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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

November 23, 1972

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
(By Cable)

1. We have just completed a six-hour meeting with the North Vietnamese which proved to be every bit as difficult as predicted. After granting some improvements, including a more satisfactory statement on the status of the DMZ, the other side held rigidly firm that there would be only minor changes in the political chapter, and no improvements whatsoever in the text of the agreement with respect to the issue of their troops in South Vietnam.

Concurrently, they reiterated their demand that the political prisoners held by Thieu be released within the same time frame as U.S. prisoners of war, i. e. 60 days. In return for minor changes in the political chapter and the release of the political prisoners, Le Duc Tho stated they would make a commitment to relocate some of their forces in MR-1 and to bring the ceasefire in Laos close to the time of the ceasefire in South Vietnam. He insisted that both of these arrangements should be in the form of understandings rather than firm written commitments. He indicated that if we meet their demands on prisoners and the political chapter, they would give an appropriate response on the number of troops which would be relocated.

2. Thus at this point, in assessing the ledger, we have received a vague commitment based on an understanding to relocate some troops from the northern part of South Vietnam and to bring the ceasefire in Laos somewhat closer to the ceasefire in South Vietnam, together with some improved language and textual changes which are moderately helpful, especially with respect to the DMZ.

At the same time, we are confronted with an intransigent North Vietnamese stance on improved political positions and with respect to a formal commitment in the agreement regarding the troops in the South. In addition, the question of civilian U.S. advisors in South Vietnam following the settlement is still a point of contention. Most seriously, however, we are confronted with the demand

