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Subject: Re: AP Story on Vietnam Document Release This Morning
Eileen, thanks for sending this one along. Best for the holidays. May all your assassinations be bright and cheery! Kermit
At 02:56 PM 12/22/97 -0500, you wrote:>>>>>Dear Board members:>>>Below is today's AP story about the release of the JCS documents that>relate to Vietnam.>>Eileen>>To: Jeremy Gunn, Eileen, Jim>cc:>From: Tom Samoluk/ARRB>Date: 12/22/97 09:23:49 AM>Subject: AP Story on Vietnam Document Release This Morning>>>Copyright 1997 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.>The information contained in this news report may not be published,>broadcast or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of>the Associated Press.> By MIKE FEINSILBER> Associated Press Writer> WASHINGTON (AP) -- Seven weeks before President Kennedy was assassinated> on Nov. 22, 1963,>American military leaders were anticipating a withdrawal of U.S. forces>from South Vietnam by the end> of 1965, newly declassified documents suggest.> The documents are likely to add to the historical controversy over>whether Kennedy planned to end>American military involvement in Vietnam after the 1964 presidential>election.> At the time a key Oct. 4, 1963 memo was written, the United States had>only 16,300 advisers in>South Vietnam, a force that would swell to more than 536,000 within five>years.> "All planning will be directed towards preparing RVN (Republic of>Vietnam) forces for the>withdrawal of all U.S. special assistance units and personnel by the end of> calendar year 1965,">said the memo.> Signed by Army Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of>Staff, the memo was>directed to the uniformed leaders of the four military services.> The memo also ordered the service chiefs to "execute the plan to>withdraw 1,000 U.S. military>personnel by the end of 1963."> In all, 800 pages of Joint Chiefs papers were made public today by the>government's>Assassination Records Review Board. The board was created by Congress to>amass for>public inspection any records that might shed light on Kennedy's murder.> Some historians believe that Kennedy intended to get out of Vietnam and>that his successor,>Lyndon Johnson -- eager not to be seen as the first American president to>lose a war -->reversed Kennedy's strategy.> But historian Ronald Spector of George Washington University said the>execution of South Vietnamese>President Ngo Dinh Diem on Nov. 1, 1963 may have been more decisive in>keeping the United States>in Vietnam than the change at the top of the U.S. government.> American leaders discovered that Diem had been bottling up reports from>the field that>showed the war was going badly for the South Vietnamese, said Spector, who>teaches a>course on the U.S. role in Indochina.> The documents show that less than a month after Kennedy's assassination,> Johnson>told his commanders to press the South Vietnamese toward "increased>activity" against>North Vietnam while considering "the plausibility of denial; possible North> Vietnamese retaliation;>(and) other international reaction."> America

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