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Pres file

July 17, 1967
Monday, 6:45 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE PRESIDENT

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

Att. W. W. Rostow

SECRET-EXDIS ATTACHMENT

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Situation Report on Viet-Nam

July 17, 1967

New Developments

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-163

By 128, NARA, Date 7-20-94

Saigon 1164 describes Ambassador Bunker's meeting with Ambassador Bui Diem. The latter claimed that a written agreement between Thieu and Ky did exist and that he had seen it. He said that he had talked to Thieu, but gave no details. Bui Diem also indicated that there was to be another meeting of the Armed Forces leadership today to discuss "the whole range of problems connected with the Thieu-Ky candidacy."

A consistently reliable source states that Ky's earlier campaign manager, Social Welfare Minister Phong, has been working with Thieu and his followers on a framework for a joint Thieu-Ky campaign organization. This source indicated that the organization would be largely based on Ky's earlier organization but that Thieu men would be appointed to important positions "so that local political observers will see Thieu men running the Thieu-Ky campaign." The source also stated that a Supreme Military Council would be established to provide behind-the-scenes guidance to the new government on major policy matters.

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Ky has told an American observer that he and several political advisors intended to agree on supporting six Upper-House candidate lists and that these lists would be approved at the meeting of the Armed Forces leadership today. Ky also indicated that he and his advisors would be discussing the composition of the new Cabinet. Ky stated that he had instructed Gen. Loan to "keep his mouth shut on political matters."

The National Assembly is scheduled to meet tomorrow, July 18, to consider the recommendations of the Central Election Council with regard to presidential slates. Assembly sources confirm the likelihood that the Assembly will disqualify both Big Minh's and Au Truong Thanh's candidacies, as well as several minor candidacies.

Comment

These reports contain some hopeful signs of progress that the Thieu-Ky relationships and campaign organization are being worked out. However, this process is still in the early stages. Clearly, the Armed Forces leadership meeting today is an important session in determining the effectiveness of the Thieu-Ky ticket and its organization for the campaign ahead.