

No. 11931/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
11 September 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SOUTH VIETNAM'S ELECTIONS
(As of 1:00 PM EDT)

1. The polls are now closed in South Vietnam. All evidence points to a large voter turnout and a well-administered election. About 69 percent of the registered voters in Saigon and Gia Dinh Province--where one fourth of the country's voters live--went to the polls today. Unofficial totals from the other provinces generally range between 70 and 85 percent. Final, validated returns will probably indicate that around 70 percent of the country's registered voters participated in today's election. There is no information available on election results as yet.

2. There has thus far been no evidence of government pressure on the voters or of favoritism towards specific candidates in Saigon and surrounding Gia Dinh Province. Wire service press accounts with any interpretive coloring have been uniformly favorable. Good weather conditions throughout the country were a contributory factor in the large voter turnout.

Viet Cong Activity

3. The countrywide level of Viet Cong terrorism and harrassment was high from noon yesterday through this morning, with some 90 incidents reported during the period. This is roughly a five-fold increase over the figure for a normal 24-hour period. Six district capitals received harrassing fire but there was no sensational terrorist action or sabotage,

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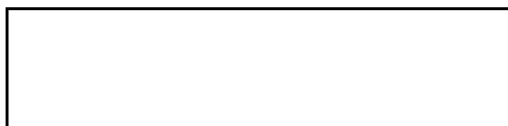
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and no large-scale military activity was reported. There were some 12 grenade explosions in Saigon yesterday, but the capital was generally free from antielection activity while the polls were open today.

Buddhist Activity

4. The call for a boycott by militant members of the Buddhist Institute failed to deter any significant number of voters from casting ballots today. Hunger strikes are being conducted in pagodas in Saigon, Hue, Da Nang, Ban Me Thuot, and Nha Trang, but are attracting little public attention. No serious efforts were made by Buddhists to disrupt the voting. One march was attempted by approximately 80 monks in Saigon this morning but they were quickly dispersed by police. Polling places in strong Buddhist areas in Saigon were crowded and some monks from the Buddhist Institute cast ballots. Thich Tam Chau, leader of the moderate Institute Buddhists, reportedly broadcast an appeal today urging the Buddhist faithful to vote. In the Buddhist stronghold of Hue, a surprising 86 percent of registered voters went to the polls and the city generally was free from any disruptive activity.

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No. 1601/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
11 September 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SOUTH VIETNAM'S ELECTIONS
(As of 9:00 AM EDT)

1. Unofficial sources, citing a "government spokesman", indicate that the number of voters at the close of the polls (6:00 PM Saigon time) was nearly 70 percent of those registered. The latest official report from several provinces on voter turnout as of mid-afternoon tends to confirm that the overall vote will be heavier than the 50 to 60 percent figures quoted as the requirement for a successful election.

2. In any event, it appears that South Vietnam's national assembly candidates are being ushered in with a stinging testimonial to the failure of the Vietnamese Communists to offer a viable alternative. Viet Cong efforts to keep people away from the polls during the past 24 hours have been solely based on terrorism and physical coercion. Several instances of mortar and grenade attacks on polling places, district capitals, and government outposts have not had a significant effect on the peoples' willingness to cast their ballots. There has been no "major" enemy incident reported. However, a small airstrip at a district capital in Quang Ngai Province was overrun and held by the Viet Cong today.

3. Heavy voter turnouts were reported in the northern cities of Hue and Da Nang. Some of those ballots, however, might be invalidated. Previous reports indicated that Buddhists were being exhorted to vote but in such a manner as to negate their vote. There have been no reports that the Buddhist hunger strike or threats of immolations have affected the actual voting.

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