

Friday, October 6, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. President:

Attached is today's situation report
on Vietnamese politics.

W. W. Rostow

Att.

~~SECRET-EXDIS~~ Attachment

30

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Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

October 6, 1967

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-405

By lip, NARA, Date 3-29-95

Formation of the Government

Thieu has reiterated to Bunker that he hopes to form a Cabinet by mid-October and to hold inauguration ceremonies on November 1. Thieu also says he intends to install the new Senate next week. Thieu has confirmed the latter publicly, and has also reiterated publicly that the new Prime Minister would be a civilian.

On the same occasion, Ky stated publicly that he had asked Thieu to give him the necessary power to "liquidate all corrupt elements" in Vietnamese society. Semi-official Viet-Nam Press has carried reports of government moves against corrupt provincial officials, but the Embassy comments that it is too early to judge whether this is a temporary flurry or a beginning of a real anti-corruption program.

The Embassy also reports that the Senators-elect are sorting themselves out, clarifying their views on national problems, and seeking electoral alliances with Lower-House candidates. At this stage these groupings are likely to be loose, front-type organizations. The Embassy believes that they could ultimately provide the nucleus for political party development, but we doubt that they have this potential in the short run on the basis on which they are now being organized.

Buddhist-Student Agitation

The Embassy judges that the Assembly's validation of the presidential elections results has removed much of the steam from the efforts of militant Buddhists and students to agitate against the government. Thieu has told Bunker that he hopes to deal firmly with Tri Quang but at the same time to give him a face-saving way out of his present position. Tri Quang remains in front of the presidential palace and press reports this morning say he has begun a hunger strike, but this is unconfirmed. Student activity appears to have died down at least for the time being everywhere but in Hue.

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