

72

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

PRIORITY
Bundy 5

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

Mandatory Review

DATE OF INFO.

Case # NLJ 96-111
Document # 72

DISTR. 1 OCTOBER 1964 1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

SUBJECT

COMMENTS: [REDACTED] INDICATING PRESENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN NGUYEN KHANH AND THE "YOUNG TURKS" AND THE URGENT NEED TO SOLVE THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY

PLACE & DATE ACQ.

VIETNAM, SAIGON [REDACTED]

REF IN 84630

SOURCE AND APPRAISAL:

FIELD REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

1. (SUMMARY. A VIETNAMESE [REDACTED] OFFICER SPOKE [REDACTED] OF THE NEED TO GET GENERAL NGUYEN KHANH MOVING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY. THE YOUNG TURKS WERE IMPATIENT WITH KHANH AND A FEW DAYS EARLIER WERE TALKING OF REMOVING KHANH, AND THE TRIUMVIRATE BY FORCE. HOWEVER, AN AMIC- ABLE CONFERENCE ON 29 SEPT AT VUNG TAU WITH KHANH AND SEVERAL OF THE "YOUNG TURKS" BROUGHT AN AGREEMENT. THE AGREEMENT INVOLVED SENDING GENERAL TRAN THIEN KHIEM ABROAD ON A GOODWILL TRIP, EVENTUAL TRIAL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE 13 SEPTEMBER ABORTIVE COUP AND RETIREMENT OF THE DALAT GENERALS FROM

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~SECRET~~

STATE/INR DIA ARMY/ACSI NAVY AIR JCS SECDEF NSA NIC AID USIA OCI ONE OCR ORR OO
SVN AD/CI 2

EXO

APPROVED FOR RELEASE 29 JUL 1997

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

~~SECRET~~
(When Filled In)

IN 84630

PAGE 2

MILITARY SERVICE. THE VUNG TAU CONFERENCE ALSO TALKED OF POLITICAL MATTERS. THE GROUP ENVISAGED KHANH RETURNING TO STRICTLY MILITARY DUTIES ON 27 OCTOBER.

AT THIS TIME DUONG VAN MINH WOULD INHERIT BY DEFAULT THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER. EVENTUALLY THE GROUP ENVISAGED A REFERENDUM FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELECTING A PRIME MINISTER, IF IN THE INTERVAL MINH HAPPENED TO PERFORM WELL HE MIGHT EVEN BE THE CHOICE.

[REDACTED] SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR THE US TO SUPPORT KHANH.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

2. NO TOP LEVEL LEADERSHIP EXISTS TODAY IN VIETNAM. POWER IS SO DIFFUSED WITHIN THE RULING TRIMVIRATE AND THERE IS SUCH PREOCCUPATION WITH PERSONAL VENDETTAS AND SLANDER CAMPAIGNS THAT NEITHER SINGLY NOR COLLECTIVELY CAN THE TRIMVIRATE RENDER DECISIONS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. NGUYEN KHANH IS THE BEST OF THE THREE, EVEN THOUGH HE IS WAVERING AND INDECISIVE. HE DESERVES MORE TIME IN WHICH TO ESTABLISH AND DISPLAY HIS GOVERNING POWER IN A DYNAMIC, CONSISTENT MANNER. SUCH A DISPLAY WOULD SATISFY THE "YOUNG TURK" MILITARY COMMANDERS, WHO ARE MOST IMPATIENT. BEFORE A MEETING WITH KHANH ON 30 SEPTEMBER, SOME OF THE YOUNG TURKS WERE CALLING FOR REMOVAL BY FORCE OF KHANH AND THE TRIUMVIRATE; A DISPLAY OF POWER ON KHANH'S PART WOULD ALSO DIMINISH AND HOPEFULLY STOP THE SLIDE OF THE COUNTRY INTO CHAOS.

3. ON 30 SEPTEMBER NGUYEN KHANH INVITED THE "YOUNG TURK" GROUP

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~
(When Filled In)

IN 84630

PAGE 3

TO VUNG TAU FOR DINNER AND A TWO HOUR DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL
THE GVN.

PROBLEMS BESETTING/. THE INVITATION WAS KHANH'S

RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR A MEETING WHICH THE

"YOUNG TURKS" HAD SENT KHANH. THE

FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT: KHANH, AIR FORCE COMMANDER NGUYEN CAO

KY, NAVY COMMANDER CHUNG TAN CANG, MARINE COMMANDER LE NGUYEN

KHANG AND AIRBORNE COMMANDER COLONEL DU QUOC DONG.

4. NO ULTIMATUMS, OR ANYTHING RESEMBLING AN ULTIMATUM, WERE
GIVEN KHANH. INSTEAD, VARIOUS VIEWS WERE EXCHANGED IN A RELAXED
AND OBJECTIVE ATMOSPHERE. AMID THIS ATMOSPHERE, KHANH MADE THE
FOLLOWING PROMISES:

A. GENERAL TRAN THIEN KHIEM WOULD BE SENT ABROAD WITHIN
48 HOURS ON A TEMPORARY MISSION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS TO CONVEY
OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) THANKS TO COUNTRIES
ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE FIGHT AGAINST THE VIET CONG.

B. THE FIVE DALAT GENERALS (TRAN VAN DON, TON THAT DINH,
LE VAN KIM, MAI HUU XUAN AND NGUYEN VAN VY) WERE TO BE REMOVED
FROM ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE AND BE ASSIGNED UNSPECIFIED OFFICIAL
CIVILIAN POSITIONS. AT KHANH'S INSISTENCE, TO PRESERVE "FACE"
FOR THE GENERALS AND CONSEQUENTLY FOR THE ARMED FORCES HIGH
COMMAND, NO IMMEDIATE ACTION ON THIS ISSUE WAS TO BE TAKEN AND
THE EFFORT WAS TO BE SPACED GRADUALLY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

C. A TRIAL OF THOSE MILITARY OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

(When Filled In)

IN 84630

PAGE 4

ABORTIVE 13 SEPTEMBER COUP EFFORT MUST BE ARRANGED.

5. BY THE END OF THE MEETING, KHANH APPEARED TO BE MUCH MORE RELAXED AND CONFIDENT THAN HE HAS BEEN IN RECENT WEEKS.

6. ALSO DISCUSSED AT VUNG TAU WAS A PLAN TO RETURN KHANH TO THE STRICTLY MILITARY ARENA AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES ON 27 OCTOBER, THE END OF THE 60 DAY PERIOD SET FOR THE TRIUMVIRATE RULE. UNDER THIS PLAN GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH WOULD BY THAT TIME BE MANEUVERED INTO THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER. THIS WOULD FORCE MINH TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNING THE COUNTRY, A RESPONSIBILITY HE HAS SO SKILLFULLY AVOIDED AS A MEMBER OF THE TRIUMVIRATE. THUS MINH WOULD BE FORCED TO DO AN EFFECTIVE JOB, ONE WHICH WOULD PLEASE EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY AND THE YOUNG TURKS, OR MINH WOULD BE PLACED CLEARLY IN THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AS AN INCOMPETENT WHO NO LONGER DESERVED BEING THE PUBLIC IDOL. IF THE LATTER WERE TO EVENTUATE, IT WOULD ELIMINATE ONE MORE OF THE TRIUMVIRATE AND PERMIT A CONSOLIDATION OF POWER. ANOTHER ASPECT OF THIS OVERALL PLAN IS TO HAVE EVENTUALLY A PUBLIC REFERENDUM WHEREIN THE PEOPLE WOULD SELECT A CIVILIAN LEADER.

7. WITH KHANH RETURNED TO MILITARY DUTIES, THE ARMED FORCES WOULD AGAIN BE UNITED AND REMOVED FROM DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL SCENE AS AT PRESENT. KHANH AND THE YOUNG TURK LEADERSHIP WOULD, HOWEVER, BE IN AN EXCELLENT POSITION, SINCE

~~SECRET~~

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~

(When Filled In)

IN 84630

PAGE 5

IT IS THEY WHO ARE DOING THE FIGHTING AND SHEDDING OF BLOOD FOR THEIR COUNTRY. THEY COULD EXERT INDIRECT PRESSURE ON A CIVILIAN PRIME MINISTER TO INSURE AN HONEST AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT. IN THIS FASHION THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE VIETNAMESE MILITARY FORCES CAN ONCE AGAIN BE BROUGHT TO BEAR AGAINST THE VC. THE POTENTIAL CAN, IN FACT, BE STRENGTHENED BY VIRTUE OF RENEWED MILITARY CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SUPPORT OF A POPULATION WON OVER BY A POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WHOSE PRIMARY AIM IS TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE PEOPLE.

8. THE US VIEW OF KHANH SHOULD BE TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HIM WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE HIM HE CANNOT BE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN WHILE SOLVING DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE. HE MUST MOVE MORE DECISIVELY NOT ONLY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS BUT ALSO TO CONSOLIDATE ACTUAL GOVERNING POWER IN HIS HANDS.

9. FIELD DISSEM . STATE (AMB TAYLOR AND DEPUTY AMB JOHNSON) USMACV (GEN WESTMORELAND) CINCPAC (ADM SHARP).

END OF MESSAGE

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~