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EPF-40 HANOI'S STRATEGY: MORE TALK AND MORE FIGHTING (580)

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 14/1972--THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN HANOI'S BASIC

MAN STRATEGY--MORE TALK AND MORE FIGHTING. OVER THE YEARS, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP HAS ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED RATHER FRANKLY THAT TALKING, OR NEGOTIATIONS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF ITS WAR POLICY, EXACTLY LIKE THE ACTUAL FIGHTING ON THE BATTLEFIELD. MILITARY SUCCESSES ARE TO BE USED TO REINFORCE NEGOTIATING POSITIONS, AND POLITICAL MOVES ARE INTENDED TO WEAKEN THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE OTHER SIDE.

THE LATEST MOVE ON THE "TALKING" FRONT HAS BEEN THE SEPTEMBER 11 PEACE PLAN. A CAREFUL READING IN NO WAY BEARS OUT FIRST REPORTS THAT IT REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT MODIFICATION OF HANOI'S CONDITIONS FOR PEACE. IT WAS, OF COURSE, THE INTENTION OF THE STATEMENT TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF SUCH A CHANGE. AMERICAN CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, AMBASSADOR WILLIAM PORTER, IN ENTERING THURSDAY'S MEETING OF THE PARIS PEACE TALKS, CALLED THE LATEST HANOI STATEMENT AN UNDISGUISED ATTEMPT TO PUT THE VIET CONG INTO POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM WITHOUT AN ELECTION. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP CANNOT STAND THE THOUGHT OF AN ELECTION UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION. SAIGON'S REPRESENTATIVE, PHAM DANG LAM POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN THE HANOI PROPOSAL AND, THEREFORE, NOTHING NEW WORTH REJECTING.

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 STATEMENT BEARS OUT THESE SUMMATIONS. THE STATEMENT REITERATES THE LONG-HELD COMMUNIST POSITION: TOTAL AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL, THE OVERTHROW OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT, AND THE IMPOSITION OF A THREE-PART COALITION GOVERNMENT. ANY DIFFERENCE IN LANGUAGE BETWEEN THIS

STATEMENT AND THE OLD SEVEN-POINT PEACE PLAN OF THE VIET CONG IS UNDERMINED BY THE SPECIFIC ENDORSEMENT OF ALL SEVEN POINTS. THERE IS THE CLAIM IN THE NEW STATEMENT-- NOT FOUND IN PREVIOUS PRONOUNCEMENTS-- THAT THE OTHER SIDE AGREES WITH THE UNITED STATES THAT NEITHER A COMMUNIST REGIME NOR A U.S. "LACKEY ADMINISTRATION"-- AS IT IS CALLED-- SHOULD BE IMPOSED ON SOUTH VIETNAM. WHILE WE FIND NO DIRECT DEMAND FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU, THE SEPTEMBER 11 STATEMENT SAYS THAT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT NGUYEN VAN THIEU CAN ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

THE DEMAND FOR TOTAL U.S. WITHDRAWAL THIS TIME INCLUDES ALSO "TECHNICAL PERSONNEL" AS WELL AS THE END OF ALL SUPPORT FOR THE THIEU ADMINISTRATION. IT IS EASY TO SEE WHAT LITTLE NEGOTIATING POWER A SAIGON GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE AFTER ALL U.S. MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT HAS CEASED. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SEPTEMBER 11 STATEMENT DROPPED SOME OF THE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS ADVANCED PREVIOUSLY FOR THE FORMING OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. IT REPLACED THEM WITH THE ALL-INCLUSIVE DEMAND FOR THE END OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR SAIGON. ON THE PRISONER RELEASE, THE LATEST STATEMENT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT IT WILL COME ONLY AFTER A FULL MILITARY AND POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS ACHIEVED.

SO MUCH FOR THE "TALKING" PART OF HANOI'S STRATEGY. IT IS DEVISED WITH THE AMERICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN CLEARLY IN MIND. THE "FIGHTING" PART OF HANOI'S POLICY IS NOT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, ALTHOUGH IT, TOO, AIMS AT THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE. AS AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES POINT OUT, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT NORTH VIETNAM WILL START A NEW MILITARY OFFENSIVE IN THE SOUTH LATE IN SEPTEMBER OR EARLY IN OCTOBER. THE AIM WOULD BE TWO-FOLD: TO PROVE THAT THE AMERICAN BOMBING OFFENSIVE HAS NOT BROKEN HANOI'S ABILITY TO SUSTAIN AN OFFENSIVE AND TO IMPROVE ITS BARGAINING POSITION IN PARIS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE AMERICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ITEM