

The Visit of General Ky

Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky is a nimble politician but he cannot bring off his pose of wide-eyed innocence about his trip to Washington to address a win-the-war rally next week. He is coming to help his extreme right-wing sponsors pressure the Nixon Administration to scrap its policy of "Vietnamization," with gradual American withdrawal, and revert to a delusive "victory" strategy. He is coming to help undermine whatever chance there may be for negotiating a Vietnam settlement in Paris—an effort to which his own Government, as well as the United States, is officially committed.

Such conduct would be rude interference in the internal affairs of the United States at any time. It is especially offensive in the middle of an election campaign in which President Nixon's conduct of Vietnam policy is a major issue. If Marshal Ky runs for President of his own country next year, as expected, it would be interesting to have his reaction to appearances in Vietnam in behalf of peace-minded opponents by such American officials as Senators Fulbright or McGovern.

The potential for polarization and violence in Marshal Ky's appearance is indicated by the glee with which the announcement of his coming was hailed by the opposing extremist camps. The Rev. Carl McIntire, organizer of the "March for Victory," obviously believes he will bring off a great coup and promises that Marshal Ky will "out-Agnew Agnew." But the Youth International Party and its allies have warned that the rally on the Washington Monument grounds will be "a free-fire zone."

We recognize, of course, that most of this is wind on both sides, made serious only because the war itself is much too serious for political posturing. Marshal Ky has the right of free speech in this country—something his opponents do not have at home. But what is involved is judgment and propriety, and these have never been conspicuous among the qualities of South Vietnam's bemedalled Number Two.