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WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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DEPT OF STATE
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JICPAC HONOLULU HI

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 REMINDED 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.

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CITE

SERIAL:

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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 IN

ACTION (I.M)
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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.

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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.)