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VNA CITES AFP DENIAL ON BLOODBATH IN DANANG

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["There Was No Bloodbath," Says an Eyewitness in Danang--VNA heading]

[Text] Hanoi VNA April 25--An eyewitness of the capture of Danang, parish Priest Father Claude Charmot, told an AFP correspondent on April 22 that "There was no bloodbath when the city was taken."

In a dispatch from this newly-liberated city the same day, the AFP correspondent said the French priest, who has been in Danang for 20 years, witnessed the arrival of the patriotic forces. "The liberation forces here were 100 times better behaved than those who liberated my birthplace of Savoie (eastern France) in 1944," the priest said.

"The intervention of the liberation forces--which was firm but not brutal--helped restore calm in less than an hour," the priest said.

The AFP correspondent reported that Andre Obrach, director of the French cultural centre in Danang, commented: "If the liberation front troops had not rapidly taken over the town, all its installations would have been looted. He added: "Soldiers of the Saigon army, some of whom were drunk, indulged in some incredible pillaging. They wandered around all over there in all sorts of vehicles. Some used armoured vehicles to break down homes or gates and steal what was on hand."

In the eyes of many witnesses, the so-called "voluntary evacuation" was "marred by slaying and mass [word indistinct] the report said. "According to the French Consul Midilleman and other eyewitnesses, the army pushed civilians around, beat them up and even fired on them.

The report further quoted Tran Dinh Than Lam, a 32-year-old Buddhist and a lecturer at Danang university as laying responsibility for the large-scale theft and looting on the Saigon administration who, he said, repeatedly warned that once Danang fell, it would be bombed by government planes.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM