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Politics

DEMONSTRATION RESULTS SEEKING WAR END DOUBTED

Saigon, August 13, 1970--Prof. Nguyen Van Bong, Chairman of the National Progressist Movement Wednesday expressed his doubts about the results of the peace campaign in the form of demonstration asking the Communists to end the war immediately, initiated by the Greater Solidarity Force (GSF).

Meanwhile Dr. Hoang Co Binh, Secretary General of the Viet-Nam Restoration Party also gave the same opinion on the result of such a campaign.

In interviews with Viet-Nam Press, these two personalities agreed that the demonstrations to be staged by the GSF are merely aimed at showing off its strength before the August 30 Half the Senate Election.

These demonstrations, according to Prof. Bong will serve to express the GSF reaction against the An Quang Buddhist church in its demand for "immediate peace".

Such a demand, said Dr. Binh is also unclear since everyone has known how the Communists' stubbornness is.

Prof. Bong stressed that the first mission of the Nationalists for the time being is to consolidate their own ranks so as to be able to fight the Communists since lip service will bring about no results.

According to Prof. Bong the August 30 Half the Senate Election has a special significance and the people will go to the polls in larger numbers than in the senatorial election three years ago.

AMB. BRUCE MEETS WITH AMB. LAM IN PARIS

Saigon, August 5, 1970--Ambassador David Bruce, new U.S. Chief Negotiator at the Paris talks Tuesday morning paid a courtesy visit to Ambassador Pham Dang Lam, RVN Chief Negotiator, a VP correspondent in Paris reported.

Also present at the 65-minute meeting were Amb. Philip Habib, U.S. Deputy Chief Negotiator, and Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong, Deputy RVN Chief Negotiator.

To newsmen's questions, Mr. Bruce said the meeting was very pleasant and productive.

Mr. Bruce refused to disclose what he will say at his first meeting at Kleber Conference Hall next Thursday August 6.

Mr. Lam told newsmen the meeting was "just an exchange of views on these problems that we face together".

Asked if there was any difference in views between himself and Mr. Bruce, he replied, "what difference can you have? We have to solve the same problems".

Asked if the negotiation could get through the present deadlock, with the presence of the new U.S. Chief Negotiator, Amb. Lam said, it's too soon to answer.

Military

ARVN TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN LOGISTICS BY 1973

Saigon, August 6, 1970--Maj. Gen. Dong Van Khuyen, Commander of the Central Supply Command, Wednesday told newsmen that the Republic of Viet-Nam Armed Forces capability on supply and maintenance is in full swing, thus helping South Viet-Nam reach a self-help logistics posture by mid 1973.

He also made known that, in the past 18 months, about 30,000 ARVN combatants from throughout the country were given special training on maintenance and supply through a program of practice.

According to Maj. Gen. Khuyen, a project worth 30,600,000 U.S. dollars for the development of ordnance repair workshops at Saigon is scheduled to be completed by mid 1971.

Maj. Gen. Khuyen also made known that at present the RVNAF are assuming ninety-five per cent of the responsibility for logistic activities such as the supply of military equipment to regular and territorial security units throughout the country.

Maj. Gen. Khuyen on this occasion said to newsmen that recent border crossing operations into Cambodia had helped the RVNAF go through the test of large-scale capabilities.

He also disclosed that RVN units participating in Cambodian operations were provided every day with 30 tons of ammunition, foodstuffs and military gear.

SEN. BUU: SECURITY SITUATION IN 4th MR IMPROVED

Saigon, August 8, 1970--The security situation of the Fourth Military Region has turned out better following operations conducted by the RVN forces in Cambodia.

Sen. Le Tan Buu, Chairman of the Senate's Public Works, Communication Committee made the statement to newsmen Friday after his observation tour in the Western provinces.

According to Sen. Buu, military convoys are from now on authorized to move only from 8 p.m. till dawn on National Route Number 4 so as to ease the traffic on this road axis leading to the Mekong Delta.

Senator Buu made known that strict security has been ensured in eight of the 16 provinces in the Fourth Military Region namely An Giang, Go Cong, Sa Dec, Vinh Long, Phong Dinh, Kien Phong, Dinh Tuong and Ben Tre.

In these provinces, the people and vehicles may safely travel from 5 a.m. to midnight on any inter provincial, provincial and national routes.

This satisfactory security situation was achieved thanks to the destruction by the RVN forces of Communist liaison and supply routes in recent border crossing operations.

The Senator remarked that Maj. Gen. Ngo Dzu, Fourth Corps Commander has built a security corridor checking main enemy routes for troop movement. This corridor spreading from Ba The Mountain to That Son Range is manned by An Giang regional forces.

Foreign Relations

MINISTER OF STATE DAN VISITS VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN CAMBODIA

Saigon, August 14, 1970--Minister of State Phan Quang Dan, Chairman of the Central Relief Committee for Repatriated Vietnamese from Cambodia last August 11 led an inter-ministerial delegation to visit refugee camps in Cambodia.

At each place visited, Minister Dan told the refugees that the RVN President and government always exert all available means to help repatriate and resettle them.

Minister Dan made known that the final wave of repatriation took place on Aug. 13.

On this occasion a quantity of relief items were presented to the refugees.

The delegation also paid a courtesy call to Mr. Chau Xeng Ua, Khmer Social Welfare and Labor Minister.

Later in a visit to the RVN Embassy, the delegation was briefed on the activities of the Embassy and of the Social, Military, Information and Medical Missions currently underway in Cambodia.

The delegation included Social Welfare Minister Tran Nguon Phieu, Health Minister Tran Minh Tung, Maj. Gen. Cao Hao Hon, Chief of the Pacification Development Center and Rear Admiral Tran Van Chon, Vietnamese Navy Commander.

MEKONG COMMITTEE HOLDS MEETING IN SAIGON

Saigon, August 11, 1970--The Mekong Committee Plan Coordination meeting opened Monday morning at the Public Works Ministry under the Chairmanship of Eng. Duong Kich Nhuong, Public Works Minister concurrently Chairman of the National Mekong Committee.

The week-long meeting will discuss the plan coordination of four riparian nations including the Republic of Viet-Nam, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos in the hydraulics, agriculture, industrial, transport and electricity domains.

In his opening speech, Minister Nhuong said that the Lower Mekong Basin amplified plan can be considered as the achievement of long and costly studies undertaken for 14 years by the International Mekong Secretariat and this plan undoubtedly constitutes an important document for the Mekong enterprise in the coming decades till the year 2000.

Minister Nhuong also praised the spirit of regional cooperation among these riparian nations to harness the Mekong hydraulic resources.

Present at the meeting were Mr. Is. Macaspac, Director for Social Economic Studies of the International Mekong Committee, observers from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, USAID officials and a number of experts of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY PRESENTS 1,000 LAW BOOKS TO SUPREME COURT

Saigon, August 6, 1970--The Louisiana University, U.S.A., Thursday morning presented to the Supreme Court over 1,000 law books at a ceremony presided over by Supreme Court President Tran Minh Tiet at Gia Long Palace.

After thanking the Louisiana University's Board of Directors, Mr. Tiet presented the Supreme Court badge to Prof. Francis C. Sullivan, representative of the University, and a certificate of satisfactory achievement to Mr. Frank O'Neill, representative of USAID in Viet-Nam.

These books will be distributed to the Library of the Supreme Court and the Viet-Nam Law Center.

The construction of the Viet-Nam Law Center on Thong Nhat Blvd. Saigon which started last March will be completed next October at a cost of over 70 million VNP.

Present at the ceremony were Mr. Nguyen Van Si, 1st Deputy President of the Supreme Court, and judges at Saigon courts.

F.M. LAM RECEIVES GHANAIAN JOURNALIST

Saigon, August 5, 1970--Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam Monday received at his office Mr. Anthony Agbezin, a reporter of the Ghanaian Times, sources from the Foreign Ministry said.

This was the first time a journalist of a non-aligned African country visited Viet-Nam, the same sources said.

At the meeting, Min. Lam and Mr. Anthony Agbezin dealt with the prospect of the diplomatic relations between the Republic of Viet-Nam and African countries.

Mr. Anthony Agbezin on this occasion expressed the hope that diplomatic ties between the RVN and Ghana will be established in a near future.

He also praised the satisfactory achievements scored by the RVN people in war time.

During his stay in Viet-Nam, Mr. Agbezin was scheduled to tour Can Tho provincial capital and Danang city.

Land-to-the-Tiller

SAIGON BUILDS FORCE TO HANDLE LAND-TO-THE-TILLER PROGRAM

Saigon, August 6, 1970--South Viet-Nam is building an administrative organization to handle implementation of its Land-to-the-Tiller program.

When President Thieu put the law into effect on March 26, 1970, the numerous details of its implementation were not determined. In the words of one government official, "We had our law. Now we had to show the farmers it would work".

Since then, a plan detailing procedures for implementing the Land-to-the-Tiller program has been completed by the Directorate General for Land Affairs under the Ministry for Land Reform and Agriculture and Fishery Development. The procedures apply to

transferring ownership of one million hectares (2.5 million acres) of riceland in three years. Of this land, 200,000 hectares will go in the first year.

The task is formidable. Plots must be distributed to some 800,000 rural families. Total cost of the program may reach an equivalent of 1,650 million dollars.

The Directorate General of Land Affairs maintains a staff of 1,000 in the provinces and another 400 in Saigon. About three-quarters of them are agricultural technicians. The remainder are administrative and clerical personnel.

The government has begun recruiting and training one resident land registrar in each village. He will work with the village agriculture and land reform commissioner, and together they will share the task of processing applications, identifying land and maintaining the local land register.

Training of village officials has already begun at Vung Tau's National Training Center. The men who will form the backbone of the land reform program are being given class work and field experience in the use of aerial photography for land identification, and detailed instruction in procedures and paperwork.

Pilot-projects have been initiated in the Mekong Delta region, site of 80 per cent of the land marked for redistribution.

At a dozen pilot-villages, farmers desiring land filled out applications and submitted them to the village land registrar. The registrar then identified the land boundaries and issued a receipt to the farmer. The applications were then posted in the village and will be forwarded to the provincial land service.

President Thieu expects to pass out the first title himself sometime in September.

The Land Reform Ministry must also process the claims of current landowners. The new law allows an owner to retain up to 15 hectares (about 35 acres) of cultivated land per family only if the owner was tilling the soil prior to March 26.

Miscellaneous

FOREIGNERS VISITING SOUTH VIET-NAM MUST GET IMMIGRATION VISAS

Saigon, August 12, 1970--Foreigners of any nationality who want to enter South Viet-Nam must get immigration visas for short or long term, starting August 13, 1970, a communique of the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

Also as of August 13, 1970, all those foreign travellers making a stopover in Saigon are not permitted to enter the Vietnamese capital until they are holders of legal visas. Such visas are not valid for more than three days.

The communique also said that all the RVN diplomatic missions abroad have been ordered to consider without delay all applications for entry to the Republic for foreigners.

FUNERAL RITES IN VIET-NAM

By Van Ngan

Saigon (MF)--The Vietnamese attach great importance to two traditional family obligations - to care for their parents in their old age and to mourn them in death. These duties are felt so strongly, they are considered sacred. The traditional time of mourning for parents is three years. Mourning begins even before death is imminent. When death is about to take place, the entire family assembles around the dying relative. A strict silence is observed. The eldest son or daughter bends close to record the last words of advice or counsel. At this time, the eldest child suggests a name for the dying person for it is considered unfortunate to continue the same name used in life after the relative has died. Men usually take the name "Trung" which means faithfulness or "Truc" which means loyalty. Women are usually called "Trinh" which means devotion or "Thuan" which means harmony.

According to ritual, when the parent has died, the children do not, as yet, accept the idea of death. They place a chopstick between the teeth of the deceased and place the body on a mat on the floor in an effort to "bring it back to life". The next rite in this tradition is for the eldest son or daughter to take a shirt the deceased has worn in life and to wave it in the air and call upon the soul of the dead to return to the body. After this rite has been completed, the descendants then perform the ceremonial cleansing of the body. The corpse is bathed which symbolizes washing off the dust of the terrestrial world; hair is combed and nails clipped. Money, gold and rice are placed in the mouth of the dead to indicate that the deceased has left this world without want or hunger. The corpse is then wrapped in white cloth and placed in a coffin. Members of the family form a honour guard around the clock until a propitious time for burial is selected.

During the period of mourning, descendants wear special mourning clothing. These garments are made of crape of ample cut with a seam in the middle of the back. All are required to cover their heads. In times gone by when Confucianism was still a dominant influence in life, mourning the dead was considered more important than the affairs of the living. A mandarin had to resign his position and retire to his home. He was expected to erect a tomb where the parent was buried and there conduct memorial ceremonies. Mourners could not marry, comb their hair or have a haircut. They were not permitted to eat good food or enjoy any form of entertainment whatsoever.

Recently, however, the severity of the mourning period has been abolished to a large extent. After the funeral the descendants return to work and are no longer required to interrupt their business affairs. Clothing for the mourning period has been modified to only a piece of black cloth worn around the arm, lapel or the head. Wedding ceremonies during the mourning period are still banned, but if the families have already approved of the engagement, special dispensation may be obtained through the proper rural or urban authorities.

In Communist occupied North Viet-Nam, all traditional funeral rites have been abolished. When a death occurs, friends and neighbours are permitted only to extend

their sympathy to the mourning family. Nevertheless, in some regions where Catholic influence is still prevalent, it is said that some of the ancient traditions are still in use.

The Vietnamese writer Le Van Sieu explained the importance of traditional funeral ceremonies by saying: "Funeral rites represent a traditional way of life to the Vietnamese people. They are based on the concept of the indestructible soul and the close relationship between members of the same blood line. By assuming this responsibility, generation after generation retains the strong fabric of our society".



Family in mourning attend religious ceremony for their mother at ancestral shrine. Her picture is displayed at upper righthand corner.

WOMEN DOCTORS IN VIET-NAM

By Ngoc Mai

Saigon (MF)--Twenty years ago, there were few women doctors in Viet-Nam. In the last few years the picture has begun to change as women are now taking an active role in the expanding health services. The number of doctors in Viet-Nam is increasing - in 1966 there were 835 practicing physicians - by 1968 the number grew to 1,056 - 88 of whom are women. There are also 29 women pharmacists, some working with the Ministry of Health and others running private pharmacies.

There are now a hundred female students attending Saigon Medical School, which will soon be graduating twenty qualified women physicians yearly. Their presence dispell the traditional Vietnamese belief that the medical field is reserved for men only. Women, compassionate by nature, do well in this humanitarian field. With so many men in the armed forces, only the female students can complete the six years training uninterrupted by military service.



Mrs. Nguyen Huynh Thi Lien, M.D.

Most of the women specialize in pediatrics and obstetrics - fields that they are naturally inclined to. At one maternity hospital, nine of the twenty one doctors are women. They provide care to hundreds of expectant mothers. Not all of the qualified women physicians practice in a hospital - some establish a private practice after three years, others teach at schools of medicine and dentistry, and a few provide care at girl's secondary schools.

A typical example of the young women doctors in Viet-Nam is Mrs. Nguyen Huynh Thi Lien, 32. Mrs. Lien, who graduated in 1967, provides medical care at two girl's schools in Saigon. She feels that the medical profession, although difficult, is an excellent field for women. "I choose the medical profession", she said, "because I like it and it serves a useful purpose. As a doctor, I can render service to the people of my country, my family, and my friends. The greatest delight for a doctor is putting into practice what she has learned at

school, and actually curing patients with the knowledge. The reward for healing a sick child is seeing the joy of the parents". There are drawbacks for women in the field of medicine, as Mrs. Lien explained, "The profession demands great endurance. Women doctors, busy with their children and household duties, as well as their medical practice, have little leisure time. This may explain the opinion that some have of female physicians- that they pay no attention to fashion, and are stern and devoid of the characteristics of womanhood. This opinion is not true - women may not have enough time to devote to their appearance, but in a humanitarian field such as medicine, they can hardly be accused of lacking sensitivity. Women are equal to men in their professional capabilities".

In addition to their regular activities, women doctors show a concern for social welfare. The Vietnamese Women Doctors Association operates a free consultation clinic in Saigon. Besides giving medical care, the doctors get to know the patients and give advice to inexperienced mothers on child care. The Association also cares for babies from needy families.

Over two thousand women are working in other fields of the medical profession - as nurses, laboratory assistants, midwives, and hospital aids. All of these women deserve the highest praise. Medicine is the noblest profession in the world, and in Viet-Nam, the health services can not develop without help of these white-clad women.

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