

REFER TO DOS

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LDX

March 24, 1973

DOS reviewed. Unclassified. Release in full

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary
Department of State

SUBJECT:

Congratulatory Letter to President
Thieu

The attached Presidential message to South Vietnamese President Thieu on the occasion of South Vietnam's Land to the Tiller Day, March 26, has been approved. Please have it transmitted to our embassy in Saigon.

Jeanne W. Davis
Staff Secretary
National Security Council

Sent 12:51 PM
on 3/24/73

LDX-919

SUBJECT: Congratulatory Letter to President Thieu

1. Please deliver the following message to President Thieu

Quote Dear Mr. President: I very much appreciate your warm message of March 20 which described the achievements of the "land to the tiller" program and expressed the gratitude of the Vietnamese people for our assistance in this great work of social reform and economic development.

With deep interest and satisfaction, I learned from your letter that on March 26 your country will celebrate the fulfillment of its three-year goal of redistributing titles for one million hectares of land to tenant farmers under the "land to the tiller" program. This program, I know, is one of the most ambitious and far-reaching land distribution programs undertaken by any country in recent times. It will ultimately benefit over one million rural families in South Vietnam and should virtually eliminate farm tenancy. The fact that this program has been completed under the difficult war-time conditions of the past three years makes the accomplishment that much more admirable. This program also represents tangible evidence of concern for and responsiveness to the needs of the people and encourages us to look with confidence to the future of your country as it pursues its goals of a lasting and fruitful peace.

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the Government and the people of the Republic of Vietnam on the success of this land reform endeavor. Americans are pleased to have cooperated with Vietnamese in this historic undertaking.

In the post war period, we look forward with equal interest to joining your Government and people in the important task of reconstruction and long-term economic development.

Sincerely, Richard Nixon Unquote.

2. We encourage the GVN to release the exchange of messages, after which we will release them on this end.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

URGENT ACTION

March 23, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *W.H. Jr*
SUBJECT: Congratulations Letter to President Thieu

Attached at Tab A is a suggested Presidential message to GVN President Thieu on the occasion of South Vietnam's Land to the Tiller Day, March 26. The letter congratulates Thieu on the progress of the land reform program and replies to a March 23 letter from him (Tab B) expressing his people's appreciation for U.S. assistance in the effort. Lee Huebner approves.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the text of the Presidential letter to Thieu. (Tab A)

Approve *BO*

Disapprove _____

ROUTINE
GNS062
DE RUEHGN #4834 0821150
R 230913Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9090

UNCLAS SAIGON 04834

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV VS

SUB: TRANSMITTAL OF LETTER FROM PRESIDENT THIEU TO PRESIDENT NIXON

1. PRESIDENT THIEU HAS REQUESTED ME TO TRANSMIT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT NIXON:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

MARCH 26TH, 1973 MARKS THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE LAND-TO-THE-TILLER LAW IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. ON THIS MEMORABLE OCCASION, I TAKE PLEASURE IN COMMUNICATING TO YOU THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR LAND REFORM, ONE OF OUR TOP PRIORITY PROGRAMS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE RURAL PEOPLE. THIS ALSO CONSTITUTES, IN MY VIEW, AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REVOLUTION, IN THE PRESENT IDEOLOGICAL CONTEST IN VIET NAM.

UPON THE PROMULGATION OF THE LAND-TO-THE-TILLER LAW IN 1970, I PLEDGED TO DISTRIBUTE FREE OF CHARGE 1,000,000 HECTARES (APPROXIMATELY 2.5 MILLION ACRES) OF LAND IN THREE YEARS TO 800,000 TENANT FARMERS WHO ACTUALLY TILLED THE LAND. TO DATE, 1,003,353 HECTARES OF LAND HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO 858,821 FORMER TENANT FARMERS. OUR PLANNED GOAL HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND SURPASSED.

THE LAND-TO-THE-TILLER PROGRAM HAS REDUCED FARM TENANCY FROM AROUND 60 PERCENT THREE YEARS AGO TO ALMOST THE VANISHING POINT. IT HAS THUS UNDERCUT THE MAIN THEME OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA VIS A VIS THE RURAL POPULATION.

OUR FARMERS HAVE NOT BEEN MERELY PASSIVE RECIPIENTS OF GOVERNMENT LARGESSE BUT HAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES. THEY ARE USING THE ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM THE SALE OF CROPS FORMERLY PAID IN RENT TO DEVELOP THE RURAL ECONOMY, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF THE NATION. OUR FARMERS HAVE NOW A NEW SENSE

*****WHSR COMMENT*****

SCOWCROFT, LORD, HOLDRIDGE

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OF PERSONAL WORTH AND DIGNITY—AND HAVE BECOME MASTERS OF THEIR DESTINY, FREE MEN WITH REASONS TO PRESERVE THEIR FREEDOM.

THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE, IN NO SMALL MEASURE, TO THE DEDICATED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF AMEMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER AND THE AMERICAN AID MISSION STAFF IN VIET NAM AND TO THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THROUGH YOUR GOVERNMENT.

FOR THIS, I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY, ON BEHALF OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, OUR DEEP GRATITUDE TO YOU, AND THROUGH YOU TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I WISH ALSO TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE HELP AND SUPPORT FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO NOT ONLY COMPLETE THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM BUT TO HELP CARRY FORWARD VIGOROUSLY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIVE-YEAR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN, WHICH WILL SOLIDIFY AND BUILD ON THE TREMENDOUS BENEFITS OF LAND DISTRIBUTION, AND OF OUR POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PLAN WHICH IS TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR AND TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN A REA OF PEACE.

SINCERELY YOURS,

NGUYEN VAN THIEU,

END TEXT.

BUNKER

BT

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