

G. McT. Kahin

AN NBC NEWS WHITE PAPER

VIETNAM HINDSIGHT

PART II: THE DEATH OF DIEM

BROADCAST: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER
22, 1971
10:00 - 11:00

CREDITS

Opening Title:

NBC NEWS WHITE PAPER
VIETNAM HINDSIGHT

PART II: DEATH OF DIEM

Credits:

NBC NEWS WHITE PAPER
VIETNAM HINDSIGHT
Copyright © The National Broadcasting
Co., Inc. 1971 All Rights Reserved

Produced and Written By
FRED FREED

Directed by
PAMELA HILL

Associate Producers
ALVIN DAVIS
PAMELA HILL

Researcher
HELEN WHITNEY

Production Assistant
BARBARA SPENCE

Film Researcher
JACK GOELMAN

Unit Manager
KLAUS HEYS

Supervising Film Editor
DARROLD MURRAY

Film Editors
MARY ANN MARTIN
STUART M. ROSENBERG
DAVID J. SAUL
JEAN BAGLEY

PEOPLE WHO WERE INTERVIEWED FOR VIETNAM HINDSIGHT IN
ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE AND POSITION HELD AT THE TIME

GEORGE BALL
Under-Secretary of State
1961-1966

MAXWELL TAYLOR
Military Adviser to JFK - 1961
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
1962-64

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH
Ambassador to India
1961-63

DAVID HALBERSTAM
Correspondent - New York Times - Vietnam
1962-63

WALT M. ROSTOW
Deputy Special Assistant to the President
for National Security
1961-64

MME. NHU
Wife of Ngo Dinh Nhu, sister-in-law of
Ngo Dinh Diem

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER
Special Assistant to the President
1961-64

PAUL HARKINS
US Military Commander - Vietnam
1962-64

JOHN VANN
American Military Adviser in Vietnam

MICHAEL FORRESTAL
Senior Member - White House National
Security Staff
1962-66

ROGER HILSMAN
Assistant Secretary of State for Far
Eastern Affairs
1963-64

RUFUS PHILLIPS
American AID Mission - Vietnam

FREDERICK NOLTING
U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam
1961-63

LT. COL. LUCIEN CONEIN
CIA - Vietnam
1961-64

DEAN RUSK
Secretary of State
1961-69

GENERAL TON THAT DINH
Military Governor - Saigon
1963

GENERAL DO MAU
Director - Military Security
1963

MA TUYEN
Leader - Saigon Chinese Community

COL. DUONG NGOC LAM
Director - Civilian Guard
1963

GENERAL NGUYEN KHANH
Commander - Second Corps - ARVN
1963

ACT VII

VII-p/1

SLOW ZOOM IN TO XCU DIEM

LS TROOPS MARCHINGG

MS MME. NHU

MS DIEM

CU GEORGE BALL

CU LUCIEN CONEIN

MONTAGE SOLDIERS FIGHTING
IN SAIGON STREETS

MS WOMAN WEEPING

BALL (VO)

It was either a question of pulling
out of Vietnam at that time and...
and or having the Diem regime
shape up or

BALL (SOF)

facing the possibility of some other
regime coming in.

CONEIN (SOF)

My instructions with my meeting with
Gen. Duong Van Minh in October of 1963
from Ambassador Lodge were that I was
to inform Gen. Minh that the United
States government would not thwart
their coup.

KALBER (VO)

This is the second of two programs
examining how in the years of John F.
Kennedy's presidency we slipped deeper
into a war in Asia against Asians.

A war that our most respected military
commanders had always warned us
against. By the summer of 1963 we had

CUT TO STREET MELEE

committed ourselves more deeply than Kennedy had intended to winning the war in Vietnam.

MS OF BURNING PALACE
CU

KALBER (SOF)

We did not ask what kind of a government we were supporting, we did not ask whether we should be there. We were there and we assumed that it was right that we should be there. The question was what would we do, how far would we go to win the war.

KALBER (VO)

MONTAGE OF RIOTS IN SAIGON

In The summer of 1963 the focus of our attention was the faltering government of Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem was losing the war, what were we going to do about it?

CONEIN (SOF)

, CU 'CONEIN

Now General Don promised me that he would turn over the plans for the coup. That I could give this personally to Lodge. I so informed Lodge that this was the agreement.

FREEZE CONEIN & ZOOM IN TO XCU

ACT VIII

MONTAGE OF IMMOLATIONS

VIII--p/1

KALBER (VO)

Between June and October 1963, seven Buddhists monks burned themselves to death as a protest against the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem has lost the support of his people. To continue to hold power he has to use more and more force.

MS OF AMERICANS & VN
DANCING

In August 1963 there are more than 12,000 Americans in Vietnam. The war costs us a half a billion dollars a year and we are losing it.

SLOW ZOOM IN TO WHITE HOUSE

The President of the United States sees his range of choices being narrowed...

MS JFK/BACK AT WINDOW

FORRESTAL (VO)

I think he had developed a sense of about to get into a trap.

XCU JFK

I think the President was worried that events were moving in a direction which might be very hard to reverse or even become irreversible.

PULL BACK

MS JFK & RUSK/STILL

KALBER (VO)

The issue has bitterly divided his advisers.

MS RUSK/BACK

MCNAMARA AT CONFERENCE STILL

XCU RFK

XCU HARRIMAN

MS NOLTING AT AIRPORT

CU JFK
PAN TO LODGE

CU LODGE

ZOOM IN TO XCU

HENRY CABOT LODGE
MS WITH PRESS

Some say we have to support Diem and concentrate on the war in the field. Others argue that we can't support a corrupt oppressive government. They say Diem can't win the war. A hint of how the debate inside the administration is going is the replacement of Frederick Nolting as Ambassador to Saigon. Nolting has insisted Diem can win the war and do it without American troops. The man chosen to replace Nolting is Henry Cabot Lodge.

Kennedy has decided that he wants a man in Saigon with "force of personality " that will allow him to "dominate the situation."

LODGE (SOF)

Well I would tell anybody that America is committed to respect people's religious convictions and religious

tolerance and that's what I would say to anybody who asked me a question about America.

MS LODGE

CORRESPONDENT (VO)

Does that mean you'll be arriving on the scene with sympathy for the Buddhist cause?

MS

LODGE (SOF)

It means I'll be arriving on the scene as an American who believes in religious tolerance.

CORRESPONDENT (VO)

Do you think there will be or should be any change in our policies toward the Vietnam government when you arrive there?

ZOOM TO CU LODGE

LOGDE (SOF)

I think the policy of the United States ought to be to help the republic of Vietnam to win and maintain its freedom from communist terrorism.

And that any event or any action which is, which promotes that objective we are for

LODGE (VO)

and anything which hinders that
objective we are against.

KALBER (VO)

Diem's brother Nhu says, "The Americans
are sending us a pro-Consul."

MONTAGE OF TROOPS IN TRUCKS

As Lodge flies to Vietnam, Diem
suddenly declares martial law. Special
forces troops, whose wages are paid
by the United States Central
Intelligence Agency, disguised in
Vietnam army uniforms,

MONTAGE OF BUDDHISTS ARRESTS

begins to carry out raids on Buddhist
pagodas all over the country. In two
hours 1400 people are arrested.

LS DIEM WITH TROOPS

CONEIN (VO)

This man at this point, in my
estimation figured that he no longer
needed the Americans. He had to find
another solution for himself,
for his country.

MCU OF VN SOLDIER

DIEM DEPARTS IN CAR

Ngo Dinh Diem has always wanted one
thing. He wanted above all
reunification and a free Vietnam.

PULL BACK FROM CU

KALBER (VO)

Lt. Col. Lucien Conein is the
key CIA agent in Vietnam.

Later he is secretly awarded this
medal by CIA Director John McCone.

He has known Diem since World War II.
He knows what Diem is thinking now.

CONEIN (SOF)

He had to make a deal with the people
of the north. His brother Ngo Dinh
Nhu in early 1963 told me personally
that he was dealing, not only me,
he told other people, but he told me
personally that he was dealing with
the people of North Vietnam.

CONEIN (VO)

If he had told this to me, the Generals
knew of this also

and they considered this as a danger
because what in the devil were they
fighting for if the

Central government was negotiating
behind their backs.

KALBER (VO)

Lodge hears from Conein the Generals

2 SHOT CONEIN & McCONE

CU McCONE

ZOOM IN TO XCU CONEIN

CU CONEIN

MS NHU SMILING

LS DIEM INSPECTING TROOPS

CU NHU

PAN TO WEAPONS TO MS DIEM

CU GEN. DON

ZOOM TO XCU GEN. MINH
LS HELICOPTER LEAVING
WHITE HOUSE

MONTAGE OF LEISURE SCENES

SLOW ZOOM TO DOOR

PAN UP TO CU BALL
CU HARRIMAN

CU HILSMAN
PAN DOWN JFK'S FACE TO HAND

CU BALL

are planning a coup.

They want to know what the United States' attitude would be.

Lodge cables Washington.

It is Saturday when Lodge's cable reaches Washington.

The president is weekendening at Hyannisport. Rusk is in New York. McNamara is on his vacation, McCone is on his honeymoon.

At George Ball's house, while he gets ready to play tennis, the issue is discussed and a cable drafted.

This cable will be signed by Ball. It is supported by the liberals--Harriman,

Hilsman--who are embarrassed by Diem's repressive policies and who feel Diem is preventing us from winning the war.

BALL (SOF)

I thought that the string had pretty well run out and if we were going to continue to support any regime, either Diem had to reform his government and take control or some new government had to come in.

VIII-p/7

MS TAYLOR/STILL

TAYLOR (VO)

It authorized Lodge to tell the
Generals that they could count on
American support...

ZOOM IN TO XCU TAYLOR

TAYLOR (SOF)

if they took action against Diem
so this in effect was an open
invitation to plot and execute a
coup against the Diem government with
the assurance that the Americans
would back up the plotters.

MCU BALL

BALL(SOF)

I called President Kennedy who was in
Hyannisport and gave him the contents
of the cable and I telephoned Secretary
Rusk who was in New York and did the
same thing. We decided to go ahead
with the cable.

GILPATRIC (VO)

I was at my home in Maryland and late
that night I got a call from Forrest

SLOW ZOOM FROM MCU TO
XCU GILPATRIC

GILPATRIC (SOF)

MS GILPATRIC

I was told that the President had

VIII-p/8

already cleared it over the phone with George Ball and that Dean Rusk had been informed and I regarded, therefore, the question of the contents of that cable as a political decision which the State department had the primary responsibility. So even though I was somewhat unhappy about the thrust of the cable I did clear it for the Defense Department.

TAYLOR (VO)

MS GILPATRIC

The first that I knew of this cable was a telephone call from Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric.

TAYLOR(SOF)

MCU TAYLOR

I was very much disturbed by what the cable contained and requested a copy of it from the Pentagon. I received one later in the evening, I would say about ten or eleven o'clock that night...the first time I saw the cable. This of course was a most unusual procedure because it meant that a cable which...the content of which had enormous impact upon our

VIII-p/9.

policy in South Vietnam, not only that year but even in the present time ...was being sent out without the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense or the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

JFK DISEMBARKS
TRAVEL SHOT

KALBER (VO)

On Monday, Kennedy, Rusk, McNamara and McCone are back in Washington. They have second thoughts about the cable.

SCHLESINGER (SOF)

President Kennedy was unhappy about the August 24th cable. It would be putting it too strongly to say that he thought something had been put over on him, but he thought something had gone out as a governmental judgment, governmental decision which had not been fully and adequately discussed.

RUSK (SOF)

When the three of us got back to town we had a chance to look at the text of the cable. I had the impression that the cable went somewhat further than we really wanted to go and we

SLOW ZOOM TO CU
SCHLESINGER

XCU DEAN RUSK

MS HILSMAN

MS JFK
PAN ADVISERS AT CONFERENCE

ZOOM IN TO XCU JFK

CUT TO XCU RUSK

CUT TO
CU JOHNSON
MCNAMARA
BALL
HARRIMAN
LODGE
GILPATRIC

XCU JFK
PULL BACK TO MS

VIII-p/10

took some steps then to sort...pull
back on that cable a bit.

HILSMAN (SOF)

McNamara and McCone had returned and
because they had not personally
approved of it were in a position where
they could raise objections and raise
doubts which they did. This made
Kennedy very angry.

HILSMAN(VO)

So there was a meeting that Monday. It
was again thoroughly discussed and
Kennedy ended up by saying, the cable
has just arrived in Saigon on Sunday,
no action has been taken, it is not
too late to renege,
call it back. And he went around the
table and asked each one of them
do you want to withdraw the cable?

And nobody said he did, so the cable
stood.

VIII-p/11

ZOOM IN ON TELETYPE
MACHINE AND HOLD

KALBER (VO)

Lodge cables Kennedy, "we are launched
on a course from which there is no
respectable turning back."

FORRESTAL (SOF)

CU FORRESTAL

There were ways as there always is
in Washington, slogans, for describing
these things, one of them that was
current at the time was "that we should
think of ourselves as a good doctor
with a sick and dying patient." That
the United States had tried everything
to think of but had found that the
patient was simply not savable.

MONTAGE OF ACTIVITY IN
SAIGON STREETS

KALBER (VO)

The coup is scheduled for August 26th.
August 26th passes, nothing happens.
Washington waits.

HILSMAN (VO)

TRAVEL SHOT OF VIETNAMESE
GIRL

Now we didn't know whether there was
going to be a coup. Some of us...some
people thought there would never be a
coup.

VIII-p/12

HILSMAN (SOF)

MS HILSMAN

So word didn't really come that it was off. What happened was that over the next week or 10 days it became increasingly clear that the Generals were not going to act. Then the issue became what will the United States do, will the United States Diem...if Diem does not change his policy will we go on supporting him in the repression of the Buddhists. Will we go on supporting him in a policy of repressing half of his country which is bound to lose the war and drag us down with him in the ignominy of attacking the Buddhists? What do we do? That became our issue.

PAN UP TO CU JFK
AT HYANNISPORT

KALBER (VO)

Now for the President there is no easy choice. Diem is the only strong leader

XCU JFK

in South Vietnam but he is losing the war.

LS JFK & CAROLINE
AT BEACH/HYANNISPORT

The alternatives are down to two. Persuade him to change or agree to the coup.

FREEZE & SUPER TITLES

ACT IX

SLOW ZOOM IN TO WHITE HOUSE
AT NIGHT

PAN DOWN FROM PRESIDENTIAL
SEAL TO MS JFK

PULL BACK FROM XCU
TO MS JFK - STILL

SLOW ZOOM IN TO XCU

CU FORRESTAL

KALBER (VO)

Now in September 1963 Vietnam is on
the President's mind.

FORRESTAL (VO)

He spent I think, probably between 15
and maybe 20 percent of his time
everyday on the subject

I think it was for him, the beginning
of a process of learning so much about
it.

that he was beginning to get concerned
about some of the major premises in
which we were operating.

FORRESTAL (SOF)

Once he asked whether I thought we
hadn't perhaps over-estimated our own
human resources, our own army, our own
AID agency, our own economic people.
Over-estimated their abilities to be
helpful 12,000 miles away in a foreign
country. And under-estimated, or I
should say also, over-estimated the
capacity of the Vietnamese government
to absorb this kind

IX-p/2

of help and to use it.

KALBER (VO)

His problem is who can he ask? The reports from the commanding general and the CIA in Saigon are still optimistic. The charts and statistics still show we are winning the war. Some of his closest advisers agree.

In Vietnam the Buddhists have now been joined by the students. On September 7, 800 students are arrested in Saigon. The country has turned against Diem.

The President expresses his concern publicly

on September 9, when he is interviewed by Chet Huntley and David Brinkley.

KENNEDY (SOF)

We don't want to have a repetition of China because that was our most, the most damaging event, certainly that has occurred to us perhaps in this century When that passed into the control of the

PULL BACK FROM CU JFK
AT WINDOW

MONTAGE OF BUDDHIST
IMMOLATIONS

MS JFK WITH CHET
HUNTLEY AND DAVID BRINKLEY

SLOW ZOOM IN TO CU JFK

CU JFK

IX-p/3

CUT TO MCU CHET
HUNTLEY

Communists

KENNEDY (VO)

What has occurred to us...

KENNEDY (SOF)

is the past two months do not give us
as great an assurance for success in
the struggle as was true up to May and
June. Now we are attempting to use our
influence to bring the situation back
to what it was.

Privately, Kennedy's advisers are
deeply split over how to get the
situation "back to what it was" Finally,
the still unspoken question is asked.

Can we go on in Vietnam with or without
Diem?

CUT TO McNAMARA/STILL
PAN UP TO CU TAYLOR

ZOOM IN TO CU McGEORGE BUNDY

CUT TO CU RUSK

SLOW ZOOM IN TO XCU
RFK/STILL

HILSMAN (VO)

The person who really raised it and
made it very blunt and clear was Robert
Kennedy.

He said, well I think, personally, that
can't go on helping Diem if he refuses

MS RFK/STILL

SLW ZOOM IN TO MS RFK

2 SHOT RFK & JFK

ZOOM IN TO XCU RFK

PULL BACK FROM RFK &
JFK SILHOUTTE

CU ROSTOW

CUT TO HARRIMAN XCU

CU HILSMAN

IX-p/4

to change his policies

and that the time has therefore come
when we the United States must consider
getting out totally. Leaving, departing.
No more aid, no more anything.

HILSMAN (VO)

The second thing was that in this very
dramatic meeting in the State Department..

HILSMAN (SOF)

there was an NSC meeting without the
President and there was some very tense
arguments between the Secretary of Defense
on the one hand, and myself and Averell
Harriman on the other, Paul Kattenburg
was there as my aide. And when a total
impasse was reached, Paul Kattenburg
had the courage to voice the ultimate
implication of what Harriman, I and he,
Kattenburg had been saying, that we
couldn't go on with Diem and that if we
couldn't work out some way of putting
pressure on Diem, even at the risk of a
coup, then the United States should
get out of Vietnam.

PAN FROM CU McNAMARA TO
CU JFK

KALBER (VO)

McNamara suggests one more fact finding mission to Vietnam.

Roger Hilsman protests. He asks,
"What good can another fact finding mission possibly do"?

PULL BACK FORM XCU
HILSMAN-STILL

HILSMAN (VO)

I was so upset

HILSMAN (SOF)

that I did something that's really unforgiveable. I followed the President of the United States into the Oval Office espostulating against this, or at least. repeating it and President Kennedy sort of in the manner of talking to a child who is misbehaving, said with some irritation in his voice, "I know all this Roger," but in words of one syllable he sounded like, he said, "I know all this but we've got to keep the JCS on board." By that he meant not going along with us and not leaking to the press and doing all sorts of things. And the only way we can keep

the JCS on board is to keep McNamara on board. And apparently the only way he can keep McNamara on board is to let him go and see for himself. And he said, "I know this is costing us, I know it's gonna cost us, but that's the price we have to pay" To keep the government together, you see.

MS OF PRESS COFERENCE

CORRESPONDENT (VO)

As a result of your visit to Vietnam will there be an increase in American manpower or American equipment.

MCU McNAMARA

MCNAMARA (SOF)

MCU MCNAMARA

I'm inclined to think, certainly not as a result of the visit, but I'm inclined to think...we will of course, continue to supply the assistance, both logistical and training assistance that is requested of us by the South Vietnamese. There will be a continued flow of support to the country, but I doubt that it will be necessary to increase the manpower in a substantial degree above present levels

GIS ON MILITARY COMPOUNDS

KALBER (VO)

That level is now over 16,000 Americans in Vietnam. And in the upper echelons of the State Department and the military in Saigon there is a deep division. Lodge and Harkins barely talk to each other.

OIS IN MILITARY OFFICE

MS HARKINS AT WORK

MCU HARKINS/STILL

HARKINS (VO)

He liked to settle things and do things on his own

HARKINS (SOF)

without too much consultation with his own staff or with those others in the country. This came to me and most apparently to me when Secretary McNamara and General Taylor visited in late September, early October of 1963 and they asked me if I'd seen two or three or four cables that came through the State Department involving some of the military operations. I said I hadn't. Well they hadn't been shown to me by the Ambassador.

MCU HARKINS

MS DIEM GREETING McNAMARA,
TAYLOR, LODGE AND HARKINS
IN PALACE

KALBER (VO)

There is a meeting with Diem. McNamara

IX-p/8

and Taylor know, and Diem must know
it is a final pulse taking.

TAYLOR (VO)

We had the feeling that based upon
Diem's record up 'til '63 which was
quite good...

TAYLOR (SOF)

that we could succeed with Diem, or Diem
would succeed with our assistance if he
would do certain things. If he would
make a real effort to conciliate the
political elements which were challenging
him in the streets, and make some effort
to bring outsiders into government so
that as the phrase was, he would
broaden the base of his cabinet. So
we had no fear at all that this was...
the situation was disastrous or
impossible if these things happened.

MS DIEM, McNAMARA,
TAYLOR, LODGE IN PALACE

TAYLOR (VO)

There was a real question whether Diem
would make the adaptation required, but
nonetheless it was the best solution
for the monent, I thought to let him try.

KALBER (VO)

The President has still not made up his
mind. He still considers his options.

CU RUSK, JFK, McNAMARA/
STILL

XCU GILPATRIC
PAN TO McNAMARA & JFK

CU GILPATRIC

PAN UP FROM JFK HANDS
TO XCU

MCU

MCU BALL

IX-p/9

GILPATRIC (VO)

In the session which McNamara and I had with the President early in October, 1963

GILPARTIC (SOF)

there may have been others present, but he specifically authorized and directed us to come up with a plan which would call for a total withdrawal of U.S. forces by the end of 1965.

KALBER (VO)

But pressures are building that cannot be held back. Kennedy has no more options. He can no longer support Diem. He can't simply pull out. Reluctantly he decides to suspend our aid to Vietnam

BALL (SOF)

It was not a decision anybody looked forward to with any great pleasure, but the President felt that Diem at that time was demeaning the United States by permitting actions to be taken in the name of his government that were so distasteful.

PAM HILL (VO)

Were there those in the administration opposed to that?

CU BALL

IX-p/10

BALL (SOF)

I don't recall that there was any very heated debate on the subject. It seemed to me at the time that there was rather widespread agreement that the Diem regime had to reform if we were going to continue to give it our support.

PAM HILL (VO)

What do you consider that decision meant for the Diem regime in terms of our association with them?

BALL (SOF)

Well, I think what the decision meant in Vietnam was a signal to the forces that were not necessarily opposed to the regime but to Diem, but felt that Diem was not providing the necessary leadership. It was an encouragement, obviously for them to go ahead and try to organize another government. This was inevitable, it seems to me, when the American government made a decision to cut off aid.

MCU BALL

CU BALL

Aid Cut-off

ZOOM TO CU JFK

KALBER (VO)

Now in October, 1963, Kennedy has committed the United States by withdrawing support

IX-p/11

DISSOLVE TO MLS JFK AT DESK

FREEZE

TITLES

from Diem, to change in the government
of Vietnam, to our acquiescence
in the overthrow of Diem.

ACT X

MS COCKFIGHT

CUT TO MS VIETNAMESE
MEN WATCHING COCKFIGHT

CU DON/STILL

SLOW ZOOM IN TO CU DON

CU CONEIN

MS COCKFIGHT

CUT TO CU DON

CUT TO MS COCKFIGHT

CUT TO XCU DON

MS 2 SHOT COCKFIGHT
1 DEAD

PAN UP TO XCU
BIG MINH

ZOOM IN TO XCU DON & FREEZE

MCU CONEIN SMOKING

X-p/1

KALBER (VO)

A morning of October 2, 1963.

A street in Saigon.

General Tran Van Don, Acting Chief
of the Joint General Staff

"accidentally" meets Colonel Conein of
the CIA. General Don says the coup is
on again.

CONEIN (SOF)

I was told that I was not to encourage,
nor was I to discourage a coup, by my
Ambassador. Those were the exact words
that I was told.

CONEIN (VO)

At no time, was I to tell them
you are to have a coup
or you are not to have a coup.

KALBER (VO)

General Don says General Big Minh is
the leader of the coup.

He wants to see Conein.

CONEIN (SOF)

My instructions were that I was to
inform General Minh that the United

MLS TRAVEL SHOT LODGE
DESCENDING STAIRS

MS LODGE ENTERING CAR

MCU CONEIN

2 SHOT VIETNAMESE IN FIELD

MONTAGE OF GIS WORKING

X-p/2

States government would not thwart
their coup. And I conveyed this.

CONEIN (VO)

You could liken it to a football team.
Ambassador Lodge was the quarterback,
the coaching was being conducted by
Washington, D.C. and I was the eyes
and ears and the mouthpiece of
Henry Cabot Lodge to the junta.

CONEIN (SOF)

It was quite obvious that if at one
point that this American hand had
shown that the whole thing would blow
up and therefore it would be an
extreme embarrassment. Therefore,
Ambassador Lodge made it very clear to
me that if something went wrong that
he would have to be able to have
deniability that I even existed.

KALBER (VO)

Most Americans in Vietnam see no sign
of what is about to happen.

American advisers working with the
army of South Vietnam do not hear

X-p/3

about the coup. United States headquarters does not believe there will be a coup.

HARKINS (VO)

✓ I thought the thing was dead as far as an overthrow of Diem was concerned and I went on with my business of fighting the war and training the military.

MS HARKINS WITH GIS

✓ And unbeknownst to me, although I was the senior military man there, the CIA was working with the Ambassador and contacting the Generals.

HARKINS (SOF)

I didn't know this, I was not informed of this until I read it in the Pentagon Papers in 1971.

CU

CONEIN (SOF)

MCU CONEIN

I, by accident had been there for many years and I had gotten to know these individuals, so consequently when they had something very important to talk about they would not talk to their military advisers, which upset the whole military chain of command. Because poor General Harkins, it was

X-p/4

not his fault. What would happen is he would say, "I have received this bit of information, what does this mean?" So he'd go up and his senior adviser would go up and he would talk to for example, to General Don and say, "What's this I hear you people are planning a coup?" "Coup?" would say General Don, "We don't know what you're talking about."

KALBER (VO)

By now Diem and Nhu have heard about the coup. Diem begins to plan to use it for his own purposes.

CONEIN (VO)

Well, he had Bravo One which was a phoney coup and he had Bravo Two, which was to bring him back into power.

And they would be brought back by popular acclaim by his military and be re-established and therefore he would go into the program that he had originally planned, which was to negotiate with the North and insist that the Americans get out.

VIETNAMESE RIOT FORCE

CU DIEM/STILL

PAN UP TO XCU DIEM/STILL

PAN ACROSS VIETNAMESE
TROOPS TO

MS DIEM

Conein

X-p/5

XCU TON THAT DINH/STILL

KALBER (VO)

To carry out his plan Diem now calls
on General Ton That Dinh.

MCU GENERAL TON THAT DINH

JACK PERKINS (VO)

So the palace wanted to stop the coup
that they heard was building and they
turned to you?

DINH (SOF)

To me, yes. Yes. sir.

MCU DINH

JACK PERKINS (VO)

Nhu called you in? Mr. Nhu...

DINH (SOF)

No, it was President Diem himself.

MCU DINH

PERKINS (VO)

President Diem himself called you in?

CU DINH

DINH (SOF)

...called me on the phone immediately.

CU DINH

JACK PERKINS (VO)

And then the palace decided to give you
control of troops to try to build up
a counter coup?

MLS DINH

DINH (SOF)

Yes, yes sir.

MCU

MCU DINH

X-p/6

JACK PERKINS (VO)

To make a counter coup?

DINH (SOF)

After that...I have told you..
President Diem when he has ordered to
me to investigate...he ordered me to
see Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu. So Mr. Ngo
Dinh Nhu give me his own troops from
palace and defense of palace,
everything.

JACK PERKINS (VO)

Nhu gave you control of all these in
order to stop the coup?

DINH (SOF)

Yes, to stop it.

JACK PERKINS

And you used them, eventually, to make
the coup?

DINH (SOF)

Yes, yes sir. (Laughing) I think
it's the best way to do.

KALBER (VO)

From the American Embassy Lodge sends
a final cable to the President. "We no
longer have the power to delay the
coup." Kennedy cables Lodge: It
is in the interest

MCU DINH

MCU

MCU DINH

MCU DINH

MCU DINH

MCU DINH

MS LODGE/STILL

ZOOM IN TO CU LODGE

SCU JFK/STILL

MONTAGE OF SAIGON STREET
SCENES

CU CONEIN

SLOW PAN OF CU TAYLOR,
RUSK, MCNAMARA, JOHNSON/
STILLS

X- p/7

of the United States government
that the coup shall succeed.

KALBER(VO)

November 1, Saigon. There are
now 16,732 Americans in Vietnam.
We are spending half-a-billion
dollars a year to support the war
against the Viet Cong. They now
control 80% of the countryside.

At 1:20 p.m. the coup begins. From
insurgent headquarters, Colonel
Conein reports to Lodge.

CONEIN (SOF)

I had a radio, a special radio
that cut me into a special net...
directly to the Embassy, plus I
had with the junta or the plotters
agreement that I had a special
telephone line directly to the U.S.
Embassy.

AL DAVIS (VO)

General Taylor and others told us
that they were not precisely aware

X- p/8

of the moment of the coup. Do you think that's possible?

CONEIN (VO)

My personal opinion is this is quite inconceivable because during the whole reporting period.

CONEIN (SOF)

through my own channels, I was reporting by cable every one of the developments leading up to and including the timing of the coup.

CONEIN (VO)

Every one of the meetings, every one of negotiations, the discussions that were held with General Big Minh, with General Don, with General Kim and any other military leader who were participating in the coup was completely reported to Washington, D.C. and I received many times guidance exactly of what I was to discuss with these individuals and the limits of which I could discuss these problems with them.

MCU CONEIN

CU DINH
PAN TO CU DON & BIG MINH

X - p/9

MCU CONEIN

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Did you ever give any advice to Don or Big Minh or any of the generals about deployment of troops, surrounding the palace closing the doors?

MCU CONEIN

CONEIN (SOF)

Do you want the truth?

MCU CONEIN

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Yes, I want the truth.

MCU CONEIN

CONEIN (SOF)

Now, the only thing that I ever gave to and advise was, that at one time when they came to me and said they are bogged down. The reason being bogged down was that one unit that was supposed to be in place was being delayed, and off the top of my head...with no instructions and no instructions from my government, I said "Once you are into the attack you must continue. If you hesitate you're going to be lost."

X - p/10

MS FRANK McGEE

McGEE (SOF)

The government of South Vietnam has been overthrown following a fourteen-hour battle in Saigon between a large force of military rebels and special troops guarding the Presidential palace.

CU DIEM/STILL

A late report says President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu surrendered following a final ninety-minute fire fight around the palace. The two are said to have been found in a basement bunker in the palace and placed under arrest.

MS McGEE

TRAVEL SHOT SAIGON STREET

KALBER (VO)

This report is untrue. Diem and Nhu have escaped from the palace. They are hiding in the Chinese quarter.

PAN SPECIAL FORCES
PRISONERS

Early the next morning Diem talks to the Junta.

PULL BACK FROM XCU TO CU
DIEM AND FREEZE

He asks for safe conduct into
exile.

X - p/11

MCU CONEIN

CONEIN (SOF)

The insurgents went in to look for Diem and bring him back. And they had arranged and I can swear to this because I'm the one who personally said this, I asked the Embassy for an aircraft and I was told I had to wait 24 hours before I could get the aircraft that was necessary to transport Diem to a nation who would accept his exile. I spoke for the United States government and I was authorized and I informed the junta that I had an aircraft, but it would take me 24 hours to have that aircraft.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Instead?

CU CONEIN

CONEIN (SOF)

Instead he was shot by a Major.

CU CONEIN

CONEIN (VO)

in the Vietnamese army.

TAYLOR (VO)

A message was passed into the President which contained simply

MONTAGE OF COUP
AFTERMATH IN SAIGON

X - p/12

the news that both Diem and his brother Nhu had been killed. And the explanation being provided by the leaders of the coup was that the two brothers had committed suicide.

TAYLOR (SOF)

President Kennedy upon reading that jumped to his feet, his face turned pale, he seemed to have difficulty in controlling himself and rushed out of the room.

CU TAYLOR

SLOW ZOOM THRU WINDOW
JFK AT DESK

FORRESTAL (VO)

It shook him personally...bothered him as a moral and religious matter. It shook his confidence, I think, in the

kind of advice he was getting about South Vietnam and it troubled him really deeply.

FREEZE JFK AT DESK

TITLES

ACT XI

ACTIVITY IN SAIGON STREET

SLOW ZOOM IN TO PORTRAIT
DIEM AND PULL BACK TO
LS GATHERING AT GRAVE SIDE

LS DIEM'S GRAVE

TRAVEL SHOT OF

CUT TO CU VN SCOUT

CUT TO LS PORTRAIT OF DIEM

LS PRIEST AT ALTAR

CHURCH - PAN CONGRE-
GATION

LS VN GENERALS

CUT TO MS AND PAN
INDIVIDUAL FACES

HUYEN VAN CAO (VO)
(Translated)

President Ngo Dinh Diem died
because he resisted the domination of
foreigners. Resisted the scheme for a
mass landing of foreign troops in
Vietnam. Resisted the attempt to widen
a war which will destroy both parts of
Vietnam. In a word, President Ngo died
for the people of Vietnam.

KALBER (VO)

Eight years after his death, November,
1971 the rehabilitation of Ngo Dinh Diem
had begun in Vietnam.

How he died,
who ordered his death, has been a
mystery for eight years.

On November 1, 1971, the members of the
junta

who plotted the overthrow of Diem met

PAN FACES OF GENS. MINH,
DON, DINH/STILL

CU COL. NGHIA

XCU COL. NGHIA

XCU COL. NGHIA

CUT TO CU NGHIA

XCU COL. NGHIA

XI - p/2

at a garden party to commemorate his death.

KALBER (VO)

They were the same men who had argued eight years before over whether they ought to kill Diem. That argument went on over several meetings, kept secret until now.

COL. NGHIA (SOF)
Translation

I can confirm one thing for you and that is the fate of President Diem was decided by the majority of the members of the revolutionary committee on the night of the first...second of November, 1963. It was decided by a majority of that committee, that's all.

The majority against.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Against what?

COL. NGHIA (SOF)
Translation

Mr. Nhu and Mr. Diem.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Against their being in power or a
their lives?

CU COL. NGHIA

COL. NGHIA (SOF)

Both.

GENERAL DO MAU (VO)
Translation

CU GEN. DO MAU/STILL

We were very tired.

ZOOM IN TO XCU/STILL

We had fallen asleep in Khiem's office.

GEN. DO MAU (SOF)
Translation

MCU DO MAU

When we woke up we discovered that the office was empty. Khiem ordered me to go out and find where the other Generals were. I finally found them in General Big Minh's office. Now it seems it was General Little Minh who said to me they were there in order to discuss the fate of President Diem. That they had decided to kill him. I was so furious that my face was red when I came back at them. Why have you decided to kill President Diem when, before the coup, General Don and I decided, we all agreed, to send President Diem to Dalat with a military escort. General Big Minh simply shrugged his shoulders while General Oai came back at me with this. "My friend you must not listen

XI - p/4

listen to Colonel Do Mau. To kill weeds you must pull them up by the roots". I was furious. I said, Well now the responsibility is yours" and I left the room and went back to my place.

CUT TO SLOW ZOOM IN TO
CU DIEM'S PALACE/STILL

KALBER (VO)

When the coup began, Diem and Nhu were in the palace. The plan was to capture them there.

DISSOLVE TO INTERIOR OF
PALACE

The palace was to be surrounded by troops of the junta.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL
SOLDIERS PILFERING

This did not happen.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

You were with the Generals. Weren't you all in on how to prevent Diem from getting out of there?

LUCIEN CONEIN (SOF)

CU CONEIN

Well, I can say this one thing that the unit that was supposed to be there to take care of that facet was the one that was delayed.

CU DIEM
ZOOM IN TO XCU DIEM

Diem and Nhu got out of the palace during the height of the attack

MS NHU/STILL
SLOW ZOOM IN TO XCU

by going very simply through a tunnel and they got into an automobile and just drove on out and went into Cholon.

CU MA TUYEN

KALBER (VO)

The leader of the local Chinese community is Ma Tuyen.

MCU MA TUYEN

MA TUYEN (SOF)
Translation

President Diem came to my home at 2100 hours on November 1, 1963.

CUT TO MLS MA TUYEN

When I saw the President arrive I came out to meet him and invited him into my house. I did not talk to him.

CUT TO MCU MA TUYEN

I only invited him into my house to rest and offered him tea. That's all.

MA TUYEN (VO)
Translation

LS THANH TAN CHURCH.

The President told me that he was going to Thanh Tan Church.

XCU CHILD'S FACE
PULL BACK TO 2 SHOT CHILD
& MOTHER

XCU VN MALE

CUT TO CU VN CHILD

CONEIN (VO)

Children recognized them, reported
to the military that

Diem was there and this was

the first indication that we knew
Diem was not in the palace.

KALBER (VO)

PAN GROUP OF VN GENERALS

It is then that the generals who
in 1971 will meet to mourn Diem,
meet in secret to

SLOW ZOOM TO XCU BUILDING

argue again, what to do with him.

PAN UP FROM HANDS TO CU
GENERAL LAM

General Lam is put in command
of the convoy that is sent to
bring Diem and Nhu back to the
headquarters of the junta.

GENERAL LAM (SOF)
Translation

MCU GEN. LAM

At first I wanted to put them in
a jeep, but when I realized for
their security I was not well
advised to put them in a jeep, since
it would be too vulnerable. I
found an armored car which provided
more security for the President
and his brother.

XI - p/7

CU GEN. LAM

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

How did it happen that you didn't put a bodyguard along with the two brothers?

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

PULL BACK TO MCU GEN. LAM

I didn't want to because I thought they were amply secure in the armored car.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

Was there a time which you considered especially dangerous during the trip back?

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

MCU GEN. LAM

No, except at one point...we came to a crossing where we were stopped by a train.

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

For how many minutes?

GEN LAM (SOF)
Translation

MCU GEN. LAM

About five minutes. And that was when they were killed.

MCU GEN. LAM

XI - p/8

MCU GEN. LAM

ALVIN DAVIS (VO)

In the armored car?

MCU GEN. LAM

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

Yes, that's what I thought later.

MCU GEN. DO MAU

GEN. DO MAU
Translation

I slept until Noon. I went back to General Headquarters and to the right of the building I saw the armored car open. When I reached the car I saw Colonel Thieu there as well. He's now President of the Republic of Vietnam. Then I saw two bodies, the body of President Diem and the body of his brother Nhu.

DAVIS (VO)

MCU Gen. Lam

Did you look into the car?

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

MCU GEN. LAM

No, I kept on going. I continued in my jeep to GHQ. When I arrived at GHQ I was told that they had been assassinated.

CUT TO
CU GEN. LAM

DAVIS (VO)

Well then, who killed the two
brothers?

CUT TO
MCU GEN. LAM

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

Three months later I was told that
it was Captain Nhung who had killed
the President.

CU LAM

DAVIS (VO)

What were his duties in the
Vietnamese army?

CUT TO
MCU GEN. LAM

GEN. LAM (SOF)
Translation

He was General Minh's aide-de-
camp and bodyguard.

XCU GEN. KHANH/STILL

KALBER (VO)

PULL BACK TO CU GEN. KHANH

General Nguyen Khanh headed a
coup that ousted Big Minh early
in 1964.

TRAVEL SHOT KHANH & AIDES
LEAVING BUILDING

He himself was ousted a short time
later. Now he runs a restaurant
in Paris.

GEN. KHANH & VN IN JEEP

GEN. KHANH (VO)
Translation

We met at Dalat after I took control on January 30, 1964, to discover the truth about the death of Diem. It is known who killed Diem.

GEN. KHANH (SOF)
Translation

MS. GEN. KHANH

But I gave my word as a General that I would not divulge the secret.

DAVIS (VO)

CUT TO CU GEN. KHANH

But the first thing you did when you became President was arrest a Major named Nhung, formerly Captain. Is that correct?

GEN. KHANH (SOF)
Translation

MS GEN. KHANH

I arrested him for his own security because I knew that pro-Diem elements would revenge themselves against him. And also, I arrested him because he was a very important witness for me.

XI - p/11

CUT TO MCU GEN. KHANH

Unfortunately, two days later, this man was found hanging in his cell by the strings of his parachute. At least, that is the official version of the report I received 24 hours later. The loss of this man meant that I had no witness to verify who gave the order to kill President Diem and his brother.

DAVIS (VO)

MCU GEN. KHANH

But this Major was the assassin, wasn't he?

GEN. KHANH (SOF)
Translation

CUT TO MS GEN. KHANH

CUT TO CU GEN. KHANH

Major Nhung was 100% the assassin of President Diem and of his brother Nhu.

DAVIS (VO)

MS GEN. KHANH

What is General Big Minh's position on the decision to kill Diem?

XI - p/12

GEN. KHANH (SOF)
Translation

CUT TO CU GEN. KHANH

I would rather you ask the question directly to Minh himself as directly and frankly as you have done to me, and I hope Minh will have the courage to answer frankly about what happened.

KALBER (VO)

General Minh did not choose to answer, He refused to see NBC News Associate Producer, Alvin Davis. Nevertheless, what happened, and his part in what happened, is now clear.

PAN UP FROM LEGS TO
MS MINH

ZOOM IN TO XCU GEN.
MINH/ STILL

LS GHQ OF JUNTA

CUT TO CU OF ENTRANCE &
FREEZE

The killing of Diem was ordered at a final meeting of the junta in the early morning hours of November 2, 1963.

MS ALVIN DAVIS

Associate Producer, Alvin Davis spent 6 weeks talking on and off the record with the principals at that meeting.

MCU DAVIS

XI - p/13

DAVIS(SOF)

When the coup began, the decision to kill Diem had not yet been made. Even afterwards, General Big Minh had assured at least three members of the Junta to whom I spoke that Diem's life would be spared.

The decision to kill Diem apparently developed over a series of eight meetings and arguments and, finally, a vote. Seventeen generals and colonels took part.

Three who would have voted to save Diem were assassinated before the vote was taken.

Four others, including the ^{Present} President Prime Minister Khiem, were expressly left out of it.

The decision began to go against Diem when it was learned that he and his brother had escaped from the palace. But there were many

XI - p/14

among the 17 who had wanted him killed from the start. There were, for an example, the words uttered by Big Minh and overheard in the only phrase spoken in French rather than Vietnamese: "THE PIG MUST BE KILLED!"

Here is the sequence as well as it can be reconstructed. Diem had his nephew call the General Staff at 4:00 a.m. on November 2 and talk to General Don. He refused to speak to Big Minh. The nephew asked for full honors, together with a graceful exit from power and safe conduct to sanctuary in another country. General Don was polite and correct, but turned him down. But Big Minh was furious over the slight to him, the leader. Between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on November 2 there were three key phone calls from Diem himself. On the first, Diem again refused to speak to Big Minh. On the

CU ALVIN DAVIS

XI - p/15

second, he finally spoke to Minh, again asking for full honors. Minh, now angrier than ever, hung up on him. On the third, Diem gave in, asking only for safe conduct. The armored column was immediately dispatched to pick up him and his brother in front of the Church at Cholon. Just before the column left, the vote began.

DAVIS (VO)

CU GEN. MINH/STILL

Big Minh: kill.

CUT TO CU GEN. DON/STILL

General Don: kill.

CUT TO CU GEN. KIM

General Le Van Kim: kill.

CUT TO CU GEN. XUAN

General Xuan: kill

CUT TO MCU COL. NGHIA

Colonel Nghia: kill

DAVIS (SOF)

And so it went.

MS ALVIN DAVIS

Colonel Nghia is right. At the end there was total unity and a vow of silence -- which has now, to me, been broken.

MCU ALVIN DAVIS

XI - p/16

The signal to kill was given by Big Minh to his bodyguard, Captain Nhung, a professional assassin with 48 notches in his revolver.

Colonel Lam was in military control of the column, in constant radio contact with Big Minh. On its way back, as Lam has said, the column reached a grade crossing and stopped for five minutes to let a train go by.

Lam told Minh by radio where they were. Minh's last signal was, "Maintenance," -- "Now!" Lam drove up along the left side of the armored car and Captain Nhung, in a jeep with Colonel Nghia, drove up along the right side.

Lam signaled the "Now!" to Nhung, Nhung opened the door of the armored car and shot the two brothers as they sat with hands tied behind their backs.

XI - p/17

Then the train passed and the column continued on to GHQ. Lam, who, as you saw, denied to me that he knew the brothers were dead, went inside and reported to Big Minh: "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED"

I showed this summary to Colonel Conein.

CONEIN (SOF)

I happen to know that there was a blood oath taken. And this blood oath is still binding.

DAVIS (VO)

Now I'm not asking you to divulge any oath or any secret, that's part of our agreement.

I'm just informing you of this and asking you if you have any comment on it?

CONEIN (SOF)

No. I have no comment on this because I consider that...what I know to be privileged information

CU CONEIN

CU CONEIN

PULL BACK TO MCU

MCU CONEIN

XI - p/18

and though you know it, be my
guest and tell everybody.

DAVIS (VO)

When you say I know it, you mean
as far as you're concerned what
I have told you fits what you
know.

CONEIN (SOF)

In all probabilities, yes.

DAVIS (VO)

Well, I'm asking you for...
don't hedge on it, please. I'm
not asking you to say anything
other than what you just said in
another form. You know it...

CONEIN (SOF)

Yes, You

found it out, you know it...

DAVIS (VO)

And you said it is correct?

CONEIN (SOF)

It's correct.

MCU CONEIN

MCU CONEIN(SMILING)

MCU CONEIN

MCU CONEIN

CU CONEIN

XCU CONEIN

XCU CONEIN

CU DIEM DEAD
FULL BACK

MONTAGE OF VN WAR
SCENES

GI WADING IN RIVER
FREEZE

CUT TO JFK & PAN TO
CU FROM XCU
(DOUBLE EXPOSURE STILL)

CU JFK

CUT TO MCU JFK/STILL

DISSOLVE AND PAN UP FROM
WRIST WATCH

KALBER (VO)

Thus 10,000 miles away from
Washington a man dies violently.

A war in Asia becomes our war.
For the first time we begin to
look at what we have gotten
ourselves into.

And John F. Kennedy, sitting with
a trusted adviser has some
troubled thoughts.

FORRESTAL (VO)

I saw him the last time on
Thursday, I think the 21st of
November. He'd asked me

to go out to Cambodia, first
Saigon then to Pnom Penh.

He did what he sometimes did
at the end of the day or when
he was a little tired. He asked
me to stay a bit and

DISSOLVE TO
XCU JFK AND PULL BACK

he said, when you come back I
want you to come and see me
because we have to start to plan

DISSOLVE TO XCU JFK PROFILE/
STILL

for what we are going to do now

DISSOLVE AND SLOW ZOOM IN
TO XCU JFK

in South Vietnam. He said I
want to start a complete and very

DISSOLVE TO XCU JFK &
PULL BACK TO MS

profound review of how we got into
this country,

DISSOLVE TO XCU JFK AND
PULL BACK

what we thought we were doing and
what we now think we can do. He
said I even want to think about
whether or not we should be there.

FORRESTAL (SOF)

He said, because this was of
course in the context of an
election campaign, that he didn't
think that we could consider drastic
changes of policy quickly. But
that what he wanted to consider
when I returned and when people
were ready to think about this

CU

more clearly was how could some kind of a gradual shift in our presence in South Vietnam occur. I think he probably said that to some other people as well. But I have a very clear recollection of it and of course, the following morning when I arrived in Saigon, actually it was night out there at 2:00 o'clock in the morning he was killed.

PULL BACK FROM WHITE
HOUSE - NIGHT

JFK FUNERAL SCENES

KALBER (VO)

One legacy he leaves is Vietnam. It is useless to speculate what he would have done if he had lived, or Diem had lived. But we know that the death of these 2 men climaxed a growing crisis that was a turning point in our involvement in Vietnam.

MS OF ETERNAL FLAME

After that we had fewer options.
the choices were harder.

Removal of

CU

XI - p/22

KALBER (SOF)

President Kennedy opposed French colonial rule in Indochina. He sympathized with the aspirations of the poor and the backward. But he also believed that the United States must confront and contain communism in Southeast Asia. He and his advisers accepted, without re-examination the slogans of 20 years of American foreign policy. They were against appeasement. They did not want to be soft on communism. They said "no more Munichs" as we now say "no more Vietnams". Perhaps the real lesson to be learned is "no more easy slogans."

KALBER (SOF)

The Taylor mission in 1961 led the Kennedy administration into a series of decisions that involved the United States more and more deeply in a war we could not win.

MS

XI - p/23

we tried to prop up an inefficient and corrupt government and an unwilling army with our money and our military technology.

When that failed we tried to force that government to reform itself and the result was a coup and 2 murders that deepened and complicated our moral and military involvement.

It is true that in November of 1963 there was still only 16,000 Americans in Vietnam. A face saving withdrawal, a neutralized Vietnam would have been costly but it might not have been impossible. Certainly the death of Diem and of Kennedy narrowed the options open to Lyndon Johnson. They did not foreclose a decision on his part to lessen our military commitment, but they did make it more difficult.

KALBER (SOF)

We have assembled in these programs as much of the record as we could and it shows that

CU

XI - p/24

for our deepened involvement in Vietnam, Kennedy and his advisers must bear responsibility. This is not to deny that they were good and patriotic men, intelligent and dedicated. But like characters in a Greek tragedy they were victims of Hubris, their pride, their arrogance in believing they could manage the crisis of the world with American know-how.

They failed to perceive the limits of their own power to change the world. In the end, John F. Kennedy, skeptical, sophisticated, aware of all of the pitfalls of involvement in a war in Asia against Asians became the architect of that involvement.

MS ETERNAL FLAME

MONTAGE GIS LEAVING VIETNAM

(MUSIC UP)

NOW I'VE BEEN HAPPY LATELY

MONTAGE GIS ARRIVING IN US

THINKING ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS
TO COME AND I BELIEVE IT COULD
BE SOMETHING GOOD
HAS BEGUN

MONTAGE GIS GREETING
FAMILIES

OH I'VE BEEN SMILING LATELY
DREAMING ABOUT THE WORLD AT
ONE? AND I BELIEVE IT COULD
BE THAT SOME DAY IS GOING TO
COME WHEN UP ON THE EDGE OF DAWN

THERE RIDES THE PEACE TRAIN
OH PEACE TRAIN TAKE THIS
COUNTRY COME TAKE ME HOME AGAIN
NOW I'VE BEEN SMILING LATELY....