were mentioned in the message K received this

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morning. Bo would not discuss further his renegging on the words "solemn engagement" or the paragraph in which those words appear.

Bo then said that he wanted M to send a message to K which would come as close as possible to eventuality (b) in the communication K received in the mail. M wrote out the text in French and read it through with Bo three times to assure its accuracy. M also did an English translation for Bo.

Message from M to K:

"After having discussed with Bo and after having obtained confirmation of his country's position regarding the eventuality of talks you should know that if the US really wants to talk it is necessary first to stop without conditions the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. I have come to the conclusion, recalling also a previous conversation in the presence of A, that the scenario could be the following: The Government of the United States would send a first message through our channel (K/M-A) announcing unequivocally the unconditional cessation of bombing. Once this has been effectively realized, a second message still through our channel might suggest the opening of the dialogue at a date and site proposed by you. If you and your friends agree on such a scenario, let Bo know this agreement through a written message which I will then transmit to Bo. I do not know if what I say is appropriate you know this better than I."

M said the last sentence of the message was added when Bo told M to end with something "friendly and conciliatory". Bo told M he would stand by to get K's reaction (Source: Kissinger/Read 10/4, 8:30 p.m. telecon)

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TO: SECRET/NODIS/PENNSYLVANIA

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October 8, 1967 - M and A called on Bo at 9:00 a.m. Paris time and spent 1½ hours with him. As in the past Bo was cordial to his visitors throughout the meeting.

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M and A handed the written portion of the message from Kissinger to Bo, which Bo read closely. M and A then read to Bo Kissinger's four "oral points", and Bo wrote them down carefully in his own notes. (M and A did not leave with Bo the "oral" part of the message.) The written message and oral points are as follows:

"M should tell B that K would be authorized to deliver to B in writing the following message whenever B is prepared to meet with him officially or unofficially:

'The United States Government understands the position of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to be as follows: That upon the cessation by the United States of all forms of bombardment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, without expression of condition, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would enter promptly into productive discussions with the United States. The purpose of these discussions would be to resolve the issues between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

'Assuming the correctness of this understanding of the position of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the United States Government is prepared, in accordance with its proposal of August 25, to transmit in advance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam the precise date upon which bombardment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would cease and to suggest a date and a place for the commencement of discussions.'

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"In addition M should convey to B the following oral points from K:

"1. K believes that this understanding is consistent with B's statements of October 4, as reported by M, and with the proposal of the United States Government of August 25.

"2. When B meets with K, K would also be prepared to state the precise date on which the cessation of bombardment would occur and to give the suggestions of the United States with respect to the date and site of the discussions following the cessation of bombardment, and K would be authorized to receive the views of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with respect to these and other modalities.

"3. K noted that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had not commented on observations by the United States Government on August 25 with respect to secrecy of the fact of discussions between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States Government.

"4. K observed that officials of the United States Government had taken note of a reduction of military activities in the vicinity of the demilitarized zone. Undoubtedly, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had noted the absence in recent weeks of aerial bombardment in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi."

Bo told M to tell Kissinger how much Bo appreciated K's personal efforts. Bo then dictated to M and A the following short message of acknowledgment to K:

"M and A have passed the note from K to B. In case B will have a reply to make, he will make it through this channel."

M suggested that Bo add a sentence saying that

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Bo was studying the message but Bo refused.

Bo then said on first reading of the written note from K, it seemed to him that all that appeared after the opening phrase stating US willingness to stop the bombing without conditions did in fact constitute conditions. In particular B characterized as "conditions" the words "prompt", "productive" and "in accordance with the proposal of August 25."

M and A said that the latter phrase really meant that neither side should take advantage of a standdown of bombing while US/DRV discussions were in process, as stated in the August 25 proposal and the President's San Antonio speech. In this regard M and A mentioned specifically that serious hostilities in the DMZ would make productive talks impossible. (M and A noted that Bo made no

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rejoinder to the point about the DMZ in the oral message from K or when they referred to the DMZ at this place in the conversation.)

M asked what Bo's response would be if the words "prompt" and "productive" were taken out. Bo replied that if this happened he would have to refer back to his government before answering.

Bo read the third oral point in K's message as referring back to the portion of the August 25 message which referred to the possibility of partial limitations of actions against the DRV because of the difficulty of keeping discussions secret after bombing stopped altogether. Bo said this was "clearly unacceptable".

Bo also referred to the "usual American double game"----that on September 29 or 30, US planes hit a school in Haiphong, killing 30 children.

M and A underscored to B the new features in the Kissinger message. (Sources: State 49772 and Kissinger/Read 10/8 telecon)

October 9, 1967 - On his own initiative M called on Bo for an hour early on the afternoon of October 9, 1967. M told Bo that K had made three principal points in his phone discussions with M and A following the latter's October 8 meeting with Bo:

(1) The message given to Bo from K on October 8 had been prepared with great care. It represented an important and detailed suggestion about bringing about discussions to resolve US/DRV differences following a cessation of bombing.

(2) As K's Washington colleagues continued to note, there had been a virtual

absence of considered responses from Hanoi to US proposals in this channel to date.

(3) K is holding open the possibility of coming to Paris next weekend (as A and M had urged him to do) but K's decision on making the trip will be influenced by what we get back through this channel during this week.

Bo professed surprise that K or M and A saw anything new in the October 8 message, and M pointed out to Bo that for the first time in the October 8 message the US was offering to provide a specific date for the cessation of bombing.

M pressed Bo for an answer to the inquiry Bo had informed M and A earlier he was sending to Hanoi regarding confirmation of the July conversations with Pham Van Dong regarding the delay between a stopping of the bombing and talks. Bo replied with a French idiom which translates as follows: "Who does not say 'no', agrees".

Bo mentioned unidentified French reports charging new US air attacks on Hanoi and other reports about the concern on the part of the diplomatic community in Hanoi of possible strikes against dikes.

Bo took careful notes of the points made by M and said that if K came to Paris next weekend he (Bo) would be available all day Saturday and Sunday to see M and A. (Source: Kissinger/Read 10/9 telecon)

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October 10-11, 1967

Kissinger received a phone call from "M" who pleaded with "K" to come to Paris this weekend. "K" advised against his returning to Paris at this time in order to continue to maximize pressures on Bo to get something back through the channel. (Kissinger/Read telecon.)

"K" phoned "M" on 11 October to say that he would return to Paris as soon as it becomes clear that Hanoi will not respond to the channel. "K" made three points to "M": (1) that he would not come to Paris this weekend; (2) that the past U.S. messages to Bo are clear and speak for themselves; and (3) Washington has nothing further to say. (Kissinger/Read telecon, 11 October).

October 17, 1967

"M" saw Bo, expressed hope to keep the channel open, and handed "M" the following message:

"Actually the U.S. has been following a policy of escalation of an extremely serious nature. In these conditions the U.S. proposals of peace are double-faced. At a time when the U.S. is pursuing a policy of escalation we cannot receive Kissinger, nor comment on the American proposals transmitted through this channel.

"The position of the Government of the DRV is perfectly clear: it is only when the U.S. has ended without condition the bombardment that discussions can take place."

"M and Bo discussed what 'the conditions' were in the U.S. proposal. M said he thought that the U.S. meant that we wanted a guarantee of serious discussions when we used the word 'productive.' Bo said the DRV thought that by use of the word 'productive' we meant that we wanted to talk about objectives in the South also, since discussions could not be fully productive without this subject being considered.

"Bo asked M if K was coming to Paris this weekend, and when M informed him that K and A would both be in Paris, Bo said that these were 'positive factors' and indicated satisfaction."

(Kissinger/Read Telecon, October 17, 1967).

October 19, 1967

"K" was given guidance for his discussion with "M" and "A". These were viewed as talking points exclusively for use with "M" and "A".

"1. From the time of your opening discussions with M. tonight, you should make it entirely clear to him that Washington considers that the DRV has rejected the forthcoming USG proposals to bring about an end to the bombing and prompt and productive US/DRV discussions with no advantage being taken by the DRV on the ground. You should indicate that we base this conclusion not only on the negative DRV message of Oct. 17 but also upon Hanoi's negative public statements, and, most importantly, upon renewed DRV hostile actions in the vicinity of the DMZ...but it should be your objective from the start to indicate that the patience of your Washington friends is running out and that they feel that Hanoi has been unwilling to respond on any significant point."

"2....

"g. You should emphasize that when the DRV messages in this channel of September 11, September 23 and October 17 are analyzed they show that the DRV has been unwilling at any time (1) to indicate in this channel or otherwise that for its part it will engage in discussions with the US even if the bombing had stopped in accordance with US proposals; or (2) to make any substantive counter proposal on how to proceed to discussions leading to peaceful settlement of differences.

"h. Note that on this date, October 19, a Reuters dispatch from Hong Kong indicates that 'North Vietnam today rejected the American offer for a conditional bombing pause in return for peace talks' as offered by President Johnson on September 29 and repeated by Secretary Rusk at his October 12 press conference...."

"3. In reviewing this channel with M. and A. you are authorized to show to them the text of the September 13 USG message and other messages which you sent during your last visit in Paris which they have not yet seen.

"4. Without requesting M. and A. to see Bo, which we assume they will promptly do to report your mood of discouragement and concern, you should indicate interest in learning

what essential differences Bo (not M. and A.) could find, if any, with the main points in your review of the channel.

"5. If pressed, you are authorized to state that the US proposals do remain open at this time but that you are not empowered to speak about future US views or actions."

(State 56516 to Amembassy Paris, 19 Oct 67).

October 20, 1967

"K" had the following conversations with M. & A. on this date. They added up to a stalemate in the channel.

"M. met me at the airport in a state of advanced euphoria. According to him, the last message from Bo made all the frustrations worthwhile. When I asked him for the cause of his optimism, he called attention to the distinction between escalation and bombing and the change of tense in the last sentence. I quickly disillusioned him. I said that the issue was really quite simple. If Hanoi wanted to negotiate it should be able to find some way of expressing this fact by means other than subtle changes in tense and elliptical references full of double meanings." (Amembassy Paris 5472 to State.)

"A. replied that he did not think it was quite fair to charge Hanoi with failing to respond completely. They had given up the demand for a public declaration that bombing would stop. Their last message was much soberer than the first and said nothing about the withdrawal of American forces from SVN. Nevertheless he thought it urgent that he and M see Bo as soon as possible. I said that the decision was up to him as long as it was clear that the USG had nothing to say. If they met Bo they should understand that four points were of particular concern to Washington: (A) that a bombing stop be followed by prompt negotiations, (B) that these negotiations not be indefinitely delayed, (C) that no advantage would be taken on the ground, (D) the special situation along the DMZ." (Amembassy Paris 5507 to State.)

"...A then wrote down the following phrases and asked me about my reaction: 'The bombardment and other acts of war against the territory of the DRV are the sole obstacle to meaningful negotiations. As soon as the bombing ceases, negotiations can begin.' A. said that he was prepared to put his personal position with Ho behind these phrases. I replied that while I could not speak for the US Government

these phrases would be a big step forward. The DMZ problem would still have to be dealt with. (I had not seen the Burchett interview reported in your 57498 then).

"I left M's house at 2030 and returned to my hotel to await word about the appointment with Bo. At 2130 A. called in great distress that Bo had refused to see them. We agreed to meet at 2230. The following is their report of the conversation. A did the talking and M. listened on the extension and took notes.

"A: We would like to see you urgently.

"Bo: There is nothing new to say. The situation is worsening. There is no reason to talk again.

"A: There is repeat is something new and very important.

"Bo: Repeated word for word the same phrase as before.

"A: There is something very important - perhaps the most important juncture of our exchanges.

"Bo: Repeated word for word the same phrase but then added: What is the important matter.

"A: It has to do with the meaning of the last sentence of your last message and the sequence with which steps have to be taken.

"Bo: Our position is perfectly clear. We stand on the Trinh interview with Burchett of January 28. Bo then repeated word for word the original phrase."

(Amembassy Paris 5545 to State.)

October 20, 1967

The following article by Wilfred Burchett was read in Washington on this date:

"Hanoi, North Vietnam AP - There is no possibility of any talks or even contacts between Hanoi and the U.S. government unless the bombardment and other acts of war against North Vietnam are definitively halted.

"This is the position stated to me during conversations in the last few days with Premier Pham Van Dong, Nguyen Duy Trinh, foreign minister and deputy premier, and other high-ranking government and party leaders.

"Hanoi is in no mood for concessions or bargaining and there is an absolute refusal to offer anything -- except talks -- for a cessation of the bombardment. The word stressed is 'talks,' not negotiations.

"During an informal talk, however, Trinh repeated that his statement to this correspondent last January 28 -- that talks could start if the bombing was halted -- still held good. He said there could be 'meaningful' talks. Whether they would be 'fruitful' or 'productive' depended on the United States.

"The mood of Hanoi is one of toughness and confidence. Although leaders expect Hanoi and Haiphong will probably be destroyed and that the war may last many more years, they feel the worst is behind them, that the daily bombings are absorbed into the country's organism.

"Despite the air assault on Haiphong and intensified attacks on bridges along the rail link with China, traffic continues to move out of Haiphong almost normally over pontoon bridges, and the rail link with China is still functioning, although occasionally halted for a day or two. Many tens of thousands of Chinese are working along this line and elsewhere, keeping rail and road communications open and repairing bridges."

....

"It is repeated at every level that total independence with complete American withdrawal from South Vietnam is the unalterable aim of the Hanoi government and the Liberation Front for South Vietnam. They are prepared to fight 10 or 20 years to achieve this, and life is being reorganized on this basis.

"Hanoi denies that this means export of communism to the South and insists it agrees with the Liberation Front that the South should remain a separate entity with a neutral, non-Socialist regime as advocated in the recently published new political program of the front, having its independent entity, with reunification a very long-range, step by step process."

October 22, 1967

Bunker was informed by Bundy that the PENNSYLVANIA track "came to a negative conclusion on Friday, with opposing party refusing even to accept further contact with intermediaries. We ourselves read this, in conjunction with concurrent publication of Burchett article

from Hanoi (sent to you septel) as clear indication that Hanoi rejects the San Antonio/UN formula and appears to be thoroughly dug in at least for the time being." (State 58070 to Amembassy Saigon.)

October 23, 1967

Ambassador Bohlen reviewed PENNSYLVANIA and made the following suggestion:

"....For example to the communist mind for us to insist that talks must be 'productive' means that we would already have determined how the talks should come out and would amount to the acceptance of an American solution to the talks before they have even begun. Since no one can possibly tell whether the talks would be productive, I would recommend that this and any other qualification be dropped. A simple statement to the effect that as soon as a date and place have been agreed upon for a meeting we would cease all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam should be sufficient."

RUMANIA

ROMANIAN-NORTH VIETNAMESE CONTACTS, OCTOBER 1966 - NOVEMBER 1967

October 22, 1966

Ambassador Goldberg had a series of conversations with Romanian Foreign Minister Manescu in late October. The thrust of Manescu's remarks was that a U.S. bombing cessation was necessary to create a "better climate" for negotiations. Goldberg responded with a new bombing formula to the effect that Hanoi only needed to give "an indication as to what it would do in response to a prior cessation of bombing by the U.S." Goldberg emphasized the importance of the words "indication" and "prior."

USUN New York 1777 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS),
22 October 1966, Refs: USUN's 1764 and Deptel 69440:

"4. Said (reftel) 'We would welcome from Hanoi through your good offices -- if that is their desire, as it is ours -- or, if not, through any other channel of their choosing, an indication as to what North Vietnam would do in response to a prior cessation of bombing by the US.' Goldberg then repeated this statement. Manescu then inquired what Goldberg considered new in this statement compared to past positions. Goldberg said words chosen carefully, that he did not want to assert anything was new but that he presumed most important word is 'indication.' Manescu, stating he needed to understand precise meaning, then inquired 'are you ready, then, to cease bombing in return for an indication?' Goldberg replied that significance was that we not asking for advance agreement but rather a statement through a trusted intermediary as to what North Vietnam would do if US following suggestions by Manescu and others to cease bombing. Manescu remarked 'this means that QUOTE indication UNQUOTE has to have a certain content.' Goldberg replied 'we do not believe we can specify the contents in advance, as that would suggest we imposing conditions. We merely say we willing consider suspending bombing if we receive encouraging indication. Of course, if nothing is going to follow, and the war is continued by North Vietnam as now, US will not suspend bombing.' Manescu then stated: 'Vietnam question very important, very sensitive. Smallest misunderstanding in this regard could have consequences no one desires. War in Vietnam does not cause victims only in Vietnam. No misunderstanding or misplaced words can be allowed. It may not be possible to have another mtg prior to my departure since I am leaving Oct 26 or 27, so this may be final talk. When I said that cessation of bombing can create better climate for solution, I

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did not put that forward as a personal opinion. The answer I am taking to Bucharest is the following. QUOTE On the basis of an indication by North Vietnam, you would consider cessation bombing. In answer my question as to what indication should consist of you said if they go on with war, you would not cease bombing UNQUOTE.' Goldberg clarified this by emphasizing: 'If they go on with the war as they are going on with it now.' He added 'an indication of value to US would have to demonstrate a desire to move toward peaceful settlement. I cannot define it further. I would rather say QUOTE We are willing to take a step toward peace if they are willing to take a step toward peace UNQUOTE. We understand you think cessation bombing by US would create better climate. We want to know what step by them would create better climate. We do not say what this step should be because we feel this would be badly received. Steps can be later discussed.' Manescu observed that when Romanians discuss problem of Vietnam among themselves, they realize US has its honor and prestige to consider in approaching a solution. 'Please take into account that other party has same consideration.' Goldberg replied that we had chosen words to take that into account. He emphasized the word 'prior' stating we were not asking for 'prior' move by Hanoi, such as removing its 19 regiments from South Vietnam prior to US suspension of bombing. We had deliberately indicated US would make 'prior' move if we got indication as to what would follow from North Vietnam after prior suspension of bombing by US. Manescu then concluded by making special appeal for discretion and agreeing that any inquiries about meeting would be met with statement that discussion concerned matters on agenda of UN of common concern to both parties. Goldberg assured Manescu that as far as US concerned he would share contents of discussion only with Secretary and President..."

GOLDBERG

On the same day, Acting Secretary Katzenbach saw Italian Ambassador Fenoaltea at the latter's request. The Ambassador repeated the Romanian message. It should be noted that Katzenbach's explanation of the response which the U.S. desired from Hanoi differed from the Goldberg explanation. Katzenbach said that the U.S. would want to know "in specific terms, publicly or privately, what response would be forthcoming."

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STATE 71460 to AmEmbassy Manila, Manila TOSEC 52,
22 October 1967:

"1. ...Romanian Ambassador had informed Italians that, after careful analysis of Vietnam situation and on basis of their various contacts, Romanian govt had concluded that if US were to suspend bombing of NVN without any time limit or conditions 'appropriate and positive reaction would not be lacking.'....

"2. Acting Secretary said that US position on bombing cessation is as stated by Goldberg. Acting Secretary noted that it was difficult to know who was speaking for Hanoi, if they were actually able to speak for Hanoi, and furthermore what specific response to bombing cessation would be. Acting Secretary expressed some skepticism regarding Romanian approach and suggested that Italian Foreign Minister might push Romanian Ambassador hard on what specific response US bombing suspension likely to be. Acting Secretary pointed out that USG could not turn bombing of NVN on and off lightly and that we had to know in specific terms, publicly or privately, what response would be forthcoming. ..."

KATZENBACH (Drafted by R.H. Miller, FE/VN)

January 23, 1967

Returning by train from the "annual hunt," Ambassador Davis was called in for a late night conversation by the Romanian President, Council of State, Chivu Stoica, and Foreign Minister Manescu. They told Davis that they were now giving him the "signal" which the Americans had long awaited from Hanoi. Davis requested permission to follow up this conversation.

BUCHAREST 892 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS),
23 January 1967:

"5. Discussion then turned to Vietnam and we went over familiar ground with difference this time, which may be important that Manescu (Stoica let Manescu conduct almost all conversation on Vietnam). In context of referring to necessity of cessation bombing North Vietnam in order that peace talks could begin said 'you always say you must have signal as to what would happen. What I tell you is the signal.' I probed as deeply as I could asking specifically whether this was based on recent contact with North Vietnamese. Manescu refused to be drawn out insisting that Romanians had continuous contact with them and that Romanians convinced information or 'signal' he had given me was accurate. He specifically requested I convey

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this information to Washington. At one point during this dialogue Stoica intervened to emphasize that I should note Romania did not seek to blame either party for Vietnam situation; they were interested only in peaceful settlement of problem. Romanians realized US prestige involved but Vietnamese had problem with 'face' too. At another point both Stoica and Manescu responded in negative to my question whether import of what they telling me meant Romania offering to mediate...."

DAVIS

January 25, 1967

State gave Davis authorization to follow up his conversation. Davis' instructions stressed the need for "concrete" reciprocity from Hanoi. Examples of reciprocity were also given: infiltration and reduction of incidents in South Vietnam. Goldberg's UN speech of 22 September was stressed as authoritative.

STATE 125269 to AmEmbassy Bucharest (SECRET-NODIS),
25 January 1967, Ref: Bucharest 892:

"3. However, it must be made clear to the Romanians that the United States could in no event stop the bombing in return for mere agreement to talk since the stopping of our bombing would improve Hanoi's military position and expose our troops to the dangers of increased DRV infiltration and military action. The Secretary's conversation with Manescu on October 5, 1966 emphasized this lack of reciprocity in an exchange of no bombing for talks. Therefore, the reciprocal response required from Hanoi must be concrete and one that gave promise of setting in motion a true process of de-escalation. Actions relating to infiltration appear to be those which would have greatest promise. A significant reduction in the number of Viet Cong attacks and incidents of terror while important and to be considered, would be somewhat less satisfactory since such actions could be resumed easily whereas reduction or stoppage of infiltration automatically reduces Viet Cong capability.

"4. You should also state that the US is not thinking in terms of a written and categorical statement by Hanoi of what it will do if we stop bombing. We appreciate the difficulty Hanoi might find in admitting openly or even in an indirect message to us what they are doing. But, particularly after the failure of last January's bombing pause, we cannot

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accept simple statements that 'something' would happen. We must have some substantial information from a reliable source of Hanoi's position. We would want to have, in advance, a reasonably accurate picture of what Hanoi's meaningful, discernable, responsive action would be.

"5. You should also point out the possibility raised in Ambassador Goldberg's UN speech of September 22 of a stopping of bombing 'prior' to the other side's taking 'timely' responsive action providing we had received assurances, private or otherwise, that the other side will take such action. That speech remains an authoritative statement of the US position.

"6. You should assure the Romanians of the seriousness of the US undertaking, spelled out in the Manila Communique, to withdraw its troops from SVN within six months after the fulfillment of the stated conditions.

"7. You should try to find out whether the 'signal' relates to Hanoi's willingness to begin negotiations if the bombing stops, or whether it relates to responsive reciprocal actions as described above. You should also continue your efforts to determine the extent to which the 'signal' comes from Hanoi as well as the precise details of the 'signal.'

"8. If the Romanians are at all forthcoming, you should ask them to tell Hanoi that the US is prepared at any time to hold direct and discreet talks with Hanoi."

RUSK (Drafted by D.I. Davidson, EA)

January 28, 1967

Davis met with Manescu to emphasize Washington's feelings on reciprocity and to inquire further about the "signal." Manescu admitted that he had no specific knowledge for this signal.

BUCHAREST 913 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 28 January 1967,
Ref: State 125269:

"2. ...I wanted to mention two important points:
(A) United States could in no event stop bombing in return for a mere agreement to talk. Secretary Rusk emphasized in his conversation with the FonMin on October 5 the lack of reciprocity in an exchange of no bombing for talks; (B) the reciprocal response requested from Hanoi must be concrete and one that

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gave promise of setting in motion true process of de-escalation. I then asked if Manescu's statement concerning the 'signal' related only to Hanoi's willingness to talk if bombing stops or whether it related to some responsive reciprocal actions by Hanoi.

"4. I then asked if Manescu could tell me whether his statement to me on train had been based on any new information or recent contact with Hanoi, i.e., something new, say in the period between his October talk with the Secretary and now. Correctly speaking, he replied, no, but it was based on all information and developments which Romanian government had noted."

DAVIS

January 31, 1967

Davis met with Deputy Foreign Minister Macovescu and Secretary General Ceausescu. Ceausescu said he was not clear on what guarantees U.S. wanted. The DRV, he said, "wants [U.S. bombing cessation] as a deliberate decision of U.S. itself." Cessation of bombing, Ceausescu concluded, had to be the first step. The second step, according to Ceausescu, was recognition of the NLF, for "it not possible for DRV to speak on behalf of NLF." In an important addition, Ceausescu said that "leaders of DRV do not wish to have intermediaries but would like to talk directly with you."

BUCHAREST 925 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 31 January 1967,
Ref: Bucharest's 913:

"5. I then went beyond these points made with Manescu on January 28 and in accordance with State 125269 said US not thinking in terms of written and categorical statement by Hanoi but we must have some substantial information from reliable source of Hanoi's position and reasonable accurate picture of what Hanoi's responsive action would be to cessation bombing.

"8. Ceausescu said US referred to wanting guarantees or assurances but he was not clear what guarantees US wanted. DRV does not require cessation of bombing as something forced on US but wants this as deliberate decision of US itself. This would in no way affect prestige of US but on contrary strengthen that prestige. Must also think of Hanoi's prestige. If US looking for honorable solution why not give other side opportunity for honorable way out. In

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summary, Ceausescu concluded, his view was first step must be unconditional cessation of bombing.

"9. Second was problem recognition of NLF. Negotiations with Hanoi not alone sufficient and it not possible for DRV to speak on behalf on NLF. Romania believed political solution must be found...

"11. Ceausescu replied he could not foresee but under present circumstances 'I cannot obtain' assurances which US seeks. He not do so but it was his firm belief that cessation bombing would smooth way to negotiations...At this point he made only remark which I would consider of possibly new significance. Ceausescu said 'insofar as I know, leaders of DRV do not wish to have intermediaries but would like to talk directly with you. Intermediaries tend to get things mixed up and DRV does not like intermediaries.'

"12. ...In accordance with paragraph 8 State Tel 125269 I said US is prepared at any time to hold direct and discreet talks with Hanoi and if Romanian government felt it possible we would appreciate their telling Hanoi this...They would tell Hanoi this..."

DAVIS

February 1, 1967

Davis summarized the current status of the Romanian track.

BUCHAREST 932 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 1 February 1967, Ref: Bucharest's 925:

"2. We neither expected nor received any hint of change in Romanian position, i.e., first step toward peaceful settlement should be unconditional cessation of bombing of North. But it is perhaps noteworthy that his references to recognition and negotiations with NLF and withdrawal of US troops were not as categorical as expressed in Warsaw Pact declaration on Vietnam of last July to which Romania had affixed its signature. Moreover, though declining in any respect to act as intermediary, he did tell us on his own initiative Hanoi preferred to talk directly to US and he assented to convey to Hanoi that US prepared to have direct and discreet talks."

DAVIS

October 25, 1967

On no notice and several weeks after his return from Hanoi, Prime Minister Maurer called in Davis for a Vietnam discussion. Maurer began by recalling his conversations with Secretary Rusk and President Johnson during the time of the extraordinary General Assembly session. He stressed the President's central point -- the South Vietnamese being able to decide their own destiny, i.e., "if they want to adopt communism, let them or vice versa; if they wish to unify with NV, let them or vice versa." The thrust of Maurer's position was contained in a two-point proposal: (1) "US must stop, immediately, unconditionally, and once for all bombing NVN; and (2) "NVN must declare its agreement to start negotiations...." Maurer assumed that "talks would start with armed action in SVN continuing." He added that "military actions can cease only when both sides find satisfactory political solution." Maurer explained that Hanoi's willingness to start negotiations was tied to President Johnson's acceptance of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 as a "real basis for discussions." Davis asked Maurer whether Hanoi accepted the principle of the South Vietnamese deciding their own destiny, and Maurer responded in the affirmative.

Ambassador Davis asked Maurer whether the President's San Antonio speech made any impact on his discussion in Hanoi, and Maurer replied that the speech was available but that the official text was not received by Hanoi at that time. Arguing that NVN did not really have many troops in the South, as the whole US approach to NVN infiltration asserted, Maurer said that the President's no advantage formula is "not based on reality and cannot be followed by NVN." Not fully understanding the formula, Maurer said that Hanoi could not stop supporting whatever troops it had in the South.

Maurer stressed that this was, indeed, a propitious time to get negotiations started, that the Soviet Union and Hanoi were in agreement with the information he had just passed on to Davis. Maurer concluded with a very interesting approach to the problem, saying that the two sides were indeed far apart, but once both sides were at the table, "then the other nations desirous of seeing an end to conflict would try to push two sides together."

BUCHAREST 604 to SecState (SECRET-EXDIS), 25 October, 1967

"3. ... He summarized these views, which he presented to Hanoi, as follows: world wants to see end of VN war, not only public opinion but governments. There was unity in USG on Vietnam question. Witness his separate conversations with President and Secretary Rusk, and he described to North Vietnamese USG position as outlined by them. Romanians believed that under present circumstances prospects were opening up for discussions with possibility discussions leading to

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peaceful solution. Certainly solution would not come immediately after sitting down at negotiating table. But if talks conducted in constructive and realistic fashion with aim to provide Vietnamese people right to decide their own destiny: to take into account dignity and prestige of each state and to create conditions for establishment of normal relations and stability between VN and US, then possibility solution existed....

"4. Maurer then said that after this exposition to Hanoi leaders, they discussed possibilities of starting negotiations. Maurer had explained Romanian position as follows: US must stop immediately, unconditionally, and once for all bombing NVN; NVN must declare its agreement to start negotiations with US on elimination of conflict. Certainly at this time armed action in SVN would not cease. It is one thing to mobilize and demobilize a force such as US has in SVN. US could leave within three days and come back again within three days. But if popular forces in SVN demobilized, then remobilization would require much more time. So talks would start with armed action in SVN continuing. Aim of negotiations would be to put an end to these armed actions. They would cease effectively when discussion would lead to mutually acceptable decisions and details could be discussed further.

"5. At this point, I broke in to ask whether Maurer was saying that initial discussions would center on cessation of military actions to be followed by political discussions.

"6. PrimeMin replied he did not separate these questions then or now. Military actions can cease only when both sides find satisfactory political solution. As long as no guarantees existed that SVN could decide its own destiny, there was no reason for them to put aside weapons. So, Maurer continued, he had requested North Vietnamese friends to declare categorically that, in case bombardment ceased unconditionally and forever, they would be willing to start negotiations because US position as explained to him by President Johnson and Rusk for a solution within framework Geneva Agreements of 1954 provided real basis for discussions.

"7. According to Maurer, Vietnamese replied in a sense which essentially agreed with Romanians, i.e., if bombardment ceased, they would be prepared to enter negotiations. To my question whether Vietnamese would state readiness to negotiate before or after

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bombardment ceased, Maurer replied he did not discuss details: it was possible Vietnamese could make this statement before or after; this was up to them.

"8. Maurer commented that his discussions with North Vietnamese had covered many aspects, but he would emphasize only those of interest for US to know.

"A. They had reviewed capacity of North Vietnamese resistance in case war goes on. From all points of view, military economic, political and social, 'I can tell you NVN can carry on long-term struggle.' This affirmative NVN assertion well known throughout world.

"B. North Vietnamese leaders are aware they cannot and could not try to humiliate US. Discussions should be conducted in such way so that actual recognition of South Vietnamese people to decide on destiny should have agreement and support of US. Besides, North Vietnamese do not look upon settlement of SVN problem as necessarily leading to immediate reunification. It would depend upon what SVN would decide.

"D. In sum, Maurer asserted that he found in NVN 'position much more rational than we found year ago in talks of much same content.' He asserted this position was not determined by diminution NVN military capacity; it was no secret fighting capacity of NVN growing and would continue to grow because of more important aid from socialist countries.

"9. Maurer then said he would like to add some other aspects as he saw them in conjunction his desire to put at disposal of US the most complete information possible to help USG with its judgment. Remarking he was not telling US a secret, he said that to a great extent the hard stand of Hanoi was influenced by the hard line of China. In Romanian view, this Chinese influence in Vietnam at present moment 'from war viewpoint' is diminishing....

"12. At this point, I asked whether NVN had accepted this principle of full liberty SVN people decide own destiny. Maurer replied 'yes -- absolutely yes.' He asserted that from their common discussions there emerged quite clearly acceptance principle SVN should decide own destiny and indeed there emerged possibility of diplomatic relations and special ties between US and SVN state as result of talks ending conflict.

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"13. This shows NVN leaders do not see aim of solution as reunification....

"15. At this point, I asked whether President's San Antonio speech on Vietnam had been available to him during course his discussion in Hanoi. Maurer replied in affirmative, saying it had come over radio during course their discussions last day. I then had interpreter read President's two sentences in regard cessation bombardment NVN as quoted in Secretary Rusk's opening statement his news conference October 12 and asked whether North Vietnamese had reacted to this to PrimeMin. Maurer replied negatively, saying President's statement came by radio on eve his departure and North Vietnamese had no definitive text.

"16. Maurer then said that he wished to make clear his view on a central problem which in his opinion is looked upon in an erroneous way in USA. He said he did not, of course, discuss with North Vietnamese leadership NVN infiltration into SVN. However, he would like convey his own impressions. NVN, of course, denied sending men into SVN. According to Maurer's impressions, this is not quite true though we might be wrong. He knows they're sending to SVN supplies, weapons, munitions, medicine, food and possibly specialists and technicians for training. His impression is that NVN troops even if they are to be found are few. So when President Johnson speaks about obligation not to take advantage of cessation of bombardment, he is referring to things which are not based on reality and cannot be followed by NVN. For example, NVN could not cease to support struggle in SVN because struggle is going on. At any rate, US doing same thing for SVN armed forces. Maurer repeated, according his view, NVN troops as such are few if any and that during cessation of bombing, NVN would continue to supply SVN struggle with food and munitions and indeed some of the aid socialist countries give to NVN. He concluded President Johnson's formulation does not seem satisfactory as it proposes a unilateral condition.

"17. I explained our point of view and the necessity of some indication from Hanoi of reciprocity if we should cease bombardment. I cited our experience when on past occasions we had ceased bombardment NVN. Maurer showed himself well aware of our position, but said he thought more than that could be done. US a great and powerful nation and could do more with

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their possibilities without risking failure. 'Possible military disadvantage would be compensated by political advantage.' In Maurer's opinion, there had never before existed so many favorable conditions for reaching political settlement.

"18. ...Soviets had expressed agreement with Romanian position saying they looked at things in same way, but emphasized decision must remain with Hanoi. Maurer added that moreover he had stressed to Soviet leaders that increase in economic and military aid by socialist countries to NVN is apt to assure greater liberty to Hanoi. According to Romanian judgment, this would make Hanoi less dependent on Chinese.

"19. Maurer summed up by saying his thoughts were very clear: negotiations would start; US would put forward list of proposals unacceptable to NVN and Hanoi would do likewise. Then the other nations desirous of seeing an end to conflict would try to push two sides together. 'This is our hope and our desire.' Friends of both sides would compel each to give a little here and there and both sides would be compelled to listen to them. Thus, in end a solution could be found."

DAVIS

November 1, 1967

State responded with interest and a good many precise and exploratory questions to the Maurer interview. State also indicated that Governor Harriman, on his way back from Pakistan, could pursue the matter should Bucharest desire. The questions State was interested in focused on: (1) whether the bombing stop had to be permanent as well as unconditional; (2) the distinction among contacts, talks and negotiations; and (3) the authorization for the Maurer statements.

State also instructed Ambassador Davis to pursue the President's San Antonio speech and clarify its meaning. Davis was told to say that the speech was "not assuming North Vietnam would cut off its support to its forces in the South while the armed struggle was continuing. At the same time USG would feel if NVN sought to take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation to increase its support of its forces in the South, to attack our forces from north of DMZ or to maintain large-scale visible resupply efforts now impossible..."

STATE 63057 to AmEmbassy Bucharest (SECRET-NODIS),
1 November 1967, Ref: Bucharest 604:

"4. ...For example, as reported reftel, Maurer explained Romanian position as requesting North Vietnam

to declare categorically that in case bombardment ceased unconditionally and forever North Vietnam would be willing to start negotiations for a solution within the framework of the 1954 Geneva Accords. According to Maurer the NVN replied in a sense which essentially agreed with Romania, i.e., if bombardment ceased they would be prepared to enter negotiations. The precise wording of the reply is obviously of great significance to the USG. Did Hanoi ask for cessation of bombardment? Did Hanoi use the words permanently or unconditionally? Did Hanoi differentiate (as it has in the past) among contacts, talks and negotiations and which word did they use to describe the discussions that would take place after the stopping of the bombing? Was it clear that the stopping of bombing would be followed by talks within a short time? What indications were there of the matters that would be taken up at the talks? What was Hanoi's reaction to Maurer's request that it 'categorically' declare its readiness to begin talks after the stopping of the bombing? FYI Usual DRV formulation is that talk 'could' follow bombing halt. End FYI.

"5. Other specific points on which we hope Maurer will be willing to furnish further information include:

"a) Whether the expectation that fighting will continue in South Vietnam concurrently with negotiations is Romanian or North Vietnamese and, if NVN, the reasoning behind their expectation.

"b) Whether NVN agreed with Romania that basic provisions of '54 Geneva Accords provided real basis for discussions. If so, can Maurer provide any specific indication of how North Vietnamese view basic provisions?

"c) What did Hanoi indicate as its conception of conditions under which South Vietnamese people could decide their own destiny?

"d) What 'special ties' between South Vietnam and the US did North Vietnam see as possibly emerging as result of talks ending conflict?

"e) What is the basis for Maurer's distinction between the NVN leaders who use their own brains and those who make judgments under Chinese influence? What underlies his judgment that Chinese influence on North Vietnam 'from war viewpoint' is diminishing? What 'elasticity' in position of USG does Maurer suggest would strengthen independent elements in North Vietnam?

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"f) What further information can Maurer provide as to North Vietnam's views on reunification of Vietnam?

"g) To what extent did North Vietnam leaders authorize Maurer to give report to USG?

"6. You should enquire whether, since Maurer's conversations in Hanoi, Romanians have received any indication of Hanoi's reaction to the President's September 29 San Antonio formulation. In connection with this enquiry you should state that the President has instructed you to inform Maurer of two important points:

"a) There can be no doubt as to the magnitude of NVN infiltration into South Vietnam. Through the capture of hundreds of prisoners, thousands of documents, the interrogation of numerous defectors from the NVN army and other means of intelligence collection the USG can state categorically that there are now in South Vietnam at least 50,000 regular soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army formed into at least 80 battalions. Furthermore, the USG estimates on the basis of reliable evidence that NVN infiltration has averaged approximately 5,000 men per month over the last two years. Finally you should note that continued artillery and other attacks upon US positions in South Vietnam just below the DMZ are being made solely by regular units of the NVN army which are not included in the figures given above.

"b) The President, in making his assumption that the North Vietnamese would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation while discussions proceed, was not assuming North Vietnam would cut off entirely its support to its forces in the South while the armed struggle was continuing. At the same time USG would feel if NVN sought to take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation to increase its support of its forces in the South, to attack our forces from north of DMZ or to mount large-scale visible resupply efforts now impossible it would not be acting in good faith."

RUSK (Drafted by S/AH: Davidson/Isham)

November 2 - 14, 1967

On 2 November in Bucharest 648, Davis said that since Maurer was in Moscow, he had sought an appointment with Macovescu and conveyed contents

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of paragraph 3, State 63057. Macovescu said that he would handle the matter with dispatch. On 4 November in State 64852, State indicated that Governor Harriman could be in Bucharest anytime from November 27 to November 30. On 3 November, in Bucharest 651, Davis requests permission to give Macovescu questions and information contained in State reftel in order to facilitate Maurer's discussions in Moscow. State concurred (State 65068) with this course of action on 4 November. On 6 November, as stated in Bucharest 668, Davis handed the paper to Macovescu. Cabling on 6 November in Bucharest 669, Davis reported that the Romanian government agreed to the Harriman visit at the end of November. On 14 November in Bucharest 712, Davis reported that Maurer had granted him an appointment for the following day.

November 15, 1967

Maurer accompanied by Macovescu had a long and very careful session with Ambassador Davis in which Maurer responded in detail to the questions contained in State 63057. While the cable is more revealing of Romanian thinking on Vietnam than on Hanoi's positions, Maurer's presentation seemed to clarify a number of points. It should be noted, however, that many of these "clarifications" were out of-whack with other signals and readings the USG was taking at the same time. Maurer's key responses were: (1) that the bombing cessation had to be permanent and unconditional before talks can start; (2) that the Romanian objective was to get negotiations started "without interrupting armed actions in SVN"; (3) that a real basis for reaching a solution existed "because essential points of NVN position are based on 1954 Geneva Accords just as essential points President Johnson's position based on Geneva"; (4) that Hanoi made "no differentiation...between contacts, talks and negotiations," and that "only reference was to discussions which would lead to solution of conflict..."; (5) that Hanoi believes there should be a "certain lapse of time" between cessation of bombardment and start of negotiations; (6) that Hanoi "understood necessity of assertion of clear stand in regard to negotiations."

Maurer made clear that Hanoi in no way authorized this report.

BUCHAREST 718 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 15 November 1967, Refs: State 63057 and Bucharest 668:

"1. PrimeMin Maurer received me for two hours this morning Nov 15 accompanied by Acting FonMin Macovescu and same interpreter as at first meeting. Today Maurer had before him paper which contained Romanian translation of questions embodied in paper which I had handed Macovescu on Sunday Nov 5 (Romanian translation was in script which indicates strict security control these conversations by Romanians about which PrimeMin Maurer again made special point several times during ensuing discussion).

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"2. Beginning with para 4 State 63057, Maurer proceeded to read and answer questions seriatim.

"3. To question did Hanoi ask for cessation of bombardment, Maurer answered 'yes and no.' In explanation, he went on to say that both in his talks with Hanoi and on other occasions, Hanoi has said that permanent and unconditional cessation of bombardment is necessary before talks can start. This is also the Romanian viewpoint. He left Vietnam convinced that this was Hanoi's view. Hanoi more or less presented this view in the statement by their FonMin in January 1966 although it was 'more hazily' expressed in this statement and more linked with other things. Maurer continued that objective his discussions was that cessation of bombardment must lead to negotiations without interrupting armed actions in SVN. Obvious there existed possibility of reaching solution because essential points of NVN position are based on 1954 Geneva Accords just as essential points President Johnson's position based on Geneva. Thus there is a basis for discussions. Certainly there may be certain nuances how one side or the other understand provisions of Geneva Accords, but this is why talks should be held to bring to common denominator all aspects.

"4. Maurer said this justified his first assertion that reply was 'yes.' 'But why,' Maurer asked, 'did I also say no.' Because during these discussions there was not one single moment when the people to whom we talked referred to this as their desire -- only a necessity resulting from respect for international norms, for sovereignty of NVN and it was presented as practical possibility to bring matters to discussion.' Maurer concluded this is why his reply was made in such 'circumstantial manner because I want my reply to be clear and definite.'

"5. Did Hanoi use words 'permanently' or 'unconditionally'? Maurer replied, 'yes,' saying French word 'definitivement' had been used for 'permanent.'

"6. Did Hanoi differentiate among contacts, talks and negotiations and which word did they use to describe discussions after stopping of bombing? Maurer replied this was not touched upon in Hanoi. He only touched upon subject of discussions which would lead, if possible, to cessation of war and settlement of conflict in Vietnam. No differentiation was made between these words. Only reference was to discussions which would lead to solution of conflict and

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'I did not notice any nuances' in position NVN. Goal is political settlement based on essential point of Vietnamese and 'as I understand it President Johnson's viewpoint' that right of South Vietnamese people to determine freely and of their own accord their destiny must be recognized.

"7. Was it clear stopping of bombing would be followed by talks in short time? Maurer replied that there was a rather longer discussion on this point because NVN viewpoint was that 'certain lapse of time' should pass between cessation of bombardment and start of discussions. Maurer said, 'we tried to show them that it was not quite necessary for this lapse of time. I should like to say in this regard that my impression is that at end our talks NVN adhered to their original viewpoint, i.e., a certain lapse of time should ensue. We talked quite a lot about this. Perhaps they have certain reasons better understood by them than by us.'

"8. Here Maurer said he would like to interject his own opinion. Should NVN adhere to this position, nevertheless cessation of bombing would constitute a start of friendly actions upon NVN in order to make this interval as short as possible. 'I think there would be many states, not only Romania and not only socialist countries, who would be ready to exert pressure by friendly advice on NVN to follow cessation of bombing by something to shorten interval between this and start of discussion.' Maurer concluded that though this was personal reflection he wished to emphasize that there were many socialist and other countries who could have a certain influence on NVN.

"9. What indications were there of matters that would be taken up at talks? Maurer answered cryptically, 'none. I avoided discussing such subjects and I continue to do so. I am not mandatory of either NVN or USA. In doing what I did, I did not defend either USA (which doesn't need it) or NVN (though I wish to defend it). What made us go to Hanoi? Our friendly relations with Hanoi are quite obvious and our friendship grows greater so long as those events go on and on. So we decided to go to Hanoi to discuss these events as I described to you last time. We agreed we should meet from time to time to consult each other. Moreover, I had advantage of talks with President Johnson and Secretary Rusk. I thought I noted something very positive in these discussions which led me to following absurd conclusion.'

"12. To question what was Hanoi's reaction to Prime Minister's request that it 'categorically' declare its readiness begin talks after stopping of bombing, Maurer replied their discussions on this topic were rather long and they ended with North Vietnamese statement that it seemed to them 'Romanian point of view as presented logical one and they would think about it and how it could be practically implemented.' Maurer said they had not been so punctilious about certain words, but his idea as presented to Hanoi was that it should state clearly that if bombing ceases then talks would start. 'Since it and NVN said QUOTE your stand logical one, UNQUOTE I can only understand that such a statement must be made from NVN own words. I did not think of formulation for such a declaration because of nature of our discussions. Moreover, there was no evidence that NVN had thought of formulation. We discussed certain ideas and result is that NVN understood necessity of assertion of clear stand in regard to negotiations.'

"13. Re questions A through G in paragraph 5 State 63057, Maurer answered as follows:

"A. Both Romanian and NVN point of view is that fighting will continue in SVN concurrently with negotiations. Maurer asserted he did not discuss reasoning for common acceptance this expectation but remarked NVN standpoint might have some different nuances as compared with his own. His own viewpoint is that while easy for US to mobilize or disband great military force in Vietnam on side NVN is completely different. They need more than 48 hours to mobilize or disband their forces. This was no secret. This was not first time 'strategy' of popular war is being discussed. Maurer asserted it was quite logical that military actions would be ended only when discussions created for both sides certainly of mutually acceptable conditions. 'This is reason why I believe military actions and political discussions will continue in parallel.'

"B. Maurer stated that NVN has always asserted that 1954 Geneva Accords provide real basis for negotiations. This is something which constantly appears in statements issued by leaders of NVN and NLF. 'Deliberately we did not discuss any subject which might be the subject of negotiations between the two sides. This is for the Vietnamese and Americans.'

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"C. To question what did Hanoi indicate as its conception of conditions which SVN people could decide their own destiny, Maurer said he did not ask as he did not ask President Johnson about US conceptions. (Comment: Here for first and last time he mentioned the name of NVN Prime Minister Phan Van Dong as a participant in talks.)

"D. As to 'special ties' between SVN and US emerging as result of talks, Maurer said if SVN decided to remain separate state this would mean it could establish not only diplomatic but economic, cultural, etc., ties with many states of its own choosing, including USA.

"E. To question what is basis for Maurer's distinction between NVN leaders who use their own brains and those who make judgments under Chinese influence, Maurer replied simply, 'I am basing myself on 65 years experience of life.' He continued there was complete unity of NVN leadership concerning securing for SVN people right to decide their own destiny but he thought it logical there would be nuances in their way of thinking which would be determined by fact that 'some of them have wider liberty in their thinking while others have a more influenced pattern of thinking.' Here Maurer paused and said he would like to say something very important though he was aware of the risk in imparting to US his view: 'My firm impression is that at present in NVN there are men in the leadership holding the most responsible positions who enjoy great liberty in their thinking.' At this juncture, Maurer with a somewhat wry smile remarked, 'what would Chou En Lai say if he knew what I told you? What would the North Vietnamese leadership say? What would happen to relations between Romania, China, and North Vietnam if they knew? As regards what underlies Maurer's judgment that Chinese influence on NVN 'from war viewpoint' is diminishing, Maurer said he would prefer not to answer; there was great risk for Romanian government policy here and exclaimed 'think what would happen if China or NVN knew I admitted this affirmation. But I said this and I stick to it. Why did I tell you this? Because I think this is a QUOTE commanding UNQUOTE thing on part of he who wishes to obtain certain results. For this reason I said it was logical US should heed this fact; that policy should be flexible enough in order to allow free thinking people to develop willingness to adhere to such ways of thinking.' To question of what 'elasticity' in position of USG does Maurer suggest would

strengthen independent elements NVN, Maurer replied cessation of bombing is cried out everywhere. It would constitute an act of great political wisdom. Maurer said he was not taking liberty of trying give lesson to leaders USA but he thought it was good to say what he had told US frankly and openly. He believed leaders USG have wisdom and insight to see what in his thinking might contribute to peace and interests of US itself.

"F. To question re further information as to NVN views on reunification Vietnam, Maurer simply replied he had nothing to add to what he had already said on this subject.

"G. To what extent did NVN leaders authorize Maurer to give report to USG? Maurer replied, 'absolutely none. It was my own exclusive responsibility.' Maurer then explained at some length why he had done this. Essentially because he believed there exist conditions which can lead to political solution. Existence of conflict, troubles, many important things in which Romania is interested. Especially after New York and Washington discussions, Maurer was confident USG was [garble] solution. He went to Hanoi to explain that a common basis existed for discussions to end hostilities. He was far from thinking in Hanoi that he would inform USG of his discussion there, but in the end and upon further reflection he thought it important to move this unhappy situation toward more reasonable solution. He was not pushed by NVN but acted solely on own initiative. It might be that NVN would reproach him greatly for this but objectively he believes a reasonable solution is near.

"14. Maurer stated that subsequent to his visit in Hanoi Romanian government has not repeat not received any indication of Hanoi's reaction to President's September 29 San Antonio formulation. In answer to my question, he stated flatly that Romanians had not participated in discussions on Vietnam during their recent visit to Moscow."

DAVIS

November 17, 1967

In Bucharest 729, Ambassador Davis cabled his impressions from the Maurer conversation. He believed that Maurer was frank and forthcoming, but that the only new element which Maurer introduced was "his intimation

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that there are divided councils in Hanoi and that Chinese hard stand influence is diminishing." Davis accepted Maurer's statement of basic Romanian policy -- "existence of conflict troubles many important things in which Romania is interested."

November 29, 1967

In Bucharest 802, Davis reported on a discussion with Ceausescu. Ceausescu took a very hard line in this conversation and argued, in effect, that the "DRV and NLF represented South Vietnamese people." He further stated that US was repeating the mistake of great powers in the past by ignoring the opinion of others and carrying out an imperialist policy. As to why Hanoi refused to accept the San Antonio formula, Ceausescu maintained that the formula imposed conditions, and that a formal declaration by the US was in order.

BUCHAREST 802 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 29 November 1967:

"5. Ceausescu referred to my morning conversation with PrimeMin and in particular to request that PrimeMin try and help bring US and Vietnam together. Ceausescu's opinion any such attempt now would not lead to very 'spectacular' results until cessation of bombing. While Ceausescu agreed that reunification of divided countries should not be achieved through force, yet blandly argued that NLF had put forth program for reunification only as long-time and peaceful development with which DRV agreed. He asserted that DRV could not wage war in South which did not have support of people there and suggested US policy based on incomplete information and incorrect assumptions. To my repeated questions why Hanoi had slammed door in face President's generous San Antonio offer and why Hanoi refused to say either publicly or privately what would happen after permanent cessation of bombing. Ceausescu took line we were imposing conditions; that a bombing pause would be only another form of ultimatum; that absence of formal declaration of war raised problems in international law (i.e., bombing) not in favor of US and that if US would only cease bombing permanently and unconditionally other countries would exercise pressure on both sides to bring them to negotiating table. Ceausescu also argued that cessation bombing would be act of political wisdom."

DAVIS

TS - NODISNovember 29, 1967 -- Harriman-Maurer Conversations

Maurer carried on a monologue in which he reviewed the points he had previously made in Bucharest 604 of 25 October. Maurer again focused on only one objective -- getting negotiations started "and nothing more." In this respect, he repeated that world opinion would push the two powers toward a settlement once negotiations began.

Maurer was told a very interesting story about Hanoi's view on getting discussions started. In his first meeting with Pham Van Dong, it was his impression that Hanoi did not wish to enter discussions. During the next day's talk with Dong, Hanoi's position softened. Dong took the position that North Vietnam "should enter discussions while continuing the struggle in the South as long as there is uncertainty as to the right of the SVN people to decide their destiny." Dong, expressing what Maurer considered to be the leadership position in Hanoi, desired a "rather more circumstantial" statement on Hanoi's part. "NVN was to declare that it was ready to start discussions with the US if the US declared and ceased unconditionally and permanently for all time bombardment over NVN DMZ, if US declared that it would 'never resume.'" Even in this event, Hanoi "would allow certain time to pass to enable it to test sincerity of such declaration and action."

Maurer, as before, continued to stress that a very serious part of the problem was China. Although he believed that the Chinese faction in Hanoi was losing some influence, it was still quite strong.

Harriman, in response, said that what was missing from this dialogue was "any indication that Hanoi wants serious negotiations, that Hanoi says that US should stop bombing, but does not even say that they will talk." Harriman gave the impression that all we were waiting for was a message from Hanoi that they would enter "meaningful talks." Harriman also noted Hanoi's demand for a "permanent cessation."

BUCHAREST 803 to SecState (SECRET-NODIS), 29 November, 1967:

"1. After briefly touching on Middle East and Manescu's election and performance at UN, I brought up Vietnam and conveyed the President's gratitude for the complete account Maurer had given Ambassador Davis. I asked Maurer if he had given full attention to the President's San Antonio speech. I told him this was as sweeping a statement as had ever been made during war and showed the President's desire for negotiated peace. I informed him that the interpretation of the 'no advantage' formulation which we had previously given him had been conveyed to Hanoi through channels then open. I told him of our disappointment at Hanoi's having turned down the offer so coldly and asked for his judgment as to why Hanoi had done so.

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"2. Maurer then launched into what was virtually a two-hour monologue out of a three hour discussion. He said he did not know directly why San Antonio offer had been turned down since speech was given on last day of his talk with Pham Van Dong and neither of them had text available.

"3. His talks with the President and the Secretary had convinced him that primary and overriding American goal was to guarantee right of South Vietnamese people to determine their own destiny and only secondarily to fulfill commitment to GVN. Based on this belief, he advised Pham Van Dong that without ceasing military action in South, NVN should enter into discussions with US. He told Dong that the struggle in the South should conclude only when US and NVN both agree on how SVN people can define freely their own destiny. Then as President Johnson told him categorically American troops will go home.

"4. Maurer deliberately focused on only one thing: 'The starting of negotiations and nothing more.' Maurer believes that once discussions begun the nations of the world will throw their influence behind reaching a successful conclusion and would put pressure both on Hanoi and the US that would push them towards solution acceptable to both sides. US and NVN both agree that SVN people should decide their own destiny and discussions could work out different understandings each side may have of this principle.

"5. At the end of the first day of conversations with Pham Van Dong (interrupted once or twice by having to go down to air raid shelter), Maurer concluded from the hazy and contradictory answers he received that Hanoi did not wish to enter discussions. Maurer decided not to pursue the matter further. The next day Maurer suggested that they discuss bilateral relations but after a short morning devoted to bilateral matters Dong brought the talks back to negotiations. Dong then asked Maurer to allow him to present Hanoi's standpoint on the statement Maurer had asked Hanoi to make to the effect that if bombardment would cease, they would enter into discussions with the US.

"6. I questioned his use of 'would,' saying that Hanoi usually uses 'could.' Maurer replied that it is difficult for him to recall precise word but that it didn't matter since they were talking in French, and Dong's French is so poor that no such nuances could be retained.

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"7. Maurer continued that this time Dong's position was very clear and logical. Dong asserted that you (Maurer) are right. The DRV must make such a statement. It should enter discussions while continuing the struggle in the South as long as there is uncertainty as to the right of the SVN people to decide their destiny.

"8. Maurer and Dong then discussed details on how such discussions could begin. Dong thought that Hanoi's statement must be 'rather more circumstantial, that is to mean NVN was to declare that it was ready to start discussions with the US if US declared and ceased unconditionally and permanently for all time bombardment over NVN DMZ if US declared that it would 'never resume,' Hanoi would allow certain time to pass to enable it to test sincerity of such declaration and action. Maurer asked why these conditions, when one condition could be enough -- that the US declare that it ceases unconditionally and for all time and that it would not resume the bombing. Why, Maurer asked, should there be an interval between end of bombing and start of negotiations?

"9. Maurer apparently did not receive an answer to his question. He indicated his personal belief that there exists within the North Vietnamese leadership some with points of view more reserved towards negotiations than one with which Dong finally agreed. He thought such reserve might be the result of the Chinese viewpoint. Maurer told me that the US should exercise flexible judgment meant to strengthen the Vietnamese (as opposed to Chinese) way of thinking.

"10. Maurer emphasized that the important thing was that on the second day Pham Van Dong was expressing the opinion of the North Vietnamese leadership. While Maurer did not see Ho, Maurer believes that at every intermission Ho was told of the discussion. Maurer believes that on the night of the first day, Ho was consulted and that there might even have been a meeting of the North Vietnamese leadership.

"11. Maurer then turned his monologue to what he described as the 'serious angle to problem': China. He said that if the Chinese leadership know of today's discussion, Romanian and Chinese relations 'would be buried.'....

"12. Maurer said that the Chinese reply was 'disconcertingly short.' They said that they agreed partially with Maurer's judgment, that they thought that the US had only two choices, either leaving VN, or expanding the war. If the US extended the war, then it was inevitable that it would expand over China. The Chinese said that 'we are ready for this and are waiting for it.' ... I asked whether he thought the Chinese did want war. Maurer said that he wouldn't say they wanted it, but he wouldn't say they don't want war... Maurer said he knew the evolution of the position of the socialist states on VN. At the beginning they furnished less support to NVN than they do now. Continuation of the situation would bring them closer together.

"14. I told him that what is missing is any indication that Hanoi wants serious negotiations, that Hanoi says that the US should stop bombing, but does not even say that they will talk. They ask not only for unconditional but permanent cessation of bombing. I pointed out that Hanoi is now attacking US forces just below the DMZ, and that since the President will not permit the invasion of NVN, the only way we can slow down their attack is to hit their positions in NVN. I mentioned the Canadian suggestion of the re-establishment of a demilitarized DMZ and Hanoi's rejection. I said there seems to be a strange idea that the bombing of the North is not part of the military action of the war, but is somehow disconnected. Hanoi is asking the US to commit itself not to resume bombing while leaving itself free to do anything it wants. I said it was our impression that Hanoi has no serious intention of entering meaningful talks, for if they had, they would send US a message either through Maurer or other channels. If they sent US a message privately or talked with US privately on conditions necessary prior to beginning of negotiations, or if they told US what they intended to do, this would be another matter. I pointed out that we have no intention of destroying the regime in NVN, but just want to stop it from taking over the South by force. I told him that I would have thought the socialist states would be putting pressure for negotiation on Hanoi, rather than encouraging it by escalating aid, and that I thought the socialist countries should recognize that we are not threatening the regime in NVN, but that we are under treaty obligation to defend SVN against aggression from NVN. I said it was my impression that the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states, but not Peking, want the fighting stopped, and that if

concern exists about major confrontation, we should get together to agree upon ending of conflict.

"15. I said we thought that the San Antonio statement, supplemented by the explanation given Maurer, made clear a possible way to end conflict.

"16. I said I was sure that Maurer agreed that above all the President wanted negotiations for a peaceful settlement, and asked him if he had any doubt about this. He replied that he had none, that if he had any he wouldn't have talked to NVN as he did. I asked him if he thought NVN had a right to enter SVN, and whether he thought West Germany had a right to enter East Germany. I recalled that we fought in Korea because the North entered the South. I said divided countries were unhappy situations, but the US has agreed, and we consider that the socialist countries have agreed, that there will be no unification by force. I told him that perhaps he hoped reunification of Germany would never come, but that while we hope that it will, we do not want it to come through force. I referred to our SEATO commitment undertaken in 1954 during the Eisenhower Administration, and said that the socialist states should realize the seriousness with which we consider our obligation and should try to induce Hanoi to terminate its aggression.

"17. I asked Maurer how he thought the President could contribute to a change in Hanoi's attitude. I said a pause might be considered, though unless Hanoi acted differently than last time, it would be of a short duration and create a more difficult situation. I explained how Hanoi had taken advantage of the Tet pause. I said I hoped the Soviet Union, Romania, and other Eastern European countries would use their influence to get talks started under conditions which would give some hope of a successful conclusion. I said that asking for a permanent cessation without any indication of what might result -- perhaps nothing -- is like asking us to tie our right hand behind our back while fighting continues. It would be different if they said stop bombing for two weeks or a month while we talk, but they ask for a permanent stop. I asked how this could be taken seriously.

"18. Maurer said he 'absolutely agreed' that bombing is a part of general military action, and said he would go further, by saying that from the military point of view not only could bombing be recommended,

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but that the occupation of NVN as a way of destroying the 'backyard' of SVN could be recommended. After NVN was temporarily occupied and the war in the North became a guerrilla one, the same military recommendation could be made concerning China, which would become the new backyard. But, said Maurer, it would not be justified from the political viewpoint. War is nothing but politics conducted by other means. It is waged to bring one side in a political conflict a decisive advantage. This is why political considerations should be dominant and it is why President Johnson does not permit his troops to cross the DMZ. From the military point of view he said the President was wrong in not ordering the crossing of the DMZ, but from the political point of view he is correct, and that is why he [garble] not justified on military grounds.

"19. Maurer admitted that the cessation of bombardment involved risks that talks may not start for some time, that negotiations may start but be unduly prolonged, or that they may not result in a solution. But he thought that with all countries (except possibly China) exerting their influence, there would be a settlement.

"20. I commented that the President is using limited means because of the limited character of our objectives. He did not want to invade NVN because he had no intention of interfering with a socialist regime which he knows socialist states will defend. He ordered attacks on supply routes and military targets but against the advice of the military he has not ordered mining of Haiphong harbor and interference with its shipping. We have not attacked the dikes or engaged in area bombing of population centers as was done in World War II. The President's military advisors say the situation in the south would become substantially more difficult if NVN were permitted to freely move men and supplies South. I appealed to Maurer as a man in a strategic position who has the ear of President Johnson, of the Soviet Union, of China and Hanoi, to advise us as to how we can bring about negotiations. I repeated that it was impossible for the President to stop bombing permanently, without some indication from Hanoi as to what would happen. I said the President had made his proposal in San Antonio, and that he would be willing to receive any other reasonable proposal from Maurer. Maurer replied that the President might put more hope in Romanian action that was justified. Maurer said that he believed there was now a consensus between the US and NVN that people

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of SVN should have right to decide their own destiny. Knowing that, said Maurer, we will see what we can do. 'There is no doubt that we will try to do something about it.'

"21. Maurer did not think it was necessary to involve Soviet Union yet. When that time came, he thought US was in a better position to do so than Romania.

"22. The discussion continued after lunch. I then asked Maurer whether he had any steps in mind now. He replied affirmatively, but said he could not name them yet, that the subject must be thought over and studied. I asked him to keep Ambassador Davis informed."

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PACKERS

PACKERS (RUMANIAN-NVN TRACK): NOVEMBER 1967 - FEBRUARY 1968

It was only after the Harriman-Maurer discussions in Bucharest on November 28, 1967 that the Rumanian track began to receive high level attention and priority in Washington. Maurer had recently returned from North Vietnam in an attempt to convince the DRV, so he said, to make a statement about entering discussions with the U.S. while continuing the struggle in the south. Maurer said that he stressed to Pham Van Dong that self-determination was the essence of the U.S. position.

Harriman explained the San Antonio formula to Maurer. "The North could," Harriman indicated, "continue supplying its forces to the extent it does now but that it must not increase." Harriman expressed the hope that GOR would take appropriate steps with Hanoi to explain this. Maurer said that he would take such steps under consideration. Harriman concluded that what was lacking was any "indication" or "impression" or "message" that Hanoi wanted serious negotiations.

On December 12, 1967, First Deputy Foreign Minister Macovescu and First Secretary of the GOR Embassy Iliescu (hereafter M & I) left Bucharest. They arrived in Hanoi on December 14 and stayed until the 18th. They arrived a few hours after a U.S. strike on the Doumer Bridge, which was restructed on December 17.

Their schedule of meetings was as follows: (a) dinner on Friday, the 15th, with Foreign Minister Trinh, (b) a meeting with Trinh in the morning of December 16, (c) Sunday afternoon meeting with Pham Van Dong, (d) on the morning of the 18th there was a DRV Politburo meeting, (e) another meeting with Trinh after the Politburo session in which Trinh spoke to M & I from a written text. Rumanians left Hanoi on the evening of the 18th.

The Rumanian discussions with the DRV leadership were not revealed to the U.S. until M & I visited Washington on January 5, 1968. (Substance will be treated at that point in the chronology.) In other words, the Trinh statement of the DRV position made on December 29 was already public knowledge.

From December 14 through 18, while M & I were in Hanoi, Ceaucescu and Maurer visited Moscow, informed the Soviets of the Harriman talks and the M & I mission. They reported that the Soviets wish success to the GOR mission in Hanoi.

On December 19, M & I visited Peking and saw Deputy Foreign Minister Gua. Gua said "it is the Vietnamese people who will have to decide."

On December 24, M & I returned to Bucharest.

On December 26, Ambassador Bogdan advised that Ceaucescu and Maurer had a message and wanted to send an emissary to the U.S. Harriman advised Bogdan that he would be glad to receive the envoy.

On December 29, Trinh spoke at a Mongolian reception. The substance of his talk was broadcast by Hanoi VNA in English on January 1. He stated, in part:

"The stand of the Vietnamese people is quite clear. That is the four-point stand of the DRV Government and the political program of the NFLSV. That is the basis for the settlement of the Vietnam question.

"The U.S. Government has unceasingly claimed that it wants to talk with Hanoi but has received no response. If the U.S. Government truly wants to talk, it must, as was made clear in our statement on 28 January 1967, first of all stop unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. After the United States has ended unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, the DRV will hold talks with the United States on questions concerned."

On December 29, Ambassador Bogdan informed Harriman that M would be the special envoy.

On January 3, 1968, the U.S. prohibited bombing within five miles of the center of Hanoi (JCS 6402 DTG 032158Z) until further notice (JCS 6700 DTG 062148Z).

On January 5, Ambassador Harriman met with Macovescu, Bogdan, Iliescu, and Celack (Third Secretary of the Embassy).

M & I said that they had presented USG views as expressed by Harriman. These views were that the U.S. is ready to cease bombing (1) if, within a reasonable period of time, the DRV would come to serious and productive discussions/negotiations, and (2) if the DRV would not take advantage of the bombing halt to increase its infiltration. The GOR representatives said that they stressed to the DRV that they should make a "gesture" or "sign" publicly or privately that Hanoi wanted negotiations. M & I said that they repeatedly stressed that the U.S. goal for South Vietnam was self-determination.

Throughout their stay, the North Vietnamese stressed to M & I that the military situation was good for them. Hanoi leadership also repeated that they did not trust U.S. peace feelers, that the Harriman exposition was nothing new, that it was essentially as conditional as the San Antonio speech.

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M & I said that they were quite pessimistic about the success of their mission until after the Politburo meeting on the morning of December 18th. It was only after that meeting that Trinh came to them with what they believed would be a responsive message. Trinh spoke from a prepared Vietnamese text and M & I, when speaking to Harriman, translated the document into French. M explained that Trinh began in even harsher terms than Pham Van Dong had the previous day. M said that he was "not going to give a presentation of all [Trinh's] exposition, but as I promised Trinh, I shall at least give you spirit of his document."

"It is clear that it is equally as difficult for the U.S. to put an end to the war as to broaden it. The U.S. is bound to strive to prevent the situation from getting worse and to avoid serious defeats until after the November election.

"The U.S.'s aggressive designs against Viet-Nam remain unchanged.

"The U.S. declares that it will continue its aggressive war in Vietnam. In the San Antonio speech and in other statements by the President and Rusk it is emphasized that the U.S. will stay in Vietnam in the interest of its own security and that it will abide by its commitment and that it will continue the fight. The U.S. perseveres in its double faced policy of stepping up the war while the U.S. administration feels compelled to take peaceful action to deceive and to appease public opinion.

"It is now clear that conditions are not yet ripe for peaceful settlement because the U.S. is unwilling to do so. The U.S. cannot intimidate by force the Vietnamese people nor deceive them by false maneuvers of peace. As long as the U.S. continues this aggression the Vietnamese people will fight to final victory. The position of the DRV is clear:

'The basis for settlement of the Vietnamese issue is provided by the four points of April 8, 1965; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently issued its January 28, 1967 statement. This is our position of principles on which no concession is possible.'

"Macovescu read the material in quotes twice from the paper in front of him.

"Harriman: No concession on the four points or on the January statement?

"Macovescu: No concession possible. I would ask you to note this for comment for he also gave me oral comments.

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"He said the Harriman proposal contains nothing new. Essentially the U.S. continues to claim reciprocity and will not stop until specific conditions are fulfilled. The Vietnamese people will not hold discussions under pressures or the menace of bombs. So far I thought this was repetition of their position. But from here on there is something which interested me and precisely because it was near the end I paid greater attention to it.

"Foreign Minister Trinh continued reading:

'We are not against discussions but any discussions should take place according to principle. As soon as discussion engaged in, our attitude will be serious and responsible but it depends on attitude of the U.S. whether such discussions are fruitful.'

"Material in quotation marks was read slowly and carefully by Macovescu.

"Here is the answer to the question that you asked Mr. Harriman. From this point on there is a passage which in the text is in quotation marks.

'We affirm the following. If the USG really wants discussions with the Government of the DRV it should first unconditionally cease bombing and any other act of war against the DRV. After the unconditional cessation of all bombing and of any other U.S. act of war against the DRV and at the end of an appropriate period of time the government of the DRV will enter into serious discussions with the USG.'

"While he was reading this paragraph I stopped him and told him comrade Minister when I mentioned cessation I said final and unconditional. Trinh looked at me and reread the sentence. I said I mentioned 'final and unconditional cessation.' He reread the sentence again. I interrupted for the third time. May I understand you are no longer speaking of final cessation. His answer was that publicly we may continue to mention it but with a view to negotiations. What I have said is our position.

"I asked him whether the Government of Romania is authorized to pass this communication to the USG. He said yes. He repeated it but he said to retain spirit of the message."

Harriman said that the Trinh public statement was much the same as the M & I message, but that the M & I statement placed more emphasis on the acceptance of the four points as a basis of negotiations. M said that he did not establish any connection between his visit to Washington, unknown to Hanoi, and the Trinh public statement. Harriman argued that

"there must be some connection." M responded that he did not believe there was a contradiction between the two messages:

"In the public statement it says the basis for negotiations is the four points, but in private conversation they say we will come with this basis but the U.S. side, we expect, will come with its own point of view. They especially said this."

Harriman then questioned whether it was the DRV view that discussions will be fruitful only if we accept their four points. M responded:

"That is not the impression I gained from my discussions. They will come with their claims but would have to negotiate on what the U.S. puts forth. They said this specifically."

With respect to the timing of discussions, M said that Trinh stated there could be no contacts "as long as U.S. acts of war continue, ... but as soon as bombing and other acts of aggression against North Vietnamese cease, we are prepared to receive anybody...." Trinh added: "We shall consider these contacts as normal diplomatic activities. The American representative will be received by our diplomats at their suggestion."

Harriman questioned further on the timing, specifically as to the meaning of "after a suitable length of time." Here, M retreated to the DRV text--"the appropriate and necessary period of time." M explained this as a period in which

"they will try to test (I don't know by what means) the sincerity of your intentions--your wish to have discussions. I could not deduce the period, but I do not think it will be too long. If an understanding is reached that you stop, at a certain established period, discussions, not negotiations, will take place."

Harriman asked if the NLF had been mentioned. M responded: "Once, by Dong...in connection with the program of the NLF and on their points which they would like to discuss at negotiations." M reported that there was no mention of involving the NLF in discussions but that this may have been a slip.

Harriman specifically queried on the DRV reaction to the San Antonio speech. M said that they would not give any assurances on 'no advantage' because "they believe it is a condition and consequently cannot be discussed." M and Harriman then argued about whether 'no advantage' was conditional. Harriman said: "The important thing is that they are on notice, that taking advantage could have serious consequences." Harriman repeated that there was a danger of talks breaking down "for physical reasons--because of difficulty in negotiations." Harriman said that "this is not a condition but a notice to Hanoi."

Harriman asked if the North Vietnamese thoroughly understood the implications of San Antonio. M said that he could not draw conclusions, but

"They have a political attitude towards it--no preconditions--but if you met them and discussed it at your first contact you may well find a solution which will not break down the military situation. We must not forget that through the other door the U.S. is pouring in men and supplies. Furthermore, you only stop in the North and fighting and bombing in the South will go on."

In response to a question by Daniel Davidson, Special Assistant to Harriman, M said that the period after the bombing and before talks is the same as the period after the bombing and before contacts.

M, again responding to Davidson, said that it was only his impression that military matters could be discussed at the first contacts, that Hanoi had said nothing to him on this matter.

M concluded that: "We Rumanians believe they have done it--given you the sign you wanted."

On January 6, there was another meeting by the Rumanians and Governor Harriman, with Secretary Rusk participating as well. This discussion was very general and added only a few points to the substance of the preceding day.

Secretary Rusk said that "some of [Hanoi's leadership] think of talks as a means of stopping the bombing while the rest of the war goes on without limitation. This is not acceptable." He added that: "The problem on our side is that the principle of reciprocity is rather important to us."

In a response to a Rusk question, M said that Hanoi would favor "private discussions." M said that he had not discussed the secrecy issue in Hanoi. M added, however, that:

"There is no doubt that at the present stage, the Vietnamese side wants [contacts] kept confidential. But after the cessation of bombing a way in which future procedures are directed towards starting 'conversations proper' will depend on your discussions through a third party."

M then read from a document:

"As long as the US acts of war go on we cannot have any contacts with them. As soon as they cease the bombings and discontinue the acts of aggression we shall be prepared to receive any person, even a representative of the United States, who may wish to make known to us the American point of view or to get informed on our viewpoint. We shall regard these future contacts as normal diplomatic activity. The American representatives will be received by our representatives at the former's suggestion."

"Secretary Rusk and Governor Harriman met with Messrs Macovesu, Iliescu and Bodgan from 12:45 p.m. - 1:15 p.m., and the Secretary gave Macovesu two papers containing the 7 written parts and 4 oral points set forth below. At 5:15-7:15 p.m. Governor Harriman and Mr. Bundy met with the Romanians to explain further our drafts and to give them our French translation of our written points. Harriman told Macovesu we left it up to the latter's judgment as to what part and how to convey our points in Hanoi.

"U.S. Written Points

"1. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam has communicated to the United States Government this statement of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam position:

'If the United States Government really wants discussions with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam it should first unconditionally cease bombing and any other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the unconditional cessation of all bombing and of any other United States act of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and at the end of an appropriate period of time the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will enter into serious discussions with the United States Government.'

The United States Government welcomes this statement.

"2. We understand that Foreign Minister Trinh has stated that 'as soon as' all bombing ceases, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam 'shall be prepared to receive' a United States representative. The United States Government will be prepared to have its representative have contacts with a representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as soon as all bombing ceases. (The United States Government believes that the first contacts should take place almost immediately, perhaps one or two days, after the cessation of bombing.) The purpose of these contacts, which might be in Vientiane, Rangoon, Bucharest, or some other suitable third-country location, would be to fix the time and place of the serious discussions referred to by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Arrangement of the necessary modalities for the serious discussions should take no more than a few days.

"3. The United States Government takes note of the fact that a cessation of aerial and naval bombardment is easily verifiable. In fact, the act of cessation would be observed immediately internationally and become a matter of public knowledge and speculation. In these circumstances, the United States Government believes that

the 'serious discussions' referred to by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam should commence immediately on the conclusion of the arrangements through the contacts.

"4. Obviously it will be important at an appropriate time, in connection with the serious discussions, to accommodate the interests of all parties directly concerned with the peace of Southeast Asia. One such means is that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States Government might suggest to the two co-chairmen, and possibly to the three International Control Commission members, that they be available at the site chosen for the serious discussions in order to talk to all parties interested in the peace of Southeast Asia. This procedure could avoid the problems of a formal conference.

"5. The United States Government understands through representatives of the Romanian Government that the serious discussions contemplated by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would be without limitation as to the matters to be raised by either side. The attitude of the United States Government toward peace in Southeast Asia continues to be reflected in the 14 points and in the Manila Communique.

"6. The United States Government draws attention to the statement of President Johnson in San Antonio on September 29 in which he said:

'The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.'

The aide memoire handed to the Romanian Government in November, 1967, which we understand was communicated to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in mid-December, explained this statement in the following language:

'The President, in making his assumption that the North Vietnamese would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation while discussions proceed, was not assuming North Viet-Nam would cut off entirely its support of its forces in the South while the armed struggle was continuing; at the same time the United States Government would feel if North Vietnam sought to take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation to increase its support of its forces in the South, to attack our forces from north of the Demilitarized Zone or to mount large-scale visible resupply efforts, now impossible, it would not be acting in good faith.'

The United States Government wishes to confirm to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that this statement remains the position of the United States Government.

"7. The United States Government would inform the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in advance of the exact date of the cessation of aerial and naval bombardment in order to enable the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to have its representative prepared to meet the representative of the United States Government.

"U.S. ORAL POINTS

"(a) The Romanian representative should be thanked for his efforts and told that we are confident that he has fully and faithfully reported the positions of both sides in these matters. We are grateful for this action and have confidence that he will continue to do so.

"(b) He should understand that the first sentence of paragraph 4 in the written message is intended to refer to the importance of the South Vietnamese Government and other interested parties being present at the site of the discussions in order to play an appropriate role.

"(c) The United States Government wishes to avoid any misunderstanding also with respect to any allegations which may be made concerning specific military actions by the United States Government against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam prior to cessation. In deference to the serious intent and sincere objectives of the mission of the Romanian Government, the United States Government will refrain for a limited period of time from bombing within five miles of the center of Hanoi or of Haiphong. This information is for the Romanian Government only. The United States Government states this as a fact and not as a commitment as to the future, but the United States Government would not wish the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam to be informed of this fact for fear that, as in the past, it could be misinterpreted by them.

"(d) The United States Government awaits with interest the report of the Romanians, after consulting Hanoi, on the foregoing written and oral points.

"During the course of the January 11, 12:15 and 5:15 discussions, clarification of the USG position was given as indicated under the several headings below:

"(1) US Cessation

"(a) Harriman stated that we 'pointed out' or 'took note'

that cessation would be public knowledge, but said we hadn't thought about a public announcement and opined that we would simply stop.

"(b) Bundy stated personally that we would probably confirm an answer to questions that cessation was a high-level decision without amplification and Harriman agreed, adding that we would not mention a time limit or condition it.

"(2) First Contacts

"(a) Timing - Harriman said 'should take place' is merely our interpretation of 'as soon as' and not an ultimatum ('Des que' was actual French preposition used by DRV). WAH underscored verb 'believes' as opposed to 'insists' in same sentence 'one or two days after cessation'.

'The maximum GOR can get us is that they will meet us in 2 or 5 days 'after cessation' - the more you can get of this the better but we are not asking for those precise answers.'

"(b) Duration - Harriman noted US opinion that modalities to be agreed on in contacts should not drag on more than a few days, but invited DRV's different opinion on duration.

"(3) 'Serious Discussions'

"(a) Rusk noted it will be difficult to conduct them secretly, and if they are public many governments and parties will feel entitled to participate. 'We could lose months'. Accordingly we suggest 'one such means' in the Para 4 that the Co-Chairman and 3 ICC members send representatives to the location and 'any one else' could be there to discuss with the 2 or the 5 or with each other. Peking could be present. This procedure could avoid the problem of a formal conference. We don't anticipate a big meeting with 8, 12 or 15 present but the 2 or 5 could put their heads together on the possibility of agreement.

"(b) Harriman assumed that 'all parties directly concerned with peace in SEA' would include any socialist state aiding DRV and SVN and the TCC's on our side. He noted, since the DRV third point covered internal SVN affairs, that the 'US won't talk about anything specifically in SVN without a GVN rep being present.'

GVN should have an opportunity to come into talks 'at an early point'. 'We don't want to exclude anyone who has a legitimate right to be present at an appropriate time.' Our para four proposal is 'complicated' and 'quite open to their suggestions.'

- "(c) NLF - Harriman noted validity of our 13th point that the VC 'would have no difficulty being represented and having their views presented.'
- "(d) Open Agenda - Bundy said 'we would take very seriously' DRV confirmation of the wide open agenda of 'serious discussions.' Bundy and Harriman confirmed our view that both sides could discuss their bases for peace; ours would be reflected in the 14 pts and Paras 25-29 of the Manila communique. We feel both sides should be prepared to negotiate.

"(4) Bilateral US/DRV Discussions

- "(a) Rusk noted that at the location of the Co-Chairman and/or ICC members meeting 'any one else could... discuss...with each other.'
- "(b) Rusk said if talks became public, as he thought they would 'both sides will have a serious time' holding discussions (beyond contacts) without other parties 'associated'. But 'this does not mean there cannot still be bilaterals, but we cannot have a situation where everyone else is excluded.' If Hanoi makes that suggestion 'we will look at it but it will be difficult.'
- "(c) Harriman: 'There are many things that we can talk to NVN about that relate to us and NVN.'

"(5) 'No advantage'

- "(a) Macovescu said the spirit of our November 'promemoria' had been given to Hanoi and he would repeat it there.'
- "(b) Harriman said the President used the 'no advantage' assumption to inform Hanoi what he would be assuming if he stopped bombing. The US does not ask advance DRV agreement.

"(c) Harriman said we could negotiate under better conditions if the level of hostilities were reduced. The DMZ would be the easiest place to deescalate. The GOR may have other suggestions.

"(d) Amb. Bogdan said the Romanians understood 'no advantage' is 'not a condition but a warning,' and Harriman said the US was not requiring Hanoi to agree to any conditions in advance.

"(6) Miscellaneous

"(a) The GOR intends first to inform Hanoi, and then if they approve, to convey the gist of the discussions with us to Moscow and Peking. We would be happy to have the Soviets informed.

"(b) Macovesu said he left Washington, as he had left Hanoi, with the feeling that 'this is a new step towards a peaceful settlement.'"

On January 12, Ambassador Bunker was given a summary of PACKERS (State 98130).

On January 15, President Johnson sent a letter of appreciation for the Rumanian efforts to President Ceaucescu (State 98490).

On January 18, Macovescu, Iliescu and Celack left Bucharest for Hanoi via Moscow and Peking. Ambassador Bogdan informed Harriman of this trip on the 18th.

Also on January 18, Ambassador Harriman informed Bogdan that the President's January 17 State of the Union remarks "confirmed the San Antonio formula." Harriman said: "The U.S. has not changed its position."

On January 20, Bunker gave Thieu a general summation of U.S. probes of the December 29 Trinh statement--without revealing the PACKERS channel (Saigon 16501). Bunker did so in accord with his request (Saigon 16081) and cable of instruction (State 99643). Bunker was permitted to tell Thieu the explanation of 'no advantage' as given by Governor Harriman to the Rumanians. In his talk with Thieu he made "a distinction between the contacts to explore Hanoi's position and possibly to set up any 'serious discussions' and the discussions themselves." He assured Thieu that "any further decision will be a matter of full consultation with you and with our Manila allies." Thieu expressed no reservations about the U.S. approach. Thieu expressed the view that the Trinh statement was good propaganda by Hanoi. Bunker had urged permission to speak to Thieu on the basis of Bui Diem's "implication that U.S.-Hanoi contacts to bring about a negotiation would be tolerable to the GVN, provided Thieu was kept informed of them

and given an opportunity to express his views before a rapidly moving situation becomes a fait accompli."

On January 22, Macovescu et al arrived in Hanoi. The U.S. was not informed of the results of his visit until February 12.

On February 12, Ambassador Harriman was informed of the results of the GOR visit to Hanoi by Ambassador Bogdan. Bogdan reported that Macovescu had been in Hanoi from January 22nd to the 28th, and Macovescu talked mainly with Dong and Trinh.

The GDRV asserted to Macovescu that "it did not consider the proposals of the USG an answer to the Trinh declaration of 29 December, and that San Antonio conditions remain."

At this point, Bogdan dictated the following passage:

"The position of the Vietnamese people and of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is very clear. There are the four points of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the political program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. This is the basis for the solution (reglementation) of the Vietnamese problem. We stated clearly: if in actuality the United States Government desires conversations, as it says it does, it must in the first place stop unconditionally the bombardment and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After a convenient period of time, following the unconditional cessation of bombardment and all other American acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will start conversations with the United States of America on the questions of interest to the two parties The Ambassador understands this to mean the interest of either side, not a common interest. The convenient period of time is the time necessary to prove that the United States has really and without conditions stopped bombardment and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the unconditional cessation of the bombardment and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam a meeting will take place between the two sides to reach an agreement on the place, the level, and the contents of the conversation. The right position and the correct attitude of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have been warmly welcomed and supported by the peoples of the world. The attitude of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is serious. If the conversations are leading or not to results, this depends on the United States."

Bogdan added that the GOR was ready to transmit communications to either side and that when Ambassador Davis returns to Bucharest he could obtain further details from M. Bogdan said that M was in Peking on January 31 and informed the Chinese Government of the various positions.

The Chinese repeated that "it was up to North Vietnam." He said that Moscow would soon be fully informed as well.

Governor Harriman took note of the continued threat to U.S. forces in the DMZ area and said that "his unofficial reaction is that Hanoi does not wish talks...."

On February 24, Ambassador Davis spoke to M (State 117922). M told D. is that after his discussions in Washington, Hanoi quickly responded to his travel request to Hanoi. M noted that when he reached Hanoi there was no U.S. bombing, but in accord with U.S. wishes he said nothing about this U.S. decision to the North Vietnamese.

M conveyed to Trinh the GOR belief that "minimum of conditions now created to take stride forward on road to negotiations."

KILLY

ITALION - NORTH VIETNAMESE TRACK, FEBRUARY-MARCH, 1968

The following account of Italian-North Vietnamese contacts was given on February 24, 1968 (ROME 4429).

January or February, 1967

Fanfani stated that he had been asked through a channel which he did not reveal whether he was prepared to receive an unidentified North Vietnamese. Secretary Rusk was informed and suggested that Fanfani first find out who the contact was and what authority he would have. Fanfani asked these questions, they were never answered, and he heard nothing further from this contact.

July or August 1967

Fanfani was asked by a different contact (also unspecified) whether he would be interested in sending d'Orlandi to get in touch with the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Prague. The unspecified contact was aware of the January contact. Fanfani said that there was no doubt that the initiative for the Prague meeting came from Hanoi.

September 5, 1967 - First Meeting

On instructions from Fanfani, D'Orlandi flew to Prague and met with North Vietnamese Ambassador Su. D'Orlandi asked Su why he had sought this meeting, but did not receive an answer. Su did say that he was aware of d'Orlandi's role in MARI GOLD. D'Orlandi advised Su that Hanoi should move rapidly to seize the opportunity of a trip Fanfani would make to Washington in mid-September and authorize Fanfani to transmit something new. D'Orlandi specifically requested that Hanoi set a period after the stopping of the bombing for the first contact with the U.S. D'Orlandi told Su that Fanfani would carry weight in Washington if he could present a time and place for the meeting between the DRV and the U.S. Su replied that he would be unable to obtain instructions from Hanoi prior to the Fanfani trip to Washington.

Early November, 1967 - Second Meeting

After a delay of more than 50 days, d'Orlandi returned to Prague and said to Su that he was entitled to a reply to his suggestions of September. Su said that the matter was being considered in Hanoi, but that he had not received a reply. D'Orlandi again stressed the importance of the need for Hanoi to set a time and place for negotiations after the cessation of U.S. bombing. Su said everytime Hanoi produced something in favor of negotiations the Americans backed out and showed bad faith. D'Orlandi stressed to Su a

favorite theme of some substantive agreements prior to the first face-to-face contacts between Hanoi and Washington. He said the Italians would be glad to transmit such issues between the two parties. Su said that he might soon be going back to Hanoi.

Su stated that if d'Orlandi's trips to Prague became known the North Vietnamese would deny everything. Su also asked d'Orlandi not to get in touch with the DRV Prague Embassy unless it was most urgent because he would be leaving for Hanoi within a week. Su would contact d'Orlandi the moment he returned to Prague.

January, 1968 - Third Meeting

D'Orlandi flew to Prague. Su said there was general approval in Hanoi of the idea of starting negotiations. Su said that he had been authorized to talk to Fanfani. It was arranged that Su would come to Rome on February 4.

February 17, 1968

State sent out to Rome some follow-up comments of Fanfani's which had been transmitted to Secretary Rusk by Ortona on February 16. There were two main points: (a) That the Italians do not have the "impression" that San Antonio has been substantially rejected. They do believe, however, that although reciprocity is unacceptable to Hanoi, Hanoi might consider some "concession"; and (b) That a direct U.S.-NVN meeting was unlikely but that Hanoi may be interested in preliminary soundings and direct channel, possibly the Italians.

The cable also noted the Washington Post story, date of February 16, dateline Rome, which went into considerable detail on Italian-North Vietnamese conversations.

State also indicated reserve with respect to this track.

The Killy slug began with this cable.

(State 117384)

Daniel Davidson, Special Assistant to Governor Harriman, was dispatched to Rome to arrive on February 20. (State 117385)

February 18, 1968

D'Orlandi was told that Su could receive him in Prague on the 21st. D'Orlandi told Fanfani that he was expected in Hanoi on the 21st and Fanfani expected him to defer his trip. Su had been expecting d'Orlandi for several days, and d'Orlandi had not given him any reason for the delay.

February 23, 1968

Davidson and Meloy met with d'Orlandi and Fanfani. Fanfani, in translating his notes from Italian to English, repeatedly made a more positive translation than was warranted by the Italian.

"Major points in his notes were:

"(A) Su (NVN Ambassador to Prague) described NLF as the representative of a great number of Southerners.

"(B) Su flatly rejected reciprocity but suggested that when contacts had been established after cessation of bombing, North Vietnamese could certainly take favorable measures and might also suggest some act of good will to the NLF. Fanfani asked if among those measures Hanoi was thinking of humanitarian measures such as liberation of PWs and received an affirmative reply. Fanfani suggested, as example, that it would be useful in order to improve atmosphere for Hanoi either before or on first day of the meetings to free PWs against previously agreed upon concessions on part of United States. Su replied that he agreed but was not authorized to answer. He did say that much will depend on attitude of US representatives at first encounter.

"(C) It is very apparent from notes that each time MARIGOLD ten points were mentioned, they were dragged in from deep left field by Fanfani. For example, initial reference to them came when Fanfani remarked that freedom of South Viet-Nam and non-intervention which North Vietnamese said should be part of settlement appeared already in the ten points 'of Tripartite Agreement of Saigon.' Fanfani asked whether Su meant to refer to those understandings and Su replied that the ten points had been bypassed by events but perhaps they can be referred to in broad outline. The only other reference to MARIGOLD occurred when Fanfani recalled that the 'three negotiators' to get around problem of reciprocity accepted Phase A-Phase B formula. Su replied that he was not authorized to discuss Tripartite contacts or current validity of the ten points but that he would submit the question to Hanoi.

"(D) Fanfani pressed Su extremely hard for the specific number of days (e.g. two days) between cessation of bombing and initiation of a dialogue between Hanoi and US. He said that it would certainly ease his task of assuring Washington that Hanoi really wanted to establish contact with it if he was given an answer. Su said he understood perfectly, would submit the question to Hanoi and might be in position to give an answer to d'Orlandi at his next meeting. Fanfani insisted on at least being assured that a specific period already existed in Hanoi's mind. Su spoke very slowly in reply and d'Orlandi is certain that following is verbatim record. 'We agree for Foreign Minister Fanfani to let it be known in communications he will make to the Government of the United States that in

case of unconditional cessation of the bombing, the delay of "X" days already exists for a first meeting of representatives of the two parties, Hanoi and Washington, with a view to establish contacts for serious conversation on questions concerning the two parties.'

"(E) Fanfani told North Vietnamese that they had not been forthcoming enough to put Washington under an obligation to reply. Fanfani asked to be put in a position to tell Washington something about the date, place, and subject of the meeting. Su was unresponsive.

"(F) Fanfani asked whether Hanoi was attempting contacts through other channels or had already established a direct channel to Washington. Su excluded this possibility. Fanfani commented that he was astonished at flat statement that Hanoi had no contacts with Washington. Su again gave categorical denial. He said there were no direct contacts and although Hanoi often received visitors they were not qualified nor in the least authorized to talk on behalf of the US Government.

"(G) North Vietnamese had suggested communique but did not push idea very hard. Their apparent motive was to demonstrate that they were in fact duly authorized representatives of Hanoi and therefore in a position to release communique. When Fanfani pointed out obvious detrimental effects of publicity, particularly predictable reaction of USG, Su quickly backed off.

"(H) Points H to J come from notes d'Orlandi made after informal discussion during which no notes were to be kept. The North Vietnamese took copious notes anyway. (This portion of the notes was not read to North Vietnamese.) Both parties felt that problem of guaranteeing an agreement was increasing to decisive importance. Su seemed to categorically exclude the UN as a guaranteeing agency and Fanfani and Su agreed that the ICC was not in position to guarantee anything.

"(I) Fanfani asked if there would be any objection if he informed Tran Van Do or even Thieu of fact that conversations with an authorized representative of Hanoi had taken place. Su stated he had no objections.

"(J) Su stated that declared and also real aim of Hanoi was to have absolutely free general elections. To insure liberty of vote, it was necessary to constitute a government with very broadly based participation excluding only 'war criminals' (undefined). There was discussion of various South Vietnamese personalities as possible members of a Government. Su would raise a name and

d'Orlandi would comment. Su generally did not reveal his opinion but Ky was obviously unacceptable to him.

"(K) Although not reflected in notes, conversation closed with discussion of modalities of next meeting. Su suggested that d'Orlandi come to Prague on February 21 but exact date was left undetermined."

Fanfani confirmed that there was no discussion of the San Antonio formula and that they were unaware of the Clifford explanation. Davidson gave Fanfani the U.S. position as contained in State 117383. (ROME 4418, Sections 1 & 2 of 2)

Also, on February 23, Davidson cabled some additional points which he had made to Fanfani and d'Orlandi. Davidson said:

"The important thing was that there must be no doubt in Hanoi's mind that it had committed itself not to take advantage of a bombing cessation by such actions as increasing its infiltration of munitions and supplies or attacking U.S. positions in the area of the DMZ."

"....I suggested that it might repeat might be sufficient if Hanoi stated that it recognized that during a period when the US was not bombing and while talks were continuing that such acts as attacks on US positions in the area of the DMZ, massive terror against the cities such as the Tet campaign or increased infiltration, would show bad faith on its part and that it, of course, would never do anything that smacked of bad faith. Hanoi could then discuss with us at the first meeting more precise definition of actions which would constitute bad faith."

Fanfani and d'Orlandi understood that this was "merely a verbal gimmick to permit Hanoi to accept all requirements of the 'not take advantage' formulation without having to actually promise 'not to take advantage'." Fanfani said that if the U.S. approves, he will dispatch d'Orlandi again to Prague. (ROME 4419)

February 24, 1968

Fanfani gave an exposition on the Italian motivation for Vietnam negotiations. He said that he was prepared to drop the matter entirely if the U.S. desired or if Hanoi did not give evidence of seriousness. He warned of escalation, and the consequences of escalation on the policy of detente with the Soviet Union. He said that an intensification of the war in Vietnam would help the communist vote in Italy. (ROME 4422)

February 26, 1968

Davidson cabled additional information on the February 22 meeting with Fanfani and d'Orlandi. After he touched on "the terrible consequences" of the U.S. stopping bombing and being forced to resume because Hanoi took advantage, Fanfani remarked that "I had used almost exactly the same expressions in discussing that contingency as Su had used." According to Fanfani, "Su told him that if the bombing stopped and then were resumed it would be 'the end of the world'."

Fanfani also discussed a coalition government-general elections issue.

"In thinking out loud of an ultimate solution, Fanfani discussed the 'hypothesis' of a government which would be composed of elements of the existing government and other forces and would have the task of preparing for free general elections. He said that the creation of such a government would avoid the problem of which elements are a majority or minority since the task of the government would be technical. He recalled that it was a non-elected Italian Government which successfully prepared the Italian elections of 1946. Fanfani said he mentioned this idea to the North Vietnamese and they didn't object to it. Su said that they thought they would win an election and that is why they want one. Fanfani mentioned that Su had asked d'Orlandi for his opinion of personalities who were clearly not rpt not part of the FLN. I asked d'Orlandi who they were and he said several professional men, members of past government, religious personalities, all in all, some 20 or 25 names. Su did not rpt not comment after d'Orlandi gave his frank evaluation of each name except to say that Foreign Minister Do was a gentleman and a man of international stature who had little internal influence. D'Orlandi said it was clear that the FLN was thinking of a government that would include people who had not rpt not fought with it but who were nonetheless patriots. I remarked that it sounded to me as if these other elements would be largely the Bogus Committees that were being set up in connection with the Tet offensive. D'Orlandi said he thought I was mistaken."

Su told Fanfani that he "didn't consider any of the Eastern European channels as serious," and "Fanfani had specifically asked Su about P. M. Maurer, and the two North Vietnamese laughed as if to say that he could not rpt not conceivably be a serious channel." They also flatly ruled out the UN and the ICC in bringing about negotiations or in guaranteeing a settlement. (ROME 4440, Sections 1 & 2 of 2)

February 26, 1968

Davidson cabled urging continuation of this track. He argued that Italy was the first Western European nation to receive authorized representatives of Hanoi, and that Su had authorized Fanfani to convey his

comments to the USG, and that Su had again invited d'Orlandi to Prague (d'Orlandi had been expected there by Su since February 21).

Davidson said that the press leak on the North Vietnamese visit to Rome was by a communist newspaper and "it appears that the leak did not come from the Italian Government." Davidson was sympathetic to Fanfani's explanation that he had, for political reasons, to unilaterally release a statement to the press on the visit of the two North Vietnamese representatives to discuss a basis for starting negotiations.

Davidson concluded that the U.S. had every reason to continue with the track. He noted that there was a "danger of letting d'Orlandi go to Prague" in that "he might succeed and we might face prospect of negotiations at time when the political-military situation makes negotiations undesirable." He added: "However, if Hanoi now wishes to try to force negotiations on USG, it can create other situations at least as awkward as one that might result from telling d'Orlandi that it accepts essence of San Antonio." (ROME 4441)

February 27, 1968

State agreed that "we should give a constructive response to the proposal that d'Orlandi make another visit to Prague as suggested by Ambassador Su." State added: "However, under existing circumstances, it would be unwise to suggest new formulations (as you propose para 4 Rome 4419) which might give Hanoi the idea that we were weakening on the San Antonio position."

State went on to issue guidance for the d'Orlandi-Su talk:

"However, it appears to us that Hanoi is undertaking a combined diplomatic and propaganda offensive rather than showing a serious intention to negotiate in good faith at the moment. It would be useful for the Italians to try to discover whether the North Vietnamese look upon contacts with the Italians as expressing a serious negotiating position or as part of a rather widespread exercise to impress a variety of governments.

"(c) As you suggest in 10-A Reftel 4441, it appears useful for d'Orlandi to visit Prague in order to tell Su:

"(1) his statements have been communicated to the US and after careful analysis did not seem to US Government to be any more forthcoming than public statements of Hanoi. If Hanoi has any intention of conveying anything new, Su should be requested to point it out.

"(2) D'Orlandi might on his own responsibility explore with Su anything that Su could suggest which would be more

definite on timing and particularly any statements Hanoi would be willing to make as to their intentions relating to the military problem of 'no advantage.' D'Orlandi may draw on explanations you have provided him as to meaning of San Antonio formula. FYI We have been informed by French and through U Thant on information he received from French that negotiations would start immediately if we announced publicly unconditional cessation of bombing and other acts of war against NVN. Therefore there is no value in making an issue of this point through Su. END FYI.

"(3) In addition, d'Orlandi might wish to point out to Su that since Hanoi had rejected San Antonio formula, Americans had asked number of questions. For example, does this mean that Hanoi feels free to move men and supplies to the South as they did during the Tet truce last year? Would Hanoi feel free to move troops to the DMZ area in positions to attack US forces south of the DMZ? Would Hanoi consider it has the right to intensify artillery and other fire across the DMZ into US positions in South Viet-Nam?

"5. If the Italians express disappointment at the lack of detail in this message, please tell them that we are understandably cautious because of the major military operations now in progress or being planned by North Viet-Nam in the DMZ and the Laos Pan-handle. We cannot ignore Hanoi's actions on the ground in interpreting what Hanoi's intentions may be."

(State 120937)

March 4, 1967

Report on d'Orlandi-Su meeting.

D'Orlandi met with Meloy and Davidson to report on his March 1 meeting in Prague with Ambassador Su. D'Orlandi asked Su if he were ready to answer the question concerning the period of delay between the stopping of the bombing and the first U.S.-Hanoi meetings? Su responded rather lamely that he thought this contact had come to an end and, therefore, he was not able to supply a precise answer. "He could state that the matter of a date would be no problem. The real problem was San Antonio."

D'Orlandi said that he had dictated to Su the first portion of the Davidson MemCon of the February 28 meeting to the North Vietnamese, but the North Vietnamese did not comment on this.

The most important point that Su made in these talks was with respect to "no advantage." Although he said he was speaking personally, it is highly doubtful that he would have said the following without specific instructions:

"....D'Orlandi then told Su that if bombing stopped and talks began, assaulting Khe Sanh, invading or trying to detach

the two northern provinces of South Viet-Nam, launching a second wave of attacks against one or more cities or creating a sensation with something else like an assault on Camp Carrol, would sink the whole thing. Su replied that, speaking personally and not on instructions, such thing would be out, that from the moment the two sides meet it was obvious no such thing could happen. (I questioned d'Orlandi about this remark of Su's and d'Orlandi replied that while he took no notes he is certain this is the sense of what Su said.) D'Orlandi told Su that whatever he or Su thought of the effect of bombing, it is a fact that the US Government and US public opinion considers bombing of the North a most important weapon and that no President could give away such a weapon while something terrible was happening either in the DMZ or the South. Su did not respond to this comment. D'Orlandi also remarked that it might be necessary for him to go to Hanoi to receive assurances directly from the top and again Su did not reply."

Su said that he will contact d'Orlandi when he receives a reply and arrange another meeting in Rome or in Prague.

(ROME 4590)

March 5, 1968

Davidson cabled another exchange with Fanfani and d'Orlandi. Referring to a Hanoi broadcast about the North Vietnamese visit to Rome "to discuss negotiations," Fanfani argued that this was Hanoi's way of verifying that the Italian channel is the one it wishes to use.

Fanfani reviewed Su's statements about "no advantage," and told exactly the same story as he had on the previous day.

(ROME 4634)

March 14, 1968

State cabled "a slight preference for Prague as site of next meeting."
(State 129885)

March 16, 1968

Lodge arrived in Rome to speak with the Italians. Nothing new was added to previous communications.

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE