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request 1 (park/deepe)

SAIGON, NOVEMBER 13--Request for Mark Franklin of the Observer begins as follows: Last month, a senior Vietnamese government official explained: "(Vice President Nguyen Cao) ~~Ng~~ Ky is impetuous. He says something and thinks about it later. Thieu thinks and thinks before making a decision--and after two weeks he decides nothing." The official also explained, "Thieu's problem is the rightwing symbolized by Nguyen Cao Ky and ~~Ha~~ Ha Thuc Ky--~~so~~ so, in ~~a~~ a way, Thieu's problem is Ky squared." The Palace ~~discussions~~ ^{with the bunker} discussions were ^{spur of the moment} essentially the story of these two men--Ky and Thieu--and the coalition ^{between them} between them, ^{disproving the} disproving the above comments of the Vietnamese official, ^{their relationship was} ~~was~~ the pivot point in the American-South Vietnamese discussions.

Paradoxically, the American officials during the past 15 months had attempted to persuade the President and his Vice President to work together, instead of continuing their ~~inter-~~ ^{intra-} intra-mural squabbles, and they refused until ^{the} mid-October ~~meetings~~ meetings when the U. S. officials ^{least} ~~expected~~ ^{expected} ~~had~~ ^{the} ~~wanted~~ ^{Thieu-Ky Coalition} appreciated it least.

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request 2 (park/deepe)

During the Palace discussions, it was Ky, rather than Thieu, who became the exponent of Vietnamese political ~~and~~ unity behind ~~the~~ the ~~President~~ ^{Ky} President--and ~~he~~ held to this position even when an American ambassador attempted to split Thieu and Ky in a separate meeting with the Vice President Ky. During ~~one~~ ^{one} point, Ky told an aide, "I no repeat no longer land my helicopter on the top of the President's bedroom (meaning on the Presidential Palace roof). Instead I land it on the grass outside his bedroom window. If I can de-escalate, so can the rest of you."

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request 3 (park/deepe)

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Without Ky's support and that of the other ~~first~~ Vietnamese national leaders, Thieu would have ~~probably~~ *probably* have given ~~off~~ *in* on what they *VIETNAMESE* consider the essential point of Paris' ~~plus~~ *plus* having a huge internal row within his own government and body politic. The coalition between Thieu and Ky—later joined by other ~~representatives~~ government personalities including Prime Minister Huong, began cementing with the growing disenchantment of ~~the~~ the way the American officials were treating the government here and in Paris—*the way the American officials were treating the government here and in Paris* but the ~~cementing~~ *in the common* ~~to~~ *opposit* opposition of even the dovish members of government believing that Thieu should refuse to sit down with the NLF ~~and~~ on an equal footing. *in Paris*

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request 4 ~~max~~ (park/deepe)

Taciturn and meditative, Thieu often has the style and grace of a Vietnamese ~~clv~~ Calvin Coolidge—the silent American President of the 1920s. But, during the Palace ~~side discussions~~ discussions, Thieu's public statements and tv addresses became more animated, emotional and convincing to Vietnamese viewers. Thieu is a master at intrigue; he has, thus far, perfected the primary dictum of Vietnamese politics—^{ly}name to survive. Of the ~~ex~~ original hand-ful of general instrumental in overthrowing Diem in 1963, only Thieu remains in power. Many have seized power, but none except Thieu have held it. (Mark: you could argue the exception to this is four-star general Tran Thien Khiem, currently Minister of Interior, a friend ~~of~~ s whom Thieu himself brought back from Taiwan).

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request 5~~2~~ (park/deepe)

The French-educated Vietnamese salon politioans call Thieu "louvoyeur" meaning "he's the best sailor in any kind of wind. If the wind is too strong, he'll go downwind in order to go upstream later." (After failing to get his baccalaureate from his high school, Thieu studied to become a captain of coastal ships in Indo-China waters—and his friends still joke with him that he ~~has~~ has adapted the principles of seamanship to politics—especially tacking). Other political sources call Thieu "a politioan who ~~can~~ can walk four directions at one time." Few, however, have ever labelled him as "trum chang" repeat "~~trun~~ trun cha "trum chang" (hiding head under a blanket—or fence-sitter). Even when he is neutral, Thieu is said to be actively neutral.

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reauest 6 (park/deepe)

Thieu's official biography says he was born April 5, 1923, in Ninh Thuan, the son of a real ~~estate~~ estate owner. He ~~is~~ married ~~to~~ *the* ~~young~~ lovely and pleasant daughter of a Southern medical expert—her father was not repeat not a full doctor—~~she~~ ^{she} She was born in My Tho in 1930; she and Thieu have one ~~son~~ seven-year-old son named Loo and one 14-year-old daughter named Anh.

Thieu's military ~~career~~ career began in 1948; after graduating as pilot of the "petit cabotage" coastal ~~line~~ line of the civilian merchant marines—which would have made him a rich man—Thieu decided instead to switch to a military career and in 1948 he joined the first ~~class~~ class of the Dalat ~~National~~ National Military Academy. He later became superintendent of the Academy, where he was popular with the instructors and students; he is now appointing some of these ^{as} students ~~to~~ ^{as} provincial and district chiefs, informed sources said.

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request 7 (park/deep)

After graduation from Dalat in 1949, Thieu was sent to the battlefield, ~~and then~~ where he ~~first~~ first served as a platoon leader. He has since held field command at every echelon, excluding the Joint General Staff; he was company and battalion commander, regimental commander, ~~Brigade~~ and subsequently commander of three Vietnamese ~~div~~ divisions—the 21st, the 1st Infantry Division and the 5th Infantry Division. Thieu was commander of the 5th Division outside Saigon during the Diem coup; Thieu brought his division to Saigon—and after hesitating to determine that the coup was for ~~real~~ real—rather than an abortive one—he committed his division to fight Diem's Presidential Guard units, then located near the current Prime Minister's office and Shell building on Hong Thap Tu.

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request 8 (park/deepe)

After that, Thieu was the secretary general of the first military junta, headed by Big Minh, and concurrently chief of staff of RVNAF. He played an important behind-the-scenes role in bringing Nguyen Khanh to power in January, 1964,—but Thieu was more aligned with the Dai Viet faction of the couplette than with the Khanh forces. ~~After Khanh~~ ~~was named~~ Khanh named Thieu as commander of the Fourth ~~CSG~~ Corps in Mekong Delta. After Khanh's overthrow, Thieu was deputy prime minister and minister of defense in the Quat government, preceding Ky's take-over, when Thieu moved up to the largely ceremonial position as chief of state and chairman of the National Directory on June 19, 1965. Then, in 1967, Thieu outmaneuvered Ky to run as the military candidate for President—which began the Ky-Thieu split that was not repeat not patched up until the ~~Bay~~ Bunker sessions began, *last + month.*

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request 9 (park/deepe)

Thieu's military training has taken him out of Vietnam four times. In 1949, he studied at the Infantry School, Coetquidan, France. In 1957, he attended the U. S. Army command and general staff college, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1959, he attended the joint and combined planning school, Pacific command, Okinawa. And, in 1960, he attended familiarization of modern weapons, Fort Bliss, Oklahoma.

As a ~~soldier~~ ^{best} soldier, other Vietnamese military men regarded him as one of the ~~better~~ field commanders, a good organizer, a ~~system~~ ^{at the Palace} systematic thinker, ~~and~~ ^{He} was one of Diem's ~~top~~ top briefers because of the ~~organized~~ ^{at the Palace} and articulate manner in which he organized briefings.

(Mark)

(Mark: this has covered the high spots in fairly superficial manner. Hope tis of some help to you. ~~Remember when are you~~ Are you planning to curtail your home leave—things are getting very juicy here. Regards Bev).

==end reuter