

No Objection to Declassification in Part 2012/10/03 : LOC-HAK-490-6-11-9 (BUNKER)

FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0116 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
REF: WHS 2089

1. I MET WITH THIEU THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS WITH HIM PLANS FOR AUGUST 1 MEETING AS OUTLINED REFTEL. CONCERNING THE THREE MODIFICATIONS:

1) I POINTED OUT THAT SINCE A CEASE-FIRE WOULD COME INTO EFFECT SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH AGREEMENT ON THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES THIS WOULD BE LESS FAVORABLE TO NORTH VIETNAM, SINCE IN THE JANUARY 25 PROPOSALS THERE WAS NO DEADLINE FOR REACHING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND IT COULD HAVE DRAGGED ON FOR A PROTRACTED PERIOD, THUS DELAYING A CEASE-FIRE.

MORI/CDF
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DOS Review
Completed.

2) THE DEADLINE BY WHICH DETAILED POLITICAL IMPLEMENTATION TALKS (POINTS 3, 4, 5 OF JANUARY 25 PROPOSAL) ARE TO BE CONCLUDED WILL BE THREE MONTHS. UNDER THE JANUARY 25 PROPOSAL, THERE IS NO DEADLINE. THEREFORE, AS MENTIONED, THESE COULD HAVE DRAGGED ON FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD.

3) THE ELECTIONS AS PROVIDED IN THE JANUARY 25 PROPOSAL WILL BE CONDUCTED SIX MONTHS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT - OR NINE MONTHS AFTER THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES IS SIGNED. WITH THIEU'S AGREEMENT, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT HE STEP DOWN TWO MONTHS RATHER THAN ONE MONTH BEFORE ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE SINCE A CRITICISM, WHICH SEEMED TO HAVE JUSTIFICATION, HAD BEEN THE FACT THAT A PERIOD OF ONE MONTH PROVIDED INSUFFICIENT TIME TO ORGANIZE ELECTIONS. I RECALLED THAT HE, HIMSELF, HAD MADE THIS POINT DURING PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

2. I MENTIONED THE FACT THAT WE HAD SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS ESSENTIALLY THE PROPOSAL WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE URGED ON HANOI, ALTHOUGH I MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF THE LATTER'S RESPONSE. NEVERTHELESS, THIS SEEMS TO BE A LINE WHICH WE WOULD DO WELL TO EXPLORE.

3. THIEU WAS NOT CLEAR ABOUT THE PROVISION FOR "AGREEMENT ON THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES". I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT THIS HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSAL THAT WE HAD SENT TO HANOI IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR AND THAT ALLIED TROOP WITHDRAWALS WERE TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE SEVEN MONTHS AFTER SIGNING OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES. THIS HAD BEEN CHANGED IN OUR JOINT PROPOSAL OF JANUARY 25 TO PROVIDE WITHDRAWAL OF ALLIED FORCES WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER SIGNING OF AGREEMENT. WHAT WE ARE SUGGESTING, THEREFORE, WILL PROVIDE AN EARLIER CEASE-FIRE AND TIGHTER SCHEDULE FOR REACHING A POLITICAL AGREEMENT.

4. THIEU SAID THAT HIS RECOLLECTION ON THE DIFFERENCES OF THE TWO PROPOSALS WAS NOT PRECISE AND HE WOULD LIKE TO REFRESH HIS RECOLLECTION ON THE TIMING AND SUBSTANCE OF OUR PREVIOUS PROPOSALS.

4. THIEU ASKED HOW YOU WOULD PROPOSE TO PRESENT THE NEW POINTS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER YOU WOULD PLAN TO DO THIS IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION OR AS A NEW PROPOSAL. HE SAID THAT HE WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF HOW THIS MIGHT BE PRESENTED IN CASE OF A LEAK CONCERNING THE TALKS OR IN CASE WE SHOULD DECIDE AT SOME TIME TO MAKE THE RECORD PUBLIC. HE SAID THAT HIS FIRST THOUGHT WAS THAT IT MIGHT BE WELL TO BRING OUT THE POINTS IN THE COURSE OF EXPLORATION OF THE OTHER SIDE'S POSITION, PERHAPS SEEKING THEIR REACTION TO OUR PROPOSALS AT THE LAST MEETING. ON THE OTHER HAND THERE MIGHT BE SOME ADVANTAGE IN BEING ABLE TO SAY WE HAD MADE A NEW PROPOSAL, INDICATING OUR FLEXIBILITY.

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6. SINCE IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WANTED A DAY OR TWO TO RE-ORIENT HIS THINKING, I LEFT HIM TEXT OF BOTH THE JANUARY 25 JOINT PROPOSAL AND THE CARLIER PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO HANOI. I STRESSED THAT WE NEEDED HIS AGREEMENT URGENTLY SO THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TIME TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEETING AND I HOPED HE WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE ME HIS ANSWER BY TOMORROW. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF YOU COULD GIVE ME AN INDICATION OF HOW YOS WOULD PLAN TO APPROACH THE OTHER SIDE IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THIEU'S QUESTION.

7. WARM REGARDS.

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