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5 January 1966

ATT

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Dean Rusk
Secretary of State

SUBJECT : Alleged Desire by North Vietnamese in Paris to Discuss Settlement of the Vietnam Situation with Unofficial US Representative

This report is being disseminated to you and to Mr. McGeorge Bundy only, and no further dissemination will be made pending your instructions.

RICHARD HELMS

Enclosure

cc: Mr. McGeorge Bundy

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State Department review completed

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SUBJECT: Alleged Desire by North Vietnamese in Paris to Discuss Settlement of the Vietnam Situation with Unofficial US Representative

1. Shortly after his return 5 January from a short stay in Paris, Pierre Salinger gave the following account to a CIA officer of an approach made to him, allegedly on behalf of NFLSV representatives in Paris, for discussions with a private US citizen on terms for ending the war in South Vietnam. Salinger expects a telegram from his Paris contact indicating whether such a meeting is possible and is ready to convey a reply.

2. On or about 1 January 1966 Salinger was approached in [redacted] French leftist and speech writer for [redacted] formerly a Com- [redacted] the following [redacted] proposition:

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3. The Viet Cong representatives in Paris were quite approachable on the subject of negotiating the situation in South Vietnam, and their terms were very simple. He said that they do not care particularly about the US pulling out troops before discussions begin but they do want to have a part in the discussions, they would like to see popular elections held, they would like a guarantee for 25 years that the big powers would stay out of Vietnamese affairs and that if later on South Vietnam wished to align itself with the North, the powers would let them do it. [redacted] indicated that the Viet Cong in Paris were friends of his. Salinger said he would like to meet with them but that he could not discuss any possible settlement of the Vietnamese situation because of the Logan Act.

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4. The next day [redacted] telephoned Salinger and told him that the Viet Cong could not meet with him on such short notice. However, at about 5:30 that same day Anselme showed up at the Salinger hotel and asked Salinger why it would not be possible for four or five US liberals to go to Paris and sit down with the Viet Cong. Salinger said he further explained the Logan Act but told Anselme that he should go back to the Viet Cong and ask them if they would meet with an individual US citizen for a "friendly discussion."

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5. Salinger arranged with Anselme for Anselme to send Salinger a telegram in code which would indicate whether or not the Viet Cong would be willing to talk with such a US representative, who could be a businessman, professor, banker, etc., but should speak French and should be aware of the US position and the Southeast Asian situation. Salinger told Anselme that if the Viet Cong were agreeable to such a meeting that 72 hours after receipt of the telegram by him a US citizen would be available in Paris for the meeting.

6. Salinger expects a telegram either agreeing to or refusing such a meeting within the next two or three days. If there is any interest in such a meeting, word should be gotten back to Salinger as soon after receipt of the telegram (if it is affirmative) so that he could inform Anselme of details.

7. As to a suggested US representative, Salinger said that possibly an individual such as Norman Cousins might be considered. He also indicated the possibility of a CIA officer if it were felt advisable. Salinger understands that such a meeting if acceptable to the Viet Cong would have to be coordinated at the highest US level, and if unacceptable, he has a ready excuse to back out.

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