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NLK 01-204-2-2

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs  
(C)

[REDACTED] to White House

[REDACTED] 3 October 1963

1. On 2 Oct 63 Lt Colonel Conein accidentally encountered Major General Tran Van Don at Tan Son Nhut Airport. Don stated he had been attempting to make contact with Conein for sometime. Requested that Conein come to Nha Trang on night of 2 Oct for private discussion. Conein was noncommittal in his reply.

2. Col Conein's cisiting Nha Trang to take with Don was approved by Truehart.

3. Trueheart's guidance to Conein was that he neither to encourage nor discourage any coup thinking or action to elicit information only and not to commit the USG to any action whatsoever.

4. Conein met with Don in Nha Trang on night of 2 Oct for approximately one hour. No other persons were present during the meeting. Don made the following points:

a. Doung Van Mink desires to see Conein for private conversation.

b. Meeting with Minh will take place at 0800 hours, 5 October at Joint General Staff Headquarters, Saigon.

c. At that hour Conein is to present himself in uniform at Don's office. Cover topic of conversation will be possible relocation of United States Special Forces headquarters. (Comment: This is a cover topic only suggested by Gen Don. [REDACTED])

d. Conein will speak to Minh alone.

e. Gen tone that Dinh has realized he was played for a fool during his tenure as military governor of Saigon. For this reason "may join our side."

f. Gen Tran Van Kim and Gen Phan Xuan Chieu have been given staff positions under Gen Don on the JGS.

g. The generals (specific personalities not identified) have requested President Diem to accord them positions of Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Minister of Education, Minister of Civic Action and the Prefector of the Police for Saigon/Cholon. In addition, generals asked President Diem to appoint a general officer Military Governor Saigon/Cholon to insure defense of area. Generals are convinced Diem has no repeat no intention of making these appointments.

5. Conein attempted to elicit additional details from Don who refused all attempts at elicitation with statement "you must talk to Minh." Don did volunteer, however, that generals know have a plan. Don was emphatic with respect to this last statement.

6. Don also stated that two days prior to Gen Dinh's first press conference (29 Aug) Vietnamese civilian, otherwise unidentified, visited Ngo Dinh Nhu stated that Americans were contacting various Vietnamese in order to encourage a coup. Thereupon Nhu had called in Don and Don was shown list of Americans engaged in such coup plots. Don stated Conein's name was not repeat not on this list.

7. Ambassador has approved Conein's contact with Don and Minh on 5 October.

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DATE: APR 2001

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