

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~LBJ LIBRARY
Mandatory Review
Case # NLJ 02-192
Document # 69dAPPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: DEC 2002

30 November 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: GVN Plans and Preparations for Paris Talks

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Y
rs
(C)

1. [redacted] members of the Government of Vietnam (GVN) negotiating delegation to the Paris Peace Talks are not being selected by the National Security Council but by a quadrumvirate composed of President Nguyen Van Thieu, Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, Foreign Minister Tran Chanh Thanh, and Ambassador to the U.S. Bui Diem, with Thieu having final say. During their meeting on the evening of 29 November, Thieu made it clear that despite reported U.S. objections, he leans to Ambassador Pham Dang Lam as delegation chief and, in any case, prefers not to name anyone else for the present.

2. The four agreed that the delegation should include a woman and tentatively narrowed the choice to Senator Nguyen Phouc Dai or Madame Vui, with Ky leaning toward Madame Vui. [redacted] could not provide Vui's full name but described her as "a good fighter, excellent speaker, intelligent, with a good revolutionary record and a husband of questionable background". This may be Madame Nguyen Thi Vui, who was a member of the People's Army Council during the pre-Thieu government and at one time was considered by Ky for appointment as Minister of Social Welfare in his Cabinet. She is married to Lam Van Si, manager of a glass works, who has been reported to be a one-time member of the French Communist Party and to have participated in world youth congresses between 1950 and 1955 in Sofia, Prague and Warsaw.) Thieu indicated he was thinking of former foreign Minister Tran Van Do as one of the other five negotiating team members, but no final decision on Do was reached at the meeting. Nguyen Luu Vien's selection seems certain.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25
Yrs
(C)~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

3. Ky, who is no admirer of An's, was nettled by Thieu's repeated suggestions that former Information Minister Tran Van An be appointed either to the delegation or to his former Information post. Ky cannot understand what Thieu sees in An, but believes Thieu will settle temporarily for having General Tran Van Trung of the Psychological Warfare Department cumulate the Information Ministry until Thieu can select his own man.

4. ~~The four also discussed whether the delegation should include a general officer. Ky has apparently been persuaded that the inclusion of a general on the GVN delegation would reinforce the world's impression of the GVN as a militarist regime and is now thinking of taking three colonels with him.~~ Another consideration influencing Ky is the involvement in shady deals, especially through his wife, of Lieutenant General Nguyen Bao Tri, the leading military candidate for the delegation now that Lieutenant General Nguyen Duc Thang has refused to go to Paris. Thieu and Ky both presume the Communists are also aware of this and would therefore have a field day at Tri's expense. However, the four men reached no decision on this matter at their 29 November meeting.

5. ~~Thieu's concept of the organization of the GVN Delegation remain substantially as he explained it to Ky on 26 November.~~ However, further details have emerged. The staff which will support Ky in his role of overall coordinator will consist of about 12 persons, including (a) four or even five members of negotiating team, (b) Dang Duc Khoi, as head of the Information and Propaganda Section, (c) the head of the "Lobby", (d) the head of a research staff, which will research problems for the delegation and probably be headed by former Opens Arms Minister Nguyen Xuan Phong, provided he is not a delegation member, (e) Colonel Phan Huy Loi, who is one of the three colonels Ky wants to take with him, (f) Colonel Ho Van Loi, former Secretary General of the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee, and (g) Colonel Nguyen Quoc Quynh, Acting Chief of J-5 of the Joint General Staff, who has been in charge of preparing military position papers under the directions of Lieutenant General Vinh Loc.

6. ~~Khoi hopes to keep his Information and Propaganda Group at no more than 27 persons,~~ although he had originally projected a staff of 42. Khoi said on 30 November that practically everyone in South Vietnam with any experience in media or the information field in general has been asking him for a position. Khoi still plans to have former Vietnam Press Director Nguyen Ngoc Linh as his deputy. Nguyen Nhan, former Counselor for Political Affairs at the GVN Embassy in Washington, will head up the office staff, while Phung Nhat Minh, an information specialist at the GVN Embassy in Australia, will concentrate on handling the foreign press. Khoi said either he or Linh probably will commute with Ky when the latter returns periodically to Saigon.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

7. Khoi said he has already written the three most important speeches Ky plans to deliver in his role as overall coordinator. ~~The first will be a 15- to 20-minute TV/radio address to the nation before Ky's departure, in which he will announce the names of the delegation members.~~ The aim of the speech will be to assure the Vietnamese people that the delegation will do everything possible to insure that vital national interests are protected in Paris.

8. ~~The second speech is a short one that Ky will deliver after departing in Paris.~~ After thanking the French for making facilities available and hosting the conference, Ky will try to quash the idea the GVN is composed of hardline militarists. He will point out that the GVN wants peace and has come to Paris to do everything possible to bring about a fair settlement. He will avoid the use of such terms as "agression" in describing the war and will instead take the tack that there is a war between North and South Vietnam, that there are problems between the two but that if both sides show good will perhaps an honorable peace can be achieved and later on a prosperous South Vietnam can reunite with a prosperous North Vietnam. Khoi said he and Ky are counting on the contrast between the hard North Vietnam/ National Liberation Front line and the GVN's moderation to win many friends for South Vietnam.

9. ~~The third speech is the statement Ky will make at a press conference he plans several days after arrival, in which he will stress the same themes.~~ Ky is aware, Khoi went on, that there will probably be some questions designed to embarrass him personally but thinks that if he handles these calmly, smartly and with a touch of humor, it will redound to his credit. After this press conference, Ky plans to disappear into his villa for about ten days to avoid giving the impression he is trying to grab headlines. Khoi added that Ky has already issued strict instructions that there are to be no shopping expeditions or anything similar which might cast the GVN representatives in a bad light from the beginning.

10. Khoi said he understands Thieu has released an initial VN\$20,000,000 (U.S. \$169,490.00 at the official exchange rate of VN\$118 to U.S.\$1.00) for the delegation's expenses. Khoi noted the problem of winter clothes alone is a serious one. He is solving it for members of his own group by having the GVN Navy make up some heavy clothing at cost.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~