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NLE MR Case No. 2000-163

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Memorandum to [REDACTED] EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs  
From : [REDACTED] (C)

Subject: Probable Consequences of Attack on Binh Xuyen by Government Forces

1. You asked me to expand on the statement in my attached memo of 16 April: "I doubt that full scale civil war would follow the expulsion of the Binh Xuyen from Saigon-Cholon".

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2. [REDACTED] agree that the Binh Xuyen, if attacked, will withdraw to the area south and east of the city. In this area the Viet Minh were able to maintain themselves for many years, and it is argued that the Binh Xuyen could do likewise.

3. However, the circumstances now are different in some important respects. The Viet Minh were able to convince a large part of the population that they were nationalists opposing a regime which if not colonialist was by no means independent. The Binh Xuyen may find it more difficult to assume this role, and may therefore be expected to enjoy less popular support in the countryside.

4. By the same token, the FAVN as an independent national force appears considerably more willing to undertake action against the Binh Xuyen and other dissident sect forces than it was against the Viet Minh in earlier years. The FAVN's military capabilities are probably now greater than those of the Binh Xuyen and Hoa Hao and their relative advantage can be expected to increase under the TRIM program, especially as the loss of French support begins to be felt by the sects.

5. The real danger posed by the sects, it seems to me, is not of large scale civil war, but of banditry and terrorism. Here we come back to our old theme, the need for an effective, competent and pervasive civil government that can protect loyal elements of the population from reprisal.

6. In my opinion the French are far less concerned about the likelihood of "civil war" than they are about loss of French lives and property through acts of terrorism and sabotage, and the political storms that would be raised internationally and in France itself if disorders were to involve military action by French troops. These responsibilities are large ones, quite adequate to support the French determination to reduce to the minimum the opportunities for outbreaks.

EXEMPT from Declass.  
Per E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-4  
Re-review - 1990



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