

MEMORANDUM

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State Dept. review completed

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

June 28, 1973

SECRET/EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER
FROM: WILLIAM L. STEARMAN
SUBJECT: Embassy Efforts to Avoid a "One Party"
Senate Election in South Vietnam

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MORI/CDF per C05106402

Attached at Tab A is a report from the CIA describing efforts we made in Saigon to avoid the threat of a "one party" Senate election in South Vietnam scheduled for August. To our knowledge none of these activities were cleared by the NSC, and this report represents our first word on what appears to have been a major intrusion on internal GVN politics.

The Agency and the Embassy clearly were responding to the possibility that only Thieu's Democracy Party would contest the planned election for one-half of the Senate's membership. Other parties were not expected to participate as a result of a tight filing schedule which, they claimed, did not provide sufficient time to negotiate formation of lists and their fears that the election would be loaded in Thieu's favor. In a memo of June 16 (2 days before the filing cutoff), the Agency had alerted us to the possibility of a one party election but had not indicated the actions it was then taking to avert this contingency. (In any event the memo was OBE by the time we received it. The filed date had passed and four states registered.)

Although no opposition or independent slates filed for the election, four groups (two associated with Thieu and two unknown, probably GVN-inspired lists) registered. The Embassy has commented that Thieu's lists are certain of victory and that he therefore will control the formerly independent Upper House. Significantly, the Embassy has also apportioned the blame for this largely no-contest election to both the administration and the politicians, who had ample warning of the legal filing schedule yet -- apparently without harassment -- failed to compose their own differences to file a joint Senate slate.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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XGDS 5B (2) by Auth CIA

21 JUN 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable G. McMurtrie Godley
Assistant Secretary for East Asian
and Pacific Affairs
Department of State

Colonel Richard Kennedy
National Security Council Staff

SUBJECT: Efforts to Avert a "One-Party" Senate Election in
South Vietnam

1. On 16 June 1973, we sent you an assessment of President Nguyen Van Thieu's probable strategy in the Senate elections scheduled for August 1973. The following is a review of the efforts made by the Mission in Vietnam to avert a "one-party" election.

2. On 26 August 1973, the South Vietnamese voters will elect 31 Senators, or approximately half the total membership of the Senate. Anticipating a possible one party election and remembering the damage done to the Government of Vietnam (GVN) image here in the United States and abroad by the uncontested presidential election of 1971, the U. S. Government sought to encourage broad participation in the upcoming Senate elections.

3. Diplomatic representations impressed upon President Thieu and other GVN leaders the desirability of the presence of opposition slates in the election so as to prove that the voters would indeed be offered a genuine choice. The GVN did remove the requirement that candidates for the Senate had to be sponsored by political parties which had qualified under the Political Parties Decree Law 060.

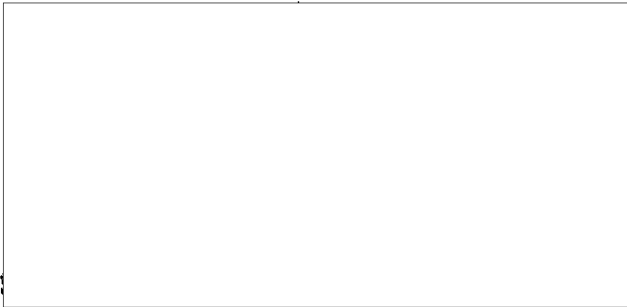


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FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS:

Theodore G. Shackley

Theodore G. Shackley

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