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Pres file

Friday, July 21, 1967
4:00 p. m.

Mr. President:

Herewith is today's situation
report on the political developments
in Viet Nam.

W. W. Rostow

Att.

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Situation Report in Viet-Nam

July 21, 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-163

By 4-8, NARA, Date 7-20-94

New Developments

Saigon 1536 reports a conversation between Ambassador Bunker and Ky on July 20. Ky said the working arrangement between him and Thieu was moving in an encouraging way. He said that he was meeting with the entire Directorate to consider broad policy questions relating to re-organization of the armed forces, pacification, formation of a Cabinet, and negotiations for a settlement of the war. Ky said that discussions were going well and that he would want to discuss these issues with Bunker when the Directorate had reached a more definite position. He indicated that a policy statement, presumably a Thieu-Ky platform, would be issued on August 3, the opening day of the presidential campaign. Bunker emphasized again that the U. S. could not countenance anything like a coup, and Ky stated categorically that there would be no coups.

Bunker comments that the Thieu-Ky relationship is developing in an encouraging way and that Ky's categorical statement

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against any coup is also reassuring. Bunker had earlier instructed that the same word be passed through senior U.S. commanders to their Vietnamese opposite numbers. Bunker believes that there is no longer any doubt about our opposition to coups in high Vietnamese military circles.

The Central Election Council has completed its consideration of complaints against Upper House candidate lists. A Reuters report this morning indicates that the Council has approved 48 lists, or 480 candidates for the Upper House race. The Council rejected 15 slates including two led by militant Buddhists and another composed of trade union representatives. According to Reuters, the Council approved five tickets led by members of the Directorate and four tickets led by retired generals.

Comment

Ambassador Bunker's efforts to move Thieu and Ky into a good working relationship is continuing on a sound course. We are instructing the Mission to utilize the special channel to Ky to provide detailed advice regarding the formulation of a Thieu-Ky platform statement.

We do not yet know the grounds for the rejection of the 15 Upper House slates. At any rate the Election Council's findings must be reviewed and approved by the Assembly.

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