

SECRET

-3- 624, SEPTEMBER 16, 6 PM (SECTION ONE OF TWO) FROM SAIGON

(A) BECAUSE OF VICE PRESIDENT THO'S KNOWLEDGE OF SOUTH WHERE COMMUNIST GUERRILLA INFILTRATION IS SPREADING SO RAPIDLY I WOULD SUGGEST THAT HE BE SHIFTED FROM MINISTRY NATIONAL ECONOMY TO MINISTRY INTERIOR. (DIEM HAS ALREADY MADE THIS SUGGESTION BUT VICE PRESIDENT MOST RELUCTANT TAKE JOB.)

(B) IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMOVE ANY FEELING WITHIN ARMED FORCES THAT FAVORITISM AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MOTIVATE PROMOTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS. ALSO VITAL IN ORDER DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH VIET-CONG THREAT THAT CHANNELS OR COMMAND BE FOLLOWED BOTH DOWN AND UP. TO ASSIST IN BRINGING ABOUT THESE CHANGES IN ARMED FORCES, I WOULD SUGGEST APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME MINISTER NATIONAL DEFENSE. (THUAN HAS INDICATED DIEM HAS BEEN THINKING OF GIVING THUAN DEFENSE JOB.)

(C) RUMORS ABOUT MR. AND MRS. NHU ARE CREATING GROWING DISSENTION WITHIN COUNTRY AND SERIOUSLY DAMAGE POLITICAL POSITION OF DIEM GOVERNMENT. WHETHER RUMORS TRUE OR FALSE, POLITICALLY IMPORTANT FACT IS THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE BELIEVE THEM TO BE TRUE. THEREFORE, BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT IN INTEREST DIEM GOVERNMENT SOME ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. IN ANALAGOUS SITUATIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING US IMPORTANT, USEFUL GOVERNMENT PERSONALITIES HAVE HAD TO BE SACRIFICED FOR POLITICAL REASONS. I WOULD SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT PRESIDENT MIGHT APPOINT NHU TO AMBASSADORSHIP ABROAD.

(D) SIMILARLY TRAN KIM TUYEN, NHU'S HENCHMAN AND HEAD OF SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, SHOULD BE SENT ABROAD IN DIPLOMATIC CAPACITY BECAUSE OF HIS GROWING IDENTIFICATION IN PUBLIC MIND WITH ALLEGED SECRET POLICE METHODS OF REPRESSION AND

DURBROW

SECRET