

# Hanoi Stance Dims Hope of Cease-Fire

By Murrey Marder  
Washington Post Staff Writer

North Vietnam and the Vietcong responded scornfully yesterday to the resignation of South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, diminishing prospects for a cease-fire.

Although Thieu's ouster was a prime Communist objective for years, the Vietcong Radio yesterday ridiculed Thieu's replacement by Vice President Tran Van Huong as a "horse-trading farce."

Even more significant for the Ford administration, North Vietnam turned its heaviest fire on the United States.

North Vietnam, in a Foreign Ministry statement, demanded that the United States immediately withdraw its warships assembling in Vietnamese waters, remove all "U.S. military personnel disguised as civilians from South Vietnam," and "completely end its military involvement and interference" in that nation.

In addition, Communist officials made it clear that any evacuation of South Vietnamese employees or friends of the United States should be subject to negotiation—after other demands on the United States are fulfilled. This means a veto right on who leaves South Vietnam.

President Ford said Monday night that he hoped a cease-fire could be arranged to make it possible to evacuate Vietnamese who have worked for the United States and others to whom the United States is obligated.

"These terms are clearly so high as to compel the United States to rub its own nose in the mud, so to speak," said one American authority.

Whether the war ends with an assault on Saigon or with a political surrender, this source said, North Vietnam evidently is determined "to leave no doubt as to who won this war."

After a meeting between President Ford and Republican leaders, Sen. Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.) was asked if there was "any hope expressed that Saigon might not fall, or any expectation?"

Case replied that "I saw no such hope" and he said none was expressed either by the President or by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

On the contrary, Case said, Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger speculated that the Communists "Might want to celebrate" the May 19 birthday of North Vietnam's late President.

See **DIPLOMACY**, A16, Col. 3

## DIPLOMACY, From A1

dent, Ho Chi Minh, "in Saigon."

Although the Ford administration discussed with Congress yesterday authority to admit up to 132,000 refugees from Indochina to the United States, Mr. Ford said Monday night that removing any large number would be "virtually impossible" without either a cease-fire or a sizeable force of American troops.

All that was discussed on this topic at the White House yesterday, Case said, was in the narrow limitations of the bill now pending in the Senate: to remove only those South Vietnam-

ese "who are dependents of Americans and such others who were greatly endangered who might be brought out as a incident of the evacuation of the Americans." Anything more, said Case, require agreement "between North and South Vietnam and ourself"

According to a Senate source, Assistant Secretary of State Philip Habib told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday that no plan yet exists for evacuating great numbers of South Vietnamese.

House Republican Leader John J. Rhodes (Ariz.) said after the White House talks yesterday that "under certain circumstances it might

be necessary for the insertion of (American) force temporarily for the purpose of securing (evacuation) landing areas, but there was certainly no discussion of any large-scale operation by American personnel."

Americans, in South Vietnam were to be reduced to "some 1,500" by the close of business yesterday, "the minimum necessary to carry on skeleton operations," Case said the members of Congress were assured. Congress has put pressure on the administration to reach that level, from a figure of about 6,000 Americans 10 days ago.

The Ford administration was silent yesterday about

the status of exploratory talks with other nations to try to produce a cease-fire in South Vietnam. French expectations for operating as a broker to arrange a political settlement once Thieu was gone, however, were publicly dented yesterday.

French Foreign Minister Jean Sauvagnargues reportedly held two hours of fruitless talks in Paris, meeting separately with North Vietnamese Ambassador Vo Van Sung, and with Pham Van Ba, mission chief of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (Vietcong).

Sung and Ba, smilingly facing newsmen, echoed the demand that the United States first must "cease all its military interference" in

South Vietnam, and "the whole Thieu clique must be overthrown and replaced by a government wishing peace, independence and national concord."

Ba said he told Sauvagnargues that the Huong and Thieu governments were "brother administrations."

U.S. officials expect Huong to resign in favor of South Vietnamese Senate leader Tran Van Lam, who would ask Gen. Duong Van (Big) Minh to form a broader government that could negotiate with the Vietcong.

In the past, the Vietcong has indicated it favored such an approach, but that was before Communist forces had clear capacity to enforce their will in Saigon.