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Galbraith's Journal Entry Account of the Conversation with Rapacki and Michałowski in New Delhi

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Summary:

Record of conversation between John Kenneth Galbraith and Polish officials Jerzy Michałowski and Adam Rapacki. The Polish officials note that the American campaign is encouraging the North Vietnamese to look to the Chinese for help. Galbraith calls for a six month ceasefire as a sign of good faith.

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Transcript - English

January 22 - New Delhi

The Polish Foreign Minister, [Adam] Rapacki, has been visiting here. Last night I got word that he wanted to talk to me about Vietnam. I met him, along with the Secretary-General of the Polish Foreign Office [Jerzy Michałowski], at M.J. Desai's house. They told me that while we [the United States] probably couldn't lose in South Vietnam, we couldn't win. Meanwhile we are forcing North Vietnam to look more and more to the Chinese for protection. This is bad. Why not get a liberal government in South Vietnam which all could support? In return, Ho Chi Minh would call off the insurrection. I had to improvise for, of course, I was without instruction. So I countered by asking why not call off the insurrection for six months and with this manifestation of good faith, we could then withdraw. They said that North Vietnam could not get peace in the south so long as Diem was in charge. They said (approximately), "You know enough of Marx yourself to know about popular movements." [1] I responded, "But you should be good enough Communists to know about the international leadership of the Communist movement." They replied that, under present circumstances, given the split between Russia and China, any reference to international leadership was to a myth. I noted that if it were easy to throw out leaders such as Diem, we would have thrown out Castro. But we weren't that powerful. [2]

[1] The reference is to my *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952, 1956), which is regarded by some Marxian scholars as showing enlightened Marxist influences.

[2] This conversation was, of course, promptly reported. It was ignored by the State Department but picked up from the cables by President Kennedy. He told [Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern W. Affairs Averell] Harriman to have me pursue the matter as he was much interested. By the time his instruction came, Rapacki had departed.