

HAK  
HAIG  
Howe  
LORD

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE 051200Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)  
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0179 IMMEDIATE  
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, FOR DR. KISSINGER

1. FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL DE FOLIN CAME TO SEE WHITEHOUSE TODAY TO CONFIDE THE SUBSTANCE OF A 3 OCTOBER TALK HELD BY FRENCH DELEGATE SUSINI IN HANOI WITH PHAM VAN DONG. IN VIEW OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS MESSAGE I AM SENDING IT TO YOU AND NOT HANDLING IT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH WE HAVE HANDLED DE FOLIN'S PREVIOUS CONFIDENCES.
2. PHAM VAN DONG OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT HE HAD RECOVERED FROM HIS RECENT ILLNESS AND WAS HOPING TO REMAIN AT THE HELM OF HIS COUNTRY FOR A LONG TIME. INDEED, HE HOPED TO BE THE PERSON WHO BROUGHT PEACE TO INDO-CHINA. IN THE TALK WHICH FOLLOWED PHAM VAN DONG WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME OPTIMISTIC REGARDING THE LIKELIHOOD OF PEACE. HE WAS RESTRAINED IN HIS COMMENTS REGARDING THE AMERICANS AND DID NOT CRITICIZE THEM. FURTHERMORE, HE NOTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE A

RICANS' DIFFICULTIES IN IMPOSING THEIR

VIEWS ON SAIGON.

3. PHAM VAN DONG COMMENTED THAT THE AMERICANS WERE MORE SUPPLE THAN THEY HAD BEEN IN THE PAST AND SAID THAT THE AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THAT A CEASE-FIRE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE WHITE HOUSE HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD AND TALKS INSTEAD OF FORMING AN ELECTORAL COMMITTEE. PHAM VAN DONG WENT ON TO SAY THAT AMERICANS WOULD ULTIMATELY ACCEPT THIS PROPOSAL AS IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO ESTABLISH PEACE IN INDO-CHINA.
4. PHAM VAN DONG SAID THAT HANOI WAS READY TO DISCUSS THE NECESSARY GUARANTEES TO PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD FROM FALLING UNDER THE SWAY OF EITHER THE COMMUNISTS OR THE REACTIONARIES AND WAS CURRENTLY DOING SO. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS A DIFFICULT PROBLEM BUT NOT INSOLUBLE.

State Dept. review completed

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

5. ON THE SUBJECT OF PRESIDENT THIEU, PHAM VAN DONG SAID THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO BE DROPPED ("LACHER") BY THE AMERICANS. SUSINI THEN ASKED PHAM VAN DONG WHETHER THE PRG AND HANOI WOULD ACCEPT PRESIDENT THIEU IN A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD FOR A LIMITED TIME. PHAM VAN DONG REPLIED "FOR US THIEU NO LONGER MATTERS. HE REPRESENTS NOTHING DESPITE HIS TEMPESTUOUS ("FRACASSANTE") DECLARATIONS. HIS FATE IS OF NO CONCERN TO US."

6. AT THIS POINT IN HIS TELEGRAM, SUSINI VOLUNTEERED THE COMMENT THAT PHAM VAN DONG'S REMARKS REGARDING PRESIDENT THIEU DESERVED TO BE HIGHLIGHTED. ALTHOUGH PHAM VAN DONG DID NOT DIRECTLY ANSWER HIS QUESTION REGARDING THIEU'S REMAINING IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT, HE CERTAINLY LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT SUCH PARTICIPATION WAS NOT EXCLUDED. IN ANY CASE, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE ABSENCE OF AMERICAN SUPPORT WOULD INEVITABLY RESULT IN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THIEU FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE.

7. RETURNING TO THE CONVERSATION, SUSINI REPORTED THAT PHAM VAN DONG WENT ON TO STATE THAT THE NEUTRALISTS SHOULD HAVE THE BEST POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD AND THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD FINALLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ELEMENT WHICH THEY CONTINUE TO UNDERESTIMATE. THE MERE PRESENCE OF THAT ELEMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD WOULD GUARANTEE ITS NON-COMMUNIST NATURE.

8. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION PHAM VAN DONG, WHILE APPEARING OPTIMISTIC, DID NOT PRETEND THAT PEACE WAS IMMINENT. "WE KNOW NOW HOW HARD IT IS FOR THE AMERICANS TO LEAVE," HE SAID, "AND WE KNOW THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND SAIGON CANNOT BE EASY."

9. PHAM VAN DONG ADMITTED THAT HIS EXPERTS HAD ERRED IN PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO AMERICANS WHO EXPRESSED THEMSELVES FRANKLY AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR. HE ADDED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON WILL PROBABLY HAVE A FREER HAND AFTER THE ELECTION.

10. PHAM VAN DONG REVEALED THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER MEETING WITH DR. ODXY IXJRA  
IQBFEKIM LIGJJEPMBNATGHYMONDEST HOPE  
WAS TO GO TO FRANCE AND SIGN THERE A