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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM  
IDENTIFICATION FORM

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30ZTOP SECRET

SECTION ONE OF THREE

*Smith*  
2-File

VIA CAS SAIGON 2063 FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE DTG 301030Z  
TO SECSTATE WASH EYES ONLY FOR RUSK, HARRIMAN, BALL, HILSMAN, HUGHES  
OSD EYES ONLY FOR MCNAMARA, GILPATRIC, TAYLOR, KURLAK, MR. WM. BUNDY  
WHITE HOUSE/EYES ONLY MCGEORGE BUNDY

INFO CAS HONLULU FOR ADM FELT EYES ONLY

CIA/EYES ONLY MCCONE, CARTER, HELMS

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

REF: CAS WASHINGTON 79109

1. WE MUST, OF COURSE, GET BEST POSSIBLE ESTIMATE OF CHANCE OF  
COUP'S SUCCESS AND THIS ESTIMATE MUST COLOR OUR THINKING, BUT  
DO NOT THINK WE HAVE THE POWER TO DELAY OR DISCOURAGE A COUP. DON HAS  
MADE IT CLEAR MANY TIMES THAT THIS IS A VIETNAMESE AFFAIR.  
IT IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE FOR US TO TURN OVER THE INFORMATION  
WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US IN CONFIDENCE TO DIEM AND THIS WOULD  
UNDOUBTEDLY STOP THE COUP AND WOULD MAKE TRAITORS OUT OF US. FOR  
PRACTICAL PURPOSES THEREFORE I WOULD SAY THAT WE HAVE VERY LITTLE  
INFLUENCE ON WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A VIETNAMESE AFFAIR. IN ADDITION,  
THIS WOULD PLACE THE HEADS OF THE GENERALS, THEIR CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS,  
AND LOWER MILITARY OFFICERS ON THE SPOT, THEREBY SACRIFICING  
A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP  
NEEDED TO CARRY THE WAR AGAINST THE VC TO ITS SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.  
AFTER OUR EFFORTS NOT TO DISCOURAGE A COUP AND THIS CHANGE OF HEART,  
WE WOULD FORECLOSE ANY POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE OF THE GVN FOR THE BETTER.  
DIEM/NHU HAVE DISPLAYED NO INTENTIONS TO DATE OF A DESIRE TO CHANGE  
THE TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONTROL THROUGH POLICE ACTION OR TAKE  
ANY RPT ANY ACTIONS WHICH WOULD ~~PREJUDICE~~ *undermine* THE POWER POSITION OR SOLIDARI-  
TY OF THE NGO FAMILY. THIS, DESPITE OUR HEAVY PRESSURES DIRECTED

534. IF OUR ATTEMPT TO THWART THIS COUP WERE SUCCESSFUL, WHICH WE DOUBT, IT IS OUR FIRM ESTIMATE THAT YOUNGER OFFICERS, SMALL GROUPS OF MILITARY, WOULD THEN ENGAGE IN AN ABORTIVE ACTION CREATING CHAOS IDEALLY SUITED TO VC OBJECTIVES.

2. WHILE WE WILL ATTEMPT A COMBINED ASSESSMENT IN A FOLLOWING MESSAGE, TIME HAS NOT YET PERMITTED SUBSTANTIVE EXAMINATION OF THIS MATTER WITH GENERAL HARKINS. MY GENERAL VIEW IS THAT THE U.S. IS TRYING TO BRING THIS MEDIEVAL COUNTRY INTO THE 20TH CENTURY AND THAT WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC WAYS BUT TO GAIN VICTORY WE MUST ALSO BRING THEM INTO THE 20TH CENTURY POLITICALLY AND THAT CAN ONLY BE DONE BY EITHER A THOROUGH GOING CHANGE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OR BY ANOTHER GOVERNMENT. THE VIET CONG PROBLEM IS PARTLY MILITARY BUT IT IS ALSO PARTLY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL.

3. WITH RESPECT TO PARA 3 REF, I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR PRESENT POSITION OF KEEPING HANDS OFF BUT CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND PRESS FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION. CAS HAS BEEN ANALYZING POTENTIAL COUP FORCES FOR SOME TIME AND IT IS THEIR ETIMATE THAT THE GENERALS HAVE PROBABLY FIGURED THEIR CHANCES PRETTY CLOSELY AND PROBABLY ALSO EXPECT THAT ONCE THEY BEGIN TO MOVE, NOT ONLY PLANNED UNITS, BUT OTHER UNITS WILL JOIN THEM. WE BELIEVE THAT VIETNAM'S BEST GENERALS ARE INVOLVED IN DIRECTING THIS EFFORT. IF THEY CAN'T PULL IT OFF, IT IS DOUBTFUL OTHER MILITARY LEADERSHIP COULD DO SO SUCCESSFULLY. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE GENERALS WOULD BE RETICENT TO REVEAL FULL DETAILS OF THEIR PLAN FOR FEAR OF LEAKS TO THE GVN.

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