

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

Page 3  
Enclosure 1  
Dispatch  
From Saigon

effective use be made of the weekly press conferences of the Directorate General of Information by channelling items of substantive information through that agency for release, that foreign correspondents be permitted to make trips in the country to learn for themselves the nature of the Viet Cong threat, and that Ministers of the Government be available to have open and frank talks with correspondents about the accomplishments and problems of the various Ministries. It is believed that this might be helpful in improving the tone of foreign press articles.

5. We are pleased to learn that steps are being taken to increase and stabilize the price of paddy to the peasants. We also suggest that further efforts be made to grant broader credit facilities to the peasants.

It is the belief of the Department of State that if measures such as those suggested above, in addition to the other liberalizing steps regarding elections of youth representatives to village councils, sending better administrators into the countryside, periodic "fireside chats", etc., are adopted in the near future, it would be worthwhile to withhold the announcement of individual measures, so that a meaningful official announcement could be made, preferably by you, of all of the liberalizing measures you are putting into immediate effect. If the individual measures were not disclosed in advance, such an across-the-board announcement of genuine liberalizing measures would, we believe, have a most beneficial effect on the people of Viet-Nam and on world opinion. It is certain that such an announcement would do a great deal to correct any erroneous impressions that have been given to world opinion in recent months and encourage the world press and government spokesmen to support you in your tireless efforts to eliminate the Viet Cong threat and continue the fine progress attained in Viet-Nam in such a short period of time.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive