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DECEMBER 4, 1972

TO: GENERAL HAIG FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: COLONEL KENNEDY

THE PRESIDENT CALLED AND DICTATED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FOR MR. KISSINGER:

BEGIN TEXT:

YOU SHOULD PROCEED ON THE SECOND OPTION, PARAGRAPH 5, IN YOUR MESSAGE. THIS IS THE MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR A SETTLEMENT. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE RECORD AS CLEAR AS POSSIBLE IN THE TALKS THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BREAKDOWN RESTS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. YOU SHOULD MAKE A CLEAR RECORD OF THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE RENEGED; FIRST AS TO THE MEANING OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE POLITICAL SIDE BY REASONS OF THE TRANSLATION PROBLEM AND SECOND BECAUSE THEY HAVE INSISTED ON MAINTAINING THE RIGHT OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES TO REMAIN PERMANENTLY IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

IN PURSUING THIS COURSE, HOWEVER, I HAVE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT MY ADDRESSING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ON THIS MATTER. I THINK WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS MAKE THE RECORD OF NORTH VIETNAMESE INTRANSIGENCE AND IF THEY PERSIST IN THAT INTRANSIGENCE, THEN YOU SHOULD RETURN HERE TO REPORT TO ME. WE THEN WILL ACT IMMEDIATELY ON THE MILITARY SIDE. TO ESCALATE THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TALKS BY A MELODRAMATIC APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, I BELIEVE WOULD BE A MISTAKE, ALTHOUGH WE CAN DISCUSS THAT FURTHER WHEN YOU RETURN.

THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE YOU SHOULD PURSUE AT THE NEXT MEETING IS TO MAKE A RECORD SUCH THAT, WHEN IT IS MADE PUBLIC BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, YOU CAN BRIEF CATEGORICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN A WAY THAT WILL PUT THE BLAME SQUARELY ON THEM. WE THEN WILL LET OUR ACTION SPEAK THIS TIME RATHER THAN OUR WORDS.

KEEPING THE NEGOTIATIONS GOING WITH POSTPONEMENTS, ETC. ARE IN OUR INTEREST. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, YOU CAN ASSUME THAT I WILL ORDER A VERY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE NORTH, INCLUDING THE USE OF B-52S OVER THE HANOI-HAIPHONG COMPLEX. I WOULD BE WILLING TO ORDER THAT TOMORROW PRIOR TO THE NEXT MEETING. I WOULD LIKE YOUR RECOMMENDATION ON THIS. IN ANY EVENT WE SHOULD HAVE THE WHOLE SALVO READY TO GO WHEN THE TALKS BREAK DOWN, IF THEY DO.

THE BETTER COURSE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE SITUATION HERE WOULD BE TO HAVE IT APPEAR THAT THE TALKS ARE CONTINUING WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WE, BY OUR STEPPED UP MILITARY ACTIONS, SHOW OUR INTENT TO SEE THIS THING THROUGH. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF IT WORKS OUT THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE TOTALLY INTRANSIGENT, THEN WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO LET THE TALKS BREAK OFF. AS I SEE IT, THE PROBLEM OF MY ADDRESSING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS DIFFERENT NOW FROM THE SITUATION AT THE TIME OF CAMBODIA AND MAY 8. IN BOTH OF THOSE INSTANCES THEY SAW REASON TO HOPE THAT THERE WAS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. THIS TIME, AFTER THE BUILDUP OF EXPECTATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY, IT WOULD APPEAR AS JUST A CONTINUATION OF MORE OF THE SAME. I HAVE NO PROBLEM IN CONTINUING AND STEPPING UP THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH. I THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE OPTION OF RAISING THIS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL FORCES THE RUSSIANS AND THE CHINESE TO REACT, WOULD GET AT BEST A MIXED REACTION HERE IN THE U.S., AND MIGHT MAKE SAIGON MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THAN THEY PRESENTLY ARE.

WARM REGARDS.

END OF TEXT

WHEN HE DICTATED THE ABOUVE MESSAGE, THE PRESIDENT WAS AWARE THAT MR. KISSINGER MAY REQUEST A POSTPONEMENT OF THE NEXT MEETING UNTIL WEDNESDAY AND FEELS THIS IS A WISE COURSE IF MR. KISSINGER WANTS TO PURSUE IT.

WARM REGARDS.

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