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SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE TO US JANUARY 11 NOTE ON VIETNAM

REF: STATE 7284

1. ON JANUARY 23 QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA BOLLE PASSED TO EMBOFF THE QUAI'S JANUARY 21 NOTE TO THE EMBASSY THANKING US FOR THE JANUARY 11 NOTE WHICH IT "DULY NOTED" (TEXT FORWARDED SEPTEL).

2. BOLLE SAID FRENCH EMBASSY WASHINGTON HAD INFORMED GOF THAT VIETNAM WORKING GROUP HEAD HAD INFORMED FRENCH EMBOFF THAT USG WOULD APPRECIATE CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS INTERESTED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO GET VIEWS ON THE MEANS OF RESUMING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE PARTIES. GOF HAD TAKEN DUE NOTE OF THIS VERBAL REQUEST, NOT CONTAINED IN THE TEXT OF THE NOTE ITSELF. BOLLE SAID GOF WAS NOW AS IN THE PAST READY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH THE U.S. ON THE VIETNAM SITUATION. TO ASSIST IN MAKING

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PROGRESS IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE ALONG THE PATH SET FORTH IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THE GOF WOULD CONTINUE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND DISCUSS VIETNAM PROBLEMS WITH U.S. BOLLE SAID SUCH EXCHANGES COULD TAKE PLACE IN PARIS OR IN WASHINGTON THROUGH EXISTING CONTACTS. BOLLE ASKED THAT THIS ORAL GOF RESPONSE TO VIETNAM WORKING GROUP REQUEST BE REPORTED TO WASHINGTON.

3. COMMENT: BOLLE WAS GIVING THE CONSIDERED FRENCH RESPONSE CONCERNING ONLY THE U.S. DESIRE FOR CONSULTATIONS; HE WAS NOT CHARGED AT THIS TIME WITH ENGAGING IN SUCH CONSULTATIONS. GOF WILL NOW BE AWAITING USG DECISION AS TO WHETHER SUCH CONSULTATIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON OR PARIS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: BOLLE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER US ENVISAGED BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSE WE SHOULD MAKE TO QUAI CONCERNING USG INTENTIONS CONCERNING SUCH CONSULTATIONS INCLUDING WHETHER THE US WILL CONSULT "OTHER GOVERNMENTS" BILATERALLY ONLY.
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