

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

FLASH

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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY WHP0148
1972 NOV 24 AM 6 14

FROM: COL KENNEDY
TO: GEN HAIG

TOHAK 78

THE PRESIDENT JUST CALLED TO DICTATE THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WHICH IS TO SUPPLEMENT THE INSTRUCTION HE SENT EARLIER;

QUOTE: TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BARGAINING POSITION WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IF THEY CONTINUE IN THEIR INTRANSIGENCE TODAY, YOU SHOULD USE YOUR JUDGEMENT WITH REGARD TO BREAKING OFF THE TALKS AT THE DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF GIVING NEGOTIATORS FROM BOTH SIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT WITH THEIR PRINCIPALS AND TO RESUME ONE WEEK LATER.

IN THE EVENT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AGREE TO THIS, FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I WOULD BE PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE A MASSIVE STRIKE ON THE NORTH IN THE INTERVAL BEFORE THE TALKS ARE RESUMED. I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS A HIGH RISK OPTION, BUT IT IS ONE I AM PREPARED TO TAKE IF THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS AN AGREEMENT WHICH IS WORSE THAN THAT OF OCTOBER 8 AND WHICH DOES NOT CLEAR UP ANY OF THE AMBIGUITIES WHICH WE AND SAIGON ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IN THE OCTOBER 8 DRAFT.

IN SUM, TAKE A HARD LINE WITH SAIGON AND AN EQUALLY HARD LINE WITH HANOI. IN OUR OWN MIND, WE KNOW THAT AS FAR AS THE HANOI SIDE IS CONCERNED THERE IS A DISADVANTAGE BUT WE CANNOT MAKE A BAD DEAL SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT THE MASSIVE EXPECTATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN BUILT UP IN THIS COUNTRY FOR A SETTLEMENT WOULD LEAD TO AN EQUALLY MASSIVE LET DOWN IF BOMBING WERE RESUMED.

OUR AIM WILL CONTINUE TO BE TO END THE WAR WITH HONOR. AND IF BECAUSE OF THE PURSUIT OF OUR STRATEGY AND THE ACCIDENT OF THE TIMING OF THE ELECTION WE ARE NOW IN A PUBLIC RELATIONS CORNER, WE MUST TAKE OUR LUMPS AND SEE IT THROUGH.

IN GIVING THIS DIRECTION, WE ALL MUST REALIZE THAT THERE IS NO WAY WHATEVER THAT WE CAN MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION BEHIND US AS IN THE CASE OF NOVEMBER 3, CAMBODIA AND MAY 8. BUT AT LEAST WITH THE ELECTION BEHIND US, WE OWE IT TO THE SACRIFICE THAT HAS BEEN MADE TO DATE BY SO MANY TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT EVEN THOUGH THE COST IN OUR PUBLIC SUPPORT WILL BE MASSIVE.

I KNOW THESE SESSIONS HAVE BEEN A VERY GREAT BURDEN FOR YOU AND FOR AL. YOU HAVE MY TOTAL CONFIDENCE AND BEST WISHES. CALL HALDEMAN TODAY AS SOON AS YOU GET ANY INDICATION OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN. IN THE EVENT YOU HAVE TO BREAK OFF TALKS, I WILL CANCEL MY TRIP TO NEW YORK WHERE I AM SCHEDULED TO SPEND THE WEEKEND.

IF YOU DETERMINE IT IS ADVISABLE TO BREAK OFF TALKS YOU ARE TO TELL NORTH VIETNAMESE CURTLY THAT YOU REPORTED THE SESSIONS TO DATE IN FULL TO THE PRESIDENT. HIS REACTION IS THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POSITION IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND HAS ORDERED YOU TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY FOR CONSULTATIONS. USE THIS MESSAGE AS YOU DEEM NECESSARY.

END OF MESSAGE

SECRET