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Task Force  
the information

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 8, 1972

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Dear Mr. President:

On this day after my reelection I wish to reopen our dialogue about the draft agreement to end the war.

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I must first of all express my deep disappointment over what I consider to be a dangerous drift in the relationship between our two countries, a tendency which can only undercut our mutual objectives and benefit the enemy. Your continuing distortions of the agreement and attacks upon it are unfair and self-defeating. These have persisted despite our numerous representations, including my October 29 letter to you. They have been disconcerting and highly embarrassing to me.

In my previous communications, and in the presentations of Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Bunker, we have repeatedly explained why we consider the draft agreement to be sound; we continue to believe that it reflects major concessions by the other side, protects the independence of South Vietnam, and leaves the political future to the South Vietnamese people themselves. You are fully informed as well about the massive resupply movement that is underway to strengthen your forces before a ceasefire. I have repeatedly given firm guarantees against the possibility that the agreement is violated. I have offered to meet with you soon after the agreement is signed to symbolize our continuing support. I will not recount here the numerous arguments, explanations, and undertakings that have been made. They all remain valid. In the light of this record, the charges made by some of your associates are becoming more and more incomprehensible.

We are in any event resolved to proceed on the basis of the draft agreement and the modifications which we are determined to obtain from the North Vietnamese which General Haig will discuss with you. With regard to these changes in the agreement, I wish to make clear what we can and cannot do:

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-- With respect to the political provisions, we will weaken the Vietnamese translation of the phrase "administrative structure" to make even clearer the fact that the National Council is in no way a governmental body. As you know, we never agreed to the North Vietnamese use of the phrase "chinh quyen" and we will do our utmost to see that the phrase "hanh chanh" is substituted. In Article 9(f) we will also press for a sentence that makes clear that the membership of the Council is appointed equally by both sides. And in Article 9(g) we will attempt to dilute the already weak functions of the Council. In any event, as we have explained to you on numerous occasions, it is obvious that the Council has no governmental authority.

-- With respect to North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam, we will treat this problem in two ways. First, we will press for the de facto unilateral withdrawal of some North Vietnamese divisions in the northern part of your country. Secondly, we will introduce wording at the end of Article 9(h) which stipulates that troops should be demobilized on a one-to-one basis and that they should return to their homes.

-- With respect to the demilitarized zone, we will press in Chapter V for language that says it will be respected by the parties.

-- In Article 15(d) we will insist on deleting the inadvertent reference to "three Indochinese countries" and substituting "the Indochinese states."

-- In addition, we will do our best to obtain as many as possible of the changes in wording your government suggests which are of a more technical nature.

We will use our maximum efforts to effect these changes in the agreement. I wish to leave you under no illusion, however, that we can or will go beyond these changes in seeking to improve an agreement that we already consider to be excellent.

It seems to me you have two essential choices. You could use the public support your recent actions have mobilized to claim the military victory the agreement reflects and to work in

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unity with your strongest ally to bring about a political victory for which the conditions exist. You could take the political and psychological initiative by halting the settlement and carrying out its provisions in a positive fashion. In this case I repeat my invitation to meet with you shortly after the signature of the agreement, in order to underline our continued close cooperation.

The other alternative would be for you to pursue what appears to be your present course. In my view this would play into the hands of the enemy and would have extremely grave consequences for both our peoples and it would be disaster for yours.

Mr. President, I would like you to tell General Haig if we can confidently proceed on this basis. We are at the point where I need to know unambiguously whether you will join us in the effort General Haig is going to outline or whether we must contemplate alternative courses of action which I believe would be detrimental to the interests of both of our countries.

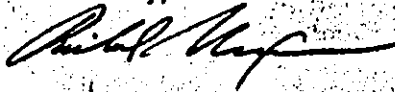
I hope that you and your government are prepared to cooperate with us. There is a great deal of preparatory work that needs to be done, and we believe joint US-GVN task forces should begin working together so that we will be in the best possible position to implement the settlement.

It is my firm conviction that your people, your armed forces, and you have achieved a major victory which the draft agreement would ratify. It is my intention to build on these accomplishments. I would like to work with you and your government in my second term to defend freedom in South Vietnam in peacetime as we have worked during my first term to defend it in conflict.

In four years you and I have been close personal and military allies. Our alliance has brought us to a position where the

enemy is agreeing to conditions which any objective observer said were impossible four years ago. Our alliance and its achievements have been based on mutual trust. If you will give me continued trust, together we shall succeed.

Sincerely,



His Excellency  
Nguyen Van Thieu  
President of the Republic of Vietnam  
Saigon