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.LF.D3 JUNE 21, 1996 THOMAS L. SAMOLUK, ESQ. ASSASSINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD 6000 L STREET NW, SECOND
Floor Washington, DC 20530. DE Dear Thomas Samoluk, I have been working on a lengthy request for missing
Marine records to submit to you, including a preliminary inventory from Marine G-2 files which I can email in
advance if you do not choose to wait for my prose explanation of it. This is why I have not yet thanked you
for the reconsideration of some of the LIENVOY-related documents, a Board action for which I am grateful even
if not yet totally satisfied. Meanwhile I wish to draw the Board's attention to what I believe are assassination-
related records in a wholly different area: records from September to December 1963 on presidential policy-
making on Vietnam. The criterion to be applied here is that of the Board's Guidance (Sec. 1400.1 [a]): "events
reasonably related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy." There are three possible grounds for
arguing that Vietnamese policy planning is so "reasonably related." The first would be that conflict over
Vietnam policy is an explanation for the murder. The second, that a shift in Vietnam policy was a major
consequence of President Kennedy's death, regardless of how this was caused. The third ground, which along
with the second is the major contention of this letter, is that undoubted anomalies in the documentary record
on Oswald can be best explained in the light of profound policy differences inside the Kennedy Administration,
which in late 1963 came to a head over Vietnam and Cuba. I want to make it clear that my argument has
nothing to do with the first ground. I have said in print, and still believe, that the fundamental change in
Vietnam policy "which occurred between November 21 [1963] (under JFK) and on November 24 (under LBJ)
does "nothing to prove the contention that differences over Vietnam became a motive for killing Kennedy"
(\fI Deep Politics \fR, p. 30). I do wish however to strengthen the argument I made in the same pages that a
fundamental change in policy did occur at that time: Kennedy's announced policy of phased withdrawal was
replaced two days after his death by Johnson's policy of planning for phased escalation, in support of a
commitment to win. The change of Presidents (a change "reasonably related to the assassination") made in this
area a major difference to American history. This particular reasonable relationship to the President's death
and its consequences would exist, even if the President had died of a heart attack. Support for this argument
(long a minority position) has come recently from Robert McNamara's book \fI In Retrospect \fR, particularly the
new paperback edition. On pp. 80-81 McNamara writes that, in October 1963, Kennedy "endorsed our
recommendation to withdraw 1,000 men by December 31, 1963." That proposal was effectively nullified by
Johnson's declaration "on November 24 that he wanted to win the war," a directive embodied in NSAM 273
of November 26 (pp. 102-03). This change in policies is emphasized in an article by James Galbraith, which

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