
Agency Information

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RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10158

RECORD SERIES : MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 07-M-63

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM : ELDER, WALTER
TO : MILLER, WILLIAM

TITLE :

DATE : 07/14/1975
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SUBJECTS :
ASSASSINATION
VIET NAM
CONIEN, LUCIEN

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

SECRET

Review Staff: 75/1083

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

R487

14 July 1975

Mr. William G. Miller
Staff Director
Select Committee To Study Governmental
Operations With Respect To Intelligence
Activities
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Miller:

Attached are four paraphrased copies of the following requested cables in response to a request arising from Mr. Colby's appearance before the SSC on 20 June 1975:

1. SAIG 1445, 5 October 1963
2. SAIG 1447, 5 October 1963
3. DIR 73661, 6 October 1963
4. SAIG 1463, 7 October 1963

CAP 63560 dated 5 October 1963, also requested, is not included. This is a White House message, and we have no copy.

DEPTEL 534, 5 October 1963, is also not included. The Third Agency Rule applies to this document, and the SSC should contact the State Department for this cable.

Sincerely,

Walter Elder

Walter Elder
Assistant to the Director

Attachments: a/s

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to
Criminal Sanctions.

Classified by 007789
Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption schedule 5D (1), (2), (3)
Automatically declassified on
Date Impossible to Determine

SECRET

TOP SECRET

ROUTING	
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: DIRECTOR

DM : SAIGON

TION: C/FE 1-6 (DCI, DDP, C/FE ISSUED TEMPO COPIES 1055 5 OCT/OJ)

FO : DCI 7, D/DCI 8, DDP 9, RF 10, VR 11

R487

T O P S E C R E T 051210Z

IMMEDIATE DIR CITE SAIG 1445

RYBAT TUCOBALT

1

2

sent Cobalt address

5 OCT 63 IN 33921

1. LT. COL. CONEIN MET WITH GEN. DUONG VAN MINH AT GEN. MINH'S HEADQUARTERS ON LE VAN DUYET FOR ONE HOUR AND TEN MINUTES MORNING OF 5 OCT 1963. THIS MEETING WAS AT THE INITIATIVE OF GEN. MINH AND HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY CLEARED IN ADVANCE BY AMBASSADOR LODGE. NO OTHER PERSONS WERE PRESENT. THE CONVERSATION WAS CONDUCTED IN FRENCH.

2. GEN. MINH STATED THAT HE MUST KNOW AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WITH RESPECT TO A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM WITHIN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. GEN. MINH ADDED THE GENERALS WERE AWARE THE SITUATION IS DETERIORATING RAPIDLY AND THAT ACTION TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE TAKEN OR THE WAR WILL BE LOST TO THE VIET CONG BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT NO LONGER HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE. GEN. MINH IDENTIFIED AMONG THE OTHER GENERALS PARTICIPATING WITH HIM IN THIS PLAN:

MAJ. GEN. TRAN VAN DON

BRIG. GEN. TRAN THIEN KHIEM

MAJ. GEN. TRAN VAN KIM

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3. GEN. MINH MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY SPECIFIC AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF HIMSELF AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT BUT HE STATED HE DOES NEED AMERICAN ASSURANCES THAT THE USG WILL NOT RPT NOT ATTEMPT TO THWART THIS PLAN.

4. GEN. MINH ALSO STATED THAT HE HIMSELF HAS NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS NOR DO ANY OF THE OTHER GENERAL OFFICERS EXCEPT PERHAPS, HE SAID LAUGHINGLY, GEN. TON THAT DINH. GEN. MINH INSISTED THAT HIS ONLY PURPOSE IS TO WIN THE WAR. HE ADDED , EMPHATICALLY THAT TO DO THIS CONTINUATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID AT THE PRESENT LEVEL (HE SAID ONE AND ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS PER DAY) IS NECESSARY.

5. GEN. MINH OUTLINED THREE POSSIBLE PLANS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT:

A. ASSASSINATION OF NGO DINH NHU AND NGO DINH CAN KEEPING PRESIDENT DIEM IN OFFICE. GEN. MINH SAID THIS WAS THE EASIEST PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH.

B. THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF SAIGON BY VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS PARTICULARLY THE UNIT AT BEN CAT. (COMMENT: FIFTH DIVISION ELEMENTS COMMANDED BY GEN. DINH.)

C. DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MILITARY UNITS INVOLVED IN THE COUP AND LOYALIST MILITARY UNITS IN SAIGON. IN EFFECT, DIVIDING THE CITY OF SAIGON INTO SECTORS AND CLEANING IT OUT POCKET BY POCKET. GEN. MINH CLAIMS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES DIEM AND NHU COULD COUNT ON THE LOYALTY OF 5,500 TROOPS WITHIN THE CITY OF SAIGON.

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6. CONEIN REPLIED TO GEN. MINH THAT HE COULD NOT ANSWER SPECIFIC QUESTION AS TO USG NON-INTERFERENCE NOR COULD HE GIVE ANY ADVICE WITH RESPECT TO TACTICAL PLANNING. HE ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT ADVISE CONCERNING THE BEST OF THE THREE PLANS.

7. GEN. MINH WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THE MOST DANGEROUS MEN IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE NGO DINH NHU, NGO DINH CAN AND NGO TRONG HIEU. MINH STATED THAT HIEU WAS FORMERLY A COMMUNIST AND STILL HAS COMMUNIST SYMPATHIES. WHEN COL. CONEIN REMARKED THAT HE HAD CONSIDERED COL. TUNG AS ONE OF THE MORE DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS, GEN. MINH STATED "IF I GET RID OF NHU, CAN AND HIEU, COL. TUNG WILL BE ON HIS KNEES BEFORE ME."

8. GEN. MINH ALSO STATED THAT HE WAS WORRIED AS TO THE ROLE OF GEN. TRAN THIEN KHIEM SINCE KHIEM MAY HAVE PLAYED A DOUBLE ROLE IN AUGUST. GEN. MINH ASKED THAT COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS PREVIOUSLY PASSED TO GEN. KHIEM (PLAN OF CAMP LONG THANH AND MUNITIONS INVENTORY AT THAT CAMP) BE PASSED TO GEN. MINH PERSONALLY FOR COMPARISON WITH PAPERS PASSED BY KHIEM TO MINH PURPORTEDLY FROM CAS.

9. MINH FURTHER STATED THAT ONE OF THE REASONS THEY ARE HAVING TO ACT QUICKLY WAS THE FACT THAT MANY REGIMENTAL, BATTALION AND COMPANY COMMANDERS ARE WORKING ON COUP PLANS OF THEIR OWN WHICH COULD BE ABORTIVE AND "A CATASTROPHE."

10. MINH APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND CONEIN'S POSITION OF BEING UNABLE TO COMMENT AT THE PRESENT MOMENT BUT ASKED THAT CONEIN AGAIN MEET WITH GEN. MINH TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC PLAN OF OPERATIONS WHICH GEN. MINH HOPES TO PUT INTO ACTION.

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SPECIFIC DATE WAS GIVEN FOR THIS NEXT MEETING. CONEIN WAS AGAIN NON-COMMITTAL IN HIS REPLY. GEN. MINH ONCE AGAIN INDICATED HIS UNDERSTANDING AND STATED THAT HE WOULD ARRANGE TO CONTACT CONEIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND HOPED THAT CONEIN WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET WITH HIM AGAIN AND GIVE THE ASSURANCE OUTLINED ABOVE.

T O P S E C R E T

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ROUTING

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TO : DIRECTOR

FROM : SAIGON

ACTION: C/FE 1/2 (O/DCI, DDP, C/FE NOTIFIED AND COPIES ISSUED 1240 5 OCT/OJ)

INFO :DCI 3, D/DCI 4, DDP 5, RF 6, VR 7

T O P S E C R E T 051305Z

IMMEDIATE DIR CITE SAIG 1447

5 OCT 68 IN 33965

(IN 33921)*

1. SAIG 1445 DISCUSSED WITH AMBASSADOR LODGE AND DCM TRUEHEART. AMBASSADOR NOW COORDINATING DRAFT MESSAGE TO RUSK AND OFFICIAL CIA / WITH GENERAL HARKINS. MESSAGE IN PRESENT FORM ASKS FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON FOLLOW UP OF MINH -CONEIN INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDS THAT GEN. MINH BE GIVEN THE ASSURANCES HE DESIRES.
2. I HAVE RECOMMENDED TO AMBASSADOR LODGE THAT:
 - A. THAT WE PROCEED WITH THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH GEN. MINH.
 - B. WE DO NOT SET OURSELVES IRREVOCABLY AGAINST THE ASSASSINATION PLOT, SINCE THE OTHER TWO ALTERNATIVES MEAN EITHER A BLOODBATH IN SAIGON OR A PROTRACTED STRUGGLE WHICH COULD RIP THE ARMY AND THE COUNTRY ASUNDER.
 - C. THAT EQUAL OR GREATER WEIGHT BE GIVEN TO DISCUSSION AND PLANNING OF ALTERNATIVES THAN TO DISCUSSION OF MEANS TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT.
3. IN SEPERATE DISCUSSIONS WITH DCM TRUEHEART I HAVE COMMENTED: THAT:

- A. ANY PLAN TO ELIMINATE NGO DINH CAN AND NGO DINH NHU JUL 15 1975

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AND RETAIN PRESIDENT DIEM IS NAIVE. SINCE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS DIEM PROBABLY WOULD NOT COOPERATE WITH THE PERPETRATORS OF THOSE ACTS.

(CIA / ³OFFICIAL AGREES WITH THIS VIEW IN DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE).

B. WHILE IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT BIG MINH HAS THE WILL AND ABILITY TO CARRY OUT THE PLANS HE OUTLINED TO CONEIN, HE PROBABLY FEELS HE EITHER HAS TO ACT OR SEE THE INITIATIVE PASS TO THE HANDS OF JUNIOR OFFICERS WHOSE EFFORTS WOULD PROBABLY BE ABORTIVE.

C. THE SELF-IMMOLATION OF THE BONZE IN SAIGON TODAY MAY BE THE BEGINNING OF A CAMPAIGN OF ADDITIONAL SUICIDES AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WHICH WILL DEEPEN THE CRISIS HERE.

4. I HAVE FULLY IN MIND CIA / ^{OFFICIAL'S} ADMONITIONS NOT RPT NOT TO EMBARK ON THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL. THUS, EACH RECOMMENDATION AND COMMENT IS PREDICATED UPON MY RECEIPT OF INSTRUCTIONS FROM HQS.

5. FOR THE RECORD, I HAVE CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE THAT CONEIN CAN ABLY CARRY OUT WHATEVER ROLE IN THIS AFFAIR THAT HQS MAY DIRECT.

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C/S Comment: *Minh told Conein he must know American Govt. position with respect to a change in the GVN within the very near future. Minh outlined three possible plans for the accomplishment of the change.

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W. COLBY
C/FE
6 OCT 1963

CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

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TO : SAIG
FROM : DIRECTOR
INFO : DCI, D/DCI, DDP, RF, VR

6 OCT 63 17 20

SIG CEN
DEFERRED
ROUTINE

PRIORITY SAIG INFO

CITE DIR

73331

RYBAT

RE SAIG 1447 (In 33965)

GUIDANCE ON SAIG 1445 (IN 33921) WILL COME IN SEPARATE MESSAGE. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, OFFICIAL CIA / DIRECTS THAT YOU WITHDRAW RECOMMENDATION TO AMBASSADOR REF PARA 2 B UNDER CIA / OFFICIAL'S INSTRUCTIONS. AS WE CANNOT BE IN POSITION ACTIVELY CONDONING SUCH COURSE OF ACTION AND THEREBY ENGAGING OUR RESPONSIBILITY THEREFOR.

END OF MESSAGE

C/S COMMENT: *TOP SECRET.

See SAIG 1447 (In 33965)

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W.F. Colby
C/FE
RELEASING OFFICER

COORDINATING OFFICERS
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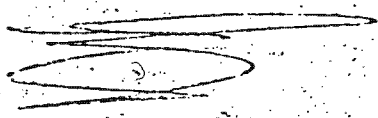
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O : DIRECTOR

ROM : SAIGON

CTION: C/FE 2

INFO : DCI, D/DCI, DDP, RF, VR



SECRET 070547Z

17 OCT 63 IN 34280

PRIORITY DIR CITE SAIG 1463

RYPAT

2

REF: DIR 73661*

ACTION TAKEN AS DIRECTED IN REF. IN ADDITION, SINCE
 DCM TRUEHEART WAS ALSO PRESENT WHEN ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATION ^{WA} ~~CS~~
 MADE, SPECIFIC WITHDRAWAL OF RECOMMENDATION AT CIA / OFFICIAL'S
 INSTRUCTION WAS ALSO CONVEYED TO TRUEHEART. AMBASSADOR LODGE COMMENTED THAT
 HE SHARES BRENT'S OPINION AS REFLECTED IN SAIG 1448. (IN 34020)

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official
 C/S COMMENT: * CIA / directed that COS withdraw the recommendation
 to the Ambassador.

** Ambassador Lodge recommended that Conein when next approached
 by Minh assure him that US will not attempt to thwart his plans, other than the
 assassination plans, and assure Minh that US aid will be continued to Vietnam under
 a government which gives promise of gaining the support of the people and winning
 the war against the Communists.

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