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ACTION

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/BUTTERCUP~~

Monday, November 13, 1967
5:25 p.m.

Prev file

Mr. President:

Your clearance is requested on the attached cable now proposed by Sec. Rusk and Amb. Bunker to set the next stage of BUTTERCUP in motion.

In essence:

- it accepts the limited proposal on prisoners now to be released;
- it indicates in a single sentence (marked) our interest in subsequent political discussions.

The main reference cable is attached.

W. W. Rostow

OK _____

No _____

See me _____

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 94-477

By kg, NARA, Date 6-28-95

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

WWRostow:rln

~~SECRET~~

Amembassy SAIGON

STATE

NODIS-BUTTERCUP

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-478By ljp, NARA, Date 4-3-96

Ref: a: Saigon 576
 b: CAS Saigon 4407

1. We approve proposed response in para 1 of ref a but suggest that in para 1 sub para b, 1st sentence, the portion reading "cadres who were detained as a result of the August 1967 arrest" be changed to read: "cadres known to us to have been detained in connection with the August 1967 arrest".
2. We believe that this message should contain only brief reference to broader political subjects and should be cleared with the GVN and dispatched as rapidly as feasible. Therefore we suggest that following sentence be added as new sub-para e to proposed response set forth in para ¹ ~~1~~ of ref a: "We are, > hopeful that successful prisoner exchanges would provide the appropriate background for discussion of the broader political subjects raised in your message of October 19."

S/AH;Davidson:jmj 11/13/ 7541

The Secretary

Amb Bunker EA - Mr. Bundy S/S - Mr. Read

The Under Secretary

White House

~~SECRET~~

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 flimsy work copies before delivery to Telecommunications Operations Division

TELECOMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS DIVISION
Amembassy SAIGON

WORK COPY

~~SECRET~~

3. We note in ref b para 1f that Sau Ha is undergoing continued interrogation. We assume that he is receiving proper treatment and not being subjected to physical coercion or undue interrogation. Has CAS received sufficient information to evaluate prospects that Sau Ha will be willing to return to NLF?
4. Ambassador Bunker concurs.

END

~~SECRET~~

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FM CIA
TO WHITE HOUSE
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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-478

By 4-3-96, NARA, Date 4-3-96

~~SECRET~~ 01106Z VIA CAS CHANNELS

NODIS BUTTERCUP

FM CHARGE D' LOCKE SAIGON 576

TO THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVE FOR MR ROSTOW
SECSTATE, EXCL USIVE FOR SECRETARY RUSK AND AMBASSADOR BUNKER
SE CDEF, EXCLUSIVE FOR SECRETARY McNAMARA

DIRECTOR CIA, EXCLUSIVE FOR MR. HELMS

REFS: A. CAS WA SHINGTON 50294
B. SAIGON 551
C. CAS WASHINGTON 4 9639

1. OUR PROPOSED RESPONSE TO BUTTERCUP/1 (FIRST PORTION
PERTAINING TO POWS) FOLLOWS:

"A. WE HAVE TAKEN YOUR MESSAGE, WHICH WAS DELIVERED
TO US ON OCTOBER 26TH, UNDER MOST CAREFUL AND SERIOUS
CONSIDERATION. THIS STUDY, ENSUING DISCUSSIONS AND SUB-
SEQUENT DECISIONS WERE MADE JOINTLY BE SENIOR LEVELS OF
BOTH INTER ESTED PARTIES ON OUR SIDE.

B. WE HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO COMPLY WITH YOUR REQUEST:
YOUR ORIGINAL EMISSARY HAS BEEN SET FREE AND RETURNED TO YOU
ALONG WITH THE BEARER OF THIS MESSAGE WHO WAS EARLIER SET
FREE; CADRES WHO WERE DETAINED AS A RE SULT OF THE AUGUST 1967
ARREST OF YOUR EMISSARY HAVE ALL BEEN RELEASED AND INFORMED
THAT THEY MAY REMAIN FREE IF THEY DO NOT ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES
JUDGED DETRIMENTAL TO THE GOVERNMENT; THE CADRES LISTED BY
YOU IN YOUR OCTOBER MESSAGE ARE BEING GIVEN GOOD TREATMENT,
INCLUDING MEDICAL CARE. HAVING INDEPENDENTLY RELEASED SOME
OF YOUR PEOPLE WE SUGGEST A RECIPROCAL GESTURE BY YOU WOULD
BE IN ORDER.

C. WE BELIEVE THAT FOLLOWING THESE ACTIONS ON OUR
PART THE TIME IS PROPITIOUS FOR EXPEDITIOUSLY MOVING FORWARD
ON THE SUBJECT OF YOUR AND OUR IMMEDIATE CONCERN, THE RELEASE
OF PRISONERS. IN THIS REGARD WE BELIEVE THAT THE RADIO
CHANNEL ORIGINALLY PROPOSED TO YOU, IN OUR FIRST LETTER,
PROMISES BOTH SPEED, SECURITY AND SAFETY; WE SENT YOU OUR
FIRST MESSAGE ON THIS CHANNEL ON NOVEMBER 5TH AND NOVEMBER
8TH BUT FAILED TO RECEIVE ANY RESPONSE FROM YOU.

D. WE HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED
BY YOU IN BOTH YOUR FIRST AND SECOND MESSAGES REPRESENT
PERSONS THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO SEE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST
RECIPROCAL RELEASE OF PRISONERS. ON OUR SIDE WE WOULD WANT
YOU TO RELEASE AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY
THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN WOUNDED OR WHO ARE IN POOR HEALTH. UPON
RECEIPT OF A MESSAGE FROM YOU THAT YOU

THAT THEY MAY REMAIN FREE IF THEY DO NOT ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES JUDGED DETERIMENTAL TO THE GOVERNMENT; THE CADRES LISTED BY YOU IN YOUR OCTOBER MESSAGE ARE BEING GIVEN GOOD TREATMENT, INCLUDING MEDICAL CARE. HAVING INDEPENDENTLY RELEASED SOME OF YOUR PEOPLE WE SUGGEST A RECIPROCAL GESTURE BY YOU WOULD BE IN ORDER.

C. WE BELIEVE THAT FOLLOWING THESE ACTIONS ON OUR PART THE TIME IS PROPITIOUS FOR EXPEDITIOUSLY MOVING FORWARD ON THE SUBJECT OF YOUR AND OUR IMMEDIATE CONCERN, THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS. IN THIS REGARD WE BELIEVE THAT THE RADIO CHANNEL ORIGINALLY PROPOSED TO YOU, IN OUR FIRST LETTER, PROMISES BOTH SPEED, SECURITY AND SAFETY; WE SENT YOU OUR FIRST MESSAGE ON THIS CHANNEL ON NOVEMBER 5TH AND NOVEMBER 8TH BUT FAILED TO RECEIVE ANY RESPONSE FROM YOU.

D. WE HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED BY YOU IN BOTH YOUR FIRST AND SECOND MESSAGES REPRESENT PERSONS THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO SEE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST RECIPROCAL RELEASE OF PRISONERS. ON OUR SIDE WE WOULD WANT YOU TO RELEASE AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN WOUNDED OR WHO ARE IN POOR HEALTH. UPON RECEIPT OF A MESSAGE FROM YOU THAT YOU ARE UNDERTAKING THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS WE WILL PROMPTLY RECIPROcate. IN THIS RESPECT WE WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING FROM YOU IN ADVANCE WHERE THOSE PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED BY YOU WILL BE DELIVERED SO THAT WE MAY MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEM, ESPECIALLY THE SICK AND WOUNDED, TO BE PICKED UP BY HELICOPTER AND MEDICAL STAFF."

2. PLEASE NOTE THAT IN PARA A ABOVE, WE REFER TO "BOTH INTERESTED PARTIES" RATHER THAN NAME U.S. AND GVN. THIS INTENTIONAL IN VIEW OUR FEELING WE WOULD WANT PLAUSIBLE DISCLAIMER IF LETTER SURFACED OR FELL INTO WRONG HANDS.

3. PARA B COVERS COMPLIANCE WITH BUTTERCUP/1'S REQUIREMENTS WITH LAST SENTENCE ADDED RE RELEASE TO "SHOW GOOD FAITH" BUT RESTATED TO CALL IT "RECIPROCAL GESTURE." WILL INSERT NAMES OF "CADRES" RELEASED IN ABOVE INGOING MESSAGE ONCE HAVE ESTABLISHED PRECISELY HOW MANY INVOLVED AND EXACT NAMES. GENERAL LOAN'S OFFICE HAS THUS FAR NAMED A TOTAL OF ONLY THREE PRISONERS ARRESTED DIRECTLY AS RESULT OF INTERROGATION OF SAU HA. ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY WE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THERE WERE SEVEN OR EIGHT IN THIS CATEGORY, WE WERE TOLD SUBSEQUENTLY AFTER VIETNAMESE HAD ACTUALLY STUDIED THE DOSSIERS INVOLVED MORE PRECISELY, THAT THERE WERE ONLY THREE. WE ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY THIS DISCREPANCY.

4. HOPEFULLY, BUTTERCUP/1 WILL COME UP ON OUR RADIO LINK PER OUR REQUEST OR HE WILL SEND MESSAGE TO US THROUGH BUTTERCUP/2 RE PLACE WE CAN MEET TO PICK UP POWS RELEASED TO US.

5. AS SOON AS FIRST PORTION PERTAINING TO POWS IS APPROVED, WILL OBTAIN APPROVAL OF THIEU AND LOAN. DISPATCH OF THIS PORTION COULD THEN BE UNDERTAKEN IN ACCORDANCE PARA 8 OF REF C, LEAVING DISCUSSION OF BROADER POLITICAL ASPECTS WITH THIEU UNTIL YOUR VIEWS ARE FORMULATED. IF MESSAGES ARE SO SPLIT, REFERENCE TO A LATER MESSAGE ON THESE ASPECTS SHOULD BE ADDED AT THE END OF THE ABOVE RESPONSE. SINCE THIEU HAS RESERVED TO HIMSELF THE HANDLING OF THE "POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THIS MATTER", COMMENTS ON "BROADER ASPECTS" WILL NOT BE SHOWN TO LOAN UNLESS WE REQUESTED DO SO BY THIEU.