

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET

August 25, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: Messages to Saigon and London Regarding Sir Robert Thompson's
Visit to Vietnam.

Arrangements for Sir Robert Thompson's visit to Vietnam have now been completed, and he has informed us of his schedule.

We attach two telegrams for Ambassador Bunker and Sir Robert Thompson respectively.

MORI/CDF
C05077002

RECOMMENDATION

That you send the two telegrams to Ambassadors Bunker and Sir Robert.

State Dept. review completed

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

NM *10/24*
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SEND VIA CAS CHANNELS

TELEGRAM FROM DR. HENRY KISSINGER

TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER

The President has asked Sir Robert Thompson to visit Vietnam again to provide him with an independent assessment of the security situation as well as political, economic, and military conditions.

I am sure that we can count on you and other members of the Mission Council to see to it that Sir Robert is again given all the facilities and assistance he needs to study the situation thoroughly.

Sir Robert will be communicating directly with the White House via CAS channels. As last year, he will be accompanied by Desmond Palmer, his former Chief of Staff in Malaya. Both will be traveling as consultants to RAND. They have regular clearances as well as SI clearances.

Since the news of Sir Robert's visit could well break while he is in Vietnam, he proposes to explain his presence by saying that he is doing a survey of the situation for the White House, as last year, and will be reporting direct in early October. He will not say anything more.

We have asked Sir Robert to visit Cambodia as well, if the opportunity arises. If he is asked about it in advance, he will be vague. We hope you can make arrangements to notify our Embassy in Phnom Penh in good time of Sir Robert's plans to go there.

Sir Robert and Mr. Palmer will be arriving in Saigon on Tuesday, September 1, via Air Vietnam 681 from Bangkok. Please arrange to have

accommodated as last time, with access to PX and medical

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TO EMBASSY LONDON

Please deliver this message from Dr. Henry Kissinger to Sir Robert Thompson (who can be reached at Pitcott House, Winsford, Minehead, Somerset, Telephone Winsford 200) or ask Sir Robert to read it at the Embassy before he leaves for Vietnam (Sir Robert may ask Mr. Desmond Palmer to come to Embassy to get the message on his behalf.)

"The President is pleased that you are going to Vietnam again, and is looking forward to your report.

"We agree with your press line to the effect that you are doing another survey for the White House, as last year, and will be reporting direct in early October. We concur that nothing more should be said, and we assume you will make no public comment on your impressions until you report. We agree you should be vague about visiting Cambodia, and see no reason even to make any additional comment such as its being an Indochina war.

"We are notifying Saigon of your arrival and are asking them to meet you and provide the same facilities and accommodations as last year. You will have the same clearances as well, [REDACTED]

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"We would welcome reports while you are in Saigon, if you have anything you wish to call to our immediate attention, and would particularly appreciate a preliminary report as you leave Vietnam for your other visits on the way back. We hope that you will be able to provide the same general

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on any subjects which you believe warrant our more detailed consideration here.

"I am sure you know as well as anybody the areas and subjects you will want to inspect. In reply to your letter to Dick Smyser, I have the following suggestions regarding topics of particular interest to us at this time, but they are not intended to be exhaustive :

"(1) The effects of the Cambodian operations, including effects of the new situation in Cambodia on enemy and our tactics.

"(2) Problems raised by new Viet Cong tactics, as in Phu Yen and Binh Dinh provinces.

"(3) The state of the Viet Cong infrastructure, and of such South Vietnamese organizations as the Regional and Popular Forces and the People's Self-Defense Forces.

"(4) The land reform program.

"(5) Possible political unrest resulting from the situation in the cities.

"(6) Instances of attempting to convert the ARVN into another U.S. Army.

"As you can see, that list is by no means exhaustive, but is merely intended as suggestive. There are obviously broader topics as well, such as security, Vietnamization, and the general situation, and we rely on you to determine what you consider important.

"We look forward to hearing your views when you return, and wish you a good trip."