

3/8/75  
March 8, 1975

Matters of interest

IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU THIS EVENING AND TO HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT SOME MATTERS WHICH I THINK ARE CONCERNS OF BOTH MINE AND YOURS.

THE FIRST IS THE MATTER OF CONTINUING MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO SOUTH VIET NAM AND CAMBODIA. AS ALL OF YOU KNOW, THE WAR STILL GOES ON THERE IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS WITHDRAWN ITS FORCES AND IN SPITE OF THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO.

I AM CONVINCED THAT HOW WE HANDLE THE QUESTION NOW BEFORE US, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER TO PROVIDE AID NECESSARY TO RESIST THE COMMUNIST ONSLAUGHT, IS GOING TO HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON OUR POSITION IN THE WORLD. *in the future.*

WHEN WE WERE STILL IN VIET NAM THERE WERE THOSE WHO ARGUED THAT WE SHOULD PREPARE THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND THAT WE SHOULD WITHDRAW. WELL, WE DID WITHDRAW AND NOW ONE THING SEEMS VERY CLEAR TO ME: CONTINUED AMERICAN AID TO SOUTH VIET NAM IS ESSENTIAL

TO ENABLE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO DO THE JOB WE HAVE TRAINED THEM TO DO -- WHICH IS TO DEFEND THEIR FREEDOM. / A LOT OF TALK HAS SURFACED TO THE EFFECT THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED OUR OBLIGATIONS AND HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE FURTHER HELP. I CANNOT AGREE IN VIEW OF THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION. / FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS WERE SIGNED, NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS HAVE INFILTRATED INTO THE SOUTH UNTIL TODAY THIS FORCE NUMBERS 300,000; 80,000 MORE THAN WHEN THE PEACE AGREEMENT WAS APPROVED. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE ALSO EXPANDED THEIR ARMAMENT STOCKPILES, BUILT AIRFIELDS, TRIPLED THE SIZE OF THEIR ARMOR IN THE SOUTH, WHILE SHELLING POPULATION CENTERS AND OVERRUNNING 11 DISTRICT TOWNS WHICH WERE UNCONTESTABLY HELD BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AT THE TIME THE CEASE-FIRE WAS AGREED TO.

OUR SOUTH VIETNAMESE ALLIES BY CONTRAST, HAVE GENERALLY LIVED UP TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY CALLED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS ACCORDS CALLING FOR INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED ELECTIONS. THEY HAVE ALSO COOPERATED FULLY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO MONITOR

CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS. THE RESPONSE TO THEIR ACTIONS HAS BEEN CONTINUED AGRESSION BY THE NORTH, BACKED BY SOVIET SAM MISSILES, HEAVY ARTILLERY AND OTHER EQUIPMENT.

BECAUSE OF CONTINUED COMMUNIST MILITARY AID TO THE HANOI REGIME, NORTH VIETNAM, IN THE YEARS SINCE THE PEACE ACCORDS WERE SIGNED, HAS BEEN ABLE TO CREATE, IN THE WORDS OF MAJ. GENERAL JOHN MURRAY, FORMER DEFENSE ATTACHE IN SAIGON, "THE STRONGEST, BEST-POSITIONED AND BEST-SUPPORTED MILITARY MACHINE IT HAS EVER FIELDDED IN SOUTH VIETNAM". WHILE WE CONTINUED TO GIVE SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH VIETNAM IN THE FIRST 15 MONTHS AFTER THE PEACE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, THE ARVN TROOPS WERE ABLE TO HOLD ONTO THEIR TERRITORY AND OUTPOSTS. YET IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS, DUE TO INADEQUATE SUPPLIES, THEY HAVE HAD TO WITHDRAW FROM DOZENS OF OUTPOSTS, WHILE SCORES OF OTHER OUTPOSTS HAVE BEEN OVERRUN. IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY IN MY OPINION AFTER HAVING LOST 80,000 MEN IN VIETNAM AND SPENT OVER \$180 BILLION THERE TO PREVENT A MILITARY TAKE OVER BY HANOI, TO GUARANTEE THE SUCCESS OF AGGRESSION BECAUSE WE REFUSED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY ARMS WITH WHICH

TO PREVENT IT.

I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD BE SO QUICK TO FORGET THAT WE TOLD THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WE WOULD ASSIST THEM IF THEY WOULD FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES. NOW THAT THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WILLINGNESS, IT APPEARS WE ARE READY TO TURN OUR BACKS ON THEM.

THE APPARENT LACK OF CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND THE CAMBODIANS AND THEIR ABILITY TO RESIST IS ALARMING BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH IT IS NOT REALLY SURPRISING. THE NATIONAL MEDIA LONG AGO MADE UP THEIR MINDS ABOUT WHAT OUGHT TO HAPPEN IN SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THEIR COVERAGE HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN DESIGNED TO REINFORCE THEIR VIEWPOINT. LET ME GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION.

ONE MORNING THIS WEEK A PROFESSOR FROM ONE OF OUR UNIVERSITIES CAME BY TO SEE ME AND EXPRESSED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF FURTHER AID TO CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM. HE SAID THAT BASED ON WHAT HE HAD SEEN ON CBS TELEVISION, HE WAS CONVINCED THAT "OUR RAVAGING OF THESE COUNTRIES IS INEXCUSABLE." IT WAS RATHER IRONIC THAT HE SHOULD

MAKE SUCH STATEMENTS TO ME ON THIS MORNING, FOR JUST A FEW MINUTES BEFORE I HAD READ A COLUMN IN THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER BY JOHN D. LOFTON, JR. WHICH APPEARED FEBRUARY 28, 1975. THE COLUMN WAS ENTITLED "THERE WAS NO TIME FOR SAIGON'S SIDE."

MR. LOFTON POINTED OUT IN HIS COLUMN THAT, WHEN MR. TRAN VAN IAM, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM'S SENATE, APPEARED BEFORE THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB TO PRESENT HIS COUNTRY'S CAUSE FOR CONTINUED MILITARY AID, NEITHER THE CBS, NBC, NOR ABC NEWS NETWORKS BOTHERED TO GIVE ANY COVERAGE TO HIS PLEA. IT SEEMED, ACCORDING TO MR. LOFTON, WHO MADE INQUIRIES OF EACH NETWORK, THAT THEY WERE ALL TOO BUSY COVERING "HEAVY NEWS" ASSIGNMENTS OF THE DAY.

WELL, LET'S LOOK AND SEE WHAT "HEAVY NEWS ASSIGNMENTS" PREEMPTED THE PLEA MADE BY SOUTH VIETNAM'S COUNTERPART TO HENRY KISSINGER. IT APPEARS THAT CBS WAS COVERING THE SENTENCING OF THE WATERGATE DEFENDANTS AND "CHASING REACTIONS" TO THE SENTENCING. THEY WERE REPORTING ON A SPEECH IN PITTSBURGH BY CONVICTED WATERGATE CONSPIRATOR JEB MAGRUDER

AS IF WE HAD NOT HEARD ENOUGH ALREADY. AND THEN THERE WAS A STORY ABOUT BEBE REBOZO'S PLANS TO TURN THE FORMER FLORIDA WHITE HOUSE INTO A MONUMENT TO RICHARD NIXON.

ACCORDING TO MR. LOFTON, ON NBC THE SAME NIGHT THERE WAS A STORY ABOUT A WOMAN IN HESPERUS, COLORADO, WHO OWNS A COAL MINE AND IS FIGHTING WITH THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT IT.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE NBC BLACKOUT OF MR. LAM'S TALK WAS THAT -- IT IS NORMAL AND NOT OUT OF THE ORDINARY THAT AN OFFICIAL OF A GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SUCH A PITCH FOR HIS GOVERNMENT.

YET IT WAS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO NBC ON THEIR SUNDAY NIGHT PROGRAM "THE LOYAL OPPOSITION" TO PRESENT THE VIEWS OF TWO OF MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES, WHO OPPOSE AID TO THESE COUNTRIES AND WHO CONTEND THAT THE KILLING WILL STOP IF WE WITHDRAW FROM THE PICTURE AND PERMIT THE COMMUNISTS TO PREVAIL.

IT IS INTERESTING TO ME THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS INCLUDING ONE NOTED "DOVE" WHO HAVE GONE TO SOUTH EAST ASIA DURING THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND SEEN FOR THEMSELVES THE DETERMINATION OF OUR ALLIES, BELIEVE WE SHOULD HONOR OUR COMMITMENT TO AID THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIANS IN THEIR OWN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. IT IS TRAGIC THAT THE ENTIRE CONGRESS AND EQUALLY IMPORTANT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC CANNOT VIEW FIRSTHAND WHAT THEY DID. PERHAPS WE WOULD SEE MORE CONCERN FOR THE PLIGHT OF TWO NATIONS FIGHTING FOR THEIR VERY EXISTENCE AGAINST EVER INCREASING ODDS WITH THE PROSPECT OF SEEING AMERICAN PROMISES OF HELP PROVED EMPTY AND HOLLOW.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXAMINE ANOTHER TRAGEDY RELATED TO THE VIETNAM CONFLICT -- THE STATUS OF OUR MIA'S. THIS QUESTION ONLY SERVES TO FURTHER ILLUSTRATE THE CALLOUSNESS OF NORTH VIETNAM AND HER UNWILLINGNESS TO LIVE UP TO HER AGREEMENTS. UNDER ARTICLE 8(b) OF THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS, THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ARE CHARGED TO:

" . . . HELP EACH OTHER TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS OF THE PARTIES MISSING IN ACTION, TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION AND TAKE CARE OF THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD SO AS TO FACILITATE THE EXHUMATION AND REPATRIATION OF THE REMAINS, AND TO TAKE ANY SUCH OTHER MEASURES AS MAY BE REQUIRED TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE STILL CONSIDERED MISSING IN ACTION."

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THAT LANGUAGE ARE OBVIOUS. OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS MAY BE SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION, BUT NOTHING IS VAGUE ABOUT ARTICLE 8(b). IN SPIITE OF THIS FACT, HOWEVER, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE NEVER ALLOWED THE UNITED STATES TO EXAMINE CRASH SITES OR GRAVES IN CONTESTED TERRITORY IN EITHER SOUTH OR NORTH VIETNAM. THIS HAS FRUSTRATED THE FINAL ACCOUNTING NECESSARY TO RESOLVE THE FATES OF OUR MISSING MEN.



NO DOUBT HANOI HOPES TO EXPLOIT THIS ISSUE FOR ALL IT CAN.

HANOI PROBABLY EXPECTS THAT IT WILL EITHER EXTRACT FURTHER CONCESSIONS FROM US THAT IT COULD NOT WIN ON THE BATTLEFIELD IN EXCHANGE FOR INFORMATION ON OUR MIA'S, OR THAT WE WILL IN TIME WRITE OFF OUR MISSING PERSONNEL AS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE. WE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE WRONG ON EITHER COUNT. THE UNITED STATES MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT WE WILL NOT PERMIT HANOI TO RE-WRITE THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS AT THEIR PLEASURE.

THERE CERTAINLY IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A NUMBER OF OUR SERVICEMEN MAY STILL BE ALIVE. ON VARIOUS OCCASSIONS, THE ENEMY ISSUED PROPAGANDA RELEASES AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF OFFICIAL ARMED SERVICES ID CARDS OF AMERICANS, NOTING THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN PRISONER. AFTER THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS WERE SIGNED, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF THE NAMES OF THE SERVICEMEN ALLUDED TO BEFORE WERE NOT ON THE OFFICIAL LISTS RELEASED BY HANOIR. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CERTAINLY KNOW WHETHER THESE MEN ARE ALIVE OR DEAD. WE MUST CONTINUE TO PLACE PRESSURE ON THEM AND THEIR COMMUNIST ALLIES UNTIL THEY CLARIFY THE STATUS OF OUR VALIANT MISSING MEN.

I WAS DISTURBED RECENTLY WHEN VISITS BY MEMBERS OF MIA GROUPS INDICATED THAT THERE IS WIDE MISTRUST BY MIA FAMILIES OF OFFICIAL MILITARY EFFORTS TO ASSIST THEM. THIS IS TRAGIC FOR CERTAINLY THERE IS LITTLE HOPE FOR SUCCESS IF WE DO NOT ALL STAND UNITED. FOR THIS REASON, I HOPE THAT THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE INFLUENCE IN THESE MATTERS WILL MAKE SURE THERE IS NO ROOM FOR MISTRUST, THAT YOU WILL SHARE WITH THOSE WHO AGONIZE EACH DAY WHATEVER INFORMATION YOU HAVE CONCERNING THEIR LOVED ONES, AND THAT YOU WILL NOT BE PART OF AN EFFORT TO SPEED FORMAL DECLARATIONS OF DEATH MERELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLEARING THE RECORD AND MOVING ON.

THESE MEN ARE TOO IMPORTANT FOR IMPATIENCE, TOO IMPORTANT TO BE FORGOTTEN.

CIA