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Ky Won't Run --Asks Delay In Election

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Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky this morning refused to run in South Vietnam's October presidential election and proposed that both he and President Nguyen Van Thieu resign and reschedule the balloting for three months from now.

Under Ky's proposal, the president of the Vietnamese Senate would head the government during the interim until a new president was chosen.

Ky said "legal irregularities" made it impossible for him to remain in the campaign. He accused Thieu of "an indescribable conspiracy to rig the election and use it as a tool for personal gain."

The vice president, who has been weighing a decision about whether to run since the Supreme Court reinstated him as a candidate on Saturday, said South Vietnam "is now in a period of crisis. The storm is near."

It was unclear today how Thieu will respond to Ky's proposal, but the suggestion was seen by both American and Vietnamese sources as placing extremely strong pressure on the president.

Should Thieu reject the suggestion and hold an uncontested election anyway, these sources said, demonstrations and possibly violence could result.

Ky had been urged by peace groups, including supporters of retired General Duong Van (Big) Minh, who withdrew from the race on Friday, not to dignify the election by participating.

The American Embassy, on the other hand, has spared no effort to keep him in. Ky met with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker again yesterday morning, but Bunker's last minute conversation apparently was to no avail.

Ky said Thieu's resignation, in the interest of a fairer election, would only be "a small sacrifice" on the part of the president.

He was scathingly critical of the Supreme Court for what he called its "bizarre action" in first disqualifying him from the election and later restoring him for political reasons.

The vice president's deci-

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sion was known shortly before his morning press conference and American political officers, looking tired but resigned, said they were not surprised at the news.

Under Vietnamese law, the elections can be postponed by presidential decree, but postponement must have the concurrence of both houses of the national legislature.

NIXON

The White House had no immediate comment on Ky's decision not to run, but informed sources said President Nixon was deeply concerned about the development.

The U.S. Embassy in Saigon issued a brief statement saying: "We regret the decision of Vice President Ky not to contest the election for the presidency of the Republic of Vietnam. We are studying the implications of the situation and have no further comment at this time."

It was believed that the Americans would go along with Ky's proposal for a new election if it proved to be the only means of avoiding a one-man race. An alternative, as U.S. officials made clear in recent days, could be a cutback in U.S. aid to South Vietnam.