

rcp3rd

From:  
 To:  
 Sent: Sunday, April 30, 2006 5:30 PM  
 Subject: FW: Some of your recollections

Addendum to my para 5, below: Lou Conein was speaking in French while talking on the phone with Duc, but I think I understood pretty well what he was saying.  
 SVW

----- Forwarded Message

**From:**  
**Date:** Sun, 30 Apr 2006 16:01:42 -0400  
**To:**  
**Conversation:** Some of your recollections  
**Subject:** Re: Some of your recollections

Rufe:

To your questions:

1. I headed up USOM's Provincial Operations from the latter part of 1964 thru 1965 to early 1966, following which I was named "US Mission Coordinator," working directly for Ambassador Lodge, with responsibilities that corresponded roughly to those of a chief of staff. I returned to the States in June 1967.
2. As I recall, you used my apartment in Saigon a couple of weeks during the summer of 1965, while I went home to bring my family back to Baguio.
3. I worked as Ed Lansdale's deputy in the Pentagon from June 1961 to July 1963. (Note: In years following, Ed would refer to my having been his executive officer. He did recruit me, however, to be his deputy, which is the term habitually used by McNamara and Gilpatric.) I was with Ed when the discussion took place with McNamara some in the winter or spring of 1962 about the "X-Factor" in the Viet Nam War. My memory is that McNamara was rather cool and unreceptive to the concept, so much so that I was trying my best (tactfully) to get Ed to end the conversation and get out of there before he damaged his already somewhat diminished standing with McNamara even more. I do not have Currey's bio on Ed, and I would be glad to review the extract to which you refer, if you would like to send it to me.

I was never aware of any memo concerning the "X-Factor," so I cannot help you further on that subject.

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4. USAF LT GEN Joseph Carroll was appointed the first director of the Defense Intelligence Agency on October 1, 1961, and served in that capacity until September 15, 1969. (I later became the fifth DIA Director #5 in May 1976.)

5. Re- Lou Conein, his story jibes completely with what I recall. I had gotten word through several reliable sources that LT GEN Duc, IV Corps Commander, was about to attempt a coup against GEN Nguyen Khanh. That same afternoon I asked Luigi to stop by my apartment (Oggie Williams' old apartment over Passage Eden) as soon as possible. When Luigi heard the news later that evening of what Duc was up to, he immediately got on the long distance phone to Cantho and proceeded to give the little Vietnamese general a loud and violently profane verbal thrashing, saying — among other things, "Remember, you arrogant little S.O.B, I knew you when you were only a sergeant..." While I could not hear Duc's end of the conversation, apparently he did say he would cease and desist with his coup plans. That night I sat up late preparing a full report on Duc's machinations. The following morning while flying with Ambassador Maxwell Taylor to (I believe) Pleiku, I passed the report to him. The Ambassador read it through carefully, thanked me and handed it back without comment.

Hope this helps.

It would be good indeed to have some time with you down here this summer.

Warm regards,

Sam

---

**From:**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Apr 2006 12:20:31 -0400

**To:**

**Subject:** Some of your recollections

Dear Sam:

I have gotten in my writing to September 5, 1965 when I came out to Saigon to join Ed's team for about three weeks to help them get started. As I recall you were on leave or going on leave and you kindly lent me your apartment to stay in. You were at that time the head of USOM Provincial Operations? Is my recollection correct? I remember staying in your apartment during one of my visits and I think it was this one. I went back in '66 and '67 for about three weeks each time, either in August or Sept of those years.

In a conversation with you I recall you saying you accompanied Ed to McNamara's office in

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1962 when Ed told McNamara he was missing the "x factor". Cecil Curry describes this visit on page 2 of his biography of Ed. If you have a copy could you check it to see if it conforms with your memory. I want to use it in my introduction because I think as an incident it is a good explanation of the problem, not just with McNamara but with the whole American effort. If you don't have the Curry book I can send you my description of the incident which is closely based on what Curry says. I would like to say in an end note that you were there and what is described fairly represents your recollection.

What you may not know or remember is that afterwards Ed sent McNamara a five page memorandum spelling out how you could measure the "x factor" containing a detailed list of questions which military officers with field experience in Vietnam could ask. McNamara actually said kind things about the memo and sent it on to General Joe Carroll to incorporate in what he was doing. Ed spoke to Carroll who said he would take into account. (Do you remember who Joe Carroll was and what he was doing?) All this is related in document 237 of Volume II Foreign Relations of the United States, Vietnam 1962. Since I never saw anything like this in any guidance being provided to the Sector Advisors or to MACV intelligence when I got out there in 1962, I assume, like other useful ideas about effective counterinsurgency it just died because it did not fit into any conventional pigeonhole.

Lastly, Lou Conein, in a long interview about when he got recalled by General Taylor in September 1964. Initially, Taylor gave him thirty days to leave after General Khanh called Lou to go up to see him in Dalat. When Lou got there Khanh goes into a tirade about Taylor and insists that Lou take down literally what he is saying and then go tell it to Taylor (espece de cont, etc.). Lou did, Taylor got so mad he tried to fly to Dalat immediately but was turned back by bad weather. He sees Khanh after a couple of days and by this time Khanh has calmed down and says nothing. In the meantime Khanh's brother tells Beverly Deepe of Newsweek all about it. Lou thinks Taylor probably blames him for the leak although Taylor doesn't say so. That's just background. The according to Lou, shortly after he gets his 30 day notice, you get word that General Duc, the IV Corps Commander, is about to launch a coup against Khanh. You call Lou and tell him about it. Lou calls Duc on the phone and reads him the riot act so Duc promises to call off his coup. This is reported to Taylor who gets mad because Lou doesn't have the authority to do what he did, so he gives Lou only 48 hours to get out of the country. Lou goes to Hong Kong where Elyette and the children are. According to Lou, the day after he leaves Saigon Duc launches his coup. I just want confirmation from you that you did call Lou with the information about Duc. I think you may have gotten it from George Melvin who was quite close to Duc, I don't know. Seems to me I recall dimly that George was probably sympathetic to Duc's point of view.

Any help you can give me with all of this would be most welcome. Trust you are reasonably well. Barbara and I intend to spend some extended time at our place in Charlotte County in part of June, part of July and August and I would like to come over to see you.

Regards,

Rufe

----- End of Forwarded Message



rcp3rd

**From:** "Sam Wilson" <swilson@hsc.edu>  
**To:** "rcp3rd" <rcp3rd@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 30, 2006 4:01 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Some of your recollections

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**Date:** Thu, 27 Apr 2006 12:20:31 -0400  
**To:** Sam Wilson <swilson@hsc.edu>  
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