

Ky Claims Thieu Tried to Kill Him

Washington

Former South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky says President Nguyen Van Thieu tried to have him murdered, apparently after learning of a plot by Ky and some associates to oust Thieu in a military coup last April.

Ky said the murder scheme failed when security guards shot three would-be assassins who managed to penetrate the Vietnamese air force compound where he lived at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airbase.

Ky, describing the events in an interview at his rented home in a northern Virginia suburb, said the plotters had hoped that the overthrow of Thieu would help save South Vietnam from falling to the Communists. He said they were talked out of the plan

by U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin, who assured him that Thieu's departure would be "arranged."

But by the time Thieu finally resigned on April 21, it was too late. Saigon surrendered nine days later.

Ky said his group included a number of top politician and military leaders, including the military chief of staff, General Cao Van Vien, air force commander Tran Van Minh and the commanders of several key military units.

Ky said the plans for a coup developed after Thieu's decision to abandon three central highlands provinces to the North Vietnamese army, a move which brought the eventual collapse of Saigon's military forces and government.

Associated Press