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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

S. Vietnam

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SECRET

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CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS
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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

REPORT NO. TDCS-DB-3/655,523(2)

SUBJECT CRITICISM AND UNDERMINING OF GENERAL KIM'S COMMENTS ON NGO DINH NHU'S

DATE DISTR. 13 JULY 1963

BEHAVIOR MEETING WITH THE GENERAL OFFICERS

PRECEDENCE PRIORITY 2 CL

DATE OF

13 JULY 1963

INFO.

PLACE &

DATE ACQ.

APPRAISAL

VIETNAM, SAIGON (13 JULY 1963)

REFERENCES IN 79141

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER (B); FROM AN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL (B) AND

SAIGON; FROM GENERAL KIM.

REMARKS BECAUSE THEY OWNED THEIR

ABOUT TIME OF THE GENERAL'S PRESENT HAD BEEN

ACCORDING BRIGADIER GENERAL LE VAN KIM MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

ON 13 JULY 1963 BEFORE THAT SUCH STATEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE BECAUSE

NAME OF HE AND BRIGADIER GENERAL PHAM XUAN CHIEU HAD JUST BEEN NAMED

INSPECTORS OF THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM; THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS

MADE BY NGO DINH NHU DURING A SECRET MEETING AT THE JOINT GENERAL

STAFF HEADQUARTERS ON 1 JULY

WHEN BRIGADIER GENERAL NGO DINH NHU CALLED ALL OF THE GENERAL OFFICERS ASIDE AFTER

A CEREMONY OPENING A SPECIAL STRATEGIC HAMLET COURSE FOR GENERAL

OFFICERS. NHU WAS VERY FRIENDLY DURING THE MEETING, HAD FLATTERED

THE GENERALS AND SOLICITED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE STRATEGIC HAMLET

PROGRAM. THE OFFICERS AND MOON'D BE WITH THEM

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PROGRAM. NHU HAD CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF THE BUDDHIST

SITUATION AND REMARKED THAT, "IF THE ARMY WAS THINKING OF A COUP

DUE TO THE FACT HE DID NOT BLAME THE OFFICERS AND WOULD BE WITH THEM.

NHU ADDED THAT THE BUDDHIST PROBLEM MIGHT THEN BE SOLVED.

7 COHENHU SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE COULD ONLY DEPEND UPON

THEMSELVES TO DEFEAT THE COMMUNISTS, BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT DEPEND ON

THOSE WHO MIGHT WANT TO NEGOTIATE, WHICH KIM SAID HE CONSIDERED AN

OBVIOUS ALLUSION TO THE AMERICANS

INSIDE TRKIM SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT PRESIDENT DIEM WAS

AWARE OF WHAT NHU HAD SAID TO THE GENERALS, THE PRESIDENT WOULD

NOT BELIEVE ANY REPORTS THAT SUCH STATEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE BECAUSE,

ACCORDING TO KIM, DIEM WAS "A COMPLETE PRISONER OF HIS BROTHER."

ABOUT FIVE OF THE GENERALS PRESENT HAD BEEN

FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH NHU'S REMARKS BECAUSE THEY OWED THEIR

ADVANCEMENT PERSONALLY TO HIM. MOST OF THE "GENERAL'S," HOWEVER, HAD

REACTED NEGATIVELY AS HE HAD. NHU HAD TREATED THE GENERALS AS THOUGH

THEY WERE CHILDREN AND FEW HAD BELIEVED THAT HE WAS SINCERE.

HE BELIEVED THAT THIS WAS JUST ANOTHER NHU MANEUVER, AND THAT

REMARKED. "WHY DID HE HOLD SUCH A MEETING NOW, AFTER YEARS OF

REMARKS: 8 APRIL 1964, THE GENERAL, DALLAS, TEXAS
 13 APR 1964

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CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

REPORT NO. TDCSDB-3/655,524

SUBJECT COMMENTS ON REPORTS OF NGO DINH
NHU'S COUP PLOTTING

DATE DISTR. 13 JULY 1963

PRECEDENCE PRIORITY

DATE OF INFO. 13 JULY 1963

REFERENCES IN

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (13 JULY 1963)

APPRAISAL

FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE JOINT EMBASSY/CAS

FOLLOWING ARE THE JOINT EMBASSY/CAS COMMENTS ON THE FOUR REPORTS CONCERNING THE 11 JULY 1963 MEETING AT JOINT GENERAL STAFF HEADQUARTERS. THE FIRST OF THESE CAME FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL VAN THANH CAO, DELEGATE TO THE EASTERN PROVINCES, SAIGON AMEMBTEL 80. TWO OTHER REPORTS ON 12 JULY: ONE FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL NGUYEN KHANH, COMMANDING GENERAL, II CORPS, TDCSDB-3/655,512 (FVS-9302), AND THE OTHER FROM A GENERAL OFFICER, TDCSDB-3/655,517 (FVS-9305). THE FOURTH REPORT IS FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL LE VAN KIM, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, TDCSDB-3/655,523 (FVS-9306).

1. ALL OF THESE REPORTS HAVE SOME ELEMENTS IN COMMON. THEY DIFFER WIDELY IN DETAIL AND EMPHASIS. COMMON ELEMENTS ARE:

A. THE MEETING WAS CALLED BY NHU; THE MEETING WAS HELD AT THE ARMY AND

MINISTRY CHIEF.

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B. NHU CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) HANDLING OF THE
BUDDHIST CRISIS;

C. NHU PROMISED THE GENERALS A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE WAR AND
ALSO PROMISED TO GIVE THOSE GENERALS WHOSE POSITIONS ARE SINECURES
LEGITIMATE RESPONSIBILITIES; AND,

D. NHU MADE AN APPEAL FOR THE LOYALTY OF THE GENERALS (TO WHOM IS
REFUSED IN LIGHT OF THE QUESTION) BUT HE WAS NOT HEARD. IN FACT,
ACTUALLY THERE MAY HAVE BEEN TWO MEETINGS BETWEEN NHU AND THE GENERALS
ON 11 JULY. THE FIRST WAS A FORMAL MEETING AT JOINT GENERAL STAFF OFFICES. THE
SECOND FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FIRST AT THE OFFICERS CLUB AT THE JOINT
GENERAL STAFF. THE GENERAL OFFICER STATES CLEARLY THAT HIS REPORT DERIVES FROM
THE OFFICERS CLUB TALK. ALTHOUGH HE ATTENDED BOTH MEETINGS, HE WERE NOT CLEAR AS
TO THOSE PRESENT AT EITHER MEETING. GENERAL KHANH STATES THAT THERE WERE ABOUT
FOURTEEN GENERALS IN ATTENDANCE WHEN NHU MADE THE REMARKS HE REPORTED. IN

INCLUDING NEWLY APPOINTED BRIGADIER GENERAL DO CAO TRI, THERE ARE NOW NINETEEN
GENERALS IN THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN).

3. THE GENERAL OFFICER'S REPORT IS THE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE WHICH IS
EXPLICIT WITH REGARD TO A COUP LED BY NHU. WITH RESPECT TO SPECIFICITY, IT IS
WORTH NOTING THAT KHANH, CAO, AND KIM HAVE HAD LONG TIME RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE
INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM THEY SPOKE.

4. IT IS WORTHWHILE TO COMPARE THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO NHU BY THE

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GENERAL OFFICER WITH THE REPORT OF THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN NHU AND AN AMERICAN OBSERVER ON 25 JUNE, CSDB-3/655,373. AT THAT TIME NHU INDICATED, AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY, THAT IF HE BELIEVED THE GOVERNMENT, MEANING DIEM, WAS BECOMING SERVILE TO THE UNITED STATES, HE HIMSELF WOULD LEAD A COUP D'ETAT.

5. BOTH CAO'S REPORT AND KHANH'S REPORTS INDICATE THAT NHU'S REMARKS HAD SOME CONSIDERABLE IMPACT UPON THE GENERALS. CAO BELIEVED THAT NHU'S STATEMENTS HAD RELIEVED THE CRITICAL SITUATION, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY. KHANH STATED THAT NHU HAD BEEN CONVINCING IN HIS REQUEST FOR LOYALTY AND SUPPORT AND THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE GENERAL OFFICERS WOULD SUPPORT NHU. IT WAS NOT CLEAR FROM KHANH'S REMARKS THAT THIS SUPPORT WOULD BE PROVIDED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A COUP D'ETAT. ON THE OTHER HAND, KIM THOUGHT THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE GENERALS REACTED NEGATIVELY. ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL OFFICER, MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN NGOC LE, CHIEF OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, COMMENTED ON 12 JULY THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE GENERALS SHOULD PROCEED WITHOUT NHU SINCE NHU ONLY SOUGHT TO SAVE HIMSELF. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IF THE GENERALS SHOULD CONSENT TO SUPPORT NHU, IT WOULD BE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW A TEMPORARY MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE.

6. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO EVALUATE EXACTLY WHAT NHU MAY HAVE IN MIND. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE GENERAL OFFICER HAS MISREAD NHU'S REMARKS WHICH WERE POSSIBLY MADE IN THE SAME VEIN AS NHU'S COMMENTS TO AN AMERICAN OBSERVER ON 25 JUNE. THIS INTERPRETATION, HOWEVER, MUST TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION NHU'S

STATEMENT THAT THE COUP MUST BE STAGED OVERNIGHT AND MUST BE LIGHTNING-FAST

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5. THE... FOLLOWED BY A TURNOVER OF POWER FROM THE GENERAL OFFICERS TO CIVILIAN CONTROL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THIS CONSTRUCTION COULD BE BASED ON THE SOME- TIMES VAGUE AND THEORETICAL UTTERANCES OF NHU.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT SOME GENERALS ARE PLANNING, OR AT THE VERY LEAST, FAR MORE INTENSIVELY THINKING ABOUT, COUP ACTION. HOW THE GENERALS PLANS OR INTENTIONS MAY BE ADVANCED OR RETARDED BY NHU'S REMARKS IS TOO EARLY TO TELL.

8. EVEN IF ONE ACCEPTS THE GENERAL OFFICER'S ACCOUNT, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT NHU IS IN FACT CONTEMPLATING A COUP. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NHU IS SEEKING TO ENTRAP THE GENERALS IN SOME FASHION AND MIGHT EVEN BE DOING SO WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF DIEM.

9. AS A SUBSIDIARY COMMENT, WE CONCLUDE FROM THESE FOUR REPORTS THAT MAJOR GENERAL TRAN VAN DON, COMMANDER OF THE ARVN, CLAIM TO BE A MEMBER OF A COUP GROUP, TDCS-3/552,822 (FVS-9264), COMPRISING MOST OF THE GENERAL OFFICERS. FROM THESE REPORTS, IT DOES NOT EMERGE THAT THE GENERALS HAVE REACHED A CONSENSUS OR ARE PLOTTING AS A SINGLE GROUP, RATHER THAT THERE MAY BE TWO OR MORE GROUPS AMONG THEM.

10. FIELD DISSEM. NONE. END OF MESSAGE

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COUNTRY	SOUTH VIETNAM	REPORT NO.	TDCS-DB-3/655,524 CORRECT
SUBJECT	COMMENTS ON REPORTS OF NGO DINH NHU'S COUP PLOTTING	DATE DISTR.	15 JULY 1963
		PRECEDENCE	PRIORITY
DATE OF INFO.	13 JULY 1963	REFERENCES	IN
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	VIETNAM, SAIGON (13 JULY 1963)		
APPRAISAL		FIELD REPORT NO.	

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SOURCE JOINT EMBASSY/CAS.

C-O-R-R-E-C-T-I-O-N

A FOUR PAGE INFORMATION REPORT WITH THE ABOVE NUMBER WAS ISSUED ON 13 JULY 1963. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL PARAGRAPH SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE REPORT.

10. WITH RESPECT TO THE GENERAL OFFICER, WE HAVE SAID THAT HIS REPORTING RECORD HAS BEEN GOOD AND THAT IN THIS INSTANCE HE PROVIDES CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL. NEVERTHELESS, THE DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN HIS REPORT AND THOSE REFERRED TO FROM THE THREE OTHER SOURCES REMAINS EXTREMELY PUZZLING AND WE REQUIRE MORE TIME FOR INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT. IF IT WERE NECESSARY TO REACH A JUDGEMENT IMMEDIATELY, WE WOULD HAVE TO RENDER IT AGAINST THE GENERAL OFFICER'S VERSION.

END OF MESSAGE

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