

Saigon Reaction to U.S. Change Mixed

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 9—The South Vietnamese press greeted President Nixon's resignation today with a mixture of moods: relief, worry, introspection, sarcasm and a wistful admiration for the American system of democracy.

"Mr. Nixon has confessed his guilt and has resigned. His lies have upset America for the last two years," said the opposition paper Dai Dan Toc in an editorial. "But the United States is fortunate to have a democratic tradition and a constitutional system that has remained sound."

"The American people had hoped that Mr. Nixon would have enough courage to let the constitutional process go its course and accept impeachment," in which case, the editorial continued, "he would have rendered a better service to America by helping demonstrate the perfection of American working democracy."

A 'Peaceful Coup'

The anti-Communist newspaper Song Than's headlines said, "Peaceful Coup d'etat in U.S.: Nixon Overthrown—Victory for the U.S. Press, Congress After a 672-day Protracted Struggle."

The paper's editorial lamented the fact that "Mr. Nixon left the White House before he had completely solved the Vietnam problem, for there is still a war going on here. We hope that his successor, Mr. Ford, will be in a better position now to

act jointly with the other superpowers to press for a speedy settlement."

The opposition paper Hoa Binh quipped, "Some left the Government to go down in history. Mr. Nixon has left the front page possibly to go down into the classified ads. That was a humiliation for Mr. Nixon. That was glory for the American people. The departure of Mr. Nixon might serve to salvage the democratic and spiritual values that had been dangerously threatened in Nixon's years."

Dan Chu, the paper of President Nguyen Van Thieu's Democracy party, stressed the likelihood that no change in American policy toward Vietnam would come from the shift of Presidents.

U.S. Aide Sees Premier

That was a widely held view by the press, Government officials and others here. The American chargé d'affaires, Wolfgang Lehmann, paid a call on Premier Tran Thien Khiem just an hour after Mr. Nixon's speech to reaffirm the durability of American support.

The Saigon Government's press office reported, "Mr. Lehmann specifically assured the Premier that the United States would continue its policy of close friendship with and support for the Republic of Vietnam including continued economic and military assistance to Vietnam."

There was some nervousness nevertheless, mostly in expectation of stepped-up Communist

attacks during the period of transition in Washington. In the last few weeks, fighting has reached the highest levels since the cease-fire, and although little serious new action was reported following Mr. Nixon's resignation address, some diplomats and Government officials expect a few months of heavier attacks by the Communists as a means of testing President Ford.

'Worry and Relief'

Dai Dan Toc summarized its perception of the atmosphere with the Page One headline: "Nixon Leaves Office, U.S. in Joyful Mood, in Vietnam Worry and Relief."

The paper's publisher, Vo Long Triou, an opposition legislator, took the opportunity to reflect on Vietnam's dependency.

"In the final analysis," he wrote, "we must reconcile ourselves to the basic fact that we cannot rely on our friends forever, and the war here cannot go on indefinitely. The decisive factor, as far as we are concerned, is the Vietnamese people, not the allies—including the U.S."

Dien Tin, a strongly anti-Government paper, wrote: "This has been a departure without honor. The political death of Mr. Nixon in U.S. political history should serve as a lesson for all Machiavellian politicians. We in Vietnam have not seen peace with honor. Let us hope that, with the departure of Mr. Nixon, a page of history will be written."

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