

A-139

EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

1972 OCT 25 AM 8 26

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WORD
NECROPONTE

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 251100Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0235 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
REF: WHS 2293
DELIVER OPENING OF BUSINESS

SUBJECT: THIEU'S OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGY

1. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIEU'S PRESENT POSTURE CAN BE EXPLAINED BY ONE OF SEVERAL ASSUMPTIONS.

-- HE IS BUILDING UP A STRAW MAN WHICH, WHEN HE ACCEPTS OUR PROPOSALS OR SOME MODIFICATION OF THEM, HE CAN KNOCK DOWN AND CLAIM A VICTORY.

-- THAT IF A CEASE-FIRE TAKES PLACE HE CAN THEN INSIST THAT THE DRV DEAL WITH THE GVN ON MATTERS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THAT THE NLF DEAL WITH THE GVN ON SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROBLEMS.

-- BY MOBILIZING SUPPORT AS IN 1968 HE THINKS HE CAN PRESENT US WITH A UNITED FRONT WHICH WILL ENABLE HIM TO MAINTAIN HIS OBJECTIONS TO OUR PROPOSALS IN THEIR PRESENT FORM ON THE THEORY THAT IF WE WITHDRAW SUPPORT AND ABANDON HIM, WE WILL BE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF OUR CRITICS WHO WILL SAY THAT WE COULD HAVE DONE THIS THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO; IN THE MEANTIME WE HAVE LOST 20,000 MEN.

-- THAT HE THINKS THAT IF BY DELAYING TACTICS HE CAN HOLD UP AN AGREEMENT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, HE CAN GET BETTER TERMS FROM A PROGRESSIVELY WEAKER ENEMY.

2. I THINK THE PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE POINTS TO EITHER THE FIRST OR SECOND OF THE FOUR ALTERNATIVES.

3. INTENSIVE ACTIVITIES IN PREPARATION FOR A CEASE-FIRE ARE UNDERWAY AND HAVE BEEN SPEEDED UP AT THIEU'S ORDERS. INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEALING WITH A CEASE-FIRE HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE CORPS COMMANDERS, PROVINCE CHIEFS, AND THE NATIONAL POLICE.

4. IN HIS SPEECH LAST NIGHT THIEU'S ATTACK ON THE COMMUNIST FORCES RELATED LARGELY TO THEIR PROPOSALS OF SEPTEMBER 11. HE DID NOT CLOSE THE DOOR TO A CEASE-FIRE; ON THE CONTRARY HE SAID HE EXPECTED ONE SOON.

State Dept. review completed

MORI/CDF C05081075

5. HIS STRESS ON THE PITFALLS IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT AND CEASE-FIRE APPEAR INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE IS RESOLUTELY DEFENDING SOUTH VIET-NAM'S INTEREST IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND WARNING THE TROOPS AND POPULATION OF THE CHALLENGE THAT A CEASE-FIRE WILL BRING.
6. I WATCHED HIS PERFORMANCE ON TV. HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF CALMNESS, DIGNITY, AND FORCEFULNESS. THERE WAS NO TRACE OF RANCOR TOWARD THE U.S.
7. THE TEN DAYS HE HAS SPENT IN ORGANIZING SUPPORT THROUGH TALKS WITH GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL LEADERS, THE ORGANIZING OF MASS MEETINGS AND PARADES IN THE PROVINCES WHILE DIRECTED AGAINST THE DANGERS OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT HAVE ALSO BEEN USED TO ALERT PEOPLE TO A CEASE-FIRE. WE HAVE HAD TODAY INCREASING EVIDENCE THAT THE ENEMY EXPECTS A CEASE-FIRE. QUANG NAM VC CADRE HAVE BEEN TOLD IT WILL TAKE PLACE AT 1100 HOURS ON OCTOBER 28. SIMILAR INFORMATION HAS COME FROM DANANG CITY, FROM THE THU BIEN SPECIAL REGION NEAR SAIGON AND FROM VC MR 6 IN THE COSVN AREA.
8. IT IS POSSIBLE, OF COURSE, THAT IF THERE IS A CEASE-FIRE BY INSISTING THAT THE DRV AND THE NLF DSAL DIRECTLY WITH THE GVN THIEU MIGHT THEN ATTEMPT TO PUT THE ONUS ON THEM SHOULD THEY BREAK THE CEASE-FIRE. I THINK IT MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT HE WILL TRY TO HOLD OUT FOR A WHILE TO SEE WHETHER THE CHANGES HE MENTIONED TO US CONCERNING THE DMZ, THE WORDING RELATING TO THE NCRC, AND THE PRESENCE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM CAN BE SECURED.
9. I HAVE ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THIEU TOMORROW AND WILL COVER POINTS IN REFTTEL.
10. WARM REGARDS.

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