

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC [726] 1965 APR 21 AM 12 00

INFO RUMJMA/AMEMBASSY MANILA 118

RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 29

RUHLHQ/CINCPAC 129

ZEN/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 72

STATE GRNC

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~~SECRET~~ APRIL 21 (SET ONE OF TWO)

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLI 9710
By [signature], NARA Date 8-22-97

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LODGE VISIT

LODGE MET WITH SIX MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CABINET, APRIL 20, FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS, TO REVIEW POLICIES AND ACTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. PRESENT WERE THE PRIME MINISTER, TREASURER HAROLD HOLD, MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS PAUL HASLUCK, MINISTER FOR DEFENSE SENATOR SHANE PALTRIDGE, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER FOR TRADE JOHN MCEWEN, AND MINISTER FOR LABOR WILLIAM

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MCMAHON. IN ADDITION PERMANENT SECRETARIES SIR JOHN BUNTING FOR PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, SIR JAMES PLIMSOLL FOR DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND EDWARD HICKS FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

THE PRIME MINISTER OPENED MEETING BY REQUESTING LODGE'S VIEWS ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR STABLE GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ATTITUDES OF THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS AND THE SOVIET RUSSIANS IN REGARD TO A SOLUTION OF THE VIETNAM PROBLEM, AND GENERALLY WHERE WE WERE GOING IN OUR PRESENT EFFORTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

LODGE RESPONDED THAT PROSPECT FOR STABLE GOVERNMENT WAS A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ANSWER IN VIEW OF FACT THAT PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, WHILE HAVING A SENSE OF PEOPLEHOOD, HAVE NO TRADITION OF NATIONHOOD; THAT, TRADITIONALLY, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN REGARDED AS AN EVIL AND THAT LOYALTIES

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-2- 726, APRIL 21 (SECTION ONE OF TWO) FROM CANBERRA

WERE RATHER GIVEN TO A SECT OR A TRIBE OR A SMALL REGION. ALTHOUGH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, GENERALLY, HATE DOMINATION BY THE CHINESE, MANY OF THEM CANNOT AS YET TRANSLATE THIS FEELING TOWARDS CHINA INTO A POSITIVE SENSE OF NATIONALISM FOR THEMSELVES. LODGE PRESENTED THE ANALOGY OF A PRE-BISMARCK

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GERMANY OR A PRE-CAVOUR ITALY WHERE THERE WAS ALSO LACKING A SENSE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MANY SMALL GROUPINGS.

LODGE STRESSED THE POINT THAT IN HIS OWN EXPERIENCE THE LACK OF A SENSE OF NATIONHOOD DID NOT MEAN THAT THE AVERAGE VIETNAMESE SOLDIER WAS LACKING IN COURAGE; ON THE CONTRARY. AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN VIETNAM, SAID LODGE, COULD NOT GET SATISFACTORY RESULTS SOLELY BY DEALING WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT; HE HAD ALSO TO DEAL WITH OTHER GROUPS WHO ARE BELOW THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

THE PRIME MINISTER PURSUED QUESTION OF POLITICAL VIABILITY OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO INQUIRE ABOUT VIETCONG. WHAT, HE ASKED, KEEPS THIS GROUP TOGETHER WITH SUCH AN APPARENT SENSE OF PURPOSE? LODGE REPLIED THAT TERRORISM IS A BIG FACTOR AND THAT THERE ARE, OF COURSE, SOME HARD CORE COMMUNISTS. THE INDOCTRINATION OF THE VIETCONG IS REGRETTABLY FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT ON THE OTHER SIDE. LODGE THEN EXPLAINED PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE HOPTAC PLAN. IF THIS INITIAL SUCCESS CAN BE EXPANDED TO THE SEVEN KEY PROVINCES AROUND SAIGON, WE WILL BE ON OUR WAY.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT ZENOPHOBIA AND EXTENT TO WHICH IT

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AFFECTED THE AMERICAN POSITION IN VIETNAM, LODGE REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NOT NEARLY AS MUCH ANTI-AMERICANISM AS ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED. THE VIETNAMESE KNOW THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT WISH TO REMAIN IN VIETNAM ONE MINUTE MORE THAN IS NECESSARY. WE ARE NOT REGARDED AS COLONIAL.

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-3- 726, APRIL 21 (SECTION ONE OF TWO) FROM CANBERRA

THE PRIME MINISTER INQUIRED ABOUT THE BUDDHISTS TO WHICH LODGE REPLIED THAT ANY GROUP THAT INCLUDED 8 OUT OF 14 MILLION PEOPLE OBVIOUSLY WAS IMPORTANT. LODGE SAID THAT THE CHIEF MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND THE BUDDHIST POLITICAL MOVEMENT WAS AN INITIAL FEAR THAT THEY WERE BEING LEFT BEHIND BY DEVELOPMENTS. THEY FEARED THAT THE CONTROL OF THE STATE WAS BEING TAKEN OUT OF THEIR HANDS. THEY ARE ANTI-FRENCH, ANTI-COLONIALIST, AND AGAINST CERTAIN CATHOLICS, BUT BY NO MEANS ALL. THEIR SENSE OF NATIONHOOD IS ESPECIALLY WEAK. BUT THEY MUST BE TAKEN EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY. WHILE THERE IS NO POLITICAL LEADER AMONG THEM WHO APPEARS TO HAVE CHARISMA AT THE MOMENT, ONE MAY YET EMERGE AND THE BUDDHISTS MUST BE CAREFULLY NURTURED AND TALKED TO. THEY HAVE ACTED CONSTRUCTIVELY ON OCCASION IN THE PAST.

LODGE SAID THAT THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF MILITARY ACTION

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IN WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED IN VIETNAM: A) WE ARE ENGAGED AGAINST THE NORTH AND THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY A U.S. ACTIVITY; B) WE ARE ENGAGED IN AN ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AGAINST FAIRLY LARGE UNITS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THIS WAS A JOINT U.S.-SOUTH VIETNAM EFFORT; AND C) WE ARE ENGAGED IN A BROAD SCALE COUNTER-SUBVERSIVE AND ANTI-TERRORIST ACTIVITY WHICH BY VERY DEFINITION HAD TO BE LED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, WITH U.S. BACKING.

WITH RESPECT TO OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE NORTH, WE HOPED TO CONVINCING THE DRV THAT THEIR AGGRESSION AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM WAS UNPROFITABLE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER THE CHINESE OR THE RUSSIANS WILL ESCALATE THIS CONFLICT TO A LEVEL OF WORLD WAR II WITH NUCLEAR STRIKES.

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Action

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1965 APR 20 PM 11 57

EUR ~~SECRET~~ APRIL 21 (FINAL SECTION OF TWO)

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USIA LODGE VISIT

NSC
INR PROPOSALS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CIA
NSA MR. HASLUCK CHANGED THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION BY INQUIRING
DOD ABOUT THE PROPOSALS FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS
AID OUTLINED IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT BALTIMORE. LODGE SAID
RMR THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS COMPLETELY SERIOUS ABOUT HIS REMARKS
IN THIS REGARD AS ATTESTED BY THE FACT THAT HE HAD APPOINTED
EUGENE BLACK AS HIS REPRESENTATIVE TO EXPLORE THE BASIS FOR

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A BROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH U THANT. THE JAPANESE WERE MUCH INTERESTED IN THIS PROPOSAL PROGRAM AND EVERYONE IN WASHINGTON FELT THAT IT HAD GREAT POSSIBILITIES. IT WAS STILL UNCLEAR HOW IT MIGHT BE ADMINISTERED ORGANIZATIONALLY; PERHAPS AS A KIND OF ASIAN OECD, BUT THIS WAS STILL AN EMBRYONIC IDEA.

BACK TO VIETNAM

HASLUCK INQUIRED ABOUT THE PHRASE "UNCONDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS" IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH. THE PRIME MINISTER INTERJECTED THAT HE FELT THE PHRASE WAS UNFORTUNATE IN THE SENSE THAT TOO MANY PEOPLE HAD MISINTERPRETED WHAT THE PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY HAD IN MIND. ON THE OTHER HAND THE GOA, ACCORDING TO HASLUCK, WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND ABOUT A POSSIBLE COURSE OF EVENTS IF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SHOULD RESPOND. WHAT DO WE NEGOTIATE? WHAT ARE OUR TERMS?

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-2- 726, April 21, (SECTION II OF II) from Canberra

LODGE RESPONDED THAT WE HAVE HAD MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH THE COMMUNIST DISREGARD FOR WORDS AND WE WOULD NOT BE SATISFIED WITH THESE. WE WOULD INSIST UPON VERIFIABLE, EFFECTIVE ENFORCEABLE INSURANCE AGAINST FUTURE AGGRESSION. AT THIS POINT THE PRIME MINISTER INTERJECTED THAT HE HOPED

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WE WOULD NOT BE SUCKED IN BY SUCH BLAND REQUESTS FOR A CEASE FIRE AS PROPOSED BY PEARSON OF CANADA. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT A SIMPLE CEASE FIRE WOULD NOT DO IN DEALING WITH THE COMMUNISTS. ONE WOULD HAVE TO INSIST ON AN ABSOLUTELY BINDING OBLIGATION TO PREVENT FUTURE AGGRESSION.

THE DISCUSSION THEN PROCEEDED TO THE ROLE OF SEATO IN THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THE PRIME MINISTER INQUIRED HOW WE INTERPRETED THE ROLE OF SEATO, IMMEDIATELY STATING THAT SO FAR AS AUSTRALIA WAS CONCERNED, IT WAS FELT THAT AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OR SEVERAL MEMBERS COULD ACT IN A PROTECTIVE ROLE TOWARDS SOUTH VIETNAM "IN THE SPIRIT OF SEATO." THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION AROUND THE TABLE WHETHER THERE WAS A NECESSITY FOR "UNANIMITY" ON THE PART OF SEATO MEMBERS, BUT BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HASLUCK INSISTED THAT THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TREATY TO PERMIT "INDIVIDUAL" OR SEVERAL ACTION WAS A VALID ONE.

THE MEETING WITH THE INNER CABINET ENDED ON A 15 MINUTE INTERCHANGE IN WHICH ALMOST ALL THE MINISTERS TOOK PART INQUIRING ABOUT THE DETERMINATION OF THE U.S. TO STAY IN VIETNAM AND SEE THE THING THROUGH. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT

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MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WERE CONCERNED (PERHAPS BY A MISINTERPRETATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S BALTIMORE SPEECH) THAT THE U.S. MIGHT "PULL OUT" OF VIETNAM PREMATURELY. LODGE EMPHASIZED THAT ON THE BASIS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WITH ALL TOP MEMBERS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, HE COULD REASSURE THEM THAT THE U.S. HAS NO INTENTION OF PULLING AWAY FROM ITS OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. LODGE WAS ASKED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO WHICH HE REPLIED THAT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE NEVER FAILED TO RESPOND TO LEADERSHIP AND HE HAS NO DOUBTS BUT THAT OUR LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON COULD AND WOULD PURSUADE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO COMMIT THE RESOURCES BOTH MATERIAL AND PERSONNEL REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT OUR COMMITMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

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