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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



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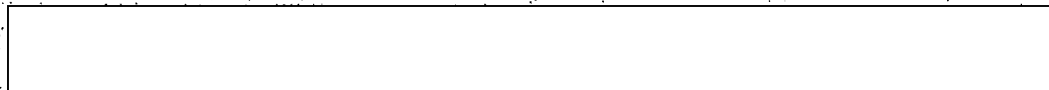
THE SITUATION IN  
SOUTH VIETNAM

(Information as of 0730 Hours)

4 Nov 63

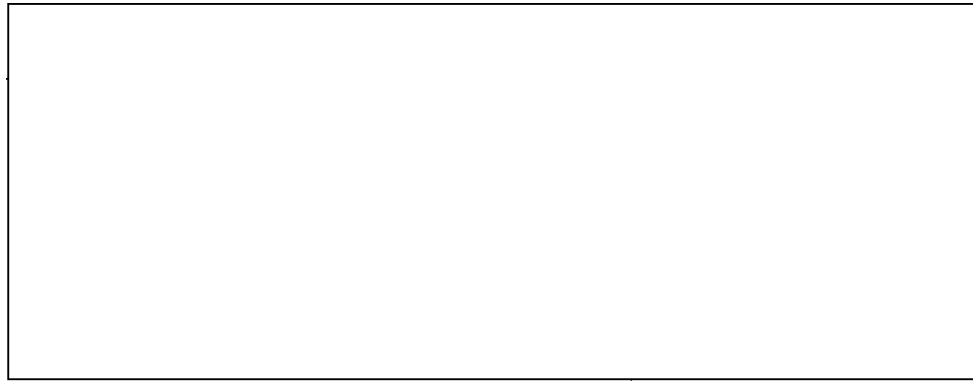
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SC. No. 11850/63

4 November 1963

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM  
(Information as of 0730 EST)

1. The Vietnamese coup leaders are encountering greater difficulties than they had expected in forming a provisional government. There is wrangling among civilian candidates, and there are signs of some dissension among the coup leaders themselves.

2. The bodies of Diem and Nhu were moved Sunday from the mortuary of the military hospital to that of the Catholic hospital in Saigon, allegedly to protect them from angry mobs, and Monday morning hospital authorities said the bodies had again been removed during the night. Press dispatches said hospital authorities had been ordered to make this announcement; there are reports that the coup leaders plan to bury the bodies secretly. Photographs are circulating in Saigon purportedly showing the bodies, with that of Diem riddled by bullets including a head wound, while the body said to be Nhu's showed evidence of a beating. Press sources said Nhu had been stabbed to death. Coup spokesmen, however, so far are sticking to the statement that Diem and Nhu committed suicide.

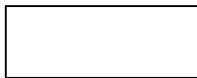
3. The generals who led the coup had envisaged a rapid turnover to an all-civilian government. They now are talking in terms of a provisional government comprising both generals and civilians, which may last longer than six months. General Le Van Kim, the political planner of the coup, ran into haggling among the civilians even before Gia Long palace fell. Cooperation between General "Big" Minh and Vice President Tho, who is to be Prime Minister, appears to be excellent. As one indication that Tho has no intention of serving as a mere front man, he is said to have rejected the appointment of General Ton That Dinh, the military governor of Saigon, as Minister of Interior. (In this, Tho will have the support of many of the generals, who consider Dinh

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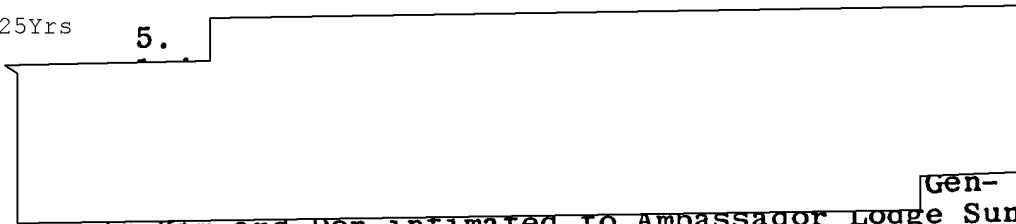
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unstable, unprincipled, and opportunistic.) Dinh, who controls most of the effective forces in the capital area and has a post-coup promotion to Major General, has been giving interviews magnifying his role in the coup, and might well attempt to seize power.

4. General Tran Tu Oai, the new director of information, has announced that civilians in the new government will be "technicians and not politicians," and that the basic policy will be "democracy within discipline," suggesting that he envisages a controlling role for the generals. The disparate groups of exiles in various world capitals are making hurried preparations to return to Saigon, where they will pose additional problems for the political reconstruction of the country.

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5.



Gen-erals Kim and Don intimated to Ambassador Lodge Sunday that the military would have to run the country for six months at a minimum but hopefully less than two years.

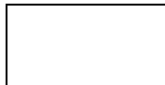
6. The coup leaders, while retaining martial law, have moved rapidly to release non-Communist political prisoners of the Diem regime, reopen schools, and reintegrate the troops which defended Diem in the final fights. Special Forces commander Colonel Tung, however, has been executed.

7. On the other hand, two civilian leaders who had not been associated with the repressions of the former regime have been arrested. They are Tran Quoc Buu, leader of the country's principal trade union, and Nguyen Phuong Thiep, an official of the National Assembly. Buu was one of the first civilians to hail the coup's success, and was celebrating with associates when his deputy brought word that some of the military coup leaders were assuming

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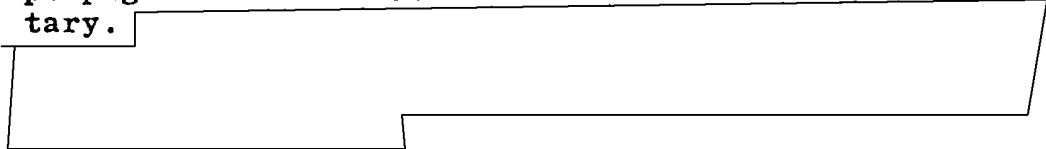
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an arrogant "we did it all ourselves" attitude. Buu, requesting an early meeting with Ambassador Lodge, noted that the Vietnamese had an unfortunate tendency to "act like kings when they get on horseback." The next report was that Buu had been arrested.

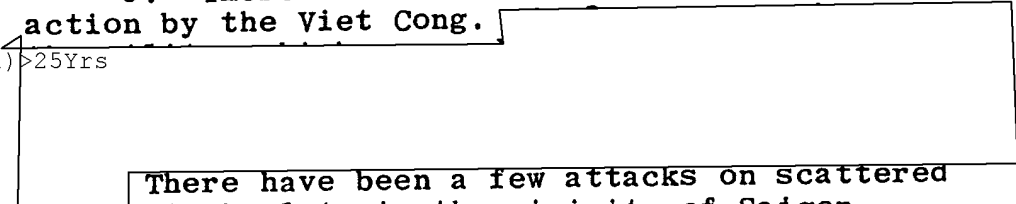
8. Buddhist leader Tri Quang has left the US Embassy where he had been in asylum. The delegation of UN observers has left Saigon. Radio broadcasts of twist music, banned by Mme. Nhu's morality laws, indicate the relaxed atmosphere. The pagodas are packed, and Buddhist flags are flying. As early as Saturday, there were flurries of Communist propaganda activity, quickly suppressed by the military.

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9. There is still no discernible military reaction by the Viet Cong.

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There have been a few attacks on scattered strategic hamlets in the vicinity of Saigon.

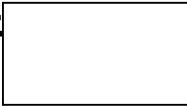
10. The situation in the northern city of Hue is unsettled and somewhat obscure. Popular resentment is rising against Diem's younger brother Ngo Dinh Can as a result of rumors that mass burial sites have been found on his property. Can, former strongman of the northern provinces, was shunted aside by Nhu in August, and now is seeking protection from the US Consulate. There are also reports, however, that Can and General Do Cao Tri, northern corps commander, might attempt a counter-coup. The public is suspicious of Tri because of his severe repression of the Buddhists.

11. Diem's brother Ngo Dinh Luyen, ambassador to London, resigned with a statement charging the death of Diem and Nhu was "murder camouflaged as suicide." Another brother, Archbishop Thuc, was on his way back to Rome from a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

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Mme. Nhu is still in Los Angeles, reportedly looking for a house. Her three youngest children are to be flown from South Vietnam, where they were in the resort city of Dalat, to Rome.

12. A roundup of world reaction to the overthrow of Diem is appended as an annex.

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