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Politics

DIALOGUE ON COALITION IN SOUTH VN

Paris, December 1. - The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Monday night recorded the dialogue between two American personalities on the problem of a coalition government for South Vietnam.

Mr. Kenneth Young, former Ambassador to Bangkok represented the opponents while Prof. Richard Falk of Princeton University spoke for the supporters of the US acceptance for the coalition solution.

The televised dialogue was realized at the "Palais Des Congres", Versailles, in the outskirts of Paris.

Witnesses on Mr. Young's side included Ambassador Pham Dang Lam, RVN Chief Negotiator at the Paris peace talks, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong, Deputy Chief, Prof. Nguyen Van Bong leader of the National Progressist Movement, Mr. Hoang Duc Nha, Press officer concurrently Private Secretary of President Nguyen Van Thieu and Prof. Milton Sacks of Brandeis University.

Present on Prof. Falk's side were Ly Van Sau, spokesman of the so-called South Vietnam Liberation Front's delegation at the Paris peace talks, Father Robery Drinan newly-elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Mr. Egbal Ahmad, a Pakistan professor in Chicago.

The program moderator, Mr. Robert Fischer made known that the dialogue was recorded in Paris since witnesses were easily found out there than anywhere else.

The program included two parts, each lasted for an hour.

In the first part, the witnesses supporting the so-called coalition government were invited to answer Mr. Falk and Mr. Young, each for about six minutes.

In the second part, the witnesses opposing the coalition solution answered the questions of Mr. Young and afterwards of Mr. Falk.

Sandwiched in the two parts were many segments of film to give additional explanations such as the interviews with President Thieu, ex. Lt. Gen. Tran Van Don and Rep.

Ngo Cong Duc on Mr. Young's side and talks with Xuan Thuy and Nguyen Thi Binh on Mr. Falk's side.

Both of the two parts will be broadcast by 200 TV stations all over the U.S.

The first part will be broadcast on the night of December 8 and the second on December 15.

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT THIEU

To justify his stand, Mr. Young said in general that the coalition government is merely a phase used by the Communists to proceed to the elimination of non-Communist elements before taking all powers.

A coalition government, he said, means that Communist Ha Noi will take over South Vietnam.

He also made known that the present popular-elected government in SVN does not force the people to accept any form of government but has suggested free elections to let the people freely choose their form of government and political future.

Mr. Young then projected a segment of film on the interview with President Thieu in Saigon. In the interview, President Thieu asserted that the RVN government is willing to let the people choose their government. Hence he has suggested free elections. All political groups in SVN including the so-called SVN Liberation Front are authorized to equally partake in the elections under international supervision.

President Thieu also said Nguyen Thi Binh will be also entitled to run for the elections. The audience, including some 100 persons, among them American students were reported "warmly applauding" President Thieu's stand.

THE WITNESSES

Prof. Sacks, a witness opposing the formation of coalition government was the first to speak.

He said he had been in Vietnam for many years and witnessed the ever-developing democratic processes in this country. The RVN government has made so many efforts to develop the national economy, and raise the people's living standards. The RVN Armed Forces have striven to shoulder additional burdens in the anti-communist fight.

Mr. Sacks made known that the Communists claim for the elimination of any government opposing them including the government of Mr. Duong Van Minh after the outgoing of Ngo Dinh Diem.

PROF. BONG'S DISCLOSURES

To a question, Prof. Bong said although he opposed the government on a number of viewpoints he will never accept a coalition with the Communists since the latter never admit those who do not share the Communist viewpoints.

Sooner or later, the Communists will eliminate all non-communist elements to take over all powers and realize dictatorship.

In reply to Mr. Falk's question, Prof. Bong said President Thieu had actively participated in the anti-colonialist Resistance Movement and the President was one of the first Vietnamese patriots who joined the national army to fight the Communists.

MR. HOANG DUC NHA:
PRES. THIEU'S STATEMENTS MISREPRESENTED

Speaking after Prof. Bong Mr. Nha said in the RVN democratic processes are recognized by the Constitution and the students have the right to speak out their opinion. All opposition elements are free to voice their stand.

Police intervention only helped play off subversive actions and restore public order, Nha said.

When Mr. Falk read the statements he claimed made by President Thieu in demanding an elimination of all advocates for immediate peace Mr. Nha said such statement were not of the RVN President since they had been distorted by Mr. Falk.

AMB. PHAM DANG LAM: COMMUNISTS CLING TO CONDITIONAL TALKS

The RVN Chief Negotiator said the Communists have refused to negotiate at the peace talks. They have rejected all the proposals of the RVN including free elections and refused to discuss a schedule for external forces, withdrawal from the South, to release unconditionally and immediately all POWs of both sides and to accept a stand-still cease fire to end the war.

The Communists, he added, merely want to replace the RVN constitutional government by a so-called coalition government chosen by them, and this is a prerequisite brought forward by the Communists before they embark on serious negotiations.

Amb. Lam also acknowledged that the RVN government is ready to negotiate all problems publicly or secretly without any preconditions provided it would bring genuine and lasting peace for the South Vietnamese people.

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong was the last witness to answer Mr. Falk.

He said for 30 years, the nationalists have been victims of the Communists who have taken advantage of the situation since the first days of the anti French resistance. That explains why, the Constitution of the 2nd Republic promulgated in 1967 has outlawed the Communists.

The witnesses supporting a coalition government only repeated the stand of the Communists.

POPE PAUL MESSAGE BEST WISHES TO VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

Saigon, November 28. - Pope Paul VI and President Nguyen Van Thieu exchanged mes-

sages Friday morning when the Pontiff flew over the Republic of Vietnam during 45 minutes in his way to Manila from East Pakistan.

The Alitalia DC-8 with the Pope aboard flew across Cambodia entered the RVN aerial space at 7:37 a.m. Friday. At 7:47 a.m. the Alitalia DC-8 flew over Qui Nhon city and left the RVN aerial space at 8:22 a.m. for the Philippines.

In the message sent to President Nguyen Van Thieu the Pontiff expressed his best wishes for the Vietnamese people's happiness and the promotion of fraternity among the Vietnamese people as a whole who are dearest to him.

Later, Pres. Thieu, on behalf of 17 million South Vietnamese population and himself sent to Pope Paul VI a message wishing good health to the Pontiff.

President Thieu also expressed his gratitude to the Pope for having sent a message to the Vietnamese people.

The Papal presence as well as the Papal concern over the Vietnamese people are valuable condolence for the whole population of this part of the world, the presidential message added.

"We will devotedly pray for Your Holiness during your historical tour crowned with love which predicts the advent of peace, a peace for which we have so tirelessly prayed" the President's message said.

"We will also wish that the efforts of Your Holiness will help the human races unite together under the faith in God who had sacrificed his life for the promotion so as of love, fraternity, freedom and dignity" President Thieu's message concluded.

The Pontiff is being on his Asian tour. He arrived in Manila early in Friday morning from Dacca, East Pakistan.

PRES. THIEU TOURS 3 IV MR PROVINCES

Saigon, November 27. - Continuing his two-day tour of the IV Military Region, President Nguyen Van Thieu Friday afternoon visited Long Xuyen, Chau Doc and Sa Dec provinces.

At Cho Moi district town, Long Xuyen, President Thieu gave a talk on the RVN government's peace stand to over 2,000 local inhabitants.

The President on this occasion asserted that "we must put an end to the war by ourselves through the development of military achievements and efforts to implement the Pacification Development program.

"In other words, the President said, while the Armed Forces are doing their best to destroy the enemy, every citizen in the rear must actively take part in the reconstruction work and be vigilant so as not to be deceived by the enemy propaganda or by a minority of nationalist elements who stupidly or by personal interests advocate viewpoints susceptible to subjugate this country to the Communist yoke."

The President described the present anti-Communist struggle of the South Vietnamese people as the action of a family Chief who drives off the gangsters who sneak

into the house.

The Chief Executive also reaffirmed his anti-Communist and anti-coalition stand, adding that international historical experiences prove that the Communists never respect the coalition solution.

The Chief Executive urged the entire people to place their confidence in the ultimate victory to actively cooperate with the government in the eradication of all the remaining enemy underground cadres, in an effort to restore a one-hundred per cent security in villages and hamlets, and shorten the path to peace, prosperity, freedom and independence.

Later, Pres. Thieu made an observation tour by motorboat of the security situation in ~~areas~~, along Hau Giang river.

He spent the Thursday's night at Long Xuyen provincial Capital, where he presided over a bonfire camp of 2,000 local Civil Self Defense cadres held at the provincial stadium.

On this occasion, Pres. Thieu praised the CSD cadres for the organization of the camp which, he said, offered them an opportunity to exchange experiences on CSD activities as well as to strengthen their ranks and promote the esprit de corps among themselves.

Pres. Thieu urged the CSD cadres to always maintain a good behavior and to completely fulfill their duty so as to strengthen the prestige of the CSD organization and to ensure security for villages and hamlets.

On November 27, President Thieu toured Chau Doc province to review the local security situation and Pacification Development achievements.

The Chief Executive presided over a ceremony at which 200 local peasants received land titles, held at Tan Viet theater in Chau Doc.

Addressing the attendance on this occasion, President Thieu dealt with the rapid progress of the security situation on in the province.

"Such a progress" he said "is now reached thanks to the continued military victories scored by the RVN and Allied troops.

The President also made known that the government has thus far completed the implementation of several developments projects at rural areas, which he said are bringing about a new face at the grass-root level throughout the country.

Pres. Thieu appealed to the entire people to be alert in the coming phase of the anti-Communist political struggle.

The President then made a sight seeing tour of the Sam Mount area, Thay pagoda, Marshal, Thoai Ngoc Hau temple and Ba temple. He presented each place visited with VN \$ 100,000.

In the afternoon of the same day, Pres. Thieu visited Sa Dec provincial capital where he expounded the government's peace stand to over 10,000 local inhabitants.

On this occasion, the President stressed that the RVN peace stand as he had several times dealt with during his previous tour of the IV Military Region, centers on the development of people's living standards and educational conditions.

Before returning to Saigon, President Thieu dropped in at Tan Phu Tru village, Duc Thinh district, where he also presided over a landtitle distribution ceremony.

Accompanying President Thieu on the tour were Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem and a number of Cabinet members.

Foreign Relations

HOLLAND, CANADA ASSIST FLOOD VICTIMS IN VIETNAM

Saigon, November 30. - In response to the appeal of the RVN government, the government of Holland has decided to contribute 25,000 florins (equivalent to US \$ 7,000) to the relief works for Central Vietnam flood victims.

Sources from the Foreign Affairs Ministry said Mr. A.H. Crom, charge d'Affairs at the Dutch Embassy in Vietnam, will hand over a cheque for 25,000 florins to the Central Relief Committee at a ceremony to be held in the next few days.

Meanwhile, the same sources said the Canadian government will provide the RVN government with 19,000 blankets and 200,000 corrugated iron sheets as a contribution to the assistance to flood victims in Central Vietnam.

Economics

LAW ON PETROLEUM EXPLOITATION PROMULGATED

Saigon, December 2. - President Nguyen Van Thieu Tuesday promulgated Law No. 011-70 prescribing the prospecting and exploitation of petroleum and conditions for taxes, expenditures and foreign exchange involved.

The law, recently endorsed by the National Assembly, aimed at providing favorable conditions for international companies desirous to invest in the prospecting of petroleum in Vietnam as well as at properly safeguarding the national interests.

Sources from the President's Office also said at 4 p.m. the same day, Pres. Thieu received Mr. Kenneth B. Keating, US Ambassador to New Delhi, who is now on a week-long visit to the Republic.

Also present at the hour-long meeting was Mr. Ellsworth Bunker, US Ambassador to Vietnam.

NATIONWIDE TAXATION CONTROL CAMPAIGN TO BE LAUNCHED

Saigon, December 2. - A Nationwide Taxation Control Campaign will be launched next Monday December 7, authoritative sources reported.

In the Capital City, the campaign launching ceremony will be held at the Saigon City Hall with Saigon Prefect Col. Do Kien Nhieu presiding.

Sources from the Directorate General of Taxation and Rural Development cadres, cadets from the Thu Duc Infantry School, students of the National Commerce School and Technical cadres will make a house-to-house tour distributing taxation control forms. Family chiefs will fill in the forms respective of the questions on their incomes, professions etc...

A week later, taxation cadres will return to each house to collect the forms.

The Nationwide Taxation Control Campaign aims at helping the Finance Ministry have basic documents for a much more rational levy of taxes.

In the first phase, the campaign is launched only at provincial capitals, cities and the Capital City.

JAPANESE EXPERTS DELEGATION IN TOWN

Saigon, November 27. - A delegation of Japanese experts arrived in Saigon Friday morning for the promotion of the setting up of the Southeast Asia Economic Development Center.

The delegation including 6 experts from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economy and Finance will stay in Vietnam for three days to make an on the spot economic development study.

The setting up of the Southeast Asia Economic Development Center, initiated by Thailand at the 3rd convention of Southeast Asian Economy Ministers, was reported to center on the promotion of a close cooperation among the Southeast Asian countries in the fields of commerce, investment and tourism.

The Japanese experts delegation was headed by Mr. Ukawa.

An official meeting between the Japanese and Vietnamese experts will be convened on November 28 at Hoan My (Majestic) restaurant.

Military

VIETNAMESE NAVY HAS 14 MORE PATROL CRAFTS

Saigon, December 2. - The Vietnamese Navy recently received 14 Patrol Crafts Fast

(PCF) from the US Navy at a ceremony held Tuesday at Cat Lo base, Vung Tau, with Vietnamese Navy Commander Rear Admiral Tran Van Chon and Commander of the US Navy Force in Vietnam, Vice Admiral Jerome H. King, presiding.

On this occasion, Rear Admiral Chon thanked the US government for its help in the carrying out of the Vietnamese Navy development and modernization program. He also praised the 213rd Coastal Patrol Task Force for its active contribution to the fulfilment of naval missions.

The Vietnamese Navy Commander on this occasion asserted that "since we tighten the control of the RVN territorial waters, the Communists have found it extremely hard to break through our maritime defense belt."

Enemy Navy Crafts from the North were repeatedly uncovered and destroyed by the RVN and Allied Navy forces when they attempted to infiltrate into the South, Commander Chon said. The recent discovery and destruction of a NVN warship in Vinh Binh, he added, proved the effectiveness of the coastal patrol system of the RVN Navy.

At the same ceremony, the 1st. Flotilla, the 1st. River Group and the 13th Coast Patrol Group of the US Navy officially transferred the combat responsibilities to the 213rd RVN Coastal Patrol Task Force.

Special Feature

INFILTRATION BY THE SEA

Letter from Saigon, December 3. - A coordinated Communist attempt at supplying the hard pressed insurgent movement in the Mekong delta was spoiled in the early hours of Sunday last, when a North Vietnamese trawler was sunk 5.5 miles off the coast of the once Viet Cong infested province of Kien Hoa.

At approximately the time when the North Vietnamese ship intruded Kien Hoa territorial waters, Viet Cong gunners throughout the province also staged eight mortar and ground attacks, which, by their limited character, had been probably aimed at keeping government troops from venturing out of their positions and interfering with their logistical mission.

Viet Cong longshoremen did not have the chance of unloading the cargo of war materiel, however. Closely trailed by allied men-of-war and pounded from the air by U.S. jets the North Vietnamese vessel exploded a little past midnight in the South China Sea 70 miles south of Saigon.

TRAILED FOR SIX DAYS: According to spokesmen, the enemy ship had been under allied surveillance for six days before she reached the mouth of the Ham Luong, one of the estuaries of the Mekong river.

As the Communist trawler neared the coastline of marsh and mangrove late Saturday night, trailing allied men-of-war closed in on her and demanded that she surrender. North Vietnamese sailors responded by firing at their nearest tormentor, the minesweeper USS Endurance.

Early in the night, the Endurance had observed the enemy ship moving in a north-eastern direction parallel to the coastline. It was to catch up with the intruder after following her for 13 miles and when she infringed upon Kien Hoa territorial waters challenged her by firing two shots across her bow.

An exchange of fire was then recorded between the Endurance and the trawler. At one point in the hourlong battle, the North Vietnamese vessel tried to ram the minesweeper, which had to avoid the kiss of death by making a big detour. As the two ships continued to exchange volleys of explosive, two coast guard cutter which were in the vicinity - the Rush and Sherman - also took the intruder under fire. In the last stage of the naval battle, U.S. planes were brought to the area.

ILLUMINATED SKY: To prevent the enemy trawler from disappearing in the many canals of Kien Hoa province, flareships were also called in which illuminated the moonless sky with dozens of 15,000-watt flares. Two battalions of the South Vietnamese Seventh Infantry Division were then told to be ready to be helilifted to the area of the intruder's port of call.

But allied firepower on the spot was too much for the lone enemy vessel. A little past midnight, she exploded and sank after being repeatedly pounded. The one-side affair lasted exactly 52 minutes since the first rounds were exchanged.

Immediately thereafter, a squad of frogmen were dispatched to the scene to explore the inside of the Communist ship now 50 feet under water. Latest reports from the scene indicated yesterday the search might last many days.

Whatever the deep-sea divers may find, the naval encounter off Kien Hoa indicates the enemy is desperately looking for an alternate or supplementary infiltration route in addition to the Ho Chi Minh trail through Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia.

A SEVERANCE ATTEMPT: For these well-known infiltration routes, the allied high command in Saigon has resorted to airpower. Thousands of tons of ordnance had been dropped on the jungle of Laos and Cambodia in an effort to cut the flow of North Vietnamese arms and men into the southern half of Indochina.

From sources at headquarters, it was learned last week that the tactics can be said to be "rather successful", for aerial reconnaissance and photography have lately revealed only a limited degree of traffic on the many jungle trails in this area.

It was thus with some surprise that allied generals heard of the capture of up to 384 tons of 85mm cannon ammunition in the Cambodian province of Ratanakiri about a week ago. The well-preserved stock did not reveal signs indicating how long it had been there and military commanders had to think it had only recently arrived in the Bo Kheo area.

For all the pounding of the Ho Chi Minh trail, thus, it must be assumed that Transportation Group 559, the main North Vietnamese logistics organization for the conquest of the South, is still very much alive. The many signs of a new Communist campaign in the highlands of Central Vietnam also must be viewed as indicating weapons and men from the North still had managed to go through the rain of bombs of the U.S. Strategic Air Command.

SMALLER CONTEXT: In this large context, the sinking of the unidentified North Vietnamese ship off the coast of Kien Hoa, thus, is only a small episode of the logistical war between the Communists and the allies. Its significance must be viewed in the smaller context of the war in the Mekong delta.

Indeed, the weekend's naval battle was not the first such incident in the Mekong delta. Only a month ago, another unidentified vessel had been sighted near the southern-most tip of Camau. On this particular occasion, however, the intruder escaped allied surveillance by boldly seeking refuge in a dense fog. It was presumed to have brought the hardpressed Viet Cong in their U Minh forest base camp some most needed arms and munitions.

For some of the recent returnees in the once Communist-infested province of Kien Hoa, too, the Viet Cong movement had also been supplied by Soviet submarines at certain periods of the long war. These submarines reportedly visited Thoi Thuan district town every fortnight, bringing mail and other important supplies to the insurgents, and keeping them much closer to the outside world than allied policy-makers would think they were.

Communist infiltration routes by the sea, however, appeared to have come to an end after Norodom Sihanouk, the overthrown Cambodian leader, opened Sihanoukville to Communist traffic. But, then, Sihanouk was overthrown and Sihanoukville ~~barred~~ to Communist shipping. The Viet Cong insurgents in the Mekong delta were faced with growingly insoluble problems.

THE EXAMPLE OF KIEN HOA: Parts of these problems can be seen in the Viet Cong's situation in Kien Hoa the birthplace of the Communist movement and one of the most insecure regions of South Vietnam until recently.

During the past six months or so, fighting has been so very reduced there that a state of normalcy has been restored throughout the island province. Giong Trom, the Viet Cong "capital" was occupied by government troops last month with practically no enemy resistance. All the roads in the provinces are safe for travel day and night. And the number of Communist turn-coats has increased so dramatically that one may wonder whether the backbone of the insurgency can be said to have been broken in this particular area.

Giong Trom, Ba Tri, Thoi Thuan, An Hoa--all these famous names in all Communist books on the Vietnam war--have one by one come under government control. The degree of security in this once Communist-dominated region can be measured by the level of the mortar and ground attacks that took place simultaneously with the naval battle.

Indeed, although Communist gunners that night pounded the provincial capital of Truc Giang and three district towns--Don Nhon, Mo Cay, and Binh Dai--and attacked a Regional Force position, the assaults were so weak that they wounded only five among the local population. On the other and, a South Vietnamese operation in the Giong Trom area earlier in the day had resulted in 22 enemies killed and the capture of ten weapons.

BETTER SENSE: In the smaller context of the situation in the Mekong delta, the naval incident of last Sunday makes much better sense. Caught off their sources of men and materiel in the North, the Viet Cong insurgents have found themselves unable to cope with the new situation as was brought about by allied pacification campaigns and Cambodian operations.

The enemy high command early this year had to call on its troops to revert to guerrilla tactics by taking their foe's weapons and living on the people but the instruction apparently either was unheeded or turned out to be impossible to implement. Mekong delta-based Viet-Cong elements continued to rally to Saigon by the hundreds. If nothing should come from Hanoi to impress the remaining loyal elements that they are not abandoned, the situation might turn irreversibly bad for the Viet Cong.

Hanoi generals had to do something. The South China sea was there. But they did not reckon with Operation Market Time and the ever sharp radar eyes of South Vietnamese and American navies. Once detected, North Vietnamese trawlers really do not have a chance.

Sunday's naval battle, thus, is nothing but a desperate attempt by Hanoi to revive the moribund Viet Cong movement in the Mekong delta. It failed.

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