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Margaret Higgins column -

The leaders of the "get Diem" faction were Under Secretary Averell Harriman; Roger Hilsman, Asst Sec, Far East Affairs; Lodge.

At top levels of government, those with deep worries about repercussions to a coup, included Sec. of Defense, McNamara, CIA Director, John McCone (who in this case was disloyally served by some of his junior officers) and some State Dept. officials.

It is certain that in Saigon, Amb. Lodge did not take Gen. Paul Harkins, leader of military mission, into his confidence concerning the "time bomb" to use an embassy phrase, that was being built under Diem regime.

According to a key signal corps officer in the revolutionary front, a milestone on the road to the coup d'état was Aug 25th Voice of America broadcast that in effect "unleashed the Vietnamese military for them to topple Diem, if they could."

Duong Van Minh and other key generals of junta have claimed that restoration had been brewing for six months.

On same Sunday, as Voice of America broadcast, Lodge decided to authorize CIA to take poll of key Viet generals to see if they were pro-coup or anti-coup.

Negative results of poll reported to Washington, Aug. 29th.

The two other milestones on the road to revolt were Pres. Kennedy's call for "changes of policy and maybe personnel, and cuts in economic aid."

Said member of Harkins mission, "we completely underestimated Lodge's determination to get Diem."

It is clearly Uncle Sam's team that is at the bat now in Vietnam. And, every American, military and civilian is united in desire to get away from intrigue and on with the war.