

NEW YORK TIMES, SEPTEMBER 9, 1963: "VIETNAM'S PAGODA RAIDERS REPORTED ON CIA PAYROLL, \$250,000 Monthly fund Said to be Continuing Despite Controversy" Special to NYT

MANILA, Sept. 8-- The United States Central Intelligence Agency, according to reports reaching here, has quietly decided to continue its regular monthly payment to support the Special Forces of Col. Le Quang Tung in South Vietnam.

The decision to continue paying a quarter of a million dollars a month was made in the middle of last week and was viewed as a sharply controversial decision by the American community in Saigon.

There was widespread opposition among employees of the CIA in Saigon as well as among other Americans employed by the United States missions in the country.

It was Le Quang Tung's troops, who had been trained and supported by Americans, who led the raids on Buddhist pagodas on Aug. 21.

The salary and upkeep of Le Quang Tung's troops is financed by the CIA, according to highly reliable sources, in "direct, under-the-table aid" amounting to \$3 million a year. The aid is said to be given out each month-- a quarter of a million dollars each time.

The reliable sources said the CIA men in Saigon met Monday and that an almost unanimous opinion was voiced to drop the aid to Col. Le Quang Tung. Tuesday, however, they were called together again, the sources said, and were told: "Gentlemen, it's business as usual."

Despite the CIA involvement with Le Quang Tung, the Aug. 21 raids came as a complete surprise to the head of the CIA in Saigon, and for several days the embassy and Washington were confused as to what happened and whose troops were in charge.

Lower officials of the CIA were reported to have been warning, however, that something unpleasant would be undertaken by the Le Quang Tung forces. The payment is usually made at the start of the month and thus, at the beginning of last week, the question of continuing support arose.

The opposition that was voiced hinged on the employees' belief that ~~it~~ the original purpose of the Special Forces had been completely reversed.

The Americans had visualized the unit as developing parallel to their own elite Special Forces units. The Americans planned to have the Vietnamese Special Forces used in border crossings into Laos and North Vietnam and in training mountain highlanders. The troops were picked from other units for toughness and physique and they underwent airborne and ranger training.

The troops serve under officers chosen for their loyalty to the anti-Communist cause. The Communist guerrillas have enlisted or captured ~~the~~

many relatives of these on the government side and loyalty has thus been a principal problem.

Some Americans fear, however, that the Special Forces have become more a political than a military weapon and that they are being used <sup>more</sup> against the country's population ~~XXXXX~~ than against the Communist guerrillas, or Vietcong.

Americans reacted strongly to the attacks on the pagodas. Some highly placed Americans evinced a further feeling, one of personal betrayal because the attacks had been carried out by troops, trained and financed by the United States, and this seemed evident to the population and to elements of the army that oppose the family of the President, Ngo Dinh Diem

Thus, when CIA officials met, some argued that the aid to the Special Forces was the very first segment that should be cut, that it was both a moral and a political issue and that, because it was secretly given aid, it would be relatively easy to abandon.

#### Decision Not Popular

One source said that the feeling of almost all of those at the meeting<sup>1</sup> was in favor of dropping the support.

One American argued at the meeting that as long as Le Quang Tung's people were supported by Americans, there would be confusion in the minds of the Vietnamese people about where the United States stood on continued support of the Government and on the question of the raids on the pagodas.

One source said the decision to continue the aid was ~~XXXXXXXX~~ basically made in Washington.

Washington's decision was said to have been based on the fact that the ~~XXXXXX~~ United States policy is to support the military effort against the Vietcong and the Vietnamese Special Forces are part of the military effort.

Those who opposed the decision argued that the rest of the Vietnamese military is frightened of Le Quang Tung's people and this fear has a divisive effect on the war effort and a damaging effect on military and civilian morale.

#### Forces in Key Spots

When the pagodas were attacked, Le Quang Tung's troops moved into a position where they were militarily in charge of Saigon. This, sources said, was to prevent a possible counter-strike against the Presidential Palace.

Le Quang Tung was chosen for ~~XX~~ his job by the Ngo family. He is about 40 years old and comes from Hue, the Ngo family's ancestral home. The ~~X~~ colonel is a Roman Catholic and has spent a lifetime in the security and counterespionage sections of the military establishment.

Le Quang Tung is considered absolutely loyal to the Ngo family. He

is the head of the military section of the Can Loa party. This is the secret party of the head of the secret police, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who is the President's brother. This position means that Le Quang Tung is under the direct control of Ngo Dinh Nhu.

It is estimated that 2,000 men are in the Special Forces under Colonel Le Quang Tung.

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Accompanying article in NYT 9/9/63, same title, with subtitle: "Washington is Privately Upset but is Publically Silent on Financing," by James Reston, Special to NYT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8--The Kennedy Administration was privately annoyed but publically silent tonight about the report that it was continuing to finance the South Vietnamese Special Forces, which recently raided Buddhist pagodas.

Officials here were vehement in their denials that ~~XX~~ United States funds were going from the Central Intelligence Agency to the special troops of Ngo Dinh ~~XXXXX~~ Nhu, President Ngo Dinh Diem's adviser. But they were not prepared to take public responsibility for their private denials, apparently because they simply do not know precisely what is being done by the CIA in Saigon.

As far as ~~XX~~ can be determined here is the situation as follows:

First, there is increasing pressure ~~XXXX~~ not only within the Executive branch of the Government but from the Congress to cut aid to South Vietnam. It is felt here that this is the only pressure the Kennedy Administration has on Ngo Dinh Diem to change his policies.

Second, payments over the last fortnight have been continuing as before. No doubt this includes payments to the Special Forces, <sup>part</sup> of which were responsible for carrying out the pagoda raids. It is pointed out here, however, that some units of the Special Forces are engaged in the guerrilla warfare against the Communist or Vietcong in the south and north of the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon.

What annoys officials here in the light of this, is the suggestion that Washington on the one hand is calling for the replacement of Ngo Dinh Nhu and at the same time has decided to continue paying the forces that he is using to carry out his policies.

For the time being, it is conceded here, this situation may exist. The trend of policy in Washington, however, is not to continue supporting

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Ngo Dinh Nhu and his forces, but to reduce aid. It merely happened to be the fact that, pending a decision about how aid is to be reduced, no specific decision has been made to cut off support from the Special Forces.

It is pointed out in Washington that 95 per cent of the aid to the South Vietnamese Government has been "open aid." No one denies that the CIA is involved in the Vietnam operation

LAST THREE LINES CUT OFF