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New Party Supported by

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SAIGON, Dec. 6—After almost a year of quiet preparation, organizers of a new nationwide political party backed by President Thieu and committed to his policies have filed registration papers and are preparing their public debut.

A vigorous recruiting campaign—which even one of the party's chief promoters acknowledges involved "an excess of zeal"—is under way throughout the country.

The nationwide organization is to provide Thieu with the means for political struggle with the Communists in the period after a cease-fire. It also would be a major step toward Thieu's professed goal of developing a two-party system in Vietnam instead of numerous political groups currently in existence.

At the same time, Thieu's political advisers have prepared legislation that would force some smaller opposition parties to merge or go out of business, and would provide that only candidates endorsed by one of the remaining parties could run for office.

This measure was to have been issued as a decree under Thieu's emergency powers, which expire Dec. 28, according to well-placed sources, but Thieu was apparently persuaded that he could obtain its passage with less resentment through normal legislative channels next year.

Both moves fit in with the Saigon government's attempts to show that it is a vigorous and well-entrenched organization that plans to be around for some time, no matter what happens in the Paris peace talks.

The South Vietnamese constitution, adopted in 1967, says that "the nation encourages progress toward a two party system" to replace the current ineffectual collection of small regional groups. And Thieu himself has been trying for years to create a mass political organization that would function throughout South Vietnam.

If he succeeds at this time after two previous failures, however, it would clearly buttress his attempt to keep control of the country after a cease-fire, according to analysts here. He would have a nationwide network of political officers, armed with money and influence, to supplement the army, which controls the country's administrative machinery and is his chief political instrument.

Thieu Is Launched

in Vietnam

The new party is to be called the Democracy Party. Its application, filed with the ministry of interior, lists Thieu's legal affairs adviser and the minister of health as the founders, but they are acknowledged to be front men.

The chief organizers of the party have been Nguyen Van Ngai, an influential senator who has been something of a political chameleon, and Nguyen Van Nhan, Thieu's little known political adviser.

They have prepared the party's constitution, supervised its recruiting efforts and even designed its flag.

The party constitution appear on party documents, nor is it known to what extent he will associate himself with it publicly after the forthcoming announcement of its formation.

Diplomatic analysts here, however, have said that Thieu is supporting the party with money from his discretionary fund provided annually by the National Assembly.

The party constitution provides that it will work to "establish a genuinely democratic Vietnam in which all basic human rights will be efficiently protected" and

"oppose communism in any form." It also provides that membership is to be "entirely voluntary."

Vietnamese sources have reported that government officials at every level have been removed from their posts for refusal to join the party.

"We have issued clearcut instructions," Ngai said in an interview, "not to force local officials to join, or to create misunderstandings with existing political parties. If we rely on coercion, how can the party operate?"

It is possible, he said, that some of the party's "executive cadres" recruited with "an excess of zeal," but he said that "once we have a system of control throughout the country we will put an end to that."

The reason for creating the Democracy Party, he said, is that "Thieu wants to have a disciplined mass organization to counter the activities of the Communists, so we can uproot the underground activities of the other side."

With few exceptions, Vietnamese political parties in the past have recruited mostly among people who held or were likely to hold positions of influence, such as students, civil servants or school teachers. The Democracy Party, Ngai said, will also try to organize "masses of farmers and masses of workers."

He said there will be full-time, paid party workers in every province and district capital who will be employees of the party, not of the government or the army.

Other informed sources, however, said that the party is expected to have a clandestine wing, which will include military officers. This has been a traditional practice of existing parties.

As for the common belief here that the party is no more than an instrument of Thieu that will crumble when he leaves office, a Western diplomat said, "That may be true but so what? Thieu's objective is to get through the next four years keeping the Communists out. If the party does not survive him, that's something to worry about when it happens."

Many South Vietnamese political figures, including opponents of Thieu, agree that the country would benefit from the creation of a vigorous, na-

tionwide political organization, which it does not now have. For a decade or more, the military and the police have been Saigon's chief instruments of fighting the Communists, operating on the principle that the only way to deal with the Communists is to kill them or arrest them.

There has been no corresponding political effort. The myraid regional and religious groups that dot the country's political landscape, unable to seize power and denied a

share in it by suspicious rulers in Saigon, have dropped out or turned to their own interests.

Years of lip service to the idea of a unified opposition having failed to produce any results, the president is apparently prepared to push the country toward a two-party system.

South Vietnam's constitution provides that the rules for each election be set separately, through legislation on such matters as party eligibil-

ity, requirements for getting on the ballot and so on.

Leaving aside the possibility of a special election that will follow a peace settlement worked out in Paris, the next scheduled election for political office here is next autumn, when half the seats in the Senate will be up.

Informed sources say that legislation to cut down the number of political parties, stiffen the requirements for getting on the ballot, and making party endorsement a con-

dition of candidacy will accompany the bill sent in by the government to set the rules for that election.

The objective would be to force those who oppose the Democracy Party candidates—that is, those who oppose Thieu—to join forces, consolidate their efforts, and work within existing parties. In the view of Vietnamese and Western analysts, there is enough support in the National Assembly for the proposals that they will be enacted.