

# U.S. TO CUT TROOPS IF SAIGON ASKS IT

Kennedy Says a Withdrawal  
Will Follow Any Request

By MAX FRANKEL

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WASHINGTON, May 22 — President Kennedy said today that South Vietnam's leaders could get any number of United States troops out of their country simply by suggesting a withdrawal.

Mr. Kennedy, apparently nettled by reports that high officials in Saigon had complained about the size of the American "advisory" mission there, said he would act the moment he



CRITICAL OF U.S.: Ngo  
Dinh Nhu of South Vietnam.

received an official expression of such an attitude.

Responding to a question at his news conference, the President went on to say that the military situation in Vietnam did not justify the recall of any of the 12,000 Americans assisting Government troops against Communist guerrilla forces. However, he expressed the hope that withdrawals could "perhaps" begin at the end of the year. [Question 11, Page 18.]

Mr. Kennedy's questioner was less interested in the state of the war against the guerrillas than in reports of continuing conflict and irritation between American military leaders and the Government of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

The question specifically referred to reports that Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem's younger brother and adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu, had said there were too many United States troops in South Vietnam.

"Yes," Mr. Kennedy replied,

"I hope we could — we would withdraw troops, any number of troops, any time the Government of South Vietnam would suggest it. The day after it was suggested, we would have some troops on their way home."

Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu was quoted by the Washington Post and Times Herald last week as having said that there were many Americans in Vietnam who were not advisers but persons come to "experiment" and "observe" the war.

In an interview with two American newsmen he also indicated many differences with United States military advisers and suggested that "Americans don't know as much as we do" about many of the specific local problems.

Partly in response to these suggestions of discord, the United States and South Vietnamese

Governments announced formally last Friday that they considered the present level of advisory and support efforts to be "still necessary."

### U. S. Copters Aid Attack

SAIGON, Vietnam, May 22 (UPI)—Ten United States Army helicopters helped Government troops kill 33 Communist soldiers in a running battle 125 miles south of Saigon today.