

(Morgan Gandy)

SAIGON, 09220, (UPIS)—The American government is drifting towards global embarrassment as the military regime of Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky appeared to be virtually finished.

The ~~im~~^z immediate, short-term question in Saigon tonight was whether the flamboyant Air Force general would be phased out in an orderly transition of power to an interim civilian government—or whether he would be toppled ~~fr~~^z by the violence of chaotic, bloody demonstrations and street mobs, or even his own dissident military troops.

"Everyone knows the Ky regime ~~is~~^z is dead," one well-informed Vietnamese political source explained. "It's ~~apparently~~
~~apparently~~ at best a brief caretaker government. It's only a question of how much time it takes to bury it—and which politicians grab the corpse."

(Note to Editor: this assessment made after talking with Vietnamese and American government officials ~~as~~ as well as Vietnamese opposition groupings).

(More—Miller—BD)

first add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x opposition groupings x

~~Handwritten note~~

Western diplomatic sources tonight presented this assessment:
"Ky's chances ~~of survival~~ of survival are very thin if you talk his re-asserting government authority boldly and firmly. His chances of staying in office as eye hollow shell are slightly better, but still the odds are worse than fifty-fifty ~~is~~ fifty."

American Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge held an ~~emergency~~ ~~meeting~~ ~~with~~ ~~Prime~~ ~~Minister~~ ~~Ky~~ ~~this~~ ~~afternoon~~, ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~request~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Ambassador~~, according to Vietnamese government sources. Later, Lodge's special assistant,, retired air force general edward lansdale, met privately with Ky, these sources said. Total ~~length~~ length of these two ~~sessions~~ ~~with~~ sessions between the high-ranking American ~~officials~~ ~~and~~ officials and the Prime Minister ~~was~~ was roughly three hours. After that, these sources said Ky was smiling as he boarded his special helicopter at his downtown office to carry him to his residence at the ~~military~~ ~~SI~~ Saigon's military airbase.

(More--Miller--BD)

second add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x military airbase x x x.

American sources here are barely worried about the international blackeye ~~the Johnson~~ ^{LYNDON} President Johnson will be given if Ky would fall. Only fifty days ago, ~~President~~ President Johnson soundly embraced Prime Minister Ky at the Honolulu Conference.

The far more serious question in the minds of Americans here is ~~what~~ ^{UNITED STATES} what kind of new government will emerge with which the ~~American~~ political and military officials here will have to work--and whether the ~~war~~ anti-Communist war can ever be effectively prosecuted again.

Some of the militant Buddhist leaders are known to want ^{PEACE FOR VIETNAM,} ~~an end to the anti-Communist war,~~ but probably would not ~~not~~ ask for the immediate withdrawal of American troops ~~from Vietnam,~~ Buddhist sources indicate.

"If there is an 'end-the-war' government that comes into power," one diplomatic source explained, ~~it~~ "it puts the Americans on a ~~steep~~ ^{steep} slope ~~where~~ in which they ~~will~~ ^{will} not know where the end is."

(More--Miller--ED)

~~these~~

These are the developments Saturday which lead reliable political sources here to believe Ky's position was virtually untenable:

1. The Vietnamese armed forces is ~~rapid~~ rapidly fragmenting both in political unity as well as ~~in~~ military discipline. The Vietnamese armed forces, while fighting the Viet ~~Con~~ Communist Viet Cong on one front, ~~also serves as the legal basis of the government, which is symbolized in the governm governing ten-man junta.~~

Highly reliable Vietnamese sources indicated ~~at~~ Saturday ~~that~~ ~~lower-ranking~~ Vietnamese unit ~~commanders~~ and service commanders were being contacted to sign petitions asking for the resignation of Ky as well as the military junta. Any sizable votes of non-confidence by the low-ranking officers would serve to withdraw the legal mandate on which the Ky regime rests.

Also ~~today~~ ^{Saturday}, Ky's deputy prime minister--and minister for war--General Nguyen Huu Co submitted his resignation from both the cabinet and the military junta, ~~Saturday~~, but it has yet to be accepted, ~~xxxx~~ Vietnamese government sources revealed. Ky and Co disagreed about removing ~~Vietnam~~ two battalions of Vietnamese Marines from the Danang airbase, ~~where they were~~ ^{these groups} in turn protecting American Marines--and was the symbol of the Saigon government presence in the dissident five northern provinces.

Saturday, Ky also appointed a new corps commander to the rebel hotspot. Just a month ago, the ouster of the commander of that corps, ~~General~~ General Nguyen ~~Chanh Thi~~ Chanh Thi, led to a spiralling political turbulence and violence and instability. Thi's ~~successor~~ successor, ~~is~~ unable to ~~keep~~ ^{maintain} order against the Buddhist-led demonstrations, strikes and anti-government protests, was removed Saturday and replaced by General ~~Thi~~ Ton That Dinh.

2. Prime Minister Ky was unable ^{last week} to re-assert government authority in the ~~the~~ dissident first corps area in the face of what would have been a ~~double~~ bloody civil war with Vietnamese army units fighting each other. He ~~is~~ ^{was} not expected ^{Saturday} to be able to maintain order ~~and~~ central government authority in the face of ~~rising~~ increasing number of anti-government protests, ~~and street fighting~~, even in the capital city.

3. Militant Buddhist leaders significantly increased their anti-Ky protests ^{Saturday} today by announcing the formation of a Buddhist Lay ~~Force~~ Struggle Force, which diplomatic sources ^{estimate} believe could easily pour ~~two~~ twenty five thousand population onto the streets of Saigon to demand an ~~interim~~ interim civilian government.

"The ~~Buddhist~~ militant Buddhist demands are equal to asking Ky for ~~our~~ unconditional surrender," one reliable source explained. "It will take ~~the~~ ^{STOP} ~~unified~~ a unified armed force to ~~maintain~~ order to block the Buddhist protest marches. And the armed forces ~~is~~ ^{NOT RPT NOT} not unified. There's not much that Ky can do."