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Hist. V. Minh
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112. Acheson instructs Saigon, in light of anticipated Franco-Viet friction on handling U.S. aid, that function of Griffin Mission is "clearly understood to be fact finding." Acheson 136 to Saigon, 9 March 1950.....

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: SECSTATE WASHINGTON

Date: March 9, 1950.

No: 136

Recd: March 10, 1950

Sent Saigon 136, Paris 1023, London 1070, repeated Tokyo 212

March 9, 5 PM, Secret

Re Paris tel 62 to Saigon. Dept believes situation clearly points to possibility of friction between French and Viets re mechanics of handling US military aid. Although vitally interested in satisfactory solution, Dept feels nothing to gain by US intervention in what is a matter for joint decision three states and French. Therefore Legation should exercise caution in maintaining neutral attitude unless lack agreement endangers program, in which case Dept will act. Your continuing progress reports required.

Similarly the related problems concerning the relations of the states with France and with each other are obviously capable of friction, which US should be careful to avoid.

In meantime, the status of the French prepared request for military aid has been received in only basic form, and awaits further clarification from Paris (see Deptel 650 to Paris, repeated Saigon as 109). Request for economic aid in more understandable terms has been received. Embassy here states PIGNON has copies both economic and military lists Saigon for information GRIFFIN Mission and Legation. Exercise care ensure no embarrassment to French or states results from your use such lists. BAO DAI's long request to JESSUP now being translated, and not yet available for study. French request for military aid from UK not yet available Dept.

Against background foregoing, following comments on Urtel 157, March 6.

Paragraph 2. Agencies represented on NAC working group have received all relevant documents on economic discussions. Summary Bao Dai Memo likewise available, but full translation not completed. Military requests in present basic form (see above) not made available to all civil agencies pending clarification.

Paragraph 3. Dept has no information.

Paragraph 4. Three states and French must, we feel, reach own agreement on unique lists. Above all, we cannot urge acceptance of one or another draft unless we are prepared to accept it, and this is not true of any presentation hitherto made.

Paragraph 5. Griffin Mission function is clearly understood to be fact finding.

ACHESON