

INWARD CABLEGRAM

ISW.

I.23104.

FROM:

DATED: 28TH AUGUST, 1963.

1925.

REC'D: 29TH AUGUST, 1963.)

1029.

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON.

2319. SECRET.

FOR BARWICK FROM BEALE.

I SAW MCGEORGE BUNDY TODAY, AND ASKED HIM FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE POSITION IN VIETNAM AND FOR ANY COMMENTS HE COULD MAKE ABOUT UNITED STATES POLICY.

2. APPEARING TO PICK HIS WORDS WITH SOME CARE, HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES REGARDED THE POSITION THERE AS A VERY GRAVE ONE INDEED.

HE COULD ONLY SAY THIS PRIVATELY BECAUSE IF THE UNITED STATES SAID IT PUBLICLY THIS WOULD TEND TO AGGRAVATE THE POSITION, AND THEY WOULD BE ACCUSED OF DOING SO.

NO ONE COULD SAY WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, BUT IT WAS DOUBTFUL WHETHER DIEM COULD SURVIVE.

THERE WAS NOT MUCH COMING FROM LODGE YET, BUT THE VARIOUS ASSESSMENTS WHICH UNITED STATES HAD RECEIVED SEEMED TO AGREE THAT THE FEELING AGAINST DIEM WAS WIDESPREAD AND THAT A COUP COULD BE EFFECTED IF THE ARMY WISHED TO DO SO.

PERHAPS BUNDY'S CAREFULNESS WAS DUE TO LACK OF UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION, OR TO UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD DO., ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD BE THAT A COUP IS IN THE MAKING AND THAT BUNDY KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

3. I SAID THAT I DID NOT THINK AUSTRALIA WOULD BREAK ITS HEART IF DIEM WENT, SO LONG AS HE WAS SUCCEEDED BY A STRONG GOVERNMENT DETERMINED TO CARRY ON THE WAR AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS, WHICH WAS THE IMPORTANT MATTER IN WHICH WE WERE INTERESTED.

HE SAID THIS WAS EXACTLY THE UNITED STATES POSITION.

MALAYSIA.

4. BUNDY ASKED MY VIEW ABOUT THE MALAYSIAN SITUATION, AND I DREW UPON YOUR RECENT CABLES.

I ALSO TOLD HIM OF OUR AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA TO EXTEND OUR PRESENT MALAYAN COMMITMENT TO MALAYSIA, EXPLAINING THAT, ALTHOUGH THIS COMMITMENT WAS NOT THE SAME AS THE BRITISH COMMITMENT, THE SECURITY OF MALAYSIA WAS OF DIRECT CONCERN TO US.

HE SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS AN ACCEPTABLE POSITION FROM THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW.

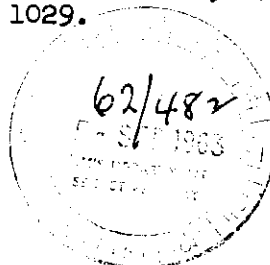
2/....

116

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET



Australian Archives 161
A1209/80
1962/482 PART 2
South Vietnam situation report 1962

INWARD CABLEGRAM

ISW.

-2-

I.23104.

SPEAKING WITH A SMILE HE SAID IT MIGHT LOOK TO SOME TO BE A LITTLE BIT 'FUZZED UP' AT THE EDGES, THE SAME AS SOME MIGHT SAY HAD NOW BEEN DONE AS REGARDS THE HARRIMAN STATEMENT ABOUT THE UNITED STATES COMMITMENT TO AUSTRALIA VIS-A-VIS MALAYSIA..

HE SAID THESE THINGS REALLY DID NOT MATTER, BECAUSE WE BOTH KNEW WHERE OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS LAY, AND COULD RELY UPON ONE ANOTHER IN THE EVENT OF REAL TROUBLE.

5. SPEAKING OF U THANT'S UNDERTAKING TO THE MALAYANS TO THE EFFECT THAT CONSULTATION WITH INDONESIA WOULD BE LIMITED TO GIVING THEM AN ADVANCE COPY OF HIS REPORT, BUNDY SAID HE THOUGHT U THANT WAS ACTING FAIRLY FIRMLY.

I SAID 'YOU KNOW, IT MAY YET BE NECESSARY TO STOP SUKARNO OVER MALAYSIA.

UNITED STATES DID THIS ONCE BEFORE TOWARD THE END OF THE BUNKER DISCUSSIONS OVER WEST NEW GUINEA, AND YOU MAY HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN.'

HE SAID HE AGREED ENTIRELY.

6. IN THE COURSE OF THIS DISCUSSION, I TOLD HIM OF OUR RECENT INCREASE IN DEFENCE EXPENDITURE AND OUR INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE.

IT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT FOR A COUNTRY LIKE THE UNITED STATES WITH ITS ENORMOUS RESOURCES, POPULATION, AND DEFENCE EXPENDITURES TO SEE IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE THE VERY MUCH SMALLER EFFORTS OF A COUNTRY LIKE AUSTRALIA, BUT I GOT THE IMPRESSION TODAY THAT BUNDY DID HAVE THIS IN FOCUS, AND THAT HE AND THE OTHERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE WERE HAPPY WITH THE WAY WE ARE PROCEEDING.

MIN. & DEPT E.A.
MIN. & DEPT DEFENCE
P.M.'B

29TH AUGUST, 1963.

for him
for him *see p/m 2/9*

Australian Archives 162
A1209/80
1962/482 PART 2
South Vietnam situation report 1962