

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

24

August 16, 1967

Dear Chairman Thieu and Prime Minister Ky:

I address you together, because at Honolulu, Manila, and Guam we did our work together.

I wish you to know how much you -- and the people of South Viet Nam -- have been in my thoughts these days. In my thirty-five years in political life, I have been through twelve elections -- some of which I won, but I have also known what it is to lose. I understand something of the emotions and the problems that go with what we call "election fever."

It has been interesting -- even exciting -- for me to see your young nation going through this competitive electoral process. Thus far, I have seen few problems I have not also seen in my own country, and known in my own experience.

I believe also that the picture of the South Viet Nam election is beginning to fall into perspective in the United States.

As you come to the final intensive days of the campaign, I am sure you will continue to ensure fairness and equity to all the candidates.

I should like you to know that our government -- and most of our people -- have no inclination to interfere with or dictate the choice of leaders now being made by the people of South Viet Nam, as they move forward on the path of self-determination. In any democracy, of course, differences of view are extensive and intensive, vigorous and visible. But you should be aware that our resolve to defend Viet Nam against aggression remains firm; and the support for this course will be strengthened -- here and elsewhere -- by the free and fair elections we know will take place on September 3.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-255

By 422, NARA, Date 6-22-95

*and said this went
to State 8/19*

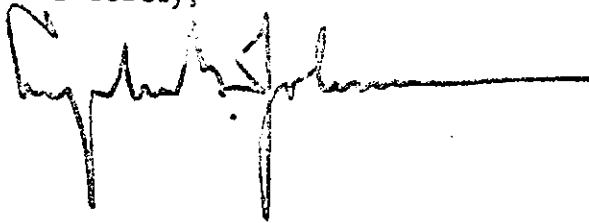
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As you know, the election itself is only one phase in the building of effective constitutional government. Whatever the outcome, other critical tasks lie ahead: the formation of a broadly based government; the holding of parliamentary elections; the development of good working relations between the executive and the legislative; and, above all, making your constitution work effectively.

But I am writing you now not to offer advice but simply to say that I am following events in Viet Nam with interest, sympathy, and great respect for you both, for your colleagues in the government, for all the candidates who are venturing now into democratic politics, and -- above all -- for the gallant people of your country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Lyndon B. Johnson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu
Chairman, National Leadership Committee
Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky
Chairman, Central Executive Committee
Republic of Viet Nam
Saigon

Aug. 19

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Mildred,

Att. is a copy of the Thieu/Ky letter
with the President's signature.

It left here, for State, on August 19.

Alice