

INFORMATION

Monday, December 18, 1967
9:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

To save time I send immediately this approach to the peace matter, for 10:00 a.m.

I checked it with Bill Bundy who says it is okay in this form. At this particular moment he doesn't think we should overtly press Thieu beyond the fifth paragraph.

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Pres file

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rln

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This war could be ended in a matter of weeks if the other side would face 5 simple facts.

First, the demilitarized zone must be respected as the 1954 Agreements require. The unity of Vietnam as a whole must be a matter for peaceful adjustment and negotiation, probably over a long period of time.

Second, the North Vietnamese forces must get out of Laos and stop infiltrating through Laos. That is what the 1962 Agreement requires and it must be respected.

Third, the overwhelming majority of the people of South Vietnam want a one man, one vote constitutional government. About 70% of all the citizens who might have voted in South Vietnam registered in the election; almost 60% of them voted.

Fourth, the 20% or so of the population now under Viet Cong control must live under a one man, one vote constitutional system if there is to be peace.

Fifth, therefore, on this basis the South Vietnamese should start talking about how to end the shooting and live together on the basis of a one man, one vote system. President Thieu has said the South Vietnamese government is not prepared to recognize the NLF as a government and it knows well NLF's control by Hanoi. So do we. But he also said he is prepared for informal talks with members of the NLF and that these "could bring good results." *we think this is a statesmanlike position*.

I hope the other side responds to this offer. That is why our statement of December 8 said "We believe that the South Vietnamese must work out their own future, acting through electoral processes of the kind carried forward in the last two years.... The political future of South Vietnam must be worked out in South Vietnam by the people of South Vietnam."