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COMMUNIST PROPOSAL DENOUNCED AS 'EMASCULATION' OF S. VIETNAM (550)

1972

PARIS, SEPT. 14-- U.S. AMBASSADOR WILLIAM J. PORTER TOLD THE COMMUNISTS SEPTEMBER 14 THAT THEIR PROPOSAL FOR A TRIPARTITE GOVERNMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WAS UNREASONABLE AND UNWORKABLE, BOTH "PROCEDURALLY AND SUBSTANTIVELY."

THE U.S. CHIEF NEGOTIATOR AT THE 159TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE PARIS TALKS SAID THE VIET CONG PLAN LISTED PRECONDITIONS WHICH, HE UNDERSTOOD, WERE MADE BEFORE THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT.

" YOU PROPOSE A GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF FIRST, THE VIET CONG, SECOND, ~~THE~~ NEUTRAL GROUP OF PERSONS WHO FAVOR 'PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, ~~NEU~~TRALITY AND DEMOCRACY' AS YOU HAVE DESCRIBED THEM, AND THIRD, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON," MR. PORTER SAID, CONTINUING:

" UNDER YOUR FORMULA, THE UNITED STATES SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE FIRST STEPS TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A GOVERNMENT BY ORDAINING CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF SOUTH VIETNAM."

PRE-CONDITIONS

SPECIFICALLY, THE U.S. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE CHANGES DEMANDED INCLUDED: THE DEPARTURE OF THE CHIEF OF STATE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND HIS SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS IN THE ARMY AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT, THE RELEASE OF ALL NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG PRISONERS OF WAR AND CIVILIANS DETAINED FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE, AND A TOTAL CHANGE OF THE POLICY OF THE "EMASCULATED SAIGON GOVERNMENT THUS CREATED."

AT THE SAME TIME, MR. PORTER SAID, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY WOULD REMAIN IN SOUTH VIETNAM DURING AND AFTER THESE CHANGES AND WOULD NOT CEASE MILITARY ACTIVITY THERE UNTIL THE TRIPARTITE GOVERNMENT WAS FORMED.

"MOREOVER," AMBASSADOR PORTER TOLD THE COMMUNISTS, "YOU ARE SILENT AS TO WHEN THAT WOULD HAPPEN. YOU WOULD RELEASE NONE OF OUR MEN WHO ARE PRISONERS, NOR WOULD YOU ACCEPT ANY OF YOUR SICK AND WOUNDED MEN WHOM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAS OFFERED TO REPATRIATE, UNTIL ALL YOUR CONDITIONS, POLITICAL OR MILITARY, WERE MET."

SUCH PRECONDITIONS, HE TOLD THE COMMUNISTS, ARE FAR FROM "TRANSITIONAL" IN NATURE, BUT WOULD DETERMINE THE OUTCOME NOT ONLY OF ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON A FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT ALSO OF ANY ELECTIONS WHICH "YOU MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY CHOOSE TO HOLD IN SOUTH VIETNAM"

HE SAID SUCH PRECONDITIONS, IF MET, WOULD DEPRIVE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OF ANY POLITICAL OR MILITARY LEADERSHIP, WHILE ALL NORTH VIETNAMESE PRISONERS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST THE STATE WOULD BE RELEASED TO PREY ON THE PUBLIC.

"IS THIS HOW YOU CONCEIVE OF EQUAL STRENGTH AND EQUAL FOOTING?" HE ASKED THE COMMUNIST SIDE. "WHAT YOU ARE AFTER SEEMS CLEAR. YOU ARE TRYING TO PREDETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND YOU FEEL YOU MUST AVOID AT ALL COSTS A PEOPLE'S DECISION UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION."

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AMBASSADOR PORTER, EMPHASIZING THE ABSURDITY OF THE SITUATION, READ A SHORT PASSAGE FROM AN ENGLISH CLASSIC: "LET THE JURY CONSIDER THEIR VERDICT," THE KING SAID FOR ABOUT THE 20TH TIME THAT DAY. "NO, NO," SAID THE RED QUEEN, "SENTENCE FIRST-- VERDICT AFTERWARDS."

HE SAID THIS EXPRESSES "YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT AN INDEPENDENTLY ORGANIZED AND INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED ELECTION TO DETERMINE THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. HE SAID THE UNITED STATES HAS AGREED TO ABIDE BY SUCH AN ELECTION OR ANY OTHER POLITICAL PROCESSES SHAPED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE THEMSELVES. YOU WANT TO SENTENCE THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY TO A COMMUNIST EXISTENCE BEFORE THEY CAN RENDER A VERDICT OR VOTE."

~~SECRET~~

IN LATER REMARKS AT THE SESSION, AMBASSADOR PORTER CHALLENGED THE COMMUNIST SIDE TO RESPOND TO THE OFFER OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO REPATRIATE 600 SICK AND WOUNDED NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS CAPTURED IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

HE SAID THIS WOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH A LETTER SENT BY NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT TON DUC THANG IN JULY DECLARING IT THE DUTY OF THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OF NORTH VIETNAM TO LOVE AND HELP SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

~~SECRET~~ (9/14/72)