

# Viet Buddhists Start Hunger Strike Against Huong

By Beverly Deepe  
*A Special Correspondent*  
SAIGON.

Five hundred Buddhists clashed with troops and police yesterday in a renewal of street violence after five Buddhist monks began a hunger strike "to the death" against the government of Premier Tran Van Huong.

At the same time, however, the latest Saigon Cabinet crisis eased. Brig. Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky, South Viet Nam's Air Force commander, agreed to accept temporarily a Cabinet post as Minister of Youth and Sports with the understanding that he would retain his military command.

Three other generals who had backed Gen. Ky in his rejection of the Cabinet job on Tuesday joined the Cabinet without reservations.

The riot outside Buddhist national headquarters—latest in a series of Buddhist anti-government outbreaks—was

broken up by tear gas after half an hour. The rioters hurled rocks, bricks and scrap iron at paratroopers and riot police.

Six policemen and one civilian were injured by the missiles, government sources said, and 24 persons were arrested on charges of inciting the disturbance.

The outburst occurred after two prominent Buddhists had announced to a walling crowd of 5,000 inside the temple that they were starting an "unlimited hunger strike, until either we die or Huong falls as Premier."

Thich Tam Chau and Thich Tri Quang, joined by three other monks, then withdrew and began their fast, lying on foam rubber mattresses spread on the floor beneath a neon-lighted white marble statute of Buddha.

In hunger strikes in the past, the fasters have not

abstained completely from either food or liquids. The fasts themselves have not been particularly effective politically but have served as an inspiration for demonstrations.

Thich Tam Chau advised the crowd yesterday against staging demonstrations, but a hard core of youths and a few robed monks left the headquarters—a sprawling tin-roofed building—and began a sitdown which rapidly turned into the riot.

Another monk, Buu Phuong (meaning "Precarious Path") handed a mimeographed statement to foreign correspondents saying that if Mr. Huong ignores the hunger strikers' demands Buu Phuong will slash his chest so that a letter in blood can be written to President Johnson and the South Vietnamese Armed Forces Council protesting against the regime.

The Buddhists have opposed Mr. Huong's 11-week-old government since its inception, charging that it is not sufficiently representative and includes former members of the repressive Ngo Dinh Diem regime overthrown in November, 1963. Yesterday's Buddhist moves signified a stepup in agitation against the Huong government after sporadic strikes and demonstrations.

Thich Tam Chau charged yesterday that the government had censored or closed Buddhist newspapers, arrested Buddhist faithful, plotted to assassinate monks, nuns and Buddhist laymen and established a rival Buddhist organization.

He said two Buddhist delegations had called on Chief of State Phan Khắc Sửu and U. S. Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor to give their views. The U. S. Embassy, he said, expressed understanding for

the Buddhists but "did not know what to do about them."

At Gia Long Palace, meanwhile, Gen. Ky and the three other generals were formally sworn in as members of the previously all-civilian cabinet. Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu became Second Deputy Premier, Maj. Gen. Tran Van Little Minh became Armed Forces Minister and Brig. Gen. Linh Quang Vien took over the new Psychological Warfare Ministry. Unlike Gen. Ky, these three gave up their military commands.

The changes, worked out in consultation with the powerful Armed Forces Council, were designed to confirm military support for Mr. Huong's harassed regime. Gen. Ky upset the calculations Tuesday by announcing he did not want the Cabinet post because the government had

not committed itself to a "revolutionary" policy. It appeared he was unwilling to relinquish his politically powerful command of the Air Force.

Yesterday, however, Gen. Ky told newsmen he would take the Cabinet post "for only a couple of weeks." He made it clear he would retain his military command.

Communist North Viet Nam meanwhile made new charges of American and South Vietnamese attacks on its territory. In a complaint to the International Control Commission for Viet Nam, Hanoi said three warships "of the United States and its South Vietnamese puppets" shelled the coastal village of Vin Tai near the north-south Vietnamese border early yesterday. A North Vietnamese news service report of the protest was monitored in Tokyo.