

8-26-71

Thieu to Go Ahead With One-Man Election

By ALVIN SHUSTER

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 25 — President Nguyen Van Thieu told his campaign managers today to proceed with plans for the October Presidential elections while American officials continued their efforts to try to salvage the appearance of a contested race.

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker met twice today with Mr. Thieu, once before the President discussed strategy with his election workers and again early this evening. Mr. Bunker presumably carried suggestions designed to ease the political crisis stemming from the prospect of a one-man race, brought about by the withdrawal of Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky and Gen. Duong Van Minh, but embassy officials maintained their silence on the American moves.

Election Rigging Charged

In his meeting with campaign workers from all the provinces at a downtown hotel, Mr. Thieu was reported to have pointed out that two names would appear on the ballots and that the elections would go on as scheduled Oct. 3. The second name is that of Vice President Ky, who has said that he will not campaign because of election rigging and that his name will be on the ballots against his will.

Unlike General Minh, who pulled out of the race charging Mr. Thieu with electoral fraud, Mr. Ky withdrew after the "final posting" of candidates. Mr. Ky says that the Supreme Court, which suddenly reversed itself to permit his candidacy, allowed him too little time to withdraw legally.

The American pressures on Mr. Thieu remained a topic of major discussion in Saigon today, but just what Mr. Bunker is proposing could not be learned. A State Department spokesman said yesterday that Washington and the embassy were discussing Vice President

Ky's suggestion that he and President Thieu resign to encourage an atmosphere permitting fair and honest elections.

President Thieu had tentatively been scheduled to address the nation tonight, but his aides said the statement had been put off until next week, after the elections for the lower house on Sunday.

Many observers believe that Mr. Thieu's statement will come around Sept. 2, when the presidential campaign officially opens.

Mr. Ky made public the letter he sent to Mr. Bunker on Mon-

day giving the reasons for his withdrawal. His office said that the letter was published to "dispel malicious distortions" of the Vice President's decision.

"Last night I came to the conclusion that the significance of this election has been damaged beyond remedy by the manipulations of the Government," Mr. Ky wrote. "Indeed, the men and the institutions involved have been so gravely corrupted that I would do my country a disservice if I were to deny our people an opportunity to seek the veritable changes which are now a neces-

sity for the survival of our nation."

Ambassador for his advice, did not say what "changes" he had in mind. But such vague references have led to widespread rumors of an impending coup, although American officials say that they have no evidence that one is impending.



Associated Press

Nguyen Van Thieu, President of South Vietnam, waving to newsmen on arrival at a Saigon hotel for talks with aides on Presidential race. He refused to talk to newsmen.