

Thieu Asks Power To Rule by Decree

Saigon

President Nguyen Van Thieu requested emergency powers last night to allow him to issue decree laws that would be subject to approval later by the National Assembly.

In a television broadcast to the nation, the president said South Vietnam is in danger and declared:

"It is time in South Vietnam that the front and the rear become one. All the people must be one. Legislature, judiciary and executive must be one. It is time that we stop permitting ourselves normal politics and time only to save the country.

"Only if the country survives will politics survive. It is time that we no longer permit ourselves to confuse being against the government and against the nation. Only if the country survives can opposition survive."

FORCEFUL

Evidently bolstered by President Nixon's announcement of the mining of North Vietnamese ports and associated measures, Thieu spoke forcefully about the conduct of the war, breaking a silence he had kept since the early days of the North Vietnamese offensive.

Thieu promised that all territories "temporarily abandoned by South Vietnamese forces would be recaptured and the enemy destroyed."

He attributed the territorial losses to heavy enemy pressure at the beginning of the offensive and "mistakes by frontline commanders." He said:

"Some field commanders

Telegrams Flood the White House

Washington

White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said yesterday that following President Nixon's Vietnam speech the White House switchboard was jammed by incoming calls "to a greater degree than I can recall."

He said the White House already has received 5000 telegrams, and that 5000 more wires are being brought in by truck while more than 12,000 are backlogged across the country in Western Union offices.

Ziegler said the response is running five or six to one in support of the President's decisions.

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had a defeatist spirit and lost some battles. But they will be punished severely."

DETENTION

So far only one commander, Brigadier General Vu Van Giai, who headed the Third Infantry Division, which was mauled and dispersed in the losing battle for Quang Tri province, has been placed under detention pending investigation.

Shortly before Thieu's speech, the mayor of Saigon, Colonel Do Kien Nhieu, presented a special broadcast of civil defense advice to the people of the city.

While avoiding any decla-

ration of imminent danger, Nhieu instructed the audience, by means of filmed sequences, on what to do in the event of shelling of the city or what he called "bigger events," presumably an enemy infantry attack.

FOOD

The colonel assured the population that since the Tet offensive of 1968, an efficient people's self-defense force had been established and shelters and medical facilities set up in each city precinct. He showed films of sizable food supplies that he said had been stocked.

The mayor made repeated appeals for calm. He warned that he had been instructed by the government to shoot "troublemakers and thieves" on sight and to take strong measures against food hoarders and profiteering merchants.

Thieu told the nation that the present offensive is not one of brief duration. He said North Vietnam considered its campaign as the final phase of the war, planned to last until the end of this year.

Instead, he appeared merely to put the legislators on notice that he claimed the emergency powers, leaving it to them to vote them.

If granted the emergency powers under Article 64 of the constitution, Thieu would issue laws rather than wait for the time-consuming legislative process to do its work. The legislature, in which the president has a majority, retains the right to void any law it wishes.

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