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thieu 1 (normass/deepe)

Bombshell

SAIGON, NOVEMBER 2—President Nguyen Van Thieu's ~~sensational~~ refusal to send a delegation to the next session of the ~~Paris~~ expanded Paris peace ~~talks~~ talks—because it would lead to a coalition government in South Vietnam—was considered here a direct, ~~retal~~ retaliatory rebuke to President Lyndon Johnson.

"In effect, Thieu said LBJ double-crossed him," one long-time Asia observer said. "And Thieu is pretty nearly right."

Sensational
Thieu's bombshell speech seemed ~~xxxx~~ here to indicate that President Johnson, ignoring Saigon's vehement objections, had given in to the long-held Communist demand that the National Liberation Front—or the Viet Cong—be allowed to sit as a separate delegation at the peace talks. The Thieu government—and previous Saigon governments—have vowed for years it would never agree to official talks with the National Liberation *115* Liberation Front *AS AN independent delegation* because it would lead to a ~~coalit~~ coalition government in South Vietnam and eventual surrender to the Communists.

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Highly Emotional

Thieu's speech before the ~~two~~ on television before a joint session of the two-house legislature ~~became a bombshell~~ was a bombshell in Saigon already tense during the past two weeks of discussions about halting the bombing. Initial indications were that Thieu's ~~speech~~ highly nationalistic speech brought him a great deal of internal support within the government, the legislature, the militant anti-Communist Catholic community and thus far from the Vietnamese armed forces. ~~Initially~~ The initial exception was the dovish militant Buddhists who had been vocalizing for a bombing halt without ~~conditions~~ specifying any conditions from Hanoi and for an immediate ceasefire. However, as long as Thieu maintains the support of the armed forces, he is in a strong position to deal with civil disorders--and only the armed forces can pull off a ~~successful~~ successful coup d'etat.

Both Americans and Vietnamese officials seemed saddened at the Washington-Saigon confrontation. ~~MAF~~ *Americans sympathetic to*

"I can see why Johnson did what he did," one American veteran official here explained. "But, I can see why Thieu did what he did too, ~~but~~ because of his own internal ~~the~~ pressures."

"This is a very difficult time and time is important," a Vietnamese general ~~he~~ said. "President Johnson can be an American patriot--but please *also* let President Thieu be a Vietnamese patriot ~~too~~ *too*."

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thieu 3 (normass/deepe)

"Please tell President Johnson, " he continued, "to think of the American^S/who have died here rather than about his friend Humphrey.~~#~~ Americans and South Vietnamese died to save Vietnam--not to give it away."

Staunchly pro-American diplomats--interested in seeing that the U. S. and the ~~#~~ West is not repeat not defeated in ~~the~~ South Vietnam--were extremely apprehensive about the new turn in the whole ~~also~~ negotiating set-up in Paris.

"I'm afraid Johnson looks like a sucker so far," one ~~outspoken~~
Pro-American outspoken diplomat explained. "How else can you classify him with these victory broadcasts from Hanoi and with the North Vietnamese ~~saying that~~ committing themselves to sit at only one more session of the peace talks.

"Why should Thieu and his government add their names to this ~~far~~ farce.

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They are being sold down the river and they know it. This whole thing stinks like Czechoslovakia of 1938; people don't like to hear it and say ~~this~~ ^{it} is Fascist ^{fact}--but it is true this time, I'm afraid. Thieu will have a hard time carrying world opinion with him because of clever Communist ~~prop~~ propaganda. But public opinion is wrong this time because Thieu is standing up against peace at any price.

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thieu 4 (normass/deepe)

"Everyone knows that Washington has been trying to steamroller Thieu for the past two weeks," he continued, "and ^{The Americans were} ~~Washington~~ it was silly enough to think Thieu would ~~one~~ cave in at the last minute. Well, he didn't. Whatever you think about Thieu and his crowd, you have to admit they stood for something—even ~~if~~ if it costs them their necks. And it well may. I once thought that Washington would never dump Thieu because it would be a catastrophic defeat for the Americans. Now, I think ~~Washington~~ it is almost inevitable that Washington will remove Thieu and Ky.

"Washington was silly to make these optimistic predictions that Thieu would send a delegation at the last minute. Washington had no repeat no mandate to speak for either Saigon or Hanoi—and it has got itself in a terrible fix by trying to speak for both of them." 1200

~~"Why should Thieu and his government add~~

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thieu ⁵ (normass/deepe)

Sign. Sec. X
The three immediate implications of Thieu's speech are:

1. In what must be considered ^{AS A} ~~another~~ major victory for Hanoi, the American-South Vietnamese alliance is more strained now than at any time since the ~~the~~ American commitment of combat troops in early 1965. In fact, it is a major confrontation to the point of ~~of breakdown~~ ^{threat} the alliance is now ~~half~~ split half-way open. Whether a ~~further~~ full split comes is now up to Washington, which has the trump cards of being able to cut ^{unilateral} ~~the~~ the vast American economic aid or to order a premature withdrawal of American combat forces. Even more, ~~xxxxx~~ Western diplomats who predicted the U. S. could never withdraw support from the elected and constitutional ~~government~~ Saigon government—which President Johnson urged to be created—are now ~~predici~~ predicting that Washington ~~will~~ will ~~inspire~~ inspire a ~~cou-~~ coup d'etat against Thieu. The dovish, left-wing militant Buddhists—who have toppled several governments in the past—are rapidly spreading ~~rumors about the~~ destructive rumors that a ~~coup~~ coup is in the making to topple Thieu and his government, or that Thieu will resign. ~~These left-leftists~~ These left-leftists leftists are clearly pushing to the forefront General Duong Van Minh, the leader of the first military junta whom ~~the~~ American officials advocated returning from four years of exile beginning in early October.

"If we have to fight both the Communists and the Americans, then we are finished," one Vietnamese ultra-nationalist said. "But remember, if Thieu goes, it is an American defeat too."

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thieu ⁶ (normass/deepe)

2. ~~The Thieu government is a hardy game~~ ^{His cards} has played its ~~hand~~ "very cleverly" ^{like a cunning old fox} ~~most~~ observers agree, ~~the it is~~ and it is clearly gambling on the election of Richard Nixon for president. Word has been filtering back here from official and unofficial Vietnamese delegations, ~~thousands~~ who ~~Nixon~~ profess to have seen Nixon aides, that ~~in~~ when the GOP ~~candidate~~ candidate wins the Presidential election, he'll back Thieu's firm position. Whether true or not, Thieu and other senior government officials have been known to believe that Hanoi would ~~make~~ attempt to wring concessions from President Johnson at the ~~last~~ eleventh hour before the election—and if the Saigon government has little to ~~lose~~ ^{to} lose by gambling that are ~~more~~ ^{tougher} a less ~~conciliatory~~ American president will be ~~more~~ ² elected next week.

If Nixon loses, Thieu has left other options open. Despite his bombshell announcement about not repeat not sending the delegation to the next session—he did not repeat not say he would not send one to the second or third sessions, ^{which} ~~when~~ Hanoi has conveniently left it ~~open~~ ^{dangling} ~~that it~~ ^{will} ~~might not~~ whether or not repeat not it ~~would~~ attend.

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Also, Thieu's ~~conclusions~~ speech, while highly emotional and nationalistic, does not repeat not carry any other insurmountable conditions ⁱⁿ for Hanoi. And, some face-saving arrangement can be worked out, such as merging the Allied delegation the South Vietnamese-American delegation, with Saigon being chairman, and merging the Hanoi-NLF delegation. The latter would take another concession from Hanoi--which it would unlikely resist making. *OR, EVEN A Triangular Conference table instead of A Square one might be agreeable to all, Some SAC*

3. In the view of the Thieu government, the Paris peace talks can proceed in a meaningful manner with the Saigon delegation since the first substantive item on the ^{Bilateral} agenda would still be the ^{Simultaneous} American-Hanoi discussion on bilateral troop withdrawals. The only thing the South Vietnamese two Southern belligerents--the Saigon government and the ~~NFL NLF** NLF--~~ would be ~~needed~~ needed for would be to approve the four-way ceasefire while the foreign troops withdrew. Even the troop withdrawals, however, can be effected without a ceasefire. Once this is decided, then Hanoi and the Americans would walk out of the conference anyway, ^{GOVERNMENTS} their argument goes, and Saigon would be ^{NOSE-TO-NOSE WITH} facing the NLF--which it has nothing to talk about, since the only topics of discussion would be Viet Cong inclusion into ^{could} the ^{A New} coalition government. This Saigon refuses to accept. Instead, Saigon has given the Viet Cong another alternative--again at President Johnson's insistence--the ~~one~~ "one-man, one-vote" principle whereby if they lay down their weapons, they can express their political views at the ballot box.