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SECRETARY'S DELEGATION
TO THE
TWENTIETH SESSION OF
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, September-October 1965

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: October 6, 1965

Time: 10 A.M.

Place: U.S. Mission

Subject: Vietnam (Part I of VI)

Participants:

U.S.

The Secretary
Mr. Emmett B. Ford, Jr.
Mr. Jose DeSeabra

Spain

Foreign Minister Castiella
Ambassador to U.S. Merry Del Val
Mr. Ramon Sedo, Director General for
Political Affairs, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs,
Mr. Nuno Aguirre de Carcer, Minister
Counsellor at the Spanish Embassy
in Washington

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Castiella said that he had heard that the American position in Vietnam was becoming stronger.

The Secretary replied that, in conventional military terms, our position is much stronger. The Viet Cong are unable to assemble any unit larger than a battalion for more than two or three hours without suffering serious casualties. American forces in South Vietnam actually constitute a reserve with which to strike enemy formations of battalion and regimental strength.

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E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.4

State Dept. Guidelines

By jc, NARA, Date 5-16-01

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Now we worry more about small Viet Cong units and hit-and-run tactics. Peiping and Hanoi are at somewhat of a cross roads in their decision as to where to go from here. It is clear to them that they cannot drive us out as matters presently stand. Either large forces will have to be sent from the north (possibly including Chinese units) or the other side will have to withdraw to husband their strength and wait for another day.

The Secretary said that there was no reason to believe that Peiping is prepared to move major Chinese forces into the area. The principal problem for us, then, is to combat terrorism and political-type activity. The Secretary also mentioned that, between now and the end of the year, American forces will undergo a massive augmentation of fire-power.

We feel that if the present situation is left alone things will improve for us. If the Chinese throw in more we shall be faced with a new problem.

The Secretary said that he understood that Spain would soon lend some assistance to South Vietnam.

Castiella said that, as a matter of fact, Spanish planning on assistance to Vietnam had been nearly completed before he had left Madrid. Spanish aid will probably take the form of the loan of a Spanish coastal vessel, as well as of certain medical assistance. There will be a meeting of the Council of Ministers in Madrid day after tomorrow (October 8) at which he (Castiella) will be present. At any rate, aid to Vietnam is receiving priority attention from the Spanish Government.

The Secretary said that such aid was greatly appreciated here, not only for its intrinsic value to South Vietnam, but also as an important symbol of international solidarity behind the Government of South Vietnam. Thus far Hanoi has believed that the nations of the world were at odds about the matter of supporting the Government of South Vietnam. Assistance such as that proposed by the Spanish Government will help convince Hanoi that it is drawing the wrong conclusion.

Castiella promised that Spain will not fail the United States in this respect.

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