

Mr. Rostow
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2. Profile

Thursday, July 27, 1967
3:00 p.m.

Mr. President:

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

W. W. Rostow

Att.

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Situation Report in Viet-Nam

July 27, 1967

The Campaign for the Senate

The 48 senatorial slates finally posted July 21 represent almost every non-communist political tendency in the country. A few lists of possible political importance were disqualified including two slates reportedly favored by the militant Buddhists and the slate sponsored by the leading labor organization. If they wish to, these groups should be able to find other slates to support among the widely-varied lists remaining.

The very large number of lists and the complicated nature of the electoral process make pre-election assessments difficult. The outcome will undoubtedly be affected by the amount of backing received from leading presidential candidates and their organizations. Thieu and Ky have indicated they will pick lists to support. The new "United Political Bloc", composed of several leading political elements originally organized in support of Ky, is running three senate lists. The Southern regionalist slate undoubtedly plans on Huong's support. The Revolutionary Dai Viet party organization is already linking Ha Thuc Ky's presidential campaign with that of four Dai Viet senatorial lists.

Other lists, such as the two Catholic-led slates, count on the advantage of bloc votes, and the slate containing several ex-Diemist officials reportedly has good financial backing for the campaign.

Overall, the senatorial elections have stirred up considerable (and unusual) enthusiasm in Vietnamese political circles. Participation has been extremely wide, and attention focussed on the senate election has had the welcome side-effect of defusing tensions generated by the concurrent presidential race.

Presidential Campaign Development

The Central Election Campaign Committee, composed of representatives of all the presidential candidates, met July 20 and agreed without apparent difficulty on major campaign procedures. The Committee Chairman told the press on July 24 that the candidates had agreed on joint appearances before voters, joint use of communications media, and a prohibition on use of personal invective in campaign speeches. This is encouraging.

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