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Friday, January 24, 1969

Pres.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Conversation with South Vietnamese Ambassador
Bui Diem, January 24, 1969

I saw the Vietnamese Ambassador for a few minutes this evening and made the following points to him:

- The Nixon Administration believes it essential that the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) and the U. S. Government work closely together in the months to come.
- We have the impression that some of the difficulty between us over the past few months resulted from unnecessary arguments over language.
- We intend to be tough with the North Vietnamese on the issues, but will try to get maneuvering room by using soft language.
- South Vietnamese attitudes over recent months, we believe, were partly a result of distrust of the U. S. Perhaps the GVN was reluctant to concede anything because of uncertainties over what we might next ask.
- This Administration will deal honestly and frankly with the GVN. We will listen carefully and sympathetically to the GVN, although we may not always be able to do what is asked of us.

Bui Diem admitted that relations had deteriorated over the past months, and said that he personally believed unnecessary things had been said by both sides.

I told the Ambassador that he should feel free to call on me any time he wished. I emphasized that I would like him to tell me what the real Vietnamese concerns were, rather than to go over arguments largely put out for public consumption.

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E.O. 13526, Section 3.5
PLA007-19/14928 Per Htr. 4/23/2015
By RS/WML/NARA, Date 6/27/2016
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