

April 5, 2012

Information and Privacy Coordinator
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Coordinator:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. subsection 552, I am requesting copies of 18 documents which I will describe in this letter.

The first batch are cited in the CIA history *CIA and the House of Ngo* (http://www.foia.cia.gov/vietnam/2_CIA_AND_THE_HOUSE_OF_NGO.pdf), declassified February 2009. If that link does not work, this can be found on the CIA FOIA website (<http://www.foia.cia.gov>), tab for "special collections," subtab for "Vietnam Histories." (The page and footnote number in that history are given at the end of each citation). The source for three of these documents has been sanitized out of the online version of this history, but you can find it easily enough by looking at the classified version. Or you might want to go directly to the collection of McCone memoranda noted for item 10 below, and you'll probably find them in that box.

1. John A. McCone, Memorandum for the Record. "Discussion-Secretary Rusk's conference room-Tuesday evening-6:00 p.m.-16 September 1963" 18 September 1963 (p. 188 n. 10) D
2. Walter Elder, "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," revised 1973 version, History Staff Job 8701032R, Box 4 (p. 188 n. 11) ND
3. Mary S. McAuliffe. "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence, 1961-1965," draft manuscript, History Staff, 1994 (p. 188 n. 11) (same source as for item 2) ND
4. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself, concerning South Viet Nam, 25 October 1963 (p. 202 n. 5) S
5. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Notes on Meeting at 4:00, Cabinet Room, re South Viet Nam," 29 October 1963 (p. 205 n. 14) D

The second batch of documents I am requesting were cited in certain footnotes in a monograph produced by CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence called *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes 1962-1968* (<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/cia-and-the-vietnam-policymakers-three-episodes-1962-1968/index.html>), posted 2007.

From first episode (no page numbers given in text, but relevant footnote is given in parentheses at the end of each citation):

D = Declassified

CF = Can't Find

S = Sanitized

ND = Not ~~Declassified~~ Declassified

6. McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the President, 10 September 1963" (n. 3) (this is probably in the same box as the document in item 10 below) •

CR

7. CIA Inspector General's report, November 1964 (TS). CIA files, Job No. 73-B-567, DCI - Inspector General, Box 2, "Surveys," document 185214 (n. 3)

CR

8. William Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "Secretary of Defense Conference on Vietnam, 8 May 1963." (S) CIA/DDP files, Job No. 78-597, DDO/ISS, Box 1, Folder 8. (n. 13)

S

9. Richard Helms, Memorandum for the Record, "Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense," 18 June 1962 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, "DCI/McCone," Folder 2 (n. 15)

S

From the second episode:

10. McCone, Memorandum for the Record of Lunch with Rusk (at McCone's home), 3 September 1963, (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 2: "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November 1963." (n. 20)

CR

11. McCone, Memorandum for the Record, 5 September 1963 (S). CIA/DCI files as above. (n. 21)

D

12. In McCone, letter to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., 19 September 1963 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B1285A, Box 8. (n. 22)

S

13. Marshall Carter 1967 memorandum, CIA/IG files, Job No 74B779, Inspector General, Box 1, "Special Studies, 1964-1972," Folder: "Chronology on Vietnam, November 1964." (n. 29)

CR

14. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with Secretary Rusk at Lunch at DCI Residence This Date," 3 September 1963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November 63." (n. 34)

S

15. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Luncheon Meeting with Mr. Reston of *The New York Times*-DCI Residence-26 September 1963." (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July-26 November '63." (n. 39)

D

16. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with the President--October 21" (S). CIA History Staff files. (n. 44)

D

17. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman at Lunch, October 30th," 31 October 1963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July-26 November '63." (n. 48)

D

Finally, I would like to see one document that has already been declassified (according to the online search engine for the CREST collection), but which has as yet not been posted in pdf format in the "Best of CREST" collection:

18. THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF NGO DINH [DIEM]

ESDN: CIA-RDP75-00001R000200410080-3

Collection: 2000 CREST Documents - General CIA Records.txt

I should note that (a) a number of these documents are records of meetings for which other records have already been declassified; and (b) that I checked both your Electronic Reading Room and the CREST search engine, and I couldn't find copies of these documents in either of those locations.

In order to help you determine what sort of fee I would have to pay, you should know that I am a professional historian, currently working as a Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Los Angeles. I was also on the CIA's Historical Review Panel for a while. I am currently working on a study of U.S. policy on Vietnam during the late Kennedy period. Since I believe disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in my commercial interest, I request a waiver of all fees for this request. If, however, you decide to charge me any fees for searching for, reviewing, or copying the records, please notify me before processing if the amount exceeds \$200.

As the FOIA requires, please release all reasonably segregable nonexempt portions of documents. If you deny all or any part of this request, please cite each specific exemption you think justifies your refusal to release the information and notify me of appeal procedures available under the law. If you have any questions about handling this request, you may telephone me at my office phone (310) 267-1904.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could possibly provide me with this material within the next three months.

Sincerely,

Marc Trachtenberg
Professor of Political Science

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

3 August 2017

Dr. Marc Trachtenberg
University of California, Los Angeles
Political Science Department
4289 Bunche Hall
Box 951472
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1472

Reference: F-2012-01096

Dear Dr. Trachtenberg:

This is a final response to your 5 April 2012 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for **the following copies of 18 documents:**

1. **John A. McCone, Memorandum for the Record. "Discussion-Secretary Rusk's conference room-Tuesday evening-6:00 p.m.-16 September 1963" 8 September 1963 (p. 188 n. 10);**
2. **Walter Elder, "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," revised 1973 version, History Staff Job 8701032R, Box 4 (p. 188 n.11);**
3. **Mary S. McAuliffe. "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence, 1961-1965," draft manuscript, History Staff, 1994 (p. 188 n. 11) (same source as for item 2);**
4. **John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself, concerning South Viet Nam, 25 October 1963" (p. 202 n. 5);**
5. **John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Notes on Meeting at 4:00, Cabinet Room, re South Viet Nam," 29 October 1963 (p. 205, n. 14);**
6. **McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the President, 10 September 1963" (n. 3) (this is probably in the same box as the document in item 10 below);**
7. **CIA Inspector General's report, November 1964 (TS). CIA files, Job No. 73-B-567, DCI - Inspector General, Box 2, "Surveys," document 185214 (n. 3);**

8. William Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "Secretary of Defense Conference on Vietnam, 8 May 1963." (S) CIA/DDP files, Job No. 78-597, DDO/ISS, Box 1, Folder 8. (n. 13);
9. Richard Helms, Memorandum for the Record, "Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense," 18 June 1962 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, "DCI/McCone," Folder 2 (n. 15);
10. McCone, Memorandum for the Record of Lunch with Rusk (at McCone's home), 3 September 1963, (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 2: "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November 1963." (n. 20);
11. McCone, Memorandum for the Record, 5 September 1963 (S). CIA/DCI files as above. (n. 21);
12. In McCone, letter to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., 19 September 1963 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B1285A, Box 8. (n. 22);
13. Marshall Carter 1967 memorandum, CIA/IG files, Job No 74B779, Inspector General, Box 1, "Special Studies, 1964-1972," Folder: "Chronology on Vietnam, November 1964." (n. 29);
14. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with Secretary Rusk at Lunch at DCI Residence This Date," 3 September 1963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November 63." (n. 34);
15. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Luncheon Meeting with Mr. Reston of *The New York Times*-DCI Residence-26 September 1963." (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November '63." (n. 39);
16. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with the President—October 21" (S). CIA History Staff files. (n. 44);
17. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with the President—October 21" (S). CIA History Staff files. (n. 44) John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman at Lunch, October 30th," 31 October 1963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July - 26 November '63." (n. 48);
18. THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF NGO DINH [DIEM]
ESDN: CIA-RDP75-00001R000200410080-3
Collection: 2000 CREST Documents - General CIA Records.txt.

We processed your request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 3141, as amended.

With regard to Items 1, 5, 11, 15, 16, and 17, we completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located the six documents, consisting of 17 pages, which we determined can be released in their entirety. Copies of the documents are enclosed at Tab A.

With regard to Items 4, 8, 9, 12, and 14, we determined that the five documents, consisting of 20 pages, can be released in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). Copies of the documents and explanation of exemptions are enclosed at Tab B.

With regard to Items 2 and 3, we determined the two documents to be currently and properly classified and must be denied in their entirety on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1), (b)(3), and (b)(5). Exemption (b)(3) pertains to information exempt from disclosure by statute. The relevant statutes are Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, as amended, and Section 102A(i)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended.

With regard to items 6, 7, 10, and 13, we did not locate any records responsive to your request. Although our searches were reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents, and it is highly unlikely that repeating those searches would change the result, you nevertheless have the legal right to appeal the finding of no records responsive to your request.

As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for these determinations. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 90 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

With regard to Item 18, we conducted a search and located the document you requested, consisting of one page. Please be advised that this document was released as part of another release program. A copy of the document is enclosed at Tab C.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison Fong', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Allison Fong
Acting Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

18 September '63

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion - Secretary Rusk's conference room -
Tuesday evening - 6:00 p.m. - 16 September 1963

ATTENDING: Secty. Rusk, Secty. McNamara, Mr. Bundy,
Gov. Harriman and McCone

1. Secretary Rusk presented a personal communication from Lodge, the intimacy of which was indicated by the fact that Lodge actually typed the letter himself. The letter extolled the capabilities of John Richardson and then went on to say that a new face was necessary to handle the change in the South Viet Nam government and therefore Lodge recommended that General Lansdale be sent out immediately. He went on to say that since General Lansdale would need a staff he would propose that Lansdale be made Chief of Station and the CAS staff report to Lansdale. This matter was left for discussion with the President on the following day.

2. There then followed a long discussion of a series of papers prepared by Hilsman which involved two courses of action, which became identified as Track I, i.e. persuasion and influencing Diem to improve his posture and the posture of his government in South Viet Nam and in world opinion; and second, the Track II, progressive actions to force Diem either to agree to modify his policies or to remove him. Track II involved four phases, each progressively stronger in the implementation of sanctions.

3. It was agreed that a choice had to be made as to whether we would go Track I or Track II. The consensus of opinion was that the paper should be reconsidered on the basis of expanding Phase One of Track II to include many of the suggestions made in Track I, and by so doing be in a position to move from Phase One to Phase Two, and so forth. No decisions were reached in the meeting. Throughout the meeting basic differences appeared between Harriman, for State, who obviously wishes to dispose of Diem and McNamara who seems to feel we'd better get along with him as the best of all alternatives from the standpoint of winning the war. DCI took no position other than to point out that the prospect of separating Nhu from Diem was indeed dim, there was no alternative on the horizon for Nhu as an advisor to Diem and director of the strategic hamlet program which he had

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handled with considerable skill, and most importantly if we were to force Diem and Nhu too far there is a pretty good prospect they might attempt to engage in a detente with Ho Chi Minh, the price of which would be the removal of U.S. influence from South Viet Nam. A memorandum dealing with this subject was circulated throughout members of the Executive Committee and their staff assistants who had been attending the larger meetings. On Tuesday (17 Sept.) at 5:30 the same group met with President Kennedy. Prior to the meeting State had produced a paper which consolidated Track I and Track II as outlined above. This paper had been rejected by Bundy who had produced a similar paper, much of which was included in the State paper from an action point of view. This paper took the form of a cable to Lodge. (Attorney General attended this meeting but did not attend Monday's meeting.)

4. There was an extended discussion of the content of the proposed cable and a number of revisions were made, the essence of which was to set forth a plan for Lodge to consider and comment upon, but not a directive for action. Also the cable was to be worded in such a way to try to suggest to Lodge that he try to approach negotiations with Diem in a spirit of attempting to reach an understanding rather than laying down the law. The impression was that Lodge is quite rigid and he was inclined to put forth an idea to Diem on a take-it-or-leave-it basis rather than to try to reason with him and influence him or negotiate with him. Decision was made to give Lodge maximum latitude in the administration of aid and other programs in South Viet Nam to enhance his prestige and to give him added leverage. DCI raised the question of continuing the relationship with Nhu, pointing out that over the years CAS had had regular meetings with Nhu at about two week intervals and one was now due. Bundy stated that Lodge did not desire such contacts so it was decided no contacts would be made with Nhu except at the direction of the Ambassador.

5. It was obvious throughout the meeting and it was very clearly indicated by the President that there were differences of opinion within the government with Harriman favoring the disposal of Nhu at all costs, McNamara, Defense Department, favoring retention of Nhu in the interests of prosecuting the war. The President pointed out this placed Lodge in an extremely difficult situation; also it was obvious there was some concern over possible impatience on the part of Lodge.

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6. It was therefore decided to send McNamara with such assistants as he needed to survey the situation and to discuss the problems of South Viet Nam with Lodge. Rusk decided to ask Alexis Johnson to remain in Bangkok and to meet with McNamara and Lodge. It was agreed that a briefing officer or perhaps Michael Forrestal should meet with Johnson in advance in Bangkok to bring him up to date as Johnson has not been a party to South Viet Nam negotiations and developments.

7. With respect to Richardson the consensus seemed to be that if Lodge had decided on a change of Chief of Station, he was entitled to make such a request and it should be honored. DCI stated he was perfectly willing to change Station Chief at any time, however he urged this not be done precipitously and that time be provided so there could be a continuity of operation in the Station. This matter was left up to further discussion between Lodge and DCI. With respect to Lansdale's introduction into the picture, Bundy expressed CIA's unalterable opposition and the meeting recognized Lodge's suggestion^{as} impractical. Furthermore DCI made the point that Lansdale was unacceptable to CIA because of past experience with him; that his introduction would only be useful if an understanding between Lodge and Diem was being sought and Lansdale could be used as a friend in court to Diem; that if the policy was to unseat the Diem government, then Lansdale's presence in South Viet Nam would be detrimental rather than a help and finally that any actions taken with respect to the station should not be precipitous. This was left for discussion between McNamara and Lodge and Johnson. There was no suggestion a CIA representative accompany McNamara, however it is my intention to discuss this privately with McNamara and possibly have Colby go out to South Viet Nam with McNamara. Substance of my comments on the Lansdale assignment were consistent with the attached memorandum of 17 September on this subject.

8. The President asked that I call on General Eisenhower at the earliest moment and bring him up to date on the developments in South Viet Nam. This is arranged for Thursday morning, 19 September.

JAM/mfb

~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

~~SECRET-PRZS ONLY~~*exp. 1.3**175**31*

25 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself concerning South Viet Nam

1. The President stated the purpose of the meeting was to consider (1) recent actions in South Viet Nam with respect to coup planning and qualifications of the individuals reporting, and (2) our policy in South Viet Nam as he wished to be assured there was unanimity within the government prior to the return of Ambassador Lodge.

2. With respect to the first item I stated that I felt we were handling a very delicate situation in a non-professional manner and that the reports indicated it in such statements as paragraph 3 of SAIG 1956.

"Gen. Don stated that Gen. Harkins had reiterated the fact that he had misunderstood a presidential directive, that Ambassador Lodge was aware of and controlling Conein's contacts with Don, and that Conein was the proper person with whom to speak."

This placed us in a position that if General Don was being "managed" by Diem and Nhu there was absolutely no plausible denial of U. S. officials participating in coup plotting at the levels of the President, General Harkins and Ambassador Lodge.

Secretary McNamara supported this position and went much further, stating that Conein's wires were inaccurate, not checked or verified as evidenced by General Harkins' denials of statements attributed to him. Furthermore, the whole coup business was being handled in an amateurish way by inexperienced people from Lodge on down.

I stated that we were dissatisfied and pointed out that this morning's cable (Lodge to Bundy) stated that "CAS has been punctilious

Met. with Pres. 25 Oct. 63

~~SECRET-PRZS ONLY~~

COPY

~~SECRET-YES ONLY~~

in carrying out my instructions. I have personally approved each meeting between General Don and Conein who has carried out my orders in each instance explicitly." On this basis CIA has no control over this situation and therefore could assume little responsibility.

After an extended exchange in which all expressed concern over the existing situation, the President asked that CIA come up with (a) a plan for installation of a chief of station and reorganization of the station, and (b) plan for further conduct of monitoring coup plotting in a way that would be non-attributable and therefore deniable. These plans should be available prior to Ambassador Lodge's return.

3. The President then said that he felt that I was not in agreement with policy and asked my views on the course of action we are pursuing. I stated as follows:

a. I was dissatisfied with the present actions of the Ambassador, General Harkins and the Station because if General Don was being "managed" by Nhu then we would be seriously embarrassed.

b. There is a possibility, however, that General Don has a coup in the making and will pull it off.

c. If so we in CIA felt we could expect an interregnum and a period of political confusion because CIA does not feel that the Generals involved in the coup plotting are capable of providing immediate, dynamic leadership to the country.

d. We forecast that this political confusion would then end up, quite possibly, in another coup at some undetermined future time and after that some form of political order would probably evolve.

However, I pointed out that the effect of all this on the war effort was difficult to determine, and indeed it was possible that the war might be lost during the interregnum and period of political confusion.

e. I said that in CIA's opinion there were civilians fully capable of running South Viet Nam, however, it is not clear to us how these men, some of whom are in South Viet Nam and others outside of the country in exile or on political assignments could be injected into the government and exercise effective control.

COPY

~~SECRET-EYES ONLY~~

f. I then said that in examining the Diem-Nhu actions in the last 60 days it is to be noted that they have taken constructive military moves as recommended by McNamara and Taylor; have taken a few relatively unimportant political steps; but have apparently "dug in" on the really important political issues. These however have not so much as been discussed with them because of the policy of "correct, cool attitude."

g. At this point I noted that the policy of "correct coolness" had foreclosed either overt or covert contact with Diem and Nhu and hence had shut off all intelligence concerning their thinking and plans. Although some contacts at the lower level [redacted] had continued, they were non-productive. Furthermore, we observed Diem and Nhu had instituted their own policy of "correct, cool attitude" and apparently had warned many of their subordinates, both civilian and military, to be extremely careful in their contacts with the American mission.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

4. I stated that we were at a crossroads. We either have to work with Diem and Nhu or we have to take aggressive steps to remove them and it was not clear that the succeeding government would be much better. However, it was clear that the resulting political confusion would be damaging.

I then said that I felt we should work with Diem and Nhu as the most desirable alternative. We should keep in contact with them and this differed from present policy. We should exercise persuasion, influence and pressure to get them to institute some political reforms. This, I felt, was in the best interest of winning the war.

I said that there was some hope that Lodge might get started on this course during this coming weekend when he would be with Diem. I didn't think he should sit stony faced waiting for Diem to talk to him but rather he should talk to Diem and get the issues out on the table and recommended he be so instructed.

5. The President ordered Bundy to cable Lodge expressing our concern over the situation described above and also urging free and open talks with Diem over the coming weekend.

6. The President also asked that (1) CIA develop a plan as outlined above promptly and (2) arrange for Dave Smith to return with Lodge.

JAM:mcm

SECRET - 3-25-67



~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~~~TOP SECRET~~

29 October 1963

Notes on Meeting - about 3:30 on 29 October - Situation Room:

In Attendance: Secretary McNamara, Gen. Taylor, McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, Mr. McCone, Mr. Helms, Mr. Colby

1. Draft cable -- keep Lodge in place until Saturday.
2. Taylor expressed view that coup, if either successful or unsuccessful, would have disastrous results.
3. McGeorge Bundy insisted we cannot reconsider our position with respect to support of a coup but can merely ask Embassy for further assessment.

McCone raised question of why not reconsider our support position, stating it was extremely disturbing to him, that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs had responsibility for military operations, and for military advice to the President; expressed dissatisfaction that it can not be reconsidered.

It was decided to send out a cable and get an appraisal of the prospects of the success of the coup.

Notes on Meeting at 4:00 - Cabinet Room - re South Viet Nam

In Attendance: The President, The Vice President, Secretary Rusk, Secretary McNamara, Attorney General, Gen. Taylor, McGeorge Bundy, Gen. Krulak, Gov. Harriman, William Bundy, Mr. Forrestal, Alexis Johnson, Mendenhall, McCone, Helms, Colby

Colby briefed on the attitude of the forces, using charts indicating the disposition of forces, stating that about an equal number of key units were in support of the coup as were in support of the Government, and units totalling about 18,000 personnel were neutral. Colby also briefed on the two coup groups, the Generals and the Can Lao group, and indicated very modest interchange between the two.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

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The President raised the question of the 1960 coup attempt. Colby stated that our principal effort was to get the two sides negotiating and to stop the fighting. The President expressed concern over prospect of protracted fighting - thought we should have an evaluation from the Embassy.

Rusk spoke, stated we must assume that Diem and Nhu are informed about the talks. Diem's talk with Lodge indicates Diem was informed about coup talks. Rusk questioned whether we should be silent and permit a coup to go forward and involve civil war. We should raise the question with the coup leaders as to whether the coup could be carried off without civil war. Lodge should pass this word on to Don; should indicate we are not now convinced of the outcome, therefore should demand their plans before indicating support. The President indicated Lodge should stay on his schedule, that if his departure was delayed and a coup would take place, it would be apparent that we were informed. After discussion it was decided that Lodge could leave on Saturday on military aircraft and this was agreed to. Agreed that a cable be sent to Lodge and Harkins asking for a detailed assessment of all questions relating to the coup and also outlining command arrangements after Lodge's departure.

The Attorney General took a very positive position, questioning the communication that was proposed and indicating grave doubts of the wisdom of our proceeding with a program which seemed to spell defeat because of failure of a coup or political confusion following a coup, if successful. He thought the consequences of failure in ~~South~~ South Vietnam would be the loss of Southeast Asia to the communists. NOTE: He in effect was repeating my statement to him at lunch last week. General Taylor repeated his views which were to the effect that a successful coup was no guarantee of success.

I repeated what I had said on 25 October at my meeting with the President, McNamara, Bundy, AG, and Taylor. A coup if attempted might result in some form of civil war in which the Viet Cong would win by sitting on the sidelines or, if successful, would result in an extended period of political confusion during which time the war might be adversely affected and possibly lost and furthermore a period of political unrest would probably result in a second or perhaps a third coup.

JAM/mfb

(Helms or Colby to prepare full notes of the above meetings)

~~SECRET~~

COPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

MCN - MCC - Taylor - Bundy - W Bundy
Helen Cable

- 1) Cable - Keep body on plane
- 2) Taylor - Result of camp
- 3) Bundy - Cannot remember
- 4) McCane - Why wait -
- 5) send out cable to get
approval

COPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Pres VP MEN - T. E. Can. K. L. L. - WTB -
 T. E. L. - M. C. B. - R. L. H. - A. G. -
 A. L. Johnson - M. L. L. - M. C. C.
 Helms - C. L. L.

C. L. L. - Briefing of attitude of
 forces - Some conclusions as
 Helms - Key assets abroad L. L. L. -
 2 Camp groups - General and C. L. L. -
 Question re 1960 Camp attempt

R. L. L. - Assume Don M. L. L. informed
 after talks - Judge L. L. L. indicates
 Don is known - Should we be
 silent - Should we raise
 question of Civil War -
 Not concerned of outcome -
 Judge should pass this word to Don

R. L. L. - Judge L. L. L. can schedule
 Will delay departure - Harbison
 in charge -

COPY

~~SECRET~~

29 October 1963

MEMORANDUM

1. Diem-Lodge discussions produced no movement in the direction of political action to satisfy our wishes. Also Diem insinuations indicate his knowledge of U.S. officials familiar with coup planning.
2. Knowledge of Generals' coup planning by at least two civilians outside of government would indicate sufficient talking in Saigon so that at least some of the plans ~~are~~ are known to Diem and Nhu.
3. The security measures are an improvement.
4. Analysis of SVN forces in Saigon area indicate three groups; neutral, pro-government, which is probably the largest and pro-coup which is smaller but still a larger force than in August.
5. Discussion ~~of~~ ~~assesse~~ of prospects of a coup. Quite probable that action will be postponed from time to time for favorable developments. On the other hand a coup attempt could be made momentarily.
6. If successful political difficulties will follow and confusion will exist for a protracted period.

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~~SECRET~~

8 MAY 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

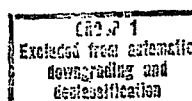
VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Secretary of Defense Conference on Vietnam,
Honolulu - 6 May 1963

SUMMARY

The conference reviewed the current situation in Vietnam and projected likely future developments. It was noted that most of the build-up of American assistance had been completed and that a number of indicators point toward a turning of the tide against the Viet-Cong. General Harkins expressed the belief that the military phase of the insurgency would have its back broken within another year. Ambassador Nolting commented on the increased xenophobia of the GVN and its effort to reduce the political impact of American advisors. However, he believed that there is no major crisis at hand and these temporary problems can be solved with tact and patience. The strategic hamlet program is proceeding with great effectiveness. The Secretary of Defense directed that planning be initiated so that Americans can be withdrawn from direct fighting roles as soon as Vietnamese can be trained, and to reduce GVN forces as soon as the insurgency declines, in order to avoid the economic burden of large forces which would require continuing large scale U.S. aid. North Vietnam operations were discussed and to some extent disputed between Admiral Felt and General Wheeler, but the matter was left that the Army's plan would be further staffed through the JCS before a decision was sought on it and that in the meantime CIA operations should continue and expand as much as possible.

1. General Harkins presented a detailed run down of the extensive steps which had been taken by the U.S. to strengthen the GVN and its forces. A review of the indicators such as incident rates, VC defectors, etc., all show a considerable strengthening of the GVN. The strategic hamlet and provincial pacification programs are proceeding in an excellent manner, except for some weaknesses in IV Corps. The Lao/Cambodia border was viewed as a continuing problem which would have to be met by both regular and paramilitary forces. General Harkins' conclusion was that it is

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essential to keep the pressure on and not relax with these first indications of success. If this is done, he indicated that clear indications of victory would appear in about a year.

2. Ambassador Nolting commented that in recent weeks there is less of an atmosphere of trust and confidence between the GVN and the U.S., although the situation is by no means critical. It is clear that GVN confidence in victory has been increased and that it is aware of the benefits brought by American advisors and assistance. It has, however, become somewhat restive under the U.S. advisory efforts for the following reasons:

a. Vietnamese sensitive nationalism, long a characteristic of the people.

b. A reaction to be independent of what they envision the uncertainties of U.S. policy. In this regard the Mansfield report with its implied suggestion of American withdrawal from Southeast Asia caused considerable impact. The U.S. position in Laos has also contributed to this belief that U.S. policy is uncertain.

c. The massive impact of the U.S. advisory effort at all levels has sharply concerned the GVN.

Despite these problems, Ambassador Nolting believes that the GVN will continue the present programs provided we display tact and patience. The problem is chiefly at the provincial level where many American advisors surround the normal province chief, and their own effectiveness frequently dominates his decisions. The criticism is addressed at both civilian and military advisors, but does not apply to military advisors with military units. In the civilian sector some elements in the Rural Affairs Division of USOM believe that a recent agreement to accept an advisory rather than a controlling role in the dispensing of the counterinsurgency fund (which is GVN owned) will cause the program to fail since U.S. influence will be reduced. Ambassador Nolting and the Embassy believe that the program will continue (as it already has in great part without U.S. control) although it is true that the U.S. influence may be somewhat reduced. The Secretary of Defense accepted the Ambassador's judgment and commented that in no country in the world do Americans control the disbursement of indigenous funds. Ambassador Nolting commented that political institutions are

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developing to some degree (hamlet elections, National Economic Council, Foreign investment law, etc.) and that Ngo Dinh Nhu has clearly become a more powerful political figure in the country. Ambassador Nolting said he continues to press the Government to bring non-Communist political prisoners to rapid trial and increase representation in the cabinet by the opposition groups.

3. A briefing on socio-economic progress was given by Mr. Brent, Director of USAID, Saigon. He recounted the excellent work of the Rural Affairs Division in provincial level activities, primarily in support of the strategic hamlet programs. Mr. Brent pointed out the critical problems which will arise in the future as a result of the projected five billion piastre annual deficit (8% of GNP), which can only produce inflation. On the other hand, direct U.S. support of the piastre would be prohibitively expensive, would also have an inflationary effect, since there are not enough commodities or production within the country to absorb this quantity of piastres, and would be rejected by the U.S. Congress. The only solution thus would be to cut back the armed forces in FY 1966 in order to reduce the deficit. Another way to avoid such a deficit would be GVN reluctance to support counterinsurgency projects to the degree we believe necessary to make the program a success in the socio-economic field. There was some debate between Ambassador Nolting and Mr. Janow, Assistant Administrator of AID for FR, over whether an emergency fund might be made available to the Embassy to provide direct piastre support in case inflation threatened. Mr. Janow reiterated the obstacles to such an operation; Ambassador Nolting pointed out that the GVN is spending at a rate which has reduced its dollar reserve far below the level the U.S. had accepted as appropriate in the Staley-Thuc Report in mid 1961. The Secretary of Defense requested the Ambassador to advise Washington if the GVN should begin to cut back its counterinsurgency expenditures.

4. With respect to forces, MACV presented projections which essentially left regular forces at the current levels for five years, reduced somewhat paramilitary forces in FY 1966 and eliminated irregular forces at the end of the insurgency. The Secretary indicated that the total force level contemplated was far too high for a country of 13 million to maintain over an extended period and emphasized the necessity to bring down the forces in order to avoid a continuing economic drain such as Korea has required of the U.S. He stated as a goal that the MAP program be reduced from its current projected 133 million (which MACV says only satisfies current expenditures and to which it has added a request for 80 odd million

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for capital investment and force improvement) to approximately 50 million for FY 65 on the assumption that the insurgency is brought under control. The Secretary also emphasized throughout the meeting the desirability of removing U.S. personnel from combat positions e.g., helicopter pilots, air strike pilots, etc., training Vietnamese to replace them and if necessary leaving the equipment in Vietnamese hands. He insisted that this matter be studied for implementation as soon as feasible without hurting the counterinsurgency effort. In this discussion the methods of control of air attacks and air strikes were reviewed in detail and it was decided that these strikes should continue with the controls currently in force. The Secretary insisted also that a plan be produced to reduce U.S. forces by 1000 this coming December.

5. The problem of relations between the GVN and the U.S. press were reviewed. This continuing problem will be worked on in the field and in Washington, primarily by trying to give the U.S. press better access to the news stories in the area.

6. In a restricted session operations into North Vietnam were discussed. This began with a briefing by a CINCPAC officer of CPLAN 33-62 for the overt employment of U.S. forces against North Vietnam. In this plan an extensive target review has been conducted and plans have been worked out by PACFLT, PACAF and ARFAC. During this discussion reference was made to a list of about six targets that the Secretary of Defense had apparently relayed to the President. These had been put together by JCS and were primarily concerned with air strikes for possible application in connection with the recent difficulties in Laos.

7. The CINCPAC officer then gave a briefing on the Department of Army study of possible operations in North Vietnam, inspired by General Wheeler's report. The CINCPAC officer pointed out that the operational concept required covert rather than overt operations. CINCPAC comments were that the operations were approximately the same that were currently being conducted by CIA. He also pointed out that the plan included the use of combat air and that only minor targets were contemplated, so that there was some question whether the plan would effectively deter the DRV. In summary he urged that CIA be given a chance to apply its

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plan and its new assets before involving the U. S. military in the covert business. General Wheeler took exception to this presentation of the Department of Army study. He commented that it was necessary to take the strategic offensive against Ho Chi Minh rather than remain on the defensive. He stated he had talked to Mr. McCone and Governor Harriman and both agreed with the objective and with the desirability of examining the problem to determine the feasibility of a program. In this examination he stated it had been determined that an overt program would not be feasible. He stated CIA resources were limited and that policy limitations have reduced their potential. He thus believed it essential to conduct "military operations under the guise of non-attribution", designed not to break the NVN will but to place pressure upon it. The plan contemplated that CIA expand its "unilateral operations" but that MACV be encouraged to utilize GVN assets in this covert program in the same way it currently utilizes GVN assets overtly in South Vietnam. He also commented that a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force would be established to coordinate military and CIA operations. He stated that the matter was merely a study and presentation to the Special Group and President Kennedy naturally depended upon CINCPAC's comments and whether Ambassador Nolting believed he could get President Diem's approval. The Secretary commented that the JCS has not yet accepted the study and that it should be staffed through JCS for further review and consideration. Admiral Felt then expressed his disagreement with General Wheeler's position and again emphasized that CIA has the capability, that MACV should not be engaged in covert operations in North Vietnam and that CIA should be allowed to continue in its present activity.

8. Mr. Richardson then presented a review of the Saigon Station program.

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Mr. Colby indicated that the matter would be further considered in Washington and that we would keep him advised of any needs. Comment:

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It is believed that we do not need any further Department of Defense assistance than that presently scheduled and that the limits on our capabilities in 1963 are primarily Vietnamese rather than American. This matter will be reviewed, however, and a memorandum prepared summarizing the situation for the Director possibly to use in contacts with the Secretary of Defense.

/s/ William E. Colby
William E. Colby
Chief, Far East Division

cc: DDCH

Distribution:

Original and 1 - Addressee

- 1 - DDCH
- 2 - DDP
- 1 - ADDP
- 1 - CFE
- 1 - [redacted]
- 1 - FE/VNC

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DOP-2-2837

Executive Registry

E-62-4192

18 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense

1. At 11:30, 18 June, the Director met with Secretary McNamara and Deputy Secretary Gilpatric to report on his trip to Southeast Asia. The meeting lasted until 12:40. The Deputy Director (Plans) also was present.

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3. After considerable discussion of Chiang's plan for a return to the Mainland, it became clear that there was some misunderstanding on the part of Messrs. McNamara and Gilpatric as to whether the United States had decided to withhold logistic support from any military effort which Chiang was planning to make. It also became clear that there was no consensus in the United States Government on what it conceives Chiang's role to be: a) whether it is solely to protect

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Taiwan, or b) whether it is to attempt the liberation of China from the Communists at an appropriate time.

4. The Director advocated the equipping of five C-123 aircraft and the positioning of amphibious gear for use by the ChiNats with the understanding that it would all remain in United States hands pending a policy decision about its use. Secretary McNamara did not seem to feel that amphibious equipment should be stockpiled [REDACTED]

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5. The Director then discussed the places he had visited in South Viet-Nam [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Director concluded this part of the meeting by saying that although he did not want to depreciate the efforts being made in South Viet-Nam, he was not optimistic about the success of the whole United States program.

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6. [REDACTED] the

Director explained the training of Border Police and Royal Thai Army units by United States forces in Northeast Thailand. He underlined his belief that United States Military Forces in Thailand should have training as their basic mission, and touched on the problem the United States may have in maintaining them there if pressure is applied by the Communists for their withdrawal in the context of the Laotian settlement.

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[REDACTED]

He stated that he feared Thailand would move toward neutralism and seek accommodation with the Communist camp if the United States position in the area showed additional signs of weakness.

7. The Director concluded the meeting by saying that he thought United States programs in Southeast Asia were essentially holding actions which would buy time. He said he did not think that they would succeed over the long run, pointing out that we were merely chipping away at the toe of a glacier from the North. He read the "General Conclusions" from the paper prepared at the end of our trip. Secretary McNamara commented that he did not feel it had yet been proved that United States actions were not capable of rolling back

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the Communist push. It was agreed that the United States should continue to support programs and projects which would buy time.

ju
Richard Helms
Deputy Director (Plans)

Distribution:

Original & 3cc - DCI
2 - DDP

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~~EYES ONLY~~

5 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Secretary McNamara and Secretary
Gilpatric on 4 September 1963

1. Read and approved the Bross letter. Gilpatric spoke most enthusiastically of Bross.

2. McNamara formally requested that we arrange for U-2 aerial surveillance of the India-ChiCom border utilizing Takhli.

3. Commented that the NRO budget had not been settled and that demand for increase in the '64 budget was in their hands. I asked that no action be taken on this budget until I had reviewed it.

4. Suggested that membership in USIB be reduced a little later this year.

5. Reviewed their position on South Viet Nam which was to the effect that the President had been poorly advised, that the actions taken last week were incorrect, that we must win the war and that they saw no alternative to winning it ~~without~~ with the Diem Government.
ADD:

6. Expressed great concern over the Dunlop case and ordered a review of the military personnel security procedures.

ADD: Both McNamara and Gilpatric said they felt that throughout last week the content and tone of the cables sent from State to the Embassy in South Viet Nam did not reflect the intention and desire of the President as expressed in the meetings from day to day. Furthermore it was obvious to them that State were deliberately leaking the Government's position to the newspapers, particularly the New York Times.

JA M/mfb

~~SECRET~~~~EYES ONLY~~

cc - Mr. Gilpatric

~~SECRET-EYES ONLY~~

19 September 1963

The Honorable Henry Cabot Lodge
The Ambassador of the United States
Saigon, South Viet Nam

Dear Cabot:

I am taking this means of communicating with you in the interests of privacy knowing that the use of the CIA channel, restrictive as it is, would mean that a few people on both ends would have access to my message to you.

I was told by Dean Rusk that you had proposed that General Lansdale come out to assist you and, in order to provide needed staff for contemplated operations, to replace Richardson as Chief of Station. Rusk explained that you spoke most highly of Richardson and therefore I assume that your suggestion was not because of dissatisfaction with John but more because you felt his relationships with the regime, and most particularly with Nhu, made it difficult for him to direct the organization in accordance with your wishes which I assume to mean you feel a "change" in South Viet Nam government a must.

First, Cabot, I wish to emphasize that the Agency will reorient the Saigon station in any practical way to meet your desires. Personnel, including the Station Chief, can be replaced; the station can be expanded or contracted and particular operations can be accelerated or stopped altogether. However, our Chiefs of Station must work in greatest intimacy with, and for that matter be directed by, a very large and experienced staff under Mr. Helms, who are experienced in, and understand the techniques of, directing field operations in such activities as positive intelligence, counterintelligence, covert political action, paramilitary training and operations, etc. To have a Station Chief in as an important a station as Saigon who is unacceptable to this organization would be unmanageable. Unfortunately General Lansdale would not be acceptable to the organization or to me personally. I will not go into details as to why this is true but some time when we are together I can tell you. Suffice it to say at this time that General Lansdale's use in the manner you propose in your letter would create insurmountable problems and therefore I must advise against it.

~~SECRET-EYES ONLY~~

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~~SECRET - EYES ONLY~~

I want to be abundantly clear however on Richardson. Despite Dean's statement that you hold John in high regard, I have reason to believe a problem might exist out there. My reason is that I have received the following report from a source that I consider responsible and absolutely dependable and I quote " - - Mike Dunn, Special Assistant to Ambassador Lodge, had told Mr. Conein of our station that Ambassador Lodge was going to get rid of Richardson. Dunn has apparently spoken to other medium-level members of the station along the same line. In short, Dunn's conduct has been designed to give our station the impression that Mr. Richardson is a 'short-termmer.' On one occasion, Dunn asked Conein 'Do you think that Dave Smith (Richardson's deputy) can run the station for a temporary period while a new Station Chief is being sent out here?' - - -"

This kind of talk apparently is accepted as being true in both the station and within our building here. I believe this most unfortunate. God knows it is difficult enough to deal with the various agencies and interested parties in the complicated matters we are dealing with in South Viet Nam without this kind of talk. Perhaps a word to Dunn on this matter would be in order. Also a word to Richardson, if you have the confidence in him which you apparently expressed.

Although I do not resist a change of Station Chief, I would counsel against precipitous action if we intend to try to work out any kind of an arrangement with the present regime even though on a short range basis. Richardson has valuable contacts and the confidence of some individuals in the regime, particularly Nhu, as well as certain generals, and these might be lost with his departure. However if the decision is to abandon all hope of working with the regime, then Richardson probably should be replaced. I think he is pretty firm in his mind that we must work with the regime for a period of time because, in the first place, there is no apparent means of replacing them and in the second there is no leadership on the horizon to take over which would guarantee an improvement over our present situation.

In addition Richardson is a man of great experience. He has been an area chief here (which is a position of very considerable importance) and he has been Station Chief in such important places as [redacted] [redacted] However we do have a man of satisfactory experience who has served with great skill in other trying situations and whom I would propose as a replacement for Richardson if you desire John removed.

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(b)(3)

~~SECRET - EYES ONLY~~

SECRET-EYES ONLY

With respect to General Lansdale, I would counsel against sending him to Saigon unless it was for the purpose of conducting a series of friendly meetings with Diem based upon the background of Lansdale's personal relationship of many years' standing with Diem and a general recognition in Viet Nam and elsewhere that Lansdale was Diem's "maker and advocate". However final decision on this is yours and the Department's, not mine.

I am more disturbed over the situation that has developed in South Viet Nam than any recent crisis which has confronted this government. Neither I nor the Agency, nor the Intelligence Community, harbor any fixed policy position. This is not our business. We do feel it is our business, however, to analyze all available intelligence and to estimate the prospects of success of a course of action under consideration by the policy makers. We have no current intelligence nor resulting estimate in hand which would lead us to the conclusion that the present regime can be disposed of or that there exists a replacement regime which would be better. This is not however to say that a coup might not occur even before you receive this letter. Coup plotting is reported almost daily and has been for the last 18 months. However, my experience in this field tells me that coups that you hear about usually don't happen.

A sample of our experience with your problem is contained in the attached few pages of a review of our analysis of the political situation in South Viet Nam since June, 1962, which I appended to my daily report of yesterday to the Executive Committee.

On a personal note, I have just had a long visit with Ike and reviewed the Viet Nam situation in some detail. He realizes the problems as he lived for many years with Diem's intransigence and his manner of governing his people he felt would come to no good end. However he urges great care and deliberation, redognizing as we all do, the carrying off of a coup is no small task and even if successful the aftermath has its own special problems. He is distressed over the violent press and feels this in itself might make careful, objective appraisals difficult as was the case in Cuba in 1958. **

With warm personal regards, and again let me assure you of my desire to help you with your most trying and difficult task and of my friendship.

Sincerely,

/S/

COPY

John A. McCone
Director

Attachment

**Handwritten in here: Ike bleeds for you - his friend - an
over

Orig of this sealed up and handed to
Dave Smith to hand-carry out to Saigon
and give into the hands of Amb. Lodge ONLY.
2:25 - 19 Sept 63

on 9/19 Elder showed this to Mr Helms and
Mr Calby. -
9/20 - Elder showed this to Mr Cline
9/22 - dci showed to McNamara Lucy
9/23 - " " " Gen. Carter REC

COPY

Knoche saw this 10/5 when Sci
asked for it.

The ~~only~~ tissue ~~carbon~~ given
to Sci on 10/5/63
(Thermo made & given to Sci 10/5/63
3 returned 10/6 & destroyed)

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~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

3 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with Secretary Rusk at lunch at DCI residence
this date

1. Ball visit to Pakistan reviewed and Rusk agreed that it is more important to preserve our assets in Pakistan than to insist upon expansion of USA-60 as a condition precedent to continuing aid. DCI agreed and stated this understanding reached with Ball during Rusk's absence. Rusk feels Ayub is seeking new connections with friends of the United States. Present Pak Foreign Minister is in trouble and probably will be removed which would be good because he is definitely not friendly to the United States. Rusk was generally optimistic on the outcome of the Ball-Ayub discussions.

2. Regarding South Viet Nam, stating he was not really in on DepTel #243 but since the Telex was discussed with him on the telephone, he assumed responsibility. He appeared critical of Hilsman and somewhat critical of Harriman. Agreed with me that we should go slowly; that there was no apparent acceptable successor to Diem. Rusk was pleased that today's cable was toned down. Also agreed that Lodge had been taken in by State Department advisors and lower echelon officers and had probably gone too far too fast. He was most complimentary of the reporting and the judgment of Carter, Helms and Colby in the meetings of last week.

3. Rusk raised the question of Dunlop; felt this defection most serious; believes NSA security must be improved; expressed surprise that NSA did not have security procedures at least equal to CIA's. Urged that DCI give consideration to a uniform security clearance procedure for all personnel throughout the Intelligence Community. Raised the question of desirability of tighter security procedures within State, including the use of polygraph.

4. Discussed the De Gaulle problem at considerable length. Rusk ventured the opinion that De Gaulle would lose out and that the ultimate strong trio in Free World defense would be Britain, U. S. and West Germany. I questioned this because of De Gaulle's nuclear development, indicating it would be formidable within 10 years. Rusk felt that De Gaulle could offer no security to Western Europe

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SECRET-EYES ONLY

that would equal that offered by the U. S. I countered by stating that De Gaulle was not inhibited by U. S. policy or the McMahon Act and therefore might easily resolve his problem by offering special nuclear materials or weapons assistance to West Germany or other countries. Rusk felt this not a probability, however he did not fully discount the idea.

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5. With regard to the future of South Viet Nam, Rusk raised the question of a possible split between Ho Chi Minh and Peking. I was to explore the possibilities of an independent, unified Viet Nam which would be neutral but free of ChiCom influence. This apparently is a French idea and if it could be accomplished would be a very stabilizing influence on all of Southeast Asia.

NOTE: I have discussed this with Helms who is going to study prospects.

JAM/mfb

SECRET-EYES ONLY**COPY**

~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

26 September 1963

myr #116
1471
John
8.MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD -- Single copy, no distributionSUBJECT: Luncheon meeting with Mr. Reston of the New York Times -
DCI residence - 26 September 1963

1. Discussed briefly our appraisal of Halberstam's objectivity, as outlined in the attached. Reston realizes there is reason for some prejudice on the part of Halberstam; stated that Halberstam and Sheehan were obviously the best-established permanent correspondents and therefore naturally the leaders in Saigon press corps. Furthermore, he did not think his reporting was as slanted as some claim.

2. Discussed in some detail the attacks on CIA as evidenced by the Ted Lewis article of September 19th and the Max Freedman article of September 23rd, and others. Reston felt the attacks were obviously planted; was of the opinion they came from State, probably a great deal of it from Harriman who is both emotional and talkative, but did not feel there was much we could do about it; nor did he feel any particular damage was done. He made the point that the American public generally are against any kind of secrecy; that they look upon CIA as an organization of intrigue and that the Washington press corps feel the Kennedy administration operates on the basis of prejudices and special interests rather than principles, and this lays them open to suspicion of intrigue, hence CIA is an obvious victim. All in all Reston felt the situation not as bad as it has been in the past and I shouldn't worry too much about it.

3. He said that stories of the Freedman type had not been planted with the New York Times to his knowledge; however spokesmen for the State Department had definitely confirmed the Halberstam article that CIA supported Nhu's secret police that raided the pagodas and this was done by the Department prior to the publishing of the article. Reston was very surprised at the true facts relating to this situation.

There was a brief discussion of why the feeling has suddenly flared up. Reston recognized that certain elements in the government had moved precipitously in late August and wondered whether CIA had supported this move or been informed in advance. He recognized that our reserved position and warning to go slow might cause pain to some of those who wished to rush ahead.

There was no discussion of operational details, position of individuals, coordination or lack of coordination, etc.

Ellen showed to Mr. Williams 9/26~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

COPY

Richardson's impression is that large part, perhaps most of U.S. civil mission personnel are strongly and emotionally against Diem administration. Civilian personnel, including Richardson, who believe we can still win this war despite adverse factors, are in distinct minority. On the other hand, would be inclined to think that most U.S. military leadership in Saigon and in countryside definitely feel we can progress with war. There are, of course, exceptions among the military.

Since 8 May and especially since 21 August, there has been large increase in intensity of American emotional reaction to local scene and in tendency to reach final and sweeping conclusion now.

U.S. press representatives resident here were bitterly anti-administration. Halberstam dominates resident U.S. press community. He made up his mind quite some time ago that war could not be won with Diem, Diem had to go, and that any American who did not agree with Halberstam was either a fool or unwitting traitor to his country. Halberstam and Sheehan live together, have identity of views and emotions, and fully exchange their information and leads with each other. Impression is also that Halberstam and Sheehan attempt to indoctrinate and dominate incoming U.S. reporters. Situation is difficult enough to justify adverse reporting and am not ascribing such reporting solely to influence of one or two men. They merely constitute at least one small part of problem.

In some ways we seem to have reached point in official American community that, if you think we can win with present government, you are simply not running in right direction with the majority. There is continual leakage from official sources to press, especially to Halberstam and to Sheehan. Realize pressures may be so strong in U.S. and abroad that time for decision making might be limited. However, if this is not compellingly the case, continue to suggest that we attempt obtain time for further development of situation here and for more deliberate process of analysis and formulation of action recommendations.



~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

4. With reference to a press representative, Reston thought it was better to have someone who is fully familiar with the Agency and who either had, or could inspire, the confidence of the Washington press corps rather than bring in a stranger from the press corps who would require years of indoctrination to really learn the agency. He spoke most favorably of Burding and volunteered his name; I did not raise it. He also spoke highly of Nils Lennartsen. He thought, however, we should search in our own house.

Attachment

JAM/mfb

~~SECRET EYES ONLY~~

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(16)

October 21, 1962

MEMORANDUM OF DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT ALONE,
OCTOBER 21, 1962. (Approx. 4:30 p.m.)

On my report of my discussion with General Eisenhower at my residence this morning, the following information was given later to the Attorney General. It is not to be given to anyone else.

After briefing by Lundahl, General Eisenhower and I engaged in a long discussion concerning the proper procedure to be followed. Eisenhower's conclusions are as follows:

1. Any military action would be inconclusive and therefore inadvisable unless it employed invasion and occupation of Cuba. Eisenhower gave this opinion on a basis of his experience in war in countless examples of air strikes which though most effective, were never completely conclusive.
2. From a military point of view a surprise attack would be most effective and most desirable if followed in a minimum time by invasion.
3. However, from a broader point of view, he opposed surprise attack because of the indictment, the resulting tensions, and the fact that such action by the United States would license other countries to resort to violent military action without notice.
4. Therefore Eisenhower would accept the handicaps from a military point of view, of warning or notice, and therefore would follow the suggested plan of initiating a blockade, conducting intense surveillance, and announcing the intention of taking military action if the Soviets and the Cubans either maintained the status quo of their missile installations or continued the construction of their missile bases. The military action he envisaged would be air strikes and invasion.

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5. General Eisenhower emphasized he was giving his opinion based solely on intelligence and without the benefit of a study of the war plans or the most recent diplomatic exchanges with Castro, Khrushchev, our allies, etc. It seemed fair to conclude that his views as expressed above represent a flash judgment rather than a considered judgment arrived at with all facets of the problem laid before him.

John A. McCone
Director

- 2 -

TOP SECRET

WE

31 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman at Lunch,
October 30th

1. We reviewed the South Vietnam situation. I stated that we had reached a point of decision. I felt that we either had to make up our minds to go along with Diem or to put our shoulder behind the coup -- that we were studying the alternatives to, and the pros and cons of both, and that I had not made a final personal judgment. However, in the last analysis it was a policy decision. On the one hand the Diem regime's strength had eroded away. On the other hand there was great uncertainty concerning the type of government which would succeed in the event of a coup.

2. I brought up the question of the August 24th cable, stating it was difficult for me to understand the reason why it was sent out so precipitously, particularly in view of the fact that on August 22nd at the meeting attended by the President and a substantial number of advisers, the group were briefed on the Pagoda raids in July, etc., and that no policy judgment was reached which would indicate action taken in the August 24th cable. Harriman accepted no responsibility for the cable and asked why we did not express ourselves when it was "coordinated". I said it was not coordinated and that at 8:00 p.m. Saturday night Mr. Helms had been called and had been "informed" about the general substance of the cable which was "supported by the President, State Department and Defense Department". Our views were not requested. Harriman said he was surprised as he had been told that the cable had been coordinated with us and that we supported it. I corrected this impression.

3. We then turned to the discussion of Laos. I said that Alexis Johnson had been given a paper outlining in detail all CIA activities in Laos, which was then reviewed and approved by the Special Group 5412. In view of the criticism of CIA/Saigon activities which had come from the Embassy and the Department, I said that he, Harriman, was the architect of the situation in Laos and therefore I wished for Alexis Johnson in approving CIA/Laos activities at the 5412 Committee to do so after discussion with Harriman. Harriman

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~~SECRET-YES ONLY~~

Harriman said he knew all about our activities in Laos and approved, but there was not criticism and thought we were and had done a good job in Laos. This had been reported by both Ambassador Brown and Unger. I said that inspite of all this I wished his current review and current approval.

4. Harriman then asked what should we do in Laos. He said that Khrushchev's attitude changed between April and July and that he was worried over reports that the Soviets were assisting the North Vietnamese and hence probably Meos in Laos. He questioned whether CIA had a plan. He also raised the question of whether the U. S. should not put in a small military force. I said that it did not appear to us that the situation had reached a point where the U. S. should take precipitous action. I felt diplomatic action was indicated and I was not sure just how accurate or how extensive the Soviet military aid to North Vietnamese really was. However, it appeared to me that the Soviets might, as part of their row with the ChiComs, openly support the North Vietnamese.

5. Governor Harriman then turned to a discussion of Latin America. He said that he was going down to a meeting in Brazil and that he was seeking ideas. What did I think about Latin America? I said that the situation was very disturbing. Each country had its own separate problem and therefore no general formula could be applied. I did say, however, that we felt the intensified guerrilla and insurgency activities directed by Castro out of Cuba applied to practically all Central and South American countries. He also asked that J. C. King discuss Latin America with him.

NOTE: I transmitted this request to J. C. King. I think we should consider whether King should accompany Harriman on his mission. Also I believe it might be useful for DDP and DDI to put together some current appraisals of the current situation in each country and out of this might come some suggestions. We should avoid being drawn too deeply into policy matters.

JAM:mcm
(taped)

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