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REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~

DIST: 05 JUNE 1992

EXCLUSIVE DISSEMINATION TO ADDRESSEES LISTED AT END OF REPORT

COUNTRY: JAPAN/VIETNAM

SUBJ: JAPANESE ACCOUNT OF MEETINGS OF VIETNAM COMMUNIST
PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER NGUYEN HONG HA WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER WATANABE RICHIO AND POLICY
AFFAIRS RESEARCH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN MORI YOSHIRO

DOI: MID - LATE MAY 1992

SOURCE:

SUMMARY: JAPANESE ACCOUNT OF A 20 MAY 1992 MEETING BETWEEN VIETNAM
COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOREIGN AFFAIRS-SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN NGUYEN HONG HA AND JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER WATANABE RICHIO
INDICATED THAT THE MEETING WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS WARM AND THE
DIALOGUE LESS FORTHCOMING THAN PORTRAYED IN THE JAPANESE PRESS.
WATANABE SHOWED SURPRISE WHEN HONG HA SAID THAT VIETNAMESE LEADERS
BELIEVED THAT VIETNAM WOULD RESOLVE ITS PROBLEMS WITH THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION ISSUE BY
THE END OF 1992. WATANABE DID NOT DISCUSS JAPANESE AID OR INVESTMENT
WITH HONG HA. AT AN 18 MAY MEETING WITH POLICY AFFAIRS RESEARCH
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN MORI YOSHIRO, HONG HA MADE A REQUEST ON BEHALF OF
HIS GOVERNMENT THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE AID TOTALING 43
BILLION YEN (U.S. \$331 MILLION).

TEXT: 1

THE MEETING
WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS WARM AND THE DIALOGUE LESS FORTHCOMING THAN
PORTRAYED IN THE FOLLOW-UP REPORTING BY THE JAPANESE PRESS. EARLY INACTION (I.M)
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THE MEETING, HONG HA TOLD WATANABE THAT VIETNAMESE LEADERS BELIEVED
THAT VIETNAM WOULD RESOLVE ITS PROBLEMS WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
REGARDING THE PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION (POW/MIA) ISSUE BY
THE END OF 1992. WATANABE SHOWED SURPRISE AT HEARING THIS AND THEN
REMARKED HONG HA BLUNTLY THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT
PROGRESS TOWARD RESOLVING VIETNAM'S BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH THE
UNITED STATES WOULD OCCUR UNTIL AFTER THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IN NOVEMBER.DURING THE REST OF THE MEETING, WATANABE
APPEARED TO BE MORE PASSIVE THAN NORMAL AND MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO
ENGAGE HONG HA IN A DIALOGUE ON U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONS OR ON OTHER
JAPAN-VIETNAM BILATERAL ISSUES. JAPANESE AID DID NOT COME UP AS AN
ISSUE AND NEITHER HONG HA NOR WATANABE BROUGHT UP JAPANESE INVESTMENT
IN VIETNAM. THE MEETING WAS SURPRISINGLY FLAT AND UNPRODUCTIVE GIVEN
WATANABE'S INTEREST IN DEVELOPING JAPAN-VIETNAM RELATIONS. WATANABE
AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE JAPANESE SIDE SEEMED QUITE SURPRISED AND
SOMEWHAT DISTURBED BY HONG'S OPTIMISTIC PROMISEMENT ABOUT
IMPROVEMENTS IN U.S.-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS. COMMENT: IN A
PRESS BRIEFING BY JAPANESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA)
OFFICIALS LATER IN THE DAY ON 20 MAY, MFA OFFICIALS SEEMED TO BE
PRESENTING THE VISIT IN A POSITIVE LIGHT. THESE MFA OFFICIALS MAY
HAVE EMBELLISHED WATANABE'S REMARKS TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TOWARD
ESTABLISHING FULL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. COMMENT: LATE MAY
JAPANESE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE HONG HA-WATANABE MEETING INDICATED
THAT WATANABE URGED HANOI TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE U.S. SEARCH FOR
MIA SERVICEMEN TO MEND VIETNAM'S TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES. --
ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, WATANABE WAS POSITIVE ABOUT JAPAN
RESUMING ITS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM.)AN 18 MAY MEETING WITH RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY
POLICY AFFAIRS RESEARCH COUNCIL (PARC) CHAIRMAN (MORI) YOSHIRO.
DURING THE MEETING, IN ADDITION TO STATING THAT THE VIETNAMESE
GOVERNMENT WAS OPTIMISTIC IT WOULD RESOLVE THE POW/MIA ISSUE WITH THE
UNITED STATES BY THE END OF 1992, HONG HA REQUESTED ON BEHALF OF HIS
GOVERNMENT THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE AN AID PACKAGE
TOTALING 43 BILLION YEN (U.S. \$331 MILLION AT 130/1). HONG HA
REQUESTED THAT 21 BILLION YEN (U.S. \$161 MILLION) BE APPLIED TO COVER
ARREARS ON PREVIOUSLY DEFAULTED LOANS FROM JAPAN AND THAT THE
REMAINING 22 BILLION YEN (U.S. \$170 MILLION) BE USED FOR
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT. MORI DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO HONG
HA'S AID REQUEST BUT SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT AID WOULD BE SENT IF
VIETNAM COULD ACHIEVE CLEAR PROGRESS ON THE POW-MIA ISSUE.BT
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MORI THEN ASKED HONG TO EXPLAIN THE ROLE VIETNAM
EXPECTED JAPAN TO PLAY IN PLANNED OIL EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION
PROJECTS OFF THE VIETNAMESE COAST. HONG BEGGED OFF ON THE QUESTION,
SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SPECIFICS OF THE PLANNING
FOR THE OIL PROJECTS BUT NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT
INTENDED TO HAVE JAPAN PARTICIPATE EXTENSIVELY. COMMENT: IT
IS POSSIBLE THAT HONG DID NOT BRING UP THE AID ISSUE WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER WATANABE BECAUSE HE HAD ALREADY RELAYED HIS GOVERNMENT'S
REQUEST TO MORI.)