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2. *Res file*

Friday, August 4, 1967
3:00 p.m.

Mr. President:

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

W. W. Rostow

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SECRET ATTACHMENT

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Situation Report in Viet-Nam

August 4, 1967

Opening of Campaign

The presidential campaign officially began yesterday. In their opening campaign statements and press conferences, leading candidates said the following about negotiations and a peace settlement:

Tran Van Huong said (1) Hanoi's demand that the NLF be represented in negotiations is a "trap". He would not negotiate with the Front; the principal parties to negotiations must be North and South Viet-Nam. (2) The US and other allies should avoid the mistake the French made in not giving South Viet-Nam a part in the 1954 Geneva negotiations.

Phan Khac Suu noted the NLF is only a tool of Hanoi and there cannot be direct negotiations with it. Suu's running mate Dr. Dan said that "talks" should be opened at various "levels", of which the NLF is one, but formal negotiations must be undertaken only with North Viet-Nam. (Note: This clarifies somewhat a press report yesterday stating Dan had proposed negotiations with the NLF but failing to mention the latter part of Dan's remark about North Viet-Nam.)

Nguyen Van Thieu stated (1) peace cannot be attained overnight and must result from a strong military and political position. (2) Nevertheless, "ending the war" is one of the Thieu-Ky ticket's three primary campaign slogans.

The press conferences were well-attended and well-received by both the Vietnamese and foreign press.

Thieu and Ky Back Senate Lists

Thieu and Ky reportedly agreed on six senatorial slates to support in the campaign. The backing is supposed to include substantial financial support. The lists include several members of the Directorate, People's-Military Council, and National Assembly as well as noted economist Vu Quoc Thuc and retired general Tran Van Don.

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By , NARA, Date 9-12-94

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