

U.S. DELEGATION ARRIVES FOR TALKS ON MIA ISSUE

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[By Charles-Antoine de Nerciat]

[Excerpt] Hanoi, March 4 (AFP) -- A U.S. delegation flew in here yesterday with a brief to discuss U.S. servicemen missing in action (MIA's) in the war in Indochina, and "bilateral humanitarian issues." Vietnamese officials said today that Richard Childress, a member of U.S. President Ronald Reagan's National Security Council, and Ann Mills Griffiths, executive director of the National League of Families, arrived here yesterday for a visit at their own request. The officials gave no details of their agenda, but the U.S. State Department announced late last week that Mr. Childress and Mrs. Griffiths would raise the MIA question as well as "other bilateral humanitarian issues."

The State Department said the three-day mission would also raise with Hanoi the issue of resettlement in the United States of Vietnamese held in the country's reeducation camps, for alleged links during the war with the United States for the pro-Washington South Vietnam government. The problem of the MIA's, 10 years after the war ended, is still sensitive in the United States where groups such as Mrs. Griffiths' are very active. Vietnam has so far returned the remains of 96 MIA's and insisted that no more U.S. servicemen remain in this country. Some U.S. groups are not so sure. The issue is seen as a major stumbling block to normalization of relations between the two countries, which do not have diplomatic ties.

'Secrecy' Surrounds Talks

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[Excerpt] Hanoi, March 5 (AFP) -- Secrecy surrounded talks here today between a U.S. delegation and Vietnamese officials on U.S. servicemen missing in action (MIA's) from the Vietnam war. No information was available from the meetings between Vietnamese authorities and two Americans -- Richard Childress, a member of President Ronald Reagan's National Security Council, and Ann Mills Griffiths, executive director of the National League of Families, a private group comprising mainly parents of the MIA's. The two arrived Sunday for a three-day visit to Vietnam.

The U.S. State Department had said that their mission was to cover the MIA's, which is a sensitive issue in the United States, and "other bilateral humanitarian issues." An official Vietnamese source confirmed the Americans' arrival, which was not covered in the media here, but gave no details of their agenda or the Vietnamese officials involved. Mr. Childress, contacted by telephone here yesterday, also gave no details.

THAI 'REACTIONARIES' ABET CRIMES AGAINST H'MONG

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[Text] Hanoi VNA March 2 -- Public opinion in Laos has over the past two years voiced strong indignation at a new crime committed by Thai ultra-rightist reactionaries against more than 500 members of the H'mong ethnic group in Xiengkhoang Province.

A group of five Lao reactionary exiles, on orders from the Bangkok ultra-rightists, on Feb. 22 secretly crossed the Mekong River into Laos' areas of Pha Lai and Thathom, in the two districts of Muong Khoun and Keo Viengsay of Xiengkhoang Province where many H'mong people are living. The reactionaries distorted the Lao party and state's policies, and tried to stir up division among the various ethnic groups of Laos.

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They forced more than 500 people there to go to Thailand. Arrived at the Mekong River, they robbed those people of nearly 50 ingots of silver, more than 600 silver coins and other property. Twenty-one among these people got drowned when crossing the river. On Thai soil, the reactionaries bluntly told these people that Thailand doesn't accept them and forced them to return to Laos. Once again the reactionaries plundered their property.

The H'mong people fled and hid in neighbouring forests. Three days later, the reactionaries gathered them and put them into boats and forced them to sail back to Hang Sinh Isle in Paksan District of Laos. The local administration and people used boats to bring them back to the Lao hamlets of Soun Savan and Cuoi, and the kilometre 13 area on the Lao side of the Mekong River.

Before many Lao journalists and the local administration, the H'mong strongly denounced the ultra-rightist reactionaries' wrongdoings. They are being helped to return to their native places.

PHAM VAN DONG RECEIVES OUTGOING UK AMBASSADOR

OW021618 Hanoi VNA in English 1509 GMT 2 Mar 85

[Text] Hanoi VNA March 2 -- Michael E. Pike, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, today paid a farewell visit to chairman of the Council of Ministers before leaving here for another assignment at home. Chairman Pham Van Dong had a cordial talk with the British ambassador.

LE DUC THO INTERVIEWED ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

PM281101 Paris L'HUMANITE in French 25 Feb 85 p 8

[Interview with CPV Politburo member Le Duc Tho by Daniel Roussel in Paris; date not given -- first two paragraphs are editorial introduction]

[Text] Le Duc Tho granted an interview to L'HUMANITE during his visit to France at the head of the Vietnamese delegation to the 25th PCF Congress.

What are the causes of the economic problems which Vietnam is experiencing? How can they be overcome? Le Duc Tho explained to us at length the terrible effects of the war, the burden of underdevelopment, military pressures on the border, the Cambodian problem, and the natural disasters which destroyed nearly 700,000 metric tons of food in 1984 alone.

"Our economy is hemmed in," Le Duc Tho stressed. "We have no economic relations of any importance with the capitalist countries, including France, although France promised us limited credit of Fr200 million."

"Without the war we could solve our problems more easily." Furthermore, Le Duc Tho said, "our comrades all emerged from the bush schools to immediately run the national economy upon our liberation in 1975. We lack know-how and experience. It is easy to understand that we were unable to avoid faltering steps in the initial stage of building socialism."

In recent years the authorities in the country have been able to "learn from experience" with a view to improving the way in which the economy is run. The objectives of development are based primarily "on satisfying the population's essential needs." What about the future? "The future lies in the agricultural industry." And on this basis, Le Duc Tho said, "we are going to reorganize and reshape our economy and look at sectors which need boosting; the construction of some production bases will be postponed, in other cases it will be temporarily halted. We are going to channel our investments into tasks which will ensure the attainment of our objective of satisfying the population's essential needs."

be the "priority" given to the effort to develop agriculture -- "a central task," Le Duc Tho explained, in ensuring that the country quickly achieves self-sufficiency in food. The development of heavy and light industry will come second to agricultural development. Finally, one of the other national priorities is the "export effort" which should help investment in domestic production.

Learning from the past, and especially making a careful analysis of the market process in society for building socialism "gradually," Le Duc Tho "admitted" that for "some time capitalist economic forms" may coexist within a society in which socialist production relations are predominant. In addition the eradication of the merchant bourgeoisie and private commerce "will take a long time," Le Duc Tho said. "We have adopted a different method of work to gradually control the private market and to subsequently be in a position to halt inflation and reduce it. This is what we are now doing. In the rural districts we will have to continue to use the 'khoan,' the inclusive contracts based on a new method of organizing work in the cooperatives and remuneration calculated on the work done by each producer."

"With regard to management we must grant greater powers to lower echelons while at the same time ensuring centralization at the state level. At our next Central Committee session we are going to take stock of all these experiences. Last, we are appealing for foreign investments, including from Vietnamese nationals abroad. Of course," Le Duc Tho explained, "this task is just beginning; there is an economic embargo and also some mistrust."

With regard to the issue of the struggle "between the two paths, capitalist and socialist," Le Duc Tho pointed to the contradiction between the negative and positive aspects of the new experiences under way. "We must be bold. We will continue to discuss all of these problems in the period ahead, learn all the lessons, and realize that there can be negative phenomena in an economy in which different relations and modes of production exist. To combat this state of affairs we need a solid, steadfast, and healthy party. Proper implementation of our policy implies combating conservatism and the bureaucratism that hampers the proper execution of adopted measures and on the other hand combating liberalism and voluntarism to permit proper management of the economy. We must find a path and advance step by step, neither rushing ahead nor lagging behind and remaining set in conservatism. Along this progressive path we can industrialize the country. We are at present in the preparatory stage."

Having spoken at length about China and the tension in the region, Le Duc Tho described as "unclear" the policy of the United States, which "sees a greater advantage in maintaining normal relations with Beijing rather than with Hanoi. "But" he added, "if the Americans really want to normalize relations with Vietnam, we are ready for it."