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File

MEMORANDUM

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

10 March 1956

NLE MR Case No. 2000-162

Document No. 1

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TO : [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Please review the bracketed portions.
The remainder of the document was
previously declassified under
NLE 91-247 #6
CIA-11102

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1. The Vietnamese Government is not unduly worried at present that Bao Dai will undertake action intended to upset the present Government plans and programs in Vietnam. The Vietnamese Government specifically believes that the French Government will not attempt to persuade Bao Dai to return to Vietnam due to the changing climate of French public opinion which is attributable in part to French press attention to the Viet Minh violations of the Geneva Accords. [redacted] that Le Monde and particularly Max Clos, who was formerly considered hostile to the Diem Government, is now publicizing Viet Minh violations of the Geneva Accords. In the present circumstances, the Vietnamese Government believes it will win increasing support from the non-Communist Leftist parties in France, as all French political elements realize the French choice in Vietnam is between maintaining a friendly Government in Saigon through which the French will have some influence in Asia due to the membership of the Associated States in the French Union and the complete loss of French influence in Asia if the Viet Minh occupy all of Vietnam. Due to this interpretation of the French political scene, the Vietnamese Government will attempt in the near future to establish better contact with the French non-Communist Left in an effort to win its support.

2. Conversations between various Vietnamese Government Officials and members of Ambassador Bonnet's entourage in Saigon during the recent Bonnet visit, add weight to the above Vietnamese Government interpretations. In discussions with Vietnamese Government Officials, Cheysson, who is regarded by the Vietnamese as a Mendes-France man, stated Mendes-France believes the French can maintain prestige in Asia only if the Vietnamese Government emerges as strong and stable with friendly support of other Southeast Asia powers. In reply to a direct question regarding Mendes-France's views of the 1956 elections, Cheysson stated Mendes-France believes an international conference must be held in 1956 to arrive at political decisions concerning the future status of the Vietnamese Government. Cheysson stated that the Geneva Accord is viewed as a temporary compromise, but stressed that the initiative in future developments must rest with the Vietnamese Government. He stated that Mendes-France will support the Vietnamese Government at such an international conference, but the Vietnamese must realize the necessity of their winning support for their own position by their own actions. The extent to which the Vietnamese Government succeeds in proving itself will determine the extent to which the French Government will be able to support a firm Vietnamese Government position at any forthcoming international meeting.

3. [redacted] Cheysson's views were well received by the Vietnamese who believe that Mendes-France probably will play a key role in the French Government in the next two years. The Vietnamese Government must, at the earliest possible date, devote its full efforts to winning support from other Southeast Asia powers in addition to efforts directed to winning the support of the French non-Communist Left.

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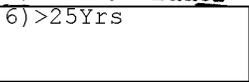
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