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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

21 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

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

1. [Redacted]

a. Ky is pleased with Thieu's press conference statements at Vung Tau, calling the position which the President enunciated on a bombing halt one which all Vietnamese can support. Ky believes that the GVN leadership is more united on the bombing issue than it has been on any recent question, and although he had suggested a tougher line to Thieu, he has no policy on the bombing issue separate from the President's.

b. Ky sincerely believes that achieving an agreed GVN position on the bombing halt is not enough; it is vital also to reach agreement with the U. S. Ky proposed to Ambassador Berger on 18 October a possible compromise which Ky regards as eminently fair. This proposal calls for the announcement of a bombing halt "after consultation and agreement between the GVN, the USG, and the Allies" coupled with a statement that the DRV has agreed to meet with GVN representatives to explore ways to end the war. Ky believes this statement would meet the GVN's political need for a publicized quid pro quo and the source "understands" that it would be acceptable to Thieu. (Comment: Ambassador Berger says that no such specific compromise proposal was offered by Ky during their 19 October talk.)

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c. Ky believes that an important missing factor is knowledge of how the bombing halt proposal originated. He does not know whether the U. S. has already made secret commitments to the DRV or whether there is still room for considerable maneuver. He hopes to elicit this from Thieu or Ambassador Berger.

2. [] is convinced that both Ky and Thieu will go to some lengths to accommodate the U. S. on this question. Asked what the GVN might do if the U. S. simply announced a bombing halt unilaterally, he hazarded the guess it would issue a statement reserving its own rights and might even withdraw its observer delegation from Paris. If, however, after the American announcement, the DRV subsequently invited the GVN to talks in a manner which recognized the GVN's primacy in SVN affairs, the GVN would probably accept. [] considers Thieu's Vung Tau reference to the GVN refusal to sit down with the NLF in any guise unfortunate propaganda, since both Ky and Thieu are willing to settle for an NLF presence at Paris so long as the GVN does not appear to be placed on an equal footing with the Front.

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