

Thieu Resigns, Calls
U.S. Untrustworthy;
Appoints Successor
to Seek Negotiations;
Evacuation of All
Americans Considered

10-YEAR RULE ENDS

Vice President Huong, 71 Years Old, Takes Office in Saigon

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 21—President Nguyen Van Thieu, denouncing the United States as untrustworthy, resigned tonight after 10 years in office.

He immediately appointed his Vice President, the 71-year-old Tran Van Huong, to replace him.

He said that President Huong would immediately press the enemy to cease all acts of

*Excerpts from Thieu's speech
of resignation, Page 14.*

war and enter into peace negotiations. The Vietcong have said repeatedly that they would not negotiate while Mr. Thieu held office.

In an impassioned address to the nation, President Thieu defended his character and the accomplishments of his regime while chronicling its collapse. He called for peace, but also said the successor government would fight on.

Accuses the U.S.

Speaking before assembled members of his Government and National Assembly at the Presidential Palace, President Thieu accused the United States of breaking its promises to support an anti-Communist Government in Saigon.

Mr. Thieu said that he had objected in October, 1972, to Secretary of State Kissinger's "acceptance of the continued presence of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam."

Mr. Thieu added that South Vietnam would fight on to defend the territory left to it. The armed forces chief of staff, Gen. Cao Van Vien, also spoke briefly to say that his troops would continue fighting to "defend the homeland against the communist aggressors."

Pledge by Nixon

"I resign but I do not desert," President Thieu said in concluding his one-and-a-half-hour address. "From this minute I will put myself at the disposal of the President and people. I will continue to stay close to you all in the coming task of national defense. Good-by to you all."

His voice taut with emotion, President Thieu devoted most of his speech to a scathing criticism of the United States, saying:

"The United States has not respected its promises. It is unfair. It is inhumane. It is not trustworthy. It is irresponsible."

Mr. Thieu said that former

Continued on Page 14, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

President Richard M. Nixon had described all accords, including the Paris peace agreement, as "pieces of paper" unless they were implemented, and had therefore promised Saigon not only military and economic aid, but also "direct and strong United States military intervention" in the event the Communists broke the accord.

But then, Mr. Thieu said, Watergate undid American resolve in aiding Vietnam, and Washington deserted its ally. By the time former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew visited Saigon later, he said, Mr. Agnew spoke "coldly," referring only to "Vietnamization" of the war and continuing military and economic aid, but not of President Nixon's promise before the Paris accord to send American troops and B-52's if needed.

The State Department has said that there was no specific commitment by the United States to intervene militarily. And the White House noted earlier this month that any private assurance given by Mr. Nixon was no longer valid because of the Congressional ban on American combat activity in Indochina imposed in August, 1973.

"Let me say that we need at least \$722-million, plus the B-52's," Mr. Thieu said today. "Let me say that we need immediate — I say immediate — shipment of arms and equipment."

"I would challenge the United States army to do better than the South Vietnamese army without B-52's," the President said.

President Huong was sworn into office immediately at the assembly and Government meeting tonight in the Presidential Palace.

Speech by Huong

In a brief speech, he praised the achievements of the outgoing President, noted that he was assuming a great responsibility, and called for national unity, saying: "United we live, divided we die."

President Thieu's resignation was one of major demands the Vietcong have called prerequisites to any peace talks.

The other is that all "American military men and advisers disguised as civilians" leave Vietnam.

In a broadcast today, the Vietcong appeared to set a time limit for the latter demand as "two to three days, or in 24 hours, even." The broadcast was strongly threatening in tone, and implied that if the conditions were not quickly met, a full-scale military drive would be launched on Saigon.

It was not immediately clear whether President Thieu's resignation and the current outflow of Americans would satisfy the Vietcong demands.

But it has been apparent in the last two days that the Communist side would now prefer a political finale to the war, rather than bald military victory.

Avoiding a Final Battle

President Thieu's decision tonight was clearly based on the desire of most of the people of this city to avoid the destruction and loss of life that a final battle would cause.

Presumably, the battered and demoralized Saigon troops commanded by General Vien will be ordered to fight only

in a defensive way, to safeguard positions they hold until such time as peace talks of some kind end the war.

A senior Western diplomat said: "Military defeat always carries with it terrible political concomitants. We can only hope now that the physical suffering of the vanquished can be reduced as much as humanly possible under the circumstances."

Curfew in Saigon was advanced an hour tonight, to 8 P.M. But for the first time, policemen and soldiers stationed around the city seemed to be paying little attention to the many curfew violators in the streets.

The electric tension of recent weeks and days seemed a little relaxed, and soldiers were joking with each other.

One said with a laugh, "Well now how long will Papa Huong be able to look after affairs of state?"

Little Hope Offered

In his speech, President Thieu offered little hope that his resignation would bring better times.

Mr. Thieu said that it was popular now to blame him for everything, "just as in 1963, everything was put on the head of the late Mr. Diem," a reference to President Ngo Dinh Diem, who was overthrown and assassinated in that year.

"There now seems to be a formidable propaganda campaign the toxicity of which is even reaching some of our soldiers," Mr. Thieu said.

President Thieu asserted that simply because he was leaving office to another man did not suggest a basic difference in their viewpoints. And he added that President Huong would press Washington for more aid.

Huong Called a Patriot

"President Huong, like myself, is a patriot," he said.

"Both of us want to negotiate — unconditional negotiations. Let them say anything, let them

even tear up the Paris accord if they want, but let us have a dialogue. Let us have immediate, unconditional negotiations."

President Thieu recapitulated at length his political battles of the last 10 years, particularly those with the United States.

He said that when confronted with a draft Vietcong peace proposal on Oct. 26, 1972, "I told the Americans that if I accepted it, I would be a traitor to my country. I would be selling off South Vietnam to the Communists. So I protested against the proposed accord for three months."

Objections to 3 Points

He said his objection was to three main points.

The first was a demand that a tripartite coalition government be created, extending from the central government all the way down to hamlet level.

The second was Vietcong insistence that Indochina be considered to consist of three states—Laos, Cambodia and only one Vietnam, presumably a Vietnam led from Hanoi rather than Saigon.

"I said that if one Vietnam was not possible, it would be better to leave it divided at the 17th Parallel," he said.

The third point was "Mr. Kissinger's acceptance of the continued presence of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam."

In the end, a compromise was agreed to.

"Afterward," Mr. Thieu said, "President Nixon told me that all accords are only pieces of paper, with no value unless they are implemented. What was important, he said, was not that he had signed the accord, but that the United States would always stand ready to help South Vietnam in case the Communists violated the accord."

Mr. Thieu said that, to discuss this matter, the President had invited him to the United States.

Thieu Sought Assurance

"I asked that the United States should be ready to come back in force to help directly, not just Vietnamization, in case the Communists renew their aggression against South Vietnam."

"The most important question in my view, at that time, was direct United States intervention."

So I won a solid pledge from our great ally, leader of the free world, that when and if North Vietnam renewed its aggression against South Vietnam, the United States would actively and strongly intervene."

But then, when Mr. Thieu visited Mr. Nixon again in 1973, he said, matters had changed.

"Unfortunately, there was Watergate," he said, "and United States politics have greatly affected the volume of aid to South Vietnam, as well as Vietnamization."

The crucial test, Mr. Thieu said, came when Communist forces attacked and overran an outpost late in 1973.

"By then, the United States did not intervene, and that encouraged the Communists to move on to attack other places," he said.

Generals Criticized

President Thieu assigned the major share of blame for recent events here to the United States, but he also had criticism for some of his generals.

"Recently the time came for us to take a decision. After the fall of Ban Me Thuot, I asked the generals whether they could hold Kontum and Pleiku and they said they could not."

"So we made the political decision not to hold Kontum and Pleiku, but would use our troops to retake Ban Me Thuot. That was the practical and political decision I took after consultation with the Prime Minister and commanding generals, but unfortunately, withdrawal is the most difficult of operations."

"The withdrawal from Kontum and Pleiku did not help us retake Ben Me Thuot."

The problem of the balance of forces, overwhelmingly in favor of the Communists, led to the fall of Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang and the other towns lost in the last few weeks, he said.

The reduction in American aid "reduced our armed forces" was potential by 60 per cent," he said, and this was complicated by some mistakes by "some bad commanders."

Harder Battles Foreseen

Despite his plea for peace, President Thieu said:

"We will have to fight with sheer determination, regardless of how many troops and how much equipment we have left. I expect harder battles ahead."

In describing American political pressures on him, President Thieu spoke of the 1971 election, in which all opponents refused to run against him on the ground that the election was rigged.

Apparently referring to the United States, Mr. Thieu went on to say: "They plotted to create a power vacuum in Vietnam to impose a solution on us. I was determined not to let that happen, so I decided to run, even after other slates had withdrawn."