

VIET-NAM BULLETIN

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Politics

CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL SECURITY HELD IN VUNG TAU

Saigon, October 23. - A conference on National Security of the Republic of Vietnam opened at 09:00 this morning at the Vietnamese National Cadres Training Center in Vung Tau.

The two day conference presided over by President Nguyen Van Thieu is held to review the achievement of the Pacification Development Program in 1970, to map out plans for the coming months and to set forth guidelines for the community security and development programs of 1971. The conference is attended by Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, Cabinet members of the Vietnamese Central Pacification-Development Council, the Commanders of the four military regions, the Saigon Prefect, Province Chiefs, City Mayors and Chairmen of the city and provincial councils from throughout the Republic of Vietnam.

Military situations in Vietnam, rural pacification and reports on government control territory situation are discussed today. At the conference, President's peace proposals and eliminating of the Vietcong infrastructures will be discussed tomorrow.

PRES. THIEU TOURS VILLAGES AND HAMLETS IN KIEN HOA

Kien Hoa, October 16. - President Nguyen Van Thieu Thursday made an inspection tour of Cu Lao Minh area in Kien Hoa province.

In the talks with local officials and inhabitants, President Thieu dealt with the national situation and clearly explained them the RVN government's stand in the settlement of the war.

According to the President, the kind of peace that the entire people are longing for is actually being restored at each locality throughout the country thanks to the growingly strengthened anti-Communist spirit of the people and the security restoration in the localities.

For this reason, the enemy is facing with bitter failures and could in no way

launch offensives or high points, large and small, the Chief Executive added.

However, the Communist delegation at the Paris peace talks still cling to their stubbornness, waiting for a some kind of victory with two unreasonable demands - the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops and the setting-up of a coalition government in South Vietnam.

Through their unreasonable demands, Pres. Thieu said, the Communists emerge as a losing gambler who is saving their last cents because, while denying their ambitions of usurping power in the South as they did in the past, they are only claiming for a coalition government to share the power.

However, the President explained, the Communists could not hide their deceitful scheme of using the coalition form as a phase to reach the communization of South Vietnam.

The RVN government and people, recognizing this forthcoming danger, are determined not to accept the other side's unreasonable demands and are ready to struggle for a genuine peace without losing any piece of land and without losing the national sovereignty.

The President then advised the people to be firmly confident in the strength of the RVN Armed Forces and to lend the government a hand in the eradication of the enemy grass-root henchmen.

Only thus doing, President Thieu said, the people could eradicate those foolish and defeatist elements viewpoints, which are only the conception of a minority of immature and crooked politicians.

Beginning the tour, the Chief Executive visited Ba Vat subsector, Phuoc My Trung village and Don Nhon district and was briefed on the overall situation of Kien Hoa by Province Chief Lt. Col. Tran Thanh Nhien.

Ba Vat area was recently pacified after eight years under the Communist control.

Later the President met with about 200 returnees and urged them to determinedly get rid of Communism and to actively participate in the national activities.

The President then called at Thom Market area, An Thanh village, Mo Cay, Huong My and Thanh Phu districts before returning to Saigon.

Accompanying the President in his tour of Kien Hoa province were Rural Development Minister Tran Thanh Phong, Information Minister Ngo Khac Tinh, Land Reform, Agriculture and Fishery Development Minister Cao Van Than, Vice Interior Minister Le Cong Chat, U.S. Deputy Ambassador William Colby and a number of general officers and high-ranking officials at the Presidency.

RVN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY CLARIFIES

Saigon, October 17. - The RVN Foreign Affairs Ministry Saturday termed as "total groundless" a news item released by the Associated Press on October 15, which misrepresented what the RVN Chief negotiator at the Paris Peace Talks had expressed, a commu-

nique of the Foreign Affairs Ministry said Saturday.

According to the communique the A.P. news item alleged that Ambassador Pham Dang Lam recently said that the RVN government may accept an alternative to elections as a further step to decide the political future of South Vietnam.

For a political solution for South Vietnam, the RVN Foreign Affairs Ministry requested newsmen to refer to the RVN government's October 8 declaration on how to restore peace in Indochina.

L.H. INDEPENDENCE BLOC CLARIFIES

Saigon, October 21. - The Lower House Independence Bloc Wednesday morning made a clarification denying a news report carried by a Saigon daily which alleged that "the L.H. Independence Bloc recently put forth a peace initiative relating to the setting up of a "super government".

The clarification with the signature of Rep. Phan Huy Duc, new leader of the Independence Bloc, wrote that the so-called peace initiative was only preliminary idea of a bloc member and it has not been discussed by the Bloc yet.

Therefore, the clarification added, such an individual idea could not be considered as a view point of the whole Independence Bloc.

Rep. Tran Quy Phong, new chairman of the L.H. labor and Social Affairs Committee, who is also a member of the Independence Bloc, Tuesday disseminated a draft of the Bloc declaration on the restoration of peace.

In the declaration, Rep. Phong put forth four following proposals:

- I) to determinedly fight and repel aggression to restore a just and lasting peace;
- 2) to withdraw the RVN negotiating delegation from the Paris peace talks because this conference only provides a "theater stage" for the Capitalist Imperialists and the Communist Imperialists to plot for a division of the world between them;
- 3) to convene an international conference under the sponsorship of the United Nations so as to set up a federal-type Provisional Committee with an equal number of representatives from both sides, with a view to arrange the total withdrawal of any kinds of external troops and cadres, and to prepare for a general election for the unification of both parts of Vietnam;
- 4) pending such a general election, both sides pledge not to stage aggression against each other and fix deadline so that the people of both parts of Vietnam can freely choose their places of residence with the guarantee and the assistance of the United Nations.

The border which temporarily partitioned the country, is that fixed by 1954 Geneva agreement.

REP. TUONG PROPOSES AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION : Meanwhile, Rep. Ho Huu Tuong Wednesday morning announced that he had sent a letter to Lower House Speaker Nguyen Ba Luong,

requesting an amendment of Article 4 of the Constitution.

The content of his letter was not disclosed. However, after dealing with various data relating to the current events, Rep. Tuong contended that Article 4 of the Constitution should be amended as follows:

"The Republic of Vietnam opposes the use under any forms of weapons and military or para-military organizations with a view to change part or the whole regime stipulated in this Constitution."

"All acts aimed at propagandizing, organizing and realizing the use of military measure, violence or weapons are prohibited."

Article 4 of the RVN Constitution promulgated on April 1, 1967 prescribes that "the Republic of Vietnam opposes the Communist doctrine under any forms. All acts aimed at propagandizing or realizing Communism are prohibited."

SENATOR HUYEN RE-ELECTED SENATE CHAIRMAN

Saigon, October 17--The Senate Saturday morning held a plenary session to elect its office for the 1970-1971 term.

At this session, Senator Nguyen Van Huyen was re-elected Chairman of the Senate for the new term.

The newly re-elected Senate Chairman had gathered 51 votes out of 56 Senators in attendance. So far, Chairman Huyen has been assuming this post for the past three years.

Also at the same session, Senator Huynh Van Cao was elected First Deputy Chairman of the Senate. He won over Senator Tran The Minh.

Senator Nguyen Ngoc Ky who ran for the election of the Senate Second Deputy Chairman was defeated by his opponent, Senator Nguyen Manh Bao, with only one vote.

The Saturday morning session ended around noon.

Foreign Relations

FOREIGN MINISTER OF CANADA'S RECOGNITION OF PEKING REGIME

Saigon, October 15--Foreign Affairs Minister Tran Van Lam in an interview with Reuter Wednesday expressed the hope that Canada's recognition of the Peking regime will not affect in any way the Canadian position on the International Control and Supervision Commission (ICSC) in Vietnam.

On the announcement of the Canadian recognition of the Peking regime, as the sole

legal government of China, Minister Lam stated that he was surprised to see it happened so shortly after the United Nations just voted against the Communist Chinese U.N. membership.

However, he knew that the diplomatic relations were being considered by Canada and Red China for quite some time.

Minister Lam said he took note that the Foreign Minister Mitchell Sharp has declared that Canada neither challenges nor endorses the Red Chinese position on the Island of Taiwan.

The RVN Foreign Minister felt that the Canadian delegation as member of the ICSC understand well the basic issue of Vietnam and noticed that the Canadian Foreign Minister has qualified the five-point peace proposals by the United States and the Republic of Vietnam as a "real initiative".

FORMER COSTA RICA PRESIDENT VISITS SAIGON

Saigon, October 20. - Mr. Mario Echandi, former President of the Republic of Costa Rica Tuesday morning arrived in Vietnam for a week-long visit to the Republic at the invitation of Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations. (VCFR).

On hand to greet Mr. Mario Echandi at Tan Son Nhat airport were Dr. Nguyen Duy Tai, VCFR Chairman, Lawyer (Mrs.) Huynh Ngoc Anh and an official of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

During his stay in Vietnam, Mr. Echandi was scheduled to meet with Foreign Affairs Minister Tran Van Lam, Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem and President Nguyen Van Thieu.

He will also visit the Thi Nghe Open Arms Center, the Bien Hoa Industrial complex and make an observation tour of Pacification-Development activities in Can Tho and Hue. Especially in Hue, former President Echandi will be guided to visit the mass grave of victims of the 1968 Communist offensive.

Mr. Mario Echandi, 55, a native of San Jose was President of the Republic of Costa Rica from 1958 to 1962. Earlier, he assumed the posts of the Secretary General of the National Union Party, Ambassador of the South American Nations Organization to the U.S. and United Nations Ambassador to the U.S.

Mr. Echandi was scheduled to leave Vietnam on October 26.

RVN-CAMBODIA SEEK TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC TIES

Saigon, October 14. - A preliminary meeting to strengthen the economic and financial ties between the Republic of Vietnam and the Khmer Republic, opened last weekend at the office of the Khmer National Bank in Phnom Penh.

The RVN delegation headed by Ambassador Tran Van Phuoc included Messrs. Le Van My,

Cabinet Director at the Finance Ministry, Nguyen Hien, Assistant to the Custom Director General, Ngo Khac Thieu, Economic Financial Director at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Duong Thach Dam, Office Chief at the Post and Transportation Ministry, Nguyen Huu Dan, of the Office of the Minister of State in charge of Development and Reconstruction and Col. Pham Do Chanh, Administrative and Legislative Director at the Defense Ministry.

The Khmer delegation headed by Mr. Fouch Kim included representatives of the Trade Ministry, Customs Directorate, National Bank, Foreign Affairs Ministry and Ministers Council.

The meeting was held in accordance with a joint communique signed in Saigon last May 27 between RVN Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam and Foreign Minister Yem Bambaur of the Khmer Republic.

MR. NGUYEN HUY DAU, NEW RVN CONSUL GENERAL TO INDIA

Saigon, October 17. - Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem Wednesday signed a decree appointing Mr. Nguyen Huy Dau, Consul General to New Delhi (India) in replacement of Mr. Pham Trong Nhan.

Mr. Nguyen Huy Dau was Presiding Judge at the Saigon Appeal Court and former chief of the RVN Embassies Inspection Team.

Besides, the Prime Minister signed another decree discharging Mr. Pham Trong Nhan from his post as RVN Consul General to New Delhi.

Economics

MEKONG COMMITTEE SUPPORTS 3 NEW PROJECTS IN RVN

Saigon, October 20. - The International Mekong Committee at its meeting early this month, approved of the search for financial aid to push forward the study of three new development projects in the Republic of Vietnam.

The three projects included the setting up of An Truong model sector, the study of the influence of irrigation on sea and river products and the study of hydro-electric potentials in the RVN.

According to the RVN delegation attending the 14th meeting of the Mekong Committee's Advisory council in Bangkok, Thailand, the construction project for Eakwat farm in Ban Me Thuot will be carried out in a near future by the RVN with the cooperation of the Republic of China.

Besides, the study of hydraulic potentials in the Mekong River Delta for the Khmer Republic and the RVN will be undertaken by Holland.

The Smithsonian Institute in the U.S. will also push forward the study of diseases spread by water with the cooperation of many other countries.

The same meeting also approved of the appointment of three more Vietnamese specialists to the Bangkok Mekong Committee office to follow up projects concerning Vietnam.

Members of the Mekong Committee include the Republic of Vietnam, Laos, the Kmer Republic, Thailand and a number of other countries and international organizations such as the United States, Holland, Israel, New Zealand and the World Bank.

Military

VO XU VILLAGE CHIEF, R.F. SOLDIERS RECEIVE U.S. MEDALS

Binh Tuy, October 19. - The Vo Xu village chief and I6 Regional Forces soldiers in Binh Tuy province were recently awarded the U.S. "Bronze Star" medals by the U.S. MACV.

The U.S. 2nd Field Forces Chief of Staff presented the medals to Mr. Tran Dinh, Vo Xu village chief and I6 combatants of the R.F. 32nd platoon at a ceremony held last week at Vo Xu administrative office.

The citation praised the achievements, the sense of sacrifice and the fighting spirit of the meritorious combatants who had successfully repelled an attack on the village by a North Vietnamese regular battalion last October 4.

In the engagement friendly forces killed 20 Communists on the spot, captured another and seized two crew-served and six individual weapons.

Miscellaneous

TWO VIETNAMESE LADY ARTISTS' PAINTING EXHIBIT IN WASHINGTON

Washington, October 15. - A two week exhibit of paintings by award-winning Vietnamese artists Mrs. Le Thi An and Miss Pham Thi Thuan opened Tuesday at the Vietnam Embassy.

Mrs. An's paintings were of the traditional school, a few Chinese-style landscapes but mostly birds, insects and flowers native to Vietnam. The gifted Mrs An's paintings, especially those done in ink, appeared to attract the most attention at a preview showing for the press and selected guests.

Miss Thuan's work, rich oils in the modern or western style, were shown in a separate room on the first floor of the spacious Embassy. Her paintings, an abundance of flowers and typical Saigon street scenes, reflected her love of bright colors.

There were 50 scroll type paintings by the more senior Mrs. An, ranging in price from \$ 150 to \$ 1,200. Miss Thuan's numbered 42.

VIETNAMESE PAINTER HOLDS EXHIBIT IN U.S.

Saigon, October 20. - Vietnamese painter Thai Ba last week held a painting exhibit at the Vietnamese Studies Department, Southern Illinois University in the U.S.A.

Attending the opening ceremony were Prof. H.B. Jacobini and Mr. Nguyen Dinh Hoa, respectively Director and Deputy Director of the Vietnamese Studies Department, Prof. Nguyen Khac Hoach and a number of professors and students at the Southern Illinois University.

The painting exhibit was sponsored by the Southern Illinois University Students Association.

Special Feature

ENLIGHTENING DOCUMENTS

(Viet-Nam Council on Foreign Relations)

October 22, 1970 - Two documents have just been captured, which throw some light on the Viet Cong's war and peace intentions. They also explain to some extent why the Communists have repeatedly spurned all allied peace plans, including the "generous" offer made by Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Nguyen Van Thieu two weeks ago.

The documents, two directives sent out to Communist cadres in the provinces of Binh Tuy and Tay Ninh, declare in roughly similar terms that "the problem of war and peace remains essentially one to be solved by the belligerents on the battlefields of South Viet Nam".

Reportedly issued a few days before Nguyen Thi Binh, the "Foreign Minister" of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government (P.R.G.), spoke in Paris last Sept. 17, one of the papers also specifies the P.R.G.'s eight points "only aim at creating conditions conducive to greater attacks in this many-fronted war. They are not aimed at restoring peace".

CONTENTS : By far the more interesting of the two documents is the one found in Binh Tuy. A type-written directive of three pages, it refers to the PRG's proposal as "a new element intended to facilitate the emergence of conditions for greater pressure on the enemy on the many fronts of this war. In no case can it be interpreted as being conducive to solution of the present conflict".

"The problem between the enemy and us," the paper also affirms, "can only be solved by the existing balance of forces on the battlefields. That is why everything must be done to present the true meaning of this diplomatic offensive move and prevent illusory tendencies that peace can be brought about at the negotiating table in Paris."

Then, in mentioning the "principal objectives" being sought by the Viet Cong, the paper insists that three of them must be constantly borne in mind by Viet Cong followers, namely "the total withdrawal of all U.S. and satellite forces," "the iso-

lation of the Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique," and "the formation of a broad alliance of all peace elements".

In its final part, the document also says "the new diplomatic offensive must be well coordinated with activities within South Vietnam so as to be conducive to conditions favoring the development of various struggle movements in the cities and townships."

STEPPING STONE : Glancing through both documents students of the Viet Cong movement can find little if nothing new. The Communists still appear bent on seeking an end to the American commitment in Vietnam and the overthrow of the constitutional regime presently headed by President Nguyen Van Thieu, Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky and Premier Tran Thien Khiem.

As early as mid-1968, top Communist leaders in Hanoi and their representatives in the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) are known to have adopted a four-point political strategy that seeks (1) an end to the bombing of North Vietnam, (2) international recognition for the Viet Cong, (3) the withdrawal of U.S. troops, and (4) a coalition regime in Saigon.

With North Vietnam now off limits to U.S. bombers, the Viet Cong having metamorphosed into a "government", and America continuing the redeployment of its troops from the war zone, Hanoi apparently is seeking the fulfillment of its fourth objective : the creation or imposition of a coalition regime in Saigon.

Apparently the Viet Cong realize that the U.S. military disengagement from South Vietnam and the increasingly smaller role of Washington in the conflict no longer put America in a position to impose a political solution on the South Vietnamese. They thus have to think of another stepping stone to political power.

INTERMEDIARY CLASSES : This stepping stone, the Viet Cong call it "the intermediary classes" in the document captured in Binh Tuy. "We have to win the confidence of the intermediary classes to bring the Revolution to a new stage." By intermediary classes, students of Viet Cong point out, Communist leaders mean no one else than anti-government elements in the cities.

If Communist radios should reflect the truth to any extent the enemy already has a bridge-head in these movements. Indeed, in his broadcasts to South Vietnam, the enemy has been paying particular attention to the ever unhappy students, the continuously begrudging politicians, and other dissatisfied elements in the population. These are his "intermediary classes".

And, interestingly enough, these appear at the present time to be seeking to have their voice heard. A "People's Front for Peace" (PEF) reportedly is to be born in the coming days, "grouping the representatives from all social strata" and "enjoying the support of the nation's leading figures in many fields of activities".

To what extent the Viet Cong control these "intermediary forces" is a question of vital importance to both the Communists and the South Vietnamese. But the mere fact of their coming into existence indicates the enemy has been right in anticipating them. Still, a more important point is whether the enemy is going to be able to exploit them or not.

MORE CLEVER : Thirty months after their unsuccessful Tet offensive, in the course of which they failed to couple their military attacks on the cities with a political campaign, the Communists have grown more clever. While actively making arrangements for new campaign they said would be of the proportions of Tet, they have carefully prepared the conditions for a switch to total anarchy in the cities of South Vietnam.

In this undertaking, the foe can be said to be helped by a public grown more and more restless in a situation where the growingly difficult economic conditions and the demagoguery of some so-called opposition leaders contribute to the emergence of conditions in which Viet Cong agents may operate undetected.

But the Viet Cong would once again commit a serious mistake if they should see in South Vietnam's internal difficulties the signs for another "general attack, general uprising". The refusal of the local masses to serve as a stepping stone for a Communist takeover in the early days of 1968 and their continuous distinction between anti-Government activities and pro-Communist deeds should be enough to convince the foe he has little to gain in trying to fish in South Vietnam's troubled political waters.

... BUT NOT WISER : But being the dogmatic Marxists they are, the Viet Cong and the men from Hanoi are likely to tread on the same blind alley of Tet 1968. Huynh Tan Phat, the PRG "Premier", last week told Radio Liberation that in answer to Presidents Nixon's and Thieu's suggestion for an immediate ceasefire he and his followers would "determinedly continue the struggle until total victory".

Following Phat by a few hours and sometimes repeating the exact words of the top Viet Cong leader, the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry was to justify its call for more fighting saying "that is only part of the sacred right of self-defense of all nations". At another point, the North Vietnamese statement also said that "the Vietnamese people is determined to overcome all obstacles and accept all sacrifices to pursue the struggle military, politically and diplomatically until total victory".

For all these big words, Phat and the men from Hanoi have not proven themselves any wiser. In listening to them, even their most loyal followers in South Vietnam cannot help thinking that peace or at least an end to the killing has been rejected by their Communist leaders. "If we should be controlling 90 per cent of the territory and 75 per cent of the people in South Vietnam, why should we not accept it," some of the Viet Cong must also be asking themselves now.

NEVELTY IN KIEN HOA : Such questions probably have been and are being asked by all South Vietnamese, including Communist cadres and soldiers in this war torn land. They may have been asked with more emphasis in Kien Hoa, where the number of "returnees" or Viet Cong turncoats have doubled and tripled in the past few months.

Indeed, since Hanoi and the PRG are on the record to have spurned Saigon's offer for general elections in late 1969 and Washington's recent suggestion for an unconditional cease-fire, the number of Viet Cong defectors in the birth-place of the National Liberation Front (NLF) has increased from 100-200 to 600-700 each month. In the past four weeks, it has even soared to over 700, permitting some observers here to speculate that the backbone of the insurrection in South Vietnam has probably been broken.

Indeed, if one knows that Kien Hoa is the province where the NLF was proclaimed a decade ago and that security in this once Communist-infested region has permitted a seemingly normal life for its half-million people, one must naturally suspect something has gone wrong for the Communist insurgents and their North Vietnamese acolytes in the

South. Let it also be known that Kien Hoa is still considered as one of the least pacified provinces in South Vietnam.

But Communist leaders probably think they are so close to victory, coalition being the last of four stages leading to their "peace in freedom," that all these indications can be dismissed as temporary setbacks. For them, what they need at present is a development that may substantiate their claim to being irreducible, thereby making their demand for a coalition more palatable.

NO ALTERNATIVE : In these conditions as the Binh Tuy document has shown, Communist leaders have no alternative but to heat up the fighting. The hundreds of weapons captured in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong provinces last week and reports of enemy troops movements in the direction of South Vietnam's border provinces probably indicate the enemy is to initiate a major campaign as soon as the monsoon season is over.

In the present context of the current search for peace, however, such a campaign will negate all Communist claims for being peace fighters. It probably will also silence the dissenting voices in South Vietnamese politics and make Saigon all the stronger in the expectedly violent military, political and diplomatic attacks the enemy hopes to launch in the coming weeks.

Cultural Feature

LEGENDS AROUND EMPEROR DINH TIEN HOANG

Adapted by George F. Schultz

In the year 938 the Vietnamese recovered their independence from China and a new dynasty was founded by Ngo Quyen. But when the Ngo foundered in anarchy, feudal lords (su-quan) sprang up everywhere and occupied vast regions in which they became autonomous. After more than twenty years of internecine fighting, the country found itself divided into twelve provinces, each ruled by an independent lord.

One of the most powerful of these feudal lords was Tran Minh Cong, who held the power in the province of Thai Binh. At his death, he was succeeded by his lieutenant Dinh Bo Linh, who quickly defeated the other lords and in the year 968 proclaimed himself Emperor of Nam Viet (later changed to Dai Co Viet), taking for himself the reign name of Dinh Tien Hoang. His was the second dynasty after independence; he ruled until the year 979, when he was assassinated.

Although a historical figure, Dinh Tien Hoang's remarkable success was attributed by the people to supernatural birth and the possession of supernatural powers, giving rise to many legends.

I -SIRED BY AN OTTER : The village of Hoa Lu, in the province of Ninh Binh, was irrigated by a stream that was the home of a huge otter. Among the inhabitants of the village, there was a certain Dinh Cong Tru and his wife. One day, when the latter was bathing alone in the stream, she was violated by the otter and shortly thereafter discovered that she was with child.

When the villagers learned of this attack, they hunted down the otter and killed it. The pregnant woman gathered its bones, however, and hid them in her kitchen. Nine months and ten days later, she gave birth to a male child, whom she named Bo Linh. At an early age, the boy showed a remarkable aptitude for swimming and diving.

II - THE STONE HORSE : After Dinh Cong Tru's death, Bo Linh and his mother went to live with an uncle, who used him to guard his water buffaloes.

One day, a Chinese geomancer, who had followed a dragon's vein across the border, arrived in the village of Hoa Lu. In a deep whirlpool of the river, he found a miraculous site, where, according to his calculations, the dragon's head should be lying. This meant that a descendant of the person whose bones were buried there would attain the supreme power.

The geomancer, who could not swim, wanted to verify his find. He therefore promised good pay to any of the village youngsters who would dive into the whirlpool and report to him what was to be found there. Dinh Bo Linh, who was by far the best swimmer in the village, willingly assumed the task. He dived deep and at the bottom of the whirlpool discovered a stone horse. On returning to the surface, he told the Chinaman what he had seen.

"Very well, young man," said the latter. "Dive in again and offer the horse this bunch of grass. Then see what it does with it."

When Dinh Bo Linh came to the surface a moment later, he was visibly shaken.

"Sir," he reported to the geomancer, "the stone horse opened its mouth and swallowed the grass."

"That's fine," replied the man. "Say nothing about this to anyone. Here is your reward."

The geomancer then set out to return to China with the intention of digging up his father's bones so that he might put them in the horse's mouth and thus become eligible for the supreme power. But in employing Dinh Bo Linh, he had not been dealing with a fool. From the geomancer's mysterious manner, the lad immediately realized that he must have discovered the location of a miraculous site.

That evening he told his mother of the adventure that had befallen him with the geomancer and questioned her regarding the disposition of his father's remains. The woman then produced the otter's bones, which she wrapped up in a bundle of grass.

The next morning Dinh Bo Linh plunged into the watery abyss taking with him the bundle that his mother had prepared. As before, the stone horse opened its mouth and swallowed the bones and the grass.

III - WAR GAMES : From that moment on, Dinh Bo Linh's strength and courage increased prodigiously. He assumed the leadership of the buffalo boys and taught them to play at war. He divided them into two camps, which would then engage each other in daily battles. Long rushes took the place of arms and banners. After the battle Dinh Bo Linh would oblige his "soldiers" to interlace their arms and carry him about the field in triumph.

IV - CARRIED ON A DRAGON'S BACK : One day, Dinh Bo Linh decided to entertain his

little army with a feast and to do so slaughtered one of his uncle's buffaloes. Then he stuck the buffalo's tail in the earth with only the tip protruding.

That evening, when he returned home with the buffaloes, his uncle immediately perceived that one was missing. Dinh Bo Linh affirmed that the buffalo had disappeared in the earth with only its tail showing. In disbelief the uncle went to the pasture and indeed found a buffalo's tail sticking out of the ground just as his nephew had said. But when he grasped it with both hands and gave a yank, he fell over backwards. Dinh Bo Linh then ran away as fast as his legs could carry him, the uncle in swift pursuit. On reaching the river, the lad called to the ferryman, whose name was Dragon (Long), to save him.

"O Dragon!" he cried. "Come to my aid!"

Almost immediately the Dragon of the River was seen to appear in the middle of the stream. Dinh Bo Linh jumped into the water, swam to the dragon, and was carried across the river on its back. In the face of this miracle, the uncle fell to his knees in admiration and then returned home shaking his head.

V - IN THE ARMY : When Tran Minh Cong gained the power in Thai Binh province and established his capital at Bo Hai Khau, Dinh Bo Linh joined his army, taking with him his son Dinh Bo Linh. He distinguished himself in so many ways that he soon became the war lord's indispensable lieutenant. On Tran Minh Cong's death, Dinh Bo Linh succeeded to the command and moved his troops to Hoa Lu, where he raised reinforcements and became master of the entire region. He attacked the other feudal lords and one by one forced their capitulation. For these victories he earned the title of Van Thang Vuong, the King of Ten Thousand Victories. In 968 he proclaimed himself emperor under the name of Dinh Tien Hoang.

VI - BETRAYED : After a long and perilous journey, the Chinese geomancer returned to Hoa Lu, bringing with him his father's bones. But when he learned that Dinh Bo Linh had used the miraculous site to further his own ambitions, he became very angry and secretly vowed to have his revenge. He requested and obtained an audience with the emperor.

"Your Majesty," he said, "it was through the virtue of your august ancestors that you were able to take advantage of Heaven's gift. But in order for your glory to be complete, the stone horse should have a sword."

The emperor suspected nothing and accepted the geomancer's advice in good faith. He ordered a sword hung at the horse's neck. For sometime thereafter, his armies won new victories but these successes were of short duration. In the end, under the swirling action of the waters, the sword cut off the stone horse's head, bringing an end to its miraculous powers. This meant disaster for Dinh Tien Hoang and his family. In 979, the emperor and his son Dinh Bo Lien were assassinated by a mad visionary named Do Thich, who had had a dream in which he saw a star fall into his mouth; this he took to be a sign that he would become emperor if he could do away with the imperial family. Do Thich was executed for his crime, however, and the supreme power passed to Dinh Tien Hoang's first lieutenant, General Le Hoan, who founded the Le dynasty and ascended the throne as Le Dai Hanh.

THE STAMPS OF VIETNAM

By Eric Glasgow

London (MF)--Anyone who regularly receives letters or other communications from Vietnam cannot fail to be fascinated by that country's decorative and colourful stamps--usually large and expressive pictorials--commemorating memorable subjects or events in the culture or the economic and social development of Vietnam. Such stamps have come from that distant country since 1955, well over 300 of them already. They are remarkable for both modern design and their expression of the special, Asian culture of Vietnam. In their several styles they reflect, truthfully and vividly, the distinctive cultural heritage of that nation.

The most recent stamps of Vietnam are straight-forward and uncomplicated. They have no philatelic complexities, nor are they either difficult or expensive to obtain. Not only are they beautiful, artistically impressive and stimulating, but they can also teach those who collect them a great deal about this distant Asian land.

For example, taking only the stamps of the last 15 years, one may find amongst them fascinating and lucid glimpses of the Saigon Museum, the Saigon-Bien Hoa highway (opened in 1961), the Gougar Falls at Dalat (1963), a Vietnamese wedding (1967), and the serene, angular beauty of many different types of Vietnamese women (1969). The bright and attractive stamps of "Viet Nam Cong Hoa" indicate also such special features of the country's long history as the venturesome missionary, Alexander of Rhodes (1591-1660), who was responsible for giving the Vietnamese language the basis of its Roman alphabet (stamps of 5 September, 1961), also Vietnamese patriots, luminous and stirring for their own people, if little-known abroad, Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chau Trinh (stamps of 24 March, 1967). Their existing allusions to subjects of wider, world interest, include Henri Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross (1960), the World Health Organization at Geneva (1966), and the 20th anniversary of UNESCO (1966). A letter recently received from Saigon was franked with some of the stamps of the set of 1968, for the "Day of Acknowledgement for International Aid". How colourful and arresting these stamps are--visual and dazzling in their appeal, almost a mosaic in the medley of their brilliant colours.

But, of course, the 300-odd stamps of Vietnam, since 1955, do not constitute all that may be included, if one decides to collect the stamps of this vivid and distant country. The French were in Indochina from 1862 and French stamps were used from 1886 until 1892. After 1892, local stamps for French Indochina, which included also Cambodia and Laos, came into circulation. These issues, colourful and plentiful had their allusions to Saigon, the rice fields, and Alexander of Rhodes (1944), amongst other topics drawn from the territories of modern Vietnam. In 1948, when the French began to withdraw their political control, the stamps of Indochina transformed themselves into those of Vietnam, freed from French control and therefore able to provide world-wide philatelic publicity for the culture of the Vietnamese.

It is important, however, to include some stamps from the earlier stages of the postal history of the region--from 1866 until 1948--even if only as necessary introductory material. Then we can embark upon the more absorbing tasks of collecting and arranging the sparkling spate of the later issues, so distinctively and brilliantly Vietnamese, and remarkable for their tasteful combination of an old culture and modern developments, in their evident choice of subjects and themes.

Nothing in the world of philately can quite surpass the superbly visual and artistic qualities of the modern stamps of Vietnam. These have to be seen, to be believed. They have a tremendous and pervasive sense of colour and light. All the colours of the spectrum seem to sparkle from these decorative, gem-like stamps. They are engaging, attractive, and

un-political messengers from a distant and still faintly mysterious land. One of the blessed features of the stamps of Vietnam is their lack of blatant political propaganda, such that one is apt to encounter in the stamps of Communist states. The stamps of Vietnam provide us with the beauty of their designs, scenic and pictorial, without any of the rau-
cous voices of political agitation, so contrary to the peaceful pursuit of philately.

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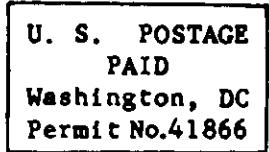
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