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**INFORMATION**

Friday, May 3, 1968 -- 7:45 p.m.

*Pres file*

Mr. President:

The author of this is an old Yugoslav anti-Communist who works somewhere in the Pentagon. There is a great deal of wisdom in it, although one need not agree with every word.

His comment on the characteristics required of the U. S. delegation (pp. 6-9) I would accept.

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18 April 1968

THOUGHTS ON PEACE TALKS WITH HANOI AND ON THE  
PROBLEM OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT

I. General

1. In view of pending peace talks with Hanoi it is imperative to re-examine the formula of Communist negotiations strategy and to alert the US negotiators relative to the problems they will undoubtedly confront during negotiations with our communist enemies.
2. It is assumed that the US will have a considerable, if not decisive, role in negotiations (particularly in regard to continuation of the war or disengagement from it), although the final acceptance of settlement or resumption of war in Vietnam may entirely depend on the views of the Government of South Vietnam. The Government of South Vietnam may not necessarily follow the US advice; if it believed the peace terms were unacceptable from the point of view of security of South Vietnam. It is assumed that the other allies, with the possible exception of Korea, may support the US position and conform to a US decision. South Vietnam and Korea share at this time almost the same feeling in regard to the security of the area and dangers from communist expansion; their geographic position is in the part of the world which is in grave danger of Chinese Communist inundation.
3. Generally, the US negotiators must expect negotiations to be of long duration; the duration of the talks will depend almost exclusively on the enemy and his willingness to prolong it as long as he sees an advantage of so doing. All indications and Hanoi's behavior in the last two years confirms this belief: it is difficult to see the end of negotiations under the conditions Hanoi is trying to impose upon the US, and under existing unfavorable psychological settings now prevailing both in the US and around the world. Hanoi will not need to hurry since the bombing of North Vietnam, which materially and psychologically hurts the Hanoi war effort the most, is successfully, partially if not entirely, resolved. And as long as the US will keep the bombing pause, each day is a clear gain for Hanoi, politically and militarily. Of course, needless to say, each such day is a clear loss for the United States and her Allies.
4. Some of Hanoi's specific objectives in prolonging peace-talks as long as possible are the following:
  - a. Recuperation from serious, if not irreparable, setbacks the NLF suffered since the US and Allies undertook the offensive two years ago;
  - b. Repositioning of political and military forces for new assaults and new threats, and for psychological purposes;

c. ~~For hidden political and subversive purposes (all for internal bargaining).~~

5. One must expect that Hanoi will seize every opportunity to generate new problems, and to provoke new weaknesses within and among Allies, particularly in regard to public opinion, in hopes to force US and Allies to accept its terms. One must expect that talks may and probably will generate additional dangers and risks which may indeed exceed those connected with the continuation of war itself. The enemy will tend, hopefully without success, to defeat the real reason and purpose for which the United States and Allies have entered the war.

6. Hanoi regards negotiations as not a means of achieving a real settlement or peace, but as a means to gain their own terms. Moscow's seemingly positive attitude towards settlement (by influencing Hanoi to enter talks for peace), may be a well devised Soviet strategy to make US and Allies believe that the Kremlin is really interested in genuine peace, even if on US terms. This attitude is helping Hanoi more than the US and Allies since Hanoi and not the US, is hard pressed for time to recuperate from something which looks like a defeat. Only a few days ago (10 April, 1968), the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party called for a greater offensive against the West and made the statement that there cannot be peaceful settlement of different ideologies and systems of government. The war of ideologies, particularly the communist ideology against those of the West, is once again redeclared. This means that the wars of subversion, the so-called wars of national liberation, will continue even with more intensity. Formal settlement of war in Vietnam, which would not surrender the country to the communists, would surely mean for the communists a need for continuation of the war by subversion.

7. In the words of Hanoi's leadership, the communist strategy is "fighting while negotiating with an aim at opening another front". One of the "another fronts", we may be sure, will be a much more intensified politico-psychological effort through use of which the communists will try to separate Americans from the South-Vietnamese people, and the peoples of both countries from the "ruling cliques" and governments. This already has proved to be successful to a certain degree. But still more time for this is needed. The more time available the better. This strategy may result in greater political problems for the US; even more than if the war were escalated, although an escalation would probably lead to a quick end of it. Neither Chinese nor Soviets would risk a war for it. Further, the Chinese could do little if anything if confronted with a fait accompli.

8. The term "fighting while negotiating" must not deceive the US negotiators. Even if the Viet Cong stop all combat operations and movement of troops within the combat zone, and movement of supplies and troops

from North to South, that would mean his renunciation of hostilities by about 30 per cent (30%) only, since he has other weapons in his arsenal. His most dangerous and effective weapons are politico-psychological warfare and other subversive and sabotage operations (about 70% of his war effort) which he will continue to use without any restraint and with assured expectations of success. Of course, the principal targets are human beings. Actions by his militant infrastructure will include not only political agitation and propaganda, but direct and indirect pressure against the people and the Government of South Vietnam, and on public opinion abroad. In addition efforts will be made to incite student rioting, labor to slow down production, strikes in transportation and public facilities, and to pitch the political and religious groups into conflict with each other. This may well create chaos in South Vietnam from which only a well-disciplined organization, as the communists are, may profit. They may prove to be the only ones capable to deal with the chaos. The communist parties must be credited with such a capability since in the past they never have refrained from imposition of order by use of bloody suppression and of ruthless extermination of all opposition. The subversive infrastructure in South Vietnam may use for its support the Front Organizations, which although not fully communist oriented, often tend to support the communist cause for a variety of reasons.

9. It must be pointed out that never in the history of communism has a Communist Party offered or accepted negotiations out of strength. The contrary is true. The communists offered and accepted talks only when they were forced to do so because of circumstances; this because of a critical situation and/or weakness. Being masters of deceit and bluff, unparalleled in history, they were able to give the appearance of strength under conditions of real desperation and weakness, and even when they were on the brink of defeat. This was my experience in dealing with the communists in WW II in a situation similar to that in South Vietnam today. All indicates that this is the case now.\* Thus the US offer of talks is in itself a great success for Hanoi and NLF. And it is difficult not to agree with those who believe that the enemy is close to collapse. South Korean General Chae Myung Shin recently stated (10 April 1968) "that at this time only a little more push is needed to win the war."

\* It is not difficult to bluff in this type of war where a few resolute individuals with rockets in hand can knock down and set fire to hundreds of parked aircraft and vehicles, set a successful ambush, assassinate Marine Guards in front of the US Embassy, or penetrate in civilian clothes into Saigon, and so on. Psychological effects of such actions are always easier for the communist to achieve when they have as their opposing enemy people who are not psychologically prepared to accept these things and when the press, because of ignorance, contributes more to a negative psychological effect than the enemy actions do.

## II. Coalition Government

1. Hanoi and the NLF will seek a "coalition government" as soon as they realize that they cannot get something more, since the mechanism of "coalition governments" proved to be very useful to the communists in the past. They know very well how to utilize it for achievement of their goals. The idea of coalition looks particularly attractive at this time in view of the Presidential election in US since some candidates have already promised Hanoi a coalition government in which the NLF would be represented.

2. Dangers of a coalition government should not be overlooked. One must be especially careful because of the situation in Vietnam which is characterized by weaknesses which lend themselves to exploitation. The weak and immature political institution that exists in South Vietnam has no great chance to survive. More sophisticated nations like Czechoslovakia (to mention one only) could not survive it. The divided political parties and religious groups with opposite beliefs and goals represent a special weakness. Weak and inexperienced, lacking organization, discipline, and well-established goals, these parties and groups cannot begin to compete with the organization, discipline, and strategy of the NLF.

3. There should be an absolute veto of either a Hanoi representation in a coalition government or even a liaison or diplomatic mission, or a cultural or similar group. This could perhaps be allowed later, and only when the situation in South Vietnam improves and stabilizes, and when both the North and South Vietnam Governments agree on establishment of normal diplomatic relations. Such a Hanoi representation on a coalition government would only contribute to subversion in South Vietnam by Hanoi.

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4. The crucial point on which the US must insist is that NLF be given representation in a coalition government equivalent to what NLF really represents in terms of people. Control of parts of the territory, particularly if expressed only in terms of percentage, should be of less importance, although the South Vietnam Government assets in that regard are incomparably higher (80%) than those of NLF (20%). And, the NLF controls mostly the jungle and only a small part of the fertile land. Since the amount of representation to be given to the NLF is generally a problem least understood, and represents a real slippery ground, the US delegates must keep in mind the following:

a. Strength of all kinds of Viet Cong troops amounts to a total of about 300,000 or less, which is equal to two per cent (2%) out of total (17.2 million) of South Vietnam population. North Vietnamese regulars cannot be included in the NLF's assets.

b. Number of the NLF supporters (its infrastructure) in the government controlled areas which willingly support VC effort has been rapidly

diminishing, particularly after the TET offensive, and is today not more than 120,000 - 170,000 personnel or 1% of the total South Vietnam population. There may be an additional 1% of passive supporters who were coerced into supporting the VC infrastructure and will abandon it as soon as the fear of coercion ceases to exist. These should not be counted in NLF's assets. Neither should the so-called Front Organizations which are not communist organizations, but from time to time are exploited by the communists.

c. It is estimated that there are about 2.4 million of the population in so-called VC territories. Out of this number, the VC may, at the best, control not more than 240,000 or 10% of that population. This is based on experiences in the past. A very loose, if at all, control of the rest (90%) is a question of the actual situation of movement of the troops of either side closer to that population or of the combat situation. Control of these 90% can be attributed as an asset to either side. These 2.4 million were never given a chance to vote and freely select their sides.

d. In summing up, NLF controls not more than 660,000 - 710,000 individuals all together, or 4% of the total South Vietnamese population (17.2 million).

e. Considering what the enemy really represents in terms of people, the NLF should be given the 4% representation in a coalition government. It is advisable not to give NLF this percentage of representation in each ministry of the government (because of possible subversion and sabotage) but to give it some Ministry (Department of the Government) in which they can hurt the nation least. The Ministries of Police, National Defense, Education, and Transportation should in no case be given to the communists. The Ministry of Labor or Agriculture should be acceptable to them.

### III. Few Suggestions in Regard to U.S. Conditions for Peace Talks

If an agreement is reached that both sides should stop fighting during talks, the following should be added to probably existing agenda as the US conditions for continuation of talks:

1. Hanoi and NLF must stop not only combat operations and movement and repositioning of troops within combat zones in South Vietnam, but also all activities of infrastructure and utilization of Front Organizations for political and other covert type activities. The US objective should be to force the enemy infrastructure to register as a NLF agent and make it come into the open; and the Front Organization either to completely stop giving support to their infrastructure and to NLF, or to openly register as a NLF agent. It is of crucial importance that all subversive politico-psychological and other operations and activities among the people by these organizations be completely stopped.

2. Hanoi and NLF must stop their aggression and subversion in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, to prove their sincere desire for peace in the area. This is an important condition since the enemy may divert his military means for Vietnam in order to increase hostile activities in these countries.

3. The problem of aggression in Vietnam should not be separated from the total problem of subversive war in the whole area. If this is not accomplished the peace talks and agreements reached in regard to South Vietnam would not, generally speaking, improve the US situation in SE Asia. The US would have to regroup her forces into Thailand and probably Laos in order to cope with new problems there. This would be a clear loss for the US since all gains in South Vietnam would be abandoned and left to mercy of an eventual renewed action by the enemy; the psychological effect may be irreparable. There is little doubt that the US would ever be able to rebuild what she had lost in Vietnam and start all over again in order to give another chance for SE Asia to survive continued communist onslaughts.

#### IV. Points to Keep in Mind at the Bargaining Table

1. US should not permit the Hanoi Government and the NLF to be considered two separate parties at talks since that would give them an unnecessarily better bargaining position, possibly two votes. The whole war in South Vietnam is directed by Hanoi and since the NLF is an instrument of Hanoi, therefore, both should be considered one single bargaining party.

2. US delegation must always keep in mind that the US is talking from the position of strength and the enemy from the position of weakness. Fact is that the US strength and US successes in battlefield in Vietnam are real and the VC is at the brink of defeat. This must be considered a fact no matter what the US and foreign ill-informed and unfriendly newspapers, and leftist-pacifist elements may say and believe.

3. The US delegates must also keep in mind probable repercussion of peace talks not only on the psychological attitude of Southeast Asia, and Korea, but also on the whole world; on the credibility of the US policies and attitudes; and on all long-term politico-military and economic consequences of the talks.

4. NLF may change its name to something more attractive for the nationalist elements to join and to bring in a wider membership and obtain better support, but will never give up the party's leadership and control of such a wider group. The name of "National Alliance for Peace" was announced by NLF during and after the TET offensive. One must be prepared to deal with this problem; this trick must not be allowed to go unchallenged.

5. NLF may request as a condition for coalition that no officials of Saigon Government, or otherwise influential patriotic individuals, can be accepted as peace-talks delegates of Saigon Government if they served the French or Diem Regime or were on friendly terms with these. This excludes almost all members of South Vietnam Government, all the important military and civilian personnel of that government and almost all influential citizens. With such a request, to which NLF will give the widest possible publicity, the communists will try to discredit patriotic elements in the eyes of people and to eliminate from talks the first-rate negotiators.

6. Hanoi and NLF may come out with numerous proposals which must be carefully weighed. Here are some possibilities:

a. Proposal to organize "National Union Democratic Government" which would "guarantee basic freedoms to all citizens" (freedom of speech, residence, assembly, press, association, etc). Such a government organized by NLF, or controlled by NLF, would only assure a total communist take-over of South Vietnam.

b. "Montagnard will be given the option of autonomous regions, or their own governments, whatever they may wish," is another probable proposal in order to divide the nation and subjugate its parts separately (divide et impera).

c. "South Vietnam would establish diplomatic relations with East and West and would accept aid from any country that offered it." The slogan is tailored to soften the position of the US negotiators.

d. "Large landowners would not have their properties confiscated."\*

e. "Religious orders could continue to belong to their own churches and pagodas."

f. "Chinese would not be forced to adopt Vietnamese citizenship."

g. "Capitalists would be encouraged to expand their operations in industry and trade."

h. If talks develop with no satisfaction for NLF the communists may even go so far to request recognition of their sovereignty over so-called territory under VC control. From that territory as a base the subversion would start as soon as reinforcement and supplies have been brought in from the North. One must be ready for all these and similar slogans to properly react and to inform the public of South Vietnam what to expect if the communist regime is installed in Saigon.

\* Number of landowners executed in 1954-1956 by Ho in North Vietnam was about 10,000. People's courts were given a mandatory quota of death sentences for each town and village.

i. Prominent Catholics in South Vietnam have begun talking about migration out of Vietnam to Australia or Canada should the time come that peace talks seem headed toward a coalition government.\* This is an additional problem which one must keep in mind and be ready to deal with in case of concessions to the enemy.

j. Hanoi and NLF will play a coordinated game during talks in order to harass the US and Allies, to delay talks, to gain time, to weaken US determination and firmness, to denigrate the principles which US advocates, and to attempt to weaken her determination by eroding her patience. General lack of patience, which is our national weakness, will be tested and the communists know how to exploit it.

#### V. Suggestions in Regard to the Composition of US Negotiating Team.

. There is no doubt the US will select the most capable high level negotiators, therefore, my remarks here are directed to the middle and lower level action officers and diplomatic personnel, who will have to support the effort of their superiors, but also may come into position directly or indirectly to influence the strategy of talks and solutions.

1. In order to understand correct meanings of the communist terms and jargon in general, and to avoid traps, it is indispensable that only US personnel thoroughly knowledgeable of these be considered for selection. These persons must know or be supported by personnel who understand the enemy strategy of conquest and have a solid knowledge of the communist ideological and doctrinal approach to the "problems of negotiating with the capitalist enemy." No panel or working groups should be without such knowledgeable persons. It would be a grave mistake to appoint self-styled experts and otherwise good solid citizens, good patriots, but who are ignorant of the nature of problems and of tricks or finesse involved. Without true knowledge of the enemy strategy of conquest, doctrines and ideologies, and of ways the communists are doing things, even the smartest individual is exposed to the risk of making irreparable mistakes.

2. The members of the US negotiating team must keep in mind that the Asiatic mentality, background, education and philosophy, combined with the communist ideologies and morality, hate for "colonialism," "imperialism," and especially hate for the US "neo-colonialism" and "aggression," will characterize the opposite members at the negotiating table. Such a NLF member would be Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, a well-known French educated anti-American even before the war; he is a communist and well-known poker player with great skill at bluff.

3. Defeatists and pessimists should not be made members of the negotiating team. No individual who cannot rid himself (or herself)

\* New York Times, 7 April 1968, article by A. J. Langguth.

from prejudices and wrong conceptions (for example, that the US cannot win in Vietnam or that US and Allies have not already made great accomplishments on the battlefield and in the field of pacification) should be included in the US delegation.

4. Weaklings by nature and people without patience and courage, and without adequate mental and physical endurance, should not be included in the US group.

#### VI. Recommendation

Recommend the contents of this paper, or parts of it, be brought to the attention of Chief of Staff of the Army, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of State.