

Thieu Is Reported Acting to Block Move By Ky to Exploit His Role in Cambodia

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, June 1—President Nguyen Van Thieu was reliably reported today to be moving swiftly to block Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky from making political capital out of his active role in South Vietnamese military operations in Cambodia.

Air Vice Marshal Ky, the President's most serious potential rival for power, was reported to be seeking powers that would make him something akin to a viceroy of eastern Cambodia. He was said to be asking for authority to conduct swift and sizable military operations against the Vietnamese Communist forces on the ground that such powers were needed for maximum success against an enemy in retreat.

The President, while not rejecting the proposal, has taken measures of his own to set hard limits to his Vice President's independent authority.

Coordinator Appointed

Reliable military sources reported that he had named a general of proved loyalty to himself to be chief coordinator for military operations in Cambodia. The officer is Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Manh, Chief of the Joint Staff. His appointment, for which President Thieu signed the order last Wednes-

day, will be announced shortly. General Manh is to be charged also with liaison with the Cambodian high command and is expected to be commuting regularly by helicopter between the two countries.

Official sources said that Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam would visit Pnompenh Wednesday, one day before Marshal Ky intended to make an official visit to the Cambodian capital.

The Vice President's special assistant and confidant, Dang Duc Khoi, is in Pnompenh now for the final preparations for what was to be the first official visit by a ranking South Vietnamese since relations between the countries were severed in 1963.

Ky's Trip May Be Deferred

The distinction will now go to the Foreign Minister, and indications tonight were that the Vice President's trip would be put off at least for a week.

Vice President Ky was reported to have put to President Thieu the view that the official needed in Cambodia should be of sufficient authority not only to order military operations on the spot but also to insure that the military operations served to cement the alliance between the two countries.

Such an official, according to this line, would have the authority to exercise full control over the military, including

the right to remove generals. This is termed necessary, the informants said, to discipline the troops that have been accused of rough treatment of Cambodians and their property and have caused serious concern in Pnompenh over Cambodia's newfound allies.

President Thieu, according to the sources, feared that to give the Vice President such extensive power over military forces might eventually encourage his colleague and rival to use the troops for his own purposes.

Aide Also a Cause of Concern

A factor that is thought to have contributed to the President's concern over Marshal Ky's projected visit to Pnompenh was the Vice President's intention to take with him his closest associate for intelligence matters. He is Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, who achieved considerable notoriety abroad when he was photographed shooting a Vietcong suspect in the head with a pistol.

Another concern thought to have contributed to the President's wish to have his own general in charge of Cambodian operations is the imperious conduct of Lieut. Gen. Do Cao Tri. As commanding general of the III Corps tactical area, General Tri has been in charge of the bulk of the South Vietnamese operations against the Communist sanctuary regions across the border.

General Tri's attitude has not only offended a number of Cambodian officers and officials, who felt themselves slighted by him, but has also aroused concern over his possible ambitions among South Vietnamese politicians.