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FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP67719

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JULY 8, 1967

AS YOU KNOW, THE MILITARY COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE VIET CONG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS AND CHIEF POLITICAL OFFICER OF THE VIET CONG IN SOUTH VIET NAM IS REPORTED DEAD OF A HEART ATTACK. HIS NAME WAS GENERAL THANH. HE AND GENERAL GIAP WERE THE ONLY FOUR-STAR GENERALS IN NORTH VIET NAM. THEY WERE LONG REPORTED TO BE RIVALS, WITH THANH BELIEVED FROM HIS WRITINGS AS WELL AS HIS REPUTATION TO BE THE LEADER OF A HARD-LINE RATHER THAN A FLEXIBLE POSITION. THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IS SPECULATING THAT HIS DEATH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN NATURAL AND COULD REFLECT OR CAUSE A SHIFT IN THE BALANCE OF HANOI'S POLICY.

BUT THERE IS NOT ONE SCRAP OF EVIDENCE BEYOND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH AND TOP-DRAWER HANOI FUNERAL ON JULY 7.

DTG: 081815Z JULY 1967

GPS: 130 IMI 130

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