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HEREWITH REPORT ON MY PRIVATE TALK WITH DIEM WHICH LASTED FROM 5 TO 7:10 PM.

HE BEGAN BY EXPRESSING PARTICULAR APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S PERSONAL LETTER INTRODUCING ME WHICH HE SAID HE HAD CAREFULLY READ. HE WAS PLEASED TO HAVE SOMEONE LIKE ME AS AMBASSADOR WHO WAS OUT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE.

I SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN A PARTICULAR HONOR FOR ME WHEN THE PRESIDENT HAD OFFERED ME THE POST OF AMBASSADOR TO VIETNAM AND HAD THOUGHT I COULD BE USEFUL IN IT. I REALIZED I KNEW LITTLE ABOUT VIETNAM, BUT FELT I KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND ALSO SOMETHING ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS AND HOPED I MIGHT ADVISE HIM ON AMERICAN AFFAIRS AND THAT HE WOULD LISTEN TO MY ADVICE WHETHER OR NOT HE TOOK IT.

I SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AS THE TERM IS USED IN FOREIGN AFFAIRES, DOES NOT INCLUDE CONGRESS AND THAT IN THE BROAD SENSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HOOK THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BECAUSE PUBLIC OPINION IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY LONG RANGE POLICY AND WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC OPINION YOU CAN NOT GET THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS AND WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS YOU CAN NOT GET FUNDS. IT WAS INTERESTING TO ME THAT PEOPLE WHOM I HAD KNOWN ALL MY LIFE IN POLITICS THOUGHT THAT MADAME NHU WAS THE CHIEF OF STATE OF VIET-NAM AND THAT I HAD MET SEVERAL PEOPLE IN MASSACHUSETTS WHO HAD SEEN HER PICTURE ON THE COVERS OF MAGAZINES AND HAD READ SOME OF HER STATEMENTS ABOUT BARBECUING

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THE PRIESTS AND TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE BUDDHISTS AND THAT THIS HAD SHOCKED PUBLIC OPINION. THE IDEA THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PERSECUTING THE BUDDHISTS WAS ALSO SHOCKING TO AMERICAN OPINION WHICH FAVORS RELIGIOUS TOLERATION. ALL THESE THINGS WERE THREATENING AMERICAN SUPPORT OF VIET-NAM.

DIEM SAID THAT HE HAD DONE HIS BEST TO GET MADAME NHU TO KEEP QUIET AND THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO HER SEVERAL TIMES. HE SAID JOKINGLY THAT HE HAD EVEN THREATENED TO TAKE A WIFE BUT THAT SHE SAID THAT SHE WAS A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY AND HAD A RIGHT TO MAKE SPEECHES.

I TOLD HIM THAT A DRAMATIC GESTURE SUCH AS LIBERATING THE BUDDHIST PRISONERS WOULD HAVE A GOOD EFFECT ON AMERICAN OPINION. HE SAID HE HAD LIBERATED MOST OF THEM AND TO PROVE IN POINT THAT BUDDHISTS WERE SMALL PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION GAVE ME BOOK WHICH I AM POUCHING ENTITLED "BUDDHISM IN VIET-NAM" PUBLISHED BY THE XA LOI PAGODA IN SAIGON WHICH STATES "UNDER THE GENERAL BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION'S AUTHORITY AND GENERAL DIRECTION, ARE GROUPED, ON THE ONE HAND, 3 SANGHAS NUMBERING WELL OVER 3,000 MONKS AND ABOUT 600 NUNS, ON THE OTHER HAND, THREE COMMUNITIES OF DISCIPLES WHICH BRANCH OUT THEIR RAMIFICATION AS FAR AS TO REMOTE HAMLETS. THE FIGURES OF ADHERENTS TO THESE THREE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED LAY ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR AFFILIATES REACH ABOUT 1,000,000, TO WHICH IT SHOULD BE ADDED AN IMPORTANT NUMBER OF NO-ASSOCIATE DISCIPLES BY AS MUCH AS THREEFOLD."

THE NEXT TWO HOURS WERE SPENT BY HIM IN A REMARKABLE DISCOURSE ABOUT HIS OWN FAMILY AND EXTENT TO WHICH VIET-NAM WAS AN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY. THE SERIOUS LACK OF EDUCATED PEOPLE, THE DIFFICULTY WHICH HE HAD IN FINDING PEOPLE WHO COULD WRITE A SIMPLE STATEMENT FOR HIM, HOW HE HAD TO WRITE MOST OF HIS OWN PROCLAMATIONS HIMSELF, HOW INFERIOR PERSONS HELD POSTS IN UNIVERSITIES WHO ABUSED THEIR TRUST BY TURNING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS INTO CENTERS OF UNREST.

HE THEN TALKED ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH A SMALL BUDDHIST SECT HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY AGITATORS AND HOW PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED ONE OF WHICH COULD KNOCK DOWN A WHOLE HOUSE. HE SAID THAT DELINQUENTS WERE USED TO AGITATE THE PEOPLE IN THE MARKET PLACE AND THAT OFTEN THE POLICE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FIRE IN SELF DEFENSE. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A WELL ORGANIZED PLAN

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TO CREATE UNREST AROUND THE COUNTRY WHICH WOULD PULL THE TROOPS OUT OF THE CITY, LEAVING THE CAPITAL DEFENSELESS. IT WAS UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HE HAD DECREED MARTIAL LAW. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM ME HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG MARTIAL LAW WOULD CONTINUE.

AT THE VERY END OF THE MEETING, HE SAID HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE DISCIPLINE, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE UNITED STATES' ACTIVITIES IN SAIGON AND THA THERE WOULD BE AN END TO REPORTS OF DIVERS ACTIVITIES INTERFERING IN VIETNAMESE AFFAIRS BY VARIOUS UNITED STATES AGENCIES.

I SAID THAT I HAD JUST ARRIVED AND NATURALLY COULD NOT KNOW EVERYTHING THAT WAS GOING ON BUT WOULD LOOK INTO IT.

GP-3.

LODGE

JMH

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