

VIET-NAM BULLETIN

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Politics

VICE-PRESIDENT KY: COALITION WITH COMMUNISTS CAN'T BE SOLUTION FOR VN ISSUE

Paris, November 4. - Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky Monday night said in Paris that the setting up of a coalition government could not be a lasting solution for the Vietnam issue and it is better to let the South Vietnamese people decide their own political future.

Vice President Ky made the above statement in reply to newsmen's questions at the dinner party hosted by Amb. Pham Dang Lam at Meurice Hotel in Paris on the occasion of the RVN National Day.

Dealing with the Paris talks, the RVN Vice President said time is not ripe now for making new proposals.

In the past two years, he said, RVN government has shown its goodwill; however, an agreement needs two sides, one side alone can't bring about results.

According to Vice President Ky, the RVN delegation cannot stay indefinitely in Paris because such a stay in the French capital costs too much while the government needs money to carry out economic and military development programs.

Asked to comment on General Duong Van Minh's recent statement in Saigon, Vice President Ky said "General Minh is a good general, as you know and as a politician, he has shown his worth".

To a question on his visit to the United States, he announced that he will make it in a near future but the exact date has not been fixed yet.

Asked to comment on a statement in Paris by Nguyen Thi Binh that the guerilla-backed provisional revolutionary government was ready to contact South Vietnamese leaders apart from the ruling triumvirate including the Vice President himself, Mr. Ky said "this was a nonsense".

At the same reception, Amb. Pham Dang Lam told newsmen that Nguyen Thi Binh's statement on Monday when she returned to Paris from London contained nothing new. She only reiterated the old Communist attitude, an attitude which has caused deadlocks at the Paris peace talks, Amb. Lam added.

According to the RVN Consul General to France, there is no basic opposition between General Minh's idea and President Nguyen Van Thieu's policy set forth in his Oct. 31 speech delivered before the National Assembly concerning peace restoration.

Both President Thieu and General Minh emphasized the necessity of national reconciliation to restore an early peace, Amb. Lam said.

GOOD PROSPECTS FOR RVN TO SOLVE HER PROBLEMS: BELGIAN PAPER

Saigon, November 10. - The Republic of Vietnam has many good prospects to solve her problems including those in the economic field.

The above statement was the conclusion of a series of reports published in La Derniere Heure in Belgium, written by Mr. Schmieder a journalist, founding member of the Belgium Vietnam Association.

Mr. Schmieder completed a week-long observation tour in the Republic last August at the invitation of the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations.

According to the Belgian correspondent, the situation in the RVN has been improved in all domains especially in the military and political ones.

In the military field, wrote Mr. Schmieder, the RVN Armed Forces have been gradually replacing U.S. and allied units to shoulder more combat duties.

Moreover, the troops' morale was highly boosted up after the Communists' failure in their 1968 general offensive.

The Belgian journalist remarked that in the political field, returnees including engineers and doctors who were formerly members of the Communist ranks have joined the RVN Armed Forces and propaganda teams in various villages and hamlets after receiving political training at the Thi Nghe Central Open Arms Center.

INDONESIAN JOURNALIST PRAISES VIETNAMESE TROOPS' FIGHTING SPIRIT

Saigon, November 11. - Indonesian journalist Marakarma Wednesday morning said the Communist troops' fighting spirit is not so strong as people have thought and the RVN Armed Forces are able to shoulder the present war.

At a meeting with Vietnamese newsmen at the Information Ministry, Mr. Marakarma, editor of the Angkatan Bersendjata, the newspaper of the Indonesian Army, made known that after his contact with RVN Generals as well as combatants, he had to acknowledge that their fighting spirit is quite high which will enable the Vietnamese forces to continue the anti-Communist fight to victory after the pull out of allied forces.

Dealing with the social and economic situation in Indonesia at present, Mr. Mara-

karma said after succeeding in destroying the Communists, the Indonesian government has concentrated all its efforts on social and economic reforms which have yielded satisfactory results.

The Indonesian journalist said that his country receives aid from foreign nations under the form of credits. For the time being, Indonesia has accepted no assistance from the socialist bloc.

Mr. Marakarma made known that about 20 or 30 dailies are in circulation in Indonesia alongside with numerous weeklies and magazines with about 80,000 readers out of a population of 115 million.

A columnist of a number of dailies, Mr. Marakarma usually writes articles attacking corruption, injustices and social vices.

He arrived in Vietnam last week along with a delegation of the Indonesian Representatives and will leave next Saturday.

During his stay in the Republic, Mr. Marakarma is scheduled to meet with leading officials in the government and legislative agencies, politicians and Vietnamese newsmen to learn about the local political, military and economic situation.

AMERICAN REPORTER OPTIMISTIC OVER VN SITUATION

Saigon, November 6. - The political and military situation in Vietnam is relatively satisfactory while the Vietnamization program shows many signs enabling us to have confidence in the abilities of the RVN Forces and it's a good opportunity for Vietnam to survive.

American reporter Paul Steinle of the Westinghouse Radio and Television Broadcasting Co. made the above statement in reply to questions raised by the audience at his talks in six States of the US in the October 1-16 period. Mr. Steinle had just returned to Vietnam to continue his reporting for the Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.

At these talks, Mr. Steinle told his audience that the political situation in Vietnam has become much more stable than before, and President Nguyen Van Thieu has adopted good action programs to better political activities in Vietnam.

The American reporter also presented the satisfactory security situation in Vietnam which he called a remarkable success, especially in the Mekong Delta and the vicinity of Saigon.

According to Mr. Steinle, the progress in the political and military fields had created optimism for the overall situation of Vietnam.

Reporter Steinle and five other newsmen of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. had held talks and discussions in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Pittsburgh.

Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. has seven radio and five TV stations in the US with

about 25 million listeners and watchers.

Flood

PRES. THIEU ENDS INSPECTION TOUR OF FLOOD-STRICKEN PROVINCES

Saigon, November 6. - President Nguyen Van Thieu Wednesday morning started a two-day observation tour of flood-stricken hamlets and villages in the I Military Region's five provinces.

President Thieu first called at the I Corps Command Hqs. in Da Nang where he presided over a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the relief of Central Vietnam's flood victims.

President Thieu was briefed in detail by Lt. Gen. Hoang Xuan Lam I Corps Commander on the material damages and casualties caused by the flood over the last weekend.

According to Lt. Gen. Lam, 229 persons were reported drowned and 11 others injured and the crops damaged from 50 to 80 percent, while 204,966 other persons were evacuated from flood-stricken areas up to October 31. However, only 9,700 refugees are now living at the temporary resettlement centers, Lt. Gen. Lam said.

The I Corps Commander on this occasion presented to the Chief Executive the local inhabitants' request for the supply in first necessities such as rice and corrugated iron sheets.

The distribution of rice seeds to local peasants for the forthcoming crop cultivation was also proposed to President Thieu.

After the briefing, President Thieu decided to grant 12 corrugated iron sheets plus 15 days of rice allowance to those families having their houses completely destroyed and six corrugated iron sheets plus seven days of rice allowance to those families whose houses sustain 50 per cent damage.

In addition, death allowances were also fixed as follows: VN \$ 4,000 for a killed adult and VN \$ 2,000 for a killed child.

President Thieu also approved the distribution of rice seeds and ploughing machines and the study of granting loans to peasants of flood-stricken areas thus helping them soon start cultivation activities at the localities.

In addition, the Chief Executive ordered the I Corps and I MR Commander to reserve the priority relief projects for the reconstruction of damaged schools and the repair of the national route I, and village roads and to actively assist the flood victims.

In the afternoon of the same day, Pres. Thieu toured the Quang Nam flood stricken areas which were the most affected in the I MR. He toured Xuyen Long village of Hieu Nhon district, Vinh Hoa village of Dien Ban district and Loc Hung village of Dai Loc district. At each village visited President Thieu inquired about the inhabitants' material damages.

The President then flew to Tu Nghia district in Quang Ngai province where he was

briefed by the Quang Ngai province chief on the flood situation of the area.

After spending the night at Da Nang city, President Thieu Thursday morning toured Giay Pho Buon Hiu (Street without Joy) quarter, the Co Thap hamlet of Quang Dien district, Van Trinh and My Xuyen hamlets of Phong Dieu district in Thua Thien province and Hai Duong and Hai Vinh villages of Hai Lang district in Quang Tri province.

At a meeting with local inhabitants, Pres. Thieu made known that his visit aimed at making an on-the-spot study of the local inhabitants difficulties following the flood so that he could satisfactorily solve all the problems involved.

President Thieu also presented each flood victim family with cash gift. Especially an elder's family at Co Thap hamlet, Quang Dien district (Thua Thien) was granted VN \$ 20,000, the old man had sacrificed his life to rescue his neighbors in darkness.

Before returning to Saigon, the Chief Executive called at Dieu De pagoda in Hue city where he praised the relief works for flood victims initiated by the Van Hanh Buddhist Social Welfare office. President Thieu also presented the Office with VN \$ 150,000, including 50,000 for the repair of the pagoda.

Accompanying Pres. Thieu on the tour were Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, Minister of State Phan Quang Dan, Economy Minister Pham Kim Ngoc, Public Works and Transportation Minister Duong Kich Nhuong, Health Minister Tran Minh Tung, Social Welfare Minister Tran Nguon Phieu, Information Minister Ngo Khac Tinh, Land Reform and Agricultural Fishery Development Minister Cao Van Than and a number of General Officers.

President Thieu and his party returned to Saigon on Thursday afternoon.

BUSINESSMEN ASSIST FLOOD VICTIMS IN CENTRAL VN

Saigon, November 8. - In response to Economy Minister Pham Kim Ngoc's appeal, businessmen gathering at the Economy Ministry Friday afternoon contributed an amount of nearly VN \$ 200 million for assistance to flood victims in Central Vietnam.

Mr. Tran Duc Uoc, Secretary General of the Saigon Chamber of Commerce and Industry said this amount was the result of the first day of a fund drive campaign for flood victims launched by the Economy Ministry with the participation of business circles throughout the country.

Besides, "Foremost" milk company has promised to present the flood victims with 100,000 cases of condensed milk. The victims will also be provided with 300,000 packages of dried nooddles and 30,000 iron sheets by other companies.

According to Mr. Uoc, businessmen also intended to use additional amounts contributed by businessmen to rebuild such public facilities as schools, hospitals, and market-places at flood-stricken areas.

CANADIAN CITIZEN OFFERS US \$ 3,000 ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAMESE FLOOD VICTIMS

Saigon, November 10. - Miss Jennie Masynyk, living in Ontario, Canada recently sent

to Lt. Col. Tran Van Lam, Director General of Vietnam Press, a letter along with a cheque for US \$ 3,000 for assistance to flood victims in Central Vietnam.

In her letter, Miss Jennie Masynyk made known that she has followed the Vietnam war through The Toronto Globe Mail daily since 1965. She said, through this newspaper's October 31 issue, she was deeply moved to know that Vietnam had been hit by the worst flood it has ever gone through in six years.

To wind up her letter, the Canadian benefactrice said she would appreciate knowing if there is more she can do for the alleviation of Vietnamese flood victims.

Foreign Relations

AMB. NGUYEN QUI THOAI PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO GAMBIA PRESIDENT

Saigon, November 9. - Ambassador Nguyen Qui Thoai last October 29 presented his credentials to President Dawda Jawara of the Republic of Gambia.

In his speech at the presentation ceremony, Ambassador Thoai conveyed to President Dawda Jawara and the Gambian people the warm greetings and best wishes from President Nguyen Van Thieu and the people of Vietnam.

Meanwhile, President Dawda Jawara expressed his satisfaction at the friendly relations between Gambia and the RVN.

He also wished Vietnam to defeat the Communists in a near future to enable an early restoration of peace for her people.

Present at the ceremony were the Gambian Foreign Minister, the Minister concurrently Secretary General at the President's Office and the Foreign Vice Minister.

Mr. Nguyen Qui Thoai, RVN Ambassador to Dakar has cumulated the ambassadorial post in Gambia on Nov. 7, 1969 when he presented credentials to the Governor of Gambia, representative of Queen Elisabeth II.

Gambia became a Republic in the British Commonwealth on April 28, 1970 after a referendum and the then Prime Minister Sir Dawda Jawara, was elected President.

Due to the change of the regime, heads of diplomatic missions in Gambia have taken turns to present new credentials to the new Chief of State.

RVN-CAMBODIA ECONOMIC CONFERENCE OPENS

Saigon, November 7. - An economic financial conference between the Republic of Vietnam and the Khmer Republic at expert level opened Saturday morning at Hoan My Hotel in Saigon.

At the opening ceremony, the two RVN and Cambodian delegations' heads, Messrs Le Van My, Finance Ministry's Cabinet Director and Touch Kim, Economy and Finance Advisor at the Cambodian Prime Minister's office, delivered their speeches in French dealing with problems

necessary to be solved after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the RVN and the Khmer Republic.

According to the two delegations heads, various problems mentioned in their speeches will be easily settled thanks to the sincerity and goodwill of the two countries.

Later, they introduced to the conference members of the two delegations.

Authoritative sources said the conference agenda may include 12 economic and financial problems which need to be solved between the two countries.

At the Cambodian delegation's proposal, the issue of common border may be discussed at the conference.

RVN PARTICIPATION IN THAT LUONG FAIR DESCRIBED SUCCESSFUL

Saigon, November 9. - The pavilion of the Republic of Vietnam has attracted large numbers of visitors at That Luong Fair in Laos which was opened at 1 p.m. last Sunday by Lao Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma.

Built in traditional Vietnamese architecture, the RVN pavilion displays pictures on the achievements of the Pacification-Development and handicraft articles.

According to sources from the RVN Embassy in Laos, the Vietnamese delegation at the Fair includes representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Information, Defense and Economy.

Meanwhile, the 43 members Central Art Troupe of the RVNAF Polwar Central Agency puts on performance every night at the Vietnamese pavilion.

Immediately after its arrival in Vientiane the Art Troupe gave a variety show on Saturday evening to collect fund for the Vietnamese Women Association in Laos.

The show was presided over by RVN Ambassador Hoang Co Thuy and his wife.

RVN ATTENDS SEMINAR ON MEKONG BASIN DEVELOPMENT

Saigon, November 11. - A delegation of the Republic of Vietnam recently left for Bangkok, Thailand to attend a seven-day seminar on Mekong River Basin Development long range projects starting November 9.

The seminar, sponsored by Asia Foundation and the International Mekong Committee, aimed at studying the development program for the whole Mekong river basin in the Republic of Vietnam, the Khmer Republic, Thailand and Laos from 1971 to 2000.

The RVN delegation headed by Mr. Le Khac Hue Vietnam Electricity Company's Management Commissioner in charge of Equipment and Regional Affairs, included Messrs. Duong Thanh Dam of the Post and Communication Ministry, Nguyen Quang Chuyen, Deputy Director of Forestry and Rural Affairs at the Land Reform Agriculture and Fishery Development Ministry, Pham Dinh Phuong of the Planning Directorate General and Nguyen Ngoc Tao, Chief

of Technique Service at the National Mekong River Committee.

Military

US AIRFIELD IN SOC TRANG TRANSFERRED TO VNAF

Saigon, November 5. - A US Infantry airfield in Soc Trang was transferred to the Vietnamese Air Force at a ceremony held Wednesday morning.

This was the first time a US airbase in Vietnam was transferred to the RVN Armed Forces.

After the transfer ceremony, the Huey UH-1 Helicopter Flight of the US 336th Assault Helicopter Company became the 227th Helicopter squadron of the Vietnamese Air Force.

Last month, the VN Air Force received a US air squadron known as the VNAF 225th Helicopter squadron stationed in Soc Trang (Ba Xuyen).

Other kinds of aircraft transferred to the VN Air Force at the same ceremony were a squadron of A-37 bombers and a Chinook helicopter squadron.

The Vietnamese Air Force has now a total of 27 air squadrons.

Brig. Gen. Kendall S. Young, Senior Advisor of the US Air Force at Tan Son Nhat air base, Wednesday morning said VNAF has now all the capacity to carry out by itself its modernization program.

With nearly 700 aircraft of all types which will be strengthened with more air units to be transferred by the US Air Force in Vietnam in the near future including C.I23 and Caribou C-7, the Vietnam Air Force is being modernized to the point it will be able to successfully defend the territory of the Republic.

ITALIAN IST LT. VOLUNTEERS FOR SERVICE IN RVNAF

Saigon, November 7. - An Italian artillery Ist. Lieutenant named Adriano Colombo recently volunteered to join the RVN Armed Forces to fight the communists.

Ist Lt. Adriano Colombo, 36, living in Legnano, Milan, made known that he had accomplished his draft service in the Italian army.

In a letter sent to the RVN Embassy in Italy, he wished to be admitted to combat units of the RVN forces.

Several days ago, an Italian youth named Ferronio Gian Pietro also sent a letter to the RVN Embassy in Rome, volunteering for service in the RVN forces to partake in the anti-communist struggle.

Culture

POETESS PHUONG DAI ON VIETNAMESE POETICAL IMPACT OF TODAY

Saigon, November 9. - "Poets are not so great unless they express themselves with the beauty of great sentiments which do reflect the common aspirations of the people as a whole."

Poetess Phuong Dai developed the expression when she made a lecture on "a glimpse on the poetical impact of today" Sunday morning at the National School of Music with over 300 guests in attendance.

Phuong Dai alias Nguyen Thi Thu Huong 38, Vinh Long, the daughter of Mrs. Song Thu a well-known poetess of South Vietnam who once was the comrade of revolutionary Ta Thu Thau, said that "the salient sentiment which emerges from Vietnamese poems these few years deals with the destiny of our Fatherland."

"Vietnamese poets of today have ceased vaguely mourning over the clouds and wind but the suffering of thousands and millions of the human beings," Phuong Dai said. To illustrate her point, she referred to poet Hoang Thoai Chau's masterwork entitled "Tinh Bien Nghia Song" (Sea's love and River's loyalty) which won the 1969 Literature Prize.

Phuong Dai Hoped that Vietnamese poets of the time will center their creative inspiration on the love of the people so that they could help the poetical works of South Vietnam overcome this bitter standstill: the new works are without buyers.

To conclude her lecture, Phuong Dai suggested that poets always seek to stir confidence and to inspire all the people with energy and hope.

Special Feature

THE HIDDEN FACE OF NORTH VIETNAM

Letter from Saigon, October 29, 1970. - If North Vietnam's mass media and its friends among the international reportorial community should reflect the truth to any extent, life must be perfectly wonderful north of the Seventeenth Parallel.

Of course, economic hardship and human misery do come through reports with Hanoi datelines but unless one should scrutinize them with a magnifying glass, life in North Vietnam would remind the reader of the living conditions in the Central Empire under its first two legendary kings, when one could sleep without locking the door and properties left in public places would naturally find their way back to their lawful owners.

Indeed, anybody mulling over articles signed by such correspondents as Mary McCarthy and Harrison Salisbury, cannot escape the impression of a totally virtuous people completely united behind their government and devoting their energy to the building of an ideal society. In these journalists' views, the North Vietnamese have achieved a social environment free of such evils as robbery, banditry, corruption and the like.

The shock, thus, must be rather big if he should be informed that Ton Duc Thang, North Vietnam's Chairman, has just signed two bills meting out the harshest sentences to perpetrators of these crimes.

ORDINANCES I49 AND I50/LCT: Last Friday and Saturday, as a matter of greatest urgency, Radio Hanoi had the entire texts of two ordinances - I49/LTC and I50/LTC - read on its wavelengths. The edicts respectively deal with "misappropriation of State properties" and "misappropriation of private properties."

Both documents, of course, also enumerate the various circumstances in which these crimes can be found to have been perpetrated and the various punishments that may be meted out to offenders. But an interested listener may immediately wonder what might have prompted the Hanoi leadership to promulgate two so very harsh laws, for both provide for the death penalty in cases viewed the world over as of minor importance.

A hint at the reasons behind the North Vietnamese move can be found in the very first chapter of both documents, which reads as follows: "Shall be severely punished (according to this ordinance) all such elements as established professional hoodlums, recidivists, leaders and members of organized gangs, or corrupt officials, whose deeds have resulted in important losses of (State or private) property."

The urgent character of the edicts is also visible through their last provision, which orders that "misappropriation of (State and private) properties committed prior to the promulgation of this Ordinance shall also be judged in accordance with its provisions."

CONTENTS: The points just mentioned are bad enough, indeed. But let us take a look at an article, chosen at random, possibly one of the mildest. Article Four of the I49/LCT Ordinance reads as follows:

"Appropriation of State property by force is punishable by imprisonment from five to 15 years. The same deed (a) committed in a professional manner or in recidive, (b) perpetrated by an organized gang, (c) done with the help of weapons or in the framework of a dangerous scheme, (d) resulting in severe wounds or the death of a person, or (e) resulting in a number of dangerous consequences shall be punished by detention from 12 to 15 years, life imprisonment or the death penalty."

The following articles provide for equally harsh punishments for crimes ranging from petty theft to pilferage through abuse of trust, misuse of bonds and stamps, and stockage of pilfered goods. Then come an entire chapter devoted to additional punishments, which may be given to those found to have infringed upon the law in some such circumstances as may not have been specified in the preceding 16 articles.

Again, culprits are liable to imprisonment up to five years and fines ranging from 50 to 5,000 piasters and confiscation of the culprit's properties.

BACKGROUND TO HARSHNESS: All this would hardly be understandable if North Vietnamese society should be uniquely composed of "good guys", whose only concern appears through Communist mass media to be the construction of a Utopia in which all men are brothers collectively bound by the Great Cause.

For students of North Vietnamese affairs, however, the ordinances published in Hanoi last week did not come as a surprise. They had had some advance warning of the

move as early as last year, when Radio Hanoi mentioned the establishment of an agency to counter the many risks and dangers faced by the average citizen in his daily life.

Indeed, about a year ago, police authorities in Hanoi and other large North Vietnamese cities were instructed by the Communist government to make a big effort to "sanitize" life in the cities, especially in their insecure suburbs, where hoodlums, thugs and other tough elements reportedly had made life impossible for the common people.

Police came up with a series of measures, including the creation of special committees for "street security," and the public was called on to denounce "bad elements". But these were found to be to no avail. Insecurity in North Vietnamese streets continued to be as bad as ever.

ANOTHER VERSION: Differing with policy-makers in Hanoi, seasoned observers of the Vietnamese scene see the real cause of North Vietnam's social uneasiness in the economic situation rather than anything else.

Not too long ago, a confidential British government study on the North Vietnamese economy pointed to the tremendous difficulties encountered by the Hanoi regime to bring out a return to normalcy nearly two years after the end of the air war in North Vietnam.

According to Time magazine, which gave a shortened version of this report, "production goals have become a bad joke. Five-year plans proved to be such exercises in fiction that in 1968 Hanoi switched to one-year plans. Even, so, targets remain elusive."

Also, Hanoi's problems "are compounded by the troubles that persist in agriculture. Fully 70 per cent of North Vietnam's agricultural work force is female, a reflection of the losses the country has suffered in nine years of war with the French and another nine years of fighting for control of South Vietnam."

A MATTER OF COURSE: North Vietnam's economic ills cannot be blamed on its people only, however. In a country that relies on import to feed its population without having the money to acquire the imported staples, economic disturbances leading to social unrest are a matter of course.

The two million tons of rice and wheat Hanoi had to buy or beg last year from Russia, China and other Communist countries constitute the best explanation of the mounting social ills which the Communist leaders had deemed necessary to counter with the two ordinances recently signed by Mr. Ton Duc Thang.

Indeed, for knowledgeable Hanoi watchers, life in North Vietnam must be truly unbearable to the great majority of its 20 million people. The ridiculous rations of food and other necessities handed out to each North Vietnamese and his family, in their reckoning, can only reduce him to a state of despair and rebellion.

Forced to work long hours for a miserable pay, the average North Vietnamese must necessarily feel the temptation of illegal practices. "It's only human", an observer said in reference to the reportedly high number of crimes in North Vietnam.

"Vietnamese families are large", the man also said. "Bread earners have grown scarcer and scarcer. It is only natural that crimes should increase in these circumstances".

SIGNS OF TROUBLES: The top Hanoi leadership, however, appears not to see the situation from that angle. Instead of seeking an improvement of the economic situation, which might only be brought about by an end to their military commitment in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, Mr. Ton Duc Thang and his friends apparently are seeking national discipline through force.

But coercion, even among the Vietnamese inured to privation and suffering, may backfire. Especially if the coming harvest should not be good and the war in Indochina should continue to drain North Vietnam of most of its youth, thereby preventing a genuine economic recovery, the North Vietnamese people may have second thoughts on the wisdom of their leaders.

It ensues that unless Nature should be generous to the North Vietnamese farmers in the coming months and developments in the Indochinese peninsula and in Paris should indicate some chance for a speedy return to normalcy, North Vietnam might be heading toward greater troubles in the wake of the promulgation of Ordinances I49 and I50/LCT.

In consideration of Hanoi's continued interest in stepping up the war in neighbouring countries and the adamantly belligerent statements by Communist diplomats in Paris and elsewhere, it can also be said the men in Hanoi do not want to search for the true cause of their present social and economic predicament.

HIDDEN FACE: The hidden face of North Vietnam, at any rate, has been put up for public view through the publication of the ordinances on "misappropriation of State properties" and "misappropriation of private properties."

No longer can the Hanoi regime claim to be one of internal peace. No longer can it boast revolutionary virtues for its citizenry. The hard facts of life have begun to pierce through the hypocritical mask the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been able to put on its face.

Unless the North Vietnamese leadership should urgently recognize the seriousness of the situation in which they have brought their country in pursuing a long struggle and do something drastic to salvage it, they might be heading for a truly difficult period.

For this correspondent, at least, a North Vietnamese collapse is not entirely out of the question.

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Cultural Feature

THE SANDALWOOD MAIDEN

Adapted by George F. Schultz

In the forest near Nha Trang there once lived a poor couple who managed to keep body and soul together by gathering firewood and selling it in the village. Although the couple often sacrificed to the gods and constantly prayed for their favors, they had remained childless. But one evening, as he was returning home, the woodcutter came upon a small girl who had been abandoned in the forest. He took her into his arms and carried her home to his wife.

The good woman was overjoyed to have a child to love and cherish at last. In spite of their abject poverty, the couple gave the little girl every care and attention. They saw to it that she wanted for nothing and let her have her own way in everything. Sometimes it seemed to them that their daughter had very strange desires.

As the years passed by, the little girl turned into a beautiful young maiden. One day, she brought home a piece of sandalwood from which a very special aroma seemed to come forth; it was much more fragrant than any other variety of sandalwood. The maiden took very good care of her new possession and no one else was permitted to touch it.

Since their daughter was very well-behaved, the parents did not deny her this strange pleasure. A day came, however, when she informed them that she had been commanded to go to the Court of the Emperor of China, where she would marry his son, The woodcutter and his wife forbade their daughter to undertake this journey. But she continued to offer new proofs of Heaven's Will and pleaded incessantly for their permission.

Finally, wearied by the young woman's pleas, the parents offered no more opposition to her plans and with heavy hearts agreed to let her depart. The maiden said farewell and went immediately to the seacoast, where she threw her piece of sandalwood into the water. Borne northwards by the current, it reached the shores of China. As for the maiden, she vanished without a trace.

Shortly thereafter, on the China coast, a fisherman found a wonderful piece of sandalwood in his net. He realized that it must be of great value and at once took it to the Imperial Palace.

When the Emperor's son gazed on the piece of sandalwood, he was seized with an overwhelming desire to own the costly object. He begged his father so insistently that the latter finally let him have it. The crown prince then wrapped the sandalwood in a silken cloth and kept it near him in the palace.

During the night the silken cloth was seen to move. The crown prince looked at it wonderingly and then remove it. From beneath the cloth appeared a beautiful maiden. The prince's heart was filled with such love for her that he went at once to his father and begged permission to marry her. The Emperor gave his consent and the wedding of the woodcutter's daughter and the son of the Emperor of China was celebrated with all the customary pomp.

The young couple were very happy in their first weeks of wedded life. Then, one day, the young wife told her husband that she had promised to visit her foster parents and requested his permission to make the journey to her old home.

The prince did not want his beautiful wife to be away from his side for a single day, however, and refused to grant her permission to leave. Prayers and tears availed her nothing. The young woman then went to the seashore with her piece of sandalwood and hurled it into the water. Before her husband's very eyes, she immediately vanished into thin air.

A few days later, the woodcutter found a piece of sandalwood on the beach of Nha Trang. It was a sad remembrance of his lost daughter. But when he returned home and found that she herself was present there, joy reigned again in the little household.

The crown prince was furious at his wife's disappearance. He equipped a fleet and sailed south with it in order to search for her. Unfortunately for the prince, his mistrust had angered Ngoc Hoang, the Emperor of Jade, who rules Heaven and Earth. As soon as the prince's ship entered the harbor of Nha Trang, it was changed into a rock.

The sandalwood maiden remained in Nha Trang and did many good deeds in helping the sick and the poor. When she died, a temple was erected in her honor and all the people of the city, both Cham and Vietnamese, venerate her as their patroness.

Note: The "sandalwood maiden" of this legend is the goddess Po Ino Nagar(or simply Po Nagar), the Cham counterpart of the Hindu goddess Uma (or Parvati), Siva's sakti. Po Nagar is said to have created the Earth, rice and sandalwood.

The mention of Ngoc Hoang, the Jade Emperor, supreme divinity of Taoism, would make it appear that the version given here is of Taoist inspiration.

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