

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY : NARA
RECORD NUMBER : 176-10036-10170
RECORD SERIES : National Security Files
AGENCY FILE NUMBER :

ORIGINATOR : WH
FROM : Bundy
TO : Lodge
TITLE :
DATE :
PAGES : 4
SUBJECTS :
DOCUMENT TYPE :
CLASSIFICATION :
RESTRICTIONS :
CURRENT STATUS :
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 9/10/2000
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS : National Security Files, Box 201: Vietnam, 10/29/63-10/31/63, State
Cables. Box 2

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

10/30/63

VIA CAS CHANNEL

EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE

FROM: BUNDY

Your 2063 shows important difference in our views and we must repeat that we cannot accept conclusion that we have no power to delay or discourage a coup. In your paragraph 12 you say that if you were convinced that the coup was going to fail you would of course do everything you could to stop it. We believe that on this basis you should do everything you can to stop or delay any operation which, in your best judgment, does not give better than even prospect of quick success.

We recognize the danger of appearing hostile to generals, but we do not share implication in your message that only conviction of ^{certain} ~~imminent~~ failure justifies intervention. We believe that your standard for intervention should be that stated above.

2. If then you should conclude that there is not a better than even chance of quick success, you should communicate this doubt to generals in a way calculated to persuade them to desist at least until chances are better. In this communication you should use the weight of your best advice and explicitly reject any implication that we oppose the effort of the generals because of preference for present regime.

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

We recognize need to bear in mind generals' interpretation of U. S. role in 1960 coup attempt and you should maintain clear distinction between strong advice given as a friend and choice of sides by USG.

3. We ~~do~~ continue to be deeply interested in up-to-the-minute assessment of prospects and are sending this before reply to our CAS 79126. We hope for continuous exchange latest assessments on this topic.

4. ~~On command arrangements outlined paragraph-~~ To clarify our intent, paragraph 7 of our 79109 is rescinded and we restate (a) our desires as follows: While you are in Saigon you will be chief of country team in all circumstances and our only instruction is that we are sure it will help to have Harkins fully informed at all stages and to use advice from both him and Smith in framing guidance for coup contacts and assessment. We continue to be concerned that neither Conein nor any other reporting source is getting the clarity we would like with respect to alignments of forces and levels of determination.

(b) When you leave Saigon and before there is a coup, Truehart will be chief of the country team, and our only modification of existing procedures is that in this circumstance we believe that all instruction and debriefing of Conein should be conducted in immediate

consultation with Harkins and Smith so that all three know what is said to Conein and what he reports at all stages.

(c) If you have left and a ^{military situation develops} coup occurs, we believe that ~~emergency~~ ^{emergency} situation ~~satisfaction~~ requires final local U. S. authority to be vested in most experienced officer with appropriate background and that officer in our view is Harkins. We do not repeat not intend that this internal switch in final responsibility should be publicized in any way, and Harkins will of course be guided in basic posture by our instructions, which follow in paragraph 5. Thus we do not believe that this switch can have the effect suggested in your paragraph 8.

5. This paragraph contains our present standing instructions for U. S. posture in the event of a coup.

(a) U. S. authorities will reject appeals for direct intervention from either side, and U. S. -controlled aircraft and other resources will not be committed between the battle lines or in support of either side, without authorization from Washington.

(b) In event of indecisive contest, U. S. authorities may in their discretion agree to perform any acts agreeable to both sides, such as removal of key personalities or relay of information. In such actions, however, U. S. authorities will strenuously avoid appearance of pressure on either side. It is not in the interest of USG

to be or appear to be instrument of existing government or instrument of coup.

6. We have your message about return to Washington and if announcement has not already been made, we suggest that it be kept as low-key and quiet as possible, and we also urge that if possible you keep open the exact time of your departure. We are strongly sensitive to great disadvantage of having you out of Saigon if this should turn out to be a week of decision and if it can be avoided we would prefer not to see you pinned to a fixed hour of departure now.



which involves producing a real military confrontation Saigon