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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

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SUBJECT A GENERAL OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT OF GROUPS FORMING IN THE
MILITARY WITH THE AIM OF MAKING DEMANDS ON THE GOVERNMENT

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (23 APRIL 1966) FIELD NO. [REDACTED]

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SOURCE

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1. (SUMMARY: THERE IS A LOOSE ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE MILITARY SERVICE, RATHER THAN AN ACTIVE CONSPIRACY, OF FIELD-GRADE AND JUNIOR OFFICERS ADVOCATING REFORMS. IN GENERAL, THESE OFFICERS WISH TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT REMAIN IN POWER. THEY WANT STRICT MEASURES AGAINST CORRUPTION, A MORE ACTIVE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR AGAINST THE VIET CONG, AND FIRM HANDLING OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. THEY ARE NOT IDENTIFIED WITH ANY EXISTING POLITICAL FORCE.)

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
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2. THE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY FORMED GROUPS FAVORING MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT REFORMS ARE MORE "FRIENDS TOGETHER" THAN A CONSPIRACY. THEY SHARE THE SAME GENERAL BACKGROUNDS, FACE THE SAME PROBLEMS AND FRUSTRATIONS OF LOW-AND MIDDLE-LEVEL COMMAND, AND HAVE THE SAME PERSONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THEY ARE DISSATISFIED AND UNHAPPY, EXCITABLE, AND LIKELY TO BE PRECIPITOUS IN THEIR ACTIONS. SINCE MANY OF THESE OFFICERS COMMAND COMPANIES AND BATTALIONS, THEY COULD BRING EFFECTIVE FORCE TO BEAR FOR A COUP D'ETAT IF THEY ACTED IN CONCERT. AT PRESENT THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF EMERGENCE OF LEADERSHIP OR EVIDENCE OF PLANS FOR ACTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THEY ARE NOW LACKING IN CENTRAL LEADERSHIP, SOMETHING THEY MUST DEVELOP BEFORE THEY CAN MOVE.

3. VARIOUS TALKS OF A GENERAL NATURE, AND PERHAPS SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS OF THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY, HAVE TAKEN PLACE AMONG THESE OFFICERS. GENERALLY THEY ARE IN AGREEMENT ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN CAO KY SHOULD REMAIN IN POWER.

B. CORRUPTION MUST BE DEALT WITH EXPEDITIOUSLY IN BOTH THE MILITARY AND THE GOVERNMENT. THEY CITE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN HUU CO AS A CORRUPT GENERAL AND ARE ALSO OPPOSED TO GENERALS NGUYEN VAN CHUAN AND PHAN XUAN NHUAN.

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C. ALL NATIONAL DIFFERENCES MUST BE SUBMERGED IN AN ALL-OUT EFFORT TO PROSECUTE THE WAR AGAINST THE VIET CONG. RATHER IDEALISTICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY THEY BELIEVE THAT A TRULY MILITARY AND DIRECT APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTH VIETNAM IS THE ONLY ANSWER.

D. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT MAKE COMPROMISES WHICH WEAKEN THE SOLIDARITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THEY CITE, AS AN EXAMPLE, THE "WEAK" APPROACH TO THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT AND THE FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO FORCEFULLY SUPPRESS THE OPPOSITION REPRESENTED BY THICH TRI QUANG.

4. THESE OFFICERS ARE NOT OPPOSED TO THE KY GOVERNMENT AS SUCH BUT ONLY SEEK A MORE HONEST, FORCEFUL, AND DIRECT APPROACH TO THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY. THEY DO NOT SUPPORT OR REPRESENT THE CATHOLICS, BUDDHISTS, OR ANY POLITICAL PARTY, NOR DO THEY HAVE A PLATFORM OF A GROUP IN TERMS OF JOINT PLANNING OR AGREEMENT REGARDING ACTION TO BE TAKEN. THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE COALESCING INTO A COHESIVE FORCE. BOTH COLONEL NGUYEN NGOC LOAN, CHIEF OF THE MILITARY SECURITY SERVICE AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, AND GENERAL LE NGUYEN KHANG, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE MARINE CORPS AND THE CAPITAL MILITARY REGION, PROBABLY HAVE THE "RESPECT" OF A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THESE OFFICERS, BUT NEITHER IS A LEADER OR

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REPRESENTATIVE OF THESE OFFICERS. (FIELD COMMENT: [REDACTED]
DESCRIBED COLONEL LOAN AS A "LEADER" OF ONE OF THE FACTIONS COMPOSED
OF OFFICERS SEEKING REFORM, BUT A MORE ACCURATE DESIGNATION PROBABLY
WOULD BE "SPOKESMAN".)

5. FIELD DISSEM: STATE USAID JUSPAO USARV USMACV NAVFORV
7TH AIR FORCE CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF.

REPORT CLASS ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ [REDACTED]

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