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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: (Conversation with Dr. Khoach on 21 September 1965. Dr. Khoach address: 147 Yen Do, telephone 22681)

1. Captain Bich of the Chieu Hoi program took me to see Dr. Khoach. Dr. Khoach is one of three living senior members of the Cao Dai (the other two are Cao Hoai San and Le Thanh Phuoc -- whose title is Bao Te.) When the official GVN interfaith committee was dissolved after the fall of General Khanh, Dr. Khoach formed a non-governmental, unofficial religious committee with the blessing of the Cao Dai, Catholics (including Archbishop Binh) and the Buddhists (Tich Tamo Chau).

2. Dr. Khoach has been entrusted by the Cao Dai Church with the task of first unifying the Cao Dai. He is now in the process of holding a convention in Saigon fm of all the Cao Dai splinter sects to seek a basis for reunification under Tay Ninh. According to Khoach all have agreed to a provisional change in one clause of the Cao Dai constitution. Subsequent to this convention there will be a ceremony of reunification in Tay Ninh.

3. Dr. Khoach is planning a meeting of religious leaders of all faiths under the aegis of the Cao Dai to be held in Tay Ninh in late October. He claims to have the support of all religious groups for this including the Buddhist Vien Hoa Dao. He said that the Vien Hoa Dao would not object to attendance by the Southern Buddhist faction.

4. Dr. Khoach talked in general terms about his past conversations with General Taylor and how he felt that a national reconciliation could be achieved with the NLF if a strong GVN could be achieved. It was apparent that General Taylor must not have understood what he was talking about. (Some of Dr. Khoach's thinking did appear a bit fuzzy.) Dr. Khoach asked me what I thought the religious leaders could achieve and I said I thought they could help re-establish a good moral climate in Vietnam along traditional Vietnamese lines. He was enthusiastic about this. He said that behind Vietnamese regionalism and splinter political groups was a strong feeling of adherence to religions and to a belief in God and that these beliefs could be used to help bring Vietnamese together.

LG: RCPHillips:pag
September 22, 1965

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