

Orlandi's cables to Italian Foreign Minister Fanfani in Rome, Office Memos 12-18,
December 1-2, 1966

Translations by Isella O'Rourke.

EMBASSY OF ITALY

(N.S.) Foreign Office Rome S December 2, 1966 12 Noon

Secret. Priority. Office Memo No. 12. For Honorable Minister.

At the three-way meeting this evening, Ambassador Lewandowsky described his trip to Hanoi characterizing it as very important because of the results obtained and not at all easy because of the difficulties encountered. Then he says:

1. We are at a crucial point in our attempt to open negotiations. I therefore had to present to Hanoi a report specifying the agreements reached during our three-way meetings. They are the following points: the U.S. is sincerely eager for a peaceful solution to be reached by means of political negotiations.
2. Said negotiations are not to be interpreted as "surrender" of North Vietnam; political negotiation must find an acceptable solution for all the problems, keeping in mind that the current status quo in South Vietnam will be changed to take into account the interests of countries opposed to the U.S. (in South Vietnam). Such solutions may be reached in an honorable and dignified manner safeguarding the pride and national prestige of the contracting parties.
3. From the point of view of their own interests, the U.S. has no intention of extending beyond measure or making permanent their presence in South Vietnam providing that a peaceful solution to the conflict underway is found; for this reason the offer made at the Manila conference to withdraw the troops and to remove the military bases is worthy of the utmost attention.

This telegram is made up of seven Office Memos. Memos 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 follow this one.

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Office Memo No. 13

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

4. The U.S. is ready, if the other contracting parties show constructive interest in a negotiated solution, to seek and discuss with them proposals directed at favoring an agreement which involves solutions to all the significant problems, from the cease-fire to the final agreement and to the withdrawal of U.S. troops.
5. In the framework of the general agreement, the United States will not (repeat not) oppose the formation of a South Vietnamese Government based on the true choice of the South Vietnamese people, with the participation of everyone in free and democratic elections. The United States will accept the necessary controls to ensure free and democratic elections and will respect the electoral results.
6. The United States maintains that the reunification of Vietnam depends on the free choice of the Vietnamese themselves and therefore is necessarily conditioned on the return of peace and the institution of qualified bodies representative of the people of South Vietnam.
7. The United States is ready to accept and respect the true and complete neutrality of South Vietnam.

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Office Memo No. 14

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

8. The U.S. is ready to halt bombing of North Vietnamese territory if this cessation facilitates attainment peace agreement. In the event of cessation of bombing, the U.S. will avoid giving impression that North Vietnam was forced by the bombings to negotiate or that it is negotiating in order to make them stop. The cessation of bombings would not imply recognition or confirmation on the part of North Vietnam that its armed forces had ever infiltrated into South Vietnam. (~~Note for President Fanfani:~~ Lewandowsky refers to the combined A

and B proposals set forth in Office Memo No. ~~which had been put forward by his guests~~ at Villa Madama on November 2nd).

9. The U.S. which does not exclude the possibility of reunification of Vietnam, will never accept that this occur under military pressure (from the North).
10. While it is clear that the U.S. seek a peaceful solution to the conflict, it is likewise evident that the U.S. will neither now nor ever declare acceptance of the proposals by North Vietnam known as "four points" or "five points".

Having dictated the ten points to us, Ambassador Lewandowsky says that in his opinion, they objectively represent what was agreed between us.

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Office Memo No. 15

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

Ambassador Lewandowsky affirms that he is authorized by the North Vietnamese Government and the Polish Government to inform the U.S. Government that if it agrees with the ten points and intends to continue the negotiations it would be appropriate to give direct confirmation to the North Vietnamese Ambassador to Warsaw. This communication will indicate to Hanoi the wish to continue and would avoid all core misunderstandings. According to Lewandowsky, in the event of a leak, Hanoi and Warsaw would immediately publish a denial and the negotiation would collapse. It is necessary therefore to make haste thereby reducing the risks of a leak.

At this point and on a lesser note Lewandowsky adds that apart from all other considerations about the negotiation underway, the U.S. should halt the bombings of the North. He concludes by saying that both Hanoi and Warsaw want the three-way talks to continue and that the two Governments make Lewandowsky available to the U.S. for any questions or clarifications.

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Office Memo No. 16

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

Having finished his account, I gave Lewandowsky credit for the accurate and able presentation he summarized in 10 points. It is consistent with what we said to each other and agreed upon; only Point 8 could appear inexact because of the understandable difficulty of mentioning the North Vietnamese infiltrations, but the very nature of the American proposal shows through with sufficient obviousness.

On a personal note, Cabot Lodge describes himself as satisfied with the ten points with a slight reservation regarding Points 2 and 8. With respect to Point 2, Cabot Lodge does not believe he accepted that the Status Quo in South Vietnam must be changed. I clarify that it has never been a case of an obligation, but that all three of us have believed that a change in the status quo (meaning the General Ky Government) would be very probable in the event of negotiations. All three of us find ourselves in agreement. With respect to point 8, Cabot Lodge puts forward my observation as well, but we all agree on my conclusion. Cabot Lodge tells us that he will immediately telegraph Washington requesting approval 10 points which he believes may be accepted with some requests for clarifications.

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Office Memo No. 17

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

Cabot Lodge asks Lewandowsky in friendship, if he can tell us something about the contacts he had in Hanoi. Lewandowsky responds (with great frankness) that his first and principal contact was Prime Minister Pham Van Dong who had pointed to him out the need for Lewandowsky's proposals to be supported by the Polish Government. It was therefore necessary (and very difficult) to obtain the approval of Gomulka. After which Pham Van Dong told him that it was necessary to have the approval of the North Vietnamese Presidium. This approval was obtained after several stormy sessions

while poor Lewandowsky, believing himself to be repudiated by the North Vietnamese, prepared to forward to Warsaw his request for recall. Lewandowsky informed his contacts at Hanoi of the three-way meetings and was encouraged to continue. Therefore he makes a warm request of Cabot Lodge to avoid that the U.S. Government tries other channels or accepts other attempts which could cause misunderstandings. I preferred not to mention his hint of a possible Vatican effort.

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Office Memo No. 18

Secret. Priority. For Honorable Minister.

Ambassador Lewandowsky adds that Moscow was informed in minute detail (at the highest level) and that it awaits to learn negotiation developments. Confidentially he added to me alone (after the meeting) that Gomulka and Rapacki maintain that it is necessary to make haste and while maintaining a direct Washington - Hanoi dialogue is possible, they think that the three-way meetings will still be very useful. Lewandowsky concluded his response to Lodge by saying that in our next meeting he will ask for some clarifications. Cabot Lodge was very thankful and said that the U.S. Government attached utmost importance to our meetings; that he would have obtained in the shortest time period possible a response to our request and that coming to see me Friday ^(tomorrow) evening could have arranged three-way meeting for Saturday. Cabot Lodge pronounced himself in agreement to strengthen secrecy measures. We agreed upon several mechanisms and for my part I said that my communications reached Your Excellency ^(Minister Fanfani) directly, deciphered by my colleague chosen personally by him, namely Chief of Cipher Service.

[Source: Archivio Storico Diplomatico, Ministero degli Affari Esteri [Diplomatic History Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Rome, translations by Isella O'Rourke.]