

# Intelligence Estimate on '63 Unrest

Excerpts from Special National Intelligence Estimate 53-2-63, "The Situation in South Vietnam," July 10, 1963.

## CONCLUSIONS

A. The Buddhist crisis in South Vietnam has highlighted and intensified a widespread and long-standing dissatisfaction with the Diem regime and its style of government. If—as is likely—Diem fails to carry out truly and promptly the commitments he has made to the Buddhists, disorders will probably flare again and the chances of a coup or assassination attempts against him will become better than ever . . .

B. The Diem regime's underlying uneasiness about the extent of the US involvement in South Vietnam has been sharpened by the Buddhist affair and the firm line taken by the US. This attitude will almost certainly persist

and further pressure to reduce the US presence in the country is likely. . . .

C. Thus far, the Buddhist issue has not been effectively exploited by the Communists, nor does it appear to have had any appreciable effect on the counterinsurgency effort. We do not think Diem is likely to be overthrown by a Communist coup. Nor do we think the Communists would necessarily profit if he were overthrown by some combination of his non-Communist opponents. A non-Communist successor regime might be initially less effective against the Viet Cong, but, given continued support from the US could provide reasonably effective leadership for the government and the war effort. . . .