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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY

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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE 241100Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0233 IMMEDIATE

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. WE ARE SENDING IN VIA NODIS CHANNELS THE TEXT OF A MEMORANDUM WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER LAM WAS PLANNING TO SEND TO VIETNAMESE EMBASSIES AND TO USE AS A BRIEFING PAPER. HE HAD ALREADY GIVEN IT TO BRITISH, NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADORS. AS SOON AS WE SAW IT I SENT CHARLIE WHITEHOUSE OVER TO SEE LAM AND HE SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE MEMO RADICALLY CHANGED. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THIS EPISODE AND A TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION ARE ALSO BEING SENT NODIS.

2. ONE WORRYING ASPECT WHICH CAME TO LIGHT IS THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE NUMEROUS CLEAR AND ELOQUENT EXPLANATIONS OF THE POLITICAL PROVISIONS YOU GAVE THE GVN IT WAS CLEAR TO CHARLIE THAT LAM HAD A TOTALLY FALSE VIEW OF THE CNRC. CHARLIE REPEATED AGAIN TO LAM ALL THE ARGUMENTS YOU HAD MADE, BUT LAM SEEMED CONVINCED THAT IF THE CNRC WERE CREATED THE GVN WOULD BE A QUOTE DYING GOVERNMENT UNQUOTE. A PART, BUT ONLY A VERY SMALL PART, OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE EMBROIDERING ON THE WORD "ADMINISTRATIVE" WHICH TO THEM IMPLIES GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES. IT WOULD BE A HELP IF YOU COULD SEND US A VIETNAMESE VERSION OF WHAT WE HAVE GIVEN THEM.

3. ALTHOUGH THE KEY MAN IN THIS SITUATION IS THIEU, I PLAN TO USE THE OPENING PROVIDED BY THE MEMORANDUM EPISODE TO TRY AND GET LAM TO UNDERSTAND OUR POSITION.

4. SINCE DRAFTING THE FOREGOING, I HAVE LEARNED FROM BRITISH AMBASSADOR THAT ORIGINAL VERSION HAS BEEN RECALLED AND NEW "MILD" REVISION ISSUED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE ALSO INFORMS ME THAT IN EXPLAINING POLITICAL PROVISIONS LAM EXPLAINED ORALLY THAT NVN HAD PROPOSED A TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE AT ALL LEVELS FROM NATIONAL TO VILLAGE, I.E., A GARBLED VERSION OF THE POSITION AT THE TIME OF AL HAIG'S VISIT.

5. IT NOW SEEMS TO ME THAT THE GVN IS DEVELOPING A TRIPARTITE STRAW MAN WHICH IT INTENDS TO BEAT TO DEATH AS PUBLICLY AS POSSIBLE. WHILE THIS VERSION OF THE POSSIBLE AGREEMENT WHICH THEY ARE CASTIGATING IS PATENTLY FALSE IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THIS MIGHT LATER BE HELPFUL AS IT WILL PERMIT THEM TO PORTRAY THE CNRC AS A GREAT CONCESSION AT A LATER DATE.

6. ALTHOUGH LAM TOLD WHITEHOUSE HE WOULD ONLY SPEAK IN GENERALITIES, HE GAVE BRITISH THE NAMES OF THE COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD SERVE IN THE REVISED ICC AS WELL AS THOSE BEING CONSIDERED FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

7. WARM REGARDS.

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