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FROM BILL JORDEN  
TO THE PRESIDENT  
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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4  
NIJ 92-100

By JL, NARA, Date 7-1-93

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JULY 4, 1967

MR. PRESIDENT:

FOLLOWING IS THE DAILY SITUATION REPORT (NO. 5) ON THE  
POLITICAL SITUATION IN VIET-NAM--

SITUATION REPORT ON VIET-NAM

THE FACTS

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, PARTICULARLY THE MINOR ONES, ARE BEGINNING TO COMMENT ON OTHER CANDIDATES AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, ON ISSUES. TWO OR THREE MINOR CANDIDATES ARE QUOTED AS CALLING FOR THIEU'S AND KY'S RESIGNATIONS FROM THEIR OFFICIAL POSITIONS "IN CONFORMITY WITH THE ELECTORAL LAW". OTHER MINOR CANDIDATES CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF CERTAIN CIVILIAN COMPETITORS.

AU TRUONG THANH, THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WHOSE MOTTO IS "CEASE FIRE" AND WHOSE CAMPAIGN SYMBOL IS "NO MORE BOMBS", IS RECEIVING SOME PUBLICITY IN THE AMERICAN PRESS AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GET MORE. THANH IS QUOTED IN THIS MORNING'S WASHINGTON POST AS SAYING THAT HE IS THE ONLY CANDIDATE OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE TO ESCALATION. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR HIS OWN PHYSICAL SAFETY, AND SAID HIS BEST GUARANTEE IS THE AMERICAN PRESS. IN A CONVERSATION WITH A CIA SOURCE, THANH SAID THAT HIS BASIC POLICY IS TO CREATE CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO A CEASE-FIRE IN VIET-NAM. HE DIDN'T SAY HOW.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PHAN KHAC SUU TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER HE WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE RETURN OF "BIG" MINH. ACCORDING TO SUU, MINH HAS NO REAL CHANCE OF WINNING THE ELECTION BUT IS CAPABLE OF "CAUSING MANY DIFFICULTIES". SUU EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT HE COULD NOT TAKE THIS POSITION PUBLICLY. SUU SAID, IF MINH'S RETURN WOULD REALLY BE HARMFUL TO NATIONAL SECURITY, THE DIRECTORATE SHOULD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE "ALL THAT IS HIDDEN BEHIND GENERAL MINH'S AFFAIR". SUU INDICATED HE WOULD WELCOME MINH'S DISQUALIFICATION BY THE CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL. SUU CLAIMED THE THIEU-KY TICKET WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS OWN CHANCE FOR VICTORY, AND THAT MANY OF KY'S FORMER SUPPORTERS ARE NOW LOOKING FOR OTHER CANDIDATES TO BACK.

COMMENT

WE EXPECT THE AMERICAN PRESS TO FOCUS ON THE GROWING NUMBER OF STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, MAJOR AND MINOR, IN THE WEEKS AHEAD. THE CANDIDATES WILL CERTAINLY SOLICIT AMERICAN PRESS ATTENTION.

THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SUU OVERESTIMATES HIS CHANCES AND THAT SOUTHERN CIVILIAN CANDIDATES ARE WORRIED ABOUT MINH'S CANDIDACY. OBVIOUSLY THE EASY WAY OUT FOR SUU WOULD BE TO LET THE DIRECTORATE ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR BARRING MINH.

THIEU AND KY PROBABLY WILL NOT RESIGN FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS, ALTHOUGH DEMANDS FOR THEM TO DO SO WILL BE MADE REPEATEDLY. THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE THEY RESIGN FROM THEIR POSTS IN THE GOVERNMENT, BUT ONLY THAT THEY RESIGN OR GO ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THEIR MILITARY POSTS.

DTG 04/1644Z JULY 1967

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