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TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY ROGERS' NEWS CONFERENCE
AT THE WESTERN WHITE HOUSE, SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF.
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 1969

(Secretary Rogers) Gentlemen, I have just had an opportunity to report to the President about the trip that I took in Asia after I left him.

I told the President that I had found support, great support, for his Asian policy in all the countries that I visited. I visited Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China, and then returned to Indonesia for a few days, went to Australia and New Zealand. Without exception, the leaders of those countries were enthusiastic. Strongly supported the position the President was taking on this trip.

I think that, at least I felt and those in my party felt, our trip was most successful. The joint cabinet meeting we had in Japan was said by the Foreign Minister, after I left, to be the most successful joint cabinet meeting that he had attended.

At the ANZUS meeting in Australia, Prime Minister Holyoake, who I think has been at all the meetings, stated publicly that he thought it was one of the most successful meetings that he had attended.

So I am encouraged by what I think was the success of the trip. Certainly the President's trip was most successful. I am encouraged to think that our trip was, too.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, did you find any thought that some of our Pacific allies would like to withdraw their troops from Vietnam?

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(The Secretary) No, I did not find that sentiment expressed. I did find that, naturally, they were interested in our program and how fast it would proceed and how many troops would be replaced. And they did show an interest, as you might expect, in wanting to be phased in at some point along the line. But there was no feeling, I think, on the part of any that I talked to that any immediate withdrawal on their part should take place.

(Question) Do you have any new sign of encouragement of a lessening of hostilities in the war zone?

(The Secretary) Nothing other than what you have read. There still seems to be a lull in the activity, although I noticed that one or two days we have had some increased activity. But I think on the whole the conclusion is that the lull is still in existence.

I talked to Admiral McCain last night on the way in Honolulu. He felt that way.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, do you feel that the President's conditions for the further withdrawal of American troops are being met?

(The Secretary) I don't think the President has made any decision on that. He is considering that now. I think it will be some time before he will make a decision on whether to announce any further troop replacements or not.

(Question) Is there any indication that this new military activity by the enemy in Vietnam is going to continue and that the lull is ending? How do you interpret this new activity?

(The Secretary) I think it is too early. You can never tell what the enemy is up to. I wouldn't say that just because there was a little flurry that was the end of the lull which has been in existence now for some time, seven weeks or so, probably is still continuing.

(Question) Do you draw any diplomatic conclusions from the continuing lull? Does this mean they are trying to signal us, that they are in effect deescalating the war?

(The Secretary) There again, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from that at the moment. As is said in a press conference, I think in New Zealand, the other day, I don't understand, if they are trying to give

us a signal, they don't just tell us. They are in communication with us all the time. We will have to analyze their activity and make our decisions based on what they do rather than what they say.

(Question) Is there any new sign of encouragement coming from Paris?

(The Secretary) I don't think I have anything to add to what has been in the press on the Paris negotiations.

(Question) Is enemy infiltration from the North still down?

(The Secretary) Yes, it is. It is down to a considerable extent.

(Question) Can you give us any figures on what it is running now?

(The Secretary) No, I can't.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, what was your reaction to Red China's bellicose reaction to your proposals to reopen talks?

(The Secretary) It is a little difficult to figure out. When I was in Hong Kong I made some statements to the effect that the United States was prepared to attempt to normalize some of our relations -- with them to see if it was possible to become somewhat more friendly in order to reduce tensions.

In the next day, there was a very vitriolic attack on me calling me a plague of war. I have a little difficulty in the logic of that, why, when you say you would like to be a little friendlier, they call you a war lord. So I have difficulty in giving any answer to your question.

(Question) Is it about what you expected or does it go beyond what you expected?

(The Secretary) It is about what I expected. This seems to be their propaganda attack. Whether this is what they mean or not is another thing. But they seem to love to engage in this hyperbole and venomous attacks on people without any reason.

I want to say our point is that we would like to reduce tensions in the world. Obviously, a nation that is causing a great deal of tensions is Communist China. We can't reduce tensions if they are not willing to.

We are willing to. We are willing to discuss matters with them. We are willing to be more friendly. If they don't want to, that is up to them. We would like to very -- much.

(Question) Mr. Secretary, what are your plans at the Western White House? Will you be staying on all week or longer?

(The Secretary) I am staying on most of the week. I have not decided yet. I am going to the astronauts dinner and then we have a Security Council meeting the next day. Then President Park is coming. So I am not sure whether I will go back to Washington and then return. I have a house and my wife is here. So chances are I will stay a week or so.

(The Press) Thank you.
