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S E C R E T [REDACTED]

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 14 FEBRUARY 1968
SUBJECT VICE PRESIDENT KY'S INTENTION TO
RELINQUISH HIS SPECIAL POWERS BECAUSE
OF DISCOURAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S
PERFORMANCE IN CURRENT CRISIS

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ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (15 FEBRUARY 1968) [REDACTED]

SOURCE [REDACTED]

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SUMMARY: VICE PRESIDENT KY [REDACTED]
ON 14 FEBRUARY [REDACTED] WAS BITTER AND DISCOURAGED AT THE
GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S PERFORMANCE IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. HE
THEREFORE HAD DECIDED TO RETURN TO PRESIDENT THIEU THE SPECIAL
POWERS GIVEN HIM AS HEAD OF THE TASK FORCE. KY RESENTS CHARGES
BY THIEU-SUPPORTERS THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO USE HIS TASK
FORCE POWERS FOR PERSONAL ADVANTAGE. HE IS ALSO FRUSTRATED
BY PRIME MINISTER LOC'S POOR SHOWING AND BY THE TENDENCY OF
CABINET MINISTERS TO INSIST ON BUREAUCRATIC PROPERTIES.
END SUMMARY.

1. [REDACTED] 14 FEBRUARY 1968,
VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] WAS "BITTER AND
DISCOURAGED" AT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S (GVN) PERFORMANCE
IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. KY [REDACTED] HAD DEFINITELY DECIDED THAT
IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS HE WILL RETURN TO PRESIDENT NGUYEN

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VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] WAS "BITTER AND DISCOURAGED" AT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S (GVN) PERFORMANCE IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. KY [REDACTED] HAD DEFINITELY DECIDED THAT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS HE WILL RETURN TO PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU ALL THE "SPECIAL POWERS" CONFERRED ON HIM BY THIEU. COMMENT: KY WAS REFERRING TO HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED BY THIEU TO COPE WITH THE AFTERMATH OF THE VIET CONG (VC) TET OFFENSIVE.)

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2. KY SAID THE GVN HAD BEEN TOTALLY AND UNNECESSARILY PARALYZED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VC ATTACKS. HE FELT THAT, GIVEN THE DESTRUCTION WROUGHT BY THE ATTACKS, IT WAS STILL MOVING WITH TOO LITTLE EFFECTIVENESS AND SENSE OF URGENCY. KY SAID THAT WHILE HE HAD ATTEMPTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE TASK FORCE AND OTHERWISE WITHIN THE POWERS CONFERRED ON HIM BY THE CONSTITUTION TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO RETURN THE SITUATION TO NORMAL, ALMOST EVERY MOVE HE HAD MADE HAD COME UNDER FIRE FROM THIEU'S SUPPORTERS WHO CLAIMED THAT HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO SET HIMSELF UP AS A SECOND GOVERNMENT.

[REDACTED]

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HE [REDACTED] EVEN HIS OWN "ANTI-FRAUD YOUTH CORPS", WHICH HE HAD HOPED COULD BE USED IN THE PRESENT EMERGENCY, WAS DOING LITTLE BUT COLLECTING ITS SALARIES.

3. [REDACTED] IT WAS NOW OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE THAT PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN VAN LOC IS A "DISMAL FAILURE." HE ADDED WITH CONSIDERABLE BITTERNESS THAT SINCE HE, KY, HAD BEEN THE CHIEF PROPONENT OF LOC FOR THE POSITION, HE FELT THAT LOC HAD LET HIM DOWN BADLY. KY ALSO COMPLAINED THAT MOST OF THE CABINET MINISTERS, DESPITE THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY, SEEMED MORE CONCERNED WITH BUREAUCRATIC PROPRIETY THAN WITH PROVIDING MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE DISPLACED BY THE FIGHTING.

4. COMMENT: WHILE [REDACTED] KY NOW APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE THE ROLE [REDACTED] PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS CAN PLAY IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, [REDACTED] IT DISTURBING THAT KY SHOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO COMPLAIN AT SUCH LENGTH TO SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT.

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[REDACTED]

5. COMMENT: [REDACTED] KY TOLD SOME CLOSE ASSOCIATES ON 13 FEBRUARY THAT HE INTENDED TO RECOMMEND TO THIEU, PROBABLY ON 18 FEBRUARY, THE TASK BE ABOLISHED. [REDACTED] SOURCES NOTED KY'S IRRITATION WITH CRITICISM BY THIEU SUPPORTERS AND WITH THE DIFFICULTY OF GETTING CABINET MINISTERS TO DO THINGS,

[REDACTED]

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6. FIELD DISSEM: STATE (AMBASSADOR BUNKER, POLITICAL COUNSELOR, MR. ZORTHIAN) USMACV (GENERAL WESTMORELAND, GENERAL ABRAMS, AMBASSADOR KOMER, CHIEF OF STAFF, J-2) 7TH AIR FORCE (GENERAL MOMYER ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF

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