

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

PERSONAL

TO : Dr. Ruben V. Austin, Coordinator DATE : September 26, 1960
FROM : Dr. Lloyd D. Musolf, Chief Advisor
SUBJECT : Political Situation in Vietnam

Previous memoranda have detailed something of the political situation in Vietnam, and this memorandum therefore need not be of great length. A brief statement is indicated, however.

The administrative situation depicted in my memorandum of September 1 has been reflected in the political situation, as one might expect. That is to say, increasingly the government seems to rest on dead center, because of the necessity to wait for presidential approval of action. In the process, a number of Vietnamese officials, both in the capital and in the provinces, have developed a considerable sense of frustration. Many apparently feel that their ideas for effective counter-action to Viet Cong efforts are not receiving immediate attention and that, meanwhile, prestige of the government is suffering. The same feeling exists among some American advisors.

The situation described above should not necessarily lead to the downfall of this government, but it is worth reporting to you that, increasingly, there is concern as to whether the government has the flexibility to respond to the Viet Cong threat. Great flexibility is needed for the reason that this threat is not only a military threat but basically involves political, economic and social actions of the government. The threat posed to the government would be a serious one for any government to handle, but the increasing inflexibility of the present government lessens its chances of meeting the multifarious threats. Hopefully, given the efforts of numerous patriotic Vietnamese and some American advisors, the present decline in government prestige can be arrested and the trend reversed.

IDW/dw

