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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

24 October 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Walt W. Rostow ✓
Special Assistant to the President

The Honorable Dean Rusk
Secretary of State

SUBJECT: Views of Vice President Ky on the Proposed
Bombing Halt as of 23 October 1968

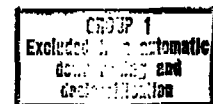
1. The following information was obtained on 23 and 24
October 1968 [redacted]

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a. The 23 October afternoon meeting between Ambassadors Bunker and Berger and President Thieu and Vice President Ky made it clear that a US/GVN agreement on terms of a bombing halt is unlikely. Ky was struck by the American refusal to "yield an inch" despite his own efforts to moderate further minimum GVN conditions. Ky had offered to delete any reference to a DRV agreement to meet with the GVN in Paris from the public statement he had earlier proposed, substituting instead just the GVN's expectation that it would shortly be participating in the talks. Ambassadors Bunker and Berger refused to accept this proposal, increasing Ky's belief that the Americans' orders are not discretionary, that they have been instructed to persuade, not bargain, and that a firm American commitment must already have been given to the DRV or Soviets.

b. Ky and Thieu had a lengthy discussion after the American Ambassadors departed. Both emerged from this session smiling

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and in good spirits and, unusually, Thieu walked Ky back to his office door. Ky told Thieu in this meeting that whatever their past differences, the President could count on his support 100 percent on the bombing halt issue. The two seemed agreed and united on this question as they have never been before.

2. The source believes it is useless for the Americans to try to persuade Ky and Thieu on the basis of what is best for Vietnam and should argue rather for the need for the GVN to swallow a bad pill now in return for American assurances of firm future backing on the question of clear primacy over the NLF in Paris talks.

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