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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
29 May 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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

Saigon

1. A crowd of some 5,000 people staged a demonstration this morning (Saigon time) following a meeting at the Buddhist Institute commemorating the "martyrs" from Da Nang. The demonstrators clashed with police as they tried to march out of the restricted area around the Buddhist Institute toward downtown Saigon. South Vietnamese marines, rangers and airborne troops reinforced the Saigon police and succeeded in driving back the demonstrators with tear gas by about 11:00 AM Saigon time. The mayor of Saigon refused a request by Buddhist monks leading the demonstration for permission to discuss the lifting of the restrictions on the area in which demonstrations can be held.

2. Buddhist leader Thich Tam Chau arrived in Saigon at 11:30 AM Saigon time today and was reported headed for the Buddhist Institute. He has been on a trip to Ceylon in recent weeks. Tam Chau is regarded as more moderate than Tri Quang and his lieutenants. Thich Phap Tri, deputy director of the Buddhist Institute, has resigned his post, according to press reports. His reasons for this action are not clear, as yet.

Da Nang

3. The US consul at Da Nang reports that the situation there is gradually returning to normal. The commercial port operations are improving and workers are reporting for unloading duties in increasing numbers. Street traffic, including bus service, is back to normal

State Department review completed

ARMY review(s) completed.

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also. This means that foodstuffs are being delivered to the markets at a normal rate. The last barbed wire barricades in the streets were removed at 3:00 PM Saigon time on 28 May.

Hue

4. A 55-year old Buddhist nun burned herself to death in the early morning hours of 29 May (Vietnam time). The immolation, the first during three months of political disturbances, was made in protest against the Ky government and followed shortly after the nun reportedly addressed a letter to President Johnson protesting US support for Ky.

5. The rebel radio in Hue claimed that the immolation was carried out without the permission of the Buddhist Institute, but applauded the action as a demonstration of Buddhist determination to struggle to the end against "reactionaries." Rumors circulated in Hue that other immolations would be forthcoming.

6. Tension is increasing between army and student elements in Hue. Acting under order of Thua Thien Province chief Khoa, troops surrounded the student-held radio station late on 28 May (Vietnam time). The troops were subsequently called off by General Dinh, who had not been consulted in the action. Dinh, expressing dismay over Khoa's "clumsy action," ordered the province chief to meet with the struggle committee and students in order to reach agreement on control of the station. Dinh claims that he had reached an agreement with Tri Quang earlier on 28 May to "separate" military and political elements. Tri Quang reportedly agreed to instruct the struggle committee to turn over the radio station to local government authorities.

7. Meanwhile, the students have indicated that they are not prepared to submit to military direction. At a 29 May meeting, the students declared that the radio station must remain in "their" hands at all costs. They also called on Khoa to "state clearly" his position regarding the revolutionary movement.

8. The students also indicated that they would start a campaign against US facilities and personnel in Hue. They called for the destruction of the US consulate,

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the "encirclement" of the US "colony," and harassment of individuals associated with Americans. In a broadcast subsequent to the meeting, the student council called for a 48-hour strike against US personnel. The "economic blockade" was pegged to the US government's "stubbornness" in continuing to support Ky.

9. General Nhuan, commander of the 1st ARVN Division, has told US military advisors that several units will soon be pulled-out of Hue and sent back to their positions in the field. At least one battalion had already left Hue by 10:00 AM (Vietnam time). US advisors are hopeful that an ARVN military operation will be initiated in Quang Tri Province on 30 May.

LATE ITEM

10. A Buddhist monk burned himself to death at the Buddhist Institute in Saigon this evening (Vietnam time), according to late press reports. The circumstances of the immolation are not yet available.

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