

VIET-NAM BULLETIN

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November 23, 1970

Politics

PRES. THIEU ASKS L.H. TO PROSECUTE REP. CHAU

Saigon, November 14. - Following the Supreme Court's May 5, 1970 decision and the Supreme Court's Cassation Board's October 30, 1970 verdict on Rep. Tran Ngoc Chau's case, President Nguyen Van Thieu recently requested the Lower House "to adopt article 37 of the Constitution for the prosecution of Rep. Chau before a court of competence" sources from the President's Office said.

The President's request was contained in a memorandum No 088-TT-VP dated Nov. 14 he recently sent to the Lower House Speaker, and a copy of which was distributed to the Senate President, according to the same sources.

Following is the unofficial translation of the memorandum:

"In your letter No 65-H-VPCT-M dated Feb. 3. 1970, in the capacity of the L.H. Speaker you informed me of a resolution reached by the Lower House which by virtue of article 37, item 3 of the Constitution approved the prosecution of Rep. Tran Ngoc Chau who was charged of ties-up with the Communists.

"Now, the Supreme Court's May 5, 1970 decisions and its Cassation Board's October 30 verdict proclaimed the above said resolution of the L.H. unconstitutional. So, the L.H. resolution involved could not serve any longer as a basic document for the trial by the mobile Field Military Court and in the event the Public Prosecutor considers Rep. Tran Ngoc Chau's offence as a criminal act of having ties-up with those who work for the ruin of the national defense security, the Public Prosecutor must establish another procedure.

"The fact that Rep. Chau having relations with the Communists, thus violating articles I, 4, 7 and 10 of Ordinance 47 dated August 21, 1956 which stipulated legal proceedings against the violation of the national defense security, was confirmed by the Lower House in a resolution passed by 70 out of 76 representatives present at the L.H. Dec. 30-31, 1969 plenary session.

"As a matter of fact, the crime of Rep. Chau was evident.

"I therefore request the Lower House to adopt, through urgent procedures in line with the explanation of the Supreme Court, article 37 of the Constitution stipulating the prosecution of Rep. Tran Ngoc Chau before the Court of competence."

VICE PRES. KY: GEN. DE GAULLE WAS A BRAVE SOLDIER

Saigon, November 12. - Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky said at a French televised interview Wednesday evening that he always regards Gen. De Gaulle as a brave soldier, and a patriot who had brought honor and hope for France.

The RVN Vice President sent a wreath and condolence letter to the bereaved family on Wednesday morning.

Vice President Ky appeared in the televised program reserved for various chiefs of state and famous personalities all over the world.

Xuan Thuy was the next official after Vice President Ky in the interview. In his name as a Minister of North Viet~~nam~~ Xuan Thuy recalled Gen. De Gaulle's statement about his support to the people of Indo-China.

PRES. THIEU RECEIVES U.S. SENATOR

Saigon, November 12. - President Nguyen Van Thieu Thursday afternoon received at Independence Palace U.S. Senator Edward J. Gurney.

Senator Gurney (Rep. Florida) is now on an observation tour of the U.S. Logistic Agencies in Vietnam.

Also present at the half-an-hour meeting was Mr. Samuel B. Berger, U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Vietnam.

Flood

FOREIGN MINISTRY CALLS ON DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS FOR ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Saigon, November 15. - The Foreign Ministry Wednesday sent a letter to the Diplomatic Missions, the Apostolic Delegation, Consular Missions, and Representations in Saigon requesting their assistance to the flood victims in Central Vietnam. The letter reads:

The recent torrential rains and floods brought by typhoons "Nora" and "Louise" have caused heavy loss of life and property in the five northern provinces of Central Vietnam (which rank among the poorest in the country), and left in their wake extensive and grievous devastation. Whole villages and thousands of head of cattle were swept out to sea, with the survivors being left with no means of subsistence, their crops destroyed, their homes gone, their families decimated or vanished.

In the face of this calamity, which has added its new toll of displaced persons to the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Cambodia, the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam has decided to appeal to all friendly nations in the hope that they will

generously respond and bring their much-needed contribution to the work of relief and rehabilitation of the afflicted areas.

Being already confronted with the immense problems of the war and a difficult economic situation, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam would be deeply appreciative of any help our friends would be willing and able to render under the present exceptional circumstances.

An emergency Relief Fund Committee has been set up, headed by Minister of State Dr. Phan Quang Dan, and all donations will be gratefully received and duly acknowledged by the Committee at No 140 Hai Ba Trung, Saigon.

In the confident hope that this urgent appeal on behalf of the destitute and the hungry will be heeded by all friendly governments and peoples, the Ministry avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Diplomatic Missions, the Apostolic Delegation, Consular Missions and Representations the assurances of its high consideration.

AUSTRALIAN GIFT TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Saigon, November 12. - The Australian Government has gifted 10,000 sheets of corrugated, galvanised steel to the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam to assist in the rehabilitation of the victims of the recent disastrous floods in Central Viet-Nam, it was announced Thursday.

During his recent visit to this area, the Australian Ambassador, Mr. R. L. Harry, witnessed the grievous extent to the flood damage and the tragic consequences for the people who lived in the areas affected. He was able to propose to the Australian Government that emergency assistance should be offered. The Australian Government's response came two days later in the form of the gift of 10,000 sheets of galvanised iron for rehousing flood victims.

The Ambassador said that on behalf of the Australian Government and people he wished to convey his sincere sympathy for the victims of the floods and hoped that this Australian gift would help in some small degree to assuage their sufferings.

PRES. NIXON EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES FOR FLOOD VICTIMS IN CENTRAL VN

Saigon, November 12. - President Nguyen Van Thieu has received from U. S. President Richard Nixon a letter of condolences on the devastation by the recent floods in five central Vietnam's provinces.

In his letter, Pres. Nixon said he was deeply moved at the heavy casualties and material damages suffered by the Vietnamese people in the recent floods, which increased the burden of a nation at war.

Pres. Nixon then expressed the sincere condolences of the American people and himself for the sufferings of the Vietnamese people in the face of the recent natural calamity.

Foreign Relations

MR. ARTHUR MORRIS APPOINTED NEW AUSTRALIAN AMB. TO VN

Saigon, November 12. - The Republic of Vietnam government has approved the Australian government's appointment of Mr. Arthur Malcolm Morris as Australian Ambassador to Vietnam in replacement of Mr. Ralph L. Harry whose term of duty will be expired by this year.

Mr. Arthur Malcolm Morris, 51, is at present Australian Ambassador to Austria.

He is a professional diplomat who has a thorough knowledge the Indochina issue.

Mr. Morris assumed the post of Ambassador to Laos from 1960-1964 and later became Director of Military Relations at the Australian Foreign Ministry from 1964 to 1966.

AMB. TOAN ON RVN MILITARY SITUATION

Saigon, November 13. - RVN Ambassador to Ivory Coast Pham Van Toan, at a recent televised and radio interview in Abidjan said, the present military situation is very favorable for RVN despite the withdrawal of 165,000 US troops in the past few months.

Amb. Toan remarked that North Vietnamese regular troops can no longer use Cambodian territory as their sanctuaries and staging areas to launch offensives against the RVN.

Meanwhile, he added, the RVN Armed Forces has been developed steadily. This development has encouraged RVN militarymen of all ranks and conversely weakened the Communists who were unable to launch any large scale attacks in the past few months.

Amb. Toan asserted that such a situation will force the Communists to give up their ambition of conquering the South and accept serious negotiations at the conference table.

On this occasion, Amb. Toan satisfactorily answered questions raised by Ivory Coast newsmen on Vietnamese traditions and landscapes.

Following the interview marking the RVN November 1 National Day, a 45 minute special program on Vietnam was broadcast to help Vietnamese nationals in Ivory Coast better understand the present situation at home.

PICTORIAL EXHIBITION ON VIETNAM HELD IN IVORY COAST

Saigon, November 13. - The RVN Embassy in Ivory Coast last October 30 opened an exhibition of pictures depicting efforts of the Vietnamese Armed Forces and people in their struggle for survival, a belated report from the Foreign Affairs Ministry said.

The two week pictorial exhibition held at the Treichvill Cultural Center in Abidjan

on the occasion of the RVN National Day (Nov. I) highlighted the theme, Vietnamese people and combatants are determined to struggle for a just peace and to reconstruct their homeland devasted by the Communist crimes.

On display were nearly 400 pictures featuring the satisfactory achievements scored by the RVN government and people since the Nov. I, 1963 Revolution.

A lot of pictures gave prominence to the RVN constitution promulgation ceremony on April I, 1967, and the implementation of the Land-to-the Tiller Law. These pictures had particularly attracted the visitors, the sources said.

The visitors were also reported expressing their admiration to the RVN combatants through the pictures featuring military parades on the National Day of the previous years and the border crossing and in country operations conducted by the RVN armed forces.

Pictures depicting the RVN efforts in the struggle for peace and in the national reconstruction also attracted the visitors, according to the same sources.

RVN ATTENDS CONFERENCE ON EXPANSION OF HIGHWAY 9

Saigon, November I2. - A delegation of the Republic of Vietnam headed by Mr. Hoang Ngoc Than, Secretary General at the Post and Communication Ministry recently left for Vientiane, Laos to attend a 3 day conference on the expansion of National route 9 linking Laotian Savanakhet city with RVN Laos-Bao- Dong Ha-Hue and Da Nang cities starting Wednesday.

The expansion of the highway will help ease not only the trade relations between the RVN and Laos but also exports from Laos through Da Nang seaport.

Moreover, the highway will help clear the congestion at Da Nang seaport and promote its modernization in the future.

The RVN delegation included Messrs Nguyen Van Dat, Director General of Commercial Ports and Bui Nhu Tuyet, Deputy Director of Road and Bridge at the Public Works Ministry.

Military

NEW ZEALAND TO HELP TRAIN RF, PF PLATOON LEADERS

Saigon, November I4. - The Government of New Zealand recently decided to send a team of 25 trainers to Vietnam by January next year to assist in the formation of platoon leaders of the RVN Regional and Popular Forces, informed sources said.

The decision was foreshadowed by Vietnamese and New Zealand authorities some months ago and particularly August 28, 1970 by Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam as an alternative to the redeployment of New Zealand troops.

The New Team will help push forward the training of 1200 students annually. They will work in cooperation with Vietnamese officers at Chi Lang National Training Centre

in Chau Doc province.

Economics

ECONOMY MINISTER BARES RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR CENTRAL VN

Saigon, November 13. - Economy Minister Pham Kim Ngoc, in his televised speech over the Hue TV network Thursday, said that his ministry will adopt urgent and long-term measures to help reconstruct flood stricken provinces in Central Vietnam.

The measures will include the reconstruction of houses for flood victims, the regular supply of rice and the mechanization of the agricultural process in Central Vietnam.

The Economy Ministry also called for businessmen's contribution to the relief activities to help flood victims soon return to a normal life. Min. Ngoc disclosed that up to late last week the business circles throughout the country contributed some VN \$ 200 million worth of gifts in cash and in kind.

Meanwhile, "Donaton", "Vanaton" and "Covinton" corrugated iron companies, according the Economy Minister, have promised to present the victims with 10,000 iron sheets and sell to the Social Welfare Ministry about 78,900 other sheets worth VN \$ 30 million at cost price.

Besides, the Economy Ministry will provide Central VN with a large quantity of cement and if necessary, Min. Ngoc said, the cement quota for other Military Regions will be removed to the I MR.

Minister Pham Kim Ngoc also announced that he will set up a 40,000 ton rice stock in Da Nang and another 5,000 ton stock in Thua Thien at the request of Lt. Gen. Hoang Xuan Lam, I Corps and I MR Commander.

BUSINESSMEN ENCOURAGED TO INVEST IN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN CENTRAL VN

Saigon, November 15. - The government has decided to especially encourage and support those businessmen who want to invest in industrial projects in Central Vietnam, sources from the Economy Ministry said.

Besides priority reserved for the consideration of such applications for the purpose all these investors will be allowed to enjoy part or all the privileges mentioned in the Investment Law No 2/63 in accordance with the decisions by the Investment Committee.

Of the privileges, the exemption of austerity tax levied on imported equipments can be considered as an indirect subsidy or the part of the RVN government.

Besides, agencies of the Economy Ministry such as Technique Supply Directorate and the Industrial Development Center will be ready to provide assistance or guidance for these investors on technical issues or other procedures.

200 CADETS OF THU DUC INFANTRY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN
TAXATION CENSUS CAMPAIGN

Saigon, November 13. - To support the nation-wide Taxation Census Campaign, 200 cadets of the Thu Duc Infantry School will be on temporary duty at the Finance Ministry, sources from the Defense Ministry said.

Besides, 100 students of the National Commerce School will be also dispatched to the Finance Ministry to help the collection of evaded taxes.

The Taxation Census Campaign will be launched throughout the country next December in an effort to provide for basic date able to properly complete taxation dossiers.

Consequently, the purpose of the campaign is to find out tax evaders or false declarations of tax payment based on improved tax collection procedures the principles of which comply with equity and rationality.

The Campaign was reported neither to center on the census of individual properties nor to levy taxes on properties.

Regulations on taxation in force will be respected by the Finance Ministry during the Campaign.

Besides, the Finance Ministry will open next November 16 a 3-day training course for taxation personnel.

Special Feature

A THIEU-MINH AFFAIR

Letter from Saigon, November 5, 1970. - Two developments have just been recorded, which may very well fore-announce the main features of the next South Vietnamese Presidential elections scheduled for the fall of 1971.

Speaking to the nation last Saturday, President Nguyen Van Thieu not only reported on the state of the Republic but also recalled all that which he had been able to achieve since he became Chief Executive three years before and what he had the intention of doing in 1971 and thereafter.

The hint was unmistakable. For the man most likely to oppose Thieu in his second bid for the nation's top post, General Duong Van ("Big") Minh immediately responded the following day, Sunday, when he reportedly told his allies that he, too, was "ready" for the race.

Will the next Presidential contest be an affair between the incumbent President and the hero of the anti-Diem coup of November 1963?

A CLOSER LOOK: Let us have first a close look at what both men had said, which may be construed as indicating their intention to run.

President Thieu was not very specific. In his report to the nation, Thieu did not say he would seek renomination. But in the eyes of the majority of his compatriots, he had made this a matter of self-evidence. To quote a local pundit, "Thieu sounded like a candidate. He spoke of past achievements and future plans. He mentioned peace 'within two or three years' and long-term development plans. Nobody without Presidential aspirations would have made the statements he did."

Minh had sought to postpone the moment to say he has an eye on the top job as long as possible. As late as last Saturday, Minh's intentions had remained unclear. Even in the "Open Letter" he sent to the Vietnamese nation that day, the former Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council made no allusion to the elections next fall. But after Thieu's address, Minh thought the time ripe. "I am ready to run for President", he told his listeners at the An Quang pagoda last Sunday and had his picture taken with leading opposition figures.

For most observers of the Vietnamese scene, the next Presidential contest had begun. They only disagreed on the number of entries.

TWO OR MORE: Politically conscious elements, of course, would prefer the contest to be between Thieu and Minh only, but Vietnamese politics being what it is, an inflation of candidates is still quite possible. Especially if this nation's many Presidential aspirants should not be convinced one way or another to seek lesser public offices, a contest involving a dozen or so candidates appears at the moment more likely than a two or three-man race.

Probably with this danger in mind, President Thieu reportedly has been considering the desirability of an amendment of the electoral law which would order a run-off election if no one should gather over 50 per cent of the votes cast. The first indication of this Presidential concern became visible when Thieu addressed a group of Saigon editors sometime ago and hinted at new electoral laws. More recently, a pro-Government member of the House also has officially submitted a bill suggesting a second balloting.

But notwithstanding whether this bill is to be tackled by Congress in time for the next Presidential race or not, indications are many that inveterate candidates with no real popular following will fail to gather as many votes as the unsuccessful participants did in the 1967 elections. "They will get far fewer than the 65 per cent they got three years ago," according to a student of Vietnamese developments.

A TIDIER AFFAIR: According to this knowledgeable person, many factors will contribute to making the 1971 contest a tidier affair.

In the first place, "even without direct Viet Cong participation in it, the 1971 race will be one the non-Communist side cannot afford to lose. The Viet Cong probably will not present a candidate but they will support one either openly or secretly. And the mere prospect of a Viet Cong victory, either direct or by proxy, will make Presidential aspirants think twice before submitting their candidacy."

In the second place, the man continued, "for all that has been said of South Vietnamese refraction to the democratic process, much has been achieved in the last five years. As the recent senatorial elections have demonstrated, slates no longer are made in the vacuum of political saloons. At any rate, all the three successful tickets represent genuine efforts at securing the allegiance of some definite segments of the elec-

torate. In other words, Saigon politicians have become more realistic."

And last but least, "the top two contestants, namely President Thieu and General Minh, and their backers will not fail to woe local bosses with promises of all sorts which other possible candidates are in no position to make. The "big" money involved in a presidential campaign, too will deter quite a few lesser names from undertaking something that may only result in splitting the non-Communist voting forces."

"At least in terms of candidates," the observer concluded, "there will be a much tidier affair with at most five or six candidates."

VOTING GROUPS: From a different angle, the next Presidential race also appears to be moving in the direction of a Thieu vs. Minh affair. Existing political affinities among major pressure groups and politico-religious sects seem to reveal two voting trends that theoreticians on both sides have prompted their flag-bearers to court with various public statements.

Thieu, who has been wooing the peasants with such measures as the "Land to the Tiller" program, probably will continue to enjoy the confidence of farmers and such localized grass-root organizations as the Hoa Hoa and the Cao Dai. His unrelenting opposition to coalition as an avenue to peace and his recent tolerance of expressions of respect for the late Ngo Dinh Diem he helped to overthrow, per force will gain him the friendship of the Catholics and supporters of the late dictators. An incumbent President, Thieu probably will also easily secure the support of such advocates of the status quo as the Chinese and Montagnard minorities. And as the Number One enemy of the Viet Cong, he will be buttressed by the many irretrievably anti-Communist elements with loved ones killed or maimed by the shooting enemy.

On his part, Minh, can be sure to count on protest votes, which abound in a country at war for a quarter of a century. This will be most visible in the cities and the northern provinces, where the Government has not yet succeeded in stopping the inflationary trends of prices while income has remained relatively steady. Some of the more active political parties probably will also join strength with the Minh ticket, having been kept out of power by Thieu. If Minh should only be able to bring about this loose alliance, he would not be much of a foe for Thieu. But it will perhaps be cemented by whatever political tenet militant Buddhist leaders may come up with at campaigning time, especially if the Viet Cong should decide to support Minh by suggesting to deal with him. Truong Dinh Dzu's remarkable show in 1967 suggests this last factor is not a negligible one.

This lineup, of course, can change as time goes by but it is this correspondent's opinion that later events can only alter it to a negligible extent as Minh's and Thieu's platforms have grown evident to whoever may have scrutinized their recent public pronouncements with some care.

PLATFORMS: After three years in power, President Thieu, of course is more aware than his rival of the political realities of South Vietnam. The points he made in his recent Report to the Nation also indicate a rare degree of articulation in a nation of political amateurs which the more politically conscious voters cannot fail to notice.

Many of Thieu's points naturally have little to do with the coming election but

his references to a Common Wealth scheme based on local self-development, agrarian reform and the development of agriculture and fishery and his 21 Points for local self-defense, administrative autonomy, and financial self-sufficiency as well as his extensive remarks on industrial development reveal big strides from the days when he could only promise the South Vietnamese "a solution to the problem of war, democracy and social reforms."

Being out of power, General Minh naturally can afford to be not so very specific. In his Open Letter to the Nation, Minh simply proclaimed his unhappiness at the state of the country. He did not say how this could be remedied. Like most opposition leaders in Saigon, Minh found in the issue of peace Thieu's heel of Achilles and directed there most of his attacks. The Government, he said, "must take into account the people's aspirations for peace, freedom, democracy, justice and a decent life. And of these, peace should be the number one objective."

At another point in his 5000 word letter, after declaring "the Government must recover our mutilated national sovereignty, Minh also said any lasting peace formula must be decided by the Vietnamese people on the basis of social and political realities in this country.

TWO-MAN AFFAIR: Nearly one year before voting day, General Minh can afford to be vague. But as the balloting date nears, this tactics of systematic but unspecific criticism may backfire if his assistants should not come up with something positively substantial to give the electorate a better vision of an alternative to what President Thieu has been trying to deliver then.

From now until the next Presidential election, many things still may happen that would alter the political lineups behind both candidates and their platforms. A dramatic military victory or setback, for example, certainly will have a great impact on the course of events in the war-torn land of South Vietnam.

But if nothing extraordinary should come about during the next ten months, all indications probably will point to a two-man affair. Many more campaign statements, thus, are to be expected from Thieu and Minh in the weeks and months aheads. The Presidential race has actually commenced.

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