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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



**THE SITUATION IN
SOUTH VIETNAM**

(Information as of 0700 hours)

2 Nov 63

SANITIZED
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By *MMB* NARA, Date *6/17/94*

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2 November 1963

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM
(Information as of 0700 EST)

1. Saigon is celebrating the success of the coup, with some retaliatory outbreaks against installations close to the Diem regime. Organized resistance has ended, and there are conflicting reports of the fate of Diem and Nhu after their reported surrender at Gia Long palace just before 0700 Saigon time (1800 EST 1 November in Washington.)

2. Diem telephoned General Don at the Joint General Staff at 0620, according to a reliable source at JGS, and offered to surrender "with honor." General "Big" Minh accepted, and was trying to arrange a ceasefire. Coup forces were even then reported to have entered Gia Long. Half an hour later, according to the source, Diem again called Don to surrender "unconditionally," and added that he had given the ceasefire order.

3. The coup generals had planned to bring Diem and Nhu to JGS headquarters and offer to fly them to the country of their choice. Saigon Radio announced at 1045, however, that Diem and Nhu had committed suicide while being taken to JGS. One source reported Vietnamese photographers had taken pictures of the bodies at JGS headquarters. Other rumors contend that they have escaped and are in hiding.

4. We have still detected no reaction--other than propaganda--from the Communists. Hanoi has labeled the coup a US move to substitute "one puppet for another."

5. The General's Council has announced a six-point program for the new regime: to fight the Communists, permit free function of political parties, release all non-Communist political prisoners, grant freedom of religion, permit a free press, and resume diplomatic relations with neighboring countries (i.e., Cambodia.) For the time being, however, martial law continues with censorship and curfews.

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6. It still appears that the generals will not be able to create an all-civilian government as rapidly as they had hoped. Vice President Tho is to head a new cabinet as Prime Minister, but at least four of the key posts will be filled by military officers. Pledges of support are coming in from Vietnamese organizations, including the Republican Youth, a mass organization which was one of Nhu's vehicles. One of the principal labor leaders visited an American friend in jubilant mood.

7. A roundup is under way seeking some police officers and other officials of the former regime still at large. Early Saturday morning small arms fire was still heard occasionally, but some of this could be ammunition exploding in fires at the palace.

8. Troops are in only loose control over the celebrating population of Saigon. The headquarters of Madame Nhu's Women's Solidarity Movement and homes of several former government members have been burned. The police station at the central market and the offices of two pro-Diem newspapers, including the Times of Vietnam, have been sacked. The statue of the Trung Sisters, Madame Nhu's favorite symbol, has been pulled down.

9. There have been no reports of US casualties. There appear to have been up to a total of 100 casualties among coup troops and those defending Diem in the palace.