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VIETNAM

SRV LEADERS ATTEND FUNERAL CEREMONY

Ho Chi Minh City VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi 1210 GMT 22 Aug 76 OW--FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] Ho Chi Minh City (VNA August 1976)--A funeral ceremony for the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien was solemnly held on 22 August in Ho Chi Minh City.

The funeral visit began at 0900 at the headquarters of the NFLSV Central Committee. Vice President Nguyen Huu Tho, on behalf of President Ton Duc Thang, laid a wreath bearing the words "The president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam respectfully pays tribute" before the coffin of the late Rev G.B. Ho Thanh Bien.

A delegation of the SRV National Assembly Standing Committee led by Comrade Truong Chinh, member of the Political Bureau of the party Central Committee and chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee, paid a visit and laid a wreath bearing the words "with deep regrets for Rev Ho Thanh Bien." Comrade Truong Chinh presented his condolences to Rev Ho Thanh Bien's relatives and wrote the following words "with deep regrets for Rev Ho Thanh Bien" in the condolence book.

SRV Vice President Nguyen Huu Tho laid a wreath and wrote the following words "with deep regrets for Uncle Ho Thanh Bien who achieved great merits in the restoration of independence for the fatherland and the national liberation" in the condolence book.

The delegation of the VFF Central Committee led by Dr Nguyen Van Huong, member of the VFF Central Committee Presidium; the delegation of the NFLSV Central Committee led by Mr Nguyen Huu Tho, member of the NFLSV Central Committee Presidium; the delegation of the VANDPP Central Committee led by lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao, chairman of the VANDPP Central Committee; the delegation of the All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-loving Vietnamese Catholics led by Rev Nguyen Thi Vinh, vice chairman of the All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-loving Vietnamese Catholics; the delegations of the Vietnam Committee for the Defense of World Peace and the Vietnam Committee for Afro-Asian People's Solidarity; and the representative of the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the premier's office came to pay tributes, lay wreaths and write in the condolence book.

Also coming to pay tribute and lay wreaths before the coffin of the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien were the delegations of the NFLSV and the Ho Chi Minh City (?People's Committee).

Many delegations of various religions--the Vietnam Unified Buddhist Union, the Vietnam Protestant Union, and the Vietnam Cao Dai Union--also came to pay tribute and lay wreaths. A delegation from the Saigon archbishopric, led by Archbishop Nguyen Van Binh, came to pay tribute, lay a wreath and write in the condolence book the following words: "The Reverend G.B. Ho Thanh Bien is an exemplary reverend, a Christian with a devoted love for our Lord and an ardent love for the fatherland and the people." Representatives from the Can Tho and Long Xuyen parishes, Christendoms and religious orders also came to pay tribute.

Many delegations from various ministries, branches, organs and mass organizations at the central level and in Ho Chi Minh City one by one came to pay tribute.

The funeral ceremony for the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien began at 1430 sharp. Attending the ceremony were representatives of the National Assembly Standing Committee, the VFF Central Committee, the NFLSV Central Committee, the VANDPP Central Committee, the All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-loving Vietnamese Catholics, and representatives of organs and mass organizations at the central level and in Ho Chi Minh City.

At the funeral ceremony, the funeral committee read a message from Premier Pham Van Dong and Vice Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh: "We respectfully convey to the family and beloved ones of the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien our regards and condolences."

Prof Pham Thieu, member of the VFF Central Committee Presidium, read the funeral oration. After recalling the great services of the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien in mobilizing God-fearing and patriotic Christians to contribute to bringing the national liberation struggle toward complete victory, he said:

"The late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien was a reverend who ardently loved his country and his religion and who made great efforts in our people's common undertaking. He is very worthy of the Independence Medal, third class, the Resistance Medal, first class, and the "Brass Fortress of the Fatherland" insignia--the great honor that the National Assembly and the government bestowed on him. With his death, the VFF has lost a typical member, the Vietnamese Catholic circles a clear-sighted and stalwart guide, and his family an outstanding family member.

Prof Pham Thieu continued: "Following the great victory in the 1975 spring campaign, our entire country has been completely liberated and our people began to live in reunification and peace and are advancing toward socialism. These sacred aspirations that he cherished over the past 30 years have been materialized. Although he is dead, his shining example remains. Regretting his death, we pledge to do our utmost to implement all lines and policies set forth by the revolution in the new stage. With this thought in mind, we, who are continuing to carry out the common revolutionary undertaking for the whole country, respectfully bow to his soul and convey to his bereaved family our sincere, heartfelt condolences and bid him farewell.

The representatives attending the ceremony were extremely touched while listening to the last words that the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien sent to the bishops and the Christian community: Let all dignitaries in the Vietnamese Catholic Church and all Christians closely unite around the Front, be wholly loyal to the fatherland, prove that Christians have correctly implemented our Lord's doctrine, and be worthy of being Vietnamese citizens of the heroic Vietnamese people.

The late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien's coffin was then brought to the Saigon Basilica where a requiem Mass was organized and the last rites were administered according to the highest form of ceremony of Christianity.

The representatives and the late Reverend Ho Thanh Bien's bereaved family accompanied his coffin while it was taken to the graveyard of the Saigon vicarage for burial.

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OBITUARY OF REV HO THANH BIEN ISSUED

Ho Chi Minh City Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1400 GMT 20 Aug 76 OW

[Text] The All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-Loving Vietnamese Catholics, the VFF and NFLSV central committees deeply regret to announce the demise of Reverend Ho Thanh Bien, acting chairman of the All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-Loving Vietnamese Catholics; former member of the Standing Committee of the DRV National Assembly, second, third and fourth legislature; member of the VFF Central Committee; member of the Vietnam Committee for Afro-Asian People's Solidarity; member of the Vietnam World Peace Council; and recipient of the Independence Medal, 3d Class; Resistance War Medal, 1st Class; and the fatherland's brass bastion insignia.

In the course of his illness, Rev Ho Thanh Bien was solicitously cared for by the party, the government and the front and was devotedly attended and given care and treatment by collective staff physicians; but due to his advanced age, weakness and acute illness, Rev Ho Thanh Bien passed away at 2050 hours [1350 GMT] on the 19th of August, at Thong Nhut hospital at the age of 86.

Ho Chi Minh City, the 20th of August, 1976.

Following is a brief biography of Rev Ho Thanh Bien: Rev Ho Thanh Bien was born in 1890 at Thoi Thuan village, Thot Not district, Hau Giang Province (former Long Xuyen); received the title of reverend on 21 September, 1921; in 1945, participated in the uprisings at Sakeo diocese, Trung Tuat township and Nhu Gia diocese of Chon Thanh and Thanh Tri districts, Soc Trang Province; and assumed the following functions: vice chairman of the Soc Trang Provincial Lien-Viet Front; chaplain of the National Guard regiment in Soc Trang; and advisor to the Central Committee of the Resistant Catholics Association in Nam Bo.

In the resistance war against the French colonialist aggressors, Rev Ho Thanh Bien resolutely and actively participated in the motivation of the catholic compatriots in Nam Bo in general and of the Catholic followers in Soc Trang in particular to contribute to the protracted war of resistance in Nam Bo and scored many achievements.

In 1954, Rev Ho Thanh Bien went to regroup in the north and participated in the Catholic movement to build socialism and in the anti-U.S. national salvation resistance war. In the course of his activities in the north, Rev Ho Thanh Bien was appointed to assume the following functions: acting chairman of the All-Vietnam Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-Loving Vietnamese Catholics; member of the Standing Committee of the DRV National Assembly, second, third and fourth legislatures; member of the VFF Central Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity; and member of the Vietnam World Peace Council.

Thanks to his many successes in contributing to the French colonialist and anti-U.S. national salvation resistance wars, Rev Ho Thanh Bien was awarded the Independence Medal, 3d Class; the Resistance Medal, 1st Class and the fatherland's brass bastion insignia by the National Assembly and government.