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Politics

FOREIGN MINISTER LAM ON POW RELEASE SUGGESTION

Saigon, December 11. - Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam Friday morning started at a press conference at his office that the RVN government is waiting for an agreement of the other side to immediately release all North Vietnamese prisoners-of-war to enable them to rejoin their families at Christmas season and the forth coming Lunar New Year Festival.

In exchange for this humanitarian return, Minister Lam stressed, the RVN government requested the Hanoi authorities to send back all Vietnamese and allied POWs currently detained in North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

According to the Foreign Minister, about 9,000 North Vietnamese are held captives by the RVN while Ha Noi is detaining between 1,000 and 2,000 POWs of the RVN and allied nations.

Minister Lam made known that the RVN government has consulted allied nations on the suggestion for the release of North Vietnamese POWs. This problem was officially set forth to the other side by the RVN negotiating delegation at the 94th session of the Paris peace talks.

This suggestion is regarded as humanitarian action and this is not the first time the RVN government realizes it. The Foreign Minister recalled the RVN unilateral release of the 62 North Vietnamese maimed POWs and 24 fishermen several months ago.

Minister Lam added, although the other side has rejected the RVN suggestion, he hoped that the rejection did not come from the Communists' clear-cut attitude. Meanwhile, the RVN and allied governments will exert all available means to rescue Vietnamese and allied POWs held in North Vietnam if Hanoi continues to refute the mutual POW release suggested by the allied side.

On this occasion, Minister Lam appealed to the North Vietnamese authorities to respect the December 9 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the treatment for POWs. This resolution demanded North Vietnam to give kind treatment to all their captives.

This RVN suggestion for the release of North Vietnamese POWs, he said, was the first phase of a total plan on the POW issue.

President Nguyen Van Thieu last October 8 made a statement accepting the release of all POWs by both sides on a reciprocal basis.

MUTUAL POW RELEASE SUGGESTED AT PARIS TALKS 94TH SESSION

Paris, December 11. - The RVN negotiating delegation Thursday suggested to the Communist side at the 94th session of the Paris peace talks that the RVN government will immediately set free all North Vietnamese POWs held in the South in exchange for the instant release of all military and administrative personnel of the RVN, US and free world countries now detained by the Communists outside South Vietnam and anywhere on the Indochina peninsula.

Ambassador Pham Dang Lam, chief of the Vietnamese delegation made it clear that this suggestion was set forth with humanitarian objective and without any conditions on the occasion of the year-end holidays.

Reliable-sources said about 8,000 North Vietnamese are held as POWs in South Vietnam whereas the number of South Vietnamese and allied personnel detained as captives by the Communists outside South Vietnam only counts one-tenth of the above figure.

In reply to newsmen's questions on the Communist negotiators' reactions toward the suggestions toward the RVN suggestion, Amb. Lam said the other side will find it hard to absolutely reject openly such realistic and simple proposal.

He said the Communists tried to evade an answer by repeating that they were ready to discuss the POW issue on condition that the US declares an unconditional withdrawal of all American and allied forces from South Vietnam before June 30, 1971.

The RVN Chief Negotiator added he had pointed out that the Communists continue to use POWs as an instrument in their political bargain without thinking about the fate of these men. The RVN delegation has energetically denounced this unhumane attitude before world public opinion.

At the 94th session, the Communist side diffused a statement saying that they agreed on a cease-fire provided that the US declares the pull-out of American and allied troops from South Vietnam before June 30, 1971 and that the RVN legal and constitutional government would be toppled and replaced by a government set up with their approval.

According to Amb. Lam, this so-called new proposal for cease-fire of the other side was merely another form of their two illogical demands put forth previously.

Both Xuan Thuy and Nguyen Thi Binh were present at this session.

The 95th session was scheduled for next Thursday as usual.

PRIME MINISTER KHIEM ADDRESSES CLOSING CEREMONY OF APU

Saigon, December 14. - Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem addressing the closing ceremony of the Asian Parliamentarians Union (APU) 's 6th General Assembly held here Saturday afternoon praised the cooperation spirit of the participant delegations.

Prime Minister Khiem said "representing your people here, you have greatly contributed to the building of peace and democracy in this part of the world."

"At a time when treacherous aggression is disguised as "people's wars of liberation", when democratic principles are challenged by mob politics, when gestures of goodwill are interpreted as signs of weakness, the APU has played an influential role" the Premier said adding. "Its far reaching voice has been instrumental in alerting world opinion what is true and what is right, and in laying a solid foundation for the security of Asian nations."

The Premier went on: "Guided by the concept that regional problems should be solved through appropriate regional initiatives regarded not only as a living symbol of freedom and democracy, but also as an effective deterrent against ideologies which are alien to Asian values and morals."

Dealing with the search for regional peace and security Premier Khiem said, "We are confronted with many difficulties and obstacles, I believe that one of our most urgent and important tasks should be finding and eliminating the fallacies and pitfalls of a false peace and a false democracy."

The Premier added "In other words, at this juncture, we should concentrate our efforts on creating and strengthening truly free and democratic institutions, the only instruments which can ensure a lasting peace."

Prime Minister Khiem expressed his strong belief that the APU, guided by this policy, will be most successful in helping build a free, prosperous and happy Asia for Asians."

Speaking on this occasion, Rep. Nguyen Quang Luyen Chairman of the APU's 6th General Assembly delivered a closing speech highlighting the results of the APU's 6th General Assembly.

According to Rep. Luyen the Assembly reached many decisions, and a great deal of important resolutions were approved.

"Foremost among these is the admission of the Khmer Republic as full member of our union, Rep. Luyen said, adding the admission of a country which is fighting valiantly against the Communist aggressors at this very moment confirms once more the solidarity among free Asian countries and the faith Asian peoples have in the Asian Parliamentarians Union.

Rep. Luyen also made known that at the Assembly, the APU participant delegations have taken concrete steps for the preservation of freedom, democracy and the promotion of common welfare in Asia.

The APU's 6th General Assembly Chairman especially laid stress on the challenge

of security paused by the Communist expansionism, which is the source of all turmoils in Asia, and on challenge of Economic and Social Development to overcome poverty and stagnation.

Rep. Luyen expressed his confidence that the Asian Parliamentarians Union will assume a more important role in meeting the above mentioned challenges through close cooperation based on equality and friendship.

"Our primary goal," Rep. Luyen said, "rests on the creation of world environment in which free societies can prosper. Unless we unite ourselves in face of the ruthless and aggressive forces of the Asian Communists, we will fail to develop such socio economic conditions required to advance our interests and the cause of freedom."

Health

ORIENTAL MEDICINE STUDY SUPPORTED

Saigon, December 15. - Dr. Hoang Van Duc, former Director of the ARVN Medical School Sunday night at the "People Want to Know" TV program initiated by Vietnam Press, refuted a common claim that Oriental medicine is rather a philosophy than a science.

According to Dr. Duc, Oriental medicine relies on scientific standard, particularly on observation to find methods to cure diseases.

He also said those who believe that Oriental medicine is empiric have failed to thoroughly examine the issue. After a careful examination, he added, we must agree that Oriental medicine is a real science, although it does not rely on the same standards with western medicine.

Dr. Duc also illustrated another standard of Oriental medicine, the spiritual standard which, according to him, has helped Oriental peoples particularly the Vietnamese people, greatly contribute to the restoration of the equilibriums in the cultural, political, economic and other domains damaged by the Western civilization.

Dr. Duc emphasized that "it is high time for the Vietnamese people to voice out their mistakes as well as their aspirations."

At the same interview, Dr. Bui Duy Tam, Dean of Hue University, Faculty of Medicine, dealt with reason for a decision made three years ago to teach Oriental medicine at the Hue University Faculty of Medicine. These reasons were set forth in a lecture given at the International Medical Education Conference in Singapore.

The most important reason was that Western medicine does not entirely succeed in the eradication of diseases. It still has so many shortcomings the cause of many diseases is not thoroughly understood particularly mental diseases. Moreover, the diagnosis is usually a little slow because it must base on organic lessons and treatment method is still very limited and contrary to nature, for example, the use of poison and surgical amputation.

Besides, to another question, Dr. Duc asserted that the RVN needs an organization in charge of the exploitation and improvement of Oriental medicine because Vietnam,

though gaining much experience from Western civilization, still needs a solution for its own in every field from the cultural political, to economy and social domains. Besides, in the teaching of Oriental medicine at medical schools, Vietnamese scientists and professors must cooperation with each other to build an institute for research of Oriental medicine.

HEALTH SEMINAR HELD FOR CADRES

Saigon, December 16. - Health Minister Dr. Tran Minh Tung, when presiding over a ceremony opening a seminar on Health Cadres Training at the logistics directorate number 136 to Hien Thanh Street, Phu Tho, Tuesday morning urged health leading officials to actively contribute to the improvement of health activities in the country through training missions.

Addressing a 200-strong audience at the seminar, Dr. Tung said that humanitarians aid programs from throughout the world to Vietnam are numerous and continuing under the form of cadres, finance and supplies as well as building materials.

However, the Health Minister added, these aid programs will be only efficient if local cadres themselves participate in the carrying out of such programs in one way or another.

Earlier, Dr. Truong Minh Cac, Director General of Health concurrently chairman of the seminar, said that the health seminar aimed at reviewing health cadres training programs, the need of health cadres and at asserting the training policy of the Health Ministry so as to search for a new method to improve the health cadres training program.

This was the first seminar on health cadres training ever organized by the Health Ministry.

Participating in the seminar were directors, instructors of health training schools senior nurses and midwives from various hospitals all over the country.

Education

NEW UNIVERSITY PROPOSED FOR DA-NANG

Saigon, December 12. - The motivation committee for establishment of Danang University Thursday said Dr. Nguyen Luu Vien, Deputy Prime Minister concurrently Education Minister has approved in principle the setting up a university in Danang.

Teaching standards of the Danang University will be "entirely new" with three faculties: Technical Science, Experimental Science and Eco-Commerce.

The University will specialize in the vocational training with much emphasis on agriculture, forestry, minerals management and electronics.

The same sources said at a meeting held last week at Dr. Dinh Van Tung's private residence No. 2 Quang Trung Street, Danang, Prof. Tran Kim Thach accepted the post of

Danang University's Rector.

An estimated number of about 3,000 students will attend Danang University, the majority of them formerly attended 20 high school in Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Quang Tin, and Danang City and from provinces in Northern Central Vietnam.

The teaching staff will include professors who are natives of the above-mentioned provinces.

The standing board of the motivation committee for establishment of Danang University consists of Dr. Tran Dinh Nam, Founding Chairman, Dr. Thai Can Active Chairman, Danang City Council Chairman Nguyen Van Vien, 1st Vice-Chairman, Lt. Col. Duy Lam, Nguyen Kim Tuan 2nd Vice Chairman, Dr. Dinh Van Tung, 3rd Vice Chairman and Prof. Thai Doan Nga, Secretary General.

Economics

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GRANTS LOANS TO RVN

Saigon, December 18. - The Republic of Vietnam Wednesday signed an agreement according to which the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will grant loans totaling U.S. dollar 2.5 million for fishery development in Vietnam.

Mr. Cao Van Than, Minister of Land Reform, Agriculture and Fishery Development representing the RVN government and Mr. Nguyen Dang Hai, Director General of Agricultural Development Bank, signed on the agreement with Mr. Takeshi Watanabe, President of the Asian Development Bank, at a ceremony held Wednesday at the ADB Hqs in Manila.

The RVN counts at present 300,000 fishers and the government has reserved priorities to fishery development projects.

This was the first time the ADB granted loans to the RVN at a 2.5 percent annual interest. The debt will be paid in a 25 year period starting in 1976.

The RVN government will use the ADB loans in the motorization of 400 fishing boats and establishment of freezing houses and ice factories.

In addition the ADB will dispatch fishery experts to the RVN to help train local fishers on the functioning of modern machines and on modern fishing technics.

The ADB experts will also assist the Fishery Directorate in the studying and making of fishery development projects in the future.

Miscellaneous

REP. HIEU MURDERED

Saigon, December 18. - Dr. Ngo Van Hieu, Lower House Representative of Phong Dinh

constituency was shot to death at noon Thursday by an armed robber at "Tam Da" shopping center number 101 Cong Ly Street, Saigon.

Dr. Hieu was killed when he was carrying out an esthetic surgical operation at his "Crystal Clinic" in rooms 220-2II of "Tam Da" building.

According to a personnel at the clinic, at noon Thursday, two young men armed with pistol and a dagger and carrying a paper bag entered the esthetic room.

They intimidated about ten persons present at the clinic with their weapons and asked Dr. Hieu to give them two million piasters.

As the surgeon was reluctant to give the money, one of the robbers pulled his pistol and shot Dr. Hieu to death. The other robber hurled a M.26 grenade before both fled away.

The explosion wounded four other persons and lightly damaged the building.

One of the assailants was captured after being wounded by the police in front of "Khai Tri" bookshop on Le Loi Street. The captive named Tran Van Phuc, declared he was a member of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG).

Investigation is underway.

BOY SCOUT JAMBOREE HELD NEAR SAIGON

Saigon, December 17. - The Vietnamese Boy Scouts Association has invited all foreign scouts in Vietnam to attend a Jamboree scheduled to open Sunday December 27 at Suoi Tien area in Thu Duc, Gia Dinh.

The 5 day Jamboree in Suoi Tien aims at marking the 40th founding anniversary of the Vietnamese Scout Movement.

According to Mr. Tran Van Luoc, Commissioner General of the Vietnamese Boy Scout Association, many American, Australian, Philippine, New Zealand, Chinese and French scouts will attend the Suoi Tien Jamboree.

Special Feature

CORRUPTION - FACTS & FICTION

Letter from Saigon, December 10. - The Press, both local and foreign, is hardly a source of enlightenment for the public. Enough has been said of South Vietnamese journalists and their tendency to fictionalize the few facts they know, thereby misleading the readers and barring the emergence of the truth. Is the blame applicable to the more professional newsmen from abroad?

SUCCUMBING TO TEMPTATION: It is the view of this correspondent that journalists from foreign lands, for all their good will and investigating techniques, have also failed to convey a truthful picture of corruption in Vietnam. Caught in the pitfalls of headlines and deadlines, they have succumbed to temptation as easily as their inexperienced Vietnamese counterparts.

Even the much respected Time magazine has not performed commonsensically. In late 1966, when Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Huu Co, the then Deputy Premier, was ousted from his job, the U.S. publication reported the cause of his demotion as being the sale of draft-exemption papers. The cause of Co's predicament might or might not be so but he certainly did not own the three fancy villas Time attributed to him, all of them being State properties.

More recently, possibly in order to prevent the contemplated visit of Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky to America, two columnists of renown of the famed Washington Post, Messrs. Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden, accused Ky of protecting Gen. Do Cao Tri, who, they said, failed to explain "the circumstances under which he sent 71 million piasters in cash to his uncle in Hong Kong (about US \$ 600,000)".

To make things more juicy, Gen. Tri was also reported to have threatened Senator Nguyen Van Chuc, his tormentor at the Upper House, to "have him shot". Then, as a side blow to the South Vietnamese Vice-President himself, the Post asked Ky: "Out of what funds were you able to purchase a DC.6 airplane for your personal use?"

DEADLINES & HEADLINES: Of course, Messrs. Mankiewicz and Braden erred. Anybody with some experience of Vietnamese politics knows that Gen. Tri is not a protege of Ky and that he has never been challenged to explain the illegal "five suitcases of banknotes" affair.

According to Justice Minister Le Van Thu, the case has only been "abetted" by a major identified by his initials as D.C.D. For Minister Thu, too, "a mixed commission has completed its investigation" and the ten men involved in the affair have been waiting trial since May in a case to be known to jurists and law students as "Case No. 9989, BI.9, DT.I" for "acts endangering the economy and finance of the State".

Gen. Tri's alleged threat to have Senator Chuc "shot" is even more preposterous. He has only challenged the senator to a duel after being charged with a different set of misdeeds and the challenge must be viewed as indicating nothing but the ire of an abused man. Still the local press has made enough vitriolic comments on this faux pas.

As for Ky's DC.6, it is public knowledge in Saigon that it is a Government of Vietnam plane, which top government leaders are entitled to use in their official movements. If South Vietnamese leaders should be asked to justify themselves anytime they board a Vietnam government plane, one may wonder whether there is any impropriety in asking U.S. presidents about the funds needed for the acquisition of Air Force One.

For anybody with some experience of presswork, however, the errors committed by such writers as Mankiewicz and Braden can be traced to the need to respect deadlines and or the temptation of dramatic headlines. If so is the case, little else should be said of these pitiful press apprentices.

POLITICAL WEAPON: Messrs. Mankiewicz and Braden are no cub reporters, though. And it is the suspicion of this correspondent they have been fed this kind of information by politically motivated elements with definite intentions to rake muck on their opponents. Corruption charges, in the case, have attained the dignity of political weapons.

For an outside observer of the Vietnamese scene, the above remark may sound extreme but a long-time resident of Saigon knows the range of weaponry deployed in the local arena is practically unlimited. In America, the tragedy at Chappaquiddick might not have destroyed Edward M. Kennedy's chances to enter the White House. Much less is needed in Vietnam to destroy more towering figures.

Seven years after the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, the general consensus in this war-torn land is that his administration might be the least corrupt regime in the recent history of Vietnam and a model of moral virtue for its successors. In Diem's lifetime, however, even the ascetic President was not beyond criticism for money manipulation. Bag tongues in Saigon even charged him with more immoral deeds.

Diem's death in 1963 demonstrates the effectiveness of the weapon. In a way, Major Nguyen Van Nhun, who shot him, was not the late President's murderer. Diem's death had been written by God's hand the very day when the general public was swayed by charges of corrupt practices leveled against his administration.

HOPEFUL SIGNS: Diem's demise and the collapse of law and order that followed it, of course, led to compounding corrupt practices and in later years the difficult economic conditions were to make honesty a rare virtue, indeed. Still, the picture is not a totally gloomy one.

The Press, by its treatment of corrupt cases, has contributed to turning the question less explosive. "If all officials should be corrupt, no matter who they may be," the average man was often found telling himself, "the Press certainly cannot be right".

With such a basically sound attitude, the average Vietnamese naturally would give less credence to the many corruption reports that find their way to the front pages of newspapers. Public opinion, at least so far as corruption is concerned, has grown wiser than its moulders.

It ensues that the charges and counter-charges that surface regularly constitute only the outside manifestations of a much less dramatic situation. "It's only a Chinese mask which either embellishes or disfigures a plain face," as an observer put it.

At any rate, the exaggerations of rumormongers and the Press have paradoxically defused an explosive situation and made corruption a less deadly political weapon. Excerpts of Messrs. Mankiewicz and Braden's article on more than a Vietnamese newspapers are possibly the best evidences that the public here has grown out of its political adolescence.

CORRUPTION EVERYWHERE: This is not to say that corruption in Vietnam is not a serious ill. Even in the reckoning of optimistic observers, it should be brought under control if greater confidence in the government were to be achieved, facilitating thereby the search for national unity and strength.

If one should look hard enough, one would find genuine corruption cases in too many a place. But one has to look hard enough. This correspondent was given access to hundreds of cases screened by Army investigators and it is his assessment that only one out of ten to twenty deserves to be brought to court.

Wherever there is big money there is possibility of important corrupt cases.

MAJOR CORRUPTION SITES: So incredible as it may seem, corruption sites are not air conditioned offices occupied by VIPs. The emplacements of corrupt practices more often than not are insignificant desks where doubtful dealings can be made without being suspected. And if the local boss should be involved in the malpractice, he would be only indirectly so.

For many years, South Vietnamese generals have been considered as the main villains in an enormous "corporation" but one has yet to find one with conclusive proofs of misconduct. This correspondent is of the view that a few of them are dishonest, but most charges levelled against the generals have turned out to have been blown up.

In the Army, the administration, as well as non-governmental agencies, malpractices only reach huge proportions wherever money and the opportunity are readily available. An unprincipled division commander may simply be a petty thief compared to the head of a border camp with cattle movements across the frontier line if both should be equally dishonest.

The recent dismissal of the chief of Tinh Bien district and some of his close associates in this border area, thus, is potentially a much bigger case than that of Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Toan, Commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, who was alledged in 1966 to have unlawfully authorized the transportation and export of cinnamon from Quang Ngai province.

DETECTION OF ILL: Gen. Toan might or might not have derived some profit from the extraction of a relatively small quantity of cinnamon from the Viet Cong-controlled part of the province. But if one should be aware of Quang Ngai politics, one should at least view the entire affair with some circumspection and be less prone to blaming him.

President Nguyen Van Thieu, in the reckoning of this correspondent, was wise in not replacing Toan, one of the best tacticians in the Army. Had he done so, he could have committed an injustice to a comrade-in-arms but more certainly would have lost one of the best general officers in a moment of crucial military confrontation with the foe.

To minimize and eventually eliminate the corrupt practices in South Vietnam, some other ways will have to be found other than mere sloganeering and demanding that "heads should roll". Like a body covered with scabies of an internal origin, the South Vietnamese nation at present looks corruption-plagued but these social skin-eruptions are only the outside appearances of a much deeper ill, which must be detected before the body may be cured.

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In this issue:

Foreign Minister Lam on POW release suggestion.....	I
Mutual POW release suggested at Paris talks 94th session.....	2
Prime Minister Khiem addresses closing ceremony of APU.....	3
Oriental medicine study supported.....	4
Health seminar held for cadres.....	5
New university proposed for Da-Nang....	5
Asian Development Bank grants loans to RVN.....	6
Rep. Hieu murdered.....	6
Boy Scout Jamboree held near Saigon....	7
Corruption - facts & fiction.....	7

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