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Documents

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE CONFERENCE OF TROOP

CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES

Washington, April 23, 1971 - Following is the final communique of the conference of troop contributing countries:

1 - The Foreign Minister of Australia, the Honorable Leslie V. Bury; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Kyu Hah Choi; the Ambassador of New Zealand, H.E. Frank Corner; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, H.E. Thanat Khoman; the Secretary of State of the United States, the Honorable William P. Rogers; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vietnam, H.E. Tran Van Lam met in Washington on April 23, 1971, at the invitation of the government of the United States.

2 - The representatives agreed that their last notable progress had been made in the Republic of Vietnam toward the goal of bringing an end to the aggression of North Vietnam against the people and territory of the Republic of Vietnam. They noted the success of the government of the Republic of Vietnam in extending control over and bringing its services to an ever growing percentage of the population. They also noted the increasing participation by the Vietnamese people in the processes of Government at all levels. Recognizing the increasing significance of economic problems confronting the Republic of Vietnam, the representatives observed with satisfaction the promising measures which had been taken in the last year to promote economic stability. They noted with regret that the considerable progress in all other areas was not accompanied by progress in achieving a negotiated end to the war. The failure so far to reach a negotiated settlement continues to be attributable to the refusal of the North Vietnamese representatives to enter serious negotiations. The representatives reaffirmed their previous agreement that all nations which are making available armed forces to help defend the Republic of Vietnam must participate in the settlement of the conflict.

3 - The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam reported in detail on the current situation in Vietnam. He described the achievements of the operations of the Vietnamese forces, with Allied support, against the sanctuaries and base areas in the Khmer Republic and in the Kingdom of Laos from which the enemy forces conducted their aggression against the Republic of Vietnam. The Minister also cited operations against the few remaining major enemy base areas within the territory of the Republic, notably the dry-season campaign in the U Minh Forest and other areas in the Mekong Delta. The Minister commented that by reason of vigorous campaigns by Vietnamese forces, the enemy was no longer secure in what had earlier been his sanctuaries. Rural security has been greatly enhanced, because of the increasing ability of the Regional Forces, Popular Forces and the People's Self-Defense Forces to assure the security of their own localities, thereby freeing the regular forces for offensive operations against the enemy's main force. The Foreign Minister discussed the progressive extension of government control and services of all kinds to the population. He noted that over 90 percent of the Vietnamese people resided in localities under secure or relatively secure government control, whereas only two-tenths of 1 percent still reside in VC controlled hamlets. The Land-to-the-Tiller program which had been launched just over a year ago will make it possible for large numbers of people, formerly tenants, to become owners of the land which they cultivated. So far 160,000 titles have been issued under this program. The program met its goal for the first year of distributing 200,000 hectares of rice-land.

4 - The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam stated that with the decrease in military activity, the enhancement of security of the population, and the extension of government control, economic problems were considered to be the most significant issues confronting his government. One of the major problems was to obtain through Vietnam's own efforts and the assistance of its friends, the resources to defray the increased costs deriving from the assumption by the Republic of Vietnam of a larger share of responsibility for its own defense. Another problem was to find means to control inflation arising largely from this increased war effort. Finally, his government needed to plan for the nation's post-war economic development. To solve these problems the government had enacted a series of measures to stabilize the economy and increase revenues in October 1970 and again in March 1971. As a result of these reforms, the rate of inflation has been reduced considerably as compared to the earlier rate of inflation which had been about 30 percent annually in recent years. The Minister cited other indicators of the improving economic situation in the Republic of Vietnam, but did not minimize the problems that would continue so long as the Republic of Vietnam was forced to continue to resist North Vietnamese aggression.

5 - The representatives noted with satisfaction the description by the Vietnamese Foreign Minister of progress made in the military situation, as well as in the other areas described by the Foreign Minister. The representatives expressed their earnest hope that the various measures taken by the government of the Republic of Vietnam would help to mitigate the adverse economic and social effects of the war, and to provide the basis for action to promote and facilitate future long-range development of the country. They expressed the hope that the steady improvement in the military situation accompanied by political and economic stability in the Republic of Vietnam might serve to persuade the rulers of North Vietnam that they could not reverse this progress by military means; and hence that they must agree to serious negotiations. The representatives re-emphasized that all Allied proposals remained fully negotiable, except with regard to the right of self-determination of the Vietnamese people. In this regard they called attention to the proposals made public by the President of the Republic of Vietnam on October 8, 1970.

6 - The representatives agreed that the progress within the last year had made it possible and desirable for them to re-examine the future combat role of the troop contributing countries. They noted that the steady assumption of responsibility for its self-defense by the Republic of Vietnam had made it possible for the troop contributing countries to begin progressive withdrawal of some of their combat forces. They also agreed that as their combat forces were withdrawn at a measured pace, the troop contributing countries should strive to provide for a further period, as desired by the government of the Republic of Vietnam, and according to their respective military and economic capabilities, military support forces capable of providing training engineer construction, medical, advisory, and other forms of assistance. They noted that steps in this direction have already been taken by the government of the Republic of Australia and the government of New Zealand (both of which have recently replaced portions of their combat forces with military training detachments) and that combat forces withdrawal planning in conjunction with the government of the Republic of Vietnam is being carried out by all troop contributing countries. Reviewing past accomplishments, the representatives noted that circumstances had already permitted a reduction of 265,000 in the number of US troops in South Vietnam by May 1, 1971. It was noted that the United States government had just recently announced plans for further withdrawals. The representatives also took note of statements which had been made by the governments of Thailand, Australia and New Zealand regarding withdrawal plans. The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea stated that, as the first

phase measure of an overall plan for gradual reductions of its troops in the Republic of Vietnam, the government of Korea planned to withdraw one division strength of its troops from Vietnam. The period of this withdrawal would be made known through consultations presently under way between the governments of the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Vietnam.

7 - They agreed that the nations which have assisted the Republic of Vietnam militarily should seek to help the Vietnamese people in the equally important endeavors of peace, thus continuing the close coordination and cooperation which had been developed in conducting their common struggle against aggression. In this continuing stage of their cooperation, which would emphasize security and economic measures, the representatives reaffirmed their determination to continue to help the South Vietnamese people to restore their national strength. With its people free from want, as well as enjoying improved security, the Republic of Vietnam can better play its role in Southeast Asia. Further, they expressed the hope that other nations join in this effort.

8 - The United States Secretary of State reaffirmed his government's fundamental policy of continuing to strengthen the forces of the Republic of Vietnam while withdrawing United States troops. This policy will result in the continued redeployment of United States forces from the Republic of Vietnam. He reported his government's satisfaction with the growing capabilities of the Vietnamese forces which continue to carry an increasing part of the burden of the defense of the Republic of Vietnam. At the same time, the United States has not altered its dedication to the achievement of a negotiated end to the war. The Secretary of State reviewed the initiatives taken by the United States to try to elicit serious negotiations on the part of the other side in the talks. He cited the concrete proposals made by President Nixon on October 7, 1970.

9 - The representatives expressed special concern about the enemy's inhumanity with regard to prisoners of war they have captured in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, the Kingdom of Laos and the Khmer Republic. They noted that the governments of the United States and the Republic of Vietnam have sought repeatedly humanitarian reasons to open productive talks on prisoners of war in the Paris meetings, but that the other side had rebuffed all such efforts. They expressed their support for the Republic of Vietnam's initiative in undertaking to repatriate sick and wounded prisoners of war to North Vietnam. They condemned the enemy's continued refusal to identify all prisoners of war, to allow them all to correspond regularly with their families, and to allow impartial inspection of prisoner of war facilities as required by the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention of 1949, to which North Vietnam is a party. The representatives renewed the undertakings of their governments to insure full compliance by their forces with the Geneva Conventions .

10 - The representatives noted that the North Vietnamese armed forces were continuing their aggression, not only against South Vietnam, but that an even larger total number of North Vietnamese troops were deployed also within the sovereign territories of the Kingdom of Laos and the Khmer Republic, inflicting untold death and destruction on the peoples of those neutral nations. They noted the declared intentions of North Vietnam to overthrow the legitimate government of the Khmer Republic. On the other hand the representatives expressed admiration for the courage and determination of the peoples of the Kingdom of Laos and the Khmer Republic in resisting North Vietnamese aggression.

11 - The representatives called upon the participants in the 1954 Geneva Agreements to ensure the independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of the Khmer Republic. They also urged that all signatories comply with their obligations to respect the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos which they had pledged at Geneva on July 23, 1962.

12 - The representatives exchanged their views on the security situation in Asia as a whole. In particular, they noted with concern that a state of tension continued to prevail over the Korean peninsula. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea pointed out that the avowed policy of the North Korean communists to bring the whole of Korea under communist rule by all means, including military aggression, and their continuing acts of provocation constituted the main cause of this tension. The representatives welcomed the statement by the President of the Republic of Korea on August 15, 1970 calling upon the North Korean communists to renounce the use of force and to undertake constructive efforts toward a peaceful solution of the Korean question, and noted with regret that it was rejected outright by the North Korean communists. They commended the efforts of the Republic of Korea to defend itself against the aggressive acts of the North Korean communists on the one hand and to develop its economy, at a rapid growth rate, on the other. The representatives reaffirmed their support for the Republic of Korea in resisting the aggressive acts of the North Korean communists.

13 - It was agreed that the Foreign Minister would meet again, as required, to coordinate their efforts in the common endeavor, and they received with gratitude an invitation from the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea to host the next such meeting. It was also agreed that representatives of the troop contributing countries would meet with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon later in the year.

TRE COC TRUYEN: THE CATFISH AND THE TOAD

By George F. Schultz

This story is told in the form of a long, versified fable written in the traditional six-eight (luc-bat) meter by an anonymous author. It consists of 396 verses. The poem was originally written in nom (Sino-Vietnamese) characters; later, when the Vietnamese orthography was Latinized, it was transcribed to quoc-ngu (modern Vietnamese).

According to one hypothesis, the Tre Coc Truyen was first composed in the thirteenth century, at a time when the Tran dynasty (1225-1400) had just begun its reign in An-Nam Quoc. If this hypothesis is correct, it would be one of the earliest works in nom characters, literary compositions prior to that time having been written in Chinese characters.

The above-mentioned hypothesis supposes that the author of the Tre Coc Truyen was a vassal of Tran Lieu and that he wrote the poem as a protest against a political system that had wronged his lord. To explain how this could come about requires a brief review of the history of the period.

Tran Lieu was married to Thuan Thien, elder of the two daughters of the last Ly emperor, Ly Hue Tong (1211-1225). When the latter abdicated and withdrew to a monastery, the throne went to Thuan Thien's younger sister, Chieu Thanh, who became the Empress Ly Chieu Hoang. At that time the power behind the throne was the brilliant but utterly unscrupulous prime minister (thai-su), Tran Thu Do. He then saw to it that the Empress, who was only seven years of age, was married to eight-year-old Tran Canh, who happened to be his own nephew. A few months later, Chieu Thanh abdicated in favor of her husband, thus bringing about a change of dynasties, from Ly to Tran. Tran Canh became the Emperor Tran Thai Tong (1225-1258).

Twelve years later, when Chieu Thanh was still only nineteen years of age, Tran Thu Do forced her to leave her husband because she had produced no heir to the throne. To replace her, the prime minister chose Thuan Thien, despite the fact that she was already married to Tran Lieu (his cousin's son); Thuan Thien was three months' pregnant at the time. Although the Emperor protested the prime minister's immoral action, the latter's will prevailed.

After all this explanation, it should be stated that there are serious doubts regarding the authorship of the work and the early date of its composition. But no matter who authored it, the Tre Coc Truyen can still be regarded as a protest against the old feudal society. The corruption of the courts is exposed and criticized. The officials of the bureaucracy are pictured as greedy persons who have little or no interest in seeing that justice is rendered. In thus revealing the evils of the old system, the fable also portrays universal human nature, which is probably no different in today's world than it was in Old Vietnam.

As with all good fables, there is a moral: it is better to settle out differences amicably than to engage in expensive and troublesome lawsuits. In the end when the tadpoles lose their tails, the Toad regains possession of his offspring without recourse to lawyers and lawsuits.

* * * * *

There was once a Toad and his wife who lived near a pond inhabited by a Catfish and his family. When the Toad's wife felt her time approaching, she went to the pond and gave birth to her tadpoles, leaving them there to grow. They were discovered by the Catfish and his wife, who decided to adopt the little ones and to rear them as their own.

One night, the Toad's wife, desirous of seeing her offspring, went to the edge of the pond to look for them. When she failed to find them there, she raised such an uproar that the Catfish rose to the surface to see what was going out. The Toad's wife accused the Catfish of stealing her offspring and demanded their return; but the Catfish angrily insisted that he knew nothing about the tadpoles. The Toad's wife had to return home empty-handed. The following day, the Toad and his wife decided to lodge a complaint with the Magistrate.

When the latter had been informed of the matter, he ordered his subordinates to open an inquiry; but before they would agree to do so, the Toad had to offer them a sizeable gratuity. As witnesses for the prosecution, the Toad named the Pike, the Tench, the Carp, and the Perch, all of whom had been in the pond when his wife gave birth. The Magistrate then issued a warrant for the arrest of the Catfish, who was brought to Court by the Constable. The four witnesses were summoned but insisted that they knew nothing about the matter and that they had become involved against their will. The Toad interrupted then and explained that, since the four witnesses were of the same race as the Catfish, they could not be expected to testify against him. Finally the Magistrate ordered the Catfish locked up, saying that he would continue the examination later (why hurry?).

In jail, the Catfish was tortured and interrogated in an effort to make him confess his crime. When his wife learned of these tortures, she sought the assistance of Nganh, the mayor of a neighboring hamlet.

Nganh told his client what she would have to do in order to obtain her husband's release: offer gifts to all the Court officials and to the Magistrate as well. Shortly thereafter, the wife of the Catfish arrived at the Courthouse with gifts for everyone. The Catfish was then released. But on the basis of the false report turned in by the investigating committee, the Toad was arrested and imprisoned. The Toad's wife was then forced to run from person to person in an effort to obtain her husband's freedom.

The Frog advised her to consult an experienced lawyer and suggested the name of Nhאי Ben, the Tree Frog, who enjoyed a good reputation. The Frog and the Toad's wife then went together to find the latter, the Frog acting as interpreter. When Nhאי Ben had learned the facts, he advised the Toad's wife to withdraw her complaint since, when the tadpoles grew larger and lost their tails, it would become quite clear to everyone to whom they belonged.

"Although you and the Catfish both have an ephemeral life,

"Each species reproduces its own. Why argue about it?

"Be at peace and give up the lawsuit.

"Your offspring are still in the water. What can you do for them?

"Let the Catfish look after them.

"When their tails fall off, they will come to you to their own accord;
that is the simplest way.

"If you want to see this matter arranged in a friendly manner,

"You will then take your offspring to the Magistrate and ask him to

release your husband.
"On the other hand, if you still want to sue,
"I will draw up a new complaint against the Catfish;
nothing would be easier."

In due time, tadpoles actually turned into toads and joined their mother. The latter then took them to the Courthouse and presented them to the Magistrate. Confronted by the evidence, the latter realized that the Catfish had lied and that his subordinates had submitted a false report. He became very angry, condemned the Catfish for his attempted fraud, and reprimanded his subordinates. The Toad was subsequently released and returned home with his family; thereafter, they all lived happily.



Coconut trees

WAR WEARINESS IN NORTH VIETNAM

Saigon, May 6, 1971. - Two North Vietnamese soldiers, who recently surrendered in the triborder area told the Press last week of widespread war weariness in North Vietnam. This situation, according to both men, "has resulted in some improved living conditions for the population but nobody in North Vietnam really knows what has happened to their beloved ones dispatched South during the past decade."

Bui Ngoc Chieu, 25, said that he first went South five years ago and was permitted to return to North Vietnam once "but during my stay there, I was not allowed to go home and members of my family, not knowing I was there, did not send me a single letter." Ha Xuan Phong, another returnee, mentioned the widespread degree of war weariness, saying: "Although the population is not openly against the war, every one is certainly against the Government and wants the war to come to an end."

Chieu said that the one event prompting him to desert the Communist ranks took place during the battle for Fire Base No. 6. A friend of his, he said, "a much decorated fighter" one day fell sick and asked to be left out of an attacking party. Instead of granting him the leave he deserved, the cadres stripped him of everything except some underwear and sent the sick man away to take care of himself in the hostile jungle. "That made me really mad," Chieu also said, explaining his decision to desert.

LAND RECLAMATION PROJECT

Saigon, May 6. - In a lecture entitled "Social Evolution Through Economic Development" given at the School of Social Action on Vinh Vien Street, Saigon, on Tuesday, April 20, 1971, Professor Vu Quoc Thuc, Minister of State in Charge of Reconstruction and Development, said the Government had selected the Cai San District in Kien Giang Province as an experimental site for the large scale Mekong Land Reclamation and Irrigation Project.

If the experiment to be carried out on the 100,000-acre site at Cai San is successful, Professor Thuc said, the green light will be given to the Mekong Project which will ultimately result in an increase of 1,000,000 more acres of arable land for the Southernmost part of South Vietnam.

Minister Thuc said it would take 10 years and VN \$ 1,100 billion (US \$ 4 billion) to implement the Mekong Project, and by the time the project is completed, farmers in the Mekong Delta will be able to cultivate their land all the year round.

Minister Thuc, who is a professor of economics, did not elaborate on the source of capital needed to carry out the project. But on the same occasion he called for a "Moral Reconstruction Campaign" to which he urged religious communities, cultural organizations and the mass communication media to participate in order to help better the society.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Saigon, May 6, 1971. - An ordinary session of the Cabinet Council was convened Monday, April 19, 1971, chaired by Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem. Sources from the Prime Minister's office said that at the 5-hour session the Cabinet discussed various matters concerning economic development with special emphasis on the northern part of the Republic. The Minister of Economy gave the Council a report on his April 13 inspection tour of the northern provinces. He also tabled several proposals for the development of these provinces.

Following are the decisions taken by the Cabinet Council at the end of the session;

1 - To entrust the SONADEZI (Industrial Park Development Company, a government-owned enterprise) with the task of preparing necessary procedures for the reception of Books Base, 10 km from Danang, which will be handed over to the Vietnamese Government by the U.S. Army next June and for the establishment of an Industrial Park in Danang.

2 - To authorize VN \$ 1 billion (about US \$ 4 million), from the Perequation Fund to be channeled through the Industrial Development Center as loans to the private sector to establish industrial enterprises in the northern part of the country.

3 - To authorize VN \$ 150 million from the Sugar Industry Development Fund for the development of sugar cane growing in Quang Ngai Province contingent upon the Quang Ngai Sugar Mill becoming operational this year.

4 - To establish a regional office of the National Bank of Vietnam in Danang and to enlist the support of commercial banking institutions in Danang for local economic development projects.

5 - To lift all restrictions on the use, storage and sale of marine engines of over 9 HP in order to help local fishermen develop fishing activities.

6 - To extend tax reduction for agricultural machineries in the northern provinces of the Republic until the end of this year.

In addition to the above matters, the Cabinet Council also discussed coordination and promotion programs aiming at seeking more aid from friendly countries.

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