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Politics

PRES. THIEU: NO COMMUNIST CANDIDATES PERMITTED IN 1971 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Saigon, December 5. - The Press Secretary at the President's Office Friday issued clarification on President Nguyen Van Thieu's statement during a recent interview with an American television network.

According to the clarification, following a Voice of America (VOA) broadcast of December 3, and another one of December 4, some Saigon newspapers reported:

"Answering questions from an American television company, President of the Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Van Thieu reiterated that he rejected the formation of a coalition government in South Vietnam. However, President Thieu agreed to allow Communist elements, including Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, to run for office in the forthcoming elections in Vietnam."

The President termed such a newsreport as entirely groundless.

The clarification went on:

- During the interview, when asked about a coalition government in South Vietnam President Thieu energetically rejected such a solution and asserted that he will never accept any coalition government with the Communists under whatever form.

- With a view to solve the war in Vietnam, the President recalled that he had, on July II, 1969, offered a political solution in South Vietnam that is most reasonable and liberal, whereby those who are fighting on the other side may return and participate in free elections under international supervision if they stop aggression, lay down their weapons and cease terrorist activities.

- When the government of the Republic of Vietnam agrees to the formula of elections to put an end to the war, then in the spirit of the July II, 1969 proposals, anyone from the other side, including Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh and Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho, may participate in the elections. This is a challenge from the government of the Republic of Vietnam to let the Communists see for themselves whether the people in South Vietnam support them or not... and put to a test for their claim that they control two-thirds of the territory and three-fourths of the population.

To date, they have not dared to accept this challenge because they know that they will lose.

In short, President Nguyen Van Thieu has never said that he would agree to allow the Communists to run for elections in the forth coming elections as he has been erroneously reported.

VICE PRESIDENT KY BACK FROM U.S. TOUR

Saigon, December 8. - Upon his return home Tuesday morning Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky held a press conference at the VIP lounge of Tan Son Nhat airport.

On this occasion, Vice President Ky made known that a coalition government with the Communists will never be accepted by both Vietnamese and American governments.

Vice President Ky said the US government has committed its support to the RVN government in the search for a non-Communist peace or a peace in freedom.

Vice President Ky on this occasion urged those who dream of a coalition with the Communists to abandon it. "Otherwise, the Army and people will eliminate them" he added.

According to Vice President Ky, the South Vietnamese people and Army have so far shared their blood in the anti-Communist fight, therefore at present we have to determinedly defeat the Communists and there is no reason to accept a coalition or mince cut concession to the enemy.

Vice President Ky said he was sure that over one million militarymen and their families will never accept such a coalition.

Dealing with the progress of the Paris peace talks, Vice President Ky said the Communist side stubbornly rejected proposals for serious talks with the RVN, therefore we need not to set forth any new peace initiatives.

Vice President Ky made known the boycott of Paris peace talks will be out of question because the RVN negotiating delegation has been simplified and limited.

On this occasion, he disclosed that the US government has agreed to change its policy of economic aid for the Republic of Vietnam.

According to Vice President Ky, US President Nixon had ordered two economic experts to visit Vietnam so as to make an on-the-spot study of an overall aid program for the RVN.

Vice President Ky remarked that the general principle for such a change of US aid policy is the simplification of procedures, and the aid should meet the aspirations of RVN people.

To another question, Vice President Ky said thanks to the growth of the RVN Armed Forces, Allied combat troops may be completely withdrawn from Vietnam by the end of 1971.

To a foreign newsmen's question, Vice President Ky asserted that there were only two major purposes for his tour of the USA that he had said before leaving Vietnam - to express the gratitude of Vietnamese people to the American people and to promote better understanding between the two nations.

On this occasion, Vice President Ky stated as a Vice President, his responsibility for the last year is to contribute to the settlement of so many difficult problems such as the problem of economy, the living conditions of the disabled veterans etc...

Regarding the coming Presidential election, Vice President recalled that for the sake of the unity of Armed Forces in the anti-Communist struggle he had decided not to run the Presidential election three years ago.

At present he still maintains this intention regarding the coming Presidential election.

Vice President Ky asserted that he will do his best to promote and consolidate the national unity in the anti-Communist fight and will never do anything harmful to this unity.

Vice President Ky emphasized that what the people talked about his running for the coming Presidential election is just rumor.

On hand to greet Vice President Ky and his wife at Tan Son Nhat airport were Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem and his wife, a number of Cabinet members, Senators, Representatives and representatives of the diplomatic corps.

APU 6TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPENS

Saigon, December 9. - President Nguyen Van Thieu Wednesday morning delivered a speech opening the Asian Parliamentarians Union (APU)'s 6th General Assembly at the Hoan My conference hall on Bach Dang Quay Saigon.

On behalf of the RVN people, President Thieu extended greetings to the Representatives to the Representatives and Senators of 13 nations attending the General Assembly.

Dealing with the spirit of the General Assembly, President Thieu said it symbolizes the unity of Asian nations in holding together discussions on problems concerning Asia and at the same time materializes their firm faith in the democracy ideal, meaning the government must be elected by the people and must work for the people.

The RVN President said it's an honor to have Saigon, the capital of Vietnam, chosen as the seat for the APU 6th General Assembly.

Touching on the ideal of democracy, President Thieu said democratic traditions have existed for centuries in Asians life, and cited for instance, the steady system of separation of power in Vietnam.

And nowadays, he added, the democracy ideal in Vietnam has been materialized through the presence of popular-elected institutions from the Central with the National Assembly down to grass-root levels with the provincial and village councils.

Conversely, according to President Thieu, the Communists dominate man by violence and destroy the oriental spiritual heritage. The Communists have taken the name of the people to betray the people, he said.

The RVN President pointed out that the RVN anti-Communist struggle has contributed to the maintenance of the just and durable peace of the world.

He also appealed to the sense of cooperation of Asian nations so as to together make progress, build peace in freedom and prosperity and enhance the Asian traditions.

President Thieu finally wished success to the General Assembly.

Earlier, Rep. Nguyen Quang Luyen, who was elected President of the APU 6th General Assembly called for a sincere cooperation among the peoples of Asia to offer the best alternative to attain progress, secure stability and prosperity for the Asians.

Rep. Luyen said "the greatest task that lies ahead of us today is the new order based on human dignity and freedom we set out to create for our fellow Asians through close cooperation, in a pluralistic world still plagued by perennial difficulties and torn by ideological differences".

According to Rep. Luyen "we are in the midst of the modernization process of our societies. Some of us have gone a long way in that direction. Others are still at the threshold of economic growth. However, the underlying strength of this quest for progress resides in the determination of Asian nations to bring the fruits of modern technology to millions of their people, to create for them meaningful roles to play in the family of men and, above all, to guarantee their national dignity and independence. We are determined to follow this path which we have carved for ourselves out of a deep sense of commitment and in conformity with our traditions and aspirations".

The APU 6th General Assembly President also denounced that the Communists, propelled by their policy of expansion, violate the privacy of individuals and integrity of nations.

The overt aggression against Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia is an illustrating example of their resort to sheer power to subjugate small and peaceful nations, he said.

Rep. Luyen made it clear "as free Asians, we cannot stay still in the face of the threatening evil forces rooted in an ideology totally alien to our way of life, contemptuous of all human rights and dignity. The war in Vietnam has brought forth a clear-cut conclusion. The aggressive forces of totalitarianism have been blunted by the forces of freedom.

"The forces of freedom which have halted the Red tide and won the Green Revolution in the remote hamlets of Vietnam cannot afford to surrender in the face of senseless violence, unruly street demonstrations and the deeds of complacency and appeasement in the capital cities of the world".

Rep. Luyen told the delegates that even in the midst of war the Vietnamese people never relent in the national endeavor to build a free and democratic society. The advent of democracy has gained the confidence of the Vietnamese people and provided a springboard for achievements in other areas.

Earlier, Mr. Ku Cheng Keng, President of the APU 5th General Assembly, delivered a speech denouncing the Communists' dark schene of aggression against Asian nations, advocated by Red China.

Meanwhile, according to Mr. Ku Cheng Keng, a number of passive peace advocates believe that, in making concession they can defend themselves and in seeking conciliation they can achieve a peaceful co-existence. In fact, the Communists will not let them live safely but always want to dominate the whole mankind.

He also urged Asian peoples to cooperate in order to check passive pacifism and Communist aggression.

Mr. Ku Cheng Keng was of the opinion that the tempo of US troops' withdrawal from Vietnam must suit the strong development of the RVN Armed Forces.

He voiced out his support to the RVN stand against a coalition government with Communist participation, the protection to the Cambodian government and the speeding up of the formation of an anti-Communist United Front in Indochina.

Among the guests present at the opening ceremony of the APU 6th General Assembly were Senate Chairman Nguyen Van Huyen, Lower House Speaker Nguyen Ba Luong, Supreme Court President Tran Van Linh, Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, the Inspectorate President, members of the Cabinet and representatives of the diplomatic corps.

MR. TRAN VAN LINH ELECTED SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT

Saigon, December 5. - Mr. Tran Van Linh Friday was elected President of the Supreme Court for the 1970-1971 term in replacement of Mr. Tran Minh Tiet.

Mr. Tran Van Linh, 46, a native of Bien Hoa, was Supreme Court President during the 1968-1969 term.

Sources close to the Supreme Court said Mr. Tran Van Linh defeated Mr. Tran Minh Tiet in a seven-to-two vote.

A communique of the Supreme Court said, at the Court's general assembly Friday its new office for the 1970-1971 term was elected and the following assignments were made:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| - Mr. Tran Van Linh | President |
| - Mr. Nguyen Van Bien | First Vice President and Cassation Board Chairman. |
| - Mr. Trinh Xuan Ngan | Second Vice President and Constitution Protection Board Chairman. |
| - Mr. Mai Van An | Supreme Court Magistrate in charge of Judiciary Management. |
| - Mr. Nguyen An Thong | Supreme Court Magistrate in charge of Internal Affairs. |

- Mr. Tran Minh Tiet

Supreme Court Magistrate in charge of Research of Laws.

- Mr. Nguyen Mong Bich

Supreme Court Magistrate in charge of External Affairs

Foreign Relations

BRITISH AID TO RVN REACHES 600,000 POUND STERLING PER YEAR

Saigon, December 4. - British aid to the Republic of Vietnam amounted to 600,000 pound sterlings (about VN \$ 170,000,000) each year and the British aid mainly comprises technical and training projects.

Mr. John Anthony Kershaw, British Foreign Office Deputy Minister made the statement at a press conference at Hoan My restaurant Friday morning.

Deputy Min. Kershaw revealed that the British government has paid special attention to the technical assistance and the training for Vietnam under long-term projects.

Besides, he said his government has considered another form of aid for Vietnam under long term credit. Deputy Min. Kershaw believed that Britain is experienced in this field since she granted such loans to several nations in the world especially for agricultural development.

Particularly, according to the British Foreign Office Deputy Minister Britain had granted 200,000 pound sterlings to two primary schools in the Capital city.

To a question on the convening of a new conference on Vietnam in Geneva, Mr. Kershaw disclosed that in a meeting with the British Foreign Secretary in London a month ago, the Soviet Foreign Minister squarely said such a conference could not yet be opened.

Referring to the relationship between Britain and Cambodia, Deputy Min. Kershaw made known that a British high ranking diplomatic official visited Cambodia a month ago to discuss the British aid for this country.

He said he also dealt with this issued with the RVN authorities.

The British Foreign Office Deputy Minister said his meeting with President Nguyen Van Thieu was friendly and useful.

Deputy Min. Kershaw arrived in Saigon last Tuesday and met with several high-ranking officials of the RVN government.

ROC PRESENTS U.S.\$ 10,000 FOR ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAMESE FLOOD VICTIMS

Saigon, December 7. - The Republic of China has donated U.S.\$ 10,000 as a contri-

bution to the relief fund for flood victims in Central Vietnam.

ROC Ambassador to Vietnam Mr. Hu Lien Monday morning handed over a cheque for the above sum to Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam.

Two weeks ago, the RVN government disseminated a message appealing to Free World nations to give assistance to flood victims in Central Vietnam.

The appeal has received warm welcome from many friendly nations.

SWISS GOVERNMENT GRANTS NEARLY VN \$ 2 MILLION TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Saigon, December 8. - Mr. Jean Pierre Weber, Swiss Consul General to Vietnam Monday morning handed over a cheque for VN \$ 1,582,861 to Minister of State Phan Quang Dan, Central Relief Committee Chairman, as a contribution of Switzerland to the relief works for Central Vietnam flood victims.

Sources from the Central Relief Committee also said the Committee recently received from Ambassador Bui Van Anh a cheque for US \$ 500 contributed by personnel of the RVN Embassy in Switzerland.

The same sources made known at a Cabinet meeting Monday afternoon, Dr. Dan briefed the Cabinet on the latest floods which hit anew the IMR provinces during the November 29 and December 4 period. He also proposed several urgent measures aimed at assisting the local flood victims, preventing a possible starvation and carrying out the reconstruction of the I Military Region.

According Dr. Dan, the Central Relief Committee had requested the Land Reform and Agriculture-Fishery Development Ministry to earmark an additional amount of VN \$ 5 million for the purchase of IR rice seeds to be redistributed to local peasants so as to help them cultivate the March crop in time.

Owing to the heavy loss of buffaloes killed by the floods, Dr. Dan said, local peasants are needing about 100 hand-operated ploughing machines for their cultivation activities.

According to Dr. Dan, flood victims in the I MR from now to Tet Lunar New Year also need about 150,000 blankets as cold weather is drawing near.

In addition Dr. Dan found it necessary to release for the 1st phase an amount of VN \$ 250 million from local Agricultural Development Banks to help local peasants and fishermen easily make their living.

ADC EXPERTS COMPLETE REPORT ON RVN ECONOMY

Saigon, December 8. - Experts at the Asian Development Center (ADC) have completed a report on the economy of Vietnam after a week working together with the RVN specialists.

Sources from the Asian Parliamentarians Union (APU) Vietnam Chapter made known that

the report covered all aspects of the promising future development, as a result of an on the spot survey of the Mekong Delta, Cam Ranh and Da Nang cities by the ADC visitors.

The APU Vietnam chapter Sunday evening held a banquet in honor of the ADC experts. Also present at the party were representatives of the APU member countries making part of the ADC Administrative Board.

On this occasion the ADC Administrative Board members signed the report which will be discussed at the December 9 plenary session of the 6th APU General Assembly in Saigon.

Open Arms

COMMUNISTS RALLY TO GOVERNMENT IN RECORD NUMBER IN VIET CONG STRONGHOLD AREA

Saigon, November 1970. - The trend in 1970 is running against the Communists in one of the last Viet Cong strongholds in the Mekong Delta -- Kien Hoa Province --, officials say. The birthplace and home of South Vietnamese rebel leaders since French colonial times, Kien Hoa Province this year is recording the nation's highest numbers of Communist defectors under the government's Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) amnesty program.

For 14 continuous weeks, Kien Hoa has registered more returnees than any of the Republic of Vietnam's other 43 provinces. Of the 27,900 ralliers recorded nationwide during the first ten months of 1970, 3,201 of them came to the government side in Kien Hoa -- more than in any other province.

Kien Hoa, bounded and traversed by three major arms of the Mekong River, is located 110 kilometers southwest of Saigon on the South China Sea.

Kien Hoa's highest Chieu Hoi totals this year occurred in August, September and October, reflecting an intensified government campaign to establish permanent control in the province's two most insecure districts, Mo Cay and Don Nhon.

In Don Nhon, government officials re-established a district capital that lay desolate and abandoned for several years.

In Mo Cay, where hard-core Communist leaders proclaimed establishment of their National Liberation Front in 1960, government forces are taking control in territories the Viet Cong and Viet Minh held since the end of World War II. Thirty new government outposts have been built to protect populated areas since February 1970, and other new ones to be added by the end of this year will bring the total in Mo Cay District alone to nearly 100.

The Viet Cong still controlled the lives of a quarter of Mo Cay's population in the second half of 1970. But in mid-October, President Thieu emphasized his confidence in the district's growing security by lunching one day at An Thanh Village, a place known until earlier this year as "Viet Cong Market". President Thieu pointed out that An Thanh, now pacified, has a new electric generator, a new eight-bed maternity clinic, a new fish market under construction, an enlarged vegetable market building, an expanded commercial rice mill to handle rice grown on previously fallow lands, and three school teachers at

a school just across the road from a villa formerly occupied by the Viet Cong village chief. Village population, down to 800 in October 1969, has increased to 2,600.

In fertile Ham Long District, nearby, pacification has progressed even farther than in Mo Cay. A year ago 12 hamlets were still under Viet Cong control. Now none are.

Kien Hoa was one of the last provinces to accept French colonial authority in the 1800s. Its leaders were among the first to fight for independence in 1940s. It was a recruiting-ground for several Viet Cong main-force battalions during the early 1960s.

The trend is unmistakably against the Communists, according to Kien Hoa Deputy Province Chief Tran Huynh Chau. "Before the Communists' Tet offensive in 1968, at least 60 percent of the population here supported the Viet Cong," he notes. "But the Viet Cong broke their promise of a Tet cease-fire, and they have been losing the trust of the people ever since."

About 80 percent of Kien Hoa's 566,800 population now lives in areas controlled by the government, Vietnamese officials report.

Economics

INVESTMENT BILL INTRODUCED

Vietnam Newsletter, December 17. - On December 2, 1970 President Nguyen Van Thieu introduced the Investment Bill to the National Assembly. This Bill if passed is to supersede the currently in force Decree Law No. 2/63 on Investment in Vietnam promulgated in February 1963.

The newly-introduced Bill is oriented towards two main objectives:

- a - To lay the necessary ground work for an immediate economic development drive as soon as the hostilities end;
- b - To introduce foreign entrepreneurs to invest in Vietnam.

The existing Decree Law No. 2/63 is considered by some as not attractive enough to compete for foreign capital with other capital-scarce countries in the region. In addition to liberal clauses allowing unlimited repatriation of profit and capital, the new Bill also provides for unqualified guaranty against nationalization which is a matter of primary concern for foreign investors.

Preliminary discussions of the Bill's draft version have been going on for more than a year among business circles, government agencies and members of the Legislative. It is therefore expected that the Bill would be passed by the National Assembly in the not too distant future.

Special Feature

COALITION OR NO COALITION THAT'S THE BASIC QUESTION

Letter from Saigon, December 17. - Millions of television viewers in America have just been given the opportunity to see some of the central characters of the Vietnamese drama and hear what they have to say for and against coalition as a road to peace for

the long suffering Vietnamese nation.

The interesting debate came about in the form of two-hour long TV programs conducted for its audience by the American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). However, it can be assumed the films, entitled "The Advocates", will be shown on TV screens in other countries as well.

With such a potentially large audience, makers of "The Advocates" probably hope it will help in the crystallization of an irresistible current of public opinion which either will force coalition down Saigon's throat or make Hanoi abandon its attempt to impose it on its foe.

Being a news medium, PBS is completely justified to do whatever it is contemplating but will the PBS series contribute in any way to the search for a peace formula acceptable to the belligerents? In other words, will "The Advocates" be of any real use?

GOOD IDEA: The idea of a debate, of course, is good, especially in the context of the inadmissible ignorance of things Vietnamese among the general public after a quarter of a century of incessant conflict in the course of which hundreds of thousands of persons have lost their lives.

PBS-devised modalities for the debate also appear fair enough with U.S. and Vietnamese witnesses answering questions filed by Kenneth Young, a former envoy to Thailand and an opponent of coalition, and Richard Falk, a professor at Princeton and supporter of the notion.

Witnesses on Mr. Young's side include such personalities as Mr. Pham Dang Lam, the chief negotiator in Paris, and Mr. Hoang Duc Nha, President Nguyen Van Thieu's Press Secretary, while those on Prof. Falk's side include Mr. Ly Van Sau, the Viet Cong spokesman in the French capital.

Sandwiched in the two TV installments are sequences giving additional explanations such as the interviews of President Thieu and former Senator Tran Van Don on Mr. Young's side and talks with Mr. Xuan Thuy and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh on Prof. Falk's side.

WHAT'S COALITION? Opening the debate, Mr. Young says that a coalition is nothing but a political maneuver by the Communists to proceed more safely to the elimination of non-Communist leaders. It is but a phase in the process of communization of a country.

Broaching on the subject, the former ambassador also declares coalition was once tried in Vietnam in 1946 and the formula resulted then in a totally Communist-dominated regime with the gradual elimination of nationalist elements from the seats of political power.

Against Mr. Young's reasoning, Prof. Falk, of course, could only say coalition is the most likely approach to bring the fighting to an end. And since America is seeking to disengage from Vietnam anyway, the formula might be worth trying for whatever it may be worth.

The Princeton professor naturally has to embrace the Communist line in trying to justify the necessity of coalition as an avenue to peace. As the debate was recorded at Versailles last November 30, he was given a helping hand by Xuan Thuy, who hinted that

Hanoi might not reject an internationally supervised election.

THE COMMUNIST LINE: Past coalition regimes in Asia, however, are safer indications of what the Communists have in mind in so adamantly rejecting all allied proposals in Paris and demanding a coalition cabinet before any serious negotiations may start in the French capital.

Besides the 1946 attempt in Hanoi, there have been some previous such tries in China. The Chinese experiment resulted, as everybody knows, in the Communist occupation of the world's most populous nation and its conversion into one of the greatest sources of conflagration.

More recently, the coalition government of Laos under Prince Souvanna Phouma, a product of the 1962 Geneva conference, should also remind the world that coalition does not necessarily lead to normalcy. As a matter of fact, it has even led to a larger conflict.

Still, the Communists appear bent on proving that coalition and the temporary truce that would ensue are preferable to continuous fighting. And indications are not few in America that the line has fallen on sympathetic ears in this war-weary and perplex land.

Mrs. Binh, the top Viet Cong delegate, thus, can be said to have struck on a sensitive American cord when she leaves out the coalition issue altogether and maintains that her followers only want to live freely and in friendship with all other peoples.

"Our people has never done any harm against the American people" she said and added in halting English, making it sound utterly sincere: "If Mr. Nixon is really willing to end the war and negotiate seriously, we are ready to do so".

NO FOOLS: Falk, Xuan Thuy, and Mrs. Binh might have fooled quite a few people abroad. They did not fool the South Vietnamese, who have suffered for too long to let the mirage of normalcy turn their heads and make them agreeable to what may be tantamount to the safest road to self-destruction.

For Ambassador Lam, Hanoi and the Viet Cong do not seek coalition as an avenue to peace. Their insistence on the overthrow of the elected government (Messrs. Thieu, Ky and Khiem) rather indicates "they want the abolition of the democratically elected government of the Republic of Vietnam."

Professor Nguyen Van Bong, one of the top leaders of the opposition National Progressist Movement (NPM) in Saigon, also recalls some of the points on which he finds himself in disagreement with President Thieu but stresses the NPM's total opposition to coalition.

"Coalition with the Communists is totally unacceptable," Prof. Bong said, "for sooner or later the Reds would eliminate all non-Communist elements, take over the country and set up a dictatorial regime which the South Vietnamese may never rid themselves of."

For former Senator Tran Van Don, another opposition figure, "the fact that we do not support the policies of President Nguyen Van Thieu cannot be construed as a form

of support for the Communist side. We only seek a change of policies and personnel at the top level of government".

The former lawmaker, a supporter of General Duong Van ("Big") Minh, does not even believe an assurance to replace the present team at the top may lead to serious negotiations. "I am not sure Gen. Minh is to accept Mrs. Binh's idea (to join in a coalition with the Viet Cong)," Don also avers.

BASIC QUESTIONS: At this point of the debate, there is little chance of a compromise between promoters and opponents of the coalition formula, for there is practically no common ground between the two diametrically opposite views expounded by the men from Saigon and Hanoi.

Outsiders may find the matter puzzling, unable as they are to realize how fellow Vietnamese can go on fighting for nearly a quarter of a century. For the Vietnamese, who naturally feel the need for peace more acutely, however, this is a basic point on which they cannot yield.

Indeed, by coming to Paris, the Hanoi leaders have acknowledged the impossibility of a military victory. But far from accepting the term of a reasonable compromise, they have consistently demanded the overthrow of President Thieu, something they have not been able to do militarily.

And the longer they wait, the farther the prospect of a military victory becomes and the more inflexible they have to be in consideration of new developments growingly favoring their foe.

On the side of the South Vietnamese, who went to Paris in 1968 with much reticence, the tremendous progress achieved since mid-1968 makes prevalence over the enemy a matter of time rather than anything else. Moreover, it can also be said the socio-political texture of South Vietnamese society is such that anything less would undo it and make Saigon a helpless victim of an enemy from within rendered even more formidable by his new legality.

For both Vietnams, thus, the question of coalition is not one of semantics. It is a question of life and death neither can afford to take up lightly. It does explain to some extent the current deadlock in Paris and the absence of movement in the two-year-old conference.

The stagnation in the French capital also is a question of will. Diplomatically, the Vietnam conflict has reached an equilibrium which either side can sway to its favor. He who finally wins might be the one with more perseverance.

ALTERNATIVE: In the PBS debate between proponents of coalition and their adversaries, however, Saigon spokesmen have come out on top.

Indeed, as the men from Hanoi adamantly continue to demand the overthrow of the present South Vietnamese administration and its replacement by a provisional government, President Thieu and Ambassador Lam have come up with a much more reasonable stand.

The chief South Vietnamese negotiator makes it clear Saigon not only is willing to negotiate anything that may help in restoring peace but also may do it either publicly or privately and without preconditions.

On his part, President Thieu again offers a general election to settle all pending problems. And when asked whether Mrs. Binh may run in such an election, the South Vietnamese chief executive emphatically asks: "Why not? Why not? Why not?"

The warm applause given Thieu by the audience at Versailles is a good indication on which side the ball is at present.

Vietnamese Legend

THE LEGEND OF CHU VAN DICH Adapted by George F. Schultz

This story, which is obviously of Buddhistic inspiration, is a lesson in honesty. A poor farmer dies before he can pay off his debts; he returns to life as a water buffalo and works hard in order to take care of his obligations. The creditor also conducts himself honestly in returning the cancelled notes to the debtor's sons.

Many years ago, a peasant was driving a water buffalo before the plow in his master's ricefield.

"Van Dich! Van Dich!" he called exhortingly. "Move along; it is almost noon. A few more furrows and our work will be finished".

Two handsome young men, who were walking along the path that bordered the ricefield, happened to overhear the peasant's words. They stopped in their tracks and looked at each other with astonishment. To whom was the peasant speaking? There was no other person in the field with him. Was it possible that he had called the buffalo by a man's name? It was all very strange.

The last furrow was plowed.

"Van Dich," said the peasant to the buffalo then, "you did a good job. It is time to rest."

The peasant wiped the sweat from his brow and then unharnessed the buffalo. The great beast plodded to the edge of the field to graze. The peasant drank some tea from a bowl and munched a few mouthfuls of rice; then, to protect himself from the unbearable heat, he removed his conical hat of palm-straw and began to fan his face with it. Absorbed in his own thoughts, he failed to notice the approach of the two strangers.

"Dear friend," one of them called to the peasant, "is your buffalo perchance named Van Dich?"

"Yes", replied the peasant, "that is his name. Does it seem odd to you?"

"Very odd," was the reply. "Why did you give him that name?"

The farmer considered for a moment.

"Well," he said then, "you are not the first ones who have asked that question. There is an unusual story connected with this buffalo. You see, my master is a wealthy landowner. I have worked for him for a long time and always with this buffalo. I call him Van Dich because he was born with that name as you can plainly see from the two characters inscribed on his back. He is the cleverest and most industrious buffalo I have ever seen."

The two young men, who were brothers, looked at each other significantly. They thanked the peasant for the information given them and then set off in the direction of the neighboring village.

"Younger brother," said the elder of the two, "how strange all this is. After an absence of many years, we are returning to our native village, which we left as children. I am ashamed to learn that a buffalo has been given our father's name. We must speak to the buffalo's owner about it."

On reaching the village, the two young men inquired about the location of the rich landowner's home. They went there then and knocked at the door. As they were well-dressed and did not look like beggars, they were admitted at once. Tea was served them and water-pipes brought forward. Finally, after a period of polite silence, the elder brother asked the master of the house, an old man with snow-white hair, to tell them about the buffalo called Van Dich.

The old man seemed surprised at their question but not unwilling to tell the story.

"I come from this village," he said. "I started as an ordinary farmer. Heaven was kind to me and my wealth increased from year to year. I acquired large holdings of land. I became richer and richer and many peasants came to work for me. My young neighbor, however, a farmer named Chu Van Dich, had no luck at all although he was an honest and righteous man. One misfortune after another happened to him, and in the end he had no more than a few crumbs of rice for his wife and two sons. He came to me to borrow some money. I gave him what he needed since I was certain that the money would bear good interest. For some time his luck seemed to change; but then his wife fell ill and his two buffaloes died in the same night. A farmer cannot live without a buffalo. I lent him some more money, with which he purchased a new buffalo. But after he had brought in a good harvest and seemed to have saved himself, a fire destroyed his house and all his grain. Chu Van Dich died then from sheer despair. His wife and children left the village and it appeared that I had lost a considerable sum of money."

The two brothers hardly dared breathe. They had just heard the story of their father's ruin.

"Several years ago," continued the landowner, "Chu Van Dich appeared to me in a dream. He was in a pitiable condition. He said that as he had not been able to pay his debts to me during his earthly existence, his soul had been unable to find peace in the Kingdom of the Dead. He said further that he would come to work for me in order to pay off his debt."

The old man stopped to sip his tea. The brothers held their faces in their hands.

"The next morning," he continued, "before I had risen, a servant came running and informed me that a buffalo cow had given birth to a calf that had the characters "Van Dich" imprinted on his back. Was I not to assume then that Chu Van Dich's soul had passed into the calf's body?"

After a long silence, the two brothers raised their heads.

"Chu Van Dich was our father," they said. "After his death, our mother left the village, taking us with her. In a distant province, Lord Buddha had compassion on us and we became well-to-do. We have come here to pay our father's debts. And then you will of course give us the buffalo."

"You owe me nothing," replied the landowner. "I will gladly give you all your father's notes for he has amply repaid me through the work of the buffalo. Ever since the time that he began working for me, we have had a large measure of good fortune. We took good care of him, which was as it should have been, and I am sorry to see him go."

The landowner then gave the brothers their father's notes and ordered the buffalo released to them. After thanking the man for his generosity, they returned to the village, leading the buffalo. There they burned the notes; at that moment the buffalo was seen to fall to the ground dead!

Chu Van Dich's soul thus returned to the Kingdom of the Dead, where it would live eternally in peace.

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