

Ky Backs 30 NOV 70 Commando POW Raids

SF CHRONICLE

Times-Post Service

Washington

Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky of South Vietnam said yesterday that more commando raids to free American prisoners of war will be "a right thing" if the enemy persists at the Paris negotiations in refusing to discuss the POW issue.

Asked on "Meet The Press" (NBC-TV) about the raid on the deserted POW camp near Hanoi, Ky said that "I totally approve the decision . . . to try to free" the captives.

In conversations in Washington over the last few days, Ky left a strong impression that he is greatly interested in the possibility of running against President Nguyen Van Thieu in next year's Vietnamese elections.

Asked yesterday about his plans, Ky said that if he must make the "sacrifice" of running to keep his country "united and strong, I can assure you that I will do it."

CHARGE

Another question concerned charges that he and his family have profited illegally from the Saigon race track.

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umnists Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden said that Ky "personally" received \$15,000 a week from track receipts and, up to 1967, had paid out a total of \$65 of the receipts to disabled war veterans.

The charges of profiteering—either as they affect himself or his family—are "not true," Ky said.

The track receipts in question traditionally have gone "for the welfare fund of the prime minister" to be used "for the welfare of the people, the civilians or the soldiers," Ky said.

"I never saw this money," he added. "It is not for my own use . . . if really I am corrupted and if I want to make money, there are thousands of ways to make thousands, millions of dollars. It is not only true at race tracks."

CRITICISM

Ky was asked to respond to charges that the Saigon government does not permit freedom of expression and that it limits criticism.

"I can tell you that the Vietnamese newspapers have more freedom than any press in any countries in the world today," he said.

"Saigon itself has more than 15 new daily newspapers and it is very hard to find some who are not against the government."

Until formal censorship ended in 1968, newspapers frequently appeared with large white spaces where stories were removed at the government's orders. That no longer is common.

The usual practice now is for the government to seize all copies of publications containing stories that it does not approve. In some instances, the government also has prosecuted publishers on grounds that the objectionable stories were either damaging to public and military morale or a threat to national security.

The government exercised its seizure policy more than 40 times last year, but the pace has slackened somewhat in 1970.

Some newspapers have been shut down for months at a time for violating the government's 1969 press code. One of Saigon's three English language papers was closed indefinitely in 1969 after the government alleged that the publisher's brother was a North Vietnamese intelligence agent.

The vice president also dismissed charges that the Saigon government is oppressive because it has put some political opponents in prison.

" . . . We have to prevent them to make trouble," he said. "That is all. If they are not Communists . . . I think all political groups have now a freedom and a right, you know, to act the way they think it is right for their policies."