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*Pres file*

Tuesday, July 25, 1967  
2:30 p.m.

Mr. President:

Here is today's situation report  
on the political development in Viet-Nam.

Walt Rostow

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Situation Report in Viet-Nam

July 25, 1967

The activation of Ky's political apparatus behind the Thieu-Ky ticket has thrown additional light on the developing relationship between the two men.

Thieu's desire to use the apparatus in the absence of an effective organization of his own is apparently seen by Ky and his followers as confirmation of the dominant behind-the-scenes role Ky expects to play in the new regime. Ky still plans on having the major voice in selection of campaign issues and strategy and in naming a new Prime Minister and cabinet. He also plans to control the Upper House of the new Assembly by supporting several senatorial slates for election and by wielding his personal influence with various political groups.

In addition, Ky seems to be relying on use of a "special military committee" which would, in effect, operate as a shadow government deciding on general policy and significant issues and passing guidance on to the new legal government for implementation. Ky expects to dominate this inner military group, reportedly already agreed upon by him and Thieu and composed of himself (as chairman), Thieu, the Defense Minister, the National Security Minister, and the four Corps Commanders.

Comment

Through their jointly-agreed campaign efforts, Thieu and Ky seem to be defining their "understanding" further, at least for the pre-election period. Ky may even be right in feeling he has begun to pin Thieu down on post-election arrangements. However, the agreements are still ill-defined and have probably not been formally ratified by Thieu. The "special military council" on which Ky may be relying is extra-constitutional. It may prove hard for Ky to control such a group. Moreover, once in office Thieu could, if he wished, try to side-step such a council or severely limit its role. We are asking Embassy Saigon for its views on this matter.

SECRET - LINDIS