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SUBJECT COMMENTS OF AN ALLEGED PRG SPOKESMAN TO AN INTERMEDIARY OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DON ON OPENING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS; DON'S COMMENTS ON A POSSIBLE APPROACH THE GVN COULD TAKE IN SUCH NEGOTIATIONS

1. ON 11 APRIL 1975, AN INTERMEDIARY OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DON AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE DESIGNATE TRAN VAN D O N MET WITH DR. TRAN VAN D U , DIRECTOR OF THE LABORATORY OF MEDICAL ANALYSIS, WHOM DON BELIEVES HAS GOOD CONTACTS WITH PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT (PRG) FIGURES. DON HAD ASKED THE INTERMEDIARY TO MAKE THE CONTACT.

2. DU TOLD THE INTERMEDIARY TO INFORM DON THAT THE CONTINUATION OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN T H I E U IN OFFICE CONSTITUTES A "BLOCK TO NEGOTIATIONS," AND HIS CONTINUATION IN POWER IS "NOT NEGOTIABLE." THE PRG ALSO REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE WITH MEMBERS OF THE NGUYEN BAN C A N GOVERNMENT, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF TRAN VAN DON. ACCORDING TO DU, THE PRG DEMANDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) BE HEADED BY A "NEUTRAL" FIGURE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT BE COMPRISED OF "THIRD FORCE" PERSONALITIES AND "LEFTISTS." THE PRG WILL REFUSE TO DEAL WITH ANY OF THE "THIEU CLIQUE", SAID DU, BUT THE GOVERNMENT MAY CONTAIN "PRO-AMERICAN POLITICIANS."

3. DU SAID THAT THE COMMUNIST STRATEGY "AT THE MOMENT" IS TO CUT SAIGON OFF FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE COUNTRY, BUT NOT TO ATTACK SAIGON. DU INSISTED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO BLOODBATH IN SAIGON; THE PRG CONSIDERS SAIGON "RIPE" AND READY TO FALL; ALL THE COMMUNISTS HAVE TO DO IS ISOLATE SAIGON, AND THIS WILL IN TURN CAUSE A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AND A NEUTRALIZATION OF THE GVN. DU SAID THAT ONCE THE GVN BECOMES NEUTRAL, THE COMMUNISTS BELIEVE THERE

WILL BE NO FURTHER OPPOSITION AND THEY CAN TAKE THEIR TIME TO ASSUME FULL CONTROL. DU CLAIMED THAT THOSE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNISTS TO BE "HARMFUL" WILL BE PUT ON TRIAL. OTHERS WILL BE LEFT IN PEACE. DU SAID THAT TRAN VAN DON SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST BEGIN AND BEGIN SOON. ONLY IN THIS WAY CAN PEOPLE BE EVACUATED FROM SOUTH VIETNAM IN AN "ORDERLY FASHION." DU SAID HE COULD FORESEE THE POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNIST TROOPS MOVING INTO SAIGON IF COMMUNIST FORCES ENCOUNTER LITTLE OR NO OPPOSITION FROM GVN FORCES. SHOULD THIS OCCUR, EVACUATION WILL BE "IMPOSSIBLE" FOR EVERYONE. DU AGAIN STRESSED THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BE INITIATED IMMEDIATELY. (FIELD COMMENT: THE INTERMEDIARY WAS SLATED TO PASS DU'S COMMENTS TO DON THE NEXT DAY. DON HAD EARLIER ON 11 APRIL ADVISED THE INTERMEDIARY THAT HE JOINED THE CAN CABINET IN ORDER TO HELP IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS. DON ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT THE CAN GOVERNMENT TO LAST "MORE THAN ONE WEEK." HE ADDED, WITH REGARD TO THIEU, THAT HE, DON, "DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE" TO TELL THIEU TO RESIGN WHEN THIEU HAD ASKED FOR HIS THOUGHTS ON THIS RECENTLY.)

4. ON 10 APRIL, DON COMMENTED ON THE MILITARY SITUATION AND THE TACK THE GVN COULD POSSIBLY TAKE IN ATTEMPTING TO RESOLVE THE

CURRENT SITUATION BY POLITICAL MEANS. DON WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT FORCES (ARVN) TO DEFEND SAIGON SINCE COMMUNIST FORCES COULD BE HELD ONLY FOR A "LIMITED" PERIOD; ARVN COULD NOT WITHSTAND A FULL-SCALE ATTACK. DON, NOTING THE RECENT STATEMENTS OF PRG SPOKEMEN AND THE FRENCH PRESIDENT, SAID THAT "IF" OUR GOVERNMENT ADVOCATES A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO END THE PRESENT CRISIS, THEN THERE MUST BE A "NEW" GOVERNMENT CONSISTING OF PERSONS WHO DISPLAY A "SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION." THIS NEW GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROCLAIM IMMEDIATELY THIS "SPIRIT" AS SOON AS IT IS FORMED. ADDITIONALLY, A PLAN MUST BE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY TO WIN OVER A NUMBER OF POLITICAL FIGURES WHO COULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A (FUTURE) "THIRD FORCE." DON SAID THAT MILITARILY, WE MUST STRIVE TO HALT THE COMMUNISTS ALONG THE "DEFENSE LINES" WE NOW HOLD, THEN SEEK TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

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