

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Six South Vietnamese Parliamentarians
Truong Quoc Buu, South Vietnamese Labor Leader
Amb. Tran Kim Phuong, South Vietnamese
Ambassador to the U. S.

President Ford
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, March 25, 1975
11:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

[The press was admitted briefly for photographs.]

President: I am very pleased, Mr. Buu, to have the opportunity to greet you and your associates from Vietnam.

Phuong: We are very honored that you have been willing to meet with the Parliamentary delegation and Mr. Buu. I informed President Thieu last night of your kindness. He asked me to tell you he appreciated your kindness and your letter. He will write very shortly to explain the situation. He expresses his deep appreciation. He is aware of your efforts with the Congress. Your kindness and understanding he appreciates and anything you can do with the Congress.

We have had to withdraw from the Highlands in the face of massive illegal attack from the north. Last night we also had to withdraw from Hue. The road from the south is cut off so resupply by land and air is impossible. There are three divisions attacking. The President says we will make a stand in Danang.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept
By lit ARA, Date 1/20/00

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[He gets out a map.] The President asked me to tell you what we will do now. We will regroup in Danang as an enclave because two provinces south already are overrun -- Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. We will defend the coastal provinces [names them] and the two Highland provinces. We will hold this line [he indicates] and MRs 3 and 4. During the last two weeks there is the feeling we have drawn back but this area was indefensible. We could get three or four divisions chewed up or immobilized at Hue. We can resupply Danang by ship but not Hue; it has no harbor, and there are shifting sands.

President: Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Buu, Members of Parliament. I am happy to have you visit here. I spent 25 years in our parliament and I have a great understanding of your problems. I am disturbed as are the American people that Hanoi has so flagrantly violated the Paris accords. Please tell President Thieu that I am pleased to hear his plans for military defense. It is important that it be successful. Tell President Thieu that I will do everything I can to get the aid that South Vietnam needs.

I hope you all had a chance to discuss these problems with members of Congress. I think there is a better spirit there now. I hope the Congress will respond, and my Administration will do its best.

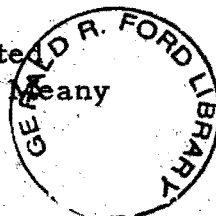
The news is bad, but if your government carries out this redeployment, I wish you well.

I am sending General Weyand, our Chief of Staff, to Saigon tomorrow to make an assessment and report to me. He is a friend of Vietnam and has been directed to tell me what we can do to help.

Mr. Buu: I am very happy to be here. I thank you, Mr. President, for your words of support. We send you the greetings of labor. We don't agree with President Thieu on everything but we certainly do on fighting the Communists. We have been affiliated with the CIO for 20 years. Always before we could count on the U.S. But now, the statements being made are more damaging than the bombs of the North. These comments have encouraged the Communists to attack. The North Vietnamese are being supported by the Chinese and the Soviet Union. If the U.S. doesn't help us, who will? Millions of Vietnamese people's attention is focussed on the U.S. to see what you will do.

President: The AFL/CIO under George Meany has always supported American actions in Vietnam. Some in labor haven't, but George Meany

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and his associates have supported strength in Vietnam and elsewhere. They know that labor has no voice under Communist regimes and that in a democracy, labor does have a union. George Meany and I don't always agree -- like you and Thieu -- but we agree that we must support people who want to be free if they are willing to fight. The GVN is fighting and standing strong and I will do everything possible to be helpful.

Buu: Whatever you can do, do it quickly.

President: We will expedite military and economic assistance and we will try to get the Congress to make additional funds available.

What was the reaction from the Congressmen you spoke to?

Minh: On behalf of the delegation, I want to express my thanks and express the feeling of the Vietnamese people. We thank you for your help and understanding. We want peace but we must resist aggression. We can't exercise self-determination without help. We have to thank you for your help in our fight for survival and freedom. We have confidence in the U. S. as the leader of the free world. We have met about 50 Congressmen. Some are in agreement with us, some of the freshmen. Before, they were reluctant but I think now it is better, since we are here and your delegation went there.

President: I appreciate your help on the Hill. We will continue to work for action.

Diep: It is a great honor to be here. Everybody is aware now that more than one and a half million of our people are fleeing. I am speaking for the people of North Vietnam and Hue. In 1968 half of my family was killed in Hue, and now the other half are forced to flee.

Phuong: Over half of this delegation is from Hue. Since we will fight at Danang, there is the problem of rescuing the refugees from Hue and eventually out of Danang so we can fight. We can only move forty thousand a month. [He shows on the map.] We feel strongly about Hue, but we can't sacrifice two divisions at Hue.

President: Danang has a good harbor?

Phuong: Yes.



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President: Are these lines easily defensible?

Phuong: We have to defend along here. We intend to do it fiercely.

President: Let me just say again how strongly I support the government and the Vietnamese people. This is an important area that the world knows is a fight for freedom. We must continue to help, and to the extent I can continue to do so, I will. Keep up the good fight, and please give to President Thieu and the other leaders my best wishes for strength and freedom in the years ahead.

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MEETING WITH SIX SOUTH VIETNAMESE
PARLIAMENTARIANS AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE
LABOR LEADER TRUONG QUOC BUU

Tuesday, March 25, 1975

11:00 a.m. (20 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Henry A. Kissinger *B*I. PURPOSE

To express your concern over developments in Indochina and to demonstrate your support for Vietnam.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

- A. Background: Truong Quoc Buu has been the principal figure in the free labor movement of South Vietnam for 35 years. He is not fully a supporter of President Thieu, but he is a staunch anti-Communist who clearly prefers Thieu to a Communist regime. The AFL-CIO has requested that you meet with Buu, who is their guest in this country.

The South Vietnamese parliamentarians are here on an official mission to meet with members of the U.S. Congress and to explain South Vietnamese needs for assistance.

- B. Participants: South Vietnamese Ambassador Tran Kim Phuong (PHUNG); Truong Quoc Buu (BOO), Head of the South Vietnamese Labor Movement; Dinh Xuan Minh, First Deputy Chairman of the Lower House; Dinh Van De (DAY), Chairman of the Defense Committee; Pham Anh (ON), Secretary General of the Lower House; (Mrs.) Truong Thi Bich Diep (DEEP), Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Nguyen Van Thuan (TWANG), Member of Foreign Affairs Committee; Huynh Ngoc Ang (ON), Member of Foreign Affairs Committee; Brent Scowcroft.

- C. Press Arrangements: Press photo session. Meeting to be announced.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By *LJ*, NARA, Date *1/20/00*~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

III. TALKING POINTS

1. It is a pleasure to receive you today. As a former Congressman, I am always delighted to meet fellow parliamentarians. Mr. Buu, it is also an honor to meet you. I understand you have had useful discussions with the leaders of our labor organizations.
2. I am deeply disturbed by the reports of new fighting in South Vietnam. I would like you to carry back to President Thieu and to the Vietnamese people, my personal message of respect and high admiration for the courage and determination they are showing in their gallant defense against Hanoi's latest offensive.
3. As you know, I have already requested supplementary assistance for South Vietnam from the Congress. I will continue to push hard to gain approval for these critically needed funds.
4. The United States condemns the blatant attacks carried out by the North Vietnamese, and we will continue our efforts to make clear internationally their flagrant violations of the Paris accords.
5. I know that the recent losses suffered by your forces have caused morale to suffer. That is why it is so important that you convey the message that I am making a maximum effort to obtain the assistance which your countrymen so desperately need. I will not abandon them.
6. While you are here in the United States, I hope you will visit as many different cities and areas of the country as possible. It is very important that you convey the message to the American people that your people are determined to remain free.
7. I am sending General Weyand to South Vietnam to assess the situation and make recommendations to me on what actions the United States might take to be of assistance. This mission will give me a better idea of what actions are required. I will look forward to receiving his report.



MEMORANDUM

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WASHINGTON

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 91-16, FBI NSC 24, 8/20/92
By KBH, NARA, Date 9/25/92

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Truong Quoc Buu, South Vietnamese Labor Leader
and Six South Vietnamese Parliamentarians
Amb. Tran Kim Phuong, RVN Ambassador
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE & TIME: Tuesday - March 25, 1975
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PLACE: The Cabinet Room

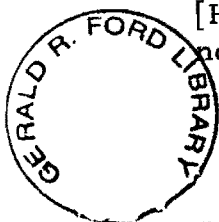
[There was a brief press photo opportunity.]

President: I am very pleased, Mr. Buu, to have the opportunity to greet you and your associates from Vietnam.

Phuong: We are very honored that you have been willing to meet with the Parliamentarian Delegation and Mr. Buu.

I informed President Thieu last night of your kindness in receiving us. He asked me to tell you he appreciated your kindness and your letter. He will write very shortly to explain the situation. He expresses his deep appreciation. He is aware of your efforts with the Congress. Your kindness and understanding he appreciates, and anything you can do with the Congress. We have had to withdraw from the Highlands in the face of the massive illegal attack from the North. Last night we also had to withdraw from Hue. The road south is cut off, so resupply by land and air is impossible. There are three divisions attacking. The President says we will make a stand in Danang.

[He gets out a map.] The President asked me to tell you what we will do now. We will regroup in Danang as an enclave because two provinces to



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CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5(b)(3)
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp To Det.

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President: Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Buu, members of the Parliament, I am happy to have you. I spent 25 years in Parliament and have a great understanding of your problems. I am disturbed, as are the American people, that they have so flagrantly violated the Paris Accords. Please tell President Thieu I am pleased to have a chance to see his plan for a military defense. It is important that it be successful. Tell President Thieu I will do everything I can to get the aid that South Vietnam needs.

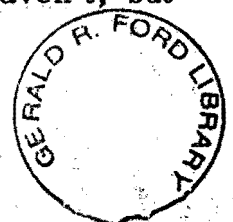
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The news is bad, but if your government carries out this deployment, I wish you well.

I am sending General Weyand to Vietnam tomorrow to make an assessment and report to me. He is a friend of Vietnam and has been directed to tell me what we can do to help.

Buu: I am very happy to be here. Thank you for your words of support. We send you the greetings of labor. We don't agree with President Thieu on everything but we certainly do on fighting the Communists. I have been affiliated with the CIO for 20 years. Always before, we could count on United States. But now, the statements being made are more damaging than the bombs of the North. These announcements have encouraged the Communists to attack. The North Vietnamese are being supported by the Chinese and the Soviet Union. If the United States doesn't help us, who will? Millions of the Vietnamese people's attention is focussed on the United States to see what you will do.

President: The AFL/CIO under George Meany has always supported American action in Vietnam. Some in the labor movement haven't, but



but George Meany and his associates have supported American strength in Vietnam and elsewhere. They know that labor has no voice under a Communist regime and that in a democracy labor does have a means to achieve its goals. George Meany and I don't always agree -- like you and President Thieu -- but we agree that we must support people who want to be free if they are willing to fight. The Government of Vietnam is fighting and standing strong and I will do everything possible to be helpful.

Buu: Whatever you can do, do it quickly.

President: We will expedite the military and economic assistance and try to get Congress to make additional funds available.

Minh: On behalf of the delegation, I want to express my thanks and express the feeling of the Vietnamese people. We thank you for your help and understanding.

We want peace but we must resist aggression. We can't exercise self-determination without help. We have to thank you for your help in our fight for survival and freedom. We have confidence in the United States as the leader of the free world. We have met about 50 Congressmen. Some of them are open with us, some of the freshmen. Before, they were misinformed, but I think now it is better, since we are here and your delegation went there.

President: I appreciate your help on the Hill. We will continue to ask for action.

Diep: It is a great honor to be here. Everybody is desperate; more than 1.5 million of our people are fleeing. I am speaking for the people of North Vietnam and Hue. In 1968 half of my family was killed in Hue, and now the other half are forced to flee.

Phuong: Over half of this delegation is from Hue. Since we will fight at Danang, there is the problem of moving the refugees from Hue and eventually out of Danang so we can fight. We can only move 40,000 a month. [He shows on the map.] We feel strongly about Hue, but we can't sacrifice two divisions at Hue.

President: Danang has a good harbor?



Phuong: Yes.

President: Are these new lines easily defensible?

Phuong: We have to defend along here. We intend to do it firmly.

President: Let me just say again how strongly I support the government and the Vietnamese people. This is an important area the world views as a fight for freedom. We must continue to help, and to the extent I can continue to do so, I will. Keep up the good fight, and give to President Thieu and the others my best wishes for strength and freedom in the years ahead.

[The meeting ended.]



✓ Pres/mtg w/6 SVN Parlia-
mentarians, + SVN Labor Leader
Truong Quoc Bui, 3/25
11:00 am

(Pers photo)

P I very pleased Mr Bui to have opportunity
to meet you and your associates from VN
Phuong We are very pleased that you have been
willing to meet w/ a Parlia delegation &
Mr Bui. I informed Thien last night
from your business. He asked me to tell you
he appreciated your business & your
letter. He will write very shortly & explain
a bit. He expresses his deep appreciation
he is aware of your efforts w/c Cong. Your
business & understanding, she appreciates
& anything you can do w/c Cong. we
have had to w/ draw from a highland
in face of massive illegal attack from
- north. Last night we had to w/ draw
from it all. The road from South is out of
a supply by land is impossible. There
are 3 divisions attacking. Pres says we
will make a stand in Da Nang. (Out out
a map). Pres asked me to tell you what
we will do now. We will regroup in
Da Nang as an enclave because 2 provinces
south already overrun (Quang Nam, Quang Binh)
We will expand a Coastal province (name them)
& 2 highland provinces. We will hold
this line (points) - MR 5 & 4. During last
2 weeks there is pulling us back down back
but this area is indefensible. We can't get
3-4 divs. Chanh says is inevitable at
this. We can resupply Da Nang by ship
but not here (no harbor, shifting sands)



P Mr. Arak, Brun, members of Parliament. Happy
to have you. I spent 25 yrs in parliament
& have great understanding of your job.
I understood as ^{one} US people have so frequently
violated basic rights. Please tell them
I pleased to have phone for visit, difference.
It important that it be successful.
Tell them I will do anything I can
to get a civil service. I hope you all
have shown to know that we members
of Cong. I think that a better spirit now
I hope the Cong will expand and my
admin will do its best.

The news is bad, but if your part
comes out this weekend, I wish
you well.

I sending beyond tomorrow to make
an assessment report to me. He is a
friend of UN and has been ^{chosen} ~~chosen~~ to
tell me what we can do to help.

Mr. Brun very happy to be here. Thank you for your
words of support. Send you greetings of love.
Don't yell w/ them on every thing but
continue to ~~see~~ fighting a crusade. I have
affiliated w/ US for 20 yrs. Always before
we could count on US, but now, a
statements being made are more damaging
than a bomb of war. These arguments
have encouraged China to attack, The NON
are being supported by PRUSSIA. If US don't
help us, who will. Millions of UN people
attention focused on US to see what you



will do - make money

P AFL/CIO has always supported US action
in VN. Some in labor movement, but
AFL/CIO & associates have supported strength
in VN & elsewhere. They know labor
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Money + I don't always agree - but you
think - but not agree we must support
people who want to be free if they wish
to fight. GVN is fighting & standing strong -
I will do anything possible to be helpful

Barbara: Whatever you can do, do it gracefully.

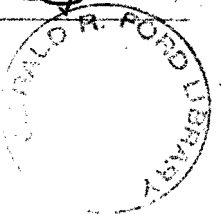
P We will expedite mail - we can assist & try to
get any bankheadquartered funds available.
What was center from Congress you go to

Think: On behalf of delegation, thanks & express
feeling of VN people. We thank you for your
help & understanding. We want peace but
we must resist aggression. We must
preserve self-determination. We have
to thank you for your help in our fight
for survival & freedom. We have
confidence in US as leaders of free world.
We have met about 50 Congressmen - some
are open w/ us, some of - freshmen. Beyond
they misunderstand but I think now it
is better, time we have your delegation
went there.

P I'll print your help on Hill. We will
continue to work for action

Deep
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