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INFORMATION

Saturday,
November 18, 1967

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MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT

For file

Mr. President:

Attached is a Viet-Nam situation report. It describes the "action program" of the new Government headed by Prime Minister Loc. It looks thorough and thoughtful. Ambassador Bunker will be urging the Vietnamese to ~~look~~ forward on all these fronts.

move

W. W. Rostow

Att.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By *RSJ*, NARA, Date *12-4-91*

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Viet-Nam Political Situation Report

November 18, 1967

Prime Minister Loc has announced his "Action Program". It represents an omnibus attack upon a wide range of social ills and governmental deficiencies. Analysis of South Viet-Nam's current problems is exceptionally candid and searching; in contrast, the proposed remedies and lines of action are generally moderate and cautiously stated. There is an emphasis upon austerity and service. The sole proposal for specific legislative action involves preparation of press and political party laws.

A greatly abridged summary of major program features follows:

- a) Foreign Affairs - improvement of information programs and diplomatic representation;
- b) Reconciliation - welcome and opportunities for exiles and Viet Cong; NVN is asked for "sympathy" and an end to violence;
- c) Military Affairs - tightened discipline (to end "bribery, favoritism, and abuse of power") and improved benefits for servicemen, veterans, and dependents, so as to "improve combat capability";
- d) Revolutionary Development - to occupy "first place among GVN activities", with increased RVNAF support;
- e) Agriculture - detailed programs include restoring 500,000 expired land leases, issuance of 110,500 titles to purchasers of expropriated lands; formation of cooperatives and pilot centers, emphasis upon augmented production, rural credit, etc.;
- f) Economic Affairs - within the context of "people's capitalism", a variety of measures to regularize supply, stabilize prices, and increase productivity includes encouragement of handicrafts and consumer industries and sale of stock in public enterprises;
- g) Labor - a pledge to rationalize manpower allocation is matched by promises of support for trade union growth

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 94-480

By CG, NARA, Date 11-7-95

and worker training; man-operated vehicles (cyclos, etc.) are to be phased out and workers relocated in other jobs -- a politically sensitive item;

- h) Social Services - education is to be reorganized, diversified, and standardized; hospital beds are to be doubled and rural health programs pursued; refugees and ethnic minorities provided special opportunities.

Much of the speech deals with governmental reform, acknowledging past ineffectual performance with stark frankness. While the only promises of formal institutional change concern codification of laws and administrative practice and reorganization of the judiciary, the program calls for a revolutionary psychological reorientation of the GVN. Thus the GVN's "guiding principle" is to be public service, not "demagogic slogans" or cunning methods"; procedures are to be simplified and rationalized; maximum time limits will be set for every service rendered by a GVN agency; and discipline is to be tightened. The aim is to "eliminate opportunities for government officials and civil servants to cause trouble to the people".

The program also addresses two areas of current popular discontent over urban conditions and the erosion of social values. It deals with these by, first, proposing massive urban public services and programs, and, second, by restoring social discipline in the schools, over all youth, in cities, etc. The speech identifies the foreign presence as a threat to Vietnamese culture and society necessitated by the war.

In sum, the program is notable for its sober tone, if not for precision or specifics. It says the right things to calm domestic and foreign uneasiness about the character of the new Government and does not pre-empt the legislative prerogatives of the National Assembly. Perhaps its greatest usefulness lies in promising actions with which each respective criteria by which to measure governmental performance. However, a skeptical Vietnamese populace will undoubtedly wait to judge the government by its specific accomplishments rather than by its public statements.