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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

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TOP SECRET EYES ONLY

10/30/63

VIA CAS CHANNEL

EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE

FROM: BUNDY

1 Your 2063 shows important difference in our views and we must repeat that we cannot accept conclusion that we have no power to delay or discourage a coup. In your paragraph 12 you say that if you were convinced that the coup was going to fail you would of course do everything you could to stop it. We believe that on this basis you should do everything you can to stop or delay any operation which, in your best judgment, does not give better than even prospect of quick success.

We recognize the danger of appearing hostile to generals, but we do not share implication in your message that only ^{certain} conviction of ~~imminent~~ failure justifies intervention. We believe that your standard for intervention should be that stated above.

2. If then you should conclude that there is not a better than even chance of quick success, you should communicate this doubt to generals in a way calculated to persuade them to desist at least until chances are better. In this communication you should use the weight of your best advice and explicitly reject any implication that we oppose the effort of the generals because of preference for present regime.

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(b) When you leave Saigon and before there is a coup, Truehart will be chief of the country team, and our only modification of existing procedures is that in this circumstance we believe that all instruction and debriefing of Consein should be conducted in immediate

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consultation with Harkins and Smith so that all three know what

is said to Conein and what he reports at all stages.

(c) If you have left and a ^{military situation develops} coup occurs, we believe that ^{emergency} situation

~~satisfaction~~ requires final local U. S. authority to be vested in

most experienced officer with appropriate background and that

officer in our view is Harkins. We do not repeat not intend that

this internal switch in final responsibility should be publicized in

any way, and Harkins will of course be guided in basic posture by

our instructions, which follow in paragraph 5. Thus we do not

believe that this switch can have the effect suggested in your paragraph 8.

5. This paragraph contains our present standing instructions for U. S. posture in the event of a coup.

(a) U. S. authorities will reject appeals for direct intervention from either side, and U. S. -controlled aircraft and other resources will not be committed between the battle lines or in support of either side, without authorization from Washington.

(b) In event of indecisive contest, U. S. authorities may in their discretion agree to perform any acts agreeable to both sides, such as removal of key personalities or relay of information. In such actions, however, U. S. authorities will strenuously avoid appearance of pressure on either side. It is not in the interest of USC

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to be or appear to be instrument of existing government or instrument of coup.

6. We have your message about return to Washington and if announcement has not already been made, we suggest that it be kept as low-key and quiet as possible, and we also urge that if possible you keep open the exact time of your departure. We are strongly sensitive to great disadvantage of having you out of Saigon if this should turn out to be a week of decision and if it can be avoided we would prefer not to see you pinned to a fixed hour of departure now.



which ~~involves~~ produces a ~~real~~ military confrontation Saigon