

(Morgan Gandy)

SAIGON, 14200, (UPIS)—An orderly Buddhist "victory march" with thousands of their youth, old women and ~~and~~ faithful gaily waving ~~colorful~~ colorful banners along the streets of Saigon Thursday night marked the beginning of the end of ~~the regime~~ Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky's military regime.

The Buddhist "victory march", which was also ~~an~~ an impressive show of force, was made following ~~major concessions by the~~ ^{or "outright concessions,"} Ky government to hold elections for a constitutional assembly "within three to five months." At best, Prime Minister Ky and the ~~militar~~ ruling ten-man military junta will survive as a caretaker government that long, ^{since} as moderate Buddhist leaders accepted this major concession. But, leaders of the more militant Buddhist wing are known to ~~advocate~~ advocate the toppling of the Ky regime and ~~the~~ installing a civilian government which would act as a caretaker to supervise the elections.

(More—Miller—BD)

first add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x the elections x x x.

The happy Buddhist march was also ^{considered} aye victory for President Lyndon Johnson.

At the Honolulu Conference last February, President Johnson reportedly pressed Prime Minister Ky to hold elections in Vietnam INITIALLY BY JUNE ~~as soon as possible.~~ Vietnamese government sources interpreted this to mean the Johnson administration would be prepared-- ~~to accept~~ re-arrangement aye political settlement within the South which would in the future ~~include~~ include the Communist Liberation Front in the government.

Prime Minister Ky reportedly resisted President Johnson's ~~and~~ suggestion--"it's not aye question of my government; it's aye question of my country"; he later said--but Thursday the Buddhist victory ~~and~~ march indicated he had lost the battle, after aye ~~and~~ turbulent, violent five weeks of political turmoil.

(More--Miller--BD)

"This decision today (for aye constitutional assembly) marks the beginning of President Johnson's poker game with the Communists," one anti-Communist diplomatic source explained.

"In ~~our~~ deference to ~~you~~ your President, may I say he forgot the Communist deck of ~~cards~~ has only wild aces and jokers in it--and no one can predict anything.

"Who will win in ~~the coming election~~ the most seats in the coming election? The Catholics? No, they have only ten percent of the population. The Vietnamese army, which is the most ~~can~~ cohesive anti-Communist force? No, they ~~will~~ won't even be on the ~~ball~~ ballot. The majority of the assembly will be filled with Buddhists, pro-French elements and crypto-Communists, all of whom pretend to be ~~new~~ ^{INSTANT} anti-Communist ^S for the time being."

The militant wing of the Buddhist politico-religious organization has long been considered to be penetrated by pro-Communist sympathizers or agents.

(More--Miller--ED)

third add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x or agents x x x.

~~The constituent Assembly~~

The assembly, to be elected, would be charged with the responsibility of drafting and approving a national constitution; Ky had wanted the constitution approved by a referendum, but the LEADERS Buddhists did not.

According to Chief of State General Nguyen Van Thieu, in a decree signed this morning, this assembly would be established within three to five months and "to be" through universal, direct and secret balloting all over the territory of the Republic of Vietnam."

A strict interpretation of this provision would mean that even the Communists and ~~the~~ pro-Communist elements would be given the right to vote; also that the election would be held not only in government-controlled areas, but also in "contested" or ~~contested~~ insecure areas.

(More--Miller--BD)

fourth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x insecure areas x x x.

The electoral procedures, however, are to ~~determined~~ ^{DELINEATED} later by another decree law.

The Buddhist leadership--at least today Thursday--considered the concessions by Prime Minister Ky aye major victory ^{but not rpt not total} by meeting their four initial demands made at aye press conference on March twelve, two days after the ouster of ~~the~~ Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi as commander of the five northern, Buddhist-dominated provinces.

These demands were:

1. All the military generals who contributed to the revolution should be re-integrated into military positions. ~~This~~ Ky made aye partial concession on ^{this} ~~that~~ point by ~~nominating~~ naming Lieut. Gen. Ton That Dinh as a ~~ye~~ replacement to ~~Gusted~~ General Thi. ~~Dinh~~ General Dinh, and other ex-generals ^{whom} ~~who~~ the Buddhists support, composed the first military junta in November, nineteen sixty three, but were ~~three months~~ later purged by General Nguyen Khanh on charges of being pro-neutralist and pro-French.

(More--Miller--BD)

2. The military generals should return to a purely military positions. Currently, the ten-man ruling junta is the political base of the regime--with the power to form future governments. But, after the election of the Constitutional Assembly in three to five months, the Vietnamese armed forces would withdraw from the political arena. Diplomatic sources believe that once the armed forces, ~~in a position to maintain~~ the most cohesive anti-Communist element, leaves the political arena, a power vacuum would result in which subversive Communist & subversive maneuverings become more widespread.

3. The main Buddhist demand--for an elected assembly--was the most significant concession by ~~Ky~~ Ky and the military junta.

4. To realize in a hurry the promises to carry out a revolution, particularly a social revolution relating to the living of the mass of the people. This vague Buddhist demand was already the basis of Ky's government program outlined at the Honolulu Conference.

(More--Miller--ED)

sixth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x honolulu conference x x x

~~May 1968~~

"The Buddhist victory today (~~Wed~~ (Thursday) is not a true solution to the problem," one informed American source explained.

"This only will lead to a whole series of ^{POLITICAL} battles ~~between now and when~~
~~the Constitutional Assembly is elected.~~ between now and when
the Constitutional Assembly is elected."

(Endit--~~Morgan~~ Miller--ED)