

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

•ROUTINE

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DDI EXC

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GROUP
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CITE

DIST 21 MAY 1968

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3.4(b)(1)

Rostow

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 20 MAY 1968

SUBJECT 1. SENIOR GENERALS' DECISION NOT TO OPPOSE
TRAN VAN HUONG AS PRIME MINISTER AS LONG AS
HE AVOIDS INVOLVEMENT IN MILITARY AFFAIRS

2. NATURE AND FORM OF AGREEMENT SIGNED BY
GENERALS ON 30 JUNE 1967

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (21 MAY 1968) FIELD NO.

SOURCE

[REDACTED]

1. ON 20 MAY 1968, THE SENIOR GENERALS HELD A SERIES OF
MEETINGS WITH VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY IN THE LATTER'S
OFFICE TO DISCUSS THEIR POSTURE TOWARD PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU

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AND PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE TRAN VAN HUONG. THE GENERALS DECIDED TO TAKE NO ACTION AGAINST THIEU AND TO ASSUME A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE TOWARD HUONG. THE GENERALS WILL GIVE HUONG THEIR TACIT APPROVAL AS LONG AS HE DOES NOT MEDDLE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

2. THE GENERALS CALLED THE MEETINGS BECAUSE THIEU HAD NOT CONSULTED THEM REGARDING HUONG'S APPOINTMENT AS PRIME MINISTER. KY, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS NOT EVEN OFFICIALLY INFORMED BY THIEU OF HIS PLAN TO APPOINT HUONG UNTIL 1845 HOURS ON 18 MAY; WHEN THE NOTE ARRIVED FROM THIEU'S OFFICE, KY WAS IN NHA TRANG. THE GENERALS VIEW THIEU'S BEHAVIOR IN THE MATTER AS A VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT THAT THE SENIOR GENERALS, INCLUDING THIEU, SIGNED AFTER THE 30 JUNE 1967 MEETING AT WHICH THIEU WAS DESIGNATED THE MILITARY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

3. ON 20 MAY 1968, KY SHOWED AN AIDE THE MUCH-DISCUSSED AND FREQUENTLY DENIED AGREEMENT, WHICH CONSISTS OF TWO TYPEWRITTEN PAGES. THE DOCUMENT STATES THAT WHOEVER AMONG THE SIGNATORIES IS DESIGNATED AS THE GROUP'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AGREES THAT HE WILL NOT MAKE ANY MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS AS PRESIDENT WITHOUT THE ADVISE AND CONSENT OF THE COUNCIL OF GENERALS. THE AGREEMENT


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THUS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED THE COUNCIL OF GENERALS AS THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT. KY SIGNED AS CHAIRMAN AND MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN DUC THANG AS SECRETARY GENERAL, WHILE THIEU SIGNED AS A MEMBER, HIS SIGNATURE APPEARING IN FOURTH PLACE ON THE DOCUMENT. KY TOLD HIS AIDE THAT THANG HAD ACTUALLY DRAFTED THE AGREEMENT.

4. (FIELD COMMENT: THE EXISTENCE OR NON-EXISTENCE OF THIS DOCUMENT WAS THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE REPORTING DURING THE FIRST PART OF JULY 1967.)

5. FIELD DISSEM: STATE (AMBASSADOR BUNKER, DEPUTY AMBASSADOR BERGER, POLITICAL COUNSELOR) USMACV (GENERAL WESTMORELAND, GENERAL ABRAMS, AMBASSADOR KOMER, CHIEF OF STAFF, J2) 7TH AIR FORCE (GENERAL MOMYER ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT-ARPAC PACAF [REDACTED]

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