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FM THE WHITE HOUSE TOHAK180

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UNCLAS [REDACTED] WH29889

TOHAK 180 DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

FM THE SITUATION ROOM
TO PETEG RODMAN FOR DR. KISSINGER

MORI PER C03354604

1. "OUTLINES OF A NEW AMERICAN PRESENCE IN VIETNAM"
2. LESLIE H. GELB AND ANTHONY LAKE: GELB IS A VISITING PROFESSOR AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY AND A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE BRKINGS INSTITUTION. LAKE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON FOREIGN POLICY BOOKS FOR THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.
3. YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR A NATIONAL SIGH OF RELIEF THAT WE ARE NEARING THE END OF OUR ROAD IN VIETNAM. BUT, AN AGREEMENT IN PARIS WILL ONLY MEAN, IN FACT, THAT WE HAVE ARRIVAD AT A NEW CROSSROAD: WILL WE TAKE THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DECLARE PEACE AND GET OUT OF VIETNAM? OR WILL WE FIND WAYS TO STAY IN, AND GO ON DOWN THE OLD ROAD OF SUPPORT FOR SAIGON?

THE APPROACH OF A CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT IS SETTING OFF ALARM BELLS ALL OVER VIETNAM. THEY ARE WARNING THAT A CEASE-FIRE WILL NOT BRING PEACE, BUT A NEW PHASE OF THE OLD STRUGGLE. BOTH VIETNAMESE SIDES ARE GIRDING FOR THE COMING CONTEST.

THIS ALARM HAS ALSO BEEN HEARD IN THE PENTAGON, THE STATE DEPARTMENT, AND THE U. S. MISSION IN VIETNAM. EVIDENCE MOUNTS THAT THEY ARE PREPARING TO MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE COMMITMENT TO THE THIEU REGIME.

SO ONCE AGAIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT IS DECIDING FOR US WHICH ROAD WE SHALL TAKE, WITHOUT THE CONSTRAINT OF NATIONAL DEBATE. AND THERE IS NO SIGN THAT ALARMS ABOUT U. S. POST-CEASE-FIRE POLICIES ARE READY TO GO OFF IN CONGRESS.

WHILE ALL EYES ARE ON PARIS, HERE IS WHAT RELIABLE NEWS SOURCES SAY IS GOING ON IN VIETNAM:

HANOI AND ITS SOUTHERN ALLIES ARE TAKING A NUMBER OF STEPS TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE. NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS MAY BE FOLDED INTO VIETCONG UNITS TO DISGUISE THEIR PRESENCE. THESE UNITS HAVE BEEN ISSUED ORDERS TO RELY MORE HEAVILY ON CAPTURED AMERICAN WEAPONS, SO THAT THEY AS WELL AS THE SAIGON REGIME CAN LIVE OFF AMERICAN SUPPLIES--AS THEY DID IN THE LATE '50S AND EARLY '60S.

THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MAKING WHOLESALE ARRESTS OF ANY AND ALL "SUSPECTED VIETCONG." THIEU'S ADMINISTRATIVE CADRES ARE TOURING THE COUNTRYSIDE TO SPEED PREPARATIONS AGAINST A NEW OUTBREAK OF COMMUNIST POLITICAL AND QUASI-MILITARY ACTIVITY. A MASSIVE INFLUX OF AMERICAN ARMS IS BEING DISTRIBUTED.

MEANWHILE, U. S. PLANNERS ARE PUTTING TOGETHER OUTLINES OF A NEW AMERICAN PRESENCE IN VIETNAM TO SUPPORT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT AFTER OUR TROOPS HAVE LEFT. IT REPORTEDLY WOULD INCLUDE:

(A) TEN THOUSAND AMERICAN CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS AND ADVISORS, MANY UNDER U. S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTRACTS, TO WORK WITH SAIGON'S ARMED FORCES. (ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THESE JOBS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN SAIGON, PRESUMABLY TO RECRUIT RETIRING U. S. MILITARY PERSONNEL):

(B) POSSIBLY HUNDREDS OF MILITARY ATTACHES ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY;

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(C) FOUR CONSULATE GENERALS, TO REPLACE EXISTING REGIONAL U.S.

HEADQUARTERS.

(D) ADVISORY TEAMS AT THE PROVINCE LEVEL AS WELL;

(E) ONE THOUSAND A. I. D. PERSONNEL;

(F) ONE HUNDRED VIETNAMESE OR FRENCH-SPEAKING FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS ON TEMPORARY REASSIGNMENT TO VIETNAM, REPORTING ON THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE;

(G) AND A LARGE-SCALE MILITARY AID PROGRAM, IF THE U.S. SUCCEEDS IN REMOVING THE REQUIREMENT OF THE OCTOBER AGREEMENT THAT MILITARY RESUPPLY TAKE PLACE ONLY ON A ONE-FOR-ONE BASES.

IN SHORT, THE UNITED STATES IS GEARING UP TO DO ALL IT CAN FOR THIEU, EXCEPT FOR THE DIRECT USE OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES.

IT MAY SEEM NATURAL THAT WASHINGTON WOULD WANT TO TAKE WHAT STEPS IT CAN AFTER A CEASE-FIRE TO IMPROVE THIEU'S CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL. AFTER ALL, MANY WILL ARGUE, WHY NOT MAKE SOME NEW FAIRLY MARGINAL INVESTMENTS IN THE SITUATION, SINCE WE HAVE DONE SO MUCH IN THE PAST? WHY NOT GO THIS ONE LAST MILE, WHEN WE HAVE WORKED SO LONG IN SAIGON'S BEHALF?

THE DANGER IS THAT MAINTAINING A LARGE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN VIETNAM GIVES A HOSTAGE TO THE FUTURE. THIEU WOULD THEN HAVE LESS INCENTIVE TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE VIETCONG, SO THE FIGHTING WOULD FLARE UP AT SOME POINT- RAISING THE ISSUE OF AMERICAN MILITARY REINVOLVEMENT. AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WILL STILL BE POISED ON OFF-SHORE CARRIERS AND AT BASES IN THAILAND TO COME TO THIEU'S RESCUE. WHEN THE PRESIDENT IS FACED WITH A DECISION TO SEND THE BOMBERS BACK OVER INDOCHINA, THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY AMERICANS IN VIETNAME COULD TIP THE ODDS TOWARDS MILITARY REINVOLVEMENT. WE WOULD THEN BE BACK TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY.

IN THE PAST, THE CONGRESS HAS SOMETIMES SUPPORTED AND SOMETIMES

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~~CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS DECISIONS ABOUT VIETNAM. IT HAS~~
NEVER ANTICIPATED THAT IF THE CONGRESS DOES NOT MOVE TO HELP SHAPE
FUTURE VIETNAM POLICIES NOW, IT CAN HAVE NO ONE TO BLAME
BUT ITSELF IF THINGS GO WRONG LATER.

THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT CONGRESS SHOULD BE TO
HOLD HEARINGS, IN THE HOUSE AND IN THE SENATE, ON WHAT IS GOING
ON IN INDOCHINA. THE PROBLEM WILL NOT BE THE TERMS OF THE PEACE
AGREEMENT, BUT THE ACTIONS OUR GOVERNMENT IS TAKING WITHIN THE
CONTEXT OF THE AGREEMENT. THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES NEED TO ASK
SUCH QUESTIONS AS: ARE WE STILL OBLIGED TO COMMIT AMERICAN FORCES
TO THIEU'S DEFENSE OR THE DEFENSE OF ANY OTHER ANTI-COMMUNIST
REGIME IN SAIGON? WHAT SAFEGUARDS CAN THE CONGRESS LEGISLATE
TO PREVENT AMERICAN MILITARY REINVOLVEMENT BEFORE IT BECOMES AN
ACCOMPLISHED FACT? WHO IS PAYING THE BILL FOR THE AMERICAN CIVILIANS
ATTACHED TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES? WHAT EXACTLY WILL ALL
OF THOSE U. S. MILITARY ATTACHES BE DOING? ARE THE PRESIDENT'S
POWERS AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SUFFICIENT TO ORDER U. S. MILITARY FORCES
TO INTERVENE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THESE AMERICANS IN VIETNAM?

IF WE HAVE LEARNED ANYTHING AT ALL FROM OUR DECADE OF TRAGEDY
IN VIETNAM, IT IS THAT WE OUGHT TO ASK SUCH QUESTIONS BEFORE WE
PROCEED, NOT AFTER. WE SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT IF ANYTHING CAN BE
WRONG IN VIETNAM, IT WILL.

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