

10 March 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

On Monday, 1 March 1965, I had lunch with Marguerite Higgins at her residence. This appointment was cleared in advance with Mr. McCone who had previously seen Marguerite Higgins. When I arrived, we were joined by Mr. Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News whom I remembered from a luncheon at Headquarters attended by Mr. McCone and myself.

Mrs. Hall (Marguerite Higgins) is writing a book on Vietnam which is to be published in September 1965 by Harper & Company. She knows a great deal more about Vietnam than I ever shall, and she seems to have decided on two major villains for her piece, i. e., Ambassador Lodge and Roger Hilsman. The conversation also covered her dislike for Tri Quang, the Buddhist leader, but most of the conversation consisted of her recalling the occasions on which she had warned US Government officials getting rid of Diem and Nhu was a mistake, supporting the Buddhists was a mistake, and that the present US policy was muddled and confused and was also a mistake.

She seemed thoroughly familiar with the details of the events of July, August, and September 1963 -- including the drafting of State Department telegram No. 243 and the circumstances of its "coordination", and all the other activities in high Government circles here and in Saigon.

I made one offer to her -- which was that if she wanted anyone in the Agency to read her manuscript in any form before publication for any purpose, I would be glad to offer to serve as the go-between after checking with Mr. McCone. She said only that she thought she would ask John Richardson to read some of the manuscript.

I am still somewhat puzzled as to why she chose me to talk to but I suspect Pete Lisagor may have been the motivating force here.

W. Elder

Orig - Mr. CHRISTIAN

cc - EA/DCI