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Pres file
Wednesday,
October 11, 1967

MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

Attached is today's situation report
on Vietnamese politics.

W. W. Rostow

Att.

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Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

October 11, 1967

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3A

NLJ 94-417

By Cl, NARA, Date 1-20-95

Thieu Speech

President-elect Thieu gave what appears to be an important policy speech at today's installation of the new Senate. We do not yet have the text, but press reports are focussing on his comments on negotiations.

Tri Quang Ceases Vigil

On "orders" from his Supreme Patriarch, Tri Quang returned to his pagoda after a 10-day vigil outside the palace. At a pagoda press conference, he said the Buddhists wished to test the GVN's good will but left the door open for further protests if no satisfactory solution emerges. The Embassy comments that the election validation, lack of strength in the Buddhist/student/Dzu opposition alliance, and GVN skill in handling the dispute so far undoubtedly influenced Tri Quang in calling off his protest vigil.

Lower House Elections

Some 1,200 candidates for the 137-seat Lower House began their election campaign October 6. Early reports indicate the election is being taken seriously at local levels, even if the over-all turnout may be less than for the Presidential/Upper House elections. Campaign issues have not yet clearly emerged.

Our preliminary analysis shows that the Lower House promises much wider representation than the Senate. Hoa Hao and Cao Dai candidates seem certain to win in their areas. Ethnic Cambodians and montagnards are assured of several Lower House seats. More liberal qualification procedures left several candidates in the running with appeal to the "militant" Buddhists (particularly in Saigon and I Corps). The VNQDD and Dai Viet parties are running many candidates. Organized labor is reportedly running or backing 20 to 30 candidates directly.

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The quality of candidates appears high. They include an estimated 40 Constituent Assembly members, many provincial/municipal councillors, several ex-province or ex-district chiefs, and responsible younger politicians and former youth leaders. Disqualifications for "pro-communist or pro-communist neutralist" activity seem to have been made less arbitrarily than before.

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