

WCS
TOO EARLY TO TELL LULL HAS ENDED IN VIETNAM: ROGERS (TEXT) (700)

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WASHINGTON -- SECRETARY OF STATE ROGERS BELIEVES THE UNITED STATES, "IN DECIDING WHAT STEPS TO TAKE NEXT IN THE VIETNAM WAR, MUST CONSIDER THAT THE ENEMY RECENTLY DE-ESCALATED THE CONFLICT BY REDUCING THE FIGHTING EVEN THOUGH HE "FAILED TO COMMUNICATE WITH US."

HE MADE THE REMARKS AT SAN CLEMENTE, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST 13 IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BROADCASTING COMPANY. THE INTERVIEW WAS TELECAST NATIONALLY.

SECRETARY ROGERS SAID IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THE RECENT RESUMPTION OF HEAVY FIGHTING IN VIETNAM MEANS AN END TO THE EARLIER LULL. H

"WE HOPE IT'S NOT RPT NOT AN END TO THE LULL," HE ADDED.

THE UNITED STATES, HE SAID, IS NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE RESUMED THE OFFENSIVE.

"BUT WHETHER IT'S OF SHORT DURATION AND WHETHER IT'S MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW US THAT THEY'RE NOT RPT NOT DISCOURAGED BY THE LOSSES THEY'VE TAKEN, WE'RE NOT RPT NOT SURE," THE SECRETARY STATED.

ASKED IF THERE IS ANY DANGER OF THE USSR-COMMUNIST CHINA BORDER CLASH ESCALATING INTO ALL-OUT WAR, SECRETARY ROGERS SAID "OUR BEST ASSESSMENT IS THAT THERE PROBABLY WILL NOT RPT NOT."

THE SOVIETS RECOGNIZE, HE SAID, THAT ANY ATTACK ON THE CHINA MAINLAND MIGHT INVOLVE THEM IN A SITUATION "THAT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO COPE WITH."

HE NOTED THERE ALWAYS IS A POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OF THE BORDER CLASHES COULD ZSCALATE INTO A MAJOR CONFLICT AND "THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS WE WOULD VERY MUCH OPPOSE."

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HE SAID THE UNITED STATES WILL ATTEMPT TO BECOME MORE FRIENDLY WITH BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA "TO SEE IF WE CAN RELIEVE TENSIONS."

"WE'RE NOT RPT NOT GOING TO PLAY ONE AGAINST THE OTHER," HE SAID. "WE'RE NOT RPT NOT GOING TO EXPLOIT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO."

AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AUGUST 14, SPOKESMAN CARL BARTCH WAS ASKED IF THE UNITED STATES WAS DISILLUSIONED WITH THE PARIS TALKS AND IF THE PROGRAM OF TROOP REPLACEMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE STEPPED UP ENEMY MILITARY ACTION.

MR. BARTCH REPLIED HE HAD SEEN "NO RPT NO SIGNS OF ANY DESIRE OR INTENTIONS ON THE PART OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO CONCLUDE" TALKS WITH THE OTHER SIDE AT PARIS "OR TO PULL OUT OF THEM."

HE SAID THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT "HAS BEEN QUITE DISAPPOINTING IN THE PAST AND CONTINUES TO BE."

MR. BARTCH POINTED OUT THAT THE WHITE HOUSE HAD SAID EARLIER IT WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT "LATER THIS MONTH ON TROOP REPLACEMENTS." THEREFORE, MR. BARTCH ADDED, HE WOULD HAVE NO RPT NO COMMENT ON THE MATTER.

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FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW AS TELECAST BY ABC NEWS:
(BEGIN TEXT)

JOHN SCALI: "THE FIRST QUESTION DEALS WITH TODAY'S REPORTED FIGHTING BETWEEN RUSSIAN AND CHINESE TROOPS IN SINKIANG PROVINCE. IS THERE DANGER OF THE CONFLICT ESCALATING INTO ALL-OUT WAR?"

ROGERS: "I THINK OUR BEST ASSESSMENT IS THAT THERE PROBABLY WILL NOT RPT NOT ON TV 0148,33 COMMUNISTS WOULD BE VERY ILL-ADVISED

WOULD DOUBT VERY MUCH IF THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS WOULD START THAT KIND OF ATTACK. I THINK THAT, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD REOGNIZE--DOES RECOGNIZE--THAT ANY ATTACK ON THE MAINLAND OF CHINA MIGHT ENFRESH THEM OR INVOLVE THEM IN A SITUATION THAT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO COPE WITH. THEY MIGHT HAVE INITIAL VICTORIES, BUT BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS MANPOWER OF COMMUNIST CHINA THEY MIGHT WELL GET EGGED DOWN INNMAINLAND CHINA IN A LONG, LONG WAR. SO I DOUBT VERY MUCH IF THEY WOULD START IT.

"THERE ALWAYS IS A POSSIBILITY THOUGH THAT THESE EORDER CLASHES COULD ESCALATE INTO A MAJOR CONFLICT AND THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS WE WOULD VERY MUCH OPPOSE. WE'D BE VERY UNHAPPY IF THAT OCCURRED."

SCALI: ZHOW DO WE STAND IN THIS ARGUMENT, MR. SECRETARY? ARE WE NEUTRAL?"

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ROGERS: WELL, I DON'T LIKE TO SAY WE'RE NEUTRAL. OUR POSITION IS THAT WE ARE GOING TO ATTEMPT TO BECCHE MORE FRIENDLY WITH BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA, AND WE'RE NOT RPT NOT GOING TO PLAY ONE AGAINST THE OTHER. WE'RE NOT RPT NOT GOING TO EXPLOIT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO. BUT WE ARE GOING TO SEE IF WE CAN RELIEVE TENSIONS BY BECOMING FRIENDLY WITH BOTH OF THEM."

SCALI: "ON VIETNAM, SIR, DOES IT LOOK AS IF THE LULL IS OVER NOW?"

ROGERS: "I THINK IT'S TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THE LULL IS OVER OR NOT RPT NOT. WE'RE NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE ENEMY HAS DECIDED AT THIS TIME TO STEP UP THE OFFENSIVE. BUT WHETHER IT'S OF SHORT DURATION AND WHETHER IT'S MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW US THAT THEY'RE NOT RPT NOT DISCOURAGED BY THE LOSSES THEY'VE TAKEN WE'RE NOT RPT NOT SURE.

"WE HOPE IT'S NOT RPT NOT AN END TO THE LULL. WE HOPE THAT THE LULL CONTIKUES BECAUSE IF THE ENEMY WAS WILLING TO DE-ESCALATE THE WAR IN THIS MANNER, EVEN THOUGH THEY FAILED TO COMMUNICATE WITH US, THEN WE HAVE TO TAKE THAT INTO OUR CALCULATIONS IN DECIDING WHAT STEPS TO TAKE NEXT." (END TEXT). ITEM

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