

From the Political Jungle of Viet

WHAT KHANH SAYS

By Beverly Deepe

A Special Correspondent

DALAT, South Viet Nam.

Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, South Viet Nam's self-described Prime Minister in name, charged in an exclusive interview yesterday that American Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor favored his political rival—Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh.

Since Gen. Khanh came to power in a Jan. 30 coup, Washington has sworn firm support for him in the fight against the Communist Viet Cong guerrillas.

Yesterday, however, Gen. Khanh said: "Taylor has sentiments for 'Big' Minh and wants him to come to power." He said he

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From Khanh's Own Lips: Taylor Favors 'Big' Minh

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himself had offered support for Gen. Minh—known as "Big" because he is taller and stockier than most Vietnamese—but feared that Gen. Minh would become "a puppet for the neutralists."

Told that acting Premier Nguyen Xuan Oanh described him Saturday as "mentally ill," Gen. Khanh was surprised, then laughed and said: "I am not at that stage yet."

He said his doctor had checked him and found that "I have heart trouble . . . and high blood pressure. The engine has run and run for six months, and now I need some rest."

Washington officials earlier described his condition as a bad cold. He did not appear to have a cold.

Gen. Khanh received me for 45 minutes in his official government residence in Dalat, a mountain resort town, 150 miles northeast of Saigon. He had come to Dalat Saturday with his wife and five children.

Dressed in brown civilian clothes with a maroon necktie, he spoke casually, openly and calmly during the interview. Though a chain-smoker ordinarily, he smoked only two cigarettes.

He appeared weary, with purplish circles under his eyes, but he was working at his mahogany desk as I entered, and he said he had still more work to do. One of his chief aids accompanied him to Dalat.

BETRAYED

Rather than despair or defeat, Gen. Khanh's attitude appeared to be one of disillusionment with friends who "betrayed me" and discouragement.

He said he had told Gen. Minh: "If you want to come back to power I will support you."

"I told him I'd tell my friends. You must support Big Minh," I told Taylor this too," Gen. Khanh said.

Gen. Minh was one of the leaders of the November coup against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime who in turn were overthrown by Gen. Khanh in January. Gen. Minh then reluctantly agreed to remain as figurehead Chief of State, but was deprived of that post in short-lived constitutional changes that Gen. Khanh pushed through earlier this month, temporarily making himself President.

Then, last week, Gen. Minh became one of a ruling triumvirate of generals formed after student demonstrations against the new charter and bloody Buddhist-Roman Catholic rioting. The other two members are Gen. Khanh and Lt. Gen. Tran Thien Khiem.

Explaining his difficulties, Gen. Khanh said "I had so many things to do. But I do not know what the Americans—I mean the American Embassy (in Saigon) and Washington—I do not know what they want."

"During the first student strike, I was surprised to hear the Voice of America announce that the students were against the Khanh government. They were not against my government but against the charter (constitution). That's what it said on the paper I had in my hand—they would like to revise the charter. So I was surprised at the VOA announcement. I talked to the Embassy and said it was not true. Why does VOA campaign against me? So I do not know what the Americans have in mind."

Gen. Khanh described himself as "Prime Minister in name" and said he thought the American government and Ambassador Taylor wanted him to continue in that capacity.

"I will not say like MacArthur, 'I shall return. But I am ready to. When I come back I cannot have with me some people who betray me.'"

Today Gen. Taylor flew to Dalat from Saigon, presumably to meet with Gen. Khanh. He planned to be absent from the capital for only a few hours.

Until 10 days ago, observers here con-

sidered Gen. Khanh to have two sources of power: the support of the American government and control of the Army under his friend, Gen. Khiem, the 39-year-old, bespectacled Minister of Defense.

On the general situation in Viet Nam, Gen. Khanh said: "I am sick with the intrigue in my country. I do not know if it's the same in the American agencies. I am a soldier doing my best. I do not like to stay at my desk thinking of intrigue. I go and try to win the war."

"When I came to power, I gave my confidence to the Dai Viet (Greater Viet Nam political party). You've seen them now. My right hand man in civilian affairs betrayed me. And the military still work for themselves."

THE GENERALS

"You know Gen. Khiem and I were classmates. But when we met for two days in Saigon (during a 48-hour debate on who would be the new President) he's not the same man I came to power with seven months ago. But he's not a bad one either. We can still work together."

"One general I gave the biggest job in the country to . . . still gives money to the political party working for himself and of course working against me."

"After Tonkin (the North Vietnamese attacks on American destroyers and the American bombing of North Viet Nam) our morale was high among our people and the Army. I am not surprised if the VC (Communist Viet Cong guerrillas) were trying to get the situation as bad as we have now."

"The Dai Viet plan was to divide us and put the Army against the people through the students demonstrating in the streets. So if I put in the Army, it's like under the Diem regime last year but more grave because it's not against one family or personally but against the armed forces."

He moved an ashtray, cigarette lighter and packet of cigarettes into a triangle to illustrate.

"I pulled out the Army so the people are against the people—the Buddhists against the Catholics—but that went to the maximum point, and now I ordered the Army to step in."

He said he did not know how long he would remain resting in Dalat. He said he would return to Saigon occasionally, "not to take power but to try to solve the situation, which is very dangerous."

"But if I'm asked again to take power, I'll go right away," he said. He laughed and added, "and the mental illness will go right away, too."

RUSK—NO CHANGES

From The Herald Tribune Bureau

WASHINGTON.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk said yesterday that no basic changes have taken place in South Viet Nam despite Gen. Khanh's lapse in political activity and popular unrest culminating in last week's Buddhist-Roman Catholic rioting.

Speaking on the NBC-TV program "Meet the Press," Mr. Rusk maintained that Gen. Khanh will return to his post when he is sufficiently rested—a view expressed earlier by State Department spokesmen. He did not predict when that would be.

Mr. Rusk said he expects Gen. Khanh, after he resumes activity, to work toward installation of a civilian government, which Mr. Rusk said had always been the general's goal.

In answer to a question, the Secretary of State said he could not foresee a South Vietnamese government which might ask the U. S. to get out of the country. He said he knew of no faction in South Viet Nam, religious or military, which wanted Communist rule.