

SOUTH VIETNAM – USA MEASURES

As a supplement to our reference telegram reporting on proposed USA assistance measures in Vietnam, we should add that from a further private conversation yesterday with Rostow of the White House Staff, we are sure that close attention will be paid here, and at a high level, to the Commission's action in connection with the various allegations and related documentation contained in the South Vietnam letter re Viet Cong activity to the Commission of October 24.⁴⁶ Rostow made it clear that some of the recommendations in the report of General Taylor (in which he had concurred) went a good deal beyond the measures decided upon of which we had been made aware by the State Department and which are summarized in paragraph 2 of our reference telegram. The reason for the decision at the highest levels here not repeat not to contemplate additional steps at this time, according to Rostow, was that it was deemed necessary to give diplomatic efforts and the international machinery now existing in the ICC a chance to assist in deterring the Vietminh from the large scale measures of infiltration and guerrilla warfare against the South in which they had been engaged for many months. (It was also clear that a number of the allies and friends of USA had counselled against the sending of any USA combat forces at this time.)

2. For this reason, Rostow said that early action by the Commission on this well-documented South Vietnamese complaint at the earliest possible stage was of the greatest importance. He pointed out that while the complaint referred to the Colonel Nam murder, it went far beyond this individual case and raised in specific form the basic problem with which South Vietnam is now confronted. If the Commission should not repeat not deal adequately and urgently with this matter, and if the situation should continue to deteriorate at the same rate as in recent months, Rostow did not repeat not preclude the possibility of further and more drastic measures being taken by USA.

3. We took the opportunity of explaining the Commission procedures in complaints of this sort and in indicating on the basis of our delegation's messages some of the reasons why there had been delays in taking up this important matter, including delays attributable to the recent pressures and demonstrations against the Commission in the South from which the South Vietnamese authorities could not repeat not be absolved.

4. We have noted from our delegation's message 227 of November 16 that our representative has informed the South Vietnam Liaison Officer that it would be most unfortunate if the South Vietnamese Government were to make it impossible to proceed with one of the most important cases which the Commission has had before it since its inception.

5. This message will have served its purpose if it underlines the fact that the view is strongly held here that the South Vietnam letter of October 24 and the subject matter with which it deals do in fact represent one of the most important issues with which the Vietnam Commission has been faced. It is also clear that the officials here concerned closely with the problems of Vietnam and Southeast Asia are hoping that the Canadian delegation will find it possible to expedite the consideration of the South Vietnamese complaint and publication of Commission findings as effectively and promptly as possible.

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⁴⁶ Voir/See United Kingdom, Parliamentary Papers, Cmnd. 1755, *Special Report to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-china* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1962), pp. 5-6.