

October 6, 1967

W 10/11/67 35

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

I received from Henry Kissinger in the mail today the attached letter dated October 2 from M to K, setting forth M's version of his meeting with Bo on October 2.

When K asked M by phone today why he had not received M's original notes showing Bo's interlineations on the meeting of October 2, M said that what he had mailed was his own handwritten version of the meeting (i.e., the attached letter in its original form). M said he would discuss with A tomorrow the advisability of mailing the original notes to K.

In
Note: / today's phone conversation with K, M stated that in a recent conversation with Bo, Bo had said that "it took three days for communications from Hanoi to reach me."

BH Read

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Authority 7127 89-112

By kg/esp, NARA, Date 10-23-91

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Rome
October 2, 1967

350

My dear Henry:

The note that I sent you yesterday was written in cooperation with Raymond Aubrac on the basis of notes that I had taken and discussed at the time of my last interview of October 2, 1967 with Mai Van Bo. The discussion lasted one and a half hours. The greatest part of the time was devoted to making precise and full the different points of this note. More particularly point (a) is entirely written by Mai Van Bo as well as the preamble. Points (b) and (c) were written on my suggestion but practically controlled and reread phrase by phrase by Mai Van Bo. They were discussed at length more particularly from the point of view of the non-public declaration. Mai Van Bo is waiting for an answer from Hanoi to the notes taken by Raymond Aubrac at the time of our meeting with Pham Van Dong. I recalled to you that it is a matter of the cessation de facto with official message but non-public on the part of the USA. We also discussed the word official. It was understood on both sides that this term applies to a person mandated by the Government of the USA, and that Raymond and I in any circumstances could not be considered as official messengers.

Any communication made by our advice-can only be non-official. Although this has not been written in the note, it appeared obvious to me that the official contacts, public or non-public, could begin upon cessation of the bombardments, within a short time (some 3 or 4 days??).

On several occasions Mai Van Bo told me that by the speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of February 28 and by the last speech of Pham Van Dong the RDVN had taken a solemn engagement before world opinion. A public declaration from the USA would be a reply having the same character of commitment.

I think that if the RDVN is not at present making any comment with respect to the delays, it is because of a position of principle on the cessation of the bombardments without condition, but it appears to Raymond Aubrac and to me that these delays can only be very short.

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It seems to us essential that, starting now no escalation nor any compensation^(sic) of any kind must occur. A substantial^A deescalation would certainly be a factor of the highest importance.

The speech of President Johnson made a bad impression. Mai Van Bo, who was the first one to mention it to me, found it "insulting".

It is necessary to be very prudent with respect to the public statements. The least ambiguity is immediately interpreted in its most unfavorable meaning. The less public declarations are made the better it will be at this stage.

Very cordially,

October 3, 1967
1:00 p.m.

35c

Kissinger/Read Telecon

K received in the mail this morning the typed, unsigned communication set forth below from Rome on blank white paper without letterhead. The communication was in French, and K's verbatim translation follows:

"The position of the RDVN remains always the same. If the United States really wished to talk, let them stop first without conditions the bombardment of the territory of the RDVN.

"Starting from that position there are several eventualities:

(a) A public declaration by the Government of the United States about the cessation. This declaration could take place either before or after the cessation.

(b) An official declaration but non-public preceding the cessation of the bombardment. This declaration could be communicated by the channel K/A-M (officieusement) - not quite officially, and after this indication it can be transmitted officially by an accredited person.

(c) An end of bombardment without preceding official declaration followed by an official but not public communication of the Government of the United States.

"Eventuality (a) would represent a public declaration replying to that made on the 28th of January by M. Trinh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RDVN, which constitutes a solemn engagement to talk after the unconditional end of bombing. This public declaration would be followed by the transmission of an official text by an accredited person.

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"Eventualities (b) and (c) reflect the propositions of M and A as they result from their understanding of their conversation in July in Hanoi with the Prime Minister. A confirmation is expected soon." (End of message)

Upon receipt K phoned M in Paris to ask two questions:

(a) Where is the handwritten original, showing Bo's interlineations? and (b) What is the precise interpretation of (b)? M said he had mailed the handwritten original from Paris yesterday (October 3) by airmail special delivery.

M said everything in the message except (b) was approved word for word by Bo, and point (b) is based on M's notes of his October 3 meeting with Bo. M believes he has correctly stated Bo's views in (b) although that eventuality was reconstructed by M after the October 3 meeting. K asked M, who had not yet seen Bo today, to show formulation (b) to Bo immediately and get his views on its accuracy and meaning.