

EXEMPT NLK-82-37 48 5

# TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*S. Vietnam*

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS [redacted] EO 12958 3.4(b)(1) >25Yr (C)

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM REPORT NO. [redacted]

SUBJECT ANALYSIS OF THE BUDDHIST CRISIS BY GENERAL OAI DATE DISTR. 16 AUGUST 1963

PRECEDENCE ROUTINE REFERENCES IN 01075

DATE OF INFO. [redacted]  
PLACE & DATE ACQ. [redacted]  
APPRaisal SEE BELOW

FIELD REPORT NO. [redacted] EO 12958 3.4(b)(1) >2 (C)

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE [redacted] EO 12958 3.4(b)(1) >2 (C)

APPRAISAL: OAI PROBABLY HOLDS THE VIEWS CITED. [redacted] EO 12958 3.4(b)(1) >2 (C)

1. ON 12 AUGUST 1963 BRIGADIER GENERAL TRA TU OAI, CHIEF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE, ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN), SAID THAT THERE WAS NO BUDDHIST CRISIS AS SUCH IN SOUTH VIETNAM BUT RATHER A POLITICAL CRISIS WHICH HAD DEVELOPED UNDER THE GUISE OF BUDDHIST AGITATION. OAI SAID THAT THE CURRENT CRISIS HAD BEEN CAUSED BY TWO FACTORS:

A. THE COST OF LIVING AND OF BASIC COMMODITIES HAS QUADRUPLED DURING THE PAST SIX WEEKS. RICE AND SUGAR HAVE GONE UP STEEPLY IN PRICE AND FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES MILK HAD BEEN PRICED OFF THE MARKET. THE SITUATION HAD BEEN AGGRAVATED BY CHINESE MER-

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CHANTS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SHORTAGES AND IN EFFECT RIGGING THE MARKET.

[ ] COMMENT. ALTHOUGH THE PRICES OF SOME COMMODITIES HAVE INCREASED RECENTLY, THIS IS NORMAL DURING THE RAINY SEASON.

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COMPARED WITH JUNE 1962 THE COST OF LIVING INDEX IN JUNE 1963 HAS INCREASED SLIGHTLY OVER TEN PERCENT.)

B. AFTER TEN YEARS OF RULE BY THE DIEM REGIME THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ARE ANXIOUS FOR A CHANGE. THIS IS NOT A REFLECTION OF THE WORTH OF THE REGIME OR THE LACK THEREOF BUT SIMPLY A DESIRE FOR A CHANGE. THIS FACTOR HAD MADE THE POLITICAL CRISIS WORSE.

2. OAI SAID THAT A COUP D'ETAT MIGHT OCCUR BUT THAT THE GENERALS WOULD NOT BE THE LEADERS OF IT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT EXERCISE EFFECTIVE POWER IN THE ARMY. THE BATTALION COMMANDERS ARE THE OFFICERS TO WATCH BECAUSE THEY CONTROL THE TROOPS.

3. OAI PROPOSED THE FOLLOWING SOLUTION TO THE BUDDHIST/POLITICAL CRISIS:

A. DEAL WITH THE BUDDHISTS IN A MODERATE AND CONCILIATORY FASHION ALWAYS PRESERVING LAW AND ORDER BUT WITHOUT UNNECESSARY FORCE OR BRUTALITY.

B. THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE SOME ACTION WHICH WILL PRODUCE A PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK IN ORDER TO RALLY THE POPULATION BACK TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT. THE SHOCK COULD BE PRODUCED BY REMOVING

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AND PUNISHING PROVINCE CHIEFS, DISTRICT CHIEFS, AND OTHER OFFICIALS WHO OPPRESS THE PEOPLE. OAI CITED CASES OF OFFICIALS POCKETING BRIBES AND STATED THAT DISTRICT CHIEFS IN PARTICULAR WERE PRONE TO COLLECT "SPECIAL TAXES" AND THEN KEEP THE MONEY. OAI SAID MILITARY COMMANDERS WERE GUILTY OF EXAGGERATING ENEMY LOSSES IN THEIR REPORTS TO THE PRESIDENT.

4. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY NAVY AIR USMACV MAAG USOM USIS 9TH FLD. STA. 2ND AIR DIV. CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC.

END OF MESSAGE

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