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Monday, August 28, 1967

Pres. file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

Attached is today's report on
the Viet-Nam political situation.

W. W. Rostow

Att.

SECRET-EXDIS Attachment

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DECLASSIFIED Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 94-299

August 28, 1967

By 120, NARA, Date 12-15-94

Over the week end presidential candidates or their representatives appeared before fairly large crowds in My Tho in the Delta and in DaNang. Thieu was present with the other candidates in My Tho.

In a conversation with Bunker on Saturday, Ky said he thought the Thieu-Ky ticket would get about 40 to 45% of the vote. Bunker notes Ky has lowered his sights from 50 to 60% that he projected a week or so ago. Bunker also believes that Thieu and Ky are not running scared and that they remain confident of victory.

Huong told an Embassy officer yesterday that he will not withdraw from the presidential race. Huong claimed that Suu also will not withdraw and that Suu has made a deal with Ky, whose machine is now supporting him. According to Huong, Suu will name Ky Prime Minister if he is elected. Suu's running mate, Dan, stated separately to the Embassy that the Suu/Dan slate has at least considered Ky as a possible Prime Minister but that they are now leaning toward General Thang.

The Embassy believes both Huong and Suu will stay in the race and that the withdrawal of any minor candidates would not change the outcome of the elections. The Embassy doubted Huong's claim that Ky and Suu have made a secret deal.

In a press conference on Friday, Suu's running mate, Dan, said that the current election campaign is as free as any election campaign anywhere, including the U.S., and that all candidates have to recognize this. Dan went on to say, however, that there were irregularities on the part of the government. He said that Ky's pre-campaign electioneering is grounds for disqualification under the election law and claimed that if Thieu and Ky win they will be taken to court and disqualified.

An election handbill mimeographed on USIS letterhead has recently been circulated in the Saigon area. The handbill

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lists the Thieu-Ky presidential slate and six senatorial lists, as if these candidates had U.S. support. The Embassy has issued a statement pointing out that such stationery has not been in official use in the Mission since July 1965 and that any implication that the U.S. Mission is supporting any particular candidate is completed unfounded.

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