

EA68 (AGENCIES & FORMS OUT)

(420)

WITH LONDON PEACE FEELERS

NEW YORK, FEB. 12 (AP)-NEWSWEEK SAID TODAY THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS STUDYING A REPORT OF AN EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT IN PEKING THAT RED CHINA'S MAO TSE-TUNG HAS GIVEN NORTH VIETNAM A GO-AHEAD FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES WHENEVER HANOI FEELS THE SITUATION IS FAVORABLE.

IN A RELATED STORY, THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE SAID PRESIDENT JOHNSON INSISTED SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY ISSUE A DENIAL THAT HE RECEIVED A NORTH VIETNAMESE PEACE FEELER WHILE ON A VISIT TO PARIS AND "ROUNDLY DENOUNCED" THE NEW YORK DEMOCRAT FOR INTERFERING IN "DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS" FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM. IT WAS NEWSWEEK, IN ITS LAST ISSUE, THAT SAID KENNEDY HAD RECEIVED THE PEACE FEELER THROUGH A FRENCH DIPLOMAT.

AFTER A TALK WITH JOHNSON ON MONDAY, KENNEDY SAID HE DID NOT BRING HOME ANY PEACE FEELERS FROM HIS EUROPEAN TRIP.

AS FOR THE REPORT OF THE EAST EUROPEAN, WHO WAS NOT IDENTIFIED BY NAME OR NATIONALITY, NEWSWEEK SAID MAO LAID DOWN ONE CONDITION IN GRANTING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE A GREEN LIGHT FOR DIRECT TALKS WITH THE UNITED STATES: UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE TALKS BE CONDUCTED THROUGH MOSCOW.

THE MAGAZINE GAVE THIS ACCOUNT OF WHAT IT CALLED "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT TO DATE" IN EFFORTS TO END THE WAR:

THE EAST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT RECEIVED LAST WEEK A DETAILED ACCOUNT FROM ITS EMBASSY IN PEKING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY CONVERSATION BETWEEN MAO AND HANOI'S ENVOY TO THE CHINESE CAPITAL.

"THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY MAO THAT THEY HAVE A GREEN LIGHT FROM HIM TO COMMENCE PEACE TALKS DIRECTLY WITH THE U.S. WHENEVER THEY THINK THE SITUATION FAVORABLE FOR SUCH TALKS.

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"MAO ATTACHED ONE IMPORTANT CONDITION IN GRANTING PERMISSION FOR SUCH TALKS TO BEGIN: THEY MAY UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE CONDUCTED THROUGH MOSCOW (AS BOTH HANOI AND MOSCOW MIGHT WELL PREFER) BUT MUST BE BEGUN EITHER DIRECTLY WITH THE U.S. OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH A NEUTRAL POWER WHOSE GOOD OFFICES PEKING WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE."

(A BROADCAST DISPATCH OF PEKING'S OFFICIAL NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY SAID SUNDAY THE VIETNAMESE WAR CAN BE SETTLED ONLY IF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH VIETNAM "LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL."

(**"PEACE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION AS LONG AS THE U.S. AGGRESSOR FORCES REMAIN IN OCCUPATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM," THE DISPATCH SAID.**)

**NEWSWEEK SAID THE EAST EUROPEAN AUTHOR OF THE REPORT TOLD HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE ENVOYS IN PEKING DEMONSTRATED "GREAT RELIEF AND ENJOYMENT" IN RELATING DETAILS OF THE ENVOY'S TALK WITH MAO TO THE EAST EUROPEANS.**

**THE MAGAZINE SAID THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY HAD SENT THE REPORT OF THE MEETING TO ITS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT "WAS STUDYING IT CAREFULLY, NUANCE BY NUANCE, TO SEE IF IT WAS INDEED WHAT IT PURPORTED TO BE."**

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NEW YORK--FIRST ADD NEWSWEEK A69 X X X TO BE."

IN THE KENNEDY STORY, THE MAGAZINE SAID THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION WAS IRRITATED "BECAUSE KENNEDY INTERFERED IN "DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS." BUT THE MAGAZINE'S CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, EDWARD WEINTAL, REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON THAT "THE SIMPLE TRUTH WAS THAT KENNEDY DIDN'T GRASP THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INFORMATION DUMPED IN HIS LAP BY ETIENNE MANAC'H (CQ), DIRECTOR OF ASIAN AND OCEANIC AFFAIRS IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN OFFICE FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION WAS A BASIC ONE: KENNEDY DOESN'T SPEAK FRENCH."

IT SAID MANAC'H'S REMARKS WERE TRANSLATED FOR KENNEDY BY JOHN G. DEAN, A VIETNAM EXPERT IN THE U.S. EMBASSY IN PARIS. IT WAS ONLY AFTER KENNEDY LEFT THE MEETING WITH DEAN THAT HE FULLY REALIZED ITS IMPORT, NEWSWEEK SAID.

AFTER HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON KENNEDY MET WITH UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE NICHOLAS KATZENBACH AND LATER CONFERRED WITH JOHNSON.

SAID NEWSWEEK:

"WHAT TROUBLED MR. JOHNSON--AS HE ANGRILY TOLD KENNEDY TO HIS FACE--WAS THAT THE STORY GOT OUT AT ALL. 'IT WAS ROUGH,' SAID WHITE HOUSE STAFFER WALT ROSTOW, SHAKING HIS HEAD AS HE DEPARTED THE JOHNSON-KENNEDY FACEDOWN. 'IT WAS VERY ROUGH.'"

WEINTAL'S ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING SAID "THE PRESIDENT ROUNDLY DENOUNCED KENNEDY FOR LEAKING THE STORY OF THE PEACE PROPOSAL AND JEOPARDIZING DELICATE U.S. NEGOTIATIONS. KENNEDY INSISTED HE HAD TOLD NO ONE--AND SUGGESTED THE LEAK MIGHT HAVE COME INSTEAD FROM 'YOUR STATE DEPARTMENT.' 'IT'S YOUR (ITALICS) STATE DEPARTMENT, NOT MINE,' MR. JOHNSON REPLIED HEATEDLY--A CAROM SHOT THAT PRESUMABLY SET KATZENBACH'S EARS BURNING."

KATZENBACH ONCE SERVED AS KENNEDY'S DEPUTY IN THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

THE MAGAZINE SAID THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED SCOLDING KENNEDY AND FINALLY INSISTED THAT HE ISSUE A DENIAL.

THE ACCOUNT SAID THAT LATER JOHNSON TOLD INTIMATES THAT HE WAS SATISFIED THE ORIGINAL REPORT HAD NOT COME FROM KENNEDY "AND THAT BOBBY INDEED WAS MERELY AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER IN THE AFFAIR."

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