

Thieu's Views on Residual Force

Saigon

President Nguyen Van Thieu said last night he still wants a residual force of 50,000 or more American troops left in South Vietnam through 1973, when he expects the Communists to launch their last major attacks of the war.

Thieu, meeting with 12 foreign journalists at dinner at Saigon's Independence Palace, said once again that he intends to persevere with his uncontested reelection campaign despite criticism at home and abroad.

He repeated his willingness to negotiate a settlement of the war, but he made it clear that he is maintaining his hardline position and expects concessions to be made by Hanoi and the Viet Cong before the negotiations can progress.

In a question-and-answer session stretched over nearly four hours, the President said he thought his country would need American "advisers, technicians and people who handle the helicopters" for a long time to come.

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