

Ky Says He Was Asked to Lead

United Press International

Former South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky said Graham Martin, the last U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, sought him out two weeks before the fall of Saigon and asked him to consider taking over the leadership of the government from President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Martin was often portrayed as being thoroughly wedded to Thieu and unwilling to suggest that he step down.

"A change was a necessity in the last days, a team with people like me and [Dong Van,] Big Minh," Ky said in an interview with the Mutual Broadcasting System yesterday. "A coalition might have worked."

Ky said Martin "strongly supported Mr. Thieu — until two weeks before the end.

Then he came to me and mentioned the need for a change now, that Mr. Thieu must go."

There was no immediate comment from Martin.

Asked if Martin was suggesting that Ky take over, the former vice president said, "Yes. We had a long discus-

sion and we agreed. When he left my office he said, 'Well, give me a few days for making arrangements.' But again, with Mr. Thieu's delaying tactics, instead of a few days, it takes 10 days for Mr. Thieu to decide to resign and each day we lost two or three cities."