

# MORE TROUBLE LIKELY IN VIET

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SAIGON.

South Viet Nam is bracing for more trouble as a major confrontation is expected in coming weeks between the staunchly anti-Communist armed forces and potentially pro-neutralist elements.

The battle started taking shape Monday. Three hundred Buddhist-dominated youths milled around the Premier's office that afternoon, dispersing only after realizing that American-backed Premier Nguyen Khanh was elsewhere. Six blocks away, 400 students met at their headquarters on the main street of Saigon, impeding traffic, while protesting against last Sunday's so-called "Catholic coup" and against former members of late President Ngo Dinh Diem's predominantly Catholic regime.

An increasing number of Saigonese believe the Buddhist leaders are pro-neutralists and some are suspected of being pro-Communist.

## PRESSURE

The protest meetings openly ignored Sunday's warning by rebel army units. That revolt appeared directed by anti-Communist Catholic generals and officers loyal to the Right-wing Dai Viet political party. It seemed designed not to oust Premier Khanh but to pressure him to make no more concessions to pro-Buddhist elements—concessions which have had the effect of weakening the authority of the central government.

The demonstrations Monday had been planned before the attempted coup. As they took place, middle-level Buddhist priests in Saigon tossed away their brown robes and donned civilian suits and narrow-brimmed hats to conceal their shaven heads. "We are in hiding," one explained.

High-level Buddhist monks, including leader Thich (Venerable) Tri Quang, fled to their stronghold provinces in central Viet Nam more than 18 hours before the coup attempt.

The dimensions of the impending confrontation depend primarily on how quickly, firmly and decisively Premier Khanh consolidates his position within the armed forces and reasserts his leadership of the government. On Monday, he briefly consulted with the young militant army officers wanting a hard line against the Buddhists and then decided to exile or reassign at least 10 dissident officers. These were known to include the principal leaders of the bloodless revolt. He may also transfer those key generals who were neutral instead of for him.

## SOME CAME

Gen. Khanh also held a brief cabinet meeting Monday after one of his top aids had sided with the rebel generals and attempted to establish a defacto government without Gen. Khanh.

Nguyen Xuan Oanh—whom Gen. Khanh had named as acting Premier and then dismissed—accepted the invitation of the rebel generals Sunday and called a cabinet meeting. Some of the ministers turned up but the meeting was not held.

Gen. Khanh has been attempting to establish a workable government with prominent politicians and civilian leaders—possibly to be named this week—but he's been having difficulty persuading people to join him.

Besides these troubles, there is a growing impression among Gen. Khanh's associates and top aids that the Americans have not been supporting him completely.

American intelligence officers knew about the threat of a coup at least 18 hours before it was attempted. While Gen. Khanh's aids had given him some reports, he discounted them as rumors. Key pro-Khanh generals in Saigon were preparing to spend a leisurely Sunday—two were going to the beach—when the rebels hit Saigon.

## ABOUT TO LEAVE

Gen. Khanh himself learned about the coup from a Vietnamese Army major one hour after rebel units had disarmed police at a checkpoint on the city limits of Saigon.

Gen. Khanh was just preparing to leave the mountain resort of Dalat to fly to Saigon.

Rebel troops from the Mekong Delta area began pushing northward towards Saigon at 4 a. m. Sunday. Unusual troop movements like this automatically alert the combat operations center in the American Military Assistance Command. To the bewilderment of Asian diplomats, American advisers accompanied at least one battalion which had been ordered on an operation."