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Pres file

Saturday, September 23, 1967 -- 10:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

In the light of Gene's conversation with the Soviet Counselor, this observation of Joe Kraft's is interesting. Also attached is a paper by Bill Colby of CIA, which also approaches Viet Nam from a "two-war" point of view, which we are considering in Nick's Viet Nam group.

Sec. Rusk's discussion on Monday night with Gromyko should establish whether this is in fact the approach which Moscow is going to take. If it is, the next big step will be what Thieu says in his inaugural address about bringing the Viet Cong into the political process under the Vietnamese constitution.

There are many questions here, but this is the first time I have seen the beginnings of a common framework of thought emerging from Moscow, Washington, and Hanoi.

W. W. Rostow

Paris 3855
Memo by Colby, 22 Sept 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 94-401
By CL, NARA, Date 9-19-95

cc: Mr Goldstein

WWRostow:rlh

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Saturday, September 23, 1967

TEXT OF CABLE FROM PARIS (3855)

SUBJECT: Joseph Kraft

Columnist Joseph Kraft on his way back from the Far East came to see an Embassy officer on September 21. Kraft, who had spent the last couple of days in Moscow, said that in the Soviet capital he had met with the North Vietnamese Ambassador and the National Liberation Front representative. The former had told him that as a result of recent trips of Le Thanh Nghi, Soviet assistance to the North Vietnamese is presently running at a "rate of one billion dollars per year, or about twice as much as before."

Kraft thought that the most interesting recent development in Soviet-Vietnamese relations was the fact that Brezhnev received National Liberation Front representative Dang Quang Minh on September 18 and that this event was given extensive coverage on page one of Pravda. When the Embassy officer asked Kraft how he explained this and the fact that Brezhnev had referred in his statement to an "independent South Vietnam," Kraft speculated along the following lines: The North Vietnamese are interested in spreading the idea that there are two wars going on in Vietnam -- one in the North and the other in the South. The latter conflict concerns the National Liberation Front. This line, the North Vietnamese believe, will facilitate their task of obtaining Peking's acquiescence if North Vietnam ever decides to negotiate with the U.S. The North Vietnamese could claim negotiations would cover only U.S./North Vietnamese relations and not the war in the South. Latest Soviet moves which treat South Vietnam as a separate entity support this approach. In return, the Soviets have asked Hanoi to send a top-level delegation to the 50th Anniversary celebration -- preferably Ho or Dong -- which would assure the success of the celebration. The Embassy officer did not comment on this speculation.

Kraft has asked for an appointment with Bo on September 22.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94402

By 122, NARA, Date 3-24-95

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CC: WJ
Wm Lambert
done 9/22/67
22 September 1967

There are two wars in Vietnam, the war against North Vietnam and the war in South Vietnam.

The war against North Vietnam includes the air bombardment, the fighting in the DMZ area, and the infiltration further southward.

The war in South Vietnam includes the guerrilla war, the Revolutionary Development Program to build strength in the countryside, and the political development of constitutional government in South Vietnam.

These two wars were one in 1965, when the guerrilla war in South Vietnam had grown to the stage of major battles between battalions, regiments and even divisional units. The allied military victories in South Vietnam during 1966 and early 1967 won this big war in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese response to defeat in the conventional war in South Vietnam was to open the conventional war at the DMZ, where they can still bring larger units to bear.

There is no stalemate in the war in South Vietnam. The purely military victories have been followed by the gradual mopping up process of the pacification campaign, reducing the guerrilla threat and expanding the Revolutionary Development campaign areas. It is matched by the progress made toward constitutional government, building the structure upon which national unity can be founded to link these islands of Revolutionary Development. It can be won if the United States has the will and determination to sustain its political and defense effort, despite occasional setbacks, over the time needed to produce these fundamental changes in the Vietnamese body politic.

There is no stalemate in the North Vietnamese war. There has been progress in raising the cost of North Vietnamese infiltration southward into South Vietnam. North Vietnam is being subjected to a steady increase of pressure at home through the bombing campaign. North Vietnamese attempts to push

the DMZ fight southward have been repulsed. Since we have no intention to occupy North Vietnam, it can continue a flickering frontier war at the DMZ until it recognizes that its hopes for success are gone and the cost in bombing is excessive. Its hope that American determination will flag in 1968, and its continuing the North Vietnam war at whatever cost until then, is no stalemate.

If we can present the picture in Vietnam in terms of these two wars in our communiques, in our statistics and in our casualties, we might more clearly bring out that, while gradual pacification in South Vietnam and graduated pressure against the North must be sustained, our presence there is not thereby stalemated.

W. Colby