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OCI No. 1491/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
26 May 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 9:30 A.M. EDT)

Late Developments

General Nhuan, the commander of the ARVN 1st Division in the Hue area, informed a senior US military officer that he has ordered one battalion of the Division under the command of Colonel Khoa into Hue tonight (Vietnam time) presumably to protect the Consulate and Americans. An earlier phone call from MACV noted that the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of the 1st Division was reported to be moving toward Hue.

According to a Consulate report, students in Hue are planning an attack on the Consulate by midnight tonight Vietnam time. Americans on the streets in Hue reportedly will be attacked starting on the morning of 27 May.

ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

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Hue

1. At approximately 4:30 P.M. on the afternoon of 26 May (Vietnam time), a student mob entered the USIS library in Hue, sacked it, and burned books and furniture in the yard just outside, according to Hue Consular officers. Approximately one hour later, Tri Quang broadcast an appeal over Radio Hue to the students to "limit" their ransacking, contain their anger, and go home.

2. The chief of the Hue police, along with about 20 policemen, watched the sacking after having been informed earlier of its likelihood. The building had been evacuated on reports that it, along with the Voice of America transmitter site and the Consulate itself, would be probable targets of the increasing anti-Americanism expressed by the Hue "struggle" forces.

3. Earlier in the day, a funeral procession of approximately 7,000 Buddhist followers and soldiers in honor of the ARVN lieutenant killed on 17 May passed by the US Consulate. Mourners carried anti-American banners and, according to a Consular officer, threatened to raid the Consulate. Tri Quang watched the procession which filed by other Buddhist and "struggle" movement notables.

4. Bui Tuong Huan, rector of Hue University and an influential Buddhist layman, reportedly spoke to the crowd earlier at one of the pagodas. He appealed to the people of the United States to urge their government to abandon the policy of "obsolete colonialism." The remnants of the hunger strike students who had impeded traffic into the Consulate since yesterday joined the funeral procession and had not returned by noon.

Saigon

5. Riot police this morning dispersed a small group of Buddhist monks and their followers who attempted to organize a demonstration near the US Embassy. The bonzes then tried to carry banners to the central market a few blocks from the embassy but were again met by riot police who sent them scurrying down side streets in the wake of tear gas grenades.

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Other Developments

6. A group calling themselves the "Citizens Front of Various Religions" issued a joint resolution on 24 May demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ky and Chief of State Thieu. The group is apparently a bloc of Catholics, Hoa Hoa, Cao Dai, Protestants and Buddhists. The resolution was signed by Father Hoang Quynh and other lesser lights in the religious field. The resolution asked that the Armed Forces Council cooperate with representatives of various religions, political, and labor organizations (Unnamed) in setting up a transitional civilian government.

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