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Title: **157-10014-10151\_p493.png**

Provenance:

Category: **Uncategorized**

Person:

Date:

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our responsibility therefor" (CIA cable, DCI to Saigon 10/5/63; CIA cable DIR 73661, DCI to Saigon, 10/6/63).

#### B. The Abortive Coup of August 1963

On May 8, 1963, South Vietnamese troops in the City of Hue fired on Buddhists protesting against the Diem Government, killing nine and wounding fourteen. This incident triggered a nationwide Buddhist protest and a sharp loss of popular confidence in the Diem regime.\*

On May 18, United States Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting met with Diem and outlined steps which the United States desired him to take to redress the Buddhist grievances and recapture public confidence. These steps included admitting responsibility for the Hue incident, compensating the victims, and reaffirming religious equality in the country. (Pentagon Papers, p.203) On June 3, Madame Nhu, the wife of Diem's brother, Nhu, publicly accused the Buddhists of being infiltrated with Communist agents; Truehart protested her remarks to Diem and threatened to disassociate the United States from any repressive measures against the Buddhists in the future (Pentagon Papers, p.305). Shortly thereafter, Madame Nhu commented on the self-immolation of Quang

\* Senator Gravel Edition, The Pentagon Papers, The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam, pp. 227-208, Volume II, Beacon Press, Boston (hereinafter cited as Pentagon Papers). Former Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, John Mecklin, in his book, Mission in Torment, An Intimate Account of the U.S. Role in Vietnam, Doubleday and Company, 1965, (hereinafter cited as Mecklin), at pages 159-60 described the vulnerability of the Buddhists to Communist infiltration during this period noting that it "offered a classic opportunity for a Communist sleeper ploy."