

'Hitler No Hero to Me'--Ky

South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky angrily denied today that he had ever said he regarded Adolf Hitler as a hero.

Answering questions from the floor after his address to the Commonwealth Club, he was confronted with a query about his oft-quoted statement concerning the Nazi leader.

Ky flatly declared he had never said such a thing, and added that it "was a bad and not a delicate question."

The South Vietnamese official devoted his prepared text to a discussion of the historical background of the war, and a pledge that his people would continue to fight Communist aggression.

Explains Trip

His purpose in visiting the United States, he said, was not to procure more American troops for Vietnam nor even to win a continuance of present levels.

It was, he said, to help the American people know more about the South Vietnamese and their aspirations.

During the question-and-answer period, however, the diminutive statesman delivered some peppery lines.

One club member wanted to know whether he was aware of what "the people outside"—meaning the demonstrators who were massed across the street from the Fairmont Hotel—were saying.

"I am not aware of the Communists and their threats," he replied.

"I am not aware of the people outside or inside"—a reference to a man who threw a National Liberation Front flag from a balcony.

"I am aware only if they

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give me a chance to talk to you."

Another questioner wanted his comments on the "liquidation" of former South Vietnam President Ngo Dinh Diem.

'Bad People'

"He was an excellent patriot in the beginning," Ky replied. "The last two years, he was surrounded by bad people."

"The revolution to overthrow the Diem regime was necessary, but I do not think it was the right thing to kill him."

Ky flung his own challenge back when someone wanted to know whether it was true that he had received \$15,000 from a Saigon racetrack.

"If at any time you can prove I'm not honest," he said, "I am ready to go in front of a firing squad. And I repeat that to you."

Three times during his luncheon appearance Ky was given a standing ovation. A head count seemed to indicate that he was gaining favor with the audience.

Wins Audience

At first, when he entered the Fairmont's Grand Ballroom, about 100 members of the audience refused to join in the applause and kept their seats.

When he finished his prepared address, the number who remained seated was only about 50.

And when he completed the question-and-answer session, the third standing ovation saw all but about five or six persons rise to join in.

Ky was expected to journey to Los Angeles tomorrow after having dinner tonight with Governor Reagan in Sacramento. No sightseeing tours were planned for him here, and he did not leave the hotel during the day.

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