

84

INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

~~SECRET~~/BUTTERCUP

Wednesday, November 8, 1967
9:00 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith, for information,
Sec. Rusk's suggestion to Amb. Bunker
that we not name U.S. prisoners, but
let them send out some in poor health.
The reason: U.S. picking some rather
than others by name would involve either
inequality or suggestion of importance of
individuals concerned, which could be
misleading.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-477

By lsp, NARA, Date 6-28-95

WWRostow:rln

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FM CIA

TO WHITE HOUSE

ZEN/DEPT. OF STATE

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ZEN/CAS SAIGON

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NODIS BUTTERCUP

FROM SECSTATE

TO: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON

THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVE FOR MR. ROSTOW

SECDEF, EXCLUSIVE FOR SECRETARY McNAMARA

SECSTATE, EXCLUSIVE FOR SECRETARY RUSK

DIRECTOR CIA, EXCLUSIVE FOR MR. HELMS

REF: A. SAI GON 526

B. SAIGON 509

C. CAS/WASHINGTON 49639

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED IN OUR BUTTERCUP MESSAGES TO YOU,
THEY ARE SUBJECT TO OUR DESIRE TO LEAVE FINAL DECISIONS ON DETAILS
IN YOUR HANDS.

THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR PRESENT SUGGESTIONS:

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-478

By , NARA, Date 4-3-96

1. WHILE WE AGREE ON DESIRABILITY OF TRYING TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF US PWS AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT, WE DO NOT THINK IT ADVISABLE TO GO BEYOND SUGGESTING THAT US WOULD REGARD IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SOME AMERICAN PWS (PARTICULARLY ANY WHO MAY BE IN POOR HEALTH) AS SIGN OF NLF GOOD FAITH MATCHING OUR GOOD FAITH IN RELEASING SAU HA AND THOSE CAPTURED THROUGH HIM AND OTHERWISE MEETING NLF CONDITIONS. WE PREFER TO AVOID NAMING EITHER SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR EXACT NUMBER OF PERSONS WE EXPECT TO BE RELEASED.
2. WE SUGGEST THAT A SENTENCE BE ADDED AT END OF PARAGRAPH 5D OF REF C ON INDICATING THAT US WOULD REGARD IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SOME US PRISONERS (PARTICULARLY ANY WHO MAY BE IN POOR HEALTH) AS APPROPRIATE SIGN OF VC GOOD FAITH. IN ORDER NOT TO DELAY POSSIBLE RELEASE OF US PWS, THIS GESTURE OF GOOD FAITH SHOULD BE PUT FORWARD AS SUGGESTION AND NOT AS PRIOR CONDITION. WE SHOULD STAND ON OFFER CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 5D OF REF C.
3. IF WE ARE GOING TO SUGGEST IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF US PRISONERS, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD ALSO ADVANCE SOME POSSIBLE MECHANISM WHICH WOULD AVOID GIVING CLEAR PUBLIC IMPRESSION OF AGREED EXCHANGE. ONE METHOD MIGHT BE TO HAVE NLF NOTIFY US THAT PWS IN POOR HEALTH WILL BE IN DESIGNATED AREA AT DESIGNATED TIME FOR EVACUATION BY US HELICOPTER. THE RELEASE COULD BE PORTRAYED AS HUMANITARIAN GESTURE.

4. WE ARE CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY RAISED IN REF B THAT SAU HA MAY NOT WANT TO RETURN TO NLF. WHAT IS CAS EVALUATION?

5. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD INITIATE FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH LOAN ABOUT POLITICAL CONTENT OF MESSAGE FROM NLF YOU MAY WISH TO OBSERVE, IF THIEU RAISES POINT, THAT WE DISAGREE WITH LOAN'S INTERPRETATION (REF B PARA 1) THAT THERE IS SERIOUS INCONSISTENCY IN NLF MESSAGE WHICH STATES BOTH THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT BROADER ISSUES THAN PW EXCHANGE AND THAT NOW IS NOT RIGHT TIME TO TALK PEACE. WE REGARD THE LATTER STATEMENT IN CONTEXT OF BALANCE OF MESSAGE PRIMARILY AS AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW NLF IN POSITION OF STRENGTH.

6. WE ARE AWAITING YOUR DRAFT RESPONSE TO NLF MESSAGE.

GP-1

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