

South Vietnam To Have New Constitution; Military Stays Strong

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is one installment of a series of articles on the war in Vietnam written by Howard Moffett, Collegiate Press correspondent in Saigon. The Daily Nebraskan has run two series by Moffett, who was former editor of the Yale Daily News.)

The first would take a month and a half and he hoped for the second within four to five months after that.

Questions And Answers

Questions and answers follow, with commentary in parentheses.

Q. General Thieu, are you satisfied with the present draft of the Constitution, or do you feel the legislative and judicial branches have been given too much power? Will South Vietnam need a stronger executive?

A. Well, you know, some members of the Constituent Assembly want to run too fast toward democracy. I think in general the Constitution is taking shape well, but some parts of the draft are not realistic toward the real situation of the country. But we are continually talking with the Assembly members and I think there will be time to explain to them and have these parts changed.

Military Supervises

(Score one for the military: supervising the drafting of a civil Constitution. Talks between the junta and the Assembly have in fact been going on for some time. They began when it looked like the two groups might clash over controversial Article 20 of Decree Law 21, which gives the prerogative of amending the Assembly's Constitution unless overridden by a two-thirds vote.)

General Thieu's comment underscores another question which has puzzled observers here for some time: Is the junta bringing pressure on the Assembly members to get objectionable sections changed, or is the compromising mutually amicable?

The importance of the question lies in the fact that the Assembly's slowly rising public stature derives largely from its independent, almost defiant posture toward the military government. If it comes out that collusion or pressure is involved, the new Constitution may be politically dead before the ink is dry.)

Control Of Province

Q. What parts of the draft are you referring to, specifically?

A. Primarily the election of province chiefs. This is democratic and idealistic, but it is not practical for the present time of war, or for many years after the war. The province chiefs will have to be appointed by the executive and coordinated through the central government.

We are a small country, you know, and we cannot afford independent states with elected governors like you have. For some time more we will need to maintain army officers as province chiefs. This is a difficult job and it requires a man of action, a military man.

(Score two for the military: province administration.)

Viet Cong Losing

I asked a series of questions about the progress of the war. General Thieu replied, "It is very clear that for a year the Viet Cong have had no momentum. They have no more hope of winning large battles such as in 1964 and 1965. They won't seize any provinces. They are still infiltrating, of course, but we can handle this problem."

(Score three for the generals: defeating the virulent wily Cong.)

Q. General Thieu, there has been much talk of peace in recent weeks. Do you see any chance for a negotiated settlement at the present time? Are there any circumstances under which the government of South Vietnam might enter into peace talks with Hanoi or the NLF?

No Move.

A. We have to be frank and just. We have been at war for 20 years. The reason we are fighting and the reason America is fighting with us, is that we do not want a Communist invasion. We want South Vietnam to be quiet. We would accept a just and honorable peace, if Hanoi would stop its invasion.

But there are no signs yet that Hanoi wants peace. They are still convinced that they can win—not so much militarily now, but politically. So I see no move toward peace yet.

Remember too, they may be under pressure from China to continue the war, even if Hanoi might want peace.

NLF In Coalition?

Q. But General Thieu, there seem to be signs now that Ho Chi Minh might settle for less than a victory.

It is well known that Russian supplies for North Vietnam have been stopped at the Chinese border, and the recent chaos in China may mean that China will no longer be able to pressure Hanoi into continuing the war.

A newspaper report yesterday cited North Vietnamese sources in Hong Kong as saying that Ho Chi Minh no longer feels he can win the war and is looking for a possible negotiated peace, in which the National Liberation Front might

strengthen it before a peace is signed, in order to prevent a Viet Cong political tour de force.

Coalition Wanted.

It is blatantly untrue, on the other hand, that no South Vietnamese would accept a negotiated peace and a coalition government. Even among those who have no sympathy for the Viet Cong, there is growing feeling that the war must be stopped.

Some students, religious leaders and politician-intellectuals have said privately in recent weeks that they are willing to take their chances with peace and politics, knowing full well that the Viet Cong have the single strongest political machine in the country.

Military Controls Peace

But the army is intransigent, and the generals still hold the cards. If the U.S. ever decides it wants to negotiate in Vietnam, it will have to persuade the junta as well as Ho Chi Minh and the NLF. So score four for the military: arbitrating a "just and honorable" peace.)

Q. General Thieu, how long do you think it will take to organize political

parties that may stand up to the Viet Cong?

Building Political Parties.

A. That will be a very long process—perhaps ten years. You must remember that we have never had an opportunity to organize democratic parties in Vietnam (he cited conditions under the French, Diem, etc.) But we cannot have a true democracy without strong political parties.

One of the jobs of the future government should be to help parties to organize and strengthen themselves. The only parties we have now are very old and fragmented.

Public Funds For Parties

Q. Does this mean you think the next government should subsidize political parties with public funds?

A. Possibly funds. Other kinds of support, too. Eventually we should have just three or four—maybe just two—strong parties. This is the only way to counter the Communists. The only two organized groups now are the Communists and the army.

Military Party

Q. Do you mean to imply that the army might serve as a possible base for one

of the strong political parties you envision?

A. I am against political parties in the army. On the other hand, if any retired military men wanted to organize a party with other retired army men, that might be good. Army discipline would give them a strong organization.

Korean Soldiers

(Score five for the military: providing a skeleton on which to hang a flesh-and-blood political party. Though the idea may be repugnant to Americans, the

alternatives for non-Communist Vietnamese are just not that hopeful at the present juncture.

Both American officials and Vietnamese generals are paying close attention to Korea's experiment with soldiers—turned—politicians. What an army party might do is force the fragmented groups of civilian nationalists into forming one large party of their own. Nothing else has brought them together.)

Pledges Hosting Drive For Toys

A drive for toys, story-books, and other recreational equipment is being conducted by the Theta Xi Pledge class. Articles received from the drive will be given to Lincoln's TRY school for training preschool retarded youngsters.

Anyone interested in contributing to the drive should call 432-683. Theta Xi Pledges will pick up all donations.

TRY School is just beginning operation and is in desperate need of the equipment. The drive will end Friday Night.

NU Duo Taken In Pro Draft

Two stars of the 1966 Big Eight football champion Cornhuskers were picked off in the third round of the combined NFL-AFL.

Three year stand out "Light-horse" Harry Wilson and Carel Stith, a defensive tackle who won All-Big Eight honors, as did Wilson, were the chosen Huskers.

Stith will go to the Houston Oilers in the AFL and Wilson to the NFL Philadelphia Eagles if they decide to play pro ball.

SAIGON, South Vietnam (CPS)—American officials, the press and Vietnamese politicians are setting the stage here for a dramatic transfer of power from military junta to elected civilian government.

South Vietnam's new Constitution will be ready by the end of March. In April local elections will be held in an estimated 39 per cent of the country's hamlets. By September the nation may have a duly elected president.

Step Toward Democracy

The Constituent Assembly in downtown Saigon buzzes with energetic speeches. Hopeful politicians say the new Constitution could be the first step toward true democracy—if the military will guarantee honest elections.

American officials talk of a "new political atmosphere," and point to the temporary blocs in the Assembly as the seeds of future political parties. The American press is already focusing on possible candidates for the presidency.

But make no mistake, the military still runs South Vietnam. Beneath the surface of civilian politicking there are clear signs that the generals intend to play a dominant role for some time to come.

Military's Spokesman

No one is better qualified to speak for South Vietnam's military establishment than Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu. At 42 the French-trained Thieu is Chief of State, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Chairman of the 10-man National Leadership Committee (or junta) by whose grace Air Vice Marshal Ky governs.

Thieu is a small man, with a bright young face devoid of wrinkles. Yet his voice is heavy and authoritative. His finest hour in combat came when, as a colonel, he commanded the troops that assaulted Diem's palace in the 1963 Revolution.

General Thieu spent almost an hour this afternoon talking off-the-cuff in his well-appointed office at General Staff Headquarters. What emerged was a pretty clear picture of how the generals size up the current excitement about civilian rule. In brief, they aren't nearly as excited about it as the civilians.

Military's Point of View

Underlying everything he said was one idea: South Vietnam is in a crisis situation, of which the war is only one part. Of all the major problems facing the country, there is not one that civilians are equipped to handle as well as the military.

Listen to his reasoning as it came out in the course of the interview. You may not like everything he said, but you'll have a much better idea of what is likely to happen in South Vietnam in the near future.

He began by saying that the Constitution should be promulgated and an elected government established as soon as possible. He thought



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- Mozart: Exultate, Jubilate (Metel, K.165), Bach: Jesu, meine Zuversicht (Laudes Cantata, BWV121) (SCHWARTZ-KOFF, Philharmonia Orchestra); Susskind, Gellhorn 60013
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- Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro (PREY, NOTHBERGER, GUIDER, Dresden State Opera Orchestra and Chorus; Sulzner) (Sung in German) 60019

Hathaway talks mini-dresses with Joey Heatherton.

Hathaway: It's rather unusual, isn't it, to—

Heatherton: Of course. And that's why one wears them.

Hathaway: Is there any particular—

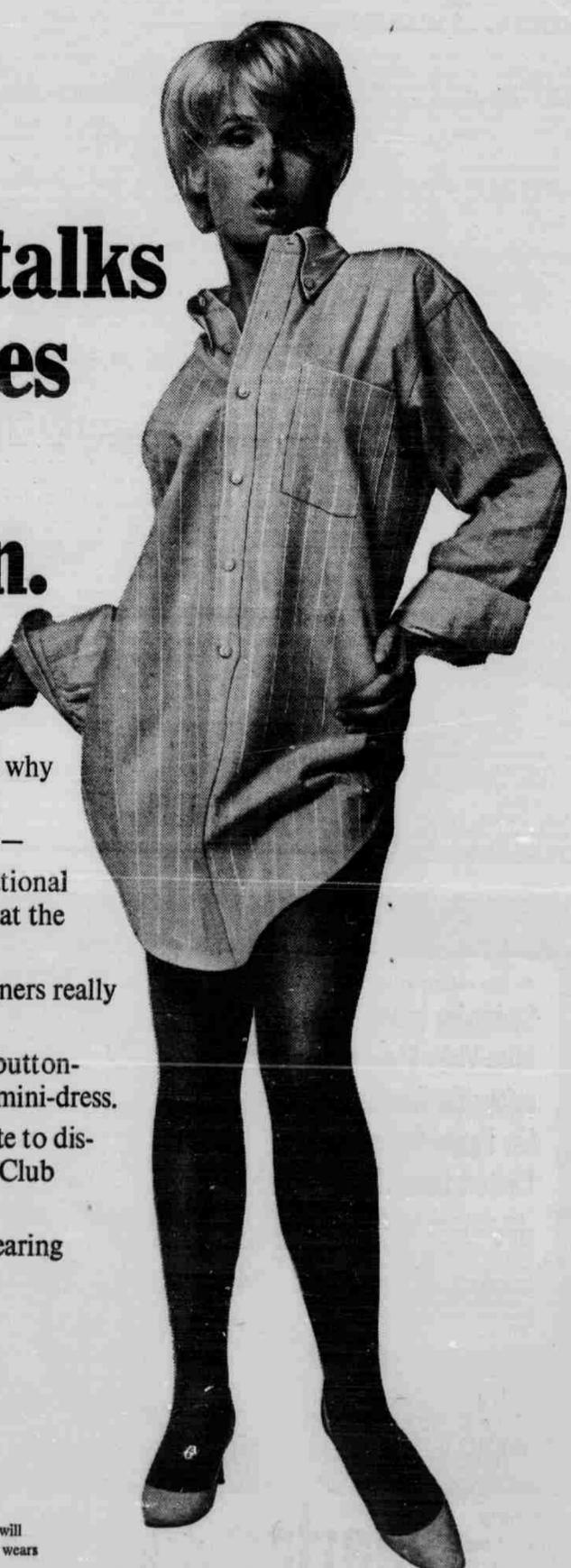
Heatherton: Well, there's the sensational curved hemline. And that slit at the sides. Very Oriental.

Hathaway: I don't think our designers really intended—

Heatherton: That soft roll to the button-down collar, too. Unique in a mini-dress.

Hathaway: Miss Heatherton, I hate to disillusion you, but we make our Club shirts principally for men.

Heatherton: You mean men are wearing mini-dresses, too?



Joey Heatherton, star of motion pictures and television, will shortly be appearing in several variety shows. Here Joey wears Hathaway's new Club Oxford denim. About \$9.00

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