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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 21, 1961

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Dear Admiral Frost:

The Combined Police Telecommunications Service of Viet-Nam has requested that the International Cooperation Administration procure as "commodities" a number of cryptographic devices for use by that Service. This request is being referred to you under the procedures of COMSEC 2-/24, although such use of ICA funds may not be considered communication security assistance as defined in COMSEC 2-/24.

If cryptographic equipment is procured for the government of Viet-Nam, the U. S. Operations Mission in Saigon has said it will probably be of Swiss make and such models as are commercially available. The USOM Saigon has already asked and been told that no devices such as the M-209 are available from surplus U. S. military or commercial sources. USOM Saigon has also pointed out that the Combined Police Telecommunications Service will probably undertake to procure this cryptographic equipment with Viet-Nam funds if we do not procure it for them.

The International Cooperation Administration has been advised that United States Government policy prohibits the provision of cryptographic equipment for the protection of internal communications of a foreign government. The ICA position is not entirely logical. They claim that cryptographic equipment will not actually be provided. However, since we cannot stop the purchase of cryptographic equipment with Viet-Nam funds, ICA therefore can see no harm in using U. S. Government funds for the same purpose.

Your support is requested in this specific matter and for future reference in answering the question; should the International Cooperation Administration be permitted to procure cryptographic equipment as a commodity for use by foreign governments?

Sincerely yours,

/s/

L. W. Parke  
Special Assistant to the  
Assistant Secretary for Administration

Copy to: Executive Secretary, USCSB

Vice Admiral L. H. Frost, U. S. Navy,  
Director, National Security Agency,  
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland