

# Ousted Saigon Leader Asserts He Clashed Often With Taylor

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Special to The New York Times

PARIS, June 16—Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who led the Government of South Vietnam and was commander of its armed forces in 1964, said here today that he was in constant conflict during that period with the United States Ambassador, Maxwell D. Taylor.

The Ambassador's reports on him and other South Vietnamese leaders form part of the data from a Pentagon study published earlier this week by The New York Times.

General Khanh, when appraised of the material published Monday, recounted in an interview his own version of the events that led to his virtual exile from South Vietnam in February, 1965. The general made it clear that the ouster had been brought about at the instigation of Ambassador Taylor after the general opposed bringing in more American troops, favoring instead a political agreement among the opposing Vietnamese forces.

## Implies U. S. Intervention

When read the text of the message Ambassador Taylor's mission sent to Washington in August, 1964, warning of the possibility that the Khanh Government might not last beyond the end of the year, the military leader smiled and said:

"There were five coups against me. Coups cannot be carried out in Saigon without the intervention of certain persons."

General Khanh said he was against the "Americanization" of the war and felt a political settlement was possible only among the Vietnamese themselves.

Hinting that he had been in contact with the National Liberation Front — the Vietcong organization—he said that the organization had been ready to talk of a settlement "and still is."

He recalled that in a speech in February, 1965, he announced that peace was possible by the end of the year.

His ouster came a few days later and he indicated that he felt it had come about because of his attitude on these two points.

Another major conflict that apparently contributed to the ouster resulted from the action of the so-called "Young Turks" in dissolving the High National Council, an embryonic legislature. Ambassador Taylor berated the officers for this initiative, according to the account sent to Washington from Saigon on Dec. 24, 1964.

## 'But I Backed It'

"I did not instigate this action but I backed it," General Khanh recounted. "The council had gone beyond its attributions. How can one talk of a military coup when it was the army that had named the council in the first place?"

General Khanh recalled that he received a telegram saying that Ambassador Taylor, who had been a general in the United States Army, wished to see him at a certain time.

"He was convoking me as if he were MacArthur on occupation in Japan," the general said

indignantly. "I told him that I would receive him."

According to the Khanh account, Ambassador Taylor, who was accompanied by Alexis Johnson, his deputy, demanded that General Khanh disavow his officers' action. The general refused, he recalled, and answered that he had agreed with what they had done. He said he had told Ambassador Taylor that he would no longer receive him.

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"I told him that he might be a good general but was certainly a bad ambassador," the former South Vietnamese leader went on. "Later the Young Turks came to me crying with rage at the treatment they had gotten from Taylor."

## Acknowledges Instability

The general also was indignant about references in the reports to intrigues by him and other generals. He acknowledged that the political situation in South Vietnam was not very stable then. General Khanh himself held a number of posts while exercising power. But the general said that some of the confusion had arisen from a lack of coherence in American policy.

"The State Department, the Pentagon and the C.I.A. were all working at cross purposes," he asserted. There was also some question in his mind as to where the decision-making center was, he said.

"Who's in charge, Washington or the embassy in Saigon?" I once asked MacNamara," General Khanh said, "he answered 'Washington.'" The general indicated that he had not been convinced.

## Sees Role for Himself

The general said he thought he could still play a role in bringing peace to Vietnam, explaining that he had kept a role in bringing peace to Vietnam, explaining that he had kept some influence in the army. But he asserted that peace could not gain by the present Saigon Government.

"The present team," he said, "represents the Americanization of the war. It must go. It is very difficult to carry out Vietnamization with people who symbolize foreign intervention. It is very difficult for a Saigon Government to call itself national when there are foreign troops occupying the country."

When General Khanh was ousted from the army command early in 1965, he was sent abroad as roving ambassador. He settled in Paris in 1968 and now lives quietly in a house in suburban Chaville with his wife and five children.

He was dismissed from the army rolls after having been accused of taking unauthorized funds with him when he left Saigon. He denied that he had taken money not his own and insisted that the contract Saigon owed him \$20,000, for funds he had spent on his mission. As far as he knows his diplomatic appointment was never terminated.

"On paper, I am still roving ambassador," he said.