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Title: **157-10014-10151_p524.png**

Provenance:

Category: **Uncategorized**

Person:

Date:

TOP SECRET

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explicit authorization from the highest level. The command and control system revealed by the record made it possible for the CIA to have engaged in assassination activities without express authorization by officials outside the Agency.

We find that neither the President nor any other official in the United States Government authorized the assassination of Diem and his brother Nhu. Both the DCI and top State Department officials did know, however, that the death of Nhu at least at one point had been contemplated by the coup leaders. To the contrary, when the possibility that the coup leaders were considering assassination was brought to the

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The ambiguity and imprecision in the record illustrates the dangers of a "plausible denial" system in which the precise level of authorization may be difficult to ascertain. While there is no evidence that the "plausible denial" system has succeeded in shielding decision makers in the cases considered in this report, the possibility that a system exists which might permit those responsible for authorizing major operations to escape responsibility is disturbing. Responsible government requires that public officials be held accountable for their decisions.

2. Findings Relating to the Level at Which the Plots Were Authorized

a. Diem