

# Ky Is Reported Planning Race With the Aid of Minh

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, June 10 — Supporters of Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, whose chances of running for the Presidency appeared considerably diminished by new electoral legislation last week, now say he will try to run anyway.

He will do so, they add, with the help of Duong Van Minh, the retired general, who apparently would have no difficulty in complying with the legislation. However, neither Mr. Ky nor General Minh has formally announced that he will run in the Oct. 3 election in opposition to President Nguyen Van Thieu.

The Vice President's campaign manager, Le Van Thai, said in an interview yesterday that the two men "have concluded an alliance whose target is Mr. Thieu."

Mr. Thai said that Mr. Ky had "worked out a deal with General Minh" in the hope of meeting the restrictions of the new legislation. This requires that a candidate obtain the endorsements of 40 members of the National Assembly or 100 members of the elected provincial or municipal councils.

## Endorsements Sought

The Vice President's aide said that, under the "deal," Mr. Ky would seek his endorsements from the council members and General Minh from the National Assembly.

"If they compete for signatures, Mr. Ky couldn't get enough," Mr. Thai said.

"It is possible," he added, "that in the last minute Mr. Ky will throw his support to General Minh—but not necessarily."

An intermediary between the two potential candidates, himself a general, confirmed that there was an alliance, though a vague one, the sole aim of which was "to work against Thieu."

Since Mr. Ky broke publicly with Mr. Thieu in April, he has been staking out a middle political ground between the President's advocacy of total military victory over the Communists and General Minh's so-called "peace" candidacy.

## Wants Clear-Cut Decision

The Minh platform has never been spelled out, but it is known to have some room for negotiations. Mr. Ky's platform calls for an end to corruption and for social justice. He also calls for an end to the fighting, but how it would end he does not say.

The restrictive electoral legislation, pushed through the National Assembly by President Thieu, is generally thought here to have been aimed at Mr. Ky.

But the supporters of the President say that he wanted the restriction in order to assure a clear-cut decision on Oct. 3. Ever since 1967, when he won election by only 35 per cent of the vote in a field of 11 candidates, he has been irked

at being a "minority President."

The behind-the-scenes meetings between General Minh and Mr. Ky were disclosed as reports came from the Presidential Palace that Mr. Thieu would, as one diplomat said today, "stand aside and let the deputies and councilors know they could give endorsements to Ky, Minh, and even another candidate" in addition to himself.

Since the passage of the Administration-sponsored electoral bill, there has been speculation that there might be only one challenger, General Minh, or none at all.

The possibility has alarmed the American Embassy more than it has caused concern to most South Vietnamese politicians.

## "One-Man Show" Feared

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker has scheduled a private luncheon with General Minh. A week ago he had lunch with Mr. Ky.

According to Mr. Ky's campaign manager, "Bunker expressed worry that the next election could be a one-man show, and that that could be very embarrassing for the United States."

An informed embassy source said today that Mr. Bunker wanted to meet with both potential candidates "to stress our desire to remain neutral with respect to all of them." Mr. Ky's supporters are taking that as an oblique encouragement of his candidacy.

However, many here think Mr. Ky does not have a good chance of winning the Presidency even if he is able to run. He is a northerner and his constituency seems largely confined to the senior officers of the 40,000-man South Vietnamese Air Force, in which he holds the rank of air vice marshal.

## Newspaper Issues Seized

Mr. Ky's split with President Thieu, with whom he has never been close, has brought calls from the Presidential Palace for his resignation. Five days out of the last 10, his newspaper, Lap Truong, has been seized for disseminating "false arguments which might sow confusion among the public."

For the past three days, Mr. Ky has been in Nhatrang and other coastal cities, talking with provincial officials about the state of the economy. He went in his role as chairman of the Government's Social Economic Council, but his aides say he has also been trying to persuade provincial councilors to endorse his candidacy.

They also report that lately he has been using Air Force helicopters to fly provincial councilors from outlying parts of the country to the villa that serves as his campaign headquarters, where he treats them to food and drink and presents his campaign arguments.

The result of all this, Mr. Thai said, is that the Vice President could probably obtain — but just barely — the 100 signatures of councilors that he would need to qualify as a candidate.