

# McGovern Expects Thieu To Flee if Democrats Win

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By JAMES M. NAUGHTON AUG 20 1972

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MILWAUKEE, Aug. 19—Senator George McGovern expects President Nguyen Van Thieu and his "cohorts" to flee Saigon into exile and a Communist-dominated coalition to take control of South Vietnam if Mr. McGovern is elected President of the United States on Nov. 7.

He said in an interview here that "arrangements should be made," perhaps including a negotiated agreement with the Communists, to "reduce the danger of assassination and re-criminations" against political and military leaders loyal to President Thieu.

But the Democratic Presidential nominee disputed President Nixon's assertion that a Communist take-over of South

Vietnam would produce widespread killing and terror. He said that the United States had been more responsible than North Vietnam or the Vietcong for "massive suffering inflicted on the population" of South Vietnam.

Mr. McGovern also said that unnamed sources had told him that North Vietnam "went all out to improve the treatment" of American prisoners of war about two years ago. He contended that the prisoners were "in better shape than we've been led to believe" by the Nixon Administration.

The Senator from South Dakota said that his recent private attempts through Pierre Salin-

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ger, a campaign aide, to determine whether the Communists might release some prisoners now had been undertaken in the hope that it might "create a climate here where the American people have more faith in the things that some of us have been saying—that the prisoners can come home if we change our policy."

The nominee outlined his views on Vietnam and the likely consequences of his election as President in a discussion with eight correspondents over breakfast yesterday in his suite in the Pfister Hotel here. At his request, the information obtained in the interview was not made public until today.

The senator flatly predicted that he would defeat President Nixon on Nov. 7 and thus be able to implement his pledge to withdraw all United States military forces and support from South Vietnam within 10 days of his inauguration.

"I would expect General Thieu and his cohorts to leave very quickly," he said in response to a question about the consequences of that action.

## Then a Coalition

"My guess is that they would leave if I won the election and that there would be an exodus of the top generals and political figures out of the country," he continued, "and that emerging behind that would be [a] coalition group that would be willing to deal with Hanoi."

He said that the Provisional revolutionary government—the Communist-led Vietcong— "probably will move in during

or immediately after" the United States pullout, but that the Communists would seek to broaden their base to assure popular support.

Mr. McGovern theorized that the Communist-based coalition "might even be willing to settle for a temporary leader" such as Gen. Duong Van Minh, the "peace candidate" who withdrew from South Vietnam's Presidential election in 1971, after charging that it was rigged in Mr. Thieu's favor. And Mr. McGovern said that he did not sense any "urgency" to try to reunite North and South Vietnam before the end of the decade.

## Confident and Relaxed

The nominee seemed confident and relaxed as he sat in shirtsleeves eating scrambled eggs, bacon, orange juice and coffee, and responding to questions from correspondents of The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Washington Star-News, The New York Daily News, The Los Angeles Times, The Baltimore Sun, The Chicago Daily News and Newsweek magazine. The hour-long interview ranged over a number of topics, touching upon the following points:

¶He conceded that his campaign had been undergoing "growing pains" since his nomination on July 13 and blamed himself for some lapses in campaign communications, but Mr. McGovern predicted that his grassroots organization would unite with the party regulars and organize labor to overcome Mr. Nixon's early advantage.

¶He disagreed with published analyses that he had created a credibility gap by

pledging "1,000 per cent" support for Senator Thomas F. Eagleton of Missouri only days before asking Mr. Eagleton to resign the Vice-Presidential nomination.

"I couldn't have meant it any more" when pledging to stick with Mr. Eagleton "because I really felt sorry for the guy," Mr. McGovern said. He added that private reactions to Mr. Eagleton's disclosure of hospitalization for nervous exhaustion in the nineteen-sixties, had been "very bad" among those "whose help we needed to win the election," causing him to change his judgment on Mr. Eagleton.

¶He reacted to suggestions that his handling of the Eagleton affair had demonstrated vacillation and weakness by saying, without giving any specifics, that he had quietly removed "some highly placed people" from his campaign organization when they did not perform up to expectations. He said that the "acid test" of his strength would be conducted when he sought as President to cut defense spending by Pentagon officials who had "intimidated one President after another."

¶In a long analysis of how he expected to win the election, he never once mentioned a role for his substitute running mate, Sargent Shriver. But in response to questions he defended Mr. Shriver's controversial contention that the Nixon Administration had missed a signal from Hanoi in early 1969 and "blown" a chance to negotiate a Vietnam settlement.

"The only thing that probably should have been added is that [President] Johnson missed that

signal or chose to ignore it as well" in late 1968, Mr. McGovern said.

Both the questions and the answers in the interview in the Senator's 18th-floor suite were dominated by foreign policy and particularly by Vietnam.

## 'Policy of Hope'

Mr. McGovern agreed that his belief in the willingness of the Vietcong to seek accommodation rather than revenge in South Vietnam, to release American prisoners and to negotiate in good faith constituted a "policy of hope," as one questioner put it.

He said at the same time that power politics had not been successful in Southeast Asia.

"Our withdrawal is not going to mean automatic stability in that part of the world," he stated, "but it does mean that the political, revolutionary forces that are moving will work themselves out without the kind of massive introduction of modern weapons and killing that we've brought in."

## Asks Perspective

Asked to comment on President Nixon's warning that the Communists would conduct a "bloodbath" if they gained control of South Vietnam, Mr. McGovern said the Communists had shown that "when they take over a village they don't assassinate the people there. They set up a school and a road system and a tax system. They just move in and take over."

Earlier this month, after Saigon's forces regained control of Binh Dinh Province in northern South Vietnam, residents there reported public executions, groups of people being led away, harsh regimentation and

enormously high taxes under Vietcong occupation forces.

Reminded of such accounts, Mr. McGovern countered that the Vietcong "may have picked out a village chief who was cooperating with Saigon to shoot" but that such incidents had to be placed within the perspective of the death of 500,000 civilians in massive bombing and artillery attacks.

"I know they've done a lot of barbaric and cruel things," he said of the Communists, "but I think they've probably been more careful in the way that they deal with the villagers and rank-and-file people than we have."

"We're the ones that have applied massive firepower and free-fire zones and this word, 'pacification'—and cleared six million people out of their homes," he said. "And, really, the massive suffering inflicted on the population, I believe, has come more from us than from the other side."

Nonetheless, he said, "Arrangements should be made to try to provide easy exit or exile for those people who want to leave" South Vietnam. Mr. McGovern expressed confidence that the Communists would be "shrewd enough to buy that, because any new administration coming into power has to consolidate its position with the people."

## Defends Salinger

He defended Mr. Salinger, a former Presidential press secretary who is cochairman of the Citizens for McGovern Committee, against the charge yesterday by Mr. Nixon's press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, that Mr. Salinger's contacts with Hanoi's representatives in

Paris could "jeopardize" official peace negotiations.

Mr. Salinger should be commended for having told the Communists not to delay serious negotiating with the Nixon Administration until after the American election, the Senator said. He added that he "didn't have the foggiest idea" that Mr. Salinger had made that point and that he had handled it "badly" in denying a news account from Paris to that effect on Wednesday.

Senator McGovern said that families of prisoners had been pressing him to "do something dramatic" to demonstrate his commitment to obtain their release, but that he "didn't really want to do that—I thought it would put me a difficult position."

Instead, he asserted, he had asked Mr. Salinger only to inquire whether the Vietcong might release some prisoners as a show of good faith. He said he had not expected them to relax their position but hope that they might so that "you could say to the American people, 'Well, these are not barbarians we're dealing with.'"

## Sees Clark on Trip

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19 (UPI)—Senator McGovern met today with former Attorney General Ramsey Clark to receive a personal review of Mr. Clark's recent controversial trip to inspect bombing damage in North Vietnam. Mr. Clark drove to Mr. McGovern's home for an hour-long briefing.

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