

LBJL: Bromley K. Smith Papers, b. 24, f. "Mys in Vietnam, Aug - Nov 1963."

Pres - Ball Mc Namara Taylor Harrison  
Walt Whitman Koubek Bundy Forrestal Aug 28  
Dillon Helms THE WHITE HOUSE Morning noon  
WASHINGTON  
Helms Colby Coster Clifton Morrow  
AG - VP later - 12:20

1. Intelligence Briefing - Saigon Beach Telegram  
 Estimate of CAS station <sup>to Diem</sup> read
2. Taylor - US forces in area for E & E  
 3 to 4,000 evacuees could be lifted by force  
 Lodge concerned <sup>US forces being moved</sup> not enough <sup>clear to Saigon</sup>  
 Felt working on way to add <sup>to US forces</sup>  
 in country, airlift is large  
 over 4,000 Americans in Saigon  
 excluding military  
 Forces loyal to Diem outnumbered 2 to 1  
 in Saigon area by those <sup>following</sup> rebel generals  
 outside, <sup>so far</sup> forces of rebels outnumber  
 Diem forces - so long run, rebels  
 would outnumber Diem forces  
 Headcount not all important because  
 few tough units could control situation  
 Nilsman - Gen ~~Diem~~ <sup>Diem</sup> is key - if he corruptible  
 try to get him to defect <sup>go against</sup> Diem  
 revolt - as said yesterday, think Diem & we  
 know of our activity.  
~~Saigon telegram~~ off Saigon  
 Ball - Leads of 7th fleet movement suggested  
 by Lodge & Haskins -  
 JFK = Doubts - obvious evidence of intervention <sup>US</sup>

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By, JAL, NARA, Date 4-20-93

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MacN - Decide first if we looking. If so,  
show defect doubtful generals  
General have almost pulled set along  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
in last 24 hours WASHINGTON

Ball - Def if not imp to live with <sup>ascendant</sup> New  
no option - beyond pt of navigation  
How make things work

MacN - If proceed as being pushed, then  
go to ruin. Cables raise doubt  
Diana can overpower resistance  
at least initially

JFK - Lodge & Harbison both say go  
ahead. not take position that  
we have to go ahead because we  
have gone so far. If not in cards  
would unload. Generals not  
very enthusiastic.

Bundy consequences of locking off us  
going forward  
Decide today what to do to defect  
generals. Reduce our freedom of  
action every time we act to  
help generals

Ball - If shift from CAS to mil contacts  
major change. Up? This point  
no contact with generals except CAS  
To push ones doubtful, will shift  
to mil contacts & review

JFK - I will ask Harbison if he approves  
Both he & Lodge approve - say  
support.

Molt - Surprised by Harbison support  
of Comp plan (in reply to JFK)

Further encouragement <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~country~~ <sup>country</sup> counter  
 to our agreement on econ asst. Dien  
 foresaw disagreement with US over running  
 internal affairs of <sup>the</sup> ~~country~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~country~~ <sup>country</sup>. Bad faith  
 involved - <sup>THE WHITE HOUSE</sup> <sup>WASHINGTON</sup> - ~~gross~~ <sup>gross</sup> reservations -  
 personal commitment based on gov.  
 instructions, Oppose coup to  
 get gov. we can deal with & a base  
 on which we can win Viet Cong.

① Bad principle + bad precedent  
 more denial to get preponderance  
 force + quick solution ② backing  
 off (difficult) ③ leave generals  
 alone + let go if they howl

Bundy - Difference between gaining  
 operational control of coup on present  
 sit in which we merely letting  
 generals we understand + that we  
 can't live with me

Wilson - Some things we can do  
 in which US hand won't blow

Poell - Dien broken promises - have  
 not violation of good faith -  
 not sympathetic to line that we  
 breaking commitments - anti American

① can't win war with present situation  
 US position in eyes of world being  
 badly damaged - Hand can't back off

② let generals go - if lose, they lose  
 this no good - half baked

③ we do it right - no alternative  
 urge we decide to go thru to success

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Harrison agrees  
Dillon - If anything starts, it will be  
labeled as show & if we go must succeed,  
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WASHINGTON

SFK

1. What do we or suggest how to maximize success here
  2. Ask Lodge + Hartness how to build up coup forces
- at present, does not look like coup forces can win

(Dillon - then, don't go) <sup>ways</sup>  
asked Deferre to explain how to build up anti-Diem forces in Saigon

- Harrison ~~to~~ Lodge asking standing authority to
1. suspend all econ aid to gov but to generals
  2. suspend all US operations
  3. US mil assist coup
  4. Public announcement of US support.

MoN - Tell Lodge + Hartness <sup>to</sup> don't let coup start if it can't win  
① because can't deal with Diem if coup fails - question now if can succeed  
② first action to help generals actions such as ① defecting generals & movement of US fleet

Bundy

1. most generals favor coup
2. US controls all US assistance

Harrison - Have lost Viet Nam if coup fails - Can't win war with me

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Harrison - Have lost fight + must  
withdraw if coup doesn't take place  
we put ~~the~~ Diem in - they betrayed  
+ double crossed us <sup>THE WHITE HOUSE</sup> always favored  
<sup>WASHINGTON</sup> assisting us - made mistake to work  
Hilsman - can't stop generals - they  
go or die - can't win with Diem

with him on strategic  
howlets

Harrison - <sup>not</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>Diem</sup>  
generals were <sup>winning</sup> <sup>because</sup>  
they defecting - opposition could rally

- JFK
1. Back to Lodge + Harkins
  2. Tell Lodge + Harkins we can't  
up force favoring Diem  
balance of forces

Bundy go back specifically  
Lodge + Harkins can't handle  
an caliber of troops.

A6 - what steps Diem taking?  
if he knows of troops. He going  
to act - overt. Figure out  
how to offset his actions

Nelt - what condition will country  
be in after coup? Stable or  
revolving leadership

Hilsman - Diem put VP in power  
+ real Korea plan on basis  
little info. Important that  
Diem, we be spied

Nalt - Only Diem ~~can~~ can hold this  
fragmented country together. Possibly  
Diem could get the news out but

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Washington  
doubts. & My this again. Discarded  
by Lodge for fear of exposing coup  
Horvath

Disagreement. Pol. sit with blow

Some time. Release sit again

Pol forces will rally against Diem

Nalt - Not anti-American  
not Diem

6 p.m. meeting



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Coup in South Vietnam, November 1963**

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