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Politics

PRES. THIEU ANSWERS QUESTIONS OF THE PRESS

Saigon, April 16, 1970--President Nguyen Van Thieu said Wednesday the Communists had to pay a high price for their shelling of four rockets on Saigon Monday night.

At a meeting with the press when he presided over the ceremony marking Hung Vuong Day at Tao Dan Park, President Thieu made it clear that immediately on Tuesday morning government forces killed 179 enemy, captured 30 others along with over 50 weapons besides destroying a number of Red installations in an operation South of Tay Ninh.

The President stressed this would make the Communists see to it that their shellings on the capital may meet fierce retaliation.

According to him, the enemy rocketed against Saigon because in the previous weeks they had suffered heavy setbacks in Dak Seang and other areas along the border.

To a question on the possibility of resuming of bombing of North Viet-Nam if the Communists continue to shell Saigon President Thieu said this could not be foretold. However there will be equivalent retaliations meaning wherever the enemy are present they will be killed but, the President stressed he did not mention retaliation on our opponent's territory or neighboring countries since to date we have still respected the others' territory and border including Cambodia.

To another question concerning the Vietnamese victims of events in Cambodia, Pres. Thieu said foreign intervention has been called upon on that matter.

He also said that a discreet contact with Cambodian authorities had been arranged on the security of Vietnamese nationals living in that country as well as other problems.

Asked about the assistance rendered to Cambodia, President Thieu disclosed that if Cambodian Prime Minister Lon Nol made an appeal for such an assistance his appeal will be considered by the Republic of Viet-Nam.

PRES. THIEU RECEIVES RECTORS OF SAIGON UNIVERSITIES

Saigon, April 20, 1970--Sources from the Press Secretary at the President's office reported:

As previously announced, at 4 p.m. April 17, President Nguyen Van Thieu received at Independence Palace Ven. Thich Minh Chau, Van Hanh University Rector, Prof. Tran Quang De, Saigon University Rector and Reverend Buu Duong who intervened in favor of the arrested students and asked for leniency towards them.

Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Vy and Justice Minister Le Van Thu were also present at the meeting.

President Thieu, Prime Minister Khiem and the Ministers discussed with the Rectors lenient measures to be taken towards the students who will be judged soon.

President Thieu expressed his understanding with the Rectors, and was determined to settle all matters so as to reach a political and social stability necessary in the present anti-Communist struggle.

The President had always a comprehensive attitude towards the students' problem at the present national juncture and was concerned about their prompt return to their faculties because of the coming examinations.

However, since the case was under jurisdiction of the court, it had to be judged as soon as possible in conformity with the laws, and the President will grant a pardon to those students after the verdict of the Tribunal.

On this occasion, President Thieu conferred with the university rectors on how to take care more properly of the students and to create for them a better environment, useful for national tasks. President Thieu asked university rectors, faculty deans, university professors to cooperate with the government in such an undertaking.

As for news reports alleging that a number of students were beaten up, investigation was being made on that matter and appropriate measures will be taken against the offenders, the same sources said.

F.M. LAM TESTIFIES BEFORE LOWER HOUSE

Saigon, April 20, 1970--Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam in his testimony before the Lower House's Foreign Affairs Committee Saturday afternoon said immediately after news reports mentioned the slaughters of Vietnamese nationals in Cambodia the government applied many appropriate measures to repatriate them.

Minister Lam stressed in parallel with efforts through the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh to get the Lon Nol Government's approval on the sending of a RVN delegation to Cambodia for an observation tour, the government has prepared all necessary transport means to welcome the Vietnamese nationals back home.

Concerning the sources saying that hundreds of corpses floating on the Mekong River were Vietnamese slaughtered by the Cambodians, Foreign Minister Lam said no one knew for sure that they were all Vietnamese.

Minister Lam asserted that the North Viet-Nam Communists had intentionally initiated sniper fires, and assassinated Cambodian officials to create indiscriminate revenge on the Vietnamese. In so doing the Communists intended to sow panic among the Vietnamese in Cambodia so as to easily push them into the Communists' hand.

On this occasion the Foreign Minister made known thousands of Vietnamese in Cambodia on Saturday morning asked the Japanese Embassy to set up procedures for their repatriation. In addition, about 1,500 others had been of their own will, crossed the border to flee to Viet-Nam.

According to Minister Lam in the repatriation of Vietnamese nationals at present, the government did not raise the problem of pro-Communist and anti-Communist elements but only made efforts to urgently protect the lives of Vietnamese living in Cambodia.

However, he said, the problem also depends on the approval of the Cambodian government, and the Lon Nol Government till now still declared its maintenance of neutral principles.

Minister Lam said the biggest slaughters perpetrated at the Vietnamese nationals occurred in Soai Rieng and Ba Thu areas where most of Vietnamese were under the influence of North Viet-Nam Communists.

To a representative's question, Minister Lam said the murder of Vietnamese in Cambodia was the result of the vindictive policy caused by former Chief of State Sihanouk.

He urged the Vietnamese lawmakers of Cambodian origin to adopt appropriate attitude to halt the rancor now speaking in Cambodia.

To another question, Foreign Minister Lam made known in an urgent message sent to various Chiefs of provinces and districts near the Vietnamese Cambodian border in the First, Third and Fourth Corps Tactical Zones, the government had ordered responsible authorities to welcome and reserve all facilities for the Vietnamese who cross the border to return to Viet-Nam. In each province a committee was established to set up the list of refugees and send it to the Social Welfare Ministry for help.

Concerning the public opinion at home on the slaughters of Vietnamese in Cambodia, Minister Lam said the government didn't like to noisily brag about the activities which are being carried out. Meanwhile the diplomatic relations between Viet-Nam and Cambodia have not been improved. Therefore all difficulties must be solved with subtlety.

Present at the testimony were Rep. Mac Giao, Chairman of the Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Dinh Van De, Deputy-Chairman, Rep. Do Trong Nguyen, Secretary-General and a number of members of the Lower House Independence Bloc.

Mr. Cao Van Tuong, Secretary of State in charge of relations with the National Assembly was also attending.

F.M. LAM ON INTERVENTION FOR VIET-NAM
NATIONALS IN CAMBODIA

Saigon, April 17, 1970--Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam, at a press conference at the Foreign Ministry Friday morning, denied press reports alleging that the RVN government did not have prompt reaction toward the massacre of VN nationals in Cambodia.

The Minister said, on the contrary, the government had immediately intervened when informed of the Vietnamese nationals difficulties caused by Cambodian demonstrators.

According to him, the greatest obstacle arose from the fact that so far normal diplomatic relations between the new Cambodian government headed by Prime Minister Lon Nol and the RVN government have not been re-established.

On the news according to which hundreds of Vietnamese bodies were seen floating on the Mekong River, the Minister said so far there has been no confirmation ever on the identification of these victims to ascertain whether they be Cambodian or Vietnamese.

He opined that the Viet Cong might exploit this difficult situation to sow confusion and undermine the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On this occasion, Minister Lam disclosed that the following measures had been taken:

1) A Vietnamese people's delegation including representatives of Cao Dai, Catholic Churches and the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (VCL) has been applying for a visit to Cambodia, but so far it has received no answer from the Cambodian government.

2) An official RVN delegation is seeking entry visa to visit Cambodia for a first-hand observation tour of the events there, but so far no reply has been received from the Cambodian authorities.

ASSISTANCE TO REPATRIATED VIETNAMESE: Minister Lam said, an inter-ministerial meeting including representatives of Defense, Public Health, Interior, Social Selfare and Foreign Ministries was held at the Prime Minister's Office Thursday to map out a plan for assistance to the Vietnamese nationals repatriated from Cambodia.

Besides, a department working at the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh was directed to grant all facilities to those who wanted to return to their homeland.

For those who crossed the border to return home they had received assistance from provincial authorities at the border areas. So far, a total of 1,467 persons have been recorded and are living at Chau Doc, Long Xuyen and Kien Phong provinces.

On a mass repatriation through military means, Minister Lam said the Ministry of Defense has enough means of transpotation, but he insisted, such a measure might cause misunderstanding, for at present, no military liaison has been existed between Cambodia and the RVN.

The Foreign Minister also said, the Social Welfare Ministry has been contemplating an extensive program to resettle a large number of repatriated compatriots from Cambodia.

Foreign Relations

AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS SAIGON

Saigon, April 17, 1970--Mr. William McMahon Australian Minister for External Affairs arrived in Saigon Thursday afternoon for a four-day visit to the Republic.

In a prepared statement released upon his arrival at the Tan Son Nhut International Airport, Mr. McMahon said:

"This is my first visit to Viet-Nam since becoming Minister for External Affairs. During the time I have been Minister, I have been preoccupied with the problems of the former Indo-China states and with the fundamental principle of their right to determine their own future."

He also expressed the hope that "North Viet-Nam will yet come to accept the principle I have already mentioned -- that all the people of this area, in the Republic of Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia must have the right to determine their future free from external interference."

On hand to greet the Australian Minister were Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam, Australian Ambassador to the RVN R.L. Harry, ROK Ambassador Shin Sang Chul, and high-ranking officials at the Foreign Ministry.

Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem Thursday afternoon received Australian Minister for External Affairs William McMahon at the Prime Minister's office.

Present at the meeting was Mr. Ralph Lindsay Harry, Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Viet-Nam.

Economics

CAM RANH BAY PROPOSED HUB OF R.V.N. POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tokyo, April 2, 1970--Japanese economists are advocating that Cam Ranh Bay be made the hub of South Viet-Nam's post-war industrial development by converting the big U.S. base into a Singapore style free trade center.

Keidanren, a powerful organization that includes Japan's top businessmen, is drafting a book-length report on the Japanese role in post-war South Viet-Nam.

A Keidanren mission will visit South Viet-Nam in mid-April for an on-the-scene inspection of the country's economic potential before submitting its recommendations to the Japanese Government.

The Keidanren survey is to be the Japanese version of America's "Lilienthal Report" which proposes a five billion U.S. dollar package of government economic aid and private investment for South Viet-Nam.

It is expected to influence the Japanese Government's thinking on the question of aiding Viet-Nam after the war.

The financial newspaper Nixon Keizai says that Keidanren's economists envision six South Vietnamese cities as the bases for the country's post-war economic development.

Chief among them would be Cam Ranh, which already has a labor force of 150,000 employees of American base.

Keidanren's survey team reasons that the problem of coping with unemployment will be acute when the war ends. They are recommending establishment of a free trade center, along with manufacturing facilities for paper, sugar refining, and daily necessities.

F.M. LAM RECEIVES JAPANESE ECONOMIC DELEGATION

Saigon, April 17, 1970--Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam at 10 a.m. Wednesday received the Japanese economy delegation "Keidanren" which is visiting the Republic of Viet-Nam.

The Japanese craftsmen and industrialists arrived in Saigon last Thursday to get a first-hand study on the RVN economy and the economic and technical cooperation between Japan and the Republic of Viet-Nam.

PRES. THIEU URGES INVESTIGATION ON CURRENCY SMUGGLING

Saigon, April 17, 1970--The Press Secretary at the President's office announced:

President Nguyen Van Thieu on Thursday, April 16 sent an official note to the Prime Minister, urging a prompt investigation on the recently discovered currency smuggling case.

The note said: "The smuggling of Viet-Nam currency was closely followed by public opinion and differently commented by newspapers.

"In order to show that the government is determined to eradicate illegal acts especially those detrimental to the National Economy at the present juncture, and at the same time, to avoid malicious allegations from a number of persons who wanted to undermine the government's prestige with such claims as the government deliberately ignores this smuggling case in which high officials or high ranking officers were involved . . .

"I request Mr. Prime Minister to step up the investigation to clear up this matter and to make public the results of the investigation as soon as possible, and immediately complete necessary procedures to prosecute the smugglers before the Court."

The War

HANOI DRAFTS ALL YOUNG MEN FOR FORCIBLE SERVICE IN THE SOUTH

Saigon, April 11, 1970--The Hanoi authorities are enforcing a policy of drafting all available young men to fuel their war of aggression in South Viet-Nam. No young men can get exemption or deferment from the no-return Southward trip whatever his family situation may be.

This was revealed by Luong Duc Tien, 18, a North Vietnamese soldier from Regiment F-51 of the NVA 9th Division, who was captured in Hieu Thien District, Tay Ninh last Friday.

Tien related his own story as follows:

"I am the only child in my family. My mother is elderly. I had just finished the tenth class and was preparing to enter the university when I received the order to do military service. After five months on training, I was ordered to go South. I asked to stay in the North, alleging that my aging mother was alone, but government officials rejected my request. They also refused to let me go on leave for two days to bid farewell to my mother. I was quite sure my return to my family was absolutely out of the question."

Ever since 1965, Tien said, countless North Vietnamese young men have been sent to the Southern battlefield but he has yet to see a single young man to be allowed to return home or send letters to his family. "I'm not so sure whether my mother is aware that I am in the South, but whenever the people in the North do not receive word from their relatives in the army for some time they know that these relatives have been sent to the South."

According to Tien, many North Vietnamese families have become angry and demanded that the Hanoi authorities notify them whenever their relatives are sent to the South or at least allow them to write to their families back home. "Some people became so mad that in tears, they shouted at government officials - demanding the return of their relatives. But the officials only tried to indoctrinate them and even threatened to cut down their rice allowances. So waves after waves of us young men have continued to be sent Southward," Tien said.

Besides, Nguyen Trong Ngan, 19, who was captured along Tien said: "I was farming with my parents when I received the order to go South. My parents were so sad because I am their only son. They complained about the order, but government officials simply said that all young men must do their military service in the South until victory is achieved. My parents and my sisters cried so much because they knew I would never come back."

Ngan expressed his desire to send a letter to his family but gave up his idea on second thought. "It's useless to write letters," he said; "I'm quite sure the government in the North will never deliver my letters to my family."

NVN RALLIERS IN LAOS REQUEST REPATRIATION TO SAIGON

Saigon, April 13, 1970--Two North Vietnamese military cadres who were released late March by the Laotian Royal Government had reported to the RVN Embassy in Vientiane and requested to be repatriated to South Viet-Nam, authoritative sources reported Monday.

The two ralliers, Ha Van Chac, native of Yen Bai and Hoang Van Hop, native of Cao Bang, infiltrated into Laos in early 1968 and reported to the Laotian Royal Army last September in the Plain of Jars.

The RVN Embassy in Vientiane is speeding up procedures to help them return to the Republic of Viet-Nam as soon as possible.

COMMUNISTS SHELL SAIGON

Saigon, April 14, 1970--The Communist gunners fired four rounds of 122 mm rockets into the city of Saigon at 11:30 last night and killed two and wounded at least 41 civilians.

One of the rockets hit the annex office building of Interior Affairs Ministry by the side of the Saigon Post Office, damaged part of the third floor of the rectangular three-floor building, and wounded one person. The office building is frequently used by Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem who is at the same time Minister of Interior Affairs.

Another rocket hit a theater on Hong Thap Tu Street and killed two civilians and wounded 40 (including 15 men, 13 women and 12 children) and damaged 30 per cent of the theater.

One of the other two rounds impacted in tennis court areas and the fourth impacted in the Saigon River.

This is the first time the Communists fired rockets in Saigon in ten months.

P.M. KHIEM VISITS VICTIMS OF RED SHELLINGS

Saigon, April 17, 1970--Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem at 11 a.m. Thursday unexpectedly visited and comforted victims of Red shellings on Saigon Monday night who are under treatment at the Saigon Hospital.

The Prime Minister was led by Dr. Nguyen Phuoc Dai, Director of the Hospital, to the bed of each of the victims.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Khiem inquired after their health condition and presented each of them with a gift package and 3,000 piasters.

Twelve men and seven women, victimized by the Red shellings, are receiving treatment at the hospital while a number of others, slightly wounded, have been released.

Saigon Prefect Colonel Do Kien Nhieu who was present at the visit made known the Capital Social Service is speeding up procedures to grant allowances to the victims as prescribed by the government.

Accompanying Prime Minister Khiem was Mr. Nguyen Van Vang, Secretary of State at the Prime Minister's office.

Special Feature

VIETNAMESE TRAINING CENTER ACCENTS RURAL PROGRESS

Changes at South Viet-Nam's National Training Center, a sprawling camp on the sand dunes and lowland forests of the South China sea coast, 61 kilometers (38 miles) southeast of Saigon, reflect a striking growth in the role of local government.

When the training center was founded in early 1966, its sole function was preparing Revolutionary Development (RD) cadres, young people who serve as an internal peace corps to help rural Vietnamese rebuild the economy and protect themselves against the Viet Cong.

But in 1969 the government gave in Vung Tau Center responsibility for training a variety of rural workers and leaders. Of the 31,000 trainees graduated at the center last year, the largest group -- 16,000 persons -- was composed of village and hamlet officials.

Another indicator of change is that when the first RD cadremen were graduated four years ago, they were expected to lead rural people to a better life with little guidance from village officials. Now, RD cadres are directly responsible to village chiefs. The difference is that four years ago village officials were appointed, but today nearly all of them have been elected by the local populace.

President Nguyen Van Thieu, who frequently visits the Vung Tau Training Center, told a recent graduating class there why the government stresses the dominance of democratically elected leaders in village development.

"The people have the duty to support the Armed Forces and to root the Communists out of the villages and hamlets," he said. "But above all we must develop the rural areas so as to raise the villagers' standards of living."

"No one can direct that process as well as locally elected leaders," President Thieu added.

At Vung Tau, elected officials learn how to organize farmers' cooperatives, to mechanize agriculture and develop rural electrification, to make the most of government support for farm credit and village self-development projects. They also develop administrative skills needed to manage village budgets, assess taxes and register land for distribution under the new land-reform law.

Local officials also receive a dose of the patriotic course material originally developed for young RD cadremen by Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Be, the camp's Director. This material emphasises:

- Nationalism, community spirit, values of traditional culture and their relationship to modern technology.
- Organization of hamlets to resist the Viet Cong.
- Improving local education.
- Teaching hygiene and fighting disease.
- Carrying out land reform while improving agriculture and animal-husbandry methods.

The center must retain its emphasis on these ideals, Colonel Be says, despite recent expansion of the Training Center's role into preparation of information-service leaders, local militia leaders, and Armed Propaganda team cadremen.

Meanwhile, the center still trains RD cadremen. Some 15,000 youths, about 50 per cent more than the total of RD cadremen trained at Vung Tau in 1969, will graduate from the 13-week RD course in 1970.

The 48,000 RD cadremen already stationed in their home villages throughout the Republic wear black-pajama uniforms that identify them with the rural peasants they are trained to help. The cadres' job, as always, is to live with and for the common people, seeking to improve the standard of living and show the villagers how to overcome Viet Cong harassment.

Paramilitary training is given the RD cadres at the Vung Tau center, though principal tasks taught relate to social and economic developments.

Nonetheless, nearly 3,000 RD cadremen died "in action" serving their country, from 1966 through 1969.

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