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RELEASE IN FULL

TELECON  
The President/The Secretary  
April 18, 1975  
Time: 10:10 p.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: How are you?

K: I hope I wasn't interrupting anything.

P: I was just having dinner after a long day.

K: The schedule was crowded. I wanted to bring you up-to-date on the military situation. It is deteriorating in VietNam. You should be aware that we may have from 4 to 10 days and we have to figure by next weekend, at the worst, it will be over. I would like to send a telegram to Martin. He has agreed to reduce the number of Americans to 1730 next Tuesday.

P: Americans plus legitimate Vietnamese dependents?

K: Yes. I would like to tell him to get down to 1250 which is one airlift. But we shouldn't announce that figure; it might cause panic.

P: As long as it is inevitable, let's do it so we don't get adverse reactions.

K: If we can get it down to one airlift there is no difference between 1000 or 1300, but we will be in trouble if we don't do that. I called in Dobrynin tomorrow morning. I want to ask him for a temporary cease-fire to permit evacuation of Americans and Vietnamese.

P: Do they have control or the power to effect a cease-fire?

K: No probably not, but I want to ask him not to ship in any military equipment during that time. I am for taking the 2 chances in 20 that they may help. I don't know whether they have the power, but they might want to assert themselves. Secondly, Hanoi may want a controlled takeover.

P: Did Martin see the President?



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- K: No. He sees him tomorrow or Sunday. The more I think, it would be better for Theiu to stay until we get an answer from the Soviets, or else it is going to be like Phnom Phen. We can jeteson him as soon as we can get an answer from the Russians. If we don't get an answer, it will all be over anyway.
- P: There isn't much difference either way.
- K: There is just a chance that Hanoi may want to take over under controlled conditions and the Soviets may want to exert themselves. My recommendation is to do it on this basis.
- P: We will be down to 1300 by Tuesday?
- K: Yes, Tuesday morning our time.
- P: Are we going to do anything?
- K: I really thought about it, Mr. President; at first I thought we should go to the Chinese. If we go to both we give them an alibi.
- P: Play one against the other?
- K: The Chinese would kick us in the teeth. If one says no then the other would say no also.
- P: Put the burden on just one.
- K: Once the Chinese find out, and they will find out through Hanoi, that we have given the Russians this opportunity, they won't like it.
- P: Very good, Henry, very shrewd.
- K: We have no other choice but to play it ruthless.
- P: Does this preclude any major South Vietnamese evacuation?
- K: It includes it. Americans and some South Vietnamese. In return we are offering to get rid of Theiu some time soon.
- P: Good, it looks good to me.
- K: The odds are that it won't work but if we don't try.... they can still get the message to Hanoi on Sunday Hanoi time, if we meet tomorrow.



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- P: It is certainly worth a try and I hope for the best. It's a hell of a situation.
- K: It is tragic. I testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee today.
- P: How did it go.
- K: Broomfield, ~~Zob~~black, were not too bad. Some of the younger ones were obnoxious. They are talking tough language, but I am being very tough. I know that this is not in keeping with your policy of reconciliation, but I am being tough. I just want the record to show that we asked for it.
- P: That is the point. The public should be able to see that it is on record. At the meeting I had with 50 news people from New England I took the same position.
- K: How do you think it went?
- P: Damn good.
- K: Somebody was in today..... Oh yes Elliot Richardson.
- P: My successor.
- K: No he is measuring the walls in my office. He could be talked into taking your job you know.
- P: I am going to compete with you on this.
- K: He said that the mood in the country was going to turn conservative.
- P: That is right. In New England my approach on domestic and foreign policy got a good response. And I really let into the press group on the CIA and the intelligence community. No President including myself, can operate with a crippled intelligence community. It doesn't make sense to destroy the agency for one mistake they made.
- K: I haven't noticed that Church has been extremely active lately.
- P: They are getting the word. You go ahead and I will be back at 12:30 and we can talk about Zambia.



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K: Before you see him, I have to tell you something about him. I can't talk over the phone. Perhaps you have seen it.

P: I think I have.

K: It doesn't give us much gratitude.

P: O.K. The talk at Boston did well and especially going to the Old North Church. That was where I spoke. It was a capacity crowd. And the streets of Boston were filled. The boos were louder than the supporters, but on the whole it was a good crowd. I didn't go to Cambridge. ...

K: I don't think you should press your luck. We will talk tomorrow.

P: O.K.