

# Thieu Resigns,

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Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, April 21—Nguyen Van Thieu resigned today as president of South Vietnam in an emotional and angry speech in which he called the United States "inhuman" for not living up to its responsibilities toward his country. Thieu is succeeded by his vice president, Tran Van Huong, 71, a civilian and a former prime minister.

Thieu said he was resigning because the U.S. Congress was now considering the issue of aid for South Vietnam and

he hoped that his resignation would favorably influence the outcome of that debate.

[The Vietcong in Saigon labeled President Thieu's resignation "a new political plot." For other reaction, see Page 20.]

He warned, however, that the \$722 million requested by President Ford would not be enough to achieve military stabilization which, according to Thieu, was necessary if peace talks were to resume. Thieu said he had asked Ford to send B-52 bombers into

action again over Vietnam but that he had not received an answer.

"They [the U.S. Congress] are haggling over \$300 million, although the \$722 million initially requested by the President was grossly insufficient," Thieu said. "Who knows if the requested \$300 million will not now be increased to \$700 million or even \$1,000 million."

But while asking for increased aid, Thieu severely admonished Washington. "The inhuman attitude of the United States," he said, "is that of a

## Terms

# U.S. 'Inhuman'

great power fleeing from its responsibilities."

Thieu's resignation follows weeks of speculation and rising discontent with his leadership, or the lack of it. It is felt that a new civilian government might be able to make some arrangement with the Communists to avoid a battle on the streets of Saigon, but no one can say how the Communists will react to this move.

The resignation, which was reportedly decided only today, followed reports of the abandonment of Xuanloc Sunday night with the government

now trying to draw new defense lines before Bienhoa and Vungtau.

Thieu said in his speech that the new government under Huong would call upon the North Vietnamese to cease their attacks and to resume peace talks in Paris, which the South Vietnamese would enter into "without any conditions." He said the new government would also ask the United States to provide enough aid in order to bring about a military stabilization.

[Informed sources in Washington said Huong is expected to resign in a "few days" for reasons of health. He

will be succeeded by Tran Van Lam, president of the Senate and former foreign minister, the sources said.]

Thieu said that the Communist insistence that they would not resume negotiations until he resigned was just a "trick" and that this argument had "poisoned" opinion both in the United States and in South Vietnam—even among his own soldiers.

Rather than have it said that "if Mr. Thieu stays there will be no peace talks," Thieu said he would resign

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even though he was just a "victim"—a scapegoat whom the Americans were using to cover and excuse their abandonment of Vietnam.

Thieu spoke from the Presidential Palace before a hastily assembled audience of members of the South Vietnamese Assembly, the Senate and the Supreme Court. The speech, which lasted for two hours, was carried on national television.

The outbursts of anger and the barely controlled emotion—at times he seemed to be fighting back tears—contrasted with the calm and collected Thieu who seemed so confident during his first inauguration in November of 1967.

out what I meant in those days in 1968."

Watergate and the energy crisis had resulted in an American reduction in aid, Thieu said, while the North Vietnamese were getting more and more aid and equipment from China and the Soviet Union. The Communists had launched attacks last December just to test the American response, he said, and when there was none, they were encouraged to strike again.

Thieu took responsibility for the loss of the northern part of the country, but he said his original decision to withdraw from the highlands was justified because he had so few troops. He said that some generals had proved to be cowards, but that in recent battles

With his country now on the verge of a military defeat, Thieu seemed distraught and stressed that American aid was "urgently, urgently, urgently" needed before it was too late.

But Thieu's speech was bitterly anti-American, and for the first hour he traced what he considers the betrayal back to the signing of the Paris cease-fire accords in 1973, which he said "led the South Vietnamese people to death."

He said he had always been against any agreement which allowed the North Vietnamese to retain their troops in the country, and he said Nixon promised that America would retaliate strongly against any North Vietnamese attack.

Vice President Spiro Agnew, when

the South Vietnamese had tried to stop the North Vietnamese advance, but had proved too weak.

But he clearly indicated that he mainly blamed the United States:

"I told the United States then, 'You are asking me to do what your army did not succeed in doing with \$300,000 million dollars in six years,' " he said.

"I told them, 'You wanted to get out of the Vietnam war honorably, and now you are asking us to do things that are impossible or unreasonable. For me to carry on this war despite the cuts in military aid is like giving me \$3 a day and pretending I can live like a luxury tourist.' "

Thieu said that he himself had never personally lacked courage and that he

he came to Saigon, was supposed to reiterate that promise, Thieu said, but he mentioned only aid and the recognition of South Vietnam as the only legal government in the south and not the promise of U.S. retaliation.

"You must remember that in 1968 the American pressure was not small," Thieu said. "They wanted us to bring the so-called liberation forces into power. I fought against it. Anybody who wants to know what person I am, who wants to know about the power of the regime, should ask the American government about what happened in 1968.

"I told you in those days that if you listened to these political schemes of the Americans you would be lost," he continued. "Now you are going to find

had refused American pressure to attend the peace talks in Paris in 1968, even though it meant someone might have him killed, he said. But he was afraid when he learned that the Americans were going to cut aid, he said, and he doubted that the Americans themselves could hold back the enemy on the present terms.

When the speech ended, Thieu kissed Huong on both cheeks and Huong asked for the cooperation of all to help stabilize the military situation.

As Thieu spoke, Americans trying to enter the defense attache's office at Tansonnghut airport to evacuate Saigon were told to take cover because a sniper was in the area shooting Americans as they tried to leave.