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U.S. POLICY IN VIETNAM SUCCEEDING, BUNKER SAYS IN SAIGON (350)

SAIGON -- U.S. AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER RETURNED TO SAIGON OCTOBER 14 AFTER SIX WEEKS ON HOME LEAVE AND WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS.

"I COME BACK FEELING THAT OUR POLICY HERE IS SUCCEEDING AND THAT WE ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION" THE AMBASSADOR TOLD REPORTERS ON HIS ARRIVAL.

MR. BUNKER WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, ALSO ON LEAVE FROMM HER POST AS AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL.

AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAID THAT THEIR TRIP WAS THE FIRST HOME VACATION FOR HIM IN ABOUT THREE YEARS (SINCE HE TOOK CHARGE OF THE AMERICAN MISSION TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM). HE ADDED, "I'M GLAD TO GET BACK."

"I HAD A CHANCE TO SEE A GOOD MANY PEOPLE, HEAR A LOT OF VIEWS ABOUT THE SITUATION HERE," HE CONTINUED. "AND I ALSO HAD A CHANCE TO TELL THEM WHAT I THOUGHT THE SITUATION WAS LIKE HERE, AS WELL. AND I GATHERED SOME INFORMATION AND, I THINK, IMPARTED SOME INFORMATION."

"I DID HAVE A CHANCE, AS YOU KNOW, TO TALK, TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY ROGERS AND OTHER TOP OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT. I THINK THESE WERE USEFUL DISCUSSIONS THAT WE HAD."

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IN REPLY TO CORRESPONDENTS' QUESTIONS, AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAID HE CARRIED NO RPT NO LETTER FROM PRESIDENT NIXON TO PRESIDENT (NGUYEN VAN) THIEU BUT EXPECTED TO SEE PRESIDENT THIEU SOON.

HE DECLINED COMMENT ON QUESTIONS ABOUT SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS BUT IN REPLY TO ONE ABOUT THE "VIETNAM MORATORIUM" DEMONSTRATIONS PLANNED IN THE UNITED STATES, HE RESPONDED: "I CERTAINLY DON'T THINK THEY HELP THE SITUATION HERE."

AT THE SAME TIME, HE AFFIRMED THAT "OBVIOUSLY, IN THE UNITED STATES, EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE, AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS OPINION ABOUT THE WAR, OR ABOUT ANY OTHER SUBJECT." HE CONTINUED, "I HAPPEN TO THINK, I'M CONVINCED, THAT WE'RE ON THE RIGHT COURSE HERE. AND I THINK -- NOT EVERYONE MAY AGREE WITH THIS --- BUT I THINK IN GENERAL THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS PRETTY GOOD SUPPORT FOR THE COURSE HE IS TAKING." ITEM

10/14/69 316PM GD