



We told De we found it extraordinary that Chuong should make such suggestions both because there was no question of replacing Diem, as we had clearly stated on several occasions, and secondly because Chuong was Diem's own Ambassador and such speculation did not appear to be very loyal to his chief. De replied he was not surprised for Chuong was a notorious opportunist who could adjust himself readily to circumstances and had apparently become convinced that Diem was sinking ship and he was jumping off it promptly. We also expressed surprise that Chuong had left for Cannes to see Bao Dai immediately after arriving in Paris. De said this was in keeping with his character as well for he would undoubtedly attempt to make clear to Bao Dai that he was no longer loyal to Diem and ready to jump on new bandwagon when and if it were formed. De remarked slyly that Bao Dai would not be taken in.

and shall

De's beliefs  
to this

De also claims that Chuong spoke in friendly fashion about sects even to point of proposing them as possible successor to Diem. Claimed he told De that his information from Saigon was to effect that if Diem were removed as Prime Minister sects would be content to withdraw from taking part in "executive branch of government" and return to administering their localized <sup>provincial?</sup> aravyakew (as received) control.

De again expressed Bao Dai's concern that whatever steps are to be taken in Saigon toward solution present **crisis** be taken without delay. We replied that Generals Collins and Ely were working night and day toward that end and were well aware of urgency.

De is proceeding to Cannes tomorrow and will return at beginning next week when he will call at Embassy again.

Chuong called us yesterday to say that he would like to see us but was proceeding immediately to Cannes. It was agreed that we would see him on his return.

De's remarks should be recorded

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DILLON

3 copies/rk

with reserve. One of his principal characteristics is that he has been in the B.D. (since 1949) has been to undermine any figures he has felt were attaining real power & influence.

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NLE 2013-262

Authority

By MMK

NLDD

Date

5/17/16

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Form FS-412

Imp. Le-van-Tan - 53.453

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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FROM : Paris

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*No action required*

*k*

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Limited distribution.

Following Department's instruction contained Department telegram 3653 we called on Nguyen De and gave him Department's position regarding reported change in government in Vietnam including Department's denial that there was any agreement with French to seek replacement for Diem as reported Department telegram 3635 repeated Saigon 4515. De made no comment except that he would immediately make know our position to Bao Dai as requested.

In conversation following De reported that he had had long talk yesterday with Tran Van Chuong, Vietnamese Ambassador in Washington. De said that although Chuong had on many occasions previously informed Bao Dai that "Americans will not consider doing business with anyone in Indochina except Ngo Dinh Diem", his story had now totally changed and centers about impossibility of Diem carrying on and need for finding new government. <sup>Chuong</sup> He went so far, De said, as to suggest four candidates for replacement. The first is <sup>Southern Dai Viet leader</sup> Nguyen Ton Huan whom he described as being "very acceptable to the Americans". <sup>(Who has been in the edge for a long time! 4/16)</sup> De said that he did not take Chuong seriously in this but regarded it as a test feeler on Chuong's part to try to smoke out Bao Dai's position on possible replacements. Second was Tran Van Do which De said he took more seriously for Chuong is known to be partial to government by family concept and it is to be expected he would favor his own brother. Third and fourth were Tran Van The and Nguyen Van Thoai.

~~SECRET~~

*Plan for plan*