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- Presidential file

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Friday, August 25, 1967
4:00 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

Attached is the daily Viet-Nam
political report.

William J. Jorden

Att.

SECRET-EXDIS Attachment

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~~SECRET EXDIS~~

Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

August 25, 1967

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

~~E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4~~

~~NEJ 94-299~~

Campaign Developments

~~7-1967, NARA, Date 2-7-96~~

Joint appearances of presidential candidates or their representatives in the provinces are continuing, but neither Thieu nor Ky has yet participated.

Registration began today of candidates for the Lower House election on October 22. Reports indicate that as many as 1,000 candidates may file for the 137 Lower House seats. (532 candidates ran for the 117 Constituent Assembly seats.)

We are receiving an increasing number of reports that provincial and district officials are being instructed to ensure a Thieu-Ky victory. We have asked for Ambassador Bunker's judgment as to whether Thieu and Ky are beginning to run scared and the lengths to which they might be prepared to go to rig the election. We have also requested Bunker's current thinking on the most likely contingencies to arise after September 3 and what courses of action we should consider for meeting such contingencies.

Bunker-Thieu Conversation

Thieu told Bunker he planned to participate tomorrow in a joint appearance with other candidates. Thieu asserted that continuing charges of irregular election practices had not been substantiated and no one had resorted to the legal complaint procedures. Thieu estimated that he would receive at the most 50% of the vote but could get 40% or less. He said he understood some civilian candidates might make a joint request that Thieu and Ky step down from their offices. He had also heard that Huong still might withdraw from the campaign, making the race an even closer one. The Embassy is checking further on these two reports.

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Impending Military Shake-Up

The press quotes General Thieu as announcing that 50 military officers, including some Generals, will be tried on charges of inefficiency and corruption. Thieu reportedly said that no decision had yet been taken but that such actions were planned. This press report is consistent with CIA reporting in the past two or three weeks.

Post-Election Thinking

A Huong supporter stated to an Embassy officer that Huong, if elected, intended to appoint a military man (unmarried) as Prime Minister. He said that Huong also was considering the establishment of a unified command for Vietnamese, U.S. and free world forces. Huong's supporter clearly indicated that Huong would not enter a government headed by the generals and would instead become a very vocal part of the opposition.

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