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WINS BROADCAST

JERRY LANDAY/PREMIER NGUYEN CAO KY OF VIETNAM

At 35 years of age, the slim, diminutive prime minister of South Vietnam, Air Vice Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky, appears larger than life. One's fascination in Ky goes beyond the striking appearance he makes in those dark sun glasses, jet black flying suit, purple scarf and pearl-handled revolver. Few thought Ky and his directory of nine young generals, would survive the virtual route of the South Vietnamese army early last summer. They have. Few thought that Ky, the inexperienced politician could last a year in office. He has, maturing in the process. Many gave him up for lost during the Buddhist turmoils of the last three months, they were wrong. Ky has stayed put longer than any of his countless predecessors since the despotic Diem. Against the buffetings and bruising of communist aggression, social revolution and domestic unrest. And it seemed obvious to me after spending a day with Ky that he likes it, which also makes him unique among recent South Vietnamese leaders. Last weekend, I was one of two American reporters who accompanied prime minister Ky to ^{Hue} ~~Wei~~ in the north, just after government forces had quelled the dissident Buddhist revolt there. Ky was symbolically reasserting the central government's authority and control in the traditionally restive city. Aboard his C47 on the return to Saigon, I

interviewed him and began by asking the prime minister to summarize in English, what he told the ^{soldiers} ~~people~~ and the civil servants of ~~the~~ ^{Hue}.

KY

First I told them that we never had intention to crush Buddhism, and second that we would not allow governments of these men to participate to obstruct our movement. We have said the people express their idea and their opinion, because it's a form of a democracy. But we not accept to serve these men like a military function ^{more} ~~there~~, to participate to such a struggle movements. If they want this, they resign first, that's all, and all we want we try to do is to improve their conditions of living, conditions of living of the people. Stipulating order in the rear, that's all.

LANDAY

To an old couple of political hands you seemed in effect to be making a speech about your own future. As a man who might himself some day step down from the military, in order to continue as ^a head of government. I wonder if I'm correct.

KY

I want the power. . . I want to stay in the power. . . and so and so. . . I said no. I have no ambitions.

LANDAY

You have no ambitions to continue after the elections?

KY

Not at all. All what I want is to go back . . . with my family because really, ^{at present time} I have no time to see my family.

LANDAY

Ky sounded like the reluctant politician, who's waiting to be asked to stay on.

LANDAY

Suppose it became obvious to you after the elections that there was no one else with the popularity and the strength of power to hold the country together during this crucial moment. Could you be prevailed upon to stay as head of government?

KY

Then I will accept my responsibilities and my destiny, as I have accepted a year ago. That's all. What can I do in that case? Just tell me, because anyway I have ^{to think} ~~a thing~~ about my country first, and my family. . .

LANDAY

Whether Ky will be able to retain power after the elections of September 11 is still uncertain. There's no question that he would like to despite the objections of dissident Buddhists. The Ky plan calls first for the election of an assembly to write a constitution, and then for another election later in 1967 to pick a legislature and civilian government. Ky makes it clear for himself and his directory of generals that they intend to retain power until then, and he thinks the Buddhists under a new more moderate leadership will go along.

KY

I think our major troubles are over.

LANDAY

Ky insists that despite earlier threats to boycott the September elections, the Buddhists will participate. It's in their own interests, he says. He's outspokenly unhappy over what he maintains is the over-exaggerated picture of the recent political troubles received in the United States. I asked Ky. . .

LANDAY

It is very hard over long distances for people sometimes to understand the political complexities of another country, and so in the United States many people become mystified that in the middle of a war effort against a common enemy externally, that you are faced with this kind of political problem internally. How would you explain the situation to them because many of them feel that the war effort is endangered by this.

KY

It's your fault, is not my fault. I said, it's your fault.

LANDAY

What do you mean.

KY

The foreign press.

LANDAY

What has the foreign press done.

KY

You know, every small little thing you make into big headlines. You know, demonstrations, for example. How many, you can see in Saigon. ^{300-400?} As I said, even 4,000 is nothing. We have 14 million ^{here} ~~see~~, so minority. . . We accept it because we are fighting a

war for revolution. . . revolutionary war. Is not a normal war here, because at the same time we fight aggression and at the same time we try to build some solid basic form for future democracy. We have a lot of trouble in the far west. When you first came in. . . to the state, without law, gun fires, it's individual. [?] ^{first} In the past 3 months, talk about trouble, demonstrations. . . but ^{why} we continue in the countryside to pacify the country to bring big ^(rice) . . . rice to the peasants, to build the schools, ^{roads} hospitals. No one mentioned this and I can show to you this.

LANDAY

On that subject of pacification and rural reconstruction, are you satisfied with the progress that's been made in land reform and in other aspects of the social revolution that you're leading?

KY

Yes, for a short period of time, of one year, no ^{one, no} government can expect to. . . you just ^{to} pacify the country. We have now a clear cut policy and understanding by all cadres from the highest to the lowest echelon. . . all the province ^{chief,} districts ^{chiefs,} know what I and we want to do. That is the most important.

LANDAY

One of the things that you must do is to sometimes put yourself in the place of the enemy to think about what he's going to do, and now the great mystery is, the ^{General (NAME)???} ~~general job~~ has been involved in a great buildup in the central highlands for the past several months, and is desperately seeking a victory

but has made no major military move. What do you think he's going to do? If you were in his position, what do you think he might do.

KY

He will continue to try. He is a very proud man, because he defeat ^{French} ~~once~~ colonialism and also to keep his head and his job, he must win, and the day he accept that he cannot win, and ^{then} he will lose his job in North Vietnam. . . I think he failed ^{very soon but} ~~failed~~ already I can say he failed.

LANDAY

What is your own timetable now, for the progress of the war, Mr. Prime Minister. Many people say one year for the heavy fighting, two years for the heavy fighting, all over in 5 years, there are many guesses, but what is your own personal estimate of the course of the war which has now turned dramatically in your favor.

Of the KY
1967. . .

LANDAY

The fighting will be over?

~~KY~~ LANDAY

And how will the war end. Will it end through negotiation, or will it end as you see it simply through a gradual de-escalation by the Viet Cong.

KY

They will just ^{you know} go back ^{gradually} . . . If I am a communist, exactly the technics I will adapt. One step back and wait for the next 5 years, the next 10 years. . .

LANDAY

Whether Ky can survive the September elections, this fledgling country's first nationwide experiment in popular democracy, depends largely on his regime's ability to make effective inroads against mounting inflation, against workers' demands for lower prices and higher wages, against the peasants' long standing demands for a better deal, and on whether he can successfully disprove the communist's harping thesis that no Saigon government will ever give the peasant a decent break.

KY

I am counting that
In the next 4 months, economic situation will be better, particularly right now, the government of the United States is trying to help us in this matter, very very strongly. Congestion ~~to~~ *at* the port, *with* goods, and many other things, I think the situation will be improved.

LANDAY

Do you have any spare time General Ky, and if so, what do you manage to do during this spare time.

KY

Spend with my family.

Watching particularly now, watching every night cowboy ^{TV} with my ⁴ young boys, and they like it. . . every night. I think your TV do a wonderful thing, particularly for my family, because now they stay quiet and watch TV, and you know, now *it's time,* ~~they start~~ to learn all the star names, . . .

LANDAY

Where do you get your strength.

KY

Because I believe . . . I have an idea. . . I have my country to serve, ^{but you know} my wife said you become an old man now. . . .

No fun, no jokes, cannot go downtown and see the movie, have a coffee Sunday morning. . . restaurant, night club. . . finished.

LANDAY

What are your satisfactions coming from today?

KY

I have the feeling that I just achieve correctly my duty. You know, Ambassador Lodge, any time he met with me, he said, you sleep well? I said yes. You eat good? I said yes. So he said, I am happy.

LANDAY

General, may I ask you why you said today in the ^{HUE} ~~the~~ city hall, why you made a point of saying that in your long service to Vietnam you have never taken one piastre ~~and~~ and that if you had you should be beheaded.

Why did you feel you should say that.

KY

Because ^{maybe} some people, some propaganda, said that I want power, I want money. ^{So} I just prove to them that is not correct. So they must understand why I am suffering is not for money, is not for honor, but if I am suffering ^{last} for the ¹² months, it's for them. That is what I try to explain, it is true.

LANDAY

Do You feel that by setting this example for the nation, that it's having a deep effect on the standards of the people who work for you.

KY *big effect,*
Yes, and it's very important, particularly in a country in war like Vietnam, where people all around talk about corrupted people, about black market, it's very important and necessary that a leader make an example.

LANDAY

How much corruption, I asked the prime minister, actually exists within his government today.

KY

Less than any government. *before*

LANDAY

At 35, Nguyen Kao Ky must face revolution on three fronts, military, domestic and social. With the authority of a soldier, the skill of a master ~~pk~~ politician, and the finesse of a ballet dancer. As but one of a directory of ten leading generals, all young and ambitious, Ky is careful to say, We, not I, *in when* speaking of his plans. Sensitively aware that his fate largely lies in the hands of others. Yet his youth, forcefulness, style, sense of drama, and sense of the future too, seem to give him a better chance than those older, less ~~flexible~~ flexible men who preceded him.

When you watch Ky in action, up close, and growing with the job, you're tempted to give him some pretty good odds.

JERRY LANDAY--SAIGON