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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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T O P S E C R E T 221600Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER SAIGON 0222 FLASH

TO: GENERAL HAIG

HAKTO 43

1. THIS MESSAGE WILL GIVE YOU A LITTLE MORE FLAVOR OF THE SITUATION HERE AND BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE OF ACTION I HAVE ASKED YOU TO IMPLEMENT IN THE PREVIOUS MESSAGE.
2. AS WE PLOT OUT OUR COURSE OF ACTION NOW, THE PRESIDENT AND YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW I STARTED MY MEETING WITH THIEU THIS AFTERNOON. I SPOKE FIRST AND TOLD HIM THE FOLLOWING. I INFORMED HIM OF THE EXTREMELY ENTHUSIASTIC REACTION OF LON NOL AND SOUVANNA PHOUMA. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT IF I WENT AHEAD WITH THE FINAL LEG I WOULD PROPOSE TO THE DRV THAT THEY REMOVE SOME OF THEIR DIVISIONS FROM MR-1 WITHOUT ANNOUNCING THIS AND THAT THE REINFORCEMENT PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD MAKE IMPOSSIBLE THE REINTRODUCTION OF THESE TROOPS. I TOLD HIM AS WELL THAT WE WOULD TRY TO GET THE PARAGRAPH IN THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING THREE EQUAL SEGMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL CHANGED. FINALLY I SAID THAT IF I FAILED TO GET EITHER OF THESE CONCESSIONS FROM THE OTHER SIDE I WOULD RETURN FROM THE FINAL LEG WITHOUT MAKING AN AGREEMENT. I DID THIS IN ORDER TO GAIN TIME THROUGH THE ELECTION PERIOD. THIEU REFUSED ALL OF THIS WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT NO POLITICAL PRESCRIPTIONS IN ANY FORM. I AM ASKING BUNKER TO SEND AS CLOSE TO A VERBATIM ACCOUNT AS POSSIBLE SO THAT THE PRESIDENT CAN SEE WHAT WE WERE UP AGAINST.
3. IN THE PERIOD NOW BEFORE US I THINK IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT WE NOT SHOW ANY NERVOUSNESS. EVERYONE SHOULD EXUDE OPTIMISM AND GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE MAY BE VERY CLOSE TO AN AGREEMENT. IF WE ARE HARD-PRESSED BY QUESTIONS WE SHOULD SIMPLY SAY THAT TECHNICAL DETAILS ALWAYS ARISE IN THE LAST STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. AND IF WE ARE REALLY PRESSED TO THE WALL WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE QUESTION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES IN THE SOUTH. AT ALL COST WE MUST AVOID LETTING THIEU BECOME THE OBJECT OF PUBLIC SCORN, NOT FOR HIS SAKE BUT FOR OUR OWN. IF THIEU EMERGES AS THE VILLIAN, EVEN IF WE FINALLY OVERCOME HIS OBJECTIONS, EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE DONE FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS WILL BE THROWN INTO QUESTION.
4. I BELIEVE THAT OVER A PERIOD OF WEEKS WE CAN STILL BRING THIS TO A REASONABLE CONCLUSION. I HAVE ASKED BUNKER TO GET TO WORK ON THIEU. ALL INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT HE IS MAKING ACTIVE

PREPARATIONS FOR A CEASEFIRE. IT IS THEREFORE LIKELY THAT HE WILL YIELD, ESPECIALLY IF WE REMAIN FIRM AFTER THE ELECTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE DOES NOT YBMZD THERE IS STILL A GOOD CHANCE THAT HANOI AND WE COULD SIGN AN AGREEMENT WHICH WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE OTHER PARTIES THAT THEY ACCEPT. THIS WOULD GIVE THIEU AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM THAT HE WAS RAPED BUT IN THE END HE WOULD YIELD. WE SHOULD DO A PURELY BILATERAL DEAL ONLY AS A LAST RESORT..

5. I KNOW THE PRESIDENT IS VERY RELUCTANT TO END THE BOMBING WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT. HOWEVER IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT WE NOT ONLY HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT I BELIEVE THAT IT IS AN UNALLOYED PLUS. FIRST OF ALL EVERYONE WILL RELATE IT TO NEARLY COMPLETED NEGOTIATIONS. SECONDLY, WHILE WE HAVE A MORAP CASE FOR BOMBING NORTH VIETNAM WHEN IT DOES NOT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS, IT SEEMS TO BE REALLY STRETCHING THE POINT TO BOMB NORTH VIETNAM WHEN IT HAS ACCEPTED OUR PROPOSALS AND WHEN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS NOT. IF WE NOW STOP THE BOMBING AND THEN HANOI REFUSES TO MAKE A BILATERAL DEAL IN THE ABOVE SENSE, THEN WE CAN RESUME THE BOMBING WITH ALL THE GREATER EFFECT. ALSO OUR STOPPING THE BOMBING NOW WILL ALSO SHOW TO THIEU THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS. THUS, DESPITE WHAT I KNOW ARE PROBABLY YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS ON THIS ISSUE, I KNOW YOU WILL MAKE THE STRONGEST CASE POSSIBLE TO THE PRESIDENT. YOU SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO GAIN HIS CONCURRENCE TO END THE BOMBING FOR AT LEAST THE PERIOD THAT I WOULD HAVE BEEN IN HANOI. I SEE NOTHING BUT DISASTER IN MOCK TOUGHNESS NOW. WE WOULD HAVE NO BASIS TO GET MOSCOW OR PEKING TO HELL US WITHOUT A BOMBING HALT. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL NOT THINK WE ARE GETTING SOFT SINCE THERE ARE ENOUGH

8. STORIES NOW SUGGESTING THAT WE ARE NEAR AGREEMENT. WE CAN MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE ARE ONLY A FEW RELATIVELY MINOR DETAILS STANDING IN THE WAY OF AN AGREEMENT. I LEAVE TO YOU THE BEST WAY TO PRESENT THE ARGUMENTS FOR STOPPING THE BOMBING TO THE PRESIDENT AND AM COUNTING ON YOU TO GET HIS CONCURRENCE IN AT LEAST THE INTERIM HALT FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

6. YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT YOUR MISSIONS WITH THIEU HAVE BEEN NO MORE POPULAR THEN MINE. HE TOLD ME THAT WE IRREVOCABLY BROKE OUR BONDS WITH HIM WHEN YOU REQUESTED HIM LAST YEAR TO AGREE TO STEP DOWN. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY PARANOID.

7. UNLESS I HEAR TO THE CONTRARY, I NOW PLAN TO LEAVE SAIGON AROUND 1400 TOMORROW, MONDAY. BUNKER AND I HAVE A MEETING WITH THIEU AT 8:00 IN THE MORNING, BUT THIS IS STRICTLY FORMAL, IN ORDER

TO GIVE A PUBLIC EXCUSE FOR MY STAYING OVER UNTIL TOMORROW. WE CANNOT REPEAT NOT EXPECT ANY CHANGE IN HIS POSITION.

8. IF ALL OF US CAN NOW KEEP OUR SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE AND NOT PANIC IN THE FACE OF THIS TEMPORARY BAD TURN, WE WILL STILL BE ABLE TO GET NEARLY EVERYTHING WE HAVE SOUGHT. FURTHERMORE, IN THE LONG TERM IT MAY BE BETTER FOR AMERICA IF WE FINISH THIS PROCESS AFTER THE ELECTION. AND IT MAY EVEN HELP DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO SHOW THAT WE WILL NOT BE STAMPEDED BY ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS.

WARM REGARDS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE