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MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY DOUGLAS

From: Brig Gen Lansdale, OSO/OSD

Subject: Vietnam

In determining U.S. policy towards Vietnam in the immediate future, you might find the following personal observations of help:

President Ngo Dinh Diem will have the 1954 coup attempt of General Minh in mind as he deals with the leaders of the 1960 coup attempt and receives U.S. advice about punishment. In 1954, Diem was persuaded to let Minh and his key officers leave the country unpunished. A few weeks later, they were instigating a revolt by the sect forces against Diem which led to considerable bloodshed in March and April 1955. President Diem always felt that a little more firmness with a few individuals would have cooled many of the hot-heads who later listed to Minh.

The 1954 and 1960 events have enough similarities to make the 1954 lesson fresh in his mind. Both coup attempts were in November. The military leader of each claimed inspiration from Nasser of Egypt and had rather close ties with former chief of state Bao Dai. Both had imprecise programs of political aims, stated as generalized ideals which sounded as phoney as a \$3-bill to the people they hoped would rally to their cause, but which coincided with a French analysis of the desires of the U.S. Ambassador and his political staff. Both were certain that Army units wouldn't act against them; both wooed the sect organizations and the same political parties; both seem to share the same friends and acquaintances in France and Cambodia.

The actions of the U.S. Ambassador undoubtedly have deepened President Diem's suspicions of his motivations. Diem cannot help but wonder at U.S. objectives as voiced by such a

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