

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.

