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SAIGON RADIO COMMENTS ON U.S. CONGRESSIONAL VISIT

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0500 GMT 3 Mar 75 SG

[Commentary]

[Excerpts] At a moment when communist gunfire is still heard in the RVN, the political atmosphere has been heated once again with the presence of a delegation of U.S. legislators in Saigon. It is not because we want to belittle this trip of a U.S. delegation to the RVN to study the situation that we mention the heated atmosphere created by current issues. Rather, we want to deal with some other aspects that some sections of public opinion in Saigon are deliberately trying to turn into trouble-making instruments.

Upon its arrival at Tan Son Nhut Airport, the U.S. congressional delegation stated that the objective of its trip to Saigon was to study the situation and not to cause trouble. People can believe what these U.S. congressmen stated upon arrival in an allied country that fought shoulder to shoulder with the United States to safeguard a common ideal. Nevertheless, the feverish approaches to the U.S. congressional delegation and the fact that some U.S. congressmen made comments too soon make people ask themselves whether impartiality can remain intact.

What people can realize most clearly is that upon its arrival in the RVN, the delegation of U.S. legislators could go anywhere and meet anyone it wanted to. Meanwhile, some U.S. congressmen have proved themselves self-contradictory in commenting on the regime in the RVN. Senator Bartlett and Representative McCloskey went to the national police headquarters where they met with and had fully identified to them the underground communist cadres who were arrested on 3 February for infiltrating the RVN press to perform acts of sabotage. Representative McCloskey confirmed that these cadres had told him they were given fair treatment. As reported by a BBC correspondent, Representative McCloskey also stressed that these cadres had admitted that they are communist agents and not newsmen.

At a reception in Independence Palace, a U.S. congresswoman again raised the question of a visit to what she called political prisoners to RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu. The RVN leader, who was termed by Representative McCloskey as a respected leader, plainly denied the existence of political prisoners in the RVN, saying that this is but a communist trick aimed at concealing from public opinion the fact that the communist side has not yet fully implemented the provisions concerning the return of captured and detained personnel, as specified in the Paris agreement and its protocols.

As the delegation of U.S. legislators stated upon its arrival in the RVN, the problem related to military aid for the RVN depends in a very large extent on the study of the situation by the U.S. congressional delegation. At a first meeting with publishers and some political leaders, two U.S. congressmen posed the following question: Are you for the provision of an additional \$300 million in aid for the RVN? If you are, please raise your hands. However, those who are responsible for guiding public opinion kept still at this meeting.

At another meeting, the leader of a struggle movement here opposed the proposal for additional aid for the RVN. In order to justify his stand, he resorted to a vague argument that can be easily advanced by anyone, according to which one-third of U.S. monetary aid has fallen into the hands of corrupt elements. He also said that the ARVN lacks combat motivation.

It is obvious that the communists are accelerating their military offensive and that our troops need vigorous support in terms of military equipment. Our army needs additional aid in order to withstand the enemy. Except for the communists, no one in South Vietnam wants to witness a decline in strength of our army just because of the lack of military equipment. Except for the Vietnamese traitors who serve as lackeys of the communists, no one has the right to use this or that pretext to deprive our combatants of weapons while they are facing the enemy.

POST CARRIES OPEN LETTER TO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Saigon THE SAIGON POST in English 3 Mar 75 SG

[An Open Letter U.S. Legislators in Vietnam"]

[Text] Dear friends:

Godspeed as you return to the United States after a visit to Vietnam.

You have heard the pros and cons on the need of additional aid for the republic of Vietnam and assessments on the current situation prevailing here. Doubtless, in your meetings with a cross section of the community, you were treated to discourses on the prosaic and the ponderous. Undoubtedly, too, you must have been regaled with perorations about what is right and what is wrong in Vietnam.

We do not propose to dwell on this right-or-wrong-course controversy. We are not concerned with politics. We are but ordinary people concerned with a free Vietnam--free of communism and the totalitarian way of life.

Allow us simple citizens to air a few thoughts.

We shall not be presumptuous by discussing American interests. In truth, we do not know much about it. What we do know is that a little over a decade ago, you committed troops to Vietnam. And from the beginning to the end of that presence, there were not a few mistakes by Americans as well as Vietnamese. It cannot be denied that the presence of these American troops gave rise to a very special situation replete with problems which it was our lot to inherit.

We do not want to argue about the merits of your desire to end involvement in Vietnam for the sake of your own interest and, may we say, ours too.

The Vietnamese people do realize that to be truly deserving of freedom and independence, they have to struggle for it themselves and not rely on other peoples to do it for them.

What concerns us is the manner and the spirit of how the American role in Vietnam shall terminate. You want to leave and, we want you to leave too, aware as we are that after little more than a decade you have grown tired and decided you must go.

As a nation rich in the tradition of helping other peoples in safeguarding their patrimony and the right to exist under the sun, you may not find leaving easy or simple. But the situation spawned by the American commitment requires that you look at the consequences of your decision on involvement regardless of whether it was a mistake or not.

It is said that the Vietnam affair is an open-ended one, a bottomless pit. Please be assured, that past experience has made us realize only too well the pain of humiliation as a people who have to knock on the door of another people to ask for help. But we are buoyed by the determination not to rely on foreign assistance in the near future. And there are reasonable chances of accomplishing this through food production and the bright prospects of exploiting oil.

You have been told and we have heard your views about ours being an undemocratic regime and that venality and injustices are widespread here. Again, in the capacity of mere and simple citizens, let us state that we have many reasons to be unhappy about our own government and often are frustrated and discouraged by the ills that plague this government. Despite such unhappiness and frustration, however, we believe there is still room for improvement and that this can be done. The alternative is if the communists prevail we shall be cast into the abyss of eternal darkness.

Let us reiterate that our concern is not really the amount of additional aid--in the instant case, 300 million U.S. dollars--but the basic attitude of your government vis-a-vis our country. We are realistic and cognizant of the mood prevailing in your country on further assistance to us. If we are repetitious in our concern and preoccupation with the basic U.S. attitude toward us, it is because we look at the great American nation as imbued with the most lofty of ideals and altruism. In this conviction we do not want to be disappointed.

In arguing for a cutoff of American assistance even if it entails the collapse of South Vietnam and a communist takeover, some may say it couldn't be helped and that we deserve it.

Somehow we conceive that deep in the American psyche, a tortured voice will say this is wrong and will consign South Vietnamese to a fate they do not want nor deserve.

An abrupt, if inglorious, end of the American commitment in Vietnam is a traumatic experience too disturbing to contemplate.

Let us close this letter by citing a simple story on human relations. A gentleman comes to a house where a lady resides. The man decides to stay. Affection blossoms; she becomes enciente. Should he suddenly depart, dismissing all by saying he was wrong to have entered the house in the first place? The lady, of course, knew that he could not stay forever, but she is resigned to reality and to do her best to cope with the situation.

Best wishes always and love to you from Vietnam.

Your Vietnamese friends

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