

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

~~DECLASSIFIED~~ WASHINGTON

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-298

~~SECRET~~ By lsp, NARA, Date 10-26-95

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 1967  
1:45 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Here are some thoughts about Viet Nam policy after the election.

1. Obviously, however it comes out, we must try to hold the military and civil elements together and encourage them to build a broad based government of maximum talents.

2. The new government should then draw up an appeal of maximum effectiveness to the Viet Cong to stop the war and join in the political process under the constitution. The heart of the matter here -- and it is not easy -- will be an offer to let the Viet Cong take part in political life on an organized basis under the constitution if they stop fighting. This means offering a formula not unlike that available to the Greek Communists. In Greece the Communists are also forbidden by the constitution to operate as a party; but by changing their name and accepting the constitution they do in fact operate.

3. The reason the Vietnamese have always feared this gambit is that they lack a big national political party capable of defeating the Communists in an election; and they lack the organizing gifts which the Communists have in Vietnam, as elsewhere.

You will recall that this point was discussed between Foreign Minister Do and Clifford/Taylor.

Therefore, we must proceed vigorously after a broad based government is formed to help the Vietnamese build a big national political party organization which would assemble as wide a spectrum of the non-Communist elements in the population as possible. This is a purpose for which we should be willing to provide them both funds and quiet technical assistance.

4. Against this background -- jointly with the new South Vietnamese government -- we should be prepared to have a bombing pause. We should go not merely to Hanoi through diplomatic channels but to the Russians, U Thant, the Indians, etc., and, in effect, tell them to put up or shut up.

Kosygin, for example, has reportedly said he could deliver them if we stop bombing. He should be reminded of this. Similarly, U Thant. The pause should be without conditions but, of course, not permanent

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and with the understanding submitted privately that we shall be watching closely whether they take advantage of the pause.

5. If this maximum effort doesn't work, we should then consider making the war very rough indeed for Hanoi.

*W.W.F.R.*