

Lodge's Last Talk With Diem

Excerpt from cablegram from Ambassador Lodge to State Department, Nov. 1, 1963, as provided in the body of the Pentagon study. According to the narrative, the message says that at 4:30 P.M. on Nov. 1 President Diem telephoned Ambassador Lodge and the following conversation ensued:

DIEM: Some units have made a rebellion and I want to know what is the attitude of the US?

LODGE: I do not feel well enough informed to be able to tell you. I have heard the shooting, but am not acquainted with all the facts. Also it is 4:30 a.m. in Washington and the US Government cannot possibly have a view.

DIEM: But you must have some general ideas. After all, I am a Chief of State. I have tried to do my duty. I want to do now what duty and good sense require. I believe in duty above all.

LODGE: You have certainly done

your duty. As I told you only this morning, I admire your courage and your great contributions to your country. No one can take away from you the credit for all you have done. Now I am worried about your physical safety. I have a report that those in charge of the current activity offer you and your brother safe conduct out of the country, if you resign. Had you heard this?

DIEM: No. (And then after a pause) You have my telephone number.

LODGE: Yes. If I can do anything for your physical safety, please call me.

DIEM: I am trying to re-establish order.