

WSUS

HANOI'S POSITION WORSENING IN VIETNAM WAR, JOURNALIST SAYS (600)

WASHINGTON -- "ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT THE SITUATION, IT IS NOW IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE NORTH TO CONQUER THE SOUTH BY MILITARY FORCE, EVEN IF THE AMERICANS LEAVE," SAYS PIERRE DARCOURT, A WELL-KNOWN FRENCH JOURNALIST WHO WAS BORN IN SAIGON, GREW UP IN NORTH VIETNAM, ATTENDED COLLEGE IN HANOI AND SPENT MORE THAN 30 YEARS IN THE FAR EAST.

MR. DARCOURT MADE THE STATEMENT IN A COPYRIGHTED INTERVIEW IN THE CURRENT "U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT," WEEKLY MAGAZINE. THE FRENCH JOURNALIST TOLD THE U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT HE IS CONVINCED THAT "THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT EVEN IF AMERICAN COMBAT TROOPS ARE WITHDRAWN," AND THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE END TO THE "POLITICAL-MILITARY" WAR IS "A COMPROMISE AMONG THE VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES."

ASKED WHETHER THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE GENERALLY SUPPORT THE WAR AGAINST THE SOUTH, MR. DARCOURT SAID:

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"SINCE THE 'TET' OFFENSIVE, NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, MORE THAN 300,000 NORTHERN TROOPS -- AT A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE -- HAVE DIED IN THE SOUTH. THERE ISN'T A SINGLE FAMILY IN THE NORTH THAT HASN'T LOST A HUSBAND OR A SON. AND THE WAR, STILL GOING ON, IS A DRAIN ON THE NORTH. YOU FIND PEASANTS COMPLAINING ABOUT SONS DYING ON 'FOREIGN SOIL'."

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THE JOURNALIST ADDED:
 "YOU FIND SOUTHERNERS WHO SAY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS DO NOTHING BUT BRING TROUBLE WITH THEM. SO THEY ARE BETRAYING THE NORTHERNERS -- TELLING THE AMERICANS OR SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY WHENEVER NORTH VIETNAMESE UNITS COME TO THEIR VILLAGES. THAT IS NEW. BEFORE, FEW VILLAGERS WOULD BETRAY THE VIET CONG, BECAUSE THEY WERE SOUTHERNERS -- EVEN NEIGHBORS AND RELATIVES. ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT THE SITUATION, AT LEAST IN MY OPINION, IT IS NOW IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE NORTH TO CONQUER THE SOUTH BY MILITARY FORCE, EVEN IF THE AMERICANS LEAVE."

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ASKED HOW HE THOUGHT THE WAR WILL END, MR. DARCOURT REPLIED:
 "WHAT HAPPENS NEXT DEPENDS PARTLY ON THE AMERICAN PROGRAM OF VIETNAMIZATION. ... IT IS SUCCESSFUL, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WILL BE FACING A TRAINED FORCE OF AT LEAST A MILLION MEN IN THE SOUTH. ALSO, I'M CONVINCED THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WILL CONTINUE TO REPTING SOUTH. ALSO, I'M CONVINCED THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT EVEN IF AMERICAN COMBAT ROOPS ARE WITHDRAWN. THE FIGHTING HAS CREATED A FEELING IN THE SOUTH THAT THEY ARE A SEPARATE NATION. EVEN SOUTHERNERS WHO OPPOSE THE THIEU GOVERNMENT ARE NATIONALISTIC AND ARE DETERMINED NEVER TO TAKE ORDERS FROM HANOI. FURTHERMORE, THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT NO LONGER HAS THE POWER I CLAIM THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR ALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM."

"SO IT'S CLEAR THAT THE LONGER HANOI WAITS TO NEGOTIATE, THE MORE ITS OPTIONS ARE NARROWED."
 ASKED, "WHY WON'T HANOI NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY?" AND "DOES ANYONE IN HANOI WANT A QUICK END TO THE WAR?", THE FRENCH NEWSMAN REPLIED:

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"ONE REASON IS THAT THE NORTHERNERS FEEL THEY CANNOT TOLERATE A STRONG, ANTI-COMMUNIST MILITARY REGIME IN THE SOUTH ... THE MEN WHO RUN NORTH VIETNAM ARE MEN OF BLOOD AND STEEL WHO HAVE BEEN

FIGHTING FOR 40 YEARS. THEY ARE TOUGH, DEDICATED COMMUNISTS... OF COURSE, THERE ARE INTELLECTUALS IN THE REGIME WHO ARE SENT ABROAD OCCASIONALLY AS SPOKESMEN, UT THE REAL LEADERSHIP IS A SMALL CLAN--A KIND OF TOUGH MAFIA OF EX-CONVICTS...

"THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERS PRIVATELY ADMIT THEY CANNOT WIN A MILITARY VICTORY. THEY HAVE A VITAL NEED FOR PEACE, AND THEY WANT PEACE. BUT THEY FEEL THEIR POSITION IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH MILITARILY AT THE MOMENT TO NEGOTIATE. AS LONG AS THEY ARE INFERIOR IN MILITARY POWER, ANY SETTLEMENT WOULD REQUIRE CONCESSIONS ON THEIR PART. THEY ARE NOT READY TO DO THAT. AND, UNFORTUNATELY FOR PEACE, THIS INFERIORITY IS GROWING." ITEM

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GOODWILL A CONTINUING PRODUCT OF SEAP GAMES (420)

RANGOON -- THE FIFTH SOUTHEAST ASIAN PENINSULA (SEAP) GAMES WHICH ENDED IN RANGOON DECEMBER 13, HAD ALL IT TAKES TO MAKE A GREAT SPORTS FESTIVAL.

THE GAMES HAD COLOR, PAGEANTRY, A SPATE OF RECORD-BREAKING ANY MANY OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES WHICH WILL ADD NEW PAGES TO SEAP GAMES HISTORY.

BUT ABOVE ALL, THE GAMES WERE PERVADED BY A SPIRIT OF GREAT FRIENDLINESS AND SPORTSMANSHIP THUS FULFILLING THEIR OBJECTIVE OF ENHANCING THE EXISTING GOODWILL AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE SEAP COUNTRIES.

FOR BURMA, THE HOST COUNTRY, THE FIFTH SEAP GAMES, MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A SPORTS RENAISSANCE. FOLLOWING THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SECOND SEAP GAMES HELD IN RANGOON IN 1961, THERE HAD BEEN A SLUMP IN THE COUNTRY'S REPUTATION INTERNATIONALLY EXCEPT FOR SPORTS LIKE WEIGHT LIFTING, BOXING AND ESPECIALLY FOOTBALL, IN WHICH BURMA BECAME THE ASIAN CHAMPIONS BY WINNING 1966 ASIAN GAMES HELD IN BANGKOK.

IN THE LAST TWO SEAP GAMES HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR IN 1965 AND BANGKOK IN 1967, BURMA COULD TAKE ONLY THE FOURTH POSITION IN THE OVERALL PLACINGS.

BURMA'S SUCCESS ON THIS OCCASION IS DUE TO THE YEOMAN SERVICE RENDERED BY THE GAMES' SUPPORTING COMMITTEES BUT THE LION'S SHARE OF THE CREDIT MUST UNDOUBTEDLY GO THE APTLY-NAMED COMMITTEE FOR ENSURING SUCCESS IN THE GAMES WHOSE MEMBERS' UNFLAGGING EFFORTS WERE MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ENTHUSIASING THE BURMESE ATHLETES TO ACCOMPLISH SPORTS FEATS WHICH EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS.

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BURMA'S OVERWHELMING SUCCESS IS A HAPPY AUGURY FOR THE FUTURE, AND WILL MOST ASSUREDLY GIVE A BIG IMPETUS TO THE COUNTRY'S SPORTS MOVEMENT.

BUT IF BURMA EMERGED AS GAMES' CHAMPIONS, THE OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WERE NOT WITHOUT THEIR SHARE OF TOP HONORS.

SINGAPORE DOMINATED THE SWIMMING, WATER POLO AND JUDO COMPETITIONS, THAILAND WAS TOPS IN CYCLING AND SHOOTING AND MALAYSIA MADE A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE BADMINTON TITLES AND TOOK MOST OF THE MEDALS IN TABLE TENNIS.

THE FINAL TEAM PLACINGS, ACCORDING TO MEDALS WON, WERE BURMA FIRST WITH 57 GOLD, 46 SILVER AND 43 BRONZE MEDALS.

THAILAND SECOND WITH 32 GOLD 32 SILVER AND 46 BRONZE MEDALS.

SINGAPORE THIRD WITH 30 GOLD 30 SILVER AND 23 BRONZE MEDALS.

MALAYSIA FOURTH WITH 17 GOLD, 24 SILVER AND 37 BRONZE MEDALS.

VIETNAM FIFTH WITH NINE GOLD, FIVE SILVER AND NINE BRONZE MEDALS AND THE GALLANT SPORTSMEN FROM LAOS FINISHED SIXTH WITH THREE BRONZE MEDALS.

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