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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 22, 1967

Pres file

Mr. President:

Attached is today's Situation
Report on Viet Nam politics.

W. A. R. Rostow

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~~SECRET-EXDIS~~

Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

September 22, 1967

DETENTION OF AU TRUONG THANH

Press reports of the manhandling of Au Truong Thanh by Vietnamese police have attracted Congressional and press attention here. The Embassy confirms the basic elements of the story reported in the press, namely that Au Truong Thanh has been called in for questioning by the Vietnamese police regarding alleged Viet Cong connections and regarding his application for travel to the U. S. The Embassy also confirms that excessive police methods were used in getting Thanh to police headquarters for questioning. There are late press reports indicating that the police chief, Gen. Loan, has apologized for the use of force with Thanh and that Thanh has been released. We have no confirmation of the latter report.

Bunker has told Thieu that the good image which the Vietnamese Government had created through its handling of the elections should not be tarnished by acts which needlessly left it open to criticism.

We have instructed Bunker to inform Thieu that the state of U. S. public opinion will not permit the U. S. Government to appear to condone the police's handling of Thanh. Bunker is also to make clear to Thieu that the Vietnamese Government's investigation of Thanh should be pursued quietly and with full regard for accepted legal practices.

In answer to press questioning today, the Department spokesman expressed the view that, without prejudging all aspects of the matter, it appeared that unnecessarily severe police measures were used.

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~~SECRET-EXDIS~~ By LC, NARA, Date 1-13-95