

Conway
2. Pre file

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Monday, July 24, 1967
2:30 p.m.

Mr. President:

Here is today's situation report on political developments in Viet Nam. The Thieu-Ky ticket obviously enjoys a tremendous head start in organization and resources.

Walt Rostow

MW:hg

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Situation Report in Viet-Nam

July 24, 1967

Political activity is beginning to focus heavily on organizing for the forthcoming presidential campaign.

Thieu and Ky are reported to have worked out the details of a campaign organization operating on at least two different levels: an open political "front" (or bloc) composed mainly of government, Cao Dai, VNQDD, and Hoa Hao leaders working for the Thieu-Ky ticket, and a campaign committee probably headquartered in the presidential palace, utilizing largely governmental/military resources for communications, personnel, etc., and basing its platform mainly on the accomplishments of the present GVN. A third organization, a covert campaign apparatus loyal to Ky personally and intended to operate without the knowledge of Thieu, is reported in place in each district and will be given instructions to work for the Thieu-Ky ticket. Financing for the Thieu-Ky campaign will require large sums of money, the amount estimated to be the equivalent of between \$750,000 to \$875,000 U.S. The exact source of this money is not clear, but it too will probably be drawn somehow from GVN resources.

Embassy officers' recent conversations with candidates Tran Van Huong and Phan Khac Suu reveal considerably less organizational activity in their camps. Both complain of a serious lack of funds, and both appear to be relying primarily on their personal appeal and a less formal, volunteer campaign organization than Thieu and Ky. Both remain suspicious of the GVN's intentions in regard to allowing a fair campaign and election, though their suspicions seem to have lessened slightly as a result of the GVN's abolition of press censorship.

From both men's discussion of the issues, it is clear that "peace" will be a major element in their respective platforms. However, they have framed the issue relatively conservatively, Huong stating he would "never" negotiate with the NLF and Suu calling essentially for continued partition into a non-communist South and a communist North.

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By jm, NARA, Date 7-20-94

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