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AUST 9-70
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VIETNAMIZATION CALLED STEP TOWARD VIETNAM PEACE (BKGR) (450)
BY AN IPS WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

9/70

WASHINGTON -- THE MIDDLE EAST IS POTENTIALLY MORE

DANGEROUS, BUT VIETNAM IS STILL THE MOST ANGUISHING PROBLEM CONFRONTING PRESIDENT NIXON.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT IN THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE VIETNAM WAR, THERE ARE NO BRILLIANT SOLUTIONS LEFT, ONLY THE NEED TO MAKE A PEACE THAT WILL ENDURE.

THE OFFICIALS, SPEAKING TO U.S. MIDWESTERN NEWSPAPER AND BROADCASTING EXECUTIVES AT A RECENT BRIEFING ON FOREIGN POLICY, EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON, ON TAKING OFFICE, WAS CONFRONTED WITH A SITUATION IN BEING, WITH NO OPTION OF DECIDING IN THE ABSTRACT WHETHER THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN VIETNAM. (THE FOREIGN POLICY BRIEFING WAS GIVEN WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE NAMES OF THE OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN WOULD NOT BE USED.)

MR. NIXON HAS SET AS HIS GOAL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM VIETNAM AND PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THOSE LEADERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO GENUINELY PEACEFUL PERIODS HAVE BEEN MEN WHO WOULD NOT LET THEMSELVES BE DEFLECTED FOR SHORT TERM GAINS, AND WHO KEPT THEIR EYES ON THE LARGER OBJECTIVE.

THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES HE HAS AN OBLIGATION TO THE PEOPLE WHO ELECTED HIM TO CARRY OUT POLICIES CONDUCIVE TO A LONG-TERM STRUCTURE FOR PEACE.

HIS VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM IS A STEP TOWARD THAT GOAL OF AN ENDURING PEACE AND A GENUINE, NOT ILLUSORY, RELAXATION OF TENSIONS.

IT IS AN INDUCEMENT, THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES, FOR HANOI TO GET DOWN TO MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS AT THE PARIS PEACE TALKS BY PROVING TO THE COMMUNIST COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN NORTH VIETNAM THAT NEGOTIATION IS PREFERABLE TO PROLONGED CONFLICT WITH DIMINISHING PROMISE OF VICTORY.

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IT IS AN INSTRUMENT FOR POINTING OUT HANOI'S OWN SELF-INTEREST; AND WASHINGTON DOES NOT BELIEVE HANOI WILL NEGOTIATE UNLESS SUCH SELF-INTEREST CAN BE SHOWN.

THE OFFICIALS REASON THAT AS SAIGON BECOMES STRONGER AND LESS LIKELY TO ACCEPT NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE WAR, NORTH VIETNAM WILL SEE ITS OWN INTERESTS SERVED BY A DIPLOMATIC CONCLUSION THAT WOULD INVOLVE WASHINGTON AS WELL AS SOUTH VIETNAM.

THUS FAR HANOI HAS REFUSED FRUITFUL NEGOTIATIONS AT THE PARIS PEACE TALKS.

(THE REMARKS ON THE PARIS NEGOTIATIONS WERE MADE BEFORE THE VIET CONG DELEGATION ISSUED A STATEMENT THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS THE BEGINNINGS OF A PEACE INITIATIVE. WASHINGTON HAS THE STATEMENT UNDER STUDY, AND HAS NOT YET PUBLICLY EVALUATED IT.)

WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE PARIS TALKS, THE OFFICIALS SAY, MR. NIXON IS DETERMINED TO REDUCE THE U.S. PRESENCE IN VIETNAM CONSISTENT WITH THE NIXON DOCTRINE.

RECOGNIZING THAT NEGOTIATION IS PROBABLY STILL THE MOST RELIABLE WAY TO PEACE, THE PRESIDENT WILL PROCEED WITH THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM, CONVINCED THAT IF HANOI OPENS SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS IT WILL BE DUE AT LEAST IN PART TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CONCEPT. ITEM

9/21/70 630P GD