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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

EXEMPT
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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM REPORT NO. TDCSDB-3/656,793

SUBJECT INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE DATE DISTR. 23 SEPTEMBER 1963
EIGHTH REGIMENT, FIFTH INFANTRY DIVISION, IN
DANG DUC KHOI COUP D'ETAT PLAN PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

DATE OF INFO. 22 SEPTEMBER 1963 AND AS STATED REFERENCES IN

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (22 SEPTEMBER 1963)

APPRAISAL SEE BELOW FIELD REPORT NO.

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

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER (B); FROM MAJOR NGUYEN VAN TU.

APPR IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT MAJOR TU HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN COUP D'ETAT PLANNING WITH DANG DUC KHOI, BUT WHETHER THE GROUP WILL EVER BE ACTIVATED CANNOT BE ASSESSED. TU'S STATEMENT THAT THE COUP WILL BEGIN WITH THE REVOLT OF HALF OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, AS WELL AS PART OF THE AIRBORNE, IS UNUSUAL AS THE GUARD HAS BEEN THOUGHT TO BE EXTREMELY LOYAL TO PRESIDENT DIEM.

1. SUMMARY. MAJOR NGUYEN VAN TU, COMMANDING OFFICER, EIGHTH REGIMENT OF THE FIFTH INFANTRY DIVISION, THIRD MILITARY AREA, SAID ON 22 SEPTEMBER 1963 THAT HIS REGIMENT IS PREPARED TO MOVE AS A COUNTER-COUP D'ETAT FORCE IN SUPPORT OF A COUP D'ETAT PLAN TO WHICH DANG DUC KHOI BELONGS. TU CLAIMED THAT THE COUP WOULD BEGIN WITH THE REVOLT OF HALF OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD AND FOUR BATTALIONS OF THE AIRBORNE. TU REMARKED THAT HE WAS KEEPING ALL HIS TRANSPORT UNDER REGIMENTAL CONTROL IN ORDER TO MOVE ONE BATTALION AT A TIME, THAT HE HAS STOCKED FIFTY-SEVEN MM RIFLES, AMMUNITION, SAND BAGS, BARBED WIRE, AND HAS ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN 3.5 ROCKETS.

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2. MAJOR TU STATED THAT FOR SOME MONTHS HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN COUP D'ETAT PLANNING WITH DANG DUC KHOI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL, DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF INFORMATION. TU SAID THAT THE COUP WILL BEGIN WITH THE REVOLT OF HALF OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD AND FOUR BATTALIONS OF THE AIRBORNE. HIS REGIMENT, WHICH IS DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) AS A PRIMARY ANTI-COUP D'ETAT STRIKE FORCE, WILL MOVE ONE OR TWO OF THE THREE BATTALIONS TO SAIGON AS A COUNTER-COUP D'ETAT FORCE. TU SAID THAT HE HAD SEALED ORDERS WHICH WERE TO BE OPENED ONLY ON RECEIPT OF A CODE WORD.

3. TU REMARKED THAT HE WAS NOW KEEPING ALL THE TRANSPORT UNDER HIS REGIMENTAL CONTROL, WHICH WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO MOVE ONLY ONE BATTALION AT A TIME. HE HAS ALSO STOCKED FIFTY-SEVEN MM RECOILLESS RIFLES WITH AMMUNITION, AND HE HAS ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN 3.5 ROCKETS. HE HAS ALSO RECENTLY STOCKPILED SAND BAGS AND BARBED WIRE.

4. TU COMMENTED THAT HE PLANNED TO USE THE FIRST BATTALION AS AN INITIAL FORCE, BACKED BY THE SECOND BATTALION. THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE FIRST BATTALION, CAPTAIN TRUONG VAN PHUC, IS AGGRESSIVE, RUTHLESS, AND A COURAGEOUS OFFICER, WHO IS ALSO OUTSPOKENLY OPPOSED TO THE NGO FAMILY, ALTHOUGH HE IS SYMPATHETIC TO PRESIDENT DIEM. (SOURCE COMMENT. BOTH PHUC AND TU WERE DISCOURAGED UPON HEARING OF TRAN KIM TUYEN'S DEPARTURE FROM SOUTH VIETNAM.)

5. TU REMARKED THAT CAPTAIN NONG VIET NGOC, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE SECOND BATTALION, IS A CAO DAI AND ALSO STRONGLY ANTI-NGO DINH NHU, BUT IS NOT THE SAME TYPE OF COURAGEIOUS LEADER AS PHUC. CAPTAIN HA MAI VIET, COMMANDING

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OFFICER, FIFTH MECHANIZED RIFLE COMPANY IS ALSO INVOLVED IN THE COUP D'ETAT PLANNING AND READY TO SUPPORT IT, AS IS LIEUTENANT HIEN, REGIMENTAL S-3, WHO IS A DEVOUT BUDDHIST. TU SAID THAT HIS LIAISON WITH THE OTHER PLOTTERS IN SAIGON IS A MR. CHIN, AT THE SAIGON INFORMATION BUREAU.

6. COLONEL NGUYEN VAN THIEN, COMMANDING OFFICER, FIFTH DIVISION, IS NOT AWARE OF THE PLAN, AND TU BOTH DISLIKES AND FEARS HIM. CAPTAIN NGUYEN VAN THIEP, DIVISION G-1, CAPTAIN LE DAT CONG, DIVISION G-2, CAPTAIN PHAM DONG NHAC, DIVISION G-4, CAPTAIN TRAN VAN THANH, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE FIFTH RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY, ARE MOST FRIENDLY WITH TU, BUT ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE PLAN. CAPATIN BANG, TU'S REGIMENTAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER, IS A DEVOUT CATHOLIC AND STRONGLY PRO-REGIME, AND HE HAS BEEN SENT ON AN EXTENDED UNJUSTIFIED SICK LEAVE.

7. FIELD DISSEM. STATE

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