

OCT 23 1972

NYTimes

THIEU ACCEPTABLE TO EXILE LEADERS

Paris Group's Head Sees His
Participation in Coalition

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22—The head of the leading Vietnamese exile federation in Paris declared today that his group—traditionally anti-Communist, anti-American and anti-Thieu—was now willing to accept President Nguyen Van Thieu as a participant in a coalition government in Saigon.

Thich Thien Chau, a Buddhist monk who is the head of the recently broadened Opposition and Reconciliation Movement, added during an interview here that Mr. Thieu's future was no longer as important to Vietnamese neutralists as the fate of the more than 100,000 political prisoners in South Vietnam.

Mr. Chau served for years as president of the Association of Vietnamese Buddhists in France, one of many anti-Thieu expatriate groups there. During an interview six months ago in Paris, he and others heatedly expressed their objections to President Thieu and insisted that Mr. Thieu must be replaced as a condition for the formation of a coalition government in South Vietnam.

In the interview today, which was arranged shortly after Mr. Chau began a private visit here, the Buddhist leader said: "In Paris, we always emphasized the withdrawal of support from Thieu. Now, if there is a coalition government, he doesn't matter."

Changed Situation Seen

"In a coalition government," Mr. Chau went on, "He is no longer President. If he has to share power, then he's like everybody else."

Mr. Chau is known to have close relations with the North Vietnamese and Vietcong negotiating delegations in Paris and has reportedly been briefed on some aspects of the private talks in Paris conducted by Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser. In the interview, he accepted without question the widely published accounts indicating that a three-sided coalition would be set up in South Vietnam after a cease-fire and United States troop withdrawal.

The Buddhist leader also made clear that it was his understanding that both North Vietnam and the Vietcong were currently negotiating on a basis providing for Mr. Thieu to participate in a coalition government.

"We don't attack him," Mr. Chau said, "but we attack his policy. So when he agrees to become part of a coalition, it means that he has changed his policy."

Mr. Chau further suggested that the key role in any coalition would be played by the third component, which would be made up of elements that are both anti-Thieu and anti-Communist. Under the formula now being discussed in Paris and Saigon, the National Liberation Front, or Vietcong, and the Saigon regime reportedly would share power in the coalition with the third component.

On Sept. 28 in Paris, Mr. Chau convened a major conference of Vietnamese exile groups in France that included nonaligned parties as well as those closely associated with the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front.

Exiles Confer in Paris

By FLORA LEWIS

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Oct. 22—A group of non-Communist exiles from South Vietnam met here tonight to agree on a list of men who might compose the neutralist third segment of a Saigon coalition government.

They have not been in touch with either Americans or North Vietnamese officials since "agreement in principle" on a cease-fire reportedly was reached between Washington and Hanoi.

"We don't want to go in either side at this stage," said Nguyen Van Con, one of the members, "because we want to show that we are real neutralists. But we have agreed among ourselves."

The exile group has not been officially informed of a cease-fire agreement by either side. But they take it for granted now that an American-North Vietnamese accord has been reached and that what remains in question is the position of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

The neutralists who met here included former army officers who served in the French Army before Vietnamese independence, politicians, professors and businessmen.

They agreed on the following persons:

Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, former commander of Military Region II in South Vietnam, who was exiled in 1966 after a break with Premier Nguyen Cao Ky over a revolt of Buddhists in the northern region.

Nguyen Thai, a former aide to the late President Ngo Dinh Diem, at one point a special adviser at the Paris peace talks.

Nguyen Van Thoai, a former minister under Mr. Diem and now a professor in France.

Au Truong Thanh, a minister of Finance and Economics under the Premiership of Gen. Duong Van Minh.

Mr. Con, a founding member of the National Reconciliation Movement, who now is employed at the French Ministry of Education.