

SECRET - LIMIT DISTRIBUTION

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Despatch 157
From Saigon

ENGLISH TEXT OF NOTES ON NGO DINH NHU AND DR. TRAN KIM TUYEN

In addition to these positive moves, again as a friend and most reluctantly, I feel that I should bring to your attention the increasing discontent among various strata of Vietnamese society with the role and alleged activities of your brother Ngo Dinh Nhu and Madame Nhu. I repeat, I bring this matter up most reluctantly since I have respect for Mr. and Mrs. Nhu and I know how much you count on his advice and counsel. I know personally of the many contributions he has made to the success of your Government and I know that he is equally desirous with you to maintain the independence and integrity of Viet-Nam, as well as to advance the fine progress which has already been made in your country. We have discussed this type of rumor before and I know that you have full confidence in your brother. Nevertheless, the position that Mr. and Mrs. Nhu hold in Viet-Nam has become the basis for a large amount of criticism and discontent against the Government. Unfortunately, whether based on fact or not, this criticism has reached the point that question is no longer whether these allegations are true or not. The fact that more and more people are believing them is seriously damaging the prestige of the Government. Unfortunately these rumors are also being used against your Government by Viet Cong propagandists in the countryside. Therefore, since it appears that these allegations are assuming a larger and larger importance in the public mind and are causing considerable discontent in the country, it might perhaps be advisable to give serious consideration to transferring Mr. Nhu to other duties. It has been suggested that he might be given an Ambassadorial assignment abroad. As you know, Mr. President, many Governments, including my own, have from time to time found it necessary to remove or transfer highly useful officials because of the adverse public image they have created.

In this connection we have also heard much criticism of the role and activities of Dr. Tran Kim Tuyen, who, according to a growing number of reports, has come to represent a negative force in the minds of many. This too constitutes a basis for serious discontent and resentment against the Government. I personally know Dr. Tuyen and know of his abilities and contribution to the work of the Government, but because of the negative attitude about him which has developed, it might be well to consider his appointment to a post abroad.

I repeat, as unfounded as these reports and rumors may be, it has often proven advantageous to other Governments to make transfers of this kind.

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