



Chief of Staff
Department of State

TELEGRAM

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USOM BANGKOK

DISSENT CHANNEL

SUBJ: STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO THE BOMBING OF HAIPHONG

1. THIS CABLE TRANSMITS A DISSENTING VIEW SUBMITTED BY [REDACTED]

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2. WE, THE ABOVE-MENTIONED UNITED STATES FOREIGN SERVICE RESERVE OFFICERS, CURRENTLY SERVING WITH THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USOM) IN THAILAND, HEREIN FORMALLY REGISTER OUR OPPOSITION TO THE RECENT MILITARY ACTION TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

3. WE HAVE CHOSEN THIS MENTHOO TO COMMUNICATE OUR DISAPPROVAL AS IT REPRESENTS THE SOLE OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED FORUM FOR FOREIGN SERVICE EMPLOYEES TO EXPRESS THEIR DISSENT AND BECAUSE WE CONSIDER ANY UNRESTRAINED, PUBLIC CRITICISM ON OUR PART, EITHER PERSONALLY OR THROUGH THE NEWS MEDIA, AS SERVING NO USEFUL PURPOSE. EVERY CONCEIVABLE ARGUMENT FOR OR AGAINST THE WAR HAVING LONG SINCE BEEN MADE.

4. WE REGARD THE AIR ATTACKS AGAINST FUEL AND OTHER STORAGE

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FACILITIES AT HAIPHONG AND THE MASSING OF CONSIDERABLE AIR AND SEA FORCES IN THE AREA (PRESUMABLY TO FORESTALL FURTHER NORTH VIETNAMESE THRUSTS IN THE SOUTH) AS A BREACH OF THE SPIRIT IF NOT THE LETTER OF OUR STATED POLICY TO DISENGAGE FROM THE INDO-CHINA CONFLICT, AND AS SUCH CONSTITUTES AN ILL-TIMED, ENTIRELY IDEFENSIBLE ESCALATION OF HOSTILITIES. WHETHER INITIATED AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE TO SAFEGUARD REMAINING UNITED STATES TROOPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM OR TO BUY ADDITIONAL TIME FOR "VIETNAMIZATION," THE RETALIATORY RAIDS ON APRIL 15-16 WERE UNWARRANTED. WHAT IS MORE, THEY ARE LIKELY TO LOSE US SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS WELL AS AT HOME AND RUN THE VERY REAL RISK OF PROVOKING COUNTRIES WHICH, TILL NOW, HAVE LIMITED THEMSELVES TO MATERIAL SUPPORT OF THE NORTH.

WE DO NOT CONSIDER THE RISK OF ANY OF THESE ALTERNATIVE OUTCOMES WORTH THE TEMPORARY RELIEF THE UNITED STATES IS LIKELY TO ACHIEVE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM BY ITS ACTIONS. FURTHERMORE, WE DEPLORE THE FAILURE TO CONSIDER OTHER OPTIONS WHICH THIS ACTION REPRESENTS. WE FEEL OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD WILL MERELY FIND RENEWED JUSTIFICATION OF THEIR VIEW THAT THE U.S. INTEREST IN WORLD AFFAIRS IS EXPRESSED PRIMARILY IN MILITARY TERMS AND THAT WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN MILITARY DOMINANCE. WHILE DISAPPROVING OF UNITED STATES RESUMPTION OF BOMBING, WE IN NO WAY CONDOONE THE RECENT MOVES OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO ESTABLISH ITS DOMINANCE OVER THE SOUTH THROUGH FORCE OF ARMS. RATHER, WE FEEL AND WHOLE HEARTEDLY ENDORSE THE COURSE OF ACTION THE ADMINISTRATION EMBARKED UPON IN THE 1968 WITHDRAWAL. WE APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT TO ADHERE TO THIS POLICY AT ALL COSTS.

MILITARY TRIUMPH, AT THIS JUNCTURE, IS WELL BEYOND THE GRASP OF THE UNITED STATES, BUT IS IS NOT TOO LATE TO SALVAGE PART OF THE NATIONAL PRESTIGE WE HAVE SACRIFICED IN VIETNAM OVER THE LAST DECADE. ULTIMATELY, AS THE U.S. HAS OFTEN DECLARED SINCE 1968, SOUTH VIETNAM MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESERVING ITS NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. UNLESS OUR GOVERNMENT IS NOW PREPARED TO PUT ITS CONFIDENCE IN "VIETNAMIZATION" TO THE TEST (EVEN RISKING ITS FAILURE), U.S. INVOLVEMENT WILL REMAIN DIRECT AND OUR COMMITMENT OPEN-ENDED, NEITHER OF WHICH ARE ATTRACTIVE PROSPECTS.

IT IS OUR FIRM HOPE THAT THE NIXON DOCTRINE REPRESENTS A SINCERE EFFORT TO LOOK AT NEW POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE 1970'S AND TO LEAVE

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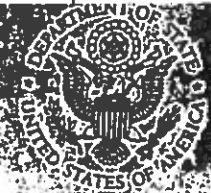
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BEHIND THE NARROW, MILITARY DOMINATED OPTIONS WHICH WERE
CONSIDERED THE ONLY VALID ONES DURING THE 1960'S. IF NEW OPTIONS
ARE TO BE CONSIDERED, WE CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT WE NOT ALLOW
OURSELVES TO BE TEMPTED TO USE THE OLD AND EASILY AVAILABLE
EXPEDIENTS AS WE DID IN THE BOMBING! UNTIL WE HAVE EXHAUSTED
ALL OTHER MEANS.

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DISSIDENT CHANNEL

FOR [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] AND [redacted]
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FROM DIRECTOR, S/PC

REF: BANGKOK 5767

1. THIS WILL ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF YOUR DISSIDENT CHANNEL MESSAGE CONTAINED IN BANGKOK 5767. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MESSAGE WILL RECEIVE FULL ATTENTION IN THE DEPARTMENT. INITIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THIS TELEGRAM HAS BEEN MADE TO THE SECRETARY, THE UNDER SECRETARY, THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, THE COUNSELOR, THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OPEN FORUM PANEL.

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