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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. <u>Kathy Troia to General, 4/8/75</u>			
1a. Letter	Richard Nixon to Nguyen Van Thieu (2 pp.)	12/17/72	C(A)
1b. Letter	" " " " " " (2 pp.)	11/18/72	C(A)
1c. Letter	" " " " " " (4 pp.)	11/14/72	C(A)
1d. Letter	" " " " " " (4 pp.)	11/8/72	C(A)
1e. Letter	" " " " " " (4 pp.)	10/29/72	C(A)
1f. Letter	" " " " " " (3 pp.)	10/16/72	C(A)
2. Copy of item 1			
2a-f. Letters	Copies of items 1a-f (Total 19 pp.)	10/72-12/72	C(A)

*Declassified
2/4/90 KBH*

FILE LOCATION Cheney Files Box 13
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WHM, 6/7/85

April 9, 1975

(To be read by Ron Nessen at the Press Briefing - April 9)

Assurances to the Republic of Viet Nam as to both U.S. assistance and U.S. enforcement of the Paris agreement were stated clearly and publicly by President Nixon. The publicly stated policy and intention of the United States government to continue to provide adequate economic and military assistance and to react vigorously to major violations of the Paris agreement reflected confidential exchanges between the Nixon Administration and President Thieu at the time. In substance, the private exchanges do not differ from what was stated publicly. The law of 1973, of course, ruled out the possibility of American military reaction to violations of the agreement.

(Citations from U.S.-South Vietnamese communique, President Nixon's news conference, and President Nixon's foreign policy report to be distributed to the press.)

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

8 April 1975

General:

Attached are the President Nixon letters to President Thieu from October to December 1972.

- A. December 17, 1972
- B. November 18, 1972
- C. November 14, 1972
- D. November 8, 1972
- E. October 29, 1972
- F. October 16, 1972

Kathy Troia



300

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 17, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have again asked General Haig to visit you in Saigon. He will inform you of my final considered personal judgment of the state of the ceasefire negotiations and of the prospects we now face.

Over the last two months -- through my personal letters, through my extensive personal discussions with your emissary, through communications via Dr. Kissinger, General Haig, and Ambassador Bunker, and through daily consultations in Paris -- I have kept you scrupulously informed of the progress of the negotiations. I have sought to convey to you my best judgment of what is in our mutual interest. I have given you every opportunity to join with me in bringing peace with honor to the people of South Vietnam.

General Haig's mission now represents my final effort to point out to you the necessity for joint action and to convey my irrevocable intention to proceed, preferably with your cooperation but, if necessary, alone.

Recent events do not alter my conclusion. Although our negotiations with Hanoi have encountered certain obstacles, I want you to have no misunderstanding with regard to three basic issues: First we may still be on the verge of reaching an acceptable agreement at any time. Second, Hanoi's current stalling is prompted to a great degree by their desire to exploit the public dissension between us. As Hanoi obviously realizes, this works to your grave

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MR 89-17, #18 NSC Ltr. 10/27/89

By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

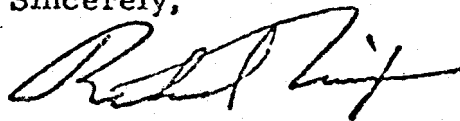
disadvantage. Third, as I have informed Hanoi, if they meet our minimum remaining requirements, I have every intention of proceeding rapidly to a settlement.

You are also aware of certain military actions which will have been initiated prior to General Haig's arrival. As he will explain to you, these actions are meant to convey to the enemy my determination to bring the conflict to a rapid end -- as well as to show what I am prepared to do in case of violation of the agreement. I do not want you to be left, under any circumstances, with the mistaken impression that these actions signal a willingness or intent to continue U. S. military involvement if Hanoi meets the requirements for a settlement which I have set.

If the present lack of collaboration between us continues, and if you decide not to join us in proceeding now to a settlement, it can only result in a fundamental change in the character of our relationship. I am convinced that your refusal to join us would be an invitation to disaster -- to the loss of all that we together have fought for over the past decade. It would be inexcusable above all because we will have lost a just and honorable alternative.

I have asked General Haig to obtain your answer to this absolutely final offer on my part for us to work together in seeking a settlement along the lines I have approved or to go our separate ways. Let me emphasize in conclusion that General Haig is not coming to Saigon for the purpose of negotiating with you. The time has come for us to present a united front in negotiating with our enemies, and you must decide now whether you desire to continue to work together or whether you want me to seek a settlement with the enemy which serves U. S. interests alone.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 18, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have read with great attention the November 18 memorandum from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. I am sure you recognize the enormous difficulties posed to us by another set of extensive changes following the many proposed changes which we have already discussed. Nevertheless, I shall instruct Dr. Kissinger to seek to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out to you, however, first that the express references to North Vietnamese troops in the South have the disadvantage of legitimizing any forces that may remain and, secondly, as we have repeatedly pointed out are clearly unobtainable. Also, it is impossible at this point to change the composition of the International Control Group. As for the other changes, Dr. Kissinger will brief your Ambassador at the end of each day as to what progress is being made.

My instructions to Dr. Kissinger are to press to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out, however, that I am not prepared to scuttle the agreement or to go along with an accumulation of proposals which will have that practical consequence. It may therefore not be possible to get all the changes.

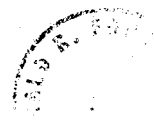
As for the proposal to send an emissary to Washington, I believe that after two visits by Dr. Kissinger and three by General Haig, three personal letters from me and numerous exchanges through Ambassador Bunker as well as my personal reading of all your communications, we have all of the suggestions that you have made fully in mind for this phase of the negotiations. I would therefore think that the best occasion for a meeting of your emissary with me would be immediately after the Paris phase when we have a new set of issues to consider jointly. I therefore suggest if you select Mr. Duc

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MR 89-17, #19 NSC Ltr. 10/27/89

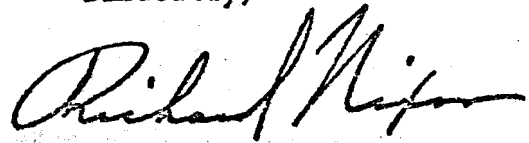
By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90



as your emissary that he return to Washington on Dr. Kissinger's aircraft immediately upon the conclusion of the next Paris round. If, on the other hand, you prefer that Foreign Minister Lam serve as your emissary, I recommend that he proceed to Paris immediately and take part in the discussions which will follow each day's session and then return to Washington with Dr. Kissinger for a meeting with me.

I again urge you to join us in the course that I am determined to follow. I must once more impress upon you the enormous danger of losing public support in the United States with all the risks for continuing our joint effort. We will, of course, be in close touch after the completion of the negotiations in Paris.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon".

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 14, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I was pleased to learn from General Haig that you held useful and constructive discussions with him in Saigon in preparation for Dr. Kissinger's forthcoming meeting with North Vietnam's negotiators in Paris.

After studying your letter of November 11 with great care I have concluded that we have made substantial progress towards reaching a common understanding on many of the important issues before us. You can be sure that we will pursue the proposed changes in the draft agreement that General Haig discussed with you with the utmost firmness and that, as these discussions proceed, we shall keep you fully informed through your Ambassador to the Paris Conference on Vietnam who will be briefed daily by Dr. Kissinger.

I understand from your letter and from General Haig's personal report that your principal remaining concern with respect to the draft agreement is the status of North Vietnamese forces now in South Vietnam. As General Haig explained to you, it is our intention to deal with this problem first by seeking to insert a reference to respect for the demilitarized zone in the proposed agreement and, second, by proposing a clause which provides for the reduction and demobilization of forces on both sides in South Vietnam on a one-to-one basis and to have demobilized personnel return to their homes.

Upon reviewing this proposed language, it is my conviction that such a provision can go a long way towards dealing with your concern with respect to North Vietnamese forces. General Haig tells me, however, that you are also

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MR 89-17 # 20 NSC Mr. 10/27/89

By 1984 NARA, Date 2/1/90

seriously concerned about the timing and verification of such reductions. In light of this, I have asked Dr. Kissinger to convey to you, through Ambassador Bunker, some additional clauses we would propose adding to the agreement dealing with each of these points. In addition, I have asked that Dr. Kissinger send you the other technical and less important substantive changes which General Haig did not have the opportunity to discuss with you because they had not yet been fully developed in Washington. With these proposed modifications, I think you will agree that we have done everything we can to improve the existing draft while remaining within its general framework.

You also raise in your letter the question of participation by other Asian countries in the International Conference. As you know, the presently contemplated composition are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the members of the ICCS, the parties to the Paris Conference on Vietnam and the Secretary General of the United Nations. We seriously considered Cambodian and Laotian participation but decided that these would be unnecessary complications with respect to representation. We do not, however, exclude the possibility of delegations from these countries participating in an observer status at the invitation of the conference. As for Japan, this question was raised earlier in our negotiations with Hanoi and set aside because of their strenuous objections to any Japanese role in guaranteeing the settlement and also because it inevitably raises the possibility of Indian participation. I have, however, asked that Dr. Kissinger raise this matter again in Paris and he will inform your representative what progress we make on this. What we must recognize as a practical matter is that participation of Japan is very likely to lead to the participation of India. We would appreciate hearing your preference on whether it is better to include both countries or neither of them.

Finally, in respect to the composition of the ICCS, I must say in all candor that I do not share your view that its contemplated membership is unbalanced. I am hopeful that it

will prove to be a useful mechanism in detecting and reporting violations of the agreement. In any event, what we both must recognize is that the supervisory mechanism in itself is in no measure as important as our own firm determination to see to it that the agreement works and our vigilance with respect to the prospect of its violation.

I will not repeat here all that I said to you in my letter of November 8, but I do wish to reaffirm its essential content and stress again my determination to work towards an early agreement along the lines of the schedule which General Haig explained to you. I must explain in all frankness that while we will do our very best to secure the changes in the agreement which General Haig discussed with you and those additional ones which Ambassador Bunker will bring you, we cannot expect to secure them all. For example, it is unrealistic to assume that we will be able to secure the absolute assurances which you would hope to have on the troop issue.

But far more important than what we say in the agreement on this issue is what we do in the event the enemy renews its aggression. You have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement it is my intention to take swift and severe retaliatory action.

I believe the existing agreement to be an essentially sound one which should become even more so if we succeed in obtaining some of the changes we have discussed. Our best assurance of success is to move into this new situation with confidence and cooperation.

With this attitude and the inherent strength of your government and army on the ground in South Vietnam, I am confident this agreement will be a successful one.

If, on the other hand, we are unable to agree on the course that I have outlined, it is difficult for me to see how we will be able to continue our common effort towards securing a just and honorable peace. As General Haig told you I would with

great reluctance be forced to consider other alternatives. For this reason, it is essential that we have your agreement as we proceed into our next meeting with Hanoi's negotiators. And I strongly urge you and your advisors to work promptly with Ambassador Bunker and our Mission in Saigon on the many practical problems which will face us in implementing the agreement. I cannot overemphasize the urgency of the task at hand nor my unalterable determination to proceed along the course which we have outlined.

Above all we must bear in mind what will really maintain the agreement. It is not any particular clause in the agreement but our joint willingness to maintain its clauses. I repeat my personal assurances to you that the United States will react very strongly and rapidly to any violation of the agreement. But in order to do this effectively it is essential that I have public support and that your Government does not emerge as the obstacle to a peace which American public opinion now universally desires. It is for this reason that I am pressing for the acceptance of an agreement which I am convinced is honorable and fair and which can be made essentially secure by our joint determination.

Mrs. Nixon joins me in extending our warmest personal regards to Madame Thieu and to you. We look forward to seeing you again at our home in California once the just peace we have both fought for so long is finally achieved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon".

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 8, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

On this day after my reelection I wish to reopen our dialogue about the draft agreement to end the war.

I must first of all express my deep disappointment over what I consider to be a dangerous drift in the relationship between our two countries, a tendency which can only undercut our mutual objectives and benefit the enemy. Your continuing distortions of the agreement and attacks upon it are unfair and self-defeating. These have persisted despite our numerous representations, including my October 29 letter to you. They have been disconcerting and highly embarrassing to me.

In my previous communications, and in the presentations of Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Bunker, we have repeatedly explained why we consider the draft agreement to be sound; we continue to believe that it reflects major concessions by the other side, protects the independence of South Vietnam, and leaves the political future to the South Vietnamese people themselves. You are fully informed as well about the massive resupply movement that is underway to strengthen your forces before a ceasefire. I have repeatedly given firm guarantees against the possibility that the agreement is violated. I have offered to meet with you soon after the agreement is signed to symbolize our continuing support. I will not recount here the numerous arguments, explanations, and undertakings that have been made. They all remain valid. In the light of this record, the charges made by some of your associates are becoming more and more incomprehensible.

We are in any event resolved to proceed on the basis of the draft agreement and the modifications which we are determined to obtain from the North Vietnamese which General Haig will discuss with you. With regard to these changes in the agreement, I wish to make clear what we can and cannot do:

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 89-17 #21 NSC str. 10/27/89

By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

-- With respect to the political provisions, we will weaken the Vietnamese translation of the phrase "administrative structure" to make even clearer the fact that the National Council is in no way a governmental body. As you know, we never agreed to the North Vietnamese use of the phrase "chinh quyen" and we will do our utmost to see that the phrase "hanh chanh" is substituted. In Article 9(f) we will also press for a sentence that makes clear that the membership of the Council is appointed equally by both sides. And in Article 9(g) we will attempt to dilute the already weak functions of the Council. In any event, as we have explained to you on numerous occasions, it is obvious that the Council has no governmental authority.

-- With respect to North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam, we will treat this problem in two ways. First, we will press for the de facto unilateral withdrawal of some North Vietnamese divisions in the northern part of your country. Secondly, we will introduce wording at the end of Article 9(h) which stipulates that troops should be demobilized on a one-to-one basis and that they should return to their homes.

-- With respect to the demilitarized zone, we will press in Chapter V for language that says it will be respected by the parties.

-- In Article 15(d) we will insist on deleting the inadvertent reference to "three Indochinese countries" and substituting "the Indochinese states."

-- In addition, we will do our best to obtain as many as possible of the changes in wording your government suggests which are of a more technical nature.

We will use our maximum efforts to effect these changes in the agreement. I wish to leave you under no illusion, however, that we can or will go beyond these changes in seeking to improve an agreement that we already consider to be excellent.

It seems to me you have two essential choices. You could use the public support your recent actions have mobilized to claim the military victory the agreement reflects and to work in

unity with your strongest ally to bring about a political victory for which the conditions exist. You could take the political and psychological initiative by hailing the settlement and carrying out its provisions in a positive fashion. In this case I repeat my invitation to meet with you shortly after the signature of the agreement, in order to underline our continued close cooperation.

The other alternative would be for you to pursue what appears to be your present course. In my view this would play into the hands of the enemy and would have extremely grave consequences for both our peoples and it would be disaster for yours.

Mr. President, I would like you to tell General Haig if we can confidently proceed on this basis. We are at the point where I need to know unambiguously whether you will join us in the effort General Haig is going to outline or whether we must contemplate alternative courses of action which I believe would be detrimental to the interests of both of our countries.

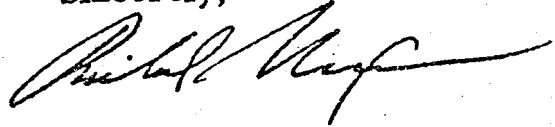
I hope that you and your government are prepared to cooperate with us. There is a great deal of preparatory work that needs to be done, and we believe joint US-GVN task forces should begin working together so that we will be in the best possible position to implement the settlement.

It is my firm conviction that your people, your armed forces, and you have achieved a major victory which the draft agreement would ratify. It is my intention to build on these accomplishments. I would like to work with you and your government in my second term to defend freedom in South Vietnam in peacetime as we have worked during my first term to defend it in conflict.

In four years you and I have been close personal and military allies. Our alliance has brought us to a position where the

enemy is agreeing to conditions which any objective observer said were impossible four years ago. Our alliance and its achievements have been based on mutual trust. If you will give me continued trust, together we shall succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon", written in dark ink.

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 29, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have just completed a careful reading of the October 28, 1972 memorandum entitled "Memorandum Re: Radio Hanoi's Broadcast on October 26, 1972 and Dr. Kissinger's Press Briefing on October 26, 1972." As I have informed you, Dr. Kissinger has spoken and continues to speak on my behalf. There has not been nor will there be any distinction between his views and mine. As I wrote to you in my letter of October 16, "Dr. Kissinger's comments have my total backing."

With specific reference to the points raised in this memorandum, we are astonished to be asked to comment on claims emanating from Radio Hanoi. Dr. Kissinger gave a full and detailed explanation of the ad referendum character of his discussions with the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Therefore, the Government of South Vietnam should not ask itself why theoretical planning dates were given to the DRV; it is patently obvious that they were ad referendum since none of these dates have been carried out.

With respect to your concerns about my messages of October 20 and October 22 to the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, you will recall that Dr. Kissinger specifically referred to the content of these messages during his discussions with you in Saigon. These messages essentially concerned three matters concerning South Vietnam and two matters concerning Laos and Cambodia. With respect to South Vietnam, we informed Hanoi that we rejected any claim regarding your resignation and insisted on the replacement and prisoner provisions which you have seen. With respect to Laos and Cambodia, we demanded assurances with

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MR 89-17, #22 NSC ltr. 10/27/89

By KBH, NARA, Date 2/1/90

respect to ending the conflict in these countries. Dr. Kissinger, in the presence of Ambassador Bunker, told you that in their replies the North Vietnamese yielded on all these points. I consider that you were fully informed.

Concerning the current status of the draft agreement, Dr. Kissinger has made a solemn commitment to you to obtain the maximum number of changes reflecting the views expressed to him during his visit to Saigon. With respect to the inclusion of reference to the "three" countries of Indochina, Dr. Kissinger explained to you that the use of "three" was simply inadvertent and we would demand of the North Vietnamese to have it deleted from the present text.

With respect to the National Council, Dr. Kissinger made amply clear in his press conference, as he did in his talks with you, that it has no governmental functions. All American and foreign observers have seen its real meaning -- a face-saving device for the communists to cover their collapse on their demands for a coalition government and your resignation. It is therefore incomprehensible to me why your government has chosen to portray the Council as a structure which encompasses governmental functions. This constant reiteration by your officials of misleading comments may bring about what we have struggled so hard to avoid.

Our position continues to be that we can live with an "administrative structure" which in English clearly implies advisory functions and not governmental ones, but that we reject the North Vietnamese translation which would imply that the structure is endowed with governmental powers and functions. This is precisely what Dr. Kissinger meant when he referred to language problems in his press conference. This is what we will clarify when we meet the North Vietnamese next. We chose the phrase linguistic ambiguity to give everybody a face-saving way out. You and I know what is involved.

Dr. Kissinger's press conference was conducted on my detailed instructions. He was doing his utmost to prevent you from being

portrayed as the obstacle to peace with an inevitable cutoff by Congress of U. S. funds to the Government of South Vietnam and the creation of unmanageable impediments to continued U. S. support for you and your Government. Constant criticism from Saigon can only undercut this effort. We will continue our efforts to present a united front, but they cannot succeed without the cooperation of your associates.

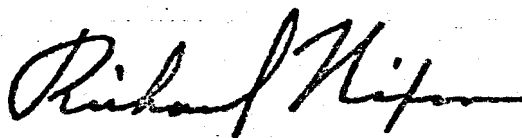
Beyond these specific points I cannot fail to call to your attention the dangerous course which your Government is now pursuing. You know my firm commitment to the people of South Vietnam and to you personally. As Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Bunker have informed you, I would like to underline this commitment by meeting with you within one or two weeks after the signing of this agreement. It is my conviction that the future depends on the unity which exists between us and on the degree to which we can make clear our unequivocal support to do what is necessary in the days ahead to insure that the provisions of a peace settlement are strictly enforced. Just as our unity has been the essential aspect of the success we have enjoyed thus far in the conduct of hostilities, it will also be the best guarantee of future success in a situation where the struggle continues within a more political framework. If the evident drift towards disagreement between the two of us continues, however, the essential base for U. S. support for you and your Government will be destroyed. In this respect the comments of your Foreign Minister that the U. S. is negotiating a surrender are as damaging as they are unfair and improper.

You can be assured that my decisions as to the final character of a peace settlement are in no way influenced by the election in the United States, and you should harbor no illusions that my policy with respect to the desirability of achieving an early peace will change after the election. I have taken this opportunity to comment on the memorandum of October 28 so that there can be no doubts in Saigon with respect to the objectives sought by me and my Government.

I urge you again, Mr. President, to maintain the essential unity which has characterized our relations over these past

difficult four years and which has proven to be the essential ingredient in the success we have achieved thus far. Disunity will strip me of the ability to maintain the essential base of support which your Government and your people must have in the days ahead, and which I am determined to provide. Willingness to cooperate will mean that we will achieve peace on the basis of what I consider to be a workable agreement -- especially with the amendments which we are certain to obtain. From this basis, we can move with confidence and unity to achieve our mutual objectives of peace and unity for the heroic people of South Vietnam.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic
of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1972

Dear President Thieu:

I have asked Dr. Henry Kissinger to convey to you this personal letter regarding our current negotiations with North Vietnam which now appear to be reaching a final stage.

As you know, throughout the four years of my Administration the United States has stood firmly behind your Government and its people in our support for their valiant struggle to resist aggression and preserve their right to determine their own political future.

The military measures we have taken and the Vietnamization program, the dramatic steps that we took in 1970 against the Cambodian sanctuaries, the operations in Laos in 1971 and the measures against North Vietnam just this past May have fully attested to the steadfastness of our support. I need not emphasize that many of these measures were as unpopular to many in the U. S. as they were necessary.

At the negotiating table we have always held firmly to the principle that we would never negotiate with North Vietnam a solution which predetermined the political outcome of the conflict. We have consistently adhered to positions that would preserve the elected government and assure the free people of Vietnam the opportunity to determine their future.

Until very recently the North Vietnamese negotiators have held firmly to their long-established position that any settlement of the war would have to include your resignation and the dismantlement of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and its institutions.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MB 89-17, #23 NSC Ltr. 10/27/89

By KBF NARA Date 2/1/90

It now seems, however, that the combination of the perseverance and heroism of your Government and its fighting forces, the measures taken by the United States on the 8th of May, 1972, and our firmness at the conference table have caused a fundamental shift in Hanoi. In the course of Dr. Kissinger's recent meetings with the North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, it has become progressively more evident that Hanoi's leadership is prepared to agree to a ceasefire prior to the resolution of the political problem in South Vietnam. This is indeed an important reverse in doctrine and must represent a decision for them which cannot have been taken lightly. They know the weakness of their own political forces in the South and therefore the risks involved in reaching an agreement that does not meet their political objectives must indeed for them be great.

The consequence of this change in strategy has resulted in a situation wherein we and Hanoi's negotiators have reached essential agreement on a text which provides for a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of remaining allied forces, the exchange of prisoners of war, and the continued existence of your Government and its institutions after the ceasefire takes effect. In addition to the document itself a number of private assurances have been obtained designed to meet the security concerns of your country and whose implementation we consider an essential part of this agreement.

Dr. Kissinger will explain to you in the fullest detail the provisions of the proposed agreement which he carries with him and I will therefore not provide further elaboration in this message. I do, however, want you to know that I believe we have no reasonable alternative but to accept this agreement. It represents major movement by the other side, and it is my firm conviction that its implementation will leave you and your people with the ability to defend yourselves and decide the political destiny of South Vietnam.

As far as I am concerned, the most important provision of this agreement, aside from its military features, is that your Government, its armed forces and its political institutions, will remain intact after the ceasefire has been observed. In the period

following the cessation of hostilities you can be completely assured that we will continue to provide your Government with the fullest support, including continued economic aid and whatever military assistance is consistent with the ceasefire provisions of this government.

I recognize that after all these years of war a settlement will present an enormous challenge to your leadership and your people. We all recognize that the conflict will now move into a different form, a form of political struggle as opposed to open military confrontation; but I am of the firm conviction that with wisdom and perseverance your Government and the people of South Vietnam will meet this new challenge. You will have my absolute support in this endeavor and I want you to know it is my firm belief that in this new phase your continued leadership of the destiny of South Vietnam is indispensable.

Finally, I must say that, just as we have taken risks in war, I believe we must take risks for peace. Our intention is to abide faithfully by the terms of the agreements and understandings reached with Hanoi, and I know this will be the attitude of your government as well. We expect reciprocity and have made this unmistakably clear both to them and their major allies. I can assure you that we will view any breach of faith on their part with the utmost gravity; and it would have the most serious consequences.

Allow me to take this occasion to renew my sentiments of highest personal regard and admiration for you and your comrades in arms.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the

Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

*Dr. Kissinger, General Hanoi
and I have discussed this
proposal at great length.
I am personally convinced
it is the best we will be able to get and
that it meets my absolute conviction
that the GVN must survive as a
free country. Dr. Kissinger's comments
have my total backing. (P)*

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

8 April 1975

General:

Attached are the President Nixon letters to President Thieu from October to December 1972.

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- B. November 18, 1972
- C. November 14, 1972
- D. November 8, 1972
- E. October 29, 1972
- F. October 16, 1972

Kathy Troia



300

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 17, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have again asked General Haig to visit you in Saigon. He will inform you of my final considered personal judgment of the state of the ceasefire negotiations and of the prospects we now face.

Over the last two months -- through my personal letters, through my extensive personal discussions with your emissary, through communications via Dr. Kissinger, General Haig, and Ambassador Bunker, and through daily consultations in Paris -- I have kept you scrupulously informed of the progress of the negotiations. I have sought to convey to you my best judgment of what is in our mutual interest. I have given you every opportunity to join with me in bringing peace with honor to the people of South Vietnam.

General Haig's mission now represents my final effort to point out to you the necessity for joint action and to convey my irrevocable intention to proceed, preferably with your cooperation but, if necessary, alone.

Recent events do not alter my conclusion. Although our negotiations with Hanoi have encountered certain obstacles, I want you to have no misunderstanding with regard to three basic issues: First we may still be on the verge of reaching an acceptable agreement at any time. Second, Hanoi's current stalling is prompted to a great degree by their desire to exploit the public dissension between us. As Hanoi obviously realizes, this works to your grave

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

NSC Ltr 10/27/89 MR 89-17, #18

By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

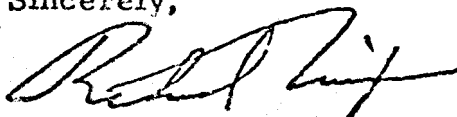
disadvantage. Third, as I have informed Hanoi, if they meet our minimum remaining requirements, I have every intention of proceeding rapidly to a settlement.

You are also aware of certain military actions which will have been initiated prior to General Haig's arrival. As he will explain to you, these actions are meant to convey to the enemy my determination to bring the conflict to a rapid end -- as well as to show what I am prepared to do in case of violation of the agreement. I do not want you to be left, under any circumstances, with the mistaken impression that these actions signal a willingness or intent to continue U.S. military involvement if Hanoi meets the requirements for a settlement which I have set.

If the present lack of collaboration between us continues, and if you decide not to join us in proceeding now to a settlement, it can only result in a fundamental change in the character of our relationship. I am convinced that your refusal to join us would be an invitation to disaster -- to the loss of all that we together have fought for over the past decade. It would be inexcusable above all because we will have lost a just and honorable alternative.

I have asked General Haig to obtain your answer to this absolutely final offer on my part for us to work together in seeking a settlement along the lines I have approved or to go our separate ways. Let me emphasize in conclusion that General Haig is not coming to Saigon for the purpose of negotiating with you. The time has come for us to present a united front in negotiating with our enemies, and you must decide now whether you desire to continue to work together or whether you want me to seek a settlement with the enemy which serves U.S. interests alone.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 18, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have read with great attention the November 18 memorandum from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. I am sure you recognize the enormous difficulties posed to us by another set of extensive changes following the many proposed changes which we have already discussed. Nevertheless, I shall instruct Dr. Kissinger to seek to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out to you, however, first that the express references to North Vietnamese troops in the South have the disadvantage of legitimizing any forces that may remain and, secondly, as we have repeatedly pointed out are clearly unobtainable. Also, it is impossible at this point to change the composition of the International Control Group. As for the other changes, Dr. Kissinger will brief your Ambassador at the end of each day as to what progress is being made.

My instructions to Dr. Kissinger are to press to the maximum extent possible to incorporate your proposals. I must point out, however, that I am not prepared to scuttle the agreement or to go along with an accumulation of proposals which will have that practical consequence. It may therefore not be possible to get all the changes.

As for the proposal to send an emissary to Washington, I believe that after two visits by Dr. Kissinger and three by General Haig, three personal letters from me and numerous exchanges through Ambassador Bunker as well as my personal reading of all your communications, we have all of the suggestions that you have made fully in mind for this phase of the negotiations. I would therefore think that the best occasion for a meeting of your emissary with me would be immediately after the Paris phase when we have a new set of issues to consider jointly. I therefore suggest if you select Mr. Duc

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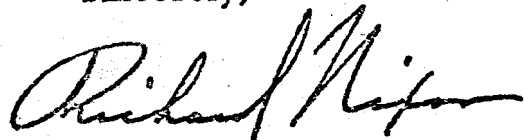
MR 89-17, #19 NSC Ltr. 10/27/89

By KBH, NARA, Date 2/1/90

as your emissary that he return to Washington on Dr. Kissinger's aircraft immediately upon the conclusion of the next Paris round. If, on the other hand, you prefer that Foreign Minister Lam serve as your emissary, I recommend that he proceed to Paris immediately and take part in the discussions which will follow each day's session and then return to Washington with Dr. Kissinger for a meeting with me.

I again urge you to join us in the course that I am determined to follow. I must once more impress upon you the enormous danger of losing public support in the United States with all the risks for continuing our joint effort. We will, of course, be in close touch after the completion of the negotiations in Paris.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon".

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 14, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I was pleased to learn from General Haig that you held useful and constructive discussions with him in Saigon in preparation for Dr. Kissinger's forthcoming meeting with North Vietnam's negotiators in Paris.

After studying your letter of November 11 with great care I have concluded that we have made substantial progress towards reaching a common understanding on many of the important issues before us. You can be sure that we will pursue the proposed changes in the draft agreement that General Haig discussed with you with the utmost firmness and that, as these discussions proceed, we shall keep you fully informed through your Ambassador to the Paris Conference on Vietnam who will be briefed daily by Dr. Kissinger.

I understand from your letter and from General Haig's personal report that your principal remaining concern with respect to the draft agreement is the status of North Vietnamese forces now in South Vietnam. As General Haig explained to you, it is our intention to deal with this problem first by seeking to insert a reference to respect for the demilitarized zone in the proposed agreement and, second, by proposing a clause which provides for the reduction and demobilization of forces on both sides in South Vietnam on a one-to-one basis and to have demobilized personnel return to their homes.

Upon reviewing this proposed language, it is my conviction that such a provision can go a long way towards dealing with your concern with respect to North Vietnamese forces. General Haig tells me, however, that you are also

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 89-17, # 20 USC (tr. 10/27/89)
By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

seriously concerned about the timing and verification of such reductions. In light of this, I have asked Dr. Kissinger to convey to you, through Ambassador Bunker, some additional clauses we would propose adding to the agreement dealing with each of these points. In addition, I have asked that Dr. Kissinger send you the other technical and less important substantive changes which General Haig did not have the opportunity to discuss with you because they had not yet been fully developed in Washington. With these proposed modifications, I think you will agree that we have done everything we can to improve the existing draft while remaining within its general framework.

You also raise in your letter the question of participation by other Asian countries in the International Conference. As you know, the presently contemplated composition are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the members of the ICCS, the parties to the Paris Conference on Vietnam and the Secretary General of the United Nations. We seriously considered Cambodian and Laotian participation but decided that these would be unnecessary complications with respect to representation. We do not, however, exclude the possibility of delegations from these countries participating in an observer status at the invitation of the conference. As for Japan, this question was raised earlier in our negotiations with Hanoi and set aside because of their strenuous objections to any Japanese role in guaranteeing the settlement and also because it inevitably raises the possibility of Indian participation. I have, however, asked that Dr. Kissinger raise this matter again in Paris and he will inform your representative what progress we make on this. What we must recognize as a practical matter is that participation of Japan is very likely to lead to the participation of India. We would appreciate hearing your preference on whether it is better to include both countries or neither of them.

Finally, in respect to the composition of the ICCS, I must say in all candor that I do not share your view that its contemplated membership is unbalanced. I am hopeful that it

will prove to be a useful mechanism in detecting and reporting violations of the agreement. In any event, what we both must recognize is that the supervisory mechanism in itself is in no measure as important as our own firm determination to see to it that the agreement works and our vigilance with respect to the prospect of its violation.

I will not repeat here all that I said to you in my letter of November 8, but I do wish to reaffirm its essential content and stress again my determination to work towards an early agreement along the lines of the schedule which General Haig explained to you. I must explain in all frankness that while we will do our very best to secure the changes in the agreement which General Haig discussed with you and those additional ones which Ambassador Bunker will bring you, we cannot expect to secure them all. For example, it is unrealistic to assume that we will be able to secure the absolute assurances which you would hope to have on the troop issue.

But far more important than what we say in the agreement on this issue is what we do in the event the enemy renews its aggression. You have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement it is my intention to take swift and severe retaliatory action.

I believe the existing agreement to be an essentially sound one which should become even more so if we succeed in obtaining some of the changes we have discussed. Our best assurance of success is to move into this new situation with confidence and cooperation.

With this attitude and the inherent strength of your government and army on the ground in South Vietnam, I am confident this agreement will be a successful one.

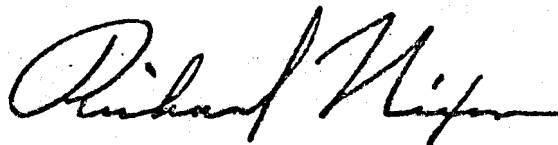
If, on the other hand, we are unable to agree on the course that I have outlined, it is difficult for me to see how we will be able to continue our common effort towards securing a just and honorable peace. As General Haig told you I would with

great reluctance be forced to consider other alternatives. For this reason, it is essential that we have your agreement as we proceed into our next meeting with Hanoi's negotiators. And I strongly urge you and your advisors to work promptly with Ambassador Bunker and our Mission in Saigon on the many practical problems which will face us in implementing the agreement. I cannot overemphasize the urgency of the task at hand nor my unalterable determination to proceed along the course which we have outlined.

Above all we must bear in mind what will really maintain the agreement. It is not any particular clause in the agreement but our joint willingness to maintain its clauses. I repeat my personal assurances to you that the United States will react very strongly and rapidly to any violation of the agreement. But in order to do this effectively it is essential that I have public support and that your Government does not emerge as the obstacle to a peace which American public opinion now universally desires. It is for this reason that I am pressing for the acceptance of an agreement which I am convinced is honorable and fair and which can be made essentially secure by our joint determination.

Mrs. Nixon joins me in extending our warmest personal regards to Madame Thieu and to you. We look forward to seeing you again at our home in California once the just peace we have both fought for so long is finally achieved.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 8, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

On this day after my reelection I wish to reopen our dialogue about the draft agreement to end the war.

I must first of all express my deep disappointment over what I consider to be a dangerous drift in the relationship between our two countries, a tendency which can only undercut our mutual objectives and benefit the enemy. Your continuing distortions of the agreement and attacks upon it are unfair and self-defeating. These have persisted despite our numerous representations, including my October 29 letter to you. They have been disconcerting and highly embarrassing to me.

In my previous communications, and in the presentations of Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Bunker, we have repeatedly explained why we consider the draft agreement to be sound; we continue to believe that it reflects major concessions by the other side, protects the independence of South Vietnam, and leaves the political future to the South Vietnamese people themselves. You are fully informed as well about the massive resupply movement that is underway to strengthen your forces before a ceasefire. I have repeatedly given firm guarantees against the possibility that the agreement is violated. I have offered to meet with you soon after the agreement is signed to symbolize our continuing support. I will not recount here the numerous arguments, explanations, and undertakings that have been made. They all remain valid. In the light of this record, the charges made by some of your associates are becoming more and more incomprehensible.

We are in any event resolved to proceed on the basis of the draft agreement and the modifications which we are determined to obtain from the North Vietnamese which General Haig will discuss with you. With regard to these changes in the agreement, I wish to make clear what we can and cannot do:

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 89-17 #21 NSC Mr. 10/27/89

By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

-- With respect to the political provisions, we will weaken the Vietnamese translation of the phrase "administrative structure" to make even clearer the fact that the National Council is in no way a governmental body. As you know, we never agreed to the North Vietnamese use of the phrase "chinh quyen" and we will do our utmost to see that the phrase "hanh chanh" is substituted. In Article 9(f) we will also press for a sentence that makes clear that the membership of the Council is appointed equally by both sides. And in Article 9(g) we will attempt to dilute the already weak functions of the Council. In any event, as we have explained to you on numerous occasions, it is obvious that the Council has no governmental authority.

-- With respect to North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam, we will treat this problem in two ways. First, we will press for the de facto unilateral withdrawal of some North Vietnamese divisions in the northern part of your country. Secondly, we will introduce wording at the end of Article 9(h) which stipulates that troops should be demobilized on a one-to-one basis and that they should return to their homes.

-- With respect to the demilitarized zone, we will press in Chapter V for language that says it will be respected by the parties.

-- In Article 15(d) we will insist on deleting the inadvertent reference to "three Indochinese countries" and substituting "the Indochinese states."

-- In addition, we will do our best to obtain as many as possible of the changes in wording your government suggests which are of a more technical nature.

We will use our maximum efforts to effect these changes in the agreement. I wish to leave you under no illusion, however, that we can or will go beyond these changes in seeking to improve an agreement that we already consider to be excellent.

It seems to me you have two essential choices. You could use the public support your recent actions have mobilized to claim the military victory the agreement reflects and to work in

unity with your strongest ally to bring about a political victory for which the conditions exist. You could take the political and psychological initiative by hailing the settlement and carrying out its provisions in a positive fashion. In this case I repeat my invitation to meet with you shortly after the signature of the agreement, in order to underline our continued close cooperation.

The other alternative would be for you to pursue what appears to be your present course. In my view this would play into the hands of the enemy and would have extremely grave consequences for both our peoples and it would be disaster for yours.

Mr. President, I would like you to tell General Haig if we can confidently proceed on this basis. We are at the point where I need to know unambiguously whether you will join us in the effort General Haig is going to outline or whether we must contemplate alternative courses of action which I believe would be detrimental to the interests of both of our countries.

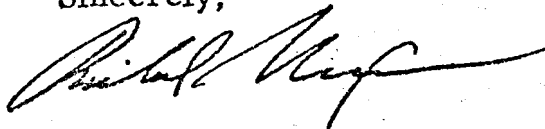
I hope that you and your government are prepared to cooperate with us. There is a great deal of preparatory work that needs to be done, and we believe joint US-GVN task forces should begin working together so that we will be in the best possible position to implement the settlement.

It is my firm conviction that your people, your armed forces, and you have achieved a major victory which the draft agreement would ratify. It is my intention to build on these accomplishments. I would like to work with you and your government in my second term to defend freedom in South Vietnam in peacetime as we have worked during my first term to defend it in conflict.

In four years you and I have been close personal and military allies. Our alliance has brought us to a position where the

enemy is agreeing to conditions which any objective observer said were impossible four years ago. Our alliance and its achievements have been based on mutual trust. If you will give me continued trust, together we shall succeed.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 29, 1972

Dear Mr. President:

I have just completed a careful reading of the October 28, 1972 memorandum entitled "Memorandum Re: Radio Hanoi's Broadcast on October 26, 1972 and Dr. Kissinger's Press Briefing on October 26, 1972." As I have informed you, Dr. Kissinger has spoken and continues to speak on my behalf. There has not been nor will there be any distinction between his views and mine. As I wrote to you in my letter of October 16, "Dr. Kissinger's comments have my total backing."

With specific reference to the points raised in this memorandum, we are astonished to be asked to comment on claims emanating from Radio Hanoi. Dr. Kissinger gave a full and detailed explanation of the ad referendum character of his discussions with the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Therefore, the Government of South Vietnam should not ask itself why theoretical planning dates were given to the DRV; it is patently obvious that they were ad referendum since none of these dates have been carried out.

With respect to your concerns about my messages of October 20 and October 22 to the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, you will recall that Dr. Kissinger specifically referred to the content of these messages during his discussions with you in Saigon. These messages essentially concerned three matters concerning South Vietnam and two matters concerning Laos and Cambodia. With respect to South Vietnam, we informed Hanoi that we rejected any claim regarding your resignation and insisted on the replacement and prisoner provisions which you have seen. With respect to Laos and Cambodia, we demanded assurances with

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E.O. 12355, Sec. 3.4.

MR 89-17, #22 NSC Ltr. 10/27/89

By 1084 NARA, Date 2/1/90

respect to ending the conflict in these countries. Dr. Kissinger, in the presence of Ambassador Bunker, told you that in their replies the North Vietnamese yielded on all these points. I consider that you were fully informed.

Concerning the current status of the draft agreement, Dr. Kissinger has made a solemn commitment to you to obtain the maximum number of changes reflecting the views expressed to him during his visit to Saigon. With respect to the inclusion of reference to the "three" countries of Indochina, Dr. Kissinger explained to you that the use of "three" was simply inadvertent and we would demand of the North Vietnamese to have it deleted from the present text.

With respect to the National Council, Dr. Kissinger made amply clear in his press conference, as he did in his talks with you, that it has no governmental functions. All American and foreign observers have seen its real meaning -- a face-saving device for the communists to cover their collapse on their demands for a coalition government and your resignation. It is therefore incomprehensible to me why your government has chosen to portray the Council as a structure which encompasses governmental functions. This constant reiteration by your officials of misleading comments may bring about what we have struggled so hard to avoid.

Our position continues to be that we can live with an "administrative structure" which in English clearly implies advisory functions and not governmental ones, but that we reject the North Vietnamese translation which would imply that the structure is endowed with governmental powers and functions. This is precisely what Dr. Kissinger meant when he referred to language problems in his press conference. This is what we will clarify when we meet the North Vietnamese next. We chose the phrase linguistic ambiguity to give everybody a face-saving way out. You and I know what is involved.

Dr. Kissinger's press conference was conducted on my detailed instructions. He was doing his utmost to prevent you from being

portrayed as the obstacle to peace with an inevitable cutoff by Congress of U.S. funds to the Government of South Vietnam and the creation of unmanageable impediments to continued U.S. support for you and your Government. Constant criticism from Saigon can only undercut this effort. We will continue our efforts to present a united front, but they cannot succeed without the cooperation of your associates.

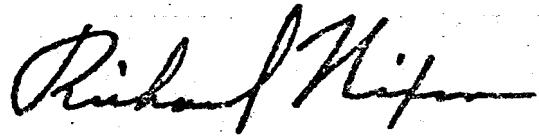
Beyond these specific points I cannot fail to call to your attention the dangerous course which your Government is now pursuing. You know my firm commitment to the people of South Vietnam and to you personally. As Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Bunker have informed you, I would like to underline this commitment by meeting with you within one or two weeks after the signing of this agreement. It is my conviction that the future depends on the unity which exists between us and on the degree to which we can make clear our unequivocal support to do what is necessary in the days ahead to insure that the provisions of a peace settlement are strictly enforced. Just as our unity has been the essential aspect of the success we have enjoyed thus far in the conduct of hostilities, it will also be the best guarantee of future success in a situation where the struggle continues within a more political framework. If the evident drift towards disagreement between the two of us continues, however, the essential base for U.S. support for you and your Government will be destroyed. In this respect the comments of your Foreign Minister that the U.S. is negotiating a surrender are as damaging as they are unfair and improper.

You can be assured that my decisions as to the final character of a peace settlement are in no way influenced by the election in the United States, and you should harbor no illusions that my policy with respect to the desirability of achieving an early peace will change after the election. I have taken this opportunity to comment on the memorandum of October 28 so that there can be no doubts in Saigon with respect to the objectives sought by me and my Government.

I urge you again, Mr. President, to maintain the essential unity which has characterized our relations over these past

difficult four years and which has proven to be the essential ingredient in the success we have achieved thus far. Disunity will strip me of the ability to maintain the essential base of support which your Government and your people must have in the days ahead, and which I am determined to provide. Willingness to cooperate will mean that we will achieve peace on the basis of what I consider to be a workable agreement -- especially with the amendments which we are certain to obtain. From this basis, we can move with confidence and unity to achieve our mutual objectives of peace and unity for the heroic people of South Vietnam.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon".

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the Republic
of Vietnam
Saigon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1972

Dear President Thieu:

I have asked Dr. Henry Kissinger to convey to you this personal letter regarding our current negotiations with North Vietnam which now appear to be reaching a final stage.

As you know, throughout the four years of my Administration the United States has stood firmly behind your Government and its people in our support for their valiant struggle to resist aggression and preserve their right to determine their own political future.

The military measures we have taken and the Vietnamization program, the dramatic steps that we took in 1970 against the Cambodian sanctuaries, the operations in Laos in 1971 and the measures against North Vietnam just this past May have fully attested to the steadfastness of our support. I need not emphasize that many of these measures were as unpopular to many in the U.S. as they were necessary.

At the negotiating table we have always held firmly to the principle that we would never negotiate with North Vietnam a solution which predetermined the political outcome of the conflict. We have consistently adhered to positions that would preserve the elected government and assure the free people of Vietnam the opportunity to determine their future.

Until very recently the North Vietnamese negotiators have held firmly to their long-established position that any settlement of the war would have to include your resignation and the dismantlement of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and its institutions.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 89-17, #23 NSC Dir. 10/27/89

By KBH NARA, Date 2/1/90

It now seems, however, that the combination of the perseverance and heroism of your Government and its fighting forces, the measures taken by the United States on the 8th of May, 1972, and our firmness at the conference table have caused a fundamental shift in Hanoi. In the course of Dr. Kissinger's recent meetings with the North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, it has become progressively more evident that Hanoi's leadership is prepared to agree to a ceasefire prior to the resolution of the political problem in South Vietnam. This is indeed an important reverse in doctrine and must represent a decision for them which cannot have been taken lightly. They know the weakness of their own political forces in the South and therefore the risks involved in reaching an agreement that does not meet their political objectives must indeed for them be great.

The consequence of this change in strategy has resulted in a situation wherein we and Hanoi's negotiators have reached essential agreement on a text which provides for a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of remaining allied forces, the exchange of prisoners of war, and the continued existence of your Government and its institutions after the ceasefire takes effect. In addition to the document itself a number of private assurances have been obtained designed to meet the security concerns of your country and whose implementation we consider an essential part of this agreement.

Dr. Kissinger will explain to you in the fullest detail the provisions of the proposed agreement which he carries with him and I will therefore not provide further elaboration in this message. I do, however, want you to know that I believe we have no reasonable alternative but to accept this agreement. It represents major movement by the other side, and it is my firm conviction that its implementation will leave you and your people with the ability to defend yourselves and decide the political destiny of South Vietnam.

As far as I am concerned, the most important provision of this agreement, aside from its military features, is that your Government, its armed forces and its political institutions, will remain intact after the ceasefire has been observed. In the period

following the cessation of hostilities you can be completely assured that we will continue to provide your Government with the fullest support, including continued economic aid and whatever military assistance is consistent with the ceasefire provisions of this government.

I recognize that after all these years of war a settlement will present an enormous challenge to your leadership and your people. We all recognize that the conflict will now move into a different form, a form of political struggle as opposed to open military confrontation; but I am of the firm conviction that with wisdom and perseverance your Government and the people of South Vietnam will meet this new challenge. You will have my absolute support in this endeavor and I want you to know it is my firm belief that in this new phase your continued leadership of the destiny of South Vietnam is indispensable.

Finally, I must say that, just as we have taken risks in war, I believe we must take risks for peace. Our intention is to abide faithfully by the terms of the agreements and understandings reached with Hanoi, and I know this will be the attitude of your government as well. We expect reciprocity and have made this unmistakably clear both to them and their major allies. I can assure you that we will view any breach of faith on their part with the utmost gravity; and it would have the most serious consequences.

Allow me to take this occasion to renew my sentiments of highest personal regard and admiration for you and your comrades in arms.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the

Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

*Dr. Kissinger, General Haring
and I have discussed this
proposal at great length.*

*I am personally convinced
it is the best we will be able to get and
that it meets my absolute condition
that the RVN must survive as a
free country. Dr. Kissinger's comments
have my total backing. (P)*

RON-NESSSEN BRIEFING

Wednesday, April 9, 1975

RELEASES:

James G. Watt to be a member of the Federal Power Commission.
Alfred D. Starbird Asst. Administrator Energy Research & Development
Text of letters from the President to Speaker of Hse & President Pro
Tempore of Sen. re. Effective Reorganization of Exec. Branch
Proclamation - May 1, 1975 Law Day
Second Quarterly Report of Council on Wage & Price Stability (reports to

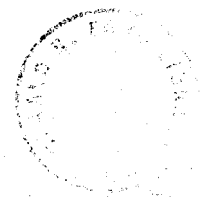
SCHEDULE: As posted with the following changes

- 10:30 a.m. Max Fisher met with the President. MF just returned from a private & personal visit to Israel and reported to the President. MF did not take or bring back any letters.
- 1:00 p.m. Bipartisan Leadership meeting. RN will give read-out. Meeting on tomorrow nite's speech.
- 2:45 p.m. Youth Delegates on Nat'l Explorer President's Cong changed from 2 p.m.

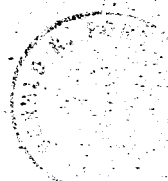
PM OF TUNESIA: Has accepted invitation of President for an official visit to the U. S. beginning on May 1. The President will host a working dinner that night at the WH (5/1)

PRIVATE AGREEMENTS: (See the attached). There was a great deal of discussion on whether the "vigorous action" had inferred military reaction by the U. S. RN stated to all these questions that though the wording was different in the private and public exchanges, the substance was the same and stated the two assurances of 1. continued economic and military assistance and 2. vigorous reaction to major violations of the Paris agreement. The law of 1973 ruled out any military reaction.

BUDGET: The President is gratified the Budget Committee has set a ceiling for gov't spending for 1976, however feels the ceiling is too high. The President hopes that this will instill new responsibility for total government spending.



Assurances to the Republic of Viet Nam as to both U.S. assistance and U.S. enforcement of the Paris agreement were stated clearly and publicly by President Nixon. The publicly stated policy and intention of the United States government to continue to provide adequate economic and military assistance and to react vigorously to major violations of the Paris agreement reflected ~~in~~ confidential exchanges between the Nixon Administration and President Thieu at the time. In substance, the private exchanges do not differ from what was stated publicly. The law of 1973, of course, ruled out the possibility of American military reaction to violations of the agreement.



U.S. -GVN Communique (San Clemente), April 3, 1973:

Both Presidents, while acknowledging that progress was being made toward military and political settlements in South Vietnam, nevertheless viewed with great concern infiltrations of men and weapons in sizeable numbers from North Vietnam into South Vietnam in violation of the Agreement on Ending the War, and considered that actions which would threaten the basis of the Agreement would call for appropriately vigorous reactions. They expressed their conviction that all the provisions of the Agreement, including in particular those concerning military forces and military supplies, must be faithfully implemented if the cease-fire is to be preserved and the prospects for a peaceful settlement are to be assured. President Nixon stated in this connection that the United States views violations of any provision of the Agreement with great and continuing concern.

* * *

President's Foreign Policy Report, May 3, 1973:

"We hope that the contending factions will now prefer to pursue their objectives through peaceful means and political competition rather than through the brutal and costly methods of the past. This choice is up to them. We shall be vigilant concerning violations of the Agreement."

* * *

"We expect our friends to observe the Agreement just as we will not tolerate violations by the North Vietnamese or its allies."

* * *

"We have told Hanoi, privately and publicly, that we will not tolerate violations of the Agreement."

* * *

President Nixon's News Conference of March 15, 1973:

"I will only suggest this: that we have informed the North Vietnamese of our concern about this infiltration and of what we believe it to be, a violation of the cease-fire, the cease-fire and the peace agreement. Our concern has also been expressed to other interested parties. And I would only suggest that based on my actions over the past four years, that the North Vietnamese should not lightly disregard such expressions of concern, when they are made, with regard to a violation. That is all I will say about it."

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Secret Agreements - Issues

Were agreements or commitments "secret"?

Has there been public discussion of "you have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement it is my intention to take swift and severe retaliatory action."?

What does public record show?

How respond to question?

Release of letters?