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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*

SUBJECT: Report by Representative Leo Ryan
on His Trip to South Vietnam

Representative Leo J. Ryan (D-California) has just issued a report (Tab A) through the House Foreign Affairs Committee summarizing findings on his recent trip to South Vietnam.

Ryan's report is highly supportive of your request for supplemental aid for South Vietnam and of the need for continuing assistance in the future.

The key judgments made by Ryan are as follows:

-- Allegations of widespread disregard for democratic principles are overblown. During the time of the visit of the study mission there appeared to be a reasonable standard of political activity and individual freedom.

-- U. S. assistance is at the minimal level for that country to continue to defend itself against North Vietnamese military incursion. If the Congress makes further cuts in U. S. assistance programs, it should be done with the realization that the action will weaken the military capability of the South Vietnamese to a dangerous level. The result will probably be a Communist takeover. Ryan says this despite his awareness that there have been constant warnings of imminent disaster in the last 10 years by the Defense and State Departments.

-- Before the Congress makes any final decision on your request and possibly sets U. S. policy on a new course, Ryan believes it is incumbent on Members to devote considerable time to assessing the implications of alternative policies.

-- In pursuit of a fresh perspective, Ryan urges Members of Congress to visit South Vietnam and strongly urges the Committee on Foreign Affairs to send a formal investigatory delegation.

-- An inadequate level of support would be a total waste of U. S. funds, and would still mean the loss of the country to North Vietnam's invasion and destruction.

-- Whether the judgment of the Congress is to commit scarce resources for years to come to South Vietnam or to end U. S. involvement -- it should be a conscious decision, not an accidental result.