

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Saturday, August 12, 1967
3:15 p.m.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

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

In this connection, I applied a small blow-
torch to State last night. I told them to get on to
Saigon, underline some of the things that were
being said here (in the Senate, etc.) and get the
message to the civilian candidates. They should
know that they were slowly but surely washing their
country down the drain. If they didn't want that,
they ought to think seriously about their current
actions. The Embassy picked up the ball and
conveyed the message diplomatically with
obviously positive results.

BJJ
William J. Jorden

Att.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 74-295

By *mg*, NARA, Date *6-22-95*

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VIET-NAM POLITICAL SITUATION REPORT

August 12, 1967

The presidential campaign appears to be back on the tracks. The civilian candidates have ended the boycott they declared earlier in protest against GVN handling of their tour to Quang Tri. They have privately attached some conditions to their resumption of activities (travel, security, etc.), but the Embassy reports these should not be too difficult for the GVN to fulfill.

The Embassy made clear yesterday to major civilian candidates the damage caused here by the campaign boycott. Huong claimed to have worked hard to get it lifted, but Suu said Huong was one of the main troublemakers seeking to milk the incident for maximum political advantage. Huong complained of unfair GVN campaign tactics but said he was staying in the race regardless. Suu, on the other hand, praised GVN efforts and called the Quang Tri issue a minor matter.

In connection with Suu's friendly comments, there is a rumor in Saigon that there is a deal between him and General Ky -- Ky to help Suu with his campaign, Ky to be Prime Minister if Suu wins. This is most unlikely. Suu will probably run third. But Ky may be encouraging him to keep him in the race -- and thereby keep the civilian vote split.

Several candidates including Huong have obviously been exploiting developments both locally and in the foreign press. The Embassy comments that Huong may have been thinking of leading a new "struggle" movement a la the 1963 movement against Diem. This may be exaggerated, but it illustrates the kind of intense political maneuvers being carried on as the campaign progresses.

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