

ETS-HK-439072

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

EYES ONLY

1972 OCT 18 PM 5 39

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY TRUE DTG 182055Z
VIA CAS (BUNKER) CHANNELS

FROM: AL HAIG
TO: WINSTON LORD FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
CITE: WHS2234

OCTOBER 18, 1972

TOHAK 35

SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR JOHNSON, AFTER READING POLITICAL CHAPTER, HAVE DESCRIBED IT AS A TOTAL SURRENDER. ROGERS MENTIONED THIS AS AN ASIDE TO THE PRESIDENT DURING THE MEETING WITH PATOLICHEV AND PRESIDENT'S ENTHUSIASM IS AGAIN AT A HIGH WATER MARK. HE JUST CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE AND STATED THAT I SHOULD PROVIDE TO YOU THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF YOUR INITIAL DISCUSSION WITH THIEU. THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT YOU SHOULD NOT LET THIEU SEE THE POLITICAL CHAPTER UNTIL YOU HAVE DISCUSSED THE MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RELEASE OF POWS AND VARIOUS SECURITY GUARANTEES, INCLUDING THE PRESENCE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN THE SOUTH AND THE CEASE-FIRE IN PLACE MODALITIES. PRESIDENT THEN SUGGESTS THAT YOU MIGHT WISH TO INFORM THIEU THAT THE OTHER SIDE CONTINUES TO INSIST ON AT LEAST A FORM OF COALITION GOVERNMENT AND WANTS SOME ASSURANCE ABOUT THIEU'S REMOVAL FROM POWER. PRESIDENT SUGGESTS THAT YOU THEN TABLE THE POLITICAL CHAPTER AS BEING THE PRESIDENT'S ROCK BOTTOM POSITION WHICH HE INTENDS TO HOLD ON AND FIGHT FOR, PROVIDED YOU CAN BE MORE FORTHCOMING WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER CHAPTERS. PRESIDENT DESCRIBED THIS AS A POKER GAME WITH THIEU IN WHICH YOU HOLD YOUR TRUMP CARD UNTIL THE LAST PLAY. I KNOW YOU NEED THIS KIND OF ADVICE AT THIS JUNCTURE BUT RECOGNIZE THAT THE PRESS OF BUSINESS THERE MIGHT HAVE PREVENTED YOU FROM FOCUSING ON THE CONDUCT OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THIEU. HOW STRONGLY YOU WOULD PLAY SUCH A HAND WOULD, OF COURSE, DEPEND ON HOW FAR BUNKER HAS GONE WITH HIM ALREADY.

ALL HERE ARE EAGERLY AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF YOUR TALKS WITH THIEU. I HOPE YOU CAN PROVIDE US WITH A REPORT AS SOON AS IT IS POSSIBLE. BEST OF LUCK ON THE TOUGHEST OF ASSIGNMENTS.

WARM REGARDS.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

State Dept. review
completed

MORI PER C03353872