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SOUTH VIETNAM

SUBJECT VO VAN HAI'S VIEWS ON THE COHESIVENESS OF THE NGO FAMILY

DOI AUGUST - 16 SEPTEMBER 1963

PADA VIETNAM, SAIGON (16 SEPTEMBER 1963)

APPR IN VIEW OF HAI'S EXCELLENT ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION HIS ESTIMATE OF PRESIDENT DIEM AND HIS VIEWS OF THE NGO FAMILY ARE PROBABLY ACCURATE.

FVS 9692

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER (B); FROM VO LANG.

1. SUMMARY. BETWEEN EARLY AUGUST AND THE MIDDLE OF SEPTEMBER 1963, VO LANG, NORMALLY RESIDENT IN PARIS WHERE HE IS IN PRIVATE BUSINESS, VISITED SAIGON AND HAD EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH HIS BROTHER, VO VAN HAI, SECRETARY OF PRESIDENT DIEM'S PRIVATE CABINET. HAI TOLD LANG THAT:

A. THE NGO FAMILY IS A HIGHLY COHESIVE UNIT AND PRESIDENT DIEM IS PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS OF FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS.

B. DIEM APPROVES OF NGO DINH NHU'S ACTIVITIES; SPECIFICALLY, NHU SUGGESTED TO DIEM AND THE LATTER APPROVED THE ATTACK ON THE BUDDHIST PAGODAS ON 21 AUGUST.

C. DIEM IS NOT ISOLATED AND IS AWARE OF NGO FAMILY ACTIVITIES.

D. DIEM WILL NEVER SUCCEED TO UNITED STATES PRESSURE TO DISMISS NHU AND MADAME NHU.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L
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DEICHSTETTER / WINSBERG

GROUP 1
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SHORDEN
SVN 7,7a,7b

HAI ALSO STATED THAT NHU BELIEVES THAT SOUTH VIETNAM CAN OPERATE WITHOUT U.S. AID AND THAT THE YOUTH OF SOUTH VIETNAM SUPPORT HIM.

2. ON 16 SEPTEMBER 1963 VO LANG PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON VO VAN HAI'S VIEWS ON THE NGO FAMILY:

A. THE NGO FAMILY IS A UNIT WITH PRESIDENT DIEM STILL IN CHARGE. DIEM IS PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS OF FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS AND PROTECTS FAMILY MEMBERS FROM OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND CRITICISM. FAMILY MEMBERS DIFFER IN OUTLOOK AND MAKE DIFFERENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING A FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION. DIEM, HOWEVER, IS AWARE OF ALL THAT NGO DINH NHU, MADAME NHU, NGO DINH CAN, AND NGO DINH NHUC DO. NEITHER DIEM NOR NHU BELIEVES THAT CAN HAS MUCH ABILITY, ESPECIALLY IN TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT THEY PUBLICLY SUPPORT CAN.

B. THE RUMOR THAT DIEM IS ISOLATED AND RECEIVES NO REPORTS IS FALSE. DIEM KNOWS ABOUT AND APPROVES OF NHU'S PLANS AND ACTIVITY. NHU PROPOSED AND DIEM AGREED TO THE ATTACK ON THE BUDDHIST PAGODAS ON 21 AUGUST. THE VIETNAMESE GENERALS INVOLVED IN THE PROCLAMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MARTIAL LAW DID NOT KNOW IN ADVANCE OF THE HARSH MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AGAINST KA LOI PAGODA IN SAIGON. (SOURCE COMMENT. HAI ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD LITTLE PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE GENERALS AND WAS NOT SURE EXACTLY HOW MUCH THEY KNEW.)

C. IN HAI'S OPINION DIEM WILL NEVER SUCCUMB TO U.S. PRESSURE TO DISMISS NHU AND MADAME NHU.

D. DIEM PERSONALLY REPRIMANDED HAI FOR DARING TO CRITICIZE MADAME NHU'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS. MADAME NHU IS AWARE OF HAI'S FEELINGS AND DOES NOT CONCEAL HER DISLIKE OF HIM. NHU ALSO DISLIKES HAI BUT THEY MANAGE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE PRESIDENCY.

D. NHU BELIEVES THAT SOUTH VIETNAM CAN OPERATE WITHOUT U.S. AID FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME. NHU ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE YOUTH, PARTICULARLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, SUPPORT HIM AND THAT THE REPUBLICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT IS A STRONG WEAPON. HAI DISAGREES WITH NHU ON AID.