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The Black Vault

The image shows a close-up of a heavy, metallic vault door. The door is partially open, revealing a bright blue glow from within. The door has several large, circular mechanical components and bolts. The lighting is dramatic, with the blue glow contrasting against the dark background.

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21

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SECRET

Action

Control: 14198

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Rec'd: OCTOBER 18, 1963
6:44 AM

Info

FROM: SAIGON

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 731, OCTOBER 18, 4 PM

EYES ONLY

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PRIORITY.

ACTION DEPARTMENT PRIORITY 731, INFORMATION CINCPAC 42.

EYES ONLY FOR SECRETARY RUSK.

PLS PASS SECRETARY MCNAMARA AND DCI, MR. JOHN MCCONE, EYES ONLY

CINCPAC POLAD EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL FELT

1. PURSUANT OT INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED PARA 9 DEPTTEL 534 AND ELABORATION PARA 9 DEPTTEL 570, WITH MACV CONCURRENCE I APPOINTED MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD G. STILWELL, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF J-3 MACV AND THE CAS ACTING CHIEF OF STATION (ACOS) TO CONVEY SUBSTANCE OF PARA 9 DEPTTEL 534 TO DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE NGUYEN DINH THUAN.

2. GENERAL STILWELL AND THE ACOS MET THUAN AT GIA LONG PALACE BY APPOINTMENT ON THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 17. THE MEETING LASTED APPROXIMATELY 45 MINUTES. GEN. STILWELL OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY STATING THAXNE HAD RECENTLY BEEN TRAVELING WITH ACTING ARVN CHIEF OF STAFF, MAJOR GENERAL TRAN VAN DON, TO VARIOUS SUBORDINATE HEADQUARTERS THROUGHOUT VIETNAM AND THAT THE PURPOSE OF THESE TRAVELS HAD BEEN TO INSURE THAT ALL UNITS WERE MAKING FULL CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT. GEN. STILWELL ADDED THAT IN THIS LIGHT, THIS MEETING HAD BEEN REQUESTED WITH THUAN.

3. THUAN IMMEDIATELY STATED, "YOU'VE COME TO TALK ABOUT THE SPECIAL FORCES." GEN. STILWELL AND THE ACOS ACKNOWLEDGED

/ THAT THIS

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THAT THIS WAS TRUE AND THEN PROCEEDED TO EXPLAIN THE STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT OF SPECIAL FORCES UNITS IN THE SAIGON AREA. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT OF TEN SPECIAL FORCES COMPANIES, SEVEN ARE MEMBERS OF ARVN AND ARE MAP-SUPPORTED; THREE COMPANIES ARE CIVILIAN AND ARE SUPPORTED ENTIRELY BY CAS. ACOS THEN STATED THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO INDICATE TO THUAN THAT UNLESS THE CIVILIAN COMPANIES WERE EFFECTIVELY SUBORDINATED TO THE JGS AND COMMITTED TO FIELD OPERATIONS, ALL SUPPORT OF THESE COMPANIES WOULD CEASE. GEN. STILWELL ADDED THAT THIS APPLIED TO THE MAP-SUPPORTED UNITS ALSO BUT WOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE LONG TERM, UNDER THE CONDITIONS SPECIFIED, BY A DECREASE EQUIVALENT TO SEVEN COMPANIES IN THE OVERALL MAP SUPPORT BUDGET. IT WAS CAREFULLY EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACTION WAS TO PLACE THESE UNITS IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THE WAR EFFORT UNDER HIS CONTROL.

4. THUAN SEEMED TO ABSORB THIS FULLY AND REPEATED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT BOTH MAP AND CAS SUPPORT OF SPECIAL FORCES WOULD CEASE UNLESS VIETNAMESE SPECIAL FORCES ARE EFFECTIVELY SUBORDINATED TO THE JGS AND COMMITTED TO FIELD OPERATIONS.

5. THUAN WAS FURTHER INFORMED THAT HENCEFORTH PAYMENTS TO MOUNTAIN SCOUTS AND BORDER SURVEILLANCE PERSONNEL WOULD BE MADE ONLY THROUGH US SPECIAL FORCES MECHANISMS AND FUNDS FOR THESE PROGRAMS WOULD NO RPT NO LONGER BE GIVEN DIRECTLY TO COL. TUNG. THUAN WAS ASSURED THAT THE ACTUAL PASSAGE OF FUNDS WOULD BE THROUGH THE HANDS OF VIETNAMESE, NOT AMERICAN, OFFICERS BUT THAT AMERICAN SPECIAL FORCES WORKING WITH THEIR VIETNAMESE COUNTERPARTS IN THE PROVINCES WOULD DIRECTLY OVERSEE THE EXPENDITURES OF THESE FUNDS. THUAN WAS INTERESTED IN THE AMOUNTS INVOLVED AND SEEMED SURPRISED AT THEIR MAGNITUDE.

6. THUAN WAS TOLD THAT THE USG DOES NOT RPT NOT PLAN ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS STEP BUT, IF IT BECAME KNOWN AND IF THE EMBASSY WERE QUERIED, WE WOULD STATE THAT THIS ACTIVE SCD BEEN TAKEN SINCE WE CANNOT SUPPORT FORCES NOT RPT NOT DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE WAR EFFORT. THUAN WAS

/ ALSO INFORMED

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ALSO INFORMED THAT THIS MATTER WOULD ALSO BE TAKEN UP DIRECTLY WITH COL. TUNG. HE CONCURRED IN THIS AND STATED THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER IMMEDIATELY WITH THE PRESIDENT.

GP-2.

LODGE

MBK-27

NOTE: PASSED WHITE HOUSE, AT 7:56 AM, OCTOBER 18, 1963.
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