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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT

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VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR'S VIEW THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST DEMAND POLICIES CONDUCIVE TO UNITING GVN LEADERSHIP FROM PRESIDENT THIEU

SOURCE [REDACTED]

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1. [REDACTED] a discussion about the lack of cooperation within and among the newly-organized anti-communist fronts gave rise to the following remarks by the Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, Bui Diem: "Co-~~operation can never be effective at the lower levels when there is no unity at the top. He said that he was convinced that the fault lies with President Nguyen Van Thieu and that Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky wishes to work with and for President Thieu. Ky has made efforts to see Thieu, but Thieu usually puts Ky off and never expresses appreciation for Ky's efforts. Thieu apparently continues to be suspicious of Ky. Thieu's entourage exacerbates this situation by continually agitating against Ky.~~"

2. According to Bui Diem a number of Ky's supporters, particularly those in the military, have in the past urged Ky to seize initiatives and assert authority, but Ky has always refused to do this. Bui Diem warned that the day might come when these military officers could not be put off by Ky, but would move ahead on their own and "wipe out Thieu." They would not eliminate Ky, Diem remarked, because they understand his position. Diem speculated that some Major might be running things some day. He explained that he has no particular Major in mind but just wanted to make the point that an element



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of younger army officers exists which will not be content to see the country slipping down the drain because of inefficiency at the top.

3. ~~Bui Diem said that the United States should tell Thieu directly and "inside of four walls" the following:~~

A. ~~The United States supports Thieu and Ky as President and Vice President; supports them jointly; does not support Ky over Thieu; and will not support any effort by Ky to take over the government from Thieu.~~

B. ~~There are many evidences that Thieu and Ky are not cooperating efficiently and that their staffs are working at cross purposes.~~

C. ~~Thieu must put aside his suspicions of Ky. He must arrange a division of responsibilities with Ky so that both may work harmoniously and effectively towards their mutual goals. As President, Thieu must take the initiative in calling Ky, seeking his active cooperation and giving him responsibilities.~~

D. ~~Thieu must put an end to the divisive attitudes and activities of his staff. If certain officials cannot put aside their petty rivalries and cooperate effectively with other elements of the government, they must be replaced.~~

E. ~~Finally, Thieu should be reminded that history will not judge him by his goodwill but by his accomplishments. The government's successes and failures will be his successes and failures. The government can succeed only if it is united in purpose and aggressive in meeting its challenges.~~

4. ~~Bui Diem said that Thieu would not resent such strong language and would not react negatively. Thieu would not show much reaction at all initially, but would think it over that night in bed. Diem explained that this is the difference between Ky and Thieu. Ky would react emotionally, but Thieu would accept it because he would recognize that he would have to accept it. It is, however, Thieu and not Ky who needs this lecture, Diem said.~~

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5. Bui Diem reiterated that the essential first point to be made to Thieu was that the United States supports him and would not support Ky over him. With this reassurance and the knowledge that his success or failure depends entirely on American support, Thieu would accept the admonition.

6. Bui Diem said it was difficult to talk in this manner to an American because he was "100% Vietnamese" and had the pride of the Vietnamese. He had not made this recommendation, he said, to anyone else and under normal conditions would not want any American interference in Vietnamese politics. Conditions were not normal because of the war and because of American presence. If the Americans were not in Vietnam, a situation such as now exists between Thieu and Ky could not exist - at least not for long. He added that if it had been left up to the Vietnamese, there certainly would not have been presidential and parliamentary elections in wartime. "You see," he concluded, "you have power and you have responsibilities." Bui Diem emphasized that he believed that his foregoing views must reach policy levels in the United States Government

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