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WZ

9 September 1964 1845 hours DCI's Residence

DCI and Marguerite Higgins

GUEST: I was afraid you didn't know I was here, because--

DCI: I didn't -- I've kind of been watching for you -- I was sitting here talking to a fellow, and I was kind of watching for you, and I thought you were a little bit late--

GUEST: No. I was afraid that I got -- he took me right by the door so quick and I was afraid he didn't know -- I went over to Bobby's house not long before he retired and the same thing happened -- I was in one part -- you know they've got this new addition -- I was in one part of the house and he was in the other part, and he thought I wasn't there. Are you going to miss him?

DCI: Oh very much, because in the first place I'm very fond of Bobby personally -- I think he's a great little fellow. I hate to see him mixed up with Ken Keating, because I like Ken too, you know--

GUEST: They're both nice guys -- yes.

DCI: --very much -- and I don't like to see that. Also I'm afraid that's going to get into kind of a dirty campaign.

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GUEST: It's going to be rough, isn't it?

DCI: There will be a lot of scar tissue. How do you think it will come out?

GUEST: I think it's going to be an absolute eyelash either way.

DCI: You do?

GUEST: Yes, because I think--

DCI: A lot of things are going to hurt. Now you know -- take Art Buchwald's column that was in the paper this morning -- did you read it?

GUEST: No.

DCI: Well he carried on in sort of a funny way, with Bobby asking him where is the East River and the Hudson River, and what's that over there, and what's this peninsula out here -- that isn't a peninsula, that's Long Island -- and all such things as that, you know.

GUEST: Well, you know, the Kennedys are always taking your breath away. I've known Bobby ever since 1952 and I still can't think -- when I think I've gotten myself adjusted to that family then something will come along like out at the airport - how do you like your new house which has 35 rooms? And she says, "Oh I haven't seen it" - (Laughing) I said, "You would go out and buy a house and you haven't seen it" (Laughing). She said, "Well, described it to me." They're forever taking my breath away.

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DCI: Did they buy a house?

GUEST: They bought a 35-room house, sight unseen.

DCI: Where is it - Long Island?

GUEST: (Glen Falls), Long Island.

DCI: Oh it is?

GUEST: Yes. But you know hardly anyone buys a 35-room house nowadays without at least having a look at it.

DCI: Hardly anybody buys a 35-room house.

GUEST: What intrigued me was it said 35 to 40 rooms -- I don't know what that means, but I assume it will open up, I think.

Did your secretary tell you what I was about?

DCI: No.

GUEST: Well I'm doing a kind of recapitulation for American Magazine of the last 12 months in Vietnam and where we go from here. And in my recapitulating and where I go from here I've been trying to do as much cross-index work as I can. But I've come to something -- I've got some things that I wanted to check out with you on certain phases of the past and the future. You remember the famous telegram of August 24th?

DCI: Yes

GUEST: What I have to do here is try to get this historically as accurately as I can. There is a -- I know you didn't see it and I know that

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McNamara didn't see it and I know that Rusk didn't see it, but I know that the President was consulted about it. It is argued by the State Department that the telegram was cleared by the responsible officials of Defense - Gilpatric, and somebody from your office, and that therefore it was strictly kosher, so to speak. Would that be fair?

DCI: I only have to speak from hearsay because I was on the West Coast. It was not cleared with anybody from CIA. We knew nothing about it until after it went out. We were given a copy for information.

GUEST: You were not consulted in advance?

DCI: We were not consulted in advance.

GUEST: I was told you were -- that your Deputy or one of your Deputies was consulted in advance.

DCI: No, no. We were given the cable for information after it had gone out. Roz Gilpatric tells me that he was called over and shown the telegram and told that it had been cleared by the President and Secretary of State, so his clearance of it was perfunctory.

GUEST: I see. That wouldn't -- I see.

DCI: The difficulty with Rusk's and the President's clearance was that they were both out of town, and you don't read a telegram like that

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over the telephone -- you have to talk very cryptically, you know, over the phone. So the extent to which it was cleared has always been a little -- there is a difference of opinion on it.

GUEST: Yes. Well I mentioned that because you get so many -- you've cleared up two points, because I was told flatly that Gilpatric had cleared it and a Deputy from your office.

The reason I think this is important, Mr. McCone, this whole picture -- you and I disagreed on it, but let me tell you why I think it's important -- is that if the history -- you said once to me on the phone -- I was trying to get across a message to you which was hard for me to tell you on the phone -- but if you do not -- if you say what's the use of who was right and wrong -- I think there is a great use to getting a right and a wrong, because when you start re-writing history as -- I've argued this with Roger, I'm not saying a thing behind his back -- I've argued it just hammer and tongs with him. There's not a word that I'm saying to you that I haven't said to him. But when I've argued with Roger about trying to say -- well, we started losing the war in April, we started losing the war in June, I think that it's very bad because it plays into the hands of "you can't win" psychology. The idea is you never were doing any -- you never did any good in Vietnam, it was always hopeless, and it always will be hopeless. That's why it upset me that history was being re-written at that time. I know what happened in Quangnai

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in April, but Roger would argue with me that the Delta had gone to hell in July and August, when I'd been in the places in the Delta--

DCI: Yes, you've been in countless places, so you told me, and--

GUEST: Well I'd been there in July and August, and I went back in November, and asked to go back to the places that I had been in July and August--

DCI: You'd been in July and August '63?

GUEST: In '63. I went back in November--

DCI: You went back in November--

GUEST: Late November.

DCI: After the coup.

GUEST: And asked to go back -- I wanted to see the same village chiefs, the same Buddhist priests. And I couldn't go back because it was in Viet Cong hands. Therefore it was -- I knew that where I could go in July and August I couldn't go -- and the same man was there - Major Olin O'Connor, who had taken me -- he was still there in November. And I did the same thing in Quangngai where Major John Kelly was, and I did the same thing in (Sao Poo). So I knew where I had been and -- you see, their tours of duty were up at the end of December -- so the same people who went with me were saying you can't go in there because the Viet Cong is there. So I know, you see. But this is the

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"can't win" psychology that -- that's when -- you were discussing John Richardson or something like that -- that I think he was right and I think -- and that's why I think it's important that the things that Bob Thompson -- and when I put it in my recapitulation I'm going to put that Bob Thompson told me in August that he could see the light at the end of the tunnel, because I think that there was a phase when things were going better. I don't think it was always hopeless -- do you?

DCI: No. No, I don't.

GUEST: And I think that's the -- and then when you say - but it was never any good and it's been going badly forever, people say - well that's a hopeless war.

DCI: No, I don't agree with that. I was convinced that it was going better all through 1963. And the fact is -- what was it? - it was mid-September '63 when Taylor and McNamara went out and came back with the famous pronouncement that they were going to have people out of there by the end of '65 wasn't it?

GUEST: Yes. Now I was -- you see these are the things I want to discuss with you -- did you go on that trip?

DCI: In September?

GUEST: Yes.

DCI: No, I did not go.

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GUEST: Did you go on the one in October?

DCI: No.

GUEST: There was one in October, wasn't there?

DCI: I don't think so -- I don't think there was a trip. There was a trip in -- well now let's get this straight. In early September--

GUEST: Bert Krulak and (Mendenhall) went out.

DCI: What's that?

GUEST: Bert Krulak and (Mendenhall) went out, and came out with divergent reports.

DCI: Yes, (Mendenhall) and Krulak went out in early September. They came back and reported, and the President asked them whether they had been to the same country.

GUEST: Yes.

DCI: You heard this remark, I guess -- he looked at them and said (humorously), "It is the same country?"

GUEST: Yes.

DCI: At this same meeting a fellow that ran USIA what was his name?

GUEST: Ed Murrow.

DCI: No, no -- the fellow that was out there?

GUEST: Oh, John (Mecklin).

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8

DCI: (Mecklin) made a report that supported (Mendenhall's) position, and in response to a question by the President as to what to do he recommended putting a division or two in Saigon -- American divisions. This other chap that was in charge of (USAM's) strategic hamlet program -- remember him?

GUEST: I remember him, yes.

DCI: He came from Virginia.

GUEST: The name escapes me right at this moment, but I remember him very well.

DCI: He reported, and his reports were quite good. Then the President asked McNamara and Taylor to go out -- and this was either late September, I believe it was, or at the latest early October -- I've forgotten the date.

GUEST: Didn't Bill Bundy go on that one?

DCI: Well he might have.

GUEST: And the White House reporter (for the Star).

DCI: I don't know. I couldn't go on that because I was going to Europe at that time. I had some other, so I didn't go. One of our people went out -- I've forgotten who it was -- (Bill Colby) or somebody went out. Now it was at that time that they came back with the very optimistic

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estimate that it looked like they could get a thousand men out by the end of the year, and--

GUEST: But that was training command.

DCI: That was training command, yes. And by the end of '65 they could get most of the people out.

GUEST: Well now that's one of the main reasons that I came to see you. I was told flatly at the State Department -- it's so hard to try and recapitulate -- you don't know in trying to be accurate how hard it is -- I guess you can -- you've just been trying to separate facts yourself. I was told at the State Department last week that on that trip McNamara and Taylor and Bundy decided that Diem couldn't make it, and that on that trip the decision that -- the reason that they decided that Diem couldn't make it was that people in the government who had been loyal to him before were criticising and disaffected. Is that your understanding of the impression?

DCI: Well, no, I never heard either one of them say that. Lodge said that at that time. Lodge was of the impression that Diem could not make it because of criticism. I never heard Taylor express himself. But I was always under the impression that McNamara felt that it would be better to try and persuade Diem to modify his procedures and improve his image than to dispose him. This was the position I took, and the reason I took it is

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that there was no other replacement for Diem and Nhu -- there was nothing else to take their place.

GUEST: I got a card -- just confidentially -- a card from a mutual friend of ours who was a Marine involved in that -- and you know who I mean -- it's from Hawaii -- and he said, "You know we used to ask the question: but who can take Diem's place? end of paragraph, last sentence. I still think it's a good question. (Laughing)

DCI: Well this is a question. Now I can tell you for your information, and I don't want you to repeat this, I was called down to the White House in very early October, and there was no one from the State Department there, and asked by the President what I thought about this, and I told him exactly what I told you. I said that we could predict only one thing and that would be a protracted period of political chaos in which we would have not one coup but several, because it didn't appear to us that there was the political strength and leadership to replace Diem and Nhu. Therefore it was my opinion, my advice, that every effort on trying to get Diem to modify his procedures and change his ways, rather than to permit drastic actions to take place. Now we didn't remove Diem. He was removed, but the machinery was set up which made it inevitable -- and you're familiar with that I presume.

GUEST: Well I don't know what you mean by that. I knew it was

11

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inevitable as soon as we started cutting aid, but I didn't know whether we -- whether this government knew it was inevitable.

DCI: Yes -- well here's what happened, since you're recapitulating. We were giving aid in the form of a commodity import program which amounted to about 20 to 25 million dollars a quarter -- and this would be steel, and building materials, and consumable things, and God knows what not -- and this would be given to the government and this would be sold and marketed through commercial channels, and the piasters that they would get from this was what really created the resources with which they paid the military. Now the last payment was due in August - August 15th. This payment was not made, and it was not made because there was -- and this was not a policy decision, but this was a bureaucratic procedural matter - the okays weren't there or the proper authorization hadn't come from the field to Washington or Washington to the field, or something -- in any event, it wasn't made. So then Lodge arrived on the 4th or 5th of August, or whenever he arrived, and then there was that week following his arrival in which a coup was considered imminent. And then the 1st of September rolled around and we were in the next quarter, so they couldn't pay the -- and by this time Lodge was assuming a very dignified and righteous attitude towards Diem but a very formal one, you see -- so the question arose as to whether this five million dollars shouldn't be paid, because at this point no policy decision was made to cut off

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12

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aid or do anything else. Well, if you paid the five million dollars you'd be more or less genuflecting to his obstinacy, you see. So if you didn't pay that five million dollars -- without paying that five million dollars then the successive payments for the last quarter, which came along periodically, were not made. Well then as the word got around -- September went on and October started -- the word got around that these commodity imports had been cut off. Then the army began to say well--

GUEST: This is the signal for us.

DCI: This is the signal we're not going to get paid -- and after all, there's nothing more important to them than their pay.

GUEST: Didn't President Kennedy realize that this was the end of Diem?

DCI: No, he didn't. Although there were constant coup reports and rumors and--

GUEST: But anyone who knew Vietnam would know that this was the end of Diem.

DCI: Well he didn't know Vietnam. He had never been to Vietnam. He didn't know Vietnam. But he rather -- I think he hoped that Diem could be persuaded--

GUEST: But to do what?

DCI: Well, this is not clear, you see, just exactly what they wanted. Specifically what they wanted to do, or hoped to do, was to remove

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18

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Nhu at least temporarily from the organization, because Nhu was looked upon as the man that was destroying Diem's image throughout the country. And indeed he was a pretty scheming Oriental. There's no question about the fact that he was building up a political organization that gave him almost dictatorial power. They knew if they got Diem to remove him -- send him to Paris or do something with him. And then there were three or four other things -- there were some steps in connection with land reform, there was a special privilege that was given to Catholics in connection with property -- and you're familiar with that -- that this should be repealed or the same privilege extended to Buddhists -- and this was one of the very serious (inaudible due to telephone ringing). And there were one or two other things.

GUEST: And wasn't it to release the Buddhists from--

DCI: Yes -- and to release some of the Buddhists from prison -- that was part of it. This is all hazy in my mind now.

Now then, the last weekend of October Diem went up to Dalat and he invited Lodge to go up and spend the weekend with him -- and you're familiar with that, I presume.

GUEST: Well I'm familiar with the fact that he was asking Lodge what was it that was wanted of him, and if he did such and such would they resume the aid, and things like that.

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DCI: No, it didn't work out quite that way. So Diem asked Lodge to come up and be his guest at Dalat, and we all thought - well, the ice is broken, and they're going to get together, and Diem's going to change his ways, and we'll get along with this thing, and we can resume aid -- this is what we hoped. The cable came in from Lodge when he had gotten back to his office and it was totally disappointing. There hadn't been much communication between the two. Lodge had explained in a most persuasive sort of a way what he wanted Diem to do, and Diem was not responsive, and so forth. This was toward the end of October, two or three days before the coup. So then the day of the coup Admiral Felt was there, and he and Lodge went to call on Diem, and after they'd had their formal visit why Diem asked Lodge if he would stay, he wanted to talk to him about something -- and so Felt went on out to the airport alone, and got in his plane and left. What Diem wanted to tell Lodge was: Now you just tell your President to tell me what he wants to do and I'll do it -- (any) message -- let me know what he wants. You tell me what he wants me to do and I'll do it. The irony of it was at that very hour the coup was on and it was too late. But this little scenario is important, because really I think President Kennedy's hope was to be nice to this fellow and get along with him. Now this was not the hope of a whole lot of people in the State Department, nor was it Lodge's hope -- Lodge wanted to get rid of Diem.

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GUEST: I know he was so elated that he could hardly contain himself.

DCI: Yes, Lodge wanted to get rid of Diem. Harriman wanted to get rid of Diem. Hilsman was the architect of this thing, as was (Mendenhall) and all the rest of them

GUEST: And Lodge told -- I never repeat anything that's told to me alone but Lodge told three of us, including (Curtis Beach), who was present, I remember, in his office in November, and I think Bob (Chapman) of the New Yorker -- that in that conversation in Dalat Diem had been very forthcoming and that that was the beginning of the breaking of the ice.

DCI: That isn't my recollection.

GUEST: But it seems to me that there was just a great psychological gap between the Kennedys and the State Department and Vietnam, because there was nobody in Vietnam -- and I was there first, you know, when I was six months old, so I have almost a mother's milk relationship to that country, because--

DCI: Why were you there then?

GUEST: I had malaria and I was taken to Vietnam--

DCI: From where?

GUEST: Hong Kong.

DCI: Oh.

GUEST: I was born in China ~~SECRET~~

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DCI: Oh you were? I see.

GUEST: Yes. I was taken to Dalat, because they didn't have medicines, you know -- they just took you to clean air -- and I had a Vietnamese amah who took care of me.

But I don't think there was any Vietnamese that I talked to who didn't know that a coup was inevitable -- because the minute that aid was cut off -- unless the United States Government forcefully and totally said -- my God, there's a coup being plotted every one and a half minutes right now against Khanh, and the only thing that's keeping him in is our saying we won't take anybody else. And people have been -- you know, you sit down to dinner and somebody says we're going to have a coup any time, you butter your bread and say "oh." I mean, so what's new? (Laughing)

DCI: Sure.

GUEST: So it just seems to me that probably -- the inconsistencies here are probably the President really thought he could bring a change without a coup and didn't realize that it was impossible. Once that barrier was broken, and once Big Minh -- when I asked him in November why he had done it he opened his mouth and said, "Why did I do it! Isn't that what the Americans wanted? Why did they cut off aid?" You know, he hadn't -- he came up fighting as if -- "Well, what are you trying to tell us. How is the army going to march?"

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17

DCI: Sure.

GUEST: There was no doubt in your mind that it was coming, was there?

DCI: Oh no, no, no doubt at all.

GUEST: After the aid was cut?

DCI: There was no doubt in my mind from the time that telegram went out that it was coming.

GUEST: Because you can't take -- in that atmosphere you can't take a poll of generals and ask them if they're ready to revolt without having it made clear to them that--

DCI: Sure.

GUEST: Now what about Nhu's statement that the State Department -- he didn't say CIA, he said State Department -- where some Americans gave 225,000 dollars to the generals in September to help them with their plotting, and that he called them together and told them, "Any money the Americans have given to you, you keep."

DCI: I don't know -- I haven't heard that statement -- I haven't heard that statement.

GUEST: And that they had the feeling that he said -- this is in a book that is coming out by a French correspondent who is -- I can't remember her name -- there's really (much) of a chapter on it--

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DCI: That our State Department gave 225,000 dollars?

GUEST: To various generals.

DCI: To various generals?

GUEST: In order to help them organize by dissent, I guess.

DCI: I don't think that's true. This is the first time I heard that.

That's not true.

GUEST: You don't think that it could--

DCI: In the first place the State Department can't do that.

GUEST: Don't they have a special fund?

DCI: They don't have funds for that. They can't do that.

GUEST: Couldn't the President have authorized it?

DCI: The President might have authorized a special fund, but I doubt very much that he would--

GUEST: I'm going to ask Bobby the same question, because--

DCI: No -- if anything like that had been done I'd have known about that.

GUEST: Going back, this is a--

DCI: But I don't think that's a correct statement.

GUEST: I'll have to get that book chapter and send it to your guy, because -- oh, I know - I've got it - (Susan La Bah)--

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DCI: Is the book out yet?

GUEST: I got a long blurb on it, and I got the proofs. I don't know if it's out. (Susan La Bah).

DCI: Is it a pretty good book?

GUEST: Well it won't sell -- it's in because she did love -- she speaks French--

DCI: Is it in English?

GUEST: English. I'll call your man, though, tomorrow when I get to the office--

DCI: Will you do that?

GUEST: Yes, because I can give him the name of the publisher. It gives all the details of the conversations that she had. I'm going to go to Vietnam and I'm going to ask all the generals -- I didn't know this at the time, so I couldn't ask them -- you know, I didn't have the information to ask them.

DCI: Yes.

GUEST: Do you, looking back now -- and this is just to help me -- Let me put my position: I don't think Diem should have been asked to let up on Thich Tri Quang and the Buddhists. I think that -- I had my doubts then and they have been -- I think Thich Tri Quang is out to do what he told me -- what he said to me was that he couldn't have an accommodation with the North unless he got rid of Diem and Nhu, and I don't think he's changed his mind.

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Besides that I think that he'd be perfectly willing to -- I'm not sure he's a Communist type but I just think he serves Communist ends.

DCI: I know you have very strong feelings about him because you've expressed them to me before. Do you think that his purpose is to make an accommodation with the North?

GUEST: And put himself in power -- and I think he would go along with the Communists. Did you see that even the New York Times the other day -- Peter Grosz^e -- the last three paragraphs, in which he said Thich Tri Quang's ambitions are to get rid of the Chinese and the Americans -- he realizes the Communists would not be kindly towards the Buddhists but he feels that the Buddhists, who have a history of 10,000 years, would prevail in the end over the Communists.

DCI: Yes, I read this.

GUEST: That was pretty amazing coming--

DCI: Yes.

GUEST: And I noticed that Khiem today - he said that Thich Tri Quang wanted to take over the country. I don't know Khiem. Do you know him?

DCI: Just met him and had lunch with him.

GUEST: Is he reliable? Is he

DCI: Oh I don't know him well enough to know his reliability.

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21

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He's not a very outgoing man -- you have to draw things out of him. It's very difficult to analyze him. He's an inscrutable sort of a fellow.

GUEST: Do you think President Kennedy realized what kind of -- do you think my judgment of Thich Tri Quang is wrong? I mean please tell me so, because this is the thing that's helpful, because I want to, you know, make a balance between lots of different judgments. Please tell me honestly.

DCI: I think you might credit him with a greater ambition than he really has and more sensitive motives than he has, although I must say that his performance has not been particularly satisfactory from our point of view, and we really don't know yet where he's going. We still have to see what his ultimate demands are going to be.

GUEST: Well when I started those April interviews -- long before there was any excuse -- did you see them?

DCI: Yes.

GUEST: When I saw them, back in April, when he said -- and I'll remember this quote as long as I live -- "did we struggle for four months that resounded around the world only to be more persecuted under this regime than we ever were under Diem?" I began to feel vindicated for all my previous feeling (Laughing). In April! Now there was no excuse in April -- and besides that--

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DCI: No, except that he thought that Khanh had surrounded himself with -- and he thought this incorrectly, incidentally -- Khanh had surrounded himself (1) with Catholics, and (2) with Diemists, and hence he thought that he was in as difficult a position if not more difficult a position than he was under Diem, or equally difficult -- although there was no excuse for it -- but this was because he was not in a position and didn't feel the Buddhists were in a position to express themselves politically.

GUEST: Why is he waging such a war on Thich Tam Chau and persecuting him to death? They're having a real fratricidal -- and Thich Tam Chau is a decent sort. But let me ask this question: If Thich Tri Quang wanted to create chaos and anarchy -- which would mean that the Americans would leave - because we will, if that happens -- what would be better for him than to demand that all Catholics, all Diemists, all experienced civil servants be gotten rid of -- and all generals, because the ones who were rewarded the most under Diem were the ones who fought the hardest.

DCI: Well, he could do this, yes, he could carry these demands to that extreme. Now his demands haven't gone that far. He has singled out a few people and demanded their removal, and he's demanded certain considerations for Buddhists.

GUEST: Didn't he get a two million dollar piece of real estate in the middle of Saigon plus 900 million piasters to build something on it?

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DCI: I think so -- I think he got some concessions. I think Khanh acceded to the total of his demand -- that's my impression -- isn't that yours?

GUEST: My impression is that Khanh fired some excellent persons from the pressure from a man whose motives were not cleared up--

DCI: Yes, that's true - that's true. I think (Thu) was a good man, a capable man -- not just how he was oriented politically. But Khanh has had two very serious factors - he's had the Buddhists, on the one hand, and the Dai Viets on the other, and--

GUEST: My friends in Vietnam say that Khanh is terrified, because he thinks the Americans, because they took Thich Tri Quang in for asylum, are in Thich Tri Quang's pocket, and that he had to -- you know everybody has to blame things on the Americans -- and I don't believe anything -- it's very hard for me to believe things that Vietnamese tell me -- I just have to try them out for size. I don't accept that.

DCI: Sure, because every Vietnamese has his own scenario of events and his own--

GUEST: Precisely. I just use it as a springboard--

DCI: --and his own particular idea of what's motivating people and what their purposes are--

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GUEST: And they're all the lowest possible person--

DCI: That's right.

GUEST: But is that conceivable in your view? - that Khanh could be under the misapprehension -- if he thinks that we favor Minh do you think he might think that we favor Tri Quang?

DCI: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think that whatever concessions he made to Quang were made purely on the basis of trying to consolidate Buddhist support under him.

GUEST: Do you think Quang represents -- I know he can arouse Buddhists, but do you think he represents Buddhism?

DCI: In--

GUEST: In Vietnam?

DCI: In the North he does, yes. And the fact that he can arouse them means that he represents them.

GUEST: I don't know, Jessie Gray can arouse (Annamites) but I don't know that he represents them or not. The reason I -- now he seems -- what about his actions in connection with the Hue (possessive) -- the secession--

DCI: I'm not familiar with that.

GUEST: Well there's this move on for secession of the three northern provinces from the south, and, as I understand it, he's working with them.

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DCI: Well this has been -- yes, there's been a certain advocacy of this. We don't place it as a very high probability.

GUEST: Do you think Thich Tri Quang could possibly run that country?

DCI: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. One of the extreme difficulties is that a great deal of competence rests with the Catholics for the simple reason that they're the people who had the education -- that's how they got to be Catholics. They were part of the product of the French missionary system, you know.

GUEST: Did you read -- because I think Tri Quang is the most interesting and possibly -- I don't think he's the Makarios of Southeast Asia -- I think Makarios is a piker compared to Tri Quang, because Tri Quang, who has utter contempt for the naivete of the Americans whom he thinks he takes in, and perhaps he does and perhaps he doesn't. I wonder if I may -- has any other American journalist interviewed him?

DCI: I don't know. I've never talked to any that have. No. I know you have, but I don't think--

GUEST: I didn't interview him on purpose.

DCI: I know you didn't.

GUEST: I just showed my White House press card and he thought I was representing the White House, and he had me there for two and a half

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hours to tell me that if President Kennedy ever said another nice word about Diem there would be so darn many burnings up that Kennedy's name would be mud, America's name would be mud, and would I please get that message back to Kennedy. And I never thought a correspondent should -- I wish I had -- I didn't -- I thought am I going to come back here and send on blackmail to the President of the United States? I think I made a terrible mistake -- I think I should have sent--

DCI: You should have passed that to John Richardson.

GUEST: I think I should have sent it to directly to Kennedy because I think it would have had at least an eye-opening effect.

DCI: How are you going to produce this -- are you writing a book, or are you going to--

GUEST: Well the first 5,000 words are going to appear in America. Did you see -- you probably saw the -- did you see the last one? Senator Dodd made a whole -- he reprinted 150,000 copies -- and the demand is still coming in, how about that! Did you see it? It's called Saigon Summary.

DCI: No, I didn't.

GUEST: Well I'll have to sent that to you, too. I thought I carried it around in my purse--

DCI: Oh I undoubtedly have it. This came out in America did it?

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GUEST: Yes, America Magazine.

DCI: Now what is--

GUEST: It's going to be 5,000 words -- and what it's going to be is another--

DCI: You're running a serial of it--

GUEST: There will be two--

DCI: Two of them?

GUEST: Two pieces.

DCI: I'd be very interested to read that.

GUEST: But--

DCI: How far back do you go?

GUEST: I'm just going to -- what I'm going to try to do is the start of what I think was terrible vicious circle that began, really, with the confusion of self-emulations and guilt on the part of the government, demands, equasion. I can remember Bobby -- however much I love him -- arguing with him: if a student rioted, a student was right -- never mind that with 5,000 -- the law of the land happened to be no demonstrations in Vietnam, the liberal thing to do was to allow demonstrations. It's **hard** to take yourself back to that atmosphere, but I'll never forget it, because it seems so ominous at the time. And I hope I'm wrong, but I think you'll find that you will have a period

of about three months in which Thich Tri Quang thinks he's gotten enough, will be quiet, and then the new demands will start coming -- because I think he wants Chaos, and I think he wants the Americans out of there so badly. I think that he knows the way to get us out is through this chaos.

DCI: Of course he has to have the military with him to do this, doesn't he?

GUEST: Not to create chaos -- because if he does what he did in -- you see, he acted against the wonderful mayor of Quangngai, the one who placated the Buddhists, but he happened to be a Catholic so he got put in jail. He was one that let them have a hunger strike in his own city hall.

DCI: Yes.

GUEST: Mr. (Thomtat) -- Mr. Tat -- I think I'm getting him mixed up with (Thom-Tat-Ten).

The Buddhists, as far as I've been able to discover, are supposed to be otherworldly. The Confucianists, who seem to be the majority in Vietnam, are supposed to be worldly. But the Buddhists seem to be far more militant -- at least Tri Quang does. Has that suggestion--

DCI: I think that Tri Quang and a coterie of people around him -- but generally the Buddhists are not activists, traditionally. They are a rather

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passive people. Their whole background of their religion, and their teaching, and their belief, has carried them away from political action, as I understand.

GUEST: What significance do you attach to the fact that he was working with the Viet Minh Communists during early 1950 - Tri Quang?

DCI: Tri Quang was. Well there were a whole lot of people who were doing that, you know -- there were a whole lot of them that were doing that. And they explain that that they were working--

GUEST: It was a passing phase against the French.

DCI: --against the French.

GUEST: And I know just because his brother is working -- it is an awful coincidence, though, about his brother, isn't it?

DCI: Yes.

GUEST: He just happens to be working in the ministry in charge of subversion in the south.

DCI: That's right.

GUEST: You know might be around some time (Laughing) if I need any help.

Do you think that there will be a quiescent -- oh, I've got to ask you this: Why did we have this double standard on things like the (Domisee) trial? (Domisee) wasn't guilty of anything except obeying superior

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orders. The United States seemed to be so much on the side of the Buddhists during the summer -- why weren't we on the side of equal justice for all? I never understood why we were so silent in the case of the (Domisee) and other things. It seemed like a double standard.

DCI: Yes. I can't explain exactly why we took the position we took in that respect.

GUEST: Would you agree that it was a double standard?

DCI: Yes, I think it was. We might have taken a somewhat different position.

GUEST: I've seen ex post facto justice -- and all the people that were put in jail in November, and still are in jail, for nothing except having done their jobs -- and I've often wondered why the United States this rule of law should prevail forever with -- because the junta seemed to think that it was pleasing the United States by making these arrests of anybody.

DCI: This was a decision that was made -- I think it was made at the level of the Embassy policy of this more or less group that had taken over, and we were watching them, but we tried to let them run their business--

GUEST: Rather than--

DCI: Yes, rather than to abolish them.

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