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Wednesday, July 19, 1967
4:15 p.m.

Mr. President:

Attached is today's Situation
Report on the Political Developments
in Viet Nam.

W. W. Rostow
Att.

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Situation Report on Viet-Nam

July 19, 1967

New Developments

The presidential slates are now formally approved after yesterday Assembly action. The 11 (not 12 as reported yesterday) slates will be formally posted today. The presidential election campaign opens August 3. The Assembly's action approving presidential slates has received wide press coverage, including criticism of the disqualification of Thanh and Big Minh, and suggestions of coercion of the Assembly by the Directorate.

Saigon 1381 contains conflicting stories of the intense maneuvering behind the scenes by the Directorate, particularly Ky, to influence the Assembly's decision on the Thieu-Ky slate. The Embassy is attempting to obtain additional information to clarify these developments, their meaning, and their motivation. In any case, the Embassy reports that the situation now appears calm, that all military units are reportedly in normal positions and carrying out normal activities. Thieu and Ky have

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By as, NARA, Date 7-20-94

been together in Hue, giving at least the impression of solidarity.

The Central Election Council is scheduled to complete its review of Upper-House candidates tomorrow and to approve Upper-House candidate lists by July 21.

Comment

Although the confusing and conflicting reports in Saigon 1381 require clarification, they and available CIA reports illustrate the capacity of the Vietnamese military leadership to take any action, including the use of physical force, to protect their dominant, political position in South Viet-Nam. This ingrained military attitude must be borne constantly in mind as the electoral campaign proceeds and the elections themselves take place. We will be expressing these concerns to Bunker, fully backing his forceful statement to Ambassador Bui Diem on July 18 that the U. S. could not countenance anything even resembling a coup.