

# Ky Vows to Stage a Coup Unless Election Is Halted

SEP 4 1971

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Sept. 3—Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky threatened today to stage a military coup and "destroy" President Nguyen Van Thieu if Mr. Thieu went ahead with his plan to run as the only candidate in the Presidential elections Oct. 3.

The Vice President declined, however, to make his threat publicly or directly. His views were made known at a background briefing for some Western correspondents, including a representative of The New York Times, at his quarters at Tansonnhut Airport on the outskirts of Saigon, with the stipulation that the views be attributed to "sources close to the Vice President."

Most Western observers here have discounted Mr. Ky's ability to depose Mr. Thieu by military means. The Vice President's attack today upon the man to whom he relinquished power in 1967 was regarded as aimed primarily at frightening the President into calling off the election.

Other points made at the briefing included:

Mr. Ky would make his move from two weeks to a month from now if Mr. Thieu proceeded with his "plebiscite." The election is scheduled a month from today.

Mr. Ky, a former air vice marshal, was confident that he could topple Mr. Thieu and "all his clique."

The Vice President was determined to act because if he did not Mr. Thieu would establish a dictatorial regime after his unopposed re-election.

Besides the Air Force, Mr. Ky had the support of 60 per cent of the South Vietnamese Army. However, most of the generals with whom he had been in touch were "indifferent."

If Mr. Ky thought he could help his country by destroying President Thieu, he would do it, and he believed he could do so. If he had to die to destroy the President, he would do that. And if he decided to go ahead with the coup, neither Ambassador Elsworth Bunker nor the whole United States Government would be able to

Continued on Page 2, Column 3

# Ky Threatens to Stage a Coup Unless Thieu Cancels Election

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

stop him.

But Mr. Ky was confident that the election would not be held as scheduled.

Mr. Ky believed Mr. Thieu was a coward and would not stand up to him in any confrontation. He had the feeling that unrest was increasing among the people and the armed forces, and that the situation was becoming unpredictable. Mr. Ky thought he was sitting on a powder keg.

Today's briefing was held a month after Mr. Ky was disqualified as a Presidential candidate because he was unable to meet the requirements of a stringent electoral law passed at President Thieu's request in June. The ruling was made by

the South Vietnamese Supreme Court.

The only other contender, Duong Van Minh, a retired general who was considered the peace candidate, fulfilled the law's requirements but withdrew from the race on Aug. 20, charging that the election was being rigged.

Thereupon, reportedly at the behest of the President, the Supreme Court reinstated Mr. Ky, but he refused to campaign. However, the Supreme Court had rushed its "final postings." For a time, it appeared that the Vice President's name would be included on the ballot against his wishes. This week, the Thieu Government officially declared him off the ballot and announced plans to go ahead with the election.