

"HISTORY MAY BE MAPPED AT U.S. 'SUMMIT' MEET HERE," BY LYLE NELSON

Every important Administration policy-maker except President Kennedy will meet at camp H.M. Smith atop Halawa Heights Wednesday to discuss U.S. strategy in ever-changing, complex Southeast Asia.

The task simplified is how best to kick Communist guerrillas out of Vietnam and stabilize pressing political problems in neighboring Cambodia and Laos.

Key players in the drama are:

Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State.

Robert S. McNamara, the Secretary of Defense.

General Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge of South Vietnam.

General Paul D. Harkins, head of the U.S. Military advisory group in Vietnam.

FELT TO HOST MEETING OF MINDS

The host, as it were, is equally important Admiral Harry D. Felt, Pacific Commander in Chief.

The meeting of the minds ~~may~~ will try to answer the question: "Where are we going?"

Of less importance is the question: "What happened?" in reference to the successful coup that toppled the government of Ngo Dinh Diem.

Wednesday's meeting was necessitated by that revolution.

It could be one of the most important in the history of the current Administration.

If South Vietnam should fall to the Communists either militarily or politically, through the failure of the new revolutionary government, it would be a major defeat for the United States. All Southeast Asia would be affected.

How to avoid these two dangers and push the Communists back out of South ~~XXXXXX~~ Vietnam is certain to provide ^{the} a major theme of all Wednesday's talks.

Certain to be resolved is the reported conflict between the State Department and the Pentagon.

Harkins, despite a vote of confidence from President Kennedy last week, apparently:

1--Worked too closely with Diem to satisfy victorious coup leaders who run things in Saigon today.

= 2--Voiced too often optimistic appraisals of military operations in contrast to what Lodge felt and saw ^{once} he arrived in the scene.

Reportedly, Lodge was tipped of coup plans and Harkins was not.

The new regime in Saigon has cautiously hinted that Harkins' effectiveness has been lost, that a change would help accelerate operations against the Viet Cong.

Kennedy headed off this speculation at his news conference last week by saying Harkins' term in Saigon would be extended past its normal termination date, in February, and maybe even past his retirement date, which falls in June.

= Kennedy took this position despite recent Saigon press attacks that included, besides Harkins, such ~~XX~~ targets as former ambassador Frederick Nolting, John Richardson of the Central Intelligence Agency and, of course, Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu.

If there is a reported coolness between Lodge and Harkins it would appear Lodge is in the driver's seat despite Kennedy's indorsement of Harkins.

Lodge was rushed to Saigon when the political situation was deteriorating due to the Diem Buddhist conflict.

Not long afterward McNamara and Taylor felt it necessary to walk over the soggy battlefields of South Vietnam to see for themselves if the Buddhist issue was stunting the Vietnamese army effort.

Apparently it was because in recent days the new Saigon regime has claimed the war effort has been stepped up considerably with new vigor, hope and optimism among Vietnam army personnel.

The inference is that, under Diem, the war effort stagnated.

This new feeling has even caused U.S. military advisers to report closer liason, better feeling and more social mixing between U.S. and Vietnam officers than existed under Diem.

There has been some speculation that at Wednesday's meeting the question of a Bruce will be discussed.

The conservative wing in U.S. politics has reacted against any move to neutralize Vietnam through a status quo similar to that existing in Korea. U.S.

As for the recent coup itself, many conservative elements openly align themselves with Madame Nhu's cause or criticized the Administration for giving the revolution tacit approval by inaction.

Quick U.S. recognition of the coup leaders, of course, is considered sufficient grounds for believing the Administration welcomed the change even if not actually involved in the overthrow.

Felt, Harkins and others have strongly insisted the coup was unexpected.

But conservative reaction in the U.S. is still similar to that which accompanied the Bay of Pigs incident in Cuba.

Now the Administration has the task of showing military improvement in Vietnam to counter complaints that no change in the occupancy of the Gia Long palace is going to bring a quick end to the campaign against the Communists.

Oddly enough, it is Lodge, a Republican Vice Presidential candidate in the last election, who reportedly has the confidence of the coup leaders, who assessed that Diem campaign against the Buddhists as crippling the war effort, who failed to share Harkins' optimism and who made Madame Nhu suspicious.

With the 1964 election approaching, Kennedy could use a change from the stagnated dollar drain that has caused Saigon press correspondents to look upon military operations as hopeless, least under Diem.

Yet just last week Harkins said the change in government would not influence the war effort.

And last week the Pentagon announced intentions to make public more details of forthcoming military operations in ~~XXXXXX~~ South Vietnam

MAY GIVE PRESS MORE BRIEFINGS

Arthur Sylvester, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, said an attempt would be made to give the press more military briefings on both Saigon and Washington.

Top Administration men have reportedly complained in the past that press reports from Saigon were misleading or inaccurate.

Sylvester and Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, are among those who will be at Camp Smith Wednesday.

The future of the war in Vietnam cries for decisive ~~XXXXXX~~ decision in the face of next year's U.S. election.

Vietnam probably will be one of the more important issues when the public goes to the polls a year from now.

Besides Vietnam, Wednesday's meeting surely will touch on ~~XXXXXX~~ Cambodia and Laos.

Both balance precariously in the abyss of a Communist takeover and Wednesday's meeting may have to settle U.S. policy toward Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia who would like U.S. military aid without ties and without advisors.

Kennedy says Sihanouk will not be a "foolish" man.

The Camp Smith meeting also will decide the question of a nominal U.S. pullout of military advisers, mostly those who do the paperwork, from Vietnam.

A figure of 1,000 of America's 16,520 was discussed before the revolution but U.S. military sources ~~X~~ in Saigon last Friday chopped this down to 300 at the most and said the decision would be reached in Honolulu.

So the stage is set for major decisions.

Lodge and Harkins are due at 8:30 tomorrow morning.

McNamara and Taylor are due tomorrow night at 9:50.

Rusk and Salinger and others will arrive at Hickam Air Force Base at 7, only an hour before the meeting starts.

Lodge, reportedly, will spend a few days in Honolulu, then continue on to Washington and a meeting with the President this weekend.

Rusk and five other cabinet members will continue on to Tokyo Friday morning for economic meetings with Japanese leaders.

Harkins will return to Saigon Thursday morning.

McNamara and Taylor will return to Washington as soon as the Camp Smith meeting ends which could be late Wednesday night.