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## New Saigon Government— Generals' Balancing Act

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SAIGON.

The new Vietnamese government taken over yesterday by the dashing Air Force Commander Brig. Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky—regarded here as a tenuous compromise regime—appears to represent an interlude which one politician called "the monsoon honeymoon."

As the monsoon rains begin here, bringing with a pressing of the Communist Viet Cong military offensive, some Vietnamese political sources predicted the new government—the ninth in 20 months—will last no more

than three months, if that long. Few expect a permanent marriage.

The 34-year-old Gen. Ky, one of the military's "Young Turks" who has cut a figure here in the black flying suit and lavender ascot he wears on combat missions, took over the Premiership yesterday in a ceremony at the Dien Hong Conference Hall on the banks of the Saigon River.

In an acceptance speech he warned that the situation is "critical and our enemy is cunning." He called for austerity by the people and added:

"I hope in a few months to be able to return power to a civilian government at which time I will go back to the

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## New Saigon Regime

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Air Force. I am just a pilot. As a pilot I don't like politics. But the generals have picked me because they have confidence in me. They picked me more to risk my life than as an honor."

Gen. Ky succeeded Phan Huy Quat, who quit a week ago in favor of the military after a dispute with Chief of State Phan Khac Suu over cabinet changes and in the face of opposition from religious elements. Mr. Suu also resigned.

Echoing the same sentiments as Gen. Ky, was Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, former Defense Minister in the Quat government, now head of a 10-man National Leadership Committee—of generals—a post corresponding to Chief of State.

After pledging to fight to the end the Viet Cong, Gen. Thieu turned to the problem of corruption in government, a weakness of successive Vietnamese regimes.

"We have observed with our own eyes, or have ourselves been victims," Gen. Thieu said, "of such contemptible acts as profiteering, theft, swindling, bribery, oppressing the weak, shirking responsibility while receiving government pay, misappropriation of public funds, illegal transfers of funds to foreign countries, sabotaging the national economy, cornering the market, hoarding goods and speculation on food, medicine and other prime necessities.

"Today, before all the people, we solemnly vow that all those guilty of such offenses to the nation will be punished he declared. Observers concluded he meant public executions by firing squad.

Also at the ceremony were the 16 new cabinet ministers—14 of them civilians. The civilians were dressed in white shirts with no ties—a type of uniform symbolizing their status as members of a war cabinet.

In another display of the new esprit de corps, the new regime threw out the previous seal of office—a spray of bamboo shoots resembling a Chinese painting. In its place they adopted a great white eagle—symbolic of Gen. Ky's position with the Air Force.

Gen. Ky, who has figured in several coups and counter-coups since the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem in November, 1963, was not a favorite of the United States Embassy here. But the U. S. apparently bowed to the will of the military.

But already there were rumblings.

The Buddhist leadership, many pro-neutralist, has privately voiced opposition to any military government. According to reliable sources, students in Buddhist stronghold areas held meetings last week to decide whether to demonstrate against the new government.

Leading pro-Buddhist politicians refused to serve in the new government. Some Catholic religious leaders are also privately voicing opposition to a military government. And Gen. Ky in the past has been identified with the Buddhists military officers, especially former strongman Lt. Gen. Nguyen Khanh.

The new ministers, scheduled to be formally installed tomorrow, will demonstrate the fact that the military will have more and more power, but it will be wielded over a shrinking anti-Communist domain.

The Viet Cong have spectacularly increased their military control of the population and Communist subversives have gradually assumed more political control in the Saigon arena.

The new government structure represents an inordinately complex series of checks and balances, which actually pitch the pro-neutralist Buddhist leaders against the anti-Communist Catholics and the military against the civilian politicians.

Atop the new government are the more than 20 generals and commanders who form the General Council of the Armed Forces—its base of power is the raw force of guns and soldiers.

The executive committee of the Council is the 10-man Leadership Committee—roughly, a legislature—headed by Gen. Thieu. One of the members is Gen. Ky, who actually holds the job as commissioner-general in charge of executive affairs. The important secretary general post in the Committee is held by Maj. Gn. Pham Xuan Chieu. Under Gen. Ky are sub-commissioners and ministers.