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LORD
NEGOTIATION
A-188

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE 270320Z NOV 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0282 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
REFS: A) WHS 2257; B) WHS 2258

1. I DELIVERED TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TWO MESSAGES (REF A) TO THIEU AT 0300 THIS MORNING. I SAID THAT I HAD BEEN ASKED TO DELIVER THESE MESSAGES WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIS NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS TO HIM IN ORDER TO BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THEY HAD BEEN ACCURATELY RECEIVED BY HIM. I SAID THAT THESE WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND MR. DUC. AS PER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, I DID NOT DISCUSS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MESSAGES WITH THIEU, BUT I MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT WE HAVE COME TO THE TIME WHEN A FINAL DECISION MUST BE MADE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS; THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD GIVE YOU FINAL INSTRUCTIONS ON DECEMBER 1 AND THAT YOU WILL LEAVE FOR PARIS DECEMBER . I MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO THIEU THAT AS THE PRESIDENT HAS STATED IF WE DO NOT TOGETHER COME TO AN AGREEMENT WE WILL PROCEED UNILATERALLY.

2. I ALSO URGED THIEU TO SEND NHA TO WASHINGTON WITH PHUONG AND DUC SO THAT BOTH WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS TO THE PRESIDENT AND BOTH HAVE THE BENEFIT OF THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS. WE THOUGHT THIS WOULD ALSO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF SIMPLIFYING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. THIEU REPLIED THAT HE WAS VERY MUCH IN NEED OF NHA HERE, BUT WOULD THINK OVER OUR SUGGESTION AND LET ME KNOW HIS DECISION.

3. WITH REFERENCE TO PARAGRAPH 3, REF B, AS SEEN FROM HERE, I THINK THIS IS A WISE DECISION ON THE PRESIDENT'S PART. AS I MENTIONED IN SAIGON 280, ALTHOUGH THERE IS CONCERN AMONG MANY VIETNAMESE OVER THE QUESTION OF THE NVA REMAINING IN THE SOUTH, THE NATIONALISTS HAVE A GREAT PREPONDERANCE OF NUMBERS AND RESOURCES ON THEIR SIDE AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE FORTHCOMING POLITICAL CONTEST SUCCESSFULLY. BUT ASIDE FROM HIS EXPRESSED CONCERNS THIEU IS CLEARLY PLAYING FOR TIME AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE HIM AND THE GVN FACE THE ISSUE IS TO DO WHAT THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES, I.E., ESTABLISH A DEADLINE AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE INTEND TO STICK TO IT.

4. ASSUMING THAT THIEU, AS I BELIEVE HE WILL, DECIDES THAT HE MUST ACCEDE TO THE AGREEMENT BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, HE MAY THEN, IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIS POSITION HERE AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF CAPITULATION TO OUR PRESSURES, TRY TO MAKE HIS ACCEPTANCE LESS THAN WHOLEHEARTED. IT SEEMS TO ME THIS COULD JEOPARDIZE FUTURE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AND THAT IN ORDER TO PREVENT THIS IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR DUC AND NHA TO MAKE CLEAR TO THIEU THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO SQUIRM OUT OF SIGNING THE AGREEMENT BY INVENTING SOME NEW PROCEDURAL GIMMICK WILL HAVE VERY UNFORTUNATE RESULTS.

5. IT SEEMS TO ME WE HAVE REACHED THAT POINT WHERE WE HAVE GIVEN THE VIETNAMESE THE RESOURCES TO DO THE JOB, THAT THE DRAFT AGREEMENT YOU HAVE WORKED OUT GIVES THEM THE OPPORTUNITY, AND THAT WE HAVE DISCHARGED FULLY OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS UP TO THEM NOW TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO SUPPORT THEM.

6. WARM REGARDS.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept. Review Completed

MORI/CDF per C03317578