

Thieu Asks an Invasion of North If Paris Peace Negotiations Fail

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 — President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam, in an interview made public today, said that if current peace efforts failed, the United States and South Vietnam should step up the war "in all possible ways," including an invasion of North Vietnam.

Mr. Thieu's outspoken views, often couched in strong language, were contained in a lengthy interview he gave on Dec. 30 to Oriana Fallaci, an Italian journalist who, in November, recorded an equally frank conversation with Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser.

Mr. Kissinger's interview was published by The New Republic magazine last month, and the magazine will print the text of the interview Mr. Thieu in its issue for Jan. 20. Copies were made available to the press today.

Defends Position on Pact

In the interview, conducted on the same day that President Nixon halted the bombing north of the 20th parallel, Mr. Thieu forcefully defended his well-known objections to Mr. Kissinger's efforts to negotiate a settlement with North Vietnam.

"Of course, I would like to go down in history as the man who brought peace," said Mr. Thieu, who spoke with Miss Fallaci in French throughout the interview. "Of course! But if I had signed what Kissinger wanted, within six months there would be bloodshed. I don't care about the people who would applaud me at the moment: 'Bravo, bravo! Long live peace!' I care about what happens later."

Mr. Thieu was asked what mistakes he thought Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Nixon might have made. He answered:

"They were too impatient to get a peace, too impatient to negotiate and sign. When you negotiate with the Communists, you shouldn't fix a deadline. You must not tell them that you want to repatriate the prisoners as soon as possible, to bring peace as soon as possible, otherwise they exploit you."

Calls Advice Unheeded

He said that he had told the Americans: "Be patient. One must be patient with the Communists, more patient than they are." But he said that his advice had been fruitless.

Mr. Thieu said that in talks he had with Mr. Kissinger in Saigon in late October, he told the Presidential envoy that there were two fundamental disagreements between them — one, the presence of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam, the other the political formula worked out for a council of National Reconciliation made up of members of the Saigon Government, the Vietcong and neutralists.

"Like the whole agreement, those two points were conceived by the Communists in Paris," Mr. Thieu said, "so I told Dr. Kissinger that accepting them would mean submitting to the North Vietnamese demands. What the North Vietnamese demand is the loss of South Vietnam."

Mr. Kissinger, at his news conference on Dec. 16, asserted that despite Mr. Thieu's objections, the United States was willing to sign an "in place" cease-fire that would allow the North Vietnamese to keep their forces in South Vietnam. This, Mr. Thieu said in the interview with Miss Fallaci, would be "absolutely unacceptable."

The Sovereignty Issue

He said: "It's like recognizing their right to call themselves liberators, their right to say that Vietnam is one country, from Hanoi to Saigon, and that this one Vietnam belongs to Hanoi, not to Saigon. Do I make myself clear? What I maintain is that accepting an army of 300,000 men inside a country means to recognize the sovereignty of that army over that country."

"It means considering the North Vietnamese as liberators instead of aggressors, thus reversing the roles; consequently, it means considering the South Vietnamese Army as a mercenary of the Americans."

"In fact, this is what I said to Dr. Kissinger: 'Dr. Kissinger, in doing so you put the legal Government of South Vietnam in the position of a puppet government installed by the Americans,'" he said.

In general, Mr. Thieu expressed uneasiness about his alliance with the United States. He compared it to a marriage: "One must trust his friends as

one does his wife, and the trust must be reciprocal. Until the day I abandon my wife or my wife abandons me and we get a divorce, the trust must remain."

Asked about the bombing of North Vietnam, particularly the raids against Hanoi, President Thieu denied that he was joyful about the stepped-up warfare, but he said that "the shorter a war, the less atrocious it is." He said he did not advocate use of nuclear weapons but that he did criticize the American penchant for on-again, off-again bombing.

"The gradualism of President Johnson in the Vietnam war was untenable," Mr. Thieu said. "He never realized this simple truth: either you make a war or you don't. The gradualism we went through after Johnson was more or less the same. For years they bomb, they stop bombing, they bomb again, they reduce, they escalate, they reduce, over the 20th Parallel, under the 20th Parallel. What's that? A war?"

"That's not a war. That's half a war. Until today we have had a half war. I say, had we attacked North Vietnam with a classical war, had we bombed North Vietnam continuously, had we landed in North Vietnam, the war would be over by now."

"I said landed. Yes, I'm a military man, and as a military man I say that if peace fails and we want to end this war, we must bring the war to North Vietnam. In all possible ways, including landing."

A Question in 1965

Mr. Thieu indicated, however, that the United States had not supported him up to now on this. He said that he had been asked in 1965, soon after the bombing of North Vietnam began, whether he thought the raids would end the war in three months.

"This depends on you," he said he told the Americans. "You are a great champion and you have to deal with a little fighter—that is, North Vietnam. If you want, you can knock your enemy down in the first round. If you don't want to do that, if you prolong the match until the ninth round, the audience can get discouraged and ask for its money back."

"But there is something worse, dear American friends: Suppose you get a cramp while prolong the match. The little fighter could even beat you. O.K.? Then go and fight him as a real champion. Knock him down in the first round. Stop it fast. If you bomb intermittently, if you make a gradual war, you'll never end it."

He said that, had the Ameri-



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President Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon recently. The man at center is a bodyguard.

cans bombed steadily, the war would have been over in 1966," but the Americans do not persist. They kill for five minutes; then they give four minutes breathing space; then they kill again."

He said he told the Americans that this was why he could not accept a "bad agreement."

"You are a boxing champion. You walk in the street with your large shoulders and you're so strong that if someone kicks you in the stomach you don't even wobble; at the most, you turn with a sign of contempt! I'm a poor boxer, and maybe I am not a boxer at all because my physique is so frail. If someone kicks me in the stomach, I fall to the ground."

"So you can probably afford the luxury of being easy in this agreement. I cannot. A bad agreement means nothing to you. To me, it's a matter of life and death. What do these 300,000 North Vietnamese mean to you? Nothing. What is the loss of South Vietnam if you look at it on the world's map? Just a speck."

'Brutal Questions' and Parries

Of Mr. Kissinger personally, Mr. Thieu said that "I am not an enemy," but he said his discussions with the Nixon adviser had been "very frank indeed—at moments, I could say, they were very hard. However, they were also friendly; we must deal as friends."

At the end of the interview, Mr. Thieu was asked what Miss Fallaci called "a series of rather brutal questions." Asked about reports that he was the most

corrupt man in South Vietnam, Mr. Thieu replied that "it isn't even worth answering." But he added: "Have you ever seen the daughter of a president living in a pension run by nuns in London? Mine lives there."

He denied that he was particularly wealthy and said that "I swear on the head of my children that I have nothing abroad." He also noted that "I haven't even bought a car."

"I still use the car of President Diem, an old Mercedes with an engine that constantly breaks down," he said. "Can you imagine the President of Vietnam who solemnly returns from some tour and at the airport gets in this old car that suddenly conks out? And the military police must push it to make it go. And the President sits there cursing: 'Damn it, I must buy a car!'"

Mr. Thieu said that he was a very religious Catholic:

"Every Sunday morning I attend holy mass in my chapel and every day I pray. I prayed for my troops to take back Quang Tri without too much loss of life. I went to the Church of Saint Mary of the Advent and I prayed in the middle of the Communist artillery's assault. I also prayed when Dr. Kissinger was here and kept asking for things I couldn't accept."

Miss Fallaci's interview with Mr. Kissinger created something of a stir in Washington. Privately, Mr. Kissinger said that Miss Fallaci had taken some of his remarks out of context.

In that interview, Mr. Kissinger was quoted as saying that he felt optimistic that once an accord was reached with Hanoi, Mr. Thieu would also agree. Mr. Kissinger's most widely quoted remarks, however, dealt with his own analysis of his popularity.

"The main point comes from the fact that I have always acted alone," Mr. Kissinger said. "The Americans love this immensely. The Americans love the cowboy who comes into the town all alone with his horse, and nothing else. Perhaps not even with a gun, because he does not shoot. He acts, and that is enough, being in the right place at the right time—in sum, a Western."

"This romantic and surprising character suits me because being alone has always been part of my style, or, if you wish, of my technique and my independence. This is very important for me. Finally, conviction; I am always convinced that I must do what I am doing. And people believe it. They feel it."