

Monday, October 23, 1967  
7:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

There is a good deal of the ring  
of truth in this assessment, notably  
the passage marked in red.

I shall try to find out who the  
"highly qualified Communist diplomatic  
source" is.

W. W. Rostow

UPI 044A (London)(by K. C. Thaler)

WWRostow:rlm

044A  
PEACE 10/23 NX  
WITH VIET 012A

BY K. C. THALER

41a

LONDON (UPI)--NORTH VIETNAM WILL REFUSE TO ATTEND ANY VIETNAM PEACE TALKS BEFORE THE 1968 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND WILL SPURN ANY ATTEMPT BEFORE THEN TO GET THEM TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE BY HALTING AMERICAN BOMBING ATTACKS, A HIGHLY QUALIFIED COMMUNIST DIPLOMATIC SOURCE SAID TODAY.

THE DIPLOMAT SAID PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH OF NORTH VIETNAM FEELS THERE IS NO POINT IN NEGOTIATING WITH PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID HO PREFERS TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION, TAKING A CHANCE ON A POSSIBLE MAJOR U.S. POLICY CHANGE.

THE DIPLOMAT SAID HO HAS PUT A HIGHER PRICE ON PEACE TALKS THAN A MERE CESSATION OF AMERICAN BOMBING.

HO WANTS ADVANCE RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF THE VIET CONG AND ITS POLITICAL ARM, THE SO-CALLED SOUTH VIETNAMESE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT, AS A FULL PARTNER TO ANY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

HO'S DEMAND IS PROMPTED BY THE COMMUNIST THESIS THAT ANYTHING SHORT OF FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE COMMUNIST-LED FACTION AS A KEY FACTOR IN SOUTH VIETNAM, PRIOR TO PEACE TALKS, WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A "KISS OF DEATH TO THE REVOLUTION IN VIETNAM."

THE DIPLOMAT REVEALED HO'S POSITION WHILE PASSING THROUGH LONDON.

IN A REMARKABLY FRANK ASSESSMENT OF THE VIETNAM SITUATION THE DIPLOMATIC INFORMANT--OSTENSIBLY WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THE COMMUNIST LINE--ALSO MADE THESE POINTS:

--HANOI REASONS THAT ONCE WASHINGTON DISCONTINUES BOMBING, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR IT TO RESUME IT IN THE FACE OF STRONG WORLD OPINION.

--HANOI ITSELF, HAS, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED, NEVER MADE ANY COMMITMENT TO START NEGOTIATIONS AS SOON AS A BOMBING PAUSE HAS BEEN REACHED. ALL PROMISES AND SUGGESTIONS TO THAT EFFECT HAVE COME FROM THIRD PARTIES, NONE OF THEM BINDING ON THE NORTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT.

--THE ESSENCE OF ANY NEGOTIATIONS FROM HANOI'S VIEWPOINT IS THE ADVANCE RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT IN THE SOUTH AS A FULL PARTNER TO ANY SETTLEMENT AND NOT MERELY A NEGOTIATING FACTION ACROSS THE CONFERENCE TABLE.

--FOR A FIGHTING REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH ITS OPPONENT WITHOUT ANY SUCH FIRM RECOGNITION IS TANTAMOUNT TO DEFEAT, SINCE ONCE ARMS HAVE BEEN LAID DOWN THE REVOLUTION MUST BE CONSIDERED DEAD.

--HANOI CAN CONTINUE TO FIGHT, WITH BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA FORCED, FOR THEIR OWN REASONS, TO SUPPORT IT WITH ARMS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.

--ANOTHER INSISTENCE OF THE HANOI REGIME WILL BE A FIRM AMERICAN UNDERTAKING, ALSO IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS, TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM, THE ONLY CONCESSION BEING THAT WITHDRAWAL NEED NOT BE IMMEDIATE AND IN ONE MOVE.

IT CAN THEREFORE BE ACCEPTED THAT HANOI PLANS TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT, PROBABLY THROUGH THE YEAR, THE SOURCES SAID.

JN653AED