

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Monday, August 14, 1967 (4:35 pm)

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Pres file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

Attached is today's situation report  
on the Vietnamese political front.

*Bill*  
William J. Jorden

Att.

SECRET Attachment

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## Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

August 14, 1967

### Presidential Campaign Resumes

The civilian candidates' boycott of joint campaign tours has ended. The next appearance is scheduled for August 15. Most of the candidates appeared at a scheduled joint news conference today. There was some criticism of Thieu and Ky, but the general bitterness of recent days seems diminished.

### Activity of Thieu-Ky Campaign

The activity of Thieu-Ky campaign organization has picked up. Funds have been distributed to local campaign workers in the Mekong Delta provinces.

### Political Attitudes of Military

Ky is reported to have remarked that if the civilian candidates continue to attack him unfairly for not providing adequate election facilities, he might set aside or cancel the elections. His statement was apparently made in a fit of irritation after a meeting with Bunker about the difficulties being encountered in GVN election campaign arrangements. At the moment we do not take this threat seriously.

Meanwhile, we have also received a report containing the "Charter" for a Supreme Military Committee which the generals allegedly will use to continue to exercise power after the elections. Ky is designated committee chairman. The Charter is supposed to have been approved by the eight top generals concerned, who have also written a most disturbing declaration to be issued when and if the committee's existence is acknowledged. Ky and Thieu have categorically denied to Bunker that such a committee exists. Bunker is now considering this report, and we expect his comments momentarily.

### Militant Buddhists call for Struggle

Militant Buddhist leaders appeared to call today for a new struggle against the GVN. They accused Thieu of trying to "destroy Buddhism" by approving a new Buddhist organization charter

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undermining the unity of Vietnamese Buddhism. They compared Thieu's act to Diem's refusal in May 1963 to allow flying of Buddhist flags, which triggered the original Buddhist uprising. In their well-covered press conference, the militant Buddhists failed to call for an election boycott, as they told the Embassy Saturday they would do. However, they did join in demanding the resignation of Thieu and Ky to insure a fair election. They are obviously attempting to peg their opposition to the GVN on a religious issue which will stir the faithful in their behalf. Judging from remarks to Embassy officers, they are also taking heart from US congressional criticism.

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