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Friday, July 21, 1967
8:20 a.m.

Mr. President:

Here is a report from Bunker
which indicates that some solid progress
may well be under way in harnessing
Ky and Thien for the campaign.

W. W. Rostow

Saigon 1536, July 12, 1967

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WWRostow:rlh

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By rg, NARA, Date 7-18-91

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By sg/hip NARA, Date 7-19-91

1. I HAD A TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER KY LATE IN THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 20 AND WE WENT OVER SOME OF THE SAME GROUND THAT I HAD COVERED IN MY MORNING TALK WITH GENERAL THIEU(REFTEL).
2. KY GAVE ME ESSENTIALLY THE SAME EXPLANATION ABOUT THE VOTE IN THE ASSEMBLY SPECIAL COMMITTEE THAT THIEU HAD GIVEN ME (PARA 3 REFTEL). KY THEN DESCRIBED THE EARLY MORNING MEETINGS WITH CORPS COMMANDERS ON JULY 18 ALONG THE LINES DESCRIBED EARLIER BY BUI DIEM (SAIGON 1381). KY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME OF THE GENERALS HAD GIVEN CREDENCE TO THE RUMOR THAT THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

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ACTION. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD THEM THIS WAS RIDICULOUS AND THEY HAD CALMED DOWN IN THE COURSE OF THE MEETING. DURING THAT MORNING, ACCORDING TO KY, CHECKS WITH THEIR PEOPLE IN THE ASSEMBLY REASSURED THEM THAT THE VOTE WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. (COMMENT: THIS CONFIRMS BUI DIEM'S STATEMENT TO ME AT OUR SECOND MEETING THAT SAME MORNING.)

3. I MENTIONED TO KY THAT WE HAD HEARD THAT LOAN FELT THE AMERICANS WERE OUT TO GET HIM. I SAID THAT WE, OF COURSE, HAD NOTHING AGAINST LOAN HIMSELF ALTHOUGH AS I HAD MAYSELF SAID TO KY WE FELT THAT HE HAD BEEN OVERZEALOUS EARLY IN THE GAME AND THAT THIS HAD NOT HELPED THE SITUATION EITHER FOR THE GOVERNMENT OR KY. KY SAID HE HAD ENTIRELY AGREED AND HAD THEREFORE PULLED LOAN BACK AT THAT TIME.

4. WE THEN GOT ON TO THE MATTER OF WORKING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN HIM AND THIEU. KY FELT THAT THIS WAS MOVING IN AN ENCOURAGING WAY AND SAID THAT HE WAS IN FACT AT THE MOMENT MEETING WITH THE ENTIRE DIRECTORATE TO CONSIDER BROAD POLICY QUESTIONS RELATING TO REORGANIZATION OF THE RVNAF, PACIFICATION,

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FORMATION OF A CABINET, AND BROAD POLICY RELATING TO NEGOTIATIONS FOR A SETTLEMENT. HE SAID THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE GOING WELL AND THAT WHEN THEY HAD REACHED A MORE DEFINITE STATE HE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS THEM WITH ME AND ALSO TALK ABOUT THE GENERAL DIVISION OF WORK ENVISAGED. HE SAID THAT A STATEMENT REGARDING THESE POLICY MATTERS WOULD BE ISSUED AUGUST 3RD, THE OPENING DAY OF THE CAMPAIGN. PRESUMABLY IT WILL CONSTITUTE A THIEU-KY PLATFORM.

- 5 DURING OUR TALK I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAY TO KY WHAT I HAD EARLIER MADE CLARER TO BUI DIEM, NAMELY, THAT WE COULD NOT MAINTAIN ANYTHING EVEN RESEMBLING A COUP. KY STATED

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5 DURING OUR TALK I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAY TO KY WHAT I HAD EARLIER MADE CLEAR TO BUI DIEM, NAMELY, THAT WE COULD NOT COUNTENANCE ANYTHING EVEN RESEMBLING A COUP. KY STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY COUPS HERE. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS SO AS NOT TO LET THEM BE INFLUENCED BY ELEMENTS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A COUP ATMOSPHERE. HE SAID HIS ADVICE TO THEM WOULD BE TO EXPEND THEIR ENERGY FIGHTING THE ENEMY, NOT FRIENDS.

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6. COMMENT: (A) THE ACCOUNTS OF THE EVENTS ON JULY 17 AND 18 BY THIEU, KY AND BUI DIEM SEEM GENERALLY CONSISTENT ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY AT VARIANCE WITH OPPOSITION ALLEGATIONS. THEIR COMMENTS ARE ALSO MODERATELY ENCOURAGING IN TERMS OF THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BEING DEVELOPED BETWEEN THIEU AND KY.

(B) KY'S CATEGORIC STATEMENT THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY COUPS IS ALSO REASSURING. I HAD EARLIER INSTRUCTED GENERAL ABRAMS TO SEE THAT THIS SAME WORD WAS PASSED ALONG THROUGH HIS SENIOR COMMANDERS TO THEIR VIETNAMESE OPPOSITE NUMBERS. I BELIEVE THERE IS NO LONGER ANY DOUBT ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE ON THIS QUESTION IN HIGH VIETNAMESE MILITARY CIRCLES.

EUNKER
BT

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