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[REDACTED] 5 Feb. 1968

Subject: Attitudes of Phan Khac Suu Toward Current Crisis

Source: Vietnam, Saigon
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1. During a conversation on the morning of 5 February, Phan Khac Suu, defeated Presidential candidate and southern Buddhist, commented that in the wake of the government's (GVN) defeat of the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese attacks, the spirit of the people in the greater Saigon area is strongly anti-Viet Cong. He compared the people's mood of excitement with that which existed after the overthrow of the Diem regime on 1 Nov. 1963. Suu felt that the opportunity to exploit the Saigonese's awareness of the evils of the Viet Cong must not be neglected, and that everything possible must be done to unite the peoples of all faiths. He felt particularly that the Government of Viet Nam must gain the confidence of the people by making food available immediately to prevent fear of shortages and to drive prices down. If the Government of Viet Nam can do this, he said, it will gain the people's confidence in social as well as military affairs.

2. Suu said that as a politician he planned to offer his services to the Government of Viet Nam to help mobilize Vietnam's manpower to lead the country back to normalcy. He added that he planned to talk with "all political leaders" before calling on any Government of Vietnam officials. He insisted, however, that he was prepared to work with any GVN official or organization.

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