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SUBJECT: SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS ON RVN-PRG
NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STOCKHOLM 1627

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON SUMMONED ME TO HIS HOME SUNDAY AFTERNOON TO INFORM ME OF THE IMPRESSIONS HE HAD GAINED FROM HIS TALKS LAST WEEK IN PARIS WITH FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVARNARGUES AND FROM SECRETARY GENERAL ASTROM'S CONTACTS WITH PHAM BAN BA. ANDERSSON SAID GOS IS PERSUADED THAT PRG IS "SERIOUSLY INTERESTED" IN NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT WITH SAIGON, WITH THE ONLY PRECONDITION THE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THEIU. HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED THAT SHOULD THE MILITARY SITUATION OF SAIGON DETERIORATE FURTHER, THE PRG MIGHT LOSE INTEREST IN NEGOTIATION. ANDERSSON SPOKE OF INCREASING PRESSURES FROM HIS OWN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOR RECOGNITION OF PRG. HE SAID THAT HE AND PRIME MINISTER PALME WOULD CONTINUE FOR THE PRESENT TO RESIST SUCH PRESSURES, SHOULD THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WORSEN PERCEPTIBLY, THEN THE GOS WOULD FEEL CONSTRAINED TO MOVE TOWARDS RECOGNITION OF THE PRG. I ASSURED THE FOREIGN MINISTER I WOULD REPORT HIS VIEWS ON THE PRG ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS PROMPTLY TO MY GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SVEN ANDERSSON CALLED ME TO HIS RESIDENCE LATE SUNDAY AFTERNOON. ANDERSSON SAID HE WISHED TO CONVEY TO ME THE IMPRESSION GAINED FROM HIS TALKS LAST WEEK IN PARIS WITH FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVARNARGUES AS WELL AS THOSE OF SECRETARY GENERAL SVERKER ASTROM WITH PHAM VAN BA, THE PRG'S "AMBASSADOR AT LARGE" IN EUROPE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT SINCE HE LEAVES TODAY (APRIL 21) FOR TEL AVIV, HE WANTED TO PASS ON THIS INFORMATION PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE.

3. ANDERSSON SAID THAT IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH SAUVARNARGUES AS WELL AS ASTROM'S WITH PHAM VAN BA, THE SWEDES HAD TRIED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF FINDING A MEANS TO GET PEACE TALKS INITIATED BETWEEN THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT AND THE PRG IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER BLOODSHED IN VIETNAM. ACCORDING TO ANDERSSON, SAUVARNARGUES HAD COMMENTED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO PASS ON TO THE USG HIS (SAUVARNARGUES') VIEWS ON THIS TOPIC BUT HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS NOT "GETTING THROUGH" TO HIS AMERICAN LISTENERS.

4. THE MAIN IMPRESSION THE GOS DERIVED FROM ITS TALKS IN PARIS IS THAT THE PRG IS "SERIOUSLY INTERESTED" IN NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT WITH THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. THE REASONS FOR THIS, THE SWEDES BELIEVE, ARE TWO: FIRST, THE PRG IS CONCERNED THAT BY SEEMING TOO INTRANSIGENT TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS IT WOULD DAMAGE ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND SECONDLY, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE PRG WOULD LIKE TO AVOID THE SACRIFICE OF MEN AND MATERIEL THAT AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON SAIGON WOULD ENTAIL. ANDERSSON EMPHASIZED THAT, AS OF LAST WEEK, THE PRG SEEMED GENUINELY INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS; HOWEVER, SHOULD THE MILITARY POSITION OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT DETERIORATE RAPIDLY, THE PRG MIGHT WELL LOSE INTEREST IN NEGOTIATIONS.

5. I REPLIED THAT THE INTEREST OF THE PRG IN NEGOTIATIONS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT ASKED WHAT PRECONDITIONS THE PRG HAD SET TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS, POINTING OUT THAT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED ITS WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE OTHER SIDE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. ANDERSSON ANSWERED THAT THE PRG IS INSISTENT THAT PRESIDENT THIEU MUST GO AND "SOME OF THE GENERALS" AS WELL. HOWEVER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ADDED THAT HE WOULD WISH TO CHECK OUT THIS POINT FURTHER WITH ASTROM. (LATER, ANDERSSON AIDE NOTIFIED ME THAT THE ONLY PRECONUIION OF THE PRG WAS THE REMOVAL OF THIEU ALONE FROM OFFICE. HE ADDED THAT IT IS, OF COURSE, NOT POSSIBLE TO KNOW WHAT OTHER CONDITIONS THE PRG MIGHT PRESENT ONCE THE NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN. I REPLIED THAT THE USG IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND THAT ONLY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE COULD DECIDE WHO THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AT ANY NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE.

6. ANDERSSON SAID THAT LAST WEEK BOTH HE AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE SPEECHES AT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEETINGS IN LINKOPING AND STOCKHOLM, RESPECTIVELY, AND HAD FACED CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM PARTY MEMBERS FOR IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION OF THE PRG. IT WAS ONLY BY STRENOUS EFFORT THAT THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO WARD OFF SUCH PRESSURES. ANDERSSON SAID THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE HAD USED THE ARGUMENT THAT IF THE GOS WERE TO RECOGNIZE THE PRG NOW,

IT WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO WORK FOR THE INITIATION OF NEGOTIATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. I ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IF HE FELT THE GOS WOULD BE ABLE TO "HOLD THE LINE" ON THE PRG RECOGNITION QUESTION. ANDERSSON REPLIED THAT FOR THE MOMENT THE GOS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT MOVE TO RECOGNIZE THE PRG, BUT ADDED THAT IF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENTS SITUATION DETERIORATED DRAMATICALLY, THEN THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO RECOGNIZE THE PRG AS THE DE FACIO GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

7. I EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOS RESISTING PRESSURES FOR PRG RECOGNITION, POINT OUT THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO A PROLONGATION OF THE WAR RATHER THAN NEGOTIATIONS, SINCE SUCH ACTION BY THE GOS AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS WOULD ONLY HARDEN THE ATTITUDE OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. I ADDED THAT WHILE THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT DOES APPEAR BLEAK, THE FORTUNES OF WAR COULD CHANGE AND A STALEMATE MIGHT DEVELOP. ANDERSSON SAID THAT THE GOS IS AWARE OF THE USG DESIRE TO GET NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY.

8. I TOLD ANDERSSON I WOULD NOTIFY MY GOVERNMENT PROMPTLY OF THE GOS VIEWS, AND WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH HIM IF I RECEIVED ANY REACTION.

9. COMMENT: THE FACT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF SUMMONING ME TO HIS RESIDENCE ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON PERSUADES ME THAT, DURING HIS TRIP TO PARIS LAST WEEK, HE MUST HAVE RECEIVED REASONABLY CONVINCING INDICATIONS THAT THE PRG IS WILLING TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. ANDERSSON HAD INFORMED ME EARLIER (REFTEL), THAT THE SWEDES APPEAR CONVINCED THAT THE PRG, IN CONTRAST WITH HANOI, WOULD PREFER A POLITICAL SOLUTION RATHER THAN A MILITARY ONE. THE REPORTED RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU THIS AFTERNOON WOULD SEEM TO ADD TO THE TIMELINESS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S INFORMATION.
STRAUSZ-HUPE