

~~SECRET~~

28

SENT  
WHCA

1967 JUN 29 20 47

SEA134  
OO WTE10  
DE WTE 1277  
FROM WALT ROSTOW  
TO THE PRESIDENT  
CITE CAP67596

SANITIZED  
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4  
NIJ 92-85  
By ju, NARA, Date 3-11-94

67 JUN 29 PM 4:49

THURSDAY

~~SECRET~~  
FOR THE PRESIDENT  
FROM WALT ROSTOW

WE CHECKED SAIGON BY TELEPHONE ON THE ASSOCIATED PRESS STORY OF  
CONFLICT AMONG THE MILITARY AND MILITARY MOVEMENTS SUGGESTING  
A COUP ATTEMPT.

SAIGON SAID THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR THE STORY.

STATE HAS DENIED AS YOU WILL SEE ON TICKER.

THE FOLLOWING CABLE IS THE BEST ACCOUNT WE HAVE ON THE  
MILITARY MEETINGS OF THE 28TH.

WESTY IS SEEING VIEN TO GET A MORE AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT.

~~SECRET~~ SAIGON 29152

1. WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORT [REDACTED]  
RELATING TO RECENT TOP-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OF VIET NAM MILITARY MEETINGS  
ON THE SUBJECT OF BIG MINH'S RETURN AND THE UNITY OF THE ARMED  
FORCES. 1.3(a)(4)

2. THE REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MILITARY MEMBERS OF  
THE DIRECTORATE ON JUNE 27 WAS CONFIRMED. THERE WAS AGREEMENT NOT  
TO PERMIT BIG MINH'S RETURN AND TO SEND GENERALS VIEN AND LA  
TO BANGKOK TO INFORM MINH. GENERAL CHIEU INITIALLY OPPOSED THE  
DECISION ON CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS BUT ACCDED TO THE VIEWS OF THE  
OTHER GENERALS.

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION COPY

COPY LBJ LIBRARY

3. GENERALS VIEN AND LA RETURNED JUNE 28 FROM BANGKOK AND  
A 5-HOUR MEETING WAS HELD LAST NIGHT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER  
FURTHER. THE TWO GENERALS REPORTED THAT BIG MINH WAS  
DETERMINED TO RETURN AND REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE DECISION  
CONVEYED TO HIM. THE ORIGINAL DECISION AGAINST HIS RETURN  
WAS REAFFIRMED LAST NIGHT, HOWEVER, AND THE DECISION WAS  
UNANIMOUS. (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY CERTAIN MEASURES HAVE  
ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO ASSURE THAT BIG MINH IS NOT ABLE TO EFFECT  
HIS RETURN BY HIMSELF.)

~~SECRET~~

4. DURING THE MEETING LAST NIGHT THE OTHER GENERALS FORCED  
THIEU AND KY TO DISCUSS THEIR CANDIDACIES AND THE QUESTION  
OF UNITY OF THE ARMED FORCES.

THIEU SAID THAT HE HAD NO PROSPECT OF WINNING,  
HAD NO ORGANIZATION OR MEANS OR PROGRAM, BUT THAT IT HAD BECOME  
A MATTER OF HONOR AND PRESTIGE AND HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RUN. HE  
CITED HIS GRIEVANCES COVERING THE LAST TWO YEARS, SAYING THAT HE  
HAD BEEN PUSHED ASIDE FROM THE MAIN STREAM OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS,  
HAD BEEN KEPT OUT OF THE PUBLIC LIMELIGHT, AND MORE RECENTLY  
HAD EVEN HAD HIS STATEMENTS CENSORED. REPORTEDLY, KY  
EXPRESSED HIS REGRET AT THE MISUNDERSTANDING AND APOLOGIZED  
TO GENERAL THIEU FOR THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY SOME OF HIS SUP-  
PORTERS. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THIS EXCHANGE BETWEEN  
THIEU AND KY CLEARED THE AIR SOMEWHAT AND WAS A GREAT RELIEF  
TO THE OTHER GENERAL PRESENT WHO HAD BEEN INCREASINGLY FEEL-  
ING THE STRAIN OF THE THIEU-KY RIVALRY.

1.3(a)(4)

5. THERE WAS A MEETING ON THE  
MORNING OF JUNE 28 OF THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM  
DIVISION COMMANDERS, APPARENTLY ONE OF A SERIES HELD PERIODICALLY  
AMONG THEM. AT THE MEETING THERE WAS A FULL DISCUSSION OF THE  
PROBLEM OF DIVISION WITHIN THE MILITARY AND THE NECESSITY TO  
AVOID MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ELECTION PROCESS. IT  
WAS AGREED THAT THE DIVISION COMMANDERS AND THEIR SUBORDINATE  
COMMANDERS SHOULD IN NO WAY BECOME INVOLVED IN THE  
CAMPAIGNS BY THIEU AND KY.

1.3(a)(4)

6. COMMENT: THIS SERIES OF MEETING AMONG THE TOP GENERALS  
AND THE DIVISION COMMANDERS IS REASSURING AND APPEARS TO REFLECT  
A GENERAL AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF DIVISION WITHIN THE MILITARY  
ARISING FROM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

1.3(a)(4)

IT SEEMS THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME CLEAR-  
ING OF THE AIR AND PROBABLY SOME PROGRESS IN THE DIRECTION  
OF STERILIZING THE MILITARY FROM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. IF  
THIS REPORT IS ACCURATE, IT WILL AFFORD A USEFUL BASIS FOR DIS-  
CUSSIONS WITH THIEU AND KY FOLLOWING UP MY LUNCHEON WITH  
THEM ON JUNE 19

BUNKER

DTG: 291825Z JUNE 1967

~~SECRET~~

PRESERVATION COPY