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Monday, September 25, 1967

Profile

MEMORANDUM 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

September 25, 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 94-402

Organization of New Government

By 4-2, NARA, Date 3-24-95

Thieu told Bunker on Friday that he and Ky had agreed on the make-up of the new Government, including the selection of the Prime Minister. We have a separate reliable report that Thieu and Ky have agreed on Ky's former Vice Presidential running-mate, Nguyen Van Loc, as Prime Minister. Loc is undistinguished, but may represent the best agreement that Thieu and Ky can come to at this point.

Thieu also told Bunker that he intended to consult with the new Senators early this week on the organization of the Senate. He then intended to install the new Senate on October 5 or 6, just after the Assembly's validation of the presidential election. After the Senate is installed, Thieu plans to announce the Government's program and the Prime Minister-designate. The Lower House would then be installed on October 29 or 30, a week or so following Lower House elections. Finally, the new Government would be inaugurated on November 1.

Thieu said that during the period between the announcement of his designation and the inauguration, the Prime Minister-designate would be working with the "shadow" Cabinet on the government's program in order to have action programs in hand when the new Government is inaugurated. Thieu said he intended to have some programs put into effect immediately and which would begin to show results within the first six months, and other programs to be gotten underway for the longer term. Thieu was receptive to Bunker's offer of close consultation and assistance in the development of the new Government's program. We have had an exchange with Ambassador Bunker on this matter and have discussed our ideas at length with Ambassador Locke. We will be sending more detailed suggestions to the Mission shortly.

Buddhist-Student Agitation

The weekend witnessed small but well publicized student and militant Buddhist agitation in Saigon. About 200

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university students (out of nearly 30,000 students in Saigon university) staged a relatively orderly demonstration yesterday to call for invalidation of the election results. Demonstrators also sent an open letter to the President demanding an end to U.S. interference in Vietnamese internal affairs and a cessation of bombing in the North. One American student took part in the demonstration, which was broken up without incident by the police.

The militant Buddhists held a press conference yesterday to denounce Thieu and to proclaim their support of those who wish to overturn the allegedly rigged elections. Dzu and another defeated presidential candidate participated. Dzu made a hard-hitting speech, calling Thieu a traitor and concluding with a rousing appeal to "get rid of Thieu Can Lao Assembly." During the question period, Tri Quang replied ambiguously to queries about launching a new "struggle" against the Government.

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