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BRIEFING BY SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS

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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
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HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

POLITICAL SUPPRESSION IN VIETNAM

I have another question: There have been a number of news reports in recent weeks concerning political suppression in South Vietnam. Has the United States done anything to protest these actions, assuming they are true, they are real, and have we attempted to bring about a widening of a political base of government there?

Secretary ROGERS. The answer, Senator, to both those questions is, yes, and I think we are encouraged by the general attitude of the present government. I don't mean that they always do everything that we would want, and we have to recognize their rights and their sovereignty, but we have been aware of these things that you have mentioned and we find that the government is quite cooperative, and I think they realize that some of these suppressions may have adverse impact in other parts of the world, and I think there has been considerable improvement in that regard.

Senator AIKEN. Well, I thought President Thieu's recent statement was very gratifying indeed. I believe most everybody found it so.

POLITICAL SOLUTION IN VIETNAM

As to the problem of a political settlement in Vietnam do you think a solution is possible without there being a revision of a constitution which outlaws communism?

Secretary ROGERS. I would think it probably would be better for us not to get involved in that. I would think that that would be a subject of negotiation.

Senator AIKEN. Probably the number of real Communists in South Vietnam is exaggerated anyway. They have almost a sure formula for revolution there. When the resources of any country get into the control of too few hands, it is almost a certain formula for revolution.

I don't want to take up too much time. I have these two questions of Senator Cooper who has asked me to put them to you. You have answered them, I am sure, in part. The questions are rather long and the answers will be short. I will read:

U.S. RESPONSIBILITY TO ENTER TALKS NOW

"It has been widely reported that last summer the Soviets had agreed to enter into negotiations on limitation of offensive and defensive weapons systems. Progress towards the actual beginning of negotiations moved rapidly. An agenda was agreed upon, negotiators were selected and we were on the verge of talks. We all know that Czechoslovakia and the election prevented these talks from proceeding. It is known that following the election of President Nixon, the Soviet Union delivered a note to him saying once again that the Soviet Union wished to enter into talks on the limitation of offensive and defensive weapons systems. As the hearings conducted by Senator Gore have so clearly indicated, the time before what I believe to be an irreversible next round in the arms race begins, is very short. Approval of the President's proposed ABM deployment, if it comes at all (and it may be defeated in the Senate) will not come for six months. It is my view