

NIXON SUPPORTS THIEU IN OPPOSING FORCED COALITION

Nixon, at News Conference,
Stresses Open Elections
as Solution in Vietnam

AFFIRMS BASIC POLICY

He Says Bruce Will Have
'Great Latitude' in Paris—
Urges Mideast Truce

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Transcript of news conference
will be found on Page 16.

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 20 —

President Nixon today firmly endorsed the opposition of South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu to a coalition government, emphasizing that an election open to all was the best approach to a political settlement in Vietnam.

At a news conference, President Nixon said that David K.E. Bruce, the new chief American negotiator at the peace talks in Paris, would have "new instructions" and "great latitude" to recommend "any new approaches that he believes might be helpful in pursuing the negotiations."

The President, who has invited Mr. Bruce to meet with the National Security Council tomorrow, would not discuss details of Mr. Bruce's instructions. He said he would leave it to Mr. Bruce to apply them at the appropriate moment in Paris.

No Change Indicated

But the burden of Mr. Nixon's comments on Vietnam indicated that he intended no change in the fundamental political terms of the United States.

"The Government of South Vietnam must be one that is chosen by the people of South Vietnam," Mr. Nixon said. "It will be one and should be one that reflects the political forces in South Vietnam.

Under no circumstances does this Government stand for the proposition that we would attempt to negotiate an imposed coalition government in South Vietnam."

Comments on Mideast

On other foreign policy issues, the President made these points:

¶The United States hopes to see Soviet combat personnel in the United Arab Republic removed through a peaceful settlement, and Henry A. Kissinger, the White House adviser on national security, did not mean to imply the intended use of force when he said the United States wanted to "expel" these Soviet military men.

¶The United States has "no intention of using ground forces" to try to interdict the movement of Communist forces down the mountain trails in Laos, although its air attacks against the region will continue.

¶Further cuts in the defense budget for the fiscal year starting next July 1 will be "very difficult" to achieve.

In his comments on the Mid-

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dle East, the President laid considerably more stress on the current American effort to promote a 90-day cease-fire between the Arab states and Israel than he had during a television interview on July 1. "We have not announced any sale of planes or delivery of planes to Israel at this time because we want to give that peace initiative every chance to succeed," Mr. Nixon said.

Declines to Speculate

Discussing South Vietnam, Mr. Nixon did not rule out acceptance of a coalition government negotiated by the Thieu Administration and its Communist opponents, but he said he considered such a settlement "highly improbable, and I think perhaps it serves no interest to speculate as to whether that would happen."

His comments were evidently intended to reassure President Thieu that there was no "misunderstanding" — as the South Vietnamese leader put it yesterday in a television interview — over the allied negotiating position, despite indications that the Nixon Administration tried to introduce new flexibility earlier this spring.

Mr. Thieu, interviewed on the Columbia Broadcasting System's news program "Face the Nation," charged that Secretary of State William P. Rogers and some American Senators "create some misunderstandings" about the possibilities of a negotiated coalition government, which Mr. Thieu described as unacceptable.

Although he did not say so, Mr. Thieu was evidently referring to a speech Mr. Rogers made, reportedly with White

House clearance, on June 29 in San Francisco. The speech followed comments by President Nixon on April 20 — repeated on June 30 — that “a fair political solution should reflect the existing relationship of political forces” in Vietnam, without the usual demand for an election preceding the formation of a postwar government.

Mr. Rogers said that the Vietcong might decide “to negotiate an agreement which gives them representation proportionate to their numbers.” At another point, he interpreted Mr. Nixon’s remarks as meaning “that if the Communists have 20 per cent of the popular support in South Vietnam, they should have 20 per cent of the representation, or 30 per cent, whatever it might be.”

His speech was immediately followed by private comments of other officials suggesting that some ratio of shared power might be negotiated in Paris. But in Saigon, Mr. Rogers reportedly met opposition from President Thieu evidently similar to Mr. Thieu’s comments on television yesterday.

Earlier Solution Cited

“We never accept a coalition government imposed by anyone,” Mr. Thieu said. “I have offered last July very fair solution, that the other side can participate in the democratic elections under an international supervision.”

Mr. Thieu added that he assumed that if the Vietcong won the election, they would change the South Vietnamese Constitution, which forbids Communist candidates. But he said that for the time being, his Government would not permit candidates to run for office if they advocated a coalition government.

“Coalition government with the Communists is anti-constitutional,” he said. In the interview, Mr. Thieu did not reconcile this position with his stated willingness to permit Communists to run in an eventual election to choose a postwar government. Presumably, he was ruling out Communists or advocates of coalition rule in an interim election.

Although some State Department officials acknowledged that they had been embarrassed by Mr. Thieu’s open criticism of Secretary Rogers,

Mr. Nixon expressed understanding and sympathy for the South Vietnamese leader’s viewpoint. He insisted that there were no significant differences between him and Mr. Thieu on political terms for settling the war.

“I understand, I think, why President Thieu indicated concern about the use of the word coalition,” Mr. Nixon said. “Coalition is a code word in international settlements,” Mr. Nixon explained, because coalition governments often become a step toward Communist take-overs.