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Friday, August 11, 1967

TEXT OF STATE CABLE 19258

*Pres file*

Deliver immediately to Ambassador Locke and Calhoun

Confirming telephone conversation with the Duty Officer, we face an urgent problem today in the House of Representatives where Bingham and others will be making sharply critical speeches based on elements in the Bingham statement summarized in paragraph 2 of State 18985.

The Bingham statement makes three charges:

A. Statements attributed to Ky threaten seizure by military coup if election should produce results unacceptable to him. The implication is that only a Thieu/Ky victory will be acceptable to authorities now in power.

B. The apple story of last Friday that senior officers have taken first steps toward "Military Affairs Committee" which would formulate the national policy in much the same way as Armed Forces leadership has done for more than two years. Added to this is the statement attributed to "one General" that democracy is coming too soon to Vietnam, that the Army must remain powerful and that: "We are willing to go along with the voting, but things must come out right."

C. The "unfortunate incident" at Quang Tri where candidates were allegedly not furnished facilities to meet with voters. The statement says this "must be viewed with suspicion" and that the Government must assume responsibility that all candidates be given opportunity of meeting formally scheduled campaign commitments.

We urgently need your comment by Noon today on these matters for possible Congressional debate here this afternoon. This comment should correct or supplement the following points we believe would be appropriate for rebuttal speakers:

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 94-296

By       , NARA, Date 11-2-94

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A. The Ky statement, as accurately reported, contains no such implication. Both Thieu and Ky have now categorically said that if the elections result in civilian victory, they will accept it.

B. The report on the alleged "Military Affairs Committee" has no significant foundation so far as we are aware. We believe all actions by the military in this regard are consistent with the Constitutional concept of an Armed Forces Council that would operate solely in military arena and under the control of Constitutional authorities. As to statements attributed to "one General", Thieu and Ky statements covered in A above refute these.

C. The incident at Quang Tri has been clearly and repeatedly explained as a case of weather interference with landing at the scheduled point. Both Thieu and Ky have made clear that there was no intent not to grant appropriate facilities, and have repeatedly stated that the Government of Vietnam is prepared to furnish such facilities.

Above is our first outline, and we can flesh this out from your earlier reporting cables. What we need is your present endorsement that these represent valid conclusions in the present situation. We would also like some summary statement of your views as to the Government's conduct in respect to free elections.

Ambassador Bunker should personally endorse your reply unless this is seriously inconvenient.