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TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS BRIEFING BY DAVID F. LAMBERTSON
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1972, 4:25 P.M.

MR. LAMBERTSON: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

In his only additional remark this afternoon Ambassador Porter made the following statement:

"I am surprised that your side has chosen to reveal the content of private negotiations, contrary to the understanding not to do so. Your decision is all the more surprising in the light of your own assessment of the significant progress that had been achieved, and since we consider that negotiations have not ended."

Those of you who were outside the building when the Ambassador left will recall his saying that there would be no substantive comment on Hanoi's recent activities from us today. That kind of comment will come, in the first instance, from Washington.

Therefore, I will have to be most reticent in discussing the Hanoi statement, which gives you Hanoi's version of events and Hanoi's version of the elements contained in an accord.

Now with that very large proviso, I'll try to answer questions.

Q. David, Xuan Thuy just told us a little while ago, that when Ambassador Porter mentioned the question of the breach of secrecy, that he, Xuan Thuy, said that the United States had many times before done exactly the same thing, and he even cited President Nixon's statement in January of this year, in which the President said that the best way to serve peace is to make public, proposals we advanced in private talks.

Did the Ambassador reply to that? Or can you ...

A. The Ambassador made only one additional remark. He did not reply to that.

I refer you to the statement that the Ambassador made, particularly the second sentence, and suggest that perhaps circumstances today are not the same as circumstances in January of 1972.

Today, by their own account, progress had been made. We consider the negotiations have not ended. In January, there had been no progress, and the talks had in fact been broken off.

Q David, Ambassador Porter finished his statement with the statement, "We consider that negotiations have not ended."

Negotiations between the United States and North Viet-Nam, or negotiations between the United States and ...

A No, I think it's obvious what he meant, Edith.

Q It's not obvious to us.

Q No, it's not obvious to me. Would you please explain?

A Negotiations with the other side -- Hanoi.

Q David, would you have any comment on Xuan Thuy's statement that the two sticking points had to do with the resupply of arms and ...

A No, Bob, I have no comment on that, nor on any other of the remarks that Xuan Thuy made today. We haven't had a chance to look at the transcript, and that also falls under our general "no comment" policy today. Sorry.

Q David, your remarks seem to suggest that the agreement, as has been released by the North Vietnamese is not the one we think we entered into -- to the degree

of course, or the proviso, that we feel the negotiations haven't ended.

Am I right in thinking that the public text that you have had a chance of seeing and doubtless are aware of ... is the wrong version?

A I won't comment Jonathan, except to say again that this is their version of what has happened. Our side has not been heard from.

Q Well, would you say it's a wrong version?

A I'm not going to say whether its right or wrong. I'm saying simply that it's their version.

Q Well reading, then, from your own statement which says negotiations are not ended, does that mean, then, that there hasn't yet been an agreement? Would you say?

A I'll "no comment" that, Serge.

Q Did you make arrangements to meet next week?

A Yes, we did.

Q Who ...

A The other side proposed a meeting and we agreed.

Q David, Xuan Thuy, in his statement and also in his press conference -- in his statement it said that

the Government of the U.S., with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam -- and in the press conference he said that the United States entered into bilateral talks as representative of South Viet-Nam. Is that not the American understanding of the situation?

A I have no comment on that, Flora.

Q Also, Xuan Thuy mentioned two messages from the President of the United States to the Prime Minister of North Viet-Nam. Can you tell us whether ^{or not} those messages are going to be made available?

A No, I can't tell you that.

Q David, do you yet know what form the Washington comment will take? Kissinger, Nixon, who is going to say what, when?

A I don't know what form it will take, nor do I know exactly when there might be some comment in Washington.

Q Today?

A I'm not sure, Jon.

Q David, I realize you can't comment on what was said today by the North Vietnamese, but in view of what they said, do you feel this sets back, or

advances the Paris Peace Talks?

A I am in no position to address that kind of question. [Laughter.]

Q What can you say today, David?

A Very little, as I have amply demonstrated, I think. [Laughter.]

Thank you very much.

[Whereupon at 4:32 P.M. the briefing was terminated.]