

'Abandoned by U.S.' SFCronicle

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A Desperate Bid To Save Saigon

South Viet Move for Negotiation

Saigon

President Tran Van Huong told the National Assembly today that America has abandoned South Vietnam and he asked for full power to form a "government of negotiation."

In a desperate bid to spare Saigon from an attack by massed North Vietnamese-Viet Cong divisions, Huong also offered to resign if the legislators wished, so the assembly could name a leader acceptable to the Communist side for peace talks.

"We have now been abandoned (by the United States) and it is clear our friends do not want to help us any more," he told the joint session of the assembly. "We now have no other choice but to negotiate."

Huong, reversing his previous stand that brought a five-day impasse over possible negotiations, indirectly indicated he would agree to step aside to be replaced by retired General Duong Van (Big) Minh. Minh is considered to be a "neutralist" and political observers believe the Viet Cong would agree to negotiate with him.

Huong left the assembly after a ten-minute address and the legislators began debating his proposals.

There was a lull on the battlefields today as the Communist side apparently waited for political developments in Saigon.

The Viet Cong have said they would not deal with the 71-year-old Huong, accusing him of being a puppet of former President Nguyen Van Thieu and the United States.

An effort by Huong to enter into direct negotiations with the North Vietnamese collapsed early today, one official said.

He reported that North Vietnam turned down a re-

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quest by the Huong administration to have a cabinet-level minister fly to Hanoi to initiate negotiations. The minister had been packed to fly north on the weekly U.S. Air Force liaison flight that was held up for two hours

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until the North Vietnamese delegation to the joint military commission in Saigon said no.

"The Vietnamese answered the request by saying there is nothing to talk about," the official said, "and suggested I contact the Viet Cong delegation on the matter."

He added that the Viet Cong representatives did not indicate any interest in negotiations at this time.

Huong, the vice president, became president Monday following the resignation of Nguyen Van Thieu.

Thieu, his wife and 15 other Vietnamese flew to Taipei early today according to informed sources. Thieu's brother is the ambassador to Taiwan.

In Washington, Representative William Broomfield (Rep-Mich.) said there is a "tacit understanding" be-

tween the Ford administration and Hanoi that Communist forces will not attack Saigon until at least Monday to permit evacuation of "non-essential" Americans.

Asked about Broomfield's statement, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger replied: "I don't know anything about that. I asked him where he got that information for myself. I don't talk about what we're doing in the diplomatic field, but this was not accurate."

Broomfield, senior Republican on the House International Relations Committee, said it was not certain what would happen after Monday, but that the United States "should seize the opportunity to get non-essential Americans and their dependents out of Saigon."

At Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport, the backlog for American-sponsored evacuation flights grew even deeper and near panic was reported at the civilian terminal in the wake of decisions by a number of commercial airlines to stop their flights.

Several commercial airlines said they were temporarily suspending service to Saigon, leaving Singapore Airlines, Air Vietnam and Air France as the only commercial flights available.

Associated Press