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101 cong ly; saigon

Sent. Aug. 18.

generals kh--1

Shodor

Add.

(Note to Editor: Please hold this until I cable that Gen. Khiem has been named No. 2 man in the new government. I might also cable an insert or correction when his new position becomes official).

SAIGON--Seventeen years ago, two young cadets graduated as classmates from a French military academy in the mountainous jungles bordering Cambodia.

One was a dynamic ~~soccer-layer~~ ^{out going} soccer exuberant 2/lt. nguyen khanh. The other was shy, soft-spoken 2/lt. tran thien khiem.

Today, they are known as the Generals KH and are the two most powerful men in Viet Nam. They are the ~~two~~ key leaders on whom American has based their hopes for a ~~final triumph~~ clear-cut victory against Communist Viet Cong Communist guerrillas. But the tasks before the two generals encompass more than military tactics or strategy. They must also clearly solve the formidable political problems facing the country--of building a ~~strong~~ ² political unity among nationalist forces strong enough to counter the ~~political~~ ^{ideology} Communist propaganda amongst the peasants in the countryside ~~were the where the war is being waged.~~ and (More) urban populations where Communists are attempting to infiltrate

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Maj. Gen. Khanh was recently elected by his military junta as President of the Republic of Viet Nam. He is also Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Lt. Gen. Khiem—with one ~~more~~ higher rank than Gen. Khanh—is Minister of Defense, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed ~~in~~ Forces and Vice President of the Republic. *And. 1st VICE Chm. of the junta.*

Both were born in the southern provinces of Vietnam, Khanh the son of a wealthy landowner and Khiem the son of a middle-class family. *Both are Nominal Burd, but Dait 3 Burd. Supt - together* During the closing days of World War II, both fought in the ~~the~~ Plain of Reeds, ~~an~~ a wasteland south of Saigon which looks like the ~~the~~ prairies of the Old West, but ~~prairie~~ prairies submerged in two feet of salt water.

Then both ~~joined~~ became cadets in the French ~~the~~ Military Academy in Dalat, a mountain resort city north of Saigon. Of the 17 members in the class, only 11 graduated—and these eleven are among some of the most important field commanders and administrators now in the Khanh government. ~~During~~ During their school-days, Khanh distinguished himself on the soccer field and earned the affectionate nickname ~~of "Little Boy"~~ of "Little Boy" from his classmates. *-including KHANH & KHIEM-*

Eight of these 11 then joined for several months the Communist Viet Minh movement which was fighting French colonialism. ~~Included~~ *Included* in these eight were Khanh and Khiem.

(More)

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They supplemented their French-styled conventional warfare schooling with the realities of Viet Minh guerrilla warfare tactics--a combination which is of value to them today. Ironically, when the eight ~~joined the Viet Minh,~~ they were put under the supervision of an cadre named Pham Ngoc ~~as an ex-Communist acting as~~ Thao, now a Khanh's press secretary and an influential political advisor.

As 1/lts., both Khiem and Khanh were married; Khiem to a beautiful woman from a traditional family; Khanh to an even more beautiful woman who had been married to a Viet Minh engineer who has since been seen in Peking and Moscow.

After the French Indo-China war in 1954, both ~~Khiem and Khanh~~ Khanh and Khiem became staunch military supporters of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Khanh became a brilliant regimental team commander, but was distrusted by Diem. In 1958, he was commander of Zone ~~5~~ 5 in the now battle-weary Mekong Delta area. ~~His~~ Khiem was his deputy. According to Khanh, the Cambodian newspapers at that time carried stories that the "colonels KH" might ~~ex~~ launch a coup which would overthrow Diem.

~~Exx~~ Two years later, he later, however, Khanh became Chief of Staff of the Joint General Staff in Saigon. Khiem became a colonel and took over Khanh's command in the delta. During the abortive 16 1960 paratrooper coup against Diem, ~~ex~~ Khanh--in his pajamas, according to versions in Saigon--ran to the Palace to convince

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Diem to negotiate with the rebels. ~~During~~ The long hours of negotiation gave Diem a chance to call in troops and armored cars from the provinces--including those under Khiem-- Khiem and his ~~ant~~ units from the Delta--to rout the rebels. The leader of military leader of the paratrooper coup ~~is~~ is now one of Khanh's

division commanders named Sub Brig-Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi.

But during the next three years, both Khiem and Khanh

the support of both ~~Diem~~ Khiem and Khanh ~~is~~ for President Diem continually diminished. During the Buddhist crisis of last year, Khanh, then a major-general commanding the northern Corps II, was known to be plotting a coup, but according to some reliable sources, an American CIA agent reported details of it to President

Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. Meanwhile in Saigon, Khiem

ONE ONE STAFF.

as a staff officer in the Army headquarters, was able to manipulate troops. On November 1, 1963, ~~he~~ his manipulation and execution of the coup plans of other generals brought down the House of Ngo--President Diem, his brother Nhu, Nhu's wife now in exile in France, Diem's dictatorial brother in the Central Provinces (now executed) and another brother, Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc.

~~When the first military junta took power on November 1, Khanh~~

When the first military junta took power on November 1, Khanh told a group of military officers--again in Dalat--that if the military did not uphold the spirit of the revolution, he ~~is~~ would launch his own coup against them.

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Add - this
Contact from Pro-Diem Elements in 2 rows, opposed to Khanh's call
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while both
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ally
K. 2 is
Diem Regime
vs Diem.

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generals kh--5

The other junta generals were evidently suspicious of him and assigned him as I Corps commander,--as far from Saigon as possible. But ~~his own army~~ three months later, Khanh's vow to launch a coup against the cou-ma coup-makers came true. The other junta generals had ~~not~~ forgotten the other General KH, who as Commander of III ~~Coe~~ Corps controlled most of the ~~gr~~ troops around Saigon.

On Jan. 30, the other junta generals were arrested while in their pajamas during an early morning raid. They are still exiled in city of Dalat. Khanh became premier and Khiem his minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

at Election Pres, Ho Strong Am Support Call from Am Press
During recent weeks, Saigon lavished in rumors that

Khiem would again attempt a coup--this time against the other General KH. Khanh's own ~~securi~~ security officers repeatedly asked him whether Khiem could be trusted. Always the reply was "Gen. Khiem is my very good friend."

Asked by a newsman whether there would be a coup, Khanh laughed and answered, "The next coup will be mine."

instating
The current government reshuffle naming him President and allowing a hard-core of government officials loyal to him indicates his coup may now be in ~~re~~ process underway. But observers here believe the success of the coup--and the dynamics of winning the anti-Communist war--also depend on the other General KH.

(End)

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generals kh--photos

enclosed roll of undeveloped film shows Khanh and ~~Gen~~² Lt.
Gen. Tran Thien Khiem (on the left with four stars on collar).

Taken by Bev Deepe.