S© to the NEWS

by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

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CORRUPT DICTATORS

Former Vice President Ky of Vietnam, a has-been politician who hasn't been important for years even in his own country, dom inated the American newscasts one day recently by issuing a state ment in Guam charging that President Thieu was "corrupt." The news media found this stale allegation big news and repeated it on network broadcasts hour after tiresome hour.

It is easy to understand why Ky made the charge. A crafty and flamboyant politician, he no doubt figured out that this was the password to getting big press in the United States, and thereby winning support from U.S. liberals for a royal reception in America in the high style to which he was accustomed in Vietnam.

The persistently selective use of the word "corrupt" by the news media is a source of semantic fascination. Like "eggs" go with "ham" or "bacon," like "Boston" goes with 11b eans, n ttcorrupt" is a word that inevitably goes with Thieu of South Vietnam, with Chiang Kai shek:of Taiwan, with Syngman Rhee of South Korea, with Franco of Spain, and with Salazar of Portugal. The one thing
that all those allegedly corrupt rulers had in common is that they were anti-Communist.

No one has ever provided any proof, however, that their regimes were any more corrupt than a recent administration of unhappy memory in our own Government. It would seem that the

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Biblical precept, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone," should restrain Americans from labeling friendly governments as "corrupt."

Sometimes the adjective "corrupt" is pronounced "corru ptandreactionary. 11 It means the same thing, only more so, and is always used to describe the same selected list of rulers identified principally by their anti-Communism.

It is even more relevant to ask why that derogatory word 11corru pt 11is never applied to Communist dictators. Has anyone ever heard the national news media refer to the corrupt regime of Brezhnev or Khrushchev, the corrupt Mao Tse-tung or Chou En-lai, the corrupt Ho Chi Minh, the corrupt Tito, or the corrupt Fidel Castro?

Whether corruption is measured by the number of acts of dishonesty against their own people and other nations, or by the extortion of economic goods from the mouths and hands of their people, or by the number of people killed and imprisoned, surely the Communist dictators are the world's corruption champions.

For the sake of sementic integrity, let's cut the ideology from the use of the word "corrupt" and put on the shoe wherever it fits.

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