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## MINH ANNOUNCES HIS ENTRY IN RACE

### Warns He'll Quit if He Feels Thieu Is Rigging Election

By ERIC PACE

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, July 26—Duong Van Minh, the retired general who led the 1963 coup d'état against President Ngo Dinh Diem, announced formally today that he would run against President Nguyen Van Thieu in the Oct. 3 election.

But he reserved the right to withdraw from the race if he concluded that the election was rigged.

General Minh, a 55-year-old Buddhist from the South, announced that his running mate would be Dr. Ho Van Minh, 34, a Roman Catholic of Northern parentage and deputy speaker of the lower house of the National Assembly. About 80 per cent of the South Vietnamese are Buddhists, and nearly 20 per cent Catholics.

Under the new South Vietnamese election law, General Minh also selected an alternate running mate. The choice was Senator Hong Son, a small religious sect.

#### Foreign Newsmen Excluded

The general went before a small group of South Vietnamese newsmen to make the long-expected announcement of his candidacy and to name Dr. Minh, who is no relation, and Senator Dong as his running mates. Foreign newsmen were specifically excluded.

The reason, sources close to the general said, is that the Presidential Palace has been charging of late that he has been courting foreign public opinion over that of his own countrymen.

General Minh, who is regarded as the "peace candidate," has called on the armed forces to continue fighting, but for "the righteous cause" of peace. He has said that peaceful co-existence with North Vietnam and a fair Presidential election on Oct. 3 are South Vietnam's only chance of survival.

Over the last two months, the general has appealed through interviews and news conferences to the United States to apply all its influence for a fair and honest election. He has urged that President Thieu be prevented from using his military and political organization to influence the elections.

#### Minh and Ky Confer

Last night General Minh and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky had a three-hour private dinner, at which the Vice President reportedly urged the general to announce his candidacy. Mr. Ky announced his own candidacy several weeks ago and named as his running mate Truong Vinh Le, a wealthy Saigon businessman, a Catholic and former head of the National Assembly. He did not name an alternate running mate.

President Thieu formally declared his candidacy Saturday. As his running mate, he named Senator Tran Van Huong, who has twice served as Premier. The alternate is Premier Tran Thieu Khiem.

General Minh, who still retains much popularity as the leader of the 1963 coup that ended the autocratic regime of President Diem, is widely regarded as the only man who might unseat President Thieu in the forthcoming election. The general's announcement today appeared to many to increase the possibility that Vice President Ky, who has broken with the Thieu regime, might step aside and throw his support to the Minh candidacy.

#### Endorsements Required

Figuring in this speculation is the continuing difficulty the Vice President has been having in complying with the Thieu-backed 1971 election law. This requires that presidential candidates, to get on the ballot, must obtain 100 validated endorsements from members of provincial or municipal councils or 40 from senators or deputies in the National Assembly.

Mr. Ky says that he already has 114 signatures from council members—or 14 more than needed—but that only 29 have been validated by the counter-signature of provincial chiefs, who are appointed by President Thieu.

The Vice President protested today in a letter to the Premier that efforts to get the required endorsements for the others have been unavailing. He said the province chiefs had made one excuse or another to be absent whenever the council members presented themselves with their endorsement forms.

#### Validation Not Received

By agreement with the Vice President, General Minh went to members of the National Assembly for the endorsements he needs. He has more than the 40 such signatures needed, he said, but none have been validated by the chairman of the lower house, a Thieu supporter, because the name of General Minh's running mate did not appear on them.

Today, he noted, the Government announced that it has issued new endorsement forms to be used by supporters of General Minh and Mr. Ky. The forms are only slightly different from the ones they have already used, but nonetheless they must now be signed.

Moreover, the chairman announced today that he would require each deputy and senator to come before him to sign the endorsements of General Minh, or he would refuse to validate the endorsements.