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Politics

PRES. THIEU: RVN BASIC PEACE STAND REMAINS UNCHANGED

Saigon, August 1, 1970--President Nguyen Van Thieu said Friday night the RVN peace stand as it was made known in several occasions before "remains unchanged" and "serves as fundamental for the restoration of a just and durable peace".

In an address to the nation through the national radio and television networks on the development of national events, the RVN Chief Executive reiterated that "we are always ready to discuss with the other side on whatever issues including the cease-fire, provided it proves the sincerity of ending the war".

President Thieu also recalled the RVN basic peace stand, made public through his January 25, 1968 message to the National Assembly which consisted of these six points:

- Communist aggression of all forms should stop.
- The territorial integrity of the RVN must be guaranteed. The Republic of Viet-Nam is an independent, free and democratic nation which admits no coalition of whatever form with the Communists.
- The RVN puts into effect the National Reconciliation Program.
- The RVN internal affairs should be decided by the South Vietnamese people themselves without pressure and intervention from anywhere and under whatever form.
- The reunification of Viet-Nam should be decided by the free choice of the entire population of Viet-Nam once Communist aggressive acts end and guaranteed peace is restored.
- Any solution aimed at ending the war and restoring peace should be controlled and internationally guaranteed.

Prior to July 11, 1969, the President said, our side had proposed several peace initiatives in an effort to push ahead serious negotiations and soon end the war, but most concrete was the July 11, 1969 proposal which rests on the principle of self-determination by the South Vietnamese people.

In other words, according to the RVN Chief Executive, all the internal affairs should be decided by the South Vietnamese people through democratic processes.

Dealing with the cease-fire eventuality as an approach to settle the war, the President expounded two major cases.

In the first case, he said, all the counterparts involved practice a "fight and talk" policy until final solution is reached and then a cease-fire order is the first thing to be carried out along with other actions concerned such as regrouping, withdrawal and control, etc...

In the second case, a cease-fire order is to be sought first which requires continued discussions on an overall solution to the war before it does come to an end, or when a cease-fire formula is reached, then discussions on an overall solution to the war should continue.

The President said in whatever cases the cease-fire can be in no way unconditional. More particularly, he added, the cease-fire must be effective and lead to the end of the war so that it cannot be exploited by the Communists for the restoration of their strength and for the continuation of hostilities.

On this occasion the President made clear that a "Leopard skin" cease-fire is impossible. One must say a "Leopard skin" solution instead, he emphasized.

Such a solution, he said, is unacceptable since it presents dangerous aftermath which helps "create small Communist states within South Viet-Nam".

For an on-the-spot cease-fire, according to the President, it is a purely military solution pending the implementation of an overall solution.

In the event such a cease-fire is to be adopted, the President said, it should be effectively controlled, otherwise it will not last for more than an hour since the Communists will surely violate it.

According to the President, his explanations on the development of the present national issues aimed at helping avoid misunderstanding by the public opinion.

"If the enemy continue to cling to their intransigence, this present war will be ended by force within our ever stronger position," he concluded.

PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY CLARIFIES

Saigon, August 2, 1970--The Press Secretary at the President's Office Saturday issued the following clarification:

A number of Saigon dailies on Saturday August 1 reported that in the dinner entertaining foreign newsmen Thursday evening at Independence Palace, President Nguyen Van Thieu said that either Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho or any Communist personalities may run for the 1971 Presidential election.

It was a regrettable mistake made by these dailies.

The truth is that in the discussion on the July 11, 1969 solution including the problem of authorizing members of the so-called South Viet-Nam National Liberation Front to participate in a free election, when asked for instance would Nguyen Huu Tho be allowed to be a candidate, President Thieu said that within the scope of that solution this Communist personality may run for the election.

PRES. THIEU TOURS CENTRAL VIET-NAM

Saigon, July 29, 1970--President Nguyen Van Thieu was back to Saigon at 8 p.m. Tuesday night from a two-day visit to two border provinces in the I MR, sources from the Press Secretary at the President's Office reported.

The Presidential trip started at 3 p.m. Monday. President Thieu first called at the old imperial city of Hue where he made contact with the War Invalids representatives from the I MR War Invalids Assn. and the I MR War Widows Assn. Executive Committee. On this occasion, President Thieu asserted that he took the trip to Hue in order to spare for the War Invalids and War Widows the trouble of journeying to Saigon for a meeting with him, as requested by them.

At the meeting, the War Disabled representatives said they advocated a moderate struggle and presented to the Chief Executive a 10-point motion.

President Thieu made it clear to them that most of their aspirations will be fulfilled with the implementation of Law 008-70 on the rights and privileges of War Invalids, War Dead dependents and veterans, and especially with his instructions given to government officials of all levels as announced in his nation-wide talk last July 10. The President also recalled that the General Housing Agency has been ordered to build for each War Invalid family in the I MR a 4m x 20m housing unit instead of the previously planned 3.5m x 11m.

As for other revendications, President Thieu said they will be considered in due time.

President Thieu, on this occasion, disclosed that the increase of rations at Hue rest house - one of the two facilities of the kind in Viet-Nam - is under study.

Within the framework of the contact, the wife of the late Lt. Col. Truong Dinh Tho, Chairman of the I MR War Widows Assn. presented to the President a 3-point motion. President Thieu said, it will be considered at the coming meeting with the chairman of the Viet-Nam War Widow Assn. (Mrs. Nguyen Van Bong) scheduled to be held July 30.

After visiting with the disabled veterans and the war dead's dependents, the Chief Executive proceeded to the 1st Inf. Division mess hall for dinner with the Division combatants. The frugal dinner gave an opportunity for the combatants to express their respect to an elder brother-in-arms who once served the 1st Inf. Division.

President Thieu spent the night in the old Imperial City.

On Tuesday morning the President toured the Lieu Quan Center, a cultural installation of the Buddhist Van Hanh area.

Later the Chief Executive dropped in at Hue University, where he informally chatted with students of Letters and Sciences.

At 9:30 a.m. the same day, the Chief Executive addressed over 10,000 Hue inhabitants including civilian and military cadres at downtown Tran Hung Dao theatre.

After recalling the victories scored by the RVNAF and the Pacification Development achievements, President Thieu said the Communists are now hopeless and if they don't agree to a peaceful settlement of the war, peace will be restored all the same through our strength and our supremacy while the war will fade out in two or three years from now.

The main problem for us now is the economic and austerity tax problem as well as the recent law-program have come into being to meet the requirements of a 1,100,000-strong army. We must do our best, he continued, if we want our allies help us boost our economy.

The President concluded his talk by saying that the ultimate victory will be attained and no coalition government under any form will be accepted.

After the meeting with civic military and administrative officials and cadres in Hue City, President Nguyen Van Thieu presided over the graduation ceremony of the 4/70 training course for C.S.D. inter-group and group leaders in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces.

The ceremony took place at the inter-provincial Popular Forces Training Center.

On this occasion, President Thieu named the course "New Rural Area 4/70".

Addressing 1,019 graduates of the course, President Thieu said he was confident in the fighting ability of the Civil-Self-Defense forces.

He recalled that to date the government has organized 3,500,000 C.S.D members into groups including 500,000 hard-core members, to ensure security at villages and hamlets, and lay the foundation for the Rural Development program.

Leaving the P.F. Training Center, President Thieu visited La Vang Church where he attended a mass and presented the Church with 200,000 VNP.

In the afternoon the President went to Bo Dang hamlet, Trieu Thanh village, Trieu Phong district (Quang Tri) to preside over a ceremony closing the First Semester C.S.D. convention.

He expressed his satisfaction at the security situation in the district.

Later, President Thieu visited some public facilities in the hamlet.

He also observed an alarm drill performed by the local C.S.D. forces.

Finally President Thieu visited the combatants of the 3rd battalion, First Division 54th Regiment, and 2nd artillery battalion stationed at Hill 300.

Accompanying President Nguyen Van Thieu in his Central Viet-Nam tour were Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Vy, Veteran Affairs Minister Maj. Gen. Pham Van Dong, and a number of Cabinet members and general officers.

P.M. KHIEM: V.N. PEOPLE ARE LONGING FOR A GENUINE PEACE

Nha Trang, July 25, 1970--"Our people are only longing for a genuine peace in freedom but will not accept a false and slavery peace the prospect of which will be the loss of the Nation", so said P.M. Tran Thien Khiem when presiding over the closing ceremony of the 20th Navy Officer Class in Nha Trang Saturday.

P.M. Khiem on this occasion stressed that the Vietnamese people must make constant efforts to repel the Communist-triggered aggressive war so as to construct a free society in which everyone can enjoy an easy and happy life.

Since the beginning of the protracted war we are facing, P.M. Khiem said, we have so far held military initiatives.

"We destroyed the enemy, he added, not only in our homeland but also at their sanctuaries on the other side of the Vietnam-Cambodian border."

Dealing with the Communist 30-year project to build socialism, P.M. Khiem said it was only another Communist dark scheme to deceive the people and cover their failure.

P.M. Khiem on this occasion urged the new Navy officers to make a clear distinction between the international proletarian ideology and the national democratic and free regime.

Foreign Relations

RVN FOREIGN MINISTRY ON DEMONSTRATION AT INDIAN CONSULATE GENERAL BUILDING

Saigon, July 28, 1970--The RVN Foreign Ministry Monday termed as "regrettable" what happened to the Indian Consulate General here.

In a communique released Monday afternoon, the RVN Foreign Ministry made plain the event as follows:

"At 10:45 a.m. this morning some 20 youths, students and disabled veterans demonstrated in front of the Indian Consulate General, protesting the state welcome which the Indian government reserved for the recent visit to India by Nguyen Thi Binh of the so-called Provisional Revolutionary government of South Viet-Nam."

"After breaking through the cordon of security agents at the area, a number of demonstrators succeeded in climbing on the facade of the Indian Consulate General building. They lowered the Indian colors and attempted to hoise a RVN flag instead. They failed in their attempt as security agents dispersed them in time with tear gas grenades."

The RVN Foreign Ministry expressed its deep regret on the event and pending final report of it by the competent agency, strict security measures were taken for the protection of the Indian Consulate General and the residence of the Indian Consul General."

FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTESTS ANTI-RVN DEMONSTRATION IN NEW DELHI

Saigon, August 2, 1970--The Foreign Ministry Sunday instructed the RVN Consulate General in New Delhi to immediately send to the Indian Foreign Ministry an official note protesting the burning of RVN President's effigy in New Delhi last July 30.

The protest also confronted the Indian government with its responsibility of ensuring security for personnel of the RVN Consulate General and good conditions for the performance of their duty.

In an official communique on the demonstration staged by about 300 Indian Communists led by several legislators in front of the RVN Consulate General in New Delhi last July 30, the RVN Foreign Ministry sternly condemned the demonstrators as a minority of extreme Communists whose actions and demands are considered unacceptable.

The Ministry expressed the hope that regrettable incidents which happened as the result of the official welcome extended by the Indian government to Nguyen Thi Binh could be brought to an end so that the diplomatic relations between the RVN and India would not be jeopardized and that the role of the Indian government in the International Control Commission (ICC) could be impartial.

The communique said while the RVN Foreign Ministry declined to accept the protest of the Indian Consulate General in Saigon because of some exaggerated terms, it also conveyed to the Indian government its regrets and requested local security forces to take additional measures to maintain order and ensure adequate protection for the Indian Consulate General and the Indian nationals.

According to the communique the Indian demonstrators in New Delhi last July 30 posted at the RVN Consulate General a memorandum to demand:

- a) an unqualified apology
- b) a half-mast flying of the Vietnamese flag for one week
- c) the insurance of safety for the Indian Consulate General and the Indian nationals in Viet-Nam
- d) a severance of relations with anti-Communist Indian personalities.

The demonstrators also threatened that if the Vietnamese apology was not made within one week, they would close the RVN Consulate General in New Delhi, the communique said.

F.M. LAM ON RVN-INDIA RELATIONS

Saigon, August 3, 1970--Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam said at his press conference Monday morning if the Indian government continued to have unfriendly actions toward the RVN such as the invitation extended to Nguyen Thi Binh, Indian nationals in Viet-Nam would bear the unfavorable consequences of these actions and the role of India in the ICC would lost its significance.

However, Minister Lam refused to disclose the measures that the RVN would adopt against Indians in Viet-Nam in the above-mentioned case although measures had been discussed by the Cabinet at its meeting last weekend.

The RVN Foreign Minister said that if the Indian government does not show a clearly impartial attitude then its role as Chairman of the ICC would be considered by the RVN as meaningless.

According to Minister Lam, the activities happened as the result of the Indian government's official welcome extended to Nguyen Thi Binh which jeopardized the diplomatic relations between the RVN and India have calmed down.

On this occasion, Minister Lam announced that the Foreign Ministry had accepted the resignation of Mr. Pham Trong Nhan, RVN Consul General to New Delhi.

He said that Mr. Nhan had violated the instructions and regulations of the Ministry when he left New Delhi for Nepal and then returned to Saigon of his own will.

Concerning Mr. Le Thanh Khe, charge d'affaires of the RVN Consulate General in India who had requested the Indian government to arrest Nguyen Thi Binh, Minister Lam made known that his Ministry only gave general instructions to the Consulate General therefore this request was merely a "regional initiative".

P.M. KHIEM LEAVES FOR 10-DAY ASIAN TOUR

Saigon, August 4, 1970--Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem left Saigon at 8 a.m. Tuesday for a ten-day official tour of the Republic of Korea, Japan and the Republic of China.

During his stay in Japan, Prime Minister Khiem representing the RVN Chief Executive will preside over the Viet-Nam Day, August 10, at the Osaka World Expo's 70.

Accompanying the RVN Prime Minister were Madame Tran Thien Khiem, Foreign Minister and Mrs. Tran Van Lam, Justice Minister Le Van Thu and Economy Minister Pham Kim Ngoc.

Present to see the delegation off at Tan Son Nhat airport were Cabinet members, a number of general officers and the diplomatic corps.

Military

GASTON RUEFF: RVNAF COMBATANTS' BEARING IN CAMBODIA ADMIRABLE

Saigon, July 24, 1970--"I can affirm that the RVNAF combatants' bearing is admirable while they are in Cambodia".

Mimot Rubber Plantation Society Chairman Gaston Rueff made the commendation when he recently returned to France after a several-day observation tour of the Cambodian front and Mimot plantation.

Chairman Rueff said he had no complaint about the damages inflicted to the Mimot plantation during the hostilities. Instead, he agreed that the presence of the RVNAF troops in Cambodia "constitutes a factor toward stabilization which helps the re-activation of the Mimot plantation".

On the other hand, Chup Rubber Plantation Chief Accountant Michel Derbot disclosed he witnessed the presence of Red Chinese advisors among Viet Cong troops operated in Cambodia.

However, Mr. Derbot said that after the RVNAF units' withdrawal from Chup plantation, VC troops sneaked into the area anew, making plain their hatred of Red Chinese advisors. "The reason", Mr. Derbot said, "was that these advisors took control over all Viet Cong commanding officers' powers".

Economics and Finance

PROF. THUC ON POST-WAR ECONOMIC PLAN

Saigon, July 30, 1970--Prof. Vu Quoc Thuc, Minister of State in charge of Development, said Wednesday no post-war economic plan for the Republic of Viet-Nam has been made thus far.

In a two-hour briefing on the post-war economic prospect at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday afternoon, Prof. Thuc said that research documents on the RVN economy made by the post-war economy study group during these last three years and led by himself were only recommendations for the present national economic situation but not a post-war economic plan as a whole.

However, he said, thanks to these recommendations, the RVN government has been able to set forth through rural pacification programs, several notable economic undertakings such as the Land-to-the-Tiller Law, the War-Invalids law and especially the formation of the Vietnamese-Japanese Economic Development Committee.

On this occasion, while making an analysis on the "Program-Law" Prof. Thuc said that this law when promulgated will not increase taxes, neither will it impoverish the people or cover the devaluation of the Vietnamese piaster as many have misunderstood,

He then urged the National Assembly to endorse the law as soon as possible since, in the present national situation, "it is necessary for the Executive to promulgate in time new laws to boost the national economy".

Prof. Thuc divided his talk into four parts: 1) preparations for the post-war development, 2) basic problems on the post-war plans, 3) synthetic survey of the post-war program, 4) and canvassing for foreign aids in the fulfilment of the post-war economic project.

According to Minister of State Vu Quoc Thuc, many countries over the world are paying close attention to the post-war economic development in Viet-Nam in particular and in the Pacific area in general, in the face of U.S. troops withdrawal from this area in the seventies.

Consequently, Prof. Thuc appealed to those responsible for the destiny of the Nation not to delay or hesitate in the working out of a post-war economic development plan. Otherwise, he said we must shoulder at one time countless burdens once the war has ended.

Dealing with an economic policy for Viet-Nam in the future, the Minister of State said that the RVN could hardly be successful in the setting up of an entirely free economy but a state guided economy in which the government will play the part of an economic guide who directs a number of key sections such as credit, foreign exchange, transportation and electricity.

To successfully adopt such an economy and to implement the post-war economic development plan, Prof. Thuc said that we can not resort to the self-sufficiency policy in so far as we lack national resources and must shoulder the burdens of war.

Therefore, Prof. Thuc stressed, we have to depend on foreign aids. Such assistances, he added, "do not make us dependable from any nations because in the international relations there is no problem of sympathy but utility".

Minister of State Thuc on this occasion dealt with several recommendations of the post-war economy study group, assessing that in the next decade the national production will be increased by fifty-two per cent. In 1980, he said, the RVN will be able to produce 9,200,000 tons of rice and will export 1.5 million, etc...

As to industry, he added, in ten years the RVN must reach to the production rate worth 600 U.S. million per year.

Prof. Thuc also dealt with the Mekong Project which aims at avoiding floods and increasing the cultivation acreage at the estimated cost of billions of U.S. dollars.

To campaign for financial aids, Prof. Thuc pointed out, four approaches; direct aid including commercialization; long-term loans with light interest; short-term loans in accordance with commercial procedures and foreign aid; and free investment for foreigners.

On this occasion, Prof. Thuc disclosed that some 15 foreign companies have applied

for the exploitation of petroleum resources along the RVN littoral shelf and below the RVN territorial waters from Thailand Gulf to Indonesia.

However, he disclosed, the RVN has not approved yet any applications pending the approval of the "Program Law" by the National Assembly.

Minister of State Thuc also appealed for the establishment of an Asian common market and for international cooperation in Southeast Asia thus paving the way for the setting-up of a military alliance in the face of Communist threat which he termed as "unavoidable" for the next decades.

Also present at the briefing were Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam and ranking officials of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

FINANCE MIN. HUE: NO GOVERNMENT DECISION ON NEW EXCHANGE RATE FOR VIETNAMESE PIASTER

Saigon, August 4, 1970--Finance Minister Nguyen Bich Hue Tuesday morning rejected a recent news report alleging that the RVN had made concession and accepted the new exchange rate of one U.S. dollar for 235 Vietnamese piasters.

In an interview with Viet-Nam Press at Tan Son Nhat airport where he saw off the government delegation led by Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem who left for an Asian tour, Minister Hue said he had never known such a change nor read the article on this issue published by foreign newspapers.

Meanwhile, Minister Hue denied sources alleging that suggestion had been made on the change of the exchange rate of the Military Payment Certificate (MPC) set at 220 VNP per one U.S. dollar.

According to the Finance Minister, the adoption of new exchange rate needs thorough study and till now the government has taken no decision on this problem.

Miscellaneous

2 FRENCH NATIONALS TO BE PROSECUTED BEFORE MILITARY TRIBUNAL

Saigon, July 27, 1970--Two French nationals, Andre Menras, 25 and Jean Pierre Debris, 26 who failed in their attempt to display a "National Liberation Front" flag at the Marines Statue in front of the Lower House building, last Saturday will be prosecuted before the Military Tribunal, Mr. Trang Si Tan, Saigon Police Director made it known at the meeting with newsmen Sunday.

The two Frenchmen's health was in good condition, Mr. Tan added.

At 1 p.m. last July 25, two French youths climbed on the Marines statue in front of the Lower House building and attempted to hang up a "National Liberation Front" flag.

Caught red-handed, the two French youths were dragged down along with the flag and were throbbed by two RVNAF combatants and passers-by.

The two Frenchmen were later sent to the Saigon hospital and then to the 1st Precinct Police Service for an investigation.

The policemen also seized a mask and some 100 anti-government leaflets.

Special Feature (1)

THE FLAG INCIDENT

(Letter from Saigon)

The Viet-Nam Council on Foreign Relations, Saigon, July 30, 1970

A little past noon last Saturday, two Caucasian youths, later to be identified as French teachers, climbed up the Marine monument in front of Parliament House, unfurled a big Viet Cong flag, and waved it in the face of the rush-hour crowd.

For some of those who happened to be there at the time, the sight of enemy colours in broad daylight in one of the most fashionable sections of the capital city came as a shock they did not recover from. For many others, however, it had a paralysing effect for a few seconds only.

Minutes after the two Frenchmen started what may be only an impish game, a passer-by rushed to the scene and told onlookers: "Compatriots! Are we going to tolerate this indecent flying of the enemy's flag? Let us teach these Communist stooges a lesson"!

Volley of Rocks: As the unidentified man finished speaking, a volley of projectiles flew in the direction of the flag bearers, who managed, however, to stay atop the 30-foot structure (depicting two charging leathernecks) and waved the banner as if in provocation of an increasingly restless crowd.

Sensing the ineffectiveness of this "indirect fire attack" tactic, the orator urged the crowd to cease "firing". He, then, took off his foot gear and single-handedly assaulted the French-held statue evidently with the intention of tearing down the yellow-starred Viet Cong banner.

By then, a dozen youths had been stirred into action. As the man assaulted the structure frontally, the others tried to charge the "enemy" from the rear. "Victory for the friendly force was a matter of time", an eyewitness was to recall.

Indeed, it was a matter of minutes before the Viet Cong flag was torn down and the two Frenchmen brought under control. As one of the two fell fifteen feet onto the ground, the other descended from the monument with hands up. Blood was visible on both men's faces.

Free for All: As police were still awaiting for instruction from headquarters, dozens of the more active onlookers rushed to the scene, beginning a pugilistic free-for-all in the course of which the two Frenchmen were roundly beaten. "A good lesson was given them", according to an eyewitness.

It was only then that police moved in, preventing a tragedy. The law enforcement officers immediately brought the Viet Cong sympathizers, later to be identified as Pierre Debris and Andre Marcel Menras, to the City Hospital for treatment and then to headquarters for questioning.

For fear of further popular reprisals, police also kept them in an isolated section of the hospital, even barring press correspondents and French diplomats from seeing the impish teachers, one of whom reportedly teaches in Saigon and the other in Danang.

A third Frenchman, whom sources identified as Jean Paul Bert, a student at the Sorbonne in Paris, had taken refuge in the National Press Center after failing to distribute leaflets demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops. He, too, had been manhandled.

Concern: Although police had not completed their investigation of the incident, leaving it an open question whether the men were merely involved in an escapade or had done what they did on the order of somebody, the affair was undoubtedly viewed with concern by the people of Saigon.

Indeed, coming in the wake of the abortive "peace" parade starring U.S. students and "militants" in Saigon some ten days ago, the flying of Viet Cong colours makes it increasingly clear to the people of Saigon a stop must be put to all such campaigns.

While the government still seemed reluctant to embark on a course of action that may be construed as unnecessarily harsh, the people of Saigon, whom a local paper recently called "the silent majority", has taken upon themselves to express their feelings. Let us say in between parentheses here that this silent majority also includes foreign residents in Viet-Nam. Shocked at what he saw his two compatriots do, a witnessing Frenchman could only utter: "imbeciles, imbeciles"! An Australian journalist was to remark: "How stupid can they get"? And an investigating American MP called them "clowns".

This trend was first noticeable after the abortive "peace" parade. Following this controversial affairs, newspapers were many in Saigon, which violently attacked U.S. peacemongers for showing little consideration for South Vietnamese sovereignty.

Bums: Such words as "bums" and "hooligans" were used in many a column signed by respectable journalists to qualify these "guests". By associating themselves with these particular Americans, Vietnamese activist students also lost some of the sympathy they had one time enjoyed from the press and the people at large.

The student struggle movement lost its momentum, and, true to the tradition of all factions in Viet-Nam, is now struggling not against the government but against itself. The failure of Huynh Tan Mam, the militant student leader, to get elected as Chairman of the Saigon Student Union, at least, proves he was being challenged for siding with elements undesirable in the eyes of his youthful friends.

Then, the flag incident happened. Had it taken place sometime before, the Frenchmen might have had a whale of a time atop the Marine monument. Finally, they would have been arrested by police but it would have been in the face of an apathetic crowd, whose

feeling might be one of intense fury but who would do little to show it.

Active Masses: Unfortunately for them, the intense debate that had been going on in Viet-Nam about war and peace had turned the South Vietnamese masses into a relatively active force, which observers should no longer dismiss as uninterested in what is happening in their country.

Instead of witnessing the affair passively and blaming themselves privately for doing nothing about it, the people of Saigon took positive action. That the Viet Cong flag bearers were beaten, some even say, with a vengeance, possibly shows that a limit has been set to what dissenters may or not do in this rather licentious city.

The incident also might have proven another point. In the eyes of the common people here, the Viet Cong do not represent a peace force from which a negotiated solution of the conflict may be expected. The flying of enemy colours, thus, is something hardly tolerable by the common people who are no longer misled by Communist phraseology.

Meaningful: That it should happen at a time when rumours of an imposed solution are so insistent is also meaningful. Indeed, following the visit of U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers, the new U.S. Chief Delegate to Paris, Mr. David K.E. Bruce, was in Saigon when the incident took place.

Although a top government spokesman denied Mr. Bruce had talked with the nation's leaders on a new peace formula, the common people in Saigon can be said to still have lingering fears about a solution in which their own interests would not be fully protected.

The statement of Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, the Viet Cong "Foreign Minister", in New Delhi about the possibility of a coalition government in which "some of the members of the present Saigon cabinet" might participate, also was viewed as indicating something was in the offing, which may even include a coalition totally unacceptable to the Vietnamese.

Conclusions: In this context, the flag incident, although unsought by the South Vietnamese, can be said to point to the following conclusions:

1. The South Vietnamese masses, although having to suffer the ravages of war for the past 25 years, are not ready for "peace at any cost". They still have the willingness to struggle and the determination to win it if the conflict should continue.

2. Although decidedly not intolerant to the point of excluding the Viet Cong from a future free and peaceful South Viet-Nam, the people here certainly will not accept the Viet Cong's National Liberation Front (NLF) as a leading element in any political arrangement.

3. A limit has been set by the masses to the right to dissent. By violently putting an end to the flag incident, the Saigon masses appear to draw a line between dissension and collaboration with the enemy. Notice has been served.

4. By taking upon themselves the task of bringing down the impish French teachers, the masses also indirectly told their government that they would tolerate firmer methods in dealing with all such incidents and that the administration should not fear public outcry in acting accordingly.

Pulse-Feeling: More than any other element in Vietnamese politics and before the flag incident, President Nguyen Van Thieu appeared to have felt the pulse of his nation. After warning promoters of "peace now" solutions, the Chief Executive also rejected as "stupid" Representative Ly Qui Chung's suggestion for "a neutral South Viet-Nam in a neutralized Indo-China".

President Thieu, however, sensed the irresistible aspirations of his people for an end to the fighting when he suggested a stand-down ceasefire. This, the President predicted, however, the enemy will not accept "for where would his troops stay but in some of the most unpopulated areas along the border"?

Although it might be only an escapade of three French "intellectuals", the flag incident still serves to clarify the attitude of the silent majority in Viet-Nam. The demonstrations in front of the Indian and French Consulates General are further indications of the latent but powerful anti-Communist attitude of that majority.

Special Feature (2)

THE WEAPONS SPEAK

By Ha Anh Thong

Saigon (MF)--Of the more than 18 million pounds of weapons and supplies discovered in the Cambodian border sanctuaries, the Communist bureaucratic penchant for keeping minute records may prove the most valuable. More than six tons - some three and a half million pages - of documents were uncovered. These records show that the National Liberation Front (or Viet Cong) is under the direct military control of the North Viet-Nam Army which commands the forces fighting against South Viet-Nam. Also, the persons inside Cambodia who profited from the lucrative running of tens of thousands of guns and millions of rounds of ammunition from the Port of Sihanoukville to the border sanctuaries may be pinpointed and exposed.

Experts were somewhat disappointed in the caches which contained few surprises. Most of the guns were standard Soviet and Chinese design arms, ranging from the AK-47 assault rifle to 122mm. rockets. Evidence indicates that the North Vietnamese were still being supplied by second-level Communist weapons and had not been furnished more modern pieces from the iron curtain inventory.

The extent of the caches was staggering: enough light weapons to equip some 55 full-strength battalions or six divisions - nearly double the present North Viet-Nam force believed to be operating in the border regions. A transport force of 432 trucks was captured, giving a lie to the image of the Viet Cong using only bicycles and back-packs.

From the documents, South Vietnamese and U.S. experts hope to glean something of the plans the North Viet-Nam army had for these huge weapons caches. The list of items seems to indicate that the North Vietnamese, already badly mauled in previous failures, were willing to throw another huge army against South Viet-Nam - and fairly soon. Also, the array - including such long range weapons as the 120mm. mortars - 3,456 found - and

the 122 rockets - 1,506 captured - indicates that continuing attacks were being planned on South Vietnamese cities in violation of the agreements made at Paris for cessation of the aerial bombing of the North. Estimates say that only about one third of the total supply cache of the North Vietnamese has been located during the first phase of the border searching (April 29 through June 30). If true, the enormity of the intended blow by the enemy can only be imagined. By depriving the North Viet-Nam army of these arms and supplies, the time-table has been substantially set back.

A huge collection of the captured arms displayed in Saigon's Hoa Lu stadium late last month has given the full meaning of the caches. If nothing else, the piles of captured supplies makes it abundantly clear that the Communists were using Cambodian neutrality to prepare a major invasion of South Viet-Nam.

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