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Authority NND 939550By JG NARA, Date 1/19/06

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Action

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Info

FROM: SAIGON

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 490, SEPTEMBER 12, 5 PM

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Authority NW 24045
By Hmm/aw, NARA, Date 10/27/04

PRIORITY

ACTION DEPARTMENT PRIORITY 490, INFORMATION CINCPAC 317,
BANGKOK 57, CAIRO 1.

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LIMIT DISTRIBUTION

DR. TRAN KIM TUYEN, FORMER SEPES DIRECTOR, WHO WAS NAMED
SOMETIME AGO TO BE CONSUL GENERAL IN CAIRO, CALLED ON TRUEHEART
AT LUNCHTIME TODAY TO SAY GOODBYE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED
ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY TO LEAVE VIETNAM BY TONIGHT,
AND HE WAS THEREFORE TAKING A PLANE FOR BANGKOK THIS EVENING.

REASON FOR HASTY DEPARTURE GIVEN BY PRESIDENT WAS THAT HE WANTS
TUYEN IN CAIRO IMMEDIATELY TO PERSUADE EGYPT TO SUPPORT VIETNAM
IN UN DEBATE. TUYEN THOUGHT REASON WAS SPECIOUS PARTLY BECAUSE
HE DOESN'T YET HAVE EGYPTIAN VISA (AND PLANS TO WAIT IN BANGKOK
UNTIL HE RECEIVES IT), AND PARTLY BECAUSE HE THINKS IT IS OUT OF
THE QUESTION THAT HE COULD ESTABLISH HIMSELF IN TIME TO
INFLUENCE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE.

AS EXPECTED, TUYEN TOOK EXCEEDINGLY DIM VIEW OF PROSPECTS FOR
VIETNAM. HE FEELS THAT SITUATION IS GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE AND
THAT DEMORALIZATION HAS EXTENDED TO THE COUNTRYSIDE. ASKED FOR
BASIS FOR LATTER STATEMENT, HE SAID HIS SOURCE WAS COLONEL
THAO, WHO WAS FROM THE SOUTH AND HAD RECENTLY BEEN LOOKING INTO
THE SITUATION THERE. THAO HAD FOUND THAT EVEN THE "ELDERS"
IN THE VILLAGES, WHO HAD TRADITIONALLY SUPPORTED GVN, WERE NOW
TURNING AGAINST GOVERNMENT. TUYEN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOUTHERN

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-2- 490, SEPTEMBER 12, 5 PM, FROM SAIGON

VILLAGERS ARE NORMALLY PASSIVE AND NOT GREATLY INTERESTED IN NATIONAL POLITICS. HOWEVER, THEY HAD CONCLUDED ON THE BASIS OF RECENT EVENTS THAT GVN WAS AGAINST BUDDHISTS, REMARKED THAT THEY THEMSELVES WERE BUDDHISTS, AND DRAWN THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION.

TUYEN FELT THAT ONLY HOPE FOR VIETNAM COULD BE A COUP AND THAT IT MUST COME WITHIN TWO MONTHS AT A MAXIMUM. IF LONGER DELAYED, COMMUNISTS WOULD HAVE MADE SUCH INROADS THAT THEY WOULD BE WINNERS ANYWAY.

ON OTHER HAND, TUYEN DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE MUCH HOPE THAT COUP WOULD IN FACT BE MOUNTED, AS GENERALS WERE DIVIDED. HE SPOKE VAGUELY OF POSSIBILITY OF LOWER-RANKING OFFICERS DOING SOMETHING.

TUYEN SAID THAT HE HAD TO LEAVE HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN IN SAIGON UNTIL HE IS ESTABLISHED IN CAIRO. HE WAS CONCERNED FOR THEIR SAFETY AND ASKED WHETHER TRUEHEART COULD HELP THEM IN CASE OF NEED (TUYEN LIVES ACROSS THE STREET FROM TRUEHEART). TRUEHEART SAID THAT IN CASE OF CIVIL DISORDER HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO HELP FAMILY. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT IF IT WERE SIMPLY A CASE OF FEAR OF ARREST OR SOMETHING OF THAT SORT, HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE MRS. TUYEN IN. TUYEN SAID THAT HE WAS ONLY THINKING OF THE CASE OF CIVIL DISORDER.

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO WHEREABOUTS OF DANG DUC KHOI (DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION), TUYEN SAID HE HAD EITHER ESCAPED THE COUNTRY OR BEEN ARRESTED. HE HAD NOT SEEN HIM FOR 10 DAYS AND HAD BEEN UNABLE TO FIND OUT ANYTHING ABOUT HIM.

GP-2.

LODGE

BAP

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~~SECRET~~